

The Lincoln I Knew

As told by an Aged Westerner to MAUBEL SHERMAN in Collier's

I FIRST saw Abraham Lincoln in March, 1863, when I made a trip to the East from California via the Isthmus of Panama. It was at the President's levee, and, of course, I wrote to my family in the West, telling them my impressions. This letter proves that I, like many others of the time, misjudged the man and surely underrated his abilities:

Last night I was at the President's levee and saw many of the dignitaries. A few moments ago I saw Burnside and at first view was satisfied of his incompetency to command the army. It is strange that our President and others have so little perception of character. Lincoln is a good-natured Westerner.

Later at one of the White House receptions Mrs. Cole and I waited in the long line to be received. She somehow dropped one of her white gloves and was not conscious of it until we had moved up and it was our turn to greet the President and Mrs. Lincoln. She stood looking about her in dismay for the missing glove, and the President, seeing what had happened, watched her with an amused smile. In a moment he said: "Never mind, Mrs. Cole, I shall have a search made for it tomorrow, and shall preserve it as a souvenir."

This remark, coming from a man to whom book etiquette was a thing unknown, proved him to be an inborn gentleman. His deportment never missed, because it was the expression of his friendly feeling for all. He did not offend because in his heart he felt no animosity for anyone.

Always in consultation he was argumentative, but not dictatorial. He was one of the best of listeners and was always open to conviction, yet if his own reasons were well founded, and no one had a better reason to offer, he could not be moved. But he was never offensively opinionated.

His Use of Anecdotes.

His profuse use of anecdotes is, of course, a matter of history. I remember one day that Mr. Shannon and I went to see Mr. Lincoln regarding some legislation that concerned California. He could not comply with our wishes in the matter, and in order to let us know that conversation on the subject had terminated, he told us this story:

In the early times in Springfield, there were three churches, all orthodox, a Methodist, a Baptist, and a Presbyterian. A young fellow came there very unexpectedly to preach the Universalist doctrine and to establish a church of that faith. That particular creed was very unpopular at that time, and these three orthodox preachers determined to get together and preach him down. They consolidated their congregations and determined to take turns addressing them. When it came to the turn of the Methodist preacher he began by telling them how happily situated they were, both in temporal and spiritual things, and then remarked that "there now comes among us a stranger to preach a new doctrine, to establish a new church in which the doctrine will be taught that all men will be saved. But, my brethren," he concluded fervently, "let us all hope for better things."

I went down on the same train with Lincoln when the battlefield of Gettysburg was dedicated.

The day, November 19, 1863, was overcast and dreary. The morning was spent in inspecting the late battle ground. In the afternoon a comparatively small crowd gathered around a plank platform thirty or forty feet square, about three or four feet above the ground. There were seats on this for the delegations and speakers.

Edward Everett was chosen orator of the day, and he held forth for over an hour in a most masterful oration. I remember that he had a little high table before him on which were cards containing notes, and he referred to these from time to time with no interruption or pause in his speech. When he had concluded the band played and then, without announcement, Lincoln arose. He laid his coat off, but retained the familiar shawl about his shoulders. I sat but a few feet away, on his right.

He began by stating well-known facts—facts with which we were all familiar. His sentences were short, and I had the impression that sometimes their brevity was due to the fact that emotion choked his utterances. It was one of those times when he seemed weighed down by his responsibilities, and his voice was fairly pathetic in its intonations. Everyone listened attentively, but it then did not seem a remarkable speech, and we were all fairly surprised when he sat down. The audience broke up without expression or demonstration, but I was conscious that Lincoln's remarks had made a tremendous impression.

Discussed Possible Danger.

During the last two years of the war I went in and out of the White House at will. I usually found Lincoln in his own room on the second floor in the northwest corner of the building.

The Country's First Tribute



The first tribute to Abraham Lincoln to be erected in this country, known as the Lot Flannery statue of the Great Emancipator, has been restored to practically its original position in front of the courthouse in the nation's capital. The statue was once removed from this position, but there was so much criticism that congress finally voted to have it restored.

On one of those days when I went unannounced I saw a look of distress on his face such as I had never seen on any human countenance. I stood still, not wishing to disturb him. Suddenly he saw me and swiftly the look of pain passed as he greeted me with his usual smile. I stayed with him a long time that day and we went over the war maps. It was then I took occasion to mention my fears for him. I had gained access to his room so easily and anyone else might have done the same.

He listened silently, as he always did, but did not seem to be impressed with my plea. When I had finished he said: "When I first came here, I made up my mind that I would not be dying all the while." He was thoughtful for a moment, then continued: "I have observed that one man's life is as dear to him as another's, and he could not expect to take my life without losing his own." Then, as an afterthought: "Besides, if anyone wanted to, he could shoot me from some window as I ride by daily to the Soldiers' home. But I do not believe it is my fate to die in this way."

