


## HENRY WARD BEECHER

ENRY WARD BEECHER, eminent American Congregational clergyman, lecturer, and author, son of Lyman Beecher, was born at Litchfield, Conn., June 24, 1813, and died at Brooklyn, N. Y., March 8, 1887. Graduating from Amherst College in 1834, he studied theology at Lane Seminary and settled in 1837 as a Presbyterian minister in Lawrenceburg, Ind., whence he shortly removed to Indianapolis, and preached there until 1847, when he received a call to Plymouth Church, Brooklyn. Here he acquired and maintained throughout his life a reputation as a pulpit orator of the first rank. He became deeply interested in politics, discussed frequently from the platform the great political questions of the day, and in 1856 and 1860 took an active part in the campaigns. In 1863, he also delivered many Union addresses in Great Britain on subjects relating to the Civil War. Among his chief published works, besides his many volumes of sermons and addresses, are "Lectures to Young Men," "Lecture Room Talks," "Star Papers," and "Yale Lectures on Preaching."

### EFFECT OF THE DEATH OF LINCOLN

DELIVERED AT BROOKLYN, APRIL 16, 1865

**A** GAIN a great leader of the people has passed through toil, sorrow, battle, and war, and come near to the promised land of peace, into which he might not pass over. Who shall recount our martyr's sufferings for this people? Since the November of 1860, his horizon has been black with storms. By day and by night, he trod a way of danger and darkness. On his shoulders rested a government dearer to him than his own life. At its integrity millions of men were striking at home. Upon this government foreign eyes lowered. It stood like a lone island in a sea full of storms, and every tide and wave seemed eager to devour it. . . .

Never did two such orbs of experience meet in one hemisphere, as the joy and the sorrow of the same week in this land. The joy was as sudden as if no man had expected it, and as entrancing as if it had fallen a sphere from heaven. It rose up over sobriety, and swept business

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from its moorings, and ran down through the land in irresistible course. Men embraced each other in brotherhood that were strangers in the flesh. They sang, or prayed, or, deeper yet, many could only think thanksgiving and weep gladness. That peace was sure; that government was firmer than ever; that the land was cleansed of plague; that the ages were opening to our footsteps, and we were to begin a march of blessings; that blood was stanchd, and scowling enmities were sinking like storms beneath the horizon; that the dear fatherland, nothing lost, much gained, was to rise up in unexampled honor among the nations of the earth—these thoughts, and that indistinguishable throng of fancies, and hopes, and desires, and yearnings, that filled the soul with tremblings like the heated air of midsummer days—all these kindled up such a surge of joy as no words may describe.

In one hour joy lay without a pulse, without a gleam or breath. A sorrow came that swept through the land as huge storms sweep through the forest and field, rolling thunder along the sky, disheveling the flowers, daunting every singer in thicket or forest, and pouring blackness and darkness across the land and up the mountains. Did ever so many hearts, in so brief a time, touch two such boundless feelings? It was the uttermost of joy; it was the uttermost of sorrow—noon and midnight, without a space between.

The blow brought not a sharp pang. It was so terrible that at first it stunned sensibility. Citizens were like men awakened at midnight by an earthquake and bewildered to find everything that they were accustomed to trust wavering and falling. The very earth was no longer solid. The first feeling was the least. Men waited to get straight to feel. They wandered in the streets as if groping after some

impending dread, or undeveloped sorrow, or some one to tell them what ailed them. They met each other as if each would ask the other, "Am I awake, or do I dream?" There was a piteous helplessness. Strong men bowed down and wept. Other and common griefs belonged to some one in chief; this belonged to all. It was each and every man's. Every virtuous household in the land felt as if its first-born were gone. Men were bereaved and walked for days as if a corpse lay unburied in their dwellings. There was nothing else to think of. They could speak of nothing but that; and yet of that they could speak only falteringly. All business was laid aside. Pleasure forgot to smile. The city for nearly a week ceased to roar. The great Leviathan lay down, and was still. Even avarice stood still, and greed was strangely moved to generous sympathy and universal sorrow. Rear to his name monuments, found charitable institutions, and write his name above their lintels; but no monument will ever equal the universal, spontaneous, and sublime sorrow that in a moment swept down lines and parties, and covered up animosities, and in an hour brought a divided people into unity of grief and indivisible fellowship of anguish. . . .

This nation has dissolved—but in tears only. It stands four-square, more solid to-day than any pyramid in Egypt. This people are neither wasted, nor daunted, nor disordered. Men hate slavery and love liberty with stronger hate and love to-day than ever before. The government is not weakened, it is made stronger. How naturally and easily were the ranks closed! Another steps forward, in the hour that the one fell, to take his place and his mantle; and I avow my belief that he will be found a man true to every instinct of liberty; true to the whole trust that is reposed in him; vigilant of the Constitution; careful of the laws; wise for

liberty, in that he himself, through his life, has known what it was to suffer from the stings of slavery, and to prize liberty from bitter personal experiences.

