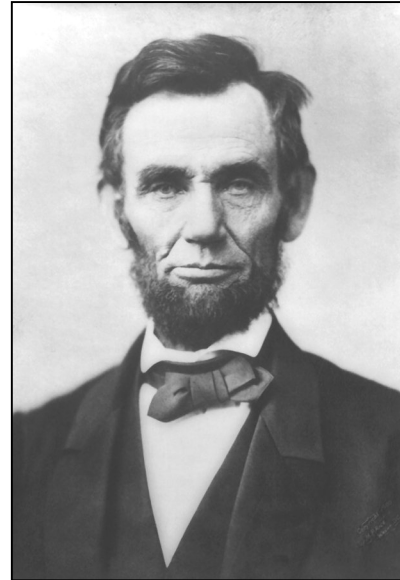


favor of allowing slaves to be carried into all the territories, but another, Stephen A. Douglas, said that the new territories ought to be opened to slaveholders and free men, the settlers themselves deciding for or against slavery. The third man declared merely in favor of union and peace. The fourth, Abraham Lincoln, claimed that, while the laws of states should be respected, slavery ought not to spread any farther, because it was morally wrong.

Now, by the last census made, at this time there were thirty-one million inhabitants in our country, only twelve million of which lived in slave states. You will therefore not be surprised to learn that Abraham Lincoln, the Republican candidate, was elected sixteenth President of the United States (1860).

It was in 1861 that Kansas joined the Union as a free state, and the thirty-fourth star was added to our flag. In mentioning Old Glory, Senator Charles Sumner once spoke these words, which every American citizen should remember: "The stripes of alternate red and white proclaim the original union of thirteen states, to maintain the Declaration of Independence. Its stars, white on a field of blue, proclaim the union of states constituting our national constellation, which receives a new star with every new state. These two signify union, past and present. The very colors have a language which was officially recognized by our fathers. White is for purity, red is for valor, blue is for justice."



Abraham Lincoln.
Library of Congress.



XXXVI. LINCOLN'S YOUTH.

BEFORE we go on to speak of the great events which took place after Lincoln's election, it will interest you to hear something about Lincoln, who, as you will see, was one of the most remarkable men that ever lived.

Born in a Kentucky log hut in 1809, Lincoln belonged to the poorest class of Americans; indeed, his father was so ignorant that he did not even know how to read. But, like

most great men, Lincoln had a very good mother, who, although poor and far from learned, taught her boy all she could. She died soon after they had moved to Indiana, and when only nine years old the poor little fellow had to help his father dig her grave. He never forgot his mother's teachings, however, and many years later, when in the White House, he said: "All that I am, or hope to be, I owe to my sainted mother."

The Lincoln family had but one book, a Bible, which Abraham used to read by the light of the pine knots he picked up, for they could not afford any other light. Instead of a slate, Lincoln had a piece of rough board, or an old fire shovel, and used a bit of charcoal or limestone as a pencil. He was eager to learn, and so persevering that he borrowed an old arithmetic book, and not only worked out all the sums without any help, but copied it all so as to have a book of his own.

Obliged to work all day, Lincoln plowed, sowed, and reaped, and split rails to fence in his father's little farm. The only way the farmers in that region could get money was by building flatboats and taking their produce to New Orleans. Lincoln soon did this too, and on reaching that city saw many strange new sights. For instance, he once went to the slave market, where, for the first time in his life, he saw human beings sold like cattle. It made him feel so bad that we are told he then said, in regard to slavery: "If I can ever hit that thing, I'll hit it hard!"

Lincoln made several trips to New Orleans, and perceiving that flatboats were often caught in snags or tangles of branches in the Mississippi, he invented a kind of pole to lift them over such obstacles. The roughly whittled pattern of this invention can still be seen in the Patent Office at Washington, where it is shown as a curiosity.

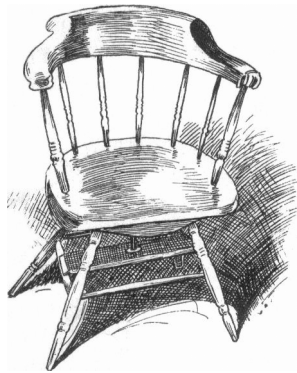
When Lincoln became a young man, he was clerk in a small store in Illinois. He was so careful and upright in all his dealings while there, that he soon won the name of "Honest Abe." Indeed, we are told that after making a mistake in giving change, he once tramped several miles at night, after the store was closed, to give an old woman the few cents he still owed her. On another occasion, Lincoln found he had given short measure in tea to a customer, and could not rest until he had corrected his mistake.

