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LINCOLN AND THE CONVENTION OF 1860

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BY

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DELEGATE FROM KANSAS TO THE CONVENTION THAT
NOMINATED LINCOLN AND DELEGATE FROM MICHIGAN
TO THE REPUBLICAN NATIONAL CONVENTION OF 1916



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LINCOLN AND HIS TIMES

BY ADDISON G. PROCTER

Youngest Delegate to the Convention of 1860 That Nominated Lincoln

The year 1860 introduced into our national life Abraham Lincoln, one of the most remarkable, and certainly the most interesting character that had graced our history since the time of Washington.

How this man, born to poverty and obscurity, whose life from its earliest days to middle age was one continuous struggle for a bare existence,—who came to the State of Illinois at the age of twenty-one a raw backwoodsman, clothed in the homespun that he had earned by the splitting of rails,—how this man could have so impressed himself on the people of that great State, and of this great Nation, as to become the chosen and accepted leader of a great national party at the most critical time in the affairs of this country, must always remain one of the interesting chapters of our political history.

There met that year in the city of Chicago in the month of May a convention composed of 466 delegates from the Northern and border states of the South. They were men of strong convictions, who had met for a very decided purpose. Slavery, as a political power, had been growing more and more aggressive, and dictatorial. It had trampled upon all of the compromises, had outraged the moral sensibilities of the North by its fugitive slave law, and under cover of a recent supreme court decision it was attempting to force itself into the free territories of the Northwest,

and so the temper of that convention was that of exasperation.

To the west, stretching from the valley of the Missouri River, to the far off Pacific Ocean, lay one great undeveloped empire, promising, as we all realized, tremendous possibilities. To that great empire of the West, this convention invited the people of the world, to come and help in its development, and to share in its prosperity, and pledged the faith of that great party that they represented to the dedicating for all time of this great empire to the upbuilding and maintaining of free homes for free men, and so, like an intrepid gladiator this convention strode into the national arena, threw its gauntlet of defiance into the face of slavery, and proclaimed—thus far may thou go, but no farther.

This great purpose of the convention having been determined and made a part of the platform on which they stood, by an unanimous vote, the next, and most vital question was—to whom in view of this emergency we are creating, can we dare to entrust the leadership? That was the question that gave us pause.

There had come to that convention, largely from the East, a well organized body of delegates demanding the nomination for the Presidency of Senator Wm. H. Seward of New York. Mr. Seward had been prominent in National affairs for many years. As Governor of the great State of New York, and as United States Senator he had attracted unusual attention by his ability and clear statesmanship. He was by all odds the most prominent man of his party at that time. He was represented in that delegation by many of the most noted political manipulators of his party under the leadership of Thurlow Weed, the most adroit politician of his day. Seward had come to that convention backed

by this great element, full of confidence, lacking less than sixty votes of enough to control that entire convention, pledged to him on that first ballot. The advent of the Seward delegations from the East into Chicago was the spectacular event of the pre-convention days.

Outside this great movement for Seward all seemed confusion and disintegration.

Vermont was asking for the nomination of her able and popular Senator, Jacob Collimer, who had filled many places, including a cabinet membership, and Supreme Judgeship, and always with honor.

New Jersey was asking for the nomination of her Judge and Senator, William L. Dayton, who had stood with Fremont four years before, and gone down to defeat on a ticket that many suggested "Had the head where the tail ought to be."

Pennsylvania was asking for the nomination of her able, aggressive Senator, Simon Cameron, with the whole Penn delegation at his call.

Ohio was urging the nomination of her splendid specimen of Senator and statesman, Salmon P. Chase, afterward our Chief Justice of the Supreme Court.

Missouri, with a splendid delegation made up of a new element that everyone wanted to encourage, was asking for the naming of her eminent jurist, Judge Edward Bates.

And Illinois was there with a united and very active delegation asking for the nomination of a man, who was neither judge nor senator, just a plain citizen, Abraham Lincoln.

This was the condition confronting us as we faced the responsibility of that nomination for leadership.

We had come to that convention from far away Kansas, from "out on the border." We had been mak-

ing a very determined fight against the aggressions of the slave power, a conflict that had attracted the attention of the entire country and had been of such value to the party that they, through their national committee, had invited us to a full participation in the councils of the convention. For this reason our little delegation of six were the recipients of many marked attentions.

The morning of our arrival we were invited to an interview with Thurlow Weed at his parlor at the Richmond House.

We had a touch of trepidation as we contemplated being ushered into the presence of this noted political mogul, but we braced up our courage and went. He met us at the door of his parlor. We were introduced, as we passed in, by our Chairman and seated about the big round table in the center of the parlor.

