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THE PROMISES OF THE DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE.

EULOGY

ON

ABRAHAM LINCOLN,

DELIVERED BEFORE

THE MUNICIPAL AUTHORITIES OF THE CITY OF BOSTON,

JUNE 1, 1865,

BY

CHARLES SUMNER.



BOSTON:

J. E. FARWELL AND COMPANY, PRINTERS TO THE CITY,

37 CONGRESS STREET.

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IN the universe of God there are no accidents. From the fall of a sparrow to the fall of an empire, or the sweep of a planet, all is according to Divine Providence, whose laws are everlasting. It was no accident which gave to his country the patriot whom we now honor. It was no accident which snatched this patriot, so suddenly and so cruelly, from his sublime duties. The Lord giveth and the Lord taketh away; blessed be the name of the Lord. Perhaps never in history has this Providence been more conspicuous than in that recent procession of events, where the final triumph was wrapt in the gloom of tragedy. It will be our duty to catch the moral of this stupendous drama.

For the second time in our history, the country has been summoned by the President to unite, on an appointed day, in commemorating the character and services of the dead. The first was on the death of George Washington, when, as now, a day was set apart for simultaneous eulogy throughout the land, and cities, towns, and villages all vied in tribute. More than half a century has passed since this early service in memory of the

Father of his country, and now it is repeated in memory of Abraham Lincoln.

Thus are Washington and Lincoln associated in the grandeur of their obsequies. But this association is not accidental. It is from the nature of the case, and because the part which Lincoln was called to perform resembled in character the part which was performed by Washington. The work left undone by Washington was continued by Lincoln. Kindred in service, kindred in patriotism, each was naturally surrounded at death by kindred homage. One sleeps in the East, and the other sleeps in the West; and thus, in death, as in life, one is the complement of the other.

The two might be compared after the manner of Plutarch; but it will be enough for the present if we glance only at certain points of resemblance and of contrast, so as to recall the part which each performed.

Each was at the head of the Republic during a period of surpassing trial; and each thought only of the public good, simply, purely, constantly, so that single-hearted devotion to country will always find a synonyme in their names. Each was the national chief during a time of successful war. Each was the representative of his country at a great epoch of history. But here, perhaps, the resemblance ends and the contrast begins. Unlike in origin, conversation, and character, they were unlike also in the *ideas* which they served, except so far as each was the servant of his country. The war conducted by Washington was unlike the war conducted by Lincoln — as the peace which crowned the arms of the one was

unlike the peace which began to smile upon the other. The two wars did not differ in the scale of operations, and in the tramp of mustered hosts, more than in the ideas involved. The first was for National Independence; the second was to make the Republic one and indivisible, on the indestructible foundations of Liberty and Equality. The first only cut the connexion with the mother country, and opened the way to the duties and advantages of Popular Government. *The second will have failed unless it performs all the original promises of that Declaration which our fathers took upon their lips when they became a nation.* In the relation of cause and effect the first was the natural precursor and herald of the second. National Independence was the first epoch in our history, and such was its importance that Lafayette boasted to the First Consul of France that, though its battles were but skirmishes, they decided the fate of the world.

The Declaration of our fathers, which was entitled simply "the unanimous Declaration of the Thirteen United States of America," is known familiarly as the Declaration of Independence, because the remarkable words with which it concludes made independence the absorbing idea, to which all else was tributary. Thus did the representatives of the United States of America in General Congress assembled, solemnly publish and declare "that these United Colonies are, and of right ought to be, free and independent States; that they are absolved from all allegiance to the British Crown, and that all political connexion between them and the State of Great Britain is, and ought to be, totally dissolved . . .

and for the support of this Declaration, with a firm reliance in the protection of Divine Providence, we mutually pledge to each other our lives, our fortunes, and our sacred honor." To sustain this mutual pledge Washington drew his sword, and led the national armies, until at last, by the Treaty of Peace in 1783, Independence was acknowledged.

Had the Declaration been confined to this pledge, it would have been less important than it was. Much as it might have been to us, it would have been less of a warning and trumpet-note to the world. There were two other pledges which it made. One was proclaimed in the designation "United States of America," which it adopted as the national name, and the other was proclaimed in those great words, fit for the baptismal vows of a Republic: "We hold these truths to be self-evident; *that all men are created equal*; that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights; that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness; that to secure these rights governments are instituted among men, *deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed.*" By the sword of Washington Independence was secured; but the Unity of the Republic and the principles of the Declaration were left exposed to question. From that day to this, through various chances, they have been questioned, and openly assailed, — until at last the Republic was constrained to take up arms in their defence. And yet, since enmity to the Union proceeded entirely from enmity to the great ideas of the Declaration, history must record that the question of the Union itself was

absorbed in the grander conflict to maintain those primal truths which our fathers had solemnly proclaimed.

Such are these two great wars in which these two chiefs bore such part. Washington fought for National Independence and triumphed,—making his country an example to mankind. Lincoln drew his reluctant sword to save those great ideas, essential to the character of the Republic, which unhappily the sword of Washington had failed to place beyond the reach of assault.

It was by no accident that these two great men became the representatives of their country at these two different epochs, so alike in peril, and yet so unlike in the principles involved. Washington was the natural representative of National Independence. He might also have represented national Unity, had this principle been challenged to bloody battle during his life; for nothing was nearer his heart than the consolidation of our Union, which, in his letter to Congress transmitting the Constitution, he declared to be “the greatest interest of every true American.” Then again, in a remarkable letter to John Jay, he plainly said that he did not conceive “we can exist long as a nation without lodging somewhere a power which will pervade the Union in as energetic a manner as the authority of the State governments extends over the several States.” But another person was needed of different birth and simpler life to represent the ideas which were now assailed.

Washington was of a family which may be traced in English heraldry. Some of his ancestors sleep in close companionship with the noble name of Spencer. By

inheritance and marriage he was rich in lands, and, let it be said in respectful sorrow, rich also in slaves, so far as slaves breed riches rather than curses. At the age of fourteen he refused a commission as a midshipman in the British Navy. At the age of nineteen he was military inspector with the rank of major. At the age of twenty-one he was selected by the British Governor of Virginia as Commissioner to the French ports. At the age of twenty-two he was colonel of a regiment, and was thanked by the House of Burgesses in Virginia. Early in life he became an observer of form and ceremony. Always strictly just, according to prevailing principles, and ordering at his death the emancipation of his slaves, he was a general and a statesman rather than a philanthropist; nor did he seem to be inspired, beyond the duties of patriotism, to any active sympathy with Human Rights. In the ample record of what he wrote or said there is no word of adhesion to the great ideas of the Declaration. Such an origin — such an early life — such opportunities — such a condition — such a character, were all in contrast with the origin, the early life, the opportunities, the condition, and the character of him whom we commemorate to-day.

Abraham Lincoln was born, and until he became President, always lived in a part of the country which at the period of the Declaration of Independence was a savage wilderness. Strange but happy Providence, that a voice from that savage wilderness, now fertile in men, was inspired to uphold the pledges and promises of the Declaration! The Unity of the Republic on the indestructible foundation of Liberty and Equality was vindi-

cated by the citizen of a community, which had no existence when the Republic was formed.

His family may be traced to a Quaker stock in Pennsylvania, but it removed first to Virginia, and then, as early as 1780, to the wilds of Kentucky, which at that time was only an outlying territory belonging to Virginia. His grandfather and father both lived in peril from the Indians, and the former perished by their hands. The future President was born in a log-house of Kentucky. His mother could read but not write. His father could do neither, except so far as to sign his name rudely, like a noble of Charlemagne. Trial, privation, and labor entered into his early life. Only at seven years of age was he able to go to school for a very brief period, carrying with him Dilworth's Spelling Book, which was one of the three books that formed the family library. Shortly afterwards his father turned his back upon that slavery which disfigured Kentucky, and placing his poor effects on a raft which his son had helped him construct, set his face towards Indiana, which was guarded against slavery by the famous Ordinance for the Northwestern Territory. In this painful journey the son, who was only eight years old, bore his share of the burdens. On reaching the chosen home in a land of Liberty, the son aided the father in building the cabin, composed of logs fastened together by notches, and filled in with mud, where for twelve years afterwards he grew in character and in knowledge, as in stature, learning to write as well as to read, and especially enjoying Bunyan's Pilgrim's Progress, Æsop's Fables, Weems's Life of Washington, and the Life

of Clay. At the age of twelve he lost his mother. At the age of nineteen he became a hired hand at \$10 a month on a flatboat, laden with stores for the plantations on the Mississippi, and in this way he floated down that lordly river to New Orleans, little dreaming that only a few years later, iron-clad navies would float on that same lordly river at his command.

