IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF ABRAHAM LINCOLN

ILLUSTRATIONS

CHAPTER XXIV

1) In no other portrait of Abraham Lincoln of the 50's is the mood of melancholy into which he at times dropped, so clearly and pathetically revealed.

2) This confidential letter of September 1856 was sent by Mr. Lincoln to a large number of Filmore men. It is an admirable example of the political method which he himself was practicing, that is, to throw his vote and his influence wherever it would have the most weight in weaking the advocates of slavery, though the result might be to put in office a man who was not of his own party.

3) Major's Hall, Bloomington, Ill., in which Lincoln delivered his "Lost Speech" on May 29, 1856.

4) Tablet on Major's Hall, put up in 1918 at the time of the Illinois Centenial.

5) Copy of claim for bounty land made by Lincoln in 1855.

(Miss Marshall: Please copy only down to and including Lincoln's signature. Leave out the affidavits.)

6) An 1856 cartoonist's notion of the Republican party at the time Abraham Lincoln joined it.

(Miss Marshall: You know, I think, which cartoon goes with this note.)

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IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF ABRAHAM LINCOLN

CHAPTER XXIV

Lincoln Bolts His Party

The years of deep depression following Abraham Lincoln's first term in Congress were, as we have seen, years of hard work at his profession. They were likewise years of profound reflection on the question of slavery extension. As a member of the Thirtieth Congress he had heard the tremendous discussion between those who insisted all new territory acquired by the country must be free and those who insisted that since the South had shared in the cost of acquirement it was just she should have her half at least for slaves. The debate had gone on through the Thirty-first Congress, finally heading in the Compromises of 1850.

These Compromises were not what Lincoln had hoped for - what forty times at least he claimed he had voted must be. To be sure, California was free, but it was left to the future citizens of New Mexico and Utah to decide whether or no they preferred freedom to slavery. He did not like the ferocious Fugitive Slave Bill. Returning runaway slaves he called "a dirty, disagreeable job," that as a rule "slaveholders would not perform for one another," but it was a law for which the South had paid with the abolition of slavery in the District of Columbia, and it must be obeyed.

It was not the Compromises that made him sober, it was

their failure to settle the matter. They were supposed to be "final". Why should they not be? Every inch of territory the United States owned was now under an agreement as solemn as men could make - Why should there not be peace?

The chief immediate reason was that the North would not obey the Fugitive Slave Law - rejoiced in evading it. Nor would it keep silent about it. Among the papers for which Lincoln & Herndon subscribed was The National Intelligencer. Not long after both Whigs and Democrats had voted the Compromises of 1850 a "finality" a woman began a serial in its pages - Uncle Tom's Cabin - a story of the workings of the hated law. With every installment the wrath of the North rose higher and hotter - and with the agitation rose the wrath of the South.

Lincoln saw with growing alarm that out of the very measures intended to settle forever the conflict two dangerous classes were forming and expanding: -in the South a group who, for the sake of perpetuating slavery, were beginning to assail and ridicule what he called "the white man's charter of freedom, the declaration that all men are created free and equal;" and in the North a group who, "rather than that slavery should continue a single hour, would shatter into fragments the union of these States, tear to tatters its now venerated Constitution, and even to burn the last copy of the Bible."

Dangerous business, but so long as the settlements held, he for one held to his life-long belief that slavery confined must untilmately die.

And then there happened the one thing which could have made

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him change his mind as to the only practical and peaceful way of putting an end to it. In May 1854 the Missouri Compromise, which he had always regarded as the most sacred of them all, forbidding slavery in any territory north of 36° 30', was repealed; and the doctrine of "squatter sovereignty" installed. It was pulling his house down about his ears - shattering the one possible way, as he saw it, for the extinction of slavery.

