

**"IN ABE LINCOLN'S
TOWN."**

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"In Abe Lincoln's town." by CLaude Hudgins

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CLAUDE HUDGINS

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Hodgenville, Ky.

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I.

To a Hodgenvillian there is no more interesting subject than the "burg" and its people. Indeed, to a great many of us who have always lived in the confines of her corporate limits, it's about the only place on the map. To us all roads lead to Hodgenville, and the sky comes down to the ground equally distant from all points of the compass. But to you who have traveled far and wide, it may have occurred ere this, that there are lots of towns as big as Hodgenville.

It must be admitted there are no great sky-scrapers towering into the heavens like other great seaports; nor do we have our streets paved with brick or other hard substance;

nor are the streets we have cut up and obstructed with the ever noisy street cars. But we have purer air, brighter sunshine, and happier hearts. We are not annoyed with the ever rush of business, and yet "we all" have plenty, and live about as easy as people who live in larger places. We are not so large but that we are blessed with a knowledge of everybody, and almost everybody's affairs; nor so crowded with our own business but that we have as much time, if not more, to devote to other people's business as we do to our own.

For indeed, in small towns things to talk about and think about are so scarce that when Sam is caught holding Mary Ann's hand, it spreads over town like wild fire or some contagious disease, and like fire and disease, it gets bigger the further it goes. Town gossip, like mental telep-

athy, travels from the firesides of our homes down the streets, around the corners, up the alleys, and into the back doors of our stores and business houses. Little lies and imaginations, in their rapid flight over the city, are transformed as if by magic into living truths, and the dirtiest meanest things that are ever done or said, live and are handed down by tradition from generation to generation. Somebody’s chickens get into somebody’s back yard, then there is a fuss, hard words, bitter feelings, and life-time enemies. One mother thinks her daughter more accomplished than her neighbor’s, or that her son, William Henry, is too good to keep company with Susan Jane, or that Ada Gray is trying her best to marry Thomas Felix, just as though the poor girl should not want to mar-

ry, and that it is a sin to think of such a thing.

To one who has always lived in a small town, and is familiar with its history from observation and actual experience, the ordinary happenings are nothing unusual, but it is otherwise to the man up a tree.

II.

Did you ever go down the street on a rainy Sunday night after the lights were out? Man alive! You can talk to me about the ace of spades and black cats, but they are nothing. Why, you can't find your way from one corner to the other. My, but how your heels do pop on the concrete! And you see streaks of light from some upstairs window glaring across the street like ghosts on the wall. You ought to get up about 4 o'clock some Monday morning, and go down through town, and see how empty, vacant and deserted your streets look. It seems like everybody has left town and taken their things with them. And then you ought to walk up to the top of the

hill, and stand tip-toe on the brink of the horizon, and watch the morning shoot sunbeams at the vanishing night.

The red sun heaves a shoulder up above Muldrough's Hill, and stares sleepily along Nolyn Valley. For a moment he hangs there, glancing carelessly, with the vague and depressing stare of a man who is tired, at the little town, Hodgenville.

A carriage from Buffalo, bent on catching the early train to Louisville, dashes down the hill and turns hurriedly toward the depot. A lean house cat, picking its way across the street like a thief returning from a midnight prowling, hears the rumble of the carriage, bristles up, takes to its heels, and scrambles hastily over the fence.

The people of the village are beginning to stir about. Albert, the