In 1830, the father removed to Illinois, transporting his effects in wagons drawn by oxen, and the future President, who was then twenty-one years of age, drove one of the teams. Another cabin was built in primitive rudeness, and the future President split the rails for the fence to enclose the lot. These rails have become classical in our history, and the name of rail-splitter has been more than the degree of a college. Not that the splitter of rails is especially meritorious, but because the people are proud to trace aspiring talent to humble beginnings, and because they found in this tribute a new opportunity of vindicating the dignity of free labor, and of repelling the insolent pretensions of Slavery.

His youth was now spent, and at the age of twenty-one, he left his father's house to begin the world for himself. A small bundle, a laughing face, and an honest heart; these were his visible possessions, together with that unconscious character and intelligence, which his country afterwards learned to prize. In the long history of "worth depressed," there is no instance of such a contrast between the depression and the triumph — unless, perhaps, his successor as President may share with him this distinction. No Academy, no University, no Alma Mater of science or

learning had nourished him. No government had taken him by the hand and given to him the gift of opportunity. No inheritance of land or money had fallen to him. No friend stood by his side. He was alone in poverty; and yet not all alone. There was God above, who watches all, and does not desert the lowly. Simple in life and manners, and knowing nothing of form or ceremony, with a village schoolmaster for six months as his only teacher, he had grown up in companionship with the people, with nature, with trees, with the fruitful corn, and with the stars. While yet a child, his father had borne him away from a soil wasted by Slavery, and he was now the citizen of a Free State, where Free Labor had been placed under the safeguard of irreversible compact and fundamental law. And thus closed the youth of the future President, happy at least that he could go forth under the day-star of Liberty.

The hardships of youth were still continued in early manhood. He labored as a hired hand on a farm, and then a second time he measured the winding Mississippi to New Orleans in a flatboat. At the call of the Governor of Illinois for troops against the Indian Chief Black Hawk, he sprang forward with patriotic ardor, and was the first to enlist at the recruiting station in his neighborhood. The choice of his associates made him captain. After the war he became a surveyor, and down to his death retained a practical and scientific knowledge of this business. In 1834, he was elected to the Legislature of Illinois, and two years later he was admitted to the practice of the law. He was now twenty-seven years old, and, under

the benignant influence of Republican Institutions, he had already entered upon the double career of a lawyer and a legislator, with the gates of the Future opening on their hinges before him.

How well he served in these two characters I need not stop to tell. It is enough if I exhibit the stages of his advance, that you may understand how he became the representative of his country at so grand a moment of history. It is needless to say that his opportunities of study as a lawyer must have been small, but he was industrious in each individual case, and thus daily added to his stores of professional experience. Faithful in all things, most conscientious in his conduct at the bar, so that he could not be unfair to the other side, and admirably sensitive to the behests of justice, so that he could not argue on the wrong side, he acquired a name for honesty, which, beginning with the community in which he lived, became proverbial throughout his State; while his genial, mirthful, overflowing nature, apt at anecdote and story, made him a favorite companion where he was personally known. His opinions on public questions were early fixed, under the example and teachings of Henry Clay, and he never departed from them, though constantly tempted, or pressed by local majorities, speaking in the name of a false democracy. It is interesting to know that thus early he espoused those two ideas, which entered so largely into the terrible responsibilities of his latter years, — I mean the Unity of the Republic, and the supreme value of Liberty. He did not believe that

a State had a right, at its own mad will, to break up this Union. As a reader of congressional speeches, and a student of what was said by the political teachers of that day, he was no stranger to those marvellous efforts of Daniel Webster, when in reply to the treasonable pretensions of nullification, that great orator of Massachusetts asserted the indestructibility of the Union, and the folly of those who would assail it. On the subject of Slavery, he drew from the experience of his own family and the warnings of his own conscience. It was natural, therefore, that one of his earliest acts in the legislature of Illinois should have been a protest in the name of Liberty.

At a later day, he became a representative in Congress for a single term, beginning in December 1847, being the only Whig representative from Illinois. His speeches during this brief period have many of the characteristics of his later productions: They are argumentative, logical, and spirited, with that quaint humor and sinewy sententiousness which belonged to his nature. His votes were constant against Slavery. For the Wilmot Proviso, he had voted, according to his own statement, "in one way and another about forty times." His vote is recorded against the pretence that slaves were property under the constitution. From Congress he again passed to his profession. The day was at hand, when all his powers, enlarged by experience and quickened to their highest activity, would be needed to repel that haughty domination which was already so menacing to the Republic.

The first field of conflict was in his own State, with no

less an antagonist than Stephen A. Douglas, unhappily at that time in alliance with the Slave Power. The too famous Kansas and Nebraska bill, introduced by him into the Senate, assumed to set aside the venerable safeguard of freedom in the territory west of Missouri, under the pretence of allowing the inhabitants "to vote Slavery up or to vote it down" according to their pleasure, and this barbarous privilege was called by the fancy name of Popular Sovereignty. The future President did not hesitate to denounce this most baleful measure in a series of popular addresses, where truth, sentiment, humor, and argument all were blended. As the conflict continued, he was brought forward as a candidate for the Senate against the able author of this measure. The debate that ensued is one of the most memorable in our political history, whether we consider the principles involved, or the way in which it was conducted.

It commenced with a close, well-woven speech from the future President, in which he used words which showed his insight into the actual condition of things, as follows: "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." Only a few days before his death, when I asked him if at the time he had any doubt about this remark, he replied, "Not in the least. It was plainly true, and time has justified me." With like plainness he exposed the Douglas pre-

tence of Popular Sovereignty as meaning simply "that if any one man shall choose to enslave *another*, no *third* man shall be allowed to object," and he announced his belief in "the existence of a conspiracy to perpetuate and nationalize Slavery," of which the Kansas and Nebraska bill, and the Dred Scott decision were essential parts. Such was the character of this debate at the beginning, and so it continued on the lips of our champion to the end.

But the topic to which the future President returned with the most frequency, and to which he clung with all the grasp of his soul, was the *practical character of the Declaration of Independence in announcing the Liberty and Equality of all men*. These were no idle words, but substantial truth binding on the conscience of mankind. I know not if this grand pertinacity has been noticed before; but I deem it my duty to say, that to my mind it is by far the most important feature of that controversy, and one of the most interesting incidents in the biography of the speaker. The words which he then uttered live after him, and nobody can hear of that championship without feeling a new motive to fidelity in the cause of Liberty and Equality.

As early as 1854, in a speech at Peoria, against the Kansas and Nebraska Bill, after denouncing Slavery as a "monstrous injustice," which enables the enemies of free institutions to taunt us as hypocrites, and causes the real friends of freedom to doubt our sincerity, he complains especially that "it forces so many really good men amongst ourselves *into an open war with the very funda-*

mental principles of civil liberty, criticising the Declaration of Independence." Thus, according to him, was criticism of the Declaration of Independence the climax of infidelity as a citizen.

Mr. Douglas opened the debate on his side July 9, 1858, at Chicago, by a speech, in which he said, among other things, "I am opposed to negro equality. I repeat, that this nation is a white people. I am opposed to taking any step that recognizes the negro man or the Indian as the equal of the white man. I am opposed to giving him a voice in the administration of the Government." Thus was the case stated on the side of Slavery.

To this speech the future President replied the next evening, and he did not forget his championship of the Declaration. After quoting the words "we hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal," he proceeds to say: —

"That is the electric cord in the Declaration that links the hearts of patriotic and liberty-loving men together, that will link those patriotic and liberty-loving men together as long as the love of freedom exists in the minds of men throughout the world. * * * I should like to know if taking this old Declaration of Independence, which declares that all men are equal upon principle, and making exceptions, where will it stop? If one man says it does not mean the negro, why not another say it does not mean some other man? If that Declaration is not the truth, let us get the Statute-book in which we find it and tear it out! Who is so bold as to do it? If it is not true, let us tear it out [cries of "no, no"]; *let us stick to it then; let us stand firmly by it then.*"

Noble words! worthy of perpetual memory. And he finished his speech on this occasion by saying:—

“I leave you, hoping that the lamp of Liberty will burn in your bosoms until there shall no longer be a doubt that all men are created free and equal.”

He has left us now, and for the last time, and I catch the closing benediction of that speech, already sounding through the ages, like a choral harmony.

