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Lincoln Admirers

Selected and arranged by HARRY J. LYTLE

If you wish to know the difference between an orator and an elocutionist — between what is felt and what is said — between what the heart and brain can do together, and what the brain can do alone — read Lincoln's wondrous speech at Gettysburg, and then the oration of Edward Everett. The speech of Lincoln will never be forgotten. It will live until languages are dead and lips are dust. The oration of Everett will never be read.

The elocutionists believe in the virtue of voice, the sublimity of syntax, the majesty of long sentences, and the genius of gesture. The orator loves the real, the simple, the natural. He places the thought above all. He knows the greatest ideas should be expressed in the shortest words — that the greatest statues need the least drapery.

Col. Ingersoll's ABRAHAM LINCOLN (1907).

There is no new thing to be said of Lincoln. There is no new thing to be said of the mountains, or of the sea, or of the stars. The years go their way, but the same old mountains lift their granite shoulders above the drifting clouds; the same mysterious sea beats upon the shore; and the same silent stars keep holy vigil above a tired world.

But to mountains and sea and stars men turn forever in unwearied homage. And thus with Lincoln. For he was mountain in grandeur of soul, he was sea in deep undervoice of mystic loneliness, he was star in steadfast purity of purpose and of service. And he abides.

Homer Hoch in House of Representatives. Feb. 12, 1923

The folk-lore Lincoln, the maker of stories, the stalking and elusive Lincoln is a challenge for any artist. He has enough outline and lights and shadows and changing tints to call out portraits of him in his Illinois backgrounds and settings — even had he never been elected President.

Sandburg's THE PRAIRIE YEARS (1926).

A touch of rusticity, contributed by his birth and environment, is to be found in much of his written work, but it enriched his personality and deepened his sympathy and imagination. But when his mind was moved to its highest points of feeling and sincerity, his expression took on a purity, an elegance, and an insight, which gave it the qualities of literature.

Robinson's ABRAHAM LINCOLN AS A MAN OF LETTERS

Gladstone left not a single piece of writing that has been given a place in the world's literature. . . . "Who ever reads Gladstone's speeches?" Lincoln's letter to Mrs. Bixby, on the other hand,

may be found on the walls of one of the colleges of Gladstone's own Oxford, placed there as a specimen of the purest English prose, and English schoolboys commit to memory Lincoln's "Gettysburg Address" as the finest speech of its kind ever written in the English language.

Dodge's ABRAHAM LINCOLN, MASTER OF WORDS (1924).

There is no man in the country so wise, so gentle and so firm. I believe the hand of God placed him where he is.

Hay's LINCOLN IN THE CIVIL WAR (1939).

Real education is the mastery of our own language as a tool for our use, the appreciation of words in their right meaning, a living through the experience of the race and making it our own experience. . . .

Though Lincoln always said his education was defective, it was the kind of education that every youth, man, and woman needs today, for it was a constant hunt for ideas, a continual process of self-education all through life. With all the contributions of our schools and higher institutions of learning, there is the constant peril that we shall confound schooling with education.

By Dr. John H. Findlay in a Lincoln day address.

It is a mistake to think of Mr. Lincoln as an uneducated man. The "kindergarten" and "primary" courses were taken in a Kentucky cabin, with his mother as "principal." Possibly he never learned at his school to make maps, but he did learn "manners and morals." At the age of nine he entered the academy to prepare for college. This "school of learning" was located in a "clearing" on his father's farm, a "little house in the woods" in the State of Indiana. Here his attention was first directed to "physical culture." This study he was not permitted to neglect. The "gymnasium" was well furnished with "apparatus" — axes, wedges, mauls, log-chains, cross-bars, swinging saplings, etc. Then came "nature study out on the campus." He found spring beauties and sweet williams, May-apples and purple grapes, and, out beyond, the prairie grasses and the wild rose. From these, from trees, shrub and plant, from form, color and perfume, came that sense of beauty embodied in those exquisite prose poems which we so much love to read. This branch of study included zoölogy. He learned the names of animals, their nature, habits, instincts, history and language. He knew when the birds mated and how they built their homes, and he learned well the lesson best worth learning from science — to be kind and gentle to all animals.

J. S. Ewing Address to Schoolmasters. Feb. 12, 1909