

ILLUSTRATIONS

for

CHAPTER XXXIX

- 1) **First Reading of the Emancipation Proclamation by Lincoln to his Cabinet, on September 20, 1862. From the original painting by F. B. Carpenter, which now hangs in the Capitol at Washington.**

This picture was painted in the State Dining Room of the White House, between February 5 and August 1, 1864, Mr. Lincoln often discussing it with the artist. When completed, the picture was exhibited first in Washington and afterwards throughout the country. Mrs. Elizabeth Thompson of New York finally purchased the canvas and presented it to the United States.

(Miss Marshall) If the above is not satisfactory, we can, I think, get a good photostat from the Library.

- 2) **The above photograph was made by Brady, under the direction of Mr. F. B. Carpenter, as a study for his painting, "The Reading of the Emancipation Proclamation."**
- 3) **Lincoln's plan for Compensation Emancipation laid before Congress in his message of March 6, 1862 was sneered at in England. The above cartoon which appeared in Punch for April 5, 1862, was the first of a series ridiculing his slavery policy.**
- 4) **This cartoon, which appeared in Punch for October 18, 1862, shows where English sympathy lay at that time as well as what was thought of the Emancipation Proclamation.**

Illustration

XXXXX - Manchester - fall of '62
3 carpenters - see Tarbell Mfg.
2 carlins - Signalment to T.D.

XL Man of Linnus - 1862
; Willie - Mrs L. - ~~the~~ Soldier's
Home - Hospital (see newspapers)

XL - ~~the~~ Digger that ~~was~~ it -

~~Confederate?~~

~~Mrs Hallum -~~

~~Mrs Hallum - Burside~~
see Barrum canton Burkmar

Not

Burning Tables on Cakes

See Rice - Intro - XXV11

" Seluy -

" Letter to Burning -

IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF ABRAHAM LINCOLN

CHAPTER XXXIX

Lincoln's "Last Card"

The widespread notion that Abraham Lincoln undertook the Civil War in order to emancipate the slaves is one of many evidences that this generation as well as the preceding one has had unsatisfactory instruction in United States history. Not long ago I heard an intelligent lawyer of forty-five or fifty years of age tell of the shock he experienced when he discovered that he had carried from college this mistaken notion of Lincoln's primary object in going to war. It had lowered Lincoln, temporarily at least, for him - he was not the Emancipator first; it had taken time, he confessed, to understand and to sympathize with Lincoln's conviction that before Emancipation came Unionism.

We belong to a time which questions as so many did in 1861, both here and abroad, the rightness of attempting to force a dissatisfied part of a country to adhere. That is, we do not fully see yet what Lincoln saw in Unionism - the only road by which man's ultimate freedom of thought and action can be achieved.

It is interesting to speculate what would have happened to slavery if the optimism of the North in the few weeks after the firing on Sumter had been realized; that is, if the rebellion had

been suppressed in sixty or ninety days as Seward so confidently affirmed. There would have been no ^{proclamation} emancipation, though Lincoln undoubtedly would have succeeded, for the time, in preventing an extension of slavery; but failure instead of victory put another face on things.

The fall of 1861 brought a strong revival of abolition sentiment. It had been fanned to a flame by the emancipation proclamation that Frémont had issued in his department in August, and which Lincoln had promptly ordered revised. The abolition sentiment of the North backed Frémont as a body. The movement spread. "Emancipation our best weapon" became its slogan. By the time Congress gathered in December it was clear that there would be a strong fight made ~~for some form of emancipation~~ ^{to put an end to slavery}.

Nobody watched the rising of this sentiment more closely than Lincoln, but he saw angles to the question which the out and out Abolitionists either did not see, or, seeing, refused to consider. Their passion for emancipation had become single, personal, violent. It was a complete solution. Free the slaves and the slaveholders punished the rebellion would be over - free the slaves and their tormenting passion of righteous indignation at the evil institution would be cooled, their minds would be free. Lincoln saw other phases of the matter - free the slaves in the way that they asked and you would lose the Border States; lose them and you lost the game - the South would be too strong for the North. ~~EMANCIPATION~~, the Confederacy would be insured and slavery more firmly established, more certain to spread than ever. Moreover, he had no itching

desire as the emancipators had to punish slaveholders, to make them suffer. Nor could he find peace of mind in a solution which he could not justify by law or by military necessity; a solution which worked injustice to many, the slaves themselves included, since it set them free without provisions for them.

What are they going to do with the freedmen? There was already dependent upon the Government a large body of them, liberated by an act of Congress confiscating property used for insurrectionary purposes. How support them? Already Northern labor had begun to be restive under the prospect of an influx of colored free labor. There were more sides to this problem than Greeley, Garrison, Sumner and Wade were willing to consider.