The debate continued from place to place in Illinois. At Bloomington, July 16, 1858, Mr. Douglas again denied that colored persons could be citizens, and then broke forth upon the champion of the Declaration of Independence:—

“I will not quarrel with Mr. Lincoln for his views on that subject. I have no doubt he is conscientious in them. I have not the slightest idea but that he conscientiously believes that a negro ought to enjoy and exercise all the rights and privileges given to white men; but I do not agree with him. *I believe that this Government of ours was founded on the white basis.* I believe that it was established by white men. I do not believe that it was the design of the signers of the Declaration of Independence or the framers of the Constitution to include negroes, Indians, or other inferior races, with white men as citizens. * * * *He wants them to vote. I am opposed to it. If they had a vote, I reckon they would all vote for him in preference to me, entertaining the views I do!*”

Then again, in another speech at Springfield, the next day, Mr. Douglas repeated his denial that the colored

man was embraced by the Declaration of Independence, and thus argued for the exclusion : —

“Remember that at the time the Declaration was put forth, every one of the thirteen colonies were slave-holding colonies — every man who signed that Declaration represented slave-holding constitutents. Did these signers mean by that act to charge themselves and all their constitutents with having violated the law of God in holding the negro in an inferior condition to the white man? And yet, if they included negroes in that term, they were bound, as conscientious men, that day and that hour, not only to have abolished Slavery throughout the land, *but to have conferred political rights and privileges on the negro and elevated him to an equality, with the white man.* * * * The Declaration of Independence only included the white people of the United States.”

On the same evening, at Springfield, the champion of the Declaration, while admitting that negroes are not “our equals in color,” thus again spoke for the comprehensive humanity of the Declaration : —

“*I adhere to the Declaration. If Judge Douglas and his friends are not willing to stand by it, let them come up and amend it. Let them make it read that all men are created equal except negroes.* Let us have it decided, whether the Declaration of Independence, in this blessed year of 1858, shall be thus amended. In his construction of the Declaration last year, he said it only meant that Americans in America were equal to Englishmen in England. Then when I pointed out to him that by that rule he excludes the Germans, the Irish, the Portuguese, and all the other people who have come among us since the Revolution, he reconstructs his construction. In his last speech he tells us it meant Europeans. I press him a little further, and ask him if it meant to include

the Russians in Asia! Or does he mean to exclude that vast population from the principles of the Declaration? I expect ere-long he will introduce another amendment to his definition. He is not at all particular. *It may draw white men down, but it must not lift negroes up.*"

Words like these must be gratefully remembered. They make the Declaration, what the fathers intended it, no mean proclamation of oligarchic egotism, but a charter and freehold for all mankind.

Again, at Ottawa, August 21, 1858, Mr. Douglas, still wishing to exclude the colored men from the Declaration of Independence, exclaimed as follows:—

"I believe this Government was made on the white basis. I believe it was made by white men, for the benefit of white men and their posterity forever."

The future President again took up the strain, as follows:—

"Henry Clay once said of a class of men who would repress all tendencies to liberty and ultimate emancipation, that they must if they would do this, go back to the era of our independence, and muzzle the cannon, which thunders its annual joyous return; they must blow out the moral lights around us; they must penetrate the human soul, and eradicate there the love of liberty: and then, and not till then, can they perpetuate Slavery in this country! To my thinking, Judge Douglas is, by his example and vast influence, doing that very thing in this community, when he says that the negro has nothing in the Declaration of Independence."

At Jonesboro, September 15, 1858, Mr. Douglas made

another effort against the rights of the colored race, in the course of which he said : —

“I am aware that all the abolition lecturers that you find travelling through the country, are in the habit of reading the Declaration of Independence to prove that all men were created equal and endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights, among which are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. Mr. Lincoln is very much in the habit of following in the track of Lovejoy in this particular, by reading that part of the Declaration of Independence, to prove that the negro was endowed by the Almighty with the inalienable right of equality with white men. Now, I say to you, my fellow-citizens, that, in my opinion, the signers of the Declaration had no reference to the negro whatever, when they declared all men to be created equal.”

At Galesborough, October 7, 1858, the future President thus again upheld the Declaration : —

“The Judge has alluded to the Declaration of Independence, and insisted that negroes are not included in that Declaration ; and that it is a slander upon the framers of that instrument, to suppose that negroes were meant therein ; and he asks you, is it possible to believe that Mr. Jefferson, who penned the immortal paper, could have supposed himself applying the language of that instrument to the negro race, and yet held a portion of that race in slavery ? Would he not at once have freed them ? I only have to remark upon this part of the Judge’s speech, that I believe the entire record of the world, from the date of the Declaration of Independence up to within three years ago, may be searched in vain for one single affirmation from one single man, that the negro was not included in the Declaration. And I will remind

Judge Douglas and this audience, that while Mr. Jefferson was the owner of slaves, as undoubtedly he was, in speaking upon this very subject, he used the strong language, that “ he trembled for his country when he remembered that God was just.”

And at Alton, October 15, 1858, he renewed this same testimony : —

“ I assert that Judge Douglas and all his friends may search the whole record of the country, and it will be a matter of great astonishment to me if they shall be able to find that one human being three years ago had ever uttered the astounding sentiment that the term “ all men ” in the Declaration did not include the negro. Do not let me be misunderstood. I know that more than three years ago, there were men who, finding this assertion constantly in the way of their schemes to bring about the ascendancy and perpetuation of Slavery, denied the truth of it. I know that Mr. Calhoun, and all the politicians of his school, denied the truth of the Declaration, ending at last in that shameful declaration of Petit of Indiana, upon the floor of the United States Senate, that the Declaration was, in that respect, a “ self-evident lie ” rather than a self-evident truth. But I say, with a perfect knowledge of all this hawking at the Declaration without directly attacking it, that three years ago there never had lived a man who had ventured to assail it in *the sneaking way of pretending to believe it, and then asserting that it did not include the negro.*”

Lifted by the cause in which he was engaged, he appealed to his fellow-countrymen in tones of pathetic eloquence : —

“ Think nothing of me ; take no thought for the political fate of any man whatsoever, but come back to the truths that are in

the Declaration of Independence. You may do anything with me you choose if you will but heed these sacred principles. You may not only defeat me for the Senate, *but you may take me and put me to death.* While pretending no indifference to earthly honors, I do claim to be actuated in this contest by something higher than an anxiety for office. I charge you to drop every paltry, insignificant thought for any man's success. It is nothing. I am nothing. Judge Douglas is nothing. *But do not destroy that immortal emblem of humanity — the Declaration of Independence.*"

Thus, at that early day, before war had overshadowed the land, was he ready for the sacrifice. "Take me and put me to death," said he, "but do not destroy that immortal emblem of humanity — the Declaration of Independence." He has been put to death by the enemies of the Declaration. But though dead, he will continue to guard that great title-deed of the human race.

The debate ended. An immense vote was cast. There were 126,084 votes for the republican candidates, 121,940 for the Douglas candidates, and 5,091 for the Lecompton candidates, another class of democrats; but the supporters of Mr. Douglas had a majority of eight on joint ballot in the legislature, and he was reëlected to the Senate.

Again returned to his profession, the future President did not forget the Declaration of Independence. In answer to the Republicans of Boston, who had invited him to unite with them in the celebration of the birthday of Thomas Jefferson, he wrote a letter, under date of April, 1859, which is a gem in political literature, where he again asserted the supremacy of those truths for

which he had battled so well. In him the West thus spoke to the East: —

“ But soberly, it is now no child’s play to save the principles of Jefferson from total overthrow in this nation.

“ One would state with great confidence that he could convince any sane child that the simpler propositions of Euclid are true; but, nevertheless, he would fail with one who should deny the definitions and axioms. The principles of Jefferson are the definitions and axioms of free society. And yet they are denied and evaded with no small show of success. One dashinglly calls them ‘glittering generalities.’ Another bluntly styles them ‘self-evident lies.’ And others insidiously argue that they apply only to ‘superior races.’

“ These expressions, differing in form, are identical in object and effect — the supplanting the principles of free government, and restoring those of classification, caste, and legitimacy. They would delight a convocation of crowned heads plotting against the people. They are the vanguard, the sappers and miners of returning despotism. We must repulse them, or they will subjugate us.

“ This is a world of compensation; and he who would *be* no slave must consent to *have* no slave. Those who deny freedom to others deserve it not for themselves; and, under a just God, cannot long retain it.

“ All honor to Jefferson — the man who, in the concrete pressure of a struggle for national independence by a single people, had the coolness, forecast, and capacity to introduce into a merely revolutionary document *an abstract truth, applicable to all men and all times*, and so to embalm it there, that to-day, and in all coming days, it shall be a rebuke and a stumbling-block to the harbingers of reappearing tyranny and oppression!”

