

Lincoln Greater, Says Ida M. Tarbell, Each Passing Year

He Is Today the Source to Which Statesmen of All Lands Look for Understanding of Democracy

By Ida M. Tarbell

been so far, no experience in our national life which has so demonstrated where this scheme holds up and where it falls down as the civil war. That episode demonstrates quite clearly where we can expect more from our form of government than from others, and also where we are in danger of getting less. This new material helps us to see this with increasing clearness.

Possibly the best thing we can say of the scheme is that it gave us Lincoln. It is very unlikely that any other form of government that the world has yet tried could by peaceful means have developed his particular genius; that is, it would not have been fully available, except possibly through a great war, under any other form of government. His talent would not have had the peculiar kind of training which he had and which made him so fit for the tasks thrust upon him.

In this new material his failures are emphasized, particularly in Welles's narrative. The exhibit there is the more impressive because it is more or less unconscious on Welles's part and because from the start he believed that Lincoln was, as he says, "a gentle, good, and great man." The impression that one who had not studied the history of the civil war with Lincoln's own letters and speeches in hand would get from Welles's narrative is that of a man stumbling through a quagmire, pretending to lead, but really clinging to the coattails of his Secretary of State.

Welles's portrait of Seward is true, if one-sided. He is naturally overinsistent of the worst side of Seward. Seward constantly thwarted and hindered him. Seward's meddlesomeness, his opportunism, his overwhelming desire to have Washington, particularly diplomatic Washington, and the army and navy believe that he was running the Government irritated Welles. He was a busybody and intriguer, who muddled things for both army and navy.

The Lincoln of Welles's narrative does not see this, nor understand that he is being handled by a mind really inferior to his own. Yet we know from Lincoln's letters that he discovered Seward's propensity before any of his colleagues and that he had in writing in less than a month after the inauguration put him in his place. Mr. Seward knew Lincoln as his master, but he took good care that nobody but Lincoln should know that he so recognized him. His colleagues, Congress, and the country grew in the conviction that Lincoln was being bullied and deceived. Lincoln's own influence was lessened in many quarters as this conviction grew. Behind this apparent weakness was in reality strength. It was one of his ways of working out his

chief value to the country, and that value was his clear sense from the start that it was our democratic scheme that was at stake and that if it was saved every man who could aid must be helped to give all that was in him.

Nothing will ever be discovered which will add to the perfect form into which he crystallized this deepest thing in his soul in the Gettysburg speech, but a multitude of recent details show how the idea guided him in handling of men and led him to put aside all natural feelings like resentment and hurt pride in cases like Seward's.

He seems to have put it something like this to himself: "Everybody in the country has had a part in creating this situation; everybody feels he has a right to say how things shall be handled; everybody that is worth his salt is going to exercise that right, and he is going to do it according to the kind of man he is—according to his temperament, his training, his self-control, his meanness, and his goodness. If we are going to put this thing through and prove that men can govern themselves, we must get from them what they can give, and we must let them give in their own way."

What this meant for him in practice was a shrewd calculation of how much he must put up with, how far he could safely go in allowing himself to be misjudged, as in Seward's case, insulted as by McClellan, abused as by Greeley, sneered at as by the military authorities.

Men close to Lincoln at the time, and men reading history since, have wondered why he refused to publish the whole of his correspondence with Greeley over the peace fiasco at Niagara Falls in July, 1864. Greeley characteristically blamed Lincoln for the failure. The correspondence would have cleared him, but it would have shown that Greeley had really lied. Moreover, it would have shown that Greeley was willing to sacrifice everything for peace. In Lincoln's judgment that would have been "a disaster equal to the loss of a great battle." It would have been pulling a prop out from the Union cause. It was better that he himself should be misunderstood and abused than that confidence in the editor of The Tribune should be lost.

It was quite as much calculation as large-mindedness that made him keep so carefully from his colleagues the preposterous suggestions of Mr. Seward in April, 1861, to invite a European war and to take over the Government. To have allowed this to leak out even to members of his Cabinet would have weakened the Secretary in the country. What he wanted was to minimize as much as possible the harmful effect of Seward's effort to give to everybody the notion that it was he

and not the President who was at the head of affairs.

The more one knows of his handling of similar, if less conspicuous, cases the greater the respect for his native talent for understanding men and for the exercise he had given it through his life. He read men of all kinds because he had always had the habit of reading them. His sympathy for human nature made him understand numbers of things that the unsympathetic, self-centred, however highly trained, never see at all.

