Interview in the DENVER TRIBUNE about 1878. Copied out of an old scrap-book.

H.E.B.

L I N C O L N I N T E A R S.

JUDGE BROMWELL REVISES THE "GATH" INTERVIEW WITH JUDGE USHER.

The Lawyer and Doctor as the Judge saw them, and saw Lincoln imitate them.

The Martyred President's Declarations About Blood-shed.

A Scene of Mixed Gayety and Sadness.....

It was during the last session of the Legislature that the interview between George Alfred Townsend and Judge J.P.Usher, concerning President Lincoln, whose Secretary of the Interior Mr. Usher was, was published.

"It is interesting," said Judge Bromwell speaking to a Tribune reporter concerning the matter,"it is decidedly interesting, but it is incorrect".

Now in the days of President Lincoln, Hon. H.P.H.Bromwell was a prominent man in Illinois, indeed in national politics. A member of the same bar and about the same age as Mr. Lincoln, politically of the same faith, he and the Judge were naturally warm friends. Hence the reporter was disposed to get Judge Bromwell to relate his version of the affair. But he was very busy making laws, and although he told the reporter that he was present on some of the occasions referred to, he declined to go into details. Yesterday the patient reporter was rewarded. He met the Judge and finding him comparatively at leasure, asked him about the Lincoln anecdote. "The anecdote

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was that concerning a Lawyer and a doctor,"put in the reporter, "you told me you were presenf if I recollect."

"Iwas present and know all about it ;except I forget some of the most laughable parts, of the altercation between the lawyer and doctor referred to. If I could recollect every word I could not tell it as Mr. Lincoln could and did. There is a sequel to the story, more interesting than any part of it, which must go with it : it concerns Mr. Lincoln directly in the last days of his life. There is not now another person than myself alive who knows all of both parts of this story. I will give you the facts just as they happened, and you may be assured that every expression attributed to Mr. Lincoln is, in the very words used by him, unless where I state it to be otherwise."

"Late in September, 1856, Mr. Lincoln and I were on a trip together speaking through the old Seventh Congressional District of Illinois. We left Charleston, Coles County, about ten o'clock in the morning, on a freight car on the Terre Haute and Alton railroad to go to Grandview, a small town about two miles from the railroad in Edgar County, where a township meeting was to be held at one o' clock that day. There were no other passengers as I can recollect and we got off at Dudley, two miles from Grandview, and went to dinner with R.B.Sotherland, who lived then at the station, an old and leading citizen of Grandview, and one of the best men of Edgar county.He is now"no more of earth", but he was one of those men whom I cannot mention with indifference at any time.

"After dinner we went in a one horse wagon with Mr. Sutherland and others , to Grandview, where a platform had been built in a grove that was fenced in, and the ground was covered with a rank growth

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of blue grass nearly two feet high. The scenery around Grandview was worthy of the name,-the whole neighborhood presented a succession of undulations, the summits covered with walnut groves;the trees being tall and straight and just enough scattered to give all the beauty of mingled shade and sunshine, and the mellow autumn sunlight breaking through the wide-spreading branches of the pensive seeming walnut trees, bending with the weight of their orange-like fruit, together with the wide and quiet landscape toward the north, gave a wonderfull air of repose to the whole scene. The people assembled and sat down on the cushion of blue grass which filled every square foot of the inclosure, and shortly after one o'clock the speaking began.

"Mr. Lincoln was one of the Republican nominees for elector at large on the Freemont ticket, and I was nominee on the same ticket for elector for the district which included Logan county running seventy miles north of Springfield, and Lawrence county opposite Vincennes on the south.

What our chances were in that region, may be inferred from the numbers of each party present (it being a Republican meeting) which were ninety Democrats and forty-six Fillmore men, or forty-six Democrats and ninety Fillmore men , I forget which, and six Republicans.

"Although that may seem a slim showing for us, yet by comparison it didn't seem so bad to me, for there were present five more Republicans than I found in all Clay county, and six more than in Piatt county at the beginning of the campaign.

"Mr.Lincoln spoke last, and made one of the most masterly speeches of his life, and his jovial spirit seemed to fillthe assembly, and there was not only universal good humor, but from some cause, there grew up a remarkable disposition to have some roaring fun.

Every body was at ease and leisure, all had been to dinner, and to

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eat dinner with the Edgar county people meant to get what the Frenchman called "a ver grand satisfye" of all the good things which a country produced when it was constantly remarked that "a man could work one day and live on it six."

