Lincoln Poetry

Poets
Tom Taylor

Excerpts from newspapers and other sources

From the files of the Lincoln Financial Foundation Collection
Abraham Lincoln

ABRAHAM LINCOLN.

THE JESTER BRITON'S APOLOGY.

From the Verses on Lincoln in "Punch" of May 6, 1865.

You lay a wreath on murdered Lincoln's bier,
You, who, with mocking pencil went to trace
Broad, for the self-complacent British sneer,
His length of shambling limb, his furrowed face.

His gaunt, gnarled hands, his unkempt, bristling hair,
His garb uncouth, his bearing ill at ease,
His lack of all we prize as debonair.
Of power or will to shine, of art to please.

You, whose smart pen backed up the pencil's laugh,
Judging each step as though the way
were plain:
Reckless, so it could point its paragraph,
Of chief's perplexity or people's pain.

Beside this corpse, that bears for winding sheet
The Stars and Stripes he lived to rear anew,
Between the mourners at his head and feet.
Say, scurril jester, is there room for you?

Yes, he had lived to shame me from my sneer,
To tame my pencil and confute my pen—
To make me own this kind of prince and peer.
This rail splitter, as true born king of men.

My shallow judgment I had learned to rue,
Noting how to occasion's height he rose;
How his quaint wit made home truth seem more true,
How, ironlike, his temper grew by blows.

How humble, yea, how hopeful he could be;
How in good fortune and in ill the same;
Nor bitter in success, nor boastful he;
Thirsty for gold, nor feverish for fame.

He went about his work—such work as few
Ever had laid on head and heart and hand—
As one who knows, where there's a task to do,
Man's honest will must heaven's good grace command.

So he grew up, a destined work to do,
And lived to do it; four long suffering years'
Ill fate, ill feeling, ill report, lived through,
And then he heard the hisses change to cheers,

The taunts to tribute, the abuse to praise,
And took both with the same unwavering mood;
Till, as he came on light from darkening days
And seemed to touch the goal from where he stood,

A felon hand, between his goal and him,
Reached from behind his back, a trigger press—
And those perplexed and patient eyes were dim,
These gaunt, long laboring limbs were laid to rest!

The words of mercy were upon his lips,
Forgiveness in his heart and on his pen.
When this vile murderer brought swift eclipse
To thoughts of peace on earth, good will to men.

The old world and the new, from sea to sea,
Utter one voice of sympathy and shame!
Bore heart, so stopped when it at last beat high,
Sad life, cut short just as its triumph came.
ABRAHAM LINCOLN.

FOLLY ASSASSINATED, APRIL 14, 1865.
(By Tom Taylor, in Punch, London, May 6, 1855.)

You lay a wreath on murdered Lincoln's bier!
You who with mocking pencil vent to trace
Bread for the self-complete Britannia soar,
His length of shambling limb, his furrowed face.

His gaunt, gaunt hands, his unkempt, bristling hair;
His mouth-moan, his bearing ill at ease.
His lack of all we prize as decent,
Of power or will to shine, or art to please;

You, whose smart pen backed up the pencil's laugh,
Judging and step, as though the way were plain;
Resolution, so it could point its paragraph,
Of chief perplexity, or people's pain!

Beside this corpse, that bears for winding-sheet
The stars and stripes he lived to rear above,
Between the mourners at his head and feet,
Say, scantly faster, is there room for you?

Yes; he had liv'd to shame me from my sneer,
To lance my pencil and confute my pen,
To make me own this kind of princes peer,
This rail-splitter a true-born king of men.

My shallow judgment I had learnt to rue,
Noting how to occasion's height he rose;
How his genius will made Boone-truth seem more true;
How, iron-like, his temper grew by blows;

How humble, yet how hopeful he could be;
How in good fortune and in ill the same;
Nor bitter in success, nor boastful he,
Thirsty for gold, nor feverish for fame.

He went about his work—such work as few
Ever had laid on head and heart and hand—
As one who knows, where there's a task to do,
Man's honest will must Heaven's good grace command;

Who trusts the strength will with the burden grow,
That God makes instruments to work his will,
If but that will we can arrive to know.
Nor tamper with the weights o' good and ill.

So he went forth to baton, on the side
That he felt clear was Liberty's and Right's;
As in his peasant boyhood he had plied
His warfare with rude Nature's thwarting mights—

The fever'd forest, the unbroken roll,
The iron bark that turns the lumberer's axe,
The rapid that oversteers the boatman's oar,
The platter hiding the mad's wanderer's tracks.

The ambush'd Indian, and the crouling bear—
Such were the deeds that help'd his youth to train;
Rough culture, but such trees large fruit may bear,
If but their stocks be of right girl and grain.

So he grew up, a destined work to do,
And liv'd to do it; four long-suffering years' ill-fate, ill-felling, ill-report, liv'd through,
And then he heard the voices change to cheers.

The taunts to tribute, the abuse to praise,
And took both with the same unavailing mood—
Till, as he came on light from darkling days,
And seemed to touch the goal from where he stood,

A felon-hand, between the goal and him,
Reach'd from behind his back, a trigger shot—
And those perplex'd and patient eyes were dim.
Those, gaunt, long-laboring limbs were laid to rest,

The words of mercy were upon his lips,
Forgiveness in his heart and on his pen.
When this vile murderer brought swift eclipse
To thoughts of peace on earth, goodwill to men.

The Old World and the New, from sea to sea,
Bitter was one voice of sympathy and shame.
Here heart, so steeped when it at last best high!
Sad life, cut short just as its triumph came!

A deed accomplisht! Strakes have been struck before
By the assassin's hand, whose heart doubt's
If men feel horror or disgrace they bore;
But thy deed crime, like Caligula's, stands darkly out,

Vile hand, that brandest murder on a strife,
What'er its grounds, slyly and nobly striven,
And with the martyr's crown crowned a life
With much to praise, little to be forgiven.
You lay a wreath on murdered Lincoln's bier!
You, who with mocking pencil went to trace
Broad for the self-complacent British sneer
His length of shambling limb, his furrowed face,
His gaunt gnarled hands, his unkempt, bristling hair,
His garb uncouth, his bearing ill at ease,
His lack of all we prize as debonair,
Of power or will to shine, of art to please!
You, whose smart pen backed up the pencil's laugh,
Judging each step as though the way were plain;
Reckless so it could point its paragraph
Of chief's perplexity, or people's pain!
Beside this corpse, that bears for winding sheet
The stars and stripes he lived to rear anew,
Between the mourners at his head and feet,
Say, scurril-jester, is there room for you?
Yes, he had lived to shame me from my sneer—
To lame my pencil and confute my pen—
To make me own this kind of princes peer,
This rail-splitter a true-born king of men.
My shallow judgment I had learnt to rue,
Noting how to occasion's height he rose;
How his quaint wit made home-truth seem more true;
How, iron-like, his temper grew by blows;
How humble, yet how hopeful, he could be;
How in good fortune and in ill the same;
Nor bitter in success, nor boastful he,
Thirsty for gold, nor favorish for fame.
He went about his work—such work as few
Ever had laid on head, and heart, and hand—
As one who knows where there's a task to do,
Man's honest will must: Heaven's good grace command;
Who causeth the strength will with the burden grow,
That God makes instruments to work his will
If but that will we can arrive to know,
Nor tamper with the weights of good and ill.
So he went forth to battle, on the side
That he felt clear was Liberty's and Right's,
As in his pleasant boyhood he had pledged
His warfare with rude nature's thwarting mights.
The unchastened forest, the unbranched soil,
The iron bark that turns the lumberer's axe,
The rapid, that o'erbear's the boatman's toil,
The prairie, hiding the mazed wanderer's tracks,
The ambushed Indian, and the prowling bear—
Such were the needs that helped his youth to train;
Rough culture—but such trees large fruit may bear,
If but their stocks be of right girth and grain.
So he grew up a destined work to do,
And liked to do it; four long-suffering years
Ill fate, ill feeling, ill report lived through,
And then he heard the blassed changed to cheers.

