

A

E U L O G Y

ON

WENDELL PHILLIPS

BY

ARCHIBALD H. GRIMKÉ

*DELIVERED IN TREMONT TEMPLE,  
BOSTON, APRIL 9, 1884*

TOGETHER WITH THE

PROCEEDINGS INCIDENT THERETO, LETTERS, ETC.

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## CORRESPONDENCE.



BOSTON, April, 1884.

A. H. GRIMKÉ, Esq. :—

The undersigned, appreciating the sentiments contained in your address in memory of Wendell Phillips, at Tremont Temple, April 9th, and the eloquent manner in which they were expressed, and believing that the address should be preserved in perpetual memorial of one whom your race, in common with the philanthropic world, will ever hold in grateful remembrance, respectfully request the favor of a copy for publication.

WILLIAM I. BOWDITCH,

ELIZUR WRIGHT,

C. A. BARTOL,

S. E. SEWELL,

JOHN F. ANDREW,

THOS. WENTWORTH HIGGINSON,

GEO. A. FLAGG,

HENRY PARKMAN,

OLIVER AMES,

THEODORE D. WELD,

M. J. SAVAGE,

H. C. LODGE,

EDW. E. HALE,

JOHN M. FORBES,

JAMES M. BUGBEE.

BOSTON, May 14, 1884.

HON. WM. I. BOWDITCH, ELIZUR WRIGHT, REV. C. A. BARTOL, D.D.,  
HON. S. E. SEWELL, AND OTHERS:—

GENTLEMEN,—Most cheerfully do I comply with your request, and herewith send a copy of my address upon Mr. Phillips, for publication. Thanking you, gentlemen, for the honor you have done me, I am,

Very respectfully,

A. H. GRIMKÉ.

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1884

# MEETING IN TREMONT TEMPLE.

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## INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

BY

HON. GEORGE L. RUFFIN.

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No other class of people can with greater propriety meet to pay a tribute to the memory of Wendell Phillips than the descendants and representatives of those for whose freedom he labored so long. During the latter part of his life he advocated other causes, and labored for other reforms; but the best years of his life — the period of his early manhood and middle age — were given wholly to the cause of the negro. And to-day his immediate colored constituents have gathered to say some words of respect to his memory, knowing at the same time that these words are entirely inadequate to express the sense of their loss.

For intensity of devotion to the anti-slavery cause Mr. Phillips must be given the first place among the leaders in that warfare. Other great captains there were with as much wisdom, patience, and steadiness; but Mr. Phillips was the brilliant and dashing officer,

marvellous in skill, and with unquenchable zeal. Yet, in the beginning of his public life, Mr. Phillips knew little or nothing of slavery from personal observation. He had never been shocked by a sight of the brutalities of plantation life. His knowledge of the negro and negro character was confined almost entirely to what he had seen and known of the less than one thousand colored people then living in Boston, and what he could occasionally gather from an escaped slave. But he did know the system of slavery, with its attendant evils, well. He knew the demoralizing effects of slavery and its degrading influence. He knew that slavery was wrong, and he abhorred it. The enemies of freedom derisively called the abolitionists negro-lovers. Mr. Phillips did not love the negro as a negro. He loved justice, he hated injustice. He saw that the negro was deprived of his liberty, and was outraged; he saw that society and government were combined against the negro, and he renounced society, rebelled against government, and took his stand against both to defend the negro. At this time Mr. Phillips was well acquainted with the leading intelligent colored men then in Boston, John T. Hilton, Rev. Thomas Paul, Charles Lenox Remond, and William C. Nell, the historian, who were all co-workers in the abolition society, which held its meetings in Belknapstreet Church (now Joy street). In this little church Mr. Phillips delivered some of those inspired speeches which, unfortunately, have never been printed, but are so often referred to latterly. Robert Morris, Lewis Hayden, William Wells Brown, and

other colored men were his co-workers. The relations between Mr. Phillips and his immediate colored constituents were pleasant and mutually agreeable; they thoroughly appreciated his sacrifices for them, and he was well aware of that fact. When danger threatened, or troubles arose, as they often did in the fugitive-slave law times, the colored man always went to Mr. Phillips for advice and assistance.

In the eyes of many colored people Mr. Phillips was the one exceptional white American wholly color-blind and free from race prejudice. Without saying this, it may be said that, if he was not the truest, he was among the truest to the rights and interests of colored people. In his demand for equal rights for colored people there was no qualification, — absolutely none; the demand covered every relation of life, and when Richard H. Dana, fugitive-slave defender though he was, said, "that when he remembered what his race was, and what the negro race was, in an insurrection his sympathy would go with his race," — Mr. Phillips, from an infinitely higher plane, replied "In such a case my sympathies would go with the right." His teachings to the colored people were of inestimable value; it was the higher education to them. He taught them their duty to themselves; he encouraged their aspirations; false notions of life were unlearned; he taught them self-reliance and manliness. He once said: "A slave I pity, a rebellious slave I respect." The question has been often asked, "which had the stronger hold upon the affections of the colored people, Mr. Garrison or Mr. Phillips?" That question can never be

satisfactorily answered. It is beyond the ability of any person to sound the depths of feeling entertained by the colored people for both; but, in a general way, it may be said older men gravitated towards Mr. Garrison, while younger men were more demonstrative for Mr. Phillips. And it may be further said, if this distinction is correct, that this feeling had its origin in the discussion between Mr. Garrison and Mr. Phillips, on the dissolution of the Anti-Slavery Society at the close of the war, — Mr. Garrison contending that the slaves were free, that the work was done; and Mr. Phillips insisting that the work was not done, but should be continued until the former slaves had equal rights.

