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*Conditions of Success*

*in Public Life*

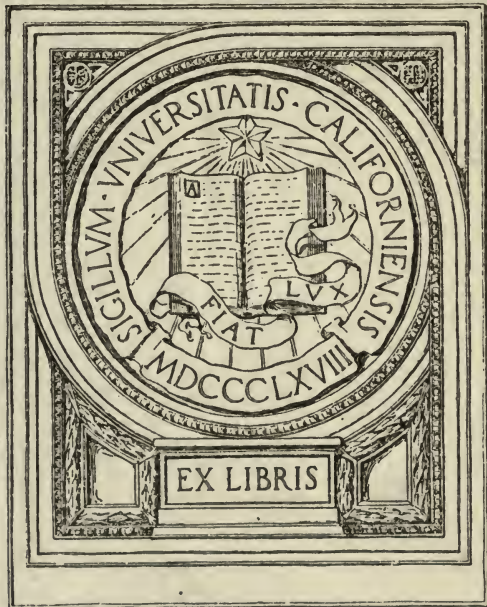


*George F. Hoar*



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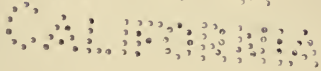


*James  
Character.  
Intelligence  
to the*



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CONDITIONS OF SUCCESS IN  
PUBLIC LIFE



AN ADDRESS

DELIVERED IN SANDERS THEATRE BEFORE THE  
STUDENTS OF HARVARD UNIVERSITY

HONOR DAY, NOV. 21, 1900

BY

GEORGE F. HOAR

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CONDITIONS OF SUCCESS  
IN PUBLIC LIFE.

CAMBRIDGE.

I AM not sure that the gentlemen to whom I am to speak account it always an undiluted pleasure to be sent for by the Dean. But I am glad to obey his summons. I am glad to have a fair excuse to visit the College and to behold again the face of my beloved Alma Mater. In my younger days the ladies who gathered here at Commencement, and Phi Beta, and Class Day were the great attraction. But for me that time is long ago gone by. I am in the condition of Campbell's sailor,

“I have no sweetheart, said the lad,  
But, parted long from one another,  
Great was the longing that I had  
To see my mother.”

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I certainly do not come here to preach. It was the fashion many years ago to ask men in public life to the colleges at the Commencement season to deliver orations on the scholar's mission, or the relation of educated men to the State, or the higher education, or various kindred topics. They used sometimes to take advantage of the occasion to pay back the criticism which they get so abundantly from the University, when the scholar of the University gives his opinion upon matters in which he is no scholar, and the man in political life returns the compliment by giving educators his opinion about matters in which he has no education.

In general, the young men spent the hour devoted to the address outside on the grass or on the chains or the fence, while the speaker was listened to inside by their mothers, and grandmothers, and aunts. I am proud to say these ladies used to declare themselves to be much gratified by the sentiments of the discourse. But I have long withdrawn from that field of labor.

I have not found, in my experience, that the



new generations care much for the preaching of the old ones. If the youth find your example to his taste, he will sometimes follow it. But he will not alter his course for your preaching.

Perhaps I may, from the experience of a long life, report something which may be of use to you in the road you are to follow. I think that a liberal education is sometimes a great comfort to men who are good for nothing but the humblest manual occupations. It is a great solace under the misfortune of lifelong ill-health, or the curse of inherited wealth. But you are, in general, educated and expected to do the brain work of the Republic—to do high thinking in high places; to sit on the Bench; to be leaders at the Bar, and in public life, and in the pulpit; to become famous in literature and art; to conduct great business enterprises, which often demand all the qualities needed for the conduct of great States; to make science the healer of sickness and pain, or the handmaid of manufacture and of labor, and in that way to lift the burden under which humanity is bowed and bent. We hear a good

deal of late about the strenuous life. But your work in this world is to be done with your brains. The object of your education is not to fit you to hunt grizzly bears. Leatherstocking and Chingachgook are very attractive characters. But neither of them was graduated at Harvard. Boating, and racing, and football, and athletics are manly sports, and doubtless develop manly quality. But they belong to the period of youth, and belong to the body, not to the mind.