In the winter of next year the Western champion appeared at New York; and, in a remarkable address at the Cooper Institute, February 27, 1860, vindicated the policy of the Fathers of the Republic and the principles of the Republican party. After showing with curious skill and minuteness the original understanding on the power of Congress over Slavery in the territories, he demonstrated that the Republican party was not in any just sense sectional; and he proceeded to expose the perils from the pretensions of slave-masters, who, not content with requiring that "we must arrest and return their slaves with greedy pleasure," insisted that the Constitution must be so interpreted as to uphold the idea of property in man. The whole address was in a subdued and argumentative style, while each sentence was like a driven nail, with a concluding rally that was a bugle-call to the lovers of right. "Let us have faith," said he, "that right makes might, and in that faith, let us to the end dare to do our duty as we understand it."

A few months later this champion, who would not see the colored man shut out from the promises of the Declaration of Independence, and who insisted upon the exclusion of Slavery from the territories, after summoning his countrymen to dare to do their duty, was nominated by a great political party as their candidate for President of the United States. Local considerations, securing to him the support of certain States beyond any other candidate, exercised a final influence in determining his selection; but it is easy to see how, from position, character, and origin, he was at that moment

pre-eminently the representative of his country. The Unity of the Republic was menaced. He was from that vast controlling Northwest, which would never renounce its communications with the sea, whether by the Mississippi or by eastern avenues. The Declaration of Independence was dishonored, in the denial of its primal truths. He had already become known as a volunteer in its defense. Republican Institutions were in jeopardy. He was the child of humble life, through whom Republican Institutions would stand confest. These things which are so obvious now, in the light of history, were less apparent then in the turmoil of party. But that Providence, in whose hands are the destinies of nations, which had found out Washington to conduct his country through the war of Independence, now found out Lincoln to wage the new battle for the Unity of the Republic on the foundations of Liberty and Equality.

The election took place. Of the popular vote, Abraham Lincoln received 1,857,610, represented by 180 electoral ballots; Stephen A. Douglas received 1,365,976, represented by 12 electoral ballots; John C. Breckinridge received 847,953, represented by 72 electoral ballots; and John Bell received 590,631, represented by 39 electoral ballots. By this vote Abraham Lincoln became President. The triumph at the ballot-box was flashed by the telegraph over the whole country, from north to south, from east to west; but it was answered by defiance from the slavemasters, speaking in the name of State Rights and for the sake of Slavery. The declared will of the American people, registered at the ballot-

box, was set at naught. The conspiracy of years blazed into day. The National Government, which Alexander H. Stephens characterized as "the best and freest government, the most equal in its rights, the most just in its decisions, the most lenient in its measures, the most aspiring in its principles to elevate the race of man that the sun of heaven ever shone upon;" and which Jefferson Davis himself pronounced "the best government that has ever been instituted by man," — that National Government, whose portrait is thus drawn by its enemies, was menaced. South Carolina was the first in crime, and before the new President had turned his face from the beautiful prairies of the West to enter upon his perilous duties, State after State had undertaken to abandon its place in the Union — senator after senator had dropped from his seat, — fort after fort had been lost — and the mutterings of war had begun to fill the air, while the actual President, besotted by Slavery, tranquilly witnessed the gigantic treason, as he sat at ease in the Executive Mansion — and did nothing.

It was time for another to come upon the scene. You do not forget how the new President left his village home, never to return except under the escort of death. In words of farewell to the friendly multitude who surrounded him, he dedicated himself to his country and solemnly invoked the aid of Divine Providence. "I know not," he said, "how soon I shall see you again"; and then, with a prophetic voice he announced that a duty devolved upon him "greater than that which has devolved upon any other man since the days of Washing-

ton," and he asked his friends to pray that he might receive that Divine assistance, without which he could not succeed, but with which success was certain. Others have gone forth to power and fame with gladness and with song. He went forth prayerfully as to a sacrifice.

You do not forget how at each resting-place on the road he renewed his vows, and when at Philadelphia, visiting Independence Hall, his soul broke forth in homage to the vital truths which were there declared. Of all his utterances on the way to the national capital, after his farewell to his neighbors, there is nothing so prophetic as these unpremeditated words:—

“All the political sentiments I entertain have been drawn, so far as I have been able to draw them, from the sentiments which originated, and were given to the world from this hall. I have never had a feeling politically that did not spring from the sentiments embodied in the Declaration of Independence.”

“Now, my friends, can this country be saved on this basis? If it can, I shall consider myself one of the happiest men in the world if I can help to save it. If it cannot be saved upon that principle, it will be truly awful. But if this country cannot be saved without giving up that principle, I was about to say *I would rather be assassinated on the spot.*”

And then, after adding that he had not expected to say a word, he repeated again the consecration of his life, exclaiming, “I have said nothing but what I am willing to live by, and, *if it be the pleasure of Almighty God, to die by.*”

He was about to raise the national banner over the old

hall. But before this service, he took up the strain which he loved so well, saying : —

“ It is on such an occasion as this that we can reason together, *reaffirm our devotion to the country and the principles of the Declaration of Independence.*”

Thus constantly did he bear his testimony.

Slavery was already pursuing his life. An attempt was made to throw from the track a train in which he was journeying, and a hand grenade was found secreted in another. Baltimore, which lay directly on his way, was the seat of a murderous plot against him. Avoiding the conspirators of Slavery, he came from Philadelphia to Washington unexpectedly in the night; and thus, for the moment, cheating assassination of its victim, he entered the National capital.

From this time forward his career broadens into the history of his country and of the age. You all know it by heart. Therefore a few glimpses will be enough, that I may exhibit its moral rather than its story.

The Inaugural Address — the formation of his cabinet — his earliest acts — his daily conversation — all attested the spirit of moderation with which he approached his perilous position. At the same time he declared openly, that in the contemplation of universal law and of the Constitution, the Union of these States is perpetual; that no State, upon its own mere motion, can lawfully get out of the Union; that resolves and ordinances to that effect are legally void; that acts of violence within any State are insurrectionary or revolutionary; and that, to the extent of his ability, he should take care, according to

the express injunction of the Constitution, that the laws of the Union should be faithfully executed in all the States. But, while thus positive in upholding the Unity of the Republic, he was determined that on his part there should be no act of offense; that there should be no bloodshed or violence unless forced upon the country; that it was his duty to hold, occupy, and possess the property and places belonging to the Government, but beyond what was necessary for this object, there would be no exercise of force, and the people everywhere would be left in that perfect security which is most favorable to calm thought and reflection.

But the madness of Slavery knew no bounds. It had been determined from the beginning that the Union should be broken, and no moderation could change this wicked purpose. A pretended power was organized, in the form of a Confederacy, with Slavery as the declared cornerstone. You know what ensued. Fort Sumter was attacked, and, after a fiery storm of shot and shell for thirty-three hours, the national flag fell. This was 14th April, 1861. War had commenced.

War is always a scourge, and it never can be regarded without sadness. It is one of the mysteries of Providence, that it is still allowed to vex mankind. There were few who deprecated it more than President Lincoln. From his Quaker blood and from reflection, he was essentially a man of peace. In one of his speeches during his short service in Congress, he arraigned military glory as "that rainbow that rises in showers of blood — that serpent eye that charms but to destroy;" and now that he

was charged with the terrible responsibility of government, he was none the less earnest for peace. He was not willing to see his beloved country torn by bloody battle, and fellow-citizens striking at each other. But after the criminal assault on Fort Sumter, there was no alternative. The Republic was in danger, and every man from President to citizen was summoned to the defense. Nor was this all. An attempt was made to invest Slavery with national Independence, and the President, who disliked both slavery and war, described, perhaps, his own condition, when, in a letter to one of the Society of Friends, he said, "Your people have had and are having very great trials on principles and faith. Opposed to both war and oppression, *they can only practically oppose oppression by war.*" In these few words the whole case is stated; inasmuch as, whatever might be the pretension of State Rights, the war was made necessary to put down the hideous ambition of Slavery.

The slave-masters simply put in execution a conspiracy long pending, for which they had already prepared the way: first, by teaching that any State might, at its own will, break from the Union, and, secondly, by teaching that colored persons were so far inferior as not to be embraced in the promises of the Declaration of Independence, but were justly held as slaves in defiance of the declared principles of Liberty and Equality. Mr. Calhoun, the Mephistopheles of Slavery, had, for years, inculcated both these pretensions. But State Rights were merely a cover for Slavery.

Therefore, when it was determined that the slave-

masters should be encountered, two things were resolved : first, that this Republic should live, and, secondly, that no hideous power, with Slavery blazoned on its front, should be created on our soil. In accepting the challenge at Fort Sumter, the President became the voice of the country, which, with a stern determination, insisted that rebel Slavery should be put down by war. The people were in earnest, and would not brook hesitation ; and they were right. If ever in history war was necessary, — if ever in history war was holy, — it was the war then and there begun for the overthrow of rebel Slavery.

