AN ADDRESS

ON THE

CHARACTER AND EXAMPLE

OF

PRESIDENT LINCOLN.

DELIVERED BEFORE THE

Athenæum and Everett Societies

OF

HAVERFORD COLLEGE,

BY

PROFESSOR THOMAS CHASE,

On Fifth Day Evening, Seventh Month 6th, 1865.

PHILADELPHIA:
SHERMAN & CO., PRINTERS.
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CORRESPONDENCE.

HAVERFORD COLLEGE, 7th Month 8th, 1865.

At a joint meeting of the Athenæum and Everett Societies, held 7th month 7th, 1865, it was resolved,

That the thanks of the Societies are due, and are hereby tendered, to Professor Thomas Chase, for his able and eloquent Address on "The Character and Example of President Lincoln;" and we, as their Committee, were authorized to request a copy for publication.

BENJ. A. VAIL,
S. C. COLLINS,
Of the Athenæum Society.
A. M. ELLIOTT,
D. H. NICHOLS,
Of the Everett Society.

HAVERFORD, 7th Month 8th, 1865.

BENJ. A. VAIL, S. C. COLLINS, A. M. ELLIOTT, D. H. NICHOLS,
Committee.

A copy of my Address is herewith placed at your disposal.

Very truly, your Friend,

THOMAS CHASE.

ADDRESS.

History records no more touching, no sublimer spectacle, than that which has just been presented in our own land, of a mighty nation of freemen, stretching over half a continent, from one of the world's great oceans to the other, bowed as one man in mourning and lamentation at the loss of their beloved and chosen chief. Who of us shall ever forget the agony of that saddest day in our country's annals, when it was told us that the shameless hand of a low-lived assassin had struck down the foremost man of all this world,—the grief, the shame, the horror, and the righteous anger which thrilled through every heart at that fell tidings? but grief overmastering our shame, our horror, and even our just wrath; grief as deep and as intense as if we had each been robbed of the nearest and dearest of our kindred; benumbing grief, which weighed upon our hearts like lead; which we could not shake off, nor would we if we could; itself the most impressive tribute that could be paid to the greatness and goodness of him who had won from a whole nation this devoted affection, and the fittest eulogy of his virtues.

Prompted by an irresistible impulse, we met, on that sad morning, to pay our simple, heartfelt tribute, to the memory of the departed patriot and Christian. The fountains of our tears were open, we spoke our few and earnest

words, and prayers ascended to the Source of all grace and consolation, for the widow, and the orphans, and the stricken land. And what we did, unbidden, men did everywhere, each in his own way. The hearts of millions had been pierced at one blow, and in deep and solemn harmony the voice of common lamentation arose from the whole land. The lightnings had flashed the tidings to remotest city and hamlet, and throughout the length and breadth of the country men went with downcast eyes and bated breath. As, later in the day, I walked the streets of yonder city, the manifold emblems of mourning around me, enforcing the sense, with a painful shock, that that was indeed reality which had appeared like some hideous dream, I seemed to have joined the vast funeral procession which was following the martyr's body to the tomb. One thought, one feeling, was uppermost in the hearts of all those silent, thronging thousands. It was indeed majestic, this unanimity of woe, this profound emotion of a people's heart in recognition of departed worth and greatness.

And again, when the precious dust was borne so tenderly, so regretfully, so proudly, through mourning States, how the people, of every rank and condition, crowded to the roadsides but to see the funeral train, and in the great cities, which deemed it a high privilege to hold the sacred relics for one short day in their storied halls, what multitudes joined in the sad processions, or gazed on the benignant features of the dead!

Nor was the mourning confined to a single continent. From the farthest corners of the globe the echoes of our lamentation are still repeated to us. In the land of our fathers,—that land which, in spite of temporary causes of alienation, is ever the nearest to our affections after our own,—the loss was felt as a domestic one; and from all classes, from the sovereign to the peasant, unprecedented honors were paid to the dead. In all our grief and disap-

pointment, both at what was either the woful incapacity of the governing classes in England to understand the true nature of our struggle, or the proof that there is a natural alliance between aristocratic institutions and the most degrading system of human bondage beneath the sun; and, above all, at that strange perversity through which a nation so loud in its professions of philanthropy gave its sympathies to insurgents who strove to build up a nation on slavery as its chief corner-stone, let us never forget the noble band of scholars and thinkers, who, in evil report and obloquy, boldly espoused our cause, continuing faithful unto the end, and the still nobler company of the workingmen of England,—nobler, for their testimony was borne in the face of famine and ruin,—who felt that ours was the cause of freedom everywhere, and scorned to buy their own comfort by assisting to fasten the fetters of the slave. And let us give even our old foes and slanderers the credit of being able to appreciate the virtue of success; not distrusting the sincerity with which the ribald reviler of the good man who has gone from us has sung that beautiful and touching Palinodia, or even the time-serving ape of Jupiter Tonans has poured forth his posthumous praise. From Russia, our faithful ally, whose good Emperor has consummated an act of emancipation which will enroll his name with Lincoln's among the benefactors of mankind,—from Germany, taught his greatness and goodness by her many wandering sons who have found happy homes on our shores,—from France, still nursing the slumbering embers of freedom, and still cherishing the remembrance of our old alliance,—from Italy, just perfecting, through many sufferings, her union and nationality,—from the descendants of the Hellenes, and from all the minor states of Europe,—from the imperial city on the Golden Horn,—from Smyrna, where old Homer sang,—from the dwellers on the Nile,—from farthest India, and the islands of the

sea,—come the same accordant strains of sympathy and sorrow and reverential praise.

Taking into view both the depth of the lamentation and its universality, I run no hazard in asserting that never was man so mourned before.