*“Non viribus aut velocitatibus aut celeritate corporum res magnæ geruntur sed consilio auctoritate sententia.”*

A great many men who are quite indifferent to their work in college apply themselves to it eagerly when they get into the law school or the medical school or study for their calling in life. They see the true value of what they are doing when they study for a profession, and that success in life is to depend on making the best use of their time then. But in my opinion the work of the undergraduate is of more consequence, if you think only of success in the

calling to which he is to devote himself, than even the work in a professional school. There are few of the high places in this country in which a good English style, the gift of speaking well, literary taste, knowledge of the best literature in our own and foreign tongues, the power of clear and orderly reasoning are not of the greatest value. You will, in all probability, get these here or will lay a foundation for them here, or nowhere. If you waste your time in the Law School and are a man of a generous ambition and good capacity, you can make up for it in a great degree after you open your office. You will be pretty sure to have some leisure then. But if you neglect the foundations which are laid in these four college years, they will never be laid, or certainly will never be well laid, at all.

I have in my time known many men famous in war, in statesmanship, in science, in the professions, and in business. If I were asked to declare the secret of their success, I should attribute it in general not to any superiority of natural genius, but to the use they made in

youth, after the ordinary day's work was over, of the hours which other men throw away or devote to idleness or rest or society. There are doubtless many dull men, there are doubtless men of a rare and brilliant genius. But the great things that have been done in this world have not, in general, been done by men of rare genius; and dull men who have done their best have contributed very largely to what has been done for mankind. The great things in this world have been done by men of ordinary natural capacity, who have done their best. They have done their best by never wasting their time. It has been said that the great fortunes in this country have been accumulated not by men with a genius for money-making, but with a genius for money-keeping; that it is not the size of the brook, but the strength and tightness of the dam which makes the great pond. That is as true of the result of a life's work in getting honor or power or fame or in storing mental capacity or doing public service as it is in making money. If half the hours of your day run to waste, there will be but half as much to

show for your life when it is over. I cannot overstate this matter. "It is what we sow," says the great preacher of the English Church, Jeremy Taylor, "it is what we sow in the minutes and spare portions of a few years that grows up to crowns and sceptres."

I suppose nearly every one of you would like, if he can, to become a good public speaker. That power is essential to success at the Bar or in the pulpit, and almost indispensable to success in public life. Wherever a man wishes to get influence over his fellow-men in a republic in honorable ways, he needs this faculty. The rare men who have succeeded without it are the men who value it most. The longer I live the more highly I have come to value the gift of eloquence. Indeed, I am not sure that it is not the single gift, not of the essentials of moral character, most to be coveted by man. The eye and the voice are the only and natural avenues by which one human soul can enter into and subdue another. When every other faculty of the orator is acquired, it sometimes almost seems as if voice

were nine-tenths and everything else but one-tenth of the consummate orator. There are exceptions, of which Charles James Fox, the most famous debater that ever lived, is the most famous. But it is impossible to overrate the importance to the orator's purpose of that matchless instrument, the human voice.

I have never supposed myself to possess this gift. The instruction which we had in my youth, especially that at Harvard, either in composition or elocution was, I think, not only no advantage but a positive injury. So a boy who had an awkward manner and a harsh voice was apt to leave college worse off than he entered it. But I have had a good opportunity to hear the best public speaking of my time for the last fifty years. So perhaps my experience and observation, too late for my own advantage, may be worth something to you.

