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HENRY WARD BEECHER.

Memorable Lecture Tour Through New England and Canada.

Warm Receptions and Crowded Houses Wherever He Spoke.

Account of the Trip, and of the Impressions It Produced Upon Him, Narrated in His Own Words.

That Mr. Beecher was the most widely popular, if not the ablest, platform speaker in America, is generally conceded. It may be inferred that this was recognized as a fact by the chief officers of our government, when, near the end of the late Civil war, they selected him to deliver the oration at the re-raising of the Union flag upon Fort Sumpter. His lecture-field was the United States, Canada and Great Britain. He traversed broad sections of these countries, addressing large and enthusiastic audiences. His eminent service in the anti-slavery cause, early in his public career, and his no less eminent service in his successful endeavor, by the masterly speeches he delivered in the largest cities of Great Britain while the Rebellion was in progress, to inform the common people of that country concerning the principles for which the North was contending, were well known. That his lectures were invariably delivered with a deep moral purpose was evident to all who listened to them. Indeed, they partook, in a great measure, of the nature of his sermons.

The following is a narrative of a remarkable trip taken by Mr. Beecher through New England and New Brunswick during the closing years of his life. It occurred subsequent to the ignominious failure of the base and cruel conspiracy by which it was attempted to ruin his character in the public mind; and the unanimity with which he was welcomed wherever he went was a source of no little gratification to him. He told the story in the form of a Lecture-Room Talk on the Friday evening which immediately followed his return. After indulging in a few prefatory remarks, he said:

"I went to Springfield, Mass., last Monday week, and addressed the citizens of that place. I had a good time, with the exception that while there was a large audience in the Town Hall, the hall itself, though it is beautiful to the eye, is poorly constructed for the voice. Nevertheless, the more than cordiality of the audience was very acceptable.

"Having fulfilled my mission there, I went on to Cambridgeport, adjoining

Boston. That is near the home of our Brother Means, who was present with us here in the Council, and whose love and honorable loyalty is deserving of all praise. There, on a delightful evening, we had a charming audience, filling the beautiful hall, which possessed every requisite for public speaking; and we had a good time generally. I, certainly, was more than contented, and they were not displeased.

"I went next to Lewiston, Me., and was the guest of Gov. Dingley, who, you will recollect, presided so ably at the Council of 1876. I found Lewiston to be a manufacturing town of great enterprise. There I had an immense audience, and as much enthusiasm as I wanted to see.

"From there I came back on my track as far as Portland; and I cannot describe my audience better than to say that it was a *Portland* audience. I spoke in the great Town Hall—one of the most magnificent audience rooms in New England; and it was filled from end to end with appreciative and enthusiastic friends.

"The same night, after the lecture, I took the twelve o'clock sleeping train, and went down to Bangor, reaching there about seven o'clock Friday morning. I took this additional night travel because I had been requested by the students and faculty of the Theological Seminary to address them, and this was the only way in which I could compass it.

"At twelve o'clock I went to the Seminary, and was greeted by my father's friend, and my own—Dr. B—venerable in years, and yet retaining his faculties to an extraordinary degree. I remember seeing him in Boston when I was a boy fourteen or fifteen years old. He was then in full manhood, working in the great controversy along with my father. The hour I spent there was not thrown away; the Spirit of God was present; and on my second visit I received assurance from the faculty that my address had been blessed to the students.

"I lectured on Friday night in Bangor to a crowded audience, composed of people from every direction in the country, and of the best citizens of the town.

"On Saturday morning I rode two hundred miles, to St. Johns, New Brunswick. It was my first visit to that province. I arrived there about seven o'clock at night. The hall in which I lectured was perhaps the largest room in that part of the country. It was filled from dome to cellar; and I received a welcome that I am beginning to think a man gets only in the Dominion of Canada. [It is not improbable that Mr. Beecher had in mind his visit to Montreal, in 1877, along with the 13th Regiment of the New York militia, of which he was chaplain, when he was the recipient of distinguished honors at a reception participated in by the Governor General and other

dignitaries of the Dominion.] There was a fiery enthusiasm, a thundering cordiality, among those folks up North, which strongly impressed me, and warmed my heart; and I was made a gratified subject of it on that my first appearance there.