The taunts to tribute, the abuse to praise;
And took both with the same unwavering mood;
Till he came on light, from darkling days
And seemed to touch the goal from where he stood.
A felon hand between the goal and him,
Reached from behind his back, a trigger prest—
And those perplexed and patient eyes were dim.
Those gaunt, long laboring limbs were laid to rest!
The words of mercy were upon his lips,
Forgiveness in his heart and on his pen,
When this vile murderer brought swift eclipse
To thoughts of peace on earth, good will to men.
The Old World and the New, from sea to sea,
Utter one voice of sympathy and shame!
Sons heart, so stopped when it at last beat high:
Sad life, cut short just as its triumph came.
A deed accurs! Strokes have been struck before
By the assassin's hand, whereof men doubt
If more of horror or disgrace they bore;
But thy foul crime, like Cain's, stands darkly out.
Vile hand, that brandest murder on a strife,
What'er its grounds, stoutly and nobly striven;
And with the martyr's crown crownest a life,
With much to praise, little to be forgiven!
Abraham Lincoln
By Tom Taylor—April, 1865

THIS tribute appeared in the London Punch, which up to the time of the assassination of Mr. Lincoln, had ridiculed and maligned him with all its well-known powers of pen and pencil. These verses made a profound impression in the United States. The editorial staff of Punch was divided in the matter of the publication of the verses as is shown by the following entry in the diary of Shirley Brooks, a member of that staff: “Dined Punch. All there. Let out my views against some verses on Lincoln in which T. T. (Tom Taylor) had not only made P. eat humble pie, but swallow dish and all.”

The accompanying Pen and Ink sketch was done by the Artist, the late Wyatt Eaton, in 1877, and it is printed by permission of Mrs. Eaton and through the courtesy of The Century Magazine. This reproduction is made from an impression taken for The Digest from Timothy Cole’s original engraving. The only other printing of the Sketch was made by The Century Company in 1877.

You, whose mocking pencil went to trace,
Broad for the self-complacent British sneer,
His length of shambing limb, his furrowed face?

His gaunt, gnarled hands, his unkempt bristling hair,
His garb uncouth, his bearing ill at ease,
His lack of all we prize as debonair,
Of power or will to shine, of art to please;

You, whose smart pen backed up the pencil’s laugh,
Judging each step as though the way were plain,
Reckless, so it could point its paragraph
Of chief’s perplexity or people’s pain:

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

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

My shallow judgment I had learned to rue
Noting how to occasion’s height he rose;
How his quaint wit and home-truth seem more true;
How iron-like, his temper grew by blows.

How humble, yet how hopeful, he could be;
How, in good fortune, and in ill, the same;
Nor bitter in success, nor boastful he,
Thirsty for gold, nor feverish for fame.

He went about his work,—such work as few
Ever laid on head and heart and hand,—
As one who knows, where there’s a task to do,
Man’s honest will must meet Heaven’s good grace command;

Who trusts the strength will with the burden grow,
That God makes instrument to work his will,
If but that will we can arrive to know,
Nor tamper with the weights of good and ill.

So he went forth to battle, on the side
That he felt clear was Liberty’s and Right’s,
As in his peasant boyhood he had plied
His warfare with rude Nature’s thwarting mights;

The uncleared forest, the unbroken soil,
The iron-hark, that turns the lumberer’s axe,
The rapid, that o’erseans the boatman’s toil,
The prairie, hiding the mazed wanderer’s tracks,

The ambushed Indian, and the prowling bear,—
Such were the deeds that helped his youth to train:
Rough culture, but such trees large fruit may bear,
If but their stocks be of right girth and grain.

So he grew up, a destined work to do,
And lived to do it: four long-suffering years’
Ill-fate, ill-feeling, ill-report, lived through,
And then heard the hisses changed to cheers,

The taunts to tribute, the abuse to praise,
And took both with the same unwavering mood;
Till, as he came on light, from darkling days,
And seemed to touch the goal from where he stood,
"Punch"s" Change of Mind

As you students of American history know, relations between the United States and England were severely strained on more than one occasion during the Civil War and had it not been for the wise oratory of Henry Ward Beecher, the minister plenipotentiary to England, and the common sense of President Lincoln and Queen Victoria, war might have resulted. Among the British organs which attacked the United States, and particularly, the President, was Punch. But later the true greatness of America's martyred President became plain and following his assassination, Punch printed a cartoon in which proud Britannia was shown as humbly coming forward among the common mourners to lay a wreath on Lincoln's bier. With the cartoon was a poem by Tom Taylor. The poem follows:

You lay a wreath on murder'd Lincoln's bier,
You, who with mocking pencil wont to trace,
Broad for the self-complaisant British sneer,
His length of shambling limb, his furrow'd face,
His gaunt, grar'd hands, his unkempt, bristling hair,
His garb uncouth, his bearing ill at ease,
His lack of all we prize as debonair,
Of power or will to shine, of art to please;
You, whose smart pen back'd up the pencil's laugh,
Judging each step as though the way were plain;
Reckless, so it could point its paragraph,
Of chief's perplexity, or people's pain—
Beside this corpse, that bears for winding sheet
The Stars and Stripes he liv'd to rear anew.
Between the mourners at his head and feet,
Say, scurrile Jester, is there room for you?
Yes: he had liv'd to shame me from my sneer.
To lame my pencil and confute my pen;
To make me own this kind of princes peer,
This rail-splitter a true-born king of men.
My shallow judgment I had learn'd to rue,
Noting how to occasion's height he rose;
How his quaint wit made home-truth seem more true;
How, iron-like, his temper grew by blows,
How humble, yet how hopeful he could be;
How in good fortune and in ill the same;
Nor bitter in success, nor humblist he,
Thirsty for gold, nor feverish for fame.

He went about his work, such work as few
Ever had laid on head and heart and hand,
As one who knows, where there's a task to do,
Man's honest will must Heaven's good grace command;
Who trusts the strength will with the burdens grow,
That God makes instruments to work his will,
If but that will we can arrive to know,
Nor tamper with the weights of good and ill.
So he went forth to battle, on the side
That he felt clear was Liberty's and Right's;
As in his peasant boyhood he had plied
His warfare with rude Nature's thwarting mists—
The uncleer'd forest, the unbroken soil,
The iron bark that turns the lumberer's ax,
The rapid that o'er bears the boatman's toil,
The prairie hiding the mad'z wanderer's tracks,
The ambush'd Indian, and the prowling bear—
Such were the deeds that help'd his youth to train:
Rough culture, but such trees large fruit may bear,
If but their stocks be of right girth and grain.

So he grew up, a destined work to do,
And lived to do it; four long-suffering years,
Ill fate, ill feeling, ill report lived through,
And then he heard the hisses change to cheers.
The taunts to tribute, the abuse to praise;
And took both with the same unwavering mood,
Till, as he came on light from darkling days,
And seemed to touch the goal from where he stood,
A felon hand, between the goal and him,
Reached from behind his back—a trigger pressed,
And those perplexed and patient eyes were dim,
Those gaunt, long-laboring limbs were laid to rest.
The words of mercy were upon his lips,
Forgiveness in his heart, and on his pen,
When this vile murderer brought swift eclipse
To thoughts of peace on earth, good will to men.
The Old World and the New, from sea to sea,
Utter one voice of sympathy and shame—
Sore heart, so stopped when it at last beat free—
Sad life, cut short just as its triumph came.