In managing the voice, the best tone and manner for public speaking is commonly that which the speaker falls into naturally when he is engaged in earnest conversation. Suppose you are sitting about a table with a dozen



friends, and some subject is started in which you are deeply interested. You engage in an earnest and serious dialogue with one of them at the other end of the table. You are perfectly at ease. You forget yourself, you do not care in the least for your manner or tone of voice, but only for your thought. The tone you adopt then will ordinarily be the best tone for you in public speaking. You can, however, learn from teachers or friendly critics to avoid any harsh or disagreeable fashion of speech that you may have fallen into and that may be habitual to you in private conversation.

Next, never strain your vocal organs by attempting to fill spaces which are too large for you. Speak as loudly and distinctly as you can do easily, and let more distant portions of your audience go. You will find in that way very soon that your voice will increase in compass and power, and you will do better than by a habit of straining the voice beyond its natural capacity. Be careful to avoid falsetto. Shun imitating the tricks of speech of other orators, even of famous and successful orators. These

may do for them, but not for you. You will do no better in attempting to imitate the tricks of speech of other men in public speaking than in private speaking.

Never make a gesture for the sake of making one. I believe that most of the successful speakers whom I know would find it hard to tell you whether they themselves make gestures or not, they are so absolutely unconscious in the matter. But with gestures as with the voice, get teachers or friendly critics to point out to you any bad habit you may fall into. I think it would be well if our young public speakers, especially preachers, would have competent instructors and critics among their auditors after they enter their profession, to give them the benefit of such observation and counsel as may be suggested in that way. If a Harvard professor of elocution would retain the responsibility for his pupils five or ten years after they get into active life, he would do a good deal more good than by his instruction to undergraduates.

So far I have been talking about mere manner. The matter and substance of the orator's

speech must depend upon the moral and intellectual quality of the man. The great orator must be a man of absolute sincerity. Never advocate a cause in which you do not believe, or affect an emotion you do not feel. No skill or acting will cover up the want of earnestness. It is like the ointment of the hand which bewrayeth itself.

In my opinion, the two most important things that a young man can do to make himself a good public speaker are :

First. Constant and careful written translations from Latin or Greek into English.

Second. Practice in a good debating society.

It has been said that all the great parliamentary orators of England are either men whom Lord North saw, or men who saw Lord North; that is, men who were conspicuous as public speakers in Lord North's youth, his contemporaries, and the men who saw him as an old man when they were young themselves. This would include Bolingbroke and would come down only to the year of Lord John Russell's birth. So we should have to add a few names, especially

Gladstone, Disraeli, John Bright, and Palmerston. There is no great Parliamentary orator in England since Gladstone died. A good many years ago I looked at the biographies of the men who belonged to that period who were famous as great orators in the Parliament or in court, to find, if I could, the secret of their power. With the exception of Lord Erskine and of John Bright, I believe every one of them trained himself by careful and constant translation from Latin or Greek, and frequented a good debating society in his youth.

Brougham trained himself for extemporaneous speaking in the Speculative Society, the great theatre of debate for the University of Edinburgh. He also improved his English style by translations from Greek, among which is his well-known version of the Oration on the Crown.

Canning's attention while at Eton was strongly turned to extemporaneous speaking. They had a debating society in which the Marquis of Wellesley and Charles Earl Grey had been trained before him, in which they had all

the forms of the House of Commons,—Speaker, Treasury Benches, and an Opposition. Canning also was disciplined by the habit of translation.

Curran practised declamation daily before a glass, reciting passages from Shakespeare and the best English orators. He frequented the debating societies which then abounded in London. He failed at first, and was ridiculed as “Orator Mum.” But at last he surmounted every difficulty. It was said of him by a contemporary: “He turned his shrill and stumbling brogue into a flexible, sustained, and finely modulated voice; his action became free and forcible; he acquired perfect readiness in thinking on his legs; he put down every opponent by the mingled force of his argument and wit, and was at last crowned with the universal applause of the society, and invited by the President to an entertainment in their behalf.” I am not sure that I have seen, on any good authority, that he was in the habit of writing translations from Latin or Greek. But he studied them with great ardor, and undoubtedly adopted, among the methods of perfecting his English

style, the custom of students of his day of translation from these languages.

