

The Gettysburg Address

WHEN WRITTEN, HOW RECEIVED,
ITS TRUE FORM

BY
MAJOR WILLIAM H. LAMBERT



*Reprinted from the Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biog-
raphy for October, 1909*

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Mr Daniel Fish

with regards

William H Lambert

THE GETTYSBURG ADDRESS

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REPRINTED FROM "THE PENNSYLVANIA MAGAZINE OF HISTORY AND BIOGRAPHY,"

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PHILADELPHIA

1909



Address delivered at the dedication of the
Cemetery at Gettysburg.

Four score and seven years ago our fathers
brought forth on this continent, a new na-
tion, conceived in liberty, and dedicated
to the proposition that all men are cre-
ated equal.

Now we are engaged in a great civil war,
testing whether that nation, or any nation
so conceived and so dedicated, can long
endure. We are met on a great battle-field
of that war. We have come to dedicate a
portion of that field, as a final resting
place for those who here gave their lives,
that that nation might live. It is alto-
gether fitting and proper that we should
do this.

But, in a larger sense, we can not dedi-

cate — we can not consecrate — we can not
hallow — this ground. The brave men, liv-
ing and dead, who struggled here have con-
secrated it, far above our poor power to add
or detract. The world will little note, nor
long remember what we say here, but it can
never forget what they did here. It is for us
the living, rather, to be dedicated here to
the unfinished work which they who fought
here have thus far so nobly advanced.
It is rather for us to be here dedicated to
the great task remaining before us — that
from these honored dead we take increased
devotion to that cause for which they gave
the last full measure of devotion — that
we here highly resolve that these dead shall
not have died in vain — that this nation,
under God, shall have a new birth of free-
dom — and that government of the people;

by the people, for the people, shall not per-
ish from the earth.

Abraham Lincoln

November 19, 1863.

The Standard Version.—President Lincoln's Final Revision.

Photographed from the fac-simile first published in "Autograph Leaves of Our
Country's Authors," Baltimore, 1864.

(Reduced)

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THE GETTYSBURG ADDRESS.

WHEN WRITTEN, HOW RECEIVED, ITS TRUE FORM.

BY MAJOR WILLIAM H. LAMBERT.

[Read before the Commandery of the State of Pennsylvania, Military Order of the Loyal Legion of the United States, February 14, 1906; and before the Historical Society of Pennsylvania, February 8, 1909.]

THE most notable of the series of speeches made by Abraham Lincoln after leaving Springfield, and while on his way to Washington for his inauguration as President, was that made in this city in Independence Hall, and inspired by its sacred memories; and the most famous of his addresses as President was delivered at the dedication of the Soldiers' National Cemetery on the battlefield of Gettysburg.

Consideration of these remarkable utterances upon the soil of our State would seem appropriate by the Historical Society of Pennsylvania at this time of commemoration of the centenary of Lincoln's birth; and your attention is invited to the circumstances attending the delivery of the Gettysburg Address, as described in some of the accounts of the dedication, which I present in an endeavor to determine what was the origin of the address, how it was received, and what is its true form, for, strange as it may appear, widely differing answers are given to these several questions.

President Lincoln left Washington for Gettysburg at noon on Wednesday, November 18, 1863, in a special train consisting of four passenger coaches; he was accompanied by a large party that included members of his Cabinet, several foreign ministers, his private secretaries, officers of the Army and Navy, a military guard, and newspaper correspondents; the train arrived at Gettysburg about dark. Mr. Lincoln spent the night at the house of David Wills,

Governor Curtin's representative and the active agent in the establishment of the Soldiers' Cemetery.

Arnold, in his "History of Lincoln and the Overthrow of Slavery," asserts that the President "while on his way from the White House to the battlefield was notified that he would be expected to make some remarks," and that asking for some paper a rough sheet of foolscap was handed to him; "retiring to a seat by himself, with a pencil he wrote the address."

Similarly Ben Perley Poore says in his "Reminiscences of Lincoln" that "his remarks at Gettysburg * * * were written in the car on his way from Washington to the battlefield, upon a piece of pasteboard held on his knee." In the beautiful story by Mrs. Andrews entitled "The Perfect Tribute," which, because of its wide circulation in the magazine in which it first appeared, and subsequently as a daintily printed book, has done much to form popular opinion of the composition and delivery of the Address, it is said that the President after gazing wistfully across the car at Edward Everett—who was not in it, having previously gone to Gettysburg by another route—appealed to Secretary Seward for the brown paper he had just removed from a package of books: "May I have this to do a little writing?" and then with a stump of a pencil labored for hours over his speech.

On the contrary, General James B. Fry, who was present in the car as one of the escort, says that he is confident that the assertion that the Address was written in the train *en route* to Gettysburg is an error, and states, "I have no recollection of seeing him writing or even reading his speech during the journey, in fact there was hardly any opportunity for him to read or write." Nicolay, the senior of the President's private secretaries, in an interesting and highly valuable paper on the Gettysburg Address, says, "There is neither record, evidence, nor well founded tradition that Mr. Lincoln did any writing or made any notes on the journey between Washington and Gettysburg,"

the many interruptions incident to the journey, together with the rocking and jolting of the train, made writing virtually impossible.

In Mowry's "History of the United States for Schools," published in 1896, it is said: "There is conclusive evidence that the words of the address were not written out until after the Presidential party had arrived upon the ground"; and in an appendix it is stated: "The following account of how the address was written was received directly from the lips of ex-Governor Curtin, of Pennsylvania, who was present on the occasion and knew whereof he affirmed. Governor Curtin said that after the arrival of the party from Washington, while the President and his Cabinet, Edward Everett, the orator of the day, Governor Curtin, and others were sitting in the parlor of the hotel, the President remarked that he understood that the committee expected him to say something. He would, therefore, if they would excuse him, retire to the next room and see if he could write out something. He was absent some time, and upon returning to the company had in his hand a large-sized, yellow government envelope. The President sat down, and remarked that he had written something, and with their permission he would like to read it to them, and invited them to criticise it. After reading what he had written upon the envelope, he asked for any suggestions they might make; Secretary Seward volunteered one or two comments, which Mr. Lincoln accepted and incorporated. Then he said, 'Now, gentlemen, if you will excuse me again, I will copy this off,' and returning again made a fresh copy to read from."

