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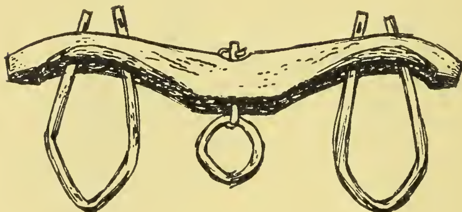
A REPORTER FOR LINCOLN

IDA M. TARBELL

LINCOLN ROOM



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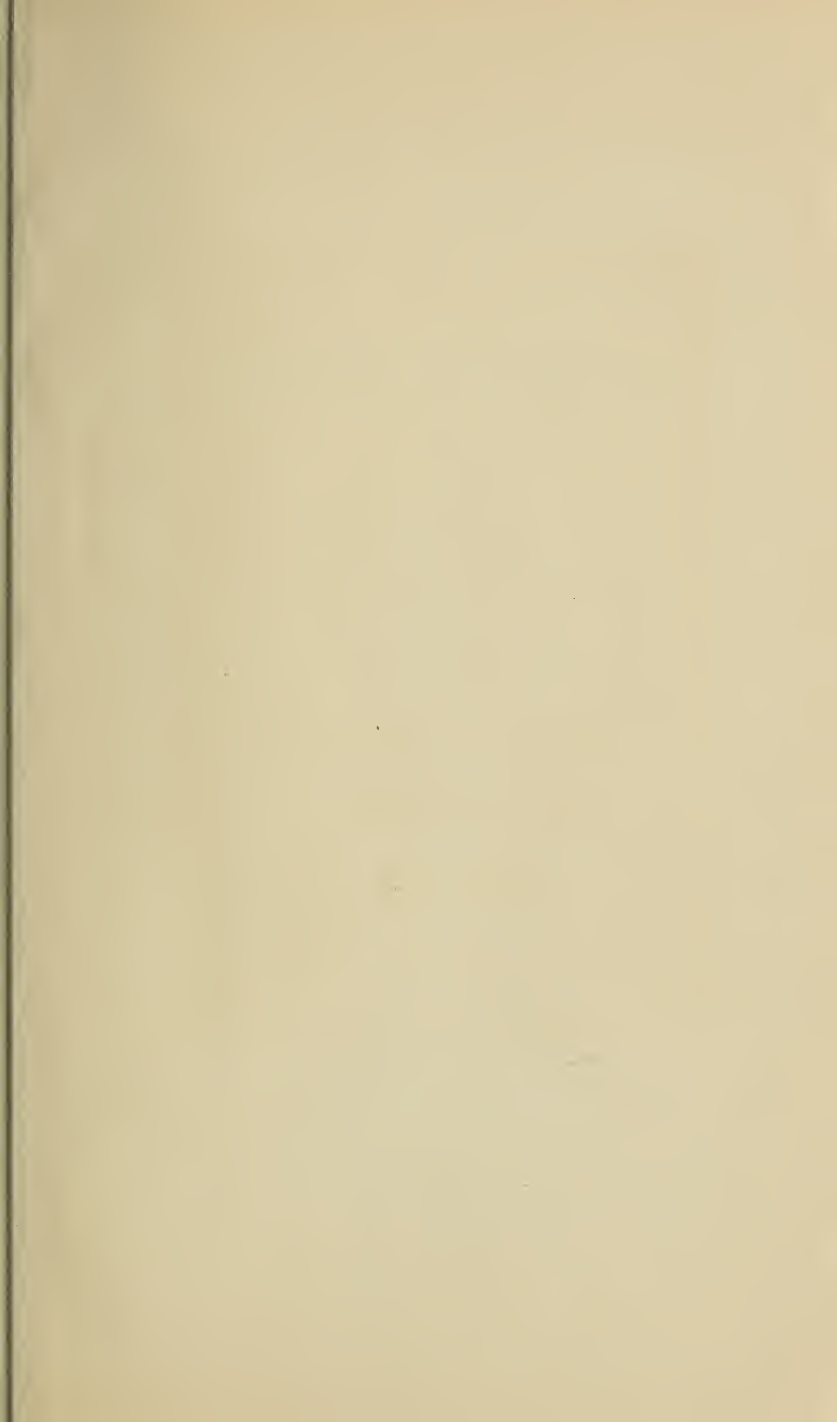

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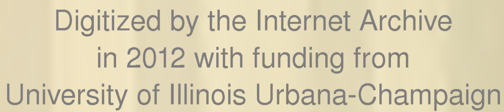
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A REPORTER FOR

LINCOLN

STORY OF HENRY E. WING

Soldier and Newspaperman

BY

IDA M. TARBELL

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NEW YORK

THE BOOK LEAGUE OF AMERICA

1929

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FOREWORD

The story of the adventures of Henry E. Wing, cub reporter for the New York *Tribune* in the last year of the Civil War, is based on letters and articles by Wing himself, supplemented by the author's many conversations with him in the last year of his life. The story treatment has altered no fact, stretched no point, added no artificial evidence to Henry Wing's own stirring accounts of his experiences or of his close relations with Abraham Lincoln. So far as possible, the historical facts have been verified.

Before the narrative was ready for publication, Mr. Wing died, at his home near Bethel, Conn.—a man of 85 years—to the last clear in mind and serene and cheerful in spirit.

IDA M. TARBELL.

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CHAPTER I

THE LOST ARMY

It was the loveliest of Washington May days, a Friday—warm, with a haze that softened to beauty war-worn buildings, neglected trees, untrimmed shrubbery. For three years now the city had been the pivot on which swung great armies and great politics. There had been no time, money, men to cut the grass, to paint and clean, to finish work begun in years of peace. The very cranes still swung from the unfinished dome of the capitol as they had swung when Sumter fell and North and South took to battle.

The magic of sun and air had transformed outward neglect and untidiness, but it had failed to soften a line of the hard, black anxiety which enveloped responsible, official Washington, threatening, if not soon relieved, to become panic.

Nothing could have more thoroughly expressed the depth of alarm in the mind of the Administration than the figure of President Lincoln as in the golden twilight he came out of the White House and with bent head made his way to the War Department. The friendly passers-by along the Avenue who noted him shook their heads at his drooping shoulders and slow, despairing walk. The unfriendly—and there were always those who were unfriendly going up and down Pennsylvania Avenue in those days—cast looks of hate, verging on exultation. In their hearts they were saying: "Another twenty-four hours and Lee will be here!"

There was reason enough for the President's bent head and slow walk. For nearly three days now there had been no word from the Army of the Potomac. It was as if it had dropped into an abyss—the silence was inexplicable, terrifying.

They knew that at midnight of Tuesday Grant had started his army of veterans from Culpepper, only some sixty miles away, on what they were daring to hope, in spite of three years of repeated efforts and failures, would be the final move on Richmond. He had moved across the "Rapid Anna"—that

they knew. But what had to be done all day Wednesday? All day Thursday? And what was he doing today? How could it be that an army of 122,000 men, with an open country and an open river between it and Washington, could be lost?

"Where was the army?" men had begun to ask on Wednesday. "Why was there no news?" And through Thursday the tension, the alarm, the despairing rumors grew with every hour. In the City of New York extras announced that Burnside and his corps had been beaten and destroyed. But, if that were true, Washington knew nothing of it.

Men could not go about their work. Congress fumed and fretted. In the Departments the clerks gathered in little groups, looking from their windows towards the Potomac and Arlington as if expecting to see a cloud of gray coats swarming upon them.

All day Thursday, all night Thursday, all day Friday, Congressmen and cabinet officers had come and gone, come and gone to and from the White House, seeking what comfort they could from the President. And he—well, he had staked everything on Grant. And now Grant had disappeared.

His mind was heavy with foreboding as he followed the graveled path from the White House to his own particular chair in the telegraph office of the War Department. The boys all knew him there. For three years a succession of them had watched for his almost daily visit and all their lives thereafter they were to tell how, pulling open a drawer where the yellow tissue telegrams of the day awaited him, he would go over them —sometimes one long leg curled over the chair, sometimes both long legs propped on the desk—how he would ponder as he read, and now and then rise and go to the military map on the wall, tracing positions with his long finger, visualizing the movements reported—how sometimes he would stop and comment, tell a story.

They loved his coming, these young telegraph operators; but this day their hearts were heavy for him—they had no news. The only thing that lay in his drawer was a telegram from Grant, three days old. It had come in early in the afternoon of Tuesday: "The crossing of the Rapidan effected. Forty-eight hours now will demonstrate whether the enemy intends giving battle this side of Richmond."

The forty-eight hours were long past—and nobody knew whether the enemy had given battle or not.

"Nothing, Mr. President," the operator at the desk told him. "Nothing that amounts to anything. A man came in to Union Mills a little while ago, claiming he had left the army early this morning. He wanted to talk to Mr. Dana, but he was not here. Then he asked to send a telegram to the *Tribune*. Secretary Stanton refused to let us use the wire for a newspaper and demanded the message. The fellow said he would not give it unless we first sent a dispatch to his paper. The Secretary says he is a spy, and has ordered him shot in the morning."

A change came over the President's face as he listened. He sat straighter; his eyes lost their dull look. "Ordered him shot?" he said.

"Yes, Mr. President."

