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Subject.

"Some reminiscences of A.Lincoln."

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SOME REMINISCENCES OF ABRAHAM LINCOLN.

It was not my good fortune to have known Abraham Lincoln before I took my regiment, the Third Maine Volunteers, to Washington and encamped it on Meridian Hill, near the Columbia College, the first week of June, 1861. The officers of the regiment, after our arrival took great pains to have a good evening parade about sundown on every fair day, and so, as to Burnside's encampment on his Rhode Island brigade, another part of Washington, and Butterfield's 12th New York on Franklin Square, visitors from the city every evening came in carriages to witness the exercises. Sometimes cabinet officers and members of congress sat in their carriages and observed us while the parade went on. Mr. Lincoln himself came two or three times and looked on with evident interest, but before I had finished my part of receiving and conducting the exercise he had ridden away; so that I did not then make his personal acquaintance.

A little later there was some consultation of army officers by cabinet officers in the presence of Mr. Lincoln at the White House, and I was among them. At that time I must have been introduced to the President, but think only in a hurried way as we came into the middle room and immediately took seats. Several officers took part in the conversation. I remember only that Mr. Seward answered a proposition from me in such a way that it made me feel very small and very young. I now only recall the fact of a young man's mortification and his resolution thereafter to hearken diligently and say little.

The next occasion when I observed Mr. Lincoln was after I had been promoted to a brigadier-general (Sept. 1861); and while waiting orders at Washington, McClellan had a grand review, and I crossed the long bridge and went over beyond the Arlington heights

to view the handling of the troops on that occasion. I met some old army acquaintances with ladies, also looking on from a nice position. As I approached I was made to feel that my presence was not welcome. These ladies and all were in sympathy with the rebellion and laughed at me as a new-fledged brigadier on the Yankee side. Mr. Lincoln's curious appearance on horseback, with his long stirrups, and his hat apparently on the back of his head, was the cause of all sorts of unkind remarks among my neighbors. As I esteemed him highly I quickly left them. It was after that parade that an officer complained to Mr. Lincoln of Genl. W. T. Sherman, who had threatened to shoot him for some misconduct, if he repeated the offense. Mr. Lincoln told the officer, in a quiet whisper aside, that Sherman was a man of his word, and might do it. Surely the officer must not again give him the occasion!

I think that I must have seen Mr. Lincoln at different times when he came to the Army of the Potomac on the Peninsula, but no public reception now impresses me like that given him in the fall of 1862 at Harper's Ferry. We had passed through the not very decisive battle of Antietam. My division, the second of Sumner's corps, had cleared the field of wrecks and disabled animals, and buried the dead. It had then marched on and caught up with the army encamped about that historic pocket, what the French would properly call Cul de Sac, Harper's Ferry. Mr. Lincoln had with him at this time quite a staff. An officer who rode by his side during the review of the troops, besides McClellan, was the already distinguished western general, McClernand. He seemed then to have a grievance against Grant. From some remarks dropped, I have always thought that at that time he had just been relieved from the command of his 13th Corps, and wanted to be restored, or

to have another equivalent, or better, assigned him. What struck me by the persistence of McClernand was the conviction that Mr. Lincoln must have continued worry and extraordinary patience under the ever-re-iterated grievances of old friends and acquaintances.

As the generals and handsome staff-officers escorted the President near to my front I joined the reviewing party. Mr. Lincoln rode along in silence returning the salutes. As soon as the solemn review was over, he lightened up. Noticing Major Whittlesey of my staff receiving some order from me and riding off, some one said to Mr. Lincoln, as he ~~rejoined~~ scarr and spoke of Whittlesey's fine figure and splendid horsemanship, "that Major was before the war a minister." Mr. Lincoln, smiling, rejoined: "He looks more the cavalier than the clergyman!" When we passed through a field where a few stumps remained cut rather high up, he contrasted that sort of stumping with that in Illinois, and told an incident concerning chopping trees by some public man, which I did not quite hear. Suddenly we saw a little engine named "The Flying Dutchman" fly past us on a railroad track. Mr. Lincoln seeing it and hearing a shrill, wild scream from its saluting whistle, laughed aloud. He doubtless was thinking of John Brown's terrorism of a few years before, for we were near the famous engine-house where he was finally penned up and taken; for, referring to the locomotive, Mr. Lincoln said: "They ought to call that thing "The Skeared Virginian!"

