

LINCOLNIANA, 1926



The things I want to know are in books; my best friend is the man who'll git me a book I ain't read.—A. Lincoln.

By DeWITT J. MASON

THE story of Abraham Lincoln's thirst for knowledge, when he was a boy, growing up in his Indiana home, is one that is interesting to this day.

The farm boys in their evenings at Jones' store in Gentryville talked about how Abe Lincoln was always reading, digging into books, stretched out flat on his stomach in front of the fireplace, studying till midnight and past; midnight, picking a piece of charcoal to write on the fire shovel, shaving off what he wrote, and then writing more—till midnight and past midnight. The next thing Abe would be reading books between the plow handles, it seemed to them. And once trying to speak a last word, Dennis Hanks said: "There's suthin' peculiar about Abe."

He wanted to learn, to know, to live, to reach out; he wanted to satisfy his hunger and thirst he couldn't tell about, this big boy of the backwoods. And some of what he wanted so much, so deep down, seemed to be in the books. Maybe in books he would find the answers to dark questions pushing around in the pools of his thoughts and the drifts of his mind. He told Dennis and other people, "The things I want to know are in books; my best friend is the man who'll git me a book I ain't read." And sometimes friends answered, "Well, books ain't as plenty as wildcats in these parts o' Indlanny."

This was one thing meant by Dennis when he said there was "suthin' peculiar" about Abe. It seemed that Abe made the books tell him more than they told other people. All the other farm boys had gone to school and read "The Kentucky Preceptor," but Abe picked out questions from it, such as "Who has the most right to complain, the Indian or the negro?" and Abe would talk about it, up one way and down the other, while they were in the cornfield pulling fodder for the winter. When Abe got hold of a story book and read about a boat that came near a magnetic rock, and how the magnets in the rock pulled all the nails out of the boat so it went to pieces and the people in the boat found themselves floundering in water, Abe thought it was funny and told it to other people. After Abe read poetry, especially Bobby Burns' poems, Abe began writing rimes himself. When Abe sat with a girl, with their bare feet in the creek water, and she spoke of the moon rising, he explained to her it was the earth not the moon—the moon only seemed to rise.

What he got in the schools didn't satisfy him. He went to three different schools in Indiana, besides two in Kentucky—altogether about four months of school. He learned his a-b-c's, how to spell, read, write. And he had been with the other barefoot boys in butternut jeans learning "manners" under the school-teacher, Andrew Crawford, who had them open a door, walk in, and say "Howdy do?" Yet what he tasted of books in school was only a beginning, only made him hungry and thirsty, shook him with a

wanting of more and more of what was hidden between the covers of books.

He kept on saying, "The things I want to know are in books; my best friend is the man who'll git me a book I ain't read."

Besides reading the family Bible and figuring his way all through the old arithmetic they had at home, he got hold of "Aesop's Fables," "Pilgrim's Progress," "Robinson Crusoe," and Weems' "The Life of Washington." The book of fables, written or collected thousands of years ago by the Greek slave known as Aesop, sank deep in his mind. As he read through the book a second and third time, he had a feeling there were fables all around him, that everything he touched and handled, everything he saw and learned had a fable wrapped in it somewhere.

One fable was about a bundle of sticks and a farmer whose sons were quarreling and fighting instead of sticking together; and the farmer took a bundle of sticks, gave them each a stick, asking them if they were strong enough to break it, which they did easily; then he handed them a bundle of sticks and asked them if they were strong enough to break it; and they tried their strength to the limit but could not break the bundle of sticks; whereupon the farmer told them: "In union there is strength."

The style of the Bible, of "Aesop's Fables," the hearts and minds back of those books, were much in his thoughts. His favorite pages in them he read over and over. Behind such proverbs as "Muzzle not the ox that treadeth out the corn," and "He that ruleth his own spirit is greater than he that taketh a city," there was a music of simple wisdom and a mystery of common, every-day life that touched deep spots in him, while out of the fables of the ancient Greek slave he came to see that cats, rats, dogs, horses, plows, hammers, fingers, toes, people, all had fables connected with their lives, characters, places. There was, perhaps, an outside for each thing as it stood alone, while inside of it was its fable.

One book came, titled "The Life of George Washington, with Curious Anecdotes, Equally Honorable to Himself and Exemplary to His Young Countrymen." Embellished with Six Steel Engravings, by M. L. Weems, formerly Rector of Mt. Vernon Parish. It pictured men of passion and proud ignorance in the government of England driving their country into war on the American colonies. It quoted the far-visions warning of Chatham

to the British parliament, "For God's sake, then, my lords, let the way be instantly opened for reconciliation. I say instantly; or it will be too late forever."

The Weems book reached some deep spots in the boy. He asked himself what it meant that men should march, fight, bleed, go cold and hungry for the sake of what they called "freedom."

"Few great men are great in everything," said this book. And there was a cool sap in the passage: "Washington's delight was in that of the manliest sort, which, by stringing the limbs and swelling the muscles, promotes the kindliest flow of blood and spirits. At jumping with a long pole, or heaving heavy weights, for his years he hardly had an equal."