A somewhat different account of Governor Curtin's recollection is given by Hon. Horatio King in his "Turning on the Light," wherein he writes that in 1885 at Gettysburg the Governor said: "I saw Mr. Lincoln writing this address in Mr. Wills' house on a long yellow envelope. He may have written some of it before. He said 'I will go and show it to Seward,' who stopped at another house, which he did and then returned and copied his speech on a fools-

cap sheet." Mr. King adds that the Governor expressed extreme regret that he had not secured that envelope on which he most positively declared he saw Mr. Lincoln writing his Address as above described.

The Hon. Edward McPherson of Gettysburg, for many years Clerk of the House of Representatives, said in 1875, in a newspaper communication, that after Mr. Lincoln had retired to his room on the night of the 18th he sent for his host and "inquired the order of exercises for the next day and began to put in writing what he called some stray thoughts to utter on the morrow." Mr. Wills believed that the Address was written in his house and said in 1893, as he had earlier, that the President read "from the same paper on which I had seen him writing it the night before."

Prof. Draper in his "History of the American Civil War," one of the most scholarly and philosophic of the histories of the Rebellion, asserts that when the President rose to speak "he unpremeditatedly and solemnly said, 'It is intimated to me that this assemblage expects me to say something on this occasion.'"

Noah Brooks, newspaper correspondent at Washington during the war, who, having been acquainted with Mr. Lincoln in Illinois, was on terms of friendly intimacy and has written much about him, declared that a few days prior to the 19th of November, 1863, Mr. Lincoln told him that Mr. Everett had kindly sent him a copy of his oration in order that the same ground might not be gone over by both; the President added, "There is no danger that I shall, my speech is all blocked out—it is very short." In answer to the question whether the speech was written, he said, "Not exactly written—it is not finished anyway." Brooks further asserted that the speech was written and rewritten many times, and revised somewhat after Mr. Lincoln's arrival at Gettysburg.

Ward H. Lamon, a personal friend and associate of Mr. Lincoln before the war, accompanied him from Springfield to Washington, was appointed Marshal of the District of

Columbia, and had confidential relations with the President throughout his administration, and was the Chief Marshal of the ceremonies at Gettysburg; and he devoted a chapter of his "Recollections of Abraham Lincoln, 1847-1865," to the Gettysburg Address, in which he writes: "A day or two before the dedication of the National Cemetery at Gettysburg, Mr. Lincoln told me that he would be expected to make a speech on the occasion; that he was extremely busy, and had no time for preparation; and that he greatly feared that he would not be able to acquit himself with credit, much less to fill the measure of public expectation." Lamon says he was shown "a sheet of foolscap, one side of which was closely written with what he informed me was a memorandum of his intended address. This he read to me, first remarking that it was not at all satisfactory to him. It proved to be in substance, if not in exact words, what was afterwards printed in his famous Gettysburg speech."

A newspaper paragraph, the original date and source of which are unknown to me, alleges that Senator Cameron had asserted that he had seen a draft of the address in the White House before the President left Washington.

Such are the divergent testimonies concerning the preparation of the Address. Fortunately there exists documentary evidence to substantiate the statements of Brooks and Lamon and Cameron, and to establish conclusively that the Address was the outcome of deliberation and careful thought.

The formal invitation to the President was written on the 2nd of November and specifically stated that "it is the desire that you as the Chief Executive of the Nation formally set apart these grounds to their sacred use by a few appropriate remarks." In the article before referred to Nicolay says that Mr. Lincoln carried in his pocket the autograph manuscript of so much of his Address as he had written at Washington, and a facsimile reproduction of the original draft is given. The first page of the manuscript is written in ink and ends with an incompleting sentence, facts

which justify Nicolay's inference that at the time of writing it in Washington the remainder of the sentence was also written in ink on another sheet of paper. On the morning of the 19th when, in Nicolay's presence, the President finished writing his Address he used a lead pencil with which he crossed out the last three words of the first page and wrote other words above them and on another sheet wrote the remainder of the Address, in substance about one-third of the whole; this second page is also produced in facsimile. This manuscript consisting of two pages was in Mr. Lincoln's hands when he delivered his Address. Undoubtedly the first page of this manuscript was part of the original draft of the Address and the second page was the new draft substituted for the cancelled original, there being probably some immaterial differences between the two versions.

Another manuscript exists, which is now in the possession of the family of the late John Hay, who as one of the President's private secretaries was present at the dedication. This manuscript, which is in the President's autograph, is reproduced in facsimile in *Putnam's Magazine* for February, 1909, in connection with "Recollections of Lincoln" by Gen. James Grant Wilson, who believes the manuscript was written after the President's return from Gettysburg.

The Hay manuscript is undoubtedly the second existing draft of the address, but because of information obtained from Col. John P. Nicholson, to whom it was imparted by Secretary Hay, I am convinced that this manuscript was written before November 19, 1863, and that it was inadvertently left at Washington. This opinion is further strengthened by the internal evidence of the manuscript itself.

The second page of the Nicolay manuscript is almost identical with the corresponding page of the Hay manuscript, but the latter in its entirety conforms much more closely to the Address as actually delivered than the Nicolay and justifies the belief that the Hay was the final draft of the complete Address before its delivery. Neither man-

Four score and seven years ago our fathers brought forth, upon this continent, a new nation, conceived in Liberty, and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal.

Now we are engaged in a great civil war, testing whether that nation, or any nation, so conceived, and so dedicated, can long endure. We are met here on a great battlefield of that war. We ~~have~~ ^{have} come ~~and~~ ^{or} to dedicate a portion of it as ~~the~~ ^a final resting place ^{for} of those who here gave their lives that that nation might live. It is altogether fitting and proper that we should do this.

