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A Man for the Ages

A Story of the Builders of Democracy

By Irving Bacheller

(Continued)

A day or two later Abe and Harry went to Springfield. Their reason for the trip lay in a talk between the postmaster and Jack Kelso the night before as they sat by the latter's fire-

"I've been living where there was shoes." no one to find fault with my parts of ech or with the parts of my legs me," which were not decently covered," a little Marseilles waistcoating? said Abe. "The sock district of my person has been without representa- der with a hearty "Howdy, Abe?" tion in the legislature of my intellect appropriation. Suddenly we discovered that there was no money in the treasury. But Samson Traylor has offered to buy an issue of bonds of the amount of fifteen dollars."

"I'm glad to hear you declare in favor of external improvements," said Kelso. "We've all been too much absorbed by internal improvements. You're on the right trail. Abe. You've been thinking of the public ear and foot and exclaimed: too little of the public eye. We must show some respect for both."

"Sometimes I think that comely highest bidder." dress ought to go with comely diction," said Abe. "But that's a thing you can't learn in books. There's no grammarian of the language of dress. Then I'm so big and awkward. It's a rather hopeless problem.'

"You're in good company," Kelso assured him. "Nature guards her best men with some sort of singularity. not attractive to others. Often she makes them odious with conceit or deformity or dumbness or garrulity. Dante was such a poor talker that no one would ever ask him to dinner. If it had not been so I presume his muse would have been sadly crippled by indigestion. If you had been a good dancer and a lady's favorite, I wonder if you would have studied Kirkham and Burns and Shakespeare and Blackstone and Starkie, and the science of surveying and been elected to the legislature. I wonder if you could even have whipped Jack Armstrong."

"Or have enjoyed the friendship of Bill Berry and acquired a national debt, or have saved my imperiled country in the war with Black Hawk," Abe laughed.

In the matter of dress the postmaster had great confidence in the taste and knowledge of his young friend, Harry Needles, whose neat appearance Abe regarded with serious admiration. So he asked Harry to go with him on his new mission and help to choose the goods and direct the tailoring, for it seemed to him a highly important enterprise.

"Our appropriation is only fifteen said Abe as they came in sight of "the big village" on a warm bright day late in October. "Of course

can't expect to make myself look ke the President of the United ates with such a sum, but I want to like a respectable citizen of the

nited States, if that is possible. I'll ive the old Abe and fifteen dollars to boot for a new one and we'll see what comes of it."

Springfield had been rapidly changing. It was still small and crude, but some of the best standards of civilization had been set up in that community. Families of wealth and culture the East had sent their sons and a share of their capital to this little metropolis of the land of plenty to go into business. Handsome, well-groomed horses, in silver-mounted harness, drawing carriages that shone "so you could see your face in them," to quote from Abe again, were on its streets.

The two New Salem men stopped and studied a big sign in front of a large store on which this announce ment had been lettered:

"Cloths, cassinettes, cassimeres, velvet silks, satins, Marseilles waistcoating, fine, calf boots, seal and morocco pumps for gentlemen, crepe lisse, lace veils. Thibet shawls, fine prunella

"Reads like a foreign language to said Abe. "How would you like Suddenly a man touched his shoul-

up to its last session. Then we got a as he had been wont to call himself bill through for local improvements to the days when he carried a pack and the governor has approved the on the road through Peter's Bluff and Clary's Grove and New Salem to Beardstown and back.

"Dis is my store," said Eli. "Your store!" Abe exclaimed.

"Ya look at de sign." The Jew pointed to his sign-board. some fifty feet long under the cornice, on which they read the degend:

"Eli Fredenberg's Emporium." Abe looked him over from head to

"My conscience! You look as if you had been fixed up to be sold to the

The hairy, dusty, bow-legged, threadbare peddler had been touched by some miraculous hand. The lavish



The Jew Pointed to His Signboard.

hand of the West had showered her favors on him. They resembled in some degree the barbaric pearl and hope," gold of the East. He glowed with prosperity. Diamonds and ruffled lin-

his neck and a blue band on his hat and a smooth-shorn face and perfumery were the glittering details that surrounded the person of Ell.