A deed accursed! Strokes have been struck before
By the assassin's hand, whereof men doubt
If more of horror or disgrace they bore;
But thy foul crime, like Cain's, stands darkly out,
Vile hand, that brandest murder on a strife
Whate'er its grounds, stoutly and nobly strive,
And with the martyr's crown crownest a life
With much to praise, little to be forgiven.
One of the most eloquent and impressive tributes to Abraham Lincoln came from abroad, is recalled by Albert E. Jones, prominent Buffalo attorney. The oration, with a note by Mr. Jones, follows:

Dear Sir:

It has been generally admitted that one of the most beautiful tributes paid to the memory of Lincoln was that paid by London Punch on the occasion of his assassination. The words were by the celebrated Tom Taylor, one of its editors.

Punch had week in and week out been little and lampooned Lincoln, but when he was assassinated, it became sadly grieved and conscience stricken and realizing that it had misrepresented him, it manfully and sorrowfully published the tribute. It created an intense feeling of warmth between the two nations and Punch was heartily applauded for the part it played.

I was a boy in England and remember very well the day Punch came out in deep mourning type and black borders.

I am sure lovers of Lincoln of the present generation will appreciate the opportunity of reading the tribute.

I am especially induced to send you the tribute of Punch at this time as regret to notice books belittling our great president are still being published.

Yours respectfully,

ALBERT E. JONES.

Abraham Lincoln

From Punch

By TOM TAYLOR

You lay a wreath on murder'd Lincoln's bier,
You who with mocking pencil went to trace,
Broad for the self-complaisant British sneer,
His length of shambling limb, his furrow'd face,
His gaunt, gaunt'd hands, his unempt, bristling hair,
His garb unsmooth, his bearing ill at ease,
His lack of all we prize as debonair,
Of power or will to shine, of art to please;
You, whose smart pen back'd up the pencil's laugh
Judging each step as though the way were plain:
Reckless, so it could point its paragraph.
Of chief's perplexity, or people's pain—
Beside this corpse, that bears for winding-sheet
The Stars and Stripes he lived to rear anew,
Between the mourners at his head and feet,
Say, scourie jester is there room for you?
Yes; he had liv'd to shame me from my sneer,
To tame my pencil and confute my pen;

To make me own this kind of princes peer,
This rail splitter a true-born king of men.
My shallow judgment I had learn'd to rue,
Noting how to occasion's height he rose;
How his quaint wit made home-truth seem more true;
How, iron-like his temper grew by blows;
How humble, yet how hopeful he could be;
How in good fortune and in ill the same;
Nor bitter in success, nor boastful he,
Thirsty for gold nor feverish for fame.

He went about his work,—such work as few
Ever had laid on head and heart and hand,—
As one who knows, where there's a task to do,
Man's honest will must Heaven's good grace command;
Who trusts the strength will with the burden grow,
That God makes instruments to work His will,
If but that will we can arrive to know.
Nor tamper with the weights of good and ill.

So he went forth to battle on the side
That he felt clear was Liberty's and Right's,
As in his peasant boyhood he had piled
His warfare with rude Nature's shriveling mights—
The unclear'd forest, the unbroken soil,
The iron bark that turns the lumberer's axe,
The rapid that o'erbears the boatman's toil,
The prairie hiding the man's wanderer's tracks,
The ambush'd Indian, and the prowling bear.—
Such were the deeds that help'd his youth to train;
Rough culture, but such trees large fruit may bear,
If but their stocks be of right girth and grain.
So he grew up, a destin'd work to do
And liv'd to do it; four long-suffering years'
Ill fate, ill feeling, ill report liv'd through,
And then he heard the hisses change to cheers.

The taunts to tribute, the abuse to praise,
And took both with the same unwavering mood.—
Till, as he came on light from darkling days,
And seemed to touch the goal from where he stood,
A felon hand, between the goal and him,
Reach'd from behind his back, a trigger prest,
And those perplex'd and patient eyes were dim;
Those gaunt, long-laboring limbs were laid to rest.

The words of mercy were upon his lips,
Forbearfulness in his heart and on his pen,
When this vile murderer brought swift eclipse
To thought of peace on earth, good will to men.

The Old World and the New, from sea to sea,
Utter one voice of sympathy and shame
Sore heart, so stopp'd when it at last beat high!
Sad life, cut short just as its triumph came!

A deed accru'd! Strokes have been struck before
By the assassin's hand, whereof men doubt
If more of honor or disgrace they bore;
But thy foul crime, like Cain's stands darkly out,
Vile hand, that broodest murder on a strife,
What'er it's grounds, stoutly and nobly striven
And with the martyr's crown crownest a life
With much to praise, little to be forgiven.
Last Friday—in an effort to please a reader—this column appealed for help in locating a poem about Abraham Lincoln which appeared on the front page of the old Evening Journal 30-odd years ago, some were told.

The oldtimer who asked us about it said that as nearly as he could recall, the last line went something like this:

"Confounds my reason and confutes my pen."

We realize that a query such as this called for a far stretch of the memory, especially since the quoted line turned out to be only half right.

Meanwhile, we continued our own search, calling in Wilmington Institute Free Library and our own News-Journal librarian, Norbert Robillard, who was determined not to be confounded by this teaser. (This columnist already had given up after rolling off a decade of Evening Journals of the 1920s on the microfilm.)

Well sir, the very next day Robillard shouted:

"Eureka!"

His source was a volume of classical quotations at the public library. Later he found the same thing in Stevenson's "Home Book of Quotations" on the reference shelves of the News-Journal.

The line fed to us as a lead was not the closing one, but rather the second line of the last stanza. What really threw us off, though, was confounds my reason." However, our informant may take a bow for choice phrasing even if it was misleading. The line actually reads:

"To lame my pencil and confute my pen."

Our anonymous reader also was right about its being written by a former critic of Lincoln who was associated with Punch, the noted British publication of wit and wisdom.

The introduction to the poem in Stevenson's book convinces us that this is what we were looking for . . . and despite the fact that Lincoln's birthday anniversary is past, we're going to give you Tom Taylor's eulogy of Lincoln, complete with explanation, as it appears in Stevenson's collection:

"This poem appeared in Punch on May 6, 1865, accompanying a full-page cartoon with the caption, 'Britannia Sympathizes with Columbia,' representing Punch among the mourners at Lincoln's bier, upon which Britannia is laying a wreath. It was Punch's apology for its scurrilous abuse and caricature of Lincoln during the whole period of the war. The poem has often been ascribed to Shirley Brooks, but an entry in his diary, under date of 10 May, 1865, is conclusive evidence that the verses were written by Taylor. Brooks wrote:"

"Dined Punch, all there. Let out my views about some verses on Lincoln in which T. T. had not only made P. (Punch) eat 'umble pie, but swallow dish and all."

"So far from being the writer of the verses, he (Brooks) condemned their publication. At the time the poem appeared, it also was ascribed to Tennyson."

Here it is . . . and after the preceding background information one may well understand why it has been called "the greatest tribute to Lincoln":

YOU lay a wreath on murdered Lincoln's bier,
YOU, who with mocking pencil went to trace,
Bread for the self-complacent British sneer,
His length of shambling limb, his furrowed face.

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

Yes, he had lived to shame me from my sneer.

TO LAME MY PENCIL AND CONFUTE MY PEN—
To make me own this kind of Prince's peer,
This rail-splitter, a true-born king of men.

Incidentally, (unlike the deluge that followed our request for the rhyme about "Monday's Child etc.,") not one of our readers came forth with Tom Taylor's "Lincoln."

Taylor was an English dramatist, artist, actor and literary figure who served on the staff of Punch until 1874 when he succeeded Shirley Brooks as editor. He died in 1880.
WHEN THE LONDON PUNCH ATE HUMBLE PIE

Abraham Lincoln
Foully Assassinated, April 14, 1865
You lay a wreath on murdered LINCOLN'S bier,
You, who with mocking pencil went to trace,
Broad for the self-complacent British sneer,
His length of shambling limb, his furrowed face,
His gaunt, gnarled hands, his unkempt, bristling hair,
His garb uncouth, his bearing ill at ease,
His lack of all we prize as debonsair
Of power or will to shine, of art to please.