But in a larger sense we can not dedicate—we can not consecrate—we can not hallow this ground. The brave men, living and dead, who struggled here, have consecrated it, far above our ^{poor} power to add or detract. The world will little note, nor long remember, what we say here, but can never forget what they did here. It is for us, the living, rather to be dedicated here to the unfinished ^{work}, which they have, thus far, so nobly carried on. It is rather

for us to be here dedicated to this great
task remaining before^{us}— that from these
honored dead we take increased devotion
to ~~the~~ ^{that} cause for which they here gave
the last full measure of devotion— that
we here highly resolve that these dead
shall not have died in vain; that this
nation shall have a new birth of freedom;
and that this government of the people, by
the people, for the people, shall not perish
from the earth.

Photographed from original manuscript owned by the Hon. John Hay.
(Reduced)

uscript was written after the delivery of the Address, for neither contains the notable addition of the words "under God," that were interpolated by the President when he spoke, and which he would not have omitted from any subsequent transcript.

Whatever revision may have been given to the Address *en route* to or at Gettysburg, whatever changes or additions may have been made in its delivery, the Address existed in substantially completed form before the President left Washington.

There can be no doubt that he had given prolonged and earnest thought to the preparation of this Address; he had had more than two weeks' notice that he was desired to speak; and although the demands upon his time and attention were such as to allow him little opportunity for uninterrupted thought, he appreciated the momentousness of the occasion, he knew how much was expected of him, and what was due to the honored dead, and he did not trust to the inspiration of the moment or rely upon his readiness as an impromptu speaker when he dedicated the Soldiers' Cemetery at Gettysburg, for he had wrought and rewrought until there came into perfect form the noblest tribute to a cause and its heroes ever rendered by human lips.

The Address has been so long and so generally accepted as the highest expression of American oratory, that it is difficult to realize that it ever had less appreciation than now. The testimonies of those who heard the Address delivered differ widely as to the reception given it and as to the impression it made.

In the "History of the Battle of Gettysburg" (published in 1875) Samuel P. Bates in giving an account of the dedication ceremonies quotes the Address and says: "Its delivery was more solemn and impressive than is possible to conceive from its perusal. Major Harry T. Lee, who was one of the actors in the battle and who was present upon the platform at the dedication, says that the people listened

with marked attention throughout the two hours that Mr. Everett spoke; * * * * * but that when Mr. Lincoln came forward and, with a voice burdened with emotion, uttered these sublime words the bosoms of that vast audience were lifted as a great wave of the sea; and that when he came to the passage, 'The brave men living and dead, who struggled here,' there was not a dry eye.* * * * *

Arnold in his life of Lincoln (1885), after citing the Address, states: "Before the first sentence was completed, a thrill of feeling like an electric shock pervaded the crowd. That mysterious influence called magnetism, which sometimes so affects a popular assembly, spread to every heart. The vast audience was instantly hushed and hung upon his every word and syllable. Every one felt that it was not the honored dead only, but the living actor and speaker that the world for all time to come would note and remember, and that the speaker in the thrilling words he was uttering was linking his name forever with the glory of the dead. * * * All his hearers realized that the great actor in the drama stood before them, and that the words he said would live as long as the language; that they were words which would be recollected in all future ages among all peoples, as often as men should be called upon to die for liberty and country. As he closed, and the tears and sobs and cheers which expressed the emotions of the people subsided, he turned to Everett and, grasping his hand, said, 'I congratulate you on your success.' The orator gratefully replied, 'Ah! Mr. President, how gladly would I exchange all my hundred pages to have been the author of your twenty lines.'"

Major Nickerson, of the 8th Ohio, who had been severely wounded in the battle, was present at the dedication and had a seat on the platform within a few feet of the speakers, gave an account in *Scribner's Magazine*, July, 1893, of his "Two Visits to Gettysburg." He says: "Others, too, have differed as to the immediate effects of the President's remarks. I give the impressions received at the time,

which were also identical with those of all with whom I spoke. I thought then and still think it was the shortest, grandest speech to which I ever listened. * * * My own emotions may perhaps be imagined when it is remembered that he was facing the spot where only a short time before we had our death grapple with Pickett's men and he stood almost immediately over the place where I had lain and seen my comrades torn in fragments by the enemy's cannon-balls—think then, if you please, how these words fell upon my ear." Then, quoting a portion of the Address, the Major adds: "If at that moment the Supreme Being had appeared with an offer to undo my past life, give back to me a sound body free from the remembrance even of sufferings past and the imminence of those that must necessarily embitter all the years to come, I should have indignantly spurned the offer, such was the effect upon me of this immortal dedication."

Robert Miller, who had been the Adjutant of an Ohio Regiment of 100 days' volunteers, was a member of the Ohio Legislature and attended the dedication ceremonies, stated in a letter published in the *Eaton, Ohio, Register*, November 30, 1863: "The tall form of the President appeared on the stand and never before have I seen a crowd so vast and restless, after standing so long, so soon stilled and quieted. Hats were removed and all stood motionless to catch the first words he should utter, and as he slowly, clearly, and without the least sign of embarrassment read and spoke for ten minutes you could not mistake the feeling and sentiment of the vast multitude before him. I am convinced that the speech of the President has fully confirmed and I think will confirm all loyal men and women in the belief that Abraham Lincoln, though he may have made mistakes, is the right man in the right place."

The Commissioners representing Massachusetts at the dedication, in their report to Governor Andrew, say, "The brief speech of President Lincoln * * * * made a

profound impression"; and that it was spoken with great deliberation. The correspondent of the *Boston Daily Advertiser*, who was probably one of the Commissioners, in his letter to that paper expressed a similar view and added that the remarks "seemed to be emphatically the right words in the right place."¹

A committee from the city of Boston attending the dedication reported: "Perhaps nothing in the whole proceedings made so deep an impression on the vast assemblage or has conveyed to the country in so concise a form the lesson of the hour, as the remarks of the President, their simplicity and force make them worthy of a prominence among the utterances from high places."²

The opinions of these Commissioners and of Lieutenant Miller are especially valuable because expressed and recorded immediately after they had heard the address.

John Russell Young, who was present on the speaker's platform as representative of the *Philadelphia Press*, in an article published in 1891, based upon his recollections and memoranda made at the time, says that the report made by the *Associated Press* "was studded with applause, but I do not remember the applause and am afraid the appreciative reporter was more than generous—may have put in the applause himself as a personal expression of opinion. * * * I have read * * * of the emotions produced by the President's address, the transcendent awe that fell upon every one who heard those most mighty and ever living words, to be remembered with pride through the ages, I have read of the tears that fell and the solemn hush, as though in a cathedral solemnity in the most holy moment of the Sacrifice. * * * There was nothing of this, to the writer at least, in the *Gettysburg Address*."