And now that the first shock of our mighty sorrow is over, it is well to ask what it was in the character and the services of the departed statesman and magistrate that won for him this majestic testimonial of the tears of a nation and a world. It is because I deem that such an inquiry will be instructive to us all, that I have yielded to your kind invitation to address you upon this theme. I shall, perhaps, best answer the question by successively reviewing some of the prominent points in our lamented President's career.

And first—a thing which is particularly instructive to us in this seat of learning—is the fact that he was so little indebted for his influence and his fame to those acquisitions and accomplishments to which we attach so high a value, and which it is one of the chief purposes of your being here to attain. The youngest of you has already enjoyed opportunities of instruction superior to any that ever fell to his lot. In classic and scientific lore, many of you are his superiors. Yet how paltry, how insignificant appear these accomplishments, when measured with the grandeur of his character! With all our superior advantages, few of us can hope to approach the eminence to which his simple virtues raised this man of the people. It is well that our pride should be humbled by this thought; it is well that we should recognize the fact that, justly as we prize the graces of learning and culture, they are worthless dross when weighed against the higher though more homely qualities of truth and honesty and moral courage.

But, while the example of the great departed rebukes

all undue pride of privilege, it incites us, at the same time, to diligence in the pursuit of mental culture, and bears witness to its value in fitting a man to discharge the great duties of life. For Abraham Lincoln, though no college had ever fostered and encouraged his literary pursuits, was a man of no mean education. That was a foul slander of our enemies which asserted that the American people had raised to their head an illiterate boor. Almost without aid, encouragement, or facilities, he had done for himself what, however great our facilities, each one of us is practically left alone to do for himself,—trained and cultivated his mind, developed its powers, evoked its energies, less systematically, less extensively, less roundly, perchance, than men on whose birth fair science smiled,—yet with results which were admirable in themselves, independent of the consideration of the difficulties triumphed over in their attainment. He mastered his own language so as to be able to express his thoughts in it with rare clearness, force, and point; and generally—although sometimes adopting phrases which a more cultivated taste would reject—with great propriety of diction, rising not unfrequently into a nervous eloquence which the greatest masters of speech have hardly surpassed. In diction, as well as in grandeur of sentiment, the closing paragraph of his address at the consecration of the National Cemetery at Gettysburg is worthy to be ranked with the funeral oration of Pericles, the noblest example of ancient oratory; and many passages might be culled from his speeches and public papers which any man might be proud to have written. In mathematical science, his attainments were by no means inconsiderable. Arithmetic itself, which he mastered in his second school, is no poor instrument of mental culture; he made himself, moreover, an accomplished surveyor; and geometry,—a science second to none in its power to develop and strengthen the mind,—he stu-

died with such ardent love and diligence that a discerning friend of his attributed to its influence one of his most striking mental characteristics; "a logical turn of mind, which followed unwaveringly every link in the chain of thought on any subject which he was called on to investigate." Again, the study of the law, one of the noblest of human sciences, and one in which he made great proficiency, is in itself an education. Nor must I omit to speak of what I rank among the proudest distinctions and noblest fruits of free institutions,—the educating power which is involved in the political activity required of the citizen. Frequently called upon to take part in the decision of public matters of the gravest import, the American freeman is compelled by natural curiosity, as well as by the highest motives of duty, to endeavor to understand the true nature of the points at issue, and the great principles of political science on which they should be decided. He weighs the arguments of contending parties, as presented at public gatherings, or through the press, by which he is sometimes brought into communion with the foremost minds of the land; he discusses them with his companions amidst the daily avocations of life; and, so far as he has opportunity, he is prompted to compare them with the lessons of history and the teachings of the wise men of old. Our municipal institutions, and the nice gradations by which we rise from township to county, state, and nation, afford, in their various offices, a school of training by which the humblest citizen may be fitted to become the ruler of the land. No university in the world presents such a course of instruction in the theory and practice of political science, as our institutions bring home to every citizen. We cannot boast that the lesson is always correctly learned, that the right answer is always given to the problem before us; but, as an educating agency, as a means of developing the intellectual energy and acumen of the whole people, we can

hardly over-estimate the efficiency and the value of this feature in our political system. Abraham Lincoln took the full course in this college of the people. In early manhood he was conspicuous in his neighborhood as an adherent of the political principles of Henry Clay. He served as a representative both in the legislature of his State and in the National Congress; he was a candidate for elector in six successive Presidential elections, and before one of them he traversed the whole State of Illinois and part of Indiana, addressing large gatherings of the people in favor of the measures of the Whig party and its candidate, the gallant statesman of Kentucky. After the rise of the Republican party, he canvassed his State on several occasions in favor of its principles with great ability and success. Everybody remembers the friendly but spirited contest between him and Senator Douglas in 1858, in which his abilities stood triumphantly the test of comparison with one of the most adroit of debaters and practised of politicians; at the same time that the largeness and soundness of the views of public policy he enunciated attracted the attention of the country, and did much to secure for him his subsequent nomination and election as President. His speech in New York, early in the year 1860, shows how thoroughly he had studied the constitutional history of the country, and the sagacity with which he could detect the sophisms of demagogues and of the slaves of slavery. Truly, a man who, in a nation like ours, and in a period like that through which we have been passing for the last thirty years, with no motive but pure patriotism and the love of truth, brings, as did Abraham Lincoln, a clear head and an honest heart to the diligent consideration of great political questions, bearing his part in the advocacy of correct views before the people, and in the labors of legislation, trains and develops some of his noblest powers, and acquires, in the school of practice, an education which might well be

envied by many a frequenter of academic libraries and lecture-rooms.

