

# WAS ABRAHAM LINCOLN A SPIRITUALIST?

By

**NETTIE COLBURN MAYNARD**

First Published in 1917

## Contents

|  |    |
|--|----|
| Foreword.....                            | 2  |
| Author's Preface .....                   | 6  |
| I        Early Memories.....             | 8  |
| II       The Mystery Deepens .....       | 10 |
| III      Further Developments.....       | 13 |
| IV      Spiritualism & War .....         | 16 |
| V       Gladness & Sadness.....          | 23 |
| VI      First Meeting With Lincoln ..... | 26 |
| VII     We Make History.....             | 30 |
| VIII    Perilous Times.....              | 35 |
| IX      The Wounded & Dying.....         | 38 |
| X       Continued Services .....         | 41 |
| XI      Spiritual Advice .....           | 45 |
| XII     A Test Séance.....               | 47 |
| XIII    "Until My Work Is Done".....     | 50 |
| XIV     The Man Lincoln.....             | 53 |

## FOREWORD

In the "Preface to the First Edition", published in 1917, these words were printed, the only clue to the writer being the initials RCH.

"Abraham Lincoln was the most prominent President that America has known; his actions, official and unofficial, have been, for thirty years, the constant theme of biographers and historians, and the fondness of the Americans for him is as warm and widespread today as though he had died but yesterday.

"The statements contained in this volume regarding him are given to the public for the reason that they are not less true than surprising; and being so, they must see the light. Praise from some quarters is natural; censure from others is to be expected. Nevertheless, what is here written is truth, fact, *history*, and what is more, no man should question them. Should he do so, the field for adequate investigation is quite accessible.

"It is well known that from time to time stray notices on the subject of Lincoln and Spiritualism have appeared in various papers, not, however, in connection with any attempt on the part of the writers or editors to verify the same. For this reason we deemed it wise, before entering into this matter extensively, to examine the subject with deliberation and care. The fruits of this examination have placed upon record information of a remarkable character, which will have a marked bearing upon the history of Spiritualism and upon the literature of today.

"That Abraham Lincoln should have been a believer in, or follower of, Spiritualism, in any form, will be an unusual statement, and to use the words of a leading New York daily: 'If it can be proven that Abraham Lincoln was in any way connected with Spiritualism, or did take counsel from any medium at a time when the nation's weal or woe hung in the balance, or was in any manner governed by such counsel, it would be the literary event of the nineteenth century, and the most astonishing statement of modern times.'

"In February of this year, the writer had the good fortune to meet a gentleman who related that he knew from personal experience and contact that Abraham Lincoln was a Spiritualist, and implicitly believed in the guidance and teachings of that science and religion whichever it may be. He further stated that he attended a séance where the President with several other persons had sat upon a piano, and that the instrument had been bodily lifted from the floor by means of spirit power, while the President and his friends remained seated upon it!

"He further stated that he knew from personal knowledge that the President had been instructed and guided by spirits in times of particular stress in affairs of state, and that at a period when the nation's future was uncertain, and while the States were in the middle of the throes of a great civil war. He also stated that he knew of his own personal knowledge and experience that numerous Spiritualistic séances were held in the White House, and that they were frequented by many of the leading men of the time, who were then located in Washington.

"This gentleman's statement, being of such peculiar significance, the writer did not believe it. This recitation, however, caused the writer to become greatly interested in the subject from a purely historical standpoint, and, therefore, he immediately started

an investigation regarding the matter, the results of which he is now obliged to state, reveal to the world, matters of decided interest and importance, and which, as far as they are related in this volume, are capable of proof, and based upon circumstances of fact.

“The writer incidentally learned that Mrs. N.C. Maynard, of White Plains, New York, had resided in Washington during several years of the War of the Rebellion, and had upon numerous occasions given sittings for the President of the United States, his wife and friends who were present by invitation, and that she was preparing a record of these experiences, together with other incidents connected with an eventful life, for publication in book form.

“He suggested that as many of the statements therein were of a personal and unusual nature, revealing habits of character in many persons who were prominent before the nation, it might be well to have the accounts of circumstances verified as described, and affidavits secured from the persons who must necessarily constitute her witnesses, as to the truthfulness of her narrative, especially such persons as were living today, and were connected with the subject in any manner, and who would be willing to come forth and testify; to which suggestion she readily assented. Immediately thereafter investigation was commenced by the writer.

“The initiatory movement was to ascertain from those who resided in the neighbourhood of her home, or thereabouts, the character and standing of Mrs N. C. Maynard. He was informed by those who had known the family for a lengthy period, that her husband had been a resident of White Plains for twenty-five years, was cordially indorsed by many of the leading residents, was trustworthy and honourable, and had been doing business during the whole of that period in that village, and that he was a man noted for truthfulness, honesty, and general integrity of character.

“The family physician stated that he knew Mrs Maynard and had attended her for about fifteen years; that she is now a hopeless invalid, has been confined to her bed for nearly three years, and cannot possibly recover; that during his experience and contact with her, he has always found her to be an exemplary woman, but possessed of a peculiar organism and sensitiveness of condition, and likewise of some peculiar power of magnetism, which, to say the least, was unexplainable, and that nothing within the science of medicine could clearly explain her ‘psychic’ condition, or briefly, in common-place words: ‘We confess there is something about Mrs Maynard that we do not understand; we, however, believe her to be a thorough Christian woman of irreproachable character and antecedents.’

“Hon. Melville C. Smith, of New York city, a well known and responsible gentleman, informed the writer that he had known Mrs Maynard for more than thirty years, and had placed full confidence in her integrity of character, and of his own knowledge of her found her to be a very remarkable woman and possessed of a peculiar ‘psychic’ condition, which permitted her to see and foresee and comprehend that which could not be understood by ordinary people.

“Francis B. Carpenter, the distinguished artist, and the painter of the ‘Emancipation Proclamation’ which is in the Capitol at Washington, who is also the author of the *Inner Life of Abraham Lincoln*, and the painter and possessor of the last portrait in oil of Lincoln, a copy of which is in the frontispiece of this volume states:

“I have known Mrs Maynard for some years. She is a talented woman; I do not believe she would tell an untruth; she is a medium of remarkable quality.

“I am not prepared to state that Mr Lincoln was a Spiritualist. I do not know that he had a faith in spiritual comfort and believed that we were, in a measure, directed by spiritual teachers and guidance’.

“Mrs Daniel E. Soames, of Washington, wife of the late Hon Daniel E. Soames, Representative from Maine, in the thirty-sixth Congress, informed the writer that she attended séances at the White House during the war when Miss Colburn [Maynard] was the medium there, and upon one occasion met Major-General Daniel Stickles, and that the circumstances recorded as to that séance are fully described in this volume. This statement she fully and completely indorses; and further adds that her husband was closely and intimately connected with President Lincoln, and had repeatedly informed her of interesting and remarkable incidents which occurred at the White House at séances as herein described and mentioned. She also states that she knows Miss Colburn did not give séances in the White House for money.

“Col. Simon P. Case, of Philadelphia, states that he was present at a séance with Mr. Lincoln, and that he, with several other gentlemen, the President included, sat upon the piano, while it was lifted bodily from the floor by spirit power, and that Mr. Lincoln was not only interested in this physical phenomenon, but was also intensely interested in the statements which the medium made to President Lincoln while in a trance condition.

“Mrs Elvira M. Debuy, of Washington, stated to the writer: ‘My husband was a visitor to séances where Mr Lincoln was present, and he told me of many interesting occurrences which happened thereat...In the winter of 1862-3, I attended a séance at Mrs Laurie’s, at Georgetown, where Mrs Lincoln was present. She was accompanied by Mr Newton, Commissioner of Agriculture. At this séance remarkable statements were made by Miss Colburn [Maynard] which surprised Mrs Lincoln to such a degree that she asked that a séance might be given to Mr Lincoln...I have always known from my husband and others that Mr Lincoln attended circles and séances, and was greatly interested in Spiritualism.’

“Mrs Parthenis Colburn, whose name finds place in this volume, now resides at White Plains; she was with Mrs Maynard [Colburn] during 1862-3-4-5, and frequently visits the White House with Miss Colburn [Maynard] when Hon Daniel E. Somes and others were present, and she has filed with the publisher an affidavit made before the county clerk of the county of West Chester, N.Y., wherein she solemnly avers that the statements regarding her, found in this book, are true and fact in each and every particular. A similar affidavit is on file with the publisher made by Mrs Nettie Colburn Maynard, the writer of this book, taken by the county clerk of the county of West Chester, at her bedside, and attested by him in regular legal form.

“The publisher wishes it distinctly understood that the statements contained in this book are free from all bias or interest from any cause or purpose other than as an historical picture of the conditions and influences which were connected with, and had bearing upon, those turbulent times, which are known as ‘the War Years of the Rebellion’. He trusts that nothing in these prefatory remarks will be construed in any way to indicate an opinion, either for or against Spiritualism, and a decision whether Abraham Lincoln was or was not, a Spiritualist, must be reached by conclusion,

through and by the judgement of the individual reader, who will find this work of special and continuous interest, and, therefore, as the title is suggestive, and the information which the book conveys is extraordinary, it is perhaps pertinent to ask the question, as given in the title – ‘Was Abraham Lincoln a Spiritualist?’”

In preparing the present edition for publication, I decided to omit, albeit reluctantly, a great deal of interesting matter, simply because it was not germane to the book’s title. It seemed to me that now sixty years had elapsed the historical references to Lincoln were the most unimportant facts to be preserved. The earlier chapters, however, are valuable for their biographical nature and show how the medium was led to Lincoln.

The White House séances with the President were no secret. On March 7, 1891, the *Banner of Light*, an American Spiritualist journal, published a letter from Hudson Tuttle, a well-known author of psychic books, which included this statement regarding Nettie Colburn Maynard:

“For the last three years of the war she was constantly consulted by President Lincoln, and the communications he received through her were of the most astonishing character. The results of battles were foretold before the telegraphic despatches, and on several occasions advice was given and accepted, which, acted on, proved of momentous consequence.”

When the book was first published it had as a subtitle, *Curious Revelations from the Life of a Trance Medium*.

I am sure that you, the reader, will derive as much interest from this work as I found in preparing it for publication.

M.B.

## AUTHOR'S PREFACE

The reminiscences contained in this volume are given to the public from no desire to proselytise in the cause of Spiritualism.

School privileges were denied me through protracted illness in childhood, and home training did not prepare for authorship; therefore, I beg the indulgence of my readers.

The earnest solicitations of friends that I should place on record the important events in my experience as a medium led me to complete these papers in which, if they have no other merit, are related facts that can be verified by living witnesses. There may be some inaccuracy in dates, as the more prominent events occurred many years ago; but the circumstances as stated are correctly recorded.

Let it be distinctly understood that no claim is made that all persons named in connection with my mediumistic experiences in the White House at Washington, or elsewhere in the several circles of that city, were Spiritualists. I never asked, nor was told their views on the subject of Spiritualism. We met with consideration and kindness wherever invited, and were offered the same welcome and courteous attention extended to the other guests.

Comparatively few of the séances with the President are given, as a number took place with Mrs Lincoln alone as witness. I was not told of the revelations then made, for when in a trance state, I am unconscious and have no knowledge of what transpires or what I have said. But those recorded demonstrate that this great and good man did not hesitate to receive and weigh any suggestions for guidance, when given intelligently, however humble their apparent origin.

Some years ago, at the request of that scholarly writer, the late Prof. S.B. Brittan, I prepared a manuscript, which he had offered to edit for publication, but his death following shortly the manuscript was lost and never recovered. The present one has been prepared at intervals during the past three years by the aid of an amanuensis.

Confined to bed by rheumatism and given up to die by my physician, there have been comparatively few days in which I could dictate these pages; therefore, under such disadvantages, this work must necessarily be imperfect.

From the time that the gift of Mediumship was developed and I became conscious of spirit life, the messengers have never failed in guiding and guarding me under all circumstances. They have advised and directed me in worldly as well as spiritual matters, and in heeding their counsel it has always been well with me.

Of the power, beauty, and intelligence of these unseen guides, who led me, an unlettered girl, from the quiet home circle to the jubilee platform as a religious teacher, and thence through strange and varied experiences, to become the honoured guest of the ruler of our great nation, during the most memorable events in its history, I have given no adequate evidence in these pages.

Looking back over my life, it is a source of undying joy to recall the scenes where I have been the instrument in the hands of the spirit world to carry health to the sick and peace to the sorrowing, and to kindle the light of hope where reigned the darkness of despair. It brings me that peace that passeth understanding, to remember that by the aid of this precious gift I have brought comfort to the bedside of the dying, and more

than once have stayed the suicidal hand; while many souls wandering in the paths of sinfulness have been reclaimed and brought back to a life of virtue and honour. It is also gratifying that the ties of friendship formed in many households, twenty-five or thirty years ago, are still unbroken.

That the memory of my work as a spirit medium is tenderly cherished, and is proven by the letters of kind sympathy that I so frequently receive; but sweeter far than all these memories is the ministry of angels to me in my helplessness and suffering as I now lie upon a bed from which *I may not hope to rise in this life*. The spirit of my dear mother comes and goes before my spiritual vision as plainly as she appeared to my mortal eyes when living. And I find strength and comfort from the dear ones who wait unseen by my side until I can in truth say, 'Death' has lost its 'sting' and 'grave' its 'victory'.

I thank God that this spirit knowledge is spreading broadcast through all lands; that mediums with more perfect gifts than mine are developing each day, to carry to all who will receive glad tidings of a *demonstrated* immortality.

NETTIE COLBURN MAYNARD

White Plains, New York,

September, 1891.

## CHAPTER 1

### EARLY MEMORIES

Omitting the preliminary description of my surroundings of my early childhood and the conditions of birth and similar matters, it will interest the reader to enter without delay upon the story, which leads up to the events to which all interest in this volume must attach.

One evening in the winter of 1845, in the town of Bolton, Conn., where my father's family resided, we were sitting about the large old-fashioned kitchen-table, which was lighted by means of oil lamps, in common use by all country people in those days. The room was a large square one, having in one corner a door, which led to the rooms above, its only fastening an iron latch, which held it in place.

While the murmur of conversation was going on, we were suddenly startled by a sound which resembled the noise produced by hurling a heavy log down the stairway against the door here mentioned. There was no mistaking the locality, as the sound was sufficiently loud to shatter the door, which it would have done had it been caused by means which the noise indicated, and by any *object* capable of making so *crashing* a sound.

Not one of the half-dozen persons seated at the table moved for some few seconds following; their startled, white faces testifying to their consternation. Before anyone had spoken the sound was repeated with equal force, and seemed to jar the entire room. This time, my mother, who was a fearless woman under ordinary circumstances, pale and trembling, took up a lamp to investigate the matter. She had scarcely risen, with face towards the door, when the noise was repeated for the third time. Not hesitating, but with blanched face, holding the light aloft, she threw open the stairway; not a sound, not an object answered her look and voice. Utter silence reigned in the chambers above.

Father was absent at the time, and our nearest neighbour was more than a quarter of a mile away. However, my sisters, who were grown to womanhood, followed by myself, went with my mother throughout the entire building, to find no intruder of any sort, nor could we find any evidence of the cause of the peculiar noises. As we returned to the kitchen the large clock on the high mantelpiece *struck eight*.

Three days later, while the matter was the subject of constant conversation, we received news of the death of my father's mother, who died at Stafford Springs, at *eight o'clock of the day of our strange experiences*.

The time elapsing between the stairway noises and the striking of the hour, we afterwards ascertained, was the exact difference between grandfather's watch and our clock; we, therefore, knew that *at the time* of the stairway noises grandmother had *passed to the great beyond*, and that period of departure was precisely ten minutes before eight o'clock. My grandfather, from this time forward to that of his death, was a member of our household.

In the early fall of 1849, while residing near the Coventry line, I was lying ill with typhus fever, close to death. On this evening, which I am about to mention, my condition was better. Father and an older sister were seated in the room playing a game of checkers, while near them looking on sat mother.

They were very quiet lest I might be disturbed. Directly fronting me stood the clock, which was of the old Bristol pattern, with iron weights. It had not been wound for more than a year, and the cord which up-held the 'strike-weight' was broken. At once, amid the stillness, *the clock struck one*.

The effect was electrical. Father, more astonished than frightened, sprang to his feet, and opened the clock door to find the wire still vibrating. In the face of the presence of the long broken cord, there was no method to account for the striking. The game of checkers was never finished, and I was wearied with questions as to my welfare-my family believing that this was but a strange herald of my departure.

