

ARTICLE.

BIOGRAPHICAL.

No. 7, Vol. 10.

SUBJECT.

Early Days, or My First Speech.

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SUBJECT

WILLIAM DAVIS, OF NEW HAMPSHIRE.

Early Days, or

My first speech/

by Gen.O.O.Howard,

rial University

Gap, Tennessee.

BURLINGTON, VT., September 15, 1903.

aided my co-trustees and myself in
now the rooms and buildings nearly
untain youth, and a partial
accounts and start squarely this
more subscriptions.
elp me to another contribution ?
fully yours,

eral U. S. Army, etc.

President Board of Directors.

Φ. The first public speech.

I am told that I was born ^{in Leeds & in} the 8th day of November 1830. During the winter of 1833 & 4. I came to distinct consciousness of myself & ^{of} some of my surroundings. My father, my mother & my grandfather Howard seem then to have impressed themselves ^{as} like pictures ^{sketched} upon the tablet of memory. Grandfather was tall well proportioned with mild laughing eyes, white thin hair, usually short & crest-like, sticking ^{ing} as when the fingers are thrust thro. after combing. He often led me about ^{by the hand}, or trothed me on his knee and told me stories which went to the right ^{spot} place in my listening heart. His clay pipe was ^{usually} after in his mouth - and it was my rival - for it ~~always~~ kept the child at arms-length.

Father had a keen eye under a shaggy brow - I was rather afraid of him, though I soon received evidence that he was proud of some things which his son could do. He ^{seemed} ^{to me} ^{very} affectionate, but always earnest & interested, more reproving than praising, more watching & correcting than loving. He was ^{like grandfather but more} tall too & slender, had very dark hair, a high forehead and slight, reddish side whiskers. Mother was of medium height, had ^{when I first remembered her} rosy cheeks, dark brown hair and her own blue eyes. She laughed & talked & sang and yet usually was serious with me. I guess they all were

inches 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8

the beginning

hall

looking into the future when they gazed into my eyes. -
 What sort of a man will this child be? ^{is worth it} Pity to ask such
 a question too soon & too often during the tenderest days!

After the snow had come that winter when I was three
 years old then came two ^{sturdy trades} men with a ^{spring or board}
 sled, probably drawn by two horses, ^{they proposed to} to buy all my father's
 surplus ^{indian} corn. It was so cold in the corn-barn that
 they moved the corn-sheller, a curious machine,
 looking like a high red box, ^{which was} about as broad as long, into
 our large front hall. - Our house was one of those
 two story, flat-topped pyramided roofed structures which
 dotted the inhabited parts of Maine fifty years
 ago. There were four large rooms of nearly equal
 size in the main, with a large hall - way running
 from front to rear. ^{hall in half} ^{my way was cut} by a partition & door.

The corn-sheller ^{then to the stairs} was as ^{simple the crank &} mechanical as a coffee-mill.
 I enjoyed seeing the ^{me} ^{just in the} ^{unshelled} corn
 at the top; and then ^{I was} trying to catch glimpses, thro
 the cracks of the machine, of the kernels as they ^{were}
 showered into the box-receiver at the bottom.

After the work was done ^{including the measuring & bagging} and all had retired
 to the ^{south east} back room, and all ^{hands} ^{warm} had been ^{warm} ^{re}freshed by a
 blazing wood fire upon the hearth and by such other
 nice & clean repast as mother happily could offer.

They found

hall

public attention was given to me. How I was suffered to sit up so late, I cannot justly establish, but probably excitement and curiosity & strangers fixed this as a special exception. Grandfather ^{must have} ~~probably~~ suggested that I could make a speech. The strangers ^{exclaimed}: "Oh, can that child make a speech!"

Father answered: "Well, my son, mount the bench and show us what you can do." The bench was a low foot-stool with four firm legs.

With red cheeks & beating heart his ^{little} legs ^{the} ~~lay~~ ^{staggered} ~~alleged~~. The ^{child} ~~man~~ dared question an order from his father.

"Then, now, make your bow. — All right, go on."
So I did —

"You'd scarce expect one of my age

" To speak in public on the stage —

" So if I chance to fall below

" Demosthenes and Cicero,

" View me not, with a critic's eye,

" But gently pass my imperfections by!

The cheering & laughing & commendation, made me very happy. Soon I went to my bed in the North East room, and was not long in passing to the ^{peaceful} ~~sweet~~ ^{dreamless} ~~oblivion~~ of a child's repose.

