

now, in my mind distinct. On rising to address the jury or the crowd he quite generally placed his hands behind him, the back part of his left hand resting in the palm of his right hand. As he proceeded and grew warmer, he moved his hands to the front of his person, generally interlocking his fingers and running one thumb around the other. Sometimes his hands, for a short while, would hang by his side. In still growing warmer, as he proceeded in his address, he used his hands—especially and generally his right hand—in his gestures; he used his head a great deal in speaking, throwing or jerking or moving it now here and now there, now in this position and now in that, in order to be more emphatic, to drive the idea home. Mr. Lincoln never beat the air, never sawed space with his hands, never acted for stage effect; was cool, careful, earnest, sincere, truthful, fair, self-possessed, not insulting, not dictatorial; was pleasing, good-natured; had great strong naturalness of look, pose, and act; was clear in his ideas, simple in his words, strong, terse, and demonstrative; he spoke and acted to convince individuals and masses; he used in his gestures his right hand, sometimes shooting out that long bony forefinger of his to dot an idea or to express a thought, resting his thumb on his middle finger. Bear in mind that he did not gesticulate much and *yet it is true* that every organ of his body was

in motion and acted with ease, elegance, and grace, so it all looked *to me*.

As Mr. Lincoln proceeded further along with his oration, if time, place, subject, and occasion admitted of it, he gently and gradually warmed up; his shrill, squeaking, piping voice became harmonious, melodious, musical, if you please, with face somewhat aglow; his form dilated, swelled out, and he rose up a splendid form, erect, straight, and dignified; he stood square on his feet with both legs up and down, toe even with toe—that is, he did not put one foot before another; he kept his feet parallel and close to and not far from each other. When Mr. Lincoln rose up to speak, he rose slowly, steadily, firmly; he never moved much about on the stand or platform when speaking, trusting no desk, table, railing; he ran his eyes slowly over the crowd, giving them time to be at ease and to completely recover himself, *as I suppose*. He frequently took hold with his left hand, his left thumb erect, of the left lapel of his coat, keeping his right hand free to gesture in order to drive home and to clinch an idea. In his greatest inspiration he held both of his hands out above his head at an angle of about fifty degrees, hands open or clenched according to his feelings and his ideas.

HERNDON TO BARTLETT, JULY 19, 1887.

## 15. THE LINCOLN-DOUGLAS DEBATE: PROLOGUE TO DESTINY

*In 1858, Abraham Lincoln was the Republican, and Stephen A. Douglas the Democratic, candidate for United States Senator from Illinois. Douglas was serving as Senator at the time and was seeking reelection. Shortly after the campaign started, Lincoln, in a letter written at Chicago, July 24, challenged Douglas to a joint debate on the issues before the people. Douglas accepted and suggested that there be a joint meeting at one prominent point in each congressional district in the State, excepting the Second and Sixth, where each had already spoken. Douglas named seven places.*

*The great issue was over slavery and its constitutional and legal place in the Nation. The Dred Scott Decision, the Kansas-Nebraska Bill, the extension of slavery into the Territories, were the points on which the great debate dwelt. Douglas was considered the leader of the Democratic Party. His great talent and power in debate were acknowledged throughout the land. Compared with him, Lincoln was unknown beyond the borders of his own State. The political and forensic contest waged by these two men in Illinois that year caught the attention of the entire Nation. After its close the name of Lincoln, for the first time, was not altogether unfamiliar in the country at large. Douglas traveled over the State during the debate in a special train equipped with a brass cannon. Lincoln traveled as an ordinary passenger in a common coach, and there were times when he could not even find a seat.'*