Life of Abraham Lincoln
by Joseph H Barrett

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The intelligence of Lee's surrender put the seal of certainty on what was confidently hoped the week before. The main army of the rebellion, the only one that had successfully resisted the advance of our forces for any long period, was now disarmed and disbanded. All other insurgent forces must quickly succumb. PEACE was at last secured. Enthusiastic exhibitions of glad emotion were renewed, with even greater earnestness, and with a thankfulness more devout, than on the fall of the Rebel capital.

On the 4th of April, the day after Gen. Weitzel entered Richmond, President Lincoln visited that city. On arriving, he proceeded at once to the headquarters of the commanding general, which happened to be the late residence of Jefferson Davis. The appearance of Mr. Lincoln in Richmond might well excite universal attention and remark. He walked from the landing to headquarters—not a little distance—with but few attendants. Nor was his presence unknown, as he passed along the streets, for crowds came out to see him. By a portion of the residents, he was received with enthusiasm—by the negroes universally with their customary manifestations of uncontrollable emotion. He received calls of respect from many army officers and Richmond citizens, holding a sort of levee in the parlor of the late Rebel Executive. Subsequently, he rode through the city, looking at the burnt district, the Libby prison, and other objects of special interest. At night he slept on board one of the gunboats lying in the James. On the 4th, and again on the 5th, he had protracted interviews with Gen. Weitzel, and also with Judge Campbell, formerly a Judge of the Supreme Court of the United States, and recently Assistant Secretary of War to Jefferson Davis. The Ex-Judge had been one of the Rebel conferees at Hampton Roads, and was now more anxious than ever about terms of peace and re-organization. It was finally understood that Gen. Weitzel should permit the assembling of a number of the leading men of Virginia, to consult as to the re-establishment of a State government. It was manifestly not agreed to by Mr. Lincoln, however, that the Pierpoint government or the Alexandria free constitution should be set aside, and much less that Wil-

liam Smith and the Rebel State Legislature should be recognized.

On the 5th, the President returned to City Point. On the same day, Mrs. Lincoln, accompanied by Attorney-General Speed, Senator Harlan, and other friends, left Washington to join him. The two following days were occupied in visiting Petersburg, the scenes of military operations in the vicinity, and other interesting localities. Mr. Lincoln, meanwhile, was occasionally receiving dispatches from Gen. Grant, whose headquarters were now at Burkesville, announcing the progress of military events. These dispatches were in turn transmitted to the Secretary of War—the last one, announcing the brilliant victory at Sailor's Creek, having been sent from City Point on the morning of April 7th.

Mr. Lincoln passed most of the day, on the 8th of April, in visiting the sick and wounded soldiers in hospital at City Point. He said to the Medical Director that he had come to see the boys who had fought the battles of the country, and particularly the battles which resulted in the evacuation of Richmond. He expressed his desire to take these men by the hand, as it would probably be his last opportunity of meeting them. Though his will was good to see them in Washington, on their return from the war homeward, it would be impossible for him to meet so many of them again. The Medical Director had at first proposed some particular places for the President to visit, and was surprised to learn the extent and impartiality of his intentions. Mr. Lincoln devoted the entire day to shaking hands with over six thousand soldiers, many of them fresh from the fields of battle, and to giving them such words of cheer and sympathy, as the circumstances from time to time suggested. "It was," says one who visited the hospital the same day, "like the visit of a father to his children, and was appreciated in the same kindly spirit by the soldiers. They loved to talk of his kindness and unaffected manner, and to dwell upon the various incidents of this visit, as a green spot in the soldier's hard life. At one point in his visit he observed an ax, which he picked up and examined, and made some pleasant remark about his having once been considered a good

chopper. He was invited to try his hand upon a log of wood lying near, from which he made the chips fly in primitive style. The 'boys' seemed to worship him; and the visit of the President to City Point Hospital will long be remembered by many a soldier who was only too happy in its enjoyment."

On the evening of the same day—Saturday, April 8th—the fate of Lee's army not being yet definitely known to him, but its capture a well assured result, Mr. Lincoln embarked on his way back to Washington, with Mrs. Lincoln and accompanying friends. During the voyage, he was at times occupied in reading the tragedy of Macbeth, a favorite drama in which he seemed now to take an unusual interest. Some passages he read aloud to the friends near him, adding remarks on the peculiar beauties that most impressed his mind. He dwelt particularly on the following lines, which he read with feeling, and again read, giving emphasis to his admiration:

> "Duncan is in his grave,
> After life's fitful fever he sleeps well;
> Treason has done his worst; nor steel, nor poison,
> Malice domestic, foreign levy, nothing
> Can touch him further."

President Lincoln, almost on the first occupation of Richmond, had visited the city—amid many anxious misgivings of his friends—but slightly guarded, for two days appearing more or less in the streets where his name had so lately been rarely mentioned except in scorn or hate. He was now returning homeward unharmed, gliding quietly along the Potomac, surrounded only by friends. Did a thought of coming danger visit him? To many hearts it was a relief to know that he had safely reached the White House, on Sunday evening, having witnessed the triumph of weary years of war. Late at night came the tidings which gladdened the land, and which on the morrow was to open again—more widely if possible, than on the preceding Monday—the floodgates of gladness Lee had surrendered.

On the 10th of April, the country was jubilant with the glad tidings. The streets of the national capital again overflowed with enthusiastic crowds. Reverberations of cannon

were heard in city, town, and hamlet throughout the land. Millions of flags were dancing to the movements of the winds. *Te Deum* was sung in New York, and thanksgiving notes of "peace on earth, good-will to men," in audible strain, or in the silent rhythm of the heart, swelled in one grand harmony through all the nation. A day which none now living can ever forget: a day which future generations will think of, bu never adequately imagine.

An unnumbered throng gathered before the White House, while cannon were resounding, and bands playing, and voices spontaneously joining in choral accompaniment. Mr. Lincoln, in response to the calls of the besieging multitude, appeared at the window above the main entrance, amid excited demonstrations of affectionate respect. Declining at this moment to make any extended speech, he only said:

I am very greatly rejoiced that an occasion has occurred so pleasurable that the people can't restrain themselves. I suppose that arrangements are being made for some sort of formal demonstration, perhaps this evening or to-morrow night. If there should be such a demonstration I, of course, shall have to respond to it, and I shall have nothing to say if I dribble it out before. [Laughter and cries of "We want to hear you now," etc.] I see you have a band. [Voices, "We have three of them."] I propose now closing up by requesting you to play a certain air, or tune. I have always thought "Dixie" one of the best tunes I ever heard. [Laughter.]

I have heard that our adversaries over the way have attempted to appropriate it as a national air. I insisted yesterday that we had fairly captured it. I presented the question to the Attorney General, and he gave his opinion that it is our lawful prize. [Laughter and cheers.] I ask the band to give us a good turn upon it.

"Dixie" was played with a vigor suited to the temper of the people, Mr. Lincoln still remaining at the window. As the music ceased, he proposed "three good, rousing, hearty cheers for Lieut.-Gen. Grant and all under his command," which were given. He then called for "three more cheers for our gallant navy," which were no less energetically given. The President then bowed and retired.