"Come in," urged the genial proprietor of the Emporium. "I vould like to show you my goots and introduce you to my brudder."

In the men's department after much thoughtful discussion they decided upthe only goods which, in view of the amount of cloth required, came within the appropriation. Eli advised against it.

"You are like Eli already," he said. You haf got de pack off your back. Look at me. Don't you hear my clothes say somet'ing?"

"They are very eloquent," said Abe. "Vell, dey make a speech. Dey say Eli Fredenberg he is no more a poor devil. You cannot sneeze at him once again. Nefer. He has climb de ladder up.' Now you let me sell you somet'ing vat makes a good speech for you.

"If you let me dictate the speech I'll agree," said Abe.

"Vell-vat is it?" Eli asked. "I would like my clothes to say in low tone of voice: 'This is humble Abraham Lincoln, about the same length and breadth that I am. He don't want to scare or astonish anybody. He don't want to look like a beggar or a millionaire. Just put him lown for a hard-working man of good intentions who is badly in debt.'

That ended all argument. The suit of blue jeans was ordered and the measures taken. As they were about to go Eli said:

"I forgot to tell you dot I haf seen Bim Kelso de odder day in St. Louis. I haf seen her on de street. She has been like a queen so grand! De hat and gown from Paris and she valk so proud! But she look not so happy like she usit to be. I speak to her. Oh my, she vas glad and so surprised! She tolt me dot she vould like to come a visit but her husband he does vant her to go dere-nefer again My jobber haf tolt me dot Mr. Biggs is git drunk efery day. Bim she t'ink de place no good.

"Poor child!" said Abe: "I'm afraid she's in trouble. Her parents have beoun to suspect that some ling is They have nev

to go down there and visit the girl. I reckon we'd better say nothing to any one of what we have heard, at present.'

They reached New Salem in the middle of the night and went into Rutledge's barn and lay down on the haymow between two buffalo hides until morning.

CHAPTER XII.

Which Continues the Romance of Abe and Ann Until the Former Leaves New Salem to Begin His Work in the Legislature. Also It Describes the Coloneling of Peter Lukins.

The next day after his return, Abe eceived a letter from Ann. She had ne over to the store on the arrival of the stage and taken her letter and run home with it. That Saturday's stage brought the new suit of clothes from Springfield.

It was an Indian summer day of the vember. That afternoon Abe went to the tavern and asked Ann to walk out to the Traylors' with him. She seemed to be glad to go. She was not the cheerful, quick-footed, rosy-cheeked Ann of old. Her face was pale, her eyes dull and listless. her step slow. Neither spoke until they had passed the Waddell cabin and were come to the open fields.

"I hope your letter brought good

news," said Abe. "It was very short," Ann answered. He took a fever in Ohio and was sick there four weeks and then he went home. In two months he never wrote a word to me. And this one was only a little bit of a letter with no love in it. I don't believe he cares for me now or, perhaps, he is married. I don't know. I'm not going to cry about it any more. I can't. I've no more tears to shed. I've given him up.'

"Then I reckon the time has come for me to tell you what is on my heart," said Abe. "I love you, Ann. I have loved you for years. I would have told you long ago but I could not make myself believe that I was good enough for you. I love you so much that if you can only be happy with John McNamar I will pray to God that he may turn out to be a good and faithful man and come back and keep his promise."

She looked up at him with a kind of awe in her face.

"Oh, Abe!" she whispered. "I had made up my mind that men were all bad but my father. I was wrong. I did not think of you."

'Men are mostly good," said Abe But it's very easy to misunderstand them. In my view it's quite likely that John McNamar is better than you think him. I want you to be fair to John. If you conclude that you can not be happy with him give me a chance. I would do my best to bring back the joy of the old days. Sometimes I think that I am going to do something worth while. Sometimes I think that I can see my way far ahead and it looks very pleasant, and you, Ann, are always walking beside me in it. Before we take another step village of Vandalia. I wish you could give me some hope to live on-just a little straw of

"You are a wonderful man, Abe," said Ann, touched by his appeal, "My on and Scotch plaid and red silk on father says that you are going to be

"I can not hold out any such hope to you." Abe answered. "I'm rather ignorant and badly in debt, but I reckon that I can make a good living and give you a comfortable home Don't you think, taking me just as I am, you could care for me a little?"

