

had been left far behind by the advancing conscience and needs of the progressing race.

The one nature magnified labor, the other nature depreciated and despised it. The one honored the laborer, and the other scorned him. The one was simple and direct; the other, complex, full of sophistries and self-excuses. The one was free to look all that claimed to be truth in the face, and separate the error from the truth that might be in it; the other did not dare to investigate, because its own established prejudices and systems were dearer to it than the truth itself, and so even truth went about in it doing the work of error. The one was ready to state broad principles, of the brotherhood of man, the universal fatherhood and justice of God, however imperfectly it might realize them in practice; the other denied even the principles, and so dug deep and laid below its special sins the broad foundation of a consistent, acknowledged sinfulness.

In a word, one nature was full of the influences of freedom, the other nature was full of the influences of slavery.

In general, these two regions of our national life were separated by a geographical boundary. One was the spirit of the North, the other was the spirit of the South. But the Southern nature was by no means all a Southern thing. There it had an organized, established form, a certain definite, established institution about which it clustered. Here, lacking advantage, it lived in less expressive ways and so lived more weakly.

There, there was the horrible sacrament of slavery, the outward and visible sign round which the inward and spiritual temper gathered and kept itself alive. But who doubts that among us the spirit of slavery lived and thrived? Its formal existence had been swept away from one State after another,

partly on conscientious, partly on economical grounds, but its spirit was here, in every sympathy that Northern winds carried to the listening ear of the Southern slaveholder, and in every oppression of the weak by the strong, every proud assumption of idleness over labor which echoed the music of Southern life back to us.

Here in our midst lived that worse and falser nature, side by side with the true and better nature which God meant should be the nature of Americans, and of which he was shaping out the type and champion in his chosen David of the sheepfold.

Here then we have the two. The history of our country for many years is the history of how these two elements of American life approached collision. They wrought their separate reactions on each other. Men debate and quarrel even now about the rise of Northern Abolitionism, about whether the Northern Abolitionists were right or wrong, whether they did harm or good.

How vain the quarrel is! It was inevitable. It was inevitable in the nature of things that two such natures living here together should be set violently against each other. It is inevitable, till man be far more unfeeling and untrue to his convictions than he has always been, that a great wrong asserting itself vehemently should arouse to no less vehement assertion the opposing right.

The only wonder is that there was not more of it. The only wonder is that so few were swept away to take, by an impulse they could not resist, their stand of hatred to the wicked institution. The only wonder is that only one brave, reckless man came forth to cast himself, almost single-handed, with a hopeless hope, against the proud power that he hated, and trust to the influence of a soul marching on

into the history of his countrymen to stir them to a vindication of the truth he loved. At any rate, whether the Abolitionists were wrong or right, there grew up about their violence, as there always will about the extremism of extreme reformers, a great mass of feeling, catching their spirit and asserting it firmly, though in more moderate degrees and methods.

About the nucleus of Abolitionism grew up a great American Anti-Slavery determination, which at last gathered strength enough to take its stand to insist upon the checking and limiting the extension of the power of slavery, and to put the type-man, whom God had been preparing for the task, before the world, to do the work on which it had resolved. Then came discontent, secession, treason. The two American natures, long advancing to encounter, met at last, and a whole country, yet trembling with the shock, bears witness how terrible the meeting was.

Thus I have tried briefly to trace out the gradual course by which God brought the character which he designed to be the controlling character of this new world into distinct collision with the hostile character which it was to destroy and absorb, and set it in the person of its type-man in the seat of highest power. The character formed under the discipline of freedom and the character formed under the discipline of slavery developed all their difference and met in hostile conflict when this war began.

Notice, it was not only in what he did and was toward the slave, it was in all he did and was everywhere that we accept Mr. Lincoln's character as the true result of our free life and institutions. Nowhere else could have come forth that genuine love of the people which in him no one could suspect of being either the cheap flattery of the demagogue or the ab-

stract philanthropy of the philosopher, which made our President, while he lived, the centre of a great household land, and when he died so cruelly made every humblest household thrill with a sense of personal bereavement which the death of rulers is not apt to bring. Nowhere else than out of the life of freedom could have come that personal unselfishness and generosity which made so gracious a part of this good man's character.