"He is at Union Mills?"

"Yes."

"Ask him if he will talk with the President."

Union Mills was a little Virginia settlement, twenty miles or so from Washington, on the military road to Culpepper. A gov-

ernment telegraph station, established there early in the war, was still in operation. It was not much to look at—this station—a small room, used only by the operator and those who came and went. But now there was an extra occupant.

On a cot at the side of the room was stretched a disreputable and suspicious-looking figure. A slight figure—a boy you would say. He could not have weighed more than 130 pounds. He was clad in the rough butternut garb of a Virginia plantation hand, heavy brogans on his feet, the bottoms of his trousers tied over their tops with hempen cord. He wore a faded cap, he was unshaven and from head to foot plastered with red Virginia mud. If you had looked you would have seen that two fingers were gone from his left hand.

He lay quiet enough. No one could have imagined from his despairing relaxation the turmoil of disappointment and rage inside his heart and head. He was sentenced to be shot in the morning—sentenced by the Secretary of War, whom he heartily hated. But that was not what enraged him. His wrath was because he, the first man to get through from the army with news, had not been

allowed to send a dispatch to his paper, his beloved *Tribune*.

Here he was with the scoop of the war, and the Secretary had refused to let him use the wire—refused even though he promised to give the Secretary, when the dispatch was sent, all that he knew—refused and ordered him to be shot as a spy.

Well, he *would* be shot before he would give Stanton a word. It didn't belong to Stanton—he was not his man; he was the *Tribune's* man. And Stanton was a bully, anyway. Had not Stanton said that no newspaper men should be allowed with the army? And had he not had to run away and sneak in? No, he'd die, but he would never give that man the satisfaction of having news that belonged to his paper. And so he lay quietly, storming within.

He did not understand telegraphy—this young boy; but lying there, absorbed in his thoughts, he suddenly was conscious that the ticking instrument was calling for him—Wing — Henry Wing — Henry Wing — Henry E. Wing, it said.

All his life he had had hunches. He knew there were things that men did not see with their eyes and feel with their hands. That

instrument was asking for him, and he sat upright. And as he sat up the operator said: "The President wants to know if you will talk with him. He wants to know if it is true that you have come from the army."

"Tell him, yes."

"He wants to know if you will tell him what news you bring."

"Tell him if he will first send one hundred words to the *Tribune*, I will tell him."

The answer came back, "Write your hundred words and we will send it at once."

And so he wrote, scribbling fast the words of his message.

Back in Washington the revived President received the message at his desk, and he read between the lines the truth: here was a spirited young correspondent, who, caring first for his trust, resented the arbitrary decision of his great Secretary of War. He read it as if it were all written there before him. His eyes twinkled, his lips parted into something like a smile—"Wasn't that like Stanton?" and "Wasn't it like a boy?"

He did not wait for consultation. He ordered that the message should go, not only to the *Tribune* but to the country, and again questioned Henry. "If I send an engine for

you, will you come to Washington?" And Henry Wing, back in Union Mills, was good enough to say "Yes."

An hour later a little military train was on its way to Union Mills, carrying in its rickety passenger car Charles A. Dana, first Assistant Secretary of War, with a good sized escort. Dana was to see Wing, and if possible go on to the Army. The train was to bring the young correspondent back to Washington.

Between one and two o'clock of Saturday morning, May 7, the train came into the capital on its return trip, and Wing, unwashed, unbrushed, but entirely unconscious of such minutiæ, stepped into a waiting carriage and was driven to the White House.

The cabinet awaited him—Mr. Lincoln, upright at his desk, watching the door, the Secretaries grouped about—Seward, Stanton, Wells, Chase—tired and anxious men—men who all day had drifted from Department to White House, from White House to their homes, only again to make the round. In the dull light of the shabby room they looked sallow, old, hopeless. Their many hours of doubt and growing anxiety which

they had to endure, the country's rising tide of angry blame, that sense of impotence which the night brings, had taken away all official dignity. They looked just what they were—wretched human beings entrusted with vast responsibility, come to the moment when they were conscious of their own powerlessness.

The messenger for whom they were watching came in. They were used to strange figures, these men, but scarcely to the dirt and rags of Henry Wing. Henry's first consciousness of his condition came at the moment when he saw the look of dismay that crossed the face of the President. But it was only for a moment—the Secretary of the Navy, Gideon Welles, had recognized him as a constituent, and rising said, "You are Henry Wing from Litchfield?" And so he was introduced.

"What had he to tell them," Mr. Lincoln asked. "When and where had he left Grant?"

Sitting in the dimly lighted room, with the whole Administration of the United States around him, he told his story, rising to point out now and then on the big military map which hung on the wall the movements

of Grant's army up to the time he had left.

What he told them was but little more than he had put into his message. It had been midnight on Tuesday that they had moved out from Culpepper—the whole army of 122,000 (it was now Saturday morning). They were going after Lee—that everybody knew. To get at him in his comfortable winter quarters they must cross the Rapidan, a nasty stream with only three fords. He, Henry, was with the second corps, Hancock's. They had done well and passed out of the tangle into the open country near Chancellorsville—a good place for a battle. They had entrenched and were expecting the other corps to come up.—Warren's and Sedgwick's.

Nobody had thought of a battle until the whole army was through the Wilderness—that is, nobody on the Union side. Nobody but Lee. He had come out of his entrenchments and attacked them Thursday morning, with half the Union army still bottled up in the Wilderness.

The other half had fought all day and at night when nobody knew quite how the battle had gone. At headquarters they only

knew that the whole army was still on the south side of the Rapidan and that General Grant had ordered an attack the next morning.

"Lee was still in position?" they asked him.

"Yes, he was still in position."

"And when did you leave?"

"Four o'clock Friday morning."

"Fighting had not begun?"

"No, fighting had not begun."

"Then you know nothing of what has happened in the last twenty-four hours?"

"No."

Henry Wing was conscious of the inadequacy of his news. It was not what had happened Thursday that they wanted to know now, but what had happened Friday. And why now, Saturday morning, they still had no news. It was almost as if they put him aside as they rose one by one, said, "Good night, Mr. President," and left the room. The President himself seemed so overwhelmed with uncertainty that he was scarcely conscious that Henry Wing had lingered behind.

"You wanted to speak to me?" said Mr. Lincoln.

"Yes, Mr. President. I have a message for you—a message from General Grant. He told me I was to give it to you when you were alone."

In an instant the President was all awareness, intent—"Something from Grant to me?"

"Yes," blurted out Henry. "He told me I was to tell you, Mr. President, that there would be no turning back."

The harried man had waited long—three years—for such a word—the one word that could have brought him help in his despair; and his long arm swept around and gathered the boy to him, and bending over he pressed a kiss on his cheek. "Come and tell me about it," he said.

They sat down, and suddenly all of Henry's journalistic discretion was gone. Here was one who had the right to know, and so he told him of the horrors and uncertainties of that day in the Wilderness—of men fighting without knowing where they were going, fighting in groups not masses; of Hancock left without support; of Warren's overcaution, bottling up the troops that Hancock had expected to support him; of a day gone wrong from start to finish.

He told how, when night had come and commanders and correspondents had gathered at headquarters, there had been angry charges, one officer accusing another; of Meade's decision that they should fall back north of the river, reëstablish their lines, and try again later, and how General Grant had come in with his quiet but final, "No, we shall attack again in the morning."

He told how, when at four o'clock Friday morning he had presented himself at headquarters and announced to the General that he was carrying out news to his paper, Grant had led him aside and looking at him intently had asked, "You think you can get to Washington?" He had no doubt of it, nor did the General's question arouse doubt.

"Then," said the General, "if you do see the President, see him alone and tell him that General Grant says there will be no turning back."

His story was told. It was four o'clock in the morning, and the President, rising, said, "It is time for you to get to bed, Henry. You look as if you needed rest, but come to see me tomorrow afternoon." And Henry Wing, who had not had more than three hours' sleep at a time for some five days now,

stumbled out of the White House, down to the National Hotel where he kept a room, and upstairs to throw himself, Virginia mud and all, across the bed and fell into the sleep of utter exhaustion.

He took time for only one ceremony—to look at his face in the glass, with something like awe, and to pass a reverential hand over his cheek. Had he dreamed it, or was it true that the President of the United States had kissed him, there, on that spot?

Day had scarcely broken on the morning of Saturday, May 7, before the streets of Washington were ringing with the cries of newsboys. Henry's beat had got through. Not for many weeks had Washington leaped from its bed at their cry. "News from the Army," was what they said. "Grant found!" The shouting penetrated a room where across a bed a dirty, sprawling figure lay. It came like a call to duty: "Henry Wing! Henry Wing! This is your news. Your work is not done; you must see the *Tribune*."

Henry was on his feet in an instant, throwing off his plantation disguise, pulling on his correspondent's uniform, dashing down and out. It was hardly six o'clock when he

reached the *Tribune* office, then on the second floor of a 14th Street building near Pennsylvania Avenue. He found the stairs blocked with excited men, men whose names he knew—Senators, department chiefs—all pushing their way in and questioning one another eagerly, "Is it true!" "What is known?"