What was the base of his belief that slavery quarantined must become extinct? Lincoln was counting on the nature of the human heart to bring about the end of slavery. He was convinced that the mass of all mankind considered it a great moral wrong, that this feeling was "not evanescent but eternal." The men of the South in the past had shared this view. Had they not joined the North in ending the slave trade? Had they not agreed to the ordinance of 1787? Was it not a slave holder, Henry Clay, who had framed the Missouri Compromise? Had they not already actually freed nearly a half million of their negroes? Was it not true that Southerners were constantly coming North and becoming "tip-top" Abolitionists? Why, Illinois herself had been "brought in free" by the work of a former slave owner, Governor Coles! Keep slavery shut in and ultimately the human sympathies of the South, her sense of the wrong of slavery, would conquer.

But the crux of his faith was quarantine. And the quarantine

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was lifted. It must be restored; and he stiffened for the fight.

I find not a few people who believe that Lincoln's knowledge and feeling about slavery dates from the repeal of the Missouri Compromise, that up to this time he had given no thought to the subject, had no strong convictions upon it. Let such people study the speech with which he began hsi war on the Nebraska Bill, as the repeal now popularly came to be called. The author and backer of that Bill, Senator Stephen A. Douglas, had come on to Illinois soon after it had been signed by the President, to make peace with an outraged constituency. Lincoln was selected by general consent as the most fit to meet him. Their first encounter came early in October 1854 at the State Fair in Springfield, and a few days later at Peoria they repeated their debate. For vigor, compactness, logic, solid information one would have to go far to find the equal of this first speech of Lincoln's against the extension of slavery. It is packed with ideas, saturated with familiarity with the history and development of the thing. It is the kind of expression that comes only from long living with a subject. It demonstrates beyond question, it seems to me, that Lincoln from his boyhood had been, both consciously and unconsciously, observing and turning over the exhibits of what he regarded as a tremendous national wrong.

This speech of October 1854 has in it, too, the seeds of all the arguments which he was afterwards to develop in the fight of which this was the first round. Here you have the first expression of that idea which afterwards was to play so large a part in his argument,

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that the repeal meant nothing else than the spread of slavery 'over every part of the wide world where men could be found inclined to take it.' Here, too, you find that he had no illusions about the terrible possibilities of standing out against the repeal. It meant "blows and bloodshed." "Could there be a more apt invention, he cried, "to bring about collision and violence on the slavery question than this Nebraska project is? If they had literally formed a ring and placed champions within to fight out the controversy, the fight could not be more likely to come off than it is." He saw more. Not only "blows and bloodshed" but that the first drop of blood shed might be the real knell of the Union!

Nothing shows better how profound was his feeling on the subject than the way in which he immediately thrust aside all thought of party, except as it might serve the question. He was something more than a Whig now. The time had come when he would go with anybody that went right - with Owen Lovejoy, the Abolitionist; with Lyman Trumbull, the Democrat; with his highly conservative Whig friend, O. W. Browning.

And what a great politician he was at the moment! How quickly he turned every effort to pulling all these scattered forces together! Rebuke them, was his cry. Show them they cannot do this kind of thing, that we will fight. We will get into office

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we can the man that is against his thing, no matter what his party. He gave the most convincing evidence of his sincerity in this counsel when in November, in the contest for the United States senatorship - he had entered with a large following - rather than let the office go to a Whig Candidate whose anti-Nebraska sentiment he mistrusted, (and who also had been intriguing in an under-handed way against him), he threw his own following to Lyman Trumbull, a Democrat, but an out-and-out anti-Nebraska Democrat.

I have always liked the way Lincoln reported this fight in the legislature for the senatorship in the fall of 1854 to his friend Washburne. "I could have headed off every combination and been elected had it not been for Matteson's (his Whig rival) double game, and his defeat now gives me more pleasure than my own gives me pain."

Here for the first time in several years we have something like the old buoyant political Lincoln. The Nebraska men were more disturbed by Trumbull's election than they would have been by his, - " . . . hated it worse than anything that could have happened," he wrote Washburne. "It is a great consolation to see them worse whipped than I am." Here is a man who can keep his sense of humor in a tremendous moral fight!

