

BIOGRAPHICAL STRABISMUS.

Biography in dealing with the lives of illustrious men is frequently afflicted with cross-eyed views of both character and achievement. Abraham Lincoln is the most conspicuous victim of this kind of injustice in our country, perhaps the most so of any man since George Washington. Writers who have written of the characters and deeds of both long since lifted them into something far above anything merely human, and it is probably true that it would require the strongest reputation to survive an honest and impartial statement of the real truth about the personal lives and characters of either of them. The halo which surrounds their names does not permit a just view of the lives they actually lived as men who, after all, were very like other human beings, including a fair proportion of weaknesses which are a common inheritance. Washington could, would, and did "swear like a pirate;" he was as full of ambition as an egg is full of meat, and he had a grasping love of the thing called money. Mr. Lincoln was a cunning politician of Illinois for thirty years, practised law on the circuits with ordinary lawyers in opposition, without rising above the level of the brethren of the bar, reached a seat in congress where he was chiefly prominent for his obscurity, and was allowed to lapse into his old and singular habits of life until Leonard Swett, Norman B. Judd, and one or two other people, pitted him in debate with Douglas, which made him famous. They assisted in composing his speeches on the slavery question which consisted in large measure, of appeals to human sympathy for the slave, and in twisting the views of Mr. Douglas so as to mislead the people.

But not content with deifying Mr. Lincoln as the man who destroyed slavery and saved the Union, and as a statesman of imposing rank, the more recent biographer insists upon his having been a great soldier. It is supposed that the "On to Richmond" order and "Bull Run" occurred before he had acquired genius for command, and that when, after McClellan was in front of Richmond, pledged by Mr. Lincoln to have McDowell's corps marched in time to compose his right wing, which never moved a step in that direction and was withdrawn, he had not yet reached his full powers as a general of fighting armies. Nor can it be seen very clearly that Mr. Lincoln proved his military greatness when he sent Pope to slaughter and disgrace, and a whole army to destruction, at Second Bull Run. Equally obscure is the claim to his military genius when McClellan took the broken army of Pope, pursued Lee into Maryland, utterly unable to extort an order from either General Lincoln, General Halleck or the lovely Mr. Stanton, and drove Lee back into Virginia,

fighting the bloody battle of Antietam "with a halter around his neck." General William B. Franklin has said, in a letter which THE CONSERVATIVE has read, that if McClellan had been defeated at Antietam, he would have been "court-martialed and shot"—as a traitor to his country, of course—because he pursued Lee, forced him to battle, and won a great victory without any other order than that of poor Halleck, warning him "not to get too far from Washington." From all that we can gather of Mr. Lincoln's powers as a military commander, they must have been exercised after Generals Grant and Sherman appeared on the field. And yet, it is probable that if both Grant and Sherman could now read biographies, they would turn over in their moulding coffins to learn for the first time that Mr. Lincoln commanded "The March to the Sea," and directed the terrible combats with Lee's starving and decimated armies which led to the inevitable at Appomattox.

CLEVELAND AND HAWAII.

President Cleveland may have been sometimes wrong but he was generally right; and, either wrong or right, he was emphatic—there was no misunderstanding his position. And never was he more clearly in the right than in his opposition to those who favored the annexation of Hawaii to the United States. We refer in this connection to the annexationists from Honolulu.

The story is briefly told. Hawaii—the Sandwich islands of our boyhood—was simply stolen from its original possessors, by those who were sent from the Christian church to convert them to Christianity. About the middle of the century, or a little earlier, in the '30's and '40's, missionaries were sent from New England to Christianize the Sandwich islanders. This work was promptly effected; never were discovered more tractable savages. Almost without persuasion they forsook idolatry and espoused Christianity. Perhaps never were Christian missionaries more kindly treated. They and their families found a home in the beautiful island and thrived mightily under the fostering care of Hawaiian royalty.

So prosperous were they that almost without effort by simply living on the lands supplied them by the royal bounty, the sons and daughters of the New England missionaries became millionaires; and after the lapse of half a century, waxed so wealthy, so powerful and so ungrateful as to wrest the islands from the kind-hearted Sandwich islanders, dethrone the family of their benefactors and, like the serpent, venomously sting the hand that had cherished them. There are bloodier pictures in the book of time, but one of the meanest of all historical events is the stealing of the Hawaiian islands from their rightful

owners, by those who had been nurtured and made rich through the lavish generosity of their benefactors and victims.

The event has been consummated; the old line of kings has passed away forever.

No one can deny that in heathendom as well as in Christianity there was an element of the heroic in this line of monarchs. But they are a thing of the past; their domains have been annexed to the great republic, firm fixed forever.

But the shameful narrative of the ungrateful miscreants who robbed them should be published to their disgrace forever.

W. F. FOSTER.

A ROOSTER WITH A MORAL.

The people of the United States are not particularly proud that their navy, standing four or five miles out in the Pacific ocean, has been able, without injury to itself, to disperse an array of naked Filipinos drawn up with boomerangs and bows and arrows to oppose it on shore. It was an abject and pitiful spectacle, certainly; Robinson Crusoe never took his savages at any such odds; and still maybe it had to be done.

The writer recalls having had a difference, in his earlier years, with a White Leghorn rooster named Billy, as to the best place for White Leghorn roosters to roost at night. Billy declared for an apple-tree that stood in the garden, while the forces of civilization, having an eye to the strawberry-bed, held for the regularly-established hen-house of orthodoxy. The hen-house was certainly somewhat cramped for one who aspired to perfect freedom, as described by the 18th century writers, but on the other hand such freedom was inconsistent with the rights of the rest of mankind to eat its own strawberries. So, as Billy would not be reasoned with, a stratagem was practised which involved the use of a degree of force, and Billy, held firmly by the legs, and appealing in vain to the other civilized nations, was taken and deposited within the hated limits of the hennery, where he spent the rest of his days.

The writer was not proud of the superiority of strength which enabled him to accomplish this, but having such strength, he would have been foolish, and false to his trust besides, if he had not made use of it.

An anthropologist who has made a study of lips, announces his conclusion that thick lips indicate, not sensuality, but mixed blood. "Really thick lips never occur, except as an anomaly, in the white race."

The average salary paid to Congregational ministers in the United States is \$1,125 per year. This is more than any stationary engineer in Nebraska City earns.