MERCY DRAWER 3A PERSONALITY

Abraham Lincoln's Personality

Mercy

Excerpts from newspapers and other sources

From the files of the

Lincoln Financial Foundation Collection

CONFEDERATE EMANCIPATION

1865

The Late President's Merciful Disposition.

The exhibition of public sympathy and horror at the assassination of our late Chief Magistrate, as shown in every foreign court and city, is indicative of the supreme regard entertained for him. Without attempting to distinguish between the honors bestowed upon his memory in the several metropolitan cities, it may be remarked that nowhere was more sorrow or emphatic grief exhibited than in Liverpool itself. As is known, that place was in some measure the principal resort for Southern capitalists. There, it was supposed, the popular mind was imbued with extreme rebel sentiments, yet we find the horrible atrocity which deprived our nation of its head, was rebuked with denunciations the most clamorous and emphatic. It does not admit of question, that the sensible portion of all rebeldom looked upon the death of Mr. Lincoln as the severest blow that could be stricken upon their falling fortunes. They had good sense enough to know that he, the murdered Chief Magistrate, was exerting his utmost efforts in behalf of those who were penitent, and that no other mind knew so well, and no other hand could so direct, the affairs of state as to save the South from its present perilous complications. In view of this condition of things, the sensible men of the South might well deplore the blow, which, while it struck down our President, killed also their ablest, best friend.

In this connection, we were sadly gratified by conversing with the Hon. D. L. Phillips, marshal of the Southern district of Illinois, an intimate personal friend of the late President. Mr. P. was in Washington prior to and after the assassination. He accompanied the funeral cortege on his return. On Thursday, the day previous to the atrocity, he spent nearly an hour and an half in conversation with Mr. Lincoln. Mr. P. had just visited New Orleans in reference to some matters of public interest, and in his conference on that occasion enjoyed no little of the President's confidence. After a long interview, and being interrupted by a meeting of the cabinet, Mr. Lincoln appointed the ensuing Saturday evening for a further conference. Alas! he never saw him again alive! Our friend states, that on this occasion, the day before the murder, he never saw Mr. Lincoln in better health and spirits. The traces of care had been effaced, and he was exceedingly joyous in the prospect of returning peace and a happy country. One fact, and in illustration of the leniency contemplated by Mr. Lincoln, should be stated. Mr. Phillips learned that the late President contemplated introducing to his cabinet a scheme of compensation to the southern owners of emancipated slaves. This project was, of course, only in its inception. No doubt Mr. Lincoln would have perfected it. We all knew how earnestly he was engaged in bringing about a kindly feeling in all sections. Who can hesitate in believing that Mr. Lincoln was honest in his friendship towards every portion of his country.—*Springfield Republican.*

LINCOLN'S MERCY.

The Story of the Worn-out Boy Who Fell Asleep On His Post.

Wash. Tribune 2-1-1906

"I thought, Mr. Allen, when I gave my Bennie to his country, that not a father in all this broad land made so precious a gift—no, not one. The dear boy only slept a minute, just one little minute, at his post. I know that was all, for Bennie never dozed over a duty. How prompt and reliable he was! I know he only fell asleep one little second—he was so young, and not strong, that boy of mine! And now they shoot him because he was found asleep when doing sentinel duty. Twenty-four hours, the telegram said, only 24 hours. Where is Bennie now?"

"We will hope, with his heavenly Father," said Mr. Allen, soothingly.

"Yes, yes; let us hope. God is very merciful!

" 'I should be ashamed, father,' Bennie said, 'when I am a man, to think that I never used this great right arm'—and he held it out so proudly before me—'for my country when it needed it. Palsy it rather than keep it at the plow!'

" 'Go, then; go, my boy,' I said, 'and God keep you!' God has kept him, I think, Mr. Allen," and the farmer repeated these last words slowly as if, in spite of his reason, his heart doubted them.

"Like the apple of his eye, Mr. Owen, doubt it not."

Blossom sat near them listening with blanched cheek. She had not shed a tear. Her anxiety had been so concealed that no one had noticed it. She had occupied herself mechanically in the household cares. Now she answered a gentle tap at the kitchen door, opening it to receive from a neighbor's hand a letter. "It is from him," was all she said.