In Lamon's account he professes to quote Mr. Lincoln's own opinion of his Address and says that, "After its delivery on the day of commemoration he expressed deep regret that

¹ Burrage: "*Gettysburg and Lincoln*," p. 124.

² Burrage: "*Gettysburg and Lincoln*," p. 125.

he had not prepared it with greater care. He said to me on the stand immediately after concluding the speech: 'Lamon, that speech won't scour! It is a flat failure and the people are disappointed.' He seemed deeply concerned about what the people might think of his address, more deeply, in fact, than I had ever seen him on any public occasion. * * * The occasion was solemn, impressive, and grandly historic. The people, it is true, stood apparently spell-bound; and the vast throng was hushed and awed into profound silence, and attention to his words arose more from the solemnity of the ceremonies and the awful scenes which gave rise to them than from anything he had said. He believed that the speech was a failure. He thought so at the time and he never referred to it afterwards in conversation with me, without some expression of unqualified regret that he had not made the speech better in every way. On the platform from which Mr. Lincoln delivered his address and only a moment after it was concluded, Mr. Seward turned to Mr. Everett and asked him what he thought of the President's speech. Mr. Everett replied, 'It is not what I expected from him, I am disappointed.' Then in his turn Mr. Everett asked, 'What do you think of it, Mr. Seward?' The response was, 'He has made a failure and I am sorry for it. His speech is not equal to him.' Mr. Seward then turned to me and asked, 'Mr. Marshal, what do you think of it?' I answered, 'I am sorry to say that it does not impress me as one of his great speeches.'

"In the face of these facts it has been repeatedly published that this speech was received by the audience with loud demonstrations of approval; that amid the tears, sobs, and cheers it produced in the excited throng, the orator of the day, Mr. Everett, turned to Mr. Lincoln, grasped his hand and exclaimed, 'I congratulate you on your success,' adding in a transport of heated enthusiasm, 'Ah! Mr. President, how gladly would I give my hundred pages to be the author of your twenty lines!'

“As a matter of fact, the silence during the delivery of the speech, and the lack of hearty demonstration of approval immediately after its close, were taken by Mr. Lincoln as a certain proof that it was not well received. In that opinion we all shared. If any person then present saw, or thought he saw, the marvelous beauties of that wonderful speech, as intelligent men in all lands now see and acknowledge them, his superabundant caution closed his lips and stayed his pen. * * * * I state it as a fact, and without fear of contradiction, that this famous Gettysburg speech was not regarded by the audience to whom it was addressed, or by the press and people of the United States, as a production of extraordinary merit, nor was it commented on as such until after the death of the author.”

While there may be some truth in Lamon's narrative, and the language ascribed to Lincoln seems natural and characteristic, allowance should be made for the author's idiosyncrasies as exhibited in the “Life of Lincoln” published in 1872, that, purporting to have been written by Lamon, and was based upon information that had been secured by him, was really written by Chauncey F. Black, son of President Buchanan's Attorney-General. Certainly Lamon's assertion concerning Everett's criticism of the Address is not consistent with his letter to the President on the following day, in which, after thanking Mr. Lincoln for the kindness shown himself and his daughter at Gettysburg, Mr. Everett said: “Permit me also to express my great admiration of the thoughts expressed by you with such eloquent simplicity and appropriateness at the consecration of the Cemetery. I should be glad if I could flatter myself that I came as near the central idea of the occasion in two hours as you did in two minutes.”

The President's reply was characteristically modest; I quote the reference to himself: “In our respective parts yesterday you could not have been excused to make a short address nor I long one. I am pleased to know that in your judgment the little I did say was not a failure.”

Mr. Clark E. Carr, who was present at Gettysburg as a Commissioner from Illinois, is the author of an address, "Lincoln at Gettysburg," in which he quotes liberally and with approval from Lamon and from Nicolay, and also gives his own impressions concerning the President's Address, saying: "His expressions were so plain and homely, without any attempt at rhetorical periods, and his statements were so axiomatic, and, I may say, matter-of-fact, and so simple, that I had no idea that as an address it was anything more than ordinary." But he adds, "Every one was impressed with his sincerity and earnestness," and, "There was one sentence that did deeply affect me—the only one in which the President manifested emotion. With the close of that sentence his lips quivered, and there was a tremor in his voice which I can never forget. * * * The sentence was, 'The world will little note, nor long remember what we say here, but it can never forget what they did here.'"

This sentence that so impressed Mr. Carr attracted the attention of George William Curtis, who, in *Harper's Weekly*, December 5, 1863, said of the Address, but with special reference to the sentence quoted: "The few words of the President were from the heart to the heart, they can not be read even without kindly emotion. It was as simple and felicitous and earnest a word as was ever spoken."

However the various narratives may differ as to the degree of appreciation of the Address, all agree that the President was accorded most respectful attention and that his bearing and demeanor were appropriate to the solemn occasion. I have found no evidence to justify the statements in "The Perfect Tribute" that the effect on the audience of the President's voice was ghastly and with his gaunt figure too much for the American crowd's sense of humor, and that a suppressed yet unmistakable titter caught and ran through the throng. It is unfortunate that this popular story should promulgate such a travesty of fact.

The circumstances attending the delivery of the Address

were not such as to conduce to its full appreciation. The procession that had escorted the President to the field had been greatly belated, and after his arrival upon the platform the proceedings were still further delayed, awaiting the arrival of the orator of the day. Mr. Everett's oration, that had been preceded by a prayer of some length and by music, was of two hours' duration, so that when the President spoke it was to an audience that had been standing for nearly four hours.

The brevity of the speech, the absence of rhetorical effort, and its very simplicity prevented its full appreciation. Nicolay's statement seems to accord with the facts, and as a devoted admirer of his Chief he would naturally incline to enhance rather than to minimize the effect of the Address upon the audience.