I assert, then, that our hero was a man of no mean education. Yet, I will not deny that in his speeches and his writings, the want of scholastic training is sometimes manifest, and that I could wish that to him had been granted the graces of more finished culture. But, as I said before, how petty are such graces in comparison with those grand qualities of head and heart which rendered him the one man worthy to lead our nation through its agony of trial, and have made his name immortal! In all things, moreover, the great law of compensation prevails. If what we might call more favorable circumstances had endowed him with all the learning of the schools, he might have lost one of the most valuable parts of his education. For education is not simply the training of the mind in literature and science. It comprehends, in its true sense, everything that develops the powers of man and evokes his energies; everything that shapes his purposes, fixes his habits, and moulds his character, whether in his physical, his intellectual, or his moral being. And Lincoln had, in his youth, three schoolmasters, whose lessons perchance he could not afford to lose, even if the highest refinements of the university were offered him in exchange,—three stern, but profitable teachers, Poverty, Hardship, and Toil. These knit his frame, and gave him that strength of nerve and sinew, without which he could never have borne the burden of those cares of state, the heaviest ever laid on mortal brain; these taught him energy and self-reliance,—two of the best lessons man can learn,—endowed him with that strength which can only be gained by surmounting obstacles,—gave him a knowledge of men and things, such as few attain, except those who like him have to hew their own pathway through the forests of life,—and taught him to sympathize

with the toiling millions, who constitute the larger portion of our race.

Nay, even as regards his intellectual culture, in this age, when the multiplicity of books presents such strong temptations to superficial reading, and gaining a smattering of many things rather than proficiency in a few, that was hardly an unkind fortune which supplied his eager mind in boyhood with few books, especially when they were so fit: the Bible, Pilgrim's Progress, Æsop's Fables, the Biographies of Washington, Clay, and Franklin, and Plutarch's Lives of the illustrious men of Greece and Rome! To these books, thoroughly read, some of them over and over again, and well digested, as they were, how much may he have been indebted for that fixedness of moral and religious principle, that pure and lofty patriotism, that shrewdness and sagacity, and that fondness for apologue and racy, telling illustration, for which he was so distinguished.

But neither the advantages of poverty, nor those of wealth; neither hardships nor abundant facilities, develop a mind and character nobly and well, unless there be a persistent will, and an earnest diligence behind. Herein is the true secret of Lincoln's advancement and success; herein is he an example for all of us, whether our circumstances are alike or unlike his. I grant that he was endowed by nature with a mind of rare sagacity, penetration, clearness, and vigor. Providence, that designed him for great services, had given him capacities for service beyond those of most men. But, in all cases, what men are, depends less upon the measure of their natural endowments, than upon what they do for themselves. It is in the earnestness of his self-culture, and in his faithfulness in occupying the talents with which he was intrusted, that Lincoln merits our highest praise and our diligent imitation. Few men have ever exhibited greater energy of

character and persistency of purpose. It is recorded of him that, from childhood, he never allowed himself to hear anything, or read anything, without thoroughly understanding it; and "when, in listening to a conversation, he had any difficulty in ascertaining what people meant, if he retired to rest, he could not sleep till he tried to understand the precise points intended; and when understood, to convey it in a clear manner to those who had listened with him." He early adopted the practice of writing out a synopsis of everything he read; one of the best aids in fixing facts and arguments in the memory. How many of us can boast habits of close attention and diligent research, which, like his, never allow anything to pass us uncomprehended and unmastered? Observe, again, the diligence with which, under the most untoward circumstances,—studying, in a floorless cabin, by the light of a log fire,—he learned to read and write, unravelled the mysteries of arithmetic and grammar; mastered, in early manhood, the sublime truths of geometry, and at last, the profound science of law,—walking to Springfield, twenty-two miles, and back again in the same day, to bring home the four volumes of Blackstone's Commentaries, which were kindly lent him. In preparing himself for his late chosen profession, with resolute purpose he denied himself many social enjoyments, and pursued his studies while others revelled, or while others slept. "You will find the whole of my early life," said Lincoln to a friend, "in a single line of Gray's Elegy,

'The short and simple annals of the poor.'"

But if short and simple, in his case the annals were crowded to glorious fulness, by the earnest labors which built up nobleness, wisdom, and strength. His successful career is but another illustration of the truth, so old and trite, but which most of us need to have dinned in our

ears again, and again, and again, that, while nothing great can be done without diligen. labor, energy, and perseverance,—with them, there is nothing too arduous for a manly soul.

But especially does our fallen chief deserve our admiration, for the integrity of his moral character, and the generous qualities of his heart. "He is the best man," said Secretary Seward, "that I ever knew;" and this is the uniform testimony of those most familiar with him in his daily life. In childhood and youth he laid the foundations of these, the sure pillars of his greatness. An obedient and loving son, whose tongue never uttered a ribald jest, an oath, a slander, or a lie; as he grew up to manhood, he passed unscathed through all temptations to intemperance and excess, and his incorruptible honesty became a proverb among his companions. At the same time, he had none of the austerity by which the fair face of virtue is sometimes clouded; cheerful, genial, witty, he was a good fellow and a kindly friend. His heart was full of kind feeling for everybody; and his benevolence and his sympathies were never appealed to in vain.

