

LINCOLN AND KENNEDY

'When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom'd'

A bereaved country reached in vain for words until a great poet, Walt Whitman, wrote: "When lilacs last in the dooryard bloom'd,/ And the great star early droop'd in the western sky in the night,/ I mourn'd, and yet shall mourn with ever-returning spring." So a singer of America wrote of President Lincoln, whose fearful trip was done that terrible day in April of 1865.

North and South

The printers of 1865 took the one-point column rules and turned them downside up into six-point shrouds of black. Historians and journalists groped in the language that he had used with such deceptive simplicity and found that simple words could not fully explain him. The preachers and the politicians, North and South, spoke mightily. And the people who didn't speak and

couldn't find the proper expressions sought some meaning.

In the good columns of The Springfield Journal, the home-town paper that Lincoln called his "friend," they remembered that as President-elect he had told his neighbors, leaving: "To this place, and the kindness of these people, I owe everything. Here I have lived a quarter of a century, and have passed from a young to an old man. Here my children have been born, and one is buried. I now leave, not knowing when, or whether ever, I may return . . ." Four years after a second American Revolution called the Civil War, he returned to Springfield.

Hatred in Texas Newspaper

Of his life, Lincoln had once told a contemporary that it was but one thing: "the short and simple annals of the poor." But along the edges of the Confederacy

that was, in The Frankfort Commonwealth, they spoke this way about a native son who was born near Hodgenville, Kentucky: "When Abraham Lincoln fell, the South lost its best and truest friend."

Such was the sympathetic reaction in most parts of the South.

But from Texas came a horrible statement in the pages of The Dallas Herald which said, "God Almighty ordered this event or it could never have taken place." And in The Tri-Weekly Telegraph, in Houston, ten days after the assassination, these shocking words appeared: "From now until God's judgment day, the minds of men will not cease to thrill at the killing of Abraham Lincoln. . . . We saw successively in his public documents how super-ruling became his purpose, and how callous to all the usual motives of humanity he grew. . . . Whoever would impose the fate of servitude and slavery on these Confederate States, whatever fatal Providence of God shall lay him low, we say, and say it gladly, God's will be done."

'The Gift Outright'

When President Kennedy took the oath of office on Jan. 20, 1961, another great poet sang of America in words that echoed Walt Whitman's. Robert Frost's vast television audience enabled him to be seen by more people than had ever in the history of mankind heard a poet recite. The dedication of his poem, "The Gift Outright," was: "For John F. Kennedy."

The land was ours before
we were the
lands's.

She was our land
than a hundred
years.

Before we were her
people. . .

Something we were
withholding made
us weak

Until we found out
that it was our-
selves

We were withholding
from our land of
living,

And forthwith found
salvation in surren-
der. . .

To the land vaguely
realizing westward,
But still unstoried,
artless, unenhanced,
Such as she was, such
as she would become.

It was, at the same time,
a tribute to a still-young
country personified by the
new President. — *The New
York Times*.

MARTYR TO A CAUSE

President Kennedy lies dead, a martyr in the cause of democratic government. His countrymen weep in sorrow and in anger. The immensity of the crime can hardly be grasped in these hours of confusion. The deed in Dallas was different only in degree of importance from such acts of violence as the bombing of houses of worship, racial murders and only last month, in the same city, the degrading assault on U. N. Ambassador Adlai Stevenson. — CHICAGO SUN-TIMES.