Manuscript: Unknown title

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Note 1.

During the celebrated canvass of ’58, in Illinois, when I was 11 years old, my father, who played the fife for our local band, was kind enough to let me ride with him in the “band wagon” going from our place 16 miles across prairie to Toulon, Stark Co., where Mr. Lincoln was to speak. Mr. Douglass had preceded him by a day or two, or was soon to follow. Aside from the seven great joint debates this was the manner of the general canvass of that year.

Coming from Cambridge, in the adjoining county, Mr. Lincoln was received by an immense throng of people on the County Fair grounds, just before noon. A young man in the neighborhood had trained a pair of steers to drive in harness, and behind these, seated in a low, open carriage, beside the driver, Mr. Lincoln was presented to the multitude. It seems to me now that I never have heard elsewhere such wild, tumultuous cheering as greeted that event. Then, following Mr. Lincoln and the steers, with flags flying, bands playing, the crowd entered the town.

My next recollection is that when the meeting opened on the square, where a long stand had been erected against the court house wall, my father and I found ourselves at the outer verge of the audience and a long way from the speaker. Father, being very deaf, and having no hope of being
able to hear from any attainable position, kindly consented that I might get closer if I could, for which confidence I shall never cease to be grateful.

Being small, I worked my way gradually through the mass to the very edge of the platform in front of the speaker, and there I stood looking up at the man whom I had already learned to love and revere.

I understood something of the momentous questions under discussion, and could follow his thought quite well; though of course I cannot now recall anything definitely that he said.

What impressed me most was the clear ringing voice, the powerful action and intense earnestness of the man. I remember that the swinging of his arms seemed to give a sweep of emphasis to his speech; that as I looked up, and his words poured forth rapidly, the fine mist from his mouth fell upon my face. This I wiped away repeatedly, and kept my eyes upon him to the close.

The crowd soon thinned, I found my father, and went home with one of the greatest memories of my life.
Note 2.

It strikes me that a valuable addition to your series by way of illustration would be the picture of an old fashioned band wagon, such as we used to see in early times; a four horse team, a common "lumber" wagon, with a rude frame and seats over the wheels on both sides. High seat in front for the driver and flag bearer. Don't forget him—flag staff fastened below so he had only to steady it with one hand. Steps running down behind for climbing in and out. Two or three fifes, two or three snare drums, with one bass drum constituted the "band". "Yankee Doodle", "The girl I left behind me", "Over the water to Charley", and "Old Zip Coon", ("Single drag" quickstep) were among the favorite tunes, and the band played vigorously on the march at every hamlet, or prominent four corners.