

A TALK WITH LINCOLN

HE HAD A FIRM BELIEF IN UPHOLDING THE MONROE DOCTRINE.

Gen. Thayer, Who Saw the War President After Vicksburg's Fall, Tells of an Interview with Him.

John M. Thayer, in New York Sun. The surrender of Vicksburg by Pemberton on July 4, 1863, gave the opportunity to apply for a leave of absence for twenty days, that I might visit my family in Massachusetts, where they stayed during the war. The leave was granted, and I came North and stopped in Washington, having business with Secretary Stanton. When that was concluded the Secretary took me to his private room and asked me various questions about the siege, the condition of the army, etc. It was the Army of the Tennessee under the command of the glory of Vicksburg, and there was no difficulty in the way of my giving the Secretary a favorable report. When I rose to leave he said:

"General, the President would like to talk with you, and I desire you to call upon him. You happen to be the first officer from the siege of Vicksburg we have met, and we are glad to get information direct from one who has personal knowledge."

There was an opportunity to meet the President I had not anticipated. To see him was a very strong desire with me, but it had seemed to be almost impossible. My satisfaction, as the impression had been made on me that he was continually pressed with overwhelming cares and perplexities of every variety; and with almost innumerable callers, the prospect of having an audience with him seemed very remote. Mr. Stanton then sent Mr. Charles A. Dana, then Assistant Secretary of War, and requested him to accompany me to the White House and present me to the President. Arriving there, we were ushered into the room of the private secretary and were requested to be seated for a while as the President was engaged with some delegation. While sitting there one of the secretaries took my name to the President, and added, "Just from Vicksburg." Soon the door opened for his call, and he stood on the threshold of the tall, gaunt figure of Abraham Lincoln, his head almost touching the top of the door frame. Standing in an instant with a smile upon his face, his first words were:

"How does it happen that a man of the name of Thayer should have strayed out to Nebraska? I thought all people of that name were Yankees and lived down round about Boston."

Thayer is a familiar name in New England, and especially in eastern Massachusetts, but I surprised him by telling him that my name was from the eastern portion of our country. He was surprised also that he knew I was from Nebraska, but I found that during our conversations that he was well posted in regard to all the generals in the field.

Mr. Lincoln came forward, grasping my hand, and taking mine in his, he led me into his office, directing the messenger at the door to admit me without further orders from him; and drawing a chair up to his own big, high-backed armchair, he said: "Now, sit down, and let us hear what you have to say."

I proceeded to give him such information as it seemed to me would interest him, which he might have learned from the public press, and suggested that he had many questions, and on such points, as most interested him. He then asked me with various inquiries as to the condition of the army, the suffering of the men during the siege, the sanitary arrangements, the commissariat, the discipline, and everything relating to the comfort and well being of the army. He said he had watched the progress of the siege, and that he had interest, and when the victory of Gettysburg was won and the Fourth of July when the news of the surrender of Vicksburg came, the hearts of the people were filled with joy. He said that a remarkable occurrence that two such victories should have been won on the same day.

LINCOLN'S VIEW OF GRANT.

After he had satisfied himself with questions regarding the army, Mr. Lincoln turned to me and said:

"General, you have a man down there by the name of Grant. Do you know him?" I replied: "Yes, sir, we have."

"Fixing on me an earnest and somewhat quizzical look, Mr. Lincoln asked: 'Well, what kind of a fellow is he?' I replied: 'General Grant is a man of whom one can best judge by considering the results he has brought to the country. He is a man of Shiloh and Vicksburg make a pretty strong record. He certainly has developed the elements of a successful commander. He is very popular with the army, which has full confidence in his military ability. When he makes his name in connection with all his energies and all his resources upon their execution, he has never been entered upon a campaign or into a battle without a fixed determination under all circumstances to win, and with a consciousness that he would win. He fills the full measure of a great commander. Mr. Lincoln listened closely to all I said, and then fixing upon me a most earnest and serious look, he put to me the blunt and startling question:

"Does Grant ever get drunk?" I replied: "No, Mr. President, Grant does not get drunk."

