

Urbana, Ill., April 13, 1896.

I this morning received yours of the 11th, enclosing the draft of Mr. Lincoln's speech delivered at Bloomington, on May 29, 1856, as reported by Maj. Whitney, and had so much curiosity to see what it was that I delayed not until I had gone through the whole document. I heard the speech and was very much impressed and aroused by it. At the distance of nearly forty years I recognise very much in the utterances, manner and spirit of the speech, especially in the moderation which he counseled. The expression, "ballots not bullets," was like oil on the troubled waters. The occasion was an inspiring one, pregnant with tremendous issues to the cause and the new party. Gov. Reeder of Kansas, having just before then been run out of Kansas by the border ruffians, was present and had spoken on the street the night before. Mr. Emory and others had addressed the convention in the most intemperate manner concerning Kansas outrages, and it almost seemed that the audience was ready for violent measures. The sentiment was half formed for war. Lincoln knew that success for the ticket just nominated was to be won by

Lincoln knew that success for the ticket just nominated was to be won by moderation and not by excess. Before him were Browning, Koerner, Herndon, Wentworth, Williams, Cook, Dubois, Arnold, Farnsworth, Bryant and many others of the Liberty party, old Democratic and Whig parties, as well as Lovejoy, Coddington and others of the Liberty party, from whose acts must come success if it came at all. The former were only to be secured by moderation, while the latter were ready for extreme measures. It was of vital importance that the ticket should go before a cautious and suspicious public in the right atmosphere. It was for Lincoln to set the pace by tempering the spirit of the convention down from its fever heat to a point from which the calm judgment of the voters could be approached and won. This he did. Passion was allayed and reason enthroned. The discordant elements were harmoniously fused and from that assemblage there went forth to the remotest parts of the state the spirit that wins. It did win. Gov. Bissell was more largely indebted to this speech of Mr. Lincoln ^{0.1} than his subsequent speeches than to any other agency.

The speech was in every respect ^{more} a masterly one, equal to the occasion which called it out and decisive of the campaign which followed.

The general public was suspicious of the "abolition" influence which was supposed to animate the new movement and ready to prejudge and condemn it. This speech went forth as the spirit of the movement and gained for it what was most needed--confidence.

Do not apologise for any favor you see fit to ask of me, for as I have before said, I shall be most happy to answer all of your calls.

Yours,

J. O. Cunningham.