

LINCOLN AND CONTEMPORARY ENGLISH PERIODICALS

JOSEPH H. PARK

THERE seems to be little doubt—if book lists may serve as a criterion—that Lincoln as a theme makes wide appeal to present-day readers of biography. And if facts relating to him and his family invite much attention, a study of contemporary opinions concerning him, gleaned from the magazines of that nation whose reactions to the United States were fateful for our own national history, may not be devoid of interest. The historian, indeed, is frequently as much concerned with the interpretation of events as with the events themselves. And although the statements of English contemporary periodicals do not always present truths concerning Lincoln as we now know them, they do give insight into English society at a time when English beliefs were *facts* for American statesmen.

The attitude of the various social classes in England toward the parties struggling in the American Civil War has, of course, been described again and again. While the working class as a whole and their allies, the Radicals such as John Bright and W. E. Forster, favoured the North, the classes of greatest political influence, represented both in Liberal and in Conservative party, adhered to the Southern cause. The socially important were actuated by many motives: the more materially minded were jealous of the rapidly growing power of the land across the water, and were not displeased to see its greatness lessened by a serious rebellion. A high tariff in the North contrasted unfavourably, in their opinion, with the free trade of the South. Manufacturing and commercial interests desired peace, and believed that peace could come only when the independence of the South should be recognized. The more philosophically minded of the upper classes talked of a South having the right of nationality on its side: they declared that a combat like the struggle between the thirteen revolted colonies and George III was being again enacted. Believing in peace, they interpreted the attempt to subjugate five and a half millions as a mere waste of life.

Moreover, the aristocracy and the upper middle class as a whole showed hostility to the United States because they felt

that an important test was being applied to the type of government developing on this side of the water; the great experiment in democracy was on trial—and America's democracy had been a constant theme of John Bright and the other Radicals. English laws of the early sixties did not permit to the great mass of workingmen the privilege of the franchise. A democratic movement would threaten the old monopoly of political power at home. Battles on American soil were deciding the status of Bright's theories; if democracy in America should fail in the great crisis, the reaction would be strongly felt in Europe, and most of all in Great Britain. A situation which presumably was a turning point of political controversy at home naturally led to eager and bitter discussion. And Lincoln came by the election of 1860 to be the head of that government which, with various emotions, Englishmen were watching carefully.

The following account is, then, an attempt to trace the opinions concerning Lincoln held by some of those periodicals known to have had influence on the English reading public, from the time of his election, year by year, to his death.

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It is too much to expect, perhaps, that Lincoln, at the time of his election relatively unknown even to our own East, should have been understood by all the more important English periodicals immediately. Nevertheless, the more conservative magazines had a suspicion of his lack of ability from the very beginning,—a suspicion founded in part on the assumption that a democracy could not bring forward a real leader in a great national crisis. *Blackwood's* is the best representative of these opinions. This periodical was positive in its idea that the best men in America could not and would not enter the political arena; it detested democracy and its mire:

But to what country shall we look for hereditary princes less fit to wield the destinies of nations than the obscure and commonplace man whose decrees now stand in the place of public law in the North? It may be said that at least he is the choice of the nation. But was he chosen by the intelligence of the nation? Or, to take lower ground, does he represent the material interests and responsibilities of the nation? Not at all; he is the choice of a numerical majority of a people who have derived the principal accessions to their numbers from the scum of Europe. Every four years the Constitution is in travail—all mankind are invited, or rather commanded, to watch the interesting event—all is convulsion—the throes of the mountain are prodigious.

And the latest result is—Mr. Abraham Lincoln. The great achievement in self-government in this vaunted democracy, which we have been so loudly and arrogantly called on to admire, is to drag from his proper obscurity an ex-rail-splitter and country attorney, and to place what it calls its liberties at his august disposal. No country furnishes so many examples as England of great men who have arisen from humble beginnings. But it would have been impossible for him or any of his Cabinet to have emerged, under British institutions, from the mediocrity to which nature had condemned them, and from which pure democracy alone was capable of rescuing them. Are the best Americans willing to accept Mr. Abraham Lincoln and Mr. W. H. Seward as their best men? If not, can they substitute better men? If they cannot, what other proof is needed of the inefficacy of their boasted institutions? An imbecile executive above, a restless, purposeless multitude below, linked together like a kite tied to a balloon, and drifting at the mercy of the air-currents, while respectability, moderation, and sense are pushed aside, or dragged helplessly along,—such is the spectacle presented, in the first storm, by the Model Republic . . .

