A Man for the Ages

A Story of the Builders of Democracy

By Irving Bacheller

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SYNOPSIS.

CHAPTER I.—Samson and Sarah Traylor, with their two children, Josiah and Betsey, travel by wagon from their home in Vergennes, Vt., to the West, the land of plenty. Their destination is the Country of the Sangamon, in Illinois.

CHAPTER II.—At Niagara Falls they meet a party of immigrants, among them a youth named John McNeil, who also decides to go to the Sangamon country. All of the party suffer from fever and ague. Sarah's ministrations save the life of a youth, Harry Needles, in the last stages of fever, and he accompanies the Traylors. They reach New Salem, Illinois, and are welcomed by young "Abe" Lincoln.

CHAPTER III.—Among the Traylors' first acquaintances are Lincoln's friends, Jack Kelso and his pretty daughter Bim, 16 years of age.

CHAPTER IV.—Samson decides to locate at New Salem, and begins building his house. Led by Jack Armstrong, rowdies attempt to break up the proceedings. Lincoln thrashes Armstrong. Young Harry Needles strikes Bap McNoll, of the Armstrong crowd, and McNoll threatens vengeance.

CHAPTER V.—A few days later Harry, alone, is attacked by McNoll and his gang, and would have been roughly used had not Bim driven off his assailants with a shotgun. John McNeil, the Traylors' Niagara Falls acquaintance, is markedly attentive to Ann Rutledge. Lincoln is in love with Ann, but has never had enough courage to tell her so.

CHAPTER VI. — Traylor helps two slaves, who had run away from St. Louis, to escape. Eliphalet Biggs, owner of the slaves, following them, attempts to beat up Traylor and in a fight has his arm broken.

CHAPTER VII.—Waiting for his arm to heal, Biggs meets Bim Kelso, with whom Harry Needles has fallen in love. Biggs asks for Bim's hand, but her father refuses his consent. Biggs returns to St. Louis.

CHAPTER VIII.—Bim confesses to Harry that she loves Biggs, and the youth is disconsolate. Lincoln decides to seek a seat in the legislature. He and Harry volunteer for the Black Hawk war, and leave New Salem.

CHAPTER IX.—Biggs comes back to the village and he and Bim elope. Harry learns of it on his way home from the "war." Lincoln's advice and philosophy sustain him in his grief.

CHAPTER X.—Lincoln, defeated in his candidacy for the legislature, forms a partnership with "Bill" Berry in the grocery business. Biggs sends a gang to burn Traylor's house, but the New Salem men are warned and the raiders worsted.

CHAPTER XI.—Lincoln, now postmaster, decides to run again for the legislature. Ann Rutledge is openly in love with John McNeil. He leaves for his home in the East, promising to return soon and marry Ann. Lincoln accepts his defeat manfully. No word coming from McNeil, Ann confesses to Abe that his real name is McNamar, and her fears that he will not return. Lincoln in his deep love endeavors to reassure her, though he shares her misgivings. Lincoln wins his seat in the legislature.

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 received a letter from Ann. She had come 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 first week in November. 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 I wish you could give me some hope to live on—just a little straw of hope."

"You are a wonderful man, Abe," said Ann, touched by his appeal. "My father says that you are going to be a great man."

"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 I think that I could love you, Abe," she answered. "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 elbow.

"I wanted to see you private 'bout Lukins," she began. "There's them that call him Bony Lukins, but I 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 asked.

"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 maybe you could fix it.'"

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

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

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

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

The Village Had Assembled to Bid Him Goodby.

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 means who had a farm on the road to Springfield—was in the village that evening. Abe showed him the commission 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. I 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 me a 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. As they sat together by the fireside Abe said:

"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 village of Vandalia.

CHAPTER XIII.

Wherein the Route of the Underground Railroad Is Surveyed and Samson and Harry Spend a Night 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 Traylors 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 minister went on. "We have already had some help from you but we need more. I take it as a duty which God has laid upon me to help 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 for all His children, may find rest and refreshment and security until they have strength to go on."

Within a week after the visit of Mr. Lovejoy, 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 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'll 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 Phillistines."

"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' to be rich."

"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 Siek 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 guess."

"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 before."

"Better late than never," Samson assured her. "You don't often see a better fellow."

The girl laughed with a subtle look of agreement in her eyes. Then came up from the barn the ragged little lad of No Santa Claus Land—now a sturdy, bright-eyed, handsome boy of twelve.

The horses were put out and all went in to supper.

After supper Brimstead showed models of a mowing machine with a cut bar six feet long, and a plow which would turn two furrows.

"That's what we need on these prairies," said Samson. "Something that'll turn 'em over and cut the crop quicker."

"Say, I'll tell ye," said Brimstead as if about to disclose a secret. "These great stretches of smooth, rich land just everlastingly ram the spurs into you and keep your brain galloping. Mine is goin' night and day. The prairies are a new thing and you've got to tackle 'em in a new way. I tell you the seeding and planting and mowing and reaping and threshing is all going to be done by machinery and horses. The wheel will be the foundation of the new era."

