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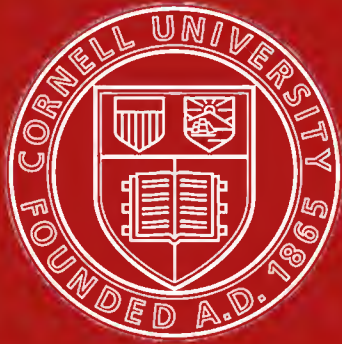
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THE  
WRITINGS AND SPEECHES  
OF  
DANIEL WEBSTER

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*National Edition*

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VOLUME THIRTEEN

THE NATIONAL EDITION OF THE  
WRITINGS & SPEECHES OF DANIEL  
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From a Painting of Mr. Webster in Hunting Costume by  
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THE WRITINGS AND  
SPEECHES  
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DANIEL WEBSTER

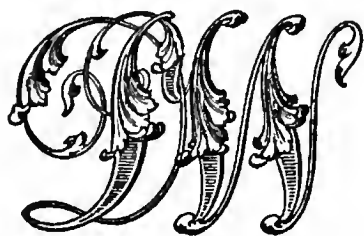
IN EIGHTEEN VOLUMES



VOLUME THIRTEEN



*The Writings and Speeches of*  
**DANIEL WEBSTER**  
HITHERTO UNCOLLECTED  
VOLUME ONE · ADDRESSES  
ON VARIOUS OCCASIONS  
NATIONAL EDITION · Illustrated  
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# Webster's Writings and Speeches Hitherto Uncollected

## Preface

IN his will, signed October 21, 1852, three days before his death, Mr. Webster said: "I appoint Edward Everett, George Ticknor, Cornelius Conway Felton, and George Ticknor Curtis, to be my literary executors; and I direct my son, Fletcher Webster, to seal up all my letters, manuscripts, and papers, and at a proper time to select those relating to my personal history, and my professional and public life, which in his judgment should be placed at their disposal, and to transfer the same to them, to be used by them in such manner as they may think fit. They may receive valuable aid from my friend George J. Abbot, Esq., now of the State Department."

On June 1, 1854, Edward Everett wrote to Fletcher Webster that the literary executors had "thought it best, at an early period, to address a circular to his (Mr. Webster's) Correspondents requesting that his letters might be sent to us. This request has been complied with in many instances." Mr. Everett added that "as the choice out of so great a mass of materials of those adapted for the press can only be made to advantage on a collective view of the whole, we shall be gratified to receive from you, as soon as convenient, such of the papers as you shall judge proper to be placed at our disposal, and we will then, as soon as possible, select from them and the collection made by ourselves those which it may be expedient to publish, at the present time, and these we will place in your hands for that purpose, agreeably to your request."

A year later, in a letter to Fletcher Webster, dated September 10, 1855, Mr. Everett wrote: "In compliance with your request I have no hesitation in stating my confident belief that

the correspondence and other papers of your late honored father now in your possession and in that of his literary executors contain ample material for several volumes not less interesting and valuable than those already published; perhaps for the general reader still more interesting.”

On October 29, 1855, Mr. Everett wrote again to Fletcher Webster giving some suggestions regarding the publication of Mr. Webster's posthumous works. He said: “ You refer to your father's speech on the Conscription. There are other speeches during his first membership in Congress, which it will be well to consider, as also some earlier political writings. There was, I understand, a very able speech in Faneuil Hall on the Oregon question, not contained in my edition. The speech in the Senate on Mr. Bates' death I regret not to have been acquainted with. His last great legal argument — on the India rubber case — will be worth preserving; and of course all his public speeches made after the six volumes were in print; among them his great historical address at New York and the last speech in Faneuil Hall.<sup>1</sup> If you will furnish me a list of anything of this kind which you either possess or which occurs to you, I will see what I can add to it. I think all matter of this kind should immediately follow your father's autobiographical Memoir, in the new publication. You observe that the papers sent on Saturday, with those put into my hands before, are all of those in your possession, ‘ which you propose to publish.’ There must be of course a large mass of papers still remaining, the disposition of which is a question of importance and interest. You may recollect when we last conversed on the subject, I recommended to you (after withdrawing all such as for personal reasons you might think proper to withhold), to send the rest to the Executors, who will make a business of examining, classing, probably binding, and otherwise carefully preparing for permanent preservation and future use such as are adapted for it. Your father's will, I think evidently contemplates the performance of this office by us. His reference to Mr. Abbot implies it. Great value will hereafter attach to these papers, scarcely inferior to those of Washington. It is desirable for

<sup>1</sup> All the speeches and addresses here referred to by Mr. Everett are now published in *Writings and Speeches Hitherto Uncollected*.

your father's reputation as a statesman and jurist, that they should be put into the most convenient form for consultation."

Some further suggestions were made by Mr. Everett in a Memorandum dated November 7, 1855.

The foregoing extracts from Mr. Everett's letters show that the publication of a series of volumes supplementing the 1851 edition of Mr. Webster's works was contemplated, but a half century elapsed and found the work still unaccomplished.<sup>1</sup> Two volumes of Private Correspondence, edited by Fletcher Webster, appeared in 1857, but many of Mr. Webster's most important letters, some of them upon great public questions, were omitted. In 1869 George Ticknor Curtis's *Life of Daniel Webster* was published. Its two volumes contained a large number of letters which were not printed in the *Private Correspondence*. Mr. Curtis stated that great pains had been taken by Mr. Ticknor in collecting the material, which had been placed in his hands by the latter after Mr. Everett's death in 1865. Mr. Curtis's Webster papers were destroyed in 1881, when the warehouse in which they were stored was burned, but, fortunately, before that time a large number of the letters had passed into the hands of Mr. Charles P. Greenough, and are now in the Library of Congress.

The largest and most valuable collection of Webster manuscripts, pamphlets, newspaper clippings, &c. was preserved by Mr. Webster's friend Peter Harvey and given by him to the New Hampshire Historical Society. An examination of this material indicates that efforts were made to trace uncollected speeches and writings, but no systematic arrangement of the material was ever made, and much of the matter which is now first collected in this publication, had not been located. The memoranda and manuscripts in Mr. Harvey's collection have, however, been of great value and help in bringing this material to light. During the past two years a great many newspaper and periodical files have been searched, Congressional records, public documents, and law reports examined, pamphlet reports of Mr. Webster's speeches secured, a large

<sup>1</sup> The original letters from Mr. Everett to Fletcher Webster from which these extracts are taken are in the New Hampshire Historical Society.

number of manuscripts have been read and copied, and with much labor and care the matter now printed in the four volumes of Writings and Speeches Hitherto Uncollected has been brought together.

Mr. Webster's eloquence, his mastery of English, and his greatness as a statesman and a jurist, were sufficiently shown in the volumes edited by Edward Everett. And with the thought that the chief value of the present work, — the first attempt to place before the world the matter not printed in the edition of 1851, — would consist in collecting and preserving this important material for reference, it has not been deemed advisable to select from the papers and letters collected, but rather to publish everything of importance without abridgment.

The first volume of the Writings and Speeches of Daniel Webster Hitherto Uncollected is chiefly devoted to Addresses on Various Public Occasions, of which more than seventy are here gathered for the first time, and printed from the contemporary reports in newspapers, periodicals, and pamphlets, and from manuscripts. The first speech in the series is that on the Tariff, delivered at the Faneuil Hall meeting of October 2, 1820, held for the purpose of opposing increased protective duties, at which time protection had not been established as the settled policy of the country. This is followed by the "Amalgamation" speech, delivered in the Adams Campaign of 1827, and a speech on Nullification at Faneuil Hall, December 17, 1832. A long address delivered before the Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge, Boston, November 11, 1836, is printed for the first time from a manuscript.

In 1837 Mr. Webster visited the West and made a speech of some length at St. Louis, and one at Rochester on his way home, which are included in this collection. There are three speeches delivered in the famous Harrison campaign of 1840; a speech before the Chamber of Commerce, New York, November 4, 1842, on receiving the news of the ratification of the Treaty of Washington; and a speech at a dinner given to Mr. Webster by the merchants of Baltimore, May 18, 1843.

In the great campaign of 1844 when Henry Clay was the Whig candidate for the Presidency, Mr. Webster made numer-



ous speeches, and eleven will be found in this collection. Just after this series are a tribute to Andrew Jackson (1845), a Speech on the Oregon Question, Faneuil Hall, November 7, 1845, and the Speech at the Boston Whig Convention, September 23, 1846, the scene of a memorable struggle between the Anti-slavery and so-called "Commercial" Whigs, in which address occurs the oft-quoted expression, "I see in the dark and troubled night which is now upon us, no star above the horizon, but the intelligent, patriotic, united Whig party of the United States." This speech is followed by one on the Mexican War, Springfield, Mass., September 29, 1847, in which Mr. Webster claimed the Wilmot proviso as his "thunder," and a speech at the Whig Convention, Abington, Mass., October 9, 1848, advocating the election of Gen. Taylor.

In 1850 and 1851 he delivered in various parts of the Union a series of remarkable addresses in defence of his famous Seventh of March Speech and the Compromise Measures. Only two of these are in his works, and seven additional speeches, delivered at Boston, Annapolis, Syracuse, and Capon Springs, Va., are now first collected. The new matter also embraces the Address on the Dignity and Importance of History before the New York Historical Society, February 23, 1852, and the Speech at the Kossuth Banquet, January 7, 1852.

The reader will find in this volume the two noted speeches delivered in Boston during the last year of Mr. Webster's life, that of May 22, 1852, — when the doors of Faneuil Hall, "the cradle of American liberty," were "thrown open, wide open, on golden hinges moving," and Mr. Webster spoke there by the unanimous invitation of both branches of the city government of Boston, — and the address delivered on Boston Common, July 9, 1852, upon the occasion of the reception tendered him on his return from Washington; also the Speech at Marshfield to his neighbors, July 25, 1852, his last public utterance.

The first volume also contains a series of papers grouped under the title of Autobiographical Papers and Conversations Hitherto Uncollected. Among these are Autobiographical Reminiscences (1825); Autobiographical Notes and Fragment of a Journal, from manuscripts; Mr. Webster's Record of his Children; his Last Will (1852); Conversations with Charles Lanman and

Professor Felton, etc. Mr. Webster's Autobiography, his Diary, and Memorandum of Mr. Jefferson's Conversations, will be found, as heretofore, in the first volume of his Private Correspondence.

The second volume of the Writings and Speeches Hitherto Uncollected contains Speeches in Congress and Diplomatic Papers. The former, with a few exceptions, have been reprinted from the Annals of Congress, Gales and Seaton's Register of Debates in Congress, and the Congressional Globe. The Speeches delivered in the House of Representatives are twenty in number, and extend from 1813 to 1827. They begin with Mr. Webster's first utterance in Congress, when a representative from New Hampshire, that on submitting Resolutions on the French Decrees, and include, among other efforts called forth by the War of 1812, the long speech on The Encouragement of Enlistments, in which he advocated the establishment of an American Navy; the speeches on the Repeal of the Embargo and The Increase of Direct Taxes (1814); and the Conscription Speech (1814), thought by his biographer, George Ticknor Curtis, to be lost, but here printed from the original manuscript. Among the important speeches in the House in this volume are that on the Resolution regarding Greece (1824), the Speech on the Bill for the Continuation of the Cumberland Road (1825), Remarks on the President's Message relative to the Creek Indians (1827), occasioned by the controversy between the United States and the State of Georgia, and a Speech on the British Colonial Trade Bill (1827).

It is worthy of note that Mr. Webster's Collected Works, published in 1851, contain none of his utterances in Congress prior to 1815.

The Speeches in the United States Senate included in the second volume are more than fifty in number, delivered in the years 1828 to 1841 and 1846 to 1850. Among the more important of these are a Speech on the Revenue Collection Bill, otherwise known as the "Force" Bill, introduced to meet the nullification emergency, Remarks and Resolutions called forth by the Modification of the Tariff proposed by Mr. Clay, and Remarks upon Mr. Calhoun's Resolutions, all of which were delivered in 1833; several speeches on the Removal of the Deposits (1834); Remarks occasioned by President Jackson's

Message explanatory of his Protest of April 17, 1834; Remarks in opposition to Mr. Calhoun's Incendiary Bill (1836); Eulogy of Senator Isaac C. Bates (1845); Remarks on the Government of California and New Mexico (1849); Debate with Mr. Calhoun on the Government of New Territories (1849); A Personal Explanation in regard to Former Speeches on Slavery (1850), &c.

The Diplomatic Papers were written in the years 1841 to 1843 and 1850 to 1852. They are printed from the Executive Documents of the United States Senate, and from copies furnished by Mr. Andrew H. Allen, Librarian of the Department of State, whose advice regarding this portion of the work has been of great value. There are in all eighty-five letters, and among the subjects to which they relate are the following: The Seizure of American Vessels; The Creole Case; The United States and Mexico; The Northeastern Boundary; Haytian Affairs; The Lopez Expedition against Cuba; The Mission to Japan; Impressment; The Hawaiian Islands; The American Policy regarding Cuba; The Republics of Central America; The Kossuth Banquet Speech; The Tehuantepec Treaty; The American Fisheries; The Claim of Peru to the Lobos Islands, &c.

In an Appendix to the second volume will be found three speeches in the United States Senate, Notes of a Speech on the Compromise Bill (1833), and twenty-one Diplomatic Papers printed from manuscripts.

The third volume of the new material includes Miscellaneous Papers, Legal Arguments and Early Addresses and Papers.

In the Miscellaneous Papers are more than forty articles upon historical, legal, and political subjects reprinted from the North American Review, from pamphlets, newspapers, manuscripts, and other sources. The Memorial to Congress on restraining the Increase of Slavery in New States (1819), The Constitutional Rights and Privileges of Harvard College (1821), and the Address on the Annexation of Texas (1845) are printed from the original pamphlets. Papers on Nullification (1830) and the Currency (1831), an Unpublished Speech on the Loss of the Fortification Bill (1836), and an article on President Tyler and the Whigs, are from the Life of Webster by George Ticknor Curtis. There are twelve editorial articles

from the *National Intelligencer* and three from the *Madisonian*. Among the papers printed from original manuscripts are two from the collection of Hon. George F. Hoar, — *Principles* (1832) and *The Duties of the Whig Party* (1845); an article entitled *President Tyler's Veto of the National Bank Bill* (1841) from the *New York Public Library (Lenox Branch) Collection*; and nine papers from the original manuscripts in the *New Hampshire Historical Society*, one of the most important being the *Suggestion to Joel Poinsett on the North-eastern Boundary* (1839).

There are twenty-six *Legal Arguments and Opinions*, derived from the *Reports*, from pamphlets, and from original manuscripts, among them being the *Argument on behalf of the Boston and Lowell Railroad* and the *Argument in the Goodyear Rubber Case*. This portion of the work has been annotated by Mr. John M. Gould of the *Suffolk Bar*.

The *Legal Arguments* are followed by seventeen *Early Addresses and Papers* from the original pamphlet, periodical, and newspaper publications, and from manuscripts. They include five articles published in the *Monthly Anthology*, 1805–1808; five *Fourth of July Orations*, 1800–1812; and three *Dartmouth College Addresses* — the *Funeral Oration on Ephraim Simonds* (1801), *Oration on Opinion* (1801), and the *Phi Beta Kappa Address* entitled *The State of Our Literature* (1809). Three early political papers — *An Appeal to the Old Whigs of New Hampshire* (1805), *Considerations on the Embargo Laws* (1808), and *The Rockingham Memorial* (1812) — will be found in the collection.

The fourth and final volume of the *Writings and Speeches Hitherto Uncollected* is devoted entirely to *Correspondence* and includes about eight hundred and fifty letters, almost all of which were written by Mr. Webster. Many of them are of great interest and importance. More than one hundred were written to Joseph Story, John Quincy Adams, Henry Clay, Edward Everett, Governor John Davis, and President Fillmore. There are sixty-one letters to Jeremiah Mason, twenty-four to Charles March, written during Mr. Webster's first year in Congress, seventeen to Ezekiel Webster, thirty-seven to Franklin Haven, numerous letters to Peter Harvey,

George Ticknor, Hiram Ketchum, R. M. Blatchford, Mrs. Caroline Le Roy Webster, and Fletcher Webster, and letters to John C. Calhoun, Jeremiah Smith, Timothy Pickering, Thomas H. Benton, De Witt Clinton, President Tyler, Chancellor Kent, Edward Livingston, Josiah Quincy, Jared Sparks, Lewis Cass, Thurlow Weed, Sir Henry L. Bulwer, Commodore R. F. Stockton, Abbott Lawrence, and many others.

Although many of these letters have been printed in newspapers and books they have never before been collected and arranged in chronological order, and a number of them are published from the original manuscripts. They begin with a letter on the Icarus Papers written to Moses Davis, August 27, 1803, and extend to a few days before Mr. Webster's death. Among the letters of considerable length and importance which will be found in the volume are the letter on the Independence of Texas written to Nicholas Biddle, September 10, 1838; that on the Annexation of Texas, addressed to the Citizens of Worcester County, Mass., January 23, 1844; one on the Judiciary of Massachusetts, to William Davis, October 16, 1843; the Correspondence with E. Rockwood Hoar, in 1848, when Mr. Webster declined to support the Free Soil nomination of Van Buren for the Presidency; letters to Hiram Ketchum and Senators Bates and Choate of Massachusetts, on the United States Bank question, written in 1841; letters giving impressions of England, written during Mr. Webster's visit there in 1839; a letter on River and Harbor Improvements, written to N. B. Judd and others, June 26, 1847; the Webster Annuity Correspondence and the Correspondence with Thomas H. Benton; letters to Governor Levi Lincoln and others, written shortly before Mr. Webster's first election to the United States Senate; numerous letters connected with his law practice and his career at Washington; letters on the Dartmouth College Case, on the Tariff and Commercial Relations, on the Cabinets of Presidents Taylor and Fillmore, on the Creole Case, the Northeastern Boundary, the McLeod Case, the Ashburton Treaty, the Chinese Mission, and the Oregon question; letters relating to the Hülsemann difficulty; a letter to B. F. Ayer on the Preservation of the Union, November 16, 1850; letters called forth by the Seventh of March Speech; the letters of



1851 and 1852 occasioned by the refusal of the use of Faneuil Hall by the Aldermen of Boston; letters on the Compromise Measures of 1850, &c., &c.

Notes printed in the original publication of the speeches, papers, letters, &c., embraced in these volumes, also notes found in the original manuscripts are indicated by asterisks and daggers, and the new notes by figures. The 1851 edition of Mr. Webster's Writings is referred to in the notes as Collected Works.

Nothing remains to add but an acknowledgment of great indebtedness to those who have generously accorded permission to reprint manuscripts in their possession or have kindly aided with information and advice.

First in importance is the New Hampshire Historical Society, Concord, N. H., which has given the unrestricted use of its remarkable Collection. Especial thanks are due to the officers and library committee and to Rev. Nathan F. Carter, the Librarian, whose help has been of great value.

Mrs. Louise A. Curtis kindly gave permission to reprint important papers and letters from her husband's Life of Daniel Webster, without which material, any approach to a complete edition of Mr. Webster's Writings would have been impossible.

Hon. George F. Hoar and Rev. Edward Everett Hale not only tendered the use of their Webster manuscripts, but furnished valuable suggestions as well.