Three weeks later, and after I had recovered, my grandfather received a slight paralytic attack while descending the stairs; mother helped him to bed, administering some medicine, which quieted him for a time. She soon after was called to his bedside, when he told her that 'Millie [his deceased wife] *has just been here*; to which mother replied, 'You have been dreaming.' 'No,' he said, 'she bent over me, calling me by name, and put her cold hand upon my side; I felt it.'

Finding that he could not be dissuaded from this thought she changed the subject. A few days after this incident, my father arose very early for the purpose of cleaning the elevated oven belonging to an old stove, and while in the yard vigorously shaking it, was startled by the noise of three strokes upon the corner of the house below the eaves - so distinct that the sound could be exactly located. He at once went into the house to the room where my grandfather lay, directly within the spot where the noise occurred, only to find grandfather peacefully sleeping.

Finding no one about, it occurred to him that the noises were surprising. On going to mother's room he informed her, but she induced him to believe he was mistaken and to return to his work, which he did. Whereupon, taking up the oven, he heard an exact *repetition* of the noises *in the same place*. He sought in vain for a solution of the mystery; when *again*, for the third time, the noise was repeated. He afterwards confessed that he was unnerved for the day.

For a week or more following this occurrence, grandfather appeared saying he did not feel well and wished mother to serve him a cup of tea. I went with mother to his room, and found him sitting up in bed breathing heavily; he desired me to send for Amasa (my father, who had left him an hour previous), saying, 'I am going to die, *for Millie has called me again*.' Mother sent for father and comforted grandfather. Within half an hour, and before father returned, grandfather had joined the voice that called him, and was with her in the great beyond, without the shadow of death.

As will be seen by the date (1845), I was a mere child, and Spiritualism was comparatively unknown to the world and *entirely unknown*, I am quite sure, in our little old-fashioned village; but in after years, when we heard of spirit manifestations, we came to know that these results were the attempts at communication on the part of our spirit friends.

## CHAPTER II

### THE MYSTERY DEEPENS

In the year 1855 we resided with my parents in the city of Hartford, Conn. One day, during the summer of that year, my father related at the dinner table certain strange phenomena that he had witnessed at the warerooms of the firm of Elton and Deming, furniture dealers of that city, and stated that a young man, hardly thirty years of age, of slight build, possessed a wonderful gift whereby he could move the heaviest pieces of furniture about the building, by simply laying his fingers upon them and requesting them to follow him; that he had done this repeatedly during the forenoon; and that a heavy secretaire, to move which required the strength of four or five men, would move across the floor with perfect ease if he but placed his fingertips thereon, requesting it to follow him.

He said the young man could do this at any time and place, and he wished to arrange with him to pass an evening at our house, that my mother and the family might witness these curious phenomena. Two evenings later he came and proceeded to demonstrate his ability, making no explanation whatever of the strange power he seemed to possess. We were all soon seated about the dining table, following his directions by placing our hands flatly upon the surface.

In a few moments the table began rocking to and fro, and the united force of all present was unable to prevent its motions. Instructing my father what to say, he began questioning the table as if it possessed intelligence; the motion ceased and a loud, distinct rap was heard whose source we sought in vain; but to all questions it responded quickly and with a decided intelligence that denoted that it understood all that was spoken.

At last the young man spoke and said the raps were so clear and distinct, and the power apparently so great, that there must be others present possessing this gift (as he termed it); and upon asking the question of this unseen intelligence of this fact a quick response in the affirmative was given. On further inquiry it stated that I possessed the gift in a marked degree; it also declared that my mother and eldest brother possessed the same gift, but not to the same extent. Many strange things were rapped out in response to questions, and the intelligence claimed to be my grandfather, and many names were spelled of deceased friends and relatives of whom the young man could have had no possible knowledge.

This curious manifestation ended by his requesting the power to display its force by turning the table bottom upwards; *which was done*, it being carefully raised clear from the support and laid flat upon the floor with the legs upwards without any hand thereon save his own. The name of this young man was Thomas Cook. I have never met him, or heard of him since that time. The matter afforded material for conversation for a few days and was forgotten.

A year later a young acquaintance came into our house and excitedly asked me if I knew anything about spirit-rapping. In surprise, I said 'No', when she related the astonishing fact that some friends were visiting at her house, and their little fifteen months' old baby was what they called a 'spirit medium'. When the little thing was seated at a table, in its high chair, curious manifestations would occur, such as dishes

moving without visible contact, the table rising and falling, and loud raps being heard in different parts of the room.

She further stated that every morning since their arrival they would find that during the night furniture of the house had been displaced, pictures removed from the walls, and many other peculiar occurrences took place for which no one could account, save that this invisible agency had been at work while all in the house had been sleeping. She concluded her strange story by saying, 'And the spirits say I am a medium'. As she uttered the words, I recollected the curious séance of the year before, when the same statement had been made about myself; and instantly I said, 'Oh, yes. I know all about it, for I witnessed something of this myself, and they told me also that I am a medium.'

We were both mere children, and comprehended nothing of the magnitude of the subject of which we were speaking, but with the egotism of inexperience and the love of novelty peculiar to the young, were anxious to know more concerning this power we were said to possess. My friend Eunice instantly proposed that we sit down and see if we could make a hall lamp-stand move. Retiring to my own room, we sat down by a stand, placed our hands upon it, as I remembered we had done on the only occasion in which I had witnessed the manifestations of this strange phenomenon, and sat patiently waiting for something to happen. During this time, my mother entered the room and we told her what we were doing; she stood by us and listened, but no sound or movement rewarded our patience. At the end of half an hour, wearied with sitting in silence, we abandoned the effort.

The next day she came to see me, full of excited interest, repeating marvels of the day before, and saying that spirits had directed that we should sit again. This we did, and for another half an hour sat patiently silent and listening, placing our hands upon the stand, but nothing rewarded our efforts. This was repeated day after day for a week, as every day Eunice would return, directed to do so, as she affirmed, by the spirits, as they manifested themselves through the infant, the little child at her house. Being but children ourselves, we became weary of these repeated failures, and on the last occasion I asserted, 'If nothing comes this time, I will not sit again and they need not ask me to.'

We had scarcely seated ourselves and placed our hands upon the table, when three loud raps sounded beneath our fingers. We sprung up in affright, upsetting the chairs in our excitement, and rushed from the room. My mother, hearing the confusion, met us, and we explained; she thereupon persuaded us to go back and try again, she going with us. At this moment my father entered the house, and feeling encouraged by his presence, we sat down, when the raps came readily, responding to any and all questions, stating distinctly that I was the medium for this particular form of manifestation, and desiring that I sit at regular intervals, as they desired to use me to make revelations to the world to demonstrate the truth of immortality. (1)

From this time forward, on all occasions when it seemed proper and right so to do, this power would manifest itself, and I could readily obtain responses to questions. The development of this curious gift naturally drew attention and brought many visitors to our house.

For nearly a year after this curious development, I was engaged almost every evening, either at my own home or at the homes of those who sought me out, exercising this

new gift; people came from near and far to have me sit at the table for them, as they claimed to receive surprising revelations from deceased relatives of whom I could have no possible previous knowledge.

Just at this time the exciting campaign between James Buchanan and John C. Fremont was at its height. My father was a staunch Vermont man, and, as a matter of course, what interest I could have in such a matter would manifest in sympathy with his ideas, although I was too young and inexperienced to understand clearly either side of the questions at issue.

The day before the election excitement and feeling ran high. A number of guests were at dinner, and my father was affirming his confidence in the election of his candidate, when my hand was seized by a power I could not control and was violently shaken. I was frightened, and knew not what to do, trying to hold my right hand still with my left. My father watched me for an instant; then quickly taking his pencil from his pocket, he placed a piece of paper hastily before me and the pencil in my right hand. Instantly the name 'Buchanan' was scrawled upon the paper; as it was written, loud raps came upon the table.

With a startled look, he questioned; 'Do you mean us to understand that Buchanan will be elected tomorrow?' The response came quickly in the affirmative, distinct and loud. *The result of the morrow's election verified the prediction.* This was the first time my hand was ever used for mechanical writing; but from that day forward, by sitting quietly with pencil in my hand resting upon the paper, it would be mechanically moved; and many pages were thus written without any volition on my part. I could converse while this writing was going on, evidencing that I had no control whatever over it. This phase of my gift, continued at various times and occasions, excited much interest, and our quiet home was constantly besieged by eager inquirers, who wished to witness these peculiar manifestations.

(1) My father tested the matter in a systematic manner, having me stand away from the stand, after first examining it upon all sides, and then repeating the question in many forms for an hour or more. When he became fully convinced and satisfied that the answers were from an intelligent unseen power, who could give him messages from his dead friends, and the names and dates which I did not know, he seemed completely overcome, and, bowing his head upon his hands, wept like a child. We were all alarmed at this, and mother placed her hand upon his head, saying, 'Father, what is the matter?' For a moment he could not reply, but, mastering his emotions, said feelingly; 'You do not realise what this is to me; for years you know that I doubted the immortality of man, for I could not accept the common teachings, as they were not based on evident proofs that satisfied my mind; but if this is true, and from the evidences before my eyes I cannot doubt that it is, *'then we are immortal beings, and life has some object beyond the mere object of living'*; and this child has brought me more than all the wealth of the world can give.

## CHAPTER III

### FURTHER DEVELOPMENTS

Some time after this I was invited, with a number of others, to attend a séance at the home of my sister, Mrs Walker. Amongst the guests present was Thomas H. Seymour, who had been Governor of the State, and who also held many other offices under our Government. I was seated at the table with my sister and a number of others, when the rappings were heard, and my hand was moved to write a message to someone in the room. As the pencil dropped from my fingers, Governor Seymour, who was standing behind me, laid his hand upon my head, and in a moment a quiet, dreamy feeling stole over me, and a prickly sensation passed through my fingers and along my arms. This is the last I remember until an hour later when I awoke in a different part of the room, finding myself seated on the sofa with the company gathered about me.

It appeared that I had been completely entranced, had personated different individuals who were known to be in the spirit world, and had spoken to a number present, giving messages that were recognised as from deceased friends; the parties thus addressed being entire strangers to me. Of these messages, or their import or significance to those to whom given, I had no recollection whatever. The time had been a blank, and my awakening impressed me as simply being aroused from a natural sleep, with the exception of a return of the prickly sensation in my arms which gradually left me, and I was conscious of no ill effects from this new and strange experience.

From this time forward, whenever I sat down for the purpose of writing, or getting the raps, I would, when it seemed desirable, be entranced, and communications be given, and on occasions when large companies were present, some influence would take possession of me and deliver what seemed to be an address upon matters pertaining to the welfare of the human family, so full of instruction as to satisfy the most sceptical, and so complete that it could not have originated with myself.

It was in this way that I became invested with my strange gift of mediumship. It came to me in a sense unsought and took me, an untaught child, from my humble home in the ranks of the labouring people, and led me forth, a teacher of the sublime truth of immortality, opening to me the doors of the wealthy and the prominent, as well as leading among the poor and lowly, speaking through my unconscious lips words of strength and consolation, suited to all conditions, until everywhere, from the farmer's quiet fireside to the palatial city mansion, I found only words of welcome and kindly care.

Late in the fall of 1856 a large company were gathered at my father's house, and among them a gentleman by the name of Welch. On this occasion I had been controlled to deliver a lecture upon some religious subject, and when the séance was over, Mr. Welch asked my father to permit me to deliver a lecture in a public hall, saying I ought to be upon the rostrum teaching, and that if he would consent he would make every arrangement and provision for the same. My father half reluctantly consented. For myself I refused to do this unless a friend whose acquaintance I had made some time previously, would accompany me and share in the exercises. This young girl was Miss Flavia Howe of Windsor, Conn., herself a fine medium, giving much of her time to clairvoyant examinations of the sick. Mr. Welch visited her

home; she consented to join me; and he then engaged a hall in Pequannock, Conn., and freely advertised the lecture which took place on Christmas Eve.

In those days Spiritualism was an unpopular theme; yet, notwithstanding the public prejudices, the pleasant hall was filled with a curious company of anxious to hear a trance-speaker expound the new doctrine. On the rostrum were seated Mr. Welch, the presiding elder of the occasion; a Dr. Norton of Hartford, a clairvoyant physician; Miss Flavia, and myself. I shall never forget the sinking sensation I experienced, and how my heart palpitated in facing the sea of faces on this my first public appearance. I felt I should never become passive enough, or still the violent throbbings of my heart sufficiently to enable the unseen intelligence to obtain control. I felt the colour come and go in my cheeks, and experienced all the trepidation of stage fright that could characterise a novice for the first time facing a critical multitude. My young companion Flavia was not so troubled, as she knew many of those present, there being a large number from her village, Pequannock, which is part of the town of Windsor, where she was likewise well acquainted.

Dr. Norton, being a man past middle age and having been long before the public in the capacity of clairvoyant physician, had full possession of his nervous system. Mr. Welch stepped forward to the front of the stage and requested those that could to join in singing some familiar hymn. He said it would assist conditions. Very soon, a thin, quavering voice started the familiar line: "When I can read my title clear," which was soon joined from the other side of the hall by a strong voice with a decided nasal tone, one after another joining in. The chorus was full and strong by the time the first verse was ended.

Some of the comical features of this attempt at creating "conditions" occurring to my mind, diverted me for the moment from the part I was expected to play in the evening's entertainment. This moment was evidently improved by my unseen friends, as I immediately lost consciousness of what was passing around me and knew nothing further until an hour and a half later, when the exercises were over. It seemed that my friend Flavia had been used to open the meeting with a beautiful invocation, after which our spirit friends had taken me to the front of the rostrum and delivered an address from the text, "Can anything good come out of Nazareth?" The text had been suggested by the fact that many unkind remarks had been made throughout the town regarding the forthcoming meeting, saying there would be no good in it, as it had all been originated among people no one knew anything about, etc. At the conclusion of the address, which I learned was frequently applauded as it progressed, Dr. Norton was controlled to pronounce the benediction, and the meeting was dismissed.

Many crowded around me with congratulations, asking me questions regarding my strange gift. My father, and mother, both being present, were questioned regarding me and the advantages I must have had to be able to speak with such fluency and readiness on matters supposed to be only discussed by learned divines or those who made such subjects a life study. My youth forbade the belief that I had studied for *any length of time upon any subject*, and when my father assured them that my fragile health from childhood had prevented me receiving even the most ordinary instruction that girls of my years were supposed to enjoy, the wonder increased. For myself, I was simply pleased with the novelty of the position and pleasant life that seemed to open before me.

On this same day a gentleman partially engaged me to speak in a church in Windsor the next evening. After consulting my friend Flavia and getting her to promise to join me therein, I agreed to accept. The scenes of this occasion were a repetition of those of the last evening, and at its close a gentleman from Warehouse Point, who was present in the audience, engaged me to speak in that village one evening the following week. This engagement I also kept, accompanied by my young friend Flavia. At this gathering a gentleman was present, whose home was Winsted, Conn., and who on this occasion arranged with me to lecture every two Sundays, for three months thereafter, in the town of Winsted. Still feeling timid about going so far from home, I persuaded the parents of my friends to let her remain my companion. This she became, and my career as a public lecturer was fully inaugurated.

## CHAPTER IV

### SPIRITUALISM AND WAR

I was lecturing in Albany, in April, 1861, when the war of the Rebellion broke out. It is well known that the northern people expected that the President's first call for troops to the number of 75,000 men would quickly end the "little fuss" down south, and that, taken all in all, the war would soon be over. The first battle of Bull Run made the northern people acquainted with the fact that no easy victory awaited them. At the close of my evening lecture, the Sunday following this disastrous battle to the north, a gentleman asked this question: "How long will this conflict continue?" Our spirit friends made the reply, "That it would continue four years, and that it would require five practically to end it." This was a distinctly prophetic statement which after events fully verified.

At the time no one believed or supposed it possible that a war could be maintained in this country for that length of time, particularly an internal war, and the statement of the spirits created much discussion.

More than a year had passed away. I was still speaking for the society when I was summoned home to bid a brief farewell to my father and brothers, all four of whom had enlisted and were about to start for the front. After much consideration it was decided best for my mother to break up her home and return with me to Albany to remain until my father's return, if he should be so fortunate as to escape the ill fortunes of war. The last evening, before the company in which my father and brothers were enlisted started for the front, we passed together at the house of a friend, and a parting circle was held. Our spirit friends gave us every encouragement, assuring us that they foresaw that all four would return in safety to their homes.