"Yes; sometimes 1 think that I uld love you, Abe," she answered. on a suit of blue jeans—that being "I do not love you yet, but I may-

some time. I really want to love you." "That is all I can ask now," said Abe as they went on. "Do you hear

from Bim Kelso?" "I have not heard from her since June.

"I wish you would write to her and tell her that I am thinking of going down to St. Louis and that I would like to go and see her."

"I'll write to her tomorrow," said Ann.

They had a pleasant visit and while Ann was playing with the baby she seemed to have forgotten her troubles. They stayed to supper, after which the whole family walked to the tavern with them. When Ann began to show weariness, Abe gently lifted her in his arms and carried her.

That evening Mrs. Peter Lukins called upon Abe at Sam Hill's store where he sat alone, before the fire, reading with two candles burning on the end of a dry goods box at his

"I wanted to see you private 'bout Lukins," she began. "There's them that call him Bony Lukins, but 1 reckon he ain't no bonier than the everidge run o' men-not a bit-an', if he was, I don't reckon his bones orto be throwed at him every time he's spoke to that away."

"What can I do about it?" Abe

"I've been hopin' an' wishin' some kind of a decent handle could be put on to his name," said Mrs. Lukins, with her eye upon a knot hole in the counter. "Something with a good sound to it. You said that anything you could do for the New Salem folks you was goin' to do an' I thought mayhe you could fix it."

Abe smiled and asked: "Do you vant a title?"

"If it ain't plum owdacious I wisht e could be made a colonel."

"I'll see what can be done, but if he gets that title he'll have to live up

"I'll make him walk a chalk lineyou see," the good woman promised as she left the store.

That evening Abe wrote a playful commission as colonel for Peter Lukins, which was signed in due time by all his friends and neighbors and presented to Lukins by a committee of which Abe was chairman.

Coleman Smoot-a man of some neans who had a farm on the road to Springfield-was in the village that evening. Abe showed him the com mission and asked him to sign it.

"I'll sign on one condition," said Smoot

"What is that?" Abe asked. "That you'll give me a commission want to be your friend."

You are that now, aren't you? Abe asked. "Yes, but I haven't earned my commission. You haven't given chance yet. What can I do to help

you along?" Abe was much impressed by these kindly words. .

"My friends do not often ask what they can do for me," he said. "I suppose they haven't thought of it. I'll think it over and let you know."

Three days later he walked out to Coleman Smoot's after supper. they sat together by the fireside Abe

"I've been thinking of your friendly question. It's dangerous to talk that way to a man like me. The fact is. I need two hundred dollars to pay pressing debts and give me something in my pocket when I go to Vandalia. If you can not lend it to me I shall think none the less of you."

"I can and will," said Smoot. "I've been watching you for a long time. A man who tries as hard as you do to get along deserves to be helped. I believe in you. I'll go up to Springfield and get the money and bring it to you within a week or so."

Abe Lincoln had many friends who would have done the like for him if they could, and he knew it.

"Every one has faith in you," said Smoot. "We expect much of you and we ought to be willing to do what we can to help."

"Your faith will be my strength, if I have any," said Abe.

On his way home that night he thought of what Jack Kelso had said of democracy and friendship. On the twenty-second of November

a letter came to Ann from Bim Kelso. which announced that she was going to New Orleans for the winter with her husband. Six days later Abe took the stage for the capital, at Rutledge's door, where all the inhabitants of the village had assembled to bid him goodby. Ann Rutledge, with a flash of her old playfulness, kissed him when he got into the stage. Abe's long arm was waving in the air as he looked back at his cheering friends while the stage rumbled down the road toward the great task of life upon which he was presently to begin in the little

CHAPTER XIII.

ground Rallroad is Surveyed and Sameon and Harry Spend & Night

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In the Home of Henry Brimstead and Hear Surprising Revelations, Confidentially Disclosed.