Jeffrey joined the Speculative Society in Edinburgh in his youth. His biographer says that it did more for him than any other event in the whole course of his education.

Chatham, the greatest of English orators, if we may judge by the reports of his contemporaries, trained himself for public speaking by constant translations from Latin and Greek. The education of his son, the younger Pitt, is well known. His father compelled him to read Thucydides into English at sight, and to go over it again and again until he had got the best possible rendering of the Greek into English.

Macaulay belonged to the Cambridge Union, where, as in the society of the same name at Oxford, the great topics of the day were discussed by men, many of whom afterward became famous statesmen and debaters in the Commons.

Young Murray, afterward Lord Mansfield, translated Sallust and Horace with ease; learned great part of them by heart; could con-



verse fluently in Latin; write Latin prose correctly and idiomatically, and was specially distinguished at Westminster for his declamations. He translated every oration of Cicero into English and back again into Latin.

Fox can hardly have been supposed to have practised much in debating societies, as he entered the House of Commons when he was nineteen years old. But it is quite probable that he was drilled by translations from Latin and Greek into English; and in the House of Commons he had in early youth the advantage of the best debating society in the world. It is said that he read Latin and Greek as easily as he read English. He himself said that he gained his skill at the expense of the House, for he had sometimes tasked himself during the entire session to speak on every question that came up, whether he was interested in it or not, as a means of exercising and training his faculties. This is what made him, according to Burke, "rise by slow degrees to be the most brilliant and accomplished debater the world ever saw."

Sir Henry Bulwer's *Life of Palmerston* does not tell us whether he was trained by the habit of writing translations or in debating societies. But he was a very eager reader of the classics. There is little doubt, however, considering the habit of his contemporaries at Cambridge, and that he was ambitious for public life and represented the University of Cambridge in Parliament just after he became twenty-one, that he belonged to a debating society, and that he was drilled in English composition by translation from the classics.

Gladstone was a famous debater in the Oxford Union, as is well known, and was undoubtedly in the habit of writing translations from Greek and Latin, of which he was always so passionately fond. He says in his paper on Arthur Hallam that the Eton Debating Club, known as the Society, supplied the British Empire with four Prime Ministers in fourscore years.

The value of the practice of translation from Latin or Greek into English, in getting command of good English style, in my judgment,

can hardly be stated too strongly. The explanation is not hard to find. You have in these two languages, and especially in Latin, the best instrument for the most precise and most perfect expression of thought. The Latin prose of Tacitus and Cicero, the verse of Virgil and Horace, are like a Greek statue, or an Italian cameo. You have not only exquisite beauty, but also exquisite precision. You get the thought into your mind with the accuracy and precision of the words that express numbers in the multiplication table. Ten times one are ten, not ten and one one-millionth. Having got the idea into your mind with the precision, accuracy, and beauty of the Latin expression, you are to get its equivalent in English. Suppose you have knowledge of no language but your own. The thought comes to you in the mysterious way in which thoughts are born, and struggles for expression in apt words. If the phrase that occurs to you do not exactly fit the thought, you are almost certain, especially in speaking or rapid composition, to modify the thought to fit the phrase. Your

sentence commands you, not you the sentence. The extempore speaker never gets, or easily loses, the power of precise and accurate thinking or statement, and rarely attains a literary excellence which gives him immortality. But the conscientious translator has no such refuge. He is confronted by the inexorable original. He cannot evade or shirk. He must try and try and try again until he has got the exact thought expressed in the English equivalent. This is not enough. He must get an English expression, if the resources of the language will furnish it, which will equal as near as may be the dignity and beauty of the original. He must not give you pewter for silver, or pinchbeck for gold, or mica for diamond. This practice will soon give him ready command of the great riches of his own noble English tongue. It will give a habitual nobility and beauty to his own style. The best word and phrase will come to him spontaneously when he speaks and thinks. The processes of thought itself will grow easier. The orator will get the affluence and abundance which characterize the great

Italian artists of the Middle Ages, who astonish us as much by the amount and variety of their work as by its excellence.