Mr. Phillips never failed to give pecuniary assistance to worthy colored students who applied to him for aid; he not only gave himself, but helped the applicant to get assistance elsewhere.

Wide apart as were Mr. Phillips and his colored friends in race and social position, there was, nevertheless, this community of feeling between them, — they were both under the ban of public disfavor. The negro was despised, and Mr. Phillips was the best-hated man in Boston.

In his speeches to the colored people he never lowered himself in style or substance to the level of their capacities. He spoke to them as he did to any other public audience; but at times he was very practical. He talked on the education of children, obtaining homesteads, and learning trades.

The people of Boston never appreciated Mr. Phillips. It seems to have never occurred to them that

they had in him a most valuable citizen, — the brightest ornament to the city. If they did appreciate him it was not admitted in his lifetime. Small and unworthy men came to the front and played important parts, while Mr. Phillips lived unnoticed in an unfashionable quarter of the city. Mr. Phillips must have had this in mind when he said, "I know the back stairs which lead to the Governor's room."

The colored people adopted heartily the general principles of the abolitionists, and they manifested their sympathy in various well-known ways. In matters of detail, however, they chose their own methods. The abolitionists were non-resistants. The colored people did not accept that doctrine. If a fugitive slave was to be rescued, or a body-guard was to go with Mr. Phillips from Belknap-street church to his home, the colored people formed that body-guard. The abolitionists did not vote. The colored people always voted when, by so doing, they thought they could thereby cripple the slave-power, and Mr. Phillips never found fault with them for exercising this discretion. The fact is that, in political action, the negro has been guided largely by that instinct based on the first law of nature, self-preservation. He always voted, and he always voted right.

The last time Mr. Phillips was with the colored people, socially, was at a dinner given to him by the Wendell Phillips Club, six or seven years ago, at their rooms in Cambridge street. Mr. Garrison was present, and the banquet lasted until a comparatively late hour of the night. The war was ended; slavery



was abolished; the constitutional amendments were adopted; the negro was free and equal before the law. And here were the two veteran abolitionists, covered with honor and glory, sitting at table with colored citizens to celebrate their victory. Grandeur was never beheld! Reminiscences of the anti-slavery struggle were given with zest; past scenes, and the names of departed heroes, were recalled, and the words of wisdom and hope which fell from the lips of Garrison and Phillips that night will never, while life lasts, be effaced from the memories of those who were present. The abolition movement was the purest and highest movement that was ever carried forward in this country. It was more than philanthropy, morality, or statesmanship. It was all these combined. The abolitionists sought to reach human conscience. They were not heeded, and the great sin of slavery was expiated in rivers of blood. Hail to the abolitionists, dead and living, men and women! Never-dying honor is yours! The freedom for which you contended has triumphed, and your deeds are recorded in the brightest page of your country's history. Illustrious Phillips, hail!

Ladies and gentlemen, I present to you a gentleman who, from his name, position, and ability, is the man to deliver the eulogy.

## THE EULOGY.

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NOT a breath of controversy over slavery disturbed the Union sixty years ago. Four years before (in 1820), a bitter quarrel over its extension had been solemnly compromised. The immediate want of the slave-system had been satisfied, and the rising fears of the Free States allayed. The conflicting claims of freedom and slavery were forever laid to rest. So certainly agreed the parties to the Missouri Compromise. Government and people, politicians and parties, turned from a question which they imagined could best be answered by silence and oblivion. Vain thought! for there was at that moment a sinister presence in the Union which no contract could bind, and no slave-line was able to circumscribe. Public distress was to nullify every covenant and disappoint every hope of the famous actors of 1820. The whole country had felt, with more or less violence, that financial revulsion which followed the peace of 1815. The North and the South suffered, though not equally or exactly at the same time. The wave passed over the North and travelled southward. The planting and commercial interests of the Southern States received the bitter end of the storm. Widespread embarrassment and agricultural ruin

stared the planters and merchants of that section in the face. Princely possessions vanished like a dream. A mad cry went up from the South. The Federal Government struggled desperately with the baffling problems which confronted it. It could think of nothing else, discuss nothing else, legislate for nothing else. Public distress it heard, and nothing else would it listen to. But in the public distress there was a voice which gathered intensity as the storm abated in the Free States and waxed in the Slave States. It was the voice of Southern discontent. The radical differences between the slave-holding States, with their peculiar labor, and the non-slaveholding States, with their free labor, thrust themselves sharply upon public attention. Complaints against national legislation grew loud in the South. Indignant protests against the fiscal action of the government as the cause of Southern distress increased in volume and fury. Alas! the very conflict which the Missouri Compromise had undertaken to expel from the Union had reappeared at another point, and was oozing back into the republic. The tariffs of 1828 and 1832 were the mediums through which sectional antagonisms reëntered the nation.

One thing the public distress and Southern disaffection had done; they had revealed a vision of disunion,—a vision of "States dissevered, discordant, belligerent; a land rent with civil feuds, or drenched, it may be, in fraternal blood." And the terrific dream had made the Union seem all the more binding and imperious. "It must, it shall be preserved," public opinion began to repeat with a sort of oracular dread.

The press, the pulpit, government and people, parties and politicians, resolved, with renewed zeal and solemnity, to preserve their glorious Union by consigning to silence and oblivion the old question of slavery.