Let us consider him next in his character as a statesman and a patriot. The responsibilities of American citizenship did not rest upon him in vain. From his earliest manhood, he made it one of his first objects to understand the nature of the political questions presented to the people for their decision, and to gain sound views in regard to the great principles of government and political science. In the foundation of our national government, he reverently recognized the hand of Providence; and with solemn earnestness he asked the question, What are the merits and what the defects of our political system? He was not long in seeing that for our best success as a nation we are indebted to our recognition,—in conjunction with respect for law and the maintenance of public order,—of the Christian principle of the dignity of man as man; and

that it is just where we have forgotten or disregarded that principle, that our worst failures have arisen. When he was received in Independence Hall, on his way to the Capitol, he said: "I have often inquired of myself what great principle or idea it was that kept this Confederacy so long together. It was not the mere matter of the separation of the Colonies from the mother-land, but that sentiment in the Declaration of Independence which gave liberty, not alone to the people of this country, but, I hope, to the world for all future time. It was that which gave promise that in due time the weights would be lifted from the shoulders of all men." And previously, when he canvassed Illinois with Senator Douglas, he had said, after quoting the eloquent statement of the equal rights of all men to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness, which was proclaimed to the world by the signers of the Declaration of Independence: "This was their majestic interpretation of the economy of the universe. This was their lofty, and wise, and noble understanding of the justice of the Creator to His creatures. Yes, gentlemen, to all His creatures, to the whole great family of man. In their enlightened belief, nothing stamped with the Divine image and likeness was sent into the world to be trodden on, and degraded, and imbruted by its fellows. They grasped not only the race of men then living, but they reached forward and seized upon the farthest posterity. . . . . Wise statesmen as they were, they knew the tendency of prosperity to breed tyrants, and so they established these great self-evident truths, that when, in the distant future, some man, some faction, some interest, should set up the doctrine that none but rich men, or none but white men, or none but Anglo-Saxon white men, were entitled to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness, their posterity might look up again to the Declaration of Independence, and take courage to renew the battle which their fathers began, so that truth,

and justice, and mercy, and all the humane and Christian virtues might not be extinguished from the land; so that no man would hereafter dare to limit and circumscribe the great principles on which the temple of liberty was being built."

But in his true democracy—how different from the spurious creed which has often claimed that name!—he was no extremist, or agrarian, or fanatic. He would not pull down the great, but he would raise the lowly. Those were wise words that he addressed, after an allusion to the riots in New York, to a committee of workingmen who visited him while he was President:

"Property is the fruit of labor; property is desirable; it is a positive good in the world. That some should be rich, shows that others may become rich, and hence is just encouragement to industry and enterprise. Let not him who is houseless pull down the house of another, but let him labor diligently and build one for himself; thus, by example, assuring that his own shall be safe from violence when built."

Nor did he suppose that the equality before the law which our fathers declared to be the birthright of all men, implied equality of merit and of claims to distinction and influence, any more than it does of mental endowment, or physical strength, or inherited wealth. Virtue and wisdom he recognized as the qualities which should determine precedence among men; he acknowledged, too, that the due influence of learning and of wealth is founded in the very nature of things; he only contended that no artificial, factitious advantages, should be allowed to any set or class of men; that neither race, nor creed, nor lineage, should draw distinctions between men in the eyes of the law; but, in his own clear and simple words, "that the weights should be lifted from all shoulders, and that all men should have *an equal chance.*"

No wonder, with his clear head and sound logic, that he very early saw the flagrant inconsistency of human slavery with the theory of our institutions, as well as its inherent injustice. One of his first political acts, in the legislature of Illinois in 1837, was a protest against slavery; in the national Congress he was an earnest opponent of the encroachments of this fell system; and in his political campaigns, he was faithful to his anti-slavery principles, even in the most uncultivated and benighted districts, where their advocacy called forth the bitterest prejudice and odium.

Yet, in his opposition to slavery, as in all things, he showed a just moderation. He scrupulously respected the constitutional rights of the States, he claimed no right to interfere with slavery, except so far as, transcending the limits of State politics, it claimed to control the policy of the nation, or demanded permission to extend itself over territories as yet unpolluted by the steps of a bondman. And in thus restricting the progress of slavery, he was but following the example of the framers of the Constitution and the founders of the Government. In his speech at the Cooper Institute, he has collected the facts on this subject, showing that the views of the Republican party were simply a conservative return to the principles of our early statesmen, Southern as well as Northern. Indeed, it was from the recorded views and acts of the great statesmen of the South, that he imbibed his opposition to slavery, and his determination to resist its progress.

"Great Washington's indignant shade
Forever urged him on;
He heard, by Monticello's glade,
The voice of Jefferson."

But what is particularly admirable, is the fact that his hatred of slavery never degenerated into hatred of the slaveholder. He waged war with sin, not with persons;

recognizing the truth that men might blindly uphold what he saw was wrong, and yet be as good men as himself. Both the firmness and moral courage with which he maintained his views in the face of obloquy, and the Christian gentleness and charity with which he held them, deserve the grateful recognition of every section in our reunited land.

And if Lincoln had the moderation of charity, he had the moderation of wisdom as well. He belonged to that best class of statesmen in free, constitutional governments, the advocates of Conservative Progress. To retain all that is good in old institutions, to get rid of all that is bad, and adopt whatever improvements the times demand, yet never being in too great haste to innovate, and always paying due regard to the claims of prescription and usage,—this was, in brief, his political creed.

His childhood spent in a slave State, his manhood in a free,—well versed in our constitutional history, and understanding both the nature of our institutions and the character of our people, with sagacious prescience he foresaw the inevitable conflict which must arise between institutions founded upon slave labor and those founded upon paid labor, and foretold that the latter would be victorious. Firm was his faith in God and in the right; hence was it that in the four long, weary, anxious years of civil war, he bore up trustful and undaunted while so many doubted and feared.

Let us consider him, further, in that capacity, in which he goes down in history immortal, as the ruler and preserver of his country, through fearful storm and peril. In this position he had a conspicuous stage for the exercise of that wisdom and those virtues which distinguished him, but which, had they not been called forth and tested by such occasion and opportunity, might have made him but the "village Hampden," the great man of some little com-

munity, instead of one of the foremost figures in the grand pageant of human history.