Henry wormed his way up the stairs, through the wrestling crowd, into the room; and there, on top of a table, was his chief, Sam Wilkeson, declaring excitedly that the news was a fake, that Henry Wing had not come out, that somebody was deceiving the country.

"Here I am, Mr. Wilkeson!" shouted Henry. And the anxious crowd, stilled for an instant by the cry, looked; more than one of them recognized Wing.

Such a shout as went up! They caught him in their arms and passed him over their heads to the table beside his chief; and there, with many interruptions, he told them the truth: he had left Grant's army south of the Rapidan at four o'clock on Friday morning; it had fought all day Thursday; Lee still held his position; when he left, Grant was to attack again in the morning; he had been

all day getting out; when he reached Union Hills and asked for Mr. Dana and that a message be sent to the *Tribune*, Stanton had refused him the lines and ordered him to be shot as a spy.

Such a groan as went up! And how had he escaped?

"The President found it out and sent a train for me," he said proudly.

There were cheers and cheers. Sam Wilkeson patted him on the back, overwhelmed with pride that one of his staff had not only achieved the biggest scoop in the whole history of the war, but had done something dearer yet to the newspaper man's heart, beaten their enemy, Stanton, and the crowd, unable to express itself better, took up a collection, passing a hatful of bills to Henry.

Having thus relieved their feelings they slowly dribbled down to the street and back to their several breakfast tables.

"And now, Henry," said Mr. Wilkeson, "what are you going to do?"

And Henry, conscious of duty fulfilled and also of a great weariness, said: "If you don't mind, Mr. Wilkeson, I will go back to the hotel and get some sleep. I want to get

rested because the President has asked me to come and see him this afternoon."

"And I will go with you," said his chief.

It was late on Saturday afternoon when Henry Wing, once more a confident, handsome, almost dapper youth, presented himself at the White House and was admitted with his chief to the President's office.

"I see you've cleaned up, Henry," said Mr. Lincoln. "What are you going to do now?" And very promptly Henry replied, "I am going after Jess."

"Jess?" said the President. "Who is Jess?"

"My horse. I left him tied in the thicket down near Warrentown. The Confederates were too thick for me to get through with him any farther, and I promised him to go back. I never break a promise to a horse, Mr. President."

"You had to leave him?" said the President. "You had difficulty in getting out? You better tell me about it, Henry."

And so Henry told the story of what had happened between four o'clock Friday morning and ten o'clock that night, when

the President had rescued him from Mr. Stanton's sentence.

"It was this way, Mr. President," he said. "After the battle, we all came to Grant's headquarters. My chief said somebody must take a dispatch to the *Tribune*. Of course the older men could not do it; they were needed. I was only the cub, and I knew it was up to me to try, and so I said I would go.

"It was midnight then, and I went around to see Jess. Jess, Mr. Lincoln, is the finest horse in the army. I told them to feed him and feed him well at three o'clock, and that I would ride out at four. I thought maybe Jess might not get any more oats until we got to Washington, and it's about seventy-five miles.

"I had it mapped out how it would be easy enough to get through. Over near Culpepper there was a Union man I knew. I had seen him only a couple of days before. He knew every road and path between the river and Washington. I was counting on him to give me directions. I did not realize that as soon as our army had crossed the Rapidan, Lee's scouts and Moseby's men had begun to come in.

"I knew from the way Jess acted as soon as we were across the river that it was none too safe. Jess knows things, Mr. Lincoln—knows danger, feels it. And he steals around like a cat when things are not safe. That's the way he acted yesterday morning. It made me a little careful. Still, I was counting on my friend. When I told him what I wanted he called me a fool. Don't you know you haven't a chance in the world to get to Washington looking like that? Don't you know that the woods are full of Confederates and that by this time they probably hold half the stations on the railroad? You will never get there in the world in those clothes.

"Well, of course, I had on the *Tribune* clothes, and, you know, Mr. Lincoln"—and Henry looked himself over complacently—"you know they are rather conspicuous."

They certainly were. The *Tribune* took pride in having its correspondents outshine those of other papers. Its representatives wore knickerbockers of the finest corduroy, jackets of buckskin, high-topped boots of the finest leather, conspicuous gauntlets, broad soft hats—a combination most becoming to a youth as handsome as Henry Wing.

" 'They would spot you across country,' my friend said. 'The only chance of your getting there is to go as a Confederate carrying news to Confederate friends in Washington, news that Lee has defeated Grant, that in twenty-four hours he will be on his way to the city. That is all that will get you through the bands that will dispute your way.'

"He told me to rip off my clothes and he gave me what you saw me in last night, Mr. Lincoln. I guess they would pass me anywhere as a field hand."

"I reckon they would," said Mr. Lincoln.

"Well, I started out, but a few miles on, when, sure enough, I ran plumb into a troop of Moseby's men. I stopped to talk and told my story in dialect. There was great hurrahing, and in no time they had an escort ready. There were Yankees still in the neighborhood, they said. I would not be safe. And so I started out with Moseby's men for escort.

"Things would have gone very well if we had not ridden right into Kelly's Ford. You have heard of Kelly, I expect—everybody knows there isn't a more bitter secessionist in Virginia. Not more than forty-eight hours

before, I had been there and talked with him. So I told the escort I was all right, that they needn't bother any further.

"But Kelly was too quick. He recognized me and as I rode up, jumped for Jess' bridle. Jess was too quick for him. He gave one great bound and rushed for the river—not the ford but the deep water. Jess knows more than I do every time.

"They fired on me but it was too late. I knew now, if my road was clear, nothing could stop Jess until we reached Washington; but the road was not clear. You haven't any idea how the enemy has filled it up—cavalry, wagons, scouts. They kept holding me up, and, though I got by every time by telling a story that set them hurrahing, I knew that could not last, that I must leave Jess and take to the railroad ties.

"You see, by this time I was only about thirty miles from here, and I thought I could make it, so I led Jess into a thicket down around Warrentown. I tied him loose, poured out all the oats I had, put my arms around his neck and promised to come back. That is what I want to do now, Mr. Lincoln."

"But how did you make the rest of the journey?"

"Pretty well until I reached Manassas Junction, where I found the enemy strong. They said they were glad of the news, but they would get it to Washington themselves; I needn't go on. I said, 'All right,' but when it began to be dusk I crawled out and sneaked up the track to Bull Run where our people are, and they sent me to Union Mills.

"At Bull Run I found out what I had not guessed before, that I was the first man in from the army, that no paper had had any news, that even Washington had no news, and that the whole country was stirred up by a rumor that Grant was defeated and Lee would soon be in Washington.

"It had never occurred to me that I could not get through some word to Alexandria, but when I tried to buy a horse, no one would sell me one. I offered $1,000 for a hand-car and a man to run me up, but they said it was a military road and no civilian could be accommodated.

"You can imagine how I felt—with news like that and no way to get it to the *Tribune* before anybody else had it. Then I had an idea. You know Mr. Dana is an old *Tribune* man, and so I went to the military telegraph office and asked them to telegraph him that

I was just in from the front, that I had left Grant at four o'clock that morning, and that I wanted to talk to him.

"Well, they didn't tell Dana; they told Stanton. You know what happened, Mr. Lincoln."

"Yes, I know what happened. And now you want to go for Jess!"

"Yes, I must go for Jess."

"Well, Henry, I think we owe you something. I will have to help you about that. I don't like to think of your making the run you did yesterday without a guard. You must remember we don't know what has happened down there since you left. If you wish, I will give you an escort, an engine, and a car."

There was no happier man in Washington that night than Henry Wing, knowing that the next morning there would be awaiting him at Alexandria an escort to take him to the spot where he had hidden his beloved horse. And there was no prouder group of men in Washington than the newspaper men who gathered about him and patted him on the back and feasted him. One of their craft was the hero of the hour.

The next morning, Sunday, May 8, the

expedition to rescue a horse, which the President of the United States had promised to a cub reporter of the New York *Tribune*, started out from Alexandria. It carried a battery of soldiers, and a box car, well equipped with water and oats.

And it was no uneventful journey. The train ran safely through the hostile scouts at Manassas Junction though not unchallenged, but from there on every mile of the way was fought for until finally they came to the point where Henry thought he had taken to the ties.

Here he sneaked from the train to hunt his way the best he could to the particular thicket where he had left Jess. He had a horrible fear that he might mistake the road —thickets were so alike. There was a growing anxiety, too, as to what might have happened to Jess in the forty-eight hours since he left him. Had he been discovered and shot or stolen? Had hunger and thirst driven him to break or gnaw away his halter, or had he kept his post, as Henry believed he would if unmolested?

His anxiety was almost unbearable as he crawled out from the underbrush to the spot

where he calculated he had left Jess, and raised his eyes to look.

There the horse stood—head stretched out, eyes alert, ears forward, legs far apart, not a muscle moving, not a sound—the very picture of intentness. And when he saw Henry it was as if he would spring to meet him, for with one snap of his white teeth he bit almost entirely through the leather strap which held him. All this he might have done before, but, no, he was waiting for the man. The man had come. Life might depend on an instantaneous get-away and the horse himself cut the strap that there might be no delay, so Henry Wing believed.

With tears streaming down his cheeks, the youth threw his arms around Jess' neck, while Jess nuzzled his neck, whinnying softly his delight.