The value of translation is very different from that of original written composition. Cicero says :

*“Stilus optimus et præstantissimus dicendi effector ac magister.”*

Of this I am by no means sure. If you write rapidly you get the habit of careless composition. If you write slowly you get the habit of slow composition. Each of these is an injury to the style of the speaker. He cannot stop to correct or scratch out. Cicero himself in a later passage states his preference for translation. He says that at first he used to take a Latin author, Ennius or Gracchus, and get the meaning into his head, and then write it again. But he soon found that in that way if he used again the very words of his author he got no advantage, and if he used other language of his own, the author had already occupied the ground with the best expression, and he was left with the second best. So he gave up the

practice and adopted instead that of translating from Greek.

It is often said that if a speech read well it is not a good speech. There may be some truth in it. The reader cannot, of course, get the impression which the speaker conveys by look, and tone, and gesture. He lacks that marvellous influence by which, in a great assembly, the emotion of every individual soul is multiplied by the emotion of every other. The reader can pause and dwell upon the thought. If there be a fallacy, he is not hurried away to something else before he can detect it. So, also, his more careful and deliberate criticism will discover offences of style and taste which pass unheeded in a speech when uttered. But still the great oratoric triumphs of literature and history stand the test of reading in the closet, as well as of hearing in the assembly. Would not Mark Antony's speech over the dead body of Cæsar, had it been uttered, have moved the Roman populace as it moves the spectator when the play is acted, or the solitary reader in his closet? Does not Lord Chatham's "I re-



joice that America has resisted" read well? Do not Sheridan's great peroration in the Impeachment of Warren Hastings and Burke's read well? Does not "Liberty and Union, Now and Forever" read well? Does not "Give me Liberty or Give me Death" read well? Does not Fisher Ames' speech for the treaty read well? Do not Everett's finest passages read well?

There are a few examples of men of great original genius who have risen to lofty oratory on some great occasion who had not the advantage of familiarity with any great authors. But they are not only few in number, but the occasions are few when they have risen to a great height. In general, the orator, whether at the Bar or in the pulpit or in public life, who is to meet adequately the many demands upon his resources, must get familiar with the images and illustrations he wants, and the resources of a fitting diction, by soaking his mind in some great author's who will alike satisfy and stimulate his imagination, and supply him with a lofty expression. Of these, I suppose the best

are, by common consent, the Bible, Shakespeare, and Milton. To these I should myself by all means add Wordsworth. It is a maxim that the pupil who wishes to acquire a pure and simple style should give his days and nights to Addison. But there is a lack of strength and vigor in Addison, which perhaps prevents his being the best model for the advocate in the court-house or the champion in a political debate. I should rather, for myself, recommend Robert South to the student. If the speaker, whose thought has weight and vigor in it, can say it as South would have said it, he may be quite sure that his weighty meaning will be expressed alike to the mind of the people and the apprehension of his antagonist.

Perhaps I may, without presumption or without breaking the rule about preaching which I laid down in the beginning, give to you, my younger brothers, children of the same dear mother, a few suggestions which may help you, if you are inclined that way, to be successful and useful men in the public life of your country. I do not think that, in general, the men

who have been our great political leaders have proposed to themselves politics as a vocation in life in the beginning. The men who propose that to themselves in the beginning are apt to fail. The people, in general, like to take for their service men whose quality has been tested in some private calling. The too eager candidate is apt to fail.