You, whose smart pen backed up the pencil's laugh,
Judging each step, as though the way were plain:
Reckless, so it could point its paragraph,
Of chief's perplexity, or people's pain.

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

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

My shallow judgment I had learnt to rue,
Noting how to occasion's height he rose,
How his quaint wit made home-truth seem more true,
How, iron-like, his temper grew by blows.

How humble yet how hopeful he could be:
How in good fortune and in ill the same:
Nor bitter in success, nor boastful he,
Thirsty for gold, nor feverish for fame.

He went about his work — such work as few
Ever had laid on head and heart and hand —
As one who knows, where there's a task to do,
Man's honest will must Heaven's good grace command;

Who trusts the strength will with the burden grow,
That God makes instruments to work his will,
If but that will we can arrive to know,
Nor tamper with the weights of good and ill.

So he went forth to battle, on the side
That he felt clear was Liberty's and Right's,
As in his peasant boyhood he had plied
His warfare with rude Nature's thwarting mights —

The uncleared forest, the unbroken soil,
The iron-bark, that turns the lumberer's axe,
The rapid, that o'erbears the boatman's toil,
The prairie, hiding the mazed wanderer's tracks,
The ambushed Indian, and the prowling bear—
Such were the needs that helped his youth to train:
Rough culture—but such trees large fruit may bear,
If but their stocks be of right girth and grain.

So he grew up, a destined work to do,
And lived to do it: four long-suffering years!
Ill-fate, ill-feeling, ill-report, lived through,
And then he heard the hisses change to cheers,
The taunts to tribute, the abuse to praise,
And took both with the same unwavering mood:
Till, as he came on light, from darkling days,
Seemed to touch the goal from where he stood,
A felon hand, between the goal and him,
Reached from behind his back, a trigger prest,—
And those perplexed and patient eyes were dim,
Those gaunt, long-labouring limbs were laid to rest!

The words of mercy were upon his lips,
Forgiveness in his heart and on his pen,
When this vile murderer brought swift eclipse
To thoughts of peace on earth, good-will to men.

The Old World and the New, from sea to sea,
Utter one voice of sympathy and shame!
Sore heart, so stopped when it at last beat high,
Sad life, cut short just as its triumph came.
A deed accruet! Strokes have been struck before
By the assassin’s hand, whereof men doubt.
If more of horror or disgrace they bore;
But thy foul crime, like CAIN’S, stands darkly out,
Vile hand, that brandest murder on a strife,
Whate’er its grounds, stoutly and nobly striven;
And with the martyr’s crown cromest a life
With much to praise, little to be forgiven!

Not only did the May 6, 1865 issue of Punch carry the Taylor poem but the entire page of 183 was given over to John Tenniel’s classic cartoon, “Britannia Sympathises with Columbia.” Here the artist made personal amends by drawing a sympathetic picture of Britain paying homage at the bedside of the fallen leader. Tenniel was often assigned to execute drawings reflecting high comedy and not infrequently tragedy. Tenniel’s work has been appraised as revealing “accuracy of drawing, precision of touch, grace and dignity of conception, and—so far as such things can be compatible—geniality of satire. Tenniel raised the political cartoon into a classic composition, from which a sense of nobility is rarely absent.” Certainly, his “Britannia Sympathises with Columbia” will rank among the best of his 2,300 cartoons, and his innumerable drawings and designs.

While Punch was not a news weekly, the May 6 issue carried the following statement regarding Lincoln’s assassination:

“The Lords re-assembled (Thursday), and Earl Russell instantly gave notice that on the following Monday he should move an Address expressive of sorrow and indignation at the murder of Mr. Lincoln. Earl Derby said that such an expression would not only meet the unanimous assent of the Peers of England, but would represent the feelings of every man, woman, and child in Her Majesty’s dominions. In the Commons, Sir George Grey gave a similar notice.”

This was not the first time that Abraham Lincoln had been mentioned in Punch. He made his first appearance in a cartoon entitled “The American Difficulty” in the May 11, 1861 issue. The newly elected (beardless) President was depicted before a smoking, sooty fireplace stoking the fire. The caption is “What a Nice White House This Would Be If It Were Not For The Blacks.” This cartoon revealed Lincoln to be a man of clean-cut intelligent features which would be in marked contrast to subsequent cartoons which depicted him with a gorilla-like countenance. After the Trent Affair, the Tenniel cartoons “rose to the higher level of just indignation.” In other words, Punch declared war on Lincoln with pen and ink.

As events in Lincoln’s presidential career transpired, he was presented numerous times in Tenniel’s cartoons in Punch as a mean, sniveling, oscillating and contemptuous leader. He was often revealed as a bearded ruffian, a vulgar charlatan and a repulsive beast. One writer stated that “they messed up his hair till it became a shaggy mane—they twisted his face into a sinister look, and they broke his back till he sagged like a gorilla.”

Not only were the artists cruel in their caricatures of the Sixteenth President, but the staff writers of Punch were equally unkind. In their December 19, 1864 issue they wrote a fictitious, brutal and burlesque address which was entitled, “Lincoln’s Inaugural Speech By Ultramarine Telegraph.” This affront was all the more obvious because Lincoln’s March 4, 1865 inaugural address was soon accorded a place among the great masterpieces of forensic English. Oddly enough, Punch had applauded Lincoln’s statements concerning secession in his First Inaugural Address.

As a magazine, Punch or The London Charivari served (and still serves for that matter) a worthwhile purpose. In England it was a power and usually a power for good. It first appeared on July 17, 1841 as an English comic weekly, and it eventually became the most famous journal of its kind—in fact, it was a recognized organ of British laughter, and it represented or aimed to represent the better part of the English people. Its articles, cartoons and drawings laughed out of the court various shams, fads, affectations and forms of ostentation. Punch or Punchinello was assumed to be a real personality—a "laughing philosopher and man of letters, the essence of all wit and the concentration of all wisdom."

To the credit of its editors the magazine did not deviate from its purpose, remaining wholly free from party bias.

As stated before, the magazine’s editors were not overly friendly to the United States, and in a prospectus issued in 1845 it was expressly announced that the Journal was to be devoted in part to “Yankee Yarns” and to “the Naturalization of those alien Jonathans whose adherence to the truth had forced them to emigrate from their native land.”

Apparently the editors grew tired of the military aspect

(Continued on page 4)
Mark Lemon (eledo) to fill the position of John cartoonist with John Leech, in succession to Etheldred Doyle.

Sir John Tenniel (1820-1914) who drew this cartoon, "Britain's Sympathies with Columbia" was long identified with Punch, having been invited in 1850 by...
of the American Civil War, and they made no allusions to
the great Union victories at Gettysburg and Vicksburg.
Their cartoons, many of them depicting Lincoln, dealt
primarily with conflicts between the United States and
England, international affairs, the cotton blockade, busi-
ness problems, the national debt, the Trent Affair, the
military situation, slavery, emancipation, neutrality and
peace. Often Tenniel would depict an American character
in his cartoons wearing the Uncle Sam garb but with
Lincoln's face. Many times completely unidentified char-
acters in the cartoons would bear a resemblance to the
Sixteenth President.

So the publication of the Tom Taylor poem, the John
Tenniel cartoon and the news releases concerning the
Lincoln assassination was a turning point in the editorial
policy of the Punch staff. But this about-face was not
easy and the readers of the famous May 6, 1865 number
had no insight into what went on behind the scenes.
Years later it would be revealed that Shirley Brooks made
the following entry in his diary:

"Dined Punch. All there. Let out my views against
some verses on Lincoln in which T. T. (Tom Taylor) had
not only made P (Punch) eat humble pie, but
swallow dish and all."