Quickly and quietly they came out, Henry leading the horse. He could not mount an animal that for forty-eight hours had had little food and no drink. But there was a great feast when that box car was reached—a great feast and a great petting and a great rejoicing. But never such rejoicing as when that night Henry Wing rode Jess into a comfortable stall in a Washington stable.

But the story was not over. Henry Wing had had his great day, and while he was gone that Sunday in his search for the horse, the newspaper men of Washington, Whitelaw Reid at their head, Uriah Painter, Sam Wilkeson, all the big ones, had planned that the next day should be Jess's. The *Tribune* was to give Jess to Henry as his own property. The men had taken up a collection and had bought him the finest saddle and bridle the town afforded, and they had arranged that at ten o'clock Monday morning dignitaries of the cabinet, led by Lincoln himself, should meet on the White House lawn and inspect the horse, for now Jess was the hero of the hour.

That program was fulfilled. The reception was held, and to cap its climax, Mr. Lincoln asked the privilege of mounting and riding Jess. If ever a boy's cup of pride and happiness was full, it was then. Indeed, it would have been hard to find a happier group than was gathered in Washington around that house the morning of Monday, May 9, for news was through now officially from Grant. The Army of the Potomac had not turned back; the Army of the Potomac was going forward. Possibly at no hour in all

these tormented three years had Abraham Lincoln felt greater relief. "And now," he said to Henry as he dismounted from Jess, "you go back to Grant?"

"Yes, Mr. Lincoln, I go back."

"Good," said the President. "You will be coming to Washington sometimes, and remember this, that when you do I want you always to come and see me. It is an order. You are to tell me all you hear and see."

CHAPTER II

NEWS GATHERING FOR LINCOLN

WE have never had a President of the United States as opinion-wise as Abraham Lincoln. His eyes and ears were always strained to catch the winds of people's thinking, whatever their volume, whatever way they blew. There were the big party winds of the "one-half" and the "other half" and the *tertium quid;* there were the daily, to be expected squalls from Congress, often nasty, treacherous squalls; there were the breezes in his cabinet, blowing hot and cold, and sometimes treacherous too. He had rare skill in picking them up as they started, and gauging their strength and velocity.

By the fourth summer of his Great Trial, 1864, he was fairly confident that he knew the mind of the North; but of one crucial factor in his problem he was uncertain. That was the mind of the Army of the Potomac. He had given it a new commander, Grant—

brought him from the West and placed him over officers whom the seasoned troops of the East understood and trusted. Grant's first undertaking had been a failure, with frightful loss. There was murmuring in the ranks. Would they hold? How was he to find out?

True, all officialdom was at his elbow, pouring numbers, movements, names into his ears. True, officers, agents, politicians came day and night with the stories of their exploits, grievances, ambitions, opinions, but it was of authorities, management, they talked, not of soldiers, the men in the ranks; and in his judgment they were the crux of the issue at that moment. And he had no report of their thinking that satisfied him. What he wanted was to listen to the wind that swayed the forest of men in arms, hear it in the talk at the camp fire, in the songs on the march, in the cries of the battlefield, in the moans of the wounded and dying. If he could only be one of them for a week he would know, but that was impossible; and one who had ears to hear the truth and the tongue to speak it did not often come his way. He would know him, if and when he should come, for in three years of war his sense of a man's fitness for a purpose, always strong, had been

quickened and deepened until it came to be almost as unconscious as it was unerring.

It was this sense that told him in May, 1864, when he was feeling keenly the need of a personal news gatherer in the army, that Henry Wing was the one for whom he was looking; he had no doubt about it; and hence it was that when the youth was about to return to his post at Grant's headquarters he had said: "You are to see me whenever you come to Washington, Henry."

Impressed as Henry Wing was by the President's words, he had no real conception of what was behind them. How could he know that Mr. Lincoln had a new service of his own, into which was admitted a hundred matters about men and things which no newspaper would consider, no official would regard as of moment. Certain it is, too, that neither Mr. Lincoln nor he could have dreamed that the "order" was to be the starting point of a comradeship which was to last as long as the President lived and to continue as Henry Wing's most precious recollection up to his death in 1925.

If Mr. Lincoln had known anything of the past of the youth whom he had drafted into his service it would only have strengthened

his conviction that he could get something—possibly much—from him. But at the moment he did not even know that Henry Wing had been a soldier—newspaper correspondents had been so rarely in the ranks. The boy, in fact, was a type of the sturdy youth of the period very dear to Abraham Lincoln—self-directing, self-educating youth, which, regardless of age, flocked by the thousands in the Northern army when the call came for volunteers. Connecticut was Henry Wing's state, his father a minister, the Reverend Ebenezer Wing—"a good man," his son described him in later years, "and harsh like his name." Truth was, there was never sympathy and understanding between Ebenezer Wing and his son. "He thought I was not a good boy," I have heard the son say. "He never liked me; my mother liked me better. Mother was beautiful and gentle and wise. She could do anything with him. He loved her, loved her so hard it hurt him. I think he could not bear to have her care so much for me as she did. When I was a little shaver I used to wish sometimes that he would get drunk and be jolly and sing like the fathers of some other boys I knew. Of course, I never told him that. He got so he couldn't

stand mother and me being so happy; he thought it was wicked. When I was fifteen he turned me out to earn my living. He said nothing but work would ever make a man of me."

Possibly the Reverend Ebenezer's theory was wiser than it sounds. The boy took hold with a will—taught and studied, term about, and finally returned to Connecticut to take up the law, paying his way by selling slate roofs which he put on mornings and nights. And thus the war found him.

One disturbing factor in the relations of Ebenezer Wing and his son had been a life-long quarrel over slavery. The man was an Abolitionist of the most bitter and intolerant type. Henry Wing was temperamentally incapable of bitterness and intolerance on any subject. Moreover, his mother had taught on Southern plantations before her marriage and he had listened from childhood to her stories of life there. What his father said was not true, he had concluded. The black man was better off than if he were free.

The boy's open rejection of his opinion was unbearable to Ebenezer Wing, a defiance of the divine command, "Honor thy father." That his wife shared the boy's moderate

view—had, in fact, inspired it—seemed not to affect him. She was a woman; her opinion did not count; moreover, she was the woman he loved.

Henry's complacent conclusion about slavery received its first rude jolt after he had gone on his own, become a teacher in a seminary in Vermont. On the campus of the institution a young negro boy was employed. Henry liked him and was kind to him.

One day this boy came to him, evidently in great trouble. "Professor, I heard you say that it was foolish for a black man to run away."

"Yes," Henry said.

"And I heard you say that if you knew of a runaway slave you would help his master to catch him."

Henry hesitated. "But—yes," he said; "I would."

"Will you?" And then Henry at last knew that here was a runaway; the boy's master was after him. No, he would not.

"Jake," he whispered, "they shall not get you."

And although, as a matter of fact, Jake's master was only four hours away,

they did not get him, for it was Henry's quick wit and savings that put him into Canada.

But his action disturbed him. He was a lawbreaker, and to his consternation he knew he would do the same thing again. And yet in 1860 he refused to vote for Lincoln—perhaps because so his father voted. And then came Sumter—the call for troops. This had nothing to do with slavery; it was the Union which must be defended. He would pay his debts as quickly as he could, and enlist. In the meantime he made speeches for the Union. He was eloquent, and the news of his eloquence spread. He was invited to make the address at a celebration given in the town where his father preached.

"It was a big affair," he would tell you, reminiscing, "and they met me at the station with a chariot and four white horses. I talked two hours, explaining that it was not a war to free slaves, but one to save the Union.

"Then came the banquet out-of-doors with speeches, my father's the first. When he got up he shouted, 'Who would have thought that Ebenezer Wing would have come to this disgrace—to be compelled to

listen to such brutal sentiments from the miscreant bearing his name?'

"I was sitting by my mother, and she turned to me with a kind of twinkle in her eye. 'Henry,' she said, 'there's a train for South Norwalk in about an hour. I think you better take it.'

"I took it. And I never got the twenty dollars they promised me for my speech!"

It was not long after this that he enlisted. He found his place in Company C, the right-center company of his regiment, the twenty-seventh Connecticut. Sixty years after this enlistment he told me the story of his soldiering. "I was very proud," he said, "when at the start I was chosen as one of the twelve boys in the color guard. We took it awfully serious. We swore we would die before our flag should be taken. You haven't any idea what a holy thing it was to us. I guess I felt about that flag like father seemed to feel about the family Bible. He always handled it gently, and I have seen him kiss it. I don't believe there was a color guard in the army that took better care of its flag than we boys did.

"It was not until December that we saw any real fighting, and that was at Fredericks-

burg. Our regiment was in Hancock's division, and they sent us across the river, right under the heights. We had been down in that country long enough for every man to know that those bluffs were stuck full of Confederate cannons and rifle pits, and that if they ever opened fire a chicken couldn't live on the field; but when Hancock came around the evening before the attack and told us we were to be ready to go out in the morning, we cheered and cheered him. It was awful cold that night. We huddled together, talked a little, and we fellows in the color guard got together and swore again that they should never get the flag as long as any of us was alive. That is what we thought most of—keeping the flag.