He seems to have had as nearly a universal human sympathy as any one in history. A man could not be so high or so low that Lincoln could not meet him. He could not be so much of a fool, or so many kinds of a fool. He could listen untroubled to cant, to violence; to criticism, just and unjust. Amazingly he absorbed from each man the real thing he had to offer, annexed him by showing him that he understood, and yet gave him somehow a sense of the impossibility of considering him alone, and leaving out the multitudes of other men as convinced and as loyal as he was.

Lincoln shows this as admirably as anywhere in the way he handled that buoyant young radical idealist, Carl Schurz. Schurz was the most romantic figure in the country. His service in making clear just what all the trouble was about, his passion for the Union as well as his hatred of slavery Lincoln valued most highly; but Schurz had the confidence of the young revolutionist that it was he who knew most and best. In his zeal for freedom he was prone to suspect the motives of others, particularly if they did not agree with him. Recently published letters of Schurz make a beautiful picture of wisdom, reflection, and experience in the person of Lincoln handling and saving to the cause the ardent, self-confident, assertive spirit of idealistic youth.

Just as Lincoln won and held this fiery young Teuton revolutionist, he held Sumner, the most highly trained and cultivated radical of the time, the one man in the country who came nearest to a high type of English cultivation; that is, Lincoln seems to have been able to attach the superior of each kind to him.

A more delicate task than Schurz or Sumner or Seward was getting something from the large group who wanted to save the Union, but were unwilling that Lincoln should have a hand in the saving. It was willing to go to any lengths to throw contempt on his policies. In spite of the danger that beset the Union, in spite of the fact that Lincoln was for the time being leader, they were determined to demonstrate his unfitness by doing all in their power to make it impossible for him to solve any problem. This revolting and discouraging feature of party government never showed itself in a more hateful form than during the civil war. All of the new material makes clear what a sad exhibit a free press can make of itself in times of great public calamity. Editors and writers are expected to report and interpret public opinion. In 1861 they immediately and without preparation set themselves up also as military experts and authorities on international law. They made up in intolerance and noisy insistence what they lacked in knowledge.

What was true of the press was true of all of the organized agencies for influencing the public. They were all for saving the Union, but saving it each in his own way, and when that way differed from that of Lincoln and his colleagues they were not for helping him to clearer and better ways, but for hindering to the utmost of their ability.

Lincoln's attitude toward this effort to hinder him is one of the strongest proofs of his greatness of mind, as well as of the profundity of his understanding of the democratic scheme. He of course had had political training which made him expect the average man in the opposition to feel free to ridicule, thwart and ruin his efforts. He was not their man. But I doubt if Lincoln could have realized how the silliness, obstinacy, selfishness, and vindictiveness which the party system arouses and justifies, even in first-rate minds, would show themselves to the extent they did in those that were committed to him in the effort to save the Union.

One loud and insistent criticism was that he was filling places of importance with Democrats. Schurz voiced this criticism as eloquently as anybody, and had the manliness to put it directly to the

President. His first letter was in the Fall of 1862, just after the election. The Administration had fared badly. Schurz wrote Lincoln:

The defeat of the Administration is the Administration's own fault. It admitted its professed opponents to its councils. It placed the army, now a great power in this Republic, in the hands of its enemies. In all personal questions to be hostile to the party of the Government seemed to be a title to consideration. It forgot the great rule that, if you are true to your friends, your friends will be true to you, and that you make your enemies stronger by placing them upon an equality with your friends. Is it surprising that the opponents of the Administration should have got into their hands the Government of the principal States after they have had for so long a time the principal management of the war, the great business of the National Government?

Lincoln's reply to this letter was first published in Schurz's papers in 1913. In the course of it he says:

The plain facts, as they appear to me, are these: The Administration came into power, very largely in a minority of the popular vote. Notwithstanding this, it distributed to its party friends as nearly all the civil patronage as any Administration ever did. The war came. The Administration could not even start in this, without assistance outside of its party. It was mere nonsense to suppose a minority could put down a majority in rebellion. Mr. Schurz (now General Schurz) was about here then, and I do not recollect that he then considered all who were not Republicans were enemies of the Government, and that none of them must be appointed to military positions. He will correct me if I am mistaken.