It was like a message from the dead. Mr. Owen took the letter, but could not break the envelope on account of his trembling fingers, and held it toward Mr. Allen with the helplessness of a child.

The minister opened it and read as follows:

"Dear Father: When this reaches you I shall be in eternity. At first it seemed awful to me; but I have thought about it so much now that it has no terror. They say they will not bind me nor blind me, but that I may meet my death like a man. I thought, father, it might have been on the battlefield, for my country, and that, when I fell, it would be fighting gloriously; but to be shot down like a dog for nearly betraying it—to die for neglect of duty! O, father, I wonder why the very thought does not kill me! But I shall not disgrace you. I am going to write you all about it, and when I am gone you may tell my comrades. I cannot now.

"You know I promised Jemmie Carr's mother I would look after her boy, and when he fell sick I did all I could for him. He was not strong when he was ordered back into the ranks, and the day before that night I carried all his luggage, besides my own, on our march. Towards night we went in on double-quick, and, though the baggage began to feel very heavy, everybody else was tired, too; and as for Jemmie, if I had not lent him an arm now and then he would have dropped by the way. I was all tired out when we came into camp, and then it was Jemmie's turn to be sentry, and I would take his place, but I was too tired, father. I could not have kept awake if a gun had been pointed at my head; but I did not know it until—well, until it was too late."

"God be thanked!" interrupted Mr. Owen reverently. "I knew Bennie was not the boy to sleep carelessly at his post."

"They tell me to-day that I have a short reprieve, given to me by circumstances—time to write to you,' our good Colonel says. Forgive him, father! He only does his duty. He would gladly save me if he could. And do not lay my death up against Jemmie. The poor boy is broken-hearted, and does nothing but beg and entreat them to let him die in my stead.

"I can't bear to think of mother and Blossom. Comfort them, father. Tell them I die as a brave boy should, and that, when the war is over, they will not be ashamed of me, as they must be now. God help me! It is very hard to bear. Good-by, father! God seems near and dear to me; not at all as if he wished me to perish forever, but as if he felt sorry for his poor, sinful, broken-hearted child, and would take me to be with him and my Savior in a better, better life."

A deep sigh burst from Mr. Owen's heart. "Amen!" he said solemnly. "Amen!"

"To-night in the early twilight I shall see the cows all coming home from pasture and precious little Blossom standing on the back stoop waiting for me; but I shall never, never come! God bless you all! Forgive your poor Bennie!"

Late that night the door of the "back stoop" opened softly, and a little figure glided out and down the footpath that led to the road by the mill. She seemed rather flying than walking, turning her head neither to the right nor to the left, looking only now and then to heaven and folding her hands as if in prayer. Two hours later the same young girl stood at the Mill depot watching the coming of the night train, and the conductor as he reached down to lift her into the car wondered at the tear-stained face that was upturned toward the dim lantern he held in his hand. A few questions and ready answers told him all, and no father could have cared more tenderly for his only child than he for our little Blossom. She was on her way to Washington to ask President Lincoln for her brother's life. She had stolen away, leaving only a note to tell where and why she had gone. She had brought Bennie's letter with her. No good, kind heart like the President's could refuse to be melted by it. The next morning they reached New York, and the conductor hurried her on to Washington. Every minute now might be the means of saving her brother's life. And so, in an incredibly short time Blossom reached the Capital and hastened immediately to the White House. The President had but just seated himself to his morning's task of overlooking and signing important papers, when, without one word of announcement, the door softly opened and Blossom, with downcast eyes and folded hands, stood before him.

"Well, my child," he said in his pleasant, cheerful tones, "what do you want, so bright and early in the morning?"

"Bennie's life, please, sir," faltered Blossom.

"Bennie? Who is Bennie?"

"My brother, sir. They are going to shoot him for sleeping at his post."

"O, yes," and Mr. Lincoln ran his eye over the papers before him. "I remember. It was a fatal sleep. You see, child, it was at a time of special danger. Thousands of lives might have been lost for his culpable negligence."

"So my father said," replied Blossom, gravely, "but poor Bennie was so tired, sir, and Jemmie was so weak. He did the work of two, sir, and it was Jemmie's night, not his. But Jemmie was too tired, and Bennie never thought about himself, that he was tired, too."

