



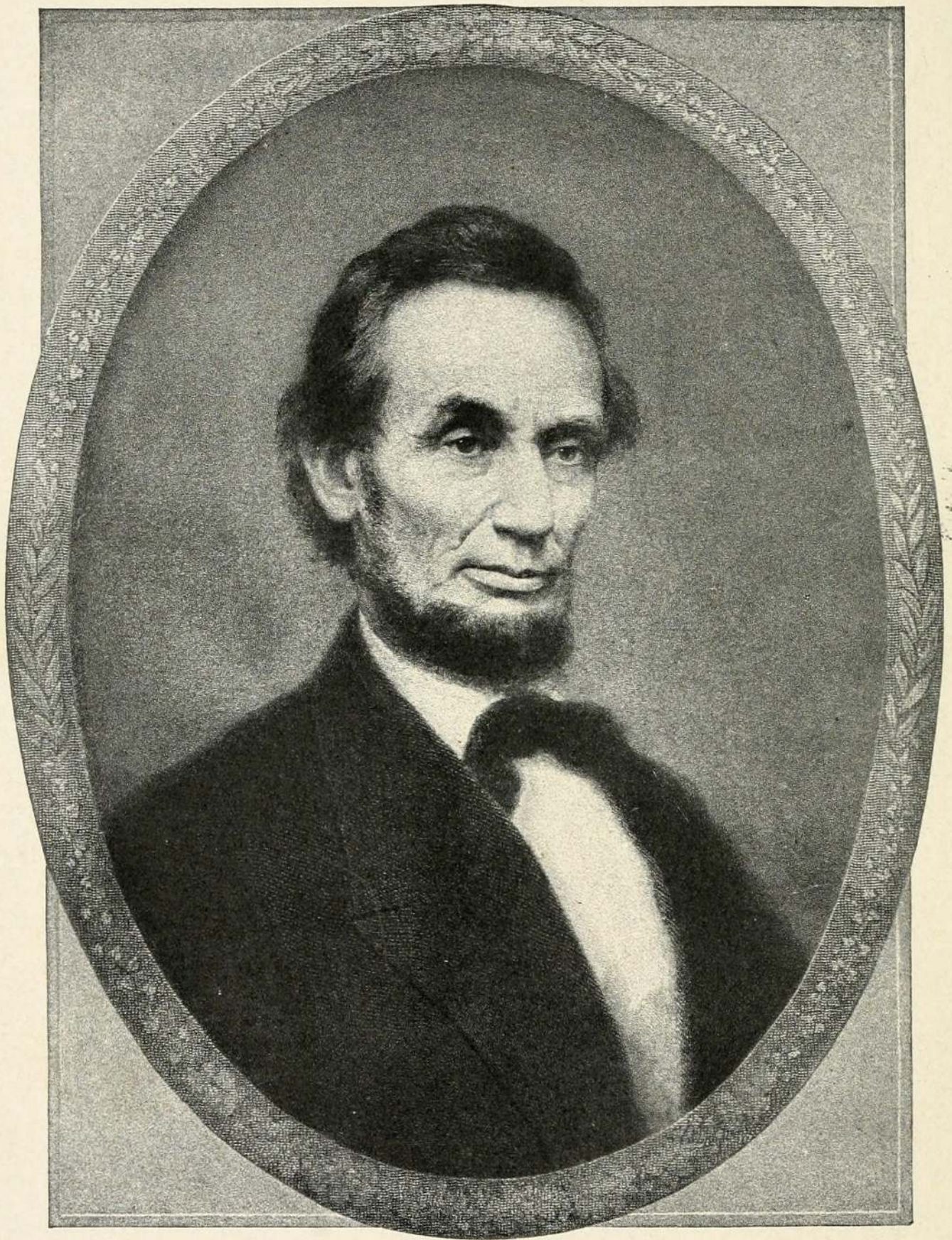
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ABRAHAM LINCOLN





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## P R E F A C E

IN preparing this text the editors have kept one aim constantly in mind: to produce a workable secondary school edition of Lincoln's principal letters and speeches. They have endeavored to present these selections in such a manner that the pupil can derive a just and clear conception of Abraham Lincoln's political philosophy.

It was likewise the intention of the editors so to arrange the material as to give the teacher the opportunity to be an inspirational force rather than a mere mechanical drillmaster. A live teacher can without difficulty correlate this work with courses in history and debating, or he can independently make it the vehicle of instruction in those branches of study and intellectual exercise.

The name of those to whom the editors are indebted in the preparation of their brief work is legion. The voluminous literature of the subject makes this inevitable. Special and grateful acknowledgment is offered to Colonel Henry Watterson and his publishers, Messrs. Duffield & Co., to Messrs. Eaton & Mains, and the North American Review for their gracious courtesy.

The final authority relied upon by the editors is James Ford Rhodes's monumental "History of the United States (1850-1877)."





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# SELECTIONS FROM ABRAHAM LINCOLN

## LINCOLN'S PEORIA SPEECH

### *Introduction*

In the days of their young manhood Lincoln and Douglas were associated in the common life of a pioneer community. But in the race for political preferment the little New Englander made far quicker progress than the uncouth and backward Kentuckian. In 1850 Stephen A. Douglas, then United States Senator from Illinois, was next to Webster and Clay the most influential man in Congress. Exchanging the environment of New England at an early age for what was then the western frontier, he was elected to the Illinois legislature at the age of twenty-three; thence he was sent to the national House of Representatives, and when thirty-three years old was made United States Senator.

James Ford Rhodes says, "Douglas's first political speech gained him the title of the 'Little Giant'; the name was intended to imply the union of small physical with great intellectual stature. Yet he was not a student of books although a close observer of man. He lacked refinement of manner; was careless of his personal appearance and had none of the art and grace that go to make up the cultivated orator. John Quincy Adams was shocked at his appearance in the House, where, as the celebrated diary records, in making a speech he raved, roared, and lashed himself into a heat with convulsed face and frantic gesticulation. 'In the midst of his roaring, to save himself from choking, he stripped



off and cast away his cravat, unbuttoned his waistcoat, and had the air and aspect of a half-naked pugilist.' But Douglas took on quickly the character of his surroundings and in Washington society he soon learned the ease of a gentleman and acquired the bearing of a man of the world."

He had to a high degree the power of attracting men. Few American political leaders have possessed such a large and devoted personal following. In spite of Webster's "seventh of March speech," which alienated so many of the illustrious Massachusetts statesman's admirers, Clay would never have succeeded in passing the Compromise of 1850 had it not been for the effective support and championship of the shrewd, resourceful, and potent senator from Illinois.

With the triumph of the Compromise of 1850 Douglas declared that he had made his last speech on the slavery question. But to the surprise of the whole country, on January 4, 1854, Douglas presented to the Senate his famous Kansas-Nebraska bill, the salient feature of which was the section providing "that the territory of Nebraska or any portion of the same, when admitted as states 'shall be received into the Union with or without slavery as their Constitution may prescribe at the time of their admission.'" The bill passed both houses and was signed by the President. Thus the Missouri Compromise, which for more than thirty years had by the deliberate agreement of North and South excluded slavery from the Louisiana purchase, was repealed, and the agitation reopened with renewed fury.

There is little reason to doubt that the desire of Douglas to secure the support of the South for his presidential aspirations was responsible for his reopening a question charged with such inflammatory and war-provoking possibilities. "Prince John" Van Buren, accomplished son of the ex-president, and one of New York's most astute politicians, said, "Could anything but a desire to buy the South at the presidential shambles dictate such an outrage?"

The law of compensation is universal in its operation; although Douglas by this manœuvre temporarily became the hero and favorite of the South, his doctrine of "squatter



sovereignty" had the opposite effect in the North. Many of his constituents had become highly dissatisfied with the way in which Douglas was representing their state. Realizing that it was time to repair his tumbling political fences, he returned to Illinois and soon afterward delivered a speech at the State Fair in Springfield. This speech was answered by Lincoln; in his rebuttal Douglas appeared to decidedly inferior advantage.<sup>1</sup>

Twelve days later the rival statesmen met again. "Lincoln had agreed to speak in Peoria, Illinois, on Monday, the sixteenth of October. Thither Douglas followed him as if determined to see his own annihilation. Douglas spoke for three hours in the afternoon, and Lincoln followed in the evening, speaking three hours. The result was the same as at Springfield. Lincoln's speech was materially different, but it was, as subsequently written out by him, more skilful and elaborate in its treatment of the great question. . . . It was, however, distinguished above all others for its manifestation of a full and exhaustive knowledge of the slavery question and of all that had at that time grown out of it. Probably no other man then living could have produced so complete and comprehensive a view of the subject presented both as to itself and its collateral branches.

"At the close of this speech Douglas said to Lincoln: 'You understand this question of prohibiting slavery in the Territories better than all the opposition in the United States Senate. I cannot make anything by debating with you. You, Lincoln, have, here and at Springfield, given me more trouble than all the opposition in the Senate combined.'"

#### SPEECH DELIVERED AT PEORIA, ILLINOIS

OCTOBER 16, 1854

But one great argument in support of the repeal of the Missouri Compromise is still to come. That argument is "the sacred right of self-government."

<sup>1</sup> See Bishop Fowler's Lecture, pages 133-134.



It seems our distinguished Senator has found great difficulty in getting his antagonists, even in the Senate, to meet him fairly on this argument. Some poet has said:

<sup>1</sup>“Fools rush in where angels fear to tread.” °

At the hazard of being thought one of the fools of this quotation, I meet that argument — I rush in — I take that bull by the horns. I trust I understand and truly estimate the right of self-government. My faith in the proposition that each man should do precisely as he pleases with all which is exclusively his own lies at the foundation of the sense of justice there is in me. I extend the principle to communities of men as well as to individuals. I so extend it because it is politically wise, as well as naturally just; politically wise in saving us from broils about matters which do not concern us. Here, or at Washington, I would not trouble myself with the oyster laws of Virginia, or the cranberry laws of Indiana. The doctrine of self-government is right, — absolutely and eternally right, — but it has no just application as here attempted. Or perhaps I should rather say that whether it has such application depends upon whether a negro is not or is a man. If he is not a man, in that case he who is a man may as a matter of self-government do just what he pleases with him. But if the negro is a man, is it not to that extent a total destruction of self-government to say that he too shall not govern himself? When the white man governs himself, that is self-government; but when he governs himself, and also governs another man, that

<sup>1</sup> Phrases marked thus: °, are commented upon in the notes.



is more than self-government — that is despotism. If the negro is a man, why then my ancient faith teaches me that “all men are created equal,” and that there can be no moral right in connection with one man’s making a slave of another.

Judge Douglas frequently, with bitter irony and sarcasm, paraphrases our argument by saying: “The white people of Nebraska are good enough to govern themselves, but they are not good enough to govern a few miserable negroes.”

Well, I doubt not that the people of Nebraska are and will continue to be as good as the average of people elsewhere. I do not say the contrary. What I do say is that no man is good enough to govern another man without that other’s consent. I say this is the leading principle, the sheet-anchor of American republicanism. Our Declaration of Independence says:

“We hold these truths to be self-evident: That all men are created equal; that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights; that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. That to secure these rights, governments are instituted among men, *deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed.*”

I have quoted so much at this time merely to show that, according to our ancient faith, the just powers of government are derived from the consent of the governed. Now the relation of master and slave is *pro tanto* a total violation of this principle. The master not only governs the slave without his consent, but he governs him by a set of rules altogether different from those which he prescribes for himself. Allow all the governed



an equal voice in the government, and that, and that only, is self-government.

Let it not be said I am contending for the establishment of political and social equality between the whites and blacks. I have already said the contrary. I am not combating the argument of necessity, arising from the fact that the blacks are already among us; but I am combating what is set up as a moral argument for allowing them to be taken where they have never yet been — arguing against the extension of a bad thing, which, where it already exists, we must of necessity manage as we best can.

In support of his application of the doctrine of self-government, Senator Douglas has sought to bring to his aid the opinions and examples of our Revolutionary fathers. I am glad he has done this. I love the sentiments of those old-time men, and shall be most happy to abide by their opinions. He shows us that when it was in contemplation for the colonies to break off from Great Britain, and set up a new government for themselves, several of the States instructed their delegates to go for the measure, provided each State should be allowed to regulate its domestic concerns in its own way. I do not quote; but this in substance. This was right; I see nothing objectionable in it. I also think it probable that it had some reference to the existence of slavery among them. I will not deny that it had. But had it any reference to the carrying of slavery into new countries? That is the question, and we will let the fathers themselves answer it.

This same generation of men, and mostly the same individuals of the generation who declared this principle,



who declared independence, who fought the war of the Revolution through, who afterward made the Constitution under which we still live — these same men passed the Ordinance of '87,<sup>o</sup> declaring that slavery should never go to the Northwest Territory. I have no doubt Judge Douglas thinks they were very inconsistent in this. It is a question of discrimination between them and him. But there is not an inch of ground left for his claiming that their opinions, their example, their authority, are on his side in the controversy.

Again, is not Nebraska, while a Territory, a part of us? Do we not own the country? And if we surrender the control of it, do we not surrender the right of self-government? It is part of ourselves. If you say we shall not control it, because it is only part, the same is true of every other part; and when all the parts are gone, what has become of the whole? What is then left of us? What use for the General Government, when there is nothing left for it to govern?

But you say this question should be left to the people of Nebraska, because they are more particularly interested. If this be the rule, you must leave it to each individual to say for himself whether he will have slaves. What better moral right have thirty-one citizens of Nebraska to say that the thirty-second shall not hold slaves than the people of the thirty-one States have to say that slavery shall not go into the thirty-second State at all?

But if it is a sacred right for the people of Nebraska to take and hold slaves there, it is equally their sacred right to buy them where they can buy them cheapest; and that, undoubtedly, will be on the coast of Africa,



provided you will consent not to hang them for going there to buy them. You must remove this restriction, too, from the sacred right of self-government. I am aware, you say, that taking slaves from the States to Nebraska does not make slaves of freemen; but the African slave-trader can say just as much. He does not catch free negroes and bring them here. He finds them already slaves in the hands of their black captors, and he honestly buys them at the rate of a red cotton handkerchief a head. This is very cheap, and it is a great abridgment of the sacred right of self-government to hang men for engaging in this profitable trade.

Another important objection to this application of the right of self-government is that it enables the first few to deprive the succeeding many of a free exercise of the right of self-government. The first few may get slavery in, and the subsequent many cannot easily get it out. How common is the remark now in the slave States, "If we were only clear of our slaves, how much better it would be for us." They are actually deprived of the privilege of governing themselves as they would, by the action of a very few in the beginning. The same thing was true of the whole nation at the time our Constitution was formed.

Whether slavery shall go into Nebraska, or other new Territories, is not a matter of exclusive concern to the people who may go there. The whole nation is interested that the best use shall be made of these Territories. We want them for homes of free white people. This they cannot be, to any considerable extent, if slavery shall be planted within them. Slave States are places for poor white people to remove from, not



to remove to.° New free States are the places for poor people to go to, and better their condition. For this use the nation needs these Territories.

Still further: there are constitutional relations between the slave and free States which are degrading to the latter. We are under legal obligations to catch and return their runaway slaves to them: a sort of dirty, disagreeable job, which, I believe, as a general rule, the slaveholders will not perform for one another. Then again, in the control of the government — the management of the partnership affairs — they have greatly the advantage of us. By the Constitution each State has two senators, each has a number of representatives in proportion to the number of its people, and each has a number of presidential electors equal to the whole number of its senators and representatives together. But in ascertaining the number of the people for this purpose, five slaves are counted as being equal to three whites.° The slaves do not vote; they are only counted and so used as to swell the influence of the white people's votes. The practical effect of this is more aptly shown by a comparison of the States of South Carolina and Maine. South Carolina has six representatives, and so has Maine; South Carolina has eight presidential electors, and so has Maine. This is precise equality so far; and of course they are equal in senators, each having two. Thus in the control of the government the two States are equals precisely. But how are they in the number of their white people? Maine has 581,813, while South Carolina has 274,567; Maine has twice as many as South Carolina, and 32,679 over. Thus, each white man in South Carolina is



more than the double of any man in Maine. This is all because South Carolina, besides her free people, has 384,984 slaves. The South Carolinian has precisely the same advantage over the white man in every other free State as well as in Maine. He is more than the double of any one of us in this crowd. The same advantage, but not to the same extent, is held by all the citizens of the slave States over those of the free; and it is an absolute truth, without an exception, that there is no voter in any slave State but who has more legal power in the government than any voter in any free State. There is no instance of exact equality; and the disadvantage is against us the whole chapter through. This principle, in the aggregate, gives the slave States in the present Congress twenty additional representatives, being seven more than the whole majority by which they passed the Nebraska Bill.

Now all this is manifestly unfair; yet I do not mention it to complain of it, in so far as it is already settled. It is in the Constitution, and I do not for that cause, or any other cause, propose to destroy, or alter, or disregard the Constitution. I stand to it, fairly, fully, and firmly.

But when I am told I must leave it altogether to other people to say whether new partners are to be bred up and brought into the firm, on the same degrading terms against me, I respectfully demur. I insist that whether I shall be a whole man, or only the half of one, in comparison with others, is a question in which I am somewhat concerned, and one which no other man can have a sacred right of deciding for me. If I am wrong in this — if it really be a sacred right of



self-government in the man who shall go to Nebraska to decide whether he will be the equal of me or the double of me, then, after he shall have exercised that right, and thereby shall have reduced me to a still smaller fraction of a man than I already am, I should like for some gentleman, deeply skilled in the mysteries of sacred rights, to provide himself with a microscope, and peep about, and find out, if he can, what has become of my sacred rights. They will surely be too small for detection with the naked eye.

Finally, I insist that if there is anything which it is the duty of the whole people to never intrust to any hands but their own, that thing is the preservation and perpetuity of their own liberties and institutions. And if they shall think, as I do, that the extension of slavery endangers them more than any or all other causes, how recreant to themselves if they submit the question, and with it the fate of their country, to a mere handful of men bent only on self-interest. If this question of slavery extension were an insignificant one — one having no power to do harm — it might be shuffled aside in this way; and being, as it is, the great Behemoth of danger, ° shall the strong grip of the nation be loosened upon him, to intrust him to the hands of such feeble keepers?

I have done with this mighty argument of self-government. Go, sacred thing! Go in peace.

But Nebraska is urged as a great Union-saving measure. Well, I too go for saving the Union. Much as I hate slavery, I would consent to the extension of it rather than see the Union dissolved, just as I would consent to any great evil to avoid a greater one. But



when I go to Union-saving, I must believe, at least, that the means I employ have some adaptation to the end. To my mind, Nebraska has no such adaptation.

“ It hath no relish of salvation in it ” °

It is an aggravation, rather, of the only one thing which ever endangers the Union. When it came upon us, all was peace and quiet. The nation was looking to the forming of new bonds of union, and a long course of peace and prosperity seemed to lie before us. In the whole range of possibility, there scarcely appears to me to have been anything out of which the slavery agitation could have been revived, except the very project of repealing the Missouri Compromise. Every inch of territory we owned already had a definite settlement of the slavery question, by which all parties were pledged to abide. Indeed, there was no uninhabited country on the continent which we could acquire, if we except some extreme northern regions which are wholly out of the question.

In this state of affairs the Genius of Discord himself could scarcely have invented a way of again setting us by the ears but by turning back and destroying the peace measures of the past. The counsels of that Genius seem to have prevailed. The Missouri Compromise was repealed; and here we are in the midst of a new slavery agitation, such, I think, as we have never seen before. Who is responsible for this? Is it those who resist the measure, or those who causelessly brought it forward and pressed it through, having reason to know, and in fact knowing, it must and would be so resisted? It could not but be expected by its author



that it would be looked upon as a measure for the extension of slavery, aggravated by a gross breach of faith.

Argue as you will and long as you will, this is the naked front and aspect of the measure. And in this aspect it could not but produce agitation. Slavery is founded in the selfishness of man's nature — opposition to it in his love of justice. These principles are an eternal antagonism, and when brought into collision so fiercely as slavery extension brings them, shocks and throes and convulsions must ceaselessly follow. Repeal the Missouri Compromise, repeal all compromises, repeal the Declaration of Independence, repeal all past history, you still cannot repeal human nature. It still will be the abundance of man's heart that slavery extension is wrong, and out of the abundance of his heart his mouth will continue to speak.



# LINCOLN'S SPRINGFIELD SPEECH

## *Introduction*

Lincoln delivered his famous "Divided House Speech" on June 16, 1858, at Springfield, Illinois, to the Republican State Convention which had named him as its candidate for United States Senator. His Democratic opponent was Stephen A. Douglas, who at that time was by far the more widely known of the two candidates. Although Lincoln had served one term in Congress and had been considered as a possible candidate for the vice-presidency by the convention which nominated Frémont, his reputation was confined to his own state. On the other hand, Douglas had for years been regarded as a power in national politics: he had proved himself to be a skilful leader, a ready debater, and a superb fighter. He realized, however, that in Lincoln he had a foeman worthy of his steel. As soon as he heard that Lincoln was to be his opponent he said, "I shall have my hands full. He is the strong man of his party — full of wit, facts, dates, and the best stump-speaker, with his droll ways and dry jokes, in the West. He is as honest as he is shrewd, and if I beat him my victory will be hardly won."

From the very first the campaign was more than a mere office-seeking contest: it was a battle between two great principles. The Springfield speech is a clear, succinct statement of the dominating issue of the day as Lincoln saw it.

Like Banquo's ghost, the slavery question would not down. At the time of the Lincoln-Douglas senatorial campaign it was the one overshadowing issue. In 1854 Congress had passed the Kansas-Nebraska Act which had been introduced by Douglas. There was little doubt that in Nebraska, the northern territory, the antislavery element would predomi-



nate; but both factions hoped to secure the southern territory, called Kansas. Armed Missourians swept across the border to win it for the South; aggressive New Englanders, equipped with Sharp rifles, swarmed in for the purpose of making it free. Kansas was soon the scene of bloody conflicts. By intimidation and force a proslavery legislature was elected, which passed a code of laws making it a crime to assert that "persons had not the right to hold slaves." To protect themselves the antislavery people met at Topeka and attempted to set up a free state government. On account of the riotous condition of things President Pierce ordered the United States troops to disperse the Topeka legislature.

This was the situation at the time of the presidential election of 1856. On account of the unpopularity of the Kansas-Nebraska measure, Douglas failed to secure the Democratic nomination, which went to James Buchanan, who easily defeated his Republican opponent, John C. Frémont. Four days after the inauguration of the new President, Chief Justice Taney, a majority of the Supreme Court concurring, decided in the famous Dred Scott case that neither Congress nor a territorial legislature had the constitutional right to prohibit slavery in a territory. Douglas approved of this decision, though it was inconsistent with his own theory of "squatter sovereignty," which conceded to the citizens of a territory the right to do as they pleased with regard to slavery.