A spirit purporting to be a Dr. Bamford, whom my father had known in earlier years, controlled me, and in his quaint "down East" dialect assured my father that the next time he had the pleasure of talking with him would be on Virginia soil. This astounding statement surprised all present, and none more so than myself, when informed of his words; for I had no possible way of visiting the army, no desire to do so, and had no thoughts of any conditions that could by chance bring about a meeting with my father in that distant State. However, time passed on.

(In August, 1862, while my friend, Miss Hannum, and myself were sitting in our room in Albany, a powerful influence came over me, and I was "controlled" to speak to her for nearly an hour, the purport of which was that there was a "congress of spirits" in the spirit life, composed of the leading public men who had passed away from earth, who were still interested in and guiding with care the affairs of the nation as perfectly as in their power; that it was imperatively necessary that they should communicate with President Lincoln; and they desired me to make arrangements to go to Washington and seek an immediate interview with him, assuring us that we would be well received and kindly treated; and that we should tell the President how we came to visit him, assuring us that we would have no cause to regret immediate obedience. When I awoke and learned the purport of the message we talked over the matter earnestly, but could not bring ourselves to follow the suggestion; and although the matter was repeatedly referred to by our spirit friends thereafter, we refused to comply with their wishes then, which fact was due to a knowledge of unpleasant experiences which had been the reward of other Spiritualists who had followed

similar directions, and who encountered woeful disappointments; and we therefore concluded that two bedraggled young damsels upon a spiritual mission would find but poor reception in the presence of the first ruler of the land.)

It was in the following November, the first week of the month, that I received two letters in the same mail, one from Washington A. Danskin, Baltimore, Md., asking me to speak for his society during the following month, December; the other from my youngest brother, who informed me that he was sick in the hospital at Alexandria, and that unless he could obtain a furlough and reach home and receive the care needed he would certainly die; that it was impossible to obtain a furlough save through the actions of friends. The letter from my brother decided me to accept the proffered engagement in Baltimore. I laid the case before the officers of our society, and they willingly released me from my duties; and leaving my mother and Miss Hannum together, housekeeping, as we had been since my father's enlistment, I started for Baltimore.

During the first week of my stay in Baltimore I made inquiries regarding the presence of any Spiritualists in Washington through whose aid I would be able to undertake my difficult mission regarding my brother. I was informed that Thos. Gales Foster, a well-known and most eminent speaker in our ranks, had recently taken a position as clerk in the War Department, and that he had resided with his family in that city. Obtaining a letter of introduction to him, I made my way to Washington and presented myself at Mr. Foster's house. I was given a most cordial welcome and a place in the household, to remain until the result of my proposed efforts could be known.

The following day, Mr. Foster presented me to the then Assistant Secretary, Mr. Tucker. I told him what my brother had written, and expressed a desire to go to him at Alexandria. He heard me kindly, gave me an order for a pass, and directed where to obtain it. Everybody knows that all official business in the city of Washington is transacted between the hours of nine in the morning and three in the afternoon. By the time this had been accomplished it was too late to think of going to Alexandria that day. The next morning Mr. Foster accompanied me to the office where I was given a permit, and going on board the Alexandria boat I was soon at my destination. A number of rickety-looking vehicles standing on the wharf bore the legend, "To the Camp".

Entering one of them I was driven to the broad gates leading to the encampment. A sea of tents arose on every side; it looked like a vast city of white canvas. I confess to a feeling of timidity and dread; but, approaching a sentry, inquired for the Connecticut Division, as I had been advised at Washington. Every kindness and politeness were shown me, and I was passed from hand to hand until I reached the tent of the Commanding Officer of the Connecticut troops quartered there in the hospital. I stated my errand, and desired to see my brother. The officer in charge treated me with consideration, and told me he would give me the use of his tent for our meeting, as the quarters of the men were hardly suitable for a lady to enter. In a few moments he returned with my brother, who was leaning heavily upon his cane, and whose appearance fully proclaimed his debilitated condition. I leave the reader to judge of the meeting that followed; nor did it at the time seem strange that I, a mere girl in years, was there amid that vast array of tents filled with sick and weary soldiers, alone and unguarded save by that same power that had thus far tenderly guided my life.

My brother informed me that the routine requisite for the examination before the board of surgeons that daily met on the hill was the issuing number of tickets, and as the numbers were called, the holders were brought before the board, examined, and either remanded back to their quarters or recommended to a furlough. He stated that he had many times received a ticket, but his number was never reached before the board adjourned.

Leaving with him the fruit I had brought, and bidding him to be of good cheer, I walked up the hill to the modern brick house on its' summit where the surgeons' headquarters were established. I inquired for Dr. Curtis, and was informed very curtly "that he could not be seen." Feeling timid in the presence of so many pert young officers, who seemed to be doing nothing, I stated the case of my brother. His name was taken down, and I was informed that he should have a ticket in the morning, which would bring him before the board of examination. Feeling that I had achieved all that was necessary I returned to my brother, and informed him of the result. He said, "It will do me no good, Nettie; it is only a repetition of what has happened every day for weeks past." I replied, "I will be down tomorrow and see." Returning to Washington by the last boat, my friends were informed of my work and its results. They felt confident of my success, feeling I was being led "*by those who would insure success.*"

That evening quite a number of people gathered at Mr. Foster's, and we held a spiritual séance. I was introduced to quite a number of prominent people, among them the Hon. D.E. Somes, ex-member of Congress from Biddeford, Maine; Mr. Cranston Laurie, for many years statistician for the Post Office Department, and a Judge Hoar of the Interior Department.

Mr. Foster became entranced and gave us one of his grandly eloquent discourses, and at its close he turned to me and assured me that success awaited my efforts in regard to my brother, BUT THAT, "I HAD OTHER AND GREATER WORK TO DO IN THAT CITY." I thought very little at the time, of the latter part of his prediction, my mind being wholly centred on the purpose of getting brother home. The next day I returned to Alexandria and found that the board of examining surgeons had met and again adjourned after examining a number of patients. Brother had received his ticket, but his name had not been called. He was disappointed and disheartened. I again visited the Headquarters of Surgeon-General Curtis, and explained that my brother's case had not received attention. I was treated politely, but in a manner that showed me that no interest was taken in the affair. Amid the thousands around them one case was of no more interest than another. Feeling for the first time somewhat apprehensive, I returned to Washington. This being Friday, I was compelled to return to Baltimore on Saturday, to be in readiness for Sunday's labour in that city.

On Monday morning, by an early train, I returned to Washington. On reaching the home of my friends, the Fosters, I found that Mr. Foster had already gone to his office in the War Department. I therefore awaited his coming home to dinner before taking any further steps. He counselled that I should see Assistant Secretary Tucker, and state the case to him. As it was then too late in the day to do so, I was obliged to defer my call on the secretary until the next day.

During the evening we had a quiet, pleasant circle whereat Mr. Foster informed me that during my entrancement I was controlled by a powerful spirit, who, in Mr. Foster's language, appeared to know exactly what he was about, and that this influence declared that my efforts in regard to my brother would be successful and that he could be on his way home in twenty-four hours, depending upon my following the spirit's direction, which was to go to Abraham Lincoln and say to him that I had been directed to come, as a crisis in affairs was approaching and that he had important revelations to make, which would aid him materially in an adjustment. The spirit gave assurance that I should be well received, and that Mr. Lincoln would simplify the matter of my brother's requirements and relieve me of further anxiety, and if I did not follow the spirit's directions I would meet with many disappointments and annoyances, as it was then decided that I should not leave Washington until the spirit had obtained the desired interview with Mr Lincoln before the dawn of the new year, and *with* or *without* my consent that he would bring about such a meeting in his own way.

Mr. Foster talked with me long and earnestly with me on the subject, and I told that I had once before been directed in a similar manner to seek the President- of my sensitiveness in the matter, giving the reasons for not obeying. I added that I felt Mr. Lincoln would be justified in handing me over to the police, as an escaped lunatic, should I go to him upon so strange an errand. At that time Mr. Foster did not know President Lincoln, but had seen him many times; he nevertheless assured me that I should not hesitate, and offered to go with me if I would obey the spirit's direction. I again flatly refused, which afterwards had good cause to regret.

Reaching the office at ten o'clock the next day, my disappointment was great to find Mr. Tucker was not at his office. I waited an hour, but still he did not come, and leaving, returned at two o'clock, when he received me with the same kindly manner that had characterised him from the first; and, having heard my story, he took up the white envelope lying upon his desk, and rapidly wrote the following words: "The surgeon commanding will give his immediate attention to the case of A.S.Colburn, sixteenth Conn. Regt. Per order Secretary of War." Folding this envelope, he handed it to me, saying: "I think this will be all you require." The following morning I started for Alexandria. I found no change in the situation, save that my brother was more feeble, and I went at once to headquarters and inquired for Dr. Curtis.

I was told he had returned to the city; that it was impossible to see him or any of his staff. Not knowing the all-potent weapon I carried in my pocket, in the shape of a simple envelope, I retreated before the forbidding appearance of the clerks, who had come to remember me and my frequent application. Going to my brother, I comforted him as well as I could, promising him I would come by an earlier boat on the next day.

Thursday saw me again at Alexandria, and on this occasion I was told that no more sessions were to be held at this camp; that the camp was about to be moved to new quarters, several miles distant; and that the board would not meet again at this point. Feeling sick and discouraged, it required all my powers of mind and body to encourage my brother and bid him hope for some more favourable turn in affairs. Leaving him with the delicacies I had brought, hoping to tempt his appetite, I returned to Washington, dispirited and disheartened. Mr. Foster advised me to see Mr. Tucker in the morning. On Friday morning I presented myself before him, and the sight of my

rueful face caused him to ask with some concern if my brother was released. I stated to him the discouragement I had met with. He then quietly asked me, "Did you show any of the officials the paper which I gave you?" I looked up in surprise and said, "No, sir! I have it in my pocket now." A quiet smile broke over his face, and he said: "I can do nothing more than that for you. You go back today," and looking at his watch he said, "You will have time to catch the boat. Go to Gen. Curtis's headquarters, and present that paper; I think that is all you will need to do."

A little more hopeful, I was soon on my way down the river. Entering the campground, I was startled to find a scene of desolation and desertion that is nowhere equalled save, it may be, on a deserted battlefield. Where, the day before, had been a sea of tents, extending as far as the eye could reach over the rolling hillside, only a cluster here and there remained; but the ground was strewn with the evidences of the late encampment. Little chimneys of blackened brick rising on every side of the trampled earth, the worn-out canteen, and the general debris of the deserted camp met the eye in every direction. Going to my brother's quarters, I found that he, with a number of others, had been left behind, there not being room in the ambulances to carry all, or he would have been removed that day to the new hospital grounds in the interior. Without shelter, they must wait until the following day before they could follow in the wake of their late companions. Frightened at the situation and his shelterless state, with every evidence of a threatening storm, I hurried to the house on the hilltop, where there were still signs of life and activity.

On this occasion, as the clerk was about to uncivilly pass me by, I presented the paper Secretary Tucker had given me. He took it from my hand, read it, and his face turned scarlet. His cap was off in a moment, and, bowing most politely, he said: "Please take a seat, madam; we will see what can be done." In an instant, all was changed. Three or four surgeons were immediately at my command. They informed me that while it was a little irregular, yet, they, being regular army surgeons, had power to examine and decide upon his case. My brother was immediately sent for. An impromptu board was formed, and he was thoroughly examined, and I received at the hands of these polite officers a strong recommendation of a furlough for my brother. They asked me if they should forward it to Washington. I asked if it would do any harm for me to carry it and present it in person. They said, "No harm whatever; it might expedite matters somewhat." As this was what I desired, I took the document, encased in a white official envelope, and retreated from their presence in triumph.

I was beginning to learn the power of those magical words, "PER ORDER OF THE SECRETARY OF WAR." The colonel of an Indiana regiment, stationed just under the hill, offered shelter and care for my brother until the result of the application for the furlough should be known. Leaving him for the first time hopeful, and full of visions of home, I returned to the city with my precious paper.

The next day, at nine o'clock, I was obliged to return to Baltimore, to meet my Sunday's engagement. The following Monday I returned to Washington, and going at once to Secretary Tucker's room, showed him my paper, and explained how quickly the paper he had given me had changed the state of affairs. He quietly smiled, and taking another envelope wrote upon it these words: "Gen. Heintzelman will please give this case his immediate attention. Per order of the Secretary of War." Handing me this envelope, which I placed in my pocket, he handed me back the recommendation, and told me to go to Gen. Heintzelman's office on the opposite side

of Pennsylvania Avenue, saying he hoped all would be well - cordially shaking hands with me, expecting, no doubt, he had seen the last of his troublesome little visitor.

On going in at the front door I was bewildered by the number of clerks moving in every direction, and I knew not whom to accost. At last, I stepped towards a clerk, who had paused for a moment in the centre of the room, and asked if I could see Gen. Heintzelman. He said, "He is too busy, madam, and cannot be seen." I was about to draw the magical envelope forth from my pocket, when a small, dapper little man with blond moustache, who evidently felt the full measure of the shoulder straps, stepped up to me, and said, "did you wish to see him about a furlough?" I responded in the affirmative. He replied, "That matter comes under my department. Please step around to my office. Going as directed, he received me in his office, and, taking the paper I had, turned it carefully over, and turning to me with a frown, said, "Why did this paper not come through the mail in the regular form?" I replied that I hoped to expedite the matter by bringing it in person. He said, "Very well; we will see." I timidly asked when he could have his furlough; feeling there could be no possible reason for refusing it. He replied, "I cannot tell; it has first to go to the recorder's office."

Completely overpowered by his bombastic manner, I ventured to ask when I could call to get an answer. "Come around tomorrow," he responded curtly. In the pauses of this interesting conversation I had heard him addressed, if memory serves correctly, as Captain DeKalb. Feeling greatly worried, I left the office and took the afternoon boat to Alexandria to inform my brother of the progress made and to see that all was well with him. Under the care he had received in the Indiana regiment, he was feeling somewhat better, but growing anxious. Save for this remnant, there were no soldiers left on all that wide campground. The house on the hill was deserted. I had just time to reassure my brother and catch the last boat back to the city.

The following morning at eleven o' clock I presented myself at Capt. DeKalb's office. He said the paper had not been returned to him, and he could not tell when it would be. I tried to explain the situation of my brother, when he interrupted me in a very impertinent manner, saying. "Your interference in the regular routine of business may probably defeat the furlough any way." Startled at this unceremonious announcement, I had just enough voice to ask if I should return the next day. He replied, "You can do so, but I cannot promise anything." I left the office for the first time with tears blinding my way, and I stumbled against a gentleman who was passing in the street. We glanced, recognised each other, and were shaking hands, each pleased to meet a familiar face in a strange city. The gentleman proved to be a Mr. Betts, of Albany, a wealthy gentleman of that city and a prominent member of our society. Mr. Betts walked with me down to the green house opposite the Treasury building, and I related to him as briefly as I could my long efforts and the result. He said, quickly, "My advice is that you go at once to Secretary Tucker and state the case to him."

As it was now too late to visit the secretary's office, it being past three o'clock, I went to Mr. Foster's. Not wishing to trouble Mr. Foster again, if it avoidable, at eleven o' clock I again sought Capt. DeKalb's office. He met me with the curt statement that the paper was lost and could not be found; that he had sent to the recorder's office for it, but that they had no knowledge of it. Going from his office, I went directly to Mr. Tucker's presence. I told him my story, and again the quiet smile stole over his face as

he asked me, "Where is the envelope I gave you to Gen. Heintzelman?" I quickly put my hand in my pocket and drew it forth. He said, "Why did you not present it?" I replied, "Because I was told he could not be seen." The reply caused him to smile again, and he said, "You take that and hand it to any one of the clerks, telling them it is for Gen. Heintzelman."

As I left the office I met Mr. Betts, who offered to be my escort, which favour was gladly accepted. Entering again the front door, the same busy scene presented itself to my eyes as on the former occasion. A clerk stepped forward and asked me what I wanted. I desired him to hand the paper to Gen. Heintzelman. As it was open, he read without trouble, and doffing his cap, which he had not chosen to do up to that moment, he quickly placed chairs for myself and my companion, and in another moment the fine soldierly presence of Gen. Heintzelman was beside me. His hands were full of papers, and he looked the hurry that his tones conveyed. "What can I do for you, madam?" he kindly inquired. I briefly stated my brother's case; my application there; Capt. Keibalb's taking possession of the paper; also his statement of the morning *that the paper was lost*. He rose with an angry frown on his face, saying, "Excuse me a moment", and left me. High words from the office near me reached my ears, and I felt that the dapper little captain was getting a rebuke from his superior officer. The general returned in a few moments, and, politely bowing, said, "Return at one o'clock and I think the paper will be found." It wanted an hour of the time. Mr. Betts went with me to the post office, where we made a call upon Mr. Laurie, to while away the time.