Lincoln always took his bridges as he reached them though he was pretty sure to be ready for them - knew what weight they would carry - their width and length! In December when Congress met, rampant, bitter, insistent, he at once gave them a practical problem. How get over this first bridge - that is, care for the freed negroes and those they were about to free - the 3000 in the District of Columbia? He proposed a measure in which as we saw earlier he had long been interested - colonization. He argued well for it, proposed that money should be voted, property acquired or found; and Congress agreed.

Where a Government fund is set aside for a noble purpose, there are always people willing to spend it. Many propositions to handle the colonization scheme - and funds - came to Lincoln. To

one of them he agreed, signing a contract with a promoter into whose credentials he had not sufficiently looked, agreeing that the Government should give \$50 per head to colonize 5000 negroes on the Ile A'Vache, one of the Haytian group.

Mr. Lincoln's secretaries were on hand when this contract was making. They tell the story from documents, and a depressing and pitiful story it is. The contractor enlisted capitalists; and men, women and children were transported to the Ile A'Vache. Smallpox broke out among them. There were all sorts of delays, failure (to protect properly) and provide for the colonists. The original contractor turned out a rascal, the capitalists who, in the hope of big returns, had put up money, stopped the funds. Finally - in 1864 - Lincoln sent an agent to investigate. The report was so distressing that his next move was to send a Government vessel to bring back the colonists. It was a miserable outcome of Mr. ^{his} Lincoln's generous hopes - a fine idea ^{at least}, no doubt, but only to be realized from years of careful direction, not a thing to be brought about merely by passing laws, appropriating money, signing orders and shipping victims.

But the proposition ^{coming} in December 1861 ^{at least} proved that the President was trying to find practical means of meeting each situation in regard to the slaves as it came up. At the same time it was clear to those who were closest to him, those to whom he talked most freely, that he was trying to educate the conservative public opinion of the North as well as in the Border States towards the

necessity of larger, freer emancipation than that he as yet had been permitted.

He had long had an idea that emancipation might be brought about gradually by Government purchase ^{followed us} and colonization. His hope now was that people in the Border States, as they found themselves losing more and more of their slaves through the friction of war would sell them if the Government would buy or help to buy. He talked this plan over with Charles Sumner, who, ardent Abolitionist that he was, had such confidence in Lincoln's integrity and such respect for his wisdom that he could discuss with him without irritation of anger - something that many Abolitionists were unable to do. Lincoln had talked with him often about his plan and Sumner urged him at the end of 1861 to make a country a "New Year's present" of it.

But he held back. The Border States would not accept it yet. He knew how they felt in Kentucky. "The only difference between you and me, Mr. Sumner," he told the Senator, "is the difference of a month or six weeks in time."

A little later Carl Schurz, another radical with whom he could talk, came back from Spain where he had been sent as minister at the beginning of the administration. Schurz had been restive at his post, he could not endure the idea of being in ease and luxury while those with whom he had fought the battles of the Republican party for so many years were in battle line. He was concerned over

the lack of European sympathy for the North, and believed that if it could be shown to Europe that slavery was the issue instead of this mystical Union of which Mr. Lincoln talked so much - a thing of which they had no understanding - all danger of recognition of the Confederacy, by England particularly, would be done away with. He elaborated his point of view with pains and sent it to Seward, asking that it be put before Mr. Lincoln - which, characteristically enough, Seward seems never to have done.

Lincoln was frankly glad to see Schurz, and listened eagerly to his ideas. "You may be right," he said, "probably you are. I have been thinking so myself. I cannot imagine that any European power would dare to recognize the Southern Confederacy if it becomes clear that the Confederacy stands for slavery and the Union for freedom."

But, while direct action against slavery, might, he believed, prevent foreign interference, he was sure it would also alienate friends of the Union that the Union could not afford to lose. Public opinion was not ready, he argued. Get the public ready, he urged Schurz and other confidants.

In March he seems to have thought it sufficiently ready to take a dose of compensated emancipation, for, in a special message to Congress, he recommended "in full view of my responsibility to my God and to my country", a resolution pledging the United States to give aid with money any state which would gradually abolish slavery. He made a most earnest plea for the plan, but the

suggestion fell flat. Congress was not leath to give the sum, but the radical element by this time had so set its mind on something more drastic, had become so fierce in its anger at the South, its determination to punish, that it had little heart for any gradual or compensated scheme. Moreover, the Representatives of the Border States, to whom of course the suggestion was directed, were uninterested. They came to the White House on business, but said nothing. What more damning than such a silence? Lincoln could not stand it, and finally invited them to the White House that he might explain his message. He argued long and earnestly, but the Border State Representatives were lukewarm, cautious. Nor did he ever get any response from them, though again and again he pushed the proposition.