In 1857 a convention met at Lecompton to frame a state constitution for Kansas. The free state men refused to attend either the convention or the later election held for the purpose of voting on the constitution which the convention had proposed. Nevertheless, the Buchanan administration tried to force through Congress a measure admitting Kansas to statehood under the Lecompton constitution. Owing to the strenuous opposition of Douglas the scheme failed, but Douglas incurred the enmity of the Buchanan administration. Hence in his campaign for re-election he had to combat not only the Republicans but a powerful



faction in his own party. However, in spite of this handicap he entered the contest under very favorable conditions. He was a strong and resourceful politician, and he enjoyed by reason of his recent victory over the administration a prestige possessed at that time by no other American statesman.

About a month after Lincoln's speech at Springfield Douglas returned to his home in Chicago, where he was given a "magnificent and enthusiastic" reception. In the course of his remarks he vigorously attacked the position taken by Lincoln at Springfield. A few days later Lincoln challenged him to a series of seven debates, which Douglas after some hesitation accepted, and the fight began in earnest.

Without doubt this senatorial campaign in Illinois in 1858 was one of the most exciting and momentous battles ever fought in the arena of American politics.

"The setting of the spectacle had the picturesqueness of the times and the region. The people gathered in vast multitudes to the number of ten thousand, even of twenty thousand, at the places named for the speech-making. They came in their wagons, bringing provisions, and making camps in the groves and fields. There were bonfires and music, parading and drinking. He was a singular man in Illinois who was not present at one of these encounters." ("Abraham Lincoln," John Morse, vol. i, page 121.)

The Republican party elected its state ticket, but Douglas received a majority of eight votes in the legislature. But though Douglas in these debates had won the success of the hour, Lincoln had insured for himself a larger victory in 1860.

"Since 'nothing succeeds like success,' it was for the most part supposed in the East that as Douglas had won the prize, he had overpowered his antagonist in debate. This remained the prevalent opinion until in 1860 the debates were published in book form. Since then the matured judgment is that in the dialectic contest Lincoln got the better of Douglas. No one would now undertake to affirm the contrary; but Lincoln had an immense advantage in having the just cause and the one to which public sentiment was tending." (J. F. Rhodes, "History of the United States," vol. ii, page 343.)



So the Springfield speech was really the beginning of the Lincoln-Douglas debates; in it Lincoln laid down the platform which he defended throughout the campaign. It was the most carefully prepared speech that he ever made. The extraordinary excitement which it created was due to the radicalism voiced in the exordium. Up to that time no American statesman had dared to express himself so frankly upon such questions. "Before delivering his speech he invited a dozen or so of his friends over to the library of the state house, where he read and submitted it to them. After the reading he asked each man for his opinion. Some condemned, and not one endorsed it. One man, more forcible than elegant, characterized it as a 'fool utterance'; another said the doctrine was 'ahead of its time'; and still another contended that it would drive away a good many voters fresh from the Democratic ranks. Each man attacked it in his criticism. I was the last to respond. Although the doctrine announced was rather rank, yet it suited my views, and I said, 'Lincoln, deliver that speech as read and it will make you President.' At the time I hardly realized the force of my prophecy. Having patiently listened to these various criticisms from his friends—all of which with a single exception were adverse—he rose from his chair, and after alluding to the careful study and intense thought he had given the question, he answered all their objections substantially as follows: 'Friends, this thing has been retarded long enough. The time has come when these sentiments should be uttered; and if it is decreed that I should go down because of this speech, then let me go down linked to the truth—let me die in the advocacy of what is just and right.' The next day the speech was delivered just as we had heard it read. Up to this time Seward had held sway over the North by his 'higher-law' sentiments, but the 'house-divided-against-itself' speech by Lincoln in my opinion drove the nail into Seward's political coffin." ("Abraham Lincoln," Herndon and Weik, vol. ii, pp. 68-69.)

Speaking of this address, Lincoln himself said, "If I had to draw a pen across my record and erase my whole life from



remembrance, and I had one choice allowed me that I might save from the wreck, I would choose that speech and leave it to the world just as it is.”

The Springfield speech was of great influence in making Abraham Lincoln President of the United States.

SPEECH DELIVERED AT SPRINGFIELD, ILLINOIS, AT  
THE REPUBLICAN STATE CONVENTION<sup>1</sup>

JUNE 16, 1858

*Mr. President and Gentlemen of the Convention:* If we could first know where we are, and whither we are tending, we could better judge what to do, and how to do it. We are now far into the fifth year since a policy was initiated with the avowed object and confident promise of putting an end to slavery agitation. Under the operation of that policy, that agitation has not only not ceased, but has constantly augmented. In my opinion, it will not cease until a crisis shall have been reached and passed. “A house divided<sup>o</sup> against itself cannot stand.” I believe this government cannot endure permanently half slave and half free. I do not expect the Union to be dissolved — I do not expect the house to fall — but I do expect it will cease to be divided. It will become all one thing, or all the other. Either the opponents of slavery will arrest the further spread of it, and place it where the public mind shall rest in the belief that it is in the course of ultimate extinction; or its advocates will push it forward till it shall become alike lawful in all the States, old as well as new, North as well as South.

Have we no tendency to the latter condition?

<sup>1</sup> This convention nominated Mr. Lincoln for U. S. Senator.



Let any one who doubts carefully contemplate that now almost complete legal combination — piece of machinery, so to speak — compounded of the Nebraska doctrine and the Dred Scott decision.° Let him consider not only what work the machinery is adapted to do, and how well adapted; but also let him study the history of its construction, and trace, if he can, or rather fail, if he can, to trace the evidences of design and concert of action among its chief architects, from the beginning.

The new year of 1854 found slavery excluded° from more than half the States by State constitutions, and from most of the national territory by congressional prohibition. Four days later commenced the struggle which ended in repealing that congressional prohibition. This opened all the national territory° to slavery, and was the first point gained.

But, so far, Congress only had acted; and an indorsement by the people, real or apparent, was indispensable to save the point already gained and give chance for more.

This necessity had not been overlooked, but had been provided for, as well as might be, in the notable argument of “squatter sovereignty,” otherwise called “sacred right of self-government,” which latter phrase, though expressive of the only rightful basis of any government, was so perverted in this attempted use of it as to amount to just this: That if any one man choose to enslave another, no third man shall be allowed to object. That argument was incorporated into the Nebraska bill itself, in the language which follows: “It being the true intent and meaning of this act not to



legislate slavery into any Territory or State, nor to exclude it therefrom; but to leave the people thereof perfectly free to form and regulate their domestic institutions in their own way, subject only to the Constitution of the United States." Then opened the roar of loose declamation in favor of "squatter sovereignty" and "sacred right of self-government," "But," said opposition members, "let us amend the bill so as to expressly declare that the people of the Territory may exclude slavery." "Not we," said the friends of the measure; and down they voted the amendment.<sup>o</sup>

While the Nebraska bill was passing through Congress, a law case involving the question of a negro's freedom, by reason of his owner having voluntarily taken him first into a free State and then into a Territory covered by the congressional prohibition, and held him as a slave for a long time in each, was passing through the United States Circuit Court for the District of Missouri; and both Nebraska bill and lawsuit were brought to a decision in the same month of May, 1854. The negro's name was Dred Scott, which name now designates the decision finally made in the case. Before the then next presidential election, the law case came to and was argued in the Supreme Court of the United States; but the decision of it was deferred until after the election. Still, before the election, Senator Trumbull, on the floor of the Senate, requested the leading advocate of the Nebraska bill to state his opinion whether the people of a Territory can constitutionally exclude slavery from their limits; and the latter answered: "That is a question for the Supreme Court."



The election came. Mr. Buchanan was elected,<sup>o</sup> and the indorsement, such as it was, secured. That was the second point gained. The indorsement, however, fell short of a clear popular majority by nearly four hundred thousand votes, and so, perhaps, was not overwhelmingly reliable and satisfactory. The outgoing President, in his last annual message,<sup>o</sup> as impressively as possible echoed back upon the people the weight and authority of the indorsement! The Supreme Court met again; did not announce their decision, but ordered a reargument. The presidential inauguration came, and still no decision of the court; but the incoming President in his inaugural address fervently exhorted the people to abide by the forthcoming decision, whatever it might be. Then, in a few days, came the decision.

The reputed author of the Nebraska bill finds an early occasion to make a speech at this capital indorsing the Dred Scott decision, and vehemently denouncing all opposition to it. The new President, too, seizes the early occasion of the Silliman letter<sup>o</sup> to indorse and strongly construe that decision, and to express his astonishment that any different view had ever been entertained!

At length a squabble springs up between the President and the author of the Nebraska bill, on the mere question of fact, whether the Lecompton constitution<sup>o</sup> was or was not, in any just sense, made by the people of Kansas; and in that quarrel, the latter declares that all he wants is a fair vote for the people, and that he cares not whether slavery be voted down or voted up. I do not understand his declaration that he cares not



whether slavery be voted down or voted up to be intended by him other than as an apt definition of the policy he would impress upon the public mind — the principle for which he declares he has suffered so much, and is ready to suffer to the end. And well may he cling to that principle. If he has any parental feeling, well may he cling to it. That principle is the only shred left of his original Nebraska doctrine. Under the Dred Scott decision, “squatter sovereignty” squatted out of existence, tumbled down like temporary scaffolding,—like the mold at the foundry, served through one blast, and fell back into loose sand, — helped to carry an election, and then was kicked to the winds. His late joint struggle with the Republicans against the Lecompton constitution involves nothing of the original Nebraska doctrine. That struggle was made on a point — the right of a people to make their own constitution — upon which he and the Republicans have never differed.

The several points of the Dred Scott decision, in connection with Senator Douglas’s “care not” policy, constitute the piece of machinery in its present state of advancement. This was the third point gained. The working points of that machinery are:

(1) That no negro slave, imported as such from Africa, and no descendant of such slave, can ever be a citizen of any State, in the sense of that term as used in the Constitution of the United States. This point is made in order to deprive the negro in every possible event of the benefit of that provision of the United States Constitution which declares that “the citizens of each State shall be entitled to all the privileges and immunities of citizens in the several States.”



(2) That "subject to the Constitution of the United States," neither Congress nor a territorial legislature can exclude slavery from any United States Territory. This point is made in order that individual men may fill up the Territories with slaves, without danger of losing them as property, and thus enhance the chances of permanency to the institution through all the future.

(3) That whether the holding a negro in actual slavery in a free State makes him free as against the holder, the United States courts will not decide, but will leave to be decided by the courts of any slave State the negro may be forced into by the master. This point is made not to be pressed immediately, but, if acquiesced in for a while, and apparently indorsed by the people at an election, then to sustain the logical conclusion that what Dred Scott's master might lawfully do with Dred Scott in the free State of Illinois, every other master may lawfully do with any other one or one thousand slaves in Illinois or in any other free State.

Auxiliary to all this, and working hand-in-hand with it, the Nebraska doctrine, or what is left of it, is to educate and mold public opinion, at least Northern public opinion, not to care whether slavery is voted down or voted up. This shows exactly where we now are, and partially, also, whither we are tending.

It will throw additional light on the latter, to go back and run the mind over the string of historical facts already stated. Several things will now appear less dark and mysterious than they did when they were transpiring. The people were to be left "perfectly free,"



“subject only to the Constitution.” What the Constitution had to do with it outsiders could not then see. Plainly enough now, it was an exactly fitted niche for the Dred Scott decision to afterward come in, and declare the perfect freedom of the people to be just no freedom at all. Why was the amendment expressly declaring the right of the people voted down? Plainly enough now, the adoption of it would have spoiled the niche for the Dred Scott decision. Why was the court decision held up? Why even a senator’s individual opinion withheld till after the presidential election? Plainly enough now, the speaking out then would have damaged the “perfectly free” argument upon which the election was to be carried. Why the outgoing President’s felicitation on the indorsement? Why the delay of a reargument? Why the incoming President’s advance exhortation in favor of the decision? These things look like the cautious patting and petting of a spirited horse preparatory to mounting him, when it is dreaded that he may give the rider a fall. And why the hasty after-indorsement of the decision by the President and others?

We cannot absolutely know that all these adaptations are the result of preconcert. But when we see a lot of framed timbers, different portions of which we know have been gotten out at different times and places, and by different workmen,—Stephen, Franklin, Roger, and James,<sup>o</sup> for instance,—and we see those timbers joined together, and see they exactly make the frame of a house or a mill, all the tenons and mortices exactly fitting, and all the lengths and proportions of the different pieces exactly adapted to their respective



places, and not a piece too many or too few, not omitting even scaffolding — or, if a single piece be lacking, we see the place in the frame exactly fitted and prepared yet to bring such piece in — in such a case we find it impossible not to believe that Stephen and Franklin and Roger and James all understood one another from the beginning, and all worked upon a common plan or draft drawn up before the first blow was struck.

It should not be overlooked that, by the Nebraska bill, the people of a State as well as Territory were to be left “perfectly free,” “subject only to the Constitution.” Why mention a State? They were legislating for Territories, and not for or about States. Certainly the people of a State are and ought to be subject to the Constitution of the United States; but why is mention of this lugged into this merely territorial law? Why are the people of a Territory and the people of a State therein lumped together, and their relation to the Constitution therein treated as being precisely the same? While the opinion of the court by Chief Justice Taney, in the Dred Scott case, and the separate opinions of all the concurring judges, expressly declare that the Constitution of the United States neither permits Congress nor a territorial legislature to exclude slavery from any United States Territory, they all omit to declare whether or not the same Constitution permits a State, or the people of a State, to exclude it. Possibly, this is a mere omission; but who can be quite sure, if McLean or Curtis<sup>o</sup> had sought to get into the opinion a declaration of unlimited power in the people of a State to exclude slavery from their limits, just as Chase and Mace sought to get such declaration, in



behalf of the people of a Territory, into the Nebraska bill — I ask, who can be quite sure that it would not have been voted down in the one case as it had been in the other? The nearest approach to the point of declaring the power of a State over slavery is made by Judge Nelson. He approaches it more than once, using the precise idea, and almost the language too, of the Nebraska act. On one occasion his exact language is: “Except in cases where the power is restrained by the Constitution of the United States, the law of the State is supreme over the subject of slavery within its jurisdiction.” In what cases the power of the State is so restrained by the United States Constitution is left an open question, precisely as the same question as to the restraint on the power of the Territories was left open in the Nebraska act. Put this and that together, and we have another nice little niche, which we may, ere long, see filled with another Supreme Court decision declaring that the Constitution of the United States does not permit a State to exclude slavery from its limits. And this may especially be expected if the doctrine of “care not whether slavery be voted down or voted up” shall gain upon the public mind sufficiently to give promise that such a decision can be maintained when made.

Such a decision is all that slavery now lacks of being alike lawful in all the States. Welcome, or unwelcome, such decision is probably coming, and will soon be upon us, unless the power of the present political dynasty shall be met and overthrown. We shall lie down pleasantly dreaming that the people of Missouri are on the verge of making their State free, and we



shall awake to the reality instead that the Supreme Court has made Illinois a slave State. To meet and overthrow the power of that dynasty is the work now before all those who would prevent that consummation. That is what we have to do. How can we best do it?

There are those who denounce us openly to their own friends, and yet whisper us softly that Senator Douglas is the aptest instrument there is with which to effect that object. They wish us to infer all from the fact that he now has a little quarrel with the present head of the dynasty; and that he has regularly voted with us on a single point upon which he and we have never differed. They remind us that he is a great man, and that the largest of us are very small ones. Let this be granted. But "a living dog is better than a dead lion."° Judge Douglas, if not a dead lion for this work, is at least a caged and toothless one. How can he oppose the advances of slavery? He don't care anything about it. His avowed mission is impressing the "public heart" to care nothing about it. A leading Douglas Democratic newspaper thinks Douglas's superior talent will be needed to resist the revival of the African slave trade. Does Douglas believe an effort to revive that trade is approaching? He has not said so. Does he really think so? But if it is, how can he resist it? For years he has labored to prove it a sacred right of white men to take negro slaves into the new Territories. Can he possibly show that it is less a sacred right to buy them where they can be bought cheapest? And unquestionably they can be bought cheaper in Africa than in Virginia. He has done all in his power to reduce the whole question of slavery to one of a mere



right of property; and as such, how can he oppose the foreign slave trade? How can he refuse that trade in that "property" shall be "perfectly free," unless he does it as a protection to the home production? And as the home producers will probably not ask the protection, he will be wholly without a ground of opposition.

Senator Douglas holds, we know, that a man may rightfully be wiser to-day than he was yesterday — that he may rightfully change when he finds himself wrong. But can we, for that reason, run ahead, and infer that he will make any particular change, of which he himself has given no intimation? Can we safely base our action upon any such vague inference? Now, as ever, I wish not to misrepresent Judge Douglas's position, question his motives, or do aught that can be personally offensive to him. Whenever, if ever, he and we can come together on principle so that our great cause may have assistance from his great ability, I hope to have interposed no adventitious obstacle. But clearly, he is not now with us — he does not pretend to be — he does not promise ever to be.

Our cause, then, must be intrusted to, and conducted by, its own undoubted friends — those whose hands are free, whose hearts are in the work, who do care for the result. Two years ago the Republicans of the nation mustered over thirteen hundred thousand strong. We did this under the single impulse of resistance to a common danger, with every external circumstance against us. Of strange, discordant, and even hostile elements, we gathered from the four winds, and formed and fought the battle through, under the constant hot fire of a disciplined, proud, and pampered enemy. Did we



brave all then to falter now? — now, when that same enemy is wavering, dissevered, and belligerent? The result is not doubtful. We shall not fail — if we stand firm, we shall not fail. Wise counsels may accelerate or mistakes delay it, but, sooner or later, the victory is sure to come.



## LINCOLN'S COLUMBUS SPEECH

### *Introduction*

“Lincoln’s more important political work of the year 1859 was the part he took in the canvass in the state of Ohio, where a governor was to be chosen at the October election, and where the result would decide not merely the present and local strength of the rival candidates, but also to some extent indicate the prospects and probabilities of the presidential campaign of 1860. The Ohio Democrats had called Douglas into their canvass, and the Republicans, as soon as they learned the fact, arranged that Lincoln should come and answer him. There was a fitness in this, not merely because Lincoln’s joint debates with him in Illinois in the previous summer were so successful, but also because Douglas in nearly every speech made since then, both in his Southern tour and elsewhere, alluded to the Illinois campaign, and to Lincoln by name, especially to what he characterized as his political heresies. By thus everywhere making Lincoln and Lincoln’s utterances a public target, Douglas himself, in effect, prolonged and extended the joint debates over the whole Union. . . .

“Thus Lincoln’s advent in the Ohio campaign attracted much more than usual notice. He made but two speeches, one at Columbus, and one at Cincinnati, at each of which places Douglas had recently preceded him. Lincoln’s addresses not only brought him large and appreciative audiences, but they obtained an unprecedented circulation in print. In the main, they reproduced and tersely re-applied the ideas and arguments developed in the senatorial campaign in Illinois, adding, however, searching comments on the newer positions and points to which Douglas had



since advanced." ("Abraham Lincoln: A History," by John G. Nicolay and John Hay.)

SPEECH DELIVERED AT COLUMBUS, OHIO  
SEPTEMBER 16, 1859

What is that Dred Scott decision?° Judge Douglas labors to show that it is one thing, while I think it is altogether different. It is a long opinion, but it is all embodied in this short statement: "The Constitution of the United States forbids Congress to deprive a man of his property without due process of law; the right of property in slaves is distinctly and expressly affirmed in that Constitution: therefore, if Congress shall undertake to say that a man's slave is no longer his slave when he crosses a certain line into a Territory, that is depriving him of his property without due process of law, and is unconstitutional." There is the whole Dred Scott decision. They add that if Congress cannot do so itself, Congress cannot confer any power to do so, and hence any effort by the territorial legislature to do either of these things is absolutely decided against. It is a foregone conclusion by that court.

Now, as to this indirect mode by "unfriendly legislation," all lawyers here will readily understand that such a proposition cannot be tolerated for a moment, because a legislature cannot indirectly do that which it cannot accomplish directly. Then I say any legislation to control this property, as property, for its benefit as property, would be hailed by this Dred Scott Supreme Court, and fully sustained; but any legislation driving slave property out, or destroying it as property, directly



or indirectly, will most assuredly by that court be held unconstitutional.

Judge Douglas says that if the Constitution carries slavery into the Territories, beyond the power of the people of the Territories to control it as other property, then it follows logically that every one who swears to support the Constitution of the United States must give that support to that property which it needs. And if the Constitution carries slavery into the Territories<sup>o</sup> beyond the power of the people to control it as other property, then it also carries it into the States,<sup>o</sup> because the Constitution is the supreme law of the land. Now, gentlemen, if it were not for my excessive modesty I would say that I told that very thing to Judge Douglas quite a year ago. This argument is here in print, and if it were not for my modesty, as I said, I might call your attention to it. If you read it, you will find that I not only made that argument, but made it better than he has made it since.

There is, however, this difference. I say now, and said then, there is no sort of question that the Supreme Court has decided that it is the right of the slaveholder to take his slave and hold him in the Territory; and, saying this, Judge Douglas himself admits the conclusion. He says if that is so, this consequence will follow; and because this consequence would follow, his argument is, the decision cannot therefore be that way — “that would spoil my popular sovereignty, and it cannot be possible that this great principle has been squelched out in this extraordinary way. It might be, if it were not for the extraordinary consequences of spoiling my humbug.”



Another feature of the Judge's argument about the Dred Scott case is an effort to show that that decision deals altogether in declarations of negatives; that the Constitution does not affirm anything as expounded by the Dred Scott decision, but it only declares a want of power, a total absence of power, in reference to the Territories. It seems to be his purpose to make the whole of that decision to result in a mere negative declaration of a want of power in Congress to do anything in relation to this matter in the Territories. I know the opinion of the judges states that there is a total absence of power; but that is, unfortunately, not all it states; for the judges add that the right of property in a slave is distinctly and expressly affirmed in the Constitution. It does not stop at saying that the right of property in a slave is recognized in the Constitution, is declared to exist somewhere in the Constitution, but says it is affirmed in the Constitution. Its language is equivalent to saying that it is embodied and so woven in that instrument that it cannot be detached without breaking the Constitution itself. In a word, it is part of the Constitution.

Douglas is singularly unfortunate in his effort to make out that decision to be altogether negative, when the express language at the vital part is that this is distinctly affirmed in the Constitution. I think myself, and I repeat it here, that this decision does not merely carry slavery into the Territories, but by its logical conclusion it carries it into the States in which we live. One provision of that Constitution is, that it shall be the supreme law of the land, — I do not quote the language, — any constitution or law of any State to



the contrary notwithstanding. This Dred Scott decision says that the right of property in a slave is affirmed in that Constitution which is the supreme law of the land, any State constitution or law notwithstanding. Then I say that to destroy a thing which is distinctly affirmed and supported by the supreme law of the land, even by a State constitution or law, is a violation of that supreme law, and there is no escape from it. In my judgment there is no avoiding that result, save that the American people shall see that State constitutions are better construed than our Constitution is construed in that decision. They must take care that it is more faithfully and truly carried out than it is there expounded.

