

# LINCOLN, OUR SAINT OF LIBERTY.

BY J. A. EDGERTON.

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**I.** HIS soul was great, it held so much of love,  
In him the simple touch of charity  
Mere force and war's red menace was above  
In conquering the years that are to be.  
An ever growing figure he will move  
Across the theater of history—  
His deed to fame the love of humble folk,  
His monument the shackles that he broke.

**II.** So unadorned was he by circumstance,  
The outward show on which the little great  
Must needs depend to gain Fame's countenance,  
So plain was he in speech and face and gait  
That those of worldly wisdom looked askance  
When he was called of God to guide the state.  
So unattractive was his earthly sheath  
Men failed to see the mighty soul beneath.



**III.** THERE has no sweeter spirit touched the earth  
Since One who died for men in Galilee,  
Whom he resembled in his patient worth,  
In love, in meekness and simplicity,  
In selflessness, in humbleness of birth,  
In laying down his life to make men free.  
As that One was the Saviour of mankind,  
So he his country's savior is enshrined.

**IV.** OUR kinliest American wast thou,  
And yet the lowly name most thy name.  
What wreath have I to fit thy ample brow,  
What words to fill the measure of thy fame,  
When at thy shrine the proudest nation bow  
And all the world grows vocal with acclaim?  
Yet, though in grace of speech far short I fall,  
My love for thee is equal to them all.

**V.** THOU Moses of this younger Israel,  
A crown peculiar is reserved for thee,  
Of old for faith the saints and martyrs fell  
We hail thee as our saint of liberty,  
They who on earth in aftertime shall dwell  
And who at last in truth are wholly free  
Will find thy name writ large on Honor's scroll  
And thank their God he gave earth such a soul.



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## Lincoln's School Days

By A. W. FERRIN  
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ABRAHAM LINCOLN was ten years old when his father made that profitable journey from Indiana to his old home in Kentucky, from which he returned with a new wife and accompanying worldly possessions which would have seemed to Abe and his little sister Nancy like the treasures of the Indies had they ever heard of that golden empire. The advent of Sally Bush in her new role as Mrs. Thomas Lincoln marked an epoch in Abe's life. Hitherto he had been growing very much like Topsy. Now he was to know a mother's loving care. As soon as she had attended to the bodily wants of her stepchildren, "made them look a little more human," as she expressed it, Mrs. Lincoln turned her attention to the minds of her new charges. It was a welcome surprise to her, no doubt, to find that in his few weeks of rough schooling in Kentucky under the tutelage of Caleb Hazel young Abe had picked up some knowledge of reading and writing, and his foster mother decided that it was high time that he should add to his attainments.



ABE MADE GESTURES THROUGH THE WINDOW.

On Little Pigeon creek, a mile and a half from the Lincoln farm, the settlers had built a log schoolhouse, and Hazel Dorsey had been hired to preside therein. Dorsey, it was said, could teach reading, writing and arithmetic, and what more could be asked? The news of these new educational advantages meant much to all the children of the backwoods, but it meant more to Abe. It was the opening of a wide gate to him. He was growing faster than ever now. Good Mrs. Lincoln despaired of keeping him in clothes that would fit him. Cloth of any kind was scarce, and much of a boy's wardrobe had to be of buckskin, and, however loose Abe's trousers might be made, a few hours in the wet fields or a fall into a woodland brook sufficed to render them a tighter fit than any tailor could fashion. Stockings were out of the question, and when on special occasions or in extreme cold weather shoes were worn they were "low cut" to save leather. There was apt to be a generous expanse of blue ankles and shin bones between Abe's trousers and his clumsy feet. This tendency to "high water pants" was one which stayed with him for many years.