It so happened that very few of our friends had a military education or were of the profession of arms. It would have been a question whether the war should be conducted on military knowledge, or on political affinity, only that our own friends, (I think Mr. Schurz included), seemed to think that such a question was inadmissible. Accordingly, I have scarcely appointed a Democrat to command who was not urged by many Republicans, and opposed by none. It was so as to McClellan. He was first brought forward by the Republican Governor of Ohio, and claimed and contended for at the same time by the Republican Governor of Pennsylvania. I received recommendations from the Republican delegations in Congress, and I believe every one of them recommended a majority of Democrats. But, after all, many Republicans were appointed, and I mean no disparagement to them when I say I do not see that their superiority of success has been so marked as to throw great suspicion on the good faith of those who are not Republicans.

This did not entirely settle the matter with Schurz. His ardor led him to write a long, defensive reply. It drew from Lincoln an admirable answer, published many years ago. Schurz probably had in mind this correspondence when in his wonderful essay on Lincoln he wrote later, "There are men now living who would today read with amazement if not regret what they then ventured to say or write to him."

The climax of this episode, so revealing of the man, is given by Schurz in his Reminiscences. Two or three days after Mr. Lincoln's second letter to Schurz, a special messenger came to the General, asking him to come to Washington as soon as his duties would permit. Schurz went at once. He describes what happened:

Mr. Lincoln was seated in an arm-chair before the open grate fire, his feet in gigantic morocco slippers. He greeted me cordially, as if of old, and bade me pull up a chair and sit by his side. Then he brought his large hand with a slap down on my knee, and said with a smile:

"Now tell me, young man, whether you really think that I am as poor a fellow as you have made me out in your letter."

I must confess this reception disconcerted me. I looked into his face, and felt something like a big lump in my throat. After a while I gathered up my wits and, after a word of sorrow if I had written anything that could have pained him, I explained to him my impressions of the situation and my reasons for writing to him as I had done. He listened with silent attention, and when I had stopped said very seriously:

"Well, I know that you are a warm anti-slavery man and a good friend to me. Now let me tell you all about it."

Then he unfolded in his peculiar way his views of the then existing state of affairs, his hopes and his apprehensions, his troubles and embarrassments, making many quaint remarks about men and things. I regret I cannot remember all. Then he described how the criticisms coming down upon him from all sides chafed him, and how my letter, although containing many points that were well founded and useful, had touched him as a terse summing up of all the principal criticisms, and offered him a good chance at me for a reply. Then, slapping my knee again, he broke out in a loud laugh and exclaimed: "Didn't I give it to you hard in my letter? Didn't I? But it didn't hurt, did it? I did not mean to, and therefore I wanted you to come so quickly."

He laughed again, and seemed to enjoy the matter heartily.

"Well," he added, "I guess we understand one another now, and it's all right."

When, after a conversation of more than an hour, I left him I asked whether he still wished that I should write to him. "Why, certainly," he answered; "write me when-

ever the spirit moves you." We parted as better friends than ever.

It is possible that Lincoln was less prepared for vindictive intrigues within his own household than for the embarrassments which meddlesomeness like Seward's or criticism like Schurz's caused him. He was never a vindictive man. All his life he had studiously avoided quarrels. Some very interesting expressions in regard to this have come out in this material of the last ten years.

There is a new letter in the Tracy collection, written in 1845, when the nomination to Congress in his district was in dispute. Because of past promises Lincoln thought it should go to him. His friend Harden was inclined to break the compact. Lincoln was willing to fight, but not to the point of quarrel, and he cautioned his friends, "It will be just all we can do to keep out of a quarrel." That was always a first consideration—not to quarrel.

He had ample reason in the war to see that this trait was unusual. He thought it singular; Hay heard him say the night they were receiving the election returns of 1864, that he, who was not a vindictive man, should have always been before the people for election in canvasses marked for their bitterness. He evidently had the same idea in mind when that same night he said to Assistant Secretary of the Navy Fox, who was rejoicing over the defeat of two especially bitter enemies of the Administration, "You have more of that feeling of personal resentment than I. Perhaps I may have too little of it, but I never thought it paid. A man has not time to spend half his life in quarrels. If any man ceases to attack me, I never remember the past against him."