"That night, when I was trying to sleep, a South Norwich boy in the guard crawled over to me. He was young, only about seventeen; he ought not to have been there. 'Henry,' he said, 'I want to tell you something. I am going to be killed tomorrow, and you are going home on crutches. My mother came to me last night and told me that.' His mother had died when he was two years old. I could not say anything. He didn't have any doubt it was so, and I didn't much. I know such

things happen; people do come back and tell you what is going to happen. They did it all the time in that war.

"It was early in the morning when we went in. We were mighty proud of ourselves for a minute. The Confederates let us come on until we got to the very heights, and when we started up they opened on us and we went down like wheat does under a scythe, hardly a head standing. I was hit pretty quick in the leg, and I guess I didn't know much for a time. When I came to I raised up and looked for the flag. I could see it going down—coming up—going down—coming up; and then I remembered Will and what he had told me the night before. I wondered if he had been killed, and so I crawled over where I thought he would be, and there I found him—dead.

"I could not see the flag any more and I began to worry about it. I just had to be sure that our boys still had it, and I started to crawl where I thought it might be, and then I got hit in the hand. After a little I crawled on again, and then I found the flag. And I found some more of our boys dead; there were ten killed there.

"I don't remember much what happened

after I found the flag. The next thing I knew I was lying on top of a piano. There were doctors beside me, and they had made a mark around my leg and another around my arm; and when I saw they meant to cut off my leg and my arm it made me mad, and I began to curse them. They just took me off the piano and threw me out on the grass. You couldn't blame them. There were twelve doctors for fifteen hundred wounded men, and they couldn't have patients fighting them. They didn't think I would live anyway.

"It was Friday morning that they threw me out, and it was not until Sunday night they got me to Lookout Hospital. The doctor came around and looked at me and went by—didn't say anything. Then a Sister of Charity came and asked me if she should get me a priest, and I said, no, that I was not a Catholic. Then she said, 'Shall I get you a minister?' 'Does that mean you think I am going to die?' 'Yes,' she said, 'you cannot live overnight.'

" 'I am not going to die,' I said. 'Before I left home my mother read from the ninety-first Psalm: "A thousand shall fall at thy side, and ten thousand at thy right hand;

but it shall not come nigh thee." You are coming back, Henry,' she said. You don't suppose that I am going to die after that do you?

"That seemed to interest Sister Antoine, as they called her, and she sent one of her aids, Sister Mary, to take care of me. Sister Mary was young and pretty. She cut off those two fingers with a pair of scissors and picked all the proud flesh out of my wounds. Day and night for a week she sat there, flushing them with tepid water and Castile soap, and every now and then giving me a few crumbs of bread in wine. I began to get well right away. She was the first girl I ever wanted to marry. I told Sister Antoine so, and she said, no, it could not be, that Sister Mary was a bride of Christ. But I thought a lot about her for a long time. They dismissed me in March—on crutches. And, of course, that was the last of me as a soldier."

But if it was the end of his soldiering, it was not the end of his work for the Union. Back in Connecticut he was soon making speeches and writing editorials—editorials so good that Horace Greeley noticed them and asked him to join the staff of the New York

Tribune. But New York was too far from the army. The hunger to be near it again was on him. Would not Mr. Greeley find a place for him in the Washington bureau? Possibly who knows there was lurking in his mind the thought that Washington might mean a sight of Sister Mary—Sister Mary whose soft eyes, gentle voice and soothing hands he could not forget. At all events he was transferred late in 1863, and there he was in March of 1864 when the long-standing feud between the War Department and the newspapermen culminated in an order from Secretary Stanton that no more civilians be allowed to go to the front.

The order was not as unreasonable as it sounds. From the beginning of the war there had been trouble. The army's business was to conceal its movements; the correspondents considered it their business to reveal them. More than once attempted surprise movements had been laid out in all their details in Northern newspapers and had reached the Confederates in ample time for frustration. Little wonder that the Secretaries of War and Navy suspected the fraternity and often dealt harshly and unjustly with its members.

Officers, especially those in positions of great responsibility, shared this dislike of correspondents, more particularly because of their activity in trying to boost or pull down this or that man. Sometimes it was a grudge, wounded vanity, back of the reporter's activities; he had not been asked to mess with the general; he had been refused a favor; he had been reprimanded. Again, it was a quite natural desire to flatter the vanity of the local constituency he served by telling how superior some man who hailed from their neighborhood was to the head of his corps, or to the head of the army itself. Grant at one time was so hurt and disgusted by hostile and irresponsible newspaper comments that he considered leaving the army. As for Sherman, he was kept in a state of violent and profane indignation. The newspaper reporters were fools, he said, venal, their only object to pick up news. They were forever praising the idle and worthless who catered to them, and crying down the hard working and meritorious who hauled them up for their indiscretions and disobedience of orders.

This feeling against the newspaper correspondent was at its height when Grant's

campaign of 1864 was undertaken. Everyone agreed that there must be no leakages this time; hence Secretary Stanton's decree, given before the campaign opened, and, as it happened, when every correspondent of the *Tribune* was in Washington for the day.

There was awful excitement; the chief of the bureau swore that any man who did not have dispatches from the army in his hands in forty-eight hours would be discharged. But nobody budged. It was too risky, they told one another. Stanton surely would clap any man into prison who was caught trying to reach the army, and they had no stomach for prisons.

Henry Wing listened in disgust, and finally, crippled as he was, dared one of the men to try with him to run the blockade. The man took him up, and forty-eight hours later, after a hazardous jaunt of some sixty miles, the two crept between the Union pickets. Henry's companion was safe; he simply was at his post, his credentials in his pocket, but Henry was an unaccredited runaway. He wired his chief that he was there, and his chief, who appreciated valor and was not averse to disobedience of orders if it meant news, immediately appointed him a

correspondent of the New York *Tribune* with the Army of the Potomac.

The story of his exploit was soon spread through the army, also the story of his limp. A feeling for him very different from that for the ordinary run of correspondent grew among officers and men. He carried his wounds; all that they faced he had faced; and, though crippled, he had taken the service that he was fit for and continued to run dangers as they did. Indeed, Henry seemed oblivious of danger. News to him was where action was; therefore he must be on the spot, whatever the risk. His quick eye and ear saw and heard official gestures and orders never intended for reporters, and he acted on them. His daily adventuring into dangerous places and his escapes were the amazement of his colleagues. "Wing's luck," they called it. It was not all luck, but unusual hardihood and quick wit.

But of all this Abraham Lincoln knew nothing when in May, 1864, half playfully, he annexed Henry Wing for his own private news service.

Henry rejoined the Army of the Potomac just in time for the battle of Spotsylvania and the beginning of a campaign of

three weeks' fighting, the most dreadful ever seen on this continent. The boy told himself more than once in those tormented days that never before had he guessed of what war might mean. He had lain in camps, had gone into one great battle to be cut down in ten minutes after he faced the enemy, he had lain wounded for forty-eight hours without food or care, he had been crippled for life; but nothing before this had seared his soul, had destroyed for him the glamour of war.

But this—this was a revelation of horrors he had never conceived. For three weeks the Army of the Potomac threw itself again and again against an intrenched foe as intent on saving men as Grant seemed intent on destroying them. The Union troops fought, fell back, strove to turn flanks, were driven in; threw themselves against intrenchments only to be again driven back. They fought in bogs and thickets. Night and day in that unknown tangle, so familiar to their enemy, they were shot as they slept, as they boiled their coffee, as they rested about the camp fire. Every tree seemed alive with sharpshooters.

Amazed, outraged, Henry Wing threw himself into the thick of it. He was more

soldier than correspondent. More than one tale was afloat in the Army of the Potomac of this merry, limping newspaperman who, caught in some fierce eddy of disorderly fighting, seized a rifle from a fallen man and joined the ranks. The dreadful advance—for advance it was—went on day after day, interminably it seemed to Henry, until, after Cold Harbor, his body racked with unbearable pain from his reckless disregard of his crippled leg, his very soul aflame with despair and revolt, he took a boat for Washington with his dispatches.

All the abounding enthusiasm and companionableness were gone out of him. All he wanted was to be let alone, and he crept into an out-of-the-way corner to rest. But the turmoil of nerves and soul left him no rest. It was there on the deck of the north-bound boat that for the first time in his life he faced a desire, ending in a determination, to give up something that he had undertaken. He was going out of that hell. Why should he go back? Had he not proved his willingness to serve? He was not a soldier, only a news gatherer. There were a hundred men eager for the place; let them have it.

His dispatches turned in, he sought his

Washington bed; but his sleep was broken by paroxysms of pain, harassed by dreams of pallid, dying men staggering back from the fighting line or lying helpless in stacks of dead which crowded the battlefields.

The day was well along when, his determination to quit still unbroken, he sought the bureau. He must tell his chief that he was resigning.

As he entered the office his chief looked up. "Henry," he said, "Mr. Lincoln knows you are here; he wants to see you."

He had forgotten Mr. Lincoln—forgotten their compact. He must go and tell him his story before he resigned.