"What is this you say, child? Come here; I do not understand," and the kind man caught eagerly, as ever, at what seemed to be a justification of an offense.

Blossom went to him; he put his hand tenderly on her shoulder and turned up the pale, anxious face toward his. How tall he seemed! And he was President of the United States, too. A dim thought of this kind passed for a moment through Blossom's mind, but she told her simple and straightforward story, and handed Mr. Lincoln Bennie's letter to read.

He read it carefully. Then, taking up his pen, wrote a few hasty lines and rang his bell.

Blossom heard this order given: "Send this dispatch at once."

The President then turned to the girl and said, "Go home, my child, and tell that father of yours, who could approve his country's sentence, even when it took the life of a child like that, that Abraham Lincoln thinks the life far too precious to be lost. Go back, or wait until to-morrow. Bennie will need a change after he has so bravely faced death; he shall go with you."

"God bless you, sir," said Blossom; and who shall doubt that God heard and registered the request?

Two days after this interview the young soldier came to the White House with his little sister. He was called into the President's private room and a strap fastened upon his shoulder. Mr. Lincoln then said: "The soldier that could carry a sick comrade's baggage and die for the act so uncomplainingly deserves well of his country." Then Bennie and Blossom took their way to their Green Mountain home. A crowd gathered at the Mill depot to welcome them back, and as Farmer Owen's hand grasped that of his boy tears flowed down his cheek, and he was heard to say fervently: "The Lord be praised!"

LINCOLN HAD TO BE MERCIFUL

Compiled by HERBERT WELLS FAY, *Custodian Lincoln's Tomb*

Explains His Acts of Mercy

Some of our generals complain that I impair discipline and subordination in the army by my pardons and respites, but it makes me rested, after a day's hard work, if I can find some good excuse for saving a man's life; and I go to bed happy as I think how joyous the signing of my name will make him and his family and his friends.—Page 324.

Constantly guests at Lincoln's tomb referring to Edwin M. Staton, say that he is the cabinet minister who was always worrying with Lincoln. This impression has gone out because the general public fails to consider the respective duties of the two officials. The secretary of war and the commanding officer of the army must establish discipline and it is justly left with the President to grant mercy when mercy was due. Of course Stanton would storm, that was his part in the drama of war. Had the position of the two been reversed, Stanton might have been too merciful to suit Mr. Lincoln. After all these years it does not appear that Lincoln pardoned a man who did not deserve his liberty, or who later violated the confidence of the great executive. It is noted that when Lincoln breathed his last, Stanton raised his arm and said, "Now he belongs to the ages"—a prophecy that has gone around the world.

The last life photograph of Lincoln ever taken. Made by the photographer Gardner, April 9, 1865, only five days before Lincoln was assassinated

Quality of Mercy

JUST at this moment in world affairs, I find this episode in Abraham Lincoln's life, which I will describe, very moving. It is an incident which I never have seen mentioned in a life of Lincoln.

All during the Civil War John Bright, the great English member of Parliament, and Charles Sumner, Chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee of the U. S. Senate, carried on a political correspondence. Sumner used to read the letters to Mr. Lincoln. Bright was one of the few important friends to the Northern cause in English public life and Lincoln had deep admiration for him.

In the spring of 1863 came a letter of a different kind from Bright:

"Dear Mr. Sumner: The son of a widow living at Birmingham, which Town I represent in Parliament, finds himself in trouble at San Francisco. His family wish me to do what I can in his favor; he may only be a foolish young man who has thoughtlessly and ignorantly brought himself into trouble.

"I write to his family to say that *hanging* is not much the custom of your Government, and that I will write to an influential person in America who may perhaps be able to save him from any severe punishment. Is it too much for me to ask you to procure his liberation on condition that he shall at once return to England? I think your Government might do this for him without harm to anybody, and I shall feel grateful to them if they can set him free. I enclose a letter from his brother which will inform you of the case more particularly. In bringing this matter before you, I assume that there is no *special* guilt in the young man's conduct."

The facts were these: Alfred Rubery, an English boy, twenty years old, had been one of the principals in a plot to start an insurrection in California which would return that state to the Confederacy. Rubery, among other activities, carried on the necessary correspondence with Southern sympathizers. Different committees were organized throughout California. The schooner *Chapman* was bought, filled with arms and ammunition and plans were made to seize larger ships. But on the eve of her sailing, March 15, 1863, the U. S. Navy seized the *Chapman* and unearthed the plot. Alfred Rubery and an American principal named Greathouse were among those arrested.