"Is he in the habit of using liquor?" asked the President quickly. My answer was: "My observations, depending on having excellent opportunities for judging, enable me to assert with a good degree of positiveness that he never uses liquor. He has opportunities have extended over a period of more than two years, during which time I have seen him often, sometimes daily, and I have never noticed the slightest indication of his using any kind of liquor. On the contrary, I have, time and again, seen him refuse to touch it."

"There was too much of a movement militarily during the late war for the good of the service or the country. More than once did it happen that a movement militarily became the officer charged with its execution had indulged too freely of old Kentucky Bourbon."

"In all my intercourse with General Grant," I continued, speaking to Mr. Lincoln, "I never saw him taste intoxicating drink. It has been charged in Northern newspapers that Grant was a heavy drinker of liquor on the fields of Donelson and Shiloh. This charge is an atrocious calumny, wickedly false, and I have never seen him during the battles of Donelson and Shiloh on the field, if there were any sober men on the field Grant was one of them. My brigade and myself gave him a Fourth of July dinner in Memphis in 1865, and he, as guest, sat upon my right, and as wine and something stronger were passed around he turned his eyes upon me, saying: 'None for me.' I am glad to bring this testimony to you in justice to much-maligned man."

"It is a relief to hear this statement from you," said the President. "For though I have not lost confidence in Grant, I have been a good deal annoyed by reports which have reached me of his intemperance. I have been pestered with appeals to remove him from the command of that army. But someone I have felt like trusting him, because, as you say, he has accomplished something. I knew you had been down there with him and thought you would give me reliable evidence, for I have desired to get the testimony of a living witness. Your direct and positive declarations have given me much satisfaction. Delegation after delegation has called upon me with the same request. Recall Grant from the command of the Army of the Tennessee, as the members of the delegation desire, and I will give you and brothers should be under the control of an intemperate leader. I could not think of relieving him, and in 1865 became very vexatious. I therefore hit upon this plan to stop them."

"One day a delegation headed by a distinguished doctor of divinity from New York, who was spokesman for the party, called on me and made the familiar complaint and protest against Grant's being retained in his command. After the clergyman had concluded his remarks, I asked if any others desired to add anything to what had already been said. They replied that they did not. Then, looking as serious as I could, I said:

"Doctor, can you tell me where General Grant gets his liquor?"

"The doctor seemed quite nonplussed, but replied that he could not. I then said to him: 'I am very sorry, for if you could tell me I would direct the chief quartermaster of the army to lay in a large stock of the same kind of liquor, and would also direct him to furnish a supply to some of my other generals, who have not yet won a victory.'"

Then, giving me a punch, as one will

sometimes do when he thinks he has said something good, Mr. Lincoln lay back in his chair and laughed most heartily. He then added: "What I want and what the people want is generals who will fight battles and win victories. Grant has done this, and I propose to stand by him. I permitted this incident to get into print, and I have been troubled no more with delegations protesting against the retention of Grant in command of that army." Continuing, Lincoln said: "Somehow or other I have always felt a leaning toward Grant, and have been inclined to place him in command. Ever since he sent that memorable message to Buckner at Donelson, when the latter asked for terms of unconditional surrender, I propose to move immediately upon your works—I have had confidence in Grant, and have felt that he was a man I could tie to, though I have never seen him. It is a source of much satisfaction that my confidence in him has not been misplaced."

The conversation then turned upon other subjects, the condition of the country, politics, the rebellion, and the prospects of being able to suppress it. What seemed to me Mr. Lincoln's greatest trouble was the state of feeling in certain of the Northern States. His bitter hostility against the prosecution of the war, "gives me more anxiety than the state of affairs at the front," he said. He said that it was dangerous to the country than the enemy before us. He said it was incomprehensible to him that there was any opposition in the North to the war. He said that the States in peace, and secure in the enjoyment of their liberties, should be ready to support the government in this great struggle to maintain its own existence.

Once in a while in the conversation he would speak of the President without close and an expression of sadness would spread over his face, lasting three or four minutes. I could not see the cause of it. It occurred to me that during these minutes the dread consciousness of the tremendous responsibility which rested upon him was crowding upon his mind. What would be the outcome was the question ever uppermost in his thoughts. At length his eyes would open and he would resume conversation with some pleasant remark or anecdote. He would frequently say, "I must tell you a story," and his anecdotes were always pertinent to the conversation.