Vanity Fair and Abraham Lincoln

The editors of the magazine Punch were never very
kind to Abraham Lincoln during his lifetime, and neither
were the editors of Vanity Fair. This humorous and satiri-
ical paper, published once a week in New York City,
had as its objective, "reformation." The editors had what
the French call "an iron hand in a velvet glove." In their
preface to Volume One (1860), they declared war on
"political tricksters, venal editors, public charlatans,
silly authors, and all people whose stupidity necessitates
their being treated as criminals." Vanity Fair editors
claimed to be devoted to the cause of "Truth and Virtue"
and they proposed to do reverence to Merit.

Apparently the V. F. editors saw little merit in the
 candidacy of Lincoln for the Presidency of the United
States on the Republican ticket. In fact, in their preface
to Volume Three (1861) the statement was made that
they "did not help Lincoln—on." The first Vanity Fair arti-
cle, (a full page Lincoln cartoon appeared in the June
9, 1860 number) devoted to Lincoln appeared on page
389 of the June 16, 1860 issue:

Life of Lincoln (Abraham) The Chicago Nominee Com-
piled From the Most Reliable Authorities.

"Hearing that a biography of the Republican Can-
didate for the Presidency was in preparation, we resolved
to forestall this tardy volume, by a brief, clear, full,
precise, comprehensive, detailed outline of Mr. LIN-
COLN'S career, from his birth up to an indefinite
period of his existence, including his last will and
testament, dying confession, and tragic end, with many
other pleasing incidents of his checkered life. To this
end, we employed a young gentleman of the V. F.
corps, who already bids fair to rival the profound and
versatile SYLVANUS EVERETT of the 'Ledge' in his
brilliant originality, and intelligent zeal for searching
hidden lore; and after visiting the treasures of art,
science and literature entombed in the celotipos of the
western flatboats, explored the monuments mouldering
along the fence-lines of Illinois, interrogated the al-
manacs, examined the mileage-accounts at Washington,
looked through all Reynolds', Cooper's, Duma's, Cobb's,
and Lippard's works, and analytically studied WOR-
CERSTER'S (Best) Quarto Dictionary — after all this
labor, we say, our Biographer has compiled the fol-
lowing eminently satisfactory (to himself) and remark-
able History of the Incorruptible Nominee of the
Republican Party. To Witt:

ABRAHAM LINCOLN was the eldest of three broth-
ers, respectively called ISAAC and JACOB, and was,
with them, though not at the same time, born on the
left bank of the Nile, B. C. 5001. Of his early life little
is known, though it is believed he once made himself
precociously famous by attempting to dam up the
waters of his native river with bull-rushes. At the age
of eighteen, ABRAHAM built a flatboat, and gather-
ing his family round him, bade them a tender adieu,
and started, well provisioned with 'old wheat' (mummy-
'wheat, probably) and 'fixins' to discover a wider field
for his genius. After a tedious voyage sailing down
the Nile to the Ganges, up the Ganges to the Danube,
down the Danube to the Burrampooter, and down the
Burrampooter to the Mississippi, he arrived 'the
truth to overcame' (the 'old wheat' having given out at this
moment) in the State of Illinois, A. D. 1860, just in time
to receive the nomination of the Republicans for Presi-
dent of the United States of America. During his
adventurous voyage, he encountered many strange
victuals of fortune, some of which are not unworthy
a passing notice. He was, for instance, in the early
period of his voyage, hotly pursued, and frequently
nearly overtaken by 'Faro,' of whom he was in fact a
sort of slave. As he advanced, however, he gradually
left this foe behind, and finally lost sight of him en-
tirely. He also spent an indefinite time in the wilder-
ness (but which wilderness, I have been unable to
ascertain with certainty) where he subsisted wholly
on senna-and-manna, and a very uncomfortable man-
er of life he found it. He was more than once furiously
assaulted with a 'poker' by rival flatboatmen, and at other
times with an 'old sledge,' both favorite
weapons of that class. but he managed to retort suc-
cessfully with 'rocks,' with which he was particularly
familiar, having split them frequently, as well as rails,
while in the wilderness in search of water, to soften
his 'old wheat.' At one period of his trip, he was
sorely worsted in a combat with a Little Giant, who
liked to have finished his career by an untimely 'blow.'
But he skilfully retreated behind a 'stump,' and left
the field to his antagonist. He likewise suffered some-
what from an endemic disease common to certain parts
of the U. S. called the Tariff, and is even to this day
subject to its attacks, now and then. But the worst
malady he has ever had to contend with is the Aboli-
 tion Mania. This virulent plague has unfortunately
taken root in his system, and will it is thought, even-
tually hurry him to a political grave. In person, ABRA-
HAM is a tallish, shortish, medium-sized sort of man.
Not dark, nor yet light. Not very thin, nor very fat.
Neither very ugly, nor very handsome. In short, a kind
of a sort of a tolerably-looking-like-other-men-more-
or-less species of man. Perhaps rather more than less.
Age mediaeval. In conclusion, I would say that he is
lamened by a wide circle of friends, among whom his
admirable qualities were highly appreciated, and was
then and there executed according to law made and
provided, etc.

'Light lie the turf above thee,
Friend of my early days, &c.'

My melancholy task is ended! V. F. BIOGRAPHER."
Abraham Lincoln.

[Tom Taylor, author of this poem, was born at Sunderland in 1797; died in 1868. He was educated at Glasgow and Cambridge. He was professor of English at University College, London, for two years, was admitted to the bar in 1836, and afterward held office under the government. He lived beyond 90 plays for the stage. In 1846 he became editor of London Punch, a weekly that, with ruthless pen and pencil, satirized President Lincoln. The following lines, written shortly after Lincoln's death and published in Punch, express Taylor's apology.]

You lay a wreath on murdered Lincoln's bier,
You, who with misquoting pencil went to trace
Broad for the self-complacent British anser.
His length of shambling limb, his furrowed face.
His gaunt, gnarled hands, his unkempt, bristling hair,
His garb uncoth, his bearing ill at ease,
His lack of all we prize as debonair,
Or power or will to shine, of art to please;
You, whose smart pen backed up the pencil's lauch
Judging each step as though the way were plain;
Heckless, so it could point its paragraph,
Of churl's perplexity, or people's pain—
Beside this corpse, that bears for winding-sheet
The Stars and Stripes he lived to rear anew—
Between the mounds at his head and feet,
Say, scurilie jests, is there room for you?
Yes; he had lived to shame me from my amere,
To shame my pencil and confute my pen;
To make me own this kind of princes peer.
This rail-splitter, a true-born king of men.
My shallow judgment I had learned to rue,
Noting how to occasion's height he rose.
How his quails wilt made home-truth seem more true:
Now, braillely, his temper grew by blows;
How humble, yet how baseful, he could be;
How in good fortune and in ill, the same;
Nor bitter in success, nor变oseful in blame.
Thirsty for gold, nor feverish for fame.
He went about his work—such work as few
Divs had laid on head and heart and hand—
As one who knows, where there's a task to do,
Man's honest, will most heaven's good grace command;
Who trusts the strength will with the burden grow,
And what is easier, incomparably to walk fitly still.
If but that we can arrive to know,
Nor tamper with the weights of good and ill.
So he went forth to battle, on the side
That he felt clear was Liberty's and Right's.
As in his pleasant boyhood he had chid
His warfare with rude Nature's thwarting might—
The unlearned forest, the unbroken soil.
The iron-dark that turns the lumberer's ax,
The rapid that overtops the boatman's till.
The prairie hiding the maido wanderer's tracks.
The ambushed Indian, and the prowling bear—
Such were the deeds that helped his youth to train:
Rough culture, but such trees large fruit may bear.
If but their stocks be of right girth and grain.
So he grew up, a destined work to do.
And lived to do it. Our long-suffering years'
Ill-fate, ill-feeling, ill-reported lived through,
And then he heard the horses change to cheers.
The taunts to tribute, the abuse to praise.
And took both with the same unwavering mood;
Till, as he came on high, from tardling days
And seemed to touch the goal from where he stood.
A felon hand, between the goal and him,
Reached from behind his back, a trigger press,
And those perplexed and patient eyes were dim.
Those gaunt, long-laboring limbs were laid to rest!
The words of mercy were upon his lips,
Forforgiveness in his heart and on his pen.
When this vile murderer brought swift eclipse
To thoughts of peace on earth, good-will to men.
The Old World and the New, from sea to sea.
Utter one voice of sympathy and shame:
Sure heart, so stopped when it at last bent high;
And life, cut short just as its triumph came.
A deed accurs. Stroke have been struck before
By the assassin's hand, whereof men doubt.
If more of horror or disgrace they bore;
But the foul crime, like Cain's, stands darkly out.
Vile hand, that brandest murder on a strife,
Whatever its grounds, stoutly and nobly strive.
And with the martyr's crown crownest a life
With much to praise, little to be forgiven.
—Tom Taylor.
(By Tom Taylor)