How many soldiers feel yet the pressure of a strong hand that clasped theirs once as they lay sick and weak in the dreary hospital! How many ears will never lose the thrill of some kind word he spoke—he who could speak so kindly—to promise a kindness that always matched his word! How often he surprised the land with a clemency which made even those who questioned his policy love him the more for what they called his weakness,—seeing how the man in whom God had most embodied the discipline of freedom not only could not be a slave, but could not be a tyrant! In the heartiness of his mirth and his enjoyment of simple joys; in the directness and shrewdness of perception which constituted his wit; in the untired, undiscouraged faith in human nature which he always kept; and perhaps, above all, in the plainness and quiet, unostentatious earnestness and independence of his religious life, in his humble love and trust of God—in all, it was a character such as only freedom knows how to make.

Now it was in this character rather than in any mere political position that the fitness of Mr. Lincoln to stand forth in the struggle of the two American natures really lay. We are told that he did not come to the Presidential chair pledged to the abolition of slavery. When shall we learn that with all true men it is not what they intend to do, but it

is what the qualities of their natures bind them to do, that determines their career!

The President came to his power full of the blood, strong in the strength of freedom. He came there free, and hating slavery. He came there, leaving on record words like these spoken three years before and never contradicted. He had said:

“A house divided against itself cannot stand. I believe this Government cannot endure permanently, half slave and half free. I do not expect the Union to be dissolved; I do not expect the house to fall; but I expect it will cease to be divided. It will become all one thing or all the other.”

When the question came, he knew which thing he meant that it should be. His whole nature settled that question for him. Such a man must always live as he used to say he lived (and was blamed for saying it) “controlled by events, not controlling them.” And with a reverent and clear mind, to be controlled by events means to be controlled by God.

For such a man there was no hesitation when God brought him up face to face with slavery and put the sword into his hand and said, “Strike it down dead.” He was a willing servant then. If ever the face of a man writing solemn words glowed with a solemn joy, it must have been the face of Abraham Lincoln as he bent over the page where the Emancipation Proclamation of 1863 was growing into shape, and giving manhood and freedom as he wrote it to hundreds of thousands of his fellow men. Here was a work in which his whole nature could rejoice. Here was an act that crowned the whole culture of his life.

All the past, the free boyhood in the woods, the free youth upon the farm, the free manhood in the honorable citizen's

employments—all his freedom gathered and completed itself in this. And as the swarthy multitudes came in, ragged, and tired, and hungry, and ignorant, but free forever from anything but the memorial scars of the fetters and the whip, singing rude songs in which the new triumph of freedom struggled and heaved below the sad melody that had been shaped for bondage; as in their camps and hovels there grew up to their half-superstitious eyes the image of a great Father almost more than man, to whom they owed their freedom,—were they not half right?

For it was not to one man, driven by stress of policy, or swept off by a whim of pity, that the noble act was due. It was to the American nature, long kept by God in his own intentions till his time should come, at last emerging into sight and power, and bound up and embodied in this best and most American of all Americans, to whom we and those poor frightened slaves at last might look up together and love to call him, with one voice, our Father.

Thus we have seen something of what the character of Mr. Lincoln was, and how it issued in the life he lived. It remains for us to see how it resulted also in the terrible death which has laid his murdered body here in our town among lamenting multitudes to-day. It is not a hard question, though it is sad to answer. We saw the two natures, the nature of slavery and the nature of freedom, at last set against each other, come at last to open war. Both fought, fought long, fought bravely; but each, as was perfectly natural, fought with the tools and in the ways which its own character had made familiar to it.

The character of slavery was brutal, barbarous, and treacherous; and so the whole history of the slave power during the war has been full of ways of warfare brutal, bar-

barous, and treacherous beyond anything that man bred in freedom could have been driven to by the most hateful passions. It is not to be marvelled at. It is not to be set down as the special sin of the war. It goes back beyond that. It is the sin of the system. It is the barbarism of slavery. When slavery went to war to save its life, what wonder if its barbarism grew barbarous a hundred-fold!