Mr. Weed was most gracious in his manner, and dispelled all terror from the start. He stood by the table while we were seated about him and addressed each one of us personally, calling each of us by name, which appealed to us as something remarkable, seeing that our introduction was so informal. That ability was probably one of the secrets of his wonderful influence, the ability to associate the name and the face, an adroit quality, essential to the successful politician. He was an attractive man and very interesting. After complimenting us on the good work accomplished out on the border and thanking us most graciously for the service rendered to the country and to the party he turned to the question of the impending nomination.

He said, "Four years ago we went to Philadelphia to name our candidate and we made one of the most inexcusable blunders any political party has ever made in this country. We nominated a man who had no quali-

fication for the position of Chief Magistrate of this Republic. "Why," he said, "that boy Fremont had not one single quality to commend him for the Presidency. The Country realized this. We were defeated as we probably deserved to be and we have that lesson of defeat before us today." He went on to say, "We are facing a crisis; there are troublous times ahead of us. We all recognize that. What this country will demand as its chief executive for the next four years is a man of the highest order of executive ability, a man of real statesmanlike qualities, well known to the Country, and of large experience in national affairs. No other class of men ought to be considered at this time. We think we have in Mr. Seward just the qualities the Country will need. He is known by us all as a statesman. As Governor of New York he has shown splendid executive ability. As Senator he has shown himself to be a statesman, and a political philosopher. He is especially equipped in a knowledge of our foreign relations, and will make a candidate to whom our people can look with a feeling of security. We expect to nominate him on the first ballot, and to go before the Country full of courage and confidence." He thanked us for the call and gave each of us a friendly handshake at parting.

As he stood at our table, so gracious, so assuring, so genial and friendly, with all our previous estimate of him dispelled, I was reminded of Byron's picture of his *Corsair* as "the mildest mannered man that ever scuttled ship or cut a throat," politically, of course.

We had hardly gotten back to our rooms at the Briggs House when in came Horace Greeley, dressed in his light drab suit with soft felt hat which he threw carelessly on our table. A clear red and white com-

plexion, blue eyes and flaxen hair, he looked, as he stood there, for all the world like a well-to-do dairy farmer fresh from his clover field. He was certainly an interesting figure, and he seemed to find a place in our hearts at a bound. As a journalist he was full of compliments for the good news we had furnished to his *Tribune* and we were all drawn to him by his irresistible smile.

“I suppose they are telling you,” said Greeley in a drawly tone, “that Seward is the be all and the end all of our existence as a party, our great statesman, our profound philosopher, our pillar of cloud by day, our pillar of fire by night, but I want to tell you boys that in spite of all this you couldn’t elect Seward if you could nominate him. You must remember as things stand today we are a sectional party. We have no strength outside the North, practically we must have the entire North with us if we hope to win. Now, there are states of the North that cannot be induced to support Seward, and without these states we cannot secure electoral votes enough to elect. So, to name Seward, is to invite defeat. He cannot carry New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Indiana, or Iowa, and I will bring to you representative men from each of these states who will confirm what I say.” And sure enough he did, bringing to us Governor Andy Curtin of Pennsylvania, Governor Henry S. Lane of Indiana, Governor Kirkwood of Iowa, each of whom confirmed what Greeley had said and gave their reasons for the belief.

Governor Curtin was particularly emphatic. He said, “I am the Republican candidate for Governor. At the last national election Mr. Buchanan carried Pennsylvania by 50,000 majority. I expect to be elected on the Republican ticket by as large a majority as Mr.

Buchanan had on the Democratic ticket, making a change of 100,000 votes, but I can only do this if you give me a man as presidential candidate acceptable to my people. I could not win with Mr. Seward as our candidate." He was a bright looking, enthusiastic, young fellow, and had every indication of making what he later proved to be, one of the most valuable of our war governors. Governor Lane and Governor Kirkwood both gave the same evidence touching Indiana and Iowa. This was the work of Horace Greeley, to satisfy the convention that the nomination of Seward would mean defeat, and he certainly did effective work.

We had calls from strong men, all in a wide awake determination to meet the demands of the emergency, among them Governor John A. Andrews of Massachusetts with quite a group of New England delegates. But Greeley was the most untiring of workers. I doubt if Horace Greeley slept three consecutive hours during the entire session of that convention.

The afternoon of the day before we were likely to reach the balloting Greeley came in to see us. He was very much discouraged. He could see no way to effect a consolidation of the elements opposed to Seward and he feared that Seward would win on the first ballot. He seemed tired and depressed. "Mr. Greeley," said one of our delegates. "Who do you really prefer to see nominated, tell us?" Greeley hesitated a moment and sort of bracing up he said, "I believe Edward Bates of Missouri is the safest nomination for us to make. He is a very able man and he comes from a section that we ought to have with us. He is not well known in the East, and for that reason I am hesitating in urging him strongly but he would make a good

candidate and an able President if elected, but I am hesitating."