This conversation took place just about a year before he was assassinated.

I was one of the last to see President Lincoln alive. It was in the afternoon of the fatal April 14th that Schuyler Colfax and I went together to Willard's hotel to see him to protest against an order issued by a general the day before. Mr. Colfax had hardly launched into the subject when Mr. Lincoln interrupted him with: "I have already changed the order."

We departed, and that night I went to New York. While I was on the train I was awakened and learned that the beloved President had been shot.

Millions Are Starving, Says General Allen

In a letter just received at Oregon state headquarters for the American committee for relief of German children, 715 Corbett building, Portland, among other things Major-General Henry T. Allen, former commander of American troops in Germany and now national chairman of this relief work, said:

"My survey of the evidence has convinced me that Secretary Hoover is fully justified in saying that 20,000,000 Germans are now in serious danger. As is always the case in such emergencies, the most acute suffering is to be found among the children and the aged. The childhood of Germany is now gravely menaced by lack of proper food and clothing and the diseases resulting therefrom."

An Inspiration.

In his homely rugged honesty, in his whole-souled devotion, to "right" in piloting the nation through the rocks that threatened its destruction Abraham Lincoln becomes enshrined eternally in the hearts of the people and serves as an inspiration down through the centuries.

"Abe" Lincoln as an Inventor

THAT Abraham Lincoln once seriously devoted his attention to mechanical invention, and pursued it so far as to obtain a patent, may be news to some who are unaware of the many activities that engrossed the great president's mind.

In the forties and later the matter of navigation was the big problem in the West. Nearly all the settlements of Illinois and Missouri anywhere near a stream were hopeful that in some way those streams could be made navigable for steamboats, and it seems Lincoln shared this hope regarding the Sangamon river.

The Lincoln patent was recorded: "Model of sinking and raising boats by bellows below. A. Lincoln, May 30, 1849."

It was stated that at one time there was a wrecked boat in the Sangamon river, about four miles from Springfield, Ill., as the result of an attempt of Lincoln's to show that the little river was navigable. It was the dream of the pioneer planters that if boats could voyage up the little streams near their holdings they would become wealthy from the proceeds of their crops. They then could get them to the big markets, where big prices were paid, and throughout the states of the Mississippi valley craft of various kinds made many experiments at up-state navigation on small streams.

When he lived in old Salem it is said Lincoln had great faith in the future of the Sangamon river as a material arm of western industry. The big problem as he and others saw it was in getting the boats over the shallow places. The time was far in advance of appropriations for river improvement, and some other means had to be devised for overcoming obstacles to navigation. In the Sangamon river were numerous stretches of comparatively "easy water," for boats, and then would come a lot of sandbars or shallow places.

It was this problem on which Lincoln worked. The model he made may still be in the patent office, or on exhibition somewhere. It would be almost priceless now. It never was demonstrated in actual work, however.

Under the guards of the boat was a "battery" of blacksmith bellows. When the boat reached a place where the bottom would strike the river bed the

bellows were supposed to act as "floaters" for the boat, like an air-inflated bladder. It was figured the bellows would raise the boat so its draught would slide over the bars like a raft. Once over the shallows the air would be released from the bellows and the boat would proceed until it came to the next bad place.

Soon after Lincoln obtained his patent his mind was diverted to weightier matters, though he never forgot his "safety first" invention for boats. It is said that soon after his inauguration as president he got one of the patent office officials to look up the model for him.

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

U. S. Land Office at The Dalles, Ore. Dec. 26, 1923.

NOTICE is hereby given that Jacob A. Dexter, of Heppner, Ore., who, on March 5, 1919, made H. E. No. 020442 and on July 12, 1920, made additional H. E. No. 020443, for NE 1/4, N 1/2 NW 1/4, SE 1/4 NW 1/4, N 1/2 SE 1/4, Sec. 20, NW 1/4 NE 1/4, NW 1/4, N 1/2 SW 1/4, Sec. 21, Township 4-South, Range 24-East, Willamette

Meridian, has filed notice of intention to make three year Proof, to establish claim to the land above described, before Gay M. Anderson, United States Commissioner, at Heppner, Oregon, on the 6th day of February, 1924.

Claimant names as witnesses: J. N. Batty, of Eightmile, Ore.; F. M. Lovgren, of Heppner, Ore.; G. I. Burnside, of Eightymile, Ore.; H. D. McGurdy, of Ione, Ore.

J. W. DONNELLY, Register.

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