The very mode in which he entered upon the duties of his office, inspired good men with confidence. It was plain that he solemnly felt the vast responsibilities imposed upon him, and that he looked devoutly to the Supreme Ruler of the world for direction, wisdom, and strength. In that touching and tender farewell which he addressed to his old friends and neighbors in Springfield, assembled at the railway station, on his departure for Washington, he declared that he placed all his reliance in the Divine Being for support, adding these memorable words: "I hope that you, my friends, will all pray that I may receive that Divine assistance, without which I cannot succeed, but with which success is certain." The sincerity and the depth of his trust in the Almighty, appears in frequent declarations in the addresses he gave to public bodies and assemblies on his progress to the Capitol, as well as during the course of his tried and arduous administration.

Again, he had confidence in the substantial good sense, intelligence, and virtue of the people,—a confidence in which many timid men were sadly wanting, but which the event proved not to be misplaced.

Another trait which he had occasion to exhibit before reaching Washington, was that of personal courage,—not mere brute courage, but the courage which springs from moral principle,—a noble trait of character, when employed to lead a man boldly and unflinchingly in the path of duty. The deep-laid plot to assassinate him near Baltimore, or on his passage through that city, detected through the vigilance of President Felton, of the Philadelphia and Baltimore Railroad, was communicated to him, if I am not mistaken, before he made that speech in Independence Hall, on the birthday of Washington, in which he said,—speaking of that principle which was the central point of

his political creed, the equal rights of all men to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness,—"If this country cannot be saved without giving up that principle, I was about to say I would rather be assassinated on this spot than surrender it;" soon afterwards adding, "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 had, very naturally, asked himself the question, "Why is it that any party of my fellow-citizens, for the welfare of all of whom I have the same sincere desire, should seek my life?" and the answer had been, "Because I am the advocate of those principles of impartial freedom which lie at the foundation of our whole fabric of government." We may imagine the earnestness with which he said to himself, "Never, *never* will I surrender those principles: I would rather be assassinated on this spot." His were all the resolution, the heroism, the devotion, and the self-sacrifice of the martyr; and when he went to our Capitol, and all the time he felt, and thought, and worked for us in the chair of state, he was holding his life in his hands. Lover, too, of the people as he was, confiding and trusting in them almost without measure, we can imagine the grief he must have felt at learning that any of them could be so base as to plot against him, whose sole aim was to do them all the good in his power. But this was grief, rather than indignation. Who doubts that for the conspirators themselves, his would have been the sublime prayer, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do!" Those of us whose privilege it was to gaze upon his face as he passed our station on the same morning in which he had made that speech in Independence Hall, remember an expression of mingled earnestness, tenderness, and solemnity, which inspired every beholder with the utmost confidence in the man, and almost with veneration and awe.

I may remark, if you will allow me a moment's digres-

sion, that there was in the face of our martyred President, and in his soft, lustrous, and beautiful eyes, a delicate, indefinable expression of intelligence, as well as of goodness, to which none of his photographs—with all their "brutal fidelity," as Goldwin Smith so well calls it, to the mere material features, without the light of the eyes and the play of the soul,—do anything like justice. Every discerning beholder would "easily believe him a good man, gladly a great man."

It was with great reluctance, as I happen to know, that he consented to the change in the mode and time of his journey, by which the foul plot was frustrated. He insisted upon adhering to the published programme, until overborne by the few gentlemen in this vicinity who were cognizant of the conspiracy, and finally by messengers sent to Harrisburg by General Scott and Senator Seward. It is needless to repeat the fact, that there is no truth whatever in the story of his going to Washington in disguise. *That* mode of seeking escape from peril has been recently illustrated by the champion of a different civilization,—illustrated, too, in a mode surpassing the wildest inventions of sensation penny-a-liners in the case of President Lincoln. In his whole life at Washington, surrounded by concealed and open foes, and often within striking distance from the camp of the enemy; in the free access to his person allowed at all times; in his walks, often late at night, between his house and the departments of his secretaries; in his visit to Richmond, before the fires of intense hatred had had time to smoulder, he manifested the same confiding fearlessness. He was too good a man himself, to be very suspicious of others; and he was too much engrossed in his cares for his country to have much thought for his personal safety.

And this was but one of the modes in which he showed his entire unselfishness. Truly, our honest, homely, homespun hero, was as selfless as the Arthur of romance. In

one of his addresses to the people in 1858, he said: "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 and 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 American Independence." The same feeling of the insignificance of self as compared with the great principles at stake in his election, appears in his public expressions on various occasions, on both of the times that he was chosen President. The honors which were given him he considered as paid only to the majesty of the nation, and the *great cause* which it was given him to represent. When informed of his late election, on the night of election day, he said: "I am thankful to God for this approval of the people; but while deeply grateful for this mark of their confidence in me, if I know my heart my gratitude is free from any taint of personal triumph. I do not impugn the motives of any one opposed to me. It is no pleasure for me to triumph over any one, but I give thanks to the Almighty for this evidence of the people's resolution to stand by free government and the rights of humanity."