It is doubtful if Lincoln ever had any scheme throughout his administration more deeply at heart. "His whole soul," Sumner said, "was occupied with this proposition. I remember nothing more touching than the earnestness and completeness with which he embraced the idea. To his mind it was just and beneficent, while it promised the sure end of slavery."

One reason, no doubt, for his holding to it so persistently was that he saw what was coming, that sooner or later the North would be obliged to use emancipation as a weapon, and if that was done the people of the Border States who had stood by the Union would have to suffer an immense loss in property in the same way that the people of the States in rebellion would suffer. It was not fair.

Moreover, he believed that if adopted, it would shorten, if not at once end the war. He argued that hope was kept up in the

Confederacy by their faith that sooner or later the Border States would leave the Union and join them. ^{But} If the Border States ~~accepted this form of emancipation, that is,~~ sold their slaves to the United States, this hope would be destroyed and "more would be accomplished," he argued, "towards shortening the war, than could be hoped from the greatest victory achieved by Union armies." It is doubtful if he was right. It would have been a blow undoubtedly to the South, but the South like the North was set on a war to the finish.

Even as late as July 12, when Lincoln had in his mind, if not in his desk, the outlines of the Emancipation Proclamation finally issued, he called these men together to urge them again to accept his plan. But this was his last plea. He realized then with inexpressible regret and disappointment that he was defeated.

But if he was defeated in this his favorite idea, he was not without a resource. In fact, Lincoln never allowed himself to be without an alternative. It was most characteristic of his whole handling of the war that however defeated and disappointed he was, he was always able, if he must, to take another tack.

The very next day after his last talk with the Border State representatives, he let certain members of his cabinet know for the first time that he had something else in his mind. He was driving with Secretaries Welles and Seward to the funeral of an infant child of Mr. Stanton's. He had come to the conclusion, he told his Secretaries, that it was an absolute military necessity to

free the slaves,--they must either do that or be overwhelmed. This was the first time that he had said anything to anybody on the subject, and he wished they would tell him frankly how the proposition struck them.

Evidently both Welles and Seward were amazed at the proposition. It was a new departure, for up to this time he had been "prompt and emphatic", as ~~Welles~~ says, in denouncing any interference with slavery by the general Government. Moreover, that was the sentiment of every member of the cabinet, all of them considered it a local, domestic question for the States to decide: The suggestion was treated as confidential in the cabinet. The time had not come, and it was only to those in whom he had absolute confidence that he even hinted of what was in his mind. One of these was his friend Leonard Swett of Bloomington, Ill., whom he telegraphed to come to Washington.

When Swett arrived, Lincoln took him into the cabinet room and began to read him letters from different parts of the country - one from Garrison, an eloquent and passionate appeal for immediate emancipation of the slaves - one from Garrett Davis of Kentucky, arguing that emancipation would be looked upon there as a stab at prosperity, a departure from the original Union purposes of the war. He begged Mr. Lincoln not to be moved by Northern abolition sentiment to any such irretrievable blunder. One from a prominent Swiss statesman, arguing that in the eyes of Europe, interference with an enemy's slaves was regarded as a cruel and improper expedient, that emancipation would be considered

equivalent to inciting slave insurrection and would force intervention.

Having finished reading the letter, Lincoln began to debate them, first one side and then the other. He did not ask Swett's opinion, nor did he seem to be trying to impress his views upon him, but rather to want a hearer whom he trusted, before whom he could weigh and examine the ^{different points of view} for his own enlightenment. He seemed to want to see for himself how his various notions looked when ~~taken out of the region of reflection and~~ put into words. That is, he was trying to clear up his own mind. When he had finished his discussion of the letters, he rose, told Mr. Swett that he hoped he would get home safely, and to please give his best wishes to So-an(-So and So-and-Sc. That was all!

This strange, one-sided discussion must have helped him, for on July 22, he called his cabinet together. ~~He told~~ them that he had resolved upon a certain step, that he had not called them there to ask their advice but to lay the subject matter before them. After he had read what he had written they could make their suggestions. And he then read them the first draft of what we know as the Emancipation Proclamation. The gist of it was that on the first of January, 1863, all persons held as slaves within any state or states wherein the constitutional authority of the United States should not then be recognized, "should henceforward and forever be free." Notice that this did not touch the slaves of the Border States, also that it gave a chance to ~~the~~ seceding States to save their slaves.

