

**THE STORY OF WENDELL
PHILLIPS: SOLDIER OF
THE COMMON GOOD**

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The Story of Wendell Phillips: Soldier of the Common Good by Charles Edward Russell

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CHARLES EDWARD RUSSELL

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PHILLIPS: SOLDIER OF
THE COMMON GOOD**

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THE STORY OF WENDELL PHILLIPS:

Soldier of the Common Good

Property of The
SOCIALIST EDUCATION
LEAGUE

BY ^
CHARLES EDWARD RUSSELL

Author of "Stories of the Great Railroads,"
"Why I am a Socialist," etc.

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THE STORY OF WENDELL PHILLIPS

I

THE ENLISTMENT

MEN and women, all under the sway of a passionate excitement, many half maniacal with rage, have crowded the hall to the limit of its capacity. All are upon their feet, surging, shouting, screaming, gesticulating. On the platform before them is a tall, grave, handsome man, waiting to be heard. Without bravado, without concern, he stands and waits. Part of the audience desires to hear him; part desires to drown his voice with clamors; part is determined to take his life.

He stands and waits. Even his foes, looking upon him there, admit it is a remarkable figure against which they storm. His stature suggests strength and repose, but something more than bulk impresses the men gazing here

upon him. What moves them in spite of themselves is the manifest attitude of a man unafraid, sincere and intent upon his message, not upon himself.

After a time a lull comes in the rioting tornado of noises that has shaken the building. Instantly, this man, standing there so quietly, shoots into the opening a shining arrow of a sentence, straight, barbed, and singing as it flies. At the sound of it, uproar redoubles. On the platform, the speaker stands and waits, an archer with bow drawn. At the next lull, almost before the crowd is aware, he has loosened two of his burning shafts; at the next, three; at the next, the clamor dies away and friends and foes stand under the charm of a silver voice that rings forth one fascinating period after another. Hostile forces cease to contend on the floor. After a moment or two comes a ripple of involuntary applause. Before long the whole rapt audience is cheering. At the end of two hours it thinks the man may have been speaking ten minutes. He bows and leaves the platform amid thundering cheers, and sown behind him are conviction and unperishing seeds of thought.

At any time between 1837 and 1861 such a scene was common in the life of this man.

Of no other orator that ever lived are such triumphs recorded. Wherever he goes he sways men with a new necromancy. Audiences the most bitterly hostile seem unable to withstand his peculiar eloquence; the beautiful bell-like voice is wings to lofty thought, invincible logic and soul-searching words; even the minds fortified against reason learn from his lips. Yet, in his long life of ceaseless activities, he debated for no crown, argued for no fees, strove for no reward, sought no place nor any fame, cared for no achievement for its own sake, and used his unequalled gifts only for some cause of justice or freedom in which he could earn nothing but obloquy, hatred and isolation.

This is the career of Wendell Phillips, the most marvelous and the most inspiring in history. Here was a man endowed with every conceivable advantage for the winning of what we call success: a brilliant and powerful mind trained in the best schools; a gift of extemporaneous and moving eloquence, an attractive presence, great personal magnetism, a famous lineage, social standing and prestige; entered upon a profession he loved and for which he had every qualification, with hosts of powerful friends, a taste for public affairs and public life, an almost unequalled aptitude for debate;