

Book Reviews

Abraham Lincoln: His Speeches and Writings. Edited by Roy P. Basler. (Cleveland, Ohio, The World Publishing Company, 1946, pp. xxx, 843. Illustrations, appendix, and index. \$3.75.)

The editor set himself the task of preparing a full and accurate text of Abraham Lincoln's most important works. So well has he accomplished his task that a significant adverse criticism will be hard to support. It is the best text of Abraham Lincoln's manuscripts now available.

The author (the extensive editorial notes make him more than an editor) employed 247 selections to cover Lincoln's most important works. They range in date from Lincoln's political announcement to the people of "Sangamo County" on March 9, 1832, to his military telegram sent to General Godfrey Weitzel at Richmond, Virginia, on April 12, 1865. Each selection is followed by its editorial notes. Together they occupy 750 pages of text. Frequently the excellent notes far exceed the extent of the Lincoln document. For example, the twelve-line letter to Mrs. Bixby is followed by five and one-half pages of notes. As a matter of fact, the set of notes throughout the volume is the second best contribution of the editor, being surpassed only by the corrected text of the Lincoln writings.

Other features include a preface by Carl Sandburg and a fifty-two-page essay on "Lincoln's Development as a Writer." This essay by Basler deserves an honorable mention. The value of the book as a first-rate reference volume is further enhanced by a list of the sources of text, a bibliography of the works cited in the notes, and an index. In addition to the frontispiece, there are five well-known photographs of Lincoln from the collection of Frederick Hill Meserve.

The volume, which is quarto in size, is beautifully bound in light tan buckram with brown leather labels lettered in gold on the front cover and the back. The endpapers carry a facsimile of the letter written by President Lincoln to Major General Joseph Hooker on January 26, 1863.

Library of Congress

C. Percy Powell