The publishers are deeply grateful to the Massachusetts Historical Society for the use of letters in the Proceedings and Collections of the Society, and to Dr. Samuel A. Green, the Librarian; to the American Antiquarian Society, of Worcester, Mass., Nathaniel Paine, Esq., President of the Society, and Stephen Salisbury, Esq., its Treasurer, for permission to print Webster letters in the Davis Papers, and to Edmund H. Barton, the Librarian, and Miss Mary Robinson, Assistant Librarian, for information; to Horace G. Wadlin, Librarian of the Boston Public Library, Otto Fleischner, Assistant Librarian, and James L. Whitney, the former Librarian, for many courtesies extended in the search and for the use of manuscripts; to Wilberforce Eames, Librarian of the New York Public Library, Lenox Branch, to Morris Jastrow, Jr., Libra-

rian of the University of Pennsylvania, to Arthur H. Chase, Librarian of the New Hampshire State Library, to Gregory B. Keen, Librarian of the Historical Society of Pennsylvania, to Herbert Putnam, Librarian of Congress, and other officials, for information and the use of valuable material; to Hon. Charles Francis Adams, for permission to print numerous letters to John Quincy Adams; to Charles P. Greenough, Esq., Boston, for the use of a large number of important letters, the original manuscript of the Phi Beta Kappa Address, delivered at Dartmouth in 1809, and other material; to Edwin B. Sanborn, Esq., New York, for permission to print several letters to Ezekiel Webster; to Mrs. Robert D. Bronson, Summit, N. J., for the use of letters to her grandfather, Judge William Gaston, of North Carolina; to Lyon G. Tyler, Esq., Williamsburg, Va., for material from Letters and Times of the Tylers; to Hon. Charles R. Corning, Concord, N. H., for the use of his collection; to Mrs. A. R. Sharp, Boston, for permission to print letters in the Sparks Correspondence, Harvard College Library; to Miss Helen Richards Healey, for letters to her grandfather, John P. Healey; to Samuel Hoar, Esq., Concord, for the use of the correspondence between his father, E. Rockwood Hoar, and Mr. Webster; to Franklin Haven, Esq., Boston, for the use of numerous letters written to his father by Mr. Webster; to Robert C. Winthrop, Jr., Boston, for permission to reprint a large number of letters from the Memoir and Correspondence of Jeremiah Mason; to Hon. William Everett, for the use of letters to his father, Edward Everett, and for having placed in the publishers' hands copies of letters preserved by Mr. Everett; to Messrs. G. P. Putnam's Sons for letters from the Speeches, Correspondence, &c., of Daniel S. Dickinson, and the Life and Correspondence of Rufus King; to Miss Eugenia Coleman for letters reprinted from the Life of J. J. Crittenden, by Mrs. C. Coleman; to Hon. Henry Cabot Lodge, for a letter written to his grandfather, Henry Cabot; to William J. Tucker, President of Dartmouth College, for a letter to Joseph Hopkinson; to Timothy Farrar Burke, Cheyenne, Wyoming, for a letter to his grandfather, Timothy Farrar; to William Kent, Esq., for letters from the Memoirs of Chancellor Kent; to Hon. Winslow Warren, for two letters reprinted from the

History of the Bunker Hill Monument Association; to Messrs. C. W. and A. F. Lewis, for information and for material from the Fryeburg Memorial; to Charles E. Bliss, Bangor, Me., for copies of newspaper clippings; to J. S. H. Frink, Esq., Portsmouth, N. H., for a copy of the Rockingham Memorial; to Messrs. Fitzroy Kelly, Boston, B. C. Clark, Boston, Arthur G. Stevens, Concord, N. H., and Grenville H. Norcross, Boston, for the use of letters; and to the late Mrs. Abbott Lawrence, for the use of material from the Memoir of Abbott Lawrence.

Indebtedness for information is acknowledged to Albert S. Batchellor, Esq., Littleton, N. H., Editor of State Papers, State of New Hampshire, William C. Lane, Librarian of Harvard College Library, Charles F. Richardson, Professor of English, Dartmouth College, Mr. Victor H. Paltsits and Mr. George de C. Curtis, of the New York Public Library, Lenox Branch, James Schouler, Esq., Boston, M. D. Bisbee, Librarian of Dartmouth College, Messrs. Edward A. Kelly, Boston, Frank B. Sanborn, Concord, Mass., Otis Norcross, Boston, James F. Colby, Hanover, N. H., J. G. Rosengarten, Philadelphia, William T. Davis, Plymouth, and Worthington C. Ford, Library of Congress. It should be added that valuable information was derived from letters written to the Boston Transcript in 1884 by Edward L. Pierce, Author of *The Memoir and Letters of Charles Sumner*; and that the newspaper and periodical files of the Boston Athenæum, together with the facilities for examining them afforded by Mr. Charles K. Bolton the Librarian and the other officials, have been of very great assistance.

J. W. McINTYRE.

Boston, October 7, 1903.

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# Addresses Hitherto Uncollected

VOL. I. — I



# Speech on the Tariff

FANEUIL HALL, BOSTON, October 2, 1820.<sup>1</sup>

MR. WEBSTER said he felt an unfeigned embarrassment in addressing the meeting on a subject which so many members of it understood much better than himself. As it was a question, however, of general, and, as he thought, of very high importance, he would beg leave to detain the meeting for a few moments.

It was in the first place necessary that he should repel any suggestions of a feeling unfriendly to American manufactures. He believed that there was no ground for supposing that such a feeling existed in any part of the community. It certainly did not exist with him. He thought it, therefore, quite unjustifiable that those who could not support the proposed tariff should be charged with hostility to domestic industry. There was power in *names*; and those who had pressed the tariff on Congress and on the country had represented it as immediately and almost exclusively connected with domestic industry and national independence. In his opinion no measure could prove more injurious to the industry of the country, and nothing was more fanciful, than the opinion that national independence rendered such a measure necessary. He certainly thought it might be doubted whether Congress would not be acting somewhat against the spirit and intention of the Constitution in exercising a power to control essentially the pursuits and occupations of individuals in their private concerns — a power to force great and sudden changes, both of occupation and property, upon individuals, not as incidental to the exercise of any other power, but as a substantial and direct power. If such changes were wrought *incidentally* only, and were the necessary consequence of such imposts as Congress,

<sup>1</sup> Boston Daily Advertiser, October 11, 1820.

## 6 Addresses Hitherto Uncollected

for the leading purpose of revenue, should enact, then they could not be complained of. But he doubted whether Congress fairly possessed the power of turning the *incident* into the *principal*; and instead of leaving manufacturers to the protection of such laws as should be passed with a primary regard to revenue, of enacting laws with the avowed object of giving preference to particular manufactures, with an entire disregard to all the considerations of revenue, and instead of laying such imposts as would best answer the purpose of raising a revenue with the least burden on the public, carrying the impost on certain articles to a burdensome excess, with a full knowledge that the increase of duty will diminish the amount of revenue raised.

It would hardly be contended that Congress possessed that sort of general power by which it might declare that particular occupations should be pursued in society, and that others should not. If such power belonged to any government in this country, it certainly did not belong to the general government. The question was, therefore, and he thought it a very serious question, whether in laying duties under the authority to lay imposts, obviously given for the purposes of revenue, Congress can, reasonably and fairly, lose sight of those purposes entirely, and levy duties for other objects. Congress may tax the land, but it would be a strange proposition if Congress should be asked to lay a land tax for the direct purpose of withdrawing capital from agriculture, and sending those engaged in it to other pursuits. The power, however, exists in one case as much as in the other. It is not easy, it must be confessed, to draw a limit in such cases, and therefore, perhaps, it must be presumed in all cases that the power was exercised for the legal purpose, the collection of revenue; and that whatever other consequence ensued must be regarded as incidental and consequential to the exercise of the power. Still, it was a question very fit in his judgment to be considered by Congress, whether it was a fair and just exercise of power to elevate the incidental far above the primary object, or to speak more properly, to pursue the latter in utter disregard of the former.

But admitting the right of congressional legislation over these subjects and for these purposes to be quite clear, the in-

quiry was, Is it *expedient* to increase the duties on imports to the extent proposed in this bill? The inquiry was not whether some change might not usefully be made. There was no objection, he presumed, to a revision of the table of duties, upon the common principle of such revisions, now, or at any time. But the House of Representatives had put it fairly to the people of the United States whether a new tariff, to the *extent* proposed and on the *principles* proposed, should be established. And he hoped the people would give a distinct answer to this question. The principle of the measure he understood to be, that we should encourage the manufactures proposed most to be benefited by the bill, principally those of woollen and cotton cloths, by prohibitory duties; that restrictions, such as we have never before imposed, shall be laid on commerce by way of bounty on particular manufactures. For his own part, he had supposed that restrictions on trade and commerce in order to benefit particular classes of manufactures were now very generally understood to be mischievous, and inconsistent with the just notions of political economy. They were of two sorts: such as arise from treaty stipulations between nations, and such as each nation may create for itself by its duties on importations. The understanding between England and Portugal relative to the importation of the wines of Portugal into England was an instance of the first sort; the prohibition of French silks into England, an instance of the latter.

Both these, and all other modes of giving great preferences to some occupations and some modes of investing capital over others, he believed had almost universally proved detrimental. They not only restrain private enterprise, but often exceedingly embarrass the operations of government. In the instance above mentioned, the English Government at this moment experiences the bad policy of such measures. Notwithstanding the general peace of Europe, the commerce between England and France is understood to be almost a nullity. Why? Because England cannot agree to receive on fair terms and in exchange for her commodities such principal articles as France produces for exportation; namely, silks and wine. And why cannot she agree to receive these articles from France? Because, as to wine, there is the old treaty with Portugal; and as



## 8      Addresses Hitherto Uncollected

to silks, the manufacture of that article has been unnaturally forced by high bounties at home, and if those bounties should now be withdrawn, some thousands of persons would be thrown out of employment. So that the particular agreement with Portugal and a concern for the silk manufacturers of Coventry completely tied up the hands of government on subjects supposed to be of the highest national importance. To individuals, this policy is as injurious as it is to government. A system of artificial government protection leads the people to too much reliance on government. If left to their own choice of pursuits, they depend on their own skill and their own industry. But if government essentially affects their occupations by its systems of bounties and preferences, it is natural, when in distress, that they should call on government for relief. Hence a perpetual contest, carried on between the different interests of society. Agriculturists taxed to-day to sustain manufacturers; commerce taxed to-morrow to sustain agriculture; and then impositions perhaps on both manufacturers and agriculture to support commerce. And when government has exhausted its invention in these modes of legislation, it finds the result less favorable than the original and natural state and course of things. He could hardly conceive of anything worse than a policy which should place the great interests of this country in hostility to one another — a policy which should keep them in constant conflict, and bring them every year to fight their battles in the committee-rooms of the House of Representatives at Washington.

We see that the most enlightened nations which have adopted this artificial system are tired of it. We see the most distinguished men in England, for instance, of all parties, condemning it. The only difference of opinion is, whether the disease is not so inveterate as to yield to no remedy which would not also produce great evils. The only difference is, whether it be an evil, grievous, but to be borne, or a grievous evil not to be borne. He alluded to England because her example had been so often quoted as a mode for our imitation. But why should we adopt, on her example, what she herself laments, and would be glad to be rid of? We hear the first Minister in Great Britain give his opinion, emphatically, that

England has become what she is, not by means of this system, but in *spite of it*. Why, then, are we so eager to adopt a system which others who have tried it would be glad to repudiate? Can anything, he would ask, in this general view of the subject, be more unwise than that this country should adopt such a course of policy?—a policy of which he would say, that no nation had entered upon and pursued it without having found it to be a policy which could not be followed without great national injury, nor abandoned without extensive individual ruin. To leave men to their own discretion, to conduct their concerns by their own skill and prudence, and to employ their capital and their labor in such occupations as they themselves found most expedient, has been found the wisest, as it is the simplest, course of political legislation. As there is an order in the natural world which holds all things in place, as the air we breathe is wisely combined and compounded for our use by the course of nature, so there is a principle of regulations, a sort of *vis medicatrix naturæ*, in the social world. Excess corrects itself. If there be too much commerce, it will be diminished. If there be too few manufactures, they will be increased with but ordinary care and protection. For his part, he believed that, however derided, the principle of leaving such things very much to their own course, in a country like ours, was the only true policy, and that we could no more improve the order and habit and composition of society by an artificial balancing of trades and occupations, than we could improve the natural atmosphere by means of the condensers and rarefiers of the chemists.

Mr. Webster proceeded to observe that the various propositions before Congress at the last session appeared to him to be equivalent to a direct declaration of the expediency of abolishing the foreign trade, or at least of most materially diminishing it. He did not perceive how any man could understand it otherwise. The new duties proposed and the bills to repeal the laws respecting credits at the custom house, and drawbacks, were to be considered a part of one system. As to allowing credits for duties, it had prevailed from the commencement of the government. It had been thought to have been productive of much good. A few merchants of the richest

class might, no doubt, be benefited by repealing this system, because such a repeal would tend to give them a sort of actual monopoly in importation.

But to merchants of small capitals the change must be most destructive. On some articles, such, for instance, as teas, the duties to be paid here equal the first cost. If, therefore, the duties must always be paid before a sale here, the business would require two capitals: one in China to purchase the article, another here to pay the duties. This might be very well for the chairman (Mr. Gray) and a few other gentlemen, but he (Mr. Webster) well knew that both the chairman and these gentlemen saw too well how this would affect the enterprise of young merchants, to give it their countenance or support. As to the punctuality and certainty with which the duties had been paid under this system, they were wonderful. The loss from 1789 was most inconsiderable. The curtailing of the privilege of drawbacks Mr. Webster thought equally objectionable. He could account for the proposition only on the supposition that the intention was greatly to diminish, if not indeed to abolish, the foreign commerce of the country.

Other nations had deemed it an object of importance to make their country an *entrepôt* of commerce, and for this end to encourage the importations of such articles as were likely to be again exported. Such also had been our own system heretofore. It was very obvious to what extent foreign commerce was encouraged by allowing drawbacks. And if the object of the present proposed measures be what he had supposed, he admitted that this, among others, was a means fitly chosen to produce the end. There were many gentlemen present who knew much better than he did to what extent our foreign trade consisted at the present moment, of foreign articles imported into this country and again exported. It was certainly very considerable. He found, by reference to Mr. Seybert's tables and statements, that the average value of foreign merchandise exported from the United States from 1795 to 1817 amounted to forty-two one hundredths of our whole exportations. In some years the exportation of foreign had exceeded that of domestic produce. It had been stated, and was doubtless true, that in some years, notwithstanding the quantity of India goods consumed

in this country, the amount of sales of those exported within the year exceeded the amount of all the purchases in India ; an important fact, by the way, for the consideration of those who consider the East India trade so destructive. Mr. Webster said he hoped he had misapprehended the object of those who proposed these measures. He hoped they saw a mode in which to reconcile them with the existence and the fair rights of commerce ; but he confessed he had himself perceived no such mode. He found that on introducing and recommending the bill the sentiments of the committee were thus expressed by its chairman : “ Commerce has been too long a pet, the spoiled child of Government, to think there are any other interests worth protecting. The mere creature of legislation, raised to importance by our laws, and the expenditure of a great portion of our revenue for its support, Commerce has presented herself as the Atlas which supports the government, the country, and all its great interests ; now it seems she cannot support herself.”

He (Mr. Webster) begged to differ most widely from these opinions. He by no means agreed that the commerce of the country was the mere creature of congressional legislation. The commerce of the country was older than Congress, older than the present government. This Commonwealth had a great and profitable trade, notwithstanding its embarrassments, before Congress had the power of legislating upon the subject. The county of Essex alone possessed more tons of shipping before this government was framed, than belonged to the whole of England in the reign of Elizabeth at the time of the repelling by her fleets of the Spanish Invasion. Before the organization of the present government, so considerable was the commerce of the States that the amount of importations for some years rose to several millions ; in one year, indeed, it fell little if any short of twenty millions of dollars. It was certainly true that the Government, during the greater part of its course hitherto, had shown a just, but no more than a just, care for the protection of commerce. He thought the Government had done no more for commerce than commerce had done for the Government. Commerce, in his opinion, had been the main support of the public revenue. He did not, in

saying this, mean that any particular class of persons — the merchants, the ship-builders, or the ship-owners, for instance — had been the principal support of government, or had done more than their part towards that support.

But commerce, by acting upon and enriching the agriculture of the country, by calling into activity all the capital and exciting all the industry and enterprise of the country, had given to the whole people an ability to contribute to the revenue; and it had also afforded an easy and convenient mode for the collection of revenue. Since the commencement of the government, three hundred and fifty millions of dollars have been paid into the treasury through the custom house — thirty-four or thirty-five millions alone have been obtained from all other sources of revenue — and this not without much discontent and more than one rebellion. This does not prove, indeed, and is not stated to prove, that any one part of the community has borne more than its portion of the public burdens; but it is stated to show that the country has been able to do that which there is no reason to believe it could or would have done without commerce.

The commerce of the country, so far from being the mere creature of congressional legislation, was one of the principal causes of calling Congress itself and the government into existence.

It is well known as a matter of historical fact, that of the causes which led to the establishment of the present government, a very prominent one was the desire to establish uniform duties and imposts through the several States, and by means of such uniform duties and imposts to enable the country to provide for the payment of the revolutionary debt.

Not to dwell, however, longer on this part of the subject, he wished to call the attention of the meeting to the immediate effects, should the proposed duties be laid. And in the first place it is admitted that a great falling off of revenue must be expected. No one, as far as he knew, had computed this loss of revenue at less than five millions a year. How is this loss to be supplied? That inquiry was very natural to the Government as well as to the people.

In truth, every man in the community not immediately benefited by the new duties would suffer a double loss. In the

first place, by shutting out the former commodity the price of the domestic manufacture would be raised. The consumer, therefore, must pay more for it. And in so much as government will have lost the duty on the imported article, a tax equal to that duty must be paid to government. The real amount then of this bounty on a given article will be precisely the amount of the present duty added to the amount of the proposed duty. At least so it appeared to him (Mr. Webster), and if any calculation could make it otherwise he would be glad to see it. Again: it is proposed to raise the duties on salt and brown sugar; these are articles of very general consumption, and the duty on them is raised probably with a view of supplying, in some degree, the loss to the treasury arising from excluding other articles. This is a tax, then, imposed to enable the treasury in some measure to bear its other losses. In other words, sugar and salt are taxed because cotton and woollen clothes are to be taxed so high as to prevent their importation: there is a tax on *food*, in order that there may be a tax on *clothing*. And after all, how few of all the members of society are to be benefited by this system, so artificially and elaborately constructed. Certainly not all manufacturers nor all mechanics, but a particular class only. All those manufacturers who have now the home market in their possession, and export more or less of their wares — the manufacturers, for instance, of shoes, nails, cabinet furniture, carriages, &c.; all these are injured, not benefited. They feel the burden without partaking the profit. We might add to these at once all the numerous class whose occupations are connected directly or indirectly with navigation and commerce. It is said to lull the alarms at the treasury that the deficit of five millions in the revenue may be made up by an excise on domestic manufactures when the foreign article should be excluded. But on *what* manufactures? On cotton and woollen alone, or principally? Certainly not, on others, as much or more than on them. On carriages, for example, among the first. This is a tax which, like many others, always diminishes the demand for the article. It takes away, then, at once the employment of the artist who works in this line. He is a manufacturer therefore not benefited, but likely in the end to

be ruined. And yet he (Mr. Webster) had understood that in making out the new census coachmakers and all other handicraftsmen or tradesmen were denominated *manufacturers*; and this would show a great number of manufacturers in the census appearing to be benefited by protecting manufactures. The case he had alluded to might suffice for an instance or example of many, and when the whole should be investigated it would be found that the sorts of manufactures to be benefited by the proposed measures were very few. An appeal had been made to the patriotic feelings of the nation. It had been said, we are not *independent* so long as we received these commodities from other nations. He could not see the force of this appeal. He did not perceive how the exchange of commodities between nations, when mutually and equally advantageous, rendered one dependent on the other in any manner derogatory to its interest or dignity. A dependence of this sort exists everywhere among individuals as well as nations. Indeed the whole fabric of civilization, all the improvements which distinguished cultivated society from savage life, rest on a dependence of this kind. He thought the argument drawn from the necessity of providing means of defence in war had been pressed quite too far. It was enough that we had a *capacity* to produce such means when occasion should call. The reasoning assumes that in war no means of defence or annoyance can be probably obtained, or not without great difficulty, except from our own materials or manufactures. He doubted whether there was much ground for that assumption. Nations had hitherto obtained military means in the midst of war from commerce. But at any rate, as it was acknowledged on all hands that the country possessed the *capacity* of supplying itself whenever it saw fit to make the sacrifice, and he did not see why the necessity of making it should be anticipated; why should we *now* change our daily habits and occupations, with great loss and inconvenience, merely because it is possible some change *may* hereafter become necessary? We should act with equal wisdom, he thought, if we were to decide that although we are now quite well and with very good appetites, yet, as it was possible we might one day be sick, we would therefore now sell all our food and lay up physic.

