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Eulogy on Abraham Lincoln Delivered at Rockland, Maine, April 19, 1865

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EULOGY

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ABRAHAM LINCOLN,

DELIVERED AT

ROCKLAND, MAINE,

April 19, 1865,

BY REQUEST OF THE CITIZENS.

BY

REV. EDWARD F. CUTTER.

BOSTON:
D. C. COLESWORTHY, 66 CORNHILL.
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EULOGY.

"The beauty of Israel is slain upon thy high places! How are the mighty fallen!"

On the 19th of April, 1775, the first blood of the Revolution was shed at Lexington.

On the 19th of April, 1861, the first blood of this terrible conflict between freedom and slavery was shed in Baltimore.

On this 19th of April, 1865, Abraham Lincoln, the first President of these United States whose name and administration will be forever associated with Universal Emancipation, struck down by the assassin's hand, is carried to his burial at Washington; and a nation is in tears.

The martyrs of Lexington and Baltimore died under the lurid skies of the morning, betokening a day of dark and doubtful conflict. Abraham Lincoln died at eventide, when the sun, breaking through the scattering clouds, tinged them with gold and purple, giving promise for the morrow, and threw across the yet darkened sky the bow of hope, — harbinger of peace.

But the victor may die, and the victory not be lost. The seed ripens for the harvest, though the hand of the sower be cold in death.

More than two centuries ago, Gustavus Adolphus, the most illustrious hero of his time, died, in the hour of victory, on the blood-stained field of Lutzen. But we, to-day, enjoying civil and religious freedom, are reaping the fruits of that victory over papal despotism and imperial tyranny.

More than a century back, the gallant Wolfe died, in the hour of triumph, on the Plains of Abraham; but the victory was not lost. The papal and French power on this continent was forever broken, and the way was prepared for the American Revolution and the birth of this glorious Republic.

Nelson, too, died at Trafalgar, in the hour of his most splendid victory; but that did not restore the shattered navy of France. Napoleon, almost omnipotent on the land, was powerless on the ocean. England was mistress of the seas.

So Lincoln has died amid the shouts of victory; but freedom, for which he fought and conquered, is not dead. It lives, and will live; for One, whom no assassin's dagger can reach, is its sure defence. The blood of its martyrs, under his overruling providence, but makes the seed ripen in more luxuriant beauty and more abundant harvest. We rejoice that Lincoln, even as the great Hebrew prophet, was permitted to enjoy a vision from Pisgah, though he entered not the Promised Land; but, thank God, he saw it nigh, and a light blessed his latter day, which, if not the full noontide glory, was yet the morning spread on the mountains, showing that the night was past.

He saw the giant Rebellion broken; its strongholds along our mighty rivers and on our ocean headlands captured; its traitor leader, a fugitive and a vagabond, seeking some resting-place for the sole of his foot, - without a capital, without a treasury, without an army, despised by his deluded followers, and execrated by all loyal men. Yes: everywhere, along the banks of the Mississippi, at Savannah, on Sumter's walls, over Charleston, Wilmington, and Richmond, the old flag floated; and brave men rallied round it, stern in purpose that it should float there forever. We thank God, Lincoln saw all this before he died; and, a conqueror, trod the streets of the proud rebel capital, and dictated the terms of submission to traitors in arms. It would have been sad indeed, had this toiling, faithful servant died while an unbroken cloud rested on the land he loved, or without the full assurance of its approaching triumph.

We remember, too, how long and patiently Lincoln struggled with treachery and imbecility on every hand, seeking to find hearts as true and honest as his own, united with firm purpose and masterly skill to guide our army and navy on to victory. We thank God that he found them, — Grant, Sherman, Sheridan, Thomas, Farragut, Porter, Alden, Winslow, Cushing, and their gallant fellows, both in rank and file, — and could rest his weary arms on these Aarons and Hurs, and see the Amalekites

scattered like chaff before these gallant leaders. If there were any premonition that he might fall, as he has fallen, suddenly, we rejoice that he could feel—and this was all he desired—that the country was safe. He left her destinies, under God, in charge of hearts as true, and hands as strong, as his own.