I doubt very much if Lincoln was prepared for the explosive and vindictive quality which several of his colleagues

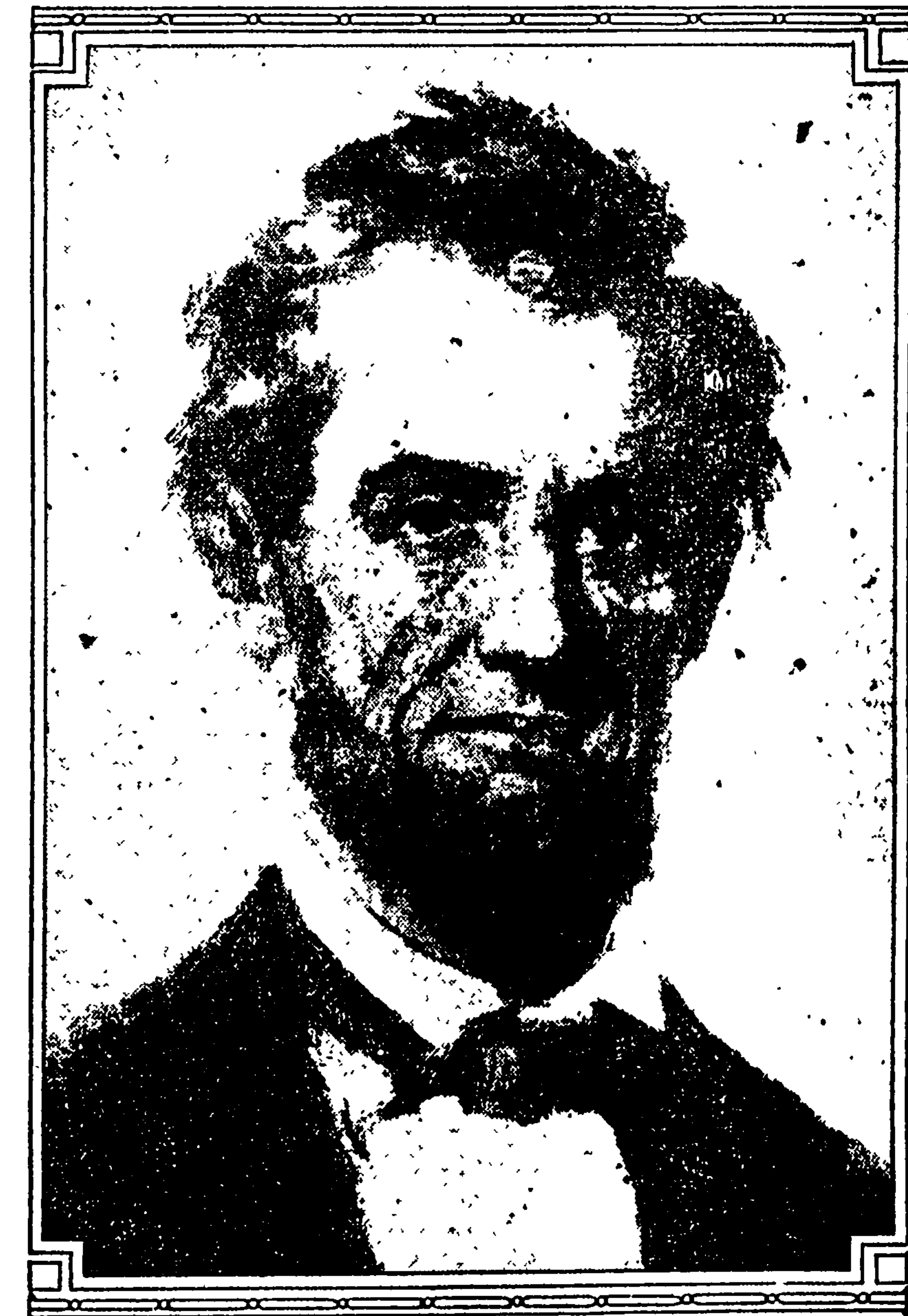
showed. Stanton was one of these. There is no question that Stanton attempted to minimize failures in the navy, underestimating its success and overestimating its failure. Lincoln took his measure early and was able to get from him the best he had to give.

Welles's story of the panic Stanton aroused in the President over the Merrimac shows well how his mind worked in his dealings with such men. Stanton had a horrible scare over the Confederate boat. He was sure that it was going to destroy the entire navy of the North and lay every coast city under contribution, but before it did this it would destroy Washington and disperse Congress.