He was in no way disturbed by the flocking of extremists to the anti-Nebraska crowd. When his anxious Whig friends said,

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"They are going to call us Abolitionists," he told them they were "silly", that the only thing at stake now was not what you were called but whether you were fulfilling the Repeal doing your duty to get back the Missouri Compromise. Douglas gibed him unmercifully for his willingness to attack fight wherever he saw a chance to gain an inch. He was not disturbed. "Remember," he replied, "you took us by surprise. We were thunderstruck, stunned, reeled and fell in utter confusion, but we rose, each fighter grasping whatever he could first reach - a scythe, a pitchfork, chopping ax or butcher's cleaver. We struck in the direction of the sound, and we are rapidly closing in on you. You must not think to divert us from our purpose by showing us that our apparel, our dress, our weapons are not entirely perfect and uniform."

Of course he was headed direct for a new party, that party which was slowly forming itself out of the belting fragments of every other party and which was collecting to itself every variety of extremist and theorist scattered about the land. Twenty-five years ago, I had the satisfaction of knowing in Illinois a number of the men who in the middle 50's had been leaders in gathering up these fragments. Among them was Paul Shelby, in 1854 the editor of a paper in Jacksonville. Mr. Shelby was a careful, scholarly, conservative person in 1896, but in 1854 you could not move fast enough for him. He was one of a few young men, eager to bring together all of the righteous indignation which had been showing itself in spontaneous mass meetings around the country in Illinois. It seemed to this

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group that a mass meeting at the State Fair of 1854 might crystalize the excitement. So it was called, but it had anything but a friendly reception at the capital. They would not allow them to hold a meeting in the State House as they had expected to do, and there was not a printing office in the town, so Mr. Shelby told me, that would set up their hand bills, so he was obliged to print them himself in a job shop. It was during the session of this band of radicals that Lincoln first replied to Douglas, and they took a recess to hear him. When they came back they appointed a state central committee and put Lincoln on it, as a representative of Sangamon. He refused to serve. He still had hopes of the Whigs, Mr. Shelby told me, with a pitying little smile. And he did. But as the months went on, the hopelessness of getting a fighting body from either of old parties was more and more clearly demonstrated. The little anti-Nebraska nucleus that had been formed at Springfield and that Lincoln had refused to commit himself, grew. And how it was fed!

All through these months there were trailing across Illinois and down the Ohio groups of Eastern Abolitionists and Free Soilers, men, women and children, crusaders, determined that Squatter Sovereignty, cost what it might in hardship, should result in the freedom of Kansas. And Kansas' neighbor, Missouri, regarding these colonists as a direct attack on its prosperity and principles, had set up a retaliatory movement. The "blows and bloodshed" that Mr. Lincoln had prophesied at the State Fair in 1854 were beginning. The fighting blood of Illinois rose with the suffering in Kansas.

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Early in 1856, Paul Shelby called a second convention, this time of anti-Nebraska editors. They met in Decatur, and Lincoln found it convenient to be in town. He took no part in the day's public meetings, but when his help on the resolutions to be adopted was asked, he gave it. He accepted an invitation for the banquet which was to be held in the evening, and spoke thus openly, going over to the bolters.

He felt, he said a sort of an interloper, and was reminded of an incident of a man not possessed of features the ladies would call handsome, who, while riding through the woods met an equestrienne. (Mr. Lincoln hardly used that word. It certainly was put in his mouth by the editor who later told the story, Mr. B. F. Shaw of the Dixon Telegraph) He reined his horse to one side of the bridle path and stopped, waiting for her to pass. She also checked her horse to a stop, and after looking him over in a curious sort of a way, finally broke out with,

"Well, for the land's sake, you are the homliest man I ever saw!

"Yes, Maam, but I cannot help that."

"No, I suppose not, but you might stay at home."