Sumner took up the matter with Stanton, Secretary of War. On June 1, 1863, the California authorities reported to Stanton. "Alfred Rubery is one of the principals in the *Chapman* affair. He is in confinement at Alcatraz Island. The case is in the hands of the U. S. District Attorney. No facts have been elicited showing him to be an object of executive clemency. The feeling here is strong against all such actions." So Stanton turned thumbs down and Charles Sumner went to Mr. Lincoln.

It was a hectic time at the White House. With 800,000 men under arms, Lincoln had just been obliged to ask for 100,000 more. It was the eve of the battle of Gettysburg. Lincoln was being torn in two by the importunings of big business, ravenous for war profits. California had long been a cause of deep anxiety to the President and this plot had been absurdly near success. He turned Sumner's plea down as far as immediate action went. He must wait and see.

In September, the battle of Chickamauga was lost with terrible carnage. In November, Lincoln made his Gettysburg speech. In December, Sumner went once more to the President. John Bright had written again and yet again. The young sister of Alfred Rubery had gone insane with grief over her brother's impending fate. His mother was ill. Lincoln listened attentively. "Poor souls!" he said, "Poor souls! I don't want John Bright to think I've been too hard! But California has been very bitter about this young Englishman's sharing in this particular brand of treason. Does he say that the girl is hopelessly insane?"

Lincoln took a turn up and down the room, then sat down at his desk and began to write, carefully: ". . . . whereas, the said Alfred Rubery is of the immature age of twenty years and of highly respectable parentage; and whereas the said Alfred Rubery is a subject of Great Britain and his pardon is desired by John Bright of England: now therefore be it known that I, Abraham Lincoln, President of the United States of America, these and divers other considerations moving me thereto, and especially as a public mark of the esteem held by the United States of America for the high character and steady friendship of the said John Bright, do hereby grant a pardon to the said Alfred Rubery. (Signed) A. Lincoln"

He handed the paper to Sumner. "This is with the understanding," Lincoln said, "that the boy goes straight home to his mother and sister."

"Yes! Yes! A thousand thanks!" cried Sumner, starting for the door.

"Let me know what John Bright says," Lincoln called after him.

"Yes! Yes!" said Sumner.

Six weeks later he was back with John Bright's reply.

"Dear Mr. Sumner: Your letter of the 15th of Dec. gave me much pleasure. I am greatly obliged to you for the trouble you have taken in the affair of Rubery. His poor mother has written to me to express her gratitude for what you have done for her son. It is a curious fact that her daughter has been apparently quite restored to reason and to health by the receipt of the news of his pardon and of his probable early return home. I have heard that in the announcement of the pardon a reference was made to the part I have taken in the matter. If that be so, I should like to have a copy of the document, if one can easily be obtained. May I ask you to convey to the President my warmest thanks for the leniency he has shown to Rubery, and for the consideration he has shown to my representations on his behalf. I have not heard the subject spoken of in any society in England where it has not produced a kindly feeling toward America and toward the Gov't of the United States. . . ."

"Now isn't it good to think of that dear girl restored to reason!" said Lincoln with a sigh of great content. And so the episode passed into all but forgotten history.

LINCOLN LORE

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MERCY AT THE FRONT

The presence of modern military leaders among the troops at the beginning of a major offensive has a tendency to inspire the men to greater valor and heroic effort. It is not often that the commander-in-chief approaches the theater of a titanic struggle as a messenger of mercy.

Abraham Lincoln set out for General Grant's headquarters the latter part of March, 1865, to be in the field if possible when peace agreements were arranged, and, according to Gideon Welles, Secretary of the Navy, so "that severe terms shall not be exacted from the Rebels."

Thursday, March 23—Mr. and Mrs. Lincoln and Tad with their attendants left the Sixth Street wharf at Washington at one p. m. on the steamer, River Queen. They were bound for City Point, Grant's headquarters, about twenty miles south of Richmond, Virginia, the capitol of the Confederacy. They proceeded down the Potomac that afternoon, and Lincoln had informed General Grant that their boat would probably "lie over during the dark hours of the night."