Of course, we do not blame Mr. Lincoln for being President. But we venture to pity him. No man is more unfortunate than he who is in a conspicuous position for which he is manifestly unfit. What had this ill-starred man done to merit such a visitation as to be set at the head of an unruly nation that is going to pieces in convulsions? His antecedents are respectable, though not illustrious. He is said to have exhibited considerable dexterity and muscular power in the splitting of rails. He may possibly be a good attorney, though we should never have selected him as a legal adviser. Had we done so, we should have expected to find him an oracle of the cloudiest kind, and, as a rule, arriving at a clear comprehension of the facts a few weeks after the case was decided. In his public compositions he is distinguished chiefly for a disregard of grammar and an infatuated fondness for metaphor. He gets laboriously on to a figure of speech, which generally runs away with him, and, after exhibiting him in various eccentric postures, leaves him sprawling in an attitude highly unbecoming in the President of a great Republic. Still, to find metaphors unmanageable is no great crime. A man may be unskilled in composition, or even an indifferent lawyer, without meriting such a fate as that which we deplore in Mr. Lincoln. It may be said that he sought the post which he so uncomfortably occupies, and has no right to complain of its inconveniences. But he may reply that other Presidents no better than he had got on very well, and that he only bargained to be, like them, the captain of a fair-weather ship. On such a plea he may possibly be absolved of presumption, but the absolution of the President is the condemnation of the system that renders him possible.

The *Saturday Review*, too, a great crusading organ against democracy, took comfort in the events on this side the water:

The English worshippers of American institutions are in danger of losing their last pretext for preferring the Republic to the obsolete and tyrannical Monarchy of England. Till within a few months, they were never tired of pointing to the harmony and perfect unity of a great empire without an army, a navy, or a peerage . . . It now appears that the peaceable completion of secession has become impossible, and it will be necessary to discover some new ground of superiority by which Mr. Buchanan or Mr. Lincoln may be advantageously contrasted with Queen Victoria. The distinction is not to be found in commercial orthodoxy, for the Morrill Tariff shows that Republican manufacturers can be as greedy of selfish advantage as the stoutest agricultural Protectionists who were formerly to be found in England. Until the present difficulty has passed away, perhaps it would be convenient to discontinue the standing contrast between English defects and American excellencies.

This magazine believed that Lincoln possessed more sincerity and self-respect than Seward, but felt, in 1861, that statesmanlike directness and sagacity had hitherto been displayed on only one side of the quarrel. The President of Montgomery had been selected for his well-known ability by the leaders of the South. Lincoln's nomination had been an election manoeuvre, rendered possible only by his acknowledged obscurity.

Somewhat in contrast to the bitterness displayed by *Blackwood's* and the *Saturday Review* is the moderateness of two Scottish magazines, the *Edinburgh Review* and the *North British Review*. The *Edinburgh Review*, writing on secession in April, 1861, saw in the election of President Lincoln a small event destined to bring about great results: for Lincoln himself was not an important man. Until the recent contest for the presidency, he had been, in its belief, little known as a politician; and in a country where public speaking was one of the chief avenues to power, he was not aspiring to oratorical fame. His choice had been the result of a compromise among the different sections of the Republican party. He had not been originally a candidate, but had been thrown to the top, as it were accidentally, during the canvass. Yet this magazine, feeling that the election of Lincoln was an event hardly worthy of provocation to a philosopher or even to a prudent statesman, was not surprised that an average planter should take alarm at a national anti-slavery demonstration.

And the *North British Review* of May, 1861, certainly was not unfavourable in a brief review of Lincoln's life. It did not believe that his abilities were by any means of the highest order, but it praised him for his extensive information and the ambition he had shown in hewing his way from manual labour to a learned

profession. He was a man, it wrote, possessed of the perceptive rather than the reflective faculty; he was a politician rather than a statesman. His *forte* was in stump oratory and political strategy, but his strategy (which, incidentally, recent writers on Lincoln acknowledge that he used) was combined with a downright honesty which had never been impugned, and which had earned for him throughout all the West the sobriquet of "Honest old Abe." As a speaker he was ready, fluent, and racy, and his extemporaneous addresses, like his conversation, abounded with rough but expressive idioms taken from western life. His inaugural speech was, it held, discreet, constitutional and national, and avoided the error of giving pledges which could not be fulfilled. Moreover, his Cabinet was discreetly chosen, but the Union which he represented was falling to pieces under the weight of its own institutions.