In his fright, going over Mr. Welles's head, he actually advised that the Boston and New York ports, as well as the Potomac, should be plugged up by sinking stone boats. The boats were actually under preparation for closing the Potomac when Mr. Welles, learning it, came to the White House. He found there that Stanton had ordered fifty or sixty canal boats loaded with stone to be sunk in the channel, and that Mr. Lincoln had sanctioned this order. He explained to Mr. Lincoln that the Merrimac could not by any manner of means get over the shoals; moreover, that his whole study so far in the war had been to keep the river open for the sake of the Army of the Potomac; to close it permanently might be much more serious than a visit from the Merrimac.

Lincoln's common sense reasserted itself, and his scare seems to have calmed. He realized at once both the folly and impropriety of what Stanton had led him into. Later he settled Stanton's interference with the navy by one of his incomparable remarks. The President and a party of the Cabinet were going

AN UNPUBLISHED LINCOLN PORTRAIT



Painted Just After Lincoln's Death by His Friend, Joseph Ames.

THIS painting of Lincoln by an intimate friend and a well-known artist, Joseph Ames, has just been brought to light.

Mr. Ames thought so much of the painting that he refused even to part with it. When he died, in 1872, he bequeathed it to a friend, who, in turn, preserved it as a treasure. The portrait now belongs to an art collection in Boston.

Ames was born and brought up in New Hampshire. He was commissioned to paint a full-length portrait of Pope Pius IX., considered one of his best works. Other pictures by him are "Daniel Webster's Last Days at Marshfield," "Death of Chatham," and "Maud Muller."

When Ames painted his portrait of Lincoln art critics had much to say at just the time. One critique, published in 1895 in Dwight's Journal of Music, said:

Mr. Ames had seen and loved the President, had talked with him and studied his features well, and his character in the features; he had also the best photograph that has been taken of him, and for which he sat expressly. With this impression vivid and fixed as by a lightning flash upon his mind by the late terrible event, he seems to have painted with a certain inspiration, giving his picture something of that same melancholy interest which attaches to the Cenci pictures, making it a portrait which cannot help feeling, though he never saw the person, to be true.



GEORGE GRAY BARNARD'S STATUE OF LINCOLN.

"To my mind it does something that nobody else has done so well in any medium; it gives a sense of the profundity of the man—a sense of what one intelligent observer on first seeing it called 'his spiritual resolution.'"—IDA M. TARBELL.

This article by Miss Tarbell is the preface to a new edition of her "Life of Lincoln." It is published here, in advance, by permission of Doubleday, Page & Co.

IN the last twenty years a continuous stream of new material relating to Abraham Lincoln has been flowing to the public. In the years 1908 and 1909 this stream swelled to river proportions, fed by the interest in the centenary of his birth.

One splendid fact outranks all others in this wealth of fresh contributions: Our new knowledge leaves us the Lincoln we had twenty years ago; indeed, the man revealed not only to this country but to the world by the tragedy of April, 1865, has not been materially changed by fifty years' study. We know him better, but we reverence and love him no less.

His prominence holds in spite of an increasing knowledge of points at which he failed. He is today our national touchstone as well as the source to which liberal statesmen of all lands look for the most perfect understanding and expression of the spirit and aims of democracy.

The new materials which have left us our old Lincoln include some of the most notable contributions to our knowledge of him. First should be placed the diary of Gideon Welles, probably the greatest personal historical narrative yet produced in this country. After Welles came the "Reminiscences" of Carl Schurz, supplemented by eight volumes of his public speeches, correspondence, and political papers. The Gettysburg edition of Lincoln's "Complete Works," a revision of the original edition edited by Nicolay and Hay, belongs in the list; so do Thayer's "Life of John Hay" and Newton's study of Lincoln and Herndon, two recent contributions of importance, because of the fresh material they contain. The stream continues. At this writing there is soon to be published a collection of over 300 letters of Lincoln, not to be found in the Gettysburg edition. This collection, which we owe to the devotion of Gilbert Tracy of Putnam, Conn., contains at least two score pieces of first rank.

The collections of Lincolniana have increased not merely in size but in intelligent arrangement and selection. Fifteen years ago the chief collection was that of Major W. H. Lambert, who died on June 1, 1912. It was a misfortune that it was scattered. Happily, a number of pieces have gone to swell the gatherings of one of Mr. Lambert's chief competitors, Judd Stewart of Plainfield, N. J. Mr. Stewart now has a collection that includes 97 per cent. of all known publications. Lincoln lovers should see to it that it does not meet the fate of Major Lambert's.