But, while the republic was wrestling with the tariff agitation of 1828, another agitation broke out in Baltimore. In 1829 an unknown Massachusetts printer proclaimed the duty of immediate and unconditional emancipation. The young man, full of the earnestness and truth of St. Paul and Thomas Jefferson, spoke out to such purpose and effect that slave-holding Maryland, after vainly trying to silence him, flung him into prison. But it was too late to stop an agitation which had ushered into the Union a new era. When Maryland justice condemned Garrison to imprisonment, it had, happily for the movement against slavery, violated the right of free speech and the freedom of the press. But silence and oblivion was the word and that word must not be broken at any cost. "Whom the gods would destroy they first make mad." The persecution of Garrison, and the assault upon two of the bulwarks of Anglo-Saxon liberty, were the first signs of the destruction which was to overtake American slavery. These manifestations of insanity multiplied rapidly after the establishment of the "Liberator," in 1831. More and more the policy of silence and oblivion interfered with the exercise of the most precious rights of the citizens of the North. The right of petition, the right of free speech, and the freedom of the press were more and more encroached upon in order to

secure this silence and oblivion. That there were black slaves in the Union there was no doubt. Men began to ask anxiously whether there were white ones also; whether, to preserve the Union and negro slavery, sons of the Puritan and patriot were to surrender their dearest rights. But the South was inexorable. It insisted upon the sacrifice. It demanded the suppression of abolitionism; and the pro-slavery North, basely compliant, hurried to make the sacrifice. The national government paltered with the right of petition, and flung out to the slave Cerberus the postal privileges of the Union. Then began a reign of proscription and persecution unparalleled in the history of free institutions. The abolitionists did not quail. With intrepid faith they confronted the combined power of church and state. They gathered around hearth-stones, they assembled in school-houses, they discussed and denounced slavery in churches and halls, in country and city. They preached with the enthusiasm of apostles, and endured with the fortitude of martyrs. Their fervor was contagious. Conviction ran like fire from soul to soul, and State to State. The government cried "Stop it;" the moneyed power of the Free States stamped upon it; the church launched against it its anathemas; the pro-slavery press emptied its meanness and malice upon it; but onward the fire ran, in full career, while all over the North public excitement was breaking into mobs and bloodshed. Popular fury had whelmed the eloquent voice of Birney in Cincinnati, and swept his press and types into the river. A Philadelphia mob had burned the hall of the abolitionists in that city. Pro-slavery

riots had broken out in New York and Vermont; Amos Dresser had been publicly flogged in Nashville, and Garrison dragged through these streets by the great mob of 1835.

These terrific disorders culminated in the murder of Lovejoy, on the 7th of November, 1837, at Alton, Ill. Thrice before had Lovejoy's types and presses been destroyed by mobs. The fourth press he resolved to defend with his life. He died the martyr of free speech and a free press. His glorious death rang down the curtain on the first act of the slavery tragedy. When that curtain went up, on the second, a new face and figure were projected against the dark and bloody background of the agitation. Wendell Phillips had entered the arena of the struggle, — Wendell Phillips, with the faith of the Puritan in his heart and the courage of the patriot in his soul! He joined the righteous remnant of Boston, in Faneuil Hall, to uphold the right of free speech and a free press, and to denounce the murderers of Lovejoy. A pro-slavery mob is there to defeat the object of the meeting. Austin, the Attorney-General of the Commonwealth, has just delivered a violent harangue, stained with the most infamous sentiments. An exigent moment has come, — a moment fraught with the greatest danger, not only to the meeting, but to the abolition movement itself. It was then that the young Puritan appeared upon the scene, and, stripling though he was, his speech proved him equal to the emergency.

Let us enter, and witness the spectacle which Faneuil Hall presented forty-six years ago. The

Attorney-General has just taken his seat, Phillips is on his feet, and the floor is in an uproar. The pro-slavery portion of the house is determined not to hear the young orator. Again and again he endeavors to speak, and again and again the mob refuses to listen. With unquailing courage he confronts the brute force of the multitude and finally compels attention. In one minute the mob has forgotten to hiss, and in two it is cheering to the echo the indignant passage in which he repels the comparison which the Attorney-General drew between the Boston patriots who spilled the tea in the harbor and the drunken murderers of Lovejoy. He moves now, with increasing confidence, and energy, to that magnificent outburst where he points to the pictured lips of Otis and Hancock, Quincy and Adams, "to rebuke the recreant American, — the slanderer of the dead." The excitement which follows the launching of this bolt baffles description. Friends and foes have gone mad. Storms of applause and hisses and the fierce cry of "Take that back!" break, wave after wave, against the young orator. When quiet has been restored, he continues with the uncompromising firmness of that sentence: "Fellow citizens, I cannot take back my words." His control of the mob is now assured; and with this consciousness of mastery he hurries into the midst of his subject. With infinite tact and earnestness he handles every phase of the Alton tragedy. With marvellous dexterity he draws within the magic circle of his genius the huge emotions of the multitude. He sweeps the gamut; the mob smiles, it frowns and cheers. He

plays with its fears, he gratifies its pride, excites its sympathy, fires its indignation, wins its applause. With surprising instinct, he guides through the rest of his speech the imprisoned passions of the crowd, letting off at intervals, by a bold metaphor, the surcharged excitement which he can no longer manage. Meanwhile, with marvellous skill, he is stating and restating his facts, marshalling and remarshalling his arguments, announcing and reannouncing his convictions, now flashing with scorn, now breaking into invective, shedding over all the charms of transcendent genius, and wresting, in one immortal hour, victory from the slave-power.

This speech was an event, a battle, the long-suffering North breaking into voice. On the young victor God had lavished the noblest gifts of mind and body. Courage and high thought, strength and beauty, looked from his eye and flowered in his person. He had a voice and grace of diction which the great age of Athenian eloquence might have envied. God had poured into his Puritan soul the fervor of an Hebrew seer. And all of these rare endowments were spun into the woof of English honesty, its stern sense of justice and uncompromising love of liberty —

“ A combination and a form indeed,  
Where every God did seem to set his seal  
To give the world assurance of a man.”