I must hasten to a conclusion. Near the beginning of my remarks I said that this insidious Douglas popular sovereignty is the measure that now threatens the purpose of the Republican party to prevent slavery from being nationalized in the United States. I propose to ask your attention for a little while to some propositions in affirmance of that statement. Take it just as it stands, and apply it as a principle; extend and apply that principle elsewhere, and consider where it will lead you. I now put this proposition, that Judge Douglas's popular sovereignty applied will reopen the African slave-trade;<sup>o</sup> and I will demonstrate it by any variety of ways in which you can turn the subject or look at it.

The Judge says that the people of the Territories have the right, by his principle, to have slaves if they want them. Then I say that the people in Georgia have the right to buy slaves in Africa if they want them,



and I defy any man on earth to show any distinction between the two things — to show that the one is either more wicked or more unlawful; to show, on original principles, that one is better or worse than the other; or to show by the Constitution that one differs a whit from the other. He will tell me, doubtless, that there is no constitutional provision against people taking slaves into the new Territories, and I tell him that there is equally no constitutional provision against buying slaves in Africa. He will tell you that a people in the exercise of popular sovereignty ought to do as they please about that thing, and have slaves if they want them; and I tell you that the people of Georgia are as much entitled to popular sovereignty, and to buy slaves in Africa, if they want them, as the people of the Territory are to have slaves if they want them. I ask any man, dealing honestly with himself, to point out a distinction. . . .

At the time the Constitution of the United States was adopted it was expected that the slave-trade would be abolished. I should assert, and insist upon that, if Judge Douglas denied it. But I know that it was equally expected that slavery would be excluded from the Territories, and I can show by history that in regard to these two things public opinion was exactly alike, while in regard to positive action, there was more done in the ordinance of '87 ° to resist the spread of slavery than was ever done to abolish the foreign slave-trade. Lest I be misunderstood, I say again that at the time of the formation of the Constitution, public expectation was that the slave-trade would be abolished, but no more so than that the spread of slavery in the Territo-



ries should be restrained. They stand alike, except that in the ordinance of '87 there was a mark left by public opinion, showing that it was more committed against the spread of slavery in the Territories than against the foreign slave-trade.

Compromise! What word of compromise was there about it? Why, the public sense was then in favor of the abolition of the slave-trade; but there was at the time a very great commercial interest involved in it, and extensive capital in that branch of trade. There were doubtless the incipient stages of improvement in the South in the way of farming, dependent on the slave-trade, and they made a proposition to Congress to abolish the trade after allowing it twenty years, a sufficient time for the capital and commerce engaged in it to be transferred to other channels. They made no provision that it should be abolished in twenty years; I do not doubt that they expected it would be; but they made no bargain about it. The public sentiment left no doubt in the minds of any that it would be done away. I repeat, there is nothing in the history of those times in favor of that matter being a compromise of the Constitution. It was the public expectation at the time, manifested in a thousand ways, that the spread of slavery should also be restricted.

Then I say, if this principle is established, that there is no wrong in slavery, and whoever wants it has a right to have it; that it is a matter of dollars and cents; a sort of question as to how they shall deal with brutes; that between us and the negro here there is no sort of question, but that at the South the question is between the negro and the crocodile; that it is



a mere matter of policy; that there is a perfect right, according to interest, to do just as you please — when this is done, where this doctrine prevails, the miners and sappers will have formed public opinion for the slave-trade. They will be ready for Jeff Davis and Stephens,<sup>o</sup> and other leaders of that company, to sound the bugle for the revival of the slave-trade, for the second Dred Scott decision, for the flood of slavery to be poured over the free States, while we shall be here tied down and helpless, and run over like sheep.



# LINCOLN'S COOPER INSTITUTE ADDRESS

## *Introduction*

Lincoln was ambitious. He was disappointed over his failure to win the senatorship. In speaking of his defeat he said that he felt "like the boy that stumped his toe; 'it hurt too bad to laugh and he was too big to cry.'" However, the debates had made him a national figure. The *New York Tribune* had published them in full, and they were widely read throughout the whole country. But before Lincoln could hope to achieve the presidency he must win the East. Consequently he was exceedingly anxious to present and expound his views before a representative Eastern audience; at last the opportunity came. In October, 1859, the Young Men's Republican Union of New York City invited him to deliver a "political lecture" before their association, an invitation which he gladly and promptly accepted.

Lincoln arrived in New York February 27, 1860, and two days later delivered his "political lecture" before a large and influential assemblage in Cooper Institute. He wore a shiny black suit, wrinkled and creased from having been ill-packed for a long time in his little valise. His audience was of a very different stamp from the holiday crowds he had been accustomed to face from the hustings of the frontier. The speaker was presented by William Cullen Bryant, who briefly and simply introduced him as "an eminent citizen of the West hitherto known to you only by reputation."

The address which Lincoln made on this occasion was that of a political philosopher, not the impromptu speech of a backwoods campaign orator which many had supposed him to be. Those who came expecting an exhibition of rhetorical fireworks of the spread-eagle pattern, if such there were,



experienced disappointment. The address bore every mark of laborious preparation. It was entirely devoid of anecdote or witticism, and was cold, logical and lucid.

The event and circumstances of Cooper Institute speech are thus described by Hon. Joseph H. Choate, who was present on that memorable occasion: "It is now forty years since I first saw and heard Abraham Lincoln, but the impression which he left on my mind is ineffaceable. After his great successes in the West he came to New York to make a political address. He appeared in every sense of the word like one of the plain people among whom he loved to be counted. At first sight there was nothing impressive or imposing about him—except that his great stature singled him out from the crowd; his clothes hung awkwardly on his giant frame, his face was of a dark pallor, without the slightest tinge of color; his seamed and rugged features bore the furrows of hardship and struggle; his deep-set eyes looked sad and anxious; his countenance in repose gave little evidence of that brain power which had raised him from the lowest to the highest station among his countrymen; as he talked to me before the meeting, he seemed ill at ease, with that sort of apprehension which a young man might feel before presenting himself to new and strange audience, whose critical disposition he dreaded. It was a great audience, including all the noted men—all the learned and cultured—of his party in New York: editors, clergymen, statesmen, lawyers, merchants, critics. They were all very curious to hear him. His fame as a powerful speaker had preceded him, and exaggerated rumor of his wit—the worst forerunner of an orator—had reached the East. When Mr. Bryant presented him, on the high platform of the Cooper Institute, a vast sea of eager upturned faces greeted him, full of intense curiosity to see what this rude child of the people was like. He was equal to the occasion. When he spoke he was transformed; his eye kindled, his voice rang, his face shone and seemed to light up the whole assembly. For an hour and a half he held his audience in the hollow of his hand. His style of speech and manner of delivery



were severely simple. What Lowell called 'the grand simplicities of the Bible,' with which he was so familiar, were reflected in his discourse. With no attempt at ornament or rhetoric, without parade or pretence, he spoke straight to the point. If any came expecting the turgid eloquence or the ribaldry of the frontier, they must have been startled at the earnest and sincere purity of his utterances. It was marvellous to see how this untutored man, by mere self-discipline and the chastening of his own spirit, had outgrown all meretricious arts, and found his own way to the grandeur and strength of absolute simplicity.

"He spoke upon the theme which he had mastered so thoroughly. He demonstrated by copious historical proofs and masterly logic that the fathers who created the Constitution in order to form a more perfect union, to establish justice, and to secure the blessings of liberty to themselves and their posterity, intended to empower the Federal Government to exclude slavery from the territories. In the kindest spirit, he protested against the avowed threat of the Southern States to destroy the Union if, in order to secure freedom in these vast regions out of which future States were to be carved, a Republican President were elected. He closed with an appeal to his audience, spoken with all the fire of his aroused and kindling conscience, with a full outpouring of his love of justice and liberty, to maintain their political purpose on that lofty and unassailable issue of right and wrong which alone could justify it, and not to be intimidated from their high resolve and sacred duty by any threats of destruction to the Government or of ruin to themselves. He concluded with this telling sentence, which drove the whole argument home to all our hearts: 'Let us have faith that right makes might, and in that faith let us to the end dare to do our duty as we understand it.' That night the great hall, and the next day the whole city, rang with delighted applause and congratulations, and he who had come as a stranger departed with the laurels of a great triumph."

From every standpoint the address was a success. The



papers printed it in full. The *Evening Post* declared that its columns were "indefinitely elastic" for Mr. Lincoln's speeches. The *Tribune* said, "No man ever made such an impression upon a New York audience." Even Horace Greeley, who had been somewhat an admirer of Douglas, pronounced it "unsurpassed" as an argument. The speech revealed Lincoln as one of the real leaders in national life. James Ford Rhodes says, "Before Lincoln made his Cooper Institute speech the mention of his name as a possible nominee for President would have been considered as a joke anywhere except in Illinois, Indiana, Ohio, and Iowa."

This was Lincoln's last carefully prepared political argument, and without a doubt it did much to determine the course of his life during his remaining years.

ADDRESS AT COOPER INSTITUTE  
FEBRUARY 27, 1860

*Mr. President and Fellow-citizens of New York:* The facts with which I shall deal this evening are mainly old and familiar; nor is there anything new in the general use I shall make of them. If there shall be any novelty, it will be in the mode of presenting the facts, and the inferences and observations following that presentation. In his speech last autumn at Columbus, Ohio, as reported in the *New York Times*, Senator Douglas said:

"Our fathers, when they framed the government under which we live, understood this question just as well, and even better, than we do now."

I fully indorse this, and I adopt it as a text for this discourse. I so adopt it because it furnishes a precise and an agreed starting-point for a discussion between Republicans and that wing of the Democracy headed by Senator Douglas. It simply leaves the inquiry:



What was the understanding those fathers had of the question mentioned?

What is the frame of government under which we live? The answer must be, "The Constitution of the United States." That Constitution consists of the original, framed in 1787, and under which the present government first went into operation, and twelve subsequently framed amendments,<sup>o</sup> the first ten of which were framed in 1789.

Who were our fathers that framed the Constitution? I suppose the "thirty-nine" who signed the original instrument may be fairly called our fathers who framed that part of the present government. It is almost exactly true to say they framed it, and it is altogether true to say they fairly represented the opinion and sentiment of the whole nation at that time. Their names, being familiar to nearly all, and accessible to quite all, need not now be repeated.

I take these "thirty-nine," for the present, as being "our fathers who framed the government under which we live." What is the question which, according to the text, those fathers understood "just as well, and even better, than we do now"?

It is this: Does the proper division of local from Federal authority, or anything in the Constitution, forbid our Federal Government to control as to slavery in our Federal Territories?

Upon this, Senator Douglas holds the affirmative, and Republicans the negative. This affirmation and denial form an issue; and this issue — this question — is precisely what the text declares our fathers understood "better than we." Let us now inquire whether



the "thirty-nine," or any of them, ever acted upon this question; and if they did, how they acted upon it—how they expressed that better understanding. In 1784,<sup>o</sup> three years before the Constitution, the United States then owning the Northwestern Territory, and no other, the Congress of the Confederation had before them the question of prohibiting slavery in that Territory; and four of the "thirty-nine" who afterward framed the Constitution were in that Congress, and voted on that question. Of these, Roger Sherman, Thomas Mifflin, and Hugh Williamson voted for the prohibition, thus showing that, in their understanding, no line dividing local from Federal authority, nor anything else, properly forbade the Federal Government to control as to slavery in Federal territory. The other of the four, James McHenry, voted against the prohibition, showing that for some cause he thought it improper to vote for it.

In 1787,<sup>o</sup> still before the Constitution, but while the convention was in session framing it, and while the Northwestern Territory still was the only Territory owned by the United States, the same question of prohibiting slavery in the Territory again came before the Congress of the Confederation; and two more of the "thirty-nine" who afterward signed the Constitution were in that Congress, and voted on the question. They were William Blount and William Few; and they both voted for the prohibition—thus showing that in their understanding no line dividing local from Federal authority, nor anything else, properly forbade the Federal Government to control as to slavery in Federal territory. This time the prohibition became a law, being



part of what is now well known as the ordinance of '87.

The question of Federal control of slavery in the Territories seems not to have been directly before the convention which framed the original Constitution; and hence it is not recorded that the "thirty-nine," or any of them, while engaged on that instrument, expressed any opinion on that precise question.

In 1789, by the first Congress which sat under the Constitution, an act was passed to enforce the ordinance of '87, including the prohibition of slavery in the Northwestern Territory. The bill for this act was reported by one of the "thirty-nine" — Thomas Fitzsimmons, then a member of the House of Representatives from Pennsylvania. It went through all its stages without a word of opposition, and finally passed both branches without ayes and nays, which is equivalent to a unanimous passage. In this Congress there were sixteen of the "thirty-nine" fathers who framed the original Constitution. They were John Langdon, Nicholas Gilman, William S. Johnson, Roger Sherman, Robert Morris, Thos. Fitzsimmons, William Few, Abraham Baldwin, Rufus King, William Paterson, George Clymer, Richard Bassett, George Read, Pierce Butler, Daniel Carroll, and James Madison.

This shows that, in their understanding, no line dividing local from Federal authority, nor anything in the Constitution, properly forbade Congress to prohibit slavery in the Federal territory; else both their fidelity to correct principle, and their oath to support the Constitution, would have constrained them to oppose the prohibition.

Again, George Washington, another of the "thirty-



nine," was then President of the United States, and as such approved and signed the bill, thus completing its validity as a law, and thus showing that, in his understanding, no line dividing local from Federal authority, nor anything in the Constitution, forbade the Federal Government to control as to slavery in Federal territory.

No great while after the adoption of the original Constitution, North Carolina ceded to the Federal Government the country now constituting the State of Tennessee;<sup>o</sup> and a few years later Georgia ceded that which now constitutes the States of Mississippi and Alabama. In both deeds of cession it was made a condition by the ceding States that the Federal Government should not prohibit slavery in the ceded country. Besides this, slavery was then actually in the ceded country. Under these circumstances, Congress, on taking charge of these countries, did not absolutely prohibit slavery within them. But they did interfere with it — take control of it — even there, to a certain extent. In 1798 Congress organized the Territory of Mississippi. In the act of organization they prohibited the bringing of slaves into the Territory from any place without the United States by fine and giving freedom to slaves so brought. This act passed both branches of Congress without yeas and nays. In that Congress were three of the "thirty-nine" who framed the original Constitution. They were John Langdon, George Read, and Abraham Baldwin. They all probably voted for it. Certainly they would have placed their opposition to it upon record if, in their understanding, any line dividing local from Federal authority,



or anything in the Constitution, properly forbade the Federal Government to control as to slavery in Federal territory.

In 1803 the Federal Government purchased the Louisiana country. Our former territorial acquisitions came from certain of our own States; but this Louisiana country was acquired from a foreign nation. In 1804 Congress gave a territorial organization to that part of it which now constitutes the State of Louisiana. New Orleans, lying within that part, was an old and comparatively large city. There were other considerable towns and settlements, and slavery was extensively and thoroughly intermingled with the people. Congress did not, in the Territorial Act, prohibit slavery; but they did interfere with it — take control of it — in a more marked and extensive way than they did in the case of Mississippi. The substance of the provision therein made in relation to slaves was:

1st. That no slave should be imported into the Territory from foreign parts.

2d. That no slave should be carried into it who had been imported into the United States since the first day of May, 1798.

3d. That no slave should be carried into it, except by the owner, and for his own use as a settler; the penalty in all the cases being a fine upon the violator of the law, and freedom to the slave.

This act also was passed without ayes or nays. In the Congress which passed it there were two of the "thirty-nine." They were Abraham Baldwin and Jonathan Dayton. As stated in the case of Mississippi, it is probable they both voted for it. They would not



have allowed it to pass without recording their opposition to it if, in their understanding, it violated either the line properly dividing local from Federal authority, or any provision of the Constitution.

In 1819-20 came and passed the Missouri question. Many votes were taken by yeas and nays, in both branches of Congress, upon the various phases of the general question. Two of the "thirty-nine" — Rufus King and Charles Pinckney — were members of that Congress. Mr. King steadily voted for slavery prohibition and against all compromises, while Mr. Pinckney as steadily voted against slavery prohibition and against all compromises. By this, Mr. King showed that, in his understanding, no line dividing local from Federal authority, nor anything in the Constitution, was violated by Congress prohibiting slavery in Federal territory; while Mr. Pinckney, by his votes, showed that, in his understanding, there was some sufficient reason for opposing such prohibition in that case.

The cases I have mentioned are the only acts of the "thirty-nine," or of any of them, upon the direct issue, which I have been able to discover.

To enumerate the persons who thus acted as being four in 1784, two in 1787, seventeen in 1789, three in 1798, two in 1804, and two in 1819-20, there would be thirty of them. But this would be counting John Langdon, Roger Sherman, William Few, Rufus King, and George Read each twice, and Abraham Baldwin three times. The true number of those of the "thirty-nine" whom I have shown to have acted upon the question which, by the text, they understood better



than we, is twenty-three, leaving sixteen not shown to have acted upon it in any way.

Here, then, we have twenty-three out of our thirty-nine fathers "who framed the government under which we live," who have, upon their official responsibility and their corporal oaths,<sup>o</sup> acted upon the very question which the text affirms they "understood just as well, and even better, than we do now"; and twenty-one of them — a clear majority of the whole "thirty-nine" — so acting upon it as to make them guilty of gross political impropriety and wilful perjury if, in their understanding, any proper division between local and Federal authority, or anything in the Constitution they had made themselves, and sworn to support, forbade the Federal Government to control as to slavery in the Federal Territories. Thus the twenty-one acted; and, as actions speak louder than words, so actions under such responsibility speak still louder.

Two of the twenty-three voted against congressional prohibition of slavery in the Federal Territories, in the instances in which they acted upon the question. But for what reasons they so voted is not known. They may have done so because they thought a proper division of local from Federal authority, or some provision or principle of the Constitution, stood in the way; or they may, without any such question, have voted against the prohibition on what appeared to them to be sufficient grounds of expediency. No one who has sworn to support the Constitution can conscientiously vote for what he understands to be an unconstitutional measure, however expedient he may think it; but one may and ought to vote against a measure



which he deems constitutional if, at the same time, he deems it inexpedient. It, therefore, would be unsafe to set down even the two who voted against the prohibition as having done so because, in their understanding, any proper division of local from Federal authority, or anything in the Constitution, forbade the Federal Government to control as to slavery in Federal territory.

The remaining sixteen of the "thirty-nine," so far as I have discovered, have left no record of their understanding upon the direct question of Federal control of slavery in the Federal Territories. But there is much reason to believe that their understanding upon that question would not have appeared different from that of their twenty-three compeers, had it been manifested at all.

For the purpose of adhering rigidly to the text, I have purposely omitted whatever understanding may have been manifested by any person, however distinguished, other than the thirty-nine fathers who framed the original Constitution; and, for the same reason, I have also omitted whatever understanding may have been manifested by any of the "thirty-nine" even on any other phase of the general question of slavery. If we should look into their acts and declarations on those other phases, as the foreign slave-trade, and the morality and policy of slavery generally, it would appear to us that on the direct question of Federal control of slavery in Federal Territories, the sixteen, if they had acted at all, would probably have acted just as the twenty-three did. Among that sixteen were several of the most noted antislavery men of



those times, — as Dr. Franklin, Alexander Hamilton, and Gouverneur Morris, — while there was not one now known to have been otherwise, unless it may be John Rutledge, of South Carolina.

The sum of the whole is that of our thirty-nine fathers who framed the original Constitution, twenty-one — a clear majority of the whole — certainly understood that no proper division of local from Federal authority, nor any part of the Constitution, forbade the Federal Government to control slavery in the Federal Territories; while all the rest had probably the same understanding. Such, unquestionably, was the understanding of our fathers who framed the original Constitution; and the text affirms that they understood the question “better than we.”

But, so far, I have been considering the understanding of the question manifested by the framers of the original Constitution. In and by the original instrument, a mode was provided for amending it; and, as I have already stated, the present frame of “the Government under which we live” consists of that original, and twelve amendatory articles framed and adopted since. Those who now insist that Federal control of slavery in Federal Territories violates the Constitution, point us to the provisions which they suppose it thus violates; and, as I understand, they all fix upon provisions in these amendatory articles, and not in the original instrument. The Supreme Court in the Dred Scott case plant themselves upon the fifth amendment, which provides that no person shall be deprived of “life, liberty or property without due process of law”; while Senator Douglas and his peculiar adherents plant them-



selves upon the tenth amendment, providing that "the powers not delegated to the United States by the Constitution" "are reserved to the States respectively, or to the people."

Now, it so happens that these amendments were framed by the first Congress which sat under the Constitution — the identical Congress which passed the act, already mentioned, enforcing the prohibition of slavery in the Northwestern Territory. Not only was it the same Congress, but they were the identical, same individual men who, at the same session, and at the same time within the session, had under consideration, and in progress toward maturity, these constitutional amendments, and this act prohibiting slavery in all the territory the nation then owned. The constitutional amendments were introduced before, and passed after, the act enforcing the ordinance of '87; so that, during the whole pendency of the act to enforce the ordinance, the constitutional amendments were also pending.

The seventy-six members of that Congress, including sixteen of the framers of the original Constitution, as before stated, were pre-eminently our fathers who framed that part of "the government under which we live" which is now claimed as forbidding the Federal Government to control slavery in the Federal Territories.

Is it not a little presumptuous in any one at this day to affirm that the two things which that Congress deliberately framed, and carried to maturity at the same time, are absolutely inconsistent with each other? And does not such affirmation become impudently



absurd when coupled with the other affirmation, from the same mouth, that those who did the two things alleged to be inconsistent, understood whether they really were inconsistent better than we — better than he who affirms that they are inconsistent?

It is surely safe to assume that the thirty-nine framers of the original Constitution, and the seventy-six members of the Congress which framed the amendments thereto, taken together, do certainly include those who may be fairly called “our fathers who framed the government under which we live.” And so assuming, I defy any man to show that any one of them ever, in his whole life, declared that, in his understanding, any proper division of local from Federal authority, or any part of the Constitution, forbade the Federal Government to control as to slavery in the Federal Territories. I go a step further. I defy any one to show that any living man in the whole world ever did, prior to the beginning of the present century (and I might almost say prior to the beginning of the last half of the present century), declare that, in his understanding, any proper division of local from Federal authority, or any part of the Constitution, forbade the Federal Government to control as to slavery in the Federal Territories. To those who now so declare I give not only “our fathers who framed the government under which we live,” but with them all other living men within the century in which it was framed, among whom to search, and they shall not be able to find the evidence of a single man agreeing with them.

Now, and here, let me guard a little against being misunderstood. I do not mean to say we are bound



to follow implicitly in whatever our fathers did. To do so, would be to discard all the lights of current experience — to reject all progress, all improvement. What I do say is, that if we would supplant the opinions and policy of our fathers in any case, we should do so upon evidence so conclusive, and argument so clear, that even their great authority, fairly considered and weighed, cannot stand; and most surely not in a case whereof we ourselves declare they understood the question better than we.