From the first cannon shot, it was plain that the rebellion was nothing but Slavery in arms ; but such was the power of Slavery, even in the Free States, that months elapsed before this giant criminal was directly attacked. Generals in the field were tender with regard to it, as if it were a church, or a work of the fine arts. It was only under the teaching of disaster that the country was aroused. The first step was taken in Congress after the defeat at Bull Run. But still the President hesitated. Disaster thickened and graves opened, until at last the country saw that only by justice could we hope for Divine favor, and the President, who leaned so closely upon the popular heart, pronounced that great word, by which all slaves in the Rebel States were set free. Let it be named forever to his glory, that he grasped the thunderbolt, even though tardily, under which the rebellion staggered to its fall ; that, following up the blow, he enlisted colored citizens as soldiers in the national army ; and, that he declared his final purpose

never to retract or modify the Emancipation Proclamation, nor to return into Slavery any person free by the terms of that instrument, or by any of the acts of Congress, saying, loftily, "If the people should, by whatever mode or means, make it an executive duty to re-enslave such persons, another and not I must be the instrument to perform it."

It was sometimes said that the Proclamation was of doubtful constitutionality. If this criticism did not proceed from sympathy with Slavery, it evidently proceeded from the prevailing superstition with regard to this idol. Future jurists will read with astonishment that such a flagrant wrong could be considered at any time as having any rights which a court was bound to respect, and especially that rebels in arms could be considered as having any title to the services of people whose allegiance was primarily due to the United States. But, turning from these conclusions, it seems to be plain, that Slavery, which stood exclusively on local law without any support in natural law, must have fallen with the local government, both legally and constitutionally; *legally*, inasmuch as it ceased to have any valid legal support; and *constitutionally*, inasmuch as it came at once within the exclusive jurisdiction of the Constitution, where Liberty is the prevailing law. The President did not act upon these principles, but, speaking with the voice of authority, he said "Let the slaves be free." What Court and Congress hesitated to declare, he proclaimed, and thus enrolled himself among the world's Emancipators.

Passing from the Proclamation of Emancipation, which

places its author so far above human approach that human envy cannot reach him, I carry you for one moment to our Foreign Relations. The convulsion here was felt in the most distant places — as at the great earthquake of Lisbon, when that capital seemed about to be submerged, there was a commotion of the waters in our Northern Lakes. All Europe was stirred. There, too, was the Slavery Question in another form. England, in an unhappy moment, under an ill-considered plea of “necessity” — which Milton tells us was the plea by which the fiend “excused a devilish deed” — accorded to rebel Slavery the rights of belligerency on the ocean, and then proceeded to open her ports, to surrender her workshops and to let loose her merchant-ships in aid of this wickedness; — forgetting all the relations of alliance and amity with the United States — forgetting all the logic of English history — forgetting all the distinctions of right and wrong — and forgetting also that a new Power founded on Slavery was a moral monster with which a just nation could have nothing to do. To appreciate the character of this concession, we must appreciate clearly the whole vast unprecedented crime of the Rebellion, taking its complexion from Slavery. Undoubtedly it was criminal to assail the Unity of this Republic, and thus destroy its peace and impair its example in the world; but the attempt to build a new Power on Slavery as a corner-stone, and with no other declared object of separate existence, was more than criminal, or rather it was a crime of that untold, unspeakable guilt, which no language can depict and which no judgment can be

too swift to condemn. The associates in this terrible apostasy might rebuke each other in the words of an old dramatist :—

Thou must do, then,
 What no malevolent star will dare to look on,
 It is so wicked; for which men will curse thee
 For being the instrument, and the blest angels
 Forsake me at my need, for being the author;
 For 't is a deed of night, of night, Francisco!
 In which the memory of all good actions
 We can pretend to, shall be buried quick;
 Or, if we be remembered, it shall be
 To fright posterity by an example
 That have outgone all precedents of villains
 That were before us.

[*Massinger. Duke of Milan. Act I.*

To recognize such a Power;—to enter into *semi-alliance* with it;—to invest it with rights;—to open ports to it;—to surrender workshops to it;—to build ships for it;—all this, or any part of this, is positive and plain complicity with the original guilt, and must be judged as we judge any other complicity with Slavery.

England led in the concession of belligerent rights to rebel Slavery. No event of the war has been comparable to this concession in encouragement to this transcendent crime or in prejudice to the United States. It was out of English ports and English workshops that rebel Slavery drew its supplies. It was in English ship yards that the cruisers of rebel Slavery were built and equipped. It was England that gave to rebel Slavery *belligerent power* on the ocean. The early legend was verified in our day. King Arthur was without a sword, when suddenly one appear-

ed, thrust out from a lake. “Lo!” said Merlin, the enchanter, “yonder is a sword; it belongeth to the Lady of the Lake; *if she will, thou mayest take it; but if she will not, it will not be in thy power to take it.*” And the Lady of the Lake yielded the sword, so says the legend — even as England has since yielded the sword to rebel Slavery.

The President saw the painful consequences of this concession, and especially that it was a first step towards the acknowledgment of rebel Slavery as an Independent Power. Clearly, if it were proper for a Foreign Power to acknowledge Belligerency, it might, at a later stage, be proper to acknowledge Independence; and any objection vital to Independence, would, if applicable, be equally vital to Belligerency. Solemn resolutions, by Congress, on this subject were communicated to Foreign Powers; but the unanswerable argument against any possible recognition of a new Power founded on Slavery was stated by the President, in a paper which I now hold in my hand, and which has never before seen the light. It is a copy of a resolution drawn by himself, which he gave to me, in his own autograph, for transmission to one of our valued friends abroad, as an expression of his opinion on the great question involved, and a guide to public duty. It is in these words: —

“*Whereas, while heretofore States and Nations have tolerated Slavery, recently, for the first [time] in the world, an attempt has been made to construct a new nation upon the basis of Human Slavery, and with the primary and fundamental object to maintain, enlarge, and perpetuate the same, therefore*

“ *Resolved*, that no such embryo State should ever be recognized by, or admitted into, the family of Christian and civilized nations ; and that all Christian and civilized men everywhere should, by all lawful means, resist to the utmost such recognition or admission.”

You will see how directly any recognition of rebel Slavery as an Independent Power is assailed, and how “ all Christian and civilized men everywhere” are summoned “ to resist to the utmost such recognition.” Of course, had such a benign spirit entered into the counsels of England when Slavery first took up arms against the Republic, this great historic nation would have shrunk at every hazard from that fatal concession of belligerent rights, which was in itself a plain contribution to its early strength, and opened the way to infinite contributions, without which the criminal pretender must have speedily succumbed. But Divine Providence willed it otherwise. Perhaps it was necessary to the recognition of its boundless capacities, that the Republic should stand forth alone, in sublime solitude, warring for Liberty and Equality, and thus become an example to mankind.

Meanwhile the war continued with the proverbial vicissitudes of this arbitrament. Battles were fought and lost. Other battles were fought and won. Rebel Slavery stood face to face in deadly conflict with the Declaration of Independence, when the President, with unconscious power, dealt it another blow, second only to the Proclamation of Emancipation. This was at the blood-soaked field of Gettysburg, where a year before the armies of the Republic had encountered the armies of Slavery, and, after a conflict of three days, had driven

them back with destructive slaughter — as at that decisive battle of Tours, on which hung the destinies of Christianity in Western Europe, the invading Mahomedans, after a conflict of three days, were driven back by Charles Martel. No battle of the present war was more important. Few battles in history can compare with it. A year later, on the anniversary of this day, there was another meeting on that same field. It was of grateful fellow-citizens, gathered from all parts of the Union to dedicate it to the memory of those who had fallen there. Among these were eminent men from our own country and from foreign lands. There too was your classic orator, whose finished address was a model of literary excellence. The President spoke very briefly; but his few words will live as long as time. Since Simonides wrote the epitaph for those who died at Thermopylae, nothing equal to them has ever been breathed over the fallen dead. Thus he began: “Fourscore and seven years ago our fathers brought forth upon this continent a new nation, *conceived in Liberty and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal.*” The truth which he had so often vindicated and for which he was willing to die, is thus heralded, and the country is again called to carry it forward, that our duty may not be left undone.

“It is for us the living, rather to be dedicated here to the *unfinished work* which they who fought here have thus far so nobly advanced. It is rather for us to be here dedicated to the great task remaining before us, that from these honored dead we take increased devotion to that cause for which they gave the last measure

of devotion ; that we here highly resolve that these dead shall not have died in vain ; that this nation under God shall have a new birth of Freedom, and that government of the people, by the people, and for the people, shall not perish from the earth."