## CHAPTER V

### GLADNESS AND SADNESS

I should have mentioned that many of the evenings that I had spent in Washington had been most agreeably filled with séances at Mr. Foster's or at Mr. Laurie's in Georgetown. Mrs. Belle Miller, Mr. Laurie's daughter, was one of the most powerful physical mediums I have ever met. While she played the piano it would rise with apparent ease, and keep perfect time, rising and falling with the music. By placing her hand on the top of the piano it would rise clear from the floor, though I have seen as many as five men seated on it at the time. Mr. and Mrs. Laurie were both fine mediums, and I have met many prominent people during my visits there, who, though not professing to be Spiritualists, made no secret of their desire to investigate the subject.

The object of my stay in Washington was well known to them all, and the liveliest interest was shown in the progress I made.

One o'clock came. Mr. Betts and myself, leaving Mr. Laurie's office, went to General Heintzelman's headquarters. Captain DeKalb, with a red spot burning on either cheek, and eyes whose light was better suited to a battlefield than his quiet office, met us, and handed me the missing paper, and in a tone that did not conceal his exultation, remarked, "There is your paper, madam; it has been rejected." I felt for a moment as though I had been struck a blow, and could not speak. At last I faltered, "Why has the application been rejected?" Bowing in a half mocking way, he said, "Because it did not come through in the regular form."

I felt this was a paltry excuse; that in some way he had defeated my labours, because I had unwittingly been the cause of a reprimand from his chief. Mr. Betts attempted to ask some particulars, when DeKalb spoke to him in a most ungracious way, and he turned and left us alone in the office. With the rejected paper in my hand I found my way to the street, and but for the kindly support of my old friend I think I should have fallen. The labour of three weeks was lost - my brother in the hands of the kindly colonel who could no longer keep him. I was dizzy, benumbed, and momentarily could not think. My old friend said to me, "Let us go to the Secretary." "No," I said, "it is useless. What can he do?" In my ignorance I did not know, even yet, the all-potent influence of the War Office.

At this moment, standing in the street, blinded by my tears and kindly protected by my old friend, I heard a voice distinctly say, "Go directly to the Assistant secretary." Above the noise of the street these words were as plain as if they had been spoken by Mr. Betts himself. I looked up and told him what I had heard. He said, "It confirms my views; let us go at once." We did so, and Mr. Tucker was fortunately alone. He came forward to meet me and his quick eye detected the traces of tears upon my face. He kindly placed a chair for me and listened while Mr. Betts told him the story. He asked me for the paper and I gave it to him. Going to his desk he took up a blank sheet lying there, and wrote something upon it, folded it and placed it with the paper, brought the two to me and put them in my hands, saying kindly, "Take these downstairs to Adjutant-General Townsend's office and hand them to him." I could only bow my head in acknowledgment; I was too full to speak, not knowing what to hope or fear.

Mr. Betts accompanied me, and we soon found the Adjutant-General's office. I entered with anything but a steady step, I fear, and going to the railing behind which sat a fine-looking man busily engaged in writing, I timidly waited until he should look up. I shall always remember the fine, clear-cut face of this man, as all my hopes were centred in him, though I did not know the nature of the paper I held in my hand. At last he laid down his pen and turning towards me courteously inquired my business. I presented the papers, and Mr. Betts informed him that Assistant-Secretary Tucker had sent me to him. He, without a word, read what the Secretary had written, opened the other paper, took another from his desk, wrote busily for a few moments, kept the papers I had handed him, and placing the one he had written in my hands, smiled pleasantly, and said "I hope your brother will soon recover his health," and bade me a pleasant "good afternoon."

I did not realise until I was on the walk outside and was eagerly reading what I held in my hand that my victory was won. The paper was a furlough granting brother twenty days' leave of absence. ISSUED BY SPECIAL ORDER OF THE WAR DEPARTMENT. I could scarcely stand from excitement. Mr. Betts told me to go at once to Mr. Foster's and rest, and he would go to Alexandria and bring brother to Washington.

In a few hours brother presented himself. The next step was to undertake to get him a pass, as I had exhausted thus far all I had received for my labours in Baltimore. Applying at the Connecticut Committee rooms for a pass, they refused to grant it on the score that his furlough was a special order of the War Department. I next tried to obtain his back pay, long overdue, but in this I failed. We then thought he would have to remain a week of the precious twenty days in Washington until I could fill my last Sunday's engagement in Baltimore. I did not reveal to the many friends I had made during the month the financial situation in which I found myself placed, or no doubt they would have quickly come to my relief. Mrs. Laurie called and told my brother to wait a day or two, and she felt she could obtain the needed pass.

Knowing my father and eldest brother were encamped at Upton's Hills, Virginia, but a few miles from Washington, I proposed to brother that we engage a livery team and drive over and see them. By three o'clock in the afternoon we drove into the little settlement of log cabins where the Twenty-second Connecticut Regiment was encamped. The welcome folds of its regimental flag were flying from the flagstaff as we drew up in the midst, and I scarcely had time to think of inquiring, when my father came towards the carriage, attracted by the curiosity of the moment, never dreaming who was awaiting him. I had not permitted mother to communicate to him my presence in Washington nor the work I was doing. Had I dropped from the skies at his feet he could not have been more astounded when he recognised us both. My eldest brother soon joined us, and it would be impossible to convey an idea of the scene of rejoicing that followed. My father took us into his neat log cabin. I hastily told my story of my work in Washington, and my father's pride and pleasure in my work were my crowning reward. I told him of the people I had met, the kindness shown me, and the circles that had been held, and he at once asked if I felt able to have a little sitting there in the cabin. Of course, I was only too glad to afford him this pleasure. The first spirit friend who presented himself to greet my father was his old friend "Dr. Bamford," reminding him of his prediction months before, when he informed him that the next time he would have the pleasure of speaking with him through his daughter "it would be upon Virginia soil."

As a medium I have had many strange experiences, been in many novel situations, and gathered up many pleasant memories that now brighten my later days; but there are none that stand out more startlingly clear nor furnish greater pleasure than to recollect that scene in the rude cabin in the heart of a camp of soldiers; my father and two brothers seated with me -hand joined in hand- as we waited to receive the blessing of the angels and the encouraging words from loved ones gone before. I shall always remember the look on my father's face when I awoke from my trance on that occasion. Tears that were no shame to his manhood were on his cheeks; and while the sound of the drum and fife was in our ears he blessed me for the comfort I had brought to him "as a messenger of the unseen life."

Another half hour and words of parting were spoken, and my brother and myself were on our way to Washington, where we arrived in safety. Here we found that Mrs. Laurie had obtained a pass from the Connecticut Committee through the influence of some friends in the office; and all was in readiness for my brother's departure for home. A friend was at Mr. Laurie's, awaiting us, and he desired brother to accompany him that evening to the theatre, hoping it might brighten his depressed spirits, as he was not to leave for Albany until the following evening. The next day I was busy making preparations to return to Baltimore, intending to go that far with brother as I still had one Sunday to speak in that city. At noon it chanced that Mr. Foster inquired by what route my brother would go to Albany from the city of New York. I said I did not know and asked him to get his pass and see what it might reveal. He went to his overcoat and thrusting his hand into his pocket found it empty. A hurried search, a still more excited one, and the truth was apparent - the precious furlough and transportation paper were lost. He had not seen it since he handed it to the officer at the theatre who passed through the crowd calling upon all soldiers present to show their passes. It was returned to him, and he placed it in his breast pocket and had not thought of it again. It was lost, lost beyond recall!

Words were powerless to describe the condition of mind I was in when I fully realised this fact. I knew not which way to turn. Without his precious papers he was liable at any moment to be taken as a deserter. It seemed to me that I could not try again; and, prostrate in body and mind, the day was spent in tears and vain regrets. My brother was completely prostrated by this blow. He had no idea how the paper had been taken from him; though he remembered being wedged in the crowd, and someone putting their arms about him as if to move him on one side to allow a group of ladies to pass. It must have been at this time that his pocket was picked. Mr. Foster informed the proper authorities at once, but it availed nothing.

When we fully realised that these precious papers were lost, and my heart had sunk like lead in my breast, I was controlled by a little messenger of my spirit circle, named "Pinkie", who assured us in her own unique manner that it was all right, and that this day was most important, as we would realise, and that, "the brave lad should have another furlough." I could derive but little comfort, however, from these assurances; for I was face to face with the fact that I had exhausted nearly all my resources, and I knew not how to seek again the kind secretary who had assisted me so well. At six o'clock that evening we would have been at the depot, and by seven on our way northward; but of course we could now do nothing. Our friends could only sympathise with us and wait for some suggestions.

## CHAPTER VI

### FIRST MEETING WITH LINCOLN

About half past eight o'clock of the evening of this day I was lying exhausted on the sofa, when a carriage halted at the door. Mr. Laurie entered hurriedly, asking if the "children" had gone (Parnie and myself). Mr. Foster explained that we were still there, and the reason therefore. Mr. Laurie seemed delighted that we had been delayed; and came at once to my side, and kindly said, "Get ready at once and go to my house with me, and I think we can remedy the loss of this furlough."

It was a ray of light in dense darkness. Without saying a word, I hastily prepared myself and was surprised to find a most elegant carriage at the door to receive us. Its crimson satin cushions should have told me whose carriage it was; but my mind was so fraught with my trouble that I barely noticed the fact that a footman in plain livery opened the door for us, and we were soon on our way to Georgetown. On my arrival I was astonished to be presented first to Mrs Lincoln, (1) the wife of President Lincoln, then to Mr. Newton, secretary of the Interior Department, and the Rev. John Pierpont, (2) at that time one of the chief clerks in the Treasury building. The Hon. D.E. Somes was also present.

*(1) At this time Mrs. Lincoln was a pre-possessing-looking woman, apparently about thirty years of age, possibly older, with an abundance of rich dark-brown hair, large and impressive eyes, so shifting that their colour was almost undecided, their brightness giving a peculiar animation to her countenance. Her face was oval, the features excellent, complexion white and fair, teeth regular, and her smile winning and kindly. She was somewhat over medium height, with full, rounded form, and under any circumstances would be pronounced a handsome woman. In manner she was quick and excitable, and would, while under excitement or adverse circumstances, completely give way to her feelings. In short, she was lacking in the general control, demeanour, and suavity of manner which we naturally expect from one in high and exalted position. She was ever kind and gracious to me; yet I could never feel for her that perfect respect and reverence that I desired to entertain regarding the chief lady of the land.*

*(2) Rev. John Pierpont was a tall, slender man, straight and commanding in appearance, and over eighty years of age, with a quick step and alert manner of a boy. He was an uncompromising temperance advocate, and attributed his great age, excellent sight and hearing, and general good health to this virtue. He had been a Unitarian (?) minister for many years, from which denomination he resigned his pastorate to embrace the truths of spiritualism. He was a poet and writer of recognised ability, a scholarly, refined gentleman, respected by all who knew him, and at the time mentioned was in possession of a valuable post in the treasury Department. He had the absolute confidence of Mr. and Mrs. Lincoln, and I often met him in the company of Mrs. Lincoln. In brief, He was just the sort of man to cement a lasting friendship with the President.*

Mrs. Lincoln informed me that she had heard of the wonderful powers of Mrs. Miller, Mr. Laurie's daughter, and had called to witness the physical manifestations through her mediumship. She had expressed a desire to see a trance medium, when they had told her of myself, fearing that I was already on my way to Baltimore with my brother, as I had expected to leave that evening. She had said at once, "Perhaps they

have not gone; suppose you take the carriage and ascertain." Mr. Laurie went, and found me, as I have stated, prostrated from my long anxiety and trouble. *But for the loss of that furlough this meeting would not have taken place.*

Mrs. Lincoln noticed my swollen eyes and inflamed cheeks, and inquired kindly the cause. Mr. Laurie briefly explained. She quickly reassured me, saying, "Don't worry any more about it. Your brother shall have another furlough, if Mr. Lincoln has to give it himself." Feeling once more happy and strong, I was in a condition to quiet my nerves long enough to enable my spirit friends to control me.

Some new and powerful influence obtained possession of my organism and addressed Mrs. Lincoln, it seemed, with great clearness and force, upon matters of state. For one hour I was under this control. When I awoke there was a most earnest and excited group around me discussing what had been said; and Mrs. Lincoln exclaimed, with great earnestness, "*This young lady must not leave Washington. I feel she must stay here, and Mr. Lincoln must hear what we have heard. It is all-important, and he must hear it.*"

This seemed to be the general impression. Turning to me she said, "Don't think of leaving Washington, I beg of you. Can you not remain with us?" I briefly explained that my livelihood depended upon my efforts as a speaker, and there was no opening in Washington of that kind for me. But, said she, "There are not other things you can do. Surely young ladies get excellent pay in the different departments, and you can have a position in one of them, I am sure." Turning to Mr. Newton, who sat at her right, she said, "You employ ladies, do you not, Mr. Newton? (1) And you can give this young lady a place in your department?"

He bowed, all smiles, saying, "I have only very old ladies and young children in my department; but I can give this young lady a position if it pleases you." She turned to me then in her sprightly manner, as if the whole thing was settled, and exclaimed, "You will stay then; will you not?" I said I would consult my friends, and see what was best. But she said, "You surely will not go until Mr Lincoln has had a chance to see you?" I replied I would not, if he desired to see me. She then turned to Mrs. Laurie, and said, "Now, to-morrow, you go with this young lady to Mr Tucker; tell him you go by my direction, and just how the case stands. Tell him he must arrange it to have her brother secure another furlough." Soon after, she left, and Mr. Somes kindly escorted me back to Mr. Foster's.

*(1) The Hon. Isaac Newton, Chief of the Agricultural Department, was about sixty or sixty-five years of age, about five feet six or seven inches, thin grey hair, smooth, round, full face, fleshy, and rather corpulent of figure; of kindly heart, easy, pleasant manners, and possessed of considerable ability in the management of people, but not what one would call brilliant or master-minded. It is needless to state that this criticism is the result of later and maturer judgment, which comes from years of contact and friendship.*

The next morning Mrs. Laurie came for me, and we went to the office of the Assistant-Secretary of War. I hid as closely as possible behind the stately person of Mrs. Laurie; but my old friend saw me and came forward to inquire how I was and if all was well with my brother. I could only shake my head and sink into a chair, leaving Mrs. Laurie to explain matters. He listened patiently, and came to me and said in the kindest manner; "You seem to have been delayed for some important purpose,

my young friend, so I would not be overtroubled about it. You get any commissioned or United states surgeon to examine your brother again, and if he affirms he is till unfit for service in the field or camp, I will issue a new furlough, if you bring me the paper.”

With a light heart I could only thank him; and that afternoon my brother and myself went to Mr. Laurie’s, and in a few hours a United States surgeon from the Georgetown Hospital made the requisite examination and *recommended him a furlough*. The next morning I carried it to Mr. Tucker, and a furlough was re-issued by the War Department - this time for *thirty* days’ leave of absence. With a light heart I went to my brother with the paper; and that night Mr. Laurie, on his return from the Post-Office department, placed in my hand an envelope, which, I was surprised to find, contained one hundred dollars in greenbacks, and a slip of paper on which was written “From a few friends who appreciate a sister’s devotion.” No name anywhere to tell who were the generous donors; and I know not to this day whence came this most welcome tribute.

The friends I had made in Washington were determined I should not leave that city, and it was decided that my brother should take my mother back to Hartford with him, with all her household effects; that I should resign my position in Albany; and that my friend Miss Hannum should join me in Washington. This programme was carried out.

The day following my brother’s departure for home, a note was received by Mrs. Laurie, asking her to come to the white House in the evening with her family, and to bring Miss Nettie with her. I felt all the natural trepidation of a young girl about to enter the presence of the highest magistrate in our land; being fully impressed with the dignity of his office, and feeling that I was about to meet some superior being; and it was almost with trembling that I entered with my friends the Red Parlour of the white House, at eight o’clock that evening (December, 1862).

