“Lincoln as I Knew Him”

Mr. C. I. Forsyth's Vivid Boyhood Impressions of the Great American

To the Editor of The Tribune.

Sir: One fine morning in May, 1858, at Lincoln, Ill., when I was a little barefoot boy, my mother sent me quite early to the butcher shop for meat. As I was crossing the Chicago & Alton railroad tracks I saw a very tall, slender man dressed in black and wearing a black silk hat looking at a badly torn engine on a switch.

"Pretty bad wreck," he said, as he passed him.

When I returned home and related what I had seen, my father said that the man I described was Abe Lincoln.

Our circuit court was in session, and Mr. Lincoln, with other attorneys, was there with the judge of the court accompanying him on the circuit. The judge was David Davis, afterward United States Senator from Illinois. The lawyers whom I remember were Abraham Lincoln and "Bill" Herndon, his law partner, of Springfield; "Bob" Williams, of Bloomington, and Leonard Swett, also of Bloomington.

Mr. Lincoln's law partner, Mr. Herndon, was dark and swarthy and lightly built. Mr. Williams was also light physically. Leonard Swett was larger. All were fine lawyers.

Although a little boy, the legal bee was buzzing in my ear, and so hardly a day passed that I wasn't in court listening to the trials of cases. And hardly a case was tried that all the lawyers above mentioned were not engaged on one side or the other.

What I noticed then, and afterward when I became a lawyer myself, was an entire absence of pettishness. Those lawyers were all above it. What seemed the leading characteristic of Mr. Lincoln was his seeming absolute fairness — fairness in the statement of his cases, both to the court and to the jury. No stories to illustrate his cases, but he spent his allotted time before the court or jury hammering in the galls of Kansas. When I heard Mr. Lincoln speak at Lincoln there was an immense crowd. He stood on an elevated platform in front of the courthouse. The entire square was filled with people. The stores and other buildings on the four streets around the square were covered with a dense crowd. I went early and took up my position in front of the speakers' stand, about forty feet from the speaker. But I heard men who were on the roofs of the buildings after the speech say that they heard every word. His voice had wonderful carrying power, and the burden of his speech was opposition to extending slavery into the territories.

Referring to Mr. Lincoln's style of oratory, it should be classed as purely oratorical style. It was neither dramatic nor conversational. In fine contrast to subsequent political orators whom I have heard, the great debaters always referred to each other in terms of highest respect. The platform was assailed, not the man.

I saw Mr. Lincoln many times, and he always seemed to me to be well dressed, always in black and always wearing a Prince Albert coat and silk hat, and they were well brushed.

I never saw Mr. Lincoln again after I saw and heard him speak in our courthouse square. The funeral train that bore him from Washington to Springfield, Ill., passed through our town the morning of the April day his body reached Springfield. It was a long train. The great coaches were all draped in black. Both the engine and tender were swathed also in the same deep mourning. I remember that a dense crowd was waiting at the depot. Forty trained singers sang the mournful dirge:

[Text not legible]
but he spent his allotted time before the court or jury hammering in the facts of evidence and thus earning the respect of court lawyers and jurists.

Mr. Lincoln, whether in or out of court, while thoroughly democratic in all his ways and actions, yet always seemed enveloped in a personal dignity which kept buffoonery at arm's length. I heard him make a number of speeches before the court and jury, and heard him speak nearly three hours at Lincoln in his race for United States Senator against Judge Douglas, and in all those speeches did not hear him tell a single funny story. In fact, I don't believe he ever told all the stories he is credited with.

His second inaugural address and his Gettysburg speech were more like the Lincoln I knew. Earnestness in manner and fairness in statement seemed his forte in oratory.

Personally, all who knew Mr. Lincoln liked him. Those whom he well knew he often called by their given names, and they called him "Ab." He was a man whom to know was to trust. I heard a Democrat who shook hands with him when he was running for United States Senator say, "I like you, Abe, all but your politics." Lincoln laughed good-naturedly and said: "Oh, Jimmie, you'll vote for me some day!" And Jimmie did.

The campaign of 1858 between Abraham Lincoln and Stephen A. Douglas was perhaps the greatest political fight ever staged in America. Both were intellectual giants. Both were fearless in the defense of their political principles. Mr. Lincoln's experience was confined to the state and one term as a member of the lower house of Congress, the Thirteenth. Judge Douglas had been a judge of the state Supreme Court and was running for re-election as United States Senator. He was a polished orator. Senator Douglas was re-elected by a slight majority of the Legislature. Illinois had always gone Democratic, but two years later Lincoln swept the state by 50,000.

The election cost Mr. Lincoln less than $1,000. Senator Douglas spent $60,000, mostly borrowed money, which fact sent him to a premature grave. Not a dollar spent by either was to purchase votes, but to hold elaborate campaign meetings. I remember one train from the Chicago & Alton Railroad containing forty cars and two engines.

I wish I could describe Mr. Lincoln's voice. The nearest I ever heard it duplicated was by Senator John J. In-

From every side your heart, and This would be very true.

My recollection of these were the

verses.

The cortege did not stop, but the engineer had the train under absolute and perfect control, for the rear of the last car was passing as the chair finished the last verse.

C. L. FORSYTH.

Gulf Chateau, Wall Springs, Fl

Feb. 6, 1928.

Arguing for Arbuckle

To the Editor of The Tribune.

Sirs: To read your editorial, "A T. of Sincerity," concerning Arbuckle return to the films one would believe that the decision of Director Gener Hays was not the subject of different of opinion between fair-minded a sensible people. You distinctly state that Mr. Hays had appointed the committee on public relations for the purpose of supplying him with advice and counsel, to raise the standard of the films, and then you proceed to assume that the committee's job should have been treated by Mr. H as a mandate.

Surely there are many reasons persons who feel that the old max "Evil be to him who evil thinks" peculiarly appropriate in this discussion. From a susceptibility standpoint it is ridiculous to conclude that the young people seeing "Fatty" in a clumsy and mirth-provoking picture (but which are invariably clean at wholesomeness) are going to bark back at the San Francisco episode. That has been forgotten except by the Phraseset.

If I am wrong, then the same rule applies when a dozen other stars perform before us who, when they play some sweet or saintly rôle, remind us of the Hollywood scandals and when they are maneuvering in the usual sex triangle or quadrangle suggest to us that they are acting quite naturally.

CHARLES TIFORD GREEN.


A Fundamentalist Ticket

(From The Pittsburgh Gazette-Telegram)

We suppose that Bryan will insist that any candidate selected by the Democratic party next year be entirely orthodox.

Chaplin vs. Chaplain

(From The Los Angeles Times)

An Iowa preacher donned overalls to get a crowd to his church. Once upon a time folks went to church to hear a sermon, not to see monkeyshines.