

Digital Image, 2011. The Ida M. Tarbell Collection, 1890-1944. Allegheny College Pelletier Library.

*Deliber. Cabell
120 East 19th St*

853

III

"You are to be my eyes and ears with the boys. Tell me what you see and hear. It is an order." These had been Lincoln's parting words to Henry Wing the night the boy had poured out his horror and suffering over the war.

Henry had taken the words literally, and through all the summer and fall he ended his frequent returns to Washington with a visit to the White House - a visit which extended frequently into the small hours of the morning.

Reserve, discretion, plan had nothing to do with Henry's reports. He poured out all that he remembered of the exciting and harrowing days and nights, guided only by an occasional question from the President. "Show me where you have been, Henry," was always Mr. Lincoln's first request, and Henry, spreading his field map on the table, would trace his movements. Under his ready tongue a vivid panorama unrolled - sunshine and rainstorm, fields, swamps and hills and valleys. For Mr. Lincoln it was like riding at the youth's side; and as he traced his route he told a score of incidents - what had happened here - what he had seen or heard there - the unreported, the officially unimportant. But to the listening President, hungry for the stuff that made up the life of the soldier, Henry Wing's talks put flesh and blood on the cold and bare dispatches from the army that he nightly went over in the office of the military telegraph.