It was evening when he was admitted to the White House, and Mr. Lincoln was alone. As the man and youth met each felt a shock of dismayed pity at what he saw in the other's face. Three weeks before they had parted almost gayly—the man, if anxious, hopeful; the boy confident, buoyant; and now both looked from drawn gray faces into eyes dull with anguish. The look on the President's face jerked Henry Wing out of his self-absorption. It was not he alone who had seen dreadful sights, heard dreadful sounds. Were not the streets of Washington where the

President daily drove back and forth to his home on the Hill dripping with blood—one long procession of wounded and dead? Were not the very corridors of the White House crowded from daylight to dark with raging men and weeping women? The fury and the woe of the country were on his head.

Putting one long arm around the youth in affectionate greeting, the President pushed him to a chair beside the big office desk, and seating himself opposite, his elbow on the table, his hand shading his eyes, his body bent forward, he said, "Henry, I wish you would tell me all about it; everything since you left. What you have seen and heard. How does it look to you?"

The boy hesitated. Where to begin? He could never tell afterward how he did begin, only that under the spell of those dark and suffering eyes intent upon him, he began to talk and was soon talking out his very soul. He had been secreting intolerable things in honor of the censorship but the President was a higher authority. These things belonged to the President.

His story had no orderly sequence, though he tried to keep one. It broke, ran away from him. He took up the trail, turned back,

only to lose himself again. There were sudden outbursts of rage—rage because men who had led in these awful weeks were so jealous of position, so intent on escaping from their own errors, that they would stop in the frightful struggle to accuse one another, to threaten, would weaken their own ability to act by hate and self-seeking. He had come upon it at the start—a commanding general and the ablest cavalry leader in the army weakening the whole tottering structure by a quarrel.

The story went on: Camps of men sleeping on their arms, attacks on intrenchments that laughed in their faces—hand to hand struggles, marches in marshes, jungles, bogs, in sunlight and in rain. The boy pictured the swamps and swollen streams, woods, rolling hills, the little courthouses, churches, plantation houses, giving their names to battles which men will never forget. The scenes and the story unrolled with details of awful slaughter.

There was the "Angle of Death," the Bloody Angle. It had rained that day. He could not see, so he left his horse and followed afoot. He had lain on his stomach in a clump of bushes close by, and he had

watched a narrow Union line, often but two men deep, crumbling and crumbling as it fought for one little point. Men were thrown to right and left, killed and maimed. They piled up on each side while always behind came that narrow, indomitable stream, breaking itself to rags against its enemy. And always those behind knew what was coming to them; they could see the piles growing. Well, they took the Angle, held it, died for it and, unsupported, were ordered from it.

The story leaped from the Angle to Cold Harbor, twenty-two days later. If one was butchery, the other was murder—sheer murder. The boy's voice, hot with passion, cried out the word. The army had known what it meant to take those heights at Cold Harbor. It had been there in sixty-two. All the night before the attack, men prepared for death, writing farewell messages, pinning tags with their names and addresses on their coats.

"An army moving across country to battle is beautiful to see, Mr. Lincoln. It was lovely at four o'clock—the time they went in at Cold Harbor. The fields were green and fragrant and dewy, and the birds were singing. I sat on a hill watching them move out.

The lines were so gay. There were flags flying, horses prancing; they went on so steadily and quietly. You could not think that it meant murder. I was watching Hancock's corps. There was a regiment of boys there I knew, boys I grew up with in Connecticut. Why, I had played hooky and gone swimming and 'spelled down' with dozens of them. I knew them by name, knew their fathers and mothers and sisters. They had never seen a real battle before, only skirmishes. They had kept them up here around Washington some eighteen months, and then sent them down there. The old fellows had been poking fun at them—'Never seen fire yet, boys'? 'Bet you will run'; that is what they would tell them.

"It was those boys I watched when the order came, and they went against those heights without a waver. There wasn't a chance of success. They knew it, but they went on just the same, dropping in their tracks as they came; and those behind rushed over the dead and wounded, and fell. You could not believe so many men could die in twenty minutes; and that is all the time it took. Lee killed seven thousand of us that day, and we hardly scratched him. It was

murder—murder, I tell you." The strident, angry voice wavered, and the story wandered among the dead.

Always at night after the battles he had gone over the fields of wounded and dead. All that night after Cold Harbor he had tramped up and down, looking for the Connecticut boys he knew, taking their names, their keepsakes, and always among them there were those that were not dead, yet dying, who had a message to give. He had brought up hundreds of names, scores of messages. It was all one could do. And when you had been there yourself, had lain all night wounded as he had after Fredericksburg, you could not bear to stop as long as there was a dead or dying man uncared for; you must help what you could.

Until now the listening President had sat motionless, his hand to his forehead, his somber eyes fixed on the boy. But when the story touched on reminiscence he stirred to life, his hand came down, he sat up straight, astonished.

"You, Henry, a soldier—at Fredericksburg? That's where you got your limp?" And then slowly, "I never thought of that."

He threw off the nightmare of the story he had been hearing—the story so awfully personal, for which he was so awfully responsible. His interest was suddenly intent on the boy who had been pouring out what he had seen and felt in this month with the battling army.

He threw himself back in his chair, and swinging one long leg to the top of the desk, said: "Where were you born, Henry? Tell me about yourself. How did you get into the army?"

And Henry Wing, probed by the President's questions, told his story—much, I imagine, as sixty years later he was to tell it to me, and as I have told it to you.

Wonder grew on Mr. Lincoln as he listened. "And after that," he exclaimed, as Henry ended with the story of his crippling, "you go back to the army—are going back again! Why, boy, you shame me. You've done your part; anybody would say that. You could quit in honor, but you stick. I wonder," he said in humility, "if I could do that. I don't believe I would. There's many a night, Henry, that I plan to resign. I wouldn't run again now if I didn't know these other fellows couldn't save the Union on

their platforms, whatever they say. I can't quit, Henry; I have to stay. But you could, and you don't. You give me courage, Henry Wing—make me feel if that's the kind of stuff that makes the Army of the Potomac I needn't worry."

They had risen and were standing looking each other full in the eye, and the President, as he looked, possibly read something of the boy's revolt—his decision, for putting his arm about him he said almost pleadingly —so it seemed to Henry Wing: "I reckon we won't quit, will we, Henry?"

And Henry, straightening himself up, said resolutely: "No, Mr. Lincoln; we won't quit."

And so their compact was renewed.

Throughout the summer and fall that followed, Henry Wing always ended his frequent returns to Washington with a visit to the White House, a visit which extended frequently into the small hours of the morning.

"Show me where you have been, Henry," was always Mr. Lincoln's first request, and Henry, spreading his field map on the table, would trace his movements.

For Mr. Lincoln it was like riding at the youth's side; for the young man told a score of incidents—what had happened here, what

he had seen or heard there, the unreported, the officially unimportant. An outsider listening to Henry's talk might have said that the human details with which it was filled, the talk of men at camp fires, their confidences, their plans, would be irrelevant to Mr. Lincoln's great purpose; to the listening President, hungry for the stuff that made up the life of the army, they were its very flesh and blood.

A feature of Henry Wing's talks, to which the President listened avidly, was his stories of those pathetic derelicts of war, young and old, feeble and crippled, that a passing army leaves and which must go down to destruction unless a strong hand is stretched out to save them. Henry Wing could no more pass by one such than he could refuse to join a dangerous raid. There were many tales afloat at headquarters of his rescues. For instance about his baby his colleagues long teased him.

He had come stealing, breathless, soaked, bareheaded, into a sleeping camp one night, to inform headquarters that fifteen or twenty miles to the south, part of a Union detachment had been surrounded by superior forces and unless promptly relieved would unques-

tionably be destroyed at daybreak. He had, characteristically enough, taken it on himself to try to get through to headquarters. It was a dangerous exploit, for the lines lay so close together that there was no way at many points of telling friend from foe; but Henry Wing valued his own skill as a scout much higher than he did that of many who bore the official title. Moreover, there was news to be put through—put through before anybody else got it, if possible.

He told his story tersely and clearly, pointing out on his field map with an accuracy which headquarters had learned to trust the location of the trapped force. All the time that he was talking he was huddling close in his arms a little black baby. Even the excitement of his message and the ensuing confusion of sending relief did not prevent his colleagues asking, "What in the world——"

It was a characteristic Wing exploit, so all agreed. At a moment in his dangerous journey when he knew himself to be close to an outpost—whether Union or Confederate he could not tell—and was crawling through the tall grass fringing a little lake, he heard what he recognized after moments of breathless listening the babbling of an infant. Fol-

lowing the sound he had come upon a negro woman dying from a bullet in her breast, the chance shot of a picket, no doubt. She had only strength to point to the little one. All that Henry Wing could do to comfort her was to pick up the baby and tell her he would look after it.

He kept his word, for after she was dead, though he knew he was endangering his life, he buttoned the child inside his coat and continued his perilous journey. What he expected happened. The child began to cry, and instantly he was surrounded. He had stumbled into the outpost he knew to be near. Luckily for him he had struck the Union line, and he was immediately hustled to the commanding officer's tent with his message. And there he stood now, pressing the child to him. It was only when he heard the order given for rescue that he hurried off to the contraband camp to deposit his find in the arms of a motherly negress.

Often the human problems Henry shouldered could not be solved as easily as that of his baby, and again and again he sought Mr. Lincoln's help. As a matter of fact, it was not long before the two were joined in a conspiracy of relief—how to ex-

tricate victims from the army law when they believed the victim was worth it—a victim, not a criminal.