At some time, this season, when the snow was at its most
pp. The sleigh-ride on the Pond

suitable depth, neither too dry so as to drift, nor so soft as to "shump",
 my father unharnessed his favorite horse to the sleigh, put upon
 the one seat, always ^{long} ~~wide~~ enough for two persons, his two large
 & worn buffalo robes. When all things were ready, to the heated block
 for mother's feet, the upper robe ^{was} ~~to~~ lifted, mother stepped in over
 the feeding side rail. Father, holding the reins in his left
 hand & soothing his restless ^{light gray} horse by gentle words, seized his boy
 with the other hand, and passed him to the foot block
^{near which} ~~where~~ his mother ^{made} ~~made~~ him sit flat upon the lower
 robe. Father quickly gained his seat and the buffalo
 was pulled high up their breasts over the boy's head.
 "Sit still Otho! Away we go: the snow ~~shump~~ ^{gives} ^{but little}
 under the sleigh-runners and ^{sends} ~~gives~~ forth a crisp
 frosty, ringing sound, like squeaking boots in the
 church aisle at sermon times, and the bells ^{sweet} ~~sounded~~ to poor
 me like muffled ones as they try to play for my
 imprisoned ears. Otho struggled to get his head out
 for just one minute. "No, no, my son, it's very cold.
 Sit still and keep your nose warm!" Mother's pleasant
 tone & the feel of a frozen nose kept me there, cozy & safe.
 Soon we ^{were} ~~are~~ crossing the great "Androscooging pond"
^{still a sizable lake now.} ~~no~~ ^{nobody} called it a lake in those days. Still it was
 large enough ~~for a lake~~ being 3 or 4 miles across & seven
 nine miles long. There was a monotonous sound

" "

long
1111

lee
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" "

on the ice, ^{than on the land} less crushing of snow by the narrow runners, hollow
reverberations from the horses' ^{quicker} solid tread and more steady
jingle. jingle by the seemingly muffled bells. I
suspect that Otis under the buffalo, warm as least by
the foot-blanket and protected by the robes from the wind,
sitting between his father & mother with his back against
the box-seat did, as such ^{leathery} youngsters usually do, ~~he~~ heard
the crushing runners, the muffled bells & the horses' tread
less & less, till his pleasant dreams gradually led him
to sounder sleep. I do not know why that ride across
the fields & across the pond and along the way to
New Harrow so much affected my memory. It was
a great joy ^{with father & mother & the sleigh} to go somewhere, away from home. It
was an odd experience under the thick robes. [#] It
was a great repression to keep me there in the
darkness, but on the whole I was contented, ^{especially} happy
when just at night we arrived at a tavern &
mother led me thro. a dark hall into the common
office room, where there was a large hot stove.
We were there warming ourselves, when I left my
mother, by some sudden impulse, and darted ~~thru~~ ^{by the} by a
door ajar - into ~~the~~ as I supposed ^{the} the dark hall. No, no!
it was the adjoining door. Down the cellar stairs I rolled
over & over to the ^{pit} bottom! My nose was bruised & bleeding

The first remembered fall.

inches 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8

the first thing I noticed when I stepped out of the car was the cold. It was a sharp contrast to the warm blanket of the car. I looked down at my hands, which were numb from the cold. I rubbed them together, trying to get some warmth. The air was crisp and clear, and I could see the snow-covered ground under my feet. I took a deep breath, feeling the cold air fill my lungs. It was a strange sensation, but I knew it was good. I was finally out there, in the real world. I looked up at the sky, which was a pale blue color. There were a few clouds scattered across it, but they were thin and wispy. I felt a sense of peace and tranquility. It was a beautiful day, and I was lucky to be here. I walked a few steps, feeling the snow under my shoes. It was soft and fluffy, and it made a gentle crunching sound. I smiled to myself, feeling a sense of accomplishment. I had made it. I was finally out there, in the real world. I looked back at the car, which was still there, but I knew I was ready to leave. I took one last look at my hands, which were still numb, but I knew I was strong enough to handle the cold. I turned and walked away, feeling a sense of freedom. The cold was no longer a problem, it was a challenge. And I was up to the task. I walked until I was out of sight of the car, and then I stopped. I looked around, feeling a sense of wonder. The world was so beautiful, and I was so lucky to be here. I took a deep breath, feeling the cold air fill my lungs. It was a strange sensation, but I knew it was good. I was finally out there, in the real world. I looked up at the sky, which was a pale blue color. There were a few clouds scattered across it, but they were thin and wispy. I felt a sense of peace and tranquility. It was a beautiful day, and I was lucky to be here. I walked a few steps, feeling the snow under my shoes. It was soft and fluffy, and it made a gentle crunching sound. I smiled to myself, feeling a sense of accomplishment. I had made it. I was finally out there, in the real world. I looked back at the car, which was still there, but I knew I was ready to leave. I took one last look at my hands, which were still numb, but I knew I was strong enough to handle the cold. I turned and walked away, feeling a sense of freedom. The cold was no longer a problem, it was a challenge. And I was up to the task.