That speech, uttered at the field of Gettysburg, and now sanctified by the martyrdom of its author, is a monumental act. In the modesty of his nature he said : "the world will little note, nor long remember what we say here ; but it can never forget what they did here." He was mistaken. The world noted at once what he said, and will never cease to remember it. The battle itself was less important than the speech. Ideas are always more than battles.

Among the events which secured to him the assured confidence of the country against all party clamor and prejudice, you cannot place this speech too high. To some who had doubted his earnestness, here was touching proof of their error. Others who had followed him with indifference, were warmed with grateful sympathy. There were none to criticise.

He was re-elected President ; and here was not only a personal triumph, but a triumph of the Republic. For himself personally, it was much to find his administration thus ratified ; but for republican ideas it was of incalculable value, that, at such a time, the plume of the soldier had not prevailed. In the midst of war, the people at the ballot-box deliberately selected a civilian. Ye, who doubt the destinies of the Republic — who fear the ambition of a military chief, — or who suspect the popular will — do not forget, that, at this moment, when

the voice of battle filled the whole land, the country quietly appointed for its ruler this man of peace.

The Inaugural Address which signalized his entry for a second time upon his great duties, was briefer than any similar address in our history; but it has already gone farther, and will live longer, than any other. It was a continuation of the Gettysburg speech, with the same sublimity and gentleness. Its concluding words were like an angelic benediction.

Meanwhile there was a surfeit of battle and of victory. Calmly he saw the land of Slavery enveloped by the national forces; saw the great coil bent by his generals about it; saw the infinite *garrotte* as it tightened against the neck of the rebellion. Good news came from all quarters. Everywhere the army was doing its duty. One was conquering in Tennessee; another was marching in Georgia and Carolina; another was watching at Richmond. The navy echoed back the thunders of the army. Place after place was falling — Savannah, Charleston, Fort Fisher, Wilmington. The President left his home to be near the Lieutenant-General. Then came the capture of Petersburg and Richmond, with the flight of Jefferson Davis and his cabinet. Without pomp or military escort, the President entered the Capital of the rebellion and walked its streets, from which Slavery had fled forever. Then came the surrender of Lee. The surrender of Johnston was at hand. The military power of rebel Slavery had been broken like a Prince Rupert drop, and everywhere within its confines the barbarous government it had set up was tumbling in crash and ruin.

The country was in ecstasy. All this he watched without elation, while his soul was brooding on thoughts of peace and clemency. His youthful son, who had been on the staff of the Lieutenant-General, returned on the morning of Friday, 13th April, to resume his interrupted studies. The father was happy in the sound of his footsteps, and felt the augury of peace. On the same day the Lieutenant-General returned. In the intimacy of his family the President said that this day the war was over. In the evening he sought relaxation, and you know the rest. Alas! the war was not over. The agents of Slavery were dogging him, and that night he became a martyr.

The country rose at once in an agony of grief, and strong men everywhere wept. City, town, and village was darkened by the obsequies, as they swept by with more than "sceptred pall." Every street was draped with the ensigns of woe. He had become, as it were, the inmate of every house, and the families of the land were in mourning. Not only in the Executive mansion, but in innumerable homes, was his vacant chair. Never before was such universal sorrow; and already the voice of lamentation is returning to us from Europe, where candor towards him had begun even before death. Only a short time ago, he was unknown, except in his own State. Only a short time ago, he had visited New York as a stranger, and was shown about its streets by youthful companions. Five years later, he was borne through these streets with funeral pomp, such as the world never before witnessed.

At the first moment it was hard to comprehend this

blow, and many cried in despair. But the rule of God has been too visible of late to allow any doubt of his constant presence. Did not our martyr remind us in his last address, that the judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether? And who will say that his death was not a judgment of the Lord? Perhaps it was needed to lift the country to a more perfect justice and to inspire it with a sublimer faith. Perhaps it was sent in mercy to set a sacred irreversible seal upon the good he had done, and to put Emancipation beyond all mortal question. Perhaps it was the sacrificial consecration of those primal truths, embodied in the Declaration of Independence, which he had so often vindicated, and for which he had announced his willingness to die. He is gone, and he has been mourned sincerely. It is only private sorrow that could wish to recall the dead. He is now removed beyond human vicissitudes. Life and death are both past. He had been happy in life. He was not less happy in death. In death, as in life, he was still under the guardianship of that Divine Providence, which took him early by the hand and led him from obscurity to power and fame. Only on the Sunday preceding his assassination, while coming from the front on the steamer, and with a quarto Shakespeare in his hands, he read aloud the well-known words of Macbeth:—

Duncan is in his grave;

After life's fitful fever, he sleeps well.

Treason has done his worst; nor steel, nor poison,

Malice domestic, foreign levy, nothing

Can touch him further.

Impressed by its beauty or by something else, he read it a second time. As the friends who then surrounded him listened to his reading, they little thought how, in a few days, what was said of the murdered Duncan would be said of him. Nothing can touch him further. He is saved from the trials that were gathering about him. He had fought the good fight of Emancipation. He had borne the brunt of war with embattled hosts against him, and had conquered. He had made the name of Republic a triumph and a joy in foreign lands. Now that the strife of blood was ended, it remained to be seen how he could confront those machinations, which are only a *prolongation of the war*, and more dangerous because more subtle, where recent rebels, with professions of Union on the lips, but still defying the principles of the Declaration of Independence, vainly seek to organize peace on *another Oligarchy of the skin*. From all these trials he was saved. But his testimony lives and will live forever, quickened by the undying echoes of his tomb. Dead, he will speak with more than living voice. But the author of Emancipation cannot die. His immortality on earth has begun. His country and his age are already enshrined in his example, as if he were its great poet gathered to his fathers: —

Back to the living hath he turned him,
 And all of death has past away;
 The age that thought him dead and mourned him,
 Itself now lives but in his lay.

If the President were alive, he would protest against any monotony of panegyric. He never exaggerated. He was always cautious in praise, as in censure. In endeav-

oring to estimate his character, we shall be nearer to him in proportion as we cultivate the same spirit.

In person he was tall and rugged, with little resemblance to any historic portrait, unless he might seem in one respect to justify the epithet which was given to an early English monarch. His countenance had even more of rugged strength than his person. Perhaps the quality which struck the most at first sight was his simplicity of manners and conversation, without form or ceremony of any kind, beyond that among neighbors. His handwriting had the same simplicity. It was as clear as that of Washington, but less florid. Each had been a surveyor, and was perhaps, indebted to this experience. But the son of the Western pioneer was more simple in nature, and the man appeared in the autograph. That integrity which has become a proverb, belonged to the same quality. The most perfect honesty must be the most perfect simplicity. The words by which an ancient Roman was described belong to him: *Vitâ innocentissimus, proposito sanctissimus*. He was naturally humane, inclined to pardon, and never remembering the hard things said against him. He was always good to the poor, and in his dealings with them was full of those "kind little words which are of the same blood as great and holy deeds." Such a character awakened instinctively the sympathy of the people. They saw his fellow-feeling with them and felt the kinship. With him as President, the idea of Republican Institutions, where no place is too high for the humblest, was perpetually manifest, so that his simple presence was like a Proclamation of the Equality of all men.

While social in nature and enjoying the flow of conversation, he was often singularly reticent. Modesty was natural to such a character. As he was without affectation, so he was without pretense or jealousy. No person civil or military can complain that he appropriated to himself any honor that belonged to another. To each and all he anxiously gave the credit that was due. And this same spirit was apparent in smaller things. On one occasion, in a sally of Congressional debate, he said that a fiery slave-master of Georgia, to whom he was replying, "was an eloquent man, and a man of learning; — so far as he could judge of learning, not being learned himself." (*Congress. Globe, Appendix, 1st session, 30th Congress, p. 1042.*)

His humor has also become a proverb. He insisted sometimes that he had no invention, but only a memory. He did not forget the good things that he heard, and was never without a familiar story to illustrate his meaning. When he spoke, the recent West seemed to vie with the ancient East in apologue and fable. His ideas moved, as the beasts entered Noah's ark, in pairs. At times his illustrations had a homely felicity, and with him they seemed to be not less important than the argument, which he always enforced with a certain intensity of manner and voice. But this same humor was often displayed where there was no story. I know not how the indifference, which many persons showed with regard to Slavery, could be exposed more effectively than when he said of a political antagonist, who was thus indifferent, "I suppose the institution of Slavery really

looks small to him. He is so put up by nature that a lash upon his back would hurt him, but a lash upon any body else's back does not hurt him." And then, again, there is a bit of reply to Mr. Douglas, which is characteristic not only for its humor, but as showing how little at that time he was looking to the great place which he reached so soon afterwards. "Senator Douglas," said he, "is of world-wide renown. All the anxious politicians of his party, or who have been of his party for years past, have been looking upon him as certainly, at no distant day, to be the President of the United States. They have seen in his round, jolly, fruitful face, post offices, land offices, marshalships, and cabinet appointments, chargéships and foreign missions, bursting and sprouting out in a wonderful exuberance, ready to be laid hold of by their greedy hands. * * *On the contrary, nobody has ever expected me to be President.* In my poor, lean, lank face nobody has ever seen that any cabbages were sprouting out. These are disadvantages that the Republicans labor under. *We* have to fight the battle upon principle, and upon principle alone." (*Debate with Douglas*, p. 55.) Here is a revelation with regard to himself, which is as honorable as it is curious.