There was Henry's drummer boy. Coming up from the army by boat one hot night, he had left his cabin, where he was writing his dispatches, to stroll the deck for air. As he passed the wheelhouse he caught a glimpse of a forlorn little figure huddling in a corner close to the rail. A child, he said to himself, but it was a child wearing the cap of a drummer boy. By his side was not only his drum but the equipment of an infantryman.

Henry Wing's friendliness was of that pure quality which dogs and children never suspect. They accept it as it is offered. In five minutes he was curled up in the corner beside the boy and a desolate little soul was telling him its story.

A year ago his mother, with whom he lived up North, had died. His father was in the Army of the Potomac. He had gone from his mother's grave to his home, taken his drum—every boy in those days had a drum—and had slipped out of the town by a southbound train. He was only twelve years old, and small for that. Kindly conductors and brakemen, hearing his story, had

passed him on. Wonderful tribute to human tenderness! He had actually found his father, had been accepted as a drummer boy and had tapped his way through the Wilderness to the James. Now, two days before his father had been killed. He had taken his rifle, his canteen, his belt, and had left the army. He was going back to his mother's grave.

Henry Wing gathered up drum, rifle and canteen, and, with one arm around the child, led him to his stateroom, where he fed him and put him in his own bed. That night he sat in a chair. The next day they were in Washington. It was something of a problem. He had pressing work and the child clung to him. In the afternoon his duties led him to the White House, to the President, who kindly listened to the whole story.

"What are we going to do with him, Henry?" he asked when Henry Wing had finished. "We," you see! "He must have a pass at once. I suppose if the provost marshal got his eye on him he would clap him into prison as a deserter"—which technically, of course, he was. The President wrote him a pass, and the two decided that for the moment

they would ask the Christian Commission to give him a home.

Not many hours later Henry Wing, whose duties had called him to the Senate Chamber, was greeted by a well-known senator: "About that drummer boy, Wing? I want him. I am going to give him a home and an education."

"How in the world did you hear about him?" Henry asked.

"Well," he said, "some of us went up to the White House to see Mr. Lincoln. The first thing he did was to tell us about your boy. It looked as if he could not get down to business until he had settled him into what he called good hands. Had us all blubbering. I am going to take care of that boy."

As the weeks went on and Henry sensed more and more Mr. Lincoln's imperative need of knowing how far he could count on the Army of the Potomac, he redoubled his efforts to understand it himself. He began to see it as it was, an army dominated by veterans—men who had been at Bull Run, Fredericksburg, Chancellorsville; officers who knew no other field than Virginia nor any other objective than Richmond. He found that it had its habits, "ways," code, its peculiar in-

stitutions. One of these institutions, of which he made free use, was the unique news service which the veterans had developed for their own satisfaction, and which they trusted far more implicitly than the official bulletins, framed, they said cynically, to tell what ought to have happened, not what did. Their news service was carried on by a fraternity known in the ranks as "Camp Walkers"—men with an insatiable natural curiosity about what was going on in their world. Back home they had always gone "up street" at night to the drug store, the corner grocery, to tell what they knew and to hear what others had to tell. Turned soldiers, they were not content with the news of their own company. The whole army was their field, and gradually they formed the habit of dropping in at foreign camp fires night after night to ask questions, repeat what they had heard elsewhere and push on. Frequently it was midnight and later before they were back in their beds.

The Camp Walkers accepted Henry as one of their own. Had he not been a soldier, and had he not proved a courage which many of them asked themselves if they would have mastered, when, unfitted for soldiering, he

had nevertheless come back to face death again. For they knew well enough, these men with whom he nightly tramped and talked, that in this campaign he was running the same risks they did.

It was not only the news they brought that Henry was interested in; the discussions of the campaigns by these men were well worth any reporter's attention, and particularly valuable did he consider them for Mr. Lincoln. There were few of the more intelligent ones who did not carry inside their pockets good-sized field maps—some of them had gone through the whole three years. They knew the topography of the country better than many of their officers, and they had their own notions of strategy. As a matter of fact, the veterans viewed military matters with a practical common sense similar to that of Lincoln himself, and they supported what they believed to be false moves and defeats a good deal as he did, with disgust—and patience.

The Camp Walkers' news and comments figured constantly in Henry's talks with Mr. Lincoln, giving him that sense of what the men were doing and feeling for which he hungered. Unquestionably he got a better

realization through Henry than from any other source of the contempt that the veterans had for Grant's use of men in the southward march. They were willing to die, but they thought it was stupid to spend seasoned men as he was spending them, to make attacks on breast works which must fail; it was not worth it. And they were particularly indignant that the ranks depleted by these repeated futile attacks should be filled by a class of men for whom they had supreme contempt—"Coffee Boilers," they called them. They were men who had been paid as substitutes to come into the army. The veterans had the highest respect for three classes of men—Americans, Irish and German, but to hear them talk of Coffee Boilers, you would suppose that they were of an entirely distinct race, though probably most of them had one or the other of the three favored origins. No veteran, however, would have admitted that a Coffee Boiler could be either American, Irish or German. Henry brought back story after story of the absolute glee with which the seasoned men saw shells scattering groups of Coffee Boilers, of the refusal of surgeons to aid one of this group when they found he had inflicted a self-injury, as sometimes hap-

pened, or of the way, when one of them had turned tail, all the veterans in line would combine to drive him back.

Mr. Lincoln's heart was sick again and again as he listened to what he felt was the just criticism by these brave fellows of the ruthless warfare which must replace men of such sterling worth and sense by so many that were venal and contemptible.

As the army worked its way south the dissatisfaction of the men grew. They felt that at more than one point Lee had been in their hands if the matter had been properly pushed. There were delays that they violently cursed—cursed even to the face of officers frequently, for they were a tribe whose illusions about officers had been dispelled. They obeyed them, yes; that was necessary. But they looked them through and through. There was not one of them that would not have told Grant himself what he thought of him if it had come in his way.

Yet nothing was more encouraging to Mr. Lincoln than Henry's reports of how Grant, in spite of what the men felt of his senseless wasting of their force, grew on them. Gradually grew the conviction that as he had sent word to Mr. Lincoln at the beginning of the

campaign, Grant was not going to turn back, and it won these men. For the first time, they told themselves grimly around the camp fires, Lee was no longer commander of the Army of the Potomac. It was noticeable that before they reached the James, they were singing—and singing heartily: "Ulysses Leads the Van." And the exultation of the groups around the camp fires to whom the Camp Walkers brought the news that Lee for some four days did not know where Grant was—which was true—well, for that word they would have been willing to die on the spot. But to lose that advantage, not to be in Petersburg and Richmond as every man felt that they might have been if the thing had been pushed that was one of the old disgusting failures, a failure over which the President groaned as bitterly as they did.

It was not until the middle of July that Henry could bring back to the President any news that stirred to hope. The army was camping around Petersburg, bitterly cursing its luck, suffering from the heat and the fever, utterly disgusted with the idea that they were in for what they believed was going to be a long siege. Henry, however, did

not believe it was to be long. An exciting new secret movement was on hand, one which he believed would end the war. This was the tremendous mine which in July of 1864 was laid under a portion of the Confederate defense.

To the boy it was an amazing thing that men should come and go, carrying out earth and carrying in timber and explosives under the very feet of the enemy. He told the President he had even heard the voices of the Confederates over his head when he had been allowed as a special privilege to visit the galleries. The thing could not fail. There would be one vast upheaval; the Union troops would pour in on the surprised Confederates, Petersburg would fall, and there would be an open road to Richmond.

But the Petersburg mine was only another of those costly miscarriages that had distinguished the Union warfare in Virginia for over three years. Mr. Lincoln was to hear much of what happened—many stories besides that of Henry Wing, though it is doubtful if any was more vivid, more provocative of indignation and depression.

Henry had awaited the hour of the explosion with impatience; he was so sure it was to

be a grand success. And what news to send after weeks of stories of half victories, or of victories almost worse than defeat, to be able to report one grand, overpowering, unexpected stroke!

Long before dawn of the morning fixed, July thirtieth, he had ridden to a knoll overlooking Petersburg, the knoll where Grant and Meade with their staffs had rendezvoused. He had been greatly excited there by the exaltation that he read in the faces of the men. Even Grant himself seemed stirred. They were all so sure this time. There could be no failure, everybody felt. Again and again every movement had been rehearsed. It had been like the preparation for a vast pageant, only here the death and destruction were to be realities, not pretenses.

The moment set for the firing of the fuse, which was to begin the terrific opening act, was 3:15 A.M. Henry, watch in hand, breathless, like the company near him, waited for the great moment. It did not come. Three-fifteen came and went. Three-thirty—four A.M., and as the minutes passed, anxiety, consternation, despair, wrath, seized the little group. They were helpless. No move could be made without danger of de-

stroying everything, until they knew what had happened, what was delaying.

Then came an aide, with news that the fuse had gone out. There had been volunteers to go in and examine it. A new attempt was making. But an hour had passed, and daylight was on them before the explosion planned came. It was an awful upheaval—earth, rocks and men were thrown high into the air over a length of half a mile, leaving a crater like the yawning mouth of a great volcano.