Do not trouble yourself much to court the favor of the people. He that will serve men must not promise himself that he shall not anger them ; and while the people wish to have their opinion respected and will not easily forgive contempt for it, in the end they like independence much better than obsequiousness. I will not undertake to speak for other parts of the country. But the one thing that the people of Massachusetts will not forgive in a public servant is that he should act against his own honest judgment to please them.

Have no secrets from the people. Make your opinion known if any man be curious to know it. Let what is in your heart and nothing else be uttered by your lips.

Do not, as some of our excellent men do so often, make your appearance in public only on occasions when you wish to repress or resist popular feeling, but take care to make known what you think equally when you sympathize with it. If the people get to think of you as a man who knows how to do nothing but scold and criticise and find fault, they will soon get sick of you. They will receive, whether convinced or not, with great respect, advice and remonstrance, and if need be, steadfast opposition, from the man whom they know to desire only their welfare, and who they know sympathizes with them, respects them, loves them, and is in general sympathy and accord with their best aspirations. Our illustrious brother, Charles Sumner, encountered and resisted great waves of public sentiment on several important occasions. But the people of Massachusetts never abated one jot or tittle in their respect for him, and he was at no time in his life more powerful than in his closing days, as would have been seen if he had lived two years longer.

One of the most remarkable instances of the

truth of what I am saying was the late Lucius Q. C. Lamar, of Mississippi, a man with whose friendship I am proud to have been honored. He voted against the free coinage of silver in spite of the fact that the people of his State earnestly favored it, and against the express instructions of its legislature. In 1874, at a time when the passions of the Civil War seemed to blaze higher, and the angry conflict between the sections seemed to blaze higher even than during the war itself, he astonished and shocked the people of the South by pronouncing a tender and affectionate eulogy on Charles Sumner. He testified to Sumner's high moral qualities, to his intense love of liberty, to his magnanimity, and to his incapacity for a personal animosity, and regretted that he had restrained the impulse which had been strong on him to go to Mr. Sumner and offer him his hand and his heart with it. It would have been almost impossible for any other man who had done either of these things to go back to Mississippi and live. But it never shook for a moment the love for Lamar of a people who knew so well his love for them.

Believe in the strength of righteousness. Believe in the strength of righteousness as a powerful and prevailing political force. Distrust the shallow philosophy that would ever attribute base motives to the great actions of human history, or teach that its mighty currents are determined by greed, selfishness, avarice, ambition, or revenge. The pure and lofty emotions are ever the great and overmastering emotions. Learn also to judge of men in public, as in private, of parties, and, above all, of your country, by their merits, and not by their defects. Washington Allston was asked at a dinner party here in Cambridge if he had seen a new painting by a living artist. He said he had, and the inquirer said, "What are its principal defects?" "Artists," replied Allston, "judge of pictures by their merits."

Have you ever thought of it that if you could trust abundant contemporary authority, the eight principal political villains of our history have been the eight greatest Presidents of the United States? Six of them have been elected twice. Washington, John Adams, Jefferson,



John Quincy Adams, Jackson, Lincoln, Grant, — these are seven of them. I will not name the eighth. If I did, part of my audience, I dare say, would agree as to the greatness, and the other part as to the villainy.

These wailing and despairing friends of ours make two mistakes when they deal with public affairs and public men. They do not commonly make them in judging of their neighbors in private, or in dealing with the affairs of common life. We have, God be thanked, pretty much got over them in theological discussion. They think that every honest man must of course see things exactly as they do. Therefore the man who says he does not see things as they do must of course be dishonest. They think every other man must draw the same conclusion from admitted premises that they do. Therefore they hold you to inferences from your doctrines which they draw for you, and which you do not admit. This attitude of mind seems ridiculous enough when you state it. But it has had terrible results in history. Out of it has grown all bigotry, all tyranny, all persecution, all op-

pression, as Macaulay has well shown in one of his most admirable essays,—that on the civil disabilities of the Jews. He well says, “To charge men with practical consequences which they themselves deny is dangerous in controversy, and it is atrocious in government.”