Early in the autumn of that year the Reverend Elijah Lovejoy of Alton had spent a night with the Trav-



The Village Had Assembled to Bid Him Goodby.

lors on his way to the North. Sitting by the fireside he had told many a vivid tale of the cruelties of slavery. "I would not have you think that all slaveholders are wicked and heartless," he said. "They are like other men the world over. Some are kind and indulgent. If all men were like them slavery could be tolerated. But they are not. Some men are brutal in the North as well as in the South. If not made so by nature they are made so by drink. To give them the power of life and death over human beings, which they seem to have in parts of the South, is a crime against

God and civilization." "I agree with you," said Samson. "I knew that you would," the min ister went on. "We have already had some help from you but we need more take it as a duty which God has ald upon me to belp every fugitive that reaches my door. You can help the good work of mercy and grace. If you hear three taps upon your window after dark or the hoot of an owl in your dooryard you will know what it means. Fix some place on your farm where these poor people who are seeking the freedom which God wills

refreshment and security until they have strength to go on. Within a week after the visit of Mr. Lovefoy, Samson and Harry built a hollow haystack about half-way from the house to the barn. The stack had a comfortable room inside of it about eight feet by seven and some six feet in height. Its entrance was an opening near the bottom of the stack well

screened by the pendant hay. But no

for all His children, may find rest and

fugitive came to occupy it that winter Soon after the new year of 1835 Samson and Harry moved the Kelsos to Tazewell county. Mr. Kelso had received an appointment as land agent and was to be stationed at the little settlement of Hopedale near the home

of John Peasley. Late in the afternoon Harry and Samson left the Kelsos and their effects at a small frame house in the little village of Hopedale. The men had no sooner begun to unload than its inhabitants came to welcome the newcomers and help them in the work of getting settled. When the goods were deposited in the dooryard Samson and Harry drove to John Peasley's farm, Mr. Peasley recognized the big, broad-shouldered Vermonter

at the first look. "Do I remember you?" he said. "Well, I guess I do. So does my barn door. Let me take hold of that right hand of yours again. Yes, sir. It's the same old iron hand. Marry Ann!" he called as his wife came out of the door. "Here's the big man from Vergennes who tossed the purty slaver.'

"I see it is," she answered. "Ain't ye comin' in?" "If you try to pass this place I'l' have ye took up," said Peasley. "There's plenty of food in the house

an' stable. "Look here-that's downright selfish," said his wife. "If we tried to keep you here Henry Brimstead would never forgive us. He talks about you morning, noon and night. Any one would think that you was the Samson that slew the Philistines."

"How is Henry?" Samson asked. "He married my sister and they're about as happy as they can be this side the river Jordan," she went on. "They've got one o' the best farms in Tazewell county and they're goin'

"Yes, sir; I didn't think o' that," said Peasley. "Henry and his wife would holler if we didn't take ye over there. It's only a quarter of a mile. I'll show ye the way and we'll all come over this evening and have a

talkin' bee." Samson was pleased and astonished by the look of Brimstead and his home and his family and the account of his success. The man from the sand flats was cleanly shaved, save for a black mustache, and neatly dressed and his face glowed with health and high spirits. A handsome brown-eyed miss of seventeen came galloping up the road on her pony

and stopped near them. "Annabel, do you remember this

man?" Brimstead asked. The girl looked at Samson.

"He is the man who helped us out of Flea valley," said the girl. "Would you mind if I kissed you?"

I would be sorry if you didn't. said Samson. "Here's my boy, Harry Needles. You wouldn't dare kiss him,

"I would be sorry, too, if you didn't," Harry laughed as he took her hand. "I'm afraid you'll have to stay sorry," said Annabel turning red with

embarrassment. "I never saw you be-"Better late than never," Samson assured her. "You don't often see a better fellow."

The girl laughed with a subtle look

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