If any man at this day sincerely believes that a proper division of local from Federal authority, or any part of the Constitution, forbids the Federal Government to control as to slavery in the Federal Territories, he is right to say so, and to enforce his position by all truthful evidence and fair argument which he can. But he has no right to mislead others who have less access to history, and less leisure to study it, into the false belief that “our fathers who framed the government under which we live” were of the same opinion — thus substituting falsehood and deception for truthful evidence and fair argument. If any man at this day sincerely believes “our fathers who framed the government under which we live” used and applied principles, in other cases, which ought to have led them to understand that a proper division of local from Federal authority, or some part of the Constitution, forbids the Federal Government to control as to slavery in the Federal Territories, he is right to say so. But he should, at the same time, brave the responsibility of declaring that, in his opinion, he understands their principles better than they did themselves; and especially should



“he not shirk that responsibility by asserting that they understood the question just as well and even better than we do now.”

But enough! Let all who believe that “our fathers who framed the government under which we live understood this question just as well, and even better than we do now,” speak as they spoke, and act as they acted upon it. This is all Republicans ask—all Republicans desire—in relation to slavery. As those fathers marked it, so let it again be marked, as an evil not to be extended, but to be tolerated and protected only because and so far as its actual presence among us makes that toleration and protection a necessity. Let all the guaranties those fathers gave it be not grudgingly, but fully and fairly, maintained. For this Republicans contend, and with this, so far as I know or believe, they will be content.

And now, if they would listen,—as I suppose they will not,—I would address a few words to the Southern people.

I would say to them: You consider yourselves a reasonable and a just people; and I consider that in the general qualities of reason and justice you are not inferior to any other people. Still, when you speak of us Republicans, you do so only to denounce us as reptiles, or, at the best, as no better than outlaws. You will grant a hearing to pirates or murderers, but nothing like it to “Black Republicans.” In all your contentions with one another, each of you deems an unconditional condemnation of “Black Republicanism<sup>o</sup>” as the first thing to be attended to. Indeed, such condemnation of us seems to be an indispensable prerequisite — license,



so to speak — among you to be admitted or permitted to speak at all. Now can you or not be prevailed upon to pause and to consider whether this is quite just to us, or even to yourselves? Bring forward your charges and specifications, and then be patient long enough to hear us deny or justify.

You say we are sectional. We deny it. That makes an issue; and the burden of proof is upon you. You produce your proof; and what is it? Why, that our party has no existence in your section — gets no votes in your section. The fact is substantially true; but does it prove the issue? If it does, then in case we should, without change of principle, begin to get votes in your section, we should thereby cease to be sectional. You cannot escape this conclusion; and yet, are you willing to abide by it? If you are, you will probably soon find that we have ceased to be sectional, for we shall get votes in your section this very year. You will then begin to discover, as the truth plainly is, that your proof does not touch the issue. The fact that we get no votes in your section is a fact of your making, and not of ours. And if there be fault in that fact, that fault is primarily yours, and remains so until you show that we repel you by some wrong principle or practice. If we do repel you by any wrong principle or practice, the fault is ours; but this brings you to where you ought to have started — to a discussion of the right or wrong of our principle. If our principle, put in practice, would wrong your section for the benefit of ours, or for any other object, then our principle, and we with it, are sectional, and are justly opposed and denounced as such. Meet us, then, on the question of whether our



principle, put in practice, would wrong your section; and so meet us as if it were possible that something may be said on our side. Do you accept the challenge? No! Then you really believe that the principle which "our fathers who framed the government under which we live" thought so clearly right as to adopt it, and indorse it again and again, upon their official oaths, is in fact so clearly wrong as to demand your condemnation without a moment's consideration.

Some of you delight to flaunt in our faces the warning against sectional parties given by Washington in his Farewell Address. Less than eight years before Washington gave that warning, he had, as President of the United States, approved and signed an act of Congress enforcing the prohibition of slavery in the Northwestern Territory, which act embodied the policy of the government upon that subject up to and at the very moment he penned that warning; and about one year after he penned it, he wrote Lafayette that he considered that prohibition a wise measure, expressing in the same connection his hope that we should at some time have a confederacy of free States.

Bearing this in mind, and seeing that sectionalism has since arisen upon this same subject, is that warning a weapon in your hands against us, or in our hands against you? Could Washington himself speak, would he cast the blame of that sectionalism upon us, who sustain his policy, or upon you, who repudiate it? We respect that warning of Washington, and we commend it to you, together with his example pointing to the right application of it.

But you say you are conservative — eminently con-



servative — while we are revolutionary, destructive, or something of the sort. What is conservatism? Is it not adherence to the old and tried, against the new and untried? We stick to, contend for, the identical old policy on the point in controversy which was adopted by “our fathers who framed the government under which we live”; while you with one accord reject, and scout, and spit upon that old policy, and insist upon substituting something new. True, you disagree among yourselves as to what that substitute shall be. You are divided on new propositions and plans, but you are unanimous in rejecting and denouncing the old policy of the fathers. Some of you are for reviving the foreign slave-trade; some for a Congressional slave code for the Territories; some for Congress forbidding the Territories to prohibit slavery within their limits; some for maintaining slavery in the Territories through the judiciary; some for the “gur-reat pur-rinciple” that “if one man would enslave another, no third man should object,” fantastically called “popular sovereignty”; but never a man among you is in favor of Federal prohibition of slavery in Federal Territories, according to the practice of “our fathers who framed the government under which we live.” Not one of all your various plans can show a precedent or an advocate in the century within which our government originated. Consider, then, whether your claim of conservatism for yourselves, and your charge of destructiveness against us, are based on the most clear and stable foundations.

Again, you say we have made the slavery question more prominent than it formerly was. We deny it.



We admit that it is more prominent, but we deny that we made it so. It was not we, but you, who discarded the old policy of the fathers. We resisted, and still resist, your innovation; and thence comes the greater prominence of the question. Would you have that question reduced to its former proportions? Go back to that old policy. What has been will be again, under the same conditions. If you would have the peace of the old times, readopt the precepts and policy of the old times.

You charge that we stir up insurrections among your slaves. We deny it; and what is your proof? Harper's Ferry! John Brown!! ° John Brown was no Republican; and you have failed to implicate a single Republican in his Harper's Ferry enterprise. If any member of our party is guilty in that matter, you know it, or you do not know it. If you do know it, you are inexcusable for not designating the man and proving the fact. If you do not know it, you are inexcusable for asserting it, and especially for persisting in the assertion after you have tried and failed to make the proof. You need not be told that persisting in a charge which one does not know to be true, is simply malicious slander.

Some of you admit that no Republican designedly aided or encouraged the Harper's Ferry affair, but still insist that our doctrines and declarations necessarily lead to such results. We do not believe it. We know we hold no doctrine, and make no declaration, which were not held to and made by "our fathers who framed the government under which we live." You never dealt fairly by us in relation to this affair. When it occurred, some important State elections were near at hand, and



you were in evident glee with the belief that, by charging the blame upon us, you could get an advantage of us in those elections. The elections came, and your expectations were not quite fulfilled. Every Republican man knew that, as to himself at least, your charge was a slander, and he was not much inclined by it to cast his vote in your favor. Republican doctrines and declarations are accompanied with a continual protest against any interference whatever with your slaves, or with you about your slaves. Surely this does not encourage them to revolt. True, we do, in common with "our fathers who framed the government under which we live," declare our belief that slavery is wrong; but the slaves do not hear us declare even this. For anything we say or do, the slaves would scarcely know there is a Republican party. I believe they would not, in fact, generally know it but for your misrepresentations of us in their hearing. In your political contests among yourselves, each faction charges the other with sympathy with Black Republicanism;° and then, to give point to the charge, defines Black Republicanism to simply be insurrection, blood, and thunder among the slaves.

Slave insurrections are no more common now than they were before the Republican party was organized. What induced the Southampton insurrection,° twenty-eight years ago, in which at least three times as many lives were lost as at Harper's Ferry? You can scarcely stretch your very elastic fancy to the conclusion that Southampton was "got up by Black Republicanism." In the present state of things in the United States, I do not think a general, or even a very extensive, slave



insurrection is possible. The indispensable concert of action cannot be attained. The slaves have no means of rapid communication; nor can incendiary freemen, black or white, supply it. The explosive materials are everywhere in parcels; but there neither are, nor can be supplied, the indispensable connecting trains.

Much is said by Southern people about the affection of slaves for their masters and mistresses; and a part of it, at least, is true. A plot for an uprising could scarcely be devised and communicated to twenty individuals before some one of them, to save the life of a favorite master or mistress, would divulge it. This is the rule; and the slave revolution in Hayti<sup>o</sup> was not an exception to it, but a case occurring under peculiar circumstances. The gunpowder plot<sup>o</sup> of British history, though not connected with slaves, was more in point. In that case, only about twenty were admitted to the secret; and yet one of them, in his anxiety to save a friend, betrayed the plot to that friend, and, by consequence, averted the calamity. Occasional poisonings from the kitchen, and open or stealthy assassinations in the field, and local revolts extending to a score or so, will continue to occur as the natural results of slavery; but no general insurrection of slaves, as I think, can happen in this country for a long time. Whoever much fears, or much hopes, for such an event, will be alike disappointed.

In the language of Mr. Jefferson, uttered many years ago, "It is still in our power to direct the process of emancipation and deportation peaceably, and in such slow degrees as that the evil will wear off insensibly, and their places be, *pari passu*,<sup>o</sup> filled up by free white laborers. If, on the contrary, it is left to force



itself on, human nature must shudder at the prospect held up."

Mr. Jefferson did not mean to say, nor do I, that the power of emancipation is in the Federal Government. He spoke of Virginia; and, as to the power of emancipation, I speak of the slaveholding States only. The Federal Government, however, as we insist, has the power of restraining the extension of the institution — the power to insure that a slave insurrection shall never occur on any American soil which is now free from slavery.

John Brown's effort was peculiar. It was not a slave insurrection. It was an attempt by white men to get up a revolt among slaves, in which the slaves refused to participate. In fact, it was so absurd that the slaves, with all their ignorance, saw plainly enough it could not succeed. That affair, in its philosophy, corresponds with the many attempts, related in history, at the assassination of kings and emperors. An enthusiast broods over the oppression of a people till he fancies himself commissioned by Heaven to liberate them. He ventures the attempt, which ends in little else than his own execution. Orsini's attempt on Louis Napoleon,<sup>o</sup> and John Brown's attempt at Harper's Ferry, were, in their philosophy, precisely the same. The eagerness to cast blame on Old England in the one case, and on New England in the other, does not disprove the sameness of the two things.

And how much would it avail you if you could, by the use of John Brown, Helper's book,<sup>o</sup> and the like, break up the Republican organization? Human action can be modified to some extent, but human nature cannot be



changed. There is a judgment and a feeling against slavery in this nation, which cast at least a million and a half of votes. You cannot destroy that judgment and feeling — that sentiment — by breaking up the political organization which rallies around it. You can scarcely scatter and disperse an army which has been formed into order in the face of your heaviest fire; but if you could, how much would you gain by forcing the sentiment which created it out of the peaceful channel of the ballot-box into some other channel? What would that other channel probably be? Would the number of John Browns be lessened or enlarged by the operation?

But you will break up the Union rather than submit to a denial of your constitutional rights.

That has a somewhat reckless sound; but it would be palliated, if not fully justified, were we proposing, by the mere force of numbers, to deprive you of some right plainly written down in the Constitution. But we are proposing no such thing.

When you make these declarations you have a specific and well-understood allusion to an assumed constitutional right of yours to take slaves into the Federal Territories, and to hold them there as property. But no such right is specifically written in the Constitution. That instrument is literally silent about any such right. We, on the contrary, deny that such a right has any existence in the Constitution, even by implication.

Your purpose, then, plainly stated, is that you will destroy the government, unless you be allowed to construe and force the Constitution as you please, on all points in dispute between you and us. You will rule or ruin in all events.



This, plainly stated is, your language. Perhaps you will say the Supreme Court has decided ° the disputed constitutional question in your favor. Not quite so. But waiving the lawyer's distinction between dictum and decision, the court has decided the question for you in a sort of way. The court has substantially said it is your constitutional right to take slaves into the Federal Territories, and to hold them there as property. When I say the decision was made in a sort of way, I mean it was made in a divided court, by a bare majority of the judges, and they not quite agreeing with one another in the reasons for making it; that it is so made as that its avowed supporters disagree with one another about its meaning, and that it was mainly based upon a mistaken statement of fact — the statement in the opinion that “the right of property in a slave is distinctly and expressly affirmed in the Constitution.”

An inspection of the Constitution will show that the right of property in a slave is not “distinctly and expressly affirmed” in it. Bear in mind, the judges do not pledge their judicial opinion that such right is impliedly affirmed in the Constitution; but they pledge their veracity that it is “distinctly and expressly” affirmed there — “distinctly,” that is, not mingled with anything else — “expressly,” that is, in words meaning just that, without the aid of any inference, and susceptible of no other meaning.

If they had only pledged their judicial opinion that such right is affirmed in the instrument by implication, it would be open to others to show that neither the word “slave” nor “slavery” is to be found in the Con-



stitution, nor the word "property" even, in any connection with language alluding to the things slave or slavery; and that wherever in that instrument the slave is alluded to, he is called a "person"; and wherever his master's legal right in relation to him is alluded to, it is spoken of as "service or labor which may be due" — as a debt payable in service or labor. Also it would be open to show, by contemporaneous history, that this mode of alluding to slaves and slavery, instead of speaking of them, was employed on purpose to exclude from the Constitution the idea that there could be property in man.

To show all this is easy and certain.

When this obvious mistake of the judges shall be brought to their notice, is it not reasonable to expect that they will withdraw the mistaken statement, and reconsider the conclusion based upon it?

And then it is to be remembered that "our fathers who framed the government under which we live" — the men who made the Constitution — decided this same constitutional question in our favor long ago; decided it without division among themselves when making the decision; without division among themselves about the meaning of it after it was made, and, so far as any evidence is left, without basing it upon any mistaken statement of facts.

Under all these circumstances, do you really feel yourselves justified to break up this government unless such a court decision as yours is shall be at once submitted to as a conclusive and final rule of political action? But you will not abide the election of a Republican President! In that supposed event, you say, you



will destroy the Union; and then, you say, the great crime of having destroyed it will be upon us! That is cool. A highwayman holds a pistol to my ear, and mutters through his teeth, "Stand and deliver, or I shall kill you, and then you will be a murderer!"

To be sure, what the robber demanded of me — my money — was my own; and I had a clear right to keep it; but it was no more my own than my vote is my own; and the threat of death to me, to extort my money, and the threat of destruction to the Union, to extort my vote, can scarcely be distinguished in principle.

A few words now to Republicans. It is exceedingly desirable that all parts of this great Confederacy shall be at peace, and in harmony one with another. Let us Republicans do our part to have it so. Even though much provoked, let us do nothing through passion and ill temper. Even though the Southern people will not so much as listen to us, let us calmly consider their demands, and yield to them if, in our deliberate view of our duty, we possibly can. Judging by all they say and do, and by the subject and nature of their controversy with us, let us determine, if we can, what will satisfy them.

Will they be satisfied if the Territories be unconditionally surrendered to them? We know they will not. In all their present complaints against us, the Territories are scarcely mentioned. Invasions and insurrections are the rage now. Will it satisfy them if, in the future, we have nothing to do with invasions and insurrections? We know it will not. We so know, because we know we never had anything to do



with invasions and insurrections; and yet this total abstaining does not exempt us from the charge and the denunciation.

The question recurs, What will satisfy them? Simply this: we must not only let them alone, but we must somehow convince them we do let them alone. This, we know by experience, is no easy task. We have been so trying to convince them from the very beginning of our organization, but with no success. In all our platforms and speeches we have constantly protested our purpose to let them alone; but this has had no tendency to convince them. Alike unavailing to convince them is the fact that they have never detected a man of us in any attempt to disturb them.

These natural and apparently adequate means all failing, what will convince them? This, and this only: cease to call slavery wrong, and join them in calling it right. And this must be done thoroughly — done in acts as well as in words. Silence will not be tolerated — we must place ourselves avowedly with them. Senator Douglas's new sedition law must be enacted and enforced, suppressing all declarations that slavery is wrong, whether made in politics, in presses, in pulpits, or in private. We must arrest and return their fugitive slaves with greedy pleasure. We must pull down our free-State constitutions. The whole atmosphere must be disinfected from all taint of opposition to slavery, before they will cease to believe that all their troubles proceed from us.

I am quite aware they do not state their case precisely in this way. Most of them would probably say to us, "Let us alone; do nothing to us, and say what



you please about slavery." But we do let them alone, — have never disturbed them, — so that, after all, it is what we say which dissatisfies them. They will continue to accuse us of doing, until we cease saying.

I am also aware they have not as yet in terms demanded the overthrow of our free-State constitutions. Yet those constitutions declare the wrong of slavery with more solemn emphasis than do all other sayings against it; and when all these other sayings shall have been silenced, the overthrow of these constitutions will be demanded, and nothing be left to resist the demand. It is nothing to the contrary that they do not demand the whole of this just now. Demanding what they do, and for the reason they do, they can voluntarily stop nowhere short of this consummation. Holding, as they do, that slavery is morally right and socially elevating, they cannot cease to demand a full national recognition of it as a legal right and a social blessing.

Nor can we justifiably withhold this on any ground save our conviction that slavery is wrong. If slavery is right, all words, acts, laws, and constitutions against it are themselves wrong, and should be silenced and swept away. If it is right, we cannot justly object to its nationality — its universality; if it is wrong, they cannot justly insist upon its extension — its enlargement. All they ask we could readily grant, if we thought slavery right; all we ask they could as readily grant, if they thought it wrong. Their thinking it right and our thinking it wrong is the precise fact upon which depends the whole controversy. Thinking it right, as they do, they are not to blame for desiring its full recognition as being right; but thinking it wrong, as



we do, can we yield to them? Can we cast our votes with their view, and against our own? In view of our moral, social, and political responsibilities, can we do this?

Wrong as we think slavery is, we can yet afford to let it alone where it is, because that much is due to the necessity arising from its actual presence in the nation; but can we, while our votes will prevent it, allow it to spread into the national Territories, and to overrun us here in these free States? If our sense of duty forbids this, then let us stand by our duty fearlessly and effectively. Let us be diverted by none of those sophistical contrivances wherewith we are so industriously plied and belabored — contrivances such as groping for some middle ground between the right and the wrong; vain as the search for a man who should be neither a living man nor a dead man; such as a policy of “don’t care”<sup>o</sup> on a question about which all true men do care; such as Union appeals beseeching true Union men to yield to Disunionists, reversing the divine rule, and calling, not the sinners,<sup>o</sup> but the righteous to repentance; such as invocations to Washington, imploring men to unsay what Washington said, and undo what Washington did.

Neither let us be slandered from our duty by false accusations against us, nor frightened from it by menaces of destruction to the government, nor of dungeons to ourselves. Let us have faith that right makes might, and in that faith let us to the end dare to do our duty as we understand it.



## LINCOLN'S FAREWELL ADDRESS AT SPRINGFIELD, ILLINOIS

### *Introduction*

“Early in February the last item of preparation for the journey to Washington had been made. Mr. Lincoln had disposed of his household goods and furniture to a neighbor and had rented his house; and as these constituted all the property he owned in Illinois there was no further occasion for concern on that score. In the afternoon of his last day in Springfield he came down to our office to examine some papers and confer with me about certain legal matters in which he still felt some interest. On several previous occasions he had told me he was coming over to the office ‘to have a long talk with me,’ as he expressed it. We ran over the books and arranged for the completion of all unsettled and unfinished matters. In some cases he had certain requests to make—certain lines of procedure he wished me to observe.

“After these things were all disposed of he crossed to the opposite side of the room and threw himself down on the old office sofa, which, after many years of service, had been moved against the wall for support. He lay for some moments, his face towards the ceiling, without either of us speaking. Presently he inquired, ‘Billy,’—he always called me by that name—‘how long have we been together?’ ‘Over sixteen years,’ I answered. ‘We’ve never had a cross word during all that time, have we?’ to which I returned a vehement, ‘No, indeed we have not.’ He then recalled some incidents of his early practice and took great pleasure in delineating the ludicrous features of many a lawsuit on the circuit. It was at this last interview in Springfield that he told me of the efforts that had been made by other lawyers to supplant me in the partnership with him. He



insisted that such men were weak creatures, who, to use his own language, 'hoped to secure a law practice by hanging to his coat-tail.' I never saw him in a more cheerful mood.

"He gathered a bundle of books and papers he wished to take with him and started to go; but before leaving he made the strange request that the sign-board which swung on its rusty hinges at the foot of the stairway should remain. 'Let it hang there undisturbed,' he said, with a significant lowering of his voice. 'Give our clients to understand that the election of a President makes no change in the firm of Lincoln and Herndon. If I live I'm coming back some time, and then we'll go right on practicing law as if nothing had ever happened.' He lingered for a moment as if to take a last look at the old quarters, and then passed through the door into the narrow hallway. I accompanied him downstairs. On the way he spoke of the unpleasant features surrounding the presidential office. 'I am sick of office-holding already,' he complained, 'and I shudder when I think of the tasks that are still ahead.' He said the sorrow of parting from his old associations was deeper than most persons would imagine, but it was more marked in his case because of the feeling which had become irrepressible that he would never return alive. I argued against the thought, characterizing it as an illusory notion not in harmony or keeping with the popular ideal of a President. 'But it is in keeping with my philosophy,' was his quick retort. Our conversation was frequently broken in upon by the interruptions of passers-by, who, each in succession, seemed desirous of claiming his attention. At length he broke away from them all. Grasping my hand warmly and with a fervent 'Good-bye,' he disappeared down the street, and never came back to the office again.

"On the morning following this last interview, the 11th day of February, the presidential party repaired to the railway station, where the train which was to convey them to Washington awaited the ceremony of departure. . . . The day was a stormy one, with dense clouds hanging



heavily overhead. A goodly throng of Springfield people had gathered to see the distinguished party safely off. After the latter had entered the car the people closed about it until the President appeared on the rear platform. He stood for a moment as if to suppress evidences of his emotion, and removing his hat made the following brief but dignified and touching address." ("Abraham Lincoln," Herndon and Weik, vol. i, pages 192-196.)

LINCOLN'S FAREWELL ADDRESS AT SPRINGFIELD,  
ILLINOIS

FEBRUARY 11, 1861

*My Friends:* No one, not in my situation, can appreciate my feeling of sadness at this parting. To this place, and the kindness of these people, I owe everything. Here I have lived a quarter of a century, and have passed from a young to an old man. Here my children have been born, and one is buried. I now leave, not knowing when or whether ever I may return, with a task before me greater than that which rested upon Washington. Without the assistance of that Divine Being who ever attended him, I cannot succeed. With that assistance, I cannot fail. Trusting in Him who can go with me, and remain with you, and be everywhere for good, let us confidently hope that all will yet be well. To His care commending you, as I hope in your prayers you will commend me, I bid you an affectionate farewell.