Such book talk was a comfort against the same thing over again, day after day; so many mornings the same kind of water from the same spring, the same fried pork and corn meal to eat, the same drizzle of rain, spring plowing, summer weeds, fall fodder pulling, each coming every year.

Lincoln was thankful to the writer of "Aesop's Fables" because that writer stood by him and walked with him, an invisible companion, when he pulled fodder or chopped wood. Books lighted lamps in the dark rooms of his gloomy hours. Well—he would live on; maybe the time would come when he would be free from work for a few weeks, or a few months, with books, and then he would read. God, then he would read. Then he would go and get at the proud secrets of his books. His father—would he be like his father when he grew up? He hoped not. Why should his father knock him off a fence rail when he was asking a neighbor, passing by, a question? Even if it was a smart question, too pert and too quick, it was no way to handle a boy in front of a neighbor. No, he was going to be a man different from his father. The books—his father hated the books. Already Abe knew more than his father; he was writing letters for the neighbors; they hunted out the Lincoln farm to get young Abe to find his bottle of ink with blackberry-brier root and copperas in it, and his pen made from a turkey buzzard's feather, and write letters. Abe had a suspicion sometimes his father was a little proud to have a boy that could write letters and tell about things in books and out-run and outwrestle and rough-and-tumble any boy or man in Spencer county. Yes, he would be different from his father; he was already so; it couldn't be helped.

gave up the attempt. He copied Lincoln's letter and sent it to his correspondent with a note of his own. Considering what manner of man Woodrow Wilson was, and his judgment in a matter of style and literary taste, that was a remarkable compliment to Abraham Lincoln.—Indianapolis News.

Lincoln a Modest Poet

When Abraham Lincoln turned poet at the age of thirty-five, toward his own work he retained that character-

istic modesty which later was noted as one of his outstanding traits in the White House.

When he had been inspired to verse by a return to Indiana after 15 years, he wrote to a friend:

"That part of the country is, within itself, as unpoetical as any spot on the earth, but still, seeing it and its objects and inhabitants aroused feelings in me which were certainly poetical; though whether my expressions of those feelings is poetry is quite another question."

IMPROVED UNIFORM INTERNATIONAL

Sunday School Lesson

(By REV. F. B. FITZWATER, D.D., Dean of the Evening School, Moody Bible Institute of Chicago.)
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Lesson for February 14

JESUS, THE GOOD SHEPHERD

LESSON TEXT—John 10:1-30.
GOLDEN TEXT—"I am the good shepherd, the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep."—John 10:11.
PRIMARY TOPIC—The Good Shepherd and His Sheep.
JUNIOR TOPIC—Jesus the Good Shepherd.
INTERMEDIATE AND SENIOR TOPIC—What the Good Shepherd Does for His Sheep.
YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULT TOPIC—Many Sheep, but One Shepherd.

The relationship of the Messiah to His own is set forth in the Old Testament under the figure of the shepherd and his sheep. (Ps. 23, Ez. 34).

1. The Good Shepherd (vv. 1-18).
2. He Is the True Shepherd (vv. 1-6).

He came by the divinely appointed way. The power exercised by the Pharisees in casting out this man was not obtained by lawful means. It was stolen by them and exercised in the bold spirit of robbers. John the Baptist, and others of the prophets, had performed the function of the porter and opened the door to the Shepherd (v. 23). Despite the deceit, audacity, theft and robbery of these Pharisees, those who were Christ's sheep were declared to be forming a new flock and following Him as the true Shepherd (v. 4). The reason the man suffered excommunication for Jesus' sake was that he recognized Him as the true Shepherd and the Pharisees as strangers.

3. He Is the Door of the Sheep (vv. 7-10).

The way to fellowship to God is through Christ. He is the only door (Acts 4:12). There is absolutely no way to get into the fold of the redeemed but by Him. All who attempt it are thieves and robbers (v. 8). Those who become members of the flock through Him enjoy marvelous gifts (vv. 9, 10).

(1) Salvation—"Shall be saved." Not only saved now but saved eternally (vv. 27, 28).

(2) Liberty—"Shall go in and out" (v. 9).

Only those who accept salvation in Christ know what freedom is.

(3) Contentment—"Shall go in and out and find pasture" (v. 9).

The one who really enters the fold by Christ, the door, receives that which is all-satisfying to the soul.

3. He Is the Good Shepherd (vv. 11-18).

He is so devoted to His sheep that He willingly lays down His life for them. The hireling abandons his sheep in time of danger. The Good Shepherd has perfect knowledge of His sheep and they know Him (vv. 14, 15). He enjoys such personal intimacy with His sheep that He knows them by name and goes before them to lead the way and defend them from every danger. This He will do even unto death. On Calvary this was historically fulfilled. It was Christ's love for such sheep as this poor blind man that caused Him to give up His life in order to find for them the abundant life (v. 10). This sympathy is worldwide—"other sheep I have which are not of this fold." This suggests that the Gentiles have a place in His fold. All who believe in Christ form one flock. In order to save His sheep He voluntarily laid down His life (vv. 17, 18).