The collection of original Lincoln letters and documents owned by Robert Lincoln, including practically all of the manuscripts, letters, and papers published by Nicolay and Hay in the first edition of the "Complete Works," is of first importance. It is to be hoped that Mr. Lincoln will one day place this collection in the Congressional Library beside the originals of the papers of Washington, Madison, Jefferson, Monroe, Jackson, Van Buren, Polk, Pierce, Johnson, and Cleveland. Those who own Lincoln manuscripts could not do better than to arrange as speedily as possible to give them whenever Mr. Lincoln shall decide to part with those in his possession.

A steady stream of interpretation in art form has run parallel to the stream of new materials, much of it commonplace, but not a little of real understanding. The most interesting, in the writer's judgment, has just come to the public, George Barnard's statue of Lincoln. This work has already started a very fundamental discussion. To my own mind it does something that nobody else has done so well in any medium; it gives a sense of the profundity of the man—a sense of what one intelligent observer on first seeing it called "his spiritual resolution."

The test of the value of these recent contributions is what they add to our understanding of Abraham Lincoln and of the situation in which he found himself. That is much. They unquestionably enlarge Lincoln, clear up our view of him. They put down the strength and weakness of him over and over again. The result is that we know him better and can judge him more fairly both as man and leader than twenty years ago. What this new material has done for Lincoln it has done for the scheme of things under which he was obliged to act. There has

down the river a few days after the episode, when they passed the sixty or so stone-loaded boats which Mr. Stanton had ordered out, and which Lincoln's lucky return to common sense had side-tracked. "That is Stanton's navy," said Lincoln. "It is as useful as the paps of a man to a suckling child. There may be some show to amuse the child, but they are good for nothing for service."

He lived in a world of intrigue. That a man who himself was so incapable of intrigue should have been able so to sense what the men whom he gathered into his Cabinet and before whom he was really humble were about is an unending marvel. But he did understand them, and the legitimate cunning with which he could handle a serious intrigue when it came to the last phase is a pure intellectual joy.

A vivid picture of this is given in Welles's diary, in the entries tracing the resentment against Seward, which crystallized at the end of 1862 by an almost unanimous vote in the Republican caucus that the President should be asked to remove him. When Seward's friends informed him he was overwhelmed with surprise. With the fatuity of a man with an ambition like his, he had not suspected how obvious his manoeuvres were to both his colleagues in the Administration and Washington in general. A goodly body of members of Congress had come to the point where they felt that it was their duty to protest against what they believed was his too great influence over the President. This, says Welles, "was the point and pith of their complaint." Surprised, chagrined, but quite big enough to understand that it was a matter for the President, he sent in his resignation.

Mr. Lincoln was perplexed. He felt that the action of the Senators who were conducting this matter was an interference with executive authority which must not be countenanced. He told Welles that if it succeeded, in his judgment, the Government "could not stand, could not hold water; the bottom would be out." But since he felt it his supreme duty to hold everybody to the cause, he was unwilling to antagonize any more than possible the group demanding that Seward should go.

He heard them; he talked with members of the Cabinet; and soon divined that in all probability there had been considerable influence exerted against Seward by members of his own Cabinet; that somebody there had complained of Seward's practice of discouraging regular Cabinet meetings, and of holding back information from the Cabinet when it did meet, of his pose of settling things independently of the President and his associates. Lincoln in the general airing of things which he conducted came to see that certainly Mr. Chase and possibly Mr. Stanton had had much to do with stirring up the trouble.

In the excitement some one suggested that the whole Cabinet resign. Welles refused. This was no time, in his judgment, to make things worse by such an exodus, but it was entirely in keeping that Stanton and Chase should bring their resignations. Welles pictures in his diary the extraordinary moment when Lincoln saw with lightning rapidity his way out. Chase had informed the President that he had prepared his resignation.

"Where is it?" said the President quickly, his eye lighting up in a moment.

"I brought it with me," said Chase, taking the paper from his pocket. "I wrote it this morning."

"Let me have it," said the President, reaching his long arm and fingers toward Chase, who held on, seemingly reluctant to part with the letter, which was sealed, and which he apparently hesitated to surrender. Something further he wished to say, but the President was eager, and did not perceive it, but took and hastily opened the letter.

"This," said he, looking toward me with a triumphant laugh, "cuts the Gordian knot." An air of satisfaction spread over his countenance, such as I had not seen for some time. "I can dispose of this subject now without difficulty," he added, as he turned on his chair. "I see my way clear."

