

labour was a necessity of the climatic condition in the South, in a semi-tropical country. So the two currents went on and on and on, the passion growing fiercer and fiercer, and for fifty years, the best men of the United States concentrated all their efforts in devising compromise after compromise to keep the numerical balance between Free States and Slave States. In 1854, a new party was organized, the Republican Party, chiefly and only, I might say, to deal with slavery. Their programme was a very moderate one; it did not propose to extinguish slavery; it did not propose to interfere with this domestic institution of the South, as it was called, but to prevent the extension of slavery beyond its then existing limits. They put a candidate in the field in 1856, but so strong was the public feeling that this moderate programme was defeated. They put another candidate in the field in 1860, and then they won, but simply because it was a three-cornered fight. Abraham Lincoln, the Republican candidate, had not the majority of the popular vote, but simply of the electoral college. Abraham Lincoln is one of the greatest men in history—notwithstanding the comparison made by Lady Drummond between him and me. I look upon him as one of the greatest men of history. He had an intuitive and instructive discernment in political problems and, whatbal, he had a most tender heart, and the most humane soul. When he was a young man he had gone down the Mississippi as far as New Orleans on a business errand and he had seen with his eyes something of the cruelty, shame and degradation of slavery, and it is said that he remarked to a friend, "If ever I have an opportunity, I shall hit slavery hard." He was elected President of the United States, he was installed in office, and you might have thought he could have hit slavery hard; but he could not do it because public opinion would not permit him to do it. The Civil War broke out; it was to go on for four long years; the Northern States were invaded by the Southern armies, and even then Abraham Lincoln could not carry out his own instinct. He had to submit to contumely, and to insults, and to taunts from ardent abolitionists, but he stood the infliction and did not move until