"The lawyer and doctor mentioned by Mr.Usher, were both there, though not by appointment. The lawyer was Hon. J.P.Cooper/, a Republican of Marshall, Clark county, formerly Democratic member of the Legislature and afterwards Judge of the County Court of Coles county ;and the doctor was Dr.A.Goodale or Paris, then as always a devoted Democrat. They were both men of remarkable fluency of speech, both excitable, and each for certain peculiarities never had an equal that I ever saw. Each for some reason had a special desire to get after the [redacted], other and each had come to make a speech if a chance could be had. Each was full of wit and droll, comical expressions ;but they were so different that if either had been pitted against any man than the other, nothing extraordinary would probably have happened. But ~~thehi~~ the combination brought them out. they were both restless while the appointed speakers were on the stand, and just before Mr.Lincoln concluded, Dr.G.came and asked me if we had any objections to his taking the stand. I said no, and went and told Mr. Lincoln what he wanted, and he announced that the doctor would speak. Judge Cooper , who it seems, did not expect that, was annoyed, and came to me saying he wanted to speak. I mentioned this to Mr.Lincoln and it was arranged that Cooper should follow the doctor. The crowd cheered the announcement, and as soon as Mr.Lincoln concluded the doctor mounted the stand, amid a roar of cheers, with his attention fixed on Cooper who was in front of the stand, and seemed to take to himself every-thing the doctor had to say, and it was plain that each rejoiced in the scalp of the other in advance.

"Among the doctor's peculiarities the most remarkable was his wonderfull stock

Sandburg spells the name "Goodall"

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and flow of words,- words of all descriptions, but especially those of the sciences, theology and metaphysics, besides his medical vocabulary,He spoke fast and the crowd cheered, and as the cheering went on increasing it became nescessary for him to speak louder and louder in order to be heard above the din, and as this exdited him he went faster and faster. He was witty and made some remarkable hits, and as the cheering went on he seemed to credit it all to that account, though the crowd enjoyed a good deal more than that , in what was going on.

"Judge Cooper,who seemed to take the whole speech to himself, was in front of the platform passing back and forward and gesticulating violently, and frequently making some retort at which the crowd shouted with all its might , whereupon the doctor would start upon another flight of his remarkable words, the crowd ~~the crowd~~ roaring until he was utterly drowned out by noise and he would stop for breath, and the screaming and laughing would go on . As soon as it slacked the Judge cut in between them with something that set all going louder than ever, and the next lull the doctor , with fresh breath and a new supply of his curious words and wit , took all by storm.

"Now Judge C. was short and fleshy, and being lame in one hip,used a very stout cane which he flourished much in speaking, and as he moved back and forth in front of the stand, and the doctor on the platform chassed from one end of it to the other, each letting fly at the other in his peculiar way, and the people rolling and sprawling in the blue grass and roaring, and the noise increasing every moment, it soon became a question of time, or rather endurance on the doctor's part,how long before he must yield the platform,and Cooper take his place.

"The doctor held the stand about an hour, when he closed, utterly out of breath. Every one jumped up and shouted for about five minutes , until the noise could have been heard a mile at least. Cooper was

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instantly on the platform, and as soon as he could be heard, went for the Doctor, who was now in front and moving back and forth, every minute making some repartee, until it became a regular set-to between them.

" I lay on the grass, and at times leaned against the trunk of a walnut tree, about seven feet from the right hand corner of the platform. Mr. Lincoln lay at full length, with his feet at the same corner, and his head supported at times on his hand, his elbow on the ground. Sometimes he moved around and cracked a joke with somebody else. He remembered all the strange, witty or ludicrous things that were uttered by either party, or by the audience; but I have forgotten most of them. I recollect however that Cooper was descanting on the fact that, just at the time of such momentous movements in the political world, this doctor should make his appearance among men, and, in addition to that, should have a vision and see the obsolete things of all dictionaries in every language, and nothing that the people wanted to know-

" "That's more than any lawyer around here has seen lately," shouted the Doctor ; a vision of any thing homogeneous with a dictionary would throw their whole system into spasms."

" 'If a lawyer or any body else should take spasms, or get foundered on any kind of valuable knowledge,' said Cooper, "a Democratic speech would work it all out of him in time to save life".

"And so they went on. All questions concerning the Nebraska bill, Missouri compromise and slavery were lost sight of in the contest of outwitting each other. Each was several times on the platform, and sometimes both, - the crowd shouting, 'Go it Pill-bags,

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"Go it Lawyer, Stick to him Doctor." etc,,hats flying twenty feet high in the air,some standing , some rolling in the grass, and all in a roar of laughter.

"At one time the Judge let of a hit at the Doctor, and he replied with a short 'that's not so[illegible] that's a lie.'

"'You say that's a lie, do you ?' Screamed Cooper,'well Doctor I'll take that off of you ; I'll take any thing in the world From you, but for God's sake do'nt give me any of your pills.'

" 'I've got no pill that would help your case; I don't treat delirium,'said the Doctor,I'll let you know that I am not practicing medicine at all now."

"'You don't practice medicine any more, you say,?' shouted Cooper,"my God, the country is safer than I had supposed."

"And so it went on , from four O'clock until just as the sun set, wh en the speakers subsided from sheer exhaustion ,and the crowd begun to stir,around and seperate :but the cheering and laughing did not slacken.On ev ery road that they went you could hear them more than a mile off, making the woods ring. Mr.Lincoln had laughed till he was worn out. Several who were near us found it impossible to stop. For my part, it was the first and only time in my life that I laughed till I became alarmed ; but the fact was, it produced a kind of spasm through the chestand the body, which did not pass off for several hours.

"We rode back to Mr.Sutherland's and nobody thought of going to bed before midnight; yet even then the laughing would break out somewhere about the houseand all hands would join in, and so it went on for hours.