There was, however, Mr. Webster observed, one part of our national defence which the advocates of the new measures appeared to have quite overlooked or forgotten. He meant the navy. If the commerce of the country should cease, the navy must cease with it. This he thought too plain to be questioned. A country with a powerful navy and little or no commerce would be an anomaly in history. The great object aimed at seemed to be, either to annihilate or greatly diminish our foreign trade. Where, then, are our seamen to come from for the navy? By reference to the amount of American tonnage in 1810, the year when its amount was greatest, it will be seen that there were employed in the foreign trade 984,000 tons; in the coasting trade, 371,000. The proportion of seamen to tonnage is, of course, greater in the larger vessels; so that probably three-fourths of the seamen of the United States were employed in the foreign trade. The coasting trade itself would be immediately diminished by the curtailment of the foreign trade; and if it should afterward revive, and be even increased and extended, there was no reason to suppose that it would supply seamen in sufficient numbers for the navy. Besides, the seamen ordinarily engaged in the coasting trade are not a class of seamen the most fit for naval service. In this trade the voyages are short; the number of hands small—not always exclusively seamen. There are not the habits of subordination, the attention to self-preservation, the exposure to danger and to hardship, which form the value of the character of good seamen. No part of national defence is so impossible to be suddenly procured as good seamen. Yet without them all attempts towards establishing a commanding naval power are entirely vain, as the history of more than one modern nation has shown. Let those, then, who would abridge commerce, on the ground of a more independent provision for national defence, declare whether they esteem a *navy* to be among our means of defence. If they do not, their argument may be consistent; if they do, it is a fallacy. Mr. Webster said he would add a few observations upon a more general view of the subject. We must regard the proposed measures either as intended to be temporary, or as intended to be permanent. If they were to be but temporary, the manufacturers would be ruined by their



repeal. We must look upon the proposed duties, therefore, as intended to be permanent; if not permanent at the same rates, yet permanent at such rates as shall preserve the system of manufacturing for ourselves. We are bound, therefore, to regard future consequences and the state of things which may ultimately arise if this system should be adopted and established. It was the part of true wisdom to look to the end. For his part he did not consider a great manufacturing population a benefit to be pursued with so much cost. He thought there were great evils in it. When it shall come naturally, and in the progress of things, we must meet it. But why hasten it? What we see of it elsewhere did not recommend it to us. The great object of good governments was individual happiness, and this, to be general, required something like an equality in condition. He was not advancing any agrarian notions, but he considered that those employments which tended to make the poor both more numerous and more poor, and the rich less in number, but perhaps more rich, were not employments fit for us to encourage by taxing other employments. And this he believed would be the tendency of the manufacturing system pushed to excess. At present it was probably true that the manufacturing capitals, being generally corporate property, were holden in many hands. But if the capital now employed in commerce were also to be put into manufactures, it would in the end, he should think, get the ascendancy, because it would be individual capital, and according to our experience would be, therefore, better managed. Manufacturing capital comes in the end to be owned but by few. It does not therefore encourage industry like capital employed in some other pursuits. The case of the establishment mentioned in the report was in point to this argument. Half a million of dollars gave employment to two hundred and sixty-five persons, and those principally women and children. Now what employment of that sum in almost any other pursuit could fail to demand and requite more human labor? If vested in agriculture, the sum would command good and productive land sufficient to employ, he might almost say, all the cotton spinners in the United States. And how would it be in commerce, suppose it were in the freighting business? A com-

mercial friend had furnished him with a statement which would show the result: A ship fit for that service may cost fifteen thousand dollars; she will require in her immediate service, on board, fifteen hands. Then, full occupation for one man is found here on a capital of one thousand dollars. But in the manufacturing establishment two thousand are required. In the first case, however, it is not the immediate employment of the navigators that is demanded and paid. He who furnished the timber, he who built the ship, all the classes connected with commerce and navigation, are employed and paid. Or suppose we look at the West India trade as we have sometimes enjoyed it. That is a trade favorable to small capitals and to personal labor. It is a trade of short voyage and quick return; a trade which transports gross commodities both ways, and requires, therefore, many vessels and those small.

Hence we have seen respectable towns growing up and kept in activity and proceeding to wealth almost by that trade alone.

It must be obvious to every one how much more capital thus employed encourages industry by finding employment and therefore by raising wages, than capital employed in large manufactures.

Between agricultural employments and manufacturing operations no one could hesitate, he thought, as to their effect on individual respectability and happiness. Such was the happy condition of this country, and such the low value of land, that almost every industrious laborer had the means, by his labor, of becoming in a short time a freeholder. He thereby obtains a feeling of respectability, a sense of propriety and of personal independence which is generally essential to elevated character. He has a stake in society, and inclined, therefore, rather to uphold than demolish it. He does not look on all property as the envied possession of others, and as a proper prey for him and his fellows so soon as they may venture to set the power of law and government at defiance, but as a stock in which he has a share and which he is interested, therefore, to protect. Now we know that the reverse of all this is true of the thousands of journeymen manufacturers in the great establishments of Europe.

They have no stake in society; they hang loose upon it, and are often neither happy in their own condition, nor without danger to the State. Mr. Webster stated that he had lately compared the returns of the number of persons committed to jail in the several counties in England, for crime or debt, for thirteen years, namely, from 1804 to 1817, with the proportion of agricultural and manufacturing population in those counties respectively. The result was what he should have expected, except that it was much more striking. In the most agricultural counties the number committed to jail was one in nineteen thousand; in the most manufacturing, one in less than one thousand — a proportion of twenty to one in favor of agricultural employments on the moral habits or on the means of subsistence of individuals.

It was well known that the English armies had been principally recruited from among the manufacturing population. It had been stated, he believed, that during the late war the city of Glasgow had furnished as many recruits as all the rest of Scotland. This facility of finding recruits might be convenient to government, but it was hardly an indication of individual happiness and independence. In short, Mr. Webster said, he would put it to any man who possessed the blessing of children, whether he would not hope rather that they would be freeholders, though they should till their own soil with their own hand, with the reasonable prospect of respectability and independence, although this freehold were to be beyond the Yellowstone, or beyond the Rocky mountains, than that they should go through life as journeymen manufacturers, taking the chance of the ignorance and the vice, the profligacy and the poverty, of that condition, although it were in the best manufactory in the richest city in the world.

It was no recommendation to him that the larger factories gave employment to women and children. He thought it a kind of employment not suited to the one or the other; and he had observed that in England Parliament had lately been obliged to interfere to prevent the cruel and excessive overworking of children in these establishments. He was happy, most happy, to know that with us all possible care had been taken in regard to the moral habits of the persons employed,

especially in the excellent establishments in our neighborhood with which he was best acquainted. But it must be remembered that the system was but just now begun. Those who come for employ must come with excellent habits already formed under the care of their parents in the farm-houses of New England. Thus far all is well. But let us not deceive ourselves. Some situations are favorable to moral habits and others are unfavorable, and among the last are some of such powerful tendency as no care has even been able to resist. He would not but believe that the respectable young men of the country would choose hereafter to look for companions for life rather in domestic families, rather among those who are the companions of their mothers, the guardians of their younger brothers and sisters, educated in the family society and with family affections, than to go for their choice to the crowded weaving-room at a factory in an atmosphere of cotton and oil, and amidst the din of spools and spindles. He knew that he was speaking upon what might be thought the remote effects of these great establishments. Yet not so remote perhaps as we may imagine. If the system be established and adhered to, which he could not believe until he should see it, the effects will not be tardy on their arrival. Two generations, in his opinion, would change the whole face of New England society. He persuaded himself, however, that the proposed change was impracticable. Our very state and condition warred against it. Our best interests, he believed, were opposed to it, and of all public measures it was among the very last to which he should give his approbation. He believed the encouragement already given to manufactures would enable them to extend themselves as fast as the general good required. The question was constantly asked: "Will you do nothing for the manufacturers?" But this he thought an unfair mode of stating the question; much is already done for the manufacturers. The duties, as they now stand, afford great protection, and in some cases extraordinary bounties, to our manufactures. It was thought that complete satisfaction had been given, at the time, by the law of 1816; which yet had been again altered most materially in favor of the manufacturers of woollen and cotton cloth. By that law the duty

on these articles was put at twenty-five per cent, but was to be diminished to twenty per cent after three years. By a subsequent act, however, this was altered, and the duty kept at the higher rate. On woollen cloths there is now paid a duty of twenty-five per cent on their original value, which, with the usual addition, amounts to twenty-seven per cent.

On cotton cloths, although the nominal rate per cent is the same, the duty is in effect much higher. It is twenty-five per cent on the first cost; but then the first cost is to be deemed always to be at least twenty-five cents a square yard, whereas, in fact, of the cotton cloths from India best suited to our consumption, and for which consequently there is most demand in our market, the original price ordinarily does not exceed seven and one-half cents per yard. Here, then, is a duty of six and one-quarter cents on a yard of cloth which costs but seven and one-half; that is to say, the duty is nearly *eighty-three per centum* on the cost of the article, and this the importer pays in addition to the cost of importation. This is so much bounty to the home manufacturers; and yet in the face of this known fact we are asked if *we will do nothing for our cotton manufacturers*; and it is now proposed to raise the bounty from eighty-three per cent to one hundred and thirty-three per cent. Iron is another article on which there has been a constant effort to raise the duty. It is an article of very general consumption in most of the occupations of life. The cost of importation itself is generally nearly equal to the original cost. By the law of 1810 the duty was fixed at nine dollars per ton. It has since been raised to fifteen, and it is now proposed to raise it to twenty-five.

He believed, upon the whole, that all reasonable encouragement had been already given to manufacturers, and especially to the manufacturers of cloth. He had the pleasure of seeing gentlemen present not from one only, but from several of the factories in this neighborhood. If their business were ruinous, as some of the manufacturers had elsewhere pretended, he hoped they would state it. He would be quite willing to leave it to those gentlemen themselves to say whether, with the present protection, the best conducted manufacturing establishments did not yield as fair profits on capital as other branches

*George Ticknor Curtis*

From a Photograph, by George G. Rockwood, New York city













of business. He exceedingly doubted whether they would be willing to come into an average, and to divide their present profits with the agriculturists and the merchants. He believed, indeed, that the persons connected with the establishments to which he had alluded had not petitioned Congress for new duties. He believed that others would have been wise to have followed the same course. That which is most to be desired on these subjects is steadiness and permanency. He hoped the present duties would stand without increase or diminution; that Congress would adhere to what it had already established; and that both the Government and the country would resist all attempts to make new, frequent, and great changes in the value of property, in the occupations and pursuits of men, and in the means of living.

## NOTE.

In writing of Mr. Webster's course regarding the tariff, Mr. George Ticknor Curtis, in "The Life of Webster," Vol. I. pages 207, 208, said:

"As Mr. Webster's early relation to this subject has sometimes been misunderstood, it will be necessary to recur to the opinions which he had hitherto held. In 1814 he declared himself not to be in favor of a policy which would force capital into manufactures faster than it would naturally find its way into them without the direct influence of legislation. In 1816, when the principle of protection to domestic manufactures, advocated by Mr. Calhoun, was first introduced into our revenue system as an incidental object of the regulation and imposition of duties on foreign goods, Mr. Webster confined himself to the procurement of such duties on particular commodities, as would be likely to afford a settled and steady policy in relation to the principal branches of manufacture. From 1816 to 1823 he was out of Congress. In the mean time, the effect of the tariff of 1816 had been to stimulate the investment of capital still more in manufacturing establishments, especially of cotton and wool, and there were indications that a policy of direct protection and encouragement by the means of still higher duties, laid for this express purpose, would be substituted for the tariff then in operation. Under these circumstances a meeting was held in Faneuil Hall in Boston, in 1820, for the purpose of opposing a still further extension of this principle. Mr. Webster, although not in public position at that time, was invited to attend and address this meeting, because his general sentiments on the subject were known to be opposed to any other measure of protection than that which is incidental to the collection of sufficient revenue for the wants of Government, and which can be adjusted from time to time to the particular situation of all the industries of the country. Previous to this time, the right to afford

protection to domestic manufactures against foreign competition was placed by its advocates upon the ground that it is a power incidental to the power of laying and collecting revenue ; and Mr. Webster argued, in his speech at Faneuil Hall, that, if protection is an incident to revenue, the incident cannot fairly be carried beyond the principal, and that duties laid for the mere object of protection are beyond the scope of the power under which it was claimed that they might be imposed. This opinion, so far as the revenue power is concerned as the source of protective duties, Mr. Webster substantially held to the end of his life. But, when he first expressed this opinion in 1820, Mr. Madison's papers and other publications, which throw a great deal of light upon the commercial clause in the Constitution, as intended by its framers to embrace the power of protecting domestic industries, had not appeared. This fact is important to be observed, in speaking of Mr. Webster's views of 1820. In what he said in 1820 on the subject of power, he had nothing in view but the revenue power. On the question of policy, he did undoubtedly at that time oppose earnestly the further extension of a principle of legislation which would, as he believed, give an artificial stimulus to some branches of industry, operate to the injury of maritime commerce, and introduce among us the system of prohibitions and monopolies which had long been followed, but which were beginning to be questioned, in England."

In his speech upon the tariff of 1824, extending the protective system, (see Collected Works), Mr. Webster expressed regret that the friends of the bill were not able or willing to bring it into a form in which, as a whole, he could give it his support. The bill, however, was enacted, and in 1831, when it was attempted to overthrow the tariff system, Mr. Webster opposed a change on the ground that protection had been established as a settled policy and because the legislation of Congress had tended to force capital into manufactures. In the United States Senate, February 25, 1833, he said that "New England had resisted in the first instance the establishment of a high protective policy ; but when that was determined on, the Eastern States turned all their natural advantages and their capital of wealth and industry into the new channel thus marked out for them. The bill of 1826 was to carry out the promises made by the bill of 1824. He disliked the bill of 1828, yet he had voted for it on account of that feature in it which gave the woollens the protection which the Government had pledged itself to give by the law of 1824. *That bill decided the policy of the country, unless it was to be kept in a state of perpetual fluctuation and uncertainty.*"

# Speech at Faneuil Hall, Boston

APRIL 20, 1827.<sup>1</sup>

AT a meeting (called for the purpose of opposing the election of the Hon. David Henshaw and Andrew Dunlap, Esq., friends of General Jackson, who were nominated on the regular Republican Ticket as candidates for the Senate of Massachusetts) on Sunday evening at Faneuil Hall, the following letter from Mr. Webster was read from the Chair and ordered to be published:—

SATURDAY EVENING, MARCH 20TH, 1827.

GENTLEMEN: The fatigue of a long journey does not allow me at the moment of its termination to meet you and other friends at Faneuil Hall for purposes connected with the pending election, as you have so kindly requested. It would otherwise give me great pleasure to be present on the occasion; my opinions on subjects of this kind are, I hope, well known; they were fully expressed on a similar occasion two years ago, and I take the liberty to say that all subsequent experience has tended but to strengthen and confirm them. To me it has appeared and now more clearly than ever appears, that our duty and true policy require us to cultivate union and conciliation among ourselves, to give to the Administration of the General Government an efficient support against all opposition which is groundless or merely personal, and to take especial care in important elections so to conduct them as not to stifle that general approbation which is undoubtedly felt toward the measures of the Executive Government; but on the contrary to give to these sentiments of approbation their natural, full and entire effect, under these feelings of duty and propriety. I shall most cheerfully give my vote on Monday for the re-election of the present distinguished Chief Magistrate of the Commonwealth, and for such candidates for the Senate as I believe to be disposed, disregarding distinctions which have no application to the present state of things, to give a serious and cordial support in all just measures, both to the National and State Administrations.

<sup>1</sup> Boston Daily Advertiser, April 23, 1827.

The letter which precedes the Speech is printed from a pamphlet, in the Boston Public Library, entitled "Extracts from the Writings and Speeches of Daniel Webster, and from a Paper sustained by his Endorsements, called the Massachusetts Journal."

## 24 Addresses Hitherto Uncollected

Repeating my regret at the circumstances which prevent me from meeting with you to-morrow evening, I beg to assure you of my regard, and am, Gentlemen, Your Obedient Servant,

DANIEL WEBSTER.

TO MESSRS. GEORGE BLAKE AND S. A. WELLS.

At a subsequent meeting held April 20, 1827, at Faneuil Hall, Mr. Webster spoke as follows : —

He said, that there were many and obvious reasons, why he might have wished to forbear taking any part in the proceedings of this meeting. Nevertheless, as the object of it was one which he entirely approved, he felt it his duty to express that approbation, and to take his part in the responsibility belonging to the occasion. Notwithstanding the odium which some attempted to attach to what they were pleased to call *amalgamation*, he entertained the belief that the time had come, when it was important and indeed indispensable, for those who entertain similar opinions, and seek to promote similar objects, to act with united counsels, and united force. The resolutions which had been read, by his friend in the gallery [Mr. Child], expressed the opinion that it was expedient for those who approve the general course of the government, to unite, without reference to former party, in the election of members to the legislature, favorable to that government, and inclined to give it a sincere and hearty support. As bearing on this question, it might be proper to look a little on the actual state of things.

The last President, Mr. Monroe, had been elected for his second term of office by a vote almost, or entirely unanimous. The course of his administration, generally speaking, was satisfactory and acceptable. But with this gentleman, the list of candidates for the office of President whose claims rested on revolutionary merits and services, terminated. An election was next to be made from a new generation of men, and that happened, which was quite natural and should surprise no one, that several candidates were proposed and supported by their friends. The east and the west, the north and the south, put forth their respective favorites. In a country so extensive, it need be no cause of wonder, when the class of

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revolutionary patriots was gone, that opinions should not unite on any one candidate, or even be divided between any two candidates for the highest office. We had no Cæsars, to bestride the land like a colossus. Our Rome encompassed many men, distinguished for talents and services, and who in the circles where they were best known, were respectively deemed worthy of the highest honors. In this state of things, the late election came on, and no candidate received a majority of all the votes. The ultimate election of course devolved on the House of Representatives, and the choice fell on a distinguished citizen of this Commonwealth. But ere he had well entered on the duties of his office, a thorough and determined opposition was commenced. It did not wait to guide its judgment by the measures of the new administration, but founding itself entirely on the choice that had been made, and complaining only that another choice had not been made, it seemed disposed not to allow men the common privilege of standing or falling according to the merits of their conduct. For his own part, he had no hesitation to say, that he looked upon such a principle of opposition as dangerous to the very being of the government. It must sometimes, and may often happen, that a majority of the electors do not agree in the choice of President. The choice then, of necessity, must be made by the House of Representatives; and if all those whose favorite candidate has not succeeded are for that reason alone to array themselves in determined hostility to the measures, right or wrong, of him who does succeed, what had we before us, for ourselves and our children but a prospect of perpetual strife and dissension — perhaps of commotion and civil war. He held it the duty of every good citizen to acquiesce in the will of the whole, as constitutionally expressed, and he feared that we should prove ourselves unworthy of a free government, and indeed unfit for it, and unable to maintain it, if when disappointed in the election of a particular favorite, we give ourselves up to an angry and indiscriminating opposition to the more successful competitor. Without some forbearance from pressing our personal preference to so extreme a point, without some degree of that charity which does not allow us to deny any virtue, or any ability, to honorable rivals,—



without a disposition to abstain from rancor and animosity towards those who have no fault, but their greater favor with the public, he did not perceive how our free and popular institutions were to be maintained. Certainly he thought the present President was entitled to a somewhat kinder treatment than that which he had received. He was a citizen of Massachusetts, a state not unknown or undistinguished in the history of the country. She had manifested no exclusive regard to those who belonged to herself. She had at no time withheld her vote or her support from distinguished individuals, citizens of other states. Virginia for example had given four Presidents to the Union, and for three of these, at least, Massachusetts gave her vote, and when she had not given her vote, as in Mr. Monroe's first election, her support of the President was sincere and zealous because she found no occasion to complain of his measures. It was not therefore unnatural to expect that when a citizen of Massachusetts had been elected, in a constitutional manner, to fill the same high office, he might at least have experienced the common candor of being judged by his acts. He wished to speak with great respect of Virginia. He remembered that there was a time when she and Massachusetts had stood together, shoulder to shoulder, the leading champions of independence and liberty. But it could not escape observation, that during the whole period, now near forty years, in which the present government had existed, Virginia had never once given her vote for the office of President to any but a native of her own State. There was another thing not altogether unworthy of observation. The ground of objection to the election of the present President was that he was not the leading candidate before the people, that another received more votes than he, and that that other, as approaching nearer to the choice of the people, ought to have been elected. Now it is somewhat curious that this complaint should be more loudly made by those who supported not the highest, but the lowest candidate; by those who gave their own votes for him who came with the least recommendation from the people, and who having endeavored in vain to elect him to the presidency, now charge disrespect for the public sentiment, an absolute effrontery on

those who voted for a candidate who had received twice as much support in the popular elections as their own.

