

LINCOLN LORE

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LINCOLN EULOGIZED IN GREAT BRITAIN

Words spoken in praise of a departed hero may have a tendency to elevate the character far above the plane in which he moved, and it is quite likely that many of our Memorial Day addresses approached this type of appraisal.

Written words which may be reread before printing are less liable to indulge in unwarranted flattery than words spoken extemporaneously, and it is with interest that we review some of the editorial comments published in the newspapers of Great Britain in 1865, upon hearing of the death of Abraham Lincoln. There is room for but a few of these excerpts.

"Abraham Lincoln has always seemed the finest character produced by the American war, on either side of the struggle. He was great not merely by the force of genius—and only the word genius will describe the power of intellect by which he guided himself and his country through such a crisis—but by the simple, natural strength and grandeur of his character . . . He seemed to arrive by instinct—by the instinct of a noble, unselfish, and manly nature—at the very ends which the highest of political genius, the longest of political experience, could have done no more than reach. He bore himself fearlessly in danger, calmly in difficulty, modestly in success." *London Morning Star, April 27, 1865.*

"We doubt whether modern history contains a grander character than the humble lawyer of Illinois. Others had more genius, and, perhaps, a deeper insight into the political future, though in that prescience which is one of the highest and rarest gifts of rulers Abraham Lincoln was far from deficient. In high moral qualities he was unsurpassed by any public character of the age. His hands were as free from corruption as his generous soul was disposed to harshness . . . His public virtue shone out as brightly as his private worth, and both made him the best beloved man in the United States." *Freeman's Journal, Dublin, April 28, 1865.*

"A sturdy, sensible western man, with long limbs and a longer head, Mr. Lincoln had worked his way in the world without any dishonorable subterfuges or mean devices. Clear, direct, simple, and straightforward, he had already, during his brief term of office, outlived many suspicions, jealousies, misconstructions, and dislikes. He bore his honors well, and was settling down into a quiet simple dignity of manner, and a kindly moderation of thought and temper. Terrible had been the trial through which he had victoriously passed. He was emphatically one of the people, but his homespun virtues seemed to justify the people's choice. At any rate, he had diligently, faithfully, and not unskillfully, labored according to such light as was given him; and now, as he seemed to touch the goal, his course is abruptly checked." *London Daily Telegraph, April 27, 1865.*

"Poor Abraham Lincoln—"Honest Abe"—the simple, the noble, the true-hearted; as blunt and unaffected, as simple-hearted, kindly and playful in his high position as President of the United States as ever he had been when, in earlier days, he drove his team through the forests of Illinois! The people of this country had all come to love him. Even those who could or would see nothing in him at first but the quondam rail-splitter and mule-driver, came in the end to recognize the native grandeur and simplicity of his character, and the fitness there was in this blunt, unassuming man to head a great people in passing through a national crisis, and doing battle for a higher civilization." *Glasgow Herald, May 1, 1865.*

"It is given to few men to triumph over the most formidable obstacles, as Mr. Lincoln triumphed, by the mere force of honesty and sagacity. His simple integrity of purpose, firmness of will, patience, humanity, and the

deep sense of accountability which marked every important act, united to form a character which has steadily and visibly gained upon the minds and hearts, not of his own countrymen alone, but also of the world." *London Daily News, April 27, 1865.*

"Fearless in danger, unshaken in adversity, hopeful when the bravest all but despaired; calm amidst the wild, contagious excitement of success; as imperturbable in the general ecstasies produced by triumph as he was resolute in the general despondency produced by misfortune, he displayed, from first to last, the rare qualities of a good man and a wise ruler." *Ulster Observer, Belfast, April 27, 1865.*

"We were only beginning to appreciate the homely common-sense which had guided him where mere astuteness would have failed—the homely honesty which, in a community where political honesty is rare, had secured him the name of "Honest Abe," the gentle, affectionate disposition which in the moment of triumph was ready to forget the past, and, in a broad spirit of philanthropy, to receive back his most deadly enemies as countrymen and friends." *Dublin Daily Express, April 29, 1865.*

"We attempt no estimate of Mr. Lincoln's character. If he was not a man of brilliant qualities or showy accomplishments, yet he possessed great grasp and force of intellect, honesty and singleness of purpose, unsullied integrity, unshaken perseverance, firmness in authority, an ambition utterly unselfish, the qualities, in short, which go to make the truest and noblest patriot . . . There was a grandeur about his simple purity and truth which never attaches to more selfish men, however great the height to which they may attain." *Bradford Review, April 29, 1865.*

"His speeches are a photograph of his character. Full of transparent honesty and candor; without the smallest infusion of political rancor or personal vanity; singular in their forgetfulness of self; singular in their devotion to the cause of truth; never skimming the surface, but always grappling fairly with the whole question at issue; never shirking difficulties or shrinking from admission, but meeting the one, and making the other, as calmly as if they were a part of his own case; overflowing with great thoughts, and strong in manly sense, which the very boldness of expression seemed, like the severe simplicity of the Egyptian architecture, to set off in more massive proportions: such were his speeches; such was his mind; such, too, was his policy." *Leeds Mercury, April 27, 1865.*

"The singular position of Mr. Lincoln—a position unparalleled, we believe, in modern history, or paralleled by that of Cavour alone—was that, while intensely individual, he was in the most perfect and complete degree a reflector of the national will. His convictions, originally those of an average American of the western States, advanced in perfect independence at the same rate as those of the country . . . The people have lost their mouth-piece, but not the determination which he so clearly expressed." *The Spectator, April 29, 1865.*

"The memory of his statesmanship, translucent in the highest degree, wise above the average, and openly faithful more than almost any this age has witnessed to fact and right, will live in the hearts and minds of the whole Anglo-Saxon race as one of the noblest examples of that race's highest qualities. Add to all this that Abraham Lincoln was the kindest and pleasantest of men, that he had raised himself from nothing, and that to the last no grain of conceit or ostentation was found in him, and there stands before the world a man whose like we shall not soon look upon again." *Liverpool Daily Post, April 27, 1865.*