In so far as the business interests were reflected in the *Economist*, those interests sympathized very early in 1861 with the problem of the North, and hoped that Lincoln's inaugural address meant the avoidance of civil war: "Mr. Lincoln is impressing the American public with a considerable sense of his shrewdness, reticence, and caution,—of his desire to feel his way very carefully before he takes any strong step,—and of his deep wish to avoid the horrors of a fruitless civil war." Within two months, however, more immediate success was being predicted for the Southern leader "of prompter mind and more vigorous decision than President Lincoln", and, shortly after, when a war of some duration seemed to be imminent, direct attacks on the Constitution and on Lincoln were forthcoming:

Nor does the accession of Mr. Lincoln place the executive power precisely where we should wish to see it. At a crisis such as America has never before seen . . . the executive authority should be in the hands of one of the most tried, trusted, and experienced statesmen of the nation. Mr. Lincoln is a nearly unknown man—who has been but little heard of—who has had little experience—who may have nerve and judgment, or may not have them—whose character, both moral and intellectual, is an unknown quantity—who must, from his previous life and defective education, be wanting in the liberal acquirements and mental training which are principal elements of an enlarged statesmanship. Nor is it true to say that the American *people* are to blame for this—that they chose Mr. Lincoln, and must endure the pernicious results. The *Constitution* is as much to blame as the people, probably even more so.

To the present-day reader it would seem that the best appreciation of Lincoln's ability during the trying days of 1861 is to be

found in certain articles in *Macmillan's* and the *Westminster Review*. The latter magazine was influenced by John Stuart Mill. Favourably inclined toward the North because of the slavery issue, it deemed Lincoln's opinions essentially moderate. *Macmillan's* during the decade of the sixties frequently contained articles by the leading Christian Socialists. Among them Tom Hughes, now known especially through his novels, but at that time acknowledged to be one of the more important leaders of the democratic movement, wrote in October, 1861, that the tone of all the leading journals except the *Spectator* seemed to be ungenerous and unfair to America. Already in the June issue another well-known Christian Socialist, J. M. Ludlow, had complained that much unfair criticism had been expended on President Lincoln for his conduct in the American crisis. His own confidence was in "Old Abe", and he thanked God that the ruling hand of the North was Lincoln's "and not that of some eloquent politician like Mr. Seward." He warmly defended the President on the score that he had found himself on accession to office with a barren title and loose authority, with administrative offices held by the unfaithful, had put the South on the wrong side, and had kept the border States in their allegiance long enough to show that the primary justification alleged for secession,—want of protection to slaves—was a falsehood.

Finally, on the opposite side of the semi-circle from *Blackwood's* stood the *Spectator*, the periodical usually mentioned as pro-Northern both by the writers of the day and by historians of a more recent date. As a matter of fact, however, the *Spectator* was often bitter in its denunciation of the President of the Republic. Its attitude may be compared to that of the Radicals at home—those thinkers and leaders who mightily rejoiced at Lincoln's election, but too soon felt keen disappointment with a leader who refused to be stampeded by their zeal for the immediate abolition of slavery. The *Spectator* of the first week of March, 1861, had slight but favourable information of Lincoln—in that he possessed an apparent efficiency, a clear insight into the nation's difficulties, a decisive plan of remedy, and an ability to maintain an unbroken silence—"perhaps the best proof possible of a determined will." Disappointment in the moderation of his first address was expressed somewhat later in the same month, although the speech was said to show "traces of a determined and practical, though perhaps somewhat narrow and lawyer-like, line of action." But by April 13, 1861, bitterness of tone is evident:

The Lincoln Administration is as imbecile, or we might perhaps more justly say, as powerless, as that of his predecessor. The President, after pledging himself solemnly to carry out the laws, occupies himself with the distribution of the spoils, and suffers the last remnants of national authority to rot away piecemeal. Fort Sumter is to be evacuated.