Mr. Lincoln suggested to the editors that he might have stayed home on this occasion. ~~But he evidently had come to his conclusion. He was ready now to go with the organized anti-Nebraska forces.~~

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A state convention of anti-Nebraska forces was called for May 29, 1856, at Bloomington, and Lincoln this time accepted his appointment as a delegate from Sangamon. He was on hand for the meeting. That it was a great convention there is no doubt. One of the reports of a Chicago correspondent began with this paragraph:

> "May 29, 9 a.m. The train arrived here an hour ago. The porches, halls and doorways of the Pike House are crowded with a dense mass of delegates. Men are here from all parts of the State. Egypt is in counsel with us. It is a spontaneous outpouring of the people."

All that followed at the Bloomington convention of 1856 justifies this correspondent's enthusiastic first paragraph. They organized. Men spoke. The thing went as well as a thing of that sort possibly could. It was left to Lincoln to make the speech which really crystalized the elements of the new party beyond any possibility of crumbling. The "lost speech" they have always called what he said that day - lost because under the emotion and sweep of it, no reporter kept his head sufficiently to take a note.

Back in the 90's, when working on a Life of Lincoln in Illinois, one of most tantalizing experiences was meeting some men who had been present at this convention and who proceeded to give me a glowing version of this miraculous legendary speech. There was Thomas J. Henderson of Princeton, Joseph Medill and George Schneider of Chicago, J. B. Cunningham of Urbana, Judge Scott of Bloomington. The spell was still on them, but as for telling me what Lincoln said, there was not a man that could give me any idea. I have before me the yellowed notes made in Bloomington after a talk

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with Judge Scott. "Unless one heard that speech he cannot know what eloquence is," he had told me - and this from a man of controlled expression.

It was a challenge to one gathering up fragments to re-create an episode, and I went from place to place and man to man, trying from talk and newspaper files to collect enough little pieces to form at least the outline of a speech. It was while at this work I learned that Henry C. Whitney, a young lawyer who had been with Mr. Lincoln at Danville in the days before the Convention, who had gone to Bloomington with him and who had heard the speech, was said to have made and preserved notes. Mr. Whitney was still living, a half invalid, at Beachmont, Mass. And there I made my way, and found it to be a fact that he alone, of all that body gathered in the hall at Bloomington, had sufficiently kept his head to set down something of what Mr. Lincoln had said.

When I urged Mr. Whitney in the name of McClure's Magazine, to write out his notes, he was reluctant. They were too imperfect, he said, and he showed me the yellowed sheets with their faded bits of writing - imperfect indeed, but still voluminous. I think he had long wanted to try to make something out of these savings but feared the result. When he finally yielded to my urging, he did his work with the utmost care, though with many misgivings. He knew well enough that whatever he produced would be severely criticized, and he went over and over his notes, carefully comparing them all with printed sources. When his work was finished, he made no other claim for it than that it was thebest he could do, after

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The result seemed to the editors of McClure's Magainse worth publishing, but before this was done, it was submitted to a number of the men with whom I had talked in Illinois. What did they think of it? Was it a fair report? The reaction ws varied. Mr. Henderson thought little of it. "It has been so universally regarded as a masterly speech and the effect of it upon the Convention was so wonderful," he wrote, "that I fear no report of it can be given to the public that would do justice to Mr. Lincoln or give a proper conception of the speech and of its remarkable power and eloquence.

There were others that felt like Mr. Henderson. McLean County, Illinois, held a commemoration of the Bloomington Speech in 1900, and the gist of opinion there was so much against Mr. Whitney's version that when the County Historical Society published its report of the exercises, it took pains to speak of Mr. Whitney's 'alleged notes', and to add: "in this community where many are now living who heard the great speech and where Mr. Lincoln was so well known and loved, all of his friends consider the speech still 'lost.'"