Chase sat by Stanton, fronting the fire; the President beside the fire, his face toward them, Stanton nearest him. I was on the sofa near the east window. While the President was reading the note, which was brief, Chase turned round and looked toward me, a little perplexed. He would, I think, have been better satisfied could this interview with the President have been without the presence of others, or, at least, if I was away. The President was so delighted that he saw not how others were affected.

"Mr. President," said Stanton, with solemnity, "I informed you day before yesterday that I was ready to tender my resignation. I wish you, Sir, to consider my resignation at this time in your possession."

"You may go to your department," said the President; "I don't want yours. This"

holding Chase's letter, "is all I want; this relieves me; my way is clear; the trouble is ended. I will detain you no longer."

Nobody understood what it meant. They all went off reluctantly and perplexedly, Chase obviously feeling that the President was going to turn both him and Seward out; that he had assisted in preparing a boom-crang for himself. This was clear enough two days later, when the President announced that Mr. Seward and Mr. Chase had resigned their portfolios, but that he had asked them to continue at their posts. Everybody was taken by surprise. No one had any idea that Chase had resigned. That was not part of the intrigue. Chase's friends, who had been insisting on Seward's going, were particularly disgusted when they found that he had received what they meant for Seward alone.

It was this quality of divining the elements of an intrigue and of almost instantaneously putting his finger on the spring which would loosen it that is most astonishing in a man of Lincoln's temperament and training.

The part that humor played in handling these situations cannot, I think, be overestimated. It was a part of the man, as natural as his melancholy, or his faculty of seeing things clearly and stating them so that everybody could understand. It bubbled up through things like one of those warm springs that one sometimes comes upon in a rugged, rocky field. The way it explained, cleared up, settled, is almost unbelievable. It puts humor higher among the human powers than any other exhibit, so far as I know. This is partly because it was so kind; not that it was without satire. There was much, but usually it was clear, friendly, light. It found its expression in common things, the expression of the man to whom all human exhibits, all physical things are clean, to whom nothing is coarse or wrong that is natural.

His zest in things, in everything, one might say, counted for much in all these difficulties. It is to mistake Lincoln to overemphasize his melancholy and his travail of spirit. That they were his constant companions is true, but they were not alone, nor did they dominate his soul. His enormous interest in life and men held them under. This unflinching curiosity and sympathy made him the most likable of men. Thayer, by his excellent use of Hay's letters and diary has succeeded in giving a fresh and delightful impression of his loveliness.

The very titles by which he and Nicolay spoke of the President—the "Ancient," the "Tycoon"—hint at their affection. The little descriptions Hay drops of Lincoln taking a hearty part in everyday happenings are particularly revealing. Those of us who have learned our Lincoln from the books have hardly pictured him as Hay does, dishing out oysters at a late informal supper, or as sitting in a private box at a concert with his gay young secretary carrying on a "hefty flirtation with the M. girls in the flies."

Hay's appreciation of the goodness and bigness of Lincoln grew constantly. He realized, if many others did not, the firmness of the hand on the wheel.

The Tycoon is in fine whack. I have rarely seen him more serene and busy. He is managing this war, the draft, foreign relations, and planning a reconstruction of the Union, all at once. I never knew with what a tyrannous authority he rules the Cabinet till now. The most important things he decides, and there is no cavil.

And then:

What a man it is! Occupied all day with matters of vast moment, deeply anxious about the fate of the greatest army of the world, with his own plans and future hanging on the events of the passing hour, he yet has such a wealth of simple bonhomme and good-fellowship that he gets out of bed and perambulates the house in his shirt to find us, that we may share with him the fun of poor Hood's queer little conceits.

It has always been difficult for those unfortunate people who regard education as possible only through schools and social contacts to understand how Lincoln was able, without college training or travel, to understand so thoroughly the thought and opinion of all sections of the country. As a truth, there was nobody who understood so well how all the people were thinking or why they thought as they did. These people will find a clue to their puzzle in not only Newton's detailed study of the intellectual life of Lincoln and his law partner, Herndon, in the years preceding the war, but in a still more recent volume of personal reminiscences of unusual character by Henry B. Rankin of Springfield, Ill. Mr. Rankin was in the office of the firm from 1850 to 1861. He says that as he looks back on this experience the circumstance which most impresses him is the way in which Lincoln and Herndon steadfastly kept the political affairs of the whole na-

tion under attention; using all sources and in their private conferences and discussions with each other reviewing and sifting all conflicting opinions on national questions that came to their office table from North and South, East and West. Mr. Rankin writes:

Had they foreseen the political and executive battles before Mr. Lincoln, his preparation could not have been more thorough, exact, and comprehensive to fit him for the Presidency in 1861-65. It was his wish that led to subscribing for Southern papers and periodicals, and he was a more diligent reader of these than his partner. The latter had first supplied the office table with the leading abolition papers of the North. The extreme opinions which Northern papers presented brought the Southern views represented in their papers to the office table. This was Mr. Lincoln's suggestion and choice, for, as he then expressed it, "Let us have both sides on our table. Each is entitled to its 'day in court.'"