The President had received the vote of the people of this State, and also of their Representatives in Congress. He had been chosen principally by the Northern and the Western States, and since an organized and extensive opposition had been raised, for no reason that he (Mr. Webster) knew of, except simply that he had been chosen, it seemed the duty of those who had placed him in office to give him a fair and just support.

If it were the general sentiment then, as he believed it to be, that the administration ought to be supported against personal or groundless opposition, the question was, how should that support be rendered. Speaking in reference to parties that had heretofore existed in the Commonwealth, were these parties to unite, and to act with concert and effect, or were they still to preserve towards each other an attitude of coldness and distance, if not of hostility, although their sentiments and objects were now acknowledged to be the same? For his own part, he thought such a question answered in the very stating of it. Could there be a case in which union was more necessary, or disunion more senseless? It was said indeed that parties had existed in the Commonwealth for thirty years — that they had differed on leading public questions — that these differences had gone deep and wide — and that therefore it would be impracticable now to reconcile them. If the premises be true, let not the conclusion be too hastily admitted. What was the nature of these differences? On what did this distinction of parties rest? They were not distinct orders in the state, with separate and unequal privileges. They were not the Patrician and Popular parties of Rome, nor the feudal or landed interest, arrayed against the mercantile and industrious classes, as in some modern states. In these last instances there were permanent grounds of difference arising from opposing interests. Our differences, on the contrary, have been mere differences of opinion upon questions of government, and on its public measures. The rich and the poor, the learned and the unlearned, the powerful and the feeble, were found on both sides of these questions. Now if the subjects which caused these differences still exist — if there still be ground for conscientious

opposition of opinion, then, of course, it ought to continue. Men were not to be persuaded to go where they must leave their honesty behind them. He would be the last to sacrifice, or invite others to sacrifice, a conscientious opinion. But what was the fact? Did these grounds of controversy still subsist? Most assuredly they did not. The two great parties which had so long divided the country had their origin almost contemporaneously with the constitution itself. The French revolution and the part taken in relation to it by the government of the United States; our own unhappy differences with the revolutionary governments; then the misunderstanding with England, and the general embarrassment of our foreign relations, leading to a commercial non-intercourse, embargo, and finally to war — these were the great topics on which parties had been divided. It was quite obvious that as practical questions all these had ceased to exist. Should we not expose ourselves to some degree of derision, if forgetting the things which are around us and before us, and which immediately concern us, we should employ our tongues, our pens, and our presses, upon any one of the topics to which he had alluded? And was it any more wise in us, because we had differed on those topics, to resolve, that we would not now unite in regard to those objects, in respect to which our sentiments, our wishes, and our hopes were the same? It was quite obvious to him, that the administration could only be supported on its own principles. When the President came into office he stated frankly and honestly that in his opinion a sacrifice of party feeling and party prejudice was to be made. His sentiments had been full, and his words emphatic. Setting out upon this basis, how could it be said that the administration was supported, by those who, while they professed friendship for it, denounced and proscribed others who felt as much friendship for it as themselves? For his own part he thought it no want of charity to distrust such pretensions. How was it to be expected of men who had no more interest than others in the matter, that they would be willing to breast the opposition with which the administration was assailed, if at the same time they and their friends were to be held out as objects of distrust and jealousy, and made the subjects of a narrow, selfish, and

exclusive policy? Had we not seen enough of the result of such a course? In alluding to the inaugural sentiments of the President, he did not mean to say, that they were any other than might have been expected, from either of the other candidates. Most of them, if not all, he believed, had expressed similar sentiments. Certainly the distinguished citizen, who is a candidate in opposition, had expressed such sentiments. They were the necessary result of events. Differing in many other things, all parties had agreed in welcoming the peace of 1815. The French Revolution with all its sympathies and its antipathies, was then at an end. Our own foreign relations were amicably adjusted, and the aliment of party was consumed. So apparent was this that he recollected to have heard a gentleman, equally distinguished for quick perception and forcible expression, say, at the moment of the peace, alluding to the manner in which corporations are sometimes dissolved, "each of the two parties will now break its common seal."

It was said to be lawful to learn from an enemy, and the admonition might be applicable to the present subject. If Mr. Chairman were to imagine two leading gentlemen in the opposition conferring in Washington on the mode of so influencing the course of two different States as to bring them to be parties to the opposition; if he should suppose them to suggest to one of these States, having a majority of one political party, that it was impossible for the present administration ever to treat that party with kindness or respect, and by the same post to urge in the other State a dangerous partiality on the part of the administration for that same party, and press the necessity of crushing both it and the administration together — if, he said, Mr. Chairman were to imagine such an occurrence, he doubted whether his fancy would very much outrun the facts. It was notorious indeed, that this sort of topic was now used, according to the latitude and longitude of the place where wanted. Where it was thought better by those opposed to the administration to preserve party distinctions, they were preserved, and disregarded when it is better for the promotion of their own objects to disregard them.

In this state of things he did not know what benefit was proposed by those who were friends to the administration, in

disunion and division. They who had elected the present President, if they remained united and firm, were capable of sustaining him and maintaining him in all just measures. But nothing short of firmness and union could accomplish this object. The case was not one to be trifled with.

Mr. Webster said that he wholly abstained from any local subjects with which the ensuing election might be connected; and he purposely forbore, also, from any remarks on particular measures of the general government; although there were one or two of those measures on which it might naturally be supposed he should be desirous of saying something to his fellow citizens. He concluded by saying that in any efforts necessary to maintain the administration against undeserved opposition, to uphold the government and carry on wise measures for the improvement and happiness of the country, he was ready to take his own humble part. If in the pursuit of these objects, it were necessary to encounter opposition, however loud or however violent, he should not be, he trusted, the first to shrink from it. But he must say that for contentions at home, for contests between parties now merely nominal, for reviving past heats and smothered animosities, he had no heart. He could see no result of such controversies that would do honor to the state, or confer utility on the country; and poor and humble as were his own public services, he would not make the sacrifice which they require, nor continue them a single hour, if his duties were to be discharged with reference to such considerations. Highly as he valued the distinction of the situation he held, and conscious as he was how little he merited it, he would not hold it a day after it should be required of him to render allegiance to any party or to serve or recognize any masters but the people, and the whole people, whom he had the honor to represent.

# Speeches at Dartmouth College

HANOVER, N. H., JULY 28, 1828.<sup>1</sup>

MR. PRESIDENT AND GENTLEMEN OF THE FACULTY: Circumstances do not allow me the pleasure of accepting the invitation, in which you have kindly joined, to pass a day with you and those under your care, and to meet you at dinner in your hall. Permit me, nevertheless, to acknowledge most gratefully this manifestation of your regard: to assure you, Mr. President and gentlemen, of the high and sincere respect which I entertain for your body, and to express my warm and constant attachment to the institution over which you preside.

If it be according to the course of human sentiments and feelings that we should ever cherish a deep sense of affectionate gratitude towards the parents who nourished our infancy, guided our footsteps in childhood, and committed us, at our entering upon the world, with the most fervent prayers and benedictions, to the protection of Providence, it is not less natural that we should entertain similar feelings towards those whose assiduous labor and solicitous care have been bestowed upon the momentous concern of our early instruction. Recollections, too, connected with the scenes and days of our education, with the opening of the mind, the strengthening and expanding of the youthful intellect, the formation of those sincere and disinterested friendships, at once so natural and so grateful to young bosoms, are all of a nature to awaken kind emotions, and to produce happiness — a happiness, indeed, necessarily somewhat dimmed and clouded by observing the inroads which time and mortality have made on the numbers of our former associates.

I am most happy, Mr. President and gentlemen, thus publicly to acknowledge my own deep obligations to the college

<sup>1</sup> From a Boston newspaper clipping, with written corrections, in the New Hampshire Historical Society.

under your care. I feel that I owe it a debt, which may be acknowledged indeed, but not repaid. And permit me also to express my conviction of the high utility, to individuals and to society, of the vocation which you pursue. If there be anything important in life, it is the business of instruction, in Religion, in Morals, and in Knowledge. He who labors upon objects wholly material works upon that which, however improved, must one day perish. Not such is the character nor such the destiny of that care which is bestowed on the cultivation of the mind and the heart. Here the subject upon which attention is to be bestowed is immortal, and any benefit conferred upon it equally immortal. Whoever purifies one human affection, whoever excites a new and a right direction to a single human thought, or corrects a single error of the understanding, will already have wrought a work, the consequences of which may extend through ages which no human enumeration can count, and swell into a magnitude which no human estimate can reach.

It is your happiness, gentlemen, to live at a time, when the duty to which you have devoted yourselves is becoming every day more highly, and therefore more and more justly regarded. Education may almost be said to be now the absorbing topic in civilized communities. It is seen to lie at the foundation of social well-being, and to connect itself also, indissolubly, with individual happiness in both worlds. A vocation so useful, so indispensable, seems, at last, likely to become prominent; to attract public regard, and to gain to those who follow it their proper place in public estimation. I tender you, gentlemen, my congratulations on these favorable appearances, as well as on other good auspices which now hang over the momentous subjects of public education. Among your number I see those who were my contemporary fellow-pupils, and whom I am now happy to meet again, in the places of our earliest acquaintance. For them, and for you all, Mr. President and gentlemen, I beg to repeat my most sincere regard and most fervent good wishes.

MY YOUNG FRIENDS: I thank you for the wishes you have signified to meet with me and to honor me with a token of your esteem. Not able to comply with your requests in that par-

particular, it gives me true satisfaction to come among you in this friendly and fraternal manner, to exchange mutual greetings, and to cherish the feelings which become sons of the same mother. I hope you will regard me as a brother, no otherwise distinguished from yourselves than as being somewhat older, and a little more experienced, but still as anxious as any brother among you for your collective and your individual happiness. The reputation of the college, and the exemplary conduct and the justly excited spirit of improvement of those who compose the classes of undergraduates, cannot but be highly gratifying to its friends. Permit me, my friends, to use the privilege of an elder brother, in endeavoring to impress upon you, still more deeply, the vital importance of filling up this portion of your time with the most assiduous application. Many things you know, and many things you can estimate as they ought to be estimated. But it is not commonly given to young minds to know the true value of time, nor to judge justly of the necessity of filling it full with duty. These things become fully revealed, however, to advancing age and increasing experience. You may safely take the truth, in this respect, on credit, and, be assured, your faith will ere long be followed by your own personal convictions. At this period of your lives, and with these opportunities around you, from which you are so soon to part, you should count not only weeks and days, but hours and minutes. Every occupied moment may produce something effective on your future usefulness and happiness. With kind and assiduous instructors around you; with anxious parents, whose hopes and prayers constantly look hitherward for their object; with an expecting country, that looks to you, and such as you, as her future protectors, benefactors and ornaments; with the certainty that your minds and hearts are now receiving impressions of lasting importance to your own happiness, what is there of high motive, what is there of just excitement, what is there of noble resolution, which does not enter into your cause to inspire your zeal, to animate your efforts, and warm you into an enthusiastic devotion to the duties of the flying moment.

Let us, on this occasion, gratefully remember the founder and the benefactors of this college. The tree which yields us



fruit was planted by them, not without toil, and defended and shielded in its early growth, not without constant care and unremitting exertions. The college was founded at a very early day in the history of this part of the State ; and its pious founder, devoted to the cause of Religion and Letters, amidst forests then recently penetrated and broken for settlement, might seem almost to resemble the Baptist, " *Vox clamantis in deserto.*" Its position, and many circumstances connected with it, have since enabled it to be eminently useful to its neighborhood and to the State. Let us cherish a fond hope for its increased prosperity. Let us look to see it rise higher and higher in the scale of public institutions. To you, the urgent duty is to enjoy and improve whatever means of education it affords. It is incumbent on those of us who have preceded you in this enjoyment, to remember gratefully our obligations to it and to assist by whatever may be in our power, its further advancement and the augmentation of its means for promoting the cause of Religion, Morality and good Learning.

I leave you, my friends and brothers, a fraternal and affectionate farewell : and I pray that such may be the conduct and character of you all, that our Alma Mater may refer to you with the feelings of the Roman Matron, and with maternal exultation exclaim, " Behold, these are my jewels."

# Remarks at a Dinner given to Hon. James Brown

NOVEMBER 6, 1829.<sup>1</sup>

It might seem altogether presumptuous in so humble an individual, said Mr. Webster, to suppose himself alluded to in the toast which had been drunk by the company. He must certainly, for himself, altogether renounce any claim to so much distinction. It could by no possibility be justly ascribed to him ; and cause for the expression of an opinion so high and so undeserved must be sought in the enlivened good feeling of the occasion, and in that generous bounty which, whether in expressions of regard or in other things, when it gives, gives largely. He begged to thank the gentlemen present for the kindness expressed towards him personally, but was at the same time quite aware that it was the mention of the name of the State to which he had the honor to belong that had mainly produced their warm expressions of regard. He was happy to be the occasion for calling forth these tokens of respect for that ancient member of our Union. He was persuaded that her citizens entertained opinions and feelings in full accordance with the objects of the meeting. They cherished high respect for the character and services of the gentleman who was the guest of the evening, and many of them felt towards him a warmer and more grateful regard for the services and benefits, kindnesses and courtesies, which they had received at his hands. For his own part he felt much honored and gratified by an invitation to be present on the occasion, not only

<sup>1</sup> In reply to a complimentary toast given Mr. Webster in behalf of the gentlemen of the New York Bar, at a dinner to Hon. James Brown, American Minister to France. From the National Intelligencer, November 14, 1829.

from the cheerfulness with which he united in manifestations of respect for Mr. Brown, but also from his high regard for those from whom the invitation proceeded. Having made, as he wished to do, his most respectful personal acknowledgments, he hoped he might be indulged in suggesting that this occasion referred us very naturally to something which was calculated to inspire a high degree of patriotic pride — he meant the ability which the diplomatic intercourse of the United States had displayed from the day of the Declaration of Independence. If that Independence, in the hour of its peril, had been defended with talent and bravery in the field; if it had been secured subsequently by an admirable constitution of government; if in all the departments of that government, in its interior administration, competent talent and character had been found to sustain its interests and institutions, — it was equally certain that in the management of our foreign relations, that point in which the Government necessarily comes into competition or into contact with foreign States, there has been a manifestation of singular ability, followed by singular success.

The old Congress, as we call it, saw in the infancy of the republic the high necessity of placing its negotiations abroad in hands the most capable of conducting them. When not only the great interests of the country, but even the recognition of its independence, were to be topics of discussion, it felt the delicacy and importance of the trust. It reposed its confidence in these matters of so high moment in the deep good sense and far-seeing sagacity of Dr. Franklin, and in the capacity, firmness, and patriotism of Adams, Jay, and Jefferson. These were fortunate auspices for the commencement of our diplomatic history. Not regularly trained in any diplomatic corps; not practised in the endless forms which always belonged to the intercourse of nations under the old school; nor affected by the frivolities and consequential trifles sometimes taught or tolerated by it, — these persons learned with their clear heads and upright hearts a thorough understanding of the particular interests of their own country, and a deep knowledge of those principles of national law which control the rights and regulate the duties of all countries. And we know that wherever

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they went they produced a feeling of profound respect for a government which, new and green as it was, was yet represented by agents who proved themselves always a match, if not sometimes a little more, for those whom they met in discussion and negotiation. Every principal court in Europe would bear cheerful testimony to the highly respectable and intelligent manner in which our early relations with the European States were discussed and concluded. It may be further observed, also, that on the new and interesting questions which grew out of the French Revolution, questions which excited the whole world and occupied everywhere the voices and the pens of the most distinguished men, the American State papers came behind no others of the day for clear perceptions of right, forcible illustration of it, and inflexible adherence to it. It might be pardoned to patriotic feeling, he thought, if he indulged a little pride on this review of the fact, and it might be allowable also to gather from it strengthened hopes for the future. He would, however, not longer occupy the attention of gentlemen except so far as to propose to them a sentiment:

“The diplomacy of the United States — one of the brightest portions of their public history.”

# Remarks on Sunday Schools

WASHINGTON, February 16, 1831.<sup>1</sup>

ON the 16th of February, 1831, a large and highly respectable meeting of the citizens of Washington, of various denominations, was held in that city to consider the resolution of the American Sunday School Union, adopted at the anniversary in May, 1830, to supply the valley of the Mississippi with Sunday schools in two years from that time. Francis S. Key, Esq., of Georgetown, prepared the following resolution :

“ *Resolved*, That the Directors of the American Sunday School Union have justly estimated the piety and patriotism of their countrymen, in relying upon them for the accomplishment of the great object they have resolved to execute, and that committees be appointed to solicit donations throughout the District in their behalf.”

The resolution was seconded by Mr. Webster, who expressed in a few words his approbation of the meeting.

NOTWITHSTANDING the very general provision made for education in the part of the country to which he belonged, said Mr. Webster, yet Sunday schools were there extensively established, and their usefulness universally acknowledged.

Most great conceptions were simple. The present age had struck out two or three ideas on the important subject of education and the diffusion of religious knowledge, partaking in a very high degree of this character. They were simple; but their application was extensive, direct, and efficacious. Of these, the leading one, perhaps, was the distribution of the Holy Scriptures without note or comment; an idea not only full of piety and duty, and of candor also, but strictly just and philosophical, since the knowledge of the general truth must, of necessity, be communicated before there can exist a capacity to examine and decide on those different views and inferences

<sup>1</sup> From the pamphlet report, issued by the American Sunday School Union, Philadelphia, 1831.

embraced by Christians of various denominations and various opinions.

The object of Sunday schools, and of the particular resolution now before the meeting, was, as he understood it, of similar large and liberal character. It was to diffuse the elements of knowledge and to teach the great truths of revelation. It was to improve to the highest of all purposes the leisure of the Sabbath, to render its rest sacred by thoughts turned towards the Deity and aspiring to a knowledge of his word and will.

There were other plans of benevolence, about which men might differ. But it seemed to him there could be no danger of error here. If we were sure of anything, we were sure of this, that the knowledge of their Creator, their duty and their destiny, is good to men; and that whatever, therefore, draws the attention of the young to the consideration of these objects, and enables them to feel their importance, must be advantageous to human happiness in the highest degree, and in all worlds. In the great wants of their moral nature all men are alike. All were born in want of culture, in want of knowledge, in want of something to explain to them not only what they may see around them, but their own nature, condition, and destiny. In civilized times and in a Christian land the means of this knowledge were to be supplied to the young by parental care, by public provision, or by Christian benevolence. They were now assembled in pursuance of a call made by this last means of operation. It was to afford to some what all needed. It was to administer to the indispensable moral necessities of mankind. It was to supply, or aid in supplying, the elements of knowledge, religious, moral, and literary, to the children throughout a most interesting and important portion of the country. He was most happy to concur in this object, and to be present at this meeting, to give it his aid and encouragement.