Where could the head of government in any monarchy be smitten down by the hand of an assassin, and the funds not quiver or fall one-half of one per cent? After a long period of national disturbance, after four years of drastic war, after tremendous drafts on the resources of the country, in the height and top of our burdens, the heart of this people is such that now, when the head of government is stricken down, the public funds do not waver, but stand as the granite ribs in our mountains.

Republican institutions have been vindicated in this experience as they never were before; and the whole history of the last four years, rounded up by this cruel stroke, seems, in the providence of God, to have been clothed, now, with an illustration, with a sympathy, with an aptness, and with a significance, such as we never could have expected nor imagined. God, I think, has said, by the voice of this event, to all nations of the earth, "Republican liberty, based upon true Christianity, is firm as the foundation of the globe."

Even he who now sleeps has, by this event, been clothed with new influence. Dead, he speaks to men who now willingly hear what before they refused to listen to. Now his simple and weighty words will be gathered like those of Washington, and your children and your children's children shall be taught to ponder the simplicity and deep wisdom of utterances which, in their time, passed, in party heat, as idle words. Men will receive a new impulse of patriotism for his sake and will guard with zeal the whole country which he loved so well. I swear you, on the altar

of his memory, to be more faithful to the country for which he has perished. They will, as they follow his hearse, swear a new hatred to that slavery against which he warred, and which, in vanquishing him, has made him a martyr and a conqueror. I swear you, by the memory of this martyr, to hate slavery with an unappeasable hatred. They will admire and imitate the firmness of this man, his inflexible conscience for the right, and yet his gentleness, as tender as a woman's, his moderation of spirit, which not all the heat of party could inflame, nor all the jars and disturbances of his country shake out of place. I swear you to an emulation of his justice, his moderation, and his mercy.

You I can comfort; but how can I speak to that twilight million to whom his name was as the name of an angel of God? There will be wailing in places which no minister shall be able to reach. When in hovel and in cot, in wood and in wilderness, in the field throughout the South, the dusky children, who looked upon him as that Moses whom God sent before them to lead them out of the land of bondage, learn that he has fallen, who shall comfort them? O, thou Shepherd of Israel, that didst comfort thy people of old, to thy care we commit the helpless, the long-wronged, and grieved.

And now the martyr is moving in triumphal march, mightier than when alive. The nation rises up at every stage of his coming. Cities and States are his pallbearers, and the cannon beats the hours with solemn progression. Dead, dead, dead, he yet speaketh. Is Washington dead? Is Hampden dead? Is David dead? Is any man that ever was fit to live dead? Disenthralled of flesh, and risen in the unobstructed sphere where passion never comes, he begins his illimitable work. His life now is grafted upon the

infinite, and will be fruitful as no earthly life can be. Pass on, thou that hast overcome. Your sorrows, O people, are his peace. Your bells and bands and muffled drums sound triumph in his ear. Wail and weep here; God made it echo joy and triumph there. Pass on.

Four years ago, O Illinois, we took from your midst an untried man and from among the people. We turn him to you a mighty conqueror. Not thine any more, but the nation's; not ours, but the world's. Give him place, O ye prairies. In the midst of this great continent his dust shall rest, a sacred treasure to myriads who shall pilgrim to that shrine to kindle anew their zeal and patriotism. Ye winds that move over the mighty places of the West, chant his requiem. Ye people, behold a martyr whose blood, as so many articulate words, pleads for fidelity, for law, for liberty.

ORATION AT THE RAISING OF "THE OLD FLAG" AT  
FORT SUMTER

DELIVERED APRIL 14, 1865

ON this solemn and joyful day we again lift to the breeze our father's flag, now again the banner of the *United States*, with the fervent prayer that God would crown it with honor, protect it from treason, and send it down to our children with all the blessings of civilization, liberty, and religion. Terrible in battle, may it be beneficent in peace. Happily no bird or beast of prey has been inscribed upon it. The stars that redeem night from darkness, and the beams of red light that beautify the morning, have been united upon its folds. As long as the sun endures, or the stars, may it wave over a nation neither enslaved nor enslaving. Once, and but once, has treason dishonored it. In that insane hour, when the guiltiest and bloodiest rebellion of time hurled their fires upon this fort, you sir [turning to

General Anderson], and a small heroic band, stood within these now crumbled walls and did gallant and just battle for the honor and defence of the nation's banner.

In that cope of fire this glorious flag still peacefully waved to the breeze above your head, unconscious of harm as the stars and skies above it. Once it was shot down. A gallant hand, in whose care this day it has been, plucked it from the ground and reared it again—"cast down, but not destroyed." After a vain resistance, with trembling hand and sad heart, you withdrew it from its height, closed its wings, and bore it far away, sternly to sleep amid the tumults of rebellion and the thunder of battle. The first act of war had begun. The long night of four years had set in. While the giddy traitors whirled in a maze of exhilaration, dim horrors were already advancing, that were ere long to fill the land with blood.