Such was Wendell Phillips, who was born in Boston, Nov. 29, 1811. He was descended from one of the English emigrants who came to America



in 1630. His father, John Phillips, was the first mayor of Boston. The boy Wendell was educated in the public schools of this city, and fitted for college at the famous Latin school, the mother of so many great men. He graduated from Harvard College in 1831, and the law school in 1834. In the same year he was admitted to the bar, and began his professional career. Early his mind was saturated with the literatures of Greece, Rome, and his mother tongue. He "had by heart the classic eulogies of brave old men and martyrs." When a student he dreamt that he had heard the same tones "from the cuckoo lips of Edward Everett." He loved to study the histories of 1640 and 1776. He had high ambitions. He was in love with his profession. He was proud of his country. Youth and hope were beating in his breast. He had genius, manly beauty, troops of friends, social position, a brilliant future. He was standing in the freshness of aspiring manhood in the vestibule of splendid achievement. He certainly possessed to a singular degree the qualities of mind and heart which would have made him a forensic orator of unsurpassed power. Fame bade him ascend the iron steps, which lead up, coil on coil, like a huge serpent, to the pinnacle of the temple, whither had climbed the Erskines, the Choates and Websters of the bar. But not in the law was he to achieve greatness. Out into the free air, along the mountain-path of duty, past the avalanches of a nation's hate, through the thunder-clouds of a people's wrong, above Mont Blanc, into the glad sunlight of a race's deliverance.

The year after his admission to the bar he witnessed Boston in the hands of the "broadcloth mob," and saw Garrison dragged through these streets by gentlemen of respectability and standing. He did not then understand the philosophy of the anti-slavery movement. He did not then comprehend the nature of the government under which he lived. He had thought that Boston was governed from City Hall, and Massachusetts from Beacon Hill. He had believed the proud declaration that this was a government of laws and not of men. The scenes of that day disturbed these illusions. Painfully the hard fact forced itself into his mind that money and the press ruled his native city and state. Irresponsible combinations had usurped the real functions of government. On this memorable October day the young attorney received his first practical lesson in political philosophy. He has hurried from his office to see the laws of Puritan Boston trampled in the streets, to witness the rights of person and property struck down, and to behold authority reeling like a drunken man. A bitter lesson this to the child of '76. "Why does the mayor stand there arguing? Why does he not call for the guns?" broke from his indignant lips. He was ready to wash out in the blood of the rioters the foul dishonor done this Boston which he "loved inexpressibly." Imperfectly felt he then the momentous nature of the issue at stake. Dimly it broke upon him that free speech and the freedom of the press the mob was dragging with Garrison through these streets, and that Maria Weston Chapman, and the brave women

who had met with her that day, had alone upheld the liberties of this commonwealth of the Puritan and the Patriot.

His eyes thus anointed, he began to see things as they were. He began to think and probe. His interest in the anti-slavery movement deepened. He began to take in its purposes and adopt its principles.

The events that were transpiring in the country, were revealing to him the tyranny of the slave system. He saw the South insolent, dictatorial, threatening, and the North cringing, suppliant, and obedient. He saw South Carolina and Georgia instructing the Free States as to their duty, and demanding the passage of laws to gag, and fetter the rights of their citizens. And he saw that the executives of New York and Massachusetts were base enough to commend this Southern insolence to their respective Legislatures. The young attorney was getting "the hang of the national school-house." He was an apt pupil. The ligaments of prejudice, education, and fashion were breaking and falling from his mind. Scales of long-cherished illusions, traditions, customs, were loosening and dropping from his free-born spirit. God was stripping him for the race, the blood-stained arena, and the crown. A few months before the tidings of Lovejoy's death reached Boston the young aristocrat had become an active supporter and disciple of Garrison. He had spoken at a few meetings of the abolitionists, and had charmed all with the high quality of his eloquence, and cheered the friends of freedom with his fresh strength and noble earnest-

ness. Goethe has said that the great earthquake at Lisbon did for thoughts of his what a shock will do for water on the verge of freezing. The shock converts it instantly into solid ice. The tragedy at Alton hardened into adamant the character and purpose of the young Boston scholar.

He awoke the morning after his famous Faneuil-Hall speech to find the doors of lifelong friends slamming in his face. Society frowned upon him, — the society of which but yesterday he had been the idol. Massachusetts wealth and culture stigmatized him as fanatic and incendiary. In twenty-four hours he was a social outcast, a political outlaw in the city of his birth. He had done what Beacon and State streets would never forgive: he had espoused the cause of the slave, and allied himself to "a few very insignificant persons of all colors." The offence was great, the greatest and most deadly which any high-born son of the Puritan could commit against the social, literary, and religious Boston of a half century ago. But the young disciple did not hesitate; he did not flinch. He had entered upon a life of self-renunciation, and it did not matter how dear former friendships and hopes and social privileges had been, he laid them all now upon the altar. One by one he had offered up all his pleasures, his plans and ambitions. Two things he yet clung to. Perhaps God, in his goodness, will grant him these, grant him thus to hold fast to that past which had twined itself about every fibre of his heart. Yes, we see him holding to his profession and the constitution of his country. These he can-

not, he must not surrender. But the lips of Duty spoke, saying: "Son, even these, thy profession and the constitution of thy country, — all must thou forsake and take up the cause of the slave." And the marvellous young man no longer questioned, no longer desired to hold back anything for himself. With stern faith he threw his utmost, — profession, the Union, his unspeakably rich gifts, — upon that sacred fire which was to melt the chains of a race.