It is difficult for us today to realize what a complete face-about Lincoln asked of his cabinet: his proposition was a direct

contradiction of all their thinking on the war, all their repeated professions. It seems to have stunned them all as it had Welles and Seward ten days before when Lincoln, on his way to the Stanton funeral, had first spoken of it to them. The Proclamation meant that henceforth the North would look upon the purpose of the war as putting an end to slavery not as saving the Union, and for all these months they had been talking and arguing that the object was Unionism, that there was no intention of interfering with slavery in the States where the Constitution had left it. It upset all their ideas.

But all of them realized, to a degree at least, what Mr. Lincoln realized, that something must be done. They were suffering at that moment the humiliation that came from the failure of McClellan's Peninsular Campaign. The North was in revolt, Congress was bitter beyond expression, it had just passed a severe confiscation act - one which Mr. Lincoln was signing with reluctance, and which indeed he had refused to sign without certain modifications, so thoroughly did he distrust its provisions. There was little hope in sight in July of 1862 - something must be done.

They talked it over - agreed practically that however far it went beyond what they had each contemplated, that it was their only resource. Seward made a practical and wise suggestion: "Postpone this order," he said, "until there is a military success." His idea seemed to me, Mr. Lincoln told Frank Carpenter when he was painting his canvas, that if the Proclamation were issued then

it would be considered their "last shriek on the retreat." "It was an aspect of the case," he went on, "that in all of my thoughts upon the subject I had entirely overlooked. The result was that I put the draft of the Proclamation aside as you might do your sketch for a picture, waiting for a victory. From time to time I add or change a line, touch it up here and there, anxiously awaiting the progress of events."

He had a bitter time waiting for the victory, for day and night he was besieged to do exactly the thing that he had determined to do. The "Greeley faction" as he called the Tribune and its friends, were particularly harsh with him. It was at this time that Greeley issued his famous "Prayer of Twenty Millions", though why he should have entitled so bitter and unjust a collection of accusations and complaints a prayer one does not see. He charged Lincoln with being "strangely and disastrously remiss in the discharge of his duties" - unduly influenced by "the menace of certain fossil politicians hailing from the Border States." He declared the Union cause was suffering immensely from his mistaken desires about rebel slavery and his begrudging execution of the laws of the land, more especially of the Confiscation Act.

Greeley's prayer gave Mr. Lincoln the best of chances to show the country his whole mind on the slavery question, to show also, as nothing that he had yet sent out, the clarity of his

thinking, the resolution of his purpose, as well as his determination to be his own executive. Nobody who read it could have there-
after any doubt that he had a definite policy from which he could
not be swayed by Greeley and his "twenty millions."

It is always worth reading, however familiar one may be
with it. Even today it has a strangely clarifying effect on one who
is trying to follow what he was thinking and feeling in the Bedlam
in which he lived:

"Executive Mansion, Washington
August 22, 1862

"Hon. Horace Greeley.

"Dear Sir: - I have just read yours of the 19th, addressed
to myself through the New York Tribune. If there be in it any
statements of assumptions of fact which I may know to be er-
roneous, 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 per-
ceptible in it an impatient and dictatorial tone, I waive it
in deference to an old friend whose heart I have always sup-
posed 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. 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 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 was waiting for a victory, but before the victory came another defeat - the Second Battle of Bull Run, with all its dreadful features - its long train of disputes and hatreds. Never had he lived through darker and more doubtful days. And then on the 17th of September, his victory - Antietam.

Five days later, on the morning of the 22nd, a State Department messenger visited the heads of the various Departments with a notice asking them to meet at twelve o'clock at the White House.

Everybody appeared and sat or stood around the long table in Mr. Lincoln's office. We can see the group in the reproduction here printed of Carpenter's picture - Lincoln at the head of the table, Chase and Stanton at his right, the others seated or standing to his left. Just such an informal grouping as generally happened at the Lincoln cabinet meetings. They were rare, those meetings, much to the irritation of Mr. Welles and others, who attributed the failure to call together the cabinet regularly, to Mr. Seward's meddlesomeness and his evident desire to act as a liason between the President and others, keep them from as much intimate knowledge of affairs as

all

he could. But they were all here on September 22. ^JThe President, to Stanton's and Chase's poorly concealed disgust, began the session by picking up a new skit of Artemus Ward's - "The High-Handed Outrage at Utica" - and reading it. It brought no laughs from the two gentlemen to his right. Stanton continued to look severe, Chase solemn and disgusted; everybody else laughed - partly at Stanton and Chase, no doubt, relishing, too, a certain mischievous satisfaction that Lincoln took in shocking his stern Secretaries. This was what usually happened when the President read Artemus Ward to the cabinet.