Sprightly as he was in story telling and in conversation about what he saw around him, he looked to me, as soon as he relapsed into silence, very care-worn and very sad. Our victory at Antietam was too little decisive to meet the desire of his heart.

My next interview with Mr. Lincoln was in the spring that succeeded Fredericksburg. I had been assigned by him to the Ele-

venth army corps and was encamped near Brook's Station, a small hamlet on the railroad north of Falmouth. It was in April, 1863, soon after I had gone up there to assume command from the Second Corps, which was located nearer the Rappahanock. My corps was reviewed in the usual manner by Mr. Lincoln, accompanied by Genl. Hooker and asmall post of attendants. The Corpspresented afine appearance along the hills and slopes. The Germans were remarkable for their neatness on parade and for the soldierly salutes which never failed to attract attention. I was congratulated by observing officers upon such a splendid command. Mr. Lincoln said nothing till just as he was finishing the review, when he said to me: "How is it, General Howard, that you have so large part of your army ~~army~~ over there?" He referred to those who appeared to be off duty, and were on the slopes opposite to those in the ranks. Of course I explained as well as I could how the old guard, the quartermaster's men, the orderlies, cooks and other essential details, had come out to see the President. Mr. Lincoln smiled, and said gently, "That review is about as big as ours!" His evident criticism was a wholesome one to the young corps commander. Those too large"details" were always a source of great weakness to us in time of battle. Brooks Station - Va.

I had my new tent wonderfully pitched by my German pioneers. The approach was a corridor of evergreens. Mr. Lincoln came around to see it, and to chat with me alone for a few minutes. He was now very kindand fatherly. He took notice of my tablets hung against the rear tent-pole inside. The one for the day I think was the beginning of the Twenty-third Psalm--"The Lord is my Shepherd: I shall not want."

I had reason to remember this occasion afterward. After Chancellorsville several officers high in command, some aspiring, went

to Mr. Lincoln at the White House and besought my removal. At Gen. Hooker's tent one day, I was made ~~to was made~~ to understand something of this hostile action. I said then, substantially, to Hooker, "Whatever you think of doing, I will hereafter simply mind my own business and obey orders." But as I rode back the few miles to my headquarters I was dreadfully depressed. On entering my tent I looked up and saw that strong promise, "The Lord is my Shepherd." "Yes," I said, "why didn't I think of it?" Mr. Lincoln's decision and his flattering remark soon after this were brought to me: "He is a good man. Let him alone; in time he will bring things straight." I felt that Mr. Lincoln's heart beat in sympathy with mine, and I reverenced him greatly; I loved him.

After Gettysburg I received from him a remarkable letter. It was in response to mine urging the advantages of the army under our new commander, Genl. Meade. That letter was long ago published in the Atlantic Monthly. You will remember how two divisions of my corps and two of Slocum's, with our corps organizations preserved, were detached in Sept., 1863, after Rosecranz' battle of Chickamauga, and sent by rail to his neighborhood with Gen. Hooker commanding the whole detachment. Mr. Lincoln and I had quite a lengthy talk in his office room at the White House. He had a fine well-mounted map hung upon a firm frame work. Mr. Lincoln took me to this map and questioned me about East Tennessee. He told me how loyal the people of that region were, and asked my opinion about getting our forces in there, so as to hold the country permanently. Just as I was leaving I asked him where he obtained his map, showing him mine. "Here, General," he said, "take this. Yours will do for me. Mine will be better for you as it will stand more wear and tear."

His parting words I cannot recall, but the impression of them was never effaced. They gave me a knowledge of his confidence and a belief in his personal interest and affection. Abraham Lincoln was worthy to be trusted and to be loved by all his countrymen.

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Portland, Oregon,
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