Besides the full use of all The Illinois State Journal's exchanges, they took regularly at the office, up to the closing of Southern mails by the Confederate States in 1861, The Charleston Mercury, The Richmond Inquirer, and The Louisville Journal; also The Southern Literary Messenger, an able monthly political and literary magazine, formerly edited by Edgar A. Poe, and later by J. R. Thompson. This was a periodical of unusual ability, published at Richmond, Va., and he gave no periodical that came to the office the attention he did to this. He had preserved an accumulation of these Southern Literary Messengers on top of one of the office presses and he directed my attention to them a few weeks before setting out for Washington, while sorting up odds and ends about the office, saying he wished me to take charge of and have them bound and kept for him until his return to the office life again, which he often spoke of as being his intention. This I did, and they are now in my library.

The soundness of Lincoln's education becomes more and more clear the more we know of the man. It is true he had no training in handling men or affairs in an orderly fashion. He did not know what system meant so far as delegating tasks, or seeing that things were kept ship-shape. Even in the White House he was still the New Salem Postmaster, who carried the mail in his hat, the Springfield lawyer whose idea of filing was tersely revealed in the legend found on a bundle of his papers, "When you can't find it anywhere else, look into this."

He had no sense of the machine or how to handle it. Lincoln never had any desire to impose his way of doing things upon other men. He liked to talk with them as the spirit moved, and he felt that way about his Cabinet. It was very difficult throughout his Administration to hold regular meetings. This probably was less Lincoln's fault than Seward's, but it was his fault that he did not overrule Seward. There was always around the White House during the Administration a great deal of back-stair gossip, of intrigue, confusion, and contradictory orders, a great deal of encroaching by Seward and Stanton on other departments, all of which might have been avoided by a more vigorous administrating hand.

The kind of thing Mr. Lincoln was doing was of course vastly more important than the kind of thing which he did not do, but what he did not do caused confusion and gave opportunity for the intriguers. It often bewildered the country. The average man thinks if the machine is running smoothly that there is a power and purpose and wisdom behind. The power and purpose and wisdom were behind the confusion, but the smaller things obscured them. With a little more training this might have been avoided.

The indictments brought against Lincoln for ineffective administration, for interfering with the army, for going beyond strict executive powers, have plenty of backing. It is curious, however, how little these things affect our judgment of him. They leave him where he has long been in the popular mind. Possibly they leave him greater, since we see how he did in the end dominate without the aid of the conventional tools and training which would have prevented many of his mistakes. These things have no more effect on our opinion of him as a statesman and leader than the insistent effort to prove that he or his mother was born out of wedlock, or that he ran away from his own wedding, has on our opinion of him as a man. One must want to believe both of these charges very badly to set aside the mass of evidence against them. That is, they both seem to have been built up so far mainly on a desire to believe, rather than on trustworthy evidence.

But supposing they are true, it makes no difference whatever in our reverence for the man. It no more changes our opinion of him than it changes our feel-

ing for Washington to be told that he could fly into a passionate rage and curse like a pirate. Though failing at many points as an administrator, Lincoln still remains the great leader. Though his life had many sordid details, he is still the great man and the great gentleman.

Through him more than through any other man yet developed in this country we are coming to realize what it means to be a useful leader in a democracy. The more one knows of him the better one understands how fully the scheme must be accepted if a man is to succeed with the people. Lincoln actually believed that popular government was practical. He actually listened to the people. He knew them so well that he understood what they said when he listened. He knew that he could not fool them in the long run, and he never tried to do so. Democracy to him was a series of practical truths, things to do as well as to say. His faith stood the test of his terrible experiences in the civil war. Perhaps no man ever had more reason for disillusionment with men and their institutions, but to the end he kept his faith in both, and he left behind an achievement and an expression which is so far the world's best guide in government by the people.