

## Lincoln and the Diplomats

*John A. Garraty\**

Among the papers of Henry Cabot Lodge at the Massachusetts Historical Society are two notebooks in which Lodge kept sporadically throughout his long career, a journal. During his early years he was in almost constant contact with older men who had played important roles in the drama of the Civil War. Occasionally these men recounted for him, often in the course of dinner parties, political meetings, and on trains, personal memories of the important events with which they had been connected and the famous men they had known and with whom they had consorted. Young Lodge had an historian's interest in these tales, and recognized their permanent value, so he recorded many of them in his journal, along with casual jottings on his personal doings.

The following two selections concern Abraham Lincoln. The first offers some previously unpublished recollections of Carl Schurz, certainly a friendly observer, and the second is an account by Charles Francis Adams which helps explain the coolness which existed between the Great Emancipator and his distinguished representative in Great Britain.

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*Feb 11th [1876. New York City]*

. . . Dined at Brevoort and then to see Schurz. . . . We then talked on various subjects particularly Mr Lincoln. Mr S. said he was convinced of Lincoln's abilities & sterling qualities by the Douglas controversy. Told me an anecdote of Lincoln's diplomatic methods & how popular he was with all the foreign ministers. Mr Lincoln sent for Lord Lyons<sup>1</sup> on one occasion & bidding him to sit down near him said "Now look here lord Lyons I want to keep peace with England but I can't stand this. You just write to the Queen & tell her that I don't want to go to war but I can't stand this sort of thing." (referring to some of England's insidious acts of hostility) Mr Schurz also described to me an interview with Mr Lincoln during the campaign of '64. The intense sadness & sorrow of Mr Lincoln & the manner in which he said in reference to attacks upon him "Why do they misunderstand me so" Mr S. said brought tears to his eyes. He also told me that Lincoln was a lover of Shakespeare & that his favorite play was Macbeth. A natural preference & sound taste but in view of Lincoln's tragic fate it seems something more. To no man more than to Lincoln did the sublime lines beginning "After Life's fitful fever" better apply.

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<sup>1</sup> Richard Bickerton Pemell, 1st Earl Lyons, was British Minister at Washington from 1858 to 1865.

*June 10th* [1876 Nahant, Mass.]

. . . At 1 P.M. to town [Boston] & then to Quincy to dine C.F.A. Jr.<sup>2</sup> Present Prof. Sumner<sup>3</sup> (for whom the dinner was given) Godkin,<sup>4</sup> C. F. Adams & C.F.A. Jr & wife. Conversation at first general. Towards close of dinner Mr Adams got talking about his English mission. Said after his appointment went with Mr Seward to see the Pres. & get instructions. On being introduced he of course expressed his acknowledgements to which Lincoln replied—"Very kind of you to say so Mr Adams but you are not my choice you are Seward's man" & then turning to Seward said "Well Seward I have settled the Chicago Post Office." Mr A. admitted that this had always been present in his mind in connection with Lincoln & had colored the Seward eulogy. Mr Adams also told of Washburne's<sup>5</sup> application to Lincoln for the Chicago P.O. & L's saying to him "You can't have the Chicago P.O. it's already promised" (then drawing out a long list of places & salaries) "You shall have the ministership to Paraguay."

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<sup>2</sup> Charles Francis Adams, Jr., son of Charles Francis Adams, was a Union officer during the Civil War.

<sup>3</sup> William Graham Sumner, economist and sociologist. In 1876 he was a professor at Yale.

<sup>4</sup> Edwin Lawrence Godkin, editor of the *Nation*.

<sup>5</sup> Elihu Benjamin Washburne, Congressman from Illinois.