Mrs Lincoln received us graciously, and introduced us to a gentleman and lady present whose names I have forgotten. Mr. Lincoln was not then present. While all were conversing pleasantly on general subjects, Mrs. Miller (Mr. Laurie’s daughter) seated herself, under control, at the double grand piano at one side of the room, seemingly awaiting someone. Mrs. Lincoln was talking with us in a pleasant strain when suddenly Mrs. Miller’s hands fell upon the keys with a force that betokened a master hand, and the strains of a grand march filled the room. As the measured notes rose and fell we became silent. The heavy end of the piano began rising and falling in perfect time to the music. All at once it ceased and Mr. Lincoln stood upon the threshold of the room. (He afterwards informed us that the first notes of the music fell upon his ears as he reached the head of the grand staircase to descend, and that he kept step to the music until he reached the doorway).

Mr and Mrs. Laurie and Mrs. Miller were duly presented. Then I was led forward and presented. He stood before me, tall and kindly, with a smile on his face. Dropping his hand upon my head, he said, in a humorous tone, “ So this is our ‘little Nettie’ is it, that we have heard so much about?” I could only smile and say, “Yes, sir,” like any school girl; when he kindly led me to an ottoman. Sitting down in a chair, the ottoman at his feet, he began asking me questions in a kindly way about my mediumship; and I think he must have thought me stupid, as my answers were little beyond “Yes” and “No”. His manner, however, was genial and kind, and it was then suggested we form

a circle. He said, "Well, how do you do it?" looking at me. Mr. Laurie came to the rescue, and said we had been accustomed to sit in a circle and join hands; but he did not think it would be necessary in this instance. While he was speaking, I lost all consciousness of my surroundings and passed under control.

For more than an hour I was made to talk to him, and I learned from my friends afterward that it was upon matters that he seemed to fully understand, while they comprehended very little until that portion was reached that related to the forthcoming Emancipation Proclamation. He was charged with the utmost solemnity and force of manner not to abate the terms of its issue, and not to delay its enforcement as a law beyond the opening of the year; and he was assured that it was to be the *crowning event of his administration and life*; and that while he was counselled by strong parties to defer enforcement of it, hoping to supplant it by other measures and to delay action, *he must in no wise heed such counsel, but stand firm to his convictions and fearlessly perform the work and fulfil the mission for which he had been raised up by an overruling Providence*. Those present declared that they lost sight of the timid girl in the majesty of the utterance, the strength and force of the language, and the importance of that which was conveyed, and seemed to realise that some strong masculine spirit force was giving speech to almost divine commands.

*I shall never forget the scene around me when I regained consciousness. I was standing in front of Mr. Lincoln, and he was sitting back in his chair, with his arms folded upon his breast, looking intently at me.* I stepped back, naturally confused at the situation – not remembering at once where I was; and glancing around the group, where perfect silence reigned. It took me a moment to remember my whereabouts.

A gentleman present then said in a low voice, "Mr. President, did you notice anything peculiar in the method of address?" Mr. Lincoln raised himself, as if shaking off his spell. He glanced quickly at the full length picture of Daniel Webster, that hung above the piano, and replied, "Yes, and it is very singular, very!" with a marked emphasis.

Mr. Somes said, "Mr. President, would it be improper for me to inquire whether there has been any pressure brought to bear upon you to defer the enforcement of the Proclamation?" To which the President replied: "Under these circumstances that question is perfectly proper, as we are all friends [smiling upon the company]. *It is taking all my nerve and strength to withstand such a pressure.*" At this point the gentlemen drew round him, and spoke together in low tones, Mr. Lincoln saying least of all. At last he turned to me, and laying his hand upon my head, uttered these words in a manner that I shall never forget: "My child, you possess a very singular gift; but that it is a gift from God, I have no doubt. I thank you for coming here tonight. It is more important than perhaps than anyone present can understand. I must leave you all now; but I hope I shall see you again." He shook me kindly by the hand, bowed to the rest of the company, and was gone. We remained for an hour longer, talking with Mrs. Lincoln and her friends, then returned to Georgetown. Such was my first interview with Abraham Lincoln, and the memory of it *is as clear and vivid as the evening on which it occurred.*

## CHAPTER VII

### WE MAKE HISTORY

On the Monday following I found employment (through the kindness of Mrs. Lincoln) in the seed-room, a division of the Department of the Interior, which was under the control of Mr. Newton. This room was part of a building on F Street near seventh, where fifty to sixty occupants, the majority old ladies, and the balance children between the ages of ten and twelve, found employment. My duties consisted of sewing together the ends of curious little sacks – each sack containing a gill of seed corn, beans etc., as the case might be; which work was little more than mere pastime. We entered the room at nine in the morning, leaving it at twelve; returning at one, and leaving again at three in the afternoon. For this work I received one dollar a day. A few days later my friend Parnie joined me, also entering this room, doing the same work, and receiving the same compensation.

In the meantime my evenings were filled with circles, which were attended by many of the most prominent people in Washington. Among those I met and learned to love, and who in turn became warmly attached to myself and friend, was Mrs. Anna M. Cosby, whose father, Mr. Robt. Mills, was the architect of the public buildings in Washington; he designed and built the Capitol of Washington. Her home was a solid brick mansion on Capitol Hill. The first floor of her house was occupied by John W. Forney; and a beautiful chamber on the second floor was usually occupied by General Simon Cameron when in Washington.

This lady, after a time, insisted upon making her house our home; and in its refining and elevating atmosphere, surrounded by all that wealth could give, we passed many happy weeks and formed many pleasant associations. At her house I met with Mr Joshua Speed, Mr. Lincoln's former law partner. Here I gave many private sittings to distinguished people, whose names I never knew; but who were apparently earnest investigators, and seemed satisfied with the truths they obtained. In short, every moment was filled to the uttermost, and the time so occupied passed quickly and pleasantly.

Prior to leaving Mr. Laurie's to become the guest of Mrs. Cosby I had another important interview with President Lincoln. One morning, early in February, we received a note from Mrs. Lincoln, saying she desired us to come over to Georgetown and bring some friends for a séance that evening, and wished 'the young ladies' to be present. In the early part of the evening, before her arrival, my little messenger, or 'familiar' spirit, controlled me, and declared that (the 'long brave,' as she denominated him) Mr Lincoln would also be there. As Mrs. Lincoln had made no mention of his coming in her letter, we were surprised at the statement. Mr. Laurie rather questioned its accuracy; as he said it would be *hardly advisable for President Lincoln to leave the White House to attend a spiritual séance anywhere*; and that he did not consider it 'good policy' to do so.

However, when the bell rang, Mr. Laurie, in honour of his expected guests, went to the door to receive them in person. His astonishment was great to find Mr. Lincoln standing on the threshold, wrapped in his long cloak; and to hear his cordial ' Good evening,' as he put out his hand and entered. Mr. Laurie promptly exclaimed,

“Welcome, Mr. Lincoln, to my humble roof; you were expected.” Mr. Lincoln stopped in the act of removing his cloak, and said, “Expected! *Why, it is only five minutes since I knew that I was coming.*” He came down from a cabinet meeting as Mrs. Lincoln and her friends were about to enter the carriage, and asked them where they were going. She replied, “To Georgetown; to a circle.” He answered immediately, “Hold on a moment; I will go with you.” “Yes.” Said Mrs. Lincoln, “and I was never more surprised in my life.” He seemed pleased when Mr. Laurie explained the source of our information; and I think it had a tendency to prepare his mind to receive what followed, and to obey the instructions given.

On this occasion, as he entered the parlour, I made bold to say to him, “I would like to speak a word with you, Mr. Lincoln, before you go, after the circle.” “Certainly,” he said; “Remind me, should I forget it.”

Mr. and Mrs. Laurie, with their daughter, Mrs. Miller, at his request, sang several fine old Scottish airs – among them, one that he declared a favourite, called *Bonnie Doon*. I can see him now, as he sat in the old high-backed rocking-chair; one leg thrown over the arm; leaning back in utter weariness, with his eyes closed, listening to the low, strong, and clear yet plaintive notes, rendered as only the Scots can sing their native melodies. I looked at his face, and it appeared tired and haggard. He seemed older by years than when I had seen him a few weeks previously. The whole party seemed anxious and troubled; but all interest centred in the chief, and all eyes and thoughts were turned to him.

At the end of the song he turned to me and said, “Well, Miss Nettie; do you think you have anything to say to me to-night?” At first I thought he referred to the request I had made when he entered the room. Recollecting myself, however, I said, “If *I have* not, there may be *others* who have.” He nodded his head in a pleasant manner, saying, “Suppose we see what they will have to tell us.”

Among the spirit friends that have controlled me since my first development, was one I have before mentioned – known as “old Dr. Bamford.” He was quite a favourite of Mr. Lincoln. His quaint dialect, old-fashioned methods of expression, straightforwardness in arriving at his subject, together with fearlessness of utterance, recommended him as no finished style could have done. This spirit took possession of me at once. As I learned from those in the circle, the substance of *his* remarks was as follows: “That a very precarious state of things existed at the front, where General Hooker had just taken command. The army was totally demoralised; regiments stacking arms, refusing to obey orders or to do duty; threatening a general retreat; declaring their purpose to return to Washington.” A vivid picture was drawn of the terrible state of affairs, greatly to the surprise of all present, save the chief to whom the words were addressed.

When the picture had been painted in vivid colours, Mr. Lincoln quietly remarked: “You seem to understand the situation. Can you point out the remedy?” Dr. Bamford immediately replied: “*Yes, if you have the courage to use it.*” “He smiled,” they said, and answered, “*Try me.*” The old doctor then said to him, “It is one of the simplest, and being so simple it may not appeal to you as being sufficient to cope with what threatens to prove a serious difficulty. The remedy lies with yourself.

*“Go in person to the front; taking with you your wife and children; leaving behind your official dignity, and all manner of display. Resist the importunities of officials to*

*accompany you, and take only such attendants as may be absolutely necessary; avoid the high grade officers, and seek the tents of the private soldiers. Inquire into their grievances; show yourself to be what you are. 'The Father of your People.' Make them feel that you are interested in their sufferings, and that you are not unmindful of the many trials which beset them in their march through the dismal swamps, whereby both their courage and numbers have been depleted."*

He quietly remarked, "If that will do any good, it is easily done." The doctor instantly replied, "*It will do all that is required. It will unite the soldiers as one man. It will unite them to you in bands of steel. And now, if you would prevent a serious, if not fatal, disaster to your cause, let the news be promulgated at once, and disseminated throughout the camp of the Army of the Potomac. Have it scattered broadcast that you are on the eve of visiting the front; that you are not talking of it, but that it is settled that you are going, and are now getting into readiness. This will stop insubordination and hold the soldiers in check; being something to divert their minds, and they will wait to see what your coming portends.*" He at once said, "*It shall be done.*"

A long conversation then followed between the doctor and Mr. Lincoln regarding the state of affairs, and the war generally. The old doctor told him "that he would be re-nominated and re-elected to the Presidency." They said that he sadly smiled when this was told to him, saying "It is hardly an honour to be coveted, save one could find it his duty to accept it."

After the circle was over, Mr. Laurie said, "Mr. Lincoln, is it possible that affairs are as bad as has been depicted?" He said, "They can hardly be exaggerated; but I ask it as a favour of all present that they do not speak of these things. The major there," pointing to an officer of that rank who was in their party, "has just brought despatches from the front depicting the state of affairs pretty much as our old friend has shown it; and we were just having a Cabinet meeting regarding the matter, when something, I know not what, induced me to leave the room and come downstairs, when I found Mrs. Lincoln in the act of coming here. I felt it might be of service for me to come; I did not know wherefore." He dropped his head as he said this – leaning forward in his chair as if he were thinking aloud. Then, looking up suddenly, he remarked, "*Matters are pretty serious down there, and perhaps the simplest remedy is the best. I have often noticed in life that little things have sometimes greater weight than larger ones.*"

As they rose to depart, he turned to me and said, "Now I will hear what you wish to say to me." Going to one side of the parlour, we sat down, and I laid before him the case of a friend who had been nearly two years in the service in the Army of the Potomac, and who was a lieutenant in the Thirtieth N.Y. Regiment. He had seen hard service in camp and field, and had never asked for a furlough during that period. At this time, as his colonel was ordered to Washington on duty for a few weeks, he sent in a petition to the War department for a furlough, signed by all the superior officers of his regiment and brigade. Not doubting the granting of the furlough, nor waiting for its arrival, feeling sure of its coming and being forwarded, he went with his colonel to Washington. Unfortunately, the day before, he had received the announcement that the application had been rejected, and that an order was then at the department for his arrest for "absence without leave."

I stated these facts in full to Mr. Lincoln, and said to him, "This young man is a true soldier, and was one of the first to respond to the call for troops. He has no desire or disposition to avoid or shirk his duty, and is intending to return and give himself up as soon as his colonel's business is completed. It occurred to me that you would be kind enough to interpose your hand between him and the consequences of his rashness in leaving the camp before the arrival of his furlough." He pleasantly smiled, and said, "I have so much to think of now, I shall forget all about this. You write it all out to me, giving me his name and regiment, and bring it to me tomorrow." Feeling sure of my cause, I was delighted, and thought of the pleasant surprise I had in store for my friend.

Mr. Lincoln bade us all a pleasant "good night" and departed, leaving us to talk over the curious circumstances of his coming and of its results.

It was at this séance that Mrs. Belle Miller gave an example of her power as a "moving medium," and highly amused and interested us by causing the piano to "waltz around the room," as was facetiously remarked in several recent newspaper articles. The true statement is as follows: Mrs. Miller played upon the piano (a three-corner grand), and under her influence it "rose and fell," keeping time to her touch in a perfectly regular manner. Mr. Laurie suggested that, as an added "test" of the invisible power that moved the piano, Mrs. Miller (his daughter) should place her hand on the instrument, *standing at arm's length from it*, to show that she was in no wise connected with its movement other than as *agent*. Mr. Lincoln then placed his hand underneath the piano, at the end nearest Mrs. Miller, who placed her *left* hand upon his to demonstrate that neither strength nor pressure was used. In this position the piano rose and fell a number of times at their bidding. At Mr. Laurie's desire the President changed his position to another side, meeting with the same result.

The President, with a quaint smile, said, "I think we can hold down this instrument." Whereupon he climbed upon it, sitting with his legs dangling over the side, as also did Mr. Somes, S.P. Kase, and a soldier in the uniform of a major from the Army of Potomac. The piano, notwithstanding this enormous added weight, continued to wobble about until the sitters were glad "to vacate the premises."

We were convinced that there were no mechanical contrivances to produce the strange result, and Mr. Lincoln expressed himself perfectly satisfied that the motion was caused by some "invisible power"; and when Mr. Somes remarked, "When I have related to my acquaintances, Mr. President, that which I have experienced to-night, they will say, with a knowing look and wise demeanour, 'You were psychologised, and as a matter of fact (*versus* fancy) you *did not see* what you in reality *did see*'"; Mr. Lincoln quietly replied, "You should bring such person here, and when the piano seems to rise, have him slip his foot under the leg and be *convinced* (doubtless) by the weight of *evidence* resting upon his *understanding*."

When the laughter caused by this rally had subsided, the President wearily sank into an armchair, "the old tired, anxious look returning to his face."

This never-to-be-forgotten incident occurred on the fifth day of February, 1863.

I believe that Mr. Lincoln was satisfied and convinced that the communications he received through me were wholly independent of my volition, and in every way superior to any manifestation that could have been given by me as a *physical* being.

*This he affirmed in my presence and in my hearing in answer to a question by Mr. Somes as to what he thought of the source of what he had experienced and heard from time to time in the form of Spiritualistic manifestations. He replied, " I am not prepared to describe the intelligence that controls this young girl's organism. She certainly could have no knowledge of the facts communicated to me, not of what was transpiring in my Cabinet meeting prior to my joining this circle, nor of affairs at the front [the army], nor regarding transpiring events which are known to me only, and which I have not imparted to any one, and which have not been made public."*

As he spoke, his face was earnest and in repose, and he laid one hand in the other impressively (as was his custom). He likewise comprehended that I was ignorant of the very facts surrounding the information of which I was the agent.

It has frequently been stated that Mr. Lincoln was a Spiritualist. That question is left open for general judgement. I do know that he held communication with numerous mediums, both at the White House and as other places, and among his mediumistic friends were Charles Foster, Charles Colchester, Mrs. Lucy A. Hamilton, and Charles Redmond, who warned Mr. Lincoln of the danger that faced him before he made that famous trip between Philadelphia and Washington, on which occasion he donned the Scotch cap and cape; and which warning saved him from assassination.

If he had not had faith in Spiritualism, he would not have connected himself with it, and would not have had any connections with it, especially in peculiarly dangerous times, while the fate of the nation was in peril. Again, had he declared an open belief in the subject, he would have been pronounced insane and probably incarcerated.