"Mr. Greeley," said one of our group, "What do you think of Abraham Lincoln as a candidate? Why not urge him?" "Lincoln," said Mr. Greeley, speaking very slowly as if weighing each word, "is a very adroit politician. He has a host of friends out here in Illinois who seem to see something in him that the rest of us haven't seen yet. He has a very interesting history that would make good campaign literature, but the trouble with Lincoln is this, he has had no experience in National affairs, and facing a crisis as we all believe, I doubt if such a nomination would be acceptable. It is too risky an undertaking. I think Bates would be safer." And that was Horace Greeley, the leader of the opposition, only a few hours before we would reach the actual balloting.

Soon after Greeley had gone we got a message on a card saying: "A company of Unionists from the border states would like to meet you in your rooms." "Have them come, right away," was our reply to the messenger. Soon there came pushing their way into our little parlor a group of about thirty of as resolute a looking body of men as I had ever seen, and I had seen some of that stamp I thought out on the border. They were of that sharp eyed, broad jawed, Scotch Irish type; the typical mountaineers of the South, intense, and volcanic, standing for something, and standing resolutely. We realized instantly that the intense moments had come. We hurriedly arranged our room to seat as many as we could, and the others stood against the four walls, filling the room so that we felt that we were in close touch with some full charged electric battery.

As Clay stepped forward and stood at the head of our table at which we were all seated there was a deep intense silence, for a moment. As he stood posed there, ready, he was the ideal Kentucky Colonel with all the mannerisms of that element so well pictured in our literature. A fascinating man, handsome to look upon, faultlessly dressed, keen, bright and emotional. We could not keep our eyes off as he stood like a waiting orator charged with a volcanic mission. As he stepped closer to the table, leaning forward with a sort of confidential gesture, speaking right into our very faces he said, "Gentlemen, we are on the brink of a great Civil War." He paused as if to note the effect. He seemed to have caught a look of incredulity creeping over our faces that he chose to interpret in his own way. Straightening himself, looking every inch the orator he said: "You undoubtedly have heard that remark before, but I want you to know that that fact will soon be flashed to you in a way you will more readily comprehend. Gentlemen, we are from the South and we want you to know that the South is preparing for war. If the man that you nominate at this convention should be elected on the platform you have already adopted the South will attempt the destruction of this Union. On your southern border stretching from the east coast of Maryland to the Ozarks of Missouri there stand today a body of resolute men (of whom these are the representatives) who are determined that this Union shall not be dissolved except at the end of a terrible struggle in resistance.

"It makes a wonderful difference who you name for this leadership at this time, a wonderful difference to you but a vital difference to us. Our homes and all we possess are in peril, we realize just what is before us.

These men of the southern border had chosen as their spokesman Cassius M. Clay of Kentucky.

You must give us a leader at this time who will inspire our confidence and our courage. We must have such a leader or we are lost. We have such a man—a man who we will follow to the end. We want your help,” and leaning forward in a half suppressed whisper, he said, “We want you to name Abraham Lincoln. He was born among us and we believe he understands us.

“You give us Lincoln and we will push back your battle lines from the Ohio (right at your doors) back across the Tennessee into the regions where it belongs. You give us Lincoln and we will join this Union strength full of enthusiasm with your Union Army and drive secession to its lair. Do this for us and let us go home and prepare for the conflict?”

Here was a new issue, just at a psychological moment, when everyone realized that something unusual had to happen. Up to this time it had been “how shall we keep slavery out of the territories?” Now it was the question, “how shall we make sure to preserve this Union?” On this new line of formation the army was drawn up for its new drive.

This impassioned appeal of Clay, first given to us, reached the many hesitating delegates, and aroused a new vitalization all along the line. Probably the more conservative presentation of the issue made by Governor Henry S. Lane of Indiana did much to supplement the more volcanic work of Clay.

Lane said to us. “I am Governor of Indiana. I know my people well. In the south half of my State a good proportion of my people have come from Slave States of the South. They were poor people, forced to work for a living, and they did not want to bring up

their families to labor in competition with the slaves, so they have moved to Indiana to get away from that influence. They will not tolerate slavery in Indiana or in our free territories but they will not oppose it where it is, if it will only stay there. These people want a man of the Lincoln type as their President. They are afraid Seward would be influenced by that abolition element of the East and make war on slavery where it is. This they do not want, so they believe Lincoln understanding this as one of their kind would be acceptable and would probably get the support of this entire element. If at any time the South should undertake in the interest of slavery to destroy this Union we can depend on everyone of this class to shoulder his musket and go to the front in defense of a United Nation even at the cost of slavery itself."

This new issue, fostered by the strong Illinois delegation under the adroit leadership of David Davis, pressed by the impetuous oratory of Clay and strengthened by the sincere and convincing arguments of Governor Lane of Indiana, was the real prevailing influence that brought cohesion out of disintegration and centered the full strength of the opposition on the one man. It was an adroit piece of work, as effective as it was adroit.