"There is every probability that the assemblage regarded Mr. Everett as the mouthpiece, the organ of expression, of the thought and feeling of the hour, and took it for granted that Mr. Lincoln was there as a mere official figurehead, the culminating decoration, so to speak, of the elaborately planned pageant of the day. They were therefore totally unprepared for what they heard and could not immediately realize that his words, and not those of the carefully selected orator, were to carry the concentrated thought of the occasion like a trumpet-peal to farthest posterity."

Undoubtedly there were many in the audience who fully appreciated the beauty and pathos of the President's Address, and many of those who read it on the following day perceived its wondrous character; but it is apparent that its full force and grandeur were not generally recognized then, either by its auditors or its readers. Not until the war itself had ended and the great leader had fallen did the Nation realize that this speech had given to Gettysburg another claim to immortality and to American eloquence its highest glory.

The variations between the several contemporary versions of the Address and its many subsequent reproductions

are remarkable, particularly in view of its brevity and importance. Attention has more than once been attracted to these variations; and because of the differences between the earlier reports and the version published in autographic facsimile in 1864, it has been assumed that the discrepancies were due either to blunders on the part of reporters, or to their attempts to improve the President's composition. But examination of a number of versions forces the conclusion that while some of the minor variations in the newspaper reports were caused by typographical or telegraphic errors, the rhetorical differences between these reports and the later version were plainly the result of the author's own revision.

The reports of the Address, published November 20, 1863, in the *Ledger*, the *North American*, the *Press*, and the *Bulletin* of this city, in the *Tribune* and the *Herald* of New York, in the *Advertiser* and the *Journal* of Boston, and in the *Springfield Republican*, and on the 23d in the *Cincinnati Commercial*, were furnished by the Associated Press. The reports printed in the Philadelphia papers named agree with the exception of obvious misprints. The New York papers agree with a single exception, probably a typographical error; the Boston papers also agree substantially with but three verbal variations. But the respective versions of the several cities differ from each other in a number of details, probably because of errors in telegraphing the reports from Gettysburg.

The reports of the Address published in the *Philadelphia Inquirer* and in the *Cincinnati Gazette*, November 20 and 21 respectively, differ materially from each other and from the Associated Press report, and are apparently independent in source; lacking in completeness, they seem to be paraphrases rather than literal reports, and are probably free renderings of notes made at the time, but are valuable so far as they go, in aiding to determine which of the other reports most nearly represents the words actually spoken.

Another independent report of greater value is that made

by the Massachusetts Commissioners, which they assert is "in the correct form as the words actually spoken by the President, with great deliberation, were taken down by one of" themselves. The differences between their report and that printed in the *North American*, which is freer from obvious errors than any other version of the Associated Press report that I have seen, are slight.

Nicolay says that the President did not read from the written pages, and that he did not deliver the Address in the form in which it was first written, but from the fulness of thought and memory rounded it out nearly to its final rhetorical completeness. Brooks states that as Mr. Lincoln read from the manuscript he made a few verbal changes.

Comparison of the several reports named leads to the conclusion that the President, remembering what he had written in the Hay manuscript, delivered his Address in closer accordance with it than with the Nicolay manuscript which he held, but to which he referred little. The *North American* report, which in my judgment reproduces the words spoken more accurately than any other, and more closely than the President's final revision, differs from the Hay manuscript in several instances, but materially only in the words "under God," which were interpolated by the President as he spoke, for the phrase does not appear either in the Nicolay or the Hay manuscript, and in the use of "the" instead of "this" before "government of the people."

Nicolay says that a few days after the visit to Gettysburg, upon receipt from Mr. Wills of a request on behalf of the States interested in the National Cemetery for the original manuscript of the Dedication Address, the President re-examined his original draft and the version that had appeared in the newspapers, and he saw that because of the variations between them, the first, that is, the Nicolay, seemed incomplete and the others imperfect; he therefore directed his secretaries to make copies of the several reports of the Associated Press and, "comparing these with his original draft and with his own fresh recollection of the

form in which he delivered it, he made a new autograph copy, a careful and deliberate revision."

What became of this first revision is unknown, it was not received by Mr. Wills, who wrote me years ago: "I did not make a copy of my report of President Lincoln's speech at Gettysburg from a transcript from the original, but from one of the press reports. I have since always used the revised copy furnished the Baltimore fair, of which I have a facsimile in lithograph."

Other copies were made, one in February, 1864, at the request of Mr. Everett, to be bound, with the manuscript of his oration and Mr. Lincoln's letter to him of November 20, in a volume to be sold at the Metropolitan Fair for the benefit of the United States Sanitary Commission. Still another copy was made at the request of the Hon. George Bancroft for the benefit of the Soldiers and Sailors Fair in Baltimore; this, having been written on both sides of a letter-sheet, was unavailable for purposes of lithographic production in facsimile, and Mr. Lincoln, in March, made another copy, which was reproduced in "Autograph Leaves of Our Country's Authors"—a volume published for the benefit of the fair.

This version exhibits the result of the author's final revision, and, except in punctuation and in the use of "on" instead of "upon" in the first sentence and in the omission of "here" between "they" and "gave" in the last sentence, is identical with the version made at Mr. Everett's request, which is the earliest of the several existing revisions of which I have been able to learn.

In an address so brief, but so momentous, every syllable tells; and though the differences between the final revision and the speech as actually delivered are few and seemingly immaterial, the changes intensify its strength and pathos and add to its beauty, and as so revised the speech cannot be too jealously preserved as the ultimate expression of the author's sublime thought. Increasing appreciation of Lincoln's character and of his fitness for the great work to

which in the providence of God he was called enhances the value of his every word, and surely the form by which he intended this utterance should be judged is that in which we should perpetuate the Gettysburg Address.

ADDRESS DELIVERED AT THE DEDICATION OF THE
CEMETERY AT GETTYSBURG.

Four score and seven years ago our fathers brought forth on this continent, a new nation, conceived in Liberty, and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal.

Now we are engaged in a great civil war, testing whether that nation, or any nation so conceived and so dedicated, can long endure. We are met on a great battle-field of that war. We have come to dedicate a portion of that field, as a final resting place for those who here gave their lives that that nation might live. It is altogether fitting and proper that we should do this.