You lay a wreath on murdered Lincoln's bier;—
As in his peasant boyhood he had plied
His warfare with rude Nature's thwarting mists;
The uncleared forest, the unbroken soil,
The iron bark that turns the lumberer's ax.
The raekid that o'er bears the boatman's till,
The prairie hiding the masd wanderer's tracks,
The ambushed Indian and the prowling var;
Such wore the deeds that helped his youth to train:
Rough culture, but such trees large fruit may bear,
If but their stocks be of right girth and grain.
So he grew up, a destined work to do,
And lived to do it, four long-suffering years!
Ill-fate, ill-feeling, ill-report, lived through,
And then he heard the bises changed to cheers,
The taunts to tribute, the abuse to praise,
And took both with the same unwavering mood;
Thal, as he came on light, from darkling days,
And seemed to touch the goal from where he stood,
A felon hand between the goal and him,
Reached from behind his back, a trigger press,
And those perplexed and patient eyes were dim,
These gaunt, long-laboring limbs were laid to rest!
The words of mercy were upon his lips,
Forgiveness in his heart and on his pen,
When this vile murderer brought swift eclipse
To thoughts of peace on earth, good will to men.
The Old World and the New, from sea to sea,
Utter one voice of sympathy and shame;
Sore heart, so stopped when it at last beat high;
Sad life cut short just as his triumph came;
A deed accurs! Strokes have been struck before
By the assassin's hand, whereof men doubt
If more of horror or disgrace they bore:
But thy foul crime, like Cain's, stands darkly out.
Vile hand, that brandishes murder on a strife,
What's ever its grounds stoutly and nobly striven,
And with the martyr's crown crowned a life
With much to praise, little to be forgiven.
LINCOLN'S LAST DREAM
Abraham Lincoln.
How humble yet how hopeful he could be,
How in good fortune and in ill, the same,
Nor bitter in success, nor boastful here,
Thirsty for gold, nor feverish for fame.
He went about his work—such work as few
Ever had laid on head, and heart and hand—
As one who knows, where there's a task to do,
Man's honest will must Heaven's good grace command;
The uncleared forest, the unbroken soil,
The iron bark that turns the lumberer's axe.
The rapid, that o'erears the boatman's toll,
The prairie, hiding the mazed wanderer's tracks,
The ambushed Indian, and the prowling bear—
Such were the needs that helped his youth to train;
Rough culture—but such trees large fruit may bear.
If but their stocks be of right girth and grain.

Tom Taylor.
Lincoln's Last Dream.
O'er thy dimpled waves, Potomac, softly now the moonbeams creep;
O'er fair Arlington's green meadows, where the brave forever sleep.
'Tis Good Friday; bells are tolling, bells of chapel beat the air
On thy quiet waves, Potomac; Arlington, serene and fair.
And he comes, the nation's hero, From the White House, worn with care;
Hears the name of "Lincoln!" ringing in the thronged streets, everywhere;
Hears the bells—what memories bringing to his long-uplifted heart!
Hears the plaudits of the people as he gains the Hall of Art.

Throbs the air with thrilling music, gaily onward sweeps the play;
But he little heeds the laughter, for his thoughts are far away;
Was it not that recent vision, when he said: "A Form I see.
Walking calmly mid the people on the shores of Galilee;
Oft I've wished his steps to follow, Whom all men as brothers met;
When the cares of State are over, Let me go to Olivet;
And the paths the Blessed followed I will walk from sea to sea, Follow him who healed the people on the shores of Galilee.

April morning: flags are blowing; thwart each flag a sable bar,
Dead, the leader of the people! dead, the world's great commoner,
Bells on the Potomac tolling; tolling by the Sangamon,
Tolling from the broad Atlantic to the ocean of the Sun.
Friend and foe clasp hands in silence, Listen to the low prayers said,
Hear the people's benedictions, Hear the nations praise the dead.
Lovely land of Palestine! he thy shores will never see.

But his dream fulfilled, he follows Him who walked in Galilee.
Hezekiah Butterworth.
British Tribute to Lincoln

By Tom Taylor

You lay a wreath on murdered Lincoln's bier!
You, who with a mocking pencil went to trace,
Bread for the self-complacent British sneer,
His length of shambling limb, his furrowed face.

His gaunt, garbled hands, his unkempt, bristling hair,
His garb unceulth, his bearing ill at ease,
His lack of all we prize as debonair,
Of power or will to shine, of art to please!

You, whose smart pen backed up the pencil's laugh,
Judging each step, as though the way were plain,
Reckless, so it could point its paragraph,
Of chief's perplexity, or people's pain!

Beside this corpse, that bears for winding-sheet
The Stars and Stripes, he lived to rear anew,
Between the mourners at his head and feet—
Say, scurrile jester, is there room for you?

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

My shallow judgment I had learned to rue,
Noting how to occasion's height he rose;
How his quaint wit made home-truth seem more true,
How iron-like his temper grew by blows;

How humble, yet how hopeful he could be;
How in good fortune and in ill the same;
Nor bitter in success, nor boastful he,
Thirsty for gold, nor feverish for fame.

He went about his work—such work as few
Ever had laid on head, and heart, and hand—
As one who knows where there's a task to do;
Man's honest will must Heaven's good grace command.

Who trusts the strength will with the burden grow,
That God makes instrument to work His will,
If but that will we can arrive to know,
Nor tamper with the weights of good and ill.

So he went forth to battle, on the side
That he felt clear was Liberty's and Right's,
As in his pleasant boyhood he had plied
His warlike with rude Nature's thwarting mights—

The uncleared forest, the unbroken soil,
The iron bark that turns the lumberer's axe,
The rapid, that o'erhears the boatmen's toil,
The prairie hiding the maded wanderer's tracks,

The ambushed Indian and the prowling bear—
Such were the needs that helped his youth to train;
Rough culture—but such trees large fruit may bear,
If but their stocks be of right girth and grain.

So he grew up a destined work to do,
And lived to do it; four long suffering years
Ill fate, ill feeling, ill-report, lived through,
And then he heard the blazes change to cheers,

The taunts to tribute, the abuse to praise,
And took both with the same unwavering mood;
Till as he came on light, from darkling days,
And seemed to touch the goal from where he stood.

A felon hand, between the goal and him,
Reached from behind his back, a trigger pren—
And those perplexed and patient eyes were dim,
Those gaunt, long-laboring limbs were laid to rest!

The words of mercy were upon his lips,
Forgiveness in his heart and on his pen,
When this vile murderer brought swift eclipse
To thoughts of peace on earth, goodwill to men.

The Old World and the New, from sea to sea,
Utter one voice of sympathy and shame!
Sore heart, so stopped when at last beat high!
Sad life, cut short just as its triumph came.
ABRAHAM LINCOLN—

POWDER ASSASSINATED APRIL 14, 1865.

From the London Puck, 1865.

You lay a wreath on murdered Lincoln's brow,
You, who, with mocking pencil, went to trace,
Broad for the self-complacent British sneer,
His length of shaming limb, his furrowed face.