Friday, March 24—The River Queen continued down Chesapeake Bay as far as Norfolk and then started up the James River, arriving that afternoon at City Point. General Grant came aboard in the evening to welcome them.

Saturday, March 25—At breakfast there was a family reunion on the River Queen when Captain Robert Lincoln came to greet the rest of the family. He reported a skirmish that morning which the President called in his report to Stanton "a little rumpus." Later the President rode on a military train toward the front and saw dead and wounded men on every side. At one o'clock he viewed Crawford's Division and later rode to the front lines with General Meade and saw the army in action. At the close of the day Lincoln is said to have remarked that "he had seen enough of the horrors of war." He was so deeply moved that he ate no supper and retired immediately.

Sunday, March 26—While visiting in the telegraph operator's tent, he observed three small kittens at play and soon had all of them in his lap, tenderly caressing them. Later the River Queen moved through a naval flotilla; and then the President lunched with Admiral Porter on his flagship, Malvern. In the afternoon the River Queen anchored at Aikin's Landing, where General Sheridan came on board to welcome the Commander-in-Chief. The review of the Army of the James which followed was carried out in the very atmosphere of military activities, and from the parade grounds the army went into action. The River Queen returned to its mooring that evening at City Point.

Monday, March 27—The morning was spent at Grant's headquarters along with Admiral Porter. In the afternoon General Sherman arrived. After visiting General Grant, Sherman, accompanied by Grant and Porter, called on the President who had retired to the River Queen. Sherman reviewed for Lincoln incidents of his famous march.

Tuesday, March 28—Lincoln, Grant, and Sherman, along with Porter representing the Navy, met on the River Queen in the morning for what might well be called the most important conference of the supreme military leaders during the war. Grant and Sherman felt that one of them would have to engage in at least one more major contest. Whereupon Lincoln inquired "if another battle could not be avoided." No guarantees were made. At this conference Lincoln made an appeal for a lenient attitude towards the enemy upon surrender, and it was undoubtedly for such a conference as this that the City Point visit had been planned by the President. Sherman said when he left Lincoln he was more than ever impressed with Lincoln's "deep and earnest sympathy with the afflictions of the whole people."

Wednesday, March 29—Lincoln in the early morning saw Grant and his staff off to the front at Petersburg where the final drive was to take place. It started to rain that day, however, which retarded the advance of the Union troops.

Thursday, March 30—Another whole day it rained and Lincoln began to get restless. He thought some of returning to Washington, and so telegraphed Stanton, but he was still very anxious to see the troops in a movement which he was confident would bring about the close of the war.

Friday, March 31—On the last day of March Lincoln had been away from Washington a week, and on this day Secretary Seward came down on business, possibly to assure him all was going well at the capital.

Saturday, April 1—Seward started for Fortress Monroe and Mrs. Lincoln decided to return to Washington, leaving Tad with the President. But no sooner had they left than the long-looked-for military action began.

Sunday, April 2—By the evening of April 2 it was very certain that the final push was under way and Petersburg was being evacuated by Lee. Lincoln telegraphed to Grant, "Allow me to tender to you and all with you the nation's gratitude for this additional and magnificient success."

Monday, April 3—Lincoln was now making his headquarters on the flagship, Malvern, and Jefferson Davis, who had been at Richmond but twenty miles away, was in flight towards Danville. The Confederate troops had fired Richmond and at 8:15 General Weitzel announced the capture of the Confederate capitol.

Tuesday, April 4—The Malvern with Lincoln aboard moved up near Richmond and the President with his boy, Tad, Admiral Porter, and a few sailors entered the city unannounced and without military escort. The distance from Rockett's Landing to the Confederate Executive Mansion was about two miles, and the party walked the entire distance. History does not record a more humble triumphant entry of a captured city by a commander-in-chief of an army. All Lincoln asked for on arrival at the southern White House was a glass of water.

Wednesday, April 5—The Confederate Assistant Secretary of War visited Lincoln and General Weitzel on the Malvern lying just off Richmond and talked peace terms and the restoration of Union authority in Virginia. The Malvern then steamed back to City Point.

Thursday, April 6—Lincoln received a telegram that Secretary Seward had been thrown from his carriage and seriously injured. Mrs. Lincoln and a party of friends arrived from Washington at City Point and visited Richmond.