# LINCOLN'S ADDRESS IN INDEPENDENCE HALL

## *Introduction*

From the day of his election until February 11, 1861, Lincoln remained at his home in Springfield. These were trying hours for the newly chosen President. States were seceding, the South was preparing for war, the North was hesitant and divided, and the administration at Washington was wholly unable to cope with the emergencies constantly arising. Lincoln could only bide his time and wait for the day when he should assume his task.

On February 11 he bade farewell to his Springfield home and neighbors and started for Washington. Though he made many addresses on the way, he was careful not to commit himself in regard to his intended policy. This peculiarity of his speeches added to the misunderstanding which disturbed the North. The new President was an unknown quantity. The wisdom of Lincoln's course in this respect is now apparent. He saw that it was of the utmost importance to refrain from specific statements of his plans until he should be successfully inaugurated.

The Independence Hall speech in Philadelphia represents the "high-water mark" of the addresses made by Lincoln on his way from Springfield to Washington. No one can read its concluding sentence without seeing in it an element of prophecy. But Lincoln had yet to utter the words which were to impart hope and confidence to an anxious people.

ADDRESS IN INDEPENDENCE HALL, PHILADELPHIA  
FEBRUARY 22, 1861

I am filled with deep emotion at finding myself standing in this place, where were collected together the



wisdom, the patriotism, the devotion to principle, from which sprang the institutions under which we live. You have kindly suggested to me that in my hands is the task of restoring peace to our distracted country. I can say in return, sir, that all the political sentiments I entertain have been drawn, so far as I have been able to draw them, from the sentiments which originated in and were given to the world from this hall. I have never had a feeling, politically, that did not spring from the sentiments embodied in the Declaration of Independence. I have often pondered over the dangers which were incurred by the men who assembled here and framed and adopted that Declaration. I have pondered over the toils that were endured by the officers and soldiers of the army who achieved that independence. I have often inquired of myself what great principle or idea it was that kept this Confederacy so long together. It was not the mere matter of separation of the colonies from the motherland, but that sentiment in the Declaration of Independence which gave liberty not alone to the people of this country, but hope to all the world, for all future time. It was that which gave promise that in due time the weights would be lifted from the shoulders of all men, and that all should have an equal chance. This is the sentiment embodied in the Declaration of Independence. Now, my friends, can this country be saved on that basis? If it can, I will consider myself one of the happiest men in the world if I can help to save it. If it cannot be saved upon that principle, it will be truly awful. But if this country cannot be saved without giving up that principle, I was about to say I would



rather be assassinated on this spot than surrender it. Now, in my view of the present aspect of affairs, there is no need of bloodshed and war. There is no necessity for it. I am not in favor of such a course; and I may say in advance that there will be no bloodshed unless it is forced upon the government. The government will not use force, unless force is used against it.

My friends, this is wholly an unprepared speech. I did not expect to be called on to say a word when I came here. I supposed I was merely to do something toward raising a flag. I may, therefore, have said something indiscreet. But I have said nothing but what I am willing to live by, and, if it be the pleasure of Almighty God, to die by.



## LINCOLN'S FIRST INAUGURAL ADDRESS

### *Introduction*

After Lincoln delivered the address at Independence Hall he went to Harrisburg. His original intention had been to go direct to Washington on the following day, Feb. 23, but it was judged advisable to change the plan. Those who were responsible for his safety were caused much uneasiness by a persistent rumor that there was a plot to assassinate the President-elect as he passed through Baltimore. Allen Pinkerton, the famous detective, who was engaged to investigate the rumor, reported that there was a strong probability of such an attempt being made. While Lincoln was in Philadelphia Frederick W. Seward came from Washington to warn him to keep secret the time of his passing through Baltimore. Yielding to the importunities of his advisers, though greatly against his own inclination, Lincoln left Harrisburg at night, all telegraphic communication with Baltimore having been severed, and made the journey to Washington in safety.

There had been widespread apprehension that the inauguration would never take place without confusion and bloodshed. However, the careful precautions of General Scott rendered improbable the occurrence of unpleasant contingencies.

“The 4th of March came in 1861 on Monday; and while the weather was variable, clouds dispersed and a chilly wind subsided as the day drew on. A small wooden canopy before the great eastern portico sheltered the public dignitaries, among whom were to be seen Buchanan, the retiring President, careworn and ill at ease; Chief Justice Taney, bowed



with years and frail of aspect, who sat robed in black silk, ready to administer at the close of this address the same oath he had administered to six predecessors; and those two defeated candidates of the sundered Democracy, Breckenridge and Douglas. Breckenridge, now retiring as Vice-President, had borne honorably his part in the electoral count, whatever disaffection he might have felt; Douglas, no longer condescending, held courteously the hat of the President-elect, which he had taken when the ceremonies began. To the crowd of auditors in front, some drawn by sympathy and others by critical curiosity, Senator Baker of Oregon, a personal and political friend, presented the man of the occasion, Abraham Lincoln, who, walking deliberately forward to the front of the canopy, bowed in response to the faint cheers that greeted him, and, after adjusting his glasses, read his address from printed sheets, altered by his pen, which lay upon a small table in front of him and were kept in place by his cane. The applause increased as he went on, and though the reader's voice seemed to falter in the last affecting paragraph, it had otherwise its usual penetrating tone." ("History of the United States," James Schouler, vol. vi, page 5.)

The First Inaugural Address has won a place among the noblest productions in the English language. It is entirely devoid of the "spread eagleism" which marks and mars so many of our American political addresses. It has the beauty and the eloquence of simplicity. But literary excellence was not the goal Lincoln had in view. His desire was to inspire hope and confidence, and if possible to prevent the war. His close study of Euclid had taught him that a "straight line is the shortest distance between two points." Applying the axiom to composition, simplicity and directness, strength of reasoning, and clearness of expression characterized all his productions. Nowhere do these admirable qualities stand out more prominently than in this particular address. The nation understood it. To the North it was like the sound of a thousand trumpets; to the South it was a declaration of war.



## FIRST INAUGURAL ADDRESS. MARCH 4, 1861

*Fellow-Citizens of the United States:* In compliance with a custom as old as the government itself, I appear before you to address you briefly, and to take in your presence the oath prescribed by the Constitution of the United States to be taken by the President "before he enters on the execution of his office."

I do not consider it necessary at present for me to discuss those matters of administration about which there is no special anxiety or excitement.

Apprehension ° seems to exist among the people of the Southern States that by the accession of a Republican administration their property and their peace and personal security are to be endangered. There has never been any reasonable cause for such apprehension. Indeed, the most ample evidence to the contrary has all the while existed and been open to their inspection. It is found in nearly all the published speeches of him who now addresses you. I do but quote from one of those speeches when I declare that "I have no purpose, directly or indirectly, to interfere with the institution of slavery in the States where it exists. I believe I have no lawful right to do so, and I have no inclination to do so." Those who nominated and elected me did so with full knowledge that I had made this and many similar declarations, and had never recanted them. And, more than this, they placed in the platform for my acceptance, and as a law to themselves and to me, the clear and emphatic resolution which I now read:

"Resolved, That the maintenance inviolate of the



rights of the States, and especially the right of each State to order and control its own domestic institutions according to its own judgment exclusively, is essential to that balance of power on which the perfection and endurance of our political fabric depend, and we denounce the lawless invasion by armed force of the soil of any State or Territory, no matter under what pretext, as among the gravest of crimes.”

I now reiterate these sentiments; and, in doing so, I only press upon the public attention the most conclusive evidence of which the case is susceptible, that the property, peace, and security of no section are to be in any wise endangered by the now incoming administration. I add, too, that all the protection which, consistently with the Constitution and the laws, can be given, will be cheerfully given to all the States when lawfully demanded, for whatever cause — as cheerfully to one section as to another.

There is much controversy ° about the delivering up of fugitives from service or labor. The clause I now read is as plainly written in the Constitution as any other of its provisions: —

“No person held to service or labour in one State, under the laws thereof, escaping into another, shall in consequence of any law or regulation therein be discharged from such service or labour, but shall be delivered up on claim of the party to whom such service or labour may be due.”

It is scarcely questioned that this provision was intended by those who made it for the reclaiming of what we call fugitive slaves; and the intention of the law-giver is the law. All members of Congress swear their



support to the whole Constitution — to this provision as much as to any other. To the proposition, then, that slaves whose cases come within the terms of this clause “shall be delivered up,” their oaths are unanimous. Now, if they would make the effort in good temper, could they not with nearly equal unanimity frame and pass a law by means of which to keep good that unanimous oath?

There is some difference of opinion whether this clause should be enforced by national or by State authority; but surely that difference is not a very material one. If the slave is to be surrendered, it can be of but little consequence to him or to others by which authority it is done. And should any one in any case be content that his oath shall go unkept on a merely unsubstantial controversy as to how it shall be kept?

Again, in any law upon this subject, ought not all the safeguards of liberty known in civilized and humane jurisprudence to be introduced, so that a free man be not, in any case, surrendered as a slave? And might it not be well at the same time to provide by law for the enforcement of that clause in the Constitution which guarantees that “the citizens of each State shall be entitled to all privileges and immunities of citizens in the several States?”

I take the official oath to-day with no mental reservations, and with no purpose to construe the Constitution or laws by any hypercritical rules. And while I do not choose now to specify particular acts of Congress as proper to be enforced, I do suggest that it will be much safer for all, both in official and private stations, to conform to and abide by all those acts which stand



unrepealed, than to violate any of them, trusting to find impunity in having them held to be unconstitutional.

It is seventy-two years since the first inauguration of a President under our National Constitution. During that period fifteen different and greatly distinguished citizens have, in succession, administered the executive branch of the government. They have conducted it through many perils, and generally with great success. Yet, with all this scope of precedent, I now enter upon the same task for the brief constitutional term of four years under great and peculiar difficulty. A disruption of the Federal Union, heretofore only menaced, is now formidably attempted.

I hold that, in contemplation of universal law and of the Constitution, the Union of these States is perpetual. Perpetuity is implied, if not expressed, in the fundamental law of all national governments. It is safe to assert that no government proper ever had a provision in its organic law for its own termination. Continue to execute all the express provisions of our National Constitution, and the Union will endure for ever — it being impossible to destroy it except by some action not provided for in the instrument itself.

Again, if the United States be not a government proper, but an association of States in the nature of contract merely, can it, as a contract, be peaceably unmade by less than all the parties who made it? One party to a contract may violate it — break it, so to speak; but does it not require all to lawfully rescind it?

Descending from these general principles, we find the proposition that, in legal contemplation, the Union is



perpetual confirmed by the history of the Union itself. The Union is much older than the Constitution.<sup>o</sup> It was formed, in fact, by the Articles of Association in 1774. It was matured and continued by the Declaration of Independence in 1776. It was further matured, and the faith of all the then thirteen States expressly plighted and engaged that it should be perpetual, by the Articles of Confederation in 1778. And, finally, in 1787 one of the declared objects for ordaining and establishing the Constitution was "to form a more perfect Union."

But if the destruction of the Union by one or by a part only of the States be lawfully possible, the Union is less perfect than before the Constitution, having lost the vital element of perpetuity.

It follows from these views that no State upon its own mere motion can lawfully get out of the Union;<sup>o</sup> that resolves and ordinances to that effect are legally void; and that acts of violence, within any State or States, against the authority of the United States, are insurrectionary or revolutionary, according to circumstances.

I therefore consider that, in view of the Constitution and the laws, the Union is unbroken;<sup>o</sup> and to the extent of my ability I shall take care, as the Constitution itself expressly enjoins upon me, that the laws of the Union be faithfully executed in all the States. Doing this I deem to be only a simple duty on my part; and I shall perform it so far as practicable, unless my rightful masters, the American people, shall withhold the requisite means, or in some authoritative manner direct the contrary. I trust this will not be regarded as a



menace, but only as the declared purpose of the Union that it will constitutionally defend and maintain itself.

In doing this there needs to be no bloodshed or violence; and there shall be none, unless it be forced upon the national authority. The power confided to me will be used to hold, occupy, and possess the property and places belonging to the government, and to collect the duties and imposts; but beyond what may be necessary for these objects, there will be no invasion, no using of force against or among the people anywhere. Where hostility to the United States, in any interior locality, shall be so great and universal as to prevent competent resident citizens from holding the Federal offices, there will be no attempt to force obnoxious strangers among the people for that object. While the strict legal right may exist in the government to enforce the exercise of these offices, the attempt to do so would be so irritating, and so nearly impracticable withal, that I deem it better to forego for the time the uses of such offices.

The mails, unless repelled, will continue to be furnished in all parts of the Union. So far as possible, the people everywhere shall have that sense of perfect security which is most favorable to calm thought and reflection. The course here indicated will be followed unless current events and experience shall show a modification or change to be proper, and in every case and exigency my best discretion will be exercised according to circumstances actually existing, and with a view and a hope of a peaceful solution of the national troubles and the restoration of fraternal sympathies and affections.



That there are persons in one section or another who seek to destroy the Union at all events, and are glad of any pretext to do it, I will neither affirm nor deny; but if there be such, I need address no word to them. To those, however, who really love the Union may I not speak?

Before entering upon so grave a matter as the destruction of our national fabric, with all its benefits, its memories, and its hopes, would it not be wise to ascertain precisely why we do it? Will you hazard so desperate a step while there is any possibility that any portion of the ills you fly from ° have no real existence? Will you, while the certain ills you fly to are greater than all the real ones you fly from — will you risk the commission of so fearful a mistake?

All profess to be content in the Union if all constitutional rights can be maintained. Is it true, then, that any right, plainly written in the Constitution, has been denied? I think not. Happily the human mind is so constituted that no party can reach to the audacity of doing this. Think, if you can, of a single instance in which a plainly written provision of the Constitution has ever been denied. If by the mere force of numbers a majority should deprive a minority of any clearly written constitutional right, it might, in a moral point of view, justify revolution — certainly would if such a right were a vital one. But such is not our case. All the vital rights of minorities and of individuals are so plainly assured to them by affirmations and negations, guarantees and prohibitions, in the Constitution, that controversies never arise concerning them. But no organic law can ever be framed with a provision specifi-



cally applicable to every question which may occur in practical administration. No foresight can anticipate, nor any document of reasonable length contain, express provisions for all possible questions. Shall fugitives from labor be surrendered by national or by State authority? The Constitution does not expressly say. *May* Congress prohibit slavery in the Territories? The Constitution does not expressly say. *Must* Congress protect slavery in the Territories? The Constitution does not expressly say.

From questions of this class spring all our constitutional controversies, and we divide upon them into majorities and minorities. If the minority will not acquiesce, the majority must, or the government must cease. There is no other alternative; for continuing the government is acquiescence on one side or the other.

If a minority in such case will secede rather than acquiesce, they make a precedent which in turn will divide and ruin them; for a minority of their own will secede from them whenever a majority refuses to be controlled by such minority. For instance, why may not any portion of a new confederacy a year or two hence arbitrarily secede again, precisely as portions of the present Union now claim to secede from it? All who cherish disunion sentiments are now being educated to the exact temper of doing this.

Is there such a perfect identity of interest among the States to compose a new Union, as to produce harmony only, and prevent renewed secession?

Plainly, the central idea of secession is the essence of anarchy. A majority held in restraint by constitutional



checks and limitations, and always changing easily with deliberate changes of popular opinions and sentiments, is the only true sovereign of a free people. Whoever rejects it does, of necessity, fly to anarchy or to despotism. Unanimity is impossible; the rule of a minority, as a permanent arrangement, is wholly inadmissible; so that, rejecting the majority principle, anarchy or despotism in some form is all that is left.

I do not forget the position, assumed by some, that constitutional questions are to be decided by the Supreme Court; nor do I deny that such decisions must be binding, in any case, upon the parties to a suit, as to the object of that suit, while they are also entitled to very high respect and consideration in all parallel cases by all other departments of the government. And while it is obviously possible that such decision may be erroneous in any given case, still the evil effect following it, being limited to that particular case, with the chance that it may be overruled and never become a precedent for other cases, can better be borne than could the evils of a different practice. At the same time, the candid citizen must confess that if the policy of the government, upon vital questions affecting the whole people, is to be irrevocably fixed by decisions of the Supreme Court, the instant they are made, in ordinary litigation between parties in personal actions, the people will have ceased to be their own rulers, having to that extent practically resigned their government into the hands of that eminent tribunal. Nor is there in this view any assault upon the court or the judges. It is a duty from which they may not shrink to decide cases properly brought before them and it is no fault



of theirs if others seek to turn their decisions to political purposes.

One section of our country believes slavery is right, and ought to be extended, while the other believes it is wrong, and ought not to be extended. This is the only substantial dispute. The fugitive-slave clause of the Constitution, and the law for the suppression of the foreign slave-trade, are each as well enforced, perhaps, as any law can ever be in a community where the moral sense of the people imperfectly supports the law itself. The great body of the people abide by the dry legal obligation in both cases, and a few break over in each. This, I think, cannot be perfectly cured; and it would be worse in both cases after the separation of the sections than before. The foreign slave-trade, now imperfectly suppressed, would be ultimately revived, without restriction, in one section, while fugitive slaves, now only partially surrendered, would not be surrendered at all by the other.

Physically speaking, we cannot separate. We cannot remove our respective sections from each other, nor build an impassable wall between them. A husband and wife may be divorced, and go out of the presence and beyond the reach of each other; but the different parts of our country cannot do this. They cannot but remain face to face, and intercourse, either amicable or hostile, must continue between them. Is it possible, then, to make that intercourse more advantageous or more satisfactory after separation than before? Can aliens make treaties easier than friends can make laws? Can treaties be more faithfully enforced between aliens than laws can among friends? Suppose you go to war,



you cannot fight always; and when, after much loss on both sides, and no gain on either, you cease fighting, the identical old questions as to terms of intercourse are again upon you.

This country, with its institutions, belongs to the people who inhabit it. Whenever they shall grow weary of the existing government, they can exercise their constitutional right of amending it, or their revolutionary right to dismember or overthrow it. I cannot be ignorant of the fact that many worthy and patriotic citizens are desirous of having the National Constitution amended. While I make no recommendation of amendments, I fully recognize the rightful authority of the people over the whole subject, to be exercised in either of the modes prescribed in the instrument itself; and I should, under existing circumstances, favor rather than oppose a fair opportunity being afforded the people to act upon it. I will venture to add that to me the convention mode seems preferable, in that it allows amendments to originate with the people themselves, instead of only permitting them to take or reject propositions originated by others not especially chosen for the purpose, and which might not be precisely such as they would wish to either accept or refuse. I understand a proposed amendment<sup>o</sup> to the Constitution — which amendment, however, I have not seen — has passed Congress, to the effect that the Federal Government shall never interfere with the domestic institutions of the States, including that of persons held to service. To avoid misconstruction of what I have said, I depart from my purpose not to speak of particular amendments so far as to say that, holding



such a provision to now be implied constitutional law, I have no objection to its being made express and irrevocable.

The chief magistrate derives all his authority from the people, and they have conferred none upon him to fix terms for the separation of the States. The people themselves can do this also if they choose; but the executive, as such, has nothing to do with it. His duty is to administer the present government as it came to his hands, and to transmit it, unimpaired by him, to his successor.

Why should there not be a patient confidence in the ultimate justice of the people? Is there any better or equal hope in the world? In our present differences is either party without faith of being in the right? If the Almighty Ruler of Nations, with His eternal truth and justice, be on your side of the North, or on yours of the South, that truth and that justice will surely prevail by the judgment of this great tribunal of the American people.

By the frame of the government under which we live, this same people have wisely given their public servants but little power for mischief; and have, with equal wisdom, provided for the return of that little to their own hands at very short intervals. While the people retain their virtue and vigilance, no administration, by any extreme of wickedness or folly, can very seriously injure the government in the short space of four years.

My countrymen, one and all, think calmly and well upon this whole subject. Nothing valuable can be lost by taking time. If there be an object to hurry any of you in hot haste to a step which you would never take



deliberately, that object will be frustrated by taking time; but no good object can be frustrated by it. Such of you as are now dissatisfied still have the old Constitution unimpaired, and, on the sensitive point, the laws of your own framing under it; while the new administration will have no immediate power, if it would, to change either. If it were admitted that you who are dissatisfied hold the right side in the dispute, there still is no single good reason for precipitate action. Intelligence, patriotism, Christianity, and a firm reliance on Him who has never yet forsaken this favored land, are still competent to adjust in the best way all our present difficulty.

In your hands, my dissatisfied fellow-countrymen, and not in mine, is the momentous issue of civil war. The government will not assail you. You can have no conflict without being yourselves the aggressors. You have no oath registered in heaven to destroy the government, while I shall have the most solemn one to "preserve, protect, and defend it."

I am loath to close. We are not enemies, but friends. We must not be enemies. Though passion may have strained, it must not break our bonds of affection. The mystic chords of memory, stretching from every battlefield and patriot grave to every living heart and hearthstone all over this broad land, will yet swell the chorus of the Union when again touched, as they surely will be, by the better angels of our nature.



# LINCOLN'S REPLY TO SECRETARY SEWARD'S OFFER TO BECOME THE HEAD OF THE ADMINISTRATION

## *Introduction*

When William H. Seward, who for years had been the acknowledged leader of the antislavery forces, was defeated for the Republican nomination by the Illinois rail-splitter, he could not altogether conceal his very natural disappointment. Nevertheless, during the campaign of 1860 he did not sulk in his tent, but rendered valuable service to the party. After the election Lincoln promptly slated his two principal rivals for the nomination for the two most important positions in his Cabinet; Seward to be Secretary of State, and Chase, Secretary of the Treasury. Unlike Chase, when Seward became a member of Lincoln's Cabinet he put aside all presidential aspirations. He did not, however, believe that Lincoln was capable of filling the office to which he had been elected. On the strength of this conviction he wrote the President a letter offering to assume larger responsibilities than those which strictly belonged to his portfolio. Lincoln's courteous but decisive reply showed clearly that the Illinois statesman had not come to Washington with the intention of resigning the presidency to any of his subordinates.

## LETTER TO WILLIAM H. SEWARD

April 1, 1861

HON. W. H. SEWARD.

*My Dear Sir:* Since parting with you I have been considering your paper dated this day, and entitled "Some Thoughts for the President's Consideration."



The first proposition in it is, "First, We are at the end of a month's administration, and yet without a policy either domestic or foreign."

At the beginning of that month, in the inaugural, I said: "The power confided to me will be used to hold, occupy, and possess the property and places belonging to the government, and to collect the duties and imposts." This had your distinct approval at the time; and, taken in connection with the order I immediately gave General Scott, directing him to employ every means in his power to strengthen and hold the forts, comprises the exact domestic policy you now urge, with the single exception that it does not propose to abandon Fort Sumter.