That may be true, but there were at least two persons, friends of Mr. Lincoln, and of importance in this movement, at the Bloomington Convention, that felt differently in 1896. Among those to whom the Magazine submitted the manuscript of Mr. Whitney's report before publishing it, was Mr. J. B. Cunningham of Urbana, whose honesty and fitness to judge of the speech, I take it that

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no one, even in the McLean County Historical Society, would question. "After forty years," Mr. Cunningham writes, "I recognize very much in the utterances, manner and spirit of the speech, especially in the moderation which he counselled."

Mr. Whitney's report made the strongest impression on Mr. Joseph Medill, the editor of the Chicago Tribune. It stirred him to a spirited informal account of the Convention and of Mr. Lincoln's part in it. Although parts of his letter have been published at different times, I do not recollect that the letter as a whole was ever printed, and I am therefore including it in this article. It proves that at least one astute and qualified

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There were others that felt like Mr. Henderson. McLean Illinois County held a commemoration of the Bloomington Speech in 1900, and the gist of opinion there was so much against Mr. Whitney's version that when the Bloomington County Historical Society published its report of the speeches and exercises, it took pains to speak of his version of the "Lost Speech" as made up from 'alleged notes' - and to the report adds that "in this community where many are now living who heard the great speech and where Mr. Lincoln was so well known and loved, all of his friends consider the speech still 'lost.'"

That may be true, but there were at least two persons at the Bloomington Convention friends of Mr. Lincoln, and of importance in this movement, that felt differently in 1896. did not agree. Among those to whom the Magazine submitted the manuscript of Mr. Whitney's report before publishing it, was Mr. J. B. Cunningham of Urbana, whose honesty and fitness to judge of the speech, I take it that no one, even in the Bloomington McLean County Historical Society, would question. "After forty years," Mr. Cunningham writes, "I recognize very much in the utterances, manner and spirit of the speech, especially in the moderation which he counselled."

Mr. Whitney's report made the strongest impression on Mr. Joseph Medill, the editor of the Chicago Tribune. It stirred him to a spirited informal account of the convention and of Mr. Lincoln's part in it. Although parts of his letter have been published at different times, I do not recollect that the letter as a whole was ever printed, and I am therefore including it in this article. It seems that at least one astute and qualified

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observer did not sniff at the Whitney report or question his good faith, and also considers it as probably the best picture of the convention we have from an actual delegate.

"You invited my attention recently to H.C.Whitney's report of the great, radical 'Anti-Nebraska' speech of Mr. Lincoln, delivered in Bloomington May 29, 1856, before the first Republican State Convention of Illinois; and as I was present as a delegate and heard it you ask me to state how accurately, according to my best recollection, is it reproduced in his report.

"I have carefully and reflectively read it, and taking into account that Mr. Whitney did not take down the speech stenographically, but only took notes and afterwards wrote them out in full, he has reproduced with remarkable accuracy what Mr. Lincoln said, largely in his identical language and partly in synonymous terms. The report is close enough in thought and word to recall the wonderful speech delivered forty years ago with vivid freshness. No one was expecting a great speech at the time. We all knew that he could say something worthy of the occasion, but nobody anticipated such a Demosthenean outburst of oratory. There was great political excitement at the time in Illinois and all over the old North West growing out of the efforts of the South to introduce slavery into Kansas and Nebraska. The Free Soil men werehighly wrought up in opposition, and Mr. Lincoln partook of their feelings.

"I am unable to point out those sentences and parts of the reported speech which vary most in phraseology from the precise language he used, because there is an approximation of his words in every part of it. The ideas uttered are all there. The sequence of argument is accurately given. The invectives hurled at pro-slavery aggression are not exaggerated in the report of the speech. Some portions of the argument citing pro-slavery aggressions seem rather more elaborate than he delivered; but he was speaking under a high degree of excitement and the convention was in a responsive mood, and it is impossible to be certain about it. The least that can be said is, that the Whitney report not being shorthand is yet a remarkably good one and is the only one in existence that reproduces the speech.