One other desire of his great heart was granted. In his last proclamations, he vindicated the Government and the flag before the world. Asserting the power of the Government over all its scaports, by stern edict he closed the rebellious ports against the commerce of the world, and demanded for the old flag its rightful position on every sea and in every harbor. How his heart exulted when he thus vindicated the Government and flag, and demanded the homage of all nations as a right, not a boon! That word of authority will be respected; an army and navy such as the world never saw lie behind it. Ay! and we, the people, will see to it that these last edicts of Abraham Lincoln, now, alas! sealed with his blood, are maintained to the letter. Woe, woe to any foreign power, woe to any traitor at home, who shall assume to put in a plea of neutrality, or attempt, on the ground of belligerent rights, to evade the laws! The hour of submission to insult is past. We are a nation among nations again.

We thank God, besides, that Abraham Lincoln did not die till he had the full assurance that, as he loved and honored the people, so the people loved and honored him. Next to the approval of God and his own conscience, this was the approval he desired and valued most. It has been often said, "Republics are proverbially ungrateful." Neither Washington nor Lincoln have had such experience: a grateful, reverent people have delighted to do them honor in life; and their memory is a nation's most cherished crown.

You all remember the Ides of November last, when the shout of a free people, from Maine to California, like the voice of many waters, rang on the air, "Well done! good and faithful servant!" and the will of the nation, almost unanimous, placed again on Lincoln's brow the crown he had once worn so worthily. And what a diadem! every star in its setting radiant with freedom! not a gem stained by tear of groaning slave! Mark the brilliant stars, — Maine, —

"Our own dear old Maine, Union's polar star
Dirigo beams bright in peace and in war:
Its beacon-light flashing o'er land and sea,
Aye for Freedom, for Union, and Victory!"

Massachusetts, the light caught from early Pilgrim fires blazing out in full-orbed meridian splendor; Vermont, "the star that never sets," with their sister Pleiades of New England; the Empire and Keystone States, brightest of the starry host; the mighty constellations of the West, whose earliest beam was kindled at Freedom's altar, circling the glorious diadem like the bands of Orion; the golden star of California and distant Oregon; the brilliant triad, Missouri, Maryland, West Virginia, for the first time showing their full radiance, unobscured by a cloud; and the newly risen star of Neyada, twinkling and tremulous, but pure as the snows of her eternally clad mountains.

"Hark, hark! to God the chorus breaks, From every star, from every gem."

Maine begins the song: the strain, gathering strength and fulness, rolls on, star after star swelling the note, across the hills and valleys of New England, along the beautiful Hudson and the "blue Juniata," waking the echoes of the Alleghany, sweeping down the broad prairies of the West, leaping from peak to peak of the Rocky Mountains, and dying out amid the ocean murmurs on the Pacific shore, — an unbroken strain of Freedom, Freedom, Universal Emancipation. Not a groan nor sigh of the oppressed mars the beauty of the song, which rolls upward, the Jubilee Thanksgiving of an emancipated nation, and sweetly blends with the everlasting anthem above.

Methinks the old mountain eagle, glorious bird of our banner, as the new and ravishing strain brake on his startled ear, and the film that had partially clouded his eye fell off, and the dazzling glory burst on his disenthralled vision, darted from his rocky height with exultant wing and joyous cry, sweeping in swifter and wider circuit round the land of whose greatness and power he is the proud emblem,— the land, all whose highways and by-ways were, from henceforth and forever, to

be as free to every human foot as the bright paths of the firmament to his own free, unchained pinions!

This coronet of freedom, brighter than ever decked monarch's brow, all radiant with freedom's stars, a grateful, loving, trusting people, on the fourth of March last, placed on the head of Abraham Lincoln; and the head was worthy to wear it. high honor, denied even to our glorious, godlike Washington, of being the first of a long and honored line of presidential kings who shall wear the crown of freedom, unsullied and unobscured by the touch or stain of slavery, was reserved in providence for "this man of the people," born and bred in poverty, struggling up the rough ways of life by hard, honest work, catching but here and there a draught from those fountains of knowledge, which, on freedom's soil, gush up alike for all, rich and poor. Freedom made and freedom crowned him; and that crown shall ever be ours, — for never — no, never, no, never shall our glorious national diadem be circled by a star or a gem that is not the willing offering of freedom and freemen.

Surely, he who first wore such a coronet, though he has fallen by cruel hand, had, before he fell, the testimony that he pleased God.

