

**ANN PHILLIPS: WIFE
OF WENDELL PHILLIPS.
A MEMORIAL SKETCH**

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Ann Phillips: Wife of Wendell Phillips. A memorial sketch by Francis Jackson Garrison

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FRANCIS JACKSON GARRISON

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WIFE OF WENDELL PHILLIPS

A Memorial Sketch



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ANN TERRY GREENE PHILLIPS.

ANN PHILLIPS, wife of Wendell Phillips, died at her residence, No. 37 Common Street, Boston, on the evening of Saturday, April 24, 1886, after an invalidism which had kept her closely confined to her house for the greater part of fifty years. She was born in Boston on the 19th of November, 1813, and was a daughter of the late Benjamin Greene, of this city, and Mary Grew (from Birmingham, England), his wife.¹ They both died in middle life, leaving a large family of young children, of whom Mrs. Phillips was the last survivor. Soon after the death of her parents she was received as a daughter into the family of her uncle and aunt, Mr. and Mrs. Henry Chapman, then living in Chauncy Place, near Summer Street; and when, in the year 1834, the entire Chapman family espoused the despised and unpopular cause of the slave, and allied themselves with Mr. Garrison and his little band of adherents, this beautiful and interesting young girl ardently sympathized with them, and threw herself heart and soul into the movement. Her zeal and enthusiasm were unflag-

¹ John Grew, the father of Mary Grew, was a friend and townsman of Dr. Joseph Priestley, and warmly sympathized with him in his advanced and liberal ideas.

ging, and if her uncertain health prevented her taking so conspicuous a part as some others, she was nevertheless a most valuable and valued ally, clear-sighted, wise in counsel, brave and hopeful in the darkest hours. In social circles her brightness, vivacity, and ready conversational powers made her a general favorite, and she improved every opportunity to present and urge the arguments of the Abolitionists, and to convert the hostile and the timid who would consent to listen to them. It was not surprising, therefore, that when Wendell Phillips, whose interest in the anti-slavery movement had been awakened by Mrs. Child's "Appeal," and strengthened by the sight of the Garrison Mob, met Miss Greene, he was soon convinced by her fervid appeals that the cause demanded not merely sympathy and occasional help from him, but a life-long consecration, to the exclusion of all worldly considerations; and it was equally natural that he found the personal charms of a young lady inspired and fairly aglow with such high moral themes, irresistible. The same year (1836) that witnessed his engagement to Ann Greene was marked by his first speech on an anti-slavery platform, at Lynn, Mass., and it was shortly after their marriage in the following year that he made that brilliant speech at the Lovejoy meeting in Faneuil Hall, which placed him at once in the first rank of orators, and from which his public career properly dates.

Of Mr. Phillips's unbounded admiration and love

for his wife, of his chivalrous devotion to her, and absolute self-abnegation through the more than forty-six years of their married life, and of his oft-confessed indebtedness to her for her wise counsel and inspiration, matchless courage, and unswerving constancy, the world knows in a general way; but only those who have been intimately acquainted with them both can fully realize and appreciate it all. They also know how ardent was her affection for him, and how great her pride in his labors and achievements. There are some charming glimpses of her feelings towards him in the letters which she wrote to near friends during the early years of her marriage, before the pen became so wearisome to her that she allowed it to fall into disuse. "My better *three-quarters*," she called him frequently. It was evidently a case of love at first sight on her part, no less than on his, for — "When I first met Wendell," she wrote, "I used to think, 'it can never come to pass; such a being as he is could never think of me.' I looked upon it as something as strange as fairy-tale." And on her first birthday after her marriage she wrote to a relative as follows: —

"November 19, 1837. Do you remember it is Ann Terry's birthday, and that I am so aged? I think I feel younger than that seventeenth birthday eve. What piteous expressions I used, as if I had almost completed threescore and ten! . . . Only last year, on my sick-bed, I thought I should never see another birthday, and I must go and leave him

in the infancy of our love, in the dawn of my new life; and how does to-day find me?—the blessed and happy wife of one I thought I should never perhaps live to see. Thanks be to God for all his goodness to us, and may he make me more worthy of my Wendell! I cannot help thinking how little I have acquired, and Wendell, only two years older, seems to know a world more,—

‘That still my wonder grew,
How one small head could carry all he knew.’”

With all this ardent admiration of her husband's powers, and modest depreciation of her own, she possessed a keen insight, a sure instinct, and a sound judgment as to measures and principles, which he ever recognized and deferred to, and she often discussed with him, before he left her to attend a convention or deliver an address, the aspects of the question which she felt he ought specially to urge and emphasize. He cared more for her criticism and her approval than for all the plaudits of the admiring thousands who were stirred by his marvellous oratory.

In June, 1839, Mr. and Mrs. Phillips went abroad and remained two years, spending their winters on the Continent, and their summers in Great Britain, where they enjoyed meeting the choice circle of Abolitionists who were in close sympathy and affiliation with their American brethren. Noteworthy among these were Elizabeth Pease, a noble young Quaker lady of Darlington, England, and Richard D. Webb, of Dublin, also a Quaker, and