"During all the preceding year the public mind of the West had been lashed into a high state of commotion over the repeal of the Missouri Compromise the year before, which had

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excluded the introduction of slavery into all territory north of 36.30 degrees. Taking advantage of the repeal the slave-holders of Missouri and other slave states, aided by the Administration of Franklin Pierce, were striving to convert Kansas and Nebraska into slave states. This bad work was carried on actively in the spring of 1856. Many houses of the free state men of the new city of Lawrence, including their hotel, were burnt. Printing offices were destroyed; store goods were carried off; horses and cattle were stolen; sharp fights were taking place; men were being killed and civil war was raging in 'bleeding Kansas.' In Washington, Brooks of South Carolina entered the Senate chamber and nearly clubbed to death Senator Sumner of Massachusetts. Judge Trumbull offered a resolution in the Senate to prevent civil war in Kansas.

"While this state of things was going on the first State Republican Convention ever held in Illinois, assembled in Bloomington, May 29, 1856. It was composed of Abolitionists, Free Soil Whigs and 'Anti-Nebraska' Democrats. Owen Lovejoy embodied the first named, Abraham Lincoln and John M. Palmer the second and third elements - the whole united made the new Republican party which has dominated the state ever since, though Palmer, now Senator, returned to the Democratic party, taking Trumbull with him, several years ago.

"At this Bloomington Republican Convention delegates were appointed who voted to nominate Fremont for President. Abraham Lincoln was placed at the head of the State electoral ticket, and Col. Bissell (of the Mexican War) was nominated for Governor, and free soil resolutions were passed. Mr. John M. Palmer presided and made a stirring free soil speech. Mr. Lincoln, who was a delegate, counselled every step that was taken, in his quiet, persuasive way. A sharp dispute broke out in the Platform Committee between the radicals led by the Abolitionist Owen Lovejoy (afterwards M.C.) and O. H. Browning (afterwards Senator and Secretary of the Interior) leading the conservatives. Lincoln acted as a peacemaker and counsellor. He advised the committee to endorse 'the Declaration of Independence and the rights of man, and to declare that in accordance with the opinions and practises of the great statesmen of all parties for the past sixty years, Congress possessed full constitutional power to prohibit slavery in all territories and that such power should be exerted to prevent such extension,' which was done. Mr. Browning (Conservative) was allowed to add some high sounding platitudes to the platform. He made the opening speech in the convention and delivered it in a courtly manner and orotund voice, advising great moderation, and invoking the

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Foot note

(* In Judge Wyatt have added here that Paul Scully ~~the~~ who had been ruling in Jefferson for ~~four~~ two years to keeping ~~for~~ ~~the~~ ~~just~~ ~~started~~ a circulum ~~at the~~ ~~was~~ expiring in ~~had~~ ~~in~~ Jacksonville, a few days before had been sealed so badly by the political opponents in Jacksonville that he was instead of on the term of Negro Ball

the convention 'to ever remember that slavery itself was one of the compromises of the Constitution and was sacredly protected by the Supreme Law.' He was followed by the radical, Owen Lovejoy, in a terrific declamation against slavery and all its works.

"Mr. Emery, a 'Free State' man just from 'bleeding Kansas,' told of the 'border ruffian' raids from Missouri upon the Free State settlers in Kansas; the burnings, robberies and murders they were then committing, and asked for help to repel them.

"When he finished Lincoln was vociferously called for from all parts of Major's large hall. He came forward and took the platform beside the presiding officer. At first his voice was shrill and hesitating. There was a curious introspective look in his eyes, which lasted for a few moments. Then his voice began to move steadily and and smoothly forward. And the modulations were under perfect control from thenceforward to the finish. He warmed up as he went on and spoke more rapidly; he looked a foot taller as he straightened himself to his full height and his eyes flashed fire; his countenance became wrapped in intense emotion; he rushed along like a thunder storm. He prophesied war as the outcome of these aggressions and poured forth hot denunciations upon the slave power. The convention was kept in an uproar applauding and cheering and stamping; and this reacted on the speaker and gave him a tongue of fire. The thrilling scene in that old Bloomington hall forty years ago arises in my mind as vividly as the day after its enactment.