To a tender, loving heart like Lincoln's, there was a blessing more precious than all this wordly honor, — the blessing of the poor bondmen he had redeemed from the lash and the chain, restoring to them the manhood of which they had been so wrongfully spoiled, and pouring the light of freedom upon the long, long night that had enshrouded them as the shadow of death. More precious in the sight of God than costly oblations, "pearls from the ocean, or gold from the mine," are the prayers of the poor; and no cup of blessing does he ever put to human lips, filled with purer draught from the river of life than the earnest love, the joyous homage, of the weak and lowly ones, whose sincere and unaffected tribute of gratitude is fragrant as the incense from the altars of God. We rejoice that the hand of the assassin was stayed till Lincoln had drank this cup to the full, till on his ear, as he entered Richmond without pomp or parade, brake the shouts and hallelujahs of the thousands who hailed him as their Messiah appointed to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord, to preach deliverance to the captives, to set at liberty them that were bruised, and unfold the gospel of freedom to the poor.

Ah, how earthly glory and greatness fade before the heavenly radiance of scenes like these! "When the ear heard him, then it blessed him; and, when the eye saw him, it gave witness to him, because he delivered the poor that cried, and the fatherless, and him that had none to help him. The blessing of him that was ready to perish came upon him." Even freedom's coronet, all radiant with stars, was not a crown like this!

What more could be given to mortal man? God had yet one blessing more, his last best gift, - the assurance of forgiven sin in Christ Jesus; and this was not withheld. There was, as always in minds sincere and thoughtful as Lincoln's, a deep underlaying of religious sentiment, a reverent regard for the Bible, a strong confidence in God's providence; but such minds advance slowly to the full, clear, decisive acceptance of the gospel, so as to make the entire, hearty surrender of the soul unto Christ. You remember Mr. Lincoln's experience, so simply and frankly told, when a friend asked if he was really and fully a Christian. With deep and tearful emotion, he replied, "When I left Springfield, making my parting request to my friends to pray for me, I was not a Christian; when my son died, and the darkest sorrow of my life came upon me, I was not a Christian; but when I went to Gettysburg, and looked on the graves of the noble dead, who died for their country, I gave my heart to Christ." What though the summons came suddenly as lightning flash! he was ready.

"He fell, but felt no fear."

Who was this man, so honored and beloved? I need not recite his history. You all know it, the world knows it, by heart.

He was a true man. "The elements so mixed in him, that Nature might stand up, and say to all the world, This was a man." Ay, a man without tinsel or trapping; his manhood, his glory and covering. High office, loving praise, harsh censure and deadly hate,—all were his; but he bore them as a man, meekly, with no show of pride, uncomplaining, the generous sympathies of his manly heart binding him to all alike, rich and poor, master and slave; never cringing to the high, nor

lording it over the low; for he recognized in every man a brother, and never forgot that he also was a man. In this development of a broad humanity, unaffected by changing circumstance,—and his was a life of lowest depression and of highest elevation,—he showed the true greatness of his nature. For great natures alone are superior to outward circumstance, and develop the godlike image, alike in incarnation and in exaltation.

He was a strong man. His physical, moral, and intellectual frame was marked more by strength than by grace and beauty. Hence many, who look only at the outward, and appreciate the gem by the richness of its setting, undervalued him. But his was a great mind in its grasp and its hold. It was a mind to guide amid the storm, and hold the ship of State to her moorings. A ship, finished in rounded lines, in the tall masts, tapering spars, swelling sails, and gay pennons, is a thing of life and beauty. As she flouts on the tide, no sea-bird skims the wave more gracefully. The eye never wearies in admiration of her marvellous beauty. To a careless observer, who, in the love of the beautiful, forgets the useful, the rough, unwieldy anchor, and the huge, bulky chain, may seem a deformity. No ornament decks them: in rude, unadorned strength, they wait their hour. When the skies are sunny, and the winds blow softly, and the billows roll gently on, then the beautiful sails and spars are seen; and, with light and buoyant wing, the gallant ship speeds onward. But, when the storm breaks, the winds lift up their voice, and the billows chase each other in maddening wrath, and the lookout cries from the mast-head, "Breakers! breakers a'lee!" then, that rough, ungainly anchor, and that rude, bulky chain, hold her to her moorings, and save her from ingulfing waves. So, in times of peace, the graceful, polished mind, trained and finished in the schools, may guide the ship of State over the sunny sea; and the gallant bark, under the gentle hand, skim, like sea-bird, the rippling But when the storm breaks, - treason, sedition, war, - and the ship is rocked and tossed amid the breakers, then the rugged intellect of a Cromwell, an Abraham Lincoln, is demanded. And who, who has not felt, amid the dark and howling storm of these last four years, that the strong, inflexible purpose, the mind embedded in unfaltering conviction of the right, and the unshaken confidence that God would make right triumphant, of Abraham Lincoln, has been the sheet-anchor of our hope? and we bless God it was not wrenched from its hold till the storm had spent its fury, the winds were lulling, the sea, like a tired gladiator, sinking to repose, and the haven of peace opening to the tempest-tost bark. Had this terrible calamity befallen the good ship while the storm was at its height, where should we have found an anchor as strong, as deeply embedded, and as sure an emblem of faith and hope to all the people?