# Speech on Nullification

BOSTON, December 17, 1832.<sup>1</sup>

MR. CHAIRMAN: Having been detained at home a few days after the meeting of Congress by the necessity of attending to some private affairs, I have been induced to delay my departure for another day that I might be present at this meeting of my fellow-citizens. When I look around me on the numbers who fill these galleries and crowd this hall, I thank Almighty God that I may still address them as citizens of the United States. The same Almighty power only knows whether, when we meet again, it will not be as citizens of Massachusetts only. The present is a moment full of interest. Events are on the wing, and are already near us, which must produce the most important effects, one way or the other, on the permanency of the Constitution of the United States. I regard the issuing of this proclamation by the President as a highly important occurrence. The actual condition of the country, in my opinion — an opinion heretofore expressed — called loudly on the President to make public his determination to rebuke the spirit of disaffection, to maintain the peace of the country and the integrity of the Union, and to call on all patriotic citizens to discountenance all such proceedings as threaten to destroy the one or disturb the other.<sup>2</sup>

The general principles of the proclamation are such as I entirely approve. I esteem them to be the true principles of the Constitution. It must now be apparent to every man that this doctrine of nullification means resistance to the

<sup>1</sup> At a Union meeting in Faneuil Hall held shortly after President Jackson's Proclamation was issued. Printed from the Boston Daily Advertiser report, December 18, 1832.

<sup>2</sup> See Mr. Webster's speech, at the Worcester Convention, Oct, 12, 1832, in Collected Works.

laws by force. It is but another name for civil war. The authors of the South Carolina Ordinance cannot regard it as a peaceable measure; they act as if they understood it as being what it really is, a measure leading to hostilities. They know it must bring on a contest, and, accordingly, they have endeavored to prepare for that contest, by putting in a state of readiness the whole military power of the State. Every man must see that they rely, not on any constitutional or legal effect of the ordinance itself, but on the military power which they may be able to bring to maintain them in their resistance to the laws.

I hope I may stand acquitted before my country of any negligence in failing to give the true character of this doctrine of nullification, when it was first advanced, in an imposing form, in the halls of Congress. What it then appeared to me to be, in its very nature, it now proves itself, in this the first attempt to put it in practice. It is resistance to law by force, it is disunion by force, it is secession by force: *it is civil war.*

The President has declared that, in meeting the exigencies of the crisis, it is his determination to execute the laws, to preserve the Union by all constitutional means; to arrest, if possible, by moderate but fair measures, the necessity of a recourse to force; and so to conduct, that the curse impending on the shedding of fraternal blood shall not be called down by any offensive act on the part of the United States. In all this I most cordially concur. To execute the laws by lawful means, to uphold the Constitution by the exercise of the powers conferred by itself, to be moderate, forbearing, slow to resort to ultimate measures, to admonish such as are misled to return to their duty, to keep the Government always in the right, and to place those who oppose it clearly in the wrong; and to hold out, with unshaken firmness, in maintaining the Union, and causing the laws to be duly executed; — these, sir, in my opinion, comprise the substance of the duty which the occasion devolves upon the Chief Magistrate of the nation.

I think I can say nothing more satisfactory to this meeting or to the people of this Commonwealth, than that, in this way of meeting the crisis, I shall give the President my entire



and cordial support. Sir, we are truly in a crisis of the utmost magnitude and the most imminent peril. The Union of the States is in danger. It is threatened by the immediate application of military force. Let us not, sir, deceive ourselves by the imagination that the Union may subsist though one State secede from it. No, sir. If the Government, on this first trial, shall be found not able to keep all the States in their proper places, from that moment the whole Union is virtually dissolved. Whatever link be struck from this golden chain, breaks the whole. Our only alternative is, to preserve the Union one and entire, as it now is, or else break up, and return to the condition of separate States, with the unpromising chances of forming, hereafter, new, partial, sectional, rival, perhaps hostile, governments; thus bidding adieu, forever, not only to the glorious *idea*, but to the glorious *reality*, of the United States of America.

In this alternative my choice is made. I am for the Union as it is. I am content with no government less than that which embraces the whole four-and-twenty States. I am for the Constitution as it is; a Constitution under which those four-and-twenty States have risen to a height of prosperity unexampled, altogether unexampled, in the history of mankind. I shall support the President in maintaining this Union and this Constitution; and the cause shall not fail for want of any aid, any effort, or any zealous co-operation of mine.<sup>1</sup> In the spirit of the resolutions now before the meeting, I say, when the standard of the Union is raised and waves over my head — the standard which Washington planted on the ramparts of the Constitution — God forbid that I should inquire whom the people have commissioned to unfurl it and bear it up: I only ask in what manner, as a humble individual, I can best discharge my duty in defending it.

<sup>1</sup> In a memorandum of his legal fees, 1832–1833, he says: “Sept. 9, 1833. A very poor year’s work. Nullification kept me out of the Supreme Court all last winter.”

See the following Speeches printed in Mr. Webster’s Collected Works; “The Administration of President Jackson,” Worcester, October 12, 1832, and “The Constitution not a Compact between Sovereign States,” United States Senate, February 16, 1833. Also, in Writings Hitherto Uncollected, the following Speeches delivered in the Senate: “Mr.

Calhoun's Resolutions," January 28, 1833; "The Revenue Collection Bill," February 8, 1833;" "The Modification of the Tariff proposed by Mr. Clay," February 12, 1833; "The Tariff," February 25, 1833; and "Speech on Mr. Calhoun's Resolutions," February 26, 1833.

## NOTE.

At the time of the delivery of the Faneuil Hall Speech Mr. Webster and President Jackson were in accord upon Nullification and upon some other matters, but on the Currency question they were irreconcilably opposed. Mr. Webster referred to the matter in the following Memorandum dictated by him in 1838, and printed in the Life of Webster, by George Ticknor Curtis, Vol. II., p. 464.

"General Jackson took an early opportunity to thank Mr. Webster *personally* for his support of the Administration on this occasion [the "Force Bill"]; and Mr. Livingston expressed his own sense, and that of General Jackson's friends, repeatedly, and in warm terms. Before the end of the session, a member of the Senate, of General Jackson's party, asked Mr. Webster to look at a list of applicants for an office from the Eastern States. This Mr. Webster declined, as he did not wish to place himself under any obligation. In May, 1833, Mr. Webster set out on a journey to the West, and returned in June [July]. On his return, he met Mr. Livingston in New York, who was then preparing to depart on his mission to France. It was understood at that time, in private and confidential circles, that, before leaving Washington, Mr. Livingston had frequent conversations with General Jackson respecting Mr. Webster, and expressing the hope that he would be able to continue his support of General Jackson's Administration. These conversations were stated to Mr. W. On many points of what was then the proposed future policy of the Government, there was no great difference of opinion; but there was an irreconcilable difference on the great question of the currency."

One of Rev. Edward Everett Hale's classmates at the Boston Latin School, Rev. Dr. Thomas Ruggles Pincheon, New Haven, evidently refers to the Faneuil Hall Speech in the following letter to Dr. Hale, dated October 18, 1902.

I cannot recall the day of the month, but it was in March. I should say the early part of the month, a wet and dark, sloppy day, and I should say in the early afternoon. Most of the boys went down trudging through the wet, with umbrellas. I recall Webster's appearance perfectly. He stood on the right hand side of the stage, looking toward the audience. His dress was black trousers, buff vest, blue coat with gilt buttons, buttoned from the waist up pretty high. He impressed me as being very much in earnest. He could be distinctly heard. His gestures were numerous, but vertical, up and down, not flowing from side to side, as were Edward Everett's, and the Latin School boys', and these I thought gave him an awkward appearance — ungraceful. As it was a very bad day, the Hall was not crowded to excess. I came away with the feeling that Prest. Jackson was a very great and determined man, and for some time I looked in the papers to see if any South Carolinian had been hung, as he had threatened to do, if they persisted.

Half the School was present, and came away with the feeling that Webster and Jackson were great patriots, and the South Carolinians great reprobates in venturing to oppose the Constitution and its defenders. Since that day I have been a Whig and an ardent supporter of the Constitution anyhow.

# Speech at Concord, N. H.

OCTOBER, 1834.<sup>1</sup>

THE following toast was announced from the chair and drunk with great enthusiasm:

“*Daniel Webster* — A workingman of the first order. New Hampshire rejoiced in the *promise* of the *youth* — his country now glories in the *performance* of the *man*.”

Mr. Webster then rose and addressed the company as follows:

GENTLEMEN: It becomes me at least to acknowledge the great honor conferred on me by an invitation to be present upon this occasion, and the kind manner in which the sentiment just given has been received. When I survey the individuals composing this assembly, so many of whom I know; when I see men of advanced life, whom from infancy I have been taught to revere, who have filled the seats of justice, who have taken the high places in the State, and have acted with credit in the councils of the Union; when I see gentlemen from parts so remote, and of all pursuits; when I see so large an assemblage of the substantial farmers of the State — I cannot but think that there is something connected with the occasion which proves the existence of danger, and which creates apprehension for the safety of our rights and laws. It is my first grateful duty upon this occasion to join with you in the tribute of respect tendered to your worthy Senator now present, my highly valued and cherished friend. I cannot, like you, offer this tribute as one of his constituents, but I come forward gladly in the character of a witness to bear conscientious and ready testimony to the able manner in which he has supported the interests and credit of his State. His presence imposes on me forbearance as to much that my heart dictates; but I will ven-

<sup>1</sup> At a dinner given to Mr. Bell of the United States Senate. Printed from the Boston Atlas report, republished in Niles' Register, October 18, 1834.

ture to say that there is no candid man in the State who can surmise any motive by which he has been governed other than a desire constitutionally to discharge his duty and to merit the approbation of his fellow citizens. Drawing towards the close of his second term of service in the Senate, what would have better suited him than to have floated along the stream with power, to have gone with majorities, to have found an easy and beaten turnpike road along which to travel towards the close of his career? What motive but a patriotic one (considering the state of feeling in his own State) could have induced him to breast the current which beset him, and resolve to stand or fall with the Constitution, desiring, as he had lived under its benefits, to partake its fate? Having said thus much of another, it becomes my duty next to thank you for the invitation to be present with you here, and for the kind manner in which I have been received. You do me honor in calling me a native of this State. I feel the strength of that tie; that it connects me with thousands of patriotic hearts within the limits of New Hampshire, and if you do not discard this connection, permit me to assure you that I shall never do so until the day of my death. I will presume to say a few words more in relation to myself. It is now eighteen years since I left this State, to pursue the arduous duties of my profession in the metropolis of the Commonwealth, with no expectation of being called again into the public service of the country; that expectation, however, was not correct. [Mr. Webster here again apologized for speaking of himself, and continued.]

But I may take notice of what must have been obvious to you all; namely, that it has been my fortune, whether in public life or out of it, to be pursued by a degree of reproach and accusation in my native State, such as I believe has never before followed an individual so humble as myself. Incessant pains have been taken to misrepresent my conduct and pursuits, to render my character odious and repulsive, to alienate from me the feelings of the citizens of New Hampshire, and to hold me up as wholly undeserving of confidence. Certainly I have felt the injustice of these calumnies — certainly I have regretted them, because they have been long continued, and have operated upon those who had no means of ascertaining their truth

or falsehood, upon a new generation who I was aware would grow up under the influence of a sentiment of enmity towards me. I should have been unworthy, however, had I suffered this, or any other injury, to weaken that feeling of affection which I cherish for my native State, and which no wrong, no calumny, no holding me up to odium and reproach, can ever eradicate from the fibres of my heart. I have trusted to time, to the influence of truth, to a returning sense of justice, to the general intelligence and the generous feeling of my fellow citizens, to do me right in this particular. I shall continue so to trust, and wait the result with perfect resignation. But in the existing state of the country I repeat what I have said elsewhere, — that men are nothing, the country everything. The preservation of the Constitution and the laws, it is to that that I would attract the attention of this and every other assembly. What occasions this meeting? What has brought the Whigs of New Hampshire, from the east and the west, from the north and the south, to take counsel together? Is it a real or fictitious danger? Is it the result of political fanaticism, of a disposition to revolt against the constituted authorities; or is it because men have come to the conviction that circumstances and a time have arisen showing that some extraordinary effort of the people themselves, some patriotic effort of the old revolutionary spirit, is necessary for the rescue of public liberty? I believe the latter. I believe the country is in danger. I believe the danger is real, urgent, pressing. I believe if the ancient revolutionary heroes of New Hampshire — Langdon, Whipple, Bartlett, Gilman, Sullivan, Poor, Stark — were now in the land of the living, every man of them would be on our side. I rejoice to see so many descendants of those illustrious Whigs here present, resolving to transmit to posterity not only the names and blood, but the principles, of their forefathers.

From the formation of the Constitution there has existed in New Hampshire much difference as to men and measures; but this has ever been accompanied by a general desire to maintain the Constitution, and a just balance of power between the executive and legislative departments; and I sincerely believe that if the ancient heroes to whom I have just alluded were

still living, and in possession of their former intellect and faculties, they would feel the great principles of the Revolution to be attacked, and would declare that it was time for the people to rise for their own rescue. The time, said Mr. Webster, would not now serve for a detailed discussion of the great principles which agitate the country: whatever is minor or is mere matter of expediency ought to be dispensed with. But that which assaults the principles of the Revolution — lays hold of the foundation of the State — is entitled at all times to consideration. It is the temper of the times, of a great party in the United States, to sink country in party: they go on the principle of division and subdivision for party. You and I have our party; what we do for our party we do for ourselves, and what we do for ourselves we do for our country. These are their principles; and it is this arising of party, and raising one man for the benefit of party, that is leading us on to man-worship and to a despotism. This system began from little, and has gone on from stage to stage. When the present Administration came into power, new and popular, it established the doctrine of universal removal from office. There were those who protested, argued, and voted against this year after year. But it was but one stage. "What doth it matter," said some, "the country is not in danger." But then came the next stage, — that he who held office, held it at the pleasure of the powers that be, at the pleasure of the person in whom the gift of office lay. Then the third stage, that any one who held office was not only subject to be removed, and that every officer was but a pen to record the decision of the individual who appointed him, thus leaving to the officer no responsibility of his own. The patronage, the power of giving office, of granting contracts and facilities, the extension of pecuniary aid, are now the means of carrying on the government, and to our shame be it spoken. I do not believe there is a government on earth that executes its will so much by pecuniary means as that of the United States. The custom-house, the land-office, the Indian and the post-office departments — we know how many thousand persons are by these means influenced. If these individuals were independent; if they were suffered to exercise the common rights of citizens; if they were subject to no political servitude; if they wore

no collar, paid no rent service for the tenure of office, the case would be different; but if they hold office entirely at the will of the giver, what can be expected? Men subject to this influence, numerous, well paid, and acting on a community engaged like honest men in their own concerns, are certain to effect their purpose in every part of the country.

And how has it happened that any part of this system has been developed, that anything is known in relation to the post-office? Certainly not through the agency of the Government. At the last session of Congress a Senator, from whom a letter has just been read (Mr. Sprague), proposed to the Senate to take the appointment of committees into its own hands: heretofore they have been appointed by an officer who was friendly to the Administration. The committees, thus differently appointed, went to work, and, having had time to examine into but one department, see what they had already brought to light! Now, can it be said that we have no cause of blame? Look at the resolution introduced into the Senate at the close of the session in relation to the Post-Office Department. Not one man, thank God, was found so completely lost as to vote against that resolution. The Postmaster-General was charged with having violated the law, with having run the United States in debt, and with having kept the matter secret, session after session. The fact was proved — admitted; no one was found hardy enough to deny it. It is not to be said, then, that there is no foundation for alarm. It is not, however, the loss of the money of which the people of the United States so much complain, but of the purposes for which it was applied. It is not because money is property that they are indignant at its loss; but when the money was used to purchase men, to buy the people, the people have certainly a right to complain. An effort was made through the post-office to control the press and govern the people by the use of their own dollars.

Again, we think that the negative power of the President over the laws has been abused. We do not think that by the Constitution the President is justified in rejecting laws at his pleasure. The power granted to the President in this respect was principally for the maintenance of his own rights, and to prevent the passing of any law which violated the Constitution. I

do not recollect, said Mr. Webster, a single instance in which this negative power has been exercised excepting on the ground of constitutional or legal right; never in a case of mere expediency. It was exercised, however, by the President in relation to the land bill, a measure which had passed both Houses by strong majorities. The United States were proprietors of a domain from which they derived a large revenue, fifty thousand dollars or sixty thousand dollars of which fell to the share of this State until the interference of the Executive. There were two modes of disposing of the public lands — one according to the census, and the other by giving them away to all who chose to occupy them. There was no reason for the adoption of the latter course. The land was cheap, one dollar and twenty-five cents an acre; settlements were not the least retarded by the price, and were going on very rapidly. It seemed then to the old States that the revenue thus accruing might have been distributed among them, inasmuch as they had no other means of raising money for necessary uses excepting by a direct and obnoxious tax upon land.

The exercise of this veto power was then another executive abuse; but under this the Government might have existed. Other assumptions, however, had been made which struck at the very existence of our institutions. The chief of these assumptions was the seizure of the public treasury, a thing so abhorrent in principle, so obnoxious to every objection to executive encroachment, as justly to awaken the indignation of every lover of the Republic. The law had designated the place for the keeping of the public money, and the law could not be repealed. Congress had been applied to, but had refused to remove it, declaring it to be safe — had decided that it should not be removed. Yet the Executive had seized upon it, and placed it in banks of his own choosing. This was an act so hostile to every principle of a popular government as to excite universal alarm. They had always been taught to believe that the public money was to be collected, kept, and appropriated by Congress. But this subject opened, Mr. Webster said, a field too wide to be pursued. It would be easy, however, to show that the act of the Executive had produced great distress and pressure — pressure which would be renewed and repeated until the cause



was removed ; for did any man suppose that the people could acquiesce in the present state of things — could consent that the funds of the nation should be kept in a place unprovided by law, and liable to the perpetual interference of the Administration ? Eternal war against such a principle : if it could not be overthrown to-day, let it be attacked to-morrow, and year after year until it *was* overthrown. While the struggle continued, however, confidence was weakened ; prices, particularly the prices of labor, were depressed ; and now, let any man who pretended to love his country, for we were a nation of laborers, and the earnings of capital were but as a drop in the bucket to the ocean, compared with those of labor — let any man say how this trifling with the prosperity of the farmers and laborers was to be justified by reference to a bank ? No sooner was the act done than the justifying reason was found in the bank ! the bank was declared to be unconstitutional ! One could not but inquire of those who raised such an outcry against the bank, at what period they became the enemies of that institution — at what time they discovered it to be a “ monster.” The bank during Mr. Adams’s administration was an independent institution, never desiring to interfere beyond the five directors. When the struggle on the succession of Mr. Adams took place, I ask if any of them complained of the bank, or proposed its annihilation as a matter of reform ? Did they say there was any danger to be apprehended from the bank ? Not a syllable ! All that was said at this time may be found and referred to in the newspapers of the day. It never was then asserted that the bank was unconstitutional, that it was a “ monster.” And there was good reason for this silence. The bank had taken no part in politics ; no one had been wicked enough to bring it into the political arena. It is as true as that our fathers fell at Bunker Hill, at Lexington, and at Monmouth, that this outcry against the bank was raised *because the bank refused to be made a political agent !*

It is true that the operation commenced with the branch bank in this State. It was tried to make that bank a political institution. Men here applied to the President to make the bank at Portsmouth a political bank. They wrote to the Secretary of the Treasury to do this. *These are facts* — made known

to the world — not disputed. And this application to make the Portsmouth branch bank a political agent was referred to the directors at Philadelphia, who unanimously agreed that it did not become them to meddle in politics. Their business was to serve the country on the terms of their charter; and they wrote to the Secretary of the Treasury that they would not change their agents on political grounds, because their institution had not been incorporated on political grounds. They said there was no man in their service who had been *appointed* on political grounds, and they would not *discharge* any man for his political opinions. They sought for business men, and had nothing to do with political motives. The moment that this letter got to Washington, said Mr. Webster, it was discovered that the bank was a “monster” with ten thousand claws, and ought to be instantly destroyed. No man in the community could doubt that, if the bank had yielded to the demand of the Administration, had said “Oh yes! we will turn out A, who is an enemy of the Government, and put in B, who is a friend; we will lend money to C, who is a proper man, and not to D, who is the reverse, witness our hand and seals,” &c. — no man can doubt if the bank had done this, that it would have been not only not a “monster,” but the most amiable, harmless, useful creature that the law ever created! But again, if the bank be unconstitutional, when did it become so? In the first message of the President it was said that a national bank was perfectly constitutional, but should be differently constituted; that it should be one founded on government credit and government revenue. This, said Mr. Webster, would have been an administration bank, and eventually, through the President’s officer (the Secretary of the Treasury), the President’s bank. The veto message of 1832 said that the President, constrained as he was to negative the bank of the United States, would, had he been applied to, have given the plan of one. Not knowing, said Mr. Webster, the kind intentions of the President in this particular, we had not an opportunity of sending to him the necessary supplication. And now, let him (Mr. Webster) ask, if, in this great controversy, all were to be driven to the question of “bank or no bank”? We supposed the bank to be convenient; we knew it to be so. We knew that over the great number of State

banks having the power to issue money the United States Bank exercised a salutary control; the experience of forty years had convinced us that it was useful, but beyond this we have nothing to do with it.