"There stood Lincoln in the forefront, erect, tall and majestic in appearance, hurling thunderbolts at the foes of freedom, while the great convention reared its endorsement! I never witnessed such a scene before or since. As he described the aims and aggressions of the unappeasable slave holders and the servility of their Northern-allies as illustrated by the perfidious repeal of the Missouri Compromise two years previously, and their grasping after the rich prairies of Kansas and Nebraska to blight them with slavery and to deprive free labor of this rich inheritance, and exhorted the friends of freedom to resist them to the death - the convention went fairly wild. It paralleled or exceeded the scene in the revolutionary Virginia convention of eighty-one years before when Patrick Henry invoked death if liberty could not be preserved and saying, 'After all we must fight.' Strange, too, that this same man received death a few

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years afterwards while conferring freedom on the slave race and preserving the American Union from dismemberment.

"While Mr. Lincoln did not write out even a memorandum of his Bloomington speech beforehand neither was it extemporary. He intended days before to make it, and coined it over in his mind in outline and gathered his facts and arranged his arguments in regular order and trusted to the inspiration of the occasion to furnish him the diction with which to clothe the skeleton of his great oration. It is difficult to name any speech by another orator delivered on the same subject about that time or subsequently that equalled it - not excepting those made by Sumner, Seward or Chase, in strength of argument or dramatic power.

"It was my journalistic duty, though a delegate to the convention, to make a 'long-hand' report of the speeches delivered for The Chicago Tribune. I did make a few paragraphs of report of what Lincoln said in the first eight or ten minutes, but I became so absorbed in his magnetic oratory that I forgot myself and ceased to take notes; and joined with the convention in cheering and stamping and clapping to the end of his speech.

"I well remember that after Lincoln had sat down and calm had succeeded the tempest, I waked out of a sort of hypnotic trance, and then thought of my report for The Tribune. There was nothing written but an abbreviated introduction.

"It was some sort of satisfaction to find that I had not been 'scooped', as all the newspaper men present had been equally carried away by the excitement caused by the wonderful oration and had made no resport or sketch of the speech.

"It was fortunate, however, that a cool-nerved young lawyer and ardent friend of Lincoln's who was present, with nimble fingers took down so much of the exact words as they feel from the great orator's lips that he was afterwards able to reproduce the speech almost identically as it was uttered, and has thus saved it to posterity.

"Mr. Lincoln was strongly urged by party friends to write out his speech to be used as a campaign document for the Fremont presidential contest of that year; but he declared that 'it would be impossible for him to recall the language he used on that

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occasion, as he had spoken under some excitement."

"My belief is, that after Mr Lincoln cooled down he was rather pleased that his speech had not been reported, as it was too radical in expression on the slavery question for the digestion of Central and Southern Illinois at that time, and that he preferred to let it stand as a remembrance in the minds of his audience. But be that as it may, the effect of it was such on his hearers that he bounded to the leadership of the new Republican party of Illinois, and no man afterwards ever thought of disputing that position with him. On that occasion he planted the seed which germinated into a presidential candidacy and that gave him the nomination over Seward at the Chicago convention of 1860, which placed him in the Presidential chair, there to complete his predestined work of detroying slavery and making freedom universal, but yielding his life as a sacrifice for the glorious deeds."

Mr Medill is quite right in saying that the speech was too radical for the digestion of many parts of Illinois. Lincoln and Billy Herndon - and nobody rejoiced as Herndon did in what Lincoln had done - went back to Springfield, and under the enthusiasm of the Bloomington success, called a ratification meeting at the court house. Three persons attended - Lincoln, Herndon and one whom Herndon describes in telling the story as "a courageous man named John Pain." Lincoln spoke. The meeting was larger, he said than he "knew" it would be! He knew he and his partner would attend, he was not sure anyone else would, and yet another man had been brave enough to come out. "While all seems dead," he exhorted Billy Herndon and John Pain, "the age itself is not dead. Be hopeful, and now let us adjourn and appeal to the people."