Again, I do not perceive how the reinforcement of Fort Sumter would be done on a slavery or a party issue, while that of Fort Pickens would be on a more national and patriotic one.

The news received yesterday in regard to St. Domingo certainly brings a new item within the range of our foreign policy; but up to that time we have been preparing circulars and instructions to ministers and the like, all in perfect harmony, without even a suggestion that we had no foreign policy.

Upon your closing propositions — that "whatever policy we adopt, there must be an energetic prosecution of it."

"For this purpose it must be somebody's business to pursue and direct it incessantly."

"Either the President must do it himself, and be all the while active in it, or

"Devolve it on some member of his cabinet. Once



adopted, debates on it must end, and all agree and abide" — I remark that if this must be done, I must do it. When a general line of policy is adopted, I apprehend there is no danger of its being changed without good reason, or continuing to be a subject of unnecessary debate; still, upon points arising in its progress I wish, and suppose I am entitled to have, the advice of all the cabinet.

Your obedient servant,

A. LINCOLN.



## LINCOLN'S LETTER TO GENERAL McCLELLAN

George B. McClellan was appointed to the command of the Army of the Potomac on Nov. 1, 1861. He immediately proved himself an able engineer and a superb organizer. He also possessed the ability to inspire great personal devotion on the part of his men. But his campaigns against Lee were not crowned with success. Many believed that McClellan's failure to show tangible results in the field was due to over-cautiousness, a view which Lincoln shared. On Jan. 31, 1862, the President ordered a forward movement of the army. As this order conflicted with McClellan's own plans he strenuously objected. Lincoln replied in a letter which exhibits the perspicuity that was always so marked an element in his style.

EXECUTIVE MANSION, WASHINGTON,  
February 3, 1862.

MAJOR-GENERAL McCLELLAN:

*My Dear Sir:* You and I have distinct and different plans for a movement of the Army of the Potomac — yours to be down the Chesapeake, up the Rappahannock to Urbana, and across land to the terminus of the railroad on the York River; mine to move directly to a point on the railroad southwest of Manassas.

If you will give me satisfactory answers to the following questions, I shall gladly yield my plan to yours.

*First.* Does not your plan involve a greatly larger expenditure of time and money than mine?



*Second.* Wherein is a victory more certain by your plan than mine?

*Third.* Wherein is a victory more valuable by your plan than mine?

*Fourth.* In fact, would it not be less valuable in this, that it would break no great line of the enemy's communications, while mine would?

*Fifth.* In case of disaster, would not a retreat be more difficult by your plan than mine?

Yours truly,

ABRAHAM LINCOLN



# LINCOLN'S LETTER TO HORACE GREELEY

## *Introduction*

In his day Horace Greeley was one of the most potent forces in American politics. His paper, the *New York Tribune*, circulated throughout the entire North. He was a brilliant, vigorous, and aggressive writer; his epigrammatical editorials were everywhere eagerly read and did much to influence public opinion.

Greeley, who brought a powerful opposition to bear against the nomination of Seward, the logical candidate, supported the impossible candidacy of Bates, and thus created a situation which made the nomination of Lincoln inevitable. He was never directly a supporter of Lincoln's aspirations. His slogan was, "Anything to beat Seward."

After the accession of Lincoln to the presidency Greeley became one of his most captious and unreasonable critics. He had done all that he possibly could to create the conditions which caused the war, but when the southern states seceded he advocated allowing the "erring sisters" to "depart in peace." During the early years of the war when the military commanders of the North were committing blunder after blunder, his criticisms complicated affairs and embarrassed the administration. He joined with Charles Sumner and other radical abolitionists in demanding the immediate emancipation of the slaves. It was with reference to criticism in this regard that Lincoln wrote the following letter. The first draft of the Emancipation Proclamation had already been made when the letter was written.

"President Lincoln's reply is remarkable not only for skill in separating the true issue from the false, but also for the equipoise and dignity with which it maintained his authority



as a moral arbiter between contending factions.” (Nicolay’s “Life of Lincoln.”)

### LETTER TO HORACE GREELEY

EXECUTIVE MANSION, WASHINGTON,  
Aug. 22, 1862.

HON. HORACE GREELEY.

*Dear Sir:* I have just read yours of the 19th, addressed to me through the *New York Tribune*. If there be in it any statements or assumptions of fact which I may know to be erroneous, I do not, now and here, controvert them. If there be in it any inferences which I may believe to be falsely drawn, I do not, now and here, argue against them. If there be perceptible in it an impatient and dictatorial tone, I waive it in deference to an old friend whose heart I have always supposed to be right.

As to the policy I “seem to be pursuing,” as you say, I have not meant to leave any one in doubt.

I would save the Union. I would save it the shortest way under the Constitution.<sup>1</sup> The sooner the national authority can be restored, the nearer the Union will be “the Union as it was.” If there be those who would not save the Union unless they could at the same time save slavery, I do not agree with them. If there be those who would not save the Union unless they could at the same time destroy slavery, I do not agree with them. My paramount object in this struggle is to save the Union, and is not either to save

<sup>1</sup> Lincoln meant to respect the Constitution in all things; nevertheless, in the process of saving the Union the Constitution was sadly, though unavoidably, strained.



or to destroy slavery. If I could save the Union without freeing any slave, I would do it; and if I could save it by freeing all the slaves, I would do it; and if I could save it by freeing some and leaving others alone, I would also do that. What I do about slavery and the colored race, I do because I believe it helps to save the Union; and what I forbear, I forbear because I do not believe it would help to save the Union. I shall do less whenever I shall believe what I am doing hurts the cause, and I shall do more whenever I shall believe doing more will help the cause. I shall try to correct errors when shown to be errors, and I shall adopt new views so fast as they shall appear to be true views.

I have here stated my purpose according to my view of official duty; and I intend no modification of my oft-expressed personal wish that all men everywhere could be free.

Yours,

A. LINCOLN.



# LINCOLN'S LETTER TO GENERAL HOOKER

## *Introduction*

When General McClellan was commander of the Army of the Potomac, "Fighting Joe Hooker" was one of his most merciless critics. Later, when McClellan was superseded by Burnside, Hooker's attitude to his new chief was the same as it had been to McClellan. Although Lincoln had by no means been pleased with the captious spirit displayed by Hooker, he had sufficient confidence in him to appoint him to the chief command of the Army of the Potomac after the disastrous failure of Burnside at Fredericksburg in December, 1862.

In appointing Hooker the President made his own choice, though there is little doubt that in naming him he was prompted by the sentiment of the country and the great popularity of the General. The day after Hooker's appointment Lincoln wrote him this frank and kindly letter.

## LETTER TO GENERAL JOSEPH HOOKER JANUARY 26, 1863

MAJOR-GENERAL HOOKER.

*General:* I have placed you at the head of the Army of the Potomac. Of course I have done this upon what appear to me to be sufficient reasons, and yet I think it best for you to know that there are some things in regard to which I am not quite satisfied with you. I believe you to be a brave and skilful soldier, which of course I like. I also believe you do not mix politics



with your profession, in which you are right. You have confidence in yourself, which is a valuable if not an indispensable quality. You are ambitious, which, within reasonable bounds, does good rather than harm: but I think that during General Burnside's command of the army you have taken counsel of your ambition and thwarted him as much as you could, in which you did a great wrong to the country and to a most meritorious and honorable brother officer. I have heard, in such a way as to believe it, of your recently saying that both the army and the government needed a dictator. Of course it was not for this, but in spite of it, that I have given you the command. Only those generals who gain successes can set up dictators. What I now ask of you is military success, and I will risk the dictatorship. The government will support you to the utmost of its ability, which is neither more nor less than it has done and will do for all commanders. I much fear that the spirit which you have aided to infuse into the army, of criticizing their commander and withholding confidence from him, will now turn upon you. I shall assist you as far as I can to put it down. Neither you nor Napoleon, if he were alive again, could get any good out of an army while such a spirit prevails in it; and now beware of rashness. Beware of rashness, but with energy and sleepless vigilance go forward and give us victories.

Yours very truly,

A. LINCOLN.



# LINCOLN'S GETTYSBURG ADDRESS

## *Introduction*

Soon after the battle of Gettysburg, David J. Wills of that town suggested that a portion of the field be set apart for a national cemetery. Under the direction of Governor Curtin about seventeen and a half acres were selected for the purpose and improved. It was decided to dedicate the cemetery on the nineteenth of November, 1863. Edward Everett, the last survivor of the great orators of an earlier day, was selected to deliver the oration. A formal invitation was extended to the President to participate in the dedication. In the invitation we find these words: "It is the desire that after the oration, you as chief magistrate formally set apart these grounds to their sacred use by a few appropriate remarks."

Lincoln received this invitation on November 2, which gave him about two weeks for preparation. They were busy weeks indeed, and it was even doubtful whether he would be able to be present at the dedicatory ceremonies. Joshua Speed, Lincoln's Attorney-General, states that the President told him "the day before he left Washington he found time to write about half of his speech." It is altogether probable, however, that according to his habit Lincoln had meditated upon his subject.

Nowhere are the circumstances of the delivery of the Gettysburg address more touchingly and impressively described than in "The Perfect Tribute," by Mary R. S. Andrews: "At eleven o'clock on the morning of Nov. 19, 1863, a vast silent multitude billowed like waves of the sea over what had been not long before the battlefield of Gettysburg. There were wounded soldiers there who had beaten their way four months ago through a singeing fire across



these quiet fields, who had seen the men die who were buried here. There were troops, grave and responsible, who must soon go again into battle; there were the rank and file of an everyday American gathering in surging thousands; and above them all on the open-air platform there were the leaders of the land, the pilots who to-day lifted a hand from the ship of state to salute the memory of those gone down in the storm. Most of the men in that group of honor are now passed over to the majority, but their names are not dead in American history — great ghosts who walk still in the annals of their country, their flesh-and-blood faces were turned attentively that bright, still November afternoon toward the orator of the day whose voice still held the audience.

“For two hours Everett spoke and the throng listened untired, fascinated by the dignity of his look and manner almost as much perhaps as by the speech which has taken a place in literature. . . .

“As the clear, cultivated voice fell into silence the mass of people burst into a long storm of applause, for they knew that they had heard an oration which was an event. At last, as the ex-Governor of Massachusetts, the ex-Ambassador to England, the ex-Secretary of State, the ex-Senator of the United States—handsome, distinguished, graceful, sure of voice and movement—took his seat, a tall, gaunt figure detached itself from the group on the platform and slouched slowly across the open space and stood facing the audience. A stir and a whisper brushed over the field of humanity as if a breeze had rippled a monstrous bed of poppies.”

Lincoln's voice was poor and his manner graceless; his address was heard only by those who happened to be near the platform, and was not appreciated even by those who did hear it. Everett appears to have been the only person in the vast audience who realized that the President had delivered a truly great oration. Lincoln himself felt that his brief speech had been an ignominious failure. But as the years have rolled by, the Gettysburg address has impressed itself more and more upon the hearts and minds of the American people. With the exception of the second



inaugural address and some of Webster's noblest periods it is unequalled in the realm of American oratory. The world most certainly will never forget what was done upon the field of Gettysburg, and we can say with equal certainty that it will never forget what was said there.

ADDRESS AT GETTYSBURG. NOVEMBER 19, 1863

Fourscore and seven years ago our fathers brought forth on this continent a new nation, conceived in liberty, and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal.

Now we are engaged in a great civil war, testing whether that nation, or any nation so conceived and so dedicated, can long endure. We are met on a great battlefield of that war. We have come to dedicate a portion of that field as a final resting-place for those who here gave their lives that that nation might live. It is altogether fitting and proper that we should do this.

But, in a larger sense we cannot dedicate — we cannot consecrate — we cannot hallow — this ground. The brave men, living and dead, who struggled here, have consecrated it far above our poor power to add or detract. The world will little note nor long remember what we say here, but it can never forget what they did here. It is for us, the living, rather, to be dedicated here to the unfinished work which they who fought here have thus far so nobly advanced. It is rather for us to be here dedicated to the great task remaining before us — that from these honored dead we take increased devotion to that cause for which they gave the last full measure of devotion;



that we here highly resolve that these dead shall not have died in vain; that this nation, under God, shall have a new birth of freedom; and that government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth.



# LINCOLN'S LETTER TO GENERAL GRANT

APRIL 30, 1864

## *Introduction*

When Lincoln wrote this letter he believed that his long and thus far fruitless search for a man who could take Richmond was ended. The silent, square-jawed soldier who had applied in vain for a colonel's commission at the beginning of the conflict was now the "man of the hour." A West Point graduate and a veteran of the Mexican War, Grant had retired from the army to pursue the vocations of peace, but had not been successful. A soldier first and last, it required the great opportunities of the present crisis to bring out his superlative talent. His success had attracted the attention of the President, who was alert to discover men of military genius.

Lincoln met Grant face to face for the first time at a crowded reception at the White House, March 8, 1864. An appointment between them was fixed for the next day, and on the following day, March 10, Grant was made Commander-in-chief of the Armies of the United States. He was now the most popular hero in the North, and parties and factions vied with each other in his praise. The path of his promotion had been beset with huge obstacles, and obloquy and misrepresentation had bitterly pursued him. But Donelson, Vicksburg, and Chattanooga were triumphs whose cumulative force overwhelmed all detractors and raised their victor to a height of glory such as few soldiers have ever attained.



## LETTER TO GENERAL U. S. GRANT

EXECUTIVE MANSION, WASHINGTON,  
April 30, 1864.

LIEUTENANT GENERAL GRANT:

Not expecting to see you again before the spring campaign opens, I wish to express in this way my entire satisfaction with what you have done up to this time, so far as I understand it. The particulars of your plans I neither know nor seek to know. You are vigilant and self-reliant; and, pleased with this, I wish not to obtrude any constraints or restraints upon you. While I am very anxious that any great disaster or capture of our men in great numbers shall be avoided, I know these points are less likely to escape your attention than they would be mine. If there is anything wanting which is within my power to give, do not fail to let me know it. And now, with a brave army and a just cause, may God sustain you.

Yours very truly,

A. LINCOLN.



## LINCOLN'S LETTER TO MRS. BIXBY

### *Introduction*

“Mr. Lincoln’s goodness of nature was boundless. In childhood it showed itself in unfeigned aversion to every form of cruelty to animal life. When he was President it found expression in that memorable letter to Mrs. Bixby of Boston, who had given, irrevocably given, as was then supposed, five sons to the country. The letter was dated November 21, 1864, before the excitement of his second election was over.” — (George S. Boutwell, in “Reminiscences of Abraham Lincoln.”)

### LETTER TO MRS. BIXBY OF BOSTON

EXECUTIVE MANSION, WASHINGTON,  
November 21, 1864.

MRS. BIXBY, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS.

*Dear Madam:* I have been shown in the files of the War Department a statement of the Adjutant-General of Massachusetts that you are the mother of five sons who have died gloriously on the field of battle. I feel how weak and fruitless must be any words of mine which should attempt to beguile you from the grief of a loss so overwhelming. But I cannot refrain from tendering to you the consolation that may be found in the thanks of the Republic they died to save. I pray that our heavenly Father may assuage the anguish of



your bereavement, and leave you only the cherished memory of the loved and lost, and the solemn pride that must be yours to have laid so costly a sacrifice upon the altar of freedom.

Yours very sincerely and respectfully,

ABRAHAM LINCOLN.



# LINCOLN'S SECOND INAUGURAL ADDRESS

## *Introduction*

When Lincoln delivered his second inaugural address on the fourth of March, 1865, he had but five weeks to live, but they were to be weeks of triumph. His position was very different from what it had been when he stood in the same place four years before. He was no longer an unknown, distrusted backwoodsman who, in the minds of most of his countrymen, owed his elevation to the presidency to the fact that the strong men of his party were unavailable. No longer was there any doubt as to the final issue of the war: at last the President had found generals able to lead the armies of the North to conclusive victory. The doom of the Confederacy was sealed, and universal confidence prevailed that in a few weeks the war would end. The country had testified to its supreme faith in Abraham Lincoln by re-electing him by a magnificent and overwhelming majority.

“The second inauguration of Abraham Lincoln took place out of doors at the east portico of the Capitol and before an assembled crowd. It was the first re-election ceremonial since Andrew Jackson's time, for Presidents of late had served but a single term, and unlike most occasions of the kind it renewed the pageantry of a first induction. By this time the bronze statue of liberty surmounted the finished dome of the national temple, looking eastward as though peering to discern the first sunbeams of hallowed peace and restoration in the dappled glow of the horizon. A throng strange in one respect assembled here; no favored race of men monopolized the honors of the day, for the negro, hitherto enslaved and degraded, found place in both civic procession and military escort which attended the ceremony. Lincoln's brief inaugural address delivered before the oath which



Chase, the new Chief Justice, administered to him, proved his last great message to his fellow-countrymen, and its language will be remembered while America has a literature.

“The assemblage on this fourth of March, we may remark, was a large one, and the inaugural ceremonies were brief. Andrew Johnson had already been installed as Vice-President in the Senate Chamber at noon and before the President arrived. The balmy and genial day of Lincoln’s first induction contrasted with the present, for there had been incessant rain for two days and the skies were still dark and angry during the forenoon; yet the sun came out while the man of the people spoke and all was halcyon and radiant by evening. The former day, observed a northern journal, ‘was the exordium of the great struggle; the latter, we fervently believe, proves its peroration.’” (“History of the United States,” James Schouler.)

With the exception of the Gettysburg address this Second Inaugural is without a doubt the noblest product of Abraham Lincoln’s mind and heart. It is a part of our literature which the American people have every reason to regard with just pride. In speaking of it Lincoln himself said, “I expect it to wear as well as, perhaps better than, anything I have produced.”

“In three or four hundred words that burn with the heat of their compression he tells the history of the war and reads its lesson. No nobler thoughts were ever conceived. No man ever found words more adequate to his desire. Here is the whole tale of the nation’s shame and the misery of her heroic struggles to free herself therefrom and of her victory. Had Lincoln written a hundred times as much more, he would not have said more fully what he desired to say. Every thought receives its complete expression, and there is no word employed which does not directly and manifestly contribute to the development of the central thought.” (“The Spectator,” London, May 2, 1891.)



## THE SECOND INAUGURAL ADDRESS

MARCH 4, 1865

*Fellow-Countrymen:* At this second appearing to take the oath of the presidential office, there is less occasion for an extended address than there was at the first. Then a statement, somewhat in detail, of a course to be pursued, seemed fitting and proper. Now, at the expiration of four years, during which public declarations have been constantly called forth on every point and phase of the great contest which still absorbs the attention and engrosses the energies of the nation, little that is new could be presented. The progress of our arms,<sup>o</sup> upon which all else chiefly depends, is as well known to the public as to myself; and it is, I trust, reasonably satisfactory and encouraging to all. With high hope for the future, no prediction in regard to it is ventured.

On the occasion corresponding to this four years ago, all thoughts were anxiously directed to an impending civil war. All dreaded it — all sought to avert it. While the inaugural address was being delivered from this place, devoted altogether to saving the Union without war, insurgent agents<sup>o</sup> were in the city seeking to destroy it without war — seeking to dissolve the Union, and divide effects, by negotiation. Both parties deprecated war; but one of them would make war rather than let the nation survive; and the other would accept war rather than let it perish. And the war came.

One-eighth of the whole population were colored



slaves, not distributed generally over the Union, but localized in the southern part of it. These slaves constituted a peculiar and powerful interest. All knew that this interest was, somehow, the cause of the war. To strengthen, perpetuate, and extend this interest was the object for which the insurgents would rend the Union, even by war; while the Government claimed no right to do more than to restrict the territorial enlargement of it.

Neither party expected for the war the magnitude or the duration which it has already attained. Neither anticipated that the cause of the conflict might cease with, or even before, the conflict itself should cease. Each looked for an easier triumph, and a result less fundamental and astounding. Both read the same Bible, and pray to the same God; and each invokes His aid against the other. It may seem strange that any men should dare to ask a just God's assistance in wringing their bread from the sweat of other men's faces: but let us judge not,<sup>o</sup> that we be not judged. The prayers of both could not be answered — that of neither has been answered fully.

The Almighty has His own purposes. "Woe unto the world because of offenses!<sup>o</sup> for it must needs be that offenses come; but woe to that man by whom the offense cometh." If we shall suppose that American slavery is one of those offenses which, in the providence of God, must needs come, but which, having continued through His appointed time, He now wills to remove, and that He gives to both North and South this terrible war, as the woe due to those by whom the offense came, shall we discern therein any departure from those divine



attributes which the believers in a living God always ascribe to Him? Fondly do we hope — fervently do we pray — that this mighty scourge of war may speedily pass away. Yet, if God wills that it continue until all the wealth piled by the bondman's two hundred and fifty years of unrequited toil shall be sunk, and until every drop of blood drawn with the lash shall be paid by another drawn with the sword, as was said three thousand years ago, so still it must be said, "The judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether." °

With malice toward none; with charity for all; with firmness in the right, as God gives us to see the right, let us strive on to finish the work we are in; to bind up the nation's wounds; to care for him who shall have borne the battle, and for his widow, and his orphan — to do all which may achieve and cherish a just and a lasting peace among ourselves, and with all nations.



# LINCOLN'S LAST ADDRESS

## *Introduction*

At the time of Lincoln's second inauguration Lee's army was at Petersburg making its last stand in the four years' defense of Richmond. For weeks Grant had been drawing the lines ever tighter about the diminished and exhausted forces of the South. The fall of the Confederacy now seemed inevitable. Already had Lee informed the Confederate government of the necessity of abandoning Richmond. On the twenty-second of March Lincoln went to City Point in order to be ready to decide important questions which might arise in reference to the capture of Richmond. On the third of April Lee evacuated Petersburg and marched south, hoping to effect a junction with Joseph E. Johnston, but at Appomattox Court House he was overtaken by the pursuing Federal troops and compelled to surrender.

The day after the Confederate Army of Northern Virginia started on its brief retreat Lincoln proceeded up the James River to Richmond, and with four companions and a guard of ten sailors walked through the deserted streets of the Confederate capital. He then went back to City Point, remaining until the ninth of April, when he returned to Washington.

On the evening of the eleventh of April a crowd gathered before the White House to serenade the President and afterward clamored for a speech. Lincoln responded with a graceful and feeling tribute to the men who had borne arms in defense of the Union, and added an eloquent plea for the policy of reconstruction which he had already outlined and inaugurated. A number of districts in the southern states had been wrested from the Confederacy in the early part of the war. In these districts Lincoln immediately began a work of reconstruction; he appointed military governors to



rule until a sufficient number of the inhabitants demonstrated their loyalty to the Union. Under this plan two congressmen were elected from Louisiana and a constitution abolishing slavery was adopted. Congress, however, was dominated by a majority of uncompromising radicals who were strenuously opposed to so reasonable and conciliatory a plan.

