

HENRY WARD BEECHER AS AN ORATOR.

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with his literature, &c. Literature must be able to do the spiritual things which the Bible cannot, it is contended that not an especially rare or exceptional should have been, as this was not uniformly successful in the things, as far as concerns his physical services in the public sphere.

J. G. ARBUTHNOT.

Beecher's influence as a politician, as well as his moral and religious influence, it was never by any means so successful as his moral and religious influence. He was a man of a high and unswerving sense of duty, and a firm belief in the principles of the Christian religion.

His moral and religious influence was shown in his work as a pastor, and in his work as a writer. He was a man of a high and unswerving sense of duty, and a firm belief in the principles of the Christian religion.

During the winter of 1848, Mr. Beecher, being then in the city of New York, was invited to deliver a course of lectures at the City Hall. He accepted the invitation, and delivered a course of lectures which were highly appreciated by the audience. He was a man of a high and unswerving sense of duty, and a firm belief in the principles of the Christian religion.

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When in October, 1847, Henry Ward Beecher assumed the pastorate of Plymouth Church, Brooklyn, he was thirty-four years old. The first thing he did was to have the pulpit cut away, and upon the broad platform was set a mahogany desk, open underneath. He had the natural instinct of an orator, and felt that for him to move his listeners, the listeners must be able to see the speaker. Through-out his whole career, it is remarkable that one so apparently careless of appearances should have been, as this man was, uniformly successful in doing the right thing, so far as concerned his physical carriage in his public appearances.

Beecher's instincts were those of a gentleman, and when-ever he shocked the sense of propriety of church-goers, it was never by any ungainliness or eccentricity of action, but always by some sudden and un-expected turn of thought, of a kind to which people were unaccustomed in Sunday services.

Beecher's greatest powers as an orator are shown in his patriotic addresses, especially those touching on freedom and slavery and the Civil War. His first sermon dealing with the war was preached April 14, 1861.

During the summer of 1863, Mr. Beecher, being much in need of rest, made a trip to Europe, and after a few months absence, returned to America, having finished a more remarkable embassy than any envoy who has represented us in Europe, since Franklin pleaded the cause of the young republic at the court of France. He kissed no royal hand, talked with no diplomat, and of course

had no official existence, but through the hearts of the people, he reached nobles, ministers, and even the throne itself.

This European story is a short one in time, but a long one in its effects. Oliver Wendell Holmes said: "Mr. Beecher made a single speech in Great Britain, but it was delivered piecemeal in different places. Its exordium was uttered on the ninth of October at Manchester, and its peroration was pronounced on the twentieth of the same month in Exeter Hall, London."

At the time when his speeches were made in England, the majority of the common people, idle through the closing of the cotton mills which had been supplied with cotton by the south, were demanding that England should interfere in behalf of the Confederacy to stop the Civil War. At Beecher's first appearance, in Manchester, a great effort was made by his enemies, the partisans of the south, to prevent his being heard, even to the extent of threatening his life. The first audience he met was made up of the riff-raff of the city, the majority of whom were determined that the speaker should not be heard.

In this speech he attempted to give a history of that series of political movements, extending through half a century, the inevitable end of which was open conflict between the two opposing forces of Freedom and Slavery. At Glasgow, his discourse seems to have been almost unpremediated. After having obtained control of his audience, he continued the subject already opened at Manchester, by showing the deadly influence expected by Slavery, in bringing labor into contempt and by setting forth its ruinous consequences to the free working man every where. In Liverpool, the center of great commercial and manufacturing interests, he showed how those interests were injured by slavery.

He pointed out the fact that "this attempt to cover the fairest portion of the earth with a slave population, that buys nothing, and a degraded white population, that buys next to nothing, should array against it, the sympathy of every true political economist, and every thoughtful and far-seeing manufacturer, as tending to strike at the vital want of commerce, not want of cotton, but want of customers".

In his great closing speech at Exeter Hall in London, Mr. Beecher unfolded before his audience, the plan and connection of his previous addresses, showing how they were related to one another as parts of a series. He told them, he had endeavored to enlist the judgement, the conscience, the interests of the British people against the attempt to spread Slavery over the Continent, and described the rebellion this attempt had aroused. He had shown that Slavery was the only cause of the War, that sympathy with the South was merely aiding the establishment of a slave empire, and that the North was contending for its own existence and for popular institutions. He then asked his audience to look at the question with him, from the American point of view. He showed how the conflict began as a moral question; he pointed out the sensitiveness of the South and the tenderness for them on the part of many Northern people, with whom he, himself had never stood. He pointed out how the question had gradually emerged into politics; the encroachments of the South, until they reached the Judiciary itself. An interruption obliged him to explain the adjustment of our State and National Governments. It was just such interruptions that brought him to his best. He concluded his speech here by a rather sanguine statement of his change of opinion as to the British sentiment, of the assurance

he should carry back of the enthusiasm for the cause of the North, and by an exhortation to unity of action with those who share their civilization and religion for the furtherance of the gospel and the happiness of mankind.

By this series of speeches Mr. Beecher changed the attitude of the English people toward the Civil War and made it impossible for the English Government to recognize the independence of the Southern Confederacy.

Mr. Beecher returned at once to America and was formally welcomed home by his fellow citizens in Brooklyn, November 19, 1863. The net result of his voluntary embassy is hard to estimate. So far as he is concerned it lifted him from the position of one of the most popular preachers and lecturers, to that of one of the most distinguished men of that period of our history.

We shall never know perhaps, precisely, to what extent his speeches influenced the official policy of Great Britain, but it is certain that we owe to Henry Ward Beecher more than to any other one man, the fact that England did not interfere in the Civil War, in behalf of the Confederacy.

Beecher's style of oratory was sharp and pointed, but only when thoroughly aroused was he at his best. His gestures were never made for effect, but always as the expression of his own thought and feeling.

His power over men was something marvelous as is shown by his work in England, where he faced audiences that, in the beginning that would willingly have thrown him out. Once he was heard, he compelled men to listen and in the end, the majority would leave the meeting, at least silenced, if not convinced, and friendly.

Many attempted analyses of Mr. Beecher's powers as orator and preacher have been made. Perhaps the best was that made by Rev. Dr. Richard S. Storrs. He has said that the elements that made Beecher the great orator that he was, were, first a thoroughly vitalized mind. His creative faculties were in play all the time; Secondly, he put immense common sense into his speeches and next to this was his quick and deep sympathy with men, his wonderful intuitive perception of moods of mind. Still, further came the emotional responsiveness, which has made him apt and ready for every occasion. Above all, perhaps, was his wonderful animal vigor, his fullness of bodily power; his voice which could thunder and whisper alike, and his inborn sympathy with Nature.

Thus Henry Ward Beecher ranks with the greatest orators, not only of his own, but of all time.

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