A man does not usually follow or obey dictation in which he has no faith, and which does not contain information of active present value *to him*. This argument, together with his following of the spirit dictation which passed through me, goes a great way towards critical and correct judgement in this matter, especially when verification is at hand. It is also true that Mrs. Lincoln was more enthusiastic regarding the subject than her husband, and openly and avowedly professed herself connected with the new religion.

Mr. Somes frequently warned me that it would be unwise to talk with newspaper men, or to answer any of the many inquiries that were constantly made regarding the subject of our Presidential séances-saying impressively, "Do not make these matters public property in any such manner at the present time. Reserve your statements of experiences until sufficient time has elapsed to remove any condemnatory criticism, which would naturally be caused by the present excitement of war, and for the time when the people are ready to look upon past and present events with coolness and correctness, at which time a true dispassionate judgement will be reached, for you will then receive impartial hearing, and at the same time make evident the truths of Spiritualism."

He added, "You are at liberty to quote me and to use my name in connection with any events herein stated in which I was a participant." The value of his opinion is apparent, and I may add that I followed this advice implicitly. The time has arrived when we can criticise freely, judge dispassionately, and reach a true conclusion regarding those events which had to do with the greatest man of his time - the chief actor in the tragedy of modern years, which centred upon us the gaze of the civilised world.

## CHAPTER VIII

### PERILOUS TIMES

The next day was Sunday, and Mr. Lincoln had evidently forgotten that fact when he bade me bring him my request in writing. I therefore used part of the day to write out a plain statement of the case. I considered it almost a state document, addressed it "to the President of the United States", and thoughtlessly, or rather with great deliberation, believing it necessary, signed my full baptismal name to the paper. Since I had responded to a name, I had been called "Nettie" by old and young, and had almost forgotten that my proper name was "Henrietta".

Sunday morning's issue of John W. Forney's "Gazette" bore in startling headlines: "*The President is about to visit the Army of the Potomac.*" Then followed a statement of what gunboat was in preparation to take him and his family to Fortress Monroe; and other matter showing *literal obedience* to the directions given the night previous. These papers, I learned, were scattered by the thousand throughout the army, as quickly as they could be conveyed there.

On Monday morning, with my paper in hand, I visited the White House. Going up to the waiting room, I sent it in by Edward, and anxiously awaited the result. Twenty minutes or more must have passed when Edward came out, and said, "The President desires that you will call tomorrow." I was thunderstruck; not knowing what this might indicate. I knew that without the consent and knowledge of my friend I had furnished the full facts about his whereabouts and his acts to headquarters; and knew not how my action might be considered by him and his colonel. Startled and full of doubt, I walked to the broad stairway, and when half-way down met the major (whose name I have forgotten, but who was with the President on the occasion of the sitting the Saturday previous), who instantly recognised me, and raised his cap and bowed pleasantly. I left the White House, going to the Post-Office Department for my mail, then returned to Georgetown to find the major awaiting me. He came to me as I entered and said, "Mr. Lincoln sent me to you with this note. He says that he thinks it will answer every purpose. He told me to tell you he had left it without a date, as you could not give him the precise date of your friend leaving camp, and being without a date, it therefore covers all the back time. He would have given it to you in person, but he did not *recognise* the name attached to the foot of the paper containing the statement."

"When I went into the room," he said, "after meeting you on the stairs, the President took up the paper and said, in a perplexed way, 'This lady states that I requested her to write this out. I do not remember the name or circumstance, and yet there is something familiar about it.' I stepped up to Mr. Lincoln, and glancing at the name, replied, 'It is that little medium we saw in Georgetown.' 'Oh, yes,' he exclaimed, 'I fully remember now. Go out and bid her in. 'I hurried out.'" added the major; "but you having left, I failed to find you. He then said, 'This matter must be attended to at once.' and writing on this card, as you see, he enclosed it in an envelope and bade me bring it to you." I opened it and read the following: "Leave of absence is granted to A.L.Gurney, Comp. G, 30th N.Y.Reg., and he will report to his company Feb. 17th, 1863"- thus giving him ten days' additional leave (the time was afterwards extended to the 27th, merely changing the date). I have no doubt this gentleman treasures to this day that souvenir of our martyred President. I thanked the major for his kindness, and

bade him extend to Mr. Lincoln my grateful acknowledgement, impulsively remarking, "How good of him to do this thing!" To which the major replied, "It is a common thing for him to do these acts. He is all the time doing something of the kind."

The President's visit to the front and the ovation tendered him showed the spontaneous uprising of a people to receive a loved ruler. How he was literally borne on the shoulders of the soldiers through the camp, and how everywhere "the boys in blue" rallied round him, all grievances forgotten and restored, and his leaving a united and devoted army behind him when he returned to Washington, are matters of history too well known to bear repeating.

He did not achieve the victory of carrying out to the letter, without a struggle, the directions of our unseen friends. Mrs. Laurie and myself visited the white House in the interval of the preparation and the time of departure; and Mrs. Lincoln informed us that they were being besieged by applications from members of both houses, and Cabinet officers and their wives, for permission to go with them. And she remarked, in her quick, impulsive way: "But I tell Mt. Lincoln if we are going to take spirits' advice, let us do it fully, and then there can be no responsibility resting with us if we fail." I was controlled at this time, and "They" impressed upon her the importance of carrying this out as strictly as was consistent; as it was all important that the "*man*" not the "*President*" should visit the army.

Disunionists had laboured to fill the minds of the soldiers with the idea that the government at Washington was rioting in the good things of life and surrounded by pomp and display, while the soldiers were left to die in the swamps, neglected and forgotten; it was therefore necessary "that they should see the man in all his simplicity," and that he should carry with him a *personal* influence which would be felt throughout the camp. The wisdom of his action is told in the result.

I think it was in May of that year that the battle of Chancellors Ville was fought. My father was then with my eldest brother in hospital in Washington. Intending to visit him, I went by permission of Mrs. Lincoln to the white House hothouse to obtain a bouquet of flowers for him. Miss Parnie and myself applied to the private entrance, expecting only to receive the flowers and depart; Mrs. Cuthbert, Mrs. Lincoln's waiting-woman, eagerly met us at the door. "Oh, my dear young ladies," she exclaimed in her broken French fashion, "the madam is distracted. Come to her, I beg of you. She wants you very much." Surprised at her earnestness, we went upstairs and were ushered into her bedroom. Mrs. Lincoln, in a loose wrapper, her long beautiful hair down her back and over her shoulders, was distractedly walking up and down the room. As she saw me she came forward and exclaimed, "Oh, Miss Nettie, such dreadful news; they are fighting at the front; such terrible slaughter; and all our generals are killed and our army is in full retreat; such is the latest news. Oh, I am glad you have come. Will you sit down a few moments and see if we can get anything from 'beyond'?"

No hint of the battle had as yet reached the public. I was surprised. I threw my things aside and we at once sat down. "Pinkie" controlled me instantly, and, in her own original way, assured Mrs. Lincoln that her alarm was groundless; that while a great battle had been fought and was still in progress, our forces were fully holding their own, and that none of the generals, as she had been informed, was slain or injured.

She bade her have no fear whatever; that they would get better news by night-fall, and the next day would bring still more cheering results.

This calmed her somewhat, and after I awoke she talked very earnestly with me to know if I fully trusted and believed in what was said through me. I assured her my confidence in whatever was communicated, and it seemed to give her courage. It was now approaching one o'clock, and Mr. Lincoln entered the room; he was bowed as if bent with trouble, his face looking anxious and careworn. He shook my hand in a listless way and kindly enquired how I was, shaking hands with my friend also. He sat down at a little stand on which Mrs. Cuthbert had placed a cup of tea and a plate of crackers. It seemed that it was his custom at this hour to partake of this frugal lunch.

Mrs. Lincoln instantly began to tell him what had been said. He looked up with quick interest. My friend Parnie said, "Perhaps Mr. Lincoln would prefer to hear it direct; would you not like to, Mr. Lincoln?" He said, "If it would not tire your friend too much, yes." I hastened to assure him that I felt no weariness whatever, and again I was soon under control. This time it was the strong clear utterance of one we had learned to call "Wisdom"; and Parnie told me that Mr. Lincoln listened intently to every word. For twenty minutes "he" talked to him, stating clearly the condition of affairs at the front; assuring him of what news he would receive by nightfall, and what the morrow would bring forth; and that in no wise was the battle disastrous; and though not decisive particularly in character, was sufficiently so to be a gain, not a loss, to the Union cause. He brightened visibly under the assurances given; and my friend said she had never seen me more impressive or convincing when under control.

Evidently "they" felt his need in that hour, and met it. When I awoke his tea stood untasted and cold, and as none seemed to think of it that should have done so, my friend quietly arose, and, taking from the stand, handed it to Mrs. Cuthbert, and said, "Change this for a hot cup of tea, and bring it soon." No one seemed to think she was stepping out of her place in thus thinking of the weary man before us. It was quickly brought, and he drank it with a relish, but left the crackers untasted. He shook us warmly by the hand, and with a pleasant smile passed back to his private apartments.

I need not say that our hands were filled with flowers when we left the White House. However, it was then too late to go to the camp. The next morning, on our way to the hospital, we called at the white House and received from Mrs. Cuthbert the assurance that the news had been received as predicted, and that Mr. and Mrs. Lincoln were both feeling much better and full of hope.

Taking the cars at Fourteenth Street, we made our visit to Mount Pleasant Hospital. Its thousands of clean, white empty tents, full of little cot-beds, suggested the possibilities of war, but presented none of the horrors. My brother was somewhat better, although still in bed; and my father was glad to see his visitors. We stayed a few hours, and he showed us over the department; taking us to the surgeons' headquarters, where all seemed quiet and peaceful. We returned to the city, little dreaming of the scene that would greet us when we again visited the camp.

## CHAPTER IX

### THE WOUNDED AND DYING

During the seven or eight days that followed we did not visit my father, being busied with circles and attending to our duties in the seed department.

The battles of Chancellorsville and Fredericksburg had been fought and our armies had gained a negative victory – that is, we had lost no ground, and the enemy had been defeated. One morning, bright and early, accompanied by our friend, Miss Anna Betts, of Albany, we started for the hospital to see my father. How changed in the brief time since we had looked upon the quiet, peaceful canvas-covered grounds, soldiers everywhere, rushing in all directions. Upon our statement of “having friends in the camp” we were freely allowed to pass. Threading our way through what seemed hardly familiar lines of tents, we were shocked to find that nearly every tent was filled with mutilated occupants; every bed having its tenant, and fresh arrivals constantly being added to the number. Reaching the tent where my brother had been an invalid, which was one of the many feet in length, containing many beds, I met him at the doorway pale and feeble, but active on behalf of those who were far more needy than he.

We stood dumb before the scene presented to our eyes, when my father hastily approached and exclaimed, “Girls, have you nerve enough to help us?” We all responded, “Yes; anything we can do.” He quickly furnished us with tin basins, and showing us where to fill them with fresh water from large tanks outside, handed each a sponge and told us to pass from cot to cot, and squeeze a spongeful of cold water upon the foot or hand of the occupant, Spiritualism repeated until a little relief was afforded, then to pass on to the next. We eagerly began our task. Anna, full of earnest zeal, started on her round, but the first sight that greeted her eyes was one of horror – a poor soldier boy bleeding to death from a wound in the neck. Turning deadly faint, she retreated to the open air. A few moments and she rallied and bravely returned to her work.

For the three hours we could remain, we passed from bed to bed and applied the cold water as best we could to the poor boys who lay, each waiting his turn, uncomplaining, and, strange to say, even cheerful under such terrible conditions. Pleasant words were passed from bed to bed between them; and when we would approach with a fresh basin of water, they would call out in a cheery tone, “Me first, me first,” and always with a pleasant laugh, if we took the first that came, without heeding the call, and I know that many tears mingled with the water we squeezed upon their poor mangled limbs. The scene comes back to me vividly as I recall it; for it was our first real experience of the meaning of that horrible word “war”.

In a tent outside surgeons were busy lopping off legs and arms; and going outside on one occasion to renew my basin of water that was crimson with the loyal blood of our brave boys in blue, I saw my brother being borne fainting from a tent. I went to him at once, and they told me that he was assisting the surgeon at an amputation when his feelings overcame him. A dose of brandy quickly brought him round, and he returned to his post with a determined spirit. Every hand was needed. The weakest grew strong in the face of that army of sufferers. At one time the water by our tent that was under our charge became exhausted, and my father hastily told me to go to the next tent on the right and there find another tank. In my hurry I turned to the left instead, and

throwing aside the flap of the tent was horrified to see a mass of legs and arms that had of necessity been hastily placed there – the fruit of the surgeons' bloody but necessary work. Weak and faint I turned back, retraced my steps, and found the needed water.

For three hours we never paused, and at the end of that time desisted, being warned by the approach of nightfall of the distance from our home. It was with regret, and tears we did not care to hide, that we left our work to return to the city. The next day Parnie and myself started early for the hospital. Anna could not accompany us, and we went without her. Our presence was hailed with delight, and we found that the wounds of all those who had been under our charge the day previous had been attended to and the application of cold water was now the only thing to be done.

We saw several other empty beds that day that told their own silent story; and the mounds grew in number around the surgeons' headquarters, as one by one the brave boys succumbed to a conqueror they were powerless to resist.

We found a full list of nurses in attendance that day and our services were hardly needed, although we went to work in the same manner as the day previous; and some of the nurses, wearied and tired, were glad of the brief respite we could give them. It was a satisfaction to us, on leaving the camp, to know that all were as comfortable as care and strict attendance could make them, and the horrors of the previous day had passed from sight. Finding we could be of no further use, we did not visit the hospital again; but it was many a day before the memory of those pain-marked faces and shattered limbs failed to haunt our dreams by night and challenge our thought by day.

Soon after this, while riding up Pennsylvania Avenue to Georgetown in a street car filled with a miscellaneous crowd composed chiefly of officers and soldiers from the headquarters in Georgetown, an incident came under my notice that I deem worthy of record. It was a dull, rainy morning such as drives all pedestrians indoors or under shelter, and the avenue above the Treasury building was practically deserted. Seated on the right-hand side of the car, I faced the Treasury building.

As we turned the corner, and some distance ahead, I beheld the tall figure of President Lincoln going with hurried strides toward the white House. He wore an old-fashioned dress coat, the sleeves tight to the arm and the right elbow torn so that his white shirt sleeve plainly showed through, and he, seemingly unconscious of this discrepancy in his dress, was pursuing his way with his head down as if in a profound study. He wore a beaver hat that looked as well worn as his coat, and in his right hand was a bundle of papers as though he had just come from some office. As he neared the gate of the White House, a soldier boy leaning on crutches, one leg drawn up, approached, and they nearly collided, so absorbed was Mr. Lincoln in his thoughts.

Hastily looking up, seeing who was before him, he instantly removed his hat, the soldier boy doing the same. He then commenced talking to him, and from his manner seemed to be inquiring as to the cause of his lameness, while one hand went into his pocket. As he drew it out, and was in the act of handing the soldier what was in his hand, his back was to the street and he did not see the loaded car which was then opposite. The soldier boys in the car, however, saw him; one impulsively jerked the check-strap and the car stopped; he shouted at the top of his lungs. "Three cheers for Father Abraham" rent the air. They were given with a will.

He looked around, startled at the outburst so near him; acting like a schoolboy caught in some dereliction of duty, thrust what he had in the hand of the soldier, doffed his hat again, and with a smile hurried out of sight into the grounds of the White House, followed by the cheers of soldiers, who witnessed in this kindness shown, unseen as he supposed, the man they loved in the President that ruled them.

I have seen President Lincoln under many aspects, and he never failed to evidence the man of kindly heart, tender feelings, and one replete with thoughtfulness for others, and one willing to serve the humblest where it did not conflict with his sense of duty.

## CHAPTER X

### CONTINUED SERVICES

About the last of May or the first of June the two year term of service of the Thirtieth Regiment of New York State Volunteers expiring, they were ordered home. In this regiment, it will be remembered, was my acquaintance for whom I had obtained Mr. Lincoln's grant of furlough. Since that gracious act of kindness the regiment had been through the fire and smoke of battle.

The fragment of a regiment that was returning was to arrive in Washington by one o'clock of the afternoon.

We reached the dock as the boat neared her moorings. The pleasant anticipation of meeting our friends was saddened by the silent procession that first passed – for the regiment was accompanied by a long array of sleepers who would never again awaken at the sound of the reveille. We had only time for a handshake.

Our friends were no sooner mustered out from their two years' service that they re-enlisted. Major Morgan H. Chrysler quickly recruited the discharged soldiers, seeking to raise a mounted brigade of veterans to return at once to the field.