ON THE MONROE DOCTRINE. It will be remembered that at this time Louis Napoleon was attempting to force monarchy upon our sister republic of Mexico by the musket, the bayonet and the cannon. He had fitted the bauble of an empire across the sea before the easily impressionable mind of the Austrian Archduke, Maximilian, and his ambitious consort, the beautiful Carlotta, formerly Duchess of Brabant, and sister of the King of the Belgians. They caught at the bait, and Napoleon sent a French army to seat them upon the throne. This action of his and that of Maximilian were exceedingly offensive to the officers and soldiers of our army in the field. I called to me to learn Lincoln's views on the subject, so I said to him:

"Mr. President, how about the French army in Mexico?" "I'm not exactly 'skered,' but don't like the looks of the thing. Napoleon has taken advantage of our weakness in our time of trouble, and has attempted to found a monarchy in Mexico. He has done this in disregard of the Monroe doctrine. My policy is, attend to only one trouble at a time. I will wait until Mexico is quiet, and then restore the Union, I propose to notify Louis Napoleon that it is about time to take his army out of Mexico. When that army is gone, the Mexicans will take care of Maximilian. I can best illustrate my position touching this subject by relating an anecdote told by Daniel S. Dickinson, Senator from New York, in a speech delivered by him a few evenings since in New York city. He said that in a certain Connecticut town there had lived two men as neighbors and friends for more than sixty years. They were pillars in the village church, one of them being a deacon and the other a member. The other was named Jones. After this long lapse of time a serious difficulty unfortunately sprang up between these two brethren of the church. The feeling waxed so warm between them that it grew into a bitter feud. Mutual friends attempted a reconciliation, but the men would not reconcile. Finally Deacon White became dangerously ill and drew near unto death. Mutual friends again interposed their kind offices to effect a reconciliation. They called on Brother Jones, and he would be a sin to permit the sick brother to die with the quarrel standing. Jones was persuaded to call on Deacon White. The two men talked over their mutual grievances, and after a few minutes' conversation shook hands and exchanged mutual forgiveness in the presence of death. The deacon then called on Brother Jones, and he received the final summons, and Jones arose to leave. But as the visitor reached the door, Deacon White raised a great effort, raised himself on his elbow and called out in a weak, faltering voice:

"Brother Jones! Brother Jones! I want it distinctly understood that if I get well the old grudge stands."

Lincoln laughed at the conclusion of the story, saying that was about the way he felt toward the Emperor Napoleon. He said that the feeling of mutual respect and respect for the United States, it had caused him great annoyance, and he was not in a condition to interfere so as to prevent it. He expressed himself strongly in favor of the Monroe doctrine, and said that he had celebrated message to Congress, in which he declared that the United States would not recognize any territory on this continent by any foreign power.

Speaking of the French army and Maximilian's being in Mexico, led Lincoln to refer to Benito Juarez, then President of Mexico, and said that he had a deep sympathy and strong regard. He alluded to the similarity in some respects between his own case and that of Juarez. Both were presidents of republics, both were engaged in a struggle against a foreign invader, and both were beset by treason at home. Juarez was compelled, however, to see a foreign invader and to be the defender of the very principle in the maintenance of which Lincoln felt to deep an interest, and which he considered the American continent against foreign powers. Both came from the ranks of humbleness, and became great leaders. They were great lawyers, and they were great statesmen. They were both men of high character, and the courage to be shot to death, as he deserved, a son of the royal house, and the very throne in Europe. He was jarred, since the plain republican president of Mexico was a greater power than the kings and emperors who ruled over the fallen Emperor.

Besides successfully defending his country against most unprincipled and most unscrupulous invaders, Juarez, in putting Maximilian to death, was the vindicator of the Monroe doctrine. He was the exemplar of what should be its real meaning, that any serious danger to a monarchist or a monarchist on this Western hemisphere is undertaken at the searcher's peril. It is full time that the nations of Europe were made not a string of mere glittering words, but a living reality. Lincoln was in full sympathy with this view, and I am fully convinced from his own expressions to me that if we had not been engaged in a gigantic civil war he would have enforced this view, and neither Napoleon's army nor Maximilian would ever have invaded Mexico.