The explosion had come. Now for the attack. The troops were immediately to rush in, but they did not rush. There was a long silence. Through their glasses the watching party saw the Confederates rallying to their breastworks—but where were the Union troops? Henry Wing, on his horse close to the Lieutenant General of the Army, heard him muttering to himself: "Why don't the boys go in? Why don't the boys go in?" And then, when the minutes passed and they did not go in, when he saw the enemy rallying, he wheeled his horse and started for the scene, Henry Wing at his heels.

The story of what Wing saw on that wild ride he told until his death. He believed that

his own eyes had found out why the Petersburg mine failed; for reaching the scene of attack and leaving his horse to reconnoiter, he had suddenly come upon a man stretched prostrate on the ground in a drunken stupor. It was the officer who was to have led the charge! The boys had not gone in because their commanding officer was drunk. It was this story with all its details that he told the President, adding with boyish generosity: "He was one of the best officers in the army, Mr. Lincoln. I never saw him intoxicated. He had taken a bracer for the morning's work, then another, and another." And the President, his head buried in his hands, had groaned: "Oh, Henry, why do men get drunk just when they ought not to?"

The story of the Petersburg mine, its grandiose preparation, the confidence of those who were in the secret that it was to be the death blow to the Confederacy, its failure through unforgivable bungling fed the anger of the North. It was madness to go on sacrificing men; let the South go; give her back her slaves; let us have peace—peace at any price.

Politicians worked with energy on fagged, revolting men and women. They offered

them McClellan and "the cessation of hostilities"—Frémont, and it was not too sure what; no more of Lincoln at least. The strong and hostile winds of opinion which had been blowing now for weeks became by August furious, biting gales, converging to one point—the President. He lived in a whirlwind of opposition, a man without a friend, his opponents confident, contemptuous; Congress sneering and hindering; intrigue in his cabinet, dismay in his party. Even his best and oldest friends came to tell him in solemn tones that his defeat was certain unless he should compromise—delay a draft, consider peace overtures, something to soothe the country's agony until after election.

"Deceive as to my intention?" he retorted, scornfully refusing.

Lincoln's deepest concern in August of 1864 was not civilian and official opposition, however strong and bitter it might be. He was more and more concerned with the army's view of things.

"Henry," he said in one of their long night talks in this dreary period, " I would rather be defeated with the soldier vote behind me than to be elected without it."

"You will have it, Mr. Lincoln. You will have it," was his repeated insistence. "They'll vote as they shoot," and his close association with the soldiers only intensified this faith.

What he had become convinced of was that the veterans were set on finishing their job, and not at all concerned with politics. Their pride as soldiers was stirred. There was not one of them but realized that Lee was in their grip. They never would let him loose now. They might love McClellan—most of them did; but he had not taught them to fight; it was Grant had done that. Grant had led them on, but never back. And who had given them Grant? Why, Lincoln. And who was backing Grant, even at the risk of his defeat in the approaching election? Lincoln. They would vote as they shot.

Mr. Lincoln, listening and carefully balancing what the boy was reporting from the army with what he was hearing from other quarters, met his confident assurances by saying grimly one night: "All right, Henry; but if they turn their backs to the fire and get burned they will have to sit on the blister."

They did not turn their backs to the fire that November. At the primitive polls set

up for them in the camps—a tent; a table under a tree; the end of an ambulance—three-quarters of the soldiers in the Army of the Potomac dropped votes for Abraham Lincoln into ballot boxes improvised from cartridge or cracker cases, and in one case at least from an old pork barrel.

Henry Wing saw the man whom he had come to so trust and honor freed from his burden of uncertainty about the fate of the Union. He saw that his thoughts were no longer with armies; they were already busy with the future, planning how order could be restored, how every one, North and South, could be put at some peaceful occupation. It seemed sometimes to Henry as if Mr. Lincoln's plans for reconstruction took in every acquaintanceship that had been dislocated by the war.

"Henry," he asked the boy, "what are you going to do when the war is over?"

"Well, Mr. Lincoln," replied young Wing, "I think I will go on with the law. I have an idea that I could get elected to Congress—think I would like that."

"Don't begin on Congress unless you go on with it, Henry," he said. "One term doesn't mean much. It takes that long to

start, learn the ways, get acquainted with the men. I had only one term; I know how it is. When you get down here you must remember that you have to prove yourself to those that have been here a long time. It is pretty hard on a newcomer. No, I wouldn't go in for Congress, Henry, unless I was sure I was going to stick to it long enough to make it amount to something."

The advice stuck in Henry Wing's mind. What could he do? It must be something that would help Mr. Lincoln. Mr. Lincoln, he told himself, was in for trouble when the war was over. There were some strong fellows on the Hill and in the country who did not believe in his idea of letting the South down easy. They sneered at the words of mercy in the President's talk, public and private. They were for punishment, hanging, outlawing; protectorates must be established. Lincoln was talking treason.

Now Henry was with the President. He had inherited none of Ebenezer Wing's capacity for righteous hatred. Mr. Lincoln was right; they should let them down easy. But how could he help?

He found a way to his liking in the winter of 1864-65. After the army settled down

for the winter and there was nothing exciting doing, Horace Greeley had called him back to New York. Close to the great editor and his staff, he saw his course; he would become an editor, the editor of a paper of his own, and it should be in Connecticut. There were too many men in that state who hated the man he loved. He would become his armor-bearer there, fight his battles.

The paper he chose and bought was a weekly sheet, seasoned by forty years of experience, the Litchfield *Enquirer*. But he was in no hurry to take hold of his possession. He wanted to see with his own eyes the end of the war; and when in March it became certain that that end was near he hurried back to his old post at Grant's headquarters, then at City Point on the James River. He had been there only a few days when the President came down for a visit.

If Henry Wing had any idea that Mr. Lincoln's friendship had cooled in these months of absence, the warm welcome given him at their first accidental meeting dispelled it. Hurrying out from the telegraph office, he had almost collided with the presidential party. Mr. Lincoln, spying him, called out an immediate hearty greeting.

"We must have a talk," he said, and putting his arm around the boy's shoulder, he walked him away from the company, down the road following the river. "Too many people here," Mr. Lincoln said; "let us get into that boat." And the President himself laying hold of the rope that tethered a little skiff floating out in the stream, drew it to shore and, directing Henry to seat himself in the stern, crawled in after him; then, dropping the rope, he allowed the boat to drift as far as it would, far enough for their talk to be entirely quiet.

"And now," said Mr. Lincoln, drawing up his knees so they almost touched his chin, and clasping them with his long arms, "tell me about things. What have you been doing?"

And Henry told him of his winter, with many anecdotes of Greeley, his erratic chief, told him of the purchase of the Litchfield *Enquirer* and of his determination to go back there and support him in the fight for a merciful reconstruction. The talk ran on over the many happenings since their last meeting, and came to the situation of the moment.

"The war is just about over," Mr. Lincoln said as he picked up the rope to pull their

skiff back to shore. "Sherman is closing on Lee from the south. It will be only a few days now. I don't want our armies to crush him. I want the Army of the Potomac to have the satisfaction of capturing General Lee; it is due them. For four years they have been at this thing. I want them to end it."

The Army of the Potomac was to have that satisfaction, and Henry Wing was to be in at the finish, a consummation which he cunningly and completely planned. As soon as Lee's army was known to be in retreat Sheridan with his cavalry attempted a detour around it, and Henry Wing went along. As they were approaching Appomattox, Gordon's cavalry came dashing down a slope toward the Union line when suddenly, in full view of both forces, a white flag fluttered to the breeze.

There was an immediate halt. Horses were pulled up in their tracks, and the startled troops and their commanders waited. Not Henry Wing. He dashed for headquarters. With his usual foresight he had arranged with a friendly member of Grant's staff that if Lee did surrender, as was expected, this man, as soon as it was certain,

should come out from the house where they were quartered, take off his hat and wipe his forehead three times with a handkerchief. There were other signals for other contingencies.

Henry rode into the groups, blue and gray, gathered about the house where the two great chiefs were in council and, dismounting, stood in apparent unconcern, though really intensely alert.

A man opened the door, came out, took off his hat and wiped his forehead three times with a handkerchief.

Henry Wing was in his saddle on the instant, dashing off with his news, his one object in life to beat the correspondent of the New York *Herald*.

It was his last dispatch. The war was over. He hurried at once to Litchfield to take possession of the *Enquirer*. He worked quickly, for if one looks over a file of the journal preserved in the town's public library, he will find that the issue of the 13th of April, 1865, bears the valedictory of its retiring editor and bespeaks for its new owners, Wing and Shumway, the "same generous patronage and kind ways that have been afforded us."

It was on the morning of the 15th of April that Henry Wing sat down at his desk to write his salutatory, a happy, confident youth, doing the thing that he wanted to do, following a leader in whom he believed.

He was sitting with a tender smile on his lips,—he was going to write something of which his mother would be proud and which his father would have to accept.

As he put his pen to paper the door opened and a boy came in, dropping a telegram on his desk. He opened it and read:

Abraham Lincoln, President of the United States, assassinated last night in Ford's Theater, Washington, died this morning at twenty-two minutes past seven.