On April 27, the *Spectator* proclaimed that the Great Republic was gone; and if temperateness sometimes led to a more just account of the administration, the North was usually depicted as leaderless, with "Mr. Lincoln himself rising only to the rank of honest respectabilities."

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The foes of democracy in England—and they were the foes of the representative of American democracy—had, of course, much cause for rejoicing during the early years of the struggle. Neither abroad nor at home was the American government attaining marked success. In the latter part of 1861, the American Captain Wilkes of the *San Jacinto* nearly caused war with England by stopping the British mail steamer *Trent* and taking forcibly from it the two accredited Confederate emissaries, Mason and Slidell. Lincoln believed that wrong had been done, but he hardly trusted as yet his own judgment against public opinion. Probably Seward rather than he saw the necessity for surrender to British demands. Yet in this case some of the English magazines stated, with a degree of accuracy, Lincoln's position. *Macmillan's* repeated the rumor that he was favourable toward a settlement of the *Trent* affair, and the *Economist* depicted him as cautious and conscientious, though puzzled, overwhelmed, and perhaps bewildered by his position—desiring not to act on his own judgment if he could help it.

The serious defeats of 1862 made that year extremely gloomy, and the failure of McClellan finally caused his dismissal and the appointment of Burnside to high command. Surprise was expressed by the *Saturday Review* that McClellan would accept and the North submit to the "dismissing of the most competent General in the army", especially as the capacity of Burnside had neither been tried nor "probably been even considered by the imbecile faction which conducts the war." Moreover, the suspension of *Habeas Corpus*, a frequent cause of complaint by sound and conservative men at home, and the Emancipation Proclamation were the bases of much bitter criticism on the part of the English press. The words of the *Economist* tell the story with a degree of moderation:

The astonishing absence of statesmanship, and indeed of ordinary political sagacity, which has distinguished the Washington government from the outset of the civil war, has never been manifested in a more startling or signal shape than in the two manifestoes issued by the President, of which tidings have been brought us by the last mails. He has suspended the writ of *Habeas Corpus*, and declared martial law throughout the United States with respect to all persons arrested for aiding the rebellion or hindering the draft. He has also proclaimed the emancipation of all slaves in rebel States or belonging to rebels after the first of January, 1863. Two more remarkable announcements could scarcely have been made. Two more questionable acts could, in our opinion, scarcely have been committed—or in a more questionable way.

Much more hostile was the *Saturday Review*. It saw President Lincoln suddenly confiscating the remaining liberties of the North and the most cherished property of the South, without any apparent necessity, in defiance of all intelligible policy, and without a shadow of constitutional right. It felt that the proclamation of martial law throughout the Federal States, together with the suspension of *Habeas Corpus*, made every free citizen who might become obnoxious to the official rulers liable to indefinite imprisonment for act or word which might be supposed to discourage enlistment. It declared that if Pitt had, in the name of the prerogative, proclaimed martial law in England because a rebellion was raging in parts of Ireland, he would have had a better excuse for his criminal usurpation than any which Lincoln could allege. It stated that the proclamation of freedom for the slaves—if it had been legal—would nevertheless be a crime, since no provision had been made for their future. It concluded that the President had virtually acknowledged his military failure, and that his desperate efforts to procure political support would probably precipitate the ruin of his cause. If his partial confiscation of slaves had been intended to produce a favourable impression in England, "a fresh display of abject weakness and of consummate wickedness will scarcely be accepted as a set-off against the expressions of causeless animosity which continue to form the substance of whatever American eloquence can be spared from the propagation of discord and anarchy at home."

Blackwood's likewise believed the President's proclamation was on the one hand an acknowledgment of the impossibility of Northern success in fair warfare, and on the other, the attempt to paralyze the victorious armies of the South by letting loose upon their hearths and homes the lust and savagery of four million

negroes. Thus was England called upon to contemplate, within the bosom of civilization, a war more full of horrors and wickedness than any which stood recorded in the world's history.

Punch, under the caption "The American Chess Players", repeats the foregoing ideas:

Although of conquest Yankee North despairs,
His brain for some expedient wild he sacks,
And thinks that having failed on the white squares,
He can't do worse by moving on the Blacks.

