LINCOLN LETTERS
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GIFT
NOTE

The letters herein by Lincoln are so thoroughly characteristic of the man, and are in themselves so completely self-explanatory, that it requires no comment to enable the reader fully to understand and appreciate them. It will be observed that the philosophical admonitions in the letter to his brother, Johnston, were written on the same sheet with the letter to his father.

The promptness and decision with which Lincoln despatched the multitudinous affairs of his office during the most turbulent scenes of the Civil War are exemplified in his unequivocal order to the Attorney-General, indorsed on the back of the letter of Hon. Austin A. King, requesting a pardon for John B. Corner. The indorsement bears even date with the letter itself, and Corner was pardoned on the following day.
THE ORIGINALS FROM WHICH THE WITHIN FAC-SIMILES WERE MADE ARE IN THE COLLECTION OF MR. WILLIAM K. BIXBY, AND THROUGH HIS COURTESY THEY ARE REPRODUCED FOR MEMBERS OF THE BIBLIOPHILE SOCIETY
Washington, Dec. 24th, 1848.

My dear father: —

Your letter of the 7th was received night before last. I very cheerfully send you the twenty dollars, which sum you say is necessary to save your land from sale. It is singular that you should have forgotten a judgment against you; and it is more singular that the plaintiff should have let you forget it so long, particularly as I suppose you have always had property enough to satisfy a judgment of that amount. Before you pay it, it would be well to be sure you have not paid it; or, at least, that you can not prove you have paid it. Give my love to Mother, and all the connections.

Affectionately your son,

A. LINCOLN.

[Written on same page with above.]

Dear Johnston: —

Your request for eighty dollars, I do not think it best to comply with now. At the various times when I have helped you a little, you have said to me, "We can get along very well
now," but in a very short time I find you in the same difficulty again. Now this can only happen by some defect in your conduct. What that defect is, I think I know. You are not lazy, and still you are an idler. I doubt whether since I saw you, you have done a good whole day's work, in any one day. You do not very much dislike to work, and still you do not work much, merely because it does not seem to you that you could get much for it. This habit of uselessly wasting time, is the whole difficulty; and it is vastly important to you, and still more so to your children, that you should break this habit. It is more important to them, because they have longer to live, and can keep out of an idle habit before they are in it easier than they can get out after they are in.

You are now in need of some ready money; and what I propose is, that you shall go to work, "tooth and nail," for somebody who will give you money for it. Let father and your boys take charge of things at home — prepare for a crop, and make the crop; and you go to work for the best money wages, or in discharge of any debt you owe, that you can get. And to secure you a fair reward for your labor, I now promise you that for every dollar you will, between this
My dear father:

Your letter of the 7th was received right before last. I very cheerfully send you the twenty dollars, which, same you say is necessary to save your land from sale. It is singular that you should have forgotten a judgment against you; and it is more singular that the plaintiff should have let you forget it today, particularly so, I suppose you have always been prompt enough to satisfy a judgment of that amount. Before you pay it, it would be well to be sure you have not paid it, at least, that you can not prove you have paid it.

I give my love to Mother, and all the children.

Affectionately your son,

Andrew.

Dear Johnston:

Your request for eighty dollars, I do not think it best to comply with now. At the present time, when I have helped you a little, you have done to me as well as you say very well now, but in a very short time I find you in the same difficulty again. Now this can not happen by some defect in your character. What that defect, I think I know. You are not lazy, and still you are an idler.
I doubt whether since I saw you, you have done a good whole day's work in any one day. You do not work much as I like to work, and still you do not work much more, because it does not seem to you that you could get much for it. This habit of idleness wasting time, is the whole difficulty, and it is very important to you, once you break free from any habit before you get it, rather than you can get it off after the one in.

You are now in need of some ready money, and what I propose is that you shall go to work for some one who will give you work for it. Let father and mother take care of the boys, the charge of things at home—prepare for a ship, and make the crop, and go to work for the best money you can get, or in discharge of any debt you owe, that you can get.

And to secure you a fair remuneration for your labor, I now promise you that for every dollar you will, between this and the first of next May, get for your own labor, either in money or in any other consideration, I will then give you one other dollar.

