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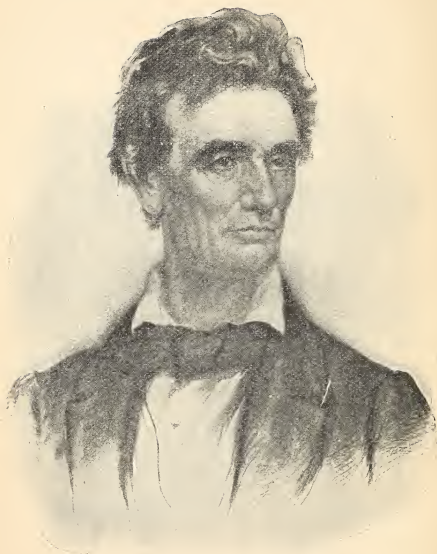
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LINCOLN IN JUNE, 1860

From a Photogravure after a Portrait by C. A. Barry

THE WORKS OF  
ABRAHAM LINCOLN

SPEECHES AND DEBATES

1856—1858

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Introductions and Special Articles by

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## PREFACE

BEGINNING with the speeches that Lincoln delivered in the Frémont campaign of 1856, this volume concludes with his opening address in the Fourth Joint Debate with Stephen A. Douglas, which was held at Charleston, Ill. Between the debates with his great opponent, Lincoln delivered several speeches, fragments of which were taken down by Horace White, now of the New York *Evening Post*, and then reporter of the Lincoln-Douglas debates for the Chicago *Tribune*. These are printed here in their chronological sequence, as is also the correspondence of the principals preliminary to the Debate.

Excepting two legal arguments, all the speeches in the volume relate to the extension of slavery, the burning political issue of the time. This had been kindled by Senator Douglas's Nebraska Act, repealing the guaranty in the Missouri Compromise of free soil to the new Territories north of the southern boundary of Missouri, and had been fanned by the Dred Scott Decision into a flame that endangered the freedom even of States already established in which slavery was constitutionally prohibited.



# INTRODUCTION

## Lincoln the Statesman.

BY WILLIAM HOWARD TAFT.

THERE are few lives which seem to have been shaped so providentially to meet a country's great need as that of Lincoln with reference to slavery and the Civil War. Coming from a childhood of the greatest penury and discomfort and squalor, mingling with the humblest and the poorest in a Western settlement, Lincoln acquired a sense of equality and democracy and a love of equal rights that never left him and gave deep color to his whole life. His soul revolted at human slavery. He had a tenderness of heart and a sympathy with his fellow-man that manifested itself in the smallest details of his life, and he had a power of putting himself in another's place which gave him a profound sense of justice. He understood the play of human nature as few men have. He knew the motives and the things which influenced the plain people as no other American in our American race of politicians has understood them. He had a sense of humor and a power of quaint expression and a capacity for creating which enabled him to give force by homely illustration to the arguments which his great power of logic enabled him to drive home.

## GREATEST POLITICIAN OF HIS AGE

He was the greatest politician of his age, and while he had deeply imbedded in his moral nature the principles in favor of human liberty, he did not purpose to sacrifice his influence to bring about the goal of his whole life's ambition by going so fast in extreme declarations of abstract principles as to deprive him of future usefulness. I have read and reread with pleasure the story of Lincoln by Herndon, his partner, and noted with intense interest his unwillingness to attend a meeting of abolitionists lest he might lose his influence with the Whigs, who did not sympathize with the abolitionists. Nor did he wish to offend the abolitionists. So he made a court engagement for himself some twenty miles away, which made it impossible for him to attend the meeting. Now, it would be easy to say that this was cowardly, that this was the trick of a mere politician, but I think we may well ascribe the motive to a desire not to lose his usefulness at a time when the future seemed big with opportunity for him. His whole life showed that, while he had ideals, he never allowed the longing for the impossible to interfere with the securing of the possible.

## A PARTY MAN

He was a party man, as every man must be who wishes to leave his individual impress upon the individual character of the nation. I do not mean for a moment to deprecate independence of party, or "mugwumpism," because I believe that the independent vote on the whole exercises more direct effect in the election than the party vote. It must be so. But while all independent

voters as a mass exercise more control over the decisions in an election, as individuals they do not do so. The man who would retain his individual influence and effect good measures in our country, where parties are a necessity in the carrying on of the Government, must be a party man. And no one recognizes this more fully than did Lincoln.

#### ECONOMIC VIEWS

Lincoln's economic views were not distinctly marked. Early in his career he favored internal improvements in Illinois, as a member of the Legislature, to such a point as to involve the State in a heavy indebtedness, which never inured largely to the benefit of the people. His mind was not directed, even during the war, to economic subjects. He safely delegated the finances of the country to his Secretary of the Treasury, Mr. Chase. As a follower of Clay, he was in favor of the protective or American system, as it was called. During his administration the Morrill tariff was passed, for the system of protection to American industries on the modern plan was then fully inaugurated.

#### THE DECLARATION AND SLAVERY

Lincoln relied greatly in his discussions on the slavery question upon the terms of the Declaration of Independence. He dwelt upon the postulate set forth in that instrument that all men are created equal, and he insisted that, in so far as the Constitution recognized slavery, and in so far as slavery was an institution of our Government, it was a departure from the Declaration of Inde-

pendence. He maintained that the words "all men are created equal" included the negro as well as the white man, but affirmed with great emphasis that he did not mean that the men who were thus declared equal were necessarily fitted at once to be voters or take part in the Government. What he contended was that they were entitled to the bread they earned and should be given the right of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.

Lincoln was not a man stiffly dogmatic. He was a man who allowed the application of his principles to be controlled by the fitness of the thing. His whole nature was that of sweet reasonableness and common sense.

It is true that the Declaration recites that all just government must rely on the consent of the governed; but that is to be interpreted as meaning a consent of the governed who have intelligence sufficient to enable them to discriminate as to what is government in their own interest. Lincoln in his debates with Douglas did not insist that the colored men, as they then were, should take part in the Government as voters, but he evidently treated the postulate in the Declaration of Independence as the ideal toward which all government should work.

One of the reasons why Mr. Lincoln was so bitterly opposed to slavery, as he said in his controversy with Douglas, was that it was an inconsistent blot upon our escutcheon as a free country, and that it robbed us of our proper world influence in favor of freedom and liberty. Nothing could more clearly show his desire that we, among the nations of the world, should wield an influence in favor of the spread of free institutions and in favor of international morality.



## UPHOLDER OF THE LAWS

The one thing that distinguished Lincoln in all his life was his contention in favor of the equal administration and protection of the laws. From the soles of his feet, through all that long frame to the top of his head, he was a democrat in the true sense of the word and opposed to privilege and class immunity. He was not an enemy of wealth lawfully accumulated. He welcomed and encouraged internal improvements, and of course favored prosperity developed by business enterprises and the combinations of capital, but he always exalted in the consideration of every issue the rights of the individual, and especially of the humbler members of society, who were least able to protect themselves.

Therefore, we may know with certainty that cannot brook contradiction that in the struggle to make all business lawful, to take away from great corporate combinations the illegal privileges and immunities that official investigations have shown in many instances to prevail, Lincoln would have made the same good fight which has endeared Roosevelt to the same plain people of the country who upheld the hands of the martyred President through all the great trials of his administration.

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