Even the *Spectator* was not disposed to exult over the President's manifesto. An opposite reason, however, actuated it: Lincoln ought to have gone farther. He had allowed himself to be too much hemmed in by all manner of parliamentary barriers, by the opinion of his people, by the prejudices of his troops, and perhaps by his own scruples as to the extent of his constitutional power. Such conduct, it asserted, does not stir the imagination of nations, and Americans must not wonder if Europe still hesitates to believe that they have finally broken with the system which they have supported for seventy years. The head of the nation, though the best of the Cabinet, is to it, through the year, "what he has always been, a shrewd second-rate lawyer" and "a sorry specimen of a sovereign man."

Thus the Northerner, discouraged by events at home, could get but little solace from articles and editorials in English periodicals. Leslie Stephen, writing in *Macmillan's* at the end of 1862, attempted to explain the situation. The North, said he, had been less capable of affecting our sympathies than they otherwise would have been, because no great man had as yet shown himself capable of concentrating the popular admiration, and standing as a symbol of the cause. "President Lincoln is a benevolent, elderly gentleman with an unpleasant trick of setting his foot down in the wrong place . . . Neither Lincoln nor McClellan are men exactly qualified to stand as personifications of the strongest aspirations of a great people." No Garibaldi had yet appeared!

Much less sympathetic was the *Quarterly Review* in its explanation of the cause of the besetting difficulties. Its statements are worthy of exact quotation, partly because they fit in with this story, and partly because they are at such great variance with the interpretation of an Englishman—Lord Charnwood—whose recent writing has shown a remarkably fine appreciation of the ability displayed by Lincoln during this crisis.

But it is not only by driving from the field of politics its natural leaders that the American democracy has brought its present disasters upon itself. It is far more directly responsible. The incompetence of the President is the most conspicuous cause of the present calamities; and the incompetence of the President is the direct result of the mode in which he is chosen . . . With a man of Mr. Lincoln's incapacity and obstinacy, entrusted with the enormous prerogatives of an American President, the ablest public servant would have been powerless to save his country. No doubt he has been very inefficiently served. But if McClellan had been a Wellington, he would have done nothing under a superior who had laid it down, as the plan of his campaign, to disperse instead of concentrating his forces, and who put an empty braggart like Pope over his head, because he had "known him in the West." If Mr. Chase had been a Turgot, he could have done nothing with a master who had made up his mind not to levy a farthing of direct taxation till the elections for Congress were over.

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Developments of 1863 and 1864 need not detain us long. Although final victory was slowly coming, the difficulties of Lincoln at home were hardly diminishing. He and his counsellors, as is well known, were absolutely discouraged over the prospects of a re-election. In the English periodicals much the same kind of attack upon him and his government can be found for these latter two years as has been seen for 1861 and 1862. The *Saturday Review* still made remarks concerning "his extraordinary style, combining the homely jocosity of a backwoodsman with the grand eloquence of a sentimental novelist", and his "repetitions of every slang phrase in the American dialect", which to it indicated "something wrong in the state of political society, as well as the coarseness of the President's mind." The *Economist* in 1863 was still declaring that the attempt to conquer the South was hopeless, and in 1864 was proclaiming that the government's notorious and unprecedented corruptions had so disgusted the lovers of public purity and decency, its numerous acts of stupid and illegal tyranny had so alienated the lovers of liberty and constitutional right, its military incapacity had so disgusted all,—while its inconsistent, timid, and tentative proceedings on the slavery question had so alarmed and offended the democratic masses, without having given confidence or satisfaction to the hearty Abolitionists,—that a change of persons, if not an entire change of party, would seem to be imminent. Nor did it seem clear how Mr. Lincoln's and Mr. Seward's successors could alter the action of the government except in the direction of peace. Even after the re-election the *Economist's* remarks are far from flattering:

It is not even contended that Mr. Lincoln is a man of eminent ability. It is only said that he is a man of common honesty, and it seems this is so rare a virtue at Washington that at their utmost need no other man can be picked out to possess it and true ability also . . .

Mr. Lincoln has been honest, but he has been vulgar; and there is no greater external misfortune . . . than for a great nation to be exclusively represented at a crisis far beyond previous, and perhaps beyond future, example by a person whose words are mean even when his actions are important.