By this, if you hire yourself at ten dollars a month from me, you will get ten, may making twenty dollars a month for your labor. In this, I do not mean you shall go off to St. Louis or the lead mine, or the gold mines in California. But I mean for you to go to work for the best wages.
can get close to home. The best course now is to
will do this, you will soon be out of debt and what
is better, you will have a habit that will keep you
from getting in debt again. But if I should not clear you
out, next year you will be just as deep in debt. You
say you would like to give your place in Illinois for $200.
Then you raise your price to $500 or very cheap. I am
with the offer. Moreover, you can get this eighty dollars, perhaps five
months now. Then I will finish you the more you will
need me the least. And if you don’t pay the money back,
you will decline further. Nonsense! If you can not
live with the land, what will you then live without it?
You have always been yours and I do not now mean
to be adverse to you. Or this coming if you will not pay
my source, you will find it worth more than eighty two
eighty dollars to you."

Effectively,

Your brother,

R. Lincoln
and the first of next May, get for your own labor either in money or in your own indebtedness, I will then give you one other dollar. By this, if you hire yourself at ten dollars a month, from me you will get ten more, making twenty dollars a month for your work. In this, I do not mean you shall go off to St. Louis, or the lead mines, or the gold mines, in California, but I mean for you to go at it for the best wages you can get close to home, in Coles County. Now if you will do this, you will soon be out of debt, and what is better, you will have a habit that will keep you from getting in debt again. But if I should now clear you out, next year you will be just as deep in as ever. You say you would almost give your place in Heaven for $70 or $80. Then you value your place in Heaven very cheaply, for I am sure you can with the offer I make you get the seventy or eighty dollars for four or five months' work. You say if I furnish you the money you will deed me the land, and if you don't pay the money back, you will deliver possession — Nonsense! If you can't now live with the land, how will you then live without it? You have always been kind to me, and I do not now mean to be unkind to you. On the contrary, if you will but follow my advice, you will find it
worth more than eight times eighty dollars to you.

Affectionately your brother,

A. LINCOLN.

Executive Mansion,
Washington, April 30, 1864.

Lieutenant-General Grant,—

Not expecting to see you again before the spring campaign opens, I wish to express, in this way, my entire satisfaction with what you have done up to this time, so far as I understand it. The particulars of your plans I neither know, or seek to know. You are vigilant and self-reliant; and, pleased with this, I wish not to obtrude any constraints or restraints upon you. While I am very anxious that any great disaster, or the capture of our men in great numbers, shall be avoided, I know these points are less likely to escape your attention than they would be mine. If there is anything wanting which is within my power to give, do not fail to let me know it.

And now with a brave Army, and a just cause, may God sustain you.

Yours very truly,

A. LINCOLN.
Executive Mansion
Washington, April 30, 1864

Lieutenant General Grant,

Not expecting to see you again before the spring campaign opens, I wish to express, in this way, my entire satisfaction with what you have done up to this time, so far as I understand it. The particulars of your plans I neither know, or seek to know. You are vigilant and self-reliant, and pleased with this, I wish not to impose any constraints or restraints upon you. While I am very anxious that no great disaster, or the capture of our men in great numbers, shall be avoided, I know these points are less likely to escape your attention than they would be mine. If there is anything wanting which is within my power to give, do not fail to let me know it.

And now with a brave Army, and a just cause, may God sustain you.

Yours very truly,

[Signature]
Washington
July 27, 1864

President Lincoln
C. c. Sir

I write to request of you the return of John A. Cameron of New Castle, N. Y., who stands indicted in the United States court in Wilmington for a conspiracy against the Government.

Mr. Cameron was among those who first went into the rebellion, but shortly after the surrender of Fort Sumter, having been busy in his farm. The great success he had committed entirely after he became a Union man, taking the oath
of allegiance and
given a house for his
future great command.
he was indebted by the
Great-Jury of St. John
for his office at the first
and since of the indiction.
I am sure it will not be
an act of mischance
inability if you will
move further now, and
I must respectfully insist
in which I do because I
have you the more.

I am hastily,

Austin Allen
H. J. B.
John 13 Corner

Attorney General,

Please make sure a pardon is in the case.

Lincoln

Jan. 27, 1864