This strong man had an inflexible love of right. Wedded to no theory, ready to adopt another man's system as his own, provided only the great end were maintained, he unselfishly sought to advance his country's highest good. He was slow, it may be, — such minds as his always are: they never jump at conclusions, but by long, patient, toiling investigation, determine truth and right. But these, once fixed, are fixed forever; and there is seldom occasion to retrace a step once taken. The singleness of purpose and the calm investigation of such a mind as Lincoln's, make it rarely, if ever, necessary to take a step backward. The advance may seem slow; but it is ever onward.

This man Lincoln, a man of the people, had an implicit faith in the people, whose exponent and executive he was proud to be. No child ever hung with more reverent ear on a mother's lips than he on the voice of the people. He was ready and glad to follow them. He bore the ark of the covenant, symbol of law and government, as it was borne of old in the midst of the tribes; the people surrounded it as a wall, - advanced with it, rested when it rested. Hence, when a march was gained, there was no loitering for the tribes to come up: the ark and the people were always together. So Lincoln has gone with the people, and the people with him; and every advance step of freedom has been held because it was taken in the hour when leader and people both felt it was demanded. Thus the abolition of slavery in the District of Columbia, the emancipation proclamation, the enlistment of negro soldiers, and the great Constitutional Amendment, were the unchangeable edict of executive and people acting and speaking together. So sealed and signed, they can never be abrogated. The flat of the executive alone might be set aside; but the flat of executive and people is final.

But what shall we say of this man's genial sympathies and large heart, tender as a mother's in its yearning love? No burden of care, no pressure of business, ever closed his ear to suffering cry, or made him forget any poor afflicted one

who might claim his protection or blessing.

You may remember the affecting story of a soldier in the Third Vermont Regiment, condemned to die for sleeping at his post. The President examined the case, and found extenuating circumstances in the fact that the soldier had been on duty two nights in succession, the second night voluntarily for a sick comrade, and the third night had fallen asleep. He sent a pardon; but the last day arrived, and, having heard nothing, he began to fear it had not reached its destination. Failing to get a satisfactory answer by telegraph, he laid every thing else aside, though the burden of a great nation rested on his shoulder, ordered his carriage, and drove rapidly to the camp, some ten miles distant, to assure himself it was all right. That soldier never forgot him. In a deadly charge on the Peninsula, he fell, pierced by six bullets. As his comrades lifted him up, he exclaimed, "Bear witness I have proved myself not a coward, and am not afraid to die." He was a Christian soldier; and with his last breath he prayed for the kindhearted President, Abraham Lincoln. Ah! how many dying lips have blessed him! how many hearts in hut, hovel, camp, and hospital, have prayed for him with more than filial love as their friend and father! O God! how faith clings to the eternal throne in trembling fear, that such a man should fall by the assassin's hand when a thousand loyal hearts would have received the deadly bullets to have shielded him. "Oh the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments! and his ways past finding out. Be still, and know I am God."