LINCOLN READING BY THE LIGHT OF THE FIREPLACE.

and with the coming of spring the boys were needed in the fields, but before the term was over Abe could "spell down" any one in the school and could read anything he could lay his hands on. The long vacation was not wasted by him. New families were arriving in the woods, and many brought books, some even whole libraries of seven and eight volumes. It was worth while for Abe to walk miles and to bear a hand at chopping or other work to get a chance to borrow them and later read them by the light of the open fireplace. He was already a story teller of parts and well versed in the backwoods learn-

ing, fact and fiction, which travels by word of mouth. One of the first rewards of his borrowing expeditions was a story teller by which he found that he was outdone. It was Esop's fables. Before he had read this volume through a score of times he could make over into a fable with some kind of a moral to it every one of the anecdotes with which his mind was stored. Then he was initiated into the beauties of "Pilgrim's Progress," a book which had unquestioned influence upon his later life. The family Bible, too, was a favorite. For some reason Hazel Dorsey was unable again to collect his scattered pupils, and it was a full year before school reopened, with a new teacher, Andrew Crawford. Mr. Crawford brought new ways and soon saw that the young persons trooping about him needed other things than book learning. From the beginning he taught

## Lincoln In the Illinois Legislature

By WALTON WILLIAMS

LITTLE has been said of Abraham Lincoln's service in the Illinois legislature. Yet his eight years in that body formed the foundation for his political career. He was defeated once, the first time he ran, at the age of twenty-three. But he received all except seven votes in his own precinct and formed an acquaintance with the people that carried him through two years later. His first race was in 1832. Lincoln was just through his soldier experience in the Black Hawk war, in which he had been captain of a company. His first appearance on the stump was at a public sale in Pappsville, near Springfield. Lincoln stopped a fist fight by hurling one of the trouble makers a dozen feet through the air and then spoke as follows: Gentlemen and Fellow Citizens—I presume you all know who I am. I am humble Abraham Lincoln. I have been solicited by my friends to become a candidate for the legislature. My politics are short and sweet, like the old woman's dance. I am in favor of a national bank. I am in favor of the Internal Improvement system and a high protective tariff. These are my sentiments and political principles. If elected I shall be thankful; if not it will be all the same. After his defeat he became a merchant in a small way and was also postmaster for a short time. It was some time in 1832 that he began the study of law. He also spent a portion of the next two years as a surveyor. In 1834 came the second race for the legislature. In relation to this canvass Mr. Herndon, afterward law partner and biographer of the martyr president, tells the following story: He (Lincoln) came to my house near Island Grove during harvest. He got his dinner and went out in the field where the men were at work. I gave him an introduction, and the boys said they could not vote for a man unless he could "make a hand." "Well, boys," said he, "if that is all, I am sure of your votes." He took hold of the cradle and led all the way round with perfect ease. The boys were satisfied, and I don't think he lost a vote in the crowd. The next day there was speaking at Berlin. He went from my house with Dr. Barnett, the man that had asked me who this man Lincoln was. I told him that he was a candidate for the legislature. He laughed and said, "Can't the party raise better material than that?" I said, "Go tomorrow and hear all before you pronounce judgment." When he came back I said, "Doctor, what say you now?" "Why, sir," said he, "he is a perfect take-in. He knows more than all of them put together."

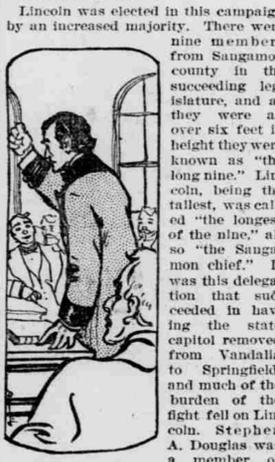


"MY POLITICS ARE SHORT AND SWEET."

Mr. Lincoln was elected this time and in due course took his seat in the lower house, in which body all his legislative life was passed. In the first session he took little part. He watched every move keenly, voted regularly, but seldom spoke. He was "getting on to the ropes." He was free from political trickery, never denounced members of the opposition, was honest, courteous and warm hearted. He had a keen faculty of always picking out the salient point of a measure under discussion and never losing sight of it. Even so early in his career he showed his remarkable perception of principles rather than men. Shortly after the close of this session occurred the sad death of Anne Rutledge that threw Lincoln into despair, and according to his best friends, brought him near even to the verge of madness. It was at this time that Mr. Lincoln began the practice of law, first in the justice courts, afterward as a circuit rider. In 1836 he was nominated for