Friday, April 7—The President and his party entrained for Petersburg. Sheridan advised Grant, "If the thing be pressed I think Lee will surrender." Upon hearing this, Lincoln wired Grant, "Let the thing be pressed"; and it was.

Saturday, April 8—This last day at the front the merciful Lincoln spent five hours visiting the hospitals and brought cheer and hope to hundreds of injured and dying men.

Sunday, April 9—Lincoln's last Sunday on earth was spent on the beautiful Potomac as the River Queen moved towards Washington. It was a quiet, restful day with the discussion of politics taboo and literature the theme. Upon reaching Washington, Lincoln, the merciful, immediately went to the bedside of the injured Seward where he ministered to the Secretary's hunger for information from the front. The Chief Executive's visit to City Point was the only extended period away from his desk in four long years. Before another Sunday dawned the President was dead.

LINCOLN LORE

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LINCOLN'S QUALITY OF MERCY

Certainly Abraham Lincoln's quality of mercy was not strained. It was the genuine outpouring of the sentiments of a tender hearted man. This characteristic of the commander-in-chief of the Grand Army of the Republic stands out more strikingly in this day of gallows and guillotines or their modern equivalents. Possibly the attribute so often observed in Lincoln during the war years, was an innate tendency which found expression even in some of his activities as a small boy. In his own words we have the story of an incident with a Thanksgiving flavor which may point us to early manifestations of this virtue, and which might be told more appropriately at this season of the year.

The Lincoln family consisting of the father, mother and two children, Sarah and Abraham, moved from Kentucky to Indiana during the Thanksgiving season in 1816. In after years the President described their new home as a "wild region with many bears and other wild animals still in the woods." In a reminiscent mood he continued that it was here he took "an early start as a hunter, which was never much improved afterwards." He stated that a few days before the completion of his eighth year while his father was away from home, "a flock of wild turkeys approached the new log cabin, and Abraham with a rifle-gun standing inside, shot through a crack and killed one of them."

This incident must have been one of the outstanding experiences of his boyhood but not one to gloat over as his further comment implies. As a sequel to the episode he stated, he had "never since pulled a trigger on any larger game." This conclusion is supplemented by the introductory statement with reference to his failure to make any progress in this avocation. So his career as a hunter which began so auspiciously just before his eighth birthday, with the woods full of game as an added incentive to improve his markmanship, was brought to an abrupt termination.

At the time this youthful Nimrod shot his quarry from his cabin hideout. John J. Audubon the famous naturalist was living at Henderson, Ky., about 40 miles southwest of the Lincoln home.* Among all the birds which Audubon has preserved with pencil and brush none have been so greatly admired as his "American Turkey Cock." A traveler passing through southern Indiana in 1814 wrote to his friends in Pennsylvania about the wild life in the woods and mentioned especially the wild turkey, "the male bird of which often attains a weight of twenty-five pounds." Only those who may have hunted these birds in sparsely settled parts of the South can visualize the grandeur of these magnificent wild fowl of the forest.

The killing of the turkey must have kindled within Abe some strange and hidden impulse for when the boy saw the beautiful bird dead at his feet, because of his own act, apparently he was to find no pleasure, thereafter, in any kind of gory sport. While many of the stories told about his youth which refer to letting game out of traps, hitting the gun when his father was about to shoot a deer, and similar capers, may be largely folk lore, yet it is well known that Lincoln would stand for no cruelty to animals among his associates as the boys with whom he played have testified.

We are wondering if an episode which occurred in the White House when Lincoln's own son Tad was about the President's age at the time of the turkey incident, might not have brought back some rather vivid memories.

A live turkey had been sent to the White House to be used during the holidays. "Tad," the President's youngest son, immediately made friends with the turkey who soon followed him about the grounds. The bird was named Jack and Tad fed him and made a great pet of him. When it came time to use the turkey for the table, Tad got wind of what was anticipated and immediately rushed with his complaint to his father who was in a cabinet meeting. One author recreates the episode in these words:

"Tad burst into the room like a bombshell, sobbing and crying with rage and indignation. The turkey was about to be killed. Tad had procured from the executioner a stay of proceeding while he hurried to lay the case before the President. 'Jack must not be killed; it is wicked.' 'But,' said the President, 'Jack was sent here to be killed, and eaten . . .' 'I can't help it,' roared Tad between his sobs, 'he's a good turkey, and I don't want him killed.' The President of the United States pausing in the midst of his business took a card and on it wrote an order of reprieve. The turkey's life was spared and Tad, seizing the precious bit of paper, fled to set him at liberty."