"You're right," said Samson.

"How are you gettin' along?"

"Rather slow," Samson answered. "It's hard to get our stuff to market down in the Sangamon country. Our river isn't navigable yet. We hope that Abe Lincoln, who has just been elected to the legislature, will be able to get it widened and straightened and cleaned up so it will be of some use to us down there."

"I've heard of him. They call him Honest Abe, don't they?"

"Yes; and he is honest if a man ever was."

"Is he going to marry the Rutledge girl?" was the query of Mrs. Brimstead.

"I don't think so," Samson answered, a little surprised at her knowledge of the attachment. "He's as humly as Sam Hill and dresses rough and ain't real handy with the gals. Some fellers are kind o' fenced in with humliness and awkwardness."

"The boys around here are all fenced in," said Annabel. "There's nobody here of my age but Lanky Peters, who looks like a fish, and a red-headed Irish boy with a wooden leg."

The Peasleys arrived and the men and women spent a delightful hour traveling without weariness over the long trail to beloved scenes and the days of their youth. Every day's end thousands were going east on that trail, each to find his pot of gold at the foot of the rainbow of memory.

Before they went to bed that night Brimstead paid his debt to Samson, with interest, and very confidentially.

It was a long, wearisome ride back to the land of plenty, over frozen ground, with barely an inch of snow upon it, under a dark sky, with a chilly wind blowing.

"After all, it's home," said Samson, when late in the evening they saw the lighted windows of the cabin ahead.

"After All, It's Home," Said Samson.

When they had put out their horses and come in by the glowing fire, Samson lifted Sarah in his arms again and kissed her.

"I'm kind o' silly, mother, but I can't help it—you look so temptin'," said Samson.

(To be continued)

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JULY HOTTEST MONTH IN 33 YEARS RECORD

With a mean temperature of 76.1 degrees, July 1921, was the hottest month recorded at the Ohio Experiment Station, Wooster, for 33 years. July 1901 previously held the record with a mean temperature of 75.9 degrees.

The range in temperature in July was from 51 to 96. The 33-year average temperature for July at Wooster is 71.3, making the past month 5.8 degrees higher than the average.

A temperature of 96 was reached on three days—July 4, 5, and 8, but the hottest July day on record was July 4, 1911—101 degrees. The highest temperature ever recorded at the station was 105 degrees on August 6, 1918. June 1921 had a mean temperature of 71.1 as compared with 33-year average of 67.4. This record, however, is surpassed by June 1919 with a mean temperature of 73.2 degrees.

The rainfall for July at Wooster was light, only 2.92 inches as compared with 4.17 inches the average for 33 years.

NEW FORD MODEL SOON.

New model Ford touring cars and roadsters with ventilating windshields, one man tops, metal dashes and refined body designs will be on the market between Aug. 15 and Sept. 1, it was stated this week.

The new models will have two movable glass plates in the windshields, instead of one fixed and one adjustable plate, as at present, and slight body changes and new tops.

Quantity production and purchases of supplies have brought the actual cost of factory production of the Ford cars down to approximately $93 a car, it was learned. Materials cost about $50 a car with $73 for agents' commissions, leaves an estimated net profit of $199 a car.

The lowest previous cost of a Ford tuoring car was in 1917, when touring car sold for $360. The total factory cost with overhead at that time was $291, making a net profit of $69 per car.

RED CROSS NOTES

Have you helped make those garments so sorely needed by the poor little ones of Central Europe? Every bulletin and every returned traveler urges the Red Cross to greater speed.

The Production Committee of Medina village, Mrs. Clyde Jones, chairman, announces that there are many garments ready for the making at the Red Cross rooms. Notify Miss Wells if you are not able to call for the work and she will try to get it delivered to you.

Just at present there is plenty of material for cutting; made up garments only may be brought in.

Every woman in Medina county should have a garment or two on this line. Our record for design and originality is a proud one; production must speed up a bit to equal it.

THE LAKE ROUTE FOR VACATION TRIPS

Lake Erie has long been noted for its fleet of magnificent passenger steamers. The most recent addition to this fleet is the Great Ship "SEE-ANDBEE," the largest and most costly passenger vessel on inland waters of the world. This Great Ship, with her sister ship, Steamer "City of Buffalo," plys daily between Cleveland and Buffalo, so that you may board steamer at either city any evening at 9:00 enjoy a night of refreshing sleep and arrive at destination following morning at 7:30.

In addition to the night trip, the Saturday daylight trips are proving very attractive to many travelers.

From Cleveland, C. & B. Line Steamer "City of Buffalo" leaves New Pier, foot of E. 9th St., every Saturday during the summer season at 9:00 a. m., arriving at Buffalo 7:00 evening of same day.

From Buffalo, the Great Ship "SEE ANDBEE" leaves wharves at South Michigan Ave. Bridge every Saturday during the summer season at 9:00 a. m., arriving at Cleveland 7:00 evening of same day.

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