As the spectre of civil war loomed before us, becoming more and more convincing and menacing, we came to realize the need of conserving that element. It grew on us that this element might be a controlling factor in the great struggle before us. It might be decisive and the thought gave us deep concern.

Later when the conflict was upon us and we saw 200,000 of these fighting men from our slave states of the border enlisted in our Union army, we more fully real-

ized the vital influence and superb wisdom of that final decision.

But the battle was not over. Strong appeals were being made by both elements. The Seward forces pressed the great fact of known ability, of great experience, of large acquaintance, its ability to control an element to finance a hard campaign: an element that might help to overcome any factional opposition in the doubtful states.

The opposition delegates centered around their man were pleading for a more complete recognition of the West as the coming factor in the growth and strengthening of the party, and while conceding the value of the ability that comes from experience, claimed for their man an abundance of common sense on which they could appeal to the people with safety. This, with the great fact of the demands of that border element for consideration, that it was not safe to ignore, gave strength to the appeal of the opposition.

The issue was sharp, keen and decisive. The call to the battle of the ballot brought us face to face with the demand for a duty we could not shirk, or we would not if we could. We felt the full weight of the responsibility, a responsibility that by our act might involve the very existence of the Republic. We knew that our man, whoever he might be, must be depended on to carry the nation through the most critical experience of its history. The coming events were casting their dread shadows before us. It was an ordeal. All I can say is—we simply put our trust in God, and He who makes no mistakes gave us Abraham Lincoln.

Lincoln having been nominated and the excitement and confusion of a great convention over, we soon came to realize that the country was not fully in accord with

the risk we had assumed. "What does it mean?" That was the message from every direction. As a fact of unwritten history, I may say right here that the nomination of Lincoln at that time created at first over a large portion of the North more anxiety than enthusiasm. Though the Seward element, especially those from New York, made a splendid showing of graceful yielding to the will of the majority, we all felt that a campaign of education was before us.

Hearing that the Michigan delegation was preparing to make their return eventful, that a special train had been chartered over the Michigan Central road from Chicago to Detroit with cars to be decorated with Lincoln's portrait and mottoes starting the campaign, "setting the ball to rolling for Lincoln," as they expressed it, I went over to the Michigan headquarters. I had decided to take a trip to my old home in the East and wanted to be a part of this excursion through Michigan for that part of my journey. Governor Austin Blair was exhorting his group of listeners to forget their disappointments, (for Michigan had been for Seward from start to finish) and unite for an enthusiastic beginning of the campaign. I arranged for a place in that crowd of excursionists.

We left Chicago early the next morning in decorated cars. Governor Blair had telegraphed to the important stations along the road of our coming, urging a turnout to meet the train with all the enthusiasm they could muster. We stopped at all the big cities on that road from Niles to Detroit. Good crowds met us at all the stops. Governor Blair and other speakers would alight and make earnest appeals to the crowds, occasionally someone would shout "Three cheers for Governor Blair," which were given with a

will, but during that whole day, from Niles to Detroit, not one crowd offered a single cheer for Lincoln. It was a nipping frost all the way and set us all to thinking, what next? The further we went East the more pronounced this showing of disappointment became.

I had been at my old home some weeks and among the younger element there was a growing feeling that there ought to be something doing in the way of organization for campaign work. I went to one of our older citizens, a man prominent for years in local affairs, a sort of political oracle and I said to him, "Mr. C—— we are going to organize a Lincoln Club tomorrow evening and we want you to preside and give us something to enthuse." He said, "I won't do it," most emphatically. "Why not?" I asked. "I will tell you why not," he replied. "You fellows knew at Chicago what this country is facing. You knew we are up against the most critical time in the life of this Nation. You knew that it will take the very best ability we can produce to pull us through. You knew that above everything else these times demanded a statesman and you have gone and given us a *rail splitter*. No, I will not preside or attend."

It may seem strange to us now but this sentiment reflected the feelings of a good proportion of our people all over the East and North. It had to be met by strong faith and real work.

The campaign started heavily. Enthusiasm was lacking and conditions were getting more and more desperate. In this state of the public mind, waiting and watching, all at once there came the announcement that Mr. Seward was about to take the platform and open the campaign for Lincoln. It was our first gleam of sunshine from out of the depths of discouragement.

Mr. Seward was a big man. We knew that the country would listen to what he had to say. He opened the campaign first in the West probably to get some of that western spirit so lacking in the East. His political addresses at that time were masterpieces of eloquence and patriotism. Immense crowds greeted him wherever he spoke. He seemed to grow with the occasion. It was a wonderful exhibition of unselfish devotion to his party, and what the party stood for. We ought never to forget Seward for his splendid work in that campaign. He proved himself a patriot, and a true, loyal Republican.