My interview with Mr. Lincoln lasted over an hour, and it was one of the most important hours of my life. No one could have listened to the conversation with me without having the conviction forced upon the mind that the President was a man of high character, of high intelligence, and of high courage. He had "full faith" as his own words declared, "that God was leading his people through his fiery trial to a triumphant issue."

THE TRUE STORY OF ELIZA. Which Formed the Basis of One of the Incidents of "Uncle Tom's Cabin."

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turning to her mother. She fixed a date for her return, and she was to come to the Rankin house.

True to the arrangements, she crossed the river one night in February, when the river was in a treacherous condition, carrying her young child in a shawl strapped to her back. The ice was broken, and she carried a board with a rope attached to it by which she passed from one cake to another. She got across and was sent to Canada to join her husband. She still had five children in slavery and said to the Rankins that she was going back to Kentucky after them the following June.

On the June day in question she appeared in Mr. Rankin's garden, and she was disguised as a man and sent across the river, where she made her way to her former master's plantation and hid beneath the currant bushes in his garden. Here she was discovered by her oldest daughter, a girl of seventeen, and at nightfall was hidden beneath the floor of her old cabin in the negro quarters. Sunday after dinner her master and his wife went several miles away to visit a friend, and Eliza took the opportunity of the absence of the family to escape. She was to be reached at 2 o'clock Monday morning. She had been told to bring nothing but the smallest bundle, and she was obliged to take with her a little water, and then go back after another child and another bundle. She was to be reached at 6 o'clock in the morning, and the boat that was to carry her was to be ready at 5 o'clock, however, and by walking about a mile and a quarter in the shallow water of the Kentucky side of the river, she reached an anti-slavery man's house, where she remained all day.

"That morning," said Mr. Rankin, "when we expected to have Eliza and her children safe in Ohio, after the fog lifted we saw thirty-one men on horseback, with dogs and guns, across the river, hunting this defenseless woman with five children. After a reward of \$1,200. Communications were opened with Eliza during the day and she was told what to do. At nightfall Mr. Rankin, disguised as a woman, with a party of young fellows made a feint to the Kentucky shore, a few miles up the river, and gave the negroes hunters a lively chase, they supposing they had tracked the woman and children across to the Rankin house, where she remained in hiding for two weeks, being finally taken to the Quaker settlement in a load of four and bran. She escaped to Canada, and lived for years there with her husband and six children."

CHOLERA NO LONGER FORMIDABLE. Proof that It Can Be Checked by Proper Precautions.

New York Evening Sun. A report which is printed in a recent number of a German medical journal is calculated to cheer the progress of the plague in Germany for the year 1884, from which it appears that there were 1,000 cases from May 23 to Dec. 15, 49 of which resulted fatally. The population of the empires in that year was 1,000,000,000. The percentage of cases per 10,000 inhabitants was 0.2, and of mortality 0.1 per 10,000. The plague is not confined to the Russian and Gallician border, and very few cases were recorded in the districts contiguous to those of the plague. In 1884, as in most other periods of contagion, the cholera entered Germany from Russia by way of the Danube. When all the medical reports agree that water traffic is much more to be feared as a medium for spreading the pestilence or wagon traffic. The German health authorities had some trouble at first in convincing the men engaged in river transportation that they must submit to surveillance for the public good, but now the police and sanitary boards at the first outbreak of the plague.

Too much cannot be said in praise of the splendid work accomplished by the German Cholera Commission in 1884. The regulations for checking the plague were at first regarded as unduly restrictive, and the health officers charged with enforcing them met with considerable opposition. The end justified the means, however. In Hamburg not a single case of cholera occurred, and there were only six in the whole district. A table made by Prof. Flügge illustrates the improvement in German methods of containing cholera, for it shows that in the district of Oberschlesien there would be 346 cases in 1884, as compared with 2,068 in 1886, 1,810 in 1887, and 1,423 in 1888. The lowest record in any previous year of general infection was 88 in 1881. Prof. Flügge says that the credit of teaching his contemporaries how to deal effectively with cholera is no longer formidable if precautionary measures are taken in proof conclusively by the exemption of the German soldiers during the period of mobilization in the Vistula district last year. At the time, in spite of the prevalence of the plague in East and West Prussia, an army of many thousands of men was engaged in maneuvers, but not a single case of cholera occurred among them. It is interesting to note the instructions issued to protect them against contagion. They were allowed to drink only water that had been boiled; whenever their clothing came in contact with water, it was to be disinfected; and after every drink each man was compelled to wash his hands with soap and pure spring water. The general health of the troops was never better.