It was not only in Springfield so cold a shoulder was turned to him that he had need of all the faith within him to carry him through. He went to Shelbyville, a town between Springfield

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and Vandalia, to debate with his friend Anthony Thornton. The county and the town were almost solidly against him. "I take some comfort," he told his audience, "from the fact that there are but sixteen Republicans in Shelby county, and therefore, however poorly I may defend my cause, I can hardly harm it if I do it no good." But what he did by that one speech - the only Republican speech made in the county during the campaign of 1856 - was to increase the sixteen Republicans to something over one hundred and fifty.

He went to Petersburg in October. Mr. Henry Rankin tells in his "Recollections" of the anger there. As Lincoln mounted the platform to present Fremont, hurrahs for Buchanan filled the air. For a time it looked as if the meeting would be broken up. "No d - d Abolition speeches could be made in Menard county this campaign," the crowd declared. For a half hour, cat-calls, whistles, tin horns filled the air, and through it all Lincoln stood with folded arms, surveying the scene. When the tumult grew less he began to talk. Little by little his hearers grew silent. In less than half an hour after he got his first hearing, Mr. Rankin says he was master, and for more than two hours he held the mastery. He enjoyed both the struggle and the conquest. "I never felt so full of just what a crowd ought to hear," Mr. Rankin heard him tell Herndon, "and never had a crowd more competent, from the common-sense

> standpoint, than the Menard County one was to hear a fair and candid statement of facts, if I could just get them still for half an hour as an entering wedge. This I did, and I gave them my best. After I was well under way it was the most enjoyable

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of all the speeches I made through the entire campaign. The returns show I did a poor day's business down there for the State Committee so far as votes count. But I dropped some things among voters that day in Menard that will stay until the next election. I soaked that crowd full of political facts they can't get away from."

And so it went. I have heard a story of a Fremont procession in this campaign in which Mr. Lincoln and one fiery Abolitionist and his son were the only marchers. But two years later, in that same town, a thousand people marched behind him. It was they that had changed, not he.

Lincoln had no illusions about the nature of the conflict to which he had committed himself. It would be long. It might outlive him and the men of the Bloomington convention. It might mean war - would if there was an attempt at disunion. But he viewed the future with a resolution which seems never to have been shaken though there is no doubt his soul was often torn with agony at the thought of the road to be travelled - its hates, its bitterness, its failures, its deceptions.

He knew what he was about, however, and was prepared to go where the road led.

People must be made to see what was at stake, that it was the very heart of the country at which the Repeal struck. If he could help them to see that - he asked nothing more for himself.

At the end of the campaign which the Bloomington convention inaugurated-a campaign in which the new party, by this time frankly calling itself Republican, though it was only anti-Nebraska at

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the start - had wonderful success in Illinois, electing a governor and actually giving Fremont, the presidential candidate, nearly 100,000 votes - he summed up at a Republican banquet in Chicago his profound convition that in the long run the thing they were after could be done.

"Public opinion on any subject," he said in substance, "has always a central idea. That central idea in our political opinion is the equality of men. The late presidential election was a struggle to discard that central idea and to substitute for it the opposite idea that slavery is right in the abstract. Let us re-inaugurate the good old central idea. We can do it. The human heart is with us. God is with us." That is where he had come after thettwo years' fight against the repeal of the Missouri Compromise.

~~He had only begun. He knew that better than anybody else.~~

The character of the fight he was making, his resolution and absorption in it, are the more interesting because at this very time he was carrying on the most important law work that he had ever had. As a matter of fact, all of Lincoln's big law cases were coincident with his fight against the extension of slavery. And it is to some of these big law cases that we will now turn.

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