As the campaign progressed the awakening brought into cooperation a new element that up to this time had held itself aloof from active participation in party politics. This was the radical Anti-Slavery group, the Abolitionists as they were called. This element made their appeals on high moral grounds. They controlled the most eloquent class of speakers in that campaign, a class of unselfish men and women, working without any thought of compensation, devoted to the work of arousing public sentiment against the wickedness of Slavery. With the "Wide Awakes" furnishing the cheers, and this element awakening the moral sentiment of our people to action, the campaign soon put on an intensity that was overwhelming. It was a great moral upheaval all over the North, and when the sixth day of November came we found we had secured the electoral vote of every Northern State from the Atlantic to the Pacific, giving us a new birth of Freedom for our heritage, and ABRAHAM LINCOLN as our accepted leader.

We had hardly gotten over our first shoutings for

victory won, when we were startled by events, more drastic than any of us had anticipated.

Only two days after Mr. Lincoln's election, President Buchanan issued an order through his Secretary of War, placing Major Beauregard, an avowed disunionist, in charge of our Military Academy at West Point. This awakened us to a new danger. A President in the hands of the disloyal, with four months to intervene, before the voice of our people could be made effective.

You may search through our American history from those primitive days of Washington down to these deep, broad, eventful days of Woodrow Wilson, and no where will you find a time or a season when this Republic of ours came so near to a complete collapse as during those days between the election and the inauguration of Mr. Lincoln.

For the first time in our history we had elected a president who was openly opposed to the extension of slavery.

The South with its four millions of slaves, and its four hundred millions invested in slave products, took instant alarm, and in the spirit of the Cavalier, without stopping to count the cost, rushed madly into secession. The North, with its infusion of Pilgrim blood, moving calmly and slow and cool, hesitated and talked conciliation, for the North more fully realized at first the cost and terrors of war.

Unfortunately the South mistook this conciliatory spirit for a species of cowardice and became more obdurate and aggressive than ever. Then came over the North one of the most strange manifestations of public feeling the Republic had ever known. It was like a great hush impending a terrible calamity, "Be care-

ful," "Say nothing," "Do nothing, to fan this flame of disunion," "Speak softly," "Keep control of your tongue and your pen," "Let the South get over its madness," "Don't precipitate collision." This was the feeling manifested on every side all over the North.

They had called a public meeting in Boston to consider the value of the Union. It was a big meeting of the solid men of Boston. Everett and Hilliard had spoken eloquently of the work of holding a united country picturing a dissolution as meaning that grass would grow in their streets, and their great ships would lay rotting at their wharves until restoration should come. When the chairman said "I see we have with us this evening a distinguished citizen always patriotic, always eloquent. I am sure we shall all be glad to listen to Wendell Phillips." Hardly had he mentioned the name of Phillips when that great crowd of conservative business men broke into a yelling mob and "no, no, no," rung out from all parts of the hall and before Phillips could say a word this mob seized him and in spite of a vigorous attempt at rescue by his immediate friends thrust him bodily out of the hall for fear he might say something that would offend the South.

George Wm. Curtis of New York, one of the finest scholars and orators of that time, the man who made the most thrilling appeal for the inserting of a portion of the "Declaration of Independence" in the platform before the Lincoln convention, was invited to come to Philadelphia to speak. He had announced, "The Policy of Honesty" as his subject. When he reached Philadelphia that evening he found a mob of citizens blocking the way to the hall, defiant and riotous. The owners of the hall fearing the destruction that might follow his attempt to speak there closed the building

and Curtis went back to New York without being able to say a word to those who had invited him to come, and so free speech, one of the guarantees of the Constitution, a plank in the republican platform just re-adopted at a National Convention, was absolutely denied in two of the largest republican cities of the country within thirty days of the election of a republican President on a free speech platform.

And that was the condition of the public mind when President Buchanan called Congress together for its last session during his term and sent to that Congress the most unfortunate message ever delivered as a public document in the entire history of this nation. A message practically approving and excusing the South for its extreme defiance of constitutional demands, and asserting the monstrous doctrine that there was no power in Congress, or any other department of our government to coerce any State into remaining in the Union that desired to withdraw. Nothing ever proclaimed by any chief magistrate of this republic has ever approached this in reckless disregard of the fixed purpose on which the whole fabric of our nationality must rest. The effect of this message was bewildering. Citizens with anxious expression asked: "Is Republican Government a failure? Is there no cohesive power in our system? Is this Republic, founded by a Washington, through seven years of exhausting warfare, a Republic that has been the beacon light of the liberty loving people of the world for all of these years, to be allowed to crumble to pieces?" And there was no response.

Then came the report of that committee on conciliation consisting of 33 members, one from each state, all able men, with Charles Francis Adams of Massachusetts

as chairman, offering to throw into the scale as the price of peace all we had gained in twenty years of anti-slavery agitation, practically eliminating the right of petition in all matters pertaining to slavery, and even that met with no response. Passion was in the saddle, and conciliation was thrown to the winds. The refusal to consider this on the part of the South has been aptly termed by one of her most illustrious sons, still living, to be the most inexcusable blunder of which the South has ever been guilty.