He was original in mind as in character. His style was his own; formed on no model, and springing directly from himself. While failing often in correctness, it is sometimes unique in beauty and in sentiment. There are passages which will live always. It is no exaggeration to say, that, in weight and pith, suffused in a certain poetical color, they call to mind Bacon's Essays. Such passages

make an epoch in State Papers. No Presidential message or speech from a throne ever had any thing of such touching reality. They are harbingers of the great era of Humanity. While uttered from the heights of power, they reveal a simple, unaffected trust in Almighty God, and speak to the people as equal to equal.

He was placed by Providence at the head of his country during an unprecedented crisis, when the fountains of the great deep were broken up, and men turned for protection to military power. Multitudinous armies were mustered. Great navies were set on foot. Of all these he was the constitutional Commander-in-Chief. As the war proceeded, all his prerogatives enlarged and others sprang into being, until the sway of a Republican President became imperial and imperial. But not for one moment did the modesty of his nature desert him. His constant thought was his country and how to serve it. Personal ambition at the expense of patriotism was as far removed from the simple purity of his nature as poison from a strawberry. And thus with equal courage in the darkest hours he continued on, heeding as little the warnings of danger as the temptations of power. "It would not do for a President," he said, "to have guards with drawn sabres at his door, as if he fancied he were, or were trying to be, or were assuming to be an emperor." And in the same simplicity he spoke of his return at morning to his daily duties as "opening shop."

When he became President he was without any considerable experience in public affairs; nor was he much versed in history, whose lessons would have been most

valuable. As he became more familiar with the place, his facility evidently increased. He had "learned the ropes," so he said. But his habits of business were irregular, and they were never those of despatch. He did not see at once the just proportions of things, and allowed himself to be too much occupied by details. Even in small things, as well as in great, there was in him a certain resistance to be overcome. There were moments when this delay caused impatience, and important questions seemed to suffer. But when the blow was struck there was nothing but gratitude, and all confessed the singleness with which he had sought the public good. There was also a conviction, that, though slow to reach his conclusion, he was inflexible in maintaining it. Pompey boasted that by the stamp of his foot he might raise an army. The President might have done the same; but, according to his own words, he "put his foot down," and saved a principle.

In the statement of moral truth and the exposure of wrong, he was at times singularly cogent. There was fire as well as light in his words. Nobody exhibited Slavery in its enormity more clearly. On one occasion he blasted it as "a monstrous injustice"; on another he pictured the slave-master as "wringing his bread from the sweat of other men's faces"; and then, on still another he said, with exquisite simplicity of diction, "If Slavery is not wrong, then nothing is wrong." Would you find any condemnation of Slavery more complete, you must go to the sayings of John Brown or to those famous words of John Wesley, when the great

* Methodist held it up as "the sum of all villainies." Another mind, more submissive to the truth which he recognized, and less disposed to take counsel of to-morrow, would not have hesitated in carrying forward this judgment to its natural conclusion. Perhaps, his courage to apply truth was not always equal to his clearness in seeing it. Perhaps, the heights that he gained in conscience were not always sustained in conduct. And have we not been told that the soul can gain heights which it cannot keep? Thus even while blasting Slavery, he still waited, till many feared that his judgment would "lose the name of action." Thus even while vindicating the Equality of all men, against the assaults of one of the ablest debaters of the country, and insisting, with admirable constancy, that colored persons were embraced within the promises of the Declaration of Independence, he yet allowed himself to be pressed by his adversary to an illogical limitation of this self evident truth, so that colored persons might be excluded from political rights. But he was at all times willing to learn and not ashamed to change. Before death he had already expressed his desire that the suffrage should be extended to colored persons in certain cases; but here again he failed to apply that very principle of Equality for which he so often contended. If the suffrage be given to colored persons only in certain cases, then, of course, it can be given to whites only in the same cases; or Equality ceases to exist.

It was his own frank confession that he had not controlled events, but that they had controlled him. At all

the great stages of the war, he followed rather than led. The people, under God, were masters. Let it not be forgotten that the triumphs of this war, and even Emancipation itself, sprang from the great heart of the American people. Individual services have been important; but there is no man who has been necessary.

There was one theme in which latterly he was disposed to conduct the public mind. It was in the treatment of the rebel leaders. His policy was never announced, and of course it would always have been subject to modification, in the light of experience. But it is well known that, at the very moment of his assassination, he was much occupied by thoughts of lenity and pardon. He was never harsh, even in speaking of Jefferson Davis; and, only a few days before his end, when one who was privileged to speak to him in that way, said, "Do not allow him to escape the law, — he must be hanged," the President replied calmly, in the words which he had adopted in his last Inaugural Address, "Judge not, that ye be not judged." And when pressed again by the remark that the sight of Libby Prison made it impossible to pardon him, the President repeated twice over these same words, revealing unmistakably the generous sentiments of his heart. The question of clemency here is the very theme so ably debated between Cæsar and Cato, while the Roman Senate was considering the punishment of the confederates of Catiline. Cæsar consented to confiscation and imprisonment, but pleaded for the lives of the criminals. Cato was sterner. It is probable that the President, who was a

Cato in heart, would on this occasion have followed the counsels of Cæsar.

His place in history may be seen from the great events with which his name is forever associated. The Proclamation of Emancipation, — the military suppression of the Rebellion — his Republican example — and characteristic speeches are in themselves a broad foundation of fame. By the association of a common death he will pass into the same historic galaxy with Cæsar, William of Orange, and Henry IV. of France, all of whom were assassinated, and his star will not pale by the side of theirs. Cæsar was a contrast to him in every thing, unless it be in clemency, and in the coincidence that each was fifty-six years of age at the time of his death. But how unlike in all else. Cæsar was of a brilliant lineage, which he traced on one side to the immortal gods, and on the other to one of the recent chiefs of Rome; of completest education; of amplest means; of rarest experience; of acknowledged genius as soldier, orator, and writer; — being in himself the most finished man of antiquity; but he was the enslaver of his country, whose personal ambition took the place of patriotism, and whose name has since become the synonyme of imperial power. William of Orange was of princely origin, and in early life was a page in the palace of Charles V. In the long contest of Holland with Spain, he became the liberator of his country, which he conducted wisely, surely, and greatly, — anticipating the example of Washington. The name of “Silent” which he bore may suggest the reticence of another. Henry IV, memorable for mirth,

anecdote, and pregnant wit, represented the idea of National Unity in France as the Supreme condition of national safety; and his career has been illustrated by the popular epic of his country, *La Henriade*, of Voltaire. These are illustrious names; but there is nothing in them which can eclipse the simple life of our President, whose example will be an epoch in the history of Humanity, and a rebuke to every usurper — to be commemorated forever by history and by song. “I called thee from the sheepcote to be ruler over Israel” said the Lord to David; and whoever is thus called is more than Cæsar. Such an appointment was his; and his simple devotion to Human Rights was more than genius or power.

There is another character, who, like him, was taken away at the age of fifty-six, with whom the President may be more properly compared. It is St. Louis of France; and yet here the resemblance is only in certain kindred features, and the common consecration of their lives. The French monarch, though at the head of a military power, was a lover of peace, and cultivated justice towards his neighbors. Under his influence, a barbarous institution was overthrown, and France was lifted in the career of civilization. Though in an age of privilege, and wearing a crown, he was moved to the practice of Equality. History recalls, with undisguised delight, the simple justice which he administered to his people, as he sat under an oak in the park of Vincennes. Our President struck too at a barbarism, and lifted his country. He too practised Equality. And he too had his oak of Vincennes. It was that plain room, where he was always

so accessible, as to make his example difficult for future Presidents. But there were stated times when he was open to all who came with their petitions, and they flocked across the continent. The transactions of that simple court of last resort would show how much was done to temper the law, to assuage sorrow, and to care for the widow and orphan; but its only record is in heaven.