The young aristocrat had quenched the last wish of his heart and slain the fondest dreams of his youth. In that supreme moment he stood naked, without friends, without profession, without country. He had offered all that he dearly loved, that we, fellow-citizens, might be free. Ah! God only knows what this great soul suffered in the dark years which followed! How pitilessly the public hounded him with obloquy! How cruelly society shot its poisoned arrows at his heart! How mercilessly the press pursued his steps! How incessantly the pulpit showered its curses upon his head! How terrible were his struggles with mobs! How violence haunted his shadow and anarchy howled around his home! He carried his life in his hand and his heart upon his sleeve. Ah! Wendell Phillips bore our wrongs upon his conscience, and nestled our woes in his soul, as a mother clasps to her bosom her first-born. Who can compute the pulse-beats of that great heart, throbbing for forty years in anguish? Who can garner up its secret agonies in the Gethsemane of trial hours?

It was not often that he uncovered his sorrows.

In 1855, on the twentieth anniversary of the Boston mob, he makes this sad confession: "In those days," he says, "as we gathered round their graves, and resolved that the narrower the circle became we would draw the closer together, we envied the dead their rest. Men ceased to slander them in that sanctuary; and as we looked forward to the desolate vista of calamity and toil before us, and thought of the temptations which beset us on either side from worldly prosperity, which a slight sacrifice of principle might secure, or social ease so close at hand by only a little turning aside, we almost envied the dead the quiet sleep to which we left them, the harvest reaped, and the seal set beyond the power of change." What a picture of heart-breaking suffering, of almost black despair!

All great movements have their moods of exaltation and depression. The noble band of anti-slavery martyrs were tried by fire. No more wonderful, beautiful, nor inspiring example has history than the spectacle of these devoted souls deliberately forsaking worldly honor and wealth for the redemption of the slave. No age and no cause, neither the early Christians dying by the hand of the Romans, nor the religious martyrs to Spanish cruelty and English persecution, made so sublime a sacrifice to liberty and truth. And miraculously were the American martyrs sustained. The viewless spirits of Humanity visited them. The sweet consciousness of right in their hearts administered to them. The divine strength of the sacredness of MAN lifted them to transcendent heights of courage and self-forget-

fulness. Through the valley of the shadow of death they toiled, with the immutable purpose of justice to guide them to victory.

How true was this, preëminently so, of the illustrious champion whose life we are commemorating! Throughout the whole of that terrific period the white plume of his heroic spirit was ever on the "perilous edge of battle." By night his matchless eloquence girdled with fire the hosts of the Lord; by day his unconquerable thoughts glowed in the bosom of the friends of freedom. He was the Lion-hearted, wielding the keen blade of Saladin. Again and again, when the skies blazed and the earth quaked with the struggle of Right and Wrong, he has soared with the swift strength of an eagle to the exigencies of the hour. It was then that he let loose the mighty forces of human speech,— all its hailstones, its thunders and lightnings; its blasts of terrible scorn, its sheets of merciless satire, its bolts of victorious invective. The "darkness visible" of that lower deep of the lowest deep of hell, one seems to see then through the sulphurous abysses down which he has hurled a traitor statesman like Webster, while ever and anon there sound the explosions of his wrath, the fierce riving of prejudices and the angry crackling of mobs.

Freedom and slavery made great advances from the murder of Lovejoy to the passage of the fugitive-slave law. Calhoun had continued that agitation of slavery in and out of Congress which looked to the union of the South for decisive action. Year by year the circle of his influence widened, and the seeds

he had sowed were springing up. And year after year the slave-power grew more aggressive and insolent. The great nullifier was generating the electrical energies of the irrepressible conflict. At the end of this period the South had but one policy and passion. To preserve slavery it trampled rough-shod upon the constitution and the liberties of the North. Texas it had got. The Mexican war it had precipitated upon the Free States. It had finally extorted from the recreant North the infamous slave bill. Southern arrogance could go no further, and Northern servility could crawl to no lower deep of wickedness. The slave-power had again overreached itself.

The anti-slavery agitation did not remain where the year '37 had left it. It advanced through the North with increasing fervor and numbers. It was arousing and uniting the North. A determined purpose had formed in the Free States to resist the extension of slavery. Northern servility and selfishness were caught in the conflagration which Garrison had kindled and Phillips fed. They were consuming in "the penal fire" of the reformation; and out of their ashes was rising the new North, liberty-crowned. And so, while the years from '37 to '50 had united the South, they had also aroused the manhood of the North. The impious enactment of 1850 accelerated the collision of the moral forces of the Republic.

It is impossible to convey any adequate idea of the earnestness and daring which then caught Phillips up and bore him on wings of flame to the manhood



of the North. He was transported to limits beyond all fear, beyond all regard for wicked laws and slave commissioners, all love of country, all the known methods and safeguards of civil society. He flung himself back upon the "great primal right of self-protection" as "the kernel of possible safety" for the fugitive. He shrank from no act, "however desperate," to rescue "a human being hunted by twenty millions of slave-catchers." At moments of supreme passion he trampled upon the sentiments of his best friends. With what vehemence he stamped upon the non-resistant doctrines of Mr. Garrison. "If your hearts answered instead of your nerves," he exclaimed, on the anniversary of the rendition of Sims, "you would rise up, every one of you abolitionists, ready to sacrifice everything, rather than a man should go back to slavery." Friends shook their heads, and said his doctrine was bloody. Enemies accused him of spreading anarchical principles. But neither enemies nor friends could frighten or dissuade him. The air which he breathed carried into his blood the monstrous dishonor done the North, and the brutal wrong done the black man. He burst through all the barriers of civil society, and stood face to face with the slave-hounds of the constitution. He bade the fugitive turn and smite his pursuer. He declared that the shooting of a Morton or a Curtis, "on the Commissioners' bench, by the hand of him they sought to sacrifice, would have a wholesome effect." In every speech he made now there was a possible John Brown.