Had Lincoln lived it is altogether probable that with his consummate tact and unwearying patience he would have succeeded where his well-meaning but bungling and impolitic successor failed. But Lincoln's work was done. Four days after he uttered his impromptu plea for tolerance and charity in dealing with the conquered states, a new President took the oath of office. The passing of Lincoln removed the last check upon the Congressional majority, which proceeded at once to carry out its implacable policy. Reconstruction was not completed until most of the statesmen who had played their parts in the great war drama had passed from the theater of action.

#### LAST PUBLIC ADDRESS. APRIL 11, 1865

We meet this evening not in sorrow, but in gladness of heart. The evacuation of Petersburg and Richmond, and the surrender of the principal insurgent army, give hope of a righteous and speedy peace, whose joyous expression cannot be restrained. In the midst of this, however, He from whom all blessings flow must not be forgotten. A call for a national thanksgiving is being prepared, and will be duly promulgated. Nor must those whose harder part give us the cause of rejoicing be overlooked. Their honors must not be parcelled out with others. I myself was near the front, and had the high pleasure of transmitting much of the good news to you; but no part of the honor for plan or execution is mine. To General Grant, his skilful offi-



cers and brave men, all belongs. The gallant navy stood ready, but was not in reach to take active part.

By these recent successes the reinauguration of the national authority — reconstruction — which has had a large share of thought from the first, is pressed much more closely upon our attention. It is fraught with great difficulty. Unlike a case of war between independent nations, there is no authorized organ for us to treat with — no one man has authority to give up the rebellion for any other man. We simply must begin with and mold from disorganized and discordant elements. Nor is it a small additional embarrassment that we, the loyal people, differ among ourselves as to the mode, manner, and measure of reconstruction. As a general rule, I abstain from reading the reports of attacks upon myself, wishing not to be provoked by that to which I cannot properly offer an answer. In spite of this precaution, however, it comes to my knowledge that I am much censured for some supposed agency in setting up and seeking to sustain the new State government of Louisiana.

In this I have done just so much as, and no more than, the public knows. In the annual message of December, 1863, and in the accompanying proclamation, I presented a plan of reconstruction, as the phrase goes, which I promised, if adopted by any State, should be acceptable to and sustained by the executive government of the nation. I distinctly stated that this was not the only plan which might possibly be acceptable, and I also distinctly protested that the executive claimed no right to say when or whether members should be admitted to seats in Congress from such States. This



plan was in advance submitted to the then Cabinet, and distinctly approved by every member of it. One of them suggested that I should then and in that connection apply the Emancipation Proclamation to the theretofore excepted parts of Virginia and Louisiana; that I should drop the suggestion about apprenticeship for freed people, and that I should omit the protest against my own power in regard to the admission of members to Congress. But even he approved every part and parcel of the plan which has since been employed or touched by the action of Louisiana.

The new constitution of Louisiana, declaring emancipation for the whole State, practically applies the proclamation to the part previously excepted. It does not adopt apprenticeship for freed people, and it is silent, as it could not well be otherwise, about the admission of members to Congress. So that, as it applies to Louisiana, every member of the Cabinet fully approved the plan. The message went to Congress, and I received many commendations of the plan, written and verbal, and not a single objection to it from any professed emancipationist came to my knowledge until after the news reached Washington that the people of Louisiana had begun to move in accordance with it. From about July, 1862, I had corresponded with different persons supposed to be interested in seeking a reconstruction of a State government for Louisiana. When the message of 1863, with the plan before mentioned, reached New Orleans, General Banks wrote me that he was confident that the people, with his military coöperation, would reconstruct substantially on that plan. I wrote to him and some of



them to try it. They tried it, and the result is known. Such has been my only agency in getting up the Louisiana government.

As to sustaining it, my promise is out, as before stated. But as bad promises are better broken than kept, I shall treat this as a bad promise, and break it whenever I shall be convinced that keeping it is adverse to the public interest; but I have not yet been so convinced. I have been shown a letter on this subject, supposed to be an able one, in which the writer expresses regret that my mind has not seemed to be definitely fixed on the question whether the seceded States, so called, are in the Union or out of it. It would perhaps add astonishment to his regret were he to learn that since I have found professed Union men endeavoring to make that question, I have purposely forbore any public expression upon it. As appears to me, that question has not been, nor yet is, a practically material one, and that any discussion of it, while it thus remains practically immaterial, could have no effect other than the mischievous one of dividing our friends. As yet, whatever it may hereafter become, that question is bad as the basis of a controversy, and good for nothing at all — a merely pernicious abstraction.

We all agree that the seceded States, so called, are out of their proper practical relation with the Union, and that the sole object of the government, civil and military, in regard to those States is to again get them into that proper practical relation. I believe that it is not only possible, but in fact easier, to do this without deciding or even considering whether these States



have ever been out of the Union, than with it. Finding themselves safely at home, it would be utterly immaterial whether they had ever been abroad. Let us all join in doing the acts necessary to restoring the proper practical relations between these States and the Union, and each forever after innocently indulge his own opinion whether in doing the acts he brought the States from without into the Union, or only gave them proper assistance, they never having been out of it. The amount of constituency, so to speak, on which the new Louisiana government rests would be more satisfactory to all if it contained 50,000, or 30,000, or even 20,000, instead of only about 12,000, as it does. It is also unsatisfactory to some that the elective franchise is not given to the colored man. I would myself prefer that it were now conferred on the very intelligent, and on those who serve our cause as soldiers.

Still, the question is not whether the Louisiana government, as it stands, is quite all that is desirable. The question is, will it be wiser to take it as it is and help to improve it, or to reject and disperse it? Can Louisiana be brought into proper practical relations with the Union sooner by sustaining or by discarding her new State government? Some twelve thousand voters in the heretofore slave State of Louisiana have sworn allegiance to the Union, assumed to be the rightful political power of the State, held elections, organized a State government, adopted a free-State constitution, giving the benefit of public schools equally to black and white, and empowering the legislature to confer the elective franchise upon the colored man. Their legislature has already voted to ratify the con-



stitutional amendment recently passed by Congress, abolishing slavery throughout the nation. These 12,000 persons are thus fully committed to the Union and to perpetual freedom in the State — committed to the very things, and nearly all the things, the nation wants — and they ask the nation's recognition and its assistance to make good their committal.

Now, if we reject and spurn them, we do our utmost to disorganize and disperse them. We, in effect, say to the white man: You are worthless or worse; we will neither help you, nor be helped by you. To the blacks we say: This cup of liberty which these, your old masters, hold to your lips we will dash from you, and leave you to the chances of gathering the spilled and scattered contents in some vague and undefined when, where, and how. If this course, discouraging and paralyzing both white and black, has any tendency to bring Louisiana into proper practical relations with the Union, I have so far been unable to perceive it. If, on the contrary, we recognize and sustain the new government of Louisiana, the converse of all this is made true. We encourage the hearts and nerve the arms of the 12,000 to adhere to their work, and argue for it, and proselyte for it, and fight for it, and feel it, and grow it, and ripen it to a complete success. The colored man, too, in seeing all united for him, is inspired with vigilance, and energy, and daring, to the same end. Grant that he desires the elective franchise, will he not attain it sooner by saving the already advanced steps toward it than by running backward over them? Concede that the new government of Louisiana is only to what it should be as the egg is to the fowl,



we shall sooner have the fowl by hatching the egg than by smashing it.

Again, if we reject Louisiana we also reject one vote in favor of the proposed amendment to the national Constitution. To meet this proposition, it has been argued that no more than three fourths of those States which have not attempted secession are necessary to validly ratify the amendment. I do not commit myself against this further than to say that such a ratification would be questionable, and sure to be persistently questioned, while a ratification by three fourths of all the States would be unquestioned and unquestionable. I repeat the question: Can Louisiana be brought into proper practical relation with the Union sooner by sustaining or by discarding her new State government? What has been said of Louisiana will apply generally to other States. And yet so great peculiarities pertain to each State, and such important and sudden changes occur in the same State, and withal so new and unprecedented is the whole case that no exclusive and inflexible plan can safely be prescribed as to details and collaterals. Such exclusive and inflexible plan would surely become a new entanglement. Important principles may and must be inflexible. In the present situation, as the phrase goes, it may be my duty to make some new announcement to the people of the South. I am considering, and shall not fail to act when satisfied that action will be proper.



EXTRACT FROM COLONEL ROBERT G.  
INGERSOLL'S EULOGY ON LINCOLN

FROM "REMINISCENCES OF ABRAHAM LINCOLN"

USED BY PERMISSION OF THE NORTH AMERICAN REVIEW

Strange mingling of mirth and tears, of the tragic and grotesque, of cap and crown, of Socrates and Rabelais, of Æsop and Marcus Aurelius, of all that is gentle and just, humorous and honest, merciful, wise, laughable, lovable, and divine, and all consecrated to the use of man; while through all, and over all, an overwhelming sense of obligation, of chivalric loyalty to truth, and upon all the shadow of the tragic end.

Nearly all the great historic characters are impossible monsters, disproportioned by flattery, or by calumny deformed. We know nothing of their peculiarities, or nothing but their peculiarities. About the roots of these oaks there clings none of the earth of humanity. Washington is now only a steel engraving. About the real man who lived and loved and hated and schemed we know but little. The glass through which we look at him is of such high magnifying power that the features are exceedingly indistinct. Hundreds of people are now engaged in smoothing out the lines of Lincoln's face — forcing all features to the common mold — so that he may be known, not as he really was, but, according to their poor standard, as he should have been.

Lincoln was not a type. He stands alone — no ancestors, no fellows, and no successors. He had the



advantage of living in a new country, of social equality, of personal freedom, of seeing in the horizon of his future the perpetual star of hope. He preserved his individuality and his self-respect. He knew and mingled with men of every kind; and, after all, men are the best books. He became acquainted with the ambitions and hopes of the heart, the means used to accomplish ends, the springs of action and the seeds of thought. He was familiar with nature, with actual things, with common facts. He loved and appreciated the poem of the year, the drama of the seasons.

In a new country, a man must possess at least three virtues — honesty, courage, and generosity. In cultivated society, cultivation is often more important than soil. A well executed counterfeit passes more readily than a blurred genuine. It is necessary only to observe the unwritten laws of society — to be honest enough to keep out of prison, and generous enough to subscribe in public — where the subscription can be defended as an investment. In a new country, character is essential; in the old, reputation is sufficient. In the new, they find what a man really is; in the old, he generally passes for what he resembles. People separated only by distance are much nearer together than those divided by the walls of caste.

It is no advantage to live in a great city, where poverty degrades and failure brings despair. The fields are lovelier than paved streets, and the great forests than walls of brick. Oaks and elms are more poetic than steeples and chimneys. In the country is the idea of home. There you see the rising and setting



sun; you become acquainted with the stars and clouds. The constellations are your friends. You hear the rain on the roof and listen to the rhythmic sighing of the winds. You are thrilled by the resurrection called Spring, touched and saddened by Autumn, the grace and poetry of death. Every field is a picture, a landscape; every landscape, a poem; every flower, a tender thought; and every forest, a fairy-land. In the country you preserve your identity — your personality. There you are an aggregation of atoms, but in the city you are only an atom of an aggregation.

Lincoln never finished his education. To the night of his death he was a pupil, a learner, an inquirer, a seeker after knowledge. You have no idea how many men are spoiled by what is called education. For the most part, colleges are places where pebbles are polished and diamonds are dimmed. If Shakespeare had graduated at Oxford, he might have been a quibbling attorney or a hypocritical parson.

Lincoln was a many-sided man, acquainted with smiles and tears, complex in brain, single in heart, direct as light; and his words, candid as mirrors, gave the perfect image of his thought. He was never afraid to ask — never too dignified to admit that he did not know. No man had keener wit or kinder humor. He was not solemn. Solemnity is a mask worn by ignorance and hypocrisy — it is the preface, prologue, and index to the cunning or the stupid. He was natural in his life and thought — master of the story-teller's art, in illustration apt, in application perfect, liberal in speech, shocking Pharisees and prudes, using any word that wit could disinfect.



He was a logician. Logic is the necessary product of intelligence and sincerity. It cannot be learned. It is the child of a clear head and a good heart. He was candid, and with candor often deceived the deceitful. He had intellect without arrogance, genius without pride, and religion without cant — that is to say, without bigotry and without deceit.

He was an orator — clear, sincere, natural. He did not pretend. He did not say what he thought others thought, but what he thought. If you wish to be sublime you must be natural — you must keep close to the grass. You must sit by the fireside of the heart; above the clouds it is too cold. You must be simple in your speech; too much polish suggests insincerity. The great orator idealizes the real, transfigures the common, makes even the inanimate throb and thrill, fills the gallery of the imagination with statues and pictures perfect in form and color, brings to light the gold hoarded by memory, the miser — shows the glittering coin to the spendthrift, hope — enriches the brain, ennobles the heart, and quickens the conscience. Between his lips, words bud and blossom.

If you wish to know the difference between an orator and an elocutionist — between what is felt and what is said — between what the heart and brain can do together and what the brain can do alone — read Lincoln's wondrous words at Gettysburg, and then the speech of Edward Everett. The oration of Lincoln will never be forgotten. It will live until languages are dead and lips are dust. The speech of Everett will never be read. The elocutionists believe in the virtue of voice, the sublimity of syntax, the majesty of long sentences, and



the genius of gesture. The orator loves the real, the simple, the natural. He places the thought above all. He knows that the greatest ideas should be expressed in the shortest words — that the greatest statues need the least drapery.

Lincoln was an immense personality — firm but not obstinate. Obstinacy is egotism — firmness, heroism. He influenced others without effort, unconsciously; and they submitted to him as men submit to nature, unconsciously. He was severe with himself, and for that reason lenient with others. He appeared to apologize for being kinder than his fellows. He did merciful things as stealthily as others committed crimes. Almost ashamed of tenderness, he said and did the noblest words and deeds with that charming confusion — awkwardness — that is the perfect grace of modesty. As a nobleman, wishing to pay a small debt to a poor neighbor, reluctantly offers a hundred-dollar bill and asks for change, fearing that he may be suspected either of making a display of wealth or a pretense of payment, so Lincoln hesitated to show his wealth of goodness, even to the best he knew.

A great man stooping, not wishing to make his fellows feel that they were small or mean.

He knew others, because perfectly acquainted with himself. He cared nothing for place, but everything for principle; nothing for money, but everything for independence. Where no principle was involved, easily swayed — willing to go slowly, if in the right direction — sometimes willing to stop, but he would not go back, and he would not go wrong. He was willing to wait. He knew that the event was not



waiting, and that fate was not the fool of chance. He knew that slavery had defenders, but no defense, and that they who attack the right must wound themselves. He was neither tyrant nor slave. He neither knelt nor scorned. With him, men were neither great nor small,—they were right or wrong. Through manners, clothes, titles, rags, and race he saw the real — that which is. Beyond accident, policy, compromise, and war he saw the end. He was patient as Destiny, whose undecipherable hieroglyphics were so deeply graven on his sad and tragic face.

Nothing discloses real character like the use of power. It is easy for the weak to be gentle. Most people can bear adversity. But if you wish to know what a man really is, give him power. This is the supreme test. It is the glory of Lincoln that, having almost absolute power, he never abused it, except upon the side of mercy.

Wealth could not purchase, power could not awe this divine, this loving man. He knew no fear except the fear of doing wrong. Hating slavery, pitying the master — seeking to conquer, not persons, but prejudices — he was the embodiment of the self-denial, the courage, the hope, and the nobility of a nation. He spoke, not to inflame, not to upbraid, but to convince. He raised his hands, not to strike, but in benediction. He longed to pardon. He loved to see the pearls of joy on the cheeks of a wife whose husband he had rescued from death.

Lincoln was the grandest figure of the fiercest civil war. He is the gentlest memory of our world.



EXTRACT FROM HON. HENRY WATTERSON'S  
LECTURE ON ABRAHAM LINCOLN

USED BY PERMISSION OF THE PUBLISHERS  
MESSRS. DUFFIELD & Co.

Amid the noise and confusion, the clashing of intellects like sabers bright, and the booming of the big oratorical guns of the North and the South, now definitely arrayed, there came one day into the Northern camp one of the oddest figures imaginable; the figure of a man who, in spite of an appearance somewhat at outs with Hogarth's line of beauty, wore a serious aspect, if not an air of command, and, pausing to utter a single sentence that might be heard above the din, passed on and for a moment disappeared. The sentence was pregnant with meaning. The man bore a commission from God on high! He said: "A house divided against itself cannot stand. I believe this government cannot endure permanently half free and half slave. I do not expect the Union to be dissolved; I do not expect the house to fall; but I do expect it will cease to be divided." He was Abraham Lincoln.

How shall I describe him to you? Shall I do so as he appeared to me, when I first saw him immediately on his arrival in the national capital, the chosen President of the United States, his appearance quite as strange as the story of his life, which was then but half known



and half told, or shall I use the words of another and a more graphic word-painter?

In January, 1861, Colonel A. K. McClure, of Pennsylvania, journeyed to Springfield, Illinois, to meet and confer with the man he had done so much to elect, but whom he had never personally known. "I went directly from the depot to Lincoln's house," says Colonel McClure, "and rang the bell, which was answered by Lincoln himself opening the door. I doubt whether I wholly concealed my disappointment at meeting him. Tall, gaunt, ungainly, ill-clad, with a homeliness of manner that was unique in itself, I confess that my heart sank within me as I remembered that this was the man chosen by a great nation to become its ruler in the gravest period of its history. I remember his dress as if it were but yesterday — snuff-colored and slouchy pantaloons; open black vest, held by a few brass buttons; straight or evening dress-coat, with tightly fitting sleeves to exaggerate his long, bony arms, all supplemented by an awkwardness that was uncommon among men of intelligence. Such was the picture I met in the person of Abraham Lincoln. We sat down in his plainly furnished parlor and were uninterrupted during the nearly four hours I remained with him, and little by little, as his earnestness, sincerity, and candor were developed in conversation, I forgot all the grotesque qualities which so confounded me when I first greeted him. Before half an hour had passed I learned not only to respect, but, indeed, to reverence the man."

A graphic portrait, truly, and not unlike. I recall him, two months later, a little less uncouth, a little better dressed, but in singularity and in angularity



much the same. All the world now takes an interest in every detail that concerned him, or that relates to the weird tragedy of his life and death.

And who was this peculiar being, destined in his mother's arms — for cradle he had none — so profoundly to affect the future of human-kind? He has told us, himself, in words so simple and unaffected, so idiomatic and direct, that we can neither misread them nor improve upon them. Writing, in 1859, to one who had asked him for some biographic particulars, Abraham Lincoln said: —

“I was born February 12, 1809, in Hardin county, Kentucky. My parents were both born in Virginia, of undistinguished families — second families, perhaps I should say. My mother, who died in my tenth year, was of a family of the name of Hanks . . . . My paternal grandfather, Abraham Lincoln, emigrated from Rockingham county, Virginia, to Kentucky about 1781 or 1782, where, a year or two later, he was killed by the Indians, not in battle, but by stealth, when he was laboring to open a farm in the forest.

“My father (Thomas Lincoln) at the death of his father was but six years of age. By the early death of his father, and the very narrow circumstances of his mother, he was, even in childhood, a wandering, laboring boy, and grew up literally without education. He never did more in the way of writing than bunglingly to write his own name. . . . He removed from Kentucky to what is now Spencer county, Indiana, in my eighth year. . . . It was a wild region, with many bears and other animals still in the woods. . . . There were some schools, so-called, but no qualification was ever



required of a teacher beyond 'readin, writin, and cipherin to the rule of three.' If a straggler supposed to understand Latin happened to sojourn in the neighborhood he was looked upon as a wizard. . . . Of course, when I came of age I did not know much. Still, somehow, I could read, write, and cipher to the rule of three. But that was all. . . . The little advance I now have upon this store of education I have picked up from time to time under the pressure of necessity.

"I was raised to farm work . . . till I was twenty-two. At twenty-one I came to Illinois, — Macon county. Then I got to New Salem, . . . where I remained a year as a sort of clerk in a store. Then came the Black Hawk war; and I was elected captain of a volunteer company, a success that gave me more pleasure than any I have had since. I went into the campaign — was elated — ran for the Legislature the same year (1832), and was beaten — the only time I ever have been beaten by the people. The next, and three succeeding biennial elections, I was elected to the Legislature. I was not a candidate afterward. During the legislative period I had studied law and removed to Springfield to practice it. In 1846 I was elected to the lower house of Congress. Was not a candidate for re-election. From 1849 to 1854, inclusive, I practiced law more assiduously than ever before. Always a Whig in politics, and generally on the Whig electoral tickets, making active canvasses, I was losing interest in politics when the repeal of the Missouri Compromise aroused me again.

"If any personal description of me is thought desirable, it may be said that I am in height six feet four



inches, nearly; lean in flesh, weighing on an average one hundred and eighty pounds; dark complexion, with coarse black hair and gray eyes. No other marks or brands recollected."

There is the whole story, told by himself, and brought down to the point where he becomes a figure of national importance.

His political philosophy was expounded in four elaborate speeches: one delivered at Peoria, Illinois, October 16, 1854; one at Springfield, Illinois, June 16, 1858; one at Columbus, Ohio, September 16, 1859, and one February 27, 1860, at Cooper Institute, in the city of New York. Of course Mr. Lincoln made many speeches and very good speeches. But these four, progressive in character, contain the sum total of his creed touching the organic character of the Government and at the same time his party view of contemporary issues. They show him to have been an old-line Whig of the school of Henry Clay, with strong emancipation leanings; a thorough anti-slavery man, but never an extremist or an abolitionist. To the last he hewed to the line thus laid down. . . .

What was the mysterious power of this mysterious man, and whence?

His was the genius of common sense; of common sense in action; of common sense in thought; of common sense enriched by experience and unhindered by fear. "He was a common man," says his friend Joshua Speed, "expanded into giant proportions; well acquainted with the people, he placed his hand on the beating pulse of the nation, judged of its disease, and was ready with a remedy." Inspired he was truly, as



Shakespeare was inspired; as Mozart was inspired; as Burns was inspired; each, like him, sprung directly from the people.

I look into the crystal globe that, slowly turning, tells the story of his life, and I see a little heart-broken boy, weeping by the outstretched form of a dead mother, then bravely, nobly trudging a hundred miles to obtain her Christian burial. I see this motherless lad growing to manhood amid the scenes that seem to lead to nothing but abasement; no teachers; no books; no chart, except his own untutored mind; no compass, except his own undisciplined will; no light, save light from Heaven; yet, like the caravel of Columbus, struggling on and on through the trough of the sea, always toward the destined land. I see the full-grown man, stalwart and brave, an athlete in activity of movement and strength of limb, yet vexed by weird dreams and visions; of life, of love, of religion, sometimes verging on despair. I see the mind, grown as robust as the body, throw off these phantoms of the imagination and give itself wholly to the work-a-day uses of the world; the rearing of children; the earning of bread; the multiplied duties of life. I see the party leader, self-confident in conscious rectitude; original, because it was not his nature to follow; potent, because he was fearless, pursuing his convictions with earnest zeal, and urging them upon his fellows with the resources of an oratory which was hardly more impressive than it was many-sided. I see him, the preferred among his fellows, ascend the eminence reserved for him, and him alone of all the statesmen of the time, amid the derision of opponents and the distrust of supporters, yet unawed and unmoved,



because thoroughly equipped to meet the emergency. The same being, from first to last; the poor child weeping over a dead mother; the great chief sobbing amid the cruel horrors of war; flinching not from duty, nor changing his life-long ways of dealing with the stern realities which pressed upon him and hurried him onward. And, last scene of all, that ends this strange, eventful history, I see him lying dead there in the capitol of the nation, to which he had rendered "the last, full measure of his devotion," the flag of his country around him, the world in mourning, and, asking myself how could any man have hated that man, I ask you, how can any man refuse his homage to his memory? Surely, he was one of God's elect; not in any sense a creature of circumstance or accident. Recurring to the doctrine of inspiration, I say again and again, he was inspired of God, and I cannot see how any one who believes in that doctrine can regard him as anything else.