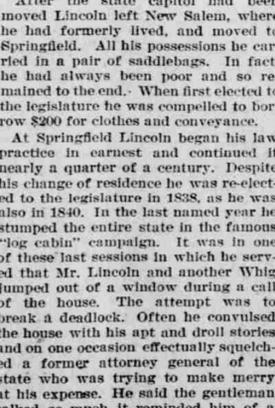
the legislature, and in the ensuing campaign his great powers began to become manifest. Before the fight was over he had gained more than county fame as a stump speaker, showing something of the powers as a debater and orator which a few years later enabled him to overcome the foremost debater in the country, Stephen A. Douglas. One incident of this campaign is worth repeating. There lived in Springfield a rather grandiloquent personage of the name of Forquer. He had been a Whig, but had turned Democrat and soon after was appointed to a fat federal office. He was the only man in Springfield with a lightning rod on his house. After one of Lincoln's speeches Forquer rose and said, "This young man must be taken down, and I am truly sorry that the task devolves upon me," after which he proceeded in an overbearing way to attack Lincoln and his speech. In response Lincoln answered Forquer's arguments in a manner that seemed to the crowd as overwhelming. He then ended his rejoinder in these words: The gentleman commenced his speech by saying that this young man—alluding to me—must be taken down. I am not so young in years as I am in the tricks and trades of a politician; but, live long or die young, I would rather die now than, like the gentleman, change my politics for a \$3,000 office and then feel obliged to erect a lightning rod over my house to protect a guilty conscience from the vengeance of an offended God.

Lincoln was elected in this campaign by an increased majority. There were nine members from Sangamon county in the succeeding legislature, and as they were all over six feet in height they were known as "the long nine." Lincoln, being the tallest, was called "the longest of the nine," also "the Sangamon chief." It was this delegation that succeeded in having the state capitol removed from Vandalla to Springfield, and much of the burden of the fight fell on Lincoln. Stephen A. Douglas was a member of this legislature, and he and the future president made his first recorded protest against slavery. There was only one man in the entire body that had the courage to sign it with him, although it was a comparatively mild document.



"YOU MAY BURN MY BODY TO ASHES."

After the state capitol had been moved Lincoln left New Salem, where he had formerly lived, and moved to Springfield. All his possessions he carried in a pair of saddlebags. In fact, he had always been poor and so remained to the end. When first elected to the legislature he was compelled to borrow \$200 for clothes and conveyance. At Springfield Lincoln began his law practice in earnest and continued it nearly a quarter of a century. Despite his change of residence he was re-elected to the legislature in 1838, as he was also in 1840. In the last named year he stumped the entire state in the famous "log cabin" campaign. It was in one of these last sessions in which he served that Mr. Lincoln and another Whig jumped out of a window during a call of the house. The attempt was to break a deadlock. Often he convulsed the house with his apt and droll stories and on one occasion effectually squelched a former attorney general of the state who was trying to make merry at his expense. He said the gentleman talked so much it reminded him of a man who shot for hours at what he thought was a squirrel, but which turned out to be only a house in his eyebrow. The story silenced Lincoln's opponent for the rest of the session.



"WIS, STEADFAST IN THE STRENGTH OF GOD, AND TRUE."

At one time during his legislative career Mr. Lincoln was urged to consent to a log rolling proposition. He said: You may burn my body to ashes and scatter them to the winds of heaven, you may drag my soul down to the regions of darkness and despair to be tormented by fiends of the damned forever, but you will never get me to support a measure which I believe to be wrong, although by doing so I may accomplish that which I believe to be right.

## LINCOLN and The POETS

FEW men of modern times have attracted to themselves nobler poetic tributes than has Abraham Lincoln. There was something about the homely, heroic figure that seemed to call forth rhythmical praise. This may have been due to the fact that Lincoln himself was a poet. He scribbled a volume of verse in his youth and then burned it. Some few of his pieces escaped into print, however. With all due respect to them, they are not half as poetical as some of his prose. The Gettysburg speech, the second inaugural address and his letter to the mother whose sons were slain in battle are prose poems. Perhaps the poets responded to this kindred strain.

The noblest poem to the martyr president is unquestionably that of James Russell Lowell. It is a really great ode, almost as great as the subject, and that is saying much. The following extracts show its merit:

Nature, they say, doth do  
And cannot make a man  
Save on some wondrous plan,  
Repeating us by rote,  
For him her old world molds aside she threw  
And, choosing sweet clay from the breast  
Of the unexhausted west,  
With stuff untaught shaped a hero new,  
Wise, steadfast in the strength of God  
and true.  
How beautiful to see  
Once more a shepherd of mankind indeed,  
Who loved his charge, but never loved to lead.  
One whose cheek flock the people joyed to be,  
Not lured by any cheat of birth,  
But by his clear grained human worth  
And brave old wisdom of sincerity!