One would be attempting a task which once was almost hopeless, but which now is only needless, if he set himself to convince a Northern congregation that slavery was a barbarian institution. It would be hardly more necessary to try to prove how its barbarism has shown itself during this war. The same spirit which was blind to the wickedness of breaking sacred ties, of separating man and wife; of beating women till they dropped down dead, of organizing licentiousness and sin into commercial systems, of forbidding knowledge and protecting itself with ignorance, of putting on its arms and riding out to steal a State at the beleaguered ballot-box away from freedom—in one word (for its simplest definition is its worst dishonor), the spirit that gave man the ownership in man in time of peace has found out yet more terrible barbarisms for the time of war.

It has hewed and burned the bodies of the dead. It has starved and mutilated its helpless prisoners. It has dealt by truth, not as men will in a time of excitement, lightly and with frequent violations, but with a cool and deliberate and systematic contempt. It has sent its agents into Northern towns to fire peaceful hotels where hundreds of peaceful men and women slept. It has undermined the prisons where its victims starved, and made all ready to blow with one blast their wretched life away. It has delighted in the lowest and basest scurrility even on the highest and most honorable lips.

It has corrupted the graciousness of women and killed out the truth of men.

I do not count up the terrible catalogue because I like to, nor because I wish to stir your hearts to passion. Even now, you and I have no right to indulge in personal hatred to the men who did these things. But we are not doing right by ourselves, by the President that we have lost, or by God who had a purpose in our losing him, unless we know thoroughly that it was this same spirit which we have seen to be a tyrant in peace and a savage in war that has crowned itself with the working of this final woe.

It was the conflict of the two American natures, the false and the true. It was slavery and freedom that met in their two representatives, the assassin and the President; and the victim of the last desperate struggle of the dying slavery lies dead to-day in Independence Hall.

Solemnly, in the sight of God, I charge this murder where it belongs, on slavery. I dare not stand here in his sight, and before him or you speak doubtful and double-meaning words of vague repentance, as if we had killed our President. We have sins enough, but we have not done this sin save as by weak concessions and timid compromises we have let the spirit of slavery grow strong and ripe for such a deed. In the barbarism of slavery the foul act and its foul method had their birth.

By all the goodness that there was in him; by all the love we had for him (and who shall tell how great it was); by all the sorrow that has burdened down this desolate and dreadful week,—I charge this murder where it belongs, on slavery. I bid you to remember where the charge belongs, to write it on the door-posts of your mourning houses, to teach it to your wondering children, to give it to the history

of these times, that all times to come may hate and dread the sin that killed our noblest President.

If ever anything were clear, this is the clearest. Is there the man alive who thinks that Abraham Lincoln was shot just for himself; that it was that one man for whom the plot was laid? The gentlest, kindest, most indulgent man that ever ruled a State! The man who knew not how to speak a word of harshness or how to make a foe! Was it he for whom the murderer lurked with a mere private hate?

It was not he, but what he stood for. It was law and liberty, it was government and freedom, against which the hate gathered and the treacherous shot was fired. And I know not how the crime of him who shoots at law and liberty in the crowded glare of a great theatre differs from theirs who have levelled their aim at the same great beings from behind a thousand ambuscades and on a hundred battle-fields of this long war. Every general in the field, and every false citizen in our midst at home, who has plotted and labored to destroy the lives of the soldiers of the republic, is brother to him who did this deed. The American nature, the American truths, of which our President was the anointed and supreme embodiment, have been embodied in multitudes of heroes who marched unknown and fell unnoticed in our ranks. For them, just as for him, character decreed a life and a death. The blood of all of them I charge on the same head. Slavery armed with treason was their murderer.

Men point out to us the absurdity and folly of this awful crime. Again and again we hear men say, "It was the worst thing for themselves they could have done. They have shot a representative man, and the cause he represented grows stronger and sterner by his death. Can it be that

so wise a devil was so foolish here? Must it not have been the act of one poor madman, born and nursed in his own reckless brain?"