But a panacea had been discovered. The pressure of last winter had been removed, never more to return; there was to be no more fraudulent paper; even the safety banks might cease their operation; the golden age had returned; a new coin had come forth, which, because deprived of the cap of liberty and the old motto *E pluribus unum*, was in future to protect the country and restore it to all its former prosperity.

One must think very lightly of the intelligence of the community to believe that it could be thus deceived; and when they heard of the new eagles, clipped, it was true, of their wings, being shown as a sign of new and better times, we could not help asking if the people were so enslaved, so ignorant, as to be led astray by such paltry devices? You know, continued Mr. Webster, that most countries make but one of the precious metals the medium of the payment of debt. In our country, from the time of Hamilton the standard has been twofold. We pay either in gold or silver. The law regulating this matter made one ounce of gold worth fifteen ounces of silver. This proportion has been found to be incorrect, gold being found to be worth more than fifteen — between fifteen dollars and sixteen dollars. The consequence of this has been that as silver is a tender with us, and gold coin in England, our gold has gone to England, while the silver has remained with us. This being the case, and wanting to have gold again, the subject was brought before Congress in petitions from the merchants of Boston and New York: the latter accompanied their petition with a bill from Mr. Gallatin to restore a just proportion between gold and silver. In the course of the last session, said Mr. Webster, we took up the matter, and were prepared to report upon the subject, but postponed our intention till the measure from the House came before us. The measure of the House was not accurate: it went to the extreme, giving too much value to gold and too little to silver; nevertheless, it pleased the Southern members, at this time most deeply interested in the gold question, and the bill was therefore passed.

As far, then, as an influx of gold is concerned, that effect has been produced by excluding dollars. Gold having been under value, will necessarily be kept in the country, and dollars will be remitted to pay all balances in trade. Gold will therefore be the only metallic medium, and that confined to the banks. In one respect this will be injurious, as it will cause an increased circulation of one-dollar bills, while, if silver had been retained, the circulation of small notes would have been proportionally arrested.

Apologizing to the meeting for this digression, Mr. Webster continued: But it is the principles and authority asserted in the protest which most truly alarm the people — the right claimed by the President to negative and construe the laws, and to reject the construction of Congress and the courts, the assumption that all the officers are his, and that every act of an officer is his (the President's) act. If this be so, what becomes of impeachment? The Constitution says that any officer shall be liable to impeachment for malpractices. Impeach a man, however, under this doctrine, and he says, "Behold the rescript of the Emperor!" Impeachment in such a case would be idle, supererogatory. In short, though I do not wish to make extravagant statements, I venture to say that, if we yield to the doctrines of the protest we shall live under an elective monarchy; elective as yet, but for information how long it will remain so let us consult the page of history. I know no difference between the King of England and the President of the United States, if the assumptions of the protest be submitted to. And how has this happened? What has brought about this state of things? What would have been done if John Quincy Adams had acted thus? I put the same question to you in regard to his predecessors, not excepting even Washington. I do not believe that Washington, in the most palmy state of his administration, at the moment of his greatest popularity, would have been able to maintain himself a single month had he claimed the powers claimed by the present President in the protest. Why are they then tolerated now even for a moment? There is but one reason; it is this, that there are those in the present generation who are *interested* to deceive, and those who from inattention to the concerns of their country *suffer* them-

selves to be deceived. Power now maintains itself by the purchased and the deceived.

Everything, said Mr. Webster, now turns upon personal confidence. Alarm the people, and the reply is, "The hero can do no wrong!" Tell them the Constitution is in danger, and they say, "It may be so, but he means no harm." Speak to them of the seizure of the treasury, and they will tell you "that, if the President had not acted as he has done, the bank would have corrupted the whole Legislature before next session." He (Mr. Webster) thought this man-worship dangerous. It was not what our forefathers had taught us. Jefferson said he did not fight for an elective monarchy. But this was not the worst. Were we sure that these various exertions of executive power originated with the "hero"? sure that the mainspring was held by his hand, that he was the head of his own administration? Or were they realizing the fears of the Roman Coriolanus before the gates of Antium? Was it not possible that the blows which they received proceeded from "boys with sticks, and cooks from the kitchen with spits and ladles"? Let him revert to another matter. The present Administration would expire in three years. Let them suppose the accession of another military man, with the same popularity, to follow up step by step the pretensions of his predecessors.

What would be the state of the country eight years hence? Could they say then that they governed themselves, made their own laws? He (Mr. Webster) put it to every man to say what must ensue if the present system were followed up. They could bear everything but the destruction of the government — pressure — anything. If their money was needed, let it flow like water for defence, but be frozen like ice if for tribute. It is not because it is money, said Mr. Webster, that we refuse to part with it, but because we know that if our opponents get our money they get everything; and if they do not get that, they get nothing. Yes, continued Mr. Webster, we can give up everything but our Constitution, which is the sun of our system. As the natural sun dispels fogs, heats the air, vivifies and illuminates; even so does the Constitution, in the days of adversity and gloom, come out for our rescue and hold us up. If the luminary which now sheds its light upon and invigorates

our sphere sinks forever in his ocean bed, clouds, cold and perpetual death, would environ us; and if we suffer our other sun, the Constitution, to be turned from us, if we reject it or disregard its benefits, if its beams disappear but once in the west, anarchy and chaos will have come again, and we shall grope out in darkness and despair the remainder of a miserable existence.

I confess, said Mr. Webster, that when I speak of the Constitution I feel a burning zeal which prompts me to pour out my whole heart. What is the Constitution? It is the band which binds together twelve millions of brothers. What is its history? Who made it? Monarchs, crowned heads, lords, or emperors? No! it was none of these. The Constitution of the United States, the nearest approach of mortal to supreme wisdom, was the work of men who purchased liberty with their blood, but who found, that without organization, freedom was not a blessing. They framed it, and the people in their intelligence adopted it. And what has been its history for forty years? Has it trodden down any man's rights? Has it circumscribed the liberty of the press? Has it stopped the mouth of any man? Has it held us up as objects of disgrace abroad? Quite the reverse. It has given us character abroad, and when with Washington at its head it went forth to the world, this young country at once became the most interesting and imposing in the circle of civilized nations. How is the Constitution of the United States regarded abroad? Why, as the last hope of liberty among men. Wherever you go, you find the United States held up as an example by the advocates of freedom. The mariner no more looks to his compass or takes his departure by the sun, than does the lover of liberty think of taking his departure without reference to the Constitution of the United States.

I feel that it is not for me, much less for those who are farther advanced in life than I am, to come to the rescue of this Constitution: the young men of the country are at this moment its main hope. Youth is generous: its patriotism is free from selfishness, it is full of just and ardent impulses, and these are feelings that become it. Early manhood is sanguine; men of this state of existence have a long life before them, and they

naturally feel a deep interest in the events which are to influence their whole future career. May we not then flatter ourselves that these young men will lay it to heart to preserve this great patrimony? If they are careless of their personal patrimony, we call them wasteful; but what shall we call them if they throw from them this pearl of great price, the constitutional liberty of their country? It is for the young men, then, to direct their attention to the preservation of that patrimony the like of which no other young men can boast; a patrimony which neither kings nor potentates can bequeath to their offspring, and which the present possessors have received at the price of their fathers' blood. If it be necessary to success, continued Mr. Webster, politics must be made the business of our lives, must be our daily occupation. Is a neighbor in error, we must instruct and enlighten him. I will not attempt to conceal from you that I feel a more than common interest, more than the interest of a stranger, in the sentiments and course of the citizens of this State. I cannot feel alien to it, or forget that it was amidst the beautiful scenery of these hills that I first drew breath; that by the kindness of revered and excellent parents I here received my education, here entered upon the pursuits of manhood, and that by the assistance of my friends in this State I was first introduced into public life. I cannot, then, if I would, tear myself from the sincerest wishes and regard for the happiness and welfare of the citizens of this State. I may not again have an opportunity of addressing so large an assembly of my friends in New Hampshire, and it is of little importance whether or not I engage again in political affairs; but permit me to assure you that, wherever I go, I shall continue to cherish a firm attachment to the State of my nativity, and a grateful sense of the kindness now and heretofore bestowed upon me. Mr. Webster then offered the following toast, and sat down amidst loud and long-continued applause:

“ *Our native State* ; rich in Revolutionary merit, she will yet be found occupying her true place in support of the Constitution, liberty, and laws.”

# Remarks at Lexington, Mass.

APRIL 20, 1835.<sup>1</sup>

IN commemoration of the sixtieth anniversary of the Battle of Lexington, April 19, 1775, it was arranged that the bones of the seven citizens of that town who were killed by the British troops should be removed from their original resting place to a more suitable and appropriate situation on the field of battle where they fell. The orator of the occasion was Edward Everett, and Judge Story and Hon. Josiah Quincy also spoke. The President of the Day proposed the following sentiment:

Hon. Daniel Webster — His unshaken firmness, his unspotted integrity, and the gigantic powers of his mind, are surpassed by nothing but the everlasting hills of his native State.

Mr. Webster rose, on the announcement of this sentiment, and was received with the applause of the whole audience. He said he esteemed it a pleasure and an honor to be invited to be present on this occasion of great interest. He supposed there could be no man in this Republic who entertained a just estimate of the value of liberty, or a just estimate of its cost, who could contemplate the history of Lexington Battle without strong emotions. He inferred this from the natural course of his own feelings. It was now many years since he, when a young man, unknown in this Commonwealth, and without a single acquaintance in this village, passed a whole day in viewing this scene of holy martyrdom, and in meditating upon the results consequent to his country and the world, from that great drama whose first scene was acted here. He could suppose that, from the Atlantic to the untrodden wilderness, from the furthest East to the Gulf of Mexico, there was not an American citizen who does not possess and feel a degree of happiness and of hope for posterity, intimately connected with the occurrence transacted on this spot. He confessed he was not able to limit, even to this continent, his view of the conse-

<sup>1</sup> Printed from the report in the Bunker Hill Aurora, April 25, 1835.



quences of this commencement of the revolutionary war. It was designed and accomplished under great hazards, trials, and with wonderful success, for the universal cause of liberty. A new world and new state of society were brought to light. It sprung up, not like the natural sun in the East, but a political sun, in the West, as sure to diffuse its light and accomplish its purpose, as the natural sun over our heads. It commenced on the western shore of the Atlantic, to gladden those who first saw the light, and react upon the old continent. America will yet pay back in this light, the debt she owes for all the knowledge, science, and intelligence of every description which she has received from Europe.

He spoke of the manner in which civil and constitutional law was understood in the early days of our revolution. These early appeals to arms, he said, were not accidental — they were founded in principle, and began in the place where we are so happily met together. The place, the details, so interesting, which we had heard from the voice of eloquence, had filled him with meditation. He could not but think after-generations would consider us, notwithstanding what we had done, too slow, too inanimate, too little alive to the great events of the revolution which commenced here. It was delightful to contemplate the characters of the military leaders of those days, exerting themselves so differently from the military leaders of history, to secure the rights and liberties of the people. The effects of their noble example are felt among the nations of Europe, where not an effort in behalf of the people is made, not a stroke is struck, without reference is made to America. Mr. Webster then offered the following sentiment :

Lexington Common — In 1775 a field of blood — in all after-time a field of glory.

Later, Mr. Webster made some remarks upon the opening of the revolution; the separate character of the colonial government; the extent of country; the union and exertion which took place for the common cause of liberty, etc., and concluded by proposing the following sentiment :

The liberty and the Union of the United States, may both be perpetual.

# Remarks at Hallowell, Maine

OCTOBER 3, 1835.<sup>1</sup>

THE contemporary account<sup>2</sup> said that Mr. Webster, on this occasion, made but little reference to the party conflicts of the day, but dwelt with much earnestness and eloquence on the importance of preserving the Union and the Constitution as it is, and admonished us that if our present national compact were abandoned or destroyed, the States of the Union would never be able to agree upon another. He set forth with masterly clearness the profound wisdom of the founders of our civil institutions, and described the superior and rare qualifications necessary in securing free institutions to any people, over the common qualities of courage and skill in arms. He said our fathers had left us nothing to achieve: we had only to preserve unimpaired what they had achieved for us. He found danger from our very prosperity. In the eager and universal development of the energies of an enterprising people over the wide face of a vast and fertile country, in the pursuit of wealth and power, the silent inroads of corruption would be overlooked, the encroachments of power be disregarded. He enforced the necessity of perpetual vigilance; repeated that our republic was only an experiment; that its enemies had predicted its speedy destruction; that upon us devolved the immensely important trust of sustaining it and transmitting it unimpaired to our posterity; that we were held responsible not only to preserve it for the benefit of the twelve millions of people now scattered over our vast territory, and for their rapidly increasing posterity which might be expected to spread and thicken to one hundred millions, but that the friends of liberty in every part of the world were anxiously looking at us to see the result of our experiment, and preparing to follow our example if we succeed.

<sup>1</sup> At a public dinner to Mr. Webster by citizens of the Kennebec Valley.

<sup>2</sup> Mr. Webster's remarks are printed from Niles' Register, October 17, 1835.

Should we then prove recreant to our sacred trust, disappoint the friends of freedom throughout the wide earth, suffer our Constitution to go to ruin, and the essence and spirit of liberty to depart from us, through our weakness, our apathy, our devotion to party rather than country — verifying the worst predictions of our enemies — we must incur the unmeasured scorn and derision of the friends of freedom in all coming time, and our names must go down to posterity loaded with the blackest infamy. He said he perceived already a disposition not to distrust the encroachments of power, if the men holding the power have been elected by us. Our fathers had taught us a different doctrine; and he referred to and quoted a remark of Mr. Jefferson, that elective despotism was as bad as any other. Mr. Webster described the virtues necessary to preserve political liberty to be not the amiable virtues of trust and confidence, but the virtues of caution, of distrust, and almost of jealousy. As to himself, he said his services in defence of the Constitution had been overrated by partial friends; he claimed nothing from the people but a belief in the perfect sincerity and honesty of his motives; and his greatest desire, so far as he was personally concerned, was to obtain the approbation of good men. His continuance in the councils of the country was of no importance. His place could easily be filled by others; but whether in those councils or not, he could not separate himself if he would, and he would not if he could, from those associates with whom he had stood in defence of principles which he deemed vitally important to public liberty.

Since I have been in this house, said Mr. Webster, a soldier of the Revolution who sits near me, on being introduced to me, grasped my hand and conjured me to stand fast by my country; he had fought for our liberties, and he wished them preserved. Sir, said Mr. Webster, I will stand by my country, and by that Constitution, which I hold to be indispensable for the preservation of its unity and its freedom; and if this proud monument of the wisdom of our fathers must be prostrated in the dust, I have no wish to survive it.

Mr. Webster offered the following sentiment:

*The Constitution of the United States* — The proudest inheritance of the American people.

# Remarks at Harvard College

CAMBRIDGE, MASS., September 8, 1836.<sup>1</sup>

THE President<sup>2</sup> proposed the following sentiment :

“Religious and civil liberty ; the history of Harvard University proves that she understands and values them ; her sons have ever claimed to be among the foremost and boldest of their advocates ; and in our day, among those upon whom she has bestowed her honors, she counts one who has borne a most illustrious part in defending that national constitution which protects both.”

As this sentiment referred particularly to the efforts of Daniel Webster in the Senate of the United States, the President of the Day called upon that gentleman to address the company.

Mr. Webster said that he could hardly allow himself to take so unmerited a compliment to himself ; that he was content to be ranked among the humblest, but the most ardent friends of the Constitution, seeking only to make up by fidelity and zeal what he might want in respect to ability ; that much of past honor, of present enjoyment, and future hope, was expressed in those few words, “The Constitution of the United States.”

He spoke warmly of the interest he felt for Harvard College, though he had not the honor to be one of her sons. She was part and parcel of New England in all its history. He spoke, too, of the eminent founders of New England and of Harvard University, as being among the most extraordinary men of their times. He adverted to the long list of distinguished men who had been here educated, — the Adamses, Hancock,

<sup>1</sup> At the commemoration of the two hundredth anniversary of the founding of the College. The contemporary account describes Mr. Webster's address as “eloquent and impressive,” but unfortunately the speech was not preserved. The abstract here given is from the History of Harvard University by Josiah Quincy, Vol. II., pages 685 and 703.

<sup>2</sup> Josiah Quincy.

King, Paine, and other lights of the State and Nation,— and concluded with proposing.

“ Civil and Religious Liberty,— here and everywhere.”

Later in the day Mr. Webster called the attention of the meeting to the fact that Paine Wingate, of New Hampshire, was the oldest living graduate of Harvard College, and thought it might be proper to notice him amidst the festivities of the occasion, although he was not present to partake of them. Judge Wingate, he said, now ninety-seven years of age, was a member of the first Senate of the United States, and afterwards a member of the House of Representatives; and, subsequently, till disqualified by his advanced age, a judge of the Supreme Court of New Hampshire. Mr. Webster closed his remarks with the following toast:

“ Paine Wingate: the living link between the past and the present sons of Harvard; long may he live, an honor to both generations, and to their common mother.”

Mr. Webster retiring, Josiah Quincy, Jr., the youngest Vice-President, having succeeded Mr. Sullivan in the chair, gave:

“ Daniel Webster. They may differ as they please in the halls of legislation about him, but in the halls of science, the voice is unanimous in his favor.”

# Lecture Before the Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge

BOSTON, November 11, 1836.<sup>1</sup>

ONE of the most striking characteristics of the present age is the extraordinary progress which it has witnessed of popular knowledge. A new movement towards higher attainments, in science and arts, has been communicated to the whole mass of society. A powerful impulse, far exceeding in degree anything experienced before, has come to act on the whole social system. Every one beholds a great change, begun, and going on, in what is around him. In morals, in politics, in science, in art, and in literature, there is a vast accession to the number of readers, and the number of proficient. Not only the daily productions of the Press, such as respect intelligence, or concern the public interest, but books and pamphlets on all subjects are multiplied almost without end or limit, and read everywhere, almost, without exception. This occasion itself is one of the innumerable proofs of the increased diffusion of knowledge, and the increased desire for it.

This lecture is introductory to a course of lectures, on the various branches of science and literature, to be read, not to professed scholars or learners alone, but to intelligent persons of both sexes, and of various employments and occupations of life. However common now, such a thing a few years ago was unheard of.

It is quite evident that the present state of popular knowledge is not the result of a uniform progress which has been going regularly on for a long time with equal steps in its advancement. It is the effect of some new causes, brought

<sup>1</sup> The newspaper report of his remarks was a brief one, but the address is here printed from a manuscript preserved in the New Hampshire Historical Society. The few words enclosed in brackets have been inserted.

into sudden and powerful action, and producing their consequences rapidly and strikingly. If, before these causes began to operate, the march of society was in the same direction as it is at present, its advance was, nevertheless, slow, measured, and obstructed by many obstacles; but these causes have overcome obstacles; they have smoothed acclivities or conquered them by a new momentum.

What then are these causes? Where are we to look for them? Are they many or few? Are they themselves but new agents which have been produced by the gradual progress of mankind in improvement, or are they to be ascribed to some fortunate occurrences which have happened, or some eminent achievements which have been accomplished in an hour, particularly propitious to the advancement of the human race?

