

Memo. on Mr. Capen's article on Lost Speech.

The address opened with Historical review. Nothing new calls particular attention to the presence of Gov. Reader and Mrs. Robinson. Notes the eloquence of Owen Lovejoy. He says of Mr. Lincoln's speech.

"When Lovejoy had finished came the marvelous and never-to-be forgotten climax. The iron was hot for the workman's use; the height of man had been reached. In this surcharged atmosphere, Mr. Lincoln arose at half-past five and spoke until seven. The newspaper reporter dropped his pencil, a hush came upon the audience, who were breathless, straining every nerve to see and hear. He talked like one lifted far above the commonplace, and seemed to be transported to a higher sphere. And yet, when he sat down, no one could recall a word. This was his only experience of the kind: what he said afterwards was carefully recorded and preserved.

That phenomenon and mystery of the "Lost Speech" spread rapidly over the country. Two weeks later, at a public meeting in Springfield, he used the scriptural quotation "a house divided against itself cannot stand" and added "this nation will become all free or all slave", which became the rallying-cry of future campaigns. Perhaps, he had said the same at Bloomington; nobody knows.

Before this, he had been recognized as a leading lawyer in his thinly-settled court circuit: had served, without special distinction in the Legislature and in Congress, and in that circuit had become a popular speaker: the "Lost Speech" and the wonder it occasioned, and what soon followed, immediately placed him by common consent, at the head of the new party in the State, to which he had first allied himself at Major's Hall. The "Lost Speech" was the beginning of his great career.

In my limited reading, I have met with only one parallel to this "Lost Speech" and that is related by William Wirt, in "Sketches of the Life and Character of Patrick Henry", one of the classic gems of our literature the description of that orator's first case, "The Parson's Cause".