Mr. President and Gentlemen of the Convention: If we could first know where we are, and whither we are tending, we could better judge what to do, and how to do it. We are now far into the fifth year since a policy was initiated with the avowed object and confident promise of putting an end to slavery agitation. Under the operation of that policy, that agitation has not only not ceased, but has constantly augmented. In my opinion, it will not cease until a crisis shall have been reached and passed. "A house divided against itself cannot stand." I believe this government cannot endure permanently half slave and half free. I do not expect the Union to be dissolved—I do not expect the house to fall—but I do expect it will cease to be divided. It will become all one thing, or all the other. Either the opponents of slavery will arrest the further spread of it, and place it where the public mind shall rest in the belief that it is in the course of ultimate extinction; or its advocates will push it forward till it shall become alike lawful in all the States, old as well as new, North as well as South.

LINCOLN SPRINGFIELD SPEECH, CLOSE OF REPUBLICAN STATE CONVENTION, JUNE 16, 1858.

13. POWER OF MEMORY

Lincoln possessed the faculty of memory in an unusually high degree. Apparently, he could remember with ease what he thought worthwhile retaining in his mind. Here, in the words of one who saw him at work almost daily for over 16 years, one glimpses the process by which Lincoln's great speeches took form.

Mr. Lincoln had keen susceptibilities to the hints, insinuations, and suggestions of nature and of man which put him in mind of something known or unknown; hence his power and tenacity of what is called the association of ideas must have been great; his memory was exceedingly retentive, tenacious, and strong; he could write out a speech, as in the Cooper Institute speech, and then repeat it word for word, without any effort on his part. This I know about the "house divided against itself" speech; he wrote that fine effort, an argumentative one, in slips, put those slips in his hat, numbering them, and when he was done with the ideas he gathered up the scraps, put them in the right order, and wrote out his speech, read it to me before it was delivered, and in the evening delivered it just as written without notes or finished speech; his susceptibilities to all suggestions and hints enabled him through his retentive memory at will to call up readily, quickly, and accurately the associated and classified fact, person, or idea.

HERNDON'S "NOTES AND MONOGRAPHS."

14. LINCOLN THE SPEAKER

Probably no one saw and heard Lincoln give more speeches than William H. Herndon. No one worked more devotedly and assiduously to promote Lincoln's political career than he. Perhaps no other person observed as carefully as did he the many little characteristics of Lincoln in the act of addressing a jury or a political gathering. Fortunately, Herndon's description of Lincoln, the speaker, is preserved for posterity in one of his many letters.

Mr. Lincoln was six feet and four inches high in his sock feet; he was consumptive by build and hence more or less stoop-shouldered. He was very tall, thin, and gaunt. When he rose to speak to the jury or to crowds of people, he stood inclined forward, was awkward, angular, ungainly, odd, and, being a very sensitive man, I think that it added to his awkwardness; he was a diffident man, somewhat, and a sensitive one, and both of these added to his oddity, awkwardness, etc., as it seemed to me. Lincoln had confidence, full and complete confidence in himself, self-thoughtful, self-helping, and self-supporting, relying on no man. Lincoln's voice was, when he first began speaking, shrill, squeaking, piping, unpleasant; his general look, his form, his pose, the color of his flesh, wrinkled and dry, his sensitiveness, and his momentary diffidence, everything seemed to be against him, but he soon recovered. I can see him