I now propose to offer a few suggestions on these questions; not so much as affording satisfactory explanation of that which may be regarded as the phenomenon of our times, as being hints for inquiry and consideration by those who may have leisure and inclination to pursue this subject into its true philosophical principles.

Whatever be the value of knowledge, it is not among the first or physical wants of mankind. Some things, there are, indispensable to human existences, and these necessarily have priority in human regard over all that which only embellishes or improves the condition of man. These indispensable requisites of human life are shelter, food, clothing, and fuel. The attainment of these must precede all attempts at the cultivation of the mind. Men must be fed and clothed, and sheltered, and warmed; and they must obtain the means of supplying these wants, before they have leisure either for teaching others, or becoming learners themselves. In general, therefore, it is true that they alone can enjoy the means of knowledge, who have some leisure from the labors necessary to subsistence. Unceasing and perpetual manual toil is not consistent with any considerable degree of mental improvement. It has thus been the common and necessary result of things in all former ages and all other countries, that knowledge and education are attainments and blessings reached only by those who are in some degree exempted from this incessant

toil. The rich have educated their families, because they have had ability to do so ; the poor have remained in ignorance, because the fruit of their labors has enabled them only to obtain the means of subsistence. Our country and our history, however, prove the practicability of great exceptions to the general result. At least they prove that steady and constant labor and close application to the pursuits of industry, under the favorable circumstances in which we are placed, still leave time and procure means for the cultivation of the understanding and the heart. The wisdom of our ancestors in founding schools to be supported by the common charge, the free nature of our institutions and the good habits which these institutions have formed, have made New England a conspicuous exception to the general truth, or at least enable her to exhibit a strong qualification of it, that a laboring community cannot cultivate intellectual improvement.

Still, as education and knowledge, in whatever degree, are attainments, they must, in all cases, cost something of time or of money. Even the faculty of reading, now enjoyed by every one among us, is but the product of time, labor, and money. Both he who has taught, and he who has learned, must have found themselves able to withdraw certain portions of time and of labor from those occupations which apply directly to the production of food, shelter, and clothing. All education, high or low, is something beyond man's absolute physical necessities, and is an advance in the improvement of his intellectual nature. No men are born readers or writers, or with the knowledge which reading imparts. Is it not true, then, that the sudden extension of general knowledge and education which has been witnessed in our day is naturally to be ascribed to some sudden but vast improvement in the condition of the great mass of society ? Is it not that that great mass, by the operation of some powerful cause or causes, has become suddenly to possess means, either in time, labor, or capital, beyond the mere necessities of life, and which it can apply to purposes of education ? Is it not because shelter and food and clothing have become objects of easier attainment, and therefore leave a greater degree of leisure and ability for improvement of the mind ?



To me this appears to be the great cause of all. The progress of popular knowledge is, I think, mainly owing to the increased comforts and ability of the great mass of society. It is undoubtedly true, most true, that in this case the effect acts back, becomes itself a cause tending to the production of the same end. Popular knowledge, taking an impulse from an improved condition of the people, no doubt helps on that improvement. Cause and effect thus come to act reciprocally and to reproduce each other ; but whether as original, or as a concomitant, and mutually acting agency, it is, I think, an improved condition of a great majority of the people, in regard to the means of living, and of wealth, which is to be esteemed as the direct cause of the extraordinary diffusion of general knowledge.

But this result, if it be true, has conducted us but one step in the inquiry. The question only recurs under a new form. To what cause, or causes, is it that we are to refer this rapid improvement in the condition of society. If men and women are now better educated because they have more leisure and more means and more ability, how has it happened that in these respects any great improvement should be made suddenly? Wealth, or any considerable increase in the means of living, or the power of attaining higher degrees of comfort, is ordinarily a slow and painful attainment. Especially it would be wonderful, it might be said, if a whole society, or the greater part of it, should be hastening with rapid strides to this new degree of comfort, or of comparative wealth. But such undoubtedly is the truth in the most civilized states of Europe, and more emphatically is it true among ourselves. There has been in the course of half a century an unprecedented augmentation of general wealth. Even within a shorter period, and under the actual observation of most of us, in our own country and our own circles, vastly increased comforts have come to be enjoyed by the industrious classes, and vastly more leisure and time are found for the cultivation of the mind. It would be easy to prove this by detailed comparisons between the present and the past, showing how far the present exceeds the past, in regard to the shelter, food, clothing, and fuel enjoyed by laboring families. But this is a truth so evident and so open to common observation as matter of fact, that proof by

particular enumeration of circumstances becomes unnecessary. We may safely take the fact to be, as it certainly is, that there are certain causes which have acted with peculiar energy in our generation, and which have improved the condition of the mass of society with a degree of rapidity heretofore altogether unknown.

What, then, are these causes? This is an interesting question. It seems to me the main cause is the successful application of science to art; or, in other words, the progress of scientific art.

It is the general doctrine of writers on political economy, that labor is the source of wealth. This is undoubtedly true. The materials of wealth are in the earth, and in the seas, or in their productions; and it is labor only which obtains them, works upon them, and fashions them to the uses of man. The fertility of the soil is nothing, till labor cultivates it; the iron in the mountain rock is of no value, till the strong hand of labor has drawn it forth, separated it from the neighboring earths, and melted and forged it into a manufactured article.

The great agent, therefore, that procures shelter, and food, and raiment for man, is labor; that is to say, it is an active agency, it is some moving power, it is something which has action and effort, and is capable of taking hold of the materials, with which the world supplies us, and of working them into shapes and forms such as shall administer to the wants and comforts of mankind.

The proposition of the philosophers, therefore, is true, that labor is the true source, and the only source of wealth; and it necessarily follows, that any augmentation of labor, augments, to the same degree, the productions of wealth. But when Adam Smith and his immediate followers laid down this maxim, it is evident that they had in view, chiefly, either the manual labors of agriculturists and artisans, or the active occupations of other productive classes. It was the toil of the human arm that they principally regarded. It was labor, as distinct from capital. But it seems to me that the true philosophy of the thing is, that any labor, any active agency, which can be brought to act usefully on the earth, or its materials, is the source of wealth. The labor of the ox, and

the horse, as well as that of man, produces wealth. That is to say, this labor, like man's labor, extracts from the earth the means of living, and these constitute wealth in its general political sense.

Now it has been the purpose, and a purpose most successfully and triumphantly obtained, of scientific art, to increase this active agency, which, in a philosophical point of view, is, I think, to be regarded as labor, by bringing the powers of the elements into active and more efficient operation, and creating millions of automatic laborers, all diligently employed for the benefit of man. The powers are principally steam, and the weight of water. The automatic machinery are mechanisms of infinitely various kinds. Two classes: first — when a series of operations is carried through by one power, till a perfect result is had, like factories. Second — more [powers,] single or united, steamboats, cars, and printing presses. We commonly speak of mechanic inventions as labor-saving machines; but it would be more philosophical to speak of them as labor-doing machines; because they, in fact, are laborers. They are made to be active agents, to have motion, and effect, and though without intelligence, they are guided by those laws of science which are exact and perfect, and they produce results, therefore, in general, more exact and accurate than the human hand is capable of producing. When one sees Mr. Whittemore's carding machine in operation and looks at the complexity and accuracy of its operations, their rapidity, and yet their unbroken and undisturbed succession, he will see that in this machine (as well as in the little dog that turns it) man has a fellow laborer, and this fellow laborer is of immense power, of mathematical accuracy and precision, and of unwearied effort. And while he is thus a most skilful and productive laborer, he is, at the same time, a non-consumer. His earnings all go to the use of man. It is over such engines, even with more propriety than on the apiary, that the motto might be written, *vos, non vobis, laborastis*.

It is true that the machinery, in this and similar cases, is the purchase of capital. But human labor is the purchase of capital also; though the free purchase, and in communities less fortunate than ours, the human being himself, who per-

forms the labor, is the purchase of capital. The work of machinery is certainly labor in all sense, as much as slave service, and in an enlarged sense, it is labor in <sup>1</sup>and regarding labor as a mere active power of production; whether that power be the hand of man, or the automatic movement of machinery, the general result is the same.

It is thus that the successful application of science to art increases the productive power and agency of the human race. It multiplies laborers without multiplying consumers, and the world is precisely as much benefited as if Providence had provided for our use millions of men, like ourselves in external appearance, who would work and labor and toil, and who yet required for their own subsistence neither shelter, nor food, nor clothing. These automata in the factories and the workshops are as much our fellow laborers, as if they were automata wrought by some Maelzel into the form of men, and made capable of walking, moving, and working, of felling the forest or cultivating the fields.

It is well known that the era of the successful application of science to arts, especially in the production of the great article of human subsistence, clothing, commenced about half a century ago. H. Arkwright predicted how productive human industry would become when no longer proportioned in its results to muscular strength. He had great sagacity, boldness, judgment, and power of arrangement. In 1770, England consumed four million pounds of cotton in manufactures — [the] United States none. The aggregate consumption of Europe and America is now five millions.<sup>2</sup> Arkwright deserves to be regarded as a benefactor of mankind. From the same period we may date the commencement in the general improvement in the condition of the mass of society, in regard to wealth and the means of living; and to the same period also we may assign the beginning of that spread of popular knowledge which now stamps such an imposing character on the times.

What is it, then, but this increased laboring power, what is

<sup>1</sup> There is a blank space here in the manuscript.

<sup>2</sup> Ellison's table in Mulhall's Dictionary of Statistics gives the consumption of raw cotton in Europe and the United States in 1830 as four hundred and sixty-five million pounds, and in 1840 as eight hundred and forty-two million pounds. The manuscript should doubtless have read five hundred millions.

it but these automatic allies and co-operators, who have come with such prodigious effect to man's aid in the great business of procuring the means of living, of comfort, and of wealth, out of the materials of the physical universe, which has so changed the face of society?

And this mighty agency, this automatic labor whose ability cannot be limited nor bounded, is the result of the successful application of science to art. Science has thus reached its greatest excellence, and achieved its highest attainment, in rendering itself emphatically, conspicuously, and in the highest degree useful to men of all classes and conditions. Its noblest attainment consists in conferring practical and substantial blessings on mankind.

“Practical mechanics,” says a late ingenious and able writer, “is, in the pre-eminent sense, a scientific art.” It is indeed true that the arts are growing every day more and more perfect, from the prosecution of scientific researches. And it ought to put to the blush all those who decry any department of science, or any field of knowledge, as barren and unproductive, that man has, as yet, learned nothing that has not been, or may not be, capable of useful application. If we look to the unclouded skies, when the moon is riding among the constellations, it might seem to us, that the distance of that luminary from any particular star could be of no possible importance, or its knowledge of no practical use to man. Yet it is precisely the knowledge of that distance, wrought out and applied by science, that enables the navigator to decide, within a few miles, his precise place on the ocean, not having seen land in many months. The high state of navigation, its safety and its despatch, are memorials of the highest character in honor of science, and the application of science to the purposes of life. The knowledge of conic sections, in like manner, may appear quite remote from practical utility, yet there are mechanical operations, of the highest importance, entirely dependent on an accurate knowledge, and a just application of the scientific rules pertaining to that subject. Therefore he who studies astronomy and explores the celestial system, a La Place or Bowditch; or he who constructs tables for finding the longitude, or works out results and proportions applicable to machinery

from conic sections, or other branches of mathematics; or he who fixes by precise rule the vibration of the pendulum, or applies to use the counterbalancing and mutually adjusting centripetal and centrifugal force of bodies, are laborers for the human race of the highest character and the greatest merit.

It is unnecessary to multiply instances or examples. We are surrounded on all sides by abundant proofs of the utility of scientific research applied to the purposes of life. Every ship that swims the sea exhibits such proof; every factory exhibits it; every printing office and almost every workshop exhibits it; agriculture exhibits it; household comforts exhibit it. On all sides, wherever we turn our eyes, innumerable facts attest the great truth, that knowledge is not barren.

It is false in morals to say that good principles do not tend to produce good practice; it is equally false in matters of science and of art to declare that knowledge produces no fruit.

Perhaps the most prominent instance of the application of science to art, in the production of things necessary to man's subsistence, is the use of the elastic power of steam, applied to the operations of spinning and weaving and dressing fabrics for human wear. All this mighty discovery bears directly on the means of human subsistence and human comfort. It has greatly altered commerce, agriculture, and even the habits of life among nations. It has affected commerce by creating new objects, or vastly increasing the importance of those before hardly known; it has affected agriculture by giving new value to its products; — what would now be the comparative value of the soil of our Southern and Southwestern States if the spinning of cotton by machinery, the power loom, and the cotton gin, were struck out of existence? And it has affected habits by giving a new direction to labor and creating a multitude of new pursuits.

Bearing less on the production of the objects necessary to man's subsistence, but hardly inferior in its importance, is the application of the power of steam to transportation and conveyance by sea and by land. Who is so familiarized to the sight even now, as to look without wonder and amazement on the long train of cars, full of passengers and merchandise, drawn along our valleys, and the sides of our mountains themselves with a rapidity which holds competition [with] the winds?

This branch of the application of steam power is younger. It is not yet fully developed; but the older branch, its application to manufacturing machinery, is perhaps to be regarded as the more signal instance marking the great and glorious epoch of the application of science to the useful arts. From the time of Arkwright to our own days, and in our own country, from a period a little earlier than the commencement of the late war with England, we see the successive and astonishing effects of this principle, not new-born, indeed, in our time, but awakened, animated, and pushed forward to most stupendous results. It is difficult to estimate the amount of labor performed by machinery, compared with manual labor. It is computed that in England, on articles exported<sup>1</sup> [it] is thirty millions sterling per year. It would be useful, if one with competent means should estimate the products of the annual labor of Massachusetts in manufactured articles carried from the State.

If these, and other considerations may suffice to satisfy us that the application of science to art is the main cause of the sudden augmentation of wealth and comfort in modern times, a truth remains to be stated of the greatest magnitude, and the highest practical importance, and that is, that this augmentation of wealth and comfort is general and diffusive, reaching to all classes, embracing all interests, and benefiting, not a part of society, but the whole. There is no monopoly in science. There are no exclusive privileges in the workings of automatic machinery, or the powers of natural bodies. The poorest, as well as the richest man in society, has a direct interest, and generally the poor a far greater interest than the rich, in the successful operation of these arts, which make the means of living, clothing especially, abundant and cheap. The advantages conferred by knowledge in increasing our physical resources, from their very nature, cannot be enjoyed by a few only. They are all open to the many, and to be profitable, the many must enjoy it.

The products of science applied to art in mechanical inventions, are made, not to be hoarded, but to be sold. Their

<sup>1</sup> The words "from the" and a blank space follow the word "exported" in the manuscript.

successful operation requires a large market. It requires that the great mass of society should be able to buy and to consume. The improved condition of all classes, more ability to buy food and raiment, better modes of living, and increased comforts of every kind, are exactly what is necessary and indispensable in order that capital invested in automatic operations should be productive to the owners. Some establishments of this kind necessarily require large capital, such as the woollen and cotton factories. And in a country like ours, in which the spirit of our institutions, and all our laws, tend so much to the distribution and equalization of property, there are few individuals of sufficient wealth to build and carry on an establishment by their own means. This renders a union of capitals necessary, and this among us is conveniently effected by corporations which are but partnerships regulated by law. And this union of many to form capital for the purpose of carrying on those operations by which science is applied to art, and comes in aid of man's labor in the production of things essential to man's existence, constitutes that aggregated wealth of which complaint is sometimes heard. It would seem that nothing could be plainer than that whatever reduces the price, whether of food or of clothing, must be in the end beneficial to the laboring classes. Yet it has not unfrequently happened, that machinery has been broken and destroyed in England, by workmen, by open and lawless violence. Most persons in our country see the folly as well as the injustice and barbarism of such proceedings; but the ideas in which these violences originated are no more unfounded and scarcely more disreputable, than those which would represent capital, collected, necessarily, in large sums, in order to carry on useful processes in which science is applied to art, in the production of articles useful to all, as being hostile to the common good, or having an interest separate from that of the majority of the community. All such representations, if not springing from sinister design, must be the result of great ignorance, or great prejudice. It has been found by long experience in England, that large capitalists can produce cheaper than small ones, especially in the article [of cotton. Greater savings can be made and these savings enable the proprietor to go on, when



he must otherwise stop. There is no doubt that it is to her abundant capital, England is now indebted for whatever power of competition with the United States she now sustains, in producing cheap articles.

There are modes of applying wealth, useful principally to the owner, and no otherwise beneficial to the community than as they employ labor. Such are the erection of expensive houses, the embellishment of ornamental grounds, the purchase of costly furniture and equipages. These modes of expenditure, although entirely lawful and sometimes very proper, are yet not such as directly benefit the whole community. Not so with aggregate wealth employed in producing articles of general consumption. This mode of employment is, peculiarly and in an emphatic sense, an application of capital to the benefit of all. Any one who complains of it, or decries it, acts against the greatest good of the greatest number. The factories, the steamboats, the railroads, and other similar establishments, although they require capital, and aggregate capital, are yet general and popular in all the good they produce.

The unquestionable operation of all these things has been not only to increase property, but to equalize it, to diffuse it, to scatter its advantages among the many, and to give content, cheerfulness, and animation to all classes of the social system. In New England, more particularly, has this been the result. What has enabled us to be rich and prosperous, notwithstanding the barrenness of our soil and the rigor of our climate? What has diffused so much comfort, wealth, and happiness among all classes, but the diligent employment of our citizens, in these processes and mechanical operations in which science comes in aid of handicraft? Abolish the use of steam and the application of water power to machinery, and what would at this moment be the condition of New England? And yet steam and water power have been employed only, and can be employed only, by what is called aggregated wealth. Far distant be the day then, when the people of New England shall be deceived by the specious fallacy, that there are different and opposing interests in our community; that what is useful to one, is hurtful to the rest; that there is one interest for the rich, and another interest for the poor; that capital is the

enemy of labor, or labor the foe of capital. And let every laboring man, on whose understanding such a fallacy is attempted to be imposed, stop the mouth of the false reasoner at once, by stating the plain and evident fact, that while aggregated wealth has for years, in Massachusetts, been most skillfully and steadily employed in the productions which result from the application of science to art; thereby reducing the cost of many of the articles most essential to human life in all conditions; labor, meantime, has been constantly rising, and is at this very moment, notwithstanding the present scarcity of money, and the constant pressure on capital, higher than it ever was before in the history of the country. These are, indeed, facts which baffle all former dogmas of political economy. In some of our most agricultural districts in the midst of our mountains, on whose tops the native forests still wave and where agricultural labor is high, in an unprecedented degree, even here automatic processes are carried on by water, and fabrics wrought out of materials which have been transported hundreds and thousands of miles, by sea and by land, and which fabrics go back again, some of them, for sale and consumption to the places where the raw material was produced. Carolina cotton is carried to the County of Berkshire, and Berkshire cotton goods are sold in Carolina. Meanwhile labor in Berkshire is not only in money price, but in comparison with the cost of the main articles of human subsistence, higher than it was ever known before. Writers on political economy may, perhaps, on facts like these see occasion to qualify their theories; meantime, it becomes every man to question and scrutinize severely, if not the motives, yet the reasoning and the logic of those who would persuade us that capital, employed in the most efficient modes of producing things useful, is hurtful to society. It would be quite as reasonable to insist, that the weaving of paper, if that be the proper term, in consequence of recent most valuable mechanical inventions, should be [suppressed], and the power press, and the hydrostatic machine taken out of the printing houses, as being all hurtful and injurious, although they may have reduced the price of books for general circulation one half.

The truth, in my opinion, rather is, that such is the enter-

prise of our people, such the astonishing amount of labor which they perform, and which they perform cheerfully because it is free and because it is profitable, and such the skill with which capital is used, that still more capital would be useful, and that its introduction would be advantageous, and most of all to the busy and industrious classes. And let it never be forgotten, that with us labor is free, intelligent, respecting itself, and respected by other interests; that it accumulates; that it is provident; that it lays up for itself; and that these savings become capital, and their owners in time capitalists.