Distrust these political critics who tell you the Republic is going to decay, because in a country where every man has his share in the government, the faults of humanity as well as its virtues make themselves felt. The temper which inspires this doleful criticism comes generally of the personal failures and disappointments of the critic himself. He is like Mr. Emerson's young lady who thought Nature had sprained her ankle when she sprained her own. I have been through, in my time, a good many periods when everything that was base and degrading seemed to have come to the surface, only to see them followed by a new manifestation of the greatness and the glory of the Republic and of the people's unconquerable love for freedom and righteousness.

In 1854, when the whole South was domi-

nated by slavery and the whole North by Know-Nothingism, when it seemed that everything that was cheap and vile and hateful had come to the surface in this country, Rufus Choate wrote to a friend abroad: "Your estate is gracious that it keeps you out of our politics. Anything more low, obscene, feculent, the manifold oceanic heavings of history have not cast up. We shall come to the worship of onions, cats, and things vermiculate." This was within six years of the heroic days of 1861.

President Eliot said something in my hearing last commencement that impressed me exceedingly, when he conferred the degree of Doctor of Laws upon the Dean. He spoke of him as "The well beloved Dean of Harvard College, because convinced of the overwhelming predominance of good in the student world." If that conviction be true, — and it is true, — it is because the student of Harvard is but typical of his countrymen, and the Dean, if he carry his conviction with him, would make a successful political leader.

What I have to say will seem commonplace

enough. But I wish I could impress upon every young American that the great text which declares that Faith, Hope, and Charity are the three things that are forever to abide conveys the best counsel to the youth of our country and tells them what quality they should bring to the service of the State. The bane, the danger, the pollution of our public life is not party spirit, not corruption, not the reckless desire for empire, not selfishness or the disregard of justice in the conduct of affairs. These are the old foes. We know them. Our fathers knew them. We have vanquished them again and again. But want of faith in God and man, hopelessness and despair, hatred and uncharitableness, — it is in these disguises that Satan presents himself to the educated youth of our time, — it is these which take from the forces of the Republic men who ought to do her the noblest service, — it is these which have so often baffled the best desire of the patriot and the best work of the statesman.

Mr. Emerson told Doctor Ripley, when he pressed upon him the old doctrines of the

church, "If I am the devil's child, I will live to the devil." My pessimist friend, if this people are the devil's children, we shall live to the devil and neither you nor we can help it. But we do not believe it and we will not accept the fact as established by your authority.

If you take part in public affairs your political duties will be created for you and not by you. They will grow out of the immediate occasion. In general, there will be opportunity enough for the best ability in the peaceful conduct of affairs in peaceful times. Of course you will always be bound to keep sweet and clean the spot you occupy. But the course of events growing out of circumstances you will have had no hand in creating will overtake you and demand of you to play a man's part. It will be fortunate for your country if the current of public affairs be placid and smooth. It will be more fortunate for you if you have the part of a leader, if you are fit for it, in stormy and perilous years. Set yourself strenuously against all evil. But do not go out of your way to create issues or discover abuses merely that

you may gain notoriety by curing them. There is no more ridiculous and helpless object than a reformer in search of a grievance, unless it be a party in search of a principle. Madame Roland said, "O Liberty! What crimes are committed in thy name!" If she had lived in our day, she would have said, "O Reform! What foolishness is uttered in thy clubs!" But still account yourself happy if it be your lot to espouse some noble and unpopular cause in the beginning, to stand by its cradle, to throw yourself on its broad altar, to see it grow, to help it grow, to see it first arouse curiosity, then attention, then contempt, then hatred, then fear, then respect, always growing and growing until at last over prejudice and hate and party and old customs and vested interests, the irresistible current makes its way.

There are still some old men alive who remember the meeting on Worcester Common, June 28, 1848, to save from slavery the vast territory between the Mississippi and the Pacific. It uttered its brave challenge to both great parties; to church and State; to manufacture



and trade'; to court and pulpit; to Congress and Legislature, with nothing on its side but liberty.