And the *Spectator*, for all its friendliness to the North, still lacked an adequate appreciation of its presiding official. It *did*, however, uphold him as against McClellan, and warned the middle class of England that it was committing a great blunder in desiring the election of the Democratic candidate. It *did* defend him—even while acknowledging him rough and uncultivated—against the superficial charges levelled at him in England. It *was* pleased that democracy won by the second election of Lincoln over autocracy. But it failed even yet to understand his peculiar ability of leadership, as can be seen from its comment on Lincoln immediately preceding and just after the second election:

Perhaps in the absence of that statesmanlike presence of mind and fertility of resource for which no one would give Mr. Lincoln any considerable credit, the greatest quality he has shown . . . is a certain naturalism of mind—closely connected perhaps, but not identical with, his high integrity,—which has enabled him to look at the position of the government and the movements of the popular feeling as if he stood outside both.

His re-election, while it has not taught him to write eloquently, or to conceal the process of slow thinking so visible between the lines of all his compositions, has made him a little more confident in the success of his own views, a little less apprehensive lest there should be any fatal divergence between the will of the electors and his own.

But it does redound to the honour of the *Spectator* that even before Lincoln's death it had changed its toward him, and in March, 1865, gave in a few sentences a remarkable depiction of his character. It is said of him that he

has grown in force of character, in self-possession, and in magnanimity, till in his last short message to Congress on the 4th of March we can detect no longer the rude and illiterate mould of a village lawyer's thought, but find it replaced by a grasp of principle, a dignity of manner, and a solemnity of purpose which would have been unworthy neither of Hampden nor of Cromwell, while his gentleness and generosity of feeling towards his foes are almost greater than we should expect from either of them.

It is apparent from the foregoing discussion, however, that, if we make exception of the *Spectator* which was influenced by the developments in the slavery situation, English magazines gave but slight expression to any shifting of opinion in favour of Lincoln before the end of the Civil War.

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The death of Lincoln, indeed, was an event of such nature that those periodicals which had changed their attitude toward him and the government which he represented could recede gracefully from their previous views. But it is interesting to see that, although many of the magazines which, in 1861, were absolutely hostile to Lincoln and the North now spoke kindly of him, they were unwilling to recognize his real greatness, and more unwilling still to be convinced that the Northern victory of the hour was proof of the worth of a democracy. The *Quarterly Review*, bitter in its hostility to democracy, lamented the death of Lincoln, so tragic—so piteous in every detail—which had combined to produce the strong feelings of indignation and sympathy within the country, and agreed that for a time it was proper to yield to a current of feeling and the generous impulse of human nature. Indeed, it went farther, and declared that no man ever played a part of the first importance in history who so little merited such a death. No ruler in possession of despotic power was ever so completely the reverse of a tyrant. The very weaknesses and defects of his character were of a nature to disarm personal resentment. Painstaking, domestic, full of quaint humour, striving with limited knowledge or capacity to do what seemed best at the moment, thrust into the midst of difficulties almost beyond the grasp of human intellect, he struggled on—"as he termed it, in his homely language, 'pegging away'"—until the world realized that under an uncouth exterior there was a large fund of shrewd sense and mother wit, with an entire absence of malice. An instinctive sense of this led all to shudder at his fate. He was an untutored child of nature, and the manner of his death seemed an outrage on nature, on mankind. But, it added, since expression has been fully given to these feelings, we must not permit truth to be sacrificed. The rule of Abraham Lincoln, as President of the United States, stands wholly apart from personal qualities, good or bad. That rule is proper matter for criticism, and must stand a keener test than that of sentiment. Respect is not to be paid to the memory of the dead by fulsome praise or falsification of history. Unfortunately, it is a proverbial expression—"to lie like an epitaph";

but no such license may be used where great principles and the destiny of millions of people are at stake,—and President Lincoln was another example of that deplorable rule, long enforced by the exigencies of the Union, which practically excludes all eminent and able men from the presidential office.