Then followed disasters thick and fast.

General Twiggs on the southwestern border treacherously surrendered the whole army of the southwest without resistance, throwing more than a million dollars worth of army supplies into the hands of our enemies in Texas, just as we needed them the most.

Louisiana backed her wagons up to the door of the United States Mint at New Orleans and took a half million newly coined dollars and removed them to her own vaults without a hand being raised in opposition.

New Orleans had assembled a fleet of armed boats, seized the two forts below the city, put a chain across the river and blockaded the Mississippi against the commerce of the world, for the first time since the days of LaSalle. Batteries were being erected along our Southern coast line in the rear of our national forts to destroy if they could not control. Seven states had withdrawn from the Union and were organizing a hostile government under a hostile flag at Montgomery. South Carolina had appointed a commission to demand a quit claim deed to the lands on which our forts stood in her harbors on the plea that she was a sovereign state and the United States government was trespassing on her territory. Every department of our

government was honeycombed by treason and disloyalty. Our army had become reduced to less than ten thousand men, and they were mostly on the Indian borders. Our navy had been so distributed that there were not armed vessels enough between our yards at Norfolk and Portsmouth to blockade a single port, and our national treasury was so near to bankruptcy that Secretary Dix was offering twelve per cent interest in New York for money enough to carry the administration through to the end. One dark cloud of uncertainty and distrust enveloped our entire horizon. The republic seemed to be groping its way toward dissolution.

We looked through all this gloom one day in February, 1861, to Illinois and we saw standing at the railway station of her capital city a tall, angular, kindly faced man, the centre of a group of friends, greeting him with their good wishes and farewells. It was our President-elect about to start on his journey to the Capitol to assume charge of the Government.

As Mr. Lincoln took his place on the rear platform of the car that was to take him on his journey, his friends gathered closely about him to hear what he might have to say. With a heart full of emotion looking into their anxious upturned faces Mr. Lincoln said, "My friends—No one, not in my position, can appreciate the sadness I feel at this parting. To you I owe all that I am. Here I have lived for more than a quarter of a century, here my children were born, and here one of them lies buried. I know not when I shall meet you again. A duty devolves on me such as has devolved on no man of this nation since Washington. He never would have succeeded but for the aid of a Divine Providence upon which he at all times relied. I feel that I cannot succeed without that same divine assist-

ance and on that almighty arm I lean for support, and I want you, my friends, to pray that I may have that support without which I cannot succeed, but with which success is certain. I bid you all an affectionate farewell."

As the train bearing Mr. Lincoln toward the Capitol made its way East great multitudes assembled at the stations to meet him for the first time and to hear what he might have to say. Up to this time Mr. Lincoln was practically unknown outside of Illinois. He had taken no part in the campaign, preferring to remain at Springfield and to meet his friends there. He had shown that "adroitness," that Greeley had spoken of, in avoiding many entangling suggestions designed to draw him out to his disadvantage, and had given the opposition no club to drive home their special scares. The deep feeling of solicitude over the prevailing conditions made the greetings peculiarly impressive in their lack of the usual enthusiasm. We all realized the tremendous responsibilities ahead of him. He seemed to be the last prop on which the whole structure must rest. And so as he went on his way all we could say was:

"Our hearts, our hopes, our prayers, our tears,
our faith,
Triumphant o'er our fears,
Are all with thee, are all with thee."

We saw him reach the Capitol in safety through a danger zone that looked threatening, and our hearts beat more quickly than for weeks before.

We saw him on the fourth of March standing before the Capitol in the presence of 20,000 people to take the oath that should make him President.

It was a scene full of the deepest significance. There stood the venerable Chief Justice Roger Taney, in his

long black robe reaching to the platform, his thin white hair coming to his shoulders and his fine Roman face wonderfully impressive, the embodiment of that decree that "Freedom and slavery had equal rights under the national domain," and there stood our coming Chief Magistrate, with the entire North at his back, the embodiment of that other declaration, "This Nation of ours cannot permanently endure half slave and half free." Surely we all recognized the fact that we had come to the parting of the ways. It was the evening before the dawning of our new National Creation. As Mr. Lincoln came forward to deliver his address, quiet swept over that great assembly that was intense. All seemed to recognize the tremendous significance of the occasion.

It was masterly and effective, the greatest argument for the right of a Nation to self preservation that had been uttered since the days of Webster. The North received it with supreme satisfaction. It placed Mr. Lincoln at once in a firm place in the confidence and hearts of the people. It was an inspiration to us all, and the country awoke to the fact that they had a real leader, one whom they could trust. Concluding he said:

"I therefore consider that in view of the Constitution and the laws, this Union is not broken, and I shall see to it as the Constitution expressly enjoins upon me, that to the best of my ability the laws of the Union are faithfully enforced in all the States. I trust this may not be considered a menace, but as a declared purpose that this Union will maintain and defend itself."