"The next morning we seperated, and I saw Mr.Lincoln no more, till we met at Atlanta , Logan county.

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"Well what was the other part of the story ?"

"Nearly nine years after , in the last days of March,1865,I was at Washington, and went with Judge James Steele, then chief clerk of the Land division of the Indian Bureau, to ccall on Mr.Lincoln.We found him writing a letter at a long table,..Governor Yates and Delegate Burlbbgh of Dacotah were in an adjoining room and came in . Mr. Lincoln asked us all to excuse him till he should finish the letter. Before he had finished writing, the door opened and Mr. Seward came inw with a portfolio under his arm and advanced to the opposite side of the table. As he did so Mr.Lincoln spoke out in a loud ringing tone;

"Good morning Mr.Secretary,Iwas Just writing a letter to send to you,but as you are here now I will give it to you myself;"and with that he said it made him think of a story about a lawyer up in one of the northern counties of Illinois , who wrote a letter to the Judge while the Court was in session,because the Judge would not allow him to speak further in the case.

"After he told the story he introdu ced me to Mr.Seward, and said, "This is the man who was with me at Grandview the time I told you of, when we had so much fun. " Then he said to Governor Yates," You never heard that story,did you ?" The Governor said he had not.Thereupon Mr.Seward said to to GOvernor Yates that he must hear it , and Mr.Lincoln began to tell it with all the particulars.

" The table was a long one standing about six feet from the fireplace,and in one corner of the room stood a long hickory cane,with the bark on. It was about four feet long.As he began to describe the performances at Grandview/,he stepped to the corner,took that long staff, and came round on the side of the table farthest from the

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fir e,and flourishing the cane, and limping as though with a lame hip as he used it, he went backward and forward before the table,imitating Judge Cooper in action and voice; then laying the cane on the table he would give the Doctor's part,an d so on; the room in a roar of laughter.

"Governor Yates, Judge Steele and I knew Judge Cooper, who was very short and fleshy with a wide head, and here was Mr.Lincoln, over six feet high, slender and straight, with a cane far too long even for him, showing off a man of such opposite form and likeness, which made the whole thing ten times more laughable than otherwise.

"Just as he had repeated the words of Cooper, "Then the country is safer than I had supposed,"and was whirling around the corner of the table, with the cane against his right hip, - Secretary Seward , Governor Yates and all the rest convulsed with laughter, -the door opened and in came the usher, saying,

" Mr.President, that soldier is out here waiting to see you again, He wants to know when you will see him." Mr.Lincoln said;

"" Tell him I can't see him any more about that matter. I've seen him as many times as I can." and turning toward the rest of us he continued; "I wish that man would let me alone; I've seen him again and again, and I've done every thing for him that I can do, and he knows it just as well as I do: and I've told him over and over, and he ought to let me alone, but he won't stop following me up. He knows I can't do any thing more for him. I declare if he don't let me alone, I'll tell him , as I did a fellow the other day, that I'll undo what I have done for him." The usher withdrew, and Mr.Lincoln went on/, saying, "There is no end of these cases of people that come to me for something, or other that nobody else can do for them. I do every thing I can for them, but I can't do everything; and some of them are so unreasonable about it, they won't let me off after I've talked it over with them time after

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time. It seems to me sometimes they will wear the very life out of me ; but then all these matters are nothing to these cases of life and death, and there are so many of them, and they all fall on me. I reckon there never was a man raised in the country on a farm, where they are always butchering cattle and hogs, and think nothing of it , that ever grew up with such an aversion to bloodshed as I have ;and yet I've had more questions of life and death to settle, in four years than all the men who ever sat in this chair put together. But I've managed to get along and do my duty, as I believe, and still save most of them;and theres no man knows the distress of my mind. But there have been some of them I could n't save-there are some casas where the law must be executed. There was that man ____ ____ who was sentenced for piracy and slave trading on the high seas. That was a case where there must be an example, and you don't know how they followed and pressed to get him pardoned, or his sentence commuted: but there was no use of talking, It had to be done. I couldn't help him, and then thhere was that ___ ____ who was caught spying and recruiting within Pope's lines in Missouri. That was another case .They beseiged me day and night but I could'nt give way. We had come to a point where something must be done, that would put a stop to such work. And then there was this case of Beal on the lakes. That was a case where there must be an example. They tried me every way. They wouldn't give up ; but I had to stand firm on that, and I even had to turn away his poor sister, when she came and begged for his life, and let him be executed, and he was executed, and I can't get the distress out of my mind yrt."

"As he uttered these words the tears ran down his cheeks, and I not only saw them, but saw them drop one by one on the floor, (he was then sitting within five feet of me.)

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"There was not a dry eye in the room , but the most profound silence ; until we all, except Mr.Seward , rose to depart. Mr.Lincoln followed us to the door ; we shook hands with feelings not to be described, To me it was the last grasp of the hand, and the last sound of the voice of Abraham Lincoln. In less than three weeks the telegraphing instruments were announcing at every station throughout the civilized world, the unspeakable crime of his assasination."

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