

lusty days, and was never so happy as when arrayed against strong men and stronger isms. In our time, when radicalism has become a force, and is no longer regarded as a crime; when its leaders have developed into administrators of departments in the public service, and have helped to carry on the great affairs of State in the government of countries, Thoreau, even with modified opinions, would not be looked upon as an attainted man. In his day, he was an Abolitionist, and sternly opposed to all tariffs, and every variety of slavery, political as well as human. The traffic in the black man, which disgraced his country, was an abomination which he could not denounce in terms of sufficient severity. He joined the anti-slavery party, when to do so was to incur the bitter hatred of many good men. Thoreau did not care. He felt a burst of sympathy tugging at his heart when old John Brown succumbed to the tap of authority on his shoulder. The hero was arrested, and Thoreau felt the mad, radical rebellious blood in his veins, warming every pulse and fibre and burning into his brain like a flame. He sent out notices to nearly every house in Concord, and told the people that he would speak on the great question in the public hall on Sunday evening, and he invited all to come and hear him. Even the Abolitionist Committee trembled at his daring, and the Republican Committee felt a sinking at the heart. They put their heads together, and advised Henry Thoreau not to be too premature in the matter. It was not advisable to speak publicly of John Brown and his character and condition. The time was not ripe, they thought, just yet. They counselled delay; wait, they all said. But Thoreau, roused to white heat, said no. Not speak next Sunday night, and the people mad to hear the story of John Brown? And so he sent to the trembling committee men this message: "I did not ask you for advice, but announced that I would speak." And

speaking he did, and the hall had never before held such an audience as he addressed on that memorable occasion. The crowds came from far and near, and Thoreau's earnest eulogy of the old martyr of Harper's Ferry was listened to with a sympathy and a respect which surprised the Abolitionists themselves. Some of them took courage from this exhibition, and Thoreau's speech was the first gun fired in Concord in behalf of the black man's cause.

Among other things which he said on that night, were these: "I am here to plead his cause with you. I plead, not for his life, but his character, his immortal life; and so it becomes your cause wholly, and not his in the least. I see now that it was necessary that the bravest and humanest man in the country should be hanged. Perhaps he saw it himself. *I almost fear* that I may yet hear of his deliverance, doubting if a prolonged life, if any life, can do as much good as his death." And, after John Brown had been hanged, Thoreau said, feelingly and tenderly:—

"On the day of his translation, I heard, to be sure, that he was hung, but I did not know what that meant; I felt no sorrow on that account; but not for a day or two did I even *hear* that he was *dead*, and not after any number of days shall I believe it. Of all the men who were said to be my contemporaries, it seemed to me that John Brown was the only one who *had not died*. I never hear of a man named Brown now—and I hear of them pretty often,—I never hear of any particularly brave and earnest man, but my first thought is of John Brown, and what relation he may be to him. I meet him at every turn. He is more alive than he ever was. He has earned immortality. He is not confined to North Elba nor to Kansas. He is no longer working in secret. He works in public, in the clearest light that shines in this land."

Thoreau lacked geniality and sunniness of disposition, charms which never fail to win friends and lovers. He had too much acid in his nature, and he did not always succeed in keeping the acid out of his books. He was a bookish man as well as a naturalist. The animals of the brush possessed more of his heart than the men he met in the streets, or the women at whose homes he dropped in now and then,