You will bear witness, I have not exaggerated the virtues of the man. But let me confirm what I have said, by the testimony of an intelligent, large-hearted friend of ours across the water, Prof. Cairnes of Dublin, who gives in brief outline the character and position of Lincoln, thus:—

"The formal, decorous, courtly figure of the founder of the Union will contrast strangely with the ungainly and unpolished figure of (we trust) its destined restorer. But history will recognize one thing common to George Washington and Abraham Lincoln,—a pure honesty void of self-seeking. When the heats of party passion and international jealousy have abated, when detraction has spent its malice, and the scandalous gossip of the day goes the way of all lies, the place of Abraham Lincoln in the grateful affection of his countrymen and in the respect of the world will be second only, if it be second, to that of Washington himself."

But Lincoln is dead. "After life's fitful fever, he sleeps well: treason has done its worst; nor steel nor poison, malice domestic, foreign levy, nothing, can touch him further." Yes: he sleeps well,—forever at rest in the bosom of his God, and in the heart of the nation.

To-day, the ordinary voices of life are hushed, the marts of commerce are still. From Atlantic to Pacific, the tolling bell, the solemn dirge, the minute-gun, the funeral wail, the tearful prayer, tell a nation's grief as we bear our loved chieftain to his burial. Reverently, we draw nigh to gaze on that pale face, wearing its wonted sad yet hopeful aspect, showing how the burden of a nation's conflict pressed on his mighty soul, and his calm trusting reliance on God. Who, who can repress the prayer, that, for one brief moment at least, life might stir that mighty brain but yesterday so earnest a worker for human good, that genial heart, so full of kindness to all, and unseal those dumb lips whose utterances will never die? Methinks I see that moment of renewed life, and catch the farewell word: "My countrymen, be true to God, to right, to freedom: be loyal to the union, the constitution, the country, and the old flag. Never suffer a fetter that has been broken to be welded anew, nor pause in the work of freedom, till all are free. To him on whom my mantle has fallen, give as generous love, as cordial support, as unceasing remembrance in prayer, as you have given me. Trust in God: all will be well." The lips are hushing into long silence; but we bend lower, and catch a whisper, — a whisper of prayer, "O God! defend, bless, save, my native land! May she ever be true to freedom and thee!" Precious legacy! we accept the trust; and here, in the presence of the honored dead, and before Almighty God, do pledge ourselves to carry on to full consummation the glorious work Abraham Lincoln begun. Come weal or come woe, if, after the armies of rebellion are scattered as chaff before the wind, the enemies of freedom, in despairing and deadly hate, shall ply the incendiary's torch and the assassin's dagger, laying our cities in ashes and our mighty men low, never, no, never, while a house remains or a loyal heart beats, will we grant slavery a foothold on our soil, or allow other than the glorious old stars and stripes to float within our borders. By the blessing of God the Union and Freedom must and shall be perpetual!

To-morrow, and on successive days, a sad procession will pass through the land; its path everywhere bedewed by the tears of a stricken people bearing the remains of our loved chieftain to rest within his prairie home. There will be a new shrine of freedom for pilgrim feet. Mt. Vernon and Springfield will henceforth be kindred shrines. The lovers of man, the friends of freedom the world over, will turn to them to kindle anew the fires of patriotism; and pilgrims of every tongue will bend with uncovered head and word of blessing over the graves of Washington and Lincoln. But to the tomb at Springfield will come, as they never came to Mt. Vernon, children and children's children of the enslaved redeemed from bondage; and no spot of earth will be wet with more sincere tears, or hallowed by more grateful memories, than the grave of Abraham Lincoln.

Turn we a moment from the dead to the living! Andrew Johnson sits to-day in the chair of Abraham Lincoln. He wears the radiant crown Lincoln wore so worthily. Can we give him like confidence? take him as worthily into our heart of hearts? We think we can. He, too, is a man of the people, a true man: his manhood has been trained in stern conflict with poverty, lack of educational privilege and caste. But an iron will and a high purpose have raised him to sit among the peers of the land, and made him a peer among them all. We

cannot wholly forget that, in an unguarded hour, under the depression and exhaustion of care and sickness, he brought shame on himself, and bowed our heads in sorrow. No more can we forget his stern, uncompromising devotion to the Union, his true and fearless patriotism, his singleness of loyalty, that made him the Abdiel of Southern senators: "faithful found among the faithless, faithful only he." Despite a life-long attachment to the Democratic party, despite proslavery and Secession influence dominant in his State, despite bonds, imprisonment, spoiling of his goods, exile, and loss of every thing but life, and that in daily peril, he has stood firm, and never wavered in his love to the old Government and the old flag.