But, in a larger sense, we can not dedicate—we can not consecrate—we can not hallow—this ground. The brave men, living and dead, who struggled here, have consecrated it, far above our poor power to add or detract. The world will little note, nor long remember what we say here, but it can never forget what they did here. It is for us the living, rather, to be dedicated here to the unfinished work which they who fought here have thus far so nobly advanced. It is rather for us to be here dedicated to the great task remaining before us—that from these honored dead we take increased devotion to that cause for which they gave the last full measure of devotion—that we here highly resolve that these dead shall not have died in vain—that this nation, under God, shall have a new birth of freedom—and that government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth.

ABRAHAM LINCOLN.

November 19, 1863.

Appendices.

A.

Four versions compared. The first draft, the Nicolay MS.; the second draft, the Hay MS.; the Associated Press report from the *North American*, Philadelphia, Nov. 20, 1863¹; the final revision, Baltimore, 1864.

Nicolay. Four score and seven years ago our fathers brought
Hay. Four score and seven years ago our fathers brought
North American. Four score and seven years ago our fathers brought
Baltimore. Four score and seven years ago our fathers brought

N. forth, upon this continent, a new nation, conceived in liberty,
H. forth, upon this continent, a new nation, conceived in Liberty,
N. A. forth upon this continent a new nation, conceived in liberty
B. forth on this continent, a new nation, conceived in Liberty,

N. and dedicated to the proposition that "all men are created equal"
H. and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal.
N. A. and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal.
B. and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal.

N. Now we are engaged in a great civil war, testing whether that
H. Now we are engaged in a great civil war, testing whether that
N. A. Now we are engaged in a great civil war, testing whether that
B. Now we are engaged in a great civil war, testing whether that

N. nation, or any nation so conceived, and so dedicated, can long
H. nation, or any nation, so conceived, and so dedicated, can long
N. A. nation, or any nation so conceived and so dedicated, can long
B. nation, or any nation so conceived and so dedicated, can long

N. endure. We are met on a great battle field of that war.
H. endure. We are met here on a great battle-field of that war.
N. A. endure. We are met on a great battle field of that war;
B. endure. We are met on a great battle-field of that war.

¹ Notes of applause omitted.

- N.* We have come to dedicate a portion of it, as a final rest-
H. We have come¹ to dedicate a portion of it as a² final rest-
N. A. we are met to dedicate a portion of it as the final rest-
B. We have come to dedicate a portion of that field, as a final rest-
N. ing place for those who died here, that the nation might
H. ing place for³ those who here gave their lives that that nation might
N. A. ing place of those who here gave their lives that that nation might
B. ing place for those who here gave their lives that that nation might
N. live. This we may, in all propriety do.
H. live. It is altogether fitting and proper that we should do this.
N. A. live. It is altogether fitting and proper that we should do this,
B. live. It is altogether fitting and proper that we should do this.
N. But, in a larger sense, we can not dedicate—we can not con-
H. But in a larger sense we can not dedicate—we can not con-
N. A. but, in a larger sense, we cannot dedicate, we cannot con-
B. But, in a larger sense, we can not dedicate—we can not con-
N. secrate—we can not hallow, this ground — The brave men, liv-
H. secrate—we can not hallow this ground. The brave men, liv-
N. A. secrate, we cannot hallow this ground. ¶ The brave men, liv-
B. secrate—we can not hallow—this ground. The brave men, liv-
N. ing and dead, who struggled here, have hallowed it, far above
H. ing and dead, who struggled here, have consecrated it far above
N. A. ing and dead, who struggled here have consecrated it far above
B. ing and dead, who struggled here, have consecrated it, far above
N. our poor power to add or detract. The world will little note,
H. our poor power to add or detract. The world will little note,
N. A. our poor power to add or to detract. The world will little note,
B. our poor power to add or detract. The world will little note,
N. nor long remember what we say here; while it can never forget
H. nor long remember, what we say here, but can never forget
N. A. nor long remember, what we say here, but it can never forget
B. nor long remember what we say here, but it can never forget
N. what they *did* here.
H. what they did here. It is for us, the living, rather to be dedi-
N. A. what they did here. It is for us, the living, rather, to be dedi-
B. what they did here. It is for us the living, rather, to be dedi-

¹ In the Hay ms. Mr. Lincoln first wrote *are met*. See facsimile.

² In the Hay ms. Mr. Lincoln first wrote *the*. See facsimile.

³ In the Hay ms. Mr. Lincoln first wrote *of*. See facsimile.

N.
H. cated here to the unfinished work which they
N. A. cated here to the unfinished work that they
B. cated here to the unfinished work which they who fought here
N. ¶ It is rather for us, the liv-
H. have, thus far, so nobly carried on. It is rather for us
N. A. have thus far so nobly carried on. It is rather for us
B. have thus far so nobly advanced. It is rather for us
N. ing, we here be dedicated to the great task remaining before
H. to be here dedicated to the great task remaining before
N. A. here to be dedicated to the great task remaining before
B. to be here dedicated to the great task remaining before
N. us—that, from these honored dead we take increased devotion to
H. us—that from these honored dead we take increased devotion to
N. A. us; that from these honored dead we take increased devotion to
B. us—that from these honored dead we take increased devotion to
N. that cause for which they here, gave the last full measure of
H. that cause for which they here gave the last full measure of
N. A. that cause for which they here gave the last full measure of
B. that cause for which they gave the last full measure of
N. devotion—that we here highly resolve these dead shall not
H. devotion—that we here highly resolve that these dead shall not
N. A. devotion; that we here highly resolve that these dead shall not
B. devotion—that we here highly resolve that these dead shall not
N. have died in vain; that the nation, shall
H. have died in vain; that this nation shall
N. A. have died in vain. That the nation shall, under God,
B. have died in vain — that this nation, under God, shall
N. have a new birth of freedom, and that government of the
H. have a new birth of freedom; and that this government of the
N. A. have a new birth of freedom, and that the government of the
B. have a new birth of freedom—and that government of the
N. people by the people for the people, shall not perish from
H. people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from
N. A. people, by the people and for the people, shall not perish from
B. people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from
N. the earth.
H. the earth.
N. A. the earth.
B. the earth.