From the passage of the fugitive-slave law

Garrison was thrown into the background by his great coadjutor. The anti-slavery agitation had passed from the first to the second stage of its growth. Over the first the pure spirit and uncompromising heart of Garrison had presided. It was the period of beginning incubation, preparation. It was the stage of investigation, discussion, revelation. It was the seed-time of the struggle. The peace principles of Garrison were the hovering wings of the movement. Under their shelter and mother-love truth and justice stirred at the centre of a nation's life. They hatched apathy into feeling, feeling into knowledge, knowledge into repentance, repentance into conviction. Within their shadow malignity could not reach, and public opinion was impotent. Thus protected the moral forces of the reformation grew. This period formed, like the clouds, amid the still processes of nature. The sun drinks up the rivers; atmospheric changes come with the winds; the blue sky vanishes; the tempest flies overhead; the imprisoned heat speaks; "the live thunder" leaps, and rain tumbles upon the thirsty fields. The period of preparation has gone. The time of action has come. "I must decrease, but thou must increase," expresses one of the subtle moods of nature. Childhood advances, and then succeeds manhood to all that it brings. To-day stands tiptoe on yesterday, and reaches up to where to-morrow begins. The years from '29 to '50 toiled and laid up to furnish Phillips his vantage ground.

We make no comparison. None can be made between Garrison and Phillips. We love them both

with a love which only those who have received much can give. But if we wished to describe Mr. Garrison's relations to the struggle we should perhaps say that he sustained to it the relations of motherhood, and Mr. Phillips those of fatherhood. They are the common parents, under God, of our deliverance. For without both, our freedom would never have been born.

But when the year 1850 came, and the slave-power hung with its Black bill over the Free States, non-resistance had no longer any place in the conflict. The time for argument had passed; the time for arms had arrived. On the first wave of this momentous change Wendell Phillips mounted to leadership. His speeches were the first billows breaking in prophetic fury against the South. They were the first blast of the tempest; the first shock on the utmost verge of civil war. Forceful resistance of the Black bill was now obedience to God. It was the dictate of the highest justice. The passage of the bill was the actual opening of hostilities between the two sections. The Union from that moment was in a state of war. Of course there were not then any of the visible signs of war, no opposite armies,—two belligerent governments, two hostile social systems in actual and bloody collision. It was none the less real, however. Such a conflict ends always in an appeal to force.

The peaceable surrender of a fugitive becomes now treason to freedom. Wendell Phillips comprehended the gravity of the situation. He refused to cry peace where there was no peace. He answered the Southern

manifesto with the thunder of his great speech on the anniversary of the rendition of Sims. Right and Wrong have grappled at last in mortal strife. "Why does the mayor stand there arguing? Why does he not call for the guns?" revealed, in '35, the character of the man. Mr. Garrison's non-resistant doctrines in '50 shrank from the consequences of meeting force with force. But this time Phillips is no longer a spectator in the street. He is in command, and has called for the guns. No half-way measure will now do. No mere resort to legal remedies to rescue fugitives can save the North from the basest capitulation. He saw clearly that the danger of the form lay in the stupor and indifference which repeated executions under the law would produce. The South was united and highly organized, impelled by a single purpose, and in possession of the whole machinery of government. He saw the North timid, irresolute, sordid, drugged by Whigs and Democrats, and frozen with the fear of disunion, ready to call the crime of yesterday indifferently bad to-day, and the unavoidable to-morrow. Peace was slavery, and sleep was death. The only hope of freedom lay now in the finger that could pull a trigger. This might beat back the advancing apathy and save the citadel of liberty. The fate of millions of slaves, the destiny of a free people, hung by a thread which one bad precedent might sever. It is the glory of Phillips that he saw this,—saw the peril in its imminency and all its consequences, and smote with undying eloquence the myrmidons of slavery. He was an army in himself. His eloquence, poured out month after month,

and year after year, became a kind of immanent presence, an elemental influence, an omnipresent curse, an incorporeal spirit of justice and duty throughout the North. The very air of the Free States vibrated with the disembodied soul of his mighty invectives. Slave-catching he has made a crime the blackest in the calendar of the republic. The Probate Judge of Massachusetts who sat as a commissioner in the case of Burns, he annihilated. His indictment of Judge Loring is a masterpiece worthy to be ranked with Burke's impeachment of Warren Hastings. He became a terror to the kidnapper. The slave-hounds bayed with bated breath at the sound of his magic voice. Black men heard him, and learned to pull the trigger and swing the bludgeon. White men heard, and learned to sleep upon muskets shotted to the lip for the man-stealer. John Brown heard him, and, with his brave little band, has flung himself upon Virginia, and struck for the freedom of the slave. Harper's Ferry has taken its place with Marathon, Marston Moor, and Lexington, and the gallows on which Brown died has become more glorious than the throne of the Cæsars.

Shock after shock has loosened the ice from the conscience and courage of the North. The Republican party is born, and then comes the first political victory of freedom. Abraham Lincoln has entered the White House, and Jeff Davis has turned his back upon Washington forever. The trial morning is rising gloomily on the republic. The gray light is haunted with strange voices, winged portents, bloody

apparitions. Right and Wrong, Freedom and Slavery, have reached the plains of '60.