His gaunt, gnarled hands, his unkempt, bristling hair,
His garb unkempt, his bearing ill at ease,
His lack of all we prize as debonair,
Of power or will to shine, of art to please.

You, whose smart pen backed up the pencil's laugh,
Judging each step as though the way were plain;
Reckless, so it could point its paragraph
Of chief perplexity or people's pain.

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

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

My shallow judgment had learnt to rue,
Noting how to occasion's height he rose,
How his quaint wit made home truth seem more true,
How, iron-like, his temper grew by blows.

How humble, yet how hopeful, he could be;
How, in good fortune and in ill, the same,
Nor bitter in success, nor boastful he,
Thirsty for gold, nor feverish for fame.

He went about his work—such work as few
Ever had laid on head and heart and hand—
As one who knows, where there's a task to do,
Man's honest will must Heaven's good grace command;

Who trusts the strength will with the burden grow;
That God makes instruments to work His will,
If but that will we can arrive to know,
Nor tamper with the weights of good and ill.

So he went forth to battle, on the side
That he felt clear was Liberty's and Right's,
As in his peasant boyhood he had plied
His warfare with rude Nature's thwarting might—
The unclad forest, the unbroken soil,
The iron bark that turns the lumberer's axe,
The rapid, that o'ersees the boatman's roll,
The prairie, hiding the 'mazed wanderer's tracks,
The ambushed Indian, and the prowling bear—
Such were the needs that helped his youth to training hair.
Rough culture—but such trees large fruit may bear,
If but their stocks be of right girth and grain.

So he grew up, a destined work to do,
And lived to do it; four long-suffering years;
Ill-fate, ill-feeling, ill-report, lived through,
And then he heard the hisses changed to cheers.

The taunts to tribute, the abuse to praise,
And took both with the same unwavering mood;
Till, as he came on light, from darkling days,
And seemed to touch the goal from where he stood.

A felon hand, between the goal and him,
Reached from behind his back, a trigger prest—
And those perplexed and patient eyes were dim.
Those gaunt, long-laboring limbs were laid to rest!

The words of mercy were upon his lips,
Forgiveness in his heart and on his pen,
When this vile murderer brought swift eclipse
To thoughts of peace on earth, good will to men.

The Old World and the New, from sea to sea,
Utter one voice of sympathy and shame;
Sore heart, so stopped when it at last beat high;
Sad life, cut short just as its triumphs came.

A deed accurst! Strokes have been struck before
By the assassin's hand, whereof men doubt
If more of horror or disgrace they bore;
But thy foul crime, like Cain's stands darkly out.

Vile hand, that brandest murder on a strife,
Whate'er its grounds, stoutly and nobly striven;
And with the martyr's crown, crowned a life
With much to praise, little to be forgiven.
ABRAHAM LINCOLN

"You lay a wreath on murdered Lincoln's bier"

Songs Requested

Abraham Lincoln

By Tom Taylor

Tom Taylor, English dramatist and art critic, was born at Sunderland, England, in 1817, and died at Wandsworth, England, July 12, 1880. He studied at Glasgow University and at Trinity College, Cambridge, England; was professor of English at University College, London; was called to the bar in 1842; in 1854 was appointed secretary of the Board of Health, and was editor of "Punch" from 1874 to 1880. He wrote or adapted about one hundred plays, among which was "Our American Cousin," the play which Abraham Lincoln was witnessing the performance of in Ford's Theater, Washington, D.C., April 14, 1865, when he was shot. Abraham Lincoln was born in Hardin County, Kentucky, February 12, 1809, and died at Washington, D.C., April 15, 1865. This tribute first appeared in London Punch, which up to that time had by word and picture tried to cast ridicule on Lincoln.

You lay a wreath on murdered Lincoln's bier,
You, who with mocking pencil went to trace,
Bread for the self-complacent British sneer,
His length of shambling limb, his furrowed face.

His gait, marred hands, his unkempt, bristling hair,
His garg unconscious, his bearing ill at ease,
His lack of all the don of debonair,
Of power or will to shine, of art to please;

You, whose smart pen backed up the pencil's laugh,
-Judging each step as though the way were plain
Reckless, so it could point its paragrap
Of chief's perplexity or people's pain;

Bedide this corpse that bears for winding-sheet
And oaths and stars and stripes he lived to rear anew.
Between the mourners at his head and feet,
Say, scruituous jest, is there room for you?

Yes, he had lived to shame me from my sneer,
To tame my pencil and confine my pen;
To make me own this king of princes poor,
This rail-splitter, a free-born king of men.

My shallow judgment had learned to rue.
Nothing to occasion his breadth he rose.
How his quaint wit made home-truth seem more true.
How ironlike his temper grew by blows.

How humble, yet how honest, he could be;
How, in good fortune and ill, the same.
Nor bitter in success, nor boastful he.
Thirsty for gold, nor feverish for fame.

He went about his work—a work so few
Ever had laid on head and heart and hand—
One who knew where there's a task to do,
Man's honest will must heaven's good grace command;

Who trusts the strength will with the burden grow,
That God makes instruments to work his will,
If but that will is well known to know.
Nor tamper with the weights of good and ill.

So he went forth to battle, on the side
That felt clear was Liberty's and Right's,
As in his peasant boyhood he had pled
His warfare with rude Nature's thwarting might.

The uncleared forest, the broken soil,
The iron bark that turns the lumberer's axe,
The view that o'ersees the boatman's toll,
The prairie hiding themasked wanderer's tracks,

The ambushed Indian and the prowling bear,
Each were the deeds that helped his youth to grain.
Rough culture, but such trees large fruit may bear
If but their stocks be of right girth and grain.

He came when days were perilous
And hearts of men were sore beguiled;
And having made his note of us
He pondered and was reconciled.

Was ever man so faithful to the plain
As he, and so untamable?
We doubted, even when he smiled
Not knowing what he knew so well.

He knew that unceasing rate
Would shame us whom he served unsought?
He knew that he must wince and wait
The jest of those for whom he fought;
He knew devoutly what he thought
Of us and of our ridicule;
He knew that we must all be taught
Like little children in a school.

We gave a glamour to the task
That he encountered and saw through,
But little of us did he ask,
And little did we ever do.

And what appears it we review
The season when we railed and chaffed?
Is in the face of one who knew
That we were learning while we laughed.

The face that in our vision feeds
Again the venom that we fling;
Transfigured, to the world reveals
The vigilance to which we clung.

Shrewd, hallowed, harrassed, and among
The mysteries that are untold,
The face we see was new, we knew
Nor could it ever have been old.

For he, to whom we have applied
Our shopman's test of age and worth,
Was elemental when he died,
At he was ancient at his birth;
The saddest among kings of earth,
Bowed with a galling crown, this man
Met raven with a cryptic mirth,
Lacimon—Olymian.

The love, the grandeur, and the fame
Are bounded by the world alone.
The calm, the mourning, and the flame
Of awful patience were own;

With him they are forever flown
Past all our fond self-torments.
Wherewith we cumber the Unknown
As with inert learning.

For we were not as other men;
Twas ours to see and his to see;
But we are coming down again,
And we shall come down pleasantly;
Nor shall we longer disagree.
On what it is to be sublime;
But flourish in our perigee
And have one Titan at a time.

The Orphan Child's Lament

By Mary Howett

Oh! I remember long ago—
So long ago 'twas like a dream.
My home was on a green hillside,
By flowery meadows still and wide.
Among trees and by a stream.

Three happy brothers I had then
My merry playmates every day—
I have looked and looked through street and square,
But never chanced I anywhere
To see such boys as they.

We all had gardens of our own—
Four little gardens in a row.
And there we set our twinning peas,
And rows of currants and red tree.
And real flowers to grow.

My father I remember, too
And even now his face can see:
And the very horse he used to ride,
And the old dog that at his side
Went barking joyfully.