We all knew what that meant and that night, before the stars in their courses had glittered on the dome of that Capitol, this Nation knew that the great problem,

whether or not, a republic founded on the free will of the people could subordinate that free will to a military dictation and stand the shock of a civil war, was about to be tested.

That evening as Mr. Lincoln went to the White House, sixty armed men from Kansas took shelter at and about that home, and were on duty there nearly sixty days, to guard our President against assassination, and they were needed.

When you sit at your feasts and call for your great song of "Praise for the powers that have made and preserved us a Nation," think on these things.

The first work of the President and his cabinet was to reinforce and strengthen the forts on our Southern coast line. This brought on the firing on our flag. Then there was a response. Then in answer to the call of Lincoln came the long roll of the drum, the sharp calls of the bugle, the unfurling of the flag, and the rushing forward of 75,000 volunteers to the defense of the capital. We thought that a fine army, as it camped on the Potomac in those early days full of enthusiasm. It was but the advance guard of a real army of a million that must follow before the end should come.

Then came war. Cruel, vindictive, grim visaged war. At times we were wild in our exultings over victories, only to find ourselves the very next day submerged in the bitter waters of defeat and disaster. And so this went on for weeks and months, for four long years, with our roadways filled with stragglers and strugglers, the wounded and the dying pressed back by the awful heat of conflict at the front, while down those same roads, facing the other way, came regiment after regiment, the best blood of the nation, pressing forward to fill those awful gaps.

And through this all for that dreadful four years stood Mr. Lincoln inspired by the faith and the confidence of the people, stood like a rock for the integrity of the Union, for the preservation of this Nation, this Nation so dear to us today; Tried as no other man of our Nation has ever been tried. Tried by treason and disloyalty all about him. Tried by disappointment in men to whom he had entrusted important undertakings. Tried by the awful sacrifices the country was making in blood and treasure, by the sufferings of the hospitals and prison pens. Tried by the perplexing and domineering demands of our foreign relations, with only one Nation in all Europe that we could depend on as our friend. Tried by the appeals of mothers for pardons for their wayward boys, appeals that touched every fibre of his great heart. There he sat in the lone watches of the night by that single telegraph operator listening so intently as the sounds came in over the wire from the front whether they told of more victories or more disasters.

By his great humanity teaching us all more charity and less malice, by his great faith inspiring our hopefulness, by his great patience exhorting us all to wait calmly on God's own time when this bitter cup of civil war should pass from us, we were able to wait in faith and in patience until the integrity of this Nation was secure under universal liberty. Then the great black clouds of war rolled back and revealed to us Appomattox.

Then arose the hallelujah chorus of victory. Then joy reigned supreme. Then mothers stood at their gateways looking down the roads to the South in their delirium of expectancy, watching for the hour, "When Johnnie comes marching home again." Then the

churches threw open their doors and there welled out on that April air "Beautiful upon the Mountains are the feet of him that bringeth glad tidings, that publisheth Peace, that saith unto Zion, Thy Lord is God."

But our triumph was of short duration for right in the midst of the rejoicing came that awful tragedy, and our leader lay dead at the hands of an assassin, just at the dawning of the morning when Peace like the first glintings of returning day "stood tip toe on our misty mountain tops," and this great Nation bowed in irrepressible grief.

They bore his body tenderly and laid it under the great dome of the Capitol where for three days and nights came that endless procession with faces moistened by the dews of grief to take their last look on that face they had known so well through all those anxious days. There were scenes there too touching to dwell upon.

It was decided that his body should have its resting place at his home city in the West, that the funeral attended by the chief men of the Government should be in charge of General Joe Hooker—who had come down from the clouds of Lookout Mountain.

As that funeral procession reached Philadelphia 100,000 people of that city, formed in solid ranks reaching from curb to curb, escorted that body to its night's rest in old Independence Hall, and there, in the sacred precincts of that chamber where the Republic was born, the very stillness was eloquent in tribute to him who had done so much to preserve, protect and defend its honor.

But it remained for the city of New York to show the greatest depth of feeling ever shown by any city of this country before or since. New York had seemed

unkind to Mr. Lincoln during the later months of the war. With her more than unfriendly mayor, her critical press and her draft riots, she had given him many an anxious day and many a sleepless night, but he was dead now, and New York seeing her mistake, stood ready to do penance. When the funeral procession reached the confines of that municipality New York with its thousands of arteries of trade and commerce stood absolutely still. The walls of Broadway were hung in black for miles. Great billows of crape floated from all the public buildings.

As that magnificent funeral car that the city had provided moved slowly up that great avenue, decked with its thousand nodding plumes, bearing the body of our President, New York stood with uncovered head, in grateful tribute to him they had so misunderstood.