“Bliss was it in that dawn to be alive,  
But to be young was heaven.”

Never make the mistake of thinking that you can gain the favor of the people by departing from the dignity of behavior that belongs to you as educated men. You will often witness and perhaps often be tempted to envy the applause which many public speakers get by buffoonery, by vulgar wit, by coarse personality, by appeal to vulgar passions. You will think that your grave and serious reasonings are lost on the audiences that receive them, half asleep, as if listening to a tedious sermon, and who come to life again when the stump speaker takes the platform. You will make a great mistake if you suppose the American people do not estimate such things at their true value. When they come to take serious action, they prefer to get their inspiration from the church or the college and not from the

circus. Uncle Sam likes to be amused. But Uncle Sam is a gentleman. I remember in the spring session of 1869, when I first took my seat in Congress, there was a member of the House perhaps as widely known to the country as any man in it except President Grant, who used to get up some scene of quarrel or buffoonery every morning session. His name was found every day in the head-lines of the newspapers. I said to General Banks one day after the adjournment, "Don't you think it is quite likely that he will be the next President of the United States?" "Never," said General Banks, in his somewhat grandiloquent fashion. "Why," said I, "don't you see that the papers all over the country are full of him every morning? People seem to be reading about nobody else. Wherever he goes the crowds throng after him. Nobody else gets such applause, not even Grant himself."

"Mr. Hoar," replied General Banks, "when I came down to the House this morning, there was a fight between two monkeys on Pennsylvania avenue. There was an enormous crowd,

shouting and laughing and cheering. They would have paid very little attention to you or me. But when they come to elect a President of the United States, they won't take either monkey."

I could prolong this talk indefinitely. But I ought not to speak any longer. I have spoken to you as to men who ought to aspire to the high places of the Republic. I would not come to my Alma Mater in any boastful or braggart spirit. But surely the son of Harvard, when he thinks of her and of what she has made him, may indulge something of the temper which Macaulay ascribes to the younger Pitt, "who thought himself worthy of great things, being in truth worthy." You come of a great spiritual lineage. You belong to an illustrious brotherhood. If anywhere on earth it be true, it is true here,—if of any men on earth it be true, it is true of us that

"In our halls is hung  
Armory of the invincible knights of old,  
In everything we are sprung  
Of earth's first blood, have titles manifold."

It is a great chapter in history that has been wrought out on this spot. A power has gone out from these walls to purify and to bless and to ennoble mankind. Its influence is not confined to the children of the college. It is not confined to the Commonwealth or to the country. Tennyson said of England that

“Her freedom slowly broadens down  
From precedent to precedent.”

If that be true, — and it is true, — not a few of the precedents that have broadened English freedom are precedents taught to England by America, taught to America by Massachusetts, and taught to Massachusetts by Harvard. The accomplished State historian of New York, Mr. Hugh Hastings, says in his preface to the papers of George Clinton, “Massachusetts was superior to her sister colonies, since through her delegates, with their learning and cultivation, she led the procession toward the separation of the mother country and her dependencies. This spirit of supremacy is to be credited to the influence of Harvard College, which, for a

century and a quarter, had been disseminating seeds not of antagonism to England, but of the Anglo-Saxon instinct of independence and liberty.”

Mr. Hastings is right. She is still planting the seed not of antagonism to anybody, but of the Anglo-Saxon instinct of independence and liberty. Her influence was never more powerful than today. It will be still more powerful to-morrow. There are some things I think only. But this thing I know: There is nothing but youth in the blood of Harvard. From her great power-house the electric wires are carrying to-day larger influence to wider fields. The spirit which planted the little college in the time of Henry Dunster still abides. It abides now that the little one has become a thousand—in the day of him every year of whose administration has been an *annus mirabilis*.







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