being well
 but, still ~~huddled~~ up. I was not much hurt, no bones broken, yet
 the blood & the blackness of the ^{undisturbed} collar frightened the youngster so
 much that he screamed ^{loud enough} enough at least to reveal his
 unpleasant situation. A tall stranger bore me aloft on his
 shoulder and conveyed me to my poor conscience sister
 mother. The camphor & the towels were quickly applied, & x x
 when father ^{his horse having been well cared for} appeared & saw the blood: "Why, Eliza, what
 does this mean! Why didn't you take better care of him?" I cannot
 recall the words. But long ago I have ^{though I remember my good father} learned that such words
 at such times had better not be said. It is ^{not well} to ^{jar} the
 tender shoots of love. In an instant father spoke kind words to
 her & me, but the child ^{ever} remembered the sharp reproof ^{of the} mother's
^{not} ~~the~~ tears & trembling lips. # from bright joy to deep sorrow.

We rode on to Bangor. The journey from New
 Sharon is forgotten. I recall my entrance to a
 beautiful parlor. There was a rectangular piano
 and upon it a large rosewood box. The lady
 present applied a key to the side and wound
 it as you would a clock. Then she put
 it back as it began to discover the sweetest
 music my ears ^{had} ever heard. It was but a
 common music-box of large size - but
 it entranced my young soul and remains
 associated with an early exquisite pleasure.

But my few moments of intense delight were
 soon followed by an experience of quite a different
 character. There was a sweet little girl, and surely
 no ^{budding} rose ~~but~~ was sweeter than that ~~little~~ pretty child of three
 years. We played together as children play, wandering
 from room to room, ascending the stairway & hiding
 & seeking in closets & corners. Two bairns were never
 gayer. She ^{suddenly} ran thro. a doorway in the chamber
 over the parlor and her fingers tingled by the ^{door} post
 when with the ^{glad} shout of a young shepherd who
 pens in his last obstinate lamb, she pushed the
 door, shutting it hard. The door caught a tiny
 finger of the sweet child & nearly eat it asunder!
 She screamed ^{with instant pain & fright} & this cried aloud. Quickly there
 appeared on the scene of pain & grief an arbitrator.
 It was a young man an excellent ^{he had} one leg was
 a limbo, stiff ^{for he was a cripple} & not angular. He quickly took in the sit-
 uation. My heart was nearly broken already, but he
 scolded me till the iron of his wrath entered into
^{my poor soul} ~~to~~ to sear it with scars that are still there.
 It was not ^{of course} a case for harshness, but
 for ~~sympathy~~ ^{sympathy} & gentle admonition.
 Rough pruning is apt to damage or spoil the
 tender vines.

The first Indian battle. 8

It was my privilege, when ^{my grandfather} he was at home to sleep with ^{him} my grandfather. I called him Grandpa. One night about this time, certainly before I was four, Grandpa was dreaming. I was suddenly awakened by an unusual noise. As I opened my eyes I caught a glimpse of Grandpa sitting up in the bed and striking out with both hands to the right and left - while he gave a sort of smothered shout. I sprang up & caught his arm and cried lustily "Grandpa! Grandpa! what are you doing?" My cries & pulling startled him out of his trance, where he told me that he dreamed that he was driving an ox-cart, that the back-board was out, and that some wild Indians were trying to force themselves into the cart. He ^{was} had ^{in his} ^{thought} his hand a huge iron-bar and was swinging it effectively ^{mercilessly} killing the intruders. He might have killed me ^{had he chosen to hit my head} with only his ^{own} powerful arm! His strange appearance, with his knitted woeless ^{sleep-like} night-cap and his stranger voice & action ^{made} ^{superior} that night ^{of} me a phenomenal impression. It was like that of a veritable battle. # A clean collar - a clean heart.