For years Phillips had advocated disunion. To him, as well as to Garrison, the constitution was a "covenant with death, and an agreement with hell." It was the strong tower of the slave-power, and he longed to see it pulled down. He firmly believed that nothing could save slavery after this crutch, which the devil had given it, had been broken. To batter the staff over the head of the evil was the solution of the problem. He did not perceive at once all the forces and circumstances which were to effect a consummation he so devoutly labored for. He saw the wrong, and he sought the remedy in dissolution. He thought this could be reached by peaceable secession, a solemn division of the Union in convention, a formal separation of two civilizations, — the fourteenth and nineteenth centuries, — a parting on that great day of the sheep and the goats, liberty and slavery, the one on the right, the other on the left, the one to enter into peace, honor, justice, and a more perfect union; the other into outer darkness, to poverty, public distress, financial ruin, masters weeping and slaves breaking their chains amid the horror of insurrection. He saw, but in a glass dimly. The confusion, the widespread misery, the lamentation, the thick darkness, and the blood of masters were indeed to fall upon the South, but not as a consequence of peaceable secession and a possible insurrection of slaves. They were to come to pass amidst the tramp of mighty armies from the North rushing over her white fields and smiling cities,

laying waste with the sword of a million freemen her magnificence and institutions, stained with the wrongs of two centuries of oppression. Phillips had become the oracle of destiny impending. He, too, groped at times amid the thick-falling shadows of fate, but it was always toward justice in the forefront of the host of freedom. All he wanted was more light, and it came in the glare of cannon in Charleston harbor. The God of battle revealed his purpose to the great leader in the smoke and fire of that mad April morning. He saw in a twinkling Emancipation marching in the lurid track of war, — war for the Union. With swift energy and triumphant faith he whirled into line with the majestic figure and under the flag of the Union. Under the flag at last, his divine speech broke loose and rolled onward, swelling and dashing like the free and glorious ocean. Every throb of his great soul drove the hot blood of patriotism through vast multitudes. He was the eagle of eloquence, bearing on his outspread wings the tumultuous longings, the rising wrath of nineteen millions to action, — Godlike action.

To abolish slavery and arm the blacks he proclaimed now the supreme duty and demand of the hour. He saw at once what it took Lincoln and Seward and the Republican party two years to see, — that the rebellion could never be crushed until the slaves were freed and invoked to strike for their liberties. Any other policy, he saw, would end in dishonor and defeat. The foul stain of two hundred years must be washed out by an act of sublime justice before victory would smile upon the national

banner. Till then our armies would advance only to retreat. The best and bravest of the land would fight only to die. The treasures of the North could not save the courage of her citizen soldiery, could not conquer peace and restore the Union. One act of justice could. National justice had become a national necessity. The highest wisdom dictated it. It now was his mission to lift or lash the North to a comprehension of the situation. No one escaped the stern scrutiny and rebuke of those eyes which burned through shams and lies to the innermost and uttermost of motive and conduct, — through the procrastination and irresolution of president and cabinet, general and statesman, — and laid open the faithlessness and shortcomings of all. He who swerved a hair's breadth from the path of justice to the slave felt the keen lash of this merciless censor. Not Sumner, nor Lincoln, nor Grant escaped. All regard for the feelings of others, all the strengths and weaknesses of friendship which make one man hesitate before censuring another, were evaporated from his heart, dried up in the fervor and madness of one mighty passion, — justice to the negro. In his great soul there were no saving clauses for high or low, friend or foe, who did not reach up to the full measure of equal and impartial justice as the policy of the republic. With this sign his matchless eloquence was stamping public opinion, and impelling the North to rally and conquer by it.

The public sentiment which Lincoln obeyed, Phillips created. It was not enough to feel it responding to his touch. It was necessary also to tell the



administration that the tide had risen. And it happened often that if he would be heard he had to deliver his message in no uncertain tone. "Free the slaves at once; you can never save the Union until you do," said Phillips. While Lincoln would reply: "Not so fast, there; I am waiting for public sentiment to ripen for emancipation and colored troops." And Phillips would rejoin: "The administration, and not public sentiment, is the laggard in this war. Courage, man! You have only to do justice bravely, and the people will sustain you." But Mr. Lincoln did not so think. And Mr. Lincoln, — with all reverence I say it, — was troubled with that same disease which he said McClellan had, the *slows*. The martyr-president had it, and that very bad, during the two first years of the war. Phillips was vigilant, and Lincoln was tardy, that is all. Justice, long deferred, came at last. The Emancipation Proclamation transfigured the flag of the Union, and verified the predictions of Phillips. The colored troops at Wagner, Olustee, and Petersburg, proved by their blood and heroism the race's title to liberty. After the war Mr. Phillips abated nothing of zeal and vigilance in our behalf. For the freedmen he demanded the ballot, and every right of American citizenship. To Sumner in the Senate, and Phillips on the platform, — the one acting upon government, the other upon public opinion, — we owe, under God, more than to any other means, the political rights which we now possess.

The great struggle for freedom may be divided into three parts. The first beginning with the im-

prisonment of Garrison in 1829, and ending with the passage of the Fugitive-slave law in 1850,—the period of pure moral agitation of which Garrison was the leader. The second extends from 1850 to the close of the war,—the period of decisive action during which Phillips was the preëminent figure. And the last opening in 1865 is not yet finished. The labors of the two first are to be permanently secured in this, the third, by law and the social changes which come with national growth. To the day of his death Sumner's was the towering character of this, the concluding act of the great drama.