His was no lonely mountain peak of mind,  
Thrusting to thin air o'er our cloudy base,  
A sea mark now, now lost in vapors blind;  
Broad prairie rather, genial, level lined,  
Fruitful and friendly for all humankind,  
Yet also nigh to heaven and loved of loftiest stars.



"WIS, STEADFAST IN THE STRENGTH OF GOD, AND TRUE."

Here was a type of the true elder race,  
And one of Pitarch's men talked with us  
Face to face.  
I praise him not; it were too late,  
And some innate weakness there must be  
In him who condescends to victory  
Such as the present gives and cannot wait.  
Safe in himself as in a fate,  
So always firmly he—  
He knew to bide his time  
And can his fame abide,  
Still patient in his simple faith sublime,  
Till the wise years decide.  
Great captains, with their guns and drums,  
Disturb our judgment for the hour,  
But at last silence comes:  
These all are gone, and, standing like a tower,  
Our children shall behold his fame,  
The kindly earnest, brave, foreseeing man,  
Sagacious, patient, dreading praise, not  
New birth of our new soil, the first  
American.  
Even better known than Lowell's immortal ode is Walt Whitman's poem, published shortly after Lincoln's assassination. It is one of the very few rhymed pieces written by Whitman. Even in this the rhymes are far from

### THESE ARE THE GREAT POETS WHOSE LINES DESCRIBE LINCOLN

perfect, but the sentiment redeems mere external imperfections: O captain, my captain, our fearful trip is done; The ship has weathered every rack; the prize we sought is won; The port is near, the bells I hear, the people all exulting, While follow eyes the steady keel, the vessel grim and daring; But, O heart, heart, heart! O the bleeding drops of red, Where on the deck my captain lies, Fallen cold and dead!

O captain, my captain, rise up and hear the bells! Rise up! For you the bugle trills, for you the shrouds and ribboned wreaths, for you the shores a-crowding— For you they call, the swaying mass, their eager faces turning; Here, captain, dear father, This arm beneath your hand! It is some dream that on the deck You've fallen cold and dead.



STEDMAN, MARKHAM, LOWELL, WHITMAN.

FOUR GREAT POETS WHOSE LINES DESCRIBE LINCOLN: My father does not feel my arm; he has no pulse; he will not rise again; The ship is anchored safe and sound, its voyage closed and done; From fearful trip the victor ship comes in with object won; Exult, O shores, and ring, O bells! But I, with mournful tread, Walk the deck my captain lies, Fallen cold and dead.

Edmund Clarence Stedman's poem on "The Hand of Lincoln" is not so well known as either of the foregoing, yet it contains many fine lines: Look on this cast and know the hand That bore a nation in its hold; From this mute witness understand What Lincoln was—how large of mold.

The hands of Anak, sinewy strong; The fingers that grasp greatness clutch— Yet, lo, the marks their lines along Of one who strove and suffered much. For here in knotted cord and vein I trace the varying chart of years; I know the troubled heart, the strain, The weight of Atlas—and the tears.

Lo, as I gaze the statured man, Built up from yon large hand, appears, A type that nature wills to plan But once in all a people's years. What better than this voiceless cast To tell of such a one as he, Since through its living semblance passed The thought that bade a race be free!

Almost every American poet since Lincoln's day has rendered some meed of praise to the memory of the great liberator. Notable among these are Alice Cary, Richard Henry Stoddard and James Whitcomb Riley. Of foreign tributes the most celebrated was that of the London Punch, beginning, "You lay a wreath on murdered Lincoln's bier," and referring to itself as a "scurrile jester" for the gibes it had thrown at America's "true born king of men."

One of the most notable of the Lincoln poems is by Edwin Markham, the author of "The Man With the Hoe." It refers to the elemental character of the man, made up of "the red earth" and "the patient greatness of the rock." Again he is likened to the pine tree that "falls with a great shout upon the hills." There are other verses innumerable concerning the "saint of liberty," all breathing forth the love and reverence in which he is held by the whole people. As the years pass this chorus of song will swell until it grows into a mighty anthem of praise and thanksgiving that this latter day Moses was lent to our nation to liberate another race and to lead us all through the wilderness into the promised land of liberty and union.