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LINCOLN.

The influence which great men exercise upon those about them arises from many various causes. Sometimes it is a result of extraordinary intellectual vigour, and sometimes it arises from great physical energy; while again, in many cases, it is due to high personal virtue and to individual excellence. It seems to be to the last of these that the subject of this sketch was indebted for the marvellous power he obtained over the minds of men with whom he associated; and when we look at his portrait and mark the strong, somewhat sad countenance, worn and lined with care, and having no beauty of feature to recommend it, yet with something gentle and winning shining out of the honest eyes, we may perhaps conceive what was the reason of that personal affection and that perfect trust with which he was regarded.

It is always interesting to learn something about one whose name has long been known and honoured among us, and in the account of the life of this last of the "Republican Presidents," as he has been called, which is appearing in the *Century Magazine*, we have a very clear and affecting narrative of Lincoln's youth and early manhood. The unpromising circumstances of his life, his poverty, his want of learning, the roughness of his surroundings, the total absence of any inspiring or uplifting influences,—all these would tend to make his future success very doubtful. But his peculiar and trying difficulties seem to have had no further effect upon him than to bring out and develop the sterling qualities, nay, perhaps the heroic, which he possessed, all unconscious of the fact.

It is with the State of Illinois that Lincoln's life is mainly identified. He was born in Kentucky in 1809, but

while he was still very young his father removed to Indiana, where Abraham spent his boyhood days, the family moving into Illinois about the time he reached his majority.

Lincoln seems to have borne a somewhat remarkable character from a very early age. After their daily tasks ordinary boys probably engaged in some recreation, or rested themselves; but in the case of Lincoln, after his employer's day was over, his own began. He had an insatiable appetite for anything printed. It is said he would sit and read a dictionary as long as he could see; and he used to go to the town constable's and "devour the *Statutes of Indiana*, as boys in our days do the *Three Guardsmen*." It was his practice, on his return from his day's work, to get into a quiet corner and put his heels up somewhere on a level with his head, and "nail himself to his book." His copy book was filled with notes, taken from books he had borrowed, which he afterward memorized. Paper was expensive, so he used to write essays and work problems on the wooden shovel, as he sat by the fire, and when he had filled the space he would shave it off and begin again. Such efforts soon drew him far in advance of his companions—he was, indeed, esteemed by his friends, something of a paragon, and all took a personal pride in his cleverness. It is pleasant to read of his gentleness and kindness of heart, so conspicuous in later days. He was always ready with some kind act or word for others, and it is said of him, with a graphic variation of a well known text, "He visited the fatherless and the widow, and he chopped their wood." It was considered an eccentricity, by his companions, that he strongly opposed cruelty to animals. "He was evidently of better and finer clay than his fellows, even in those wild and ignorant days."

But Lincoln had his mischievous traits. A stump in the harvest field was often too much of a temptation to him, and he would harangue the admiring farm hands on some ridiculous topic, to the exasperation of the farmer and the neglect of the harvest, or worse still, he would deliver a comic sermon. Some hard feelings used to be caused, too, by "coarse satires and chronicles, in prose, and in something which had, to him and his friends, the air of verse," from the pen of the clever Abraham. In these quarrels Lincoln bore his share as a matter of course, and it may be mentioned, "his opponent usually had the worst of it." But he was generous and placable, and some of