

**THE PRESIDENT'S WORDS: A
SELECTION OF PASSAGES FROM
THE SPEECHES, ADDRESSES, AND
LETTERS OF ABRAHAM LINCOLN**

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The president's words: a selection of passages from the speeches, addresses, and letters of Abraham Lincoln by Abraham Lincoln & Edward Everett Hale

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ABRAHAM LINCOLN & EDWARD EVERETT HALE

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A Selection of Passages
FROM THE
SPEECHES, ADDRESSES, AND LETTERS
OF
ABRAHAM LINCOLN.

"All goes well with us. Every thing seems quiet now."

A. LINCOLN: Telegram, April 2.

BOSTON:
WALKER, FULLER, AND COMPANY,
245, WASHINGTON STREET.
1865.

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INTRODUCTION.

THE funeral service of the 19th of April, 1865, was the most impressive religious service ever held in this country. By one impulse, the people of the land thronged the churches, which, at the hour of the funeral of the President, were everywhere open. At that hour, more people in this land united in the public worship of God, than ever united in such service on any day before. In Massachusetts, the day has been historical for nearly two centuries. It is now marked by one more association, which will remain in memory till the young children of this generation have grown old and passed away.

This little book, which we call "The President's Words," had its origin in the funeral services of that day. The ministers of different churches, who had to conduct those services, felt, of course, the impossibility of saying any thing which could give any additional precision to the lesson which the hour itself proclaimed. It certainly seemed to me

most fit to read from the President's own words, of trust in the people, and faith in God, some of the expressions in which for years he had been the providential teacher of this nation. It was, of course, impossible, on such an occasion, to read more than a few of these.

These selections attracted the attention of the publishers of this volume, who proposed at once to publish a collection of the President's more memorable sayings, and asked me to prepare it for the press. I was very glad to contribute to it such epigrams and aphorisms as I remembered, and had collected, from the addresses by which Mr. Lincoln instructed this country in the principles of its own institutions.

We knew, however, that it was desirable to make as full a collection as possible; and my friend, Mr. John Williams, to whose advice and assistance I am every day indebted, undertook the careful reading of every speech and letter of Mr. Lincoln's, which has been published, with a view to the diligent selection from them all, which he has made and arranged for this volume. To the skill with which he has done this work, the reader is indebted for its close condensation of the most striking thoughts which the President has uttered in his public life.

We have arranged them under five general heads, which will facilitate reference. Within those subdivisions, they are, in general, in the order of time. Every one knows that Mr. Lincoln was taught by experience. "I claim not to have controlled events," he said; "I confess plainly that events have controlled me." It has seemed most fair, therefore, to show, as far as might be, the process of the gradual formation of his opinions. In general, we have printed only brief *memorabilia*, separated even from their immediate connection. The last Inaugural, however, — his last long speech, — and one or two letters, are printed in full.

It has been matter of regret to us, that we could not with propriety put in print the conversational sayings which are so widely accredited to him. But it will be readily admitted, that such a collection, at this time, should not be attempted.

On the day of the funeral, in an address at Concord, Mr. R. W. Emerson thus characterized these brief utterances: —

"He is the author of a multitude of good sayings, so disguised as pleasantries that it is certain they had no reputation at first but as jests; and only later, by the very acceptance and adoption they find in the mouths of millions, turn out to be the