He laid down the book and his face took on its usual serious and thoughtful expression. Mr. Chase recorded that night in his diary what he remembered of the President's words:

"I have, as you are aware," he said to them, thought a great deal about the relation of this war to slavery; and you all remember that, several weeks ago, I read to you an order I had prepared on this subject, which, on account of objections made by some of you, was not issued. Ever since then my mind has been much occupied with this subject, and I have thought, all along, that the time for acting on it might probably come. I think the time has come now. I wish it was a better time. I wish that we were in a better condition. The action of the army against the rebels has not been quite what I should have best liked. But they have been driven out of Maryland, and Pennsylvania is no longer in danger of invasion. When the rebel army was at Frederick, I determined, as soon as it should be driven out of Maryland, to issue a proclamation of emancipation, such as I thought most likely to be useful. I said nothing to any one, but I made the promise to myself and (hesitating a little) to my Maker. The rebel army is now driven out, and I am going to fulfil that promise. I have got you together to hear what I have written down. I do not wish your advice about the main matter, for that I have determined for myself. This, I say without intending anything but respect for any one of you. But I already knew the views of each on this question. They have been heretofore expressed,

and I have considered them as thoroughly and carefully as I can. What I have written is that which my reflections have determined me to say. If there is anything in the expressions I use, or in any minor matters, which any of you thinks had best be changed, I shall be glad to receive the suggestions. One other observation I will make. I know very well that many others might, in this matter as in others, do better than I can; and if I was satisfied that the public confidence was more fully possessed by any one of them than by me, and knew of any constitutional way in which he could be put in my place, he should have it. I would gladly yield it to him. But, though I believe that I have not so much of the confidence of the people as I had some time since, I do not know that, all things considered, any other person has more; and, however this may be, there is no way in which I can have any other man put where I am. I am here; I must do the best I can, and bear the responsibility of taking the course which I feel I ought to take."

He re-read the Proclamation, in essence what he had read to them on the 22nd of July, and the paper was handed to the Secretary of State to publish the next day.

There was but one member who objected, that was the Postmaster General, Blair. It was not the principle, but his belief that it would put the Union sentiment in the Border States in jeopardy, and it would also be putting a club into the hands of a not to be neglected class of Southern sympathizers in the North. But Lincoln himself for months had seen these objections and had held back largely because of them. Whatever harm it might do the Government, and he was not one to underestimate that, the time had come when he was willing to venture.

But, as a matter of fact, whatever fear of consequences the cabinet may have had, on the whole they rejoiced. That

evening they all gathered at Secretary Chase's where John Hay found them in almost high spirits. "They all seemed to feel a sort of new and exhilarated life," he recorded in his diary, "they breathed freer; the President's proclamation had freed them as well as the slaves. They gleefully and merrily called each other Abolitionists - seemed to enjoy the novel accusation of appropriating that horrible name."

They certainly needed all the freeing of spirits that the Proclamation was able to give them to endure what came to them. All the evils that Lincoln had foreseen began to pour upon the administration while few of the benefits that he had hoped, ^{we} realized. ~~The confident assertion of the Abolitionists that this Proclamation would break the South and insure recognition from Europe, ^{at once}~~

No State took advantage of the Proclamation; and as for England, a great body of powerful opinion had nothing but sneers. The hopeful feature in England, however, was that while the press and the orators held up the misery that the war was causing to the cotton operatives, the operatives themselves openly on the issuance of the Proclamation ^{should} ~~declared~~ their sympathy with the North.

If there had been a hopeful military outlook the failure to strengthen the situation through the Proclamation would have been less conspicuous, but there was none. McClellan failed to follow up his victory at Antietam - let Lee escape. When he did

cross to the South, he crossed with so much of his old cautiousness and so many delays that Lincoln finally summarily dismissed him, putting Burnside in his place.

And then came the elections. Rarely in the history of the country has an administration received a severer rebuke than Lincoln's in the fall of 1862. "Utterly discouraging," Blair calls them; and certainly they were. Ohio, Indiana, Pennsylvania, New York, and, most disheartening of all to the President, his own State, Illinois, returned overwhelming Democratic majorities. It looked for a time as if Congress was lost - a calamity which could hardly have been overestimated. But New England, the West, and, most encouraging of all, the Border States, saved the day. They were battered but not beaten. As for Lincoln, never in his life did he undergo such an attack. It is some phases of this attack that we shall take up in the next chapter.