B.

*From Report of the Commissioners representing Massachusetts at the
Dedication of the National Cemetery.*

DEDICATORY SPEECH BY PRESIDENT LINCOLN.

Four score and seven years ago, our fathers brought forth upon this continent a new nation, conceived in liberty and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal.

Now we are engaged in a great civil war, testing whether that nation—or any nation, so conceived and so dedicated—can long endure.

We are met on a great battle-field of that war. We are met to dedicate a portion of it as the final resting-place of those who have given¹ their lives that that nation might live.

It is altogether fitting and proper that we should do this.

But, in a larger sense, we cannot dedicate, we cannot consecrate, we cannot hallow, this ground. The brave men, living and dead, who struggled here, have consecrated it, far above our power² to add or to detract.

The world will very³ little note nor long remember what we say here; but it can never forget what they did here.

It is for us, the living, rather, *to be dedicated*, here, to the unfinished work that they have thus far so nobly carried on. It is rather for us to be here⁴ dedicated to the great task remaining before us; that from these honored dead we take increased devotion to that cause for which they here gave the last full measure of devotion; that we here highly resolve that these dead shall not have died in vain; that the nation shall, under

¹ North American (Associated Press): *here gave*, and so other papers, except Boston Journal, Boston Advertiser, and Cincinnati Gazette, which have *have given*, and Inquirer, *who gave*. Hay and Baltimore: *here gave*. Nicolay: *who died here*.

² North American (Associated Press): *poor power*, and so Nicolay, Hay, and Baltimore. All but Philadelphia papers omit *poor*.

³ North American (Associated Press) omits *very*, and so all other papers and Nicolay, Hay, and Baltimore.

⁴ North American (Associated Press): *here to be*, and so other Philadelphia papers, except Inquirer, which has neither phrase, and Cincinnati Gazette. All other papers and Hay and Baltimore *to be here*. Nicolay: *here be*.

God, have a new birth of freedom, and that¹ government of the people, by the people,² for the people, shall not perish from the earth.

C.

Report in Philadelphia "Inquirer," November 20, 1863.

Four score and seven years ago our fathers brought forth upon this continent a new nation, conceived in liberty and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal. Now we are engaged in a great civil war, testing the question whether this nation or any nation so conceived, so dedicated, can long endure. We are met on the great battle-field of that war. We are met to dedicate it, on a portion of the field set apart as the final resting place of those who gave their lives for the nation's life; but the nation must live, and it is altogether fitting and proper that we should do this.

In a larger sense we cannot dedicate, we cannot consecrate, we cannot hallow this ground in reality. The number of men, living and dead, who struggled here have consecrated it far above our poor attempts to add to its consecration. The world will little know and nothing remember of what we see here, but we cannot forget what these brave men did here.

We owe this offering to our dead. We imbibe increased devotion to that cause for which they here gave the last full measure of devotion; we here might resolve that they shall not have died in vain; that the nation shall, under God, have a new birth of freedom, and that the Government of the people, for the people, and for all people, shall not perish from earth.

—Same report in "The Compiler" (Gettysburg), November 23, 1863.

Report in Cincinnati "Daily Gazette," November 21, 1863.

Four score and seven years ago our fathers established upon this Continent a Government subscribed in liberty and dedicated to the fundamental principle that all mankind are created free and equal by a good God. And now we are engaged in a great contest deciding the question whether this nation or any nation so conserved, so dedicated, can long remain. We are met on a great battle-field of the war. We are met here to dedicate a portion of that field as the final resting place of those who have given their lives that it might live. It is altogether fitting and proper that we should do this.

¹ North American (Associated Press) inserts *the*, and so other Philadelphia papers and Cincinnati Gazette. Hay inserts *this*. Other papers and Nicolay and Baltimore agree with Massachusetts.

² North American (Associated Press) inserts *and*, and so all other papers. Nicolay, Hay, and Baltimore agree with Massachusetts.

But in a large sense we cannot dedicate, we cannot consecrate, we cannot hallow this ground. The brave men, the living and the dead, who struggled here, have consecrated it far above our power to add to or detract from the work. Let us long remember what we say here, but not forget what they did here.

It is for us rather, the living, to be dedicated here to the unfinished work that they have thus far so nobly carried forward. It is for us here to be dedicated to the great task remaining before us, for us to renew our devotion to that cause for which they gave the full measure of their devotion. Here let us resolve that what they have done shall not have been done in vain; that the nation shall, under God, have a new birth offered; that the Government of the people, founded by the people, shall not perish.

—Apparent typographical errors are as in original reports.

D.

"From Pennsylvania Magazine, History and Biography," October, 1909.

CENTENARY OF ABRAHAM LINCOLN'S BIRTH.—

The Centenary of Abraham Lincoln's birth was observed by the Historical Society of Pennsylvania at a Special Meeting, February 8, at which Major William H. Lambert, a member of the Council, read a paper entitled "The Gettysburg Address, When Written, How Received, its True Form"; and also by an Exhibition of Lincoln Autographs and Relics, that continued through the week. In addition to the Society's own treasures, the following articles from Major Lambert's Lincoln Collection were shown:

Lock of Lincoln's Hair, cut April 15, 1865.

Cuff Button worn by Lincoln April 14, 1865.

Inkstand owned and used by Lincoln in his Springfield Law Office, with certificate by his partner Herndon, that from this stand the "House divided against itself" speech was written.

Cane owned and used by Lincoln, and presented by him to Rev. Dr. Gurley, pastor of the Church attended by the President and his family in Washington.

Cane presented to Lincoln in 1860, and after his death presented by his widow to Frank B. Carpenter, the artist.

Books Owned by Lincoln and Containing his Autograph.

A Dictionary for Primary Schools—Webster—1833.

Paley's Works.

Gibbon's Rome.

Hallam's Middle Ages.

Angell on Limitations.

The Illinois Conveyancer.

Books Presented to Lincoln.

The Republican Party, speech by Charles Sumner, with his autograph presentation.

Hitchcock's Religious Truth, with autograph presentation by Herndon.

Books Used by Lincoln, Each with Certificate of that Fact.