In the early fall of 1863 my friend and myself received a request from the Colonel Chrysler, at Saratoga, that we should go to Washington and see the President on behalf of him and his veterans, of whom he had raised three hundred. About this time there was strong call for reinforcements, and as fast as troops were enlisted they were forwarded to Washington and sent “to the Camp of Distribution,” so called, and scattered through the different army corps to fill up depleted companies. Colonel Chrysler's fear was that this fate would await his command; and his ambition was to raise his brigade and so obtain the command thereof. He had confidence in my power to reach the President, and he had also confidence in the unseen powers that controlled me, and he earnestly requested that I should make the effort in his behalf, offering to defray all expenses, which he did.

We went at once, going directly to our friend Mrs. Cosby, on Capitol Hill, who received us with joy and surprise, as she had not expected us until later. I told her the purpose of our coming and requested her to accompany me to see Mr. Lincoln. As we could not go at once, we decided upon making the venture the following day. Morning came and brought with it an important visitor, who called on our friend. This person was Mr. Joshua Speed. We were introduced to him; and Anna, in her gentle but forcible way, informed him of my peculiar gift, and that of my friend. While we were talking Parnie was controlled by what proved to be the spirit of an old coloured man – a former slave who was in the family of Mr. Speed, and who identified himself with his old master by expressing his thanks that he was granted his request “to be buried under the tree where in his old age he used to sit, and where (if memory serves correctly) he had died.”

Mr. Speed acknowledged that this was very strange and singular, and afterward questioned us both clearly and closely in regard to our peculiar gifts. The forenoon passed quickly; and as Mr. Speed was about to leave us, Mrs. Cosby told him of our desire to visit the President. She asked him for a letter of introduction. Smiling, he said, “Surely, you need no letter of introduction to him.”

She answered, "It has been some time since I have seen him, and I would be pleased to have a letter from you".

He sat down at her desk, and quickly indited a genial note of introduction, including my name also in the letter. I will here state that a few months previously Mr. Cosby had been superseded in his consulship, owing to the fact that he had been reported to our government "as giving entertainments to the representatives of the Southern Confederacy, at the port where he was stationed." I think it was this fact that led Mrs. Cosby to desire a letter of introduction to Mr. Lincoln, fearing that he might believe that she also held disloyal sentiments. The day was too far spent when Mr. Speed took his departure for us to think of visiting the White House.

At ten o'clock next morning we stood at the portals of the White House, where the genial Edward received our cards and letter, and were led soon after into the presence of Mr. Lincoln.

Mr. Lincoln was alone. He greeted Mrs. Cosby with a most serious but kindly deference in his manner, and he gave me his usual kindly greeting of, "How do you do, Miss Nettie? - glad to see you back among us." There was an awkward silence for a moment. He asked us to be seated. Then, turning to Mrs. Cosby, he remarked, "We have not met, Mrs. Cosby, since it was my un-pleasant duty to banish your husband from the country." She replied, "No, Mr. Lincoln; and I trust, when the full truth is known, Mr. Cosby will prove less culpable than the report caused him to appear." A slight pause, and then he remarked: "In public life we are compelled to forego all claims save those of duty, and in a critical time like the present, when the nation's life is in our hands, we must often seem to our friends unduly stern and relentless." "Say no more," remarked Mrs. Cosby in her gentle way; "I fully recognise your position, Mr. Lincoln, and am too loyal a woman to the interests of the Union to question anything which you may deem proper to do."

I shall not forget the grace and dignity of manner that governed my friend as she uttered these words, which indelibly impressed themselves upon my memory, and seemed equally to impress Mr. Lincoln, for he remarked, "I thank you for your loyalty," and "I fear that the same does not exist with all our lady residents in Washington."

During this time, he had held Mr. Speed's letter in his hand, and now turning to it said, "I see you are acquainted with my friend Speed." "Yes," she replied; "he gave me a pleasant call yesterday." "He is a good fellow," remarked Mr. Lincoln; and, after some few words concerning their early associations, looked up with his genial smile, and said, "I was with him the night he settled it about his marriage with the widow. I was walking along the road when he overtook me with his wagon and asked me to get in. We rode together until we reached her house, and there stopped for the night. I could see that Josh had something on his mind, but I did not know what that something was until I was left to go to bed alone. Towards morning Joshua came to bed, and, awakening me, informed me of the important fact that it was settled between him and the widow."

I now see the President as he then looked, seated in a big arm-chair, one leg thrown over the arm, his hands clasped behind his head, talking to us in this pleasant, familiar strain; and, as Mrs. Cosby afterwards said, "We felt that he was, under the circumstances, endeavouring to cover the embarrassment of our meeting, bearing in

mind the removal of Mr. Cosby from office.” As he concluded, Mrs. Cosby turned to me, and said, “Miss Nettie is a petitioner to-day.” He looked at me in all kindness and asked how he could serve me. In as few words as possible I related the dilemma of my acquaintance, and his request that I should lay the matter before the President, feeling that if he fully understood the determination and purpose he would not permit the troops to be scattered.

“By the way,” he remarked, “I think I have received a telegram from your friend,” and stepping to his table in the centre of the room he picked up a dispatch and read aloud: “We are coming, Father Abraham, three hundred veterans strong - M. H. Chrysler, commanding.”

The President quietly chuckled as he read it, and, turning to me, said: “I really have no power in the matter; but think I can somewhat influence the decision of the commanding officers. To tell the truth, it is unwise for me to interfere in any of the regulations connected with the army. You have no idea what a time I had when this war first broke out. When I issued my call for the first 75,000 men I was as ignorant as a child regarding the best course to pursue. Regiments were poured into Washington, and were lying about without shelter and without sufficient provisions. The troops were clamouring at the doors here for orders, and I was harassed and perplexed, not knowing what to do. At last Gov. Morgan, of New York, wrote me that it was impossible for him to fill the quota of his State until I called my recruiting officers from the field. I thought his letter impertinent, and took no notice of it. He, with others, then visited me, and explained the situation. Two recruiting parties were in the field-one in my name, contesting for the enlisting soldier; and one under the officers of the State, trying to obtain regiments to fill the demand - I, meanwhile, having made peremptory demand on the Governors of the States to forward their proportion.

“My mistake was apparent, for I had *granted the right to raise troops to every man who had applied*, and, therefore, had unwittingly checked or balked my own purpose. Of course I then cancelled all orders, and left the affairs where they should *be-in the hands of the Governors of the respecting States*. As a result, order was soon restored. So, you see, my young friend, the difficulty in this case. But I will tell you what I will do. I will give you a line to the Secretary of War, and request him to send these men to the Camp of Instruction until the brigade is completed- if he finds it possible to do so.” He wrote a line to this effect, signing and handing it to me, and, after a few more words of kindness and explanation, shook us cordially by the hand and bade us good-day.

Here, again, was the kindly and genial spirit of President Lincoln clearly shown, in that he should take the pains to explain to me his inability to comply with my request, confessing at the same time his deficiency in knowledge when war first made its demands upon him; going into an account of matters he need not have named, when without a word he might have dismissed us, as most likely any other official in Washington would have done. But it was ever the characteristic of this man, so great in goodness, that he avoided wounding the feelings of the humblest, and ever sought to work in perfect harmony with all of his people.

Being too late to see the Secretary of War that afternoon, we returned home. The next morning my friend was ill with a sick-headache, and Parnie and I went to the War Department and asked to see Secretary Stanton.

We held the paper Mr. Lincoln had given us, on which was written, "The Secretary will receive Miss Colburn and hear her statement. - A. LINCOLN."

This paper procured us instant admission to the presence of the Secretary, who received us with a very stern, unbending countenance, that boded ill for the request. In trembling tones I stated the case, and remarked that the rigid orders surrounding my soldier friends prevented their getting leave of absence to prefer this request in person. Glancing at the paper which he held in his hand containing Mr. Lincoln's name, he said, "Why did you come to me? Mr. Lincoln has full power in this matter. Why didn't he attend to it?" As was often the case in an emergency, I felt the hand of an unseen guide on my shoulder, warning me to be careful of my reply; and I heard the words issue from my lips without any volition of my own: "I supposed, as Secretary of War, you were the proper person to apply to in this case. I knew how hard it was to get to your presence, and I asked Mr. Lincoln for this paper." His countenance changed instantly, and in the kindest tones imaginable bade us be seated, took down the name of Col. Chrysler, the number of men under his command, and all the circumstances attending the subject, saying kindly, 'I will see that this is attended to at once,' and politely bowed us out.

Some time afterwards, in relating this circumstance to a friend in Washington, I was informed that the good Secretary was a little jealous of his prerogatives, and looked with unfriendly eyes upon any interference from the White House. Be this as it may, I know that my politic answer to his irate question, *for which I was not responsible*, seemed to change the face of matters and favourably shape results for our friends of the camp, who, when visiting us a few days later, informed us in high glee that they were ordered to remain at the Camp of Instruction until their brigade was fully completed, and also given full power to enlist veterans for that purpose.

## CHAPTER XI

### SPIRITUAL ADVICE

EARLY in 1864 we were the guests of Mr. and Mrs. Somes. Mrs. Somes seldom went into society, owing to the loss of her eldest son and her preference for home life. She was a lady of remarkable ability, refined and gentle manners, a devoted wife and mother, and a sincere Christian. My friend, Miss Hamlum, and I soon called at the White House, to pay our respects to the President and his wife, and were received with the greatest cordiality.

We remained but a short time, but were both particularly struck by Mr. Lincoln's careworn appearance. His old genial smile was the same, as he expressed the hope that we had come to spend the winter. A few days later Mrs. Somes received a note cordially inviting herself and husband to spend an evening at the White House, and requesting her to bring the young ladies, meaning Miss Hannum and myself. At first Mrs. Somes was inclined to refuse, but yielding to her husband's solicitation, and our wishes, she consented. In her note Mrs. Lincoln said she desired her to meet a friend, and wished to see if she (Miss Pinkie) would be able to tell who it was. We reached the Executive Mansion at half-past eight, and were ushered into the Red Parlour, where the madam received us with great kindness, and presented us in turn to a distinguished, soldierly-looking gentleman, who was wrapped in a long military cloak, completely concealing his person and every evidence of rank. She did not call him by name, apologising for not doing so, and saying she desired first to see if our friends could tell who he was, adding that she would duly present him afterwards. I saw that Mr. Somes recognised him instantly, but he gave no hint of his identity. My friend and myself removed our wraps, but Mrs. Somes declined, simply loosening hers. A pleasant half hour followed, when Mr. Lincoln joined us. After a cordial greeting all around, he wearily seated himself in an arm-chair and remarked, 'I am very busy and must forego the pleasure of conversation and ask our little friend here to see what can be given us to-night as briefly as may be, for my Cabinet is awaiting my return.'

Silence fell upon the group, and I was shortly entranced. What here follows was related to me on our return home by Mr. and Mrs. Somes and my friend. A strong, powerful presence seemed to have possession of me, directing first its entire attention to Mr. Lincoln. The substance of the remarks related to the condition of the Freedmen in and around Washington, declaring their condition deplorable in the extreme, that they were herding together like cattle in the open air, with little or no shelter, half fed and half clothed, while the manner of their existence was a reproach to the country, throwing down, as it did, all safeguards to morality and decency. A terrible picture was presented concerning the thousands thus rendered homeless and dependent upon the government, through the exigencies of war and the proclamation of Freedom.

While the spirits realised fully the many heavy cares resting upon the President, there was a duty to perform that could not be neglected—a duty that demanded immediate attention. They counselled him in the strongest terms to prove the truth of their statements, extravagant as they seemed, by appointing a special committee, whose duty it should be to investigate the condition of these people, and to receive their report in person, and on no account to receive it at second hand. They further advised that for this committee he should select men who were not burdened with other cares,

that their minds might be given entirely to their work, for, if they did their duty well, he would see the necessity at once of organising a separate bureau to control and regulate all the affairs connected with the freedmen.

While I cannot, at this late day, give a more minute account of the instructions thus given, I have presented the main points. The powers controlling me then directed their attention to the gentleman in the military cloak. They at once addressed him as "General," saying that his cloak did not disguise from their eyes the evidence of the noble sacrifice he had laid on his country's altar, nor the glittering stars he so merited, for he had royally won them by his patriotic devotion to his country. They extended my hand to him, which he accepted, rising and bowing with the same courtesy and dignity that characterised him towards all; and whatever may have been his private opinions concerning mediumship and Spiritualism, his manner was that of a courteous and true gentleman. A few words of greeting were then spoken to all - a final word of encouragement and strength spoken to the President - when the influence changed, and "Pinkie," the little Indian maiden, took possession of my organism, and after greeting the President and Mrs. Lincoln in her usual manner, turned at once to the stranger, addressing him as "Crooked Knife," her Indian name for him, thus giving to Mrs. Lincoln the test she I required, as it was thus ascertained that "Pinkie" recognised him as the General of whom she had often spoken in former circles when relating events that were taking place on distant battlefields.

While she was talking in her childish way, Mr. Lincoln excused himself, returning to his Cabinet meeting. When I awoke a half hour later, I found myself standing in front of the gentleman whom I had met that evening for the first time, and saw that his clear, piercing eyes were fixed wholly upon me. Mrs. Lincoln now hastened to cover my embarrassment by duly presenting us to all. This officer was Major-General Sickels (now Sheriff of New York City), who laid aside his cloak, revealing his whole uniform and a crutch which, until that moment had been concealed. This was the first and only time my friend and myself ever met this famous general, although, as I have stated, he and other generals were often mentioned in communications that were made by me to the President and his wife, while giving them tidings of the true state of affairs at the front, which communications were afterwards fully confirmed when reliable particulars were received. Of this I was assured on more than one occasion by Mrs. Lincoln.

It was after eleven o' clock when our carriage was announced, and as we departed the General stood by the side of Mrs. Lincoln, shaking hands with us in turn as we passed from their presence. I vividly recall the scene; the bright fire in the open grate, sending a genial warmth through the room; a large pyramid of flowers and palms in the centre of the apartment, giving a look of richness to the scene; while a marble bust of Mr. Lincoln, just received, and to which Mrs. Lincoln had called our attention earlier in the evening, stood in front of the large pier-glass, seeming almost lifelike in the shifting shadows made by the gas-light and waving palms. The scene was one never to be forgotten.

## CHAPTER XII

### A TEST SEANCE

DURING the latter part of February, and the month of March, I had a number of séances with President Lincoln and his wife; but, as there were no other witnesses, and as they did not inform me of the nature of the communications, I cannot speak as to their nature, but simply allude to the fact. These séances took place by appointment. At the close of one, Mrs. Lincoln would make an appointment, engaging me to come at a certain hour of the day, which usually would be in the vicinity of one o'clock, the time when Mr. Lincoln usually partook of his luncheon, which generally occupied about half to three-quarters of an hour. There was another meeting with Mr. Lincoln which is interesting and of considerable value. Shortly after my return to Washington, and while visiting Major Chorpenning one evening, Mr. Somes called. After an exchange of compliments, he stated that he had been requested to have me attend a séance, and as the same was of a private character he was not at liberty to say more. We all suspected the truth, however, and I instantly made ready to accompany him.

After entering the carriage provided for the occasion, he informed us that our destination was the White House, explaining that while at the War Department that afternoon he had met Mr. Lincoln coming from Secretary Stanton's office. Mr. Somes bowed to the President and was passing onward when Mr. Lincoln stopped him, asking whether Miss Colburn was still in the city, and if so, whether it were possible to have her visit the White House that evening. Upon a reply in the affirmative to both questions, Mr. Lincoln remarked, "Please bring her to the White House at eight or nine o'clock, but consider the matter confidential."

By the time Mr. Somes had completed his recital we were at the door of that historic mansion, and a servant who was evidently on the watch for us, quickly opened the door and we were hurried upstairs to the executive chamber, where Mr. Lincoln and two gentlemen were awaiting our coming. Mr. Lincoln gave an order to the servant, who retired, and a moment later Mrs. Lincoln entered. I am satisfied from what followed that she was summoned on my account to place me more at ease than otherwise, under the circumstances, would have been the case. Mr. Lincoln then quietly stated that he wished me to give them an opportunity to witness something of my "rare gift," as he called it, adding, "you need not be afraid, as these friends have seen something of this before."