As a ruler, Lincoln exhibited the prime virtue of a constitutional magistrate, respect for the law, and constant recognition of all the rights guaranteed to the people. He would not even do good, if it led him beyond the line within which his just authority was circumscribed. But at the same time he was no martinet, no legal pedant. Sagaciously reading the true spirit of the Constitution, he saw that it empowered him to suspend the writ of habeas

corpus, and to use all the means for the suppression of the rebellion which are recognized by the common law of civil societies. And when States, by plunging into war, had forfeited the guarantees of the Constitution to loyal and peaceful States, he used those rights with which the national authority is invested by the law of nature and of nations, gladly availing himself of this legitimate authority to perform one of the sublimest acts in human history,—the act which struck the shackles from four millions of slaves. Rarely has the opportunity of a deed of such sublime beneficence, such far-reaching consequences, such undying renown, been granted to a ruler among men; but if the occasion was a rare one, it found an agent of rare worth and fitness. Fitting indeed it was, that he whose whole political life had been spent in the consistent advocacy of impartial liberty and the rights of man, the great longing of whose soul had been, as he himself declared, "that all men, everywhere, might be free," whose sympathy for the oppressed, moreover, was so single and so pure, untainted with partisan feeling or sectional bitterness, with aught of malice or uncharitableness, should have been selected as the instrument in that wonderful work of Divine Providence. And patient, tried, laborious as he was, bent down beneath his fearful weight of anxieties, so that a touching sadness became the master expression of a face which faithfully told the feelings of the heart, grateful let us be that he was permitted the high and holy joy, the deep, supreme satisfaction, which must have given the hour in which he wrote the Proclamation of Freedom, a solemn happiness well worth the price of even a lifetime of pain and care. I deem it by much the grandest feature in this act of emancipation, as far as the President was concerned, that it was both the fruit and the triumph of the moral and religious principles upon the subject of slavery, which he had conscientiously adopted and faithfuly maintained. It was the

triumph of Right, not merely of expediency or of necessity, military or political; but simply as an act of wise and successful statesmanship, leaving out of view higher considerations, it is one of the most brilliant in history, and will carry the name of its author with honor down to the end of time.

Another quality in which President Lincoln was pre-eminent is his rare clemency. It was a great pleasure to him, when he could do it consistently with his duty, to sign a pardon or reprieve. "It makes me rested, after a hard day's work," he said, "if I can find some good excuse for saving a man's life, and I go to bed happy as I think how joyous the signing of my name will make him and his family and his friends." No less noteworthy is his utter freedom from any feeling of hatred or malice or revenge. Deeply as he felt the guilt of rebellion, he preferred to look upon the rebels as misguided, rather than wicked men; judging not lest he should himself be judged. But what is particularly admirable is that this gentleness was unmixed with weakness. He was as firm and unyielding, as persistent and uncompromising, as any of the renowned men of iron mould, the Cromwells or the Jacksons of history; but no other ruler, least of all amidst the strife and bitterness of civil war, was ever so forgiving and so merciful. In giving him this praise, I will make no abatements. I consider this part of his character as an application of the spirit of Christianity in the government of nations, worthy to be an example for all ages. And while I trust that all that justice really requires will be done, in meting out to the leaders of the rebellion such punishment as shall best conduce to the prevention of future revolts, I trust, too, that in all the councils of our rulers such mercy will be ever exhibited as is worthy of a Christian people and an enlightened age.

Another feature in our late President's administration

deserves our cordial acknowledgment; I mean his full recognition of the rights of conscience, even when they stood in apparent opposition to measures which he considered it his highest duty to adopt. Without question, the government of the United States, in the recent rebellion, made the fullest recognition which has ever been made of the right of men to be relieved from military service, if they feel that their duty to God and their own consciences forbids them to take part in war. Much of the praise for this wise action is due to Congress, much to the Secretary of War, and, perhaps, other members of the Cabinet; but undoubtedly much also to the late President himself. He did not sneer at scruples which he did not himself entertain; but understanding them fully, and respecting their source, he received every application for relief with kindness and attention, declaring that "for those appealing to him on conscientious grounds, he should do the best he could in his own conscience, and his oath to the law."

Of high qualities of statesmanship in time of peace, our late Chief Magistrate gave clear indications, although he had little opportunity to exercise them. Had he been permitted to lead us through the next four years, I cannot doubt that he would have shown great ability in the work of reorganization, and in fostering the great industrial interests of the nation, summoning

> "War and waste,
> To fruitful strifes, and rivalries of peace."

As a member of Congress, he had been an able advocate of a wise system of internal improvements; and in almost the last hour of his life, he sent a message to the miners of Nevada and Colorado, which evinced the far-sighted policy with which he intended to promote emigration to those regions, and assist in developing their re-

sources, until America should become "the treasury of the world."

To speak of minor merits in such a man would be to wrong his virtues, were it not that it is in little things after all that much of the best excellence of human character consists. Let me remind you, then, of his patience, and diligence, his habit of inquiring into the whole of a subject, and examining it on all sides, the courtesy and attention with which he listened to the opinions of his opponents, his affability to all comers, his uniform good temper, kindness, and generosity.

But his highest merit as a statesman is the same as his highest merit as a man,—that his one end and aim was to do what is right. "It is my earnest desire," he said to a delegation that visited him in 1862, "to know the will of Providence in this matter. And if I can learn what it is, I will do it." To another delegation, who urged him to emancipate the slaves, he said, "I can assure you that the subject is on my mind, by day and night, more than any other. *Whatever shall appear to be God's will, I will do.*" To some men, who, in 1854, while condemning the repeal of the Missouri Compromise, were still unwilling to advocate its restoration, lest they should "be thrown in company with the abolitionists," he said, "Stand with anybody that stands *right.* Stand with him while he is right, and *part* with him when he goes *wrong.*" Speaker Colfax reports that once, speaking of an eminent statesman, the President said: "When a question confronts him, he always and naturally argues it from the stand-point of which is the better policy; but with me, my only desire is to see what is right." "And this," the Speaker adds, "is the key to his life."

