

**FRIENDS WITH LINCOLN IN
THE WHITE HOUSE:
ADAPTED FROM NELLIE
BLESSING-EYSTER'S STORY**

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Friends with Lincoln in the White House: adapted from Nellie Blessing-Eyster's story by Henry W. Wilbur

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HENRY W. WILBUR

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REBECCA HARVEY

SARAH HARVEY

ISAAC HARVEY

FRIENDS WITH LINCOLN

IN THE

WHITE HOUSE.

ADAPTED FROM

NELLIE BLESSING-EYSTER'S STORY

BY HENRY W. WILBUR

PHILADELPHIA, PA.

1912

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FRIENDS WITH LINCOLN IN THE WHITE HOUSE.

During the Civil War there lived in Clinton County, Ohio, about fifty miles northwest of Cincinnati, Isaac and Sarah Harvey. They were of the conservative type of Friends of that generation. Isaac was a man often "moved" to do what seemed to his prudential neighbors, strange, if not foolish things, which made some of them call him the "crazy Quaker." But he was also a man who did not feel "easy" in his mind if his concerns could not be translated into conduct.

As the war proceeded, and the cause which produced it persisted, in

the summer of 1862 Isaac Harvey developed a compelling concern to visit Washington, and lay the burden of his mind upon the heart of the great President. In 1868 Nellie Blessing-Eyster visited the Harveys, and the story of her experience was first printed in *Harpers' Magazine* about 1874. In 1889 it was restated, and published in the *New Voice*, New York. The quotations in closer-spaced type are from this story, although we have taken the liberty of supplying the real names in place of the fictitious ones used by the author. We start the story with Nellie Blessing-Eyster's meeting with Isaac Harvey in the hallway of the Harvey home.

THE EYSTER STORY.

I crossed the threshold, when suddenly, from an armed chair just inside the door, there arose a tall, slender old man, who, leaning upon his cane, confronted me. His appearance would have been remarkable any where. His dress was of coarse but of spotless white linen, the only bit of color being a narrow black ribbon carelessly knotted under his broad, unstarched collar. His thin hair was white and fine as spun glass, a few locks falling over his high, unwrinkled forehead. His complexion was as fair as a girl's, and the facial expression intellectual and benignant. His eyes, however, were concealed by green goggles. Such a vision of majestic old age instantly arrested me. Nothing could have been more unexpected. He at once spoke.

"Thy footstep is that of a stranger; enter, for indeed thou art welcome," was his salutation.

Upon which I advanced a step or two, and laid my ungloved hand in his with a few words of greeting.

"Thy hand is that of a gentlewoman, and thy voice is low and pleasant. Be seated and tell me who thou art."

"I have come from the city of Harrisburg, in Pennsylvania, to visit my sister, Grace Harvey. I went with her to meeting this morning and was invited home to dinner by a lady whom my sister calls 'Aunt Sarah Harvey.' Do you know her?" I replied.

"Yes, I do." There was an instant's pause, when he said:

"Thou hast come, then, from the great world of which I know but little.