Sumner and Garrison are not, for God has taken them. And to-night we are standing by the open grave of the greatest of the three. But not in yonder burial-ground are we to look for a life so inspired and inspiring. Dust to dust was never spoken of a soul so luminous with the light of immortal living and doing. Justice, faith, love of liberty, were the great qualities which distinguished the man. Whoever had a wrong to redress could appeal with confidence to him. The needy Irishwoman or the distressed colored man who sought his aid was never turned away uncomforted. He was the fast friend of woman, of Ireland, temperance, the Indian,—of every good cause and true, the world over. Around his bier rich and poor, learned and unlearned, met and mingled their tears. Who ever saw him in these streets during the last years of his life whose hearts did not pour out at the sight of him the homage of unspeakable trust, admiration, and love? In his soul there was no guile. He walked among

us the incarnation of honor, purity, righteousness. True, brave, generous, marvellous man! As he spoke so he lived, the paragon of eloquence and the exemplar of the noblest virtues of the husband, citizen, and uncrowned king of public opinion. Such a life does not die in the heart of the world. It lives on, a sweet constraint, wherever the poor prays for bread, a stern compulsion wherever the slave clanks his chains and liberty struggles with power.

Whoever mistook appearance for reality, and preferred the temporal and visible to the eternal and invisible verities of mind and God, *he never*. He saw this great country, her ships sailing upon the sea, her cities shining in the plain, labor toiling at the loom, capital flowing into vaults; he saw all the glory of the republic, its opulence and power, and he looked, and beheld that all was vanity. For, under all this splendor and laughing prosperity, sin was at work. He knew that a lie was strong enough to overthrow and crumble all this worldly power and grandeur. Truth, justice, righteousness, are the only permanent forces in the universe. All else must fail and perish, like the grass which to-day is, and to-morrow rots where it once flourished. Ideas, character, goodness, the emotions, are all that we really possess. They pass over the huge, sensuous world, and empires rise and fall, races endure or vanish. They alone are worth striving for. All else is dust. Put justice at the centre of life, keep truth pure in the heart of a nation, bind about it love for all mankind. These are the only forces which make for

it permanent peace and advancing greatness. We hear this voice now sounding in our ears. We feel this light now breaking in our hearts. They come to us from the open grave of our fallen leader, from the air breathing, burning with the eloquence of his life and death, saying: "Boston, Massachusetts, — my country, — love righteousness, be just!"

And now, fellow-citizens of the same race, this loss comes to us with peculiar grief. He was our own, our beautiful, our strong, our devoted one. The sentinel has fallen at his post. Take a last look and the eternal blessing of those mute lips. They speak to us words of hope and duty. They bid us finish what yet waits to be done. The message to us is FAITH, LABOR. Let us gird ourselves with the spirit of our great friend. The work to be done now is to be done by our own hands. The battle against caste prejudice; the battle for the civil and political liberties of our race in the South; the battle against moral foes within, against the mastery of the appetites, against idleness, intemperance, and ignorance, is now to be fought. Over these obstacles let us march to equality under the law, to domestic happiness, to temperate, industrious, and educated manhood. Great lights are above us. Sumner, Garrison, Phillips, and the innumerable company of anti-slavery saints and martyrs watch us from the skies. Night and day are full of their glory. They gleam now from the firmament. They beam now upon our faces. They implore us by the chains which we wore two hundred years, by the struggles,

sufferings, and triumphs of liberty, by our duties, our rights and wrongs, for ourselves, posterity, and country, to be faithful to the high trust of **FREEMEN.**

The following letters were received : —

DANVERS, April 7, 1884.

WM. H. DUPREE, *Chairman of the Committee* : —

I am glad to see the call for the memorial meeting on the 9th inst., and regret that I cannot attend it. No people ever had a more generous and eloquent defender of their cause than the colored people of the United States have had in Wendell Phillips. Some of us who are old abolitionists have found it difficult to hear patiently those who, for selfish and party reasons, now eulogize him as extravagantly as they abused him while living for pleading the cause of the slave. And it is refreshing to listen to a heartfelt tribute of gratitude from the class for whom he did and dared so much. I have no doubt the meeting will be one of much interest, and that its able orator will do full justice to the benefactor of his people.

I am truly thy friend,

JOHN G. WHITTIER.

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MR. WM. H. DUPREE : —

DEAR SIR, — Unless some unforeseen difficulty should happen to prevent me from leaving my home on the evening of the 9th inst., I shall certainly accept your kind invitation to the memorial meeting to Wendell Phillips. From the time of the Garrison mob “of men of respectability and standing,” we have known and loved one another. I *then* became an abolitionist, on the ground (not a very high one, perhaps some may say, and I may admit) that, whoever the man Garrison might be, if he and his friends

could not meet and *talk* against slavery within sight of Bunker Hill, it was a duty of every Northern man to support him, and to help put down such a furious mob as was then surging against the door of the Old State-House. When I subsequently learned that one of the so-called "~~respectable~~" citizens of Boston had been violently tugging upon the sign of the Anti-Slavery rooms I became more determined than before. Wendell Phillips I had long known somewhat intimately, but our Anti-Slavery bond united us ever afterwards, as "with hooks of steel," although many times I differed from him, and opposed his efforts. During the long period that passed between the time of the mob up to his last extraordinary (as I thought it) position in the support of Gen. Butler, I was often, for a long time, thus opposed to him. He was a disunionist, and I claimed that I had *a right*, nay, that it was *my duty*, to vote, under the constitution, for the slave, and against the slave-power that ruled the nation. During all this lapse of years, though each went his way, and bitter hostility was manifested at times by the leaders of the two "*sects*" (as we may style them) of Anti-Slavery, Wendell and I were always sworn friends. I therefore love to honor the memory he has left to us of a noble manliness and of self-sacrifice.

Excuse this long letter, but I feel always enthusiastic when thinking of Wendell Phillips, and therefore have been led to a longer note than your kind invitation required.

Respectfully yours,

HENRY I. BOWDITCH.