

Ida M. Tarbell
120 East 19th St.
New York City

THE GREATEST STORY OF ABRAHAM LINCOLN'S LIFE

The significant stories of a man's life hinge on his decisions. The story becomes momentous when the decision is made with a certainty, ^{low} that it means long continued sacrifices when it is realized that the end is doubtful, possibly tragic. 10

4 Out of such a decision taken deliberately and shirkingly the Great Story of Abraham Lincoln's life unfolded.

He was a man of forty five, settled into what promised to be an honorable and successful career as a lawyer, ^{the law} the political ambition with which he had begun life put away. But he was a citizen ^{one who} and he could not evade the citizen's obligation to make up and speak his mind on public questions. A direful one now faced him - not a new one. The people of the United States had been struggling with it and settling it temporarily by compromises since the making of their constitution - was slavery to be kept within the boundaries law had set for it, remain sectional when it might die a natural death, or must it become a national institution. 18

23 The fight broke out again. In 1854, the battle centering in Illinois - Lincoln's home - a struggle to extend slavery into territory set aside to be free. 220
64
156

12
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18
23
42
57

He

~~As a citizen Lincoln~~ spoke his mind, spoke it in an argument so bold and unanswerable that all those who saw with him demanded ~~that~~ ^{to} he become their leader.

But what did it mean ^{to} leading a corporal's guard ^{men} in an unpopular fight against ^{man} ~~one of the greatest~~ of the Day? It meant breaking ^{valued} established relations - ^{calumniously} social, political, professional ~~relations~~ built up from meagre beginnings, by ~~hard and discouraging~~ labor. It meant neglect of the profession on which he ~~was~~ now for the first time ^{had} getting a firm hold. Should he ~~be asked to~~ do that, he with a family - boys to educate? ^{More serious} still he must enter the race for office for the struggle was between political parties. ^{It meant a return to politics}

"God knows how sincerely I prayed from the first that this field of ambition might not be opened," he said ^{old} when accused of ambition. ^{and that} ~~It meant~~ ridicule, calumny and certain defeat.

That for him, but what for the Union, that uniting of men to insure themselves freedom to work out their lives which from boyhood had had for him a mystical sacredness? Refuse to extend slavery and the old threat of disunion would surely be heard. He smelt war in it. Was he willing to face war to end the spread of human bondage? He made his decision on his knees, doom in his heart.

22
Those who
collected him
considered
him
22

23

EX
45

112
24
136

240
73
167

he forget ~~and~~
 For four years the fight went on. He came out defeated
 defeated "bespattered with every imaginable odious epithet" -
 without money to pay household expenses. But he had ~~reward~~ ^{him} ~~that for which he had made the fight~~ - more people in Illinois
 than ever before ^{was} saying, "Lincoln has got it right. We must
 stop this thing or it will spread all over the country."

It was not only in Illinois ~~they were saying it~~ - North, East, West, you
 heard it.

He went back to work ~~but~~ these people
 who were mouthing he had just ~~new~~ ^{new} ~~decision~~
 now made their decision - elected
 him president ^{and} a new chapter ~~in his story~~ ^{of his}

He went to his task ~~over~~ ^{over} ~~board~~
 sure. It was only when he said ~~just~~
 up that the ~~same~~ ^{same} ~~of~~ ^{of} ~~the~~ ^{the} ~~people~~ ^{people} ~~that~~ ^{that} ~~had~~ ^{had}

his ~~own~~ ^{own} ~~sense~~ ^{sense} ~~of~~ ^{of} ~~the~~ ^{the} ~~country~~ ^{country}
 found under "I can not ~~bring~~ ^{bring} ~~whisper~~ ^{whisper}
 whether ever I may return"

the issue came quickly. War was ~~not~~ ^{not} ~~between~~ ^{between} ~~the~~ ^{the} ~~North~~ ^{North} ~~and~~ ^{and} ~~the~~ ^{the} ~~South~~ ^{South}
 But ~~the~~ ^{the} ~~issue~~ ^{issue} ~~was~~ ^{was} ~~not~~ ^{not} ~~the~~ ^{the} ~~same~~ ^{same} ~~as~~ ^{as} ~~before~~ ^{before}

But the ~~chance~~ ^{chance} ~~was~~ ^{was} ~~not~~ ^{not} ~~the~~ ^{the} ~~same~~ ^{same} ~~as~~ ^{as} ~~before~~ ^{before}
 ran on & on to the heat of ~~drum~~ ^{drum} - the ~~cry~~ ^{cry} ~~of~~ ^{of} ~~the~~ ^{the} ~~army~~ ^{army} ~~of~~ ^{of} ~~the~~ ^{the} ~~North~~ ^{North}
 falling fury of a ~~war~~ ^{war} ~~of~~ ^{of} ~~the~~ ^{the} ~~North~~ ^{North} ~~and~~ ^{and} ~~the~~ ^{the} ~~South~~ ^{South}
 maddened ~~the~~ ^{the} ~~people~~ ^{people} - it ~~was~~ ^{was} ~~not~~ ^{not} ~~the~~ ^{the} ~~same~~ ^{same} ~~as~~ ^{as} ~~before~~ ^{before}

out here, story was not
 ended.

4 Agmon end

before the end came. The vision saved, the
 black man free, ~~and~~ A.L. gaunt and
 smiling still kind. The sun ~~be~~ had,
 always ~~known~~ ^{so long} to be hanging in his
 head, had not fallen. Was it
 still there? Why ~~that~~ ^{should} that dream ~~which~~
 he had learned to be the ~~prelude~~ ^{sum} of
 remembrance things still ~~haunt~~ con-
~~stant~~ that ~~was~~ was ~~moving~~ moving ~~swiftly~~ to a dash
 & ~~indefinite~~ stare ~~return~~ now ~~that~~
 people ~~closed~~ the ~~end~~ of ~~that~~ that ~~that~~
~~that~~ that ~~was~~ was ~~moving~~ moving
 swiftly to a dash & ~~indefinite~~ stare,
 that ~~was~~ was ~~his~~ his ~~sleep~~ sleep? And me
 still ~~shadows~~ had ~~come~~ come! — The
 great east room, a weeping crowd,
 a draped ~~hor~~ hor and ~~when~~ when ~~the~~ the
 meaning, he ~~was~~ was ~~that~~ that "The President
 is dead!"

Why should he still be haunted?
 Was not the story finished — A
 Happy ending?

5

It is - an epilogue ^{must} ~~has~~ ~~to~~ be
written - the inevitable logic
of his decision - one brief, cruel
final word - death ~~of~~ a word
which brought him peace and ^{made} ~~def~~
his ^{greatest} ~~story~~ a nation's tragedy -
tragedy ↓