"I attended church and rested on Sunday morning. On Sunday night I preached; and we had a Brooklyn time. It seemed almost like being at home, with the same experiences that we have here of insufficient room.

"On Monday I had the overture of every kind of hospitality; but in going away to lecture every night it is impossible to undertake to enjoy one's self through the day; it was necessary that I should rest; and I declined all invitations, although they were very generously and very delicately extended in many directions.

"On Monday night I lectured the second time in the same place, with an equally large audience, and with flattering testimonials on their part.

"I left that place on Tuesday morning, and went back to Bangor, and gave a second lecture there. I then learned of the time you were having all along the coast down here—of the gales and shipwrecks and pouring storms. There had not been a drop of rain on my whole trip; we had fine weather all the time; and though my traveling companion [Maj. James B. Pond] bought himself a splendid umbrella he did not have an opportunity to open it till we got back to Boston last night.

"Wednesday morning I took the boat running down to the mouth of the Penobscot river; and although the sea ran high outside, I got into Rockland in good health, without any disturbance. Rockland struck me as being a very energetic business place. The three crops from the soil of that region are granite, ice and lime.

"As soon as the lecture at Rockland was over I took the cars again, and went on to Bath, reaching there about one o'clock. At five I took the train and came to Great Falls, reaching that place the early part of the day. There I got rest yesterday, and last night, after the lecture, I took a hired engine and rode to Boston to catch the eight o'clock train, in order that I might be here to-night, not being willing to be absent from home two Friday nights in succession.

"First, I want to ask a question about a matter which concerns you as well as me—namely, whether it is worth a man's while, at my time of life, to undertake to preach Sabbath days at home, and be present at his own meetings, and yet occupy the evenings of the week in lecturing; and whether there is not a risk of one's breaking down under such a practice. Well, I have been in the habit for forty years now of watching the engine; I know just what is the condition of my head, my lungs, my liver, my digestion, my sleep, and everything about

it; so that nobody knows half so quick when I am sick as I do myself. It was a matter of experiment, however, as I had not, for a few years past, on account of some little fears, been out in the lecture-field. Therefore, returning to it after some years, it was a question whether I could do what I was doing; and I have come to the conclusion that I can fulfill an appointment every day in the week with less wear and tear and less weariness than I could at any earlier period of my life. I have suffered less from fatigue, and less from waste by nervous excitement. Although it requires careful management to secure all the sleep I need, and to preserve good, sound digestion, yet, comparing the smaller amounts of labor that I did in olden times with what I do now, I think I bear the stress a great deal better than I ever did before—and I count it a great blessing.

"Another thing for which I am very grateful is the universal feeling which I find existing with respect to Plymouth Church. I suppose there is nothing that pleases a father or mother more than to hear commendation bestowed heartily on their children; and it is very gratifying to me, as I go from place to place, to hear the unostentatious expressions of what are evidently mere specimens of feelings which exist among people in the community—love and reverence for Plymouth Church, not only on account of its general labor in years gone by in all the vast fields of enterprise, but in regard to its more recent action in all its relations. It has raised the ideal of church life; it has done much to advance some elements of Christian confederation; and I have felt a little about it as my dear father used to feel when he got to be so old that he could not preach, and he had almost a feeling as though I was himself, saying, as he did once, 'I never expected to sit in a pew and hear myself preach.' On one occasion, you will recollect, somebody said to him, 'What do you think of the sermon?' and he, after giving it his hearty commendation, added, with emphasis, 'If it hadn't been for me you never would have had him.' I indulge in a little of that innocent vanity myself. I point to you, and say, 'There is my epistle, known and read of all men. I was the first pastor of that church; it has been brought up under my ministry; it has been fed on doctrinal views and methods that are dear to me; and I bless God.' If any man has been afraid, and has not known what would come of such influence, I have been proud to say, 'There is a church that has been fashioned on those views and methods; and when it comes to a time of difficulty such as has hardly been known since the persecution of the old Papal church, that is what has come of it.' There is my answer to everybody, on the right and on the left; and to find (I do not say it in a spirit of boasting) that it is known, felt and appreciated in all churches of all