The two gentlemen referred to were evidently military officers, as was indicated by the stripe upon their pantaloons, although their frock coats, buttoned to the chin, effectually concealed any insignia or mark of rank. One of these gentlemen was quite tall and heavily built, with auburn hair and dark eyes, and side whiskers, and of decided military bearing. The other gentleman was of average height, and I somehow received the impression that he was lower in rank than his companion. He had light brown hair and blue eyes, was quick in manner, but deferential towards his friend, whose confirmation he involuntarily sought or indicated by his look of half appeal while the conversation went on.

We sat quiet for a few moments before I became entranced. One hour later I became conscious of my surroundings, and was standing by a long table, upon which was a large map of the Southern States. In my hand was a lead pencil, and the tall man, with

Mr. Lincoln, was standing beside me, bending over the map, while the younger man was standing on the other side of the table, looking curiously and intently at me. Somewhat embarrassed, I glanced around to note Mrs. Lincoln quietly conversing in another part of the room. The only remarks I heard were these: "It is astonishing," said Mr. Lincoln, "how every line she has drawn conforms to the plan agreed upon." "Yes" answered the older soldier, "it is very astonishing." Looking up, they both saw that I was awake, and they instantly stepped back, while Mr. Lincoln took the pencil from my hand and placed a chair for me.

Then madam and Mr. Somes at once joined us, Mr. Somes asking, "Well, was everything satisfactory?" "Perfectly," responded Mr. Lincoln; "Miss Nettie does not seem to require eyes to do anything," smiling pleasantly. The conversation then turned, designedly, I felt, to commonplace matters.

Shortly afterwards, when about leaving, Mr. Lincoln said to us in a low voice, "It is best not to mention this meeting at present." Assuring him of silence upon the question, we were soon again on our way to the majors.

Mr. Somes informed me that he heard enough in the opening remarks of the spirit to convince him that the power controlling knew why I had been summoned. He said I walked to the table unaided and requested that a pencil be handed me, after which the President requested Mr. Somes and Mrs. Lincoln to remain where they were at the end of the room. "In accordance with this request," said Mr. Somes, "we paid no attention to what was being said or done, further than to notice you tracing lines upon the map, and once one of the gentlemen re-sharpened the pencil for you." I never knew the purport of this meeting, nor can I say that Mr. Somes ever heard more regarding the strange affair. That it was important may be supposed, for those were not days for the indulgence of idle curiosity in any direction, nor was Mr. Lincoln a man to waste his time in giving exhibitions in occult science for the amusement of his friends.

The impressions left upon my mind could not be otherwise than gratifying, in finding myself the recipient of such unusual attentions, and, for the occasion, the central figure in what appeared to be a mysterious and momentous consultation. Had it been simply an experiment to test my mediumship, Mr. Somes and Mrs. Lincoln would have been included in the group that gathered around the table. I am confident that my services were appreciated, and that the spiritual guidance which found utterance through my lips was confirmatory of the plans which they had already prepared. As in this instance, so in many others, has this powerful aid been called upon and used to advantage, to further important national and personal interests, and accomplish results that simple human knowledge could not achieve. Mr. Lincoln's fancy for poetry and song inclined towards those melodies which appealed to his emotional nature, as is illustrated by his keen appreciation of Mrs. Laurie's *Bonnie Doon*, and his favourite poem, *Why Should the Spirit of Mortal Be Proud?* I remember hearing him refer to the touching poem upon an occasion of peculiar interest, at which time he recited apart of it applying the verses to the occasion in a very pleasant and happy manner. This incident is worthy of appearing in print:-

One morning in January, 1863, Mrs. Laurie desired me to go to the White House and inquire after Mrs. Lincoln's health. Mrs. Laurie had visited Mrs. Lincoln the previous day, and found her prostrated by one of her severe head-aches. It was about eleven

o'clock when I called. Upon sending up my name and inquiry to Mrs. Lincoln, I was requested to walk upstairs to her rooms, where I found Mr. and Mrs. Lincoln, a gentleman, and two ladies. I was cordially received by Mr. and Mrs. Lincoln, and presented to the guests, whose names were not mentioned, and when I noticed their glances, I knew that they had been told I was a medium. After explaining my errand and being about to withdraw, Mrs. Lincoln asked whether I felt equal to the task of a séance. Noticing that all were expectant, I signified my willingness and reseated myself.

After Mrs. Lincoln had assisted me to remove my wraps, she requested that the friends present do the same. They declined. Whereupon the gentleman, who was their escort, laughingly remarked, as he indicated the lady nearest him: "It is useless to urge Anna, Mrs. Lincoln, for she thinks she looks better in her new bonnet." To which Anna replied, "That she believed she did, and felt very proud of it." Mr. Lincoln, who was seated, raised his hands with a comical gesture, and quoted apart of his favourite poem, *Why Should the Spirit of Mortal Be Proud?* The gentleman said, "You are familiar with that poem?" To which the President replied, "Perfectly; it is a favourite of mine; and, let me ask, what could be finer in expression than the lines: - "The maid on whose cheek, on whose brow, in whose eye,

Shone beauty and pleasure, - her triumphs are by; And the memory of those who loved and praised, Are alike from the minds of the living erased.' " Continuing to the line:- "Have quietly mingled their bones in the dust."

At this point I became unconscious, and awoke a half hour later to find the company betraying much emotion, and while recovering myself, they talked together in low tones, and in an animated manner. This was interrupted by Mr. Lincoln rousing himself with an effort, saying: "I must go, and am afraid I have already stayed too long." Shaking hands with his visitors, he turned in his kind way to me, and, while warmly shaking my hand, said: "I thank you, Miss Nettie, for obliging us; we have deeply enjoyed our little circle."

As he left the room, the others expressed the same sentiment; and as I was preparing to don my bonnet and shawl, Mrs. Lincoln requested me to wait. She rang the bell for the servant, who soon after returned with two beautiful bouquets, one of which she said was for Mrs. Laurie, the other for myself. The party then shook hands with me, rising as they did so. I was treated by them with the same courtesy as would have been offered any friend or old acquaintance. -

I The reader will note the especial appropriateness of the poetical sally on the part of Mr. Lincoln.

## CHAPTER XIII

### UNTIL MY WORK IS DONE

I lectured occasionally during the summer, and in the fall, near the close of the presidential campaign of that year (1864), found myself in New Boston, Mass., visiting old friends, and speaking for them every Sunday. Even in that quiet village, political excitement ran high, and both parties had arranged for a meeting in the town hall, where I was accustomed to speak; the Democrats occupying the first evening, the Republicans the evening following. The town hall was packed with an excited and interested crowd on both occasions.

The first evening a Democratic lawyer from Great Barrington occupied the platform. His speech consisted of story-telling, ridicule, and abuse of the government.

The following evening Henry L. Dawes, member of Congress from Massachusetts, and a staunch Republican, spoke to the same immense audience.

When Mr. Dawes had finished his able and eloquent address, the chairman of the meeting, who was also the president of our Spiritualist Society, asked him if he had any objections to my occupying the rostrum with him and addressing the company. With the courtesy that ever characterised him, he answered in the negative, and when I was introduced to him he recognised me, having met me in Washington. I felt it an honour, indeed, to be permitted to speak from the same platform with that able orator, for it was, indeed, one of the proudest moments of my life. The audience sang a ringing campaign song, when I became entranced and addressed the audience for about fifteen minutes.

The spirit controlling me stated in substance, as I was afterwards informed, that he had nothing to add to what had already been spoken, beyond predicting, with unerring certainty, that Abraham Lincoln would be re-elected at the coming national election. I awoke amid the applause of the audience, and Mr. Dawes congratulated me in his kind way upon the manner in which I had been instrumental in closing the evening's exercises.

A few weeks later found us again in Washington City, in response to urgent solicitations on the part of friends, and we were the guests of Major Chorpenning and his wife. Major George Chorpenning was the first man to carry the United States mail across the Rocky Mountains, from Salt Lake City to San Francisco, under a contract with our government, which he had entered into many years previous to the time of which I am speaking, and which was annulled through the false representations of enemies, who coveted, and finally obtained, his position. When I first met him, he was engaged in vigorously prosecuting his claim against the government for damages sustained by the annulment of his contract. He was generous and hospitable to a fault, while his wife, a brilliant society lady, entertained in a manner that insured the acceptance of their invitations. A brilliant company assembled in their parlours once a week, and the evenings were always very enjoyable. Nearly every reception, by unanimous request, was turned into a spiritual circle, and I here met many gentlemen from both branches of Congress.

These pleasant social gatherings are among the most pleasant memories of my Washington experiences. Tuesday afternoons we usually attended Mrs. Lincoln's

receptions, often meeting there the ladies and gentlemen who graced our own. It was during this memorable winter of '64 and '65, when the Rebellion was in its death-throes, that I knew of the visits of Charles Colchester and Charles Foster (two well-known mediums of that time) to the White House, and of their sittings with President Lincoln. Through them and through myself, he received warnings of his approaching fate; but his fearless, confident nature disregarded the warnings he received.

It was during the last days of February, when the city was being filled to its utmost capacity by people from all parts of the country, to witness the second inauguration of President Lincoln, that I received a dispatch from my home telling me my father was dangerously ill, and to come to him at once. Having an appointment at the White House for the following week, I hastened with my friend, Miss Hannum, to the Executive Mansion to inform Mrs. Lincoln of the necessity that called me away. She was out, and we proceeded upstairs to the ante-room, adjacent to Mr. Lincoln's office, hoping for a last word with him.

It was two o'clock in the afternoon, and during the last days of the expiring Congress, and the waiting-room was filled with members from both Houses, all anxious to get a word with the President. Mr. Ingersoll and a number of others I knew were there, and it seemed doubtful of our obtaining an interview. Mr. Ingersoll smilingly asked if I expected to have an interview with Mr. Lincoln. I replied, "I hope so, as I am about to leave the city." He remarked, he feared it was doubtful, as he and many others had been waiting many hours for a chance to speak with him and had failed.

Edward, the faithful and devoted usher of the White House, was passing to and fro taking in cards to Mr. Lincoln's office. Calling him to me, I explained that I wished to see the President for one brief moment, to explain why I could not keep my engagement the following week; and giving him my card, bade him watch for an opportunity when Mr. Lincoln would be parting from those that were with him, and then place my card in his hand, telling him I would detain him but an instant.

Half an hour went by, when Edward approached and bade us follow him. Mr. Ingersoll, with whom we had been talking, bade us laughingly to speak a good word for him, and we were soon ushered into Mr. Lincoln's presence. He stood at his table, busily looking over some papers, but laid them down and greeted us with his usual genial smile. In as few words as possible, knowing how precious was his time, we informed him of the cause of our unseasonable call, stating I had been summoned home by a telegram telling me my father was dangerously ill. Looking at me with a quizzical smile, he said, "But cannot our friends from the upper country tell you whether his illness is likely to prove fatal or not?" I replied that I had already consulted with our friends, and they had assured me that his treatment was wrong, and that my presence was needed to effect a cure. Turning to my friend, he said laughingly, "I didn't catch her, did I?"

Then turning to me, he said, "I am sorry you cannot remain to witness the inauguration, as no doubt you wish." "Indeed, we would enjoy it," I replied, "but the crowd will be so great we will not be able to see you, Mr. Lincoln, even if we remain." "You could not help it," he answered, drawing his tall figure to its full height, and glancing at my friend in an amused way, "I shall be the tallest man there." "That is true," my friend responded, "in every sense of the word." He nodded pleasantly at the compliment, and then turning to me remarked, "But what do our

friends say of us now?" "What they predicted for you, Mr. Lincoln, has come to pass," I answered, "and you are to be inaugurated the second time." He nodded his head and I continued, "But they also re-affirm that the shadow they have spoken of still hangs over you. He turned half impatiently away and said, "Yes, I know. I have letters from all over the country from your kind of people - mediums, I mean - warning me against some dreadful plot against my life. But I don't think the knife is made, or the bullet run, that will reach it. Besides, nobody wants to harm me." A feeling of sadness that I could not conceal nor account for came over me and I said, "Therein lies your danger, Mr. President - your over-confidence in your fellow men."

The old melancholy look that had of late seemed lifted from his face now fell over it, and he said in his subdued, quiet way, "Well, Miss Nettie, I shall live till my work is done, and no earthly power can prevent it. And then it doesn't matter so that I am ready-and that I ever mean to be." Brightening again, he extended a hand to each of us, saying, "Well, I suppose I must bid you good-bye, but we shall hope to see you back again next fall."

"We shall certainly come," we replied, "*if you are here,*" without thinking of the doubts our words implied. "It looks like it now," he answered, and walking with us to a side door, with another cordial shake of the hand, we passed out of his presence for the last time. Never again would we meet his welcome smile.

## CHAPTER XIV

### THE MAN LINCOLN

Looking back upon those years of terrible struggle, Lincoln stands out in golden colours as the central figure of all persons whom I have ever met, and in my more mature judgment was representative of all that was good and great among our common humanity.

If he was not great in those qualities which made a Cicero or a Webster, he was great in that supreme goodness that allied him alike to the most brilliant minds of his time and the common people, to whose sorrows and necessities he was ever ready to listen.

His countenance in repose always struck the beholder as sad and expressive, which sadness his rare kindly smile could not wholly obliterate. I have watched him when listening to views and opinions presented by members of his Cabinet, both in the Executive chamber and in the parlour of the White House, also while in conversation with foreign ministers and men prominent in social and business circles, with men older and younger than himself, and in each and every instance his manner was marked by a gentleness and courtesy of demeanour, that could not fail to flatter the recipient, while the alert and clear expression of his eyes indicated that he lost no part in the conversation, nor failed to thoroughly understand it.

He listened more than he talked upon these occasions, and he was wont to express much in a few words, and if compelled to refuse a portion of the many petitions which were daily presented to him, the manner of refusal was apparently so tinged with regret of the fact that duty and inclination would not harmonise, that he seemed to have granted the favour he was compelled to deny. He was especially thoughtful of the feelings of the common people, from whom he sprang. Never was this thoughtfulness more forcibly illustrated than upon an occasion of a public reception given at the White House during the winter of 1865, at which myself and friend attended. After greeting the President on our passing him, on our way to the Blue room, at the entrance of which he was standing, we took up our place to the right of Mrs. Lincoln, who was surrounded by a bevy of ladies who, usually assisted at those receptions, for the purpose of watching the throng of visitors who were entering and passing on their way to the East room. Mr. Lincoln's manner was attentive, as his duty of host required, but I noticed that as men of fashion in faultless costume and bedecked with jewels greeted him, his handshake was mechanical and his glance indifferent, and he scarcely noticed them. But if a boy in blue entered, or a labouring man, whose ungloved hand was timidly offered in greeting, he earnestly met the offer, and giving the hard hand a hearty shake, added a cheery word and kindly smile, which was quickly reflected on the face of his humble visitor, who walked away with prouder mien and bolder step, as he wended his way through the mixed assemblage that jostled towards the exit.

On the occasion of these public receptions Mr. Lincoln always appeared well dressed in the regulation evening costume of black, his clothing seemed well fitting and his general appearance that of dignity and self-command. At other times when I have met him, both in his office and in other rooms of the White House, he impressed me as being indifferent to his apparel, his clothing at times being decidedly seedy-looking, and it may be added that at these meetings he seemed encompassed and imbued with

a preoccupied state of mind that forcibly impressed itself upon the memory of the onlooker as indicating great mental oppression, thought and care, plainly saying, "I am wholly the agent of a special purpose, and the servant of a condition that is not mine, but for the good of all whom I serve." He never seemed to have an idle moment, nor did he ever appear to relax his manner of reserve, nor give way to excessive mirthfulness, even at a time when witty sayings were apart of the conversation. Rather would he smile in sympathy with those around him, showing that he was in accord with them, indicating that his mind was so fully occupied with the cares of the Nation, that he could not enter into the spirit of the hour. In such instances those present could not but feel that he was *with* them, but not *of* them. When I recall his manner, conversation and conduct at these various meetings, the feeling impresses itself upon me that he remained in the presence of his friends a sufficient time to absorb the information which they could impart, and so long as they could occupy and hold his interest, he felt a special desire for their company, but that a precedence of friendship was in favour of those only who could maintain this interest. This quality of absorbing information was, I am inclined to believe, more a mental equipment of him as a man, than a quality in him as a ruler. Lincoln lived and acted at a time, and under circumstances, without a parallel in the history of nations, and by the common standard with which ordinary men are judged he cannot be justly measured. He was "of the time" because its chief actor, and "for the time" because he created its results.

It should be borne in mind that all my meetings with Mr. Lincoln were at periods of special import, and upon occasions when he was in need of aid and direction. After the "circle," which he attended, he invariably left with a brighter and happier look, evidencing the benefit in part which he experienced from that which had been imparted to him.