My mother, who was habitually ^{serious} ^{and} ~~stare~~ with me, I think

The same may be said of the other two. The first is a very good example of the same style, with the same kind of language, and the same kind of thought. The second is a very good example of the same style, with the same kind of language, and the same kind of thought. The third is a very good example of the same style, with the same kind of language, and the same kind of thought.

There must have been some special need, ^{desires} me to keep my broad collar reasonably clean. I wore them ^{shining white} when I went to school some $\frac{3}{4}$ of a mile to the south of us, or (when I had the unspeakable delight of visiting Clark & Ellen Woodman half way to the school or Melvin & Lucy Howard on the next farm to the north. One day the little fellow was well dressed ^{& dispatched to} for a child's party at Melvin's, and his mother casually remarked as a safeguard: "Otis you must keep your collar neat, you know mother will have to punish you if you do not." (You say such a rule is too hard - but I have an idea that it is like the divine. "Thou shalt keep these my laws & commandments, else I will punish thee." Or do not soil ^{thy} heart - else God will punish thee. Well the child went, then were several children, Inez, Melvin, Merrilla, Howard & probably Chas. Lane. We played as boys play. The edge of the upper fence rail is the very ^{favorite} path for a boy. To step from rolling stone to rolling stone on the wall-tops had the delicious sensations of danger. To climb trees was ^{as always} a favorite pastime.

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There must have been some species near, thinking
to keep my foot close, remarkably close. I was
then when I went to school every day with
to the south of us. or when I was in the
delight of visiting school. I was in the school
half way to the school or when I was in the school
on the next form to the next day. I was in the
the little fellow was with school. I was in the
prints of Mathew's and his mother's class. I was
been asked as a separator. I was in the
keep you in school. I was in the
will have to finish you if you do that. I was
say such a word is too bad. I was in the
on this. That is a little bit. I was in the
should keep them very close. I was in the
words, also. I was in the
not sure you know. I was in the
then. Well, the little man, I was in the
children, boys, Mathew, I was in the
first of all. I was in the
the top of the upper form. I was in the
path for a day. To keep from making them to walking
there on the walk. I was in the
if dangerous to climb. I was in the

even if it rent little breeches into shreds.
 Well, this day we found ^{an apple} a tree so bent over
 by the wind, like an old man whom a
 rheumatic shock has half overturned & left
 inclined. It had lived & stiffened into hardness
 in its new position. Up & down the same
 trunk we ran. At last by some unexpected
 push or jolt, Otis slipped off the highest reach
 perhaps three or four feet from the ground.
 His face was bruised & his nose bled profusely.
 Uncle Barney & Aunt Howard ran to the
 rescue. Basins of fresh water were at the
 back door of the house. Otis was bathed &
 soothed while he ^{continued to cry} ~~cried~~ lustily. In the midst
 of his loud lament with clothes torn & soiled &
 that white collar all bloody, Uncle Barney
 suggested that he was not much hurt, & that
 he must not cry so. "Oh," he exclaimed, "it's not
 my nose, - it's my collar! Ma said she'd whip
 me if I got it dirty." But this time
 Mother was too grieved at the wound, as she
 was ~~in and out of the house~~ ^{often in after life} afterwards after ten years, to think of or
 care for the clothes. How sensitive the heart of the
 most careless child.

even if it went little deeper into cracks.
 Well, this day we found ^{an upper} the 20 feet over
 by the mine, like an old man between a
 thermometer stick has half a century's life
 in it. It has been & stiffened into leaden
 in its new position. Up & down the room
 there was none. It lay in some unexpected
 place or other, (this sticking off the highest peak
 for half a dozen feet from the ground).
 His face was brown & his nose red & profuse.
 Well, Brown & I had known now to the
 reason. Brown of first water was at the
 bottom of the house. (This was not the
 matter while he was last). In the night
 of his last moment with the world & I
 that white cotton was bloody, that Brown
 suggested that he was much hurt, & that
 he would be 20:01. He explained, "it is
 my nose - it is my collar! He said he'd stick
 me if I got it dirty." But this time
 there was no ground at the house, so the
 was from afterword of the time, to think of or
 even for the others. How sensitive the heart of the
 most sensitive child.