Banners were in evidence everywhere. Banners with messages of honor and sympathy from all kinds of organizations and from all kinds and conditions of men, some even in foreign language, but there was one banner with a message stretched across lower Broadway that attracted special attention. It seemed like a wireless tribute to our immortal martyr, direct from the immortal Bard, and this was the message:

“After life’s fitful fever, he sleeps well;
Treason has done its worst;
Nor steel nor poison, malice, domestic foreign levy,
Nothing can touch him further.
He hath borne his faculties so meek,
Hath been so clear in his great office,
That his virtues will plead like angels, trumpet
tongued,
Against the deep damnation of his taking off.”

And so this funeral procession moved on toward the West, each city vying with the other to see which could show the highest honors, and the deepest sympathy, till at last it reached its final resting place, and there, in the presence of the dignitaries of this great Nation, the body of our President, the same who had come to that little city years before a raw backwoodsman, clothed in the homespun that he had earned by the splitting of rails, was laid to its final rest with a pomp and circumstance befitting the burial of a king.

Those were memorable days, those days of the sixties. They were the golden days of this Republic, the intense days, the days of the heroic—days of great men, and of grand women, days of great citizens, great statesmen, and great soldiers. Our National Constellation was all aglow with stars of the first magnitude.

The great Apostle tells us that one star differeth from another star in glory, and we believe this, for we each have our ideal among the stars, but the one ideal nearest today to this great loyal American heart, is that sad, anxious, kindly face of ABRAHAM LINCOLN. There he stands without one medal on his breast to tell us of his valor, without one particle of gold lace to testify to his rank; just the *plain citizen*, but the grandest citizen ever produced by the greatest Republic on the face of the earth.

ADDISON G. PROCTER

Addison G. Procter was born at Gloucester, Massachusetts, in July, 1838. His father was a successful merchant, the owner of a large fleet of fishing schooners, and was for many years a member of the Massachusetts legislation. Many of the descendants still reside there.

In 1857, at the age of 19, full of enthusiasm, and the inspiration of "Free homes for free men," he started alone for Kansas to help in the struggle to make Kansas a free state. He had just graduated from the high school and did not know a soul west of Boston.

He reached Kansas at the end of a two weeks' journey and found instant employment in the mercantile establishment of Mayor Blood of Lawrence. After serving there some six months he was sent to Emporia by Mayor Blood to take charge of the branch establishment located there.

Emporia at that time was the radiating center of a big emigration pouring into the southwest part of the territory. After a year of active business he purchased this branch establishment and, having the only fire proof safe in that active section, became a sort of banker for the group of settlers making new homes in that attractive valley region. This gave him a large and popular acquaintance with the newcomers, and in April, 1860, when the Territorial Convention, to select delegates to the National Republican Convention at Chicago met at Lawrence, this whole section of nineteen counties, without a word of solicitation on his part, sent a unanimous delegation to the convention, urging his name as delegate, which the convention unanimously approved. He was then but twenty-one and naturally the youngest of the prospective delegates.

The struggle going on in Kansas, attracting the intense interest of the whole country, gave to this delegation many special opportunities to get into close touch with many of the famous members of that national convention and to learn of the inside influence and much of the unwritten history of the events that culminated in the nomination of Lincoln. It is this that gave special value to his address on that event of our national life.

From 1861 to 1864 Mr. Procter was on a special mission to the Indian Territory, a work demanding courage and discretion of a high order, and which was especially appreciated by Secretary John P. Usher of Lincoln's cabinet. Returning to Emporia after three years of border life, he sold his business interests there and became head of a wholesale business in St. Louis, where for twelve years he prospered. From St. Louis he moved to Chicago, representing there for the next ten years the Gloucester fishery interests. In 1889 Mr. Procter moved to St. Joseph, Michigan, where he has since resided in comfortable retirement, doing his part as a useful citizen, the recipient of many evidences of kindly interest from the good people of that community and from Lincoln lovers throughout the United States.

At the request of the Michigan delegations he has occupied a platform seat at the two last Republican National Conventions. As far as known he is the sole surviving delegate to the convention of 1860. Mr. Procter's recollections of the Lincoln convention delivered before the Chicago Historical Society are now published for the first time. Since its delivery last April the Society has received numerous letters requesting copies of this address, many pronouncing this the most satisfying Lincoln address the writers have ever listened to.

At the age of eighty years, Mr. Procter is in splendid health and says he finds much in life to enjoy. In him the modern and the old school mingle and lend a charm that has endeared him to four generations of friends. But even those who looked into his boyish, cheerful face and felt the strong grip of his hand for the first time last April count as a high privilege this meeting with a man of the Lincoln stamp and the Lincoln time, "When," as Mr. Procter says, "all eyes turned to Illinois."



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