I come now to consider President Lincoln in the highest of all relations,—those he bore to his Maker. And first, from what I can learn of his life, I cannot doubt that he

was always a religious man. Taught at his mother's knee to pray, from childhood an habitual reader of the Holy Bible, accustomed to test all measures by their conformity to the will of God and His justice, careful to walk before men in accordance with His law, looking up to Him with faith and confidence as the Preserver and Protector of good men and just nations, his whole life and character exhibited the restraining and the moulding power of religious principle. In speaking, afterwards, of the extraordinary difficulties at the beginning of his administration, he said: "I was early brought to a lively reflection, that nothing would succeed, without direct assistance of the Almighty. I have often wished that I was a more devout man than I am; nevertheless, amid the greatest difficulties of my administration, when I could not see any other resort, I would place my whole reliance in God, knowing all would go well, and that He would decide for the right." And oh! happiest among all the thickly-clustered glories of his honored life, sweetest of the consolations which abide with us now that he is gone—chastened in the school of bitter trial and overwhelming care, and visited in mercy by the Spirit of Him whose righteousness he strove to fulfil before men, ere the end came,—so sad, but sad only for us,—he could say, "I know that my Redeemer liveth," he knew, as we reverently trust, that his sins had been washed away, he loved his Saviour, lived in constant communion with Him, and received at His hands the bounties of grace, mercy, and peace.

For such a man, for such faithful and unprecedented services, had America no better a reward to give than a bullet, shot from behind his back? But I cannot trust myself to speak of that scene to which my thoughts never revert without a chill of horror. "Useless" was the deed, even for the vile cause it was intended to serve; and nameless be the doer forevermore. I cannot conceive how any man

of heart or sense could yield to the prurient curiosity which creates a demand for the portraits of the wretched malefactor, or the details of his disreputable life. Returning to the question I have asked, I vindicate my country from the charge of ingratitude and insensibility. The anomalous act of a moral maniac shall not obscure the splendor of that tribute which she pays her preserver from her heart of hearts. And of him, fondly and regretfully as we may picture the happiness which might have awaited him in four years of peaceful rule, and afterwards in honored retirement, sinking at last, like Washington, in ripe old age, to rest, amidst a nation's blessings and a nation's tears, yet may we not say, as was said of the great and good Agricola, in Rome, "Tu vero felix, non vitæ tantum claritate, sed etiam opportunitate mortis." "Happy not only in the glory of thy life, but also in the timeliness of thy death." The work was substantially accomplished, his country was saved; and a joy unspeakable, as those who saw his face report, had already chased from his countenance the clouds of sorrow and of care which through four years of agony had been gathering upon it. He had walked the streets of the capital of the rebellion, without the pride, but with the power, of a conqueror. He had left his countrymen, in his last Inaugural Address, a most precious legacy, of all state papers the most fully permeated with the spirit of Christianity. His last signature to an act of Congress, confirmed the ordinance that our coinage should henceforth bear the motto, "In God we trust;" his last message was one of sympathy with the toiling miners of the far West, and of joyful anticipation of the development of the vast mineral resources of our land; and his last act, through which his life was taken, was prompted, against much reluctancy, by the kindly consideration, "I should be unwilling to have the people disappointed." And so, trusting God and loving his Redeemer,

rejoicing in the coming restoration of the nation, and the freedom of the slave, looking forward with patriotic hope and pride to the happiness and prosperity which shall bless the reunited land, now that the great source of bitterness and contention has been removed, without a taint of personal triumph, without one selfish, or revengeful feeling, "with malice towards none, with charity to all," by a painless transition he entered into rest.

It was in our day. Students of Haverford, that this man lived, and toiled for us, and died. At the time of life in which the most vivid and the most lasting impressions are made upon the mind, you have seen his whole career as ruler of the land, and have watched with intensest interest every step in the great struggle which will mark an epoch in the history of our race. And is there no responsibility attending the high privilege of contemplating such a character in our own time, and having had before our eyes such an example? Are we not rebuked in the presence of that perfect manliness and integrity, that simplicity and singleness of purpose, that modesty and unselfishness, that energy and fidelity to duty, that love of the right and supreme desire to do the right, that faith in the people and in liberal principles of government, that faith, above all, in his Saviour and his God? Shall we not strive to appropriate to ourselves some portion of the lessons taught by his simple and majestic virtues? Shall we not strive to be worthy of such a leader, and such a model? Not ours to fill so conspicuous a station, or to play so important a part in the affairs of men; yet the same qualities which fitted him for his sphere, will fit us for our spheres, and our only duty is to do faithfully that work which is given us to do. How would *he* have acted in the place of any one of us,—how borne himself amid the trials and responsibilities by which we are from time to time surrounded? I would not speak in adulation of a mortal man. Human as he was, he

must have had his share of the weaknesses of human nature, although it is hard to find such in his character. If he could speak to us from the tomb, he would say, "Follow me only so far as I have followed Christ." Yet human examples of excellence are salutary in encouraging us and stimulating us in our attempts to imitate the highest example; and, for some of the noblest traits of human character, where shall we find a better model?

I cannot forbear alluding, before I close, to a few of the lessons which we may derive from the great conflict of the last four years, in which our fallen chief held the foremost place.

The first,—and it is one which we would do well to heed in the still undecided problems before us,—is the futility of all attempts to allay contentions or avert difficulties by compromises and concessions, at the cost of any sacrifice of the eternal principles of justice. This was the sad mistake even of many honest men, who fancied that peace and safety might be bought by quietly waiving opposition to the extension of slavery over free and uncontaminated ground. It should have been enough for such men to consider that, by thus waiving our opposition to bad measures, which we had both the legal right and the power to prevent, we became sharers in the crime.