## EXTRACT FROM BISHOP FOWLER'S LECTURE ON ABRAHAM LINCOLN

USED BY PERMISSION OF THE PUBLISHERS  
MESSRS. EATON AND MAINS

Mr. Lincoln was great as a speaker. As a speaker he stands at the forefront, with no man of record in advance of him. He was about half-way between the rounded periods of Daniel Webster and the crisp, sharp utterances of modern newspaper editorials.

As a stump speaker he was by all odds the greatest the world ever saw. He could put the extinguisher on an antagonist in thirty-one seconds. Talking, over in Illinois, with a lawyer, who had great prodigality of language and great parsimony of truth, Mr. Lincoln answered him by saying: "Gentlemen of the jury, you must not blame this man for what has been going on. He knows nothing about it. He is just like a little steamboat that used to go snorting and cavorting up and down the Sangamon River. It had a boiler five feet long and a whistle twelve feet long. Every time it whistled it stopped. So it is with this gentleman. He seems to be a man of integrity when he keeps his mouth shut, but when he opens his mouth he shuts his intellect. He knows nothing of what has been going on. You must not blame him." Mr. Lincoln was the perfect master of all the tricks of the stump speaker. But in his great speeches, upon which his fame safely rests, there is not the slightest indication of this ability.



There are traditions among the old lawyers and political leaders of Illinois of occasional deliverances that were resistless in their power and overwhelming in their effects. He went to the meeting in Bloomington, Illinois, May 29, 1858, where the Republican Party of Illinois was organized. His friends besought him not to waste himself. They followed him into the coach and pleaded with him. It did not avail. He was under the orders of a solid moral conviction. He believed he had come to the parting of the ways. With the spirit of a martyr he followed duty. He went, and his speech was above description. At one time he appealed to the friends of Henry Clay and warned them against the insincerity of men clinging to dead issues, who tried to resuscitate their political corpse by casting it into the grave of Clay, that his bones might galvanize it into life. So powerful were his paragraphs that the audience, lawyers, judges, politicians, the entire audience in tears, shouting their approval, sprang to their feet and upon the seats and desks, lifted by the spell of the great soul that swayed and swept everything before him. An old judge of highest character, who was present, told me of this years after. He said, "I never heard such speaking before. I shall never hear it again. I found myself standing on the top of my desk lifted by the moral and heroic sublimity of his utterances. He seemed to embody all the great issues of the coming conflict, and with the devotion of a martyr he put the conviction upon us. I could not sleep that night. I walked my room till morning."

His first great speech of record was at the State Fair, in Springville, Illinois, October 4, 1854. Douglas had



just returned from Washington after the repeal of the Missouri Compromise. The Missouri Compromise was enacted in 1820, consecrating the Territories to freedom. Douglas had secured its repeal, opening the Territories to slavery. He came home to make his peace with an irritated constituency. Mr. Douglas was a great debater. I have heard him debate by the half day. He said things that I knew were out of harmony with the facts, yet he would state them with such a show of logic and such a display of conviction that he would make you believe them almost in spite of yourself. He was a great debater. I think Mr. Douglas was the greatest man in the great Democratic Party of that time. For three hours he pounded away at his defense. When he had finished the crowd called out Mr. Lincoln, who was present. Mr. Lincoln answered him. Herndon, Lincoln's old law partner, says, "Mr. Lincoln demonstrated that he had not lounged about the libraries of the Capitol in vain. It was not the old Lincoln, the pride and pet of Sangamon County. It was a newer and greater Lincoln, that no man there had ever seen or heard, but seeing and hearing could never forget." Herndon says, "The Nebraska Bill and Mr. Douglas's argument were shivered like an oak by a thunderbolt, torn and rent by hot bolts of truths." Mr. Douglas was utterly discomfited, and made but brief and feeble reply. From that day Mr. Lincoln was the great speaker, debater, orator, upon whom the new party relied and to whom all eyes turned for monumental occasions.

Where will you find a more telling speech than his great speech of June, 1858, known as the "House



Divided Against Itself" speech? He startled the nation with that ringing prophecy, "I believe this government cannot endure permanently half-slave and half-free."

It was trite in the sixties to praise the Lincoln-Douglas debate of 1858. It was the meeting of two seas, the sea of the dark ages and the sea of the new ages. It was the conflict of two great civilizations, the civilization of caste and aristocracy founded on wrong and on human slavery, and the civilization of manhood and freedom founded on the discovery of the individual man. The champions were the greatest debaters and platform speakers two systems had produced, the Rail-Splitter, Lincoln, and the Little Giant, Douglas. It is above comparison with any political debate known to history in the systems they represented, in the champions pushed to the front, in the principles underlying the contest, in the ability with which it was conducted, and in the consequences flowing out of it. Mr. Lincoln's triumphs in this great encounter, even had he rendered no other service to his age, would have secured to him imperishable honors at the judgment bar of mankind, and would have justified his living at the judgment bar of God.

Perhaps his greatest and most decisive speech was his Cooper Institute speech of February 27, 1860. He was in a new field, surrounded by the chieftains of the coming party. There sat William H. Seward, with a nose like a Mohawk warrior; there sat Horace Greeley, with his old white hat; there in the chair sat Thurlow Weed, the greatest Roman of them all. It was the one opportunity of a lifetime, and Mr. Lincoln was equal to it. He rose to the occasion, as he always did.



There were none of the arts of the stump speaker. It was a great, statesmanlike handling of the nation's life. It was like a plea before the Supreme Court. It candidly embodied all the facts of the situation in simple Saxon. It lifted the new party above the misrepresentation of its adversaries and joined it indissolubly with the principles and administration of Washington. It opened a consistent, easy way for every patriot to come to its support. It abused no one. It dealt with principles. For two hours that audience smiled, approved, cheered, gave themselves to the new party and their hearts to the new speaker. Nearly all the great dailies printed it in full. The *Tribune* said, "No man ever before made such an impression on his first appeal to a New York audience." It was struck off as a campaign document. They appointed a committee of scholars to test its accuracy. The committee declared "as almost incredible the accuracy of his statements and the wide extent of his knowledge." From the first line to the last he travels with a swift unerring directness, which no logician ever excelled. This speech crystallized the issues floating in the public mind, typed the Union Party, furnished it with a platform and candidate, gave it victory at the polls, a spirit and an administration for four years of terror and struggle for national existence. Measured by the severest tests of a great speech, by the use of simple Saxon, by the beauty of its rhetoric, by the grip of its logic, by the breadth of its historical illustrations, by the range of its research, by its freedom from scholastic pretensions, by its brotherly, conciliatory, yet unflinching treatment of its adversaries, by its wise ad-



monitions to its friends, by its manly avowal of the power of the right, by its reverential acknowledgement of God, by the vast results it achieved — by all these great elements that make a great speech, it is equal to any speech recorded in any language. There is but one speech of record worthy to be placed by the side of it, and that is Daniel Webster's greatest speech, his reply to Hayne, of South Carolina.

I do not wonder that the Professor of Rhetoric of New York College followed him night after night and from place to place, that he might lecture on the greatest speeches he ever heard, and discover if possible the secret of this great power.

If anything more is needed to give Mr. Lincoln a place with the greatest speakers, then take that matchless speech at Gettysburg, which will live as long as the English language. The most polished orator of New England, Edward Everett, with months of preparation and the nation's dead around him for inspiration, delivered one of his greatest orations for two hours. When he had ended Mr. Lincoln delivered that brief speech, and when he had ended Mr. Everett ran up to him in great excitement and said, "I would gladly give you my two hours for your twenty sentences"; and well he might, for those twenty sentences would carry him as a matchless orator for twenty centuries. All men will feel the deep thrill of the simple justice of his words: "We cannot dedicate, we cannot consecrate, we cannot hallow this ground. The brave men, living and dead, who struggled here have consecrated it far above our poor power to add or detract. The world will little note nor long remember what we say here,



but it can never forget what they did here. It is for us, the living, rather, to be dedicated here to the unfinished work, that these dead shall not have died in vain; that this nation, under God, shall have a new birth of freedom; and that government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth." None but the clearest and greatest mind could have projected such utterances. They would hardly shock us as a part of the Sermon on the Mount. It touched the heart of the nation like the benediction after prayer. The University of London, seeking specimens of perfect English to be studied by her pupils, has taken from this side of the Atlantic but one specimen, and that is Mr. Lincoln's Gettysburg speech. Mr. Lincoln was great as a speaker.



# NOTES

SPEECH AT PEORIA, ILL., OCT. 16, 1854

**Fools rush in where angels fear to tread.** Alexander Pope (1688-1744), "Essay on Criticism."

**American Republicanism.** The paragraph ending with these words touched the very marrow of the matter and revealed to the great audience the iniquity of "popular sovereignty" and the Kansas-Nebraska Bill.

**These same men passed the Ordinance of '87.** The Ordinance of 1787 providing for the government of the Northwest Territory, which comprised the present states of Ohio, Illinois, Indiana, Wisconsin, and Michigan, was passed by the Congress of the Confederation in its dying days. It was chiefly the work of Edward Carrington and Richard Henry Lee of Virginia, and Nathan Dane of Massachusetts. The instrument provided that the Territory should ultimately be divided into states, not exceeding five in number, and prescribed certain principles to which the future states must make their laws conform. The most significant provision of the Ordinance was the clause declaring that "there shall be neither slavery nor involuntary servitude in the said territory, otherwise than in the punishment of crimes whereof the party shall have been duly convicted." The exclusion of slavery from the territories had been unsuccessfully advocated by Jefferson in the ordinance reported by him to the Congress in 1784. Compare with Cooper Institute Speech.

**Slave States are the places for the poor white people to remove from.** Slavery was responsible for the existence in the South of the class known as "poor whites," of which Lincoln's family were members. By dividing southern society into two classes, ruling and servile, slavery created a third class for which there was no place in the economic or social structure of the South. Because he was a free man the "poor white" was too proud to do the work of the slave; and because all the work was performed by slave labor there was nothing for the "poor white" to do. Devoid of industry and energy, he subsisted partly by charity and partly by cultivating small patches of ground. The "poor



white" was despised by both master and slave. Read Charles Egbert Craddock's "Down in the Ravine," and John Fox, Jr's. "The Trail of the Lonesome Pine."

**Five slaves are counted equal to three whites.** This was one of the necessary compromises of the Constitution. "The evil consequences were unquestionably very serious indeed. Henceforth as long as slavery lasted the vote of a southerner counted for more than the vote of a northerner; and just where negroes were most numerous the power of their masters became greatest." "The Critical Period of American History," John Fiske, pp. 261-267.

**The Great Behemoth of Danger.** Job xl, 15.

**It hath no relish of salvation in it.** Hamlet, Act iii, Scene iii. Lincoln makes an allusion instead of giving an exact quotation.

#### SPEECH AT SPRINGFIELD, ILL., JUNE 16, 1858

**A House Divided.** Mark iii, 25. This opening paragraph was considered exceedingly radical both by Lincoln's friends and his foes. In defending this part of his speech, Lincoln said, "The proposition is true and has been for six thousand years. I want to use some universally known figure expressed in simple language that will strike home to the minds of men in order to raise them up to the peril of the issues."

James G. Blaine said, "Abraham Lincoln did not say a thing merely for the day's debate; he said the thing that would stand the test of time, and square itself with eternal justice."

**Compounded of the Nebraska doctrine and the Dred Scott decision.** According to the Nebraska doctrine when a territory became a state its people could decide whether it should be free or slave; according to the Dred Scott decision neither Congress nor the people of a territory could prohibit slavery within the territorial borders. Lincoln claimed that this gave slavery a chance to develop within the territory and thus insured the slave territory for a slave state.

**The New Year of 1854 found slavery excluded.** At this time the laws of fifteen states legalized slavery, while it was prohibited in sixteen states. By the provisions of the Missouri Compromise slavery was excluded from that part of the country north of 36° 30', with the exception of Missouri.

**This opened all the national territory.** The Kansas-Nebraska Bill.



**Down they voted the amendment.** Salmon P. Chase of Ohio, whom Lincoln later appointed Secretary of the Treasury and Chief Justice of the United States Supreme Court, offered an amendment to the Kansas-Nebraska Bill which explicitly declared that the people of a territory could prohibit slavery within their borders. See Lincoln's Freeport speech in the Lincoln-Douglas debates.

**Mr. Buchanan was elected.** Buchanan received 1,838,169 votes; Frémont, 1,341,264; Fillmore, 874,534.

**The outgoing President in his last annual message.** "The purpose and scope of the (Dred Scott) decision was undoubtedly known to President Pierce before the end of his term, and President Buchanan imprudently announced in his inaugural address that the point of time when the people of a territory can decide for themselves will be speedily and finally settled by the Supreme Court." Blaine's "Twenty Years in Congress," vol. i, page 132.

**The Silliman Letter.** A number of citizens of Connecticut, headed by Professor Silliman of Yale, wrote a letter to President Buchanan in regard to certain phases of the Kansas question. In his reply Buchanan said that according to the Dred Scott decision slavery legally existed in the Territory of Kansas.

**The Lecompton Constitution.** A pro-slavery constitution under which Buchanan desired to have Kansas admitted to the Union. Douglas opposed it on the ground that the majority of the people of the territory disapproved of the Lecompton Constitution.

**Stephen, Franklin, Roger, and James.** Lincoln declares that Douglas, Pierce, Taney, and Buchanan worked together to further the interests of the slave states. This charge was generally believed by the Republicans of the day, but historians do not now consider it well founded. This imputation recurred again and again during the Lincoln-Douglas debates.

**McLean or Curtis.** Two judges of the Supreme Court who had dissented from the Dred Scott decision.

**A living dog is better than a dead lion.** Ecclesiastes ix, 4.

#### THE SPEECH AT COLUMBUS, SEPT. 16, 1859

**What is the Dred Scott decision?** In the second joint debate with Douglas at Freeport, Lincoln answered a number of questions which his opponent asked him, and also asked Douglas several exceedingly pointed questions, one of which was, "Can



the people of a United States territory, in any lawful way . . . exclude slavery from its limits, prior to the formation of a state constitution?" The question involved the irreconcilable difference between the Northern and the Southern Democrats in their interpretation of the Kansas-Nebraska Law. To reply in the affirmative was to contradict the Dred Scott decision which he had defended. To answer in the negative was to repudiate his own doctrine of "squatter sovereignty." The little giant skillfully evaded the direct issue by saying that a territory could not prohibit slavery but that it could destroy it by unfriendly legislation. The answer leaned to the Northern view and denied to the South the full benefit of the Dred Scott decision, and it cost Douglas the support of the Southern Democrats in 1860. Lincoln in his speech at Columbus clearly shows the speciousness of this argument.

**And if the Constitution carries slavery into the Territories . . . it also carries it into the States.** In the debate at Galesburg, Oct. 7, 1858, Lincoln thus analyzes Douglas's argument: "Nothing in the Constitution or laws of any state can destroy a right distinctly and expressly affirmed in the Constitution of the United States. The right of property in a slave is distinctly and expressly allowed in the Constitution of the United States. Therefore, nothing in the Constitution or laws of any state can destroy the right of property in a slave."

**Will reopen the African slave trade.** Lincoln argues that as the Dred Scott decision opens all of the states and territories to slavery, it makes impossible any legislation against the slave trade. The Compromise of 1850 abolished the slave trade in the District of Columbia.

**Ordinance of '87.** See note on Peoria Speech, page 141.

**Jeff Davis and Stephens.** Jefferson Davis and Alexander H. Stephens were subsequently elected President and Vice-President of the Confederacy. Davis had been a member of the Cabinet of Franklin Pierce and United States Senator from Mississippi. Stephens was a man of feeble health and diminutive stature but of great intellectual strength. Though opposed to secession, he followed his state. Read his speech against secession before the Georgia State Convention. Denny's "American Public Addresses," page 169.

Contrary to general expectation in the North, the South after seceding did not reopen the African slave trade. The Confederate Constitution, which Davis and Stephens assisted in framing, expressly forbade it.



## THE COOPER INSTITUTE SPEECH, Feb. 27, 1860

**Twelve subsequently framed amendments.** The first ten amendments were practically a "bill of rights"; the eleventh amendment, which made it unconstitutional for an individual to bring a suit in law or equity against the United States, was adopted in 1798; the twelfth, which had to do with the method of electing the President and Vice-President, was adopted in 1804.

**In 1784.** Jefferson introduced in Congress an ordinance prohibiting slavery in the national domain north of the parallel 31° after the year 1800; the motion failed of passage.

**In 1787.** The Ordinance of 1787, passed by the Congress of the Confederation in its dying days, forbade "slavery or involuntary servitude except as a punishment for crime," in the Northwestern Territory, which comprised the present States of Wisconsin, Michigan, Illinois, Indiana, and Ohio.

**North Carolina ceded to the Federal Government — Tennessee.** North Carolina made this cession with the understanding that the Federal Government would not interfere with slavery in the ceded territory. An agreement of this kind indicated that the right of the national government to regulate slavery was recognized or at least apprehended. When Georgia ceded Mississippi and Alabama the deed of cession contained a similar provision.

**Corporal oath.** An oath ratified by touching a sacred object, especially the New Testament, as distinguished from a merely spoken or written oath.

**John Brown.** The raid of this intrepid fanatic upon Harper's Ferry and his ineffectual attempt to stir up a slave insurrection did much to inflame sectional animosity.

**Black Republicanism.** Douglas used this phrase frequently during the Lincoln-Douglas debates, appealing to race prejudice and declaring that Lincoln was a radical abolitionist.

**The Southampton Insurrection.** Sometimes referred to as Nat Turner's insurrection. It broke out at Southampton in 1831; sixty white persons were murdered.

**The Slave revolution in Haiti.** In 1791 Toussaint L'Ouverture led a successful rebellion of the negroes against the French authority.

**The Gunpowder Plot.** In 1604 a number of the opponents of the religious policy of the English Parliament plotted the destruction of that body. Powder in large quantities was concealed



in the cellar of the Parliament building, and November 5th was set as the fatal day. Before the time came one of the conspirators warned his brother-in-law, who was a member of the House of Lords, of the impending danger. The plot was discovered and the conspirators were executed.

**Pari passu**, with equal pace.

**Orsini's attempt on Louis Napoleon.** In 1858 an attempt was made to assassinate the Emperor Napoleon III. Felice Orsini, the leader in the plot, made London his headquarters. He was tried and acquitted by an English jury. The French nation was disposed to condemn Great Britain for alleged negligence.

**Helper's Book.** "The Impending Crisis of the South," by H. R. Helper. The author was a Southerner who wrote from the standpoint of the "poor white," pointing out the economic and social evils arising from slavery.

**The Supreme Court has decided.** Notice Lincoln's treatment of the Dred Scott decision.

**A policy of "don't care."** Douglas had remarked in a speech in the Senate in 1857 that he did not care whether slavery was voted up or voted down. During the debates Lincoln used this against him with telling effect.

**Calling not the sinners.** Matthew ix, 13. Lincoln was a profound student of the Bible and Shakespeare, to which fact is to be ascribed in great measure his superior literary style.

#### THE FIRST INAUGURAL ADDRESS, MARCH 4, 1861

**Apprehension.** When these words were uttered the representatives of the Gulf States were organizing the Confederate Government at Montgomery, Alabama.

**There is much controversy.** The abolitionist element in the Republican party was displeased with Lincoln's deliverance upon the subject of the fugitive slave law, which was a part of the "Omnibus Bill" or "Compromise of 1850." Daniel Webster had supported this measure in his famous "seventh of March speech" which cost him the hitherto idolatrous devotion of New England.

**The Union is much older than the Constitution.** It is worth while to note the development of the idea of a union of states. The earliest colonial league in America was the New England Confederation of 1643, formed for protection against the Indians, the Dutch, and the French. In 1698 William Penn proposed a



union, but it never materialized. In 1754 a congress composed of delegates from seven colonies met at Albany for the purpose of renewing their alliance with the Six Nations; to this body Franklin presented his famous plan for a permanent federal union. In 1765 nine colonies were represented in the Stamp Act Congress. During the years immediately preceding the Revolutionary War the Committee of Correspondence instituted by Samuel Adams did much to promote the spirit of co-operation. In 1774 came the First Continental Congress and the Articles of Association which Lincoln mentions, followed by the Second Continental Congress in 1775, and the somewhat belated Articles of Confederation adopted three years later. It is important to bear in mind, however, that in these temporary unions there was no surrender of sovereignty by the individual colonies or states participating in them.

**No State upon its own mere motion can lawfully get out of the Union.** The question of secession was first brought to the front by the New England states which participated in the Hartford Convention in 1814 and threatened to withdraw from the Union because they disapproved of the War with England which had destroyed their commerce. It is only just to state that the right of secession was nowhere seriously questioned prior to 1860.

**The Union is unbroken.** Lincoln held persistently to the theory that the Union was indestructible, and at the close of the war he was shaping his reconstruction policy in accordance with that view.

**The ills you fly from.** See Hamlet, Act iii, Scene i.

“Makes us rather bear those ills we have  
Than fly to others that we know not of.”

**It was proposed** by those who were anxious to conciliate the South to make slavery perpetual by constitutional amendment.

**“Preserve, protect, and defend it.”** See Constitution of the United States, Art. 2, Sec. 1, 8.

#### THE SECOND INAUGURAL ADDRESS, MARCH 4, 1865

**The progress of our arms.** The war was practically over. The Army of Northern Virginia was making its final stand at Petersburg, Sherman had marched “from Atlanta to the sea,” and Sheridan had ravaged the Shenandoah, the last remaining Confederate granary. More efficient than armies or victories, the blockade had completed the prostration of the South.



**Insurgent agents.** In March, 1861, two Confederate commissioners came to Washington. Through Senator Hunter of Virginia they tried to secure an interview with Secretary Seward, who was at first inclined to receive them; later he wrote a note to Senator Hunter saying, "It will not be in my power to receive the gentlemen of whom we conversed yesterday."

**Judge not.** Matthew vii, 1.

**Woe unto the world.** Matthew xviii, 7.

**The judgments of the Lord.** Psalm xix, 9.









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