

SIX MONTHS  
AT  
THE WHITE HOUSE  
WITH  
ABRAHAM LINCOLN.

*The Story of a Picture.*

BY  
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sternest necessity can ever justify it. A government had better go the the very extreme of toleration, than to do aught that could be construed into an interference with, or to jeopardize in any degree, the common rights of its citizens."

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self-denying services rendered by the Commission, in feeling terms. He concluded his response in these words: "And I desire also to add to what I have said, that there is one association whose object and motives I have never heard in any degree impugned or questioned; and that is the 'Christian Commission.' And in 'these days of villany,' as Shakspeare says, that is a record, gentlemen, of which you may justly be proud!" Upon the conclusion of the "ceremony," he added, in a conversational tone, "I believe, however, it is old 'Jack Falstaff' who talks about 'villany,' though of course Shakspeare is responsible."

After the customary hand-shaking, which followed, several gentlemen came forward and asked the President for his autograph. One of them gave his name as "Cruikshank." "That reminds me," said Mr. Lincoln, "of what I used to be called when a young man — 'long-shanks.'" Hereupon the rest of the party, emboldened by the success of the few, crowded around the desk, and the President good naturedly wrote his name for each; the scene suggesting forcibly to my mind a country schoolmaster's weekly distribution of "tickets" among his pupils.

LI.

The "Baltimore Convention," which renominated Mr. Lincoln, was convened July 7, 1864.

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It created comparatively little excitement in Washington or elsewhere, as the action of the various State legislatures and local mass meetings had prepared the public mind for the result.

Toward evening of the 8th, — the day the nominations were made, — Major Hay and myself were alone with the President in his office. He did not seem in any degree exhilarated by the action of the convention; on the contrary, his manner was subdued, if not sad. Upon the lighting of the gas, he told us how he had that afternoon received the news of the nomination for Vice-President before he heard of his own. It appeared that the despatch announcing his renomination had been sent to his office from the War Department while he was at lunch. Afterward, without going back to the official chamber, he proceeded to the War Department. While there, the telegram came in announcing the nomination of Johnson. "What!" said he to the operator, "do they nominate a Vice-President before they do a President?" "Why!" rejoined the astonished official, "have you not heard of your own nomination? It was sent to the White House two hours ago." "It is all right," was the reply; "I shall probably find it on my return."

Laughing pleasantly over this incident, he said, soon afterward, — "A very singular occurrence took place the day I was nominated at Chicago, four years ago, of which I am reminded to-night. In

the afternoon of the day, returning home from down town, I went up-stairs to Mrs. Lincoln's sitting-room. Feeling somewhat tired, I lay down upon a couch in the room, directly opposite a bureau upon which was a looking-glass. As I reclined, my eye fell upon the glass, and I saw distinctly two images of myself, exactly alike, except that one was a little paler than the other. I arose, and lay down again, with the same result. It made me quite uncomfortable for a few moments, but some friends coming in, the matter passed out of my mind. The next day, while walking in the street, I was suddenly reminded of the circumstance, and the disagreeable sensation produced by it returned. I had never seen anything of the kind before, and did not know what to make of it. I determined to go home and place myself in the same position, and if the same effect was produced, I would make up my mind that it was the natural result of some principle of refraction or optics which I did not understand, and dismiss it. I tried the experiment, with a like result; and, as I had said to myself, accounting for it on some principle unknown to me, it ceased to trouble me. But," said he, "some time ago, I tried to produce the same effect *here*, by arranging a glass and couch in the same position, without success." He did not say, at this time, that either he or Mrs. Lincoln attached any omen to the phenomenon; neither did he say that the double reflection was seen while he was walking about the

room. On the contrary, it was only visible in a certain position and at a certain angle; and therefore, he thought, could be accounted for upon scientific principles.\*

A little later in the evening, the Hon. Mr. Kelley, of Philadelphia, came in. As he sat down, he took a letter out of his pocket, saying: "Mr. President, while on a visit home, a week or two ago, I took up a number of the "Anti-Slavery Standard," in which there happened to be a communication from Mrs. Caroline H. Dall, of Boston, giving her views of the Fremont movement, and the situation generally; so admirable in its tone and spirit, that I could not resist the inclination to write to the author, expressing the interest with which I had read the article. The result was a reply, which I hold in my hand, which seems to me so just and able a statement of your position, from the standpoint of a true woman, that I have brought it up to read to you." Mr. Lincoln nodded assent, and lis-

\* Mr. Lincoln's friend Brooks, of the *Sacramento Union*, has given to the public a somewhat different version of this story, placing its occurrence on the day of the election in 1860. The account, as I have given it, was written before I had seen that by Mr. Brooks, and is very nearly as Hay and myself heard it,—the incident making a powerful impression upon my mind. I am quite confident that Mr. Lincoln said it occurred the day he was first nominated; for he related it to us a few hours after having received intelligence of his renomination, saying, "I am reminded of it to-night." It is possible, however, that I am mistaken in the date. Mr. Brooks's statement that "Mrs. Lincoln" was "troubled" about it, regarding it as a "sign that Mr. Lincoln would be reëlected, but would not live through his second term," is undoubtedly correct.

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A woman whose son had been inveigled into enlisting in the army was unable to bring her case before the President. "At length she watched her opportunity, and intercepted him on his way from the War Department. The result was, that taking down the lad's name and place of residence, this message was written on the back of the card, and sent to the War Department:

"This poor boy is said to be idiotic. Find him, if possible, and return him to his mother.

A. Lincoln."

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A few weeks prior to the President's message for 1863 which included the proclamation of amnesty, Hon Robert Dale Owen called on the President one Saturday morning. The President had so little time that morning that he asked Mr Owen to come back the next morning at ten o'clock. When he did he repeatedly rang the door bell at the White House, but receiving no response "he at length pushed open the door and walked leisurely up the stairs to the reception-room. Neither servant or secretary was to be seen. Presently Mr Lincoln passed through the hall to his office, and all was still again. Looking vainly for a servant to announce his name, Mr Owen finally went to the office-door, and knocked.

"'Really,' said he, 'Mr President, I owe you an apology for coming in upon you in this unceremonious way; but I have for some time been waiting the appearance of a servant.'

"'Oh,' was the good-natured reply, 'the boys are all out this morning. I have been expecting you: come in and sit down.'"

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According to the Hon Mr Raymond, within a month after Lincoln's first accession to office and hordes of office-seekers were beseiging him, Lincoln said, "I am like a man so busy in letting rooms in one end of his house, that he can't stop to put out the fire that is burning the other."

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