To-day you are returned again. We devoutly join with you in thanksgiving to Almighty God that he has spared your honored life and vouchsafed you the honors of this day. The heavens over you are the same; the same shores; morning comes, and evening, as they did. All else, how changed! What grim batteries crowd the burdened shores! What scenes have filled this air and disturbed these waters! These shattered heaps of shapeless stone are all that is left of Fort Sumter. Desolation broods in yonder sad city; solemn retribution hath avenged our dishonored banner! You have come back with honor who departed hence, four years ago, leaving the air sultry with fanaticism. The surging crowds that rolled up their frenzied shouts as the flag came down are dead, or scattered, or silent; and their habitations are desolate. Ruin sits in the cradle of treason. Rebellion has perished. But there flies the same flag that was insulted. With starry eyes it looks all over this bay for that banner that

supplanted it, and sees it not. You that then, for the day, were humbled are here again, to triumph once and forever. In the storm of that assault this glorious ensign was often struck; but, memorable fact, not one of its stars was torn out by shot or shell. It was a prophecy.

It said: "Not one State shall be struck from this nation by treason!" The fulfilment is at hand. Lifted to the air to-day, it proclaims, after four years of war, "Not a State is blotted out!"

Hail to the flag of our fathers, and our flag! Glory to the banner that has gone through four years black with tempests of war, to pilot the nation back to peace without dismemberment! And glory be to God, who, above all hosts and banners, hath ordained victory and shall ordain peace!

Wherefore have we come hither, pilgrims from distant places? Are we come to exult that Northern hands are stronger than Southern? No, but to rejoice that the hands of those who defend a just and beneficent government are mightier than the hands that assaulted it! Do we exult over fallen cities? We exult that a nation has not fallen. We sorrow with the sorrowful. We sympathize with the desolate. We look upon this shattered fort and yonder dilapidated city with sad eyes, grieved that men should have committed such treason and glad that God hath set such a mark upon treason that all ages shall dread and abhor it.

We exult, not for a passion gratified, but for a sentiment victorious; not for temper, but for conscience; not as we devoutly believe that our will is done, but that God's will hath been done. We should be unworthy of that liberty entrusted to our care if on such a day as this we sullied our hearts by feelings of aimless vengeance; and equally unworthy if we did not devoutly thank him who hath said, "Vengeance is

mine, I will repay, saith the Lord," that he hath set a mark upon arrogant Rebellion, ineffaceable while time lasts!

Since this flag went down on that dark day, who shall tell the mighty woes that have made this land a spectacle to angels and men? The soil has drunk blood and is glutted. Millions mourn for millions slain, or, envying the dead, pray for oblivion. Towns and villages have been razed. Fruitful fields have turned back to wilderness. It came to pass, as the prophet said: "The sun was turned to darkness, and the moon to blood." The course of law was ended. The sword sat chief magistrate in half the nation; industry was paralyzed; morals corrupted; the public weal invaded by rapine and anarchy; whole States ravaged by avenging armies. The world was amazed. The earth reeled. When the flag sank here, it was as if political night had come and all beasts of prey had come forth to devour.

That long night is ended! And for this returning day we have come from afar to rejoice and give thanks. No more war! No more accursed secession! No more slavery, that spawned them both!

Let no man misread the meaning of this unfolding flag! It says, "Government hath returned hitherto." It proclaims in the name of vindicated government peace and protection to loyalty; humiliation and pains to traitors. This is the flag of sovereignty. The nation, not the States, is sovereign. Restored to authority, this flag commands, not supplicates.

There may be pardon, but no concession. There may be amnesty and oblivion, but no honeyed compromises. The nation to-day has peace for the peaceful and war for the turbulent. The only condition of submission is to submit! There is the constitution, there are the laws, there is the

government. They rise up like mountains of strength that shall not be moved. They are the conditions of peace.

One nation, under one government, without slavery, has been ordained and shall stand. There can be peace on no other basis. On this basis reconstruction is easy and needs neither architect nor engineer. Without this basis no engineer or architect shall ever reconstruct these rebellious States.

We do not want your cities or your fields. We do not envy you your prolific soil or heavens full of perpetual summer. Let agriculture revel here; let manufactures make every stream twice musical; build fleets in every port; inspire the arts of peace with genius second only to that of Athens; and we shall be glad in your gladness and rich in your wealth.

All that we ask is unswerving loyalty and universal liberty. And that, in the name of this high sovereignty of the United States of America, we demand; and that, with the blessing of Almighty God, we will have!

We raise our fathers' banner, that it may bring back better blessings than those of old; that it may cast out the devil of discord; that it may restore lawful government and a prosperity purer and more enduring than that which it protected before; that it may win parted friends from their alienation; that it may inspire hope and inaugurate universal liberty; that it may say to the sword "Return to thy sheath," and to the plow and sickle, "Go forth;" that it may heal all jealousies, unite all policies, inspire a new national life, compact our strength, purify our principles, ennoble our national ambitions, and make this people great and strong, not for aggression and quarrelsomeness, but for the peace of the world, giving to us the glorious prerogative of leading all nations to juster laws, to more humane policies, to sincerer friend-