He used to fly my brothers' kites
And build them, their mess of snow
And sail their boat and with them race,
And carry me from place to place
Just as I liked to go.
He was, I know, a pleasant man,
And people must have loved him well;
Oh! I remember that sad day
When they bore him in a hearse away,
And tolled the funeral-bell.

My mother comes, each night, to kiss
Thee, in thy little quiet bed—
So did my mother, years ago,
And I loved her—oh! loved her so—
'Twas joy to hear her tread.

I am sure it must be many years
Since then; and yet I can recall
Her every tone, her look, her dress,
Her pleasant smiles and gentleness—
That had kind words for all.

She told us tales and sung us songs,
And in our pastimes took delight,
And joined us in our summer glee,
And sat beneath our broad green tree
Not wearied of our company.

Whole days, from morn to night,
My brothers were not there—ah me!
I knew not where they went; some said
With a rich man beyond the sea,
That they were dwelling pleasantly,
And some that they were dead.

I cannot think that it is so—
I never saw them pale and thin,
And the last time their voices I heard,
Merry they were as a summer bird
Singing in its bower within.

I wish that I could see their face,
Or know at least, that they were near—
Ah! gladly would I cross the sea,
So that with them I might but be,
For now my days pass wearily,
And all are strangers here.

Concluded on page 28
You lay a wreath on murder'd Lincoln's bier,
You, who with mocking pencil wont to trace,
Broad for the self-complaisant British sneer,
His length of shambling limb, his furrow'd face,
His gaunt, gnarl'd hands, his unkempt, bristling hair,
His garb uncouth, his bearing ill at ease,
Of power or will to shine, of art to please;
You, whose smart pen back'd up the pencil's laugh,
Judging each step as though the way were plain;
Reckless, so it could point its paragraph,
Beside this corpse, that bears for winding-sheet
The Stars and Stripes he liv'd to rear anew,
Between the mourners at his head and feet, Say, scurrile jester, is there room for you?
Yes: he had liv'd to shame me from my sneer,
To lame my pencil and confute my pen; To make me own this kind of princes peer,
This rail-splitter a true-born king of men.
My shallow judgment I had learn'd to rue, Noting how to occasion's height he rose; How his quaint wit made home-truth seem more true; How, iron-like, his temper grew by blows;
How humble, yet how hopeful he could be; How in good fortune and in ill the same; Nor bitter in success, nor boastful he, Thirsty for gold, nor feverish for fame.
He went about his work,-- such work as few Ever had laid on head and heart and hand;-- As one who knows, where there's a task to do, Man's honest will must Heav'n's good grace command;
Who trusts the strength will with the burden grow,
That God makes instruments to work his will, If but that will we can arrive to know, Nor tamper with the weights of good and ill.
So he went forth to battle, on the side That he felt clear was Liberty's and Right's, As in his peasant boyhood he had plied His warfare with rude Nature's thwarting mights;--
The unclear'd forest, the unbroken soil, The iron bark that turns the lumberer's axe, The rapid that o'erbears the boatman's toil, The prairie hiding the Maz'd wanderer's tracks,
The ambush'd Indian, and the prowling bear;-- Such were the deeds that help'd his youth to train: Rough culture, but such trees large fruit may bear, If but their stocks be of right girth and grain.
So he grew up, a destin'd work to do,  
And liv'd to do it; four long-suffering years.
Ill fate, ill feeling, ill report liv'd through,  
And then he heard the hisses change to cheers,

The taunts to tribute, the abuse to praise,  
And took both with the same unwavering mood,--
Till, as he came on light from darkling days,  
And seem'd to touch the goal from where he stood,

A felon hand, between the goal and him,  
Reach'd from behind his back, a trigger prest,
And those perplex'd and patient eyes were dim,
Those gaunt, long-laboring limbs were laid to rest.

The words of mercy were upon his lips,  
Forgiveness in his heart and on his pen,  
When this vile murderer brought swift eclipse  
To thoughts of peace on earth, good will to men.

The Old World and the New, from sea to sea,  
Utter one voice of sympathy and shame.  
Sore heart, so stopp'd when it at last beat high!  
Sad life, cut short just as its triumph came!

A deed accurs'd! Strokes have been struck before  
By the assassin's hand, whereof men doubt  
If more of horror or disgrace they bore;  
But thy foul crime, like Cain's, stands darkly out,

Vile hand, that brandest murder 
on a strife,  
Whatever its grounds, stoutly and nobly striven,  
And with the martyr's crown crowned a life  
With much to praise, little to be forgiven.

-----------------------------

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES:

Taylor, Tom

Abraham Lincoln (from "Punch")

"You lay a wreath on murder'd Lincoln's bier"
YOU lay a wreath on murdered Lincoln's bier,
You, with mocking pencil want to trace,
Broad for the self-complacent British sneer,
His gaunt, gauntleted hands, his unempted hair,
His path untrodden, his bearing ill at ease,
His lack of all we prize as debonair,
Of power or will to shine, of art to please;
You, whose smart pen backed up the pencil's laugh,
Judging each step as though the way were plain;
Reckless, so it could point its paragraph,
Of chief's perplexity or people's pain,—
Beside this corpse, that bears for winding-sheet
The Stars and Stripes he lived to rear anew,
Between the mourners at his head and feet,
Say, scurrile jester, is there room for you?
Yes: he had lived to shame me from my sneer,
To lame my pencil and confute my pen;
To make me own this kind of princes peer,
This rail-splitter a true-born king of men.

My shallow judgment I had learned to rise,
Noting how to occasion's height he rose;
How his quaint wit made home-truth seem more true;
How, iron-like, his temper grew by blows;
How humble, yet how hopeful he could be;
How to good fortune and to ill the same;
Nor bitter in success, nor boastful be;
Thirty for gold, nor feverish for fame.

Abraham Lincoln

BY TOM TAYLOR

(This tribute appeared in the London Punch which, up to the time of the assassination of Lincoln, had ridiculed and maligned him with all its well-known powers of pen and pencil.)

He went about his work,—such work as few
Ever had laid on head and heart and hand,—
As one who knows, where there's a task to do,
Man's honest will must Heaven's good grace command;

Who trusts the strength will with the burden grow,
That God makes instruments to work His will;
If but that will we can arrive to know,
Nor tamper with the weights of good and ill.

So he went forth to battle, on the side
That he felt clear was Liberty's and Right's,
As in his peasant boyhood he had plied
His warfare with rude Nature's thwarting mights—
The uncleared forest, the unbroken soil,
The iron bank that turns the lumberer's ax,
The rapid that o'errears the boatman's toll,
The prairie hiding the mazed wanderer's tracks,
The ambushed Indian, and the prowling bear,—
Such were the deeds that helped his youth to train:
Rough culture, but such trees large fruit may bear,
If but their stocks be of right girth and grain.

So he grew up, a destined work to do,
And lived to do it: four long-suffering years
Ill fate, ill feeling, ill report lived through,
And then he heard the hses change to cheers.
The taunts to tributes, the abuse to praise,
And took both with the same unsawing mood,—
Till, as he came on light from darkling days,
And seemed to touch the goal from where he stood,
A felon hand, between the goal and him,
Reached from behind his back, a trigger prest,
And those perplexed and patient eyes were dim.
Those gaunt, long-laboring limbs were laid to rest.
The words of mercy were upon his lips,
Forgiveness in his heart and on his pen,
When this vile murderer brought swift eclipse
To thoughts of peace on earth, good will to men.
The Old World and the New, from sea to sea,
Uter one voice of sympathy and shame.
Sore heart, so stepped when at last beat high!
Sad life, cut short just as its triumph came!
A deed occurred! Stripes have been struck before
By the assassin's hand, whereof men doubt;
If more of horror or disgrace they bore;
But thy foul crime, like Cain's, stands darkly out.
Vile hand, that brandest murder on a strife;
What'er its grounds, stoutly and nobly striven,
And with the martyr's crown crownest a life
With much to praise, little to be forgiven.