In the more kindly opinion of the *Saturday Review*, Lincoln, although known to have committed many mistakes, so far exceeded the anticipation of friends and enemies that his character might perhaps hereafter serve as an argument in favour of the American practice of selecting high functionaries at random. Above all, he had shown that he was capable of learning from his own errors and from the course of events. But this Conservative organ at the same time thought his last pronouncements unjust to the South and offensive to neutral governments, and still blamed him for the Emancipation Proclamation, though it proved to be only a manifesto.

The Tory *Blackwood's* acknowledged that Abraham Lincoln—boatman and splitter of logs—had steered the ship of State through difficulties and dangers which might have overpowered the statesmanship of a leader with more cultivated mind and less resolute conviction. By sheer pertinacity of purpose and simple-minded honesty, he had carried to victory the greatest cause in which an American statesman was ever engaged. And the sanctity of the grave had confirmed the victory. But it believed that his task had been as child's play compared with the work confronting Andrew Johnson.

The *Edinburgh Review*, which had not been so sharp in its criticisms in 1861, showed in the middle of the decade a decided lack of ability in interpreting affairs of the day. To it Lincoln seemed guided by no far-sighted views of policy or statesmanship, although his declarations and his actions had been marked by a sincerity and earnestness that slowly won the respect of statesmen and the affectionate sympathy of the people. But he had brought no genius to the task of government, even if his conscientious resolve to discharge his duty and to preserve the Union had given persistency to his efforts and vigour to his policy. Seward's administrative ability had compensated for the intellectual deficiency of his chief, and made no unimportant contribution to his success. Moreover Johnson, with equal honesty and greater dignity, was held to be a greater statesman than Lincoln. He lacked Lincoln's racy humour and universal sympathy, but in tact as a politician and in bearing as a ruler he far surpassed him. On the other hand, the *Economist* felt obliged to acknowledge that it

did not know from history such an example of the growth of a ruler in wisdom as was exhibited by Lincoln. And the *Westminster Review*, more nearly consistent in its friendliness, told its readers that humanity owed it to the long head and the stout heart of Abraham Lincoln that the earth at the moment of his death was not cursed with an empire having slavery as its corner stone.

Fortunate, indeed, was *Macmillan's* in the choice of the historian, Goldwin Smith, as an essayist to write of Lincoln's death. Knowing intimately the American people of his own day and the history of these people, as well as his own national history, he displayed a judgment which was remarkable in its accuracy:

The small country lawyer of Illinois has died lamented by the nations, and all that is most august in the world has paid its tribute to his grave. What is more, the best men among his own people feel that America has gained one more ideal character, the most precious and inspiring of national possessions. If it be so, the second of the two ideal characters bears a close resemblance to the first. The glory of Lincoln, like that of Washington, has nothing in it dazzling or grandiose; it is the quiet halo which rests round the upright, self-devoted, unwavering and unwearying performance of the hardest public duty. But its quiet light will shine steadily when many a meteor that has flamed in history has been turned, by the judgment of a sounder morality, to darkness.

The great President, Goldwin Smith asserted, had bided his time with patient sagacity, until he could strike slavery deliberately and legally the blow of which it died. "It struck him in return the blow which will make him live in the love of his nation and of mankind for ever." Another writer of the same issue was proud to belong to that "knot of fanatics and sciolists" whom the *London Times* in its great hostility to the North and Northern institutions, had continued to denounce.

More touching, perhaps, than the statement of continued appreciation on the part of those periodicals just mentioned, was the recantation of those which had made bitter attacks. The frank disavowal of *Punch*, which had gone so far as to use a gorilla-like caricature of Lincoln's features, has frequently met with favorable comment:

Besides this corps, that beats for winding sheet
The Stars and Stripes he lived to rear anew,
Between the mourners at his head and feet,
Say, scurril-jester, is there room for you?

Yes, he had lived to shame me from my sneer,
To lame my pencil and confute my pen—
To make me own this hind of princes peer,
This rail-splitter a true-born king of men.

And *Frazer's*, which had published the favourable writing of John Stuart Mill, but in certain other articles had been unkind, now came also; it confessed, to

Rush in to peer and praise when all is vain.

Its essayist became sympathetic even to the extent of wishing that a preceding article had been more tender. Its final pronouncement granted that democracy had gained a credit-mark with Europe for putting forth so distinctive a man as its representative:

Sir Launcelot . . . thou wert the kindest man that ever strooke with sword.