Colton's Life and Speeches of Henry Clay.
Speech of Stephen A. Douglas.

*Books Presented by Lincoln with his Penciled Autograph
Inscription in Each.*

Lincoln and Douglas Debates, 1860, with two A. L. S. of Lincoln and one of Douglas, relating to contest, inserted.

Lanman's Dictionary of Congress, 1859, with A. L. S. of Lincoln to Lanman inserted.

Autographs of Lincoln.

"Abraham Lincoln—His Book."—Small blank book in which Lincoln pasted clippings from newspaper reports of various speeches and wrote notes and a letter to Hon. J. N. Brown, for whom the book was prepared.

Autograph page from "Sum Book" signed by Lincoln and dated 1824.

Soldier's Discharge in "Black Hawk War," blanks filled by Lincoln, who signed as Captain, September 26, 1832.

Autograph Document—Notes of Survey, 1836.

Autograph Praeceptum in his first law suit, October 8, 1836.

A. L. S. to Hon. John T. Stuart, January 20, 1840.

A. L. S. to William H. Herndon, June 22, 1848.

A. L. S. to John D. Johnson (step-brother), November 25, 1851.

A. L. S. to Hon. John M. Palmer, September 7, 1854.

A. L. S. to John E. Rosette, February 20, 1857.

A. L. S. to Hon. Lyman Trumbull, April 29, 1860.

Note signed to the Secretary of the Interior, March 15, 1861.

A. N. S. to Lieut. Genl. Scott, August 7, 1861.

A. N. S. to General McClellan, September 30, 1861.

A. N. S. to Secretary of War, July 28, 1862.

A. L. S. to Governor Curtin, July 25, 1864.

A. L. S. to Dr. W. O. Snider, July 25, 1864.

A. L. S. to General Grant, City Point, April 6, 1865.

Nine visiting cards with Autograph notes signed on each, various dates.

A. L. S. of Col. J. E. Peyton to the Adjut. Genl. U. S. A. with favorable endorsements by several citizens of Philadelphia, and Mayor Henry, Governor Curtin, and President Lincoln, but disapproved by the Secretary of War.

Proposed measures for gradual and compensated abolition of slavery in Delaware; four pages in President Lincoln's autograph.

Plan of Campaign for fall of 1861, two pages in autograph of President Lincoln.

Autograph manuscript of his Address at the opening of the Sanitary Fair, Baltimore, April 18, 1864.

Autograph Manuscript—Thoughts upon Slavery.

Legal documents in Autograph of Lincoln, the several firm names signed by him.

Stuart & Lincoln.
Logan & Lincoln.
Lincoln & Herndon.

Legal Documents in Autograph of Lincoln signed for himself and associated counsel.

Lincoln & Lamon.

Whitney, Davis, Swett & Lincoln.

Autograph judicial opinion written by Lincoln at request of the Clerk of the Court.

Lincoln and Herndon Fee Book, 1847.

Copper Medal, copy of Gold Medal given Mrs. Lincoln by French citizens.

Lincoln Centennial Medals by Roiné, Gold, Silver, and Bronze.

Lincoln Medals by Brenner, Silver and Bronze.

Original Ambrotype, August 13, 1860.

Original Ambrotype.

Original Daguerreotype.

Twelve Contemporary Card Photographs.

Program of Arrangements for reception of President-Elect, Philadelphia, February 21, 1861.

Obsequies of President in Philadelphia, April 21, 1865.

Ticket of Admission to Independence Hall, April 21, 1865.

Ford's Theatre Play-Bill, April 14, 1865, First Issue.

Ford's Theatre Play-Bill, April 14, 1865, Second Issue.

Manuscript notes descriptive of the last hours of President Lincoln and of the autopsy, written April 15, 1865, by Dr. C. S. Taft, one of the attending Surgeons.

Autograph Copy by Walt Whitman of "O Captain! My Captain!"

Among the exhibits of the Historical Society were the following original autograph letters:

EXECUTIVE MANSION

MAJOR GENERAL GRANT.

WASHINGTON, July 13, 1863.

My dear General.

I do not remember that you and I ever met personally. I write this now as a grateful acknowledgment for the almost inestimable service you have done the country.—I wish to say a word further—When you first reached the vicinity of Vicksburg, I thought you should do, what you finally did—March the troops across the neck, run the batteries with the transports, and then go below; and I never had any faith, except a general hope that you knew better than I, that the Yazoo Pass expedition, and the like, could succeed. When you got below, and took Port Gibson, Grand Gulf, and vicinity, I thought you should go down the river and join Gen. Banks, and when you turned Northward East of the Big Black, I feared it was a mistake. I now wish to make the personal acknowledgment that you were right, and I was wrong.

Yours very truly

A. LINCOLN.

EXECUTIVE MANSION

ELIZA P. GURNEY.

WASHINGTON September 4, 1864.

My esteemed friend,

I have not forgotten—probably never shall forget—the very impressive occasion when yourself and friends visited me on a Sabbath forenoon

two years ago. Nor has your kind letter, written nearly a year later ever been forgotten. In all it has ever been your purpose to strengthen my reliance on God. I am much indebted to the good christian people of the country for their constant prayers and consolations; and to no one of them, more than to yourself. The purposes of the Almighty are perfect, and must prevail, though we erring mortals may fail to accurately perceive them in advance. We hoped for a happy termination of this terrible war long before this; but God knows best, and has ruled otherwise. We shall yet acknowledge His wisdom and our own error therein. Meanwhile we must work earnestly in the best light he gives us, trusting that so working still conduces to the great ends He ordains. Surely He intends some great good to follow this mighty convulsion, which no mortal could make, and no mortal could stay.

Your people—the Friends—have had, and are having a very great trial.

On principle, and faith, opposed to both war and oppression, they can only practically oppose oppression by war. In this hard dilemma, some have chosen one horn and some the other. For those appealing to me on conscientious grounds, I have done, and shall do, the best I could and can, in my own conscience, under my oath to the law. That you believe this I doubt not, and believing it, I shall still receive, for our country and myself, your earnest prayers to our Father in Heaven.

Your sincere friend,
A. LINCOLN.