"Among innumerable false, unmoved,
Unshaken, unseduced, unterrified,
His loyalty he kept, his love, his zeal:
Nor number nor example with him wrought
To swerve from truth, or change his constant mind,
Though single."

Nor can we forget his steady, onward march towards universal emancipation; and that he stands to-day, and for months past has stood, the bold, earnest, unflinching advocate of unconditional freedom to every slave in the land. To his efforts, in no small measure, it is due, that Tennessee shines to-day a bright star of freedom, and ready to place another pure, unsullied gem in our national crown.

With this record he comes to us, pledged to carry out and consummate the great work Lincoln has begun, to renew and make perpetual the union of these States, and establish the reign of freedom in all the land. How shall we receive him? You remember, when the great Hebrew leader, like our beloved Lincoln, was taken away, while yet his eye was undimmed and his natural strength not abated, in the full vigor and prime of his manhood and wisdom, the tribes turned reverently and lovingly to his successor, the valiant son of Nun, and pledged him the like loyalty and obedience they had rendered to Moses. Shall we not, to-day, so turn to Andrew Johnson, and say, in the beautiful, touching language of Israel, "According as we hearkened unto Lincoln in all things, so will we hearken unto

thee. Only the Lord thy God be with thee as he was with Lincoln,—only be strong and of a good courage"?

We may find a parallel, in the characters of Moses and Joshua, to those of Lincoln and Johnson, also in the work given them to do. Moses was the meekest of men, kind, patient, gentle, not easily provoked: he was suited to guide a capricious, captious, murmuring people through the rough wilderness, conciliating and binding together discordant factions by his long-suffering and patient endurance. But he bore in his hand only a shepherd's rod; and when the hour came for driving out the idolatrous nations of Canaan, lest, if suffered to remain, their pernicious opinions and practice should seduce the people of God, a warrior-sword was demanded. Joshua, whose sword was terrible to the foe, was the leader for the hour. Lincoln was meek as Moses: his heart tender as a woman's, he "cherished hearts that hated him," "carried in his right hand gentle peace;" and, in the conflict of parties and factions, his was the spirit that conciliated and bound together the people; but the hour had come when traitors were to answer to justice their deeds of perjury and blood; and stern, inexorable law was to decide their doom. A man of another mould was demanded, a magistrate to bear a sword, a terror to evil-doers. Andrew Johnson is that man. he looks with lenient kindness on the deluded masses whose bitter experience of slaveholding oppression he has shared, the proud, blood-stained, perjured leaders quail before him; for all his past record shows that he will vindicate law and government against treason, and mete out just penalty to traitors; and who knoweth whether he is come to the kingdom for such a time as this?

We pledge him our confidence and co-operation in this great work of justice; and if he shall prove as true in purpose, as unselfish in aim, as earnest, toiling, and faithful a worker for the Union and Freedom, as Abraham Lincoln, we will love him, pray for him, revere him in life, and mourn him in death, as we have the beloved Lincoln. If, by the blessing of God, he shall prove himself as true a man for the coming hour as Lincoln for the hour past, and shall bring back every State to the Union and Freedom, crushing out treason and traitors with

iron hand, and establish government and law over all the land. so that justice shall be maintained, and not a stain defile her pure ermine, then, when in all coming time our history is written, we will record the "first three" of our mighty men, the names of George Washington, Abraham Lincoln, Andrew Johnson. Their memory shall never die. It will live in story and song, be written on the page of a history all the world will read, sculpture and painting will exhaust their art to give it embodiment and perpetuity; but its most enduring monument will be in the hearts, the living hearts, of the millions on millions of glad freemen, who, amid Northern snows, and sunny plains of the South, by Atlantic and Pacific shore, along the mighty rivers, under the shadow of mountain-ranges, and on broad, beautiful prairies, shall reap the glorious harvest springing up everywhere, all over the land, from the seed sown by these true and faithful workers for God and Freedom.

No! their memory can never die; for generation after generation of grateful, happy freemen will keep it ever fresh and green in perennial bloom and beauty,

Long, long as the star-spangled banner shall wave O'er the home of the free, the land without slave.