II. The Sheep (vv. 19-30).

1. Unbelievers Are Not His Sheep (vv. 19-26).
Christ's assertion that He was the good shepherd caused a division among the people. Some accused Him of being mad, others that He had a devil. To their request that He would tell them plainly if He were the Christ, He referred them to the testimony of His works, declaring that the secret of their inability to recognize Him was their unbelief.

2. They Recognize His Voice (v. 4).
There are many voices in the world, the voice of the hireling, the voice of the thief and the voice of the stranger, but none of these will the sheep hear. The voice of the true Shepherd is recognized by His sheep even amidst the babel of voices in the world today.

3. His Sheep Follow Him (vv. 3, 27).
This is the proof that they are His. The one who does not hear, heed, and obey the Lord's voice is clearly not His sheep. His sheep have unquestioned faith in His ability to lead them.

4. His Sheep Are Eternally Secure (vv. 27, 28).
The sheep are entirely dependent upon the Shepherd. It is the Shepherd's business to look after and care for the sheep. This He does for He knows them by name and is acquainted with their weaknesses and trials.

5. Improvement
We patiently pursue.
Each thinking up new duties meant
For other folks to do.

The Real Blessing

The real blessing, mercy, satisfaction, is not in the having or the lack of merely outward things, but in the consciousness that the true source of life and happiness is deeper than all these.—John W. Chadwick.

Eyes to See

As a face is made beautiful by the soul's shining through it, so the world is beautiful by the shining through it of a loving God. Happy the man who has eyes to see the shining.



BOTH WRONG

A dispute arose between two old ladies as to the name of the music the band was playing. Said the first: "It's the Overture from 'The Masterstergers.'"

"Rubbish!" declared the second. "I should think I know the Prelude from 'Lohengrin' when I hear it."

As neither would give in, No. 1 consulted a notice board. "We're both wrong," she announced on returning. "It's 'Refrain From Spitting.'"

Shades of Webster!

A western newspaper reports that one mother said to another:

"My little girl's tonsils were removed last week by Doctor Blank, the famous tonsorial specialist."

Probably Doctor Blank was equally expert regarding singes, shampoos and shaves.—Manchester Union.

Sauce!

McCarthy—What's thim little red berries?

O'Brien—Thim's cranberries.

McCarthy—Are they good to eat?

O'Brien—Good to eat? Why, don't you know that cranberries make better apple sauce than prunes ever did?

OF COURSE



Mother—Bobby, this note from your teacher says you're the last boy in a class of twenty-five.

Bobby—Well, it could be worse.

Mother—I don't see how.

Bobby—I would be in a bigger class.

Diversified Flushes

I held a flush last evening
And this evening, by her grace,
I'm holding a very pretty girl—
With a flush upon her face!

A Wrecker

Maw—What are you going to do with Josh when he gets through with college?

Paw—I hadn't thought of that. I was wondering what the college was going to do with itself when Josh gets through with it.—Green Onion.

Just Like the First Ponce

"When I was at the Ponce de Leon in Florida they had a sign out, 'Youth Wanted.'"

"The Ponce de Leon! A case of history repeating itself, eh?"

One Womanly Way

Rose—Claude says he worships the very ground I stand on.

Madge—I don't blame him. A farm of that size is not to be sneered at.

AVOIDED A WORSE BREAK



"That cornetist up the street broke a blood vessel last night by practicing too much."

"He's in luck. I heard the man next door to him say he was preparing to break his neck."

Improvement

We patiently pursue.
Each thinking up new duties meant
For other folks to do.

A One-Woman Man

Madam—Well, you look as though you might do. My last chauffeur was always annoying me by kissing the maids.

Applicant—You may be sure I'll never give you cause for jealousy, ma'am.

Under-Dressed

Mother—You are very scantily clad in that ball dress!

Daughter—But I haven't put my necklace on yet!



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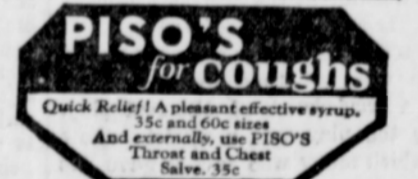
"Why is Dorothy running around with the Rokkbit twins?"
"She's building her castles."

A Druggist's Confidence

Stockton, Calif.—"When I was about sixteen I had my first experience with Dr. Pierce's medicines. I suffered with suppression, got all rundown, weak and so nervous I never got a night's sleep. I doctored but kept getting worse instead of better. My mother consulted her druggist—asked him if there was anything he could recommend—and, following his advice, she got Dr. Pierce's Favorite Prescription and Golden Medical Discovery and thru the use of these medicines I grew well and strong and never had any more trouble. And since I married I have always used Dr. Pierce's medicines."—Mrs. F. C. McGregor, 1626 S. Aurora St. All dealers.



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Wilson Copied Lincoln

When Woodrow Wilson was President he had occasion to write a letter to a sorrowing mother. Woodrow Wilson was a master of good English and had ordinarily no lack of confidence in his own ability to say exactly what he wanted to say. But when he faced that situation he was oppressed by a sense of his inability to write words that combined dignity of position and felicity of expression with genuine personal sympathy. He read Lincoln's letter to Mrs. Bixby and