While in charge of this country store, Lincoln was postmaster too. But letters were so few that he carried them around in his hat. When anyone called for mail, he quickly



Cabinet made by
Lincoln.

produced the small bundle, and, looking it over, found the right letter. Both store and post office came to an abrupt end; but Lincoln was so honest that when people came to him, several years later, to straighten out the post office accounts, he brought out an old stocking containing the little sum still due to the government. The money had lain there ever since; but although often penniless, Lincoln had never even borrowed a cent of it.



Lincoln's Law Office
Chair.

He was so anxious to study law that when some one offered to lend him Blackstone, a great analysis of English law still studied today, he hastened to go and get the four heavy volumes, although he had to tramp twenty-one miles and back in the course of one night. Then he began to study, working so hard that before long he became a good lawyer and settled in Springfield.

Lincoln was so clear-headed, so kind-hearted, so full of humor and tact, so unselfish and honest, that he won friends wherever he went. We are told that, when riding to court, he once saw that some little birds had fallen out of their nest. In spite of his companions' jeers, he got down from his horse and carefully put them back. When he again joined his friends, they asked why he had stopped, and began to make fun of him; but he quietly answered: "I could not have slept unless I had restored those little birds to their mother."

Lincoln was tall and ungainly, but his homely face was so strong and kind that every one trusted him. He was for several years a member of the Illinois legislature, and was once a member of Congress. Later on, when it came time to elect a senator for his state, some of his friends named him, while others named Stephen A. Douglas.

Both men were fine orators, and although Douglas was small, he was so strong in argument that he was called the "little giant." Douglas' speeches were very eloquent; but Lincoln's were so simple, so full of common sense and human sympathy, that they went straight to people's hearts. These two men had many a debate during this campaign, and although Lincoln failed to be elected, he won many good friends.

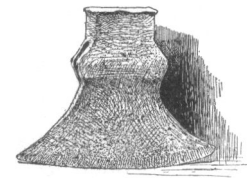
Lincoln never pretended to be either wise or clever, but his life motto was "to do his level best," and he manfully put it into practice. He did not like to hear all the quarrel-ling that was going on, and always did all he could to stop it. But when he thought a

thing right, he could be very firm; and once, after some ministers tried to convince him, by quoting Bible texts, that slavery was not wrong, he cried:

“I know there is a God, and that He hates injustice and slavery. I see the storm coming, and I know His hand is in it. If He has a place and work for me—and I think He has—I believe I am ready. I am nothing, but truth is everything. ... Douglas don’t care whether slavery is voted up or down; but God cares, and humanity cares, and I care, and with God’s help I shall not fail. I may not see the end, but it will come, and I shall be vindicated, and these men will find that they have not read their Bibles aright.”

When called upon to make his first speech as senatorial candidate, Lincoln said: “ ‘A house divided against itself cannot stand.’ I believe this government cannot endure permanently half slave and half free. I do not expect the house to fall, but I expect it will cease to be divided. It will become all one thing or all the other.” This speech is so plain, yet so clever, that it has always been greatly admired. As we have seen, Lincoln had won many friends, so when the time came to elect a new President, he was one of the candidates proposed.

During this campaign some of the opposite party tried to spoil Lincoln’s chances by calling him a “rail-splitter.” But his friends promptly said that was nothing to be ashamed of, and even carried rails in their processions. When asked whether he had really split the rails they thus paraded, Lincoln once smilingly said that he could not swear to the rails, although he had certainly split a great many just like them.



Lincoln’s
Broadax.

A few gentlemen from the East, seeing Lincoln’s awkward figure, felt sure he would never do for President, but they changed their minds after hearing a speech he made in New York. All listened to it spellbound until he closed it with the noble words: “Let us have faith that right makes might, and in that faith let us to the end dare to do our duty as we understand it.”

The campaign was an unusually exciting one, for the Southern states had vowed that if Lincoln was elected they would leave the Union. Every one, therefore, anxiously awaited the result of the election; and when it finally became known that Lincoln was chosen, the long-gathering storm burst.

The time was now rapidly drawing near when our country was to be a prey to the saddest and bloodiest conflict in our history. War is a very terrible thing, even when it