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100 Men's double-breasted Suits, all sizes, in Cassimeres, Cheviots and worsteds, in all colors, worth \$13.50 and \$12, during this sale \$8.25

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TOO MANY BOOKS. A Publisher Sees Advantages in a Literary Censorship.

George Harm Putnam, in the Independent. I judge that the literary development of our community calls, not for an increase in book production, but for a more precise and exacting standard in regard to the books which are allowed to get into print. It should be to see society established which should have for its purpose, not necessarily the restriction of writing, but the lessening of the number of manuscripts which the writers are willing to bring to a publishing office. If it is practicable to establish in districts throughout the country some "board of censorship" to which manuscripts should be submitted before they were allowed to reach the publishing office, and such board, in returning the nine-tenths of the manuscripts which could never be placed in the hands of the printers at all, would be able to impress upon the writers some satisfactory standard of literary quality, there would, I feel confident, be raised the general training, not only in literary standard, but in the intellectual and intellectual common sense" on the part of the active-minded public of our community. Such a bureau, if established, would, of course, need funds for their maintenance, but a moderate fee on the manuscripts which would provide a very ample support. Literary counsel could, in fact, be given to great advantage, as far as the saving of futile effort was concerned, in advance of the production of any manuscript at all, and the charges for such literary counsel, if inquisitorial would, of course, be proportionate to the extent of the service required. If, in a general way, for instance, a "literary yearning" should cost the "yearner" one dollar, a "literary education" two dollars, and a literary ambition, in the form of a completed manuscript, ten dollars, the bureau would be supported, and to some extent trained; the literature of the country, as far as it has been as the first books were concerned, would be materially improved in standard, in quality and in "finish." The publishers would be saved an enormous proportion of the expensive and labor-consuming waste of paper which the "botheration account" of their offices; and with fewer and better books presented to the community, there would be a better "satisfaction account" for the readers, while there would be a very much improved prospect of a living income for the deserving writers, that is, for the writers who really have something of value to give to the public.

Celebration of Christmas. New York Mail and Express. Ever since the close of the fourth century Dec. 25 has, by common consent of all Christian countries, been made a season for renewal of friendship, reuniting of families and the giving of charities.

The Carol is of religious origin. Formerly the bishops and clergy sang carols on Christmas day, in imitation of that first hymn of the angels sung to the shepherds of Bethlehem. Christmas sports in the good old days were regularly presided over by a specially chosen director. This mock sovereignty was sometimes very costly, for in 1853, the "Lord of Misrule" played the game of court in London, expended from his private purse no less a sum than \$2,000.

The present holiday season was the season for revelry, even among the peasants. The Romans had their Saturnalia, the Northern lights fire a honor to Odin and Thor, and in the British Isles the mystic Druids cut the sacred mistletoe with sacrificial rites.

The yule log, a probable relic of the fires to Odin and Thor, was brought in from the neighboring forest on Christmas eve, and ancient times. Muris and song preceded its bearers, and it was solemnly lighted with the charred relics of last year's log, which were carefully preserved.

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ONLY TWO MORE DAYS with Santa Claus and his thousands of Toys. There is no stop to the great rush for Holiday Goods. As the Christmas time is drawing to a close Xmas Shoppers are busier than ever, and our real live Santa Claus is kept busy listening to the wants of the little ones. Carloads of Toys! Thousands of useful presents in every department in the house. No advance in prices on account of the great holiday rush. Store open every evening

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Double-breasted Suits take the lead! We have them! Hundreds of them! We offer one-third off the regular price of any double-breasted Suit in the house. Just see these goods and be convinced.

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