Again, how monstrous was the delusion of those men who talked of silencing all agitation, by repealing every restriction, and allowing slavery to have its own way in all things! I cannot better expose this delusion than in words which Lincoln uttered in one of his public addresses in 1854: "Slavery is founded in the selfishness of man's nature; opposition to it in his love of justice. These principles are in eternal antagonism; and when brought into collision, so fiercely as slavery extension brings them, shocks, throes, and convulsions must ceaselessly follow. Repeal the Missouri Compromise; repeal all compromise;

repeal the Declaration of Independence; repeal all past history,—*you still cannot repeal human nature.* It still will be the abundance of man's heart that slavery extension is wrong; and out of the abundance of his heart his mouth will continue to speak."

Another lesson which we have learned in bitter experience is the ruinous consequences of false political principles. The *cause* of the war was undoubtedly the aggressive spirit of slavery; but the great instrument through which the rebellion was set in motion and organized was the pernicious doctrine of State sovereignty as paramount to the national sovereignty. A doctrine so opposed to the first principles of political science, and so fatal to all national security and stability, it would be hard to devise. Yet, enforced by selfish interest and party feeling, this fatal dogma was adopted by large bodies of men, and even whole communities, till the humiliating spectacle was presented to the world—to my mind the crowning degradation of our long years of base subserviency and political bondage—of a man who claimed to be the Chief Magistrate of the whole country, sworn to preserve, protect, and defend its Constitution and its laws,—uttering, in a message to Congress, a declaration so palpably absurd as this, that while the several States had no right to leave the Union, the General Government had no right and no power to prevent their leaving the Union!

Another delusion, founded in gross ignorance of the political history of the country, was the denial of the right of the Government to prohibit slaveholders to take their "property," in the bodies of men, into the Territories. Another, the supposition that any series of concessions would satisfy the insatiable monster, Slavery, until the whole country was under his feet; not seeing, as did the clear head of the Western statesman, that, in the inevitable conflict between the two systems of civilization, one or the

other must *completely* triumph, so that the country would either be *all* slave territory or *all* free. Another still, was distrust of the political virtue of the men of the free States, doubting their capacity of self-sacrificing patriotism, and deeming it *possible* that they would surrender their principles rather than their ease.

Still another lesson is found in the consideration that the bloody strife might have been averted, had the one party had from the first the firmness to insist upon the right, and the other the wisdom, confining itself to the sphere in which it was left free to act by the Constitution, to attempt no aggression which would excite the moral feeling and provoke the opposition of its neighbor.

From all these facts I would draw a practical lesson for ourselves,—a lesson which I deem it an especial duty of my office as an instructor in a free land to enforce,—it is the duty which devolves upon every one of us, of studying carefully and thoroughly the character of our institutions and people, the true principles of government and social science, and the merits of the political measures from time to time in dispute before us. It is a sad thing for a man *not to understand his own times*. Many a man will tell you with regret that he voted against President Lincoln at his first election from a mistaken conception of the condition of the country, of the character and purposes of the slave power, and of the policy of the different parties in the canvass. Let us strive to take such a wide, comprehensive, and impartial view of the field, in all future contests, as shall keep us from such error. To that end we should endeavor to attain sound judgments upon all the questions of political economy and national interests which are likely to come up. And, for a practical rule to guide us, we can have no better than the maxim of our departed Chief, "Ask yourselves only which side is *in the right*." Be ours the spirit, and the faith, and the noble resolve which Lincoln has clothed in immor-

tal words,—reversing, in the might and in the wisdom of simple goodness, one of the profoundest maxims of false state-craft,—"*Let us have faith that* RIGHT MAKES MIGHT; *and in that faith let us, to the end, dare to do our duty, as we understand it.*"

Then, thou pure martyr in thy country's cause, martyr in the cause of divine justice and of human rights, if from thy example, enforced and hallowed by the shedding of thy blood, thy countrymen shall adopt this faith and be loyal to it in their lives; if, banishing all empty boasting and foolish pride, cherishing kindly feelings for all other nations, while true to the cause of freedom throughout the world, willing and anxious to improve and amend our own institutions, not deeming that we have already attained, faithful at all times to the principles of human rights on which our Government is founded, and remembering that the same just God who has punished us for one sin will punish us for other sins if we are guilty of them, we strive to realize the ideal of a Christian state, deciding every public question by the highest rule of duty, and of duty alone, then shall we pay thee a tribute which thou wouldst have prized above all monuments and columns, all statues and inscriptions, all eulogy and renown. But there is one thing which we will not omit, as we strive to honor thy memory, and avenge thy death. It is to wage unceasing war with thy real assassin, who still stalks through the streets of yonder city, driving God's image, if cut in ebony, from the railway car; and still, appealing to the lowest and most vulgar prejudice, denies the privilege of suffrage to all men,—however intelligent, virtuous, thrifty, patriotic, and wise,—whose skin God has made of a different hue from our own.

Young men of America, let us prize, as we ought, our country's rich inheritance in great examples. And now, another star is added to the brilliant constellation of our

patriot sages, worthy to shine in felicitous conjunction with the purest luminaries of our earlier days. Its propitious beams shall quicken within us integrity and faith, devotion to principle and to the right, confidence in the substantial worth of our institutions, joined with the constant desire to make them better and better; love for our fellow-men, unlimited by lines of race or creed; and all directed, shaped, and sanctified by love of the great Father of all. Let us honor our martyred chief by sincere admiration, by immortal praises, and, so far as the ability is granted us, by resembling him. *Similitudine decoremus.* So shall we be worthy to be the compatriots of WASHINGTON and of LINCOLN; so shall we do our part in upholding the fair fabric of freedom and of virtue, the proud boast of our institutions, and the best secular hope of mankind.