Such, fellow-citizens, is the Life and Character of Abraham Lincoln. You have discerned his simple beginnings;—have watched his early struggles;—have gratefully followed his consecration to those truths which our fathers declared;—have hailed him as the twice-elected head of the Republic, through whom it was known in foreign lands;—have recognized him at a period of national trial as the representative of the *unfulfilled promises* of our Fathers, even as Washington was the representative of National Independence; and you have beheld him struck down, at the moment of victory when rebel Slavery was everywhere succumbing. Reverently we acknowledge the finger of the Almighty, and pray that all our trials may not fail; but that the promises of the Fathers may be fulfilled, so that all men shall be equal before the law, and government shall stand only on the consent of the governed,—two self-evident truths which the Declaration of Independence has announced.

Traitorous assassination struck him down. But do not be too vindictive in heart towards the poor atom that held the weapon. Reserve your rage for the responsible

Power, which not content with assailing the life of the Republic by atrocious Rebellion, has outraged all laws human and divine; has organized Barbarism as a principle of conduct; has taken the lives of Unionists at home; has prepared robbery and murder on the northern borders; has fired hotels, filled with women and children; has plotted to scatter infection and yellow fever; has starved American citizens, held as prisoners; has menaced assassination always; and now at last, true to itself, has assassinated our President; and this responsible Power is none other than Slavery. It is Slavery that has taken the life of our beloved Chief Magistrate, and here is another triumph of its Barbarism. On Slavery let vengeance fall. I care not what you do with the worms it employs; but do not—I entreat you—yield any indulgence to this murderous wickedness. Ravallac, the assassin of Henry IV. of France, was torn in pieces on the public square in front of the City Hall, by four powerful horses, each of them attached to one of his limbs, and pulling in opposite directions, until at last, after a fearful struggle, nothing of the wretched assassin remained in the hands of the executioner, except his empty shirt—which was at once handed over to be burned. Such be our vengeance; and let Slavery be the victim.

But not only Slavery, which is another name for property in man, but so also that other pretension, which is not less irrational, that Human Rights can depend on color. This is the shirt of the assassin; and it must be handed over to be burned.

Such a vengeance will be like a kiss of reconciliation ; for it will remove every obstacle to peace and harmony. The people where Slavery once ruled will bless the blow which destroyed it. They will yet confess that it was dealt in no harshness to them, in no unkindness, in no desire to humiliate, but simply and solemnly, in the name of the Republic, and of Human Nature ; for their good as well as ours ; ay, for their good more than ours.

It is by ideas that we have conquered, more than by armies. The sword of the Archangel was less mighty than the mission which he bore from the Lord. But if the ideas which have given us the victory are now neglected ; if the promises of the Declaration, which the Rebellion openly assailed, are still left unfulfilled, then will our blood and treasure have been lavished in vain. Alas ! for the dead who have given themselves so bravely to their country ; alas ! for the living who have been left to mourn the dead ; — if any relic of Slavery is allowed to continue ; especially if this bloody impostor, defeated in the pretension of property in man, is allowed to perpetuate an *Oligarchy of the skin* !

And how shall these ideas be saved ? At this moment all turns on the colored suffrage in the rebel states. *This is now the pivot of national safety.* A mistake on this point is worse than the loss of a battle.

The argument for the colored suffrage is overwhelming. It springs from the necessity of the case, as well as from the rights of man. This suffrage is needed for the security of the colored people ; for the stability of the local government ; and for the strength of the Union. Without

it there is nothing but insecurity for the colored people, instability for the local government, and weakness for the Union, involving of course the national credit. Without it the Rebellion will break forth under a new *alias*, unarmed it may be, but with white votes to take possession of the local government and wield it at will, whether at home or in the national counsels. If it be said that the colored people are unfit, then do I say that they are more fit than their recent masters, or even than many among the "poor whites." They have been loyal always, and who are you, that, under any pretence, exalts the prejudices of the disloyal above the rights of the loyal? Their suffrage is now needed. An English statesman, after the acknowledgment of the Spanish Colonies as Independent States, boasted that he had called a new world into existence to redress the balance of the old. In similar spirit, we too must call a new ballot into existence in order to overcome the preponderance of those who have not yet learned the duty of justice to the colored race.

The same National authority that struck down Slavery must see that this other pretension is not permitted to survive; nor can there be any doubt that the authority which struck down Slavery is competent to this kindred duty. Each is a part of that great policy of justice through which alone can peace be made permanent and immutable. Nor can the Republic shirk this remaining duty, without leaving Emancipation unfinished and the promises of the Declaration of Independence unfulfilled. Vain is the gift of Liberty, if you surrender the rights of

the freedman to be judged by the recent assertors of property in man. Burke, in his day, saw the flagrant inconsistency and denounced it, saying, that, whatever such people did on this subject was "arrant trifling," and, notwithstanding its plausible form, always wanted what he aptly called "the executive principle." These words of warning have been adopted and repeated by two later statesmen, George Canning and Henry Brougham; but they are so plain as not to need the support of names. The infant must not be handed over to be suckled by the wolf, but carefully nursed by its parent; and since the Republic is the parent of Emancipation, the Republic must nurse the immortal infant into maturity and strength. It is the Republic which at the beginning took up this great work. The Republic must finish what it began; and it cannot err on this occasion, if, in anxious care, it holds nothing done so long as anything remains undone. It is the Republic, which, with matchless energy, hurled forward its armies until it conquered. The Republic must exact that "security for the future," without which this unparalleled war will have been waged in vain. It is the Republic, which to-day, with one consenting voice, commemorates the murdered dead. The same Republic, prompt to honor him, must require that his promises to an oppressed race be maintained in all their integrity and completeness, in letter and in spirit, so that the great cause for which he became a sacrifice, may not fail. His martyrdom was a new pledge beyond any even in life.

There can be no question here, whether a State is in

the Union or out of it. This is but a phrase on which discussion is useless. Look at the *actual fact*. Here all will agree. The old governments are *vacated*, and this is enough. Until the *whole body of loyal people* have set up a government, all is under the National authority, acting by the Executive or by Congress; and, since the Constitution, even without the injunction of the Declaration of Independence, knows nothing of color, it is the obvious duty of the National authority to protect all loyal people against any denial of rights on this pretension. Already it has undertaken to say that certain persons shall not vote. Surely the same authority which may limit the electoral law of Slavery, may enlarge it. If the National authority can do anything about elections; if it can order an election; if it can regulate an election; if it can exclude a traitor who is still at large, it can admit a loyalist, whose only incapacity is his skin.

The colored suffrage is now a necessity. But beyond this, in making it an essential condition of the restoration of rebel States to the Union, we follow, first, the law of reason and of nature, and secondly, the Constitution, not only in its text, but as interpreted by the Declaration of Independence. By reason and nature there can be no denial of rights on account of color; and we can do nothing which is thus irrational and unnatural. By the Constitution it is stipulated that the "United States shall guarantee to every State a *republican form of government*;" but the meaning of this guaranty must be found in the Declaration of Independence, which is the controlling preamble of the Constitution. Beyond

all question the United States, when called to enforce this guaranty, must insist on the *Equality of all Men before the law*, and the *consent of the governed*. Such is the true idea of a Republican government according to American institutions.

The slave-masters, driven from their first intrenchments, already occupy inner defences. Property in man is abandoned; but they now insist that colored persons shall not enjoy political rights. Liberty has been won. The battle⁴ for Equality is still pending. And now a new compromise is proposed, by which colored persons are to be sacrificed in the name of State Rights. It is sad that it should be so. But I do not despair. The cause may be delayed; but it cannot be lost; and all who set themselves against it will be overborne; for it is the cause of Humanity. Not the rich and proud, but the poor and lowly, will be the favorites of an enfranchised Republic. The words of the prophet will be fulfilled; "and I will punish the people for their evil, and the wicked for their iniquity, and I will cause the arrogance of the proud to cease, and will lay low the haughtiness of the terrible. I WILL MAKE A MAN MORE PRECIOUS THAN FINE GOLD, EVEN A MAN, THAN THE GOLDEN WEDGE OF OPHIR." I catch these sublime words of prophecy, and echo them back as the assurance of triumph.

Fellow-citizens, your task is before you. Mourn not the dead, but rejoice in his life and example. Rejoice as you point to this child of the people who was lifted so high, that

Republican Institutions became manifest in him. Rejoice that through him Emancipation was proclaimed. Above all, see to it that his constant vows are fulfilled, and that the promises of the Fathers are maintained, so that no person in the upright form of man can be shut out from their protection. Then will the Unity of the Republic be fixed on a foundation that cannot fail, and other nations will enjoy its security. The corner-stone of National Independence is already in its place, and on it is inscribed the name of George Washington. There is another stone which must have its place at the corner also. This is the Declaration of Independence, with all its promises fulfilled. On this stone we will gratefully inscribe the name of ABRAHAM LINCOLN.

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