My friends, let us understand this matter. It was a foolish act. Its folly was only equalled by its wickedness. It was a foolish act. But when did sin begin to be wise? When did wickedness learn wisdom? When did the fool stop saying in his heart, "There is no God," and acting godlessly in the absurdity of his impiety? The cause that Abraham Lincoln died for shall grow stronger by his death,—stronger and sterner. Stronger to set its pillars deep into the structure of our nation's life; sterner to execute the justice of the Lord upon his enemies. Stronger to spread its arms and grasp our whole land into freedom; sterner to sweep the last poor ghost of slavery out of our haunted homes.

But while we feel the folly of this act, let not its folly hide its wickedness. It was the wickedness of slavery putting on a foolishness for which its wickedness and that alone is responsible, that robbed the nation of a President and the people of a father. And remember this, that the folly of the slave power in striking the representative of freedom, and thinking that thereby it killed freedom itself, is only a folly that we shall echo if we dare to think that in punishing the representatives of slavery who did this deed, we are putting slavery to death.

Dispersing armies and hanging traitors, imperatively as justice and necessity may demand them both, are not killing the spirit out of which they sprang. The traitor must die because he has committed treason. The murderer must die because he has committed murder. Slavery must die, because out of it, and it alone, came forth the treason of the traitor and the murder of the murderer.

Do not say that it is dead. It is not, while its essential spirit lives. While one man counts another man his born inferior for the color of his skin, while both in North and South prejudices and practices which the law cannot touch, but which God hates, keep alive in our people's hearts the spirit of the old iniquity, it is not dead. The new American nature must supplant the old. We must grow like our President, in his truth, his independence, his religion, and his wide humanity. Then the character by which he died shall be in us, and by it we shall live. Then peace shall come that knows no war, and law that knows no treason; and full of his spirit a grateful land shall gather round his grave, and in the daily psalm of prosperous and righteous living thank God forever for his life and death.

So let him lie here in our midst to-day, and let our people go and bend with solemn thoughtfulness and look upon his face and read the lessons of his burial. As he paused here on his journey from the Western home and told us what by the help of God he meant to do, so let him pause upon his way back to his Western grave and tell us with a silence more eloquent than words how bravely, how truly, by the strength of God, he did it. God brought him up as he brought David up from the sheepfolds to feed Jacob, his people, and Israel, his inheritance. He came up in earnestness and faith, and he goes back in triumph.

As he pauses here to-day, and from his cold lips bids us bear witness how he has met the duty that was laid on him, what can we say out of our full hearts but this—"He fed them with a faithful and true heart, and ruled them prudently with all his power." The "Shepherd of the People!" that old name that the best rulers ever craved. What ruler ever won it like this dead President of ours? He fed us faithfully

and truly. He fed us with counsel when we were in doubt, with inspiration when we sometimes faltered, with caution when we would be rash, with calm, clear, trustful cheerfulness through many an hour when our hearts were dark. He fed hungry souls all over the country with sympathy and consolation. He spread before the whole land feasts of great duty and devotion and patriotism, on which the land grew strong. He fed us with solemn, solid truths. He taught us the sacredness of government, the wickedness of treason. He made our souls glad and vigorous with the love of liberty that was in his. He showed us how to love truth and yet be charitable—how to hate wrong and all oppression, and yet not treasure one personal injury or insult. He fed all his people, from the highest to the lowest, from the most privileged down to the most enslaved. Best of all, he fed us with a reverent and genuine religion. He spread before us the love and fear of God just in that shape in which we need them most, and out of his faithful service of a higher Master who of us has not taken and eaten and grown strong? "He fed them with a faithful and true heart."

Yes, till the last. For at the last, behold him standing with hand reached out to feed the South with mercy and the North with charity, and the whole land with peace, when the Lord who had sent him called him and his work was done!

He stood once on the battle-field of our own State, and said of the brave men who had saved it words as noble as any countryman of ours ever spoke. Let us stand in the country he has saved, and which is to be his grave and monument, and say of Abraham Lincoln what he said of the soldiers who had died at Gettysburg. . . .

May God make us worthy of the memory of Abraham Lincoln!