Lincoln's mercy toward the unfortunate was often demonstrated in his legal practice. He wrote to a friend in 1852. "I could have got a judgment against Tarley if I had pressed to the utmost: but I am really sorry for him—poor and a cripple as he is."

Sometimes during the Civil War his tender heart collaborated with his sense of humor to demonstrate his mercy and bring about certain desirable results. Referring to one convicted man he remarked "I don't believe shooting will do him any good." Of another he said "I guess he can serve his country better above the ground than under it." And one will recall the more familiar message to a colonel by the name of Mulligan; "If you haven't shot Barney D—— yet, don't."

Time and time again we find Lincoln appealing on behalf of soldiers who were in trouble whose sentences indirectly worked a great hardship on those at home. Lincoln wrote a note to Stanton on March 1, 1864, which illustrates this attitude.

"My dear Sir: A poor widow, by the name of Baird, has a son in the army, that for some offense has been sentenced to serve a long time without pay, or at most with very little pay. I do not like this punishment of withholding pay—it falls so very hard upon poor families. After he had been serving in this way for several months, at the tearful appeal of the poor mother, I made a direction that he be allowed to enlist for a new term, on the same conditions as others. She now comes, and says she cannot get it acted upon. Please do it.

"Yours truly,
"A. Lincoln."

A note from Governor Hoadley to Secretary Chase bears this indorsement by the President.

"The case of Andrews is really a very bad one, as appears by the record already before me. Yet before receiving this I had ordered his punishment commuted to imprisonment for during the war at hard labor, and had so telegraphed. I did this, not on any merit in the case, but because I am trying to evade the butchering business lately."

"A. Lincoln."

The Oxford dictionary defines mercy in these words, "Abstention from the infliction of suffering on the part of one who has the right or power to inflict it." Lincoln had the right and the power to inflict punishment and undoubtedly there were many during the war who should have suffered the death penalty and would have paid to the full for their folly if it had not been for Lincoln's quality of mercy.

*See Lincoln Lore No. 597.

MERCY SEEN AS LINCOLN TRAIT

Moved to Compassion for Fellow-Beings, Says Rev. Paul G. Macy

SERMON ON WTAG

Solicitude Typical of Emancipator's Life, Pastor Declares

The life of Abraham Lincoln illustrates the fifth beatitude of Jesus, "Blessed are the merciful for they shall obtain mercy," Rev. Paul G. Macy said in a sermon on "When Mercy Seasons Justice," broadcast over WTAG from Plymouth Congregational church yesterday morning. This was another in a series of sermons on "The Beatitudes of Jesus."

"Jesus made it clear," said Rev. Mr. Macy, "that only the merciful do obtain mercy. He does not hesitate to apply to the heavenly Father the seeming harshness of dealing summarily with the unmerciful servant—not that God is lacking in love and mercy but that the unmerciful man places himself in a position where mercy towards him cannot operate. The quality of mercy is not an 'extra' in the curriculum of the good life, it is a requirement.

Perhaps we have thought of mercy primarily as a quality which only those in positions of power and authority can exercise. Actually the occasions for showing mercy are coming up all the time for every one of us. No matter what our place in society the fact that we have the gift of speech gives us power.

"A story comes to us. Perhaps we know it is true. Possibly in strict justice it should be passed on. But it is a story which hurts. Have we the mercy which lets it stop with us? Time and again there come to us words to repeat or things to do which would help even up a score that we have to pay someone who has been unjust or unkind to us. Justice says, 'He has it coming to him.' Mercy says, 'It is unkind, it is unloving. Blessed are the merciful for they shall obtain mercy. I won't say it, I won't do it.'

"A merciful action is typical of the life of Abraham Lincoln. No other American in history so lived the life of compassion and of mercy. The incidents of his deeds of mercy are legion. Continually in his law practice he sacrificed opportunities to make money because of his compassion."