I cannot omit to notice, here, another fact peculiar to this country, and which should cause us to hesitate in applying to ourselves, and our condition, European maxims respecting capital and labor. In Europe, generally speaking, the laborer is always a laborer. He is destined to no better condition on earth, ordinarily he rises no higher. We see proofs, melancholy proofs, of this truth often in the multitudes who come to our own shores from foreign countries for employment. It is not so with the people of New England. Capital and labor are much less distinctly divided with us. Few are they, on the one hand, who have need to perform no labor; few are they, on the other, who have no property or capital of their own. Or if there be those of the latter class among the industrious and the sober, they are young men who, though they are laborers to-day, will be capitalists to-morrow. A career of usefulness and enterprise is before them. If without moneyed capital, they have a capital in their intelligence, their knowledge, and their good habits. Around them are a thousand collections of automatic machinery, requiring the diligence of skilful and sober [laborers]; before them is the ocean, always inviting to deeds of hardihood and enterprise; behind them are the fertile [prairies] of the West, soliciting cultivation; and over them all is the broad banner of free institutions, of mild laws, and parental Government. Would [an] American young man of good health and good habits need say that he is without capital? Or why should he [discredit] his own understanding by listening to the absurdity, that they who have earned property, and they who have not yet lived long enough to earn it, must be enemies? The proportion of those who

have not capital, such as to render them independent without personal labor, and who are yet not without some capital, is vastly larger in this community than any other. They form indeed the great mass of our society. They are its life and muscle; and long may they continue free, moral, intelligent, and prosperous as they now are.

I have thus endeavored to show that the progress of popular knowledge, unequalled as it is, in our day, is but the result of that improved condition of the active and the laboring part of the community, which has been brought about by the successful application of science to art. I am aware that what I have said comprises hints only, and that it would require a regular work to follow the subject into its details, and develop it in all its just proportions. But this I must leave to others. I have not yet seen the subject treated with the fulness it deserves. We come at last to an inquiry of the greatest moment and in regard to which many intelligent minds have entertained doubts. It is, what is to be the effect of this increased popular knowledge on the morals of mankind? Will it be good or evil? I embrace the faith implied in the first part of the proposition. It must on the whole be good.<sup>1</sup>

Against nature of man and the order of Providence for knowledge, necessarily or naturally, to produce vice.

If that effect in any, it must be abandoned, without human affinity or sympathy.

There is moral preaching in the lecture room, Pulpit, and from the Press.

But nature is a great teacher. Her lecture room, — her subjects, microscopic animals, and plants.

“An undevout astronomer.”

God is perfect in knowledge and goodness, and an approach toward him in one of his attributes cannot be a departure in another.

As to the fact, it is not shown on the whole, that diffusion of knowledge has diminished the sense of the value of religion. It is rather the other way.

Bible Societies, Missions, foreign and domestic. Ecclesiastical Colleges and Seminaries. Houses of public worship, and amounts paid to clergy.

<sup>1</sup> The twelve paragraphs in smaller type which follow this consist of notes or headings rather than full statements.

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Religion acts back, and re-produces knowledge.

The great duty of benevolence. Hospitals for the sick and insane. Asylums for the Blind, and the Indigent Charitable institutions without number. All the virtues of humanity and charity have flourished.

For the promotion of morals.

Temperance Societies, Tract Societies, Sunday Schools, Seaman's Societies, and a long list of similar institutions.

“I know Europe pretty well, but I have never seen good schools for the people where Christian zeal was lacking. Elementary instruction flourishes in three countries, Holland, Germany, and Scotland; and in the whole of these it is essentially religious. In fact, there can be no true popular education without morals; no morals without religion; no religion without public worship. Let our schools for the people be Christian, in sincerity and zeal.”

These sentiments agree with those of our fathers.

And in regard to that other great interest of mankind, political government — although it is a subject with which strong passions mingle, yet we must trust that diffusion of knowledge will enable men to maintain good government and good laws.

It is certain that there is nothing supreme on earth, to which men are bound to submit. It is certain that nations must elect, and maintain their own forms of government, or that force and violence will do that for them.

And it will, indeed, be an everlasting reproach to human nature, if it shall in the end be proved, that more security and more happiness may be enjoyed under governments founded in usurpation and maintained by force, than under those established by the popular will under the full blaze of popular knowledge.

Let us hope, at least, that we shall not bring this scandal on human nature. And let us hope that with us, and throughout the whole world, religion and virtue, benevolence and philanthropy, morality and charity, and with them the blessings of free and well administered governments, may attest the advantages of the progress of popular knowledge.

# Speech at St. Louis

JUNE, 1837.<sup>1</sup>

MR. WEBSTER commenced with expressing his heartfelt gratitude for the kindness of his reception, and the hospitality which had attended him from the first moment of planting foot upon our shore. He was overwhelmed with his emotions. Everywhere since he first looked upon our city, had he met cordiality — everywhere overflowing kindness. And to the bounty of his fellow citizens, and kindness undeserved, was he indebted for the situation in which he then found himself.

Gentlemen, he continued, I am from the east — the far east, and many have been the motives which during a temporary cessation of congressional duties have induced me to visit the west: objects of private regard, objects of individual friendship, and the great objects of my life, to see, to know, my country and my whole country. Much as I have been gratified with the hospitality of you all, I must yet refer with feelings of no ordinary character to one distinguished individual — one whose name is known in the councils of our nation — which is commensurate with our country, and is nowhere spoken but with honor. Gentlemen, the individual sits by my side (Mr. Clay).

Gentlemen, it is an era in the history of North America, when an eastern man may stand upon the western bank of the Mississippi, and receiving the cordiality of which you have thought proper to make me the recipient, look around upon the scenes which I behold. And cheering beyond expression are the anticipations of futurity. When we reflect how recent, how very recent, has been the day when St. Louis began to rank itself among the cities of our land, we are amazed. How little could have been anticipated of all this from the wilderness which, but a few short years since, was howling here.

<sup>1</sup> Niles' Register, July 15, 1837.

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How little could the most sanguine temperament have looked forward to an hour like this. Where once was a wilderness, I have beheld the comforts, the luxuries, the refinements of polished existence. Who shall speak, then, the prospect of glory for the future?

You are collected from every quarter of our country; and while I recognize many from all the States of the Atlantic coast, some there are whom I may hail from my own New England. Here, too, are those who have measured half the globe of waters to find for themselves and their families liberty, security, and peace; and here are the ancient settlers of the soil, whose duty and allegiance we behold transferred from one nation to another. Gentlemen, we have not appreciated—never have we appreciated the gigantic character of this mighty State. She is an infant Hercules—an infant—yet in her cradle. Her wealth, mineral and agricultural, and of every other species, surpasses all calculation. Her wealth beneath and above the ground exceeds that of any other nation on the known world, her rivers are the finest which roll their currents upon the globe—her prairies the most extensive and the most fertile.

All this, gentlemen, have I come to see—to view with my own eyes, and in my own person. What I am, my fellow countrymen, you all know: I am a plain man. I never set up for anything: whatever else you may accuse me of, it can never be said I have set myself up for anything. I am a farmer, and on the yellow sands of the east, many a time have I tilled my father's field, and followed my father's plough. The farmer's patrimony is the true patrimony of the American citizen; our wives and our children are our dearest stake, yet they only are dearer than the soil. Give me acres; I care not whether upon the rich rolling prairie of Missouri, or among the red storm-beaten sands of old Plymouth county: there is a warmth of hospitality for both, and each is dear to my heart. You have a soil of fertility untold; agricultural productions never surpassed; everything in nature to give comfort to man. On every side, too, are rising the embellishments of art and the improvements of science: colleges, in a good degree, appear throughout the land, and the institutions

of benevolence and charity, institutions of every nature for the amelioration of the human condition, are scattering wide and far.

Gentlemen, in the sentiment you have upon this occasion been pleased to present to me, you have considered me as an individual regardful for the interest of our whole land. I deny it not. You have heard that in my place at Washington I have not been indifferent to the interests of the west. It has been so; and, gentlemen, if I had not a heart noble enough, a soul generous enough, a breast sufficiently comprehensive to take in all my country, — if I could not clasp you all at once in my arms, — then should I be unfit for my station, unfit for a public man. There is but one common tie; our country is one — undivided — entire.

For a period of fourteen or fifteen years have the interests of the west been connected with the public relations of our country, and with all the leading movements conducive to her prosperity, I have not been unacquainted. Internal improvement of every character has been an object of my public life; and I may assert that action upon no important feature, — clearing of rivers, the building of national thoroughfares, the erection of works of commercial utility, — that action in no one of these particulars has taken place in our national councils without my hearty concurrence and aid.

As to opinions upon political measures and party policy, upon an occasion like the present I would offer nothing but those general in their nature, and embracing our country, and our whole country. Political dogmas I never obtrude; but I will say here and elsewhere that which I will live by and die by, — in Congress or out of Congress, — so long as I may claim an interest in the passage of measures for the country, so long as I may cast a vote, — I owe the self-same responsibility to Missouri as to Massachusetts. The good citizens of this State have not thought proper to return me as a member to serve them in the legislation of the nation; I am sent from the far east; but never can I stoop to effect the narrow, the mean, the contemptible policy of consulting the private views of any party, any political or sectional prejudice or creed. This honest man, God bless him! (exclaimed the orator, striking his palm upon the shoulder of a hardy yeoman by his



side), is as truly my friend as though I clasped his hand as the descendant of John Hancock in Faneuil Hall! My heart I feel to be large enough to take in the interests of all controlled by the same laws, acknowledging the same national objects, blessed by the same constitution. The Constitution! Good God! what emotions does it not call up. The Constitution of North America! what are the recollections of its history and its derivation. Go back to the days of your fathers; observe the distress, the confusion, the dismay succeeding the close of our revolutionary conflict. Our old articles of confederation, a rope of sand; a public debt pressing like an incubus upon the vital energies of the nation and threatening to crush its existence. From the thick gloom and tempest of that hour came forth the glorious Constitution under which we now rejoice. I ask the scholar to examine the pages of classic antiquity: let the statesman, the philosopher, the historian, wander down the shadowy ages of the past, and scrutinize every character and system and code, from the days of Numa and Lycurgus to the present, and where may he find the constitution which in its history has been more interesting, or in its operations has been more productive of peace and happiness and comfort to man! No one of us, my countrymen, does, perhaps, his duty — his whole duty — under the requirements and blessings of such a constitution: but where on the face of the known globe, if but the last faint glimmering of freedom yet lives, is not the constitution of North America regarded with enthusiastic feeling? From the southern extremity of our own continent to the dark frozen depths of Poland, — wherever iron oppression has had her sway, — where is it not contemplated with admiration by day, where is it not the object of the delightful dream of night, that there yet exists one glorious instance of man governing himself! Yet, my countrymen, it is our union which sanctifies all else. What are our magnificent rivers, our rolling inland seas, our mountains, prairies — *all!* — my soul revolts from them disunited and connected in no gigantic whole. It is our union which hallows, ennobles, secures all else. I am not accustomed to indulge in despondency and doubt; but, my countrymen, I must confess to you, that if this union be once

severed — once destroyed — I am not sanguine to believe that we or our children's children shall ever look upon another like it. Consider all that extraordinary concurrence and succession of events which have conduced to rear up the fabric of this nation ; think you they will ever again unite to the same mighty end ? With these views, then, most heartily would I concur in the sentiment which upon this occasion has been uttered ; and if these were the last words I were ever to utter they should be : The Constitution of the United States, *as it is*, the invaluable inheritance of American citizens.

Gentlemen, the unavoidable noise of a concourse of people so immense as that before me, will not permit me to enter at length into the topics I could wish on the present occasion. I will cast, however, a slight glance at the present posture of public affairs. We are in distress — I say we, though little do you on this slope of the Alleghany ridge either know, feel, or realize of the distress which exists along the Atlantic shore. It is impossible to conceive all the horrors of the present period, except among the busy artisans of the manufacturing east. As to the cause of this distress, I have my opinion (“ Let us have it,” from the crowd), and I have both the right to declare and to withhold it, when any modification or peculiarity of circumstance may demand. But why is the present distress ? Why ? Never has our country beheld a moment of prosperity like the present, in all the grand departments of our national character. View her commerce, domestic and foreign, her agriculture, her stupendous system of improvement, — when were all more prosperous ? But it is generally said, and very truly, that there is a derangement in the circulating medium. How ? Where does the difficulty belong ? To make a long matter very short, we cannot pay our debts with our money ; we have a currency which is not current, and money which is no money. Neither people nor government can fulfil its contracts. All are broke. A man may own houses and lands and horses and cattle, prairie land, bank stock, town lots, and all, but how shall he manage from all this property, with lawful money, to pay a lawful debt ? My bill for my lodging at my hotel will to-morrow be due. I hope my landlord is a good-natured man, and will take Mississippi money. But amid all this trouble and trial and confusion,

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old Uncle Sam growls sullenly on, and pays "nobody nothing," as we say at the north.

As regards banks, whatever may be their effect upon our financial concerns, I conceive it to be clearly the duty of Congress by some method to supply a good and durable currency. This is one of the great objects of its delegated power, "to regulate commerce with foreign nations and among the several States." If this be not so, the Constitution thus far is a dead letter. "Congress regulates commerce." A ship is an instrument of commerce, and everything in any manner relating to it, from its registry, through all the minutiae of the medicine chest, crew, shipping papers, up to its letter of clearance, is made an object of congressional jurisdiction. And is a ship more truly an instrument of commerce than money? Is not the currency of a country the all important — the grand medium of its commerce? Thus in Congress, in my opinion, rests the power and right to establish a uniform currency for the country. But as well may Congress delegate to the individual States the power each of making war and making peace at their pleasure, or any other of its powers, as to commit to them the jurisdiction over the national currency. Indeed, can all the six-and-twenty States, in the nature of things, establish one uniform, changeless, circulating medium for the nation, any more than six-and-twenty men can constitute one uniform unchangeable mind?

My ideas upon these difficulties are now precisely what they were seven years ago. As to causes, I wish to force my views upon no one, I wish not to dogmatize; I will express my views and shall be very happy to be convinced that the views of others are equally right. The present troubles, then, date back as far as 1832. Our national currency then was as good, nay, it was better, than that of any other country in the commercial world. Exchange had every facility which could be demanded, and passed from my own State in the east to the city of St. Louis at but one half of one per cent. Then the bank of the United States was decreed to wind up business in 1836. Every effort to prevent this was exerted in vain. The consequence of this movement was, that lesser banks swarmed up all over the land. Next came the removal of the deposits; and the throwing such a vast increase of capital into the vaults

of the banks, induced them to lend very largely, and encouraged all to borrow; then followed the vast and unwarrantable expansion of trade which we have witnessed, and here may have resulted what is popularly termed over-trading, though we cannot easily understand its meaning. But understand or not, here we are, and now, without lingering upon the past, we require the best counsel which the present can furnish. All seems now as clear as it ever did. I have had experience on this point, you will admit. I early entered upon the arena of public life, and have taken no inactive part in its events. I was in Congress in 1816, when specie payments were before suspended, and I then introduced the bill which afforded relief. I have seen, times like the present, and I have seen them pass by; and now do you ask me whence comes our help? I reply, from the Government of the United States; from thence alone. Of this I am sure — upon this I risk my political reputation, my honor, my all. It is an easy thing for fifteen hundred state banks to suspend specie payments, hand over hand, one after another, but will it be as easy for all to follow in commencing payment again? He who expects to live to see all these twenty-six States resuming specie payment in regular succession once more, may expect to see the restoration of the Jews! Never! — “he will die without the sight.” As for myself, I own not a shilling in any bank on the face of the earth.

But what says history — experience. During forty-eight years has been the experiment of the currency: for forty of them there was a national bank in operation, during which there was no derangement of the currency; for eight years of this period there has been none, and for eight years there has been trouble. In '91 General Washington, from the mere necessity and trials of the times, at the suggestion of Hamilton, then secretary of the treasury to Congress, signed the bill for a national bank; and just so in 1816, from the mere extremity of the case, under Madison's administration was a national bank chartered. The eight intervening years, like Pharaoh's lean kine, in succession have destroyed their predecessors.

Gentlemen, I know not what is designed to be done in the approaching Congress of September. But for one, I am willing to take any thing reasonable, effectual, constitutional, and

not dangerous to our liberties, be it from A, B, or C, from administration or opposition. But, mark me! I will support nothing like relief, — temporary relief, — nothing which will extend executive prerogative the one-thousandth part of an inch. I will agree to nothing which shall shake the glorious fabric of the Constitution. Sooner would I with profane hands seize your noble flag above my head, and tear it into ten thousand fritters! I will endure anything but an attack on the Constitution. And we can — our noble country can endure anything — everything. She can bear up under a burden of bad government huge as your iron mountain! She can withstand a torrent of oppression terrible as that of the Missouri! Leave her the union; leave her the control of executive power; freedom of election, and the other grand principles of republican government, and she may withstand anything. As for the “beneficence of the treasury,” and “charity of the president,” I will listen to none of it. Our country is young; she is strong, vigorous, energetic, and she will rise and come out well in the end. If we can hold the mass united until the tempest is over, all will again be well.

In my opinion there can be no legal currency but that of the precious metals — gold and silver. But what is to be understood by that? No more nor less than the express declaration of our Constitution as regards “legal tender.” The idea of no medium of circulation but ponderous gold and silver is perfectly wild — Utopian, even where it is possible; and the constant diminution of these metals, and the increase of luxury by which they are consumed, renders it more so. But do we desire this? Do you or I wish for anything better than paper, at any moment convertible into coin? I am one of those who believe the best never can be made better. How can a notion like this (I am a Yankee, gentlemen, and do think it a notion), how can a notion like this have entered men’s heads?

As regards the State of Missouri in relation to paper currency, were I making a speech at any quarter of the world, or were I preparing a treatise on banking, nowhere could a better illustration of its operation and advantage be presented, than upon this very spot. Away in old Massachusetts, where the people are thick as mustard-seeds and good at that — why a

metallic currency to some extent will answer. Every circumstance forbids it here. The resources of the country — the rich prairies, the inexhaustible mines of lead and iron — require credit to their development, which cannot be afforded without some expansion of the circulating medium, — the assistance of paper readily convertible into gold and silver.

In conclusion let me urge upon every American citizen his duty at this crisis, or very little may be expected from the Government. We must be sober — serious now. We have had the heyday of our prosperity, and our only fault has been we have forgotten the means by which it was superinduced and sustained. Let us remember we have all one common interest, and we must stand or we must fall together. I have been called with chagrin to see at a time like this, and on such a subject, attempts to rouse one body of men against another, as the farmer against the merchant. I hope there is no bad design here, but all in charity I fear there is. Upon the hard working laborer, indeed, will a depreciation of the currency like the present press the hardest, when at the close of his daily toil he receives a ragged paper for one bit, two bits, all payable somewhere, nobody can say where, and fit for nothing but to light his candle. And yet, who sees not the utter folly of declaring that one currency may be well for the rich man and another for the poor man? They might as well tell us that there's no difference in the atmosphere we breathe. If health and happiness are received by the rich man from this bounty of nature, be sure you, my fellow citizens, will receive the same; and if ague and miasma and fever come to you, depend upon it ague, miasma, and fever will not be escaped by him. In the present period of distress look for aid to the people — the great mass of the people. Experience, too, declares, have a national bank. Our efforts on this subject have been crushed, but my sentiments now are as they were in '32, and when I learn better I will acquiesce.

Gentlemen: Again permit me to tender my grateful thanks for your kindness and hospitality since I have been with you. Whether I remain in public life or retire from it, you will ever retain my fervent regards, and never can I forget the cordiality, the generosity, the kindness, I have received at your hands.

# Speech at Rochester, N. Y.

JULY 20, 1837.<sup>1</sup>

AFTER a brief introductory address by the Hon. Timothy Childs, Mr. Webster spoke as follows :

FELLOW-CITIZENS: If I might entertain the hope of being heard by this vast assemblage, I would gladly express my thanks for the respect and kindness which have caused you to come together upon this occasion, and for the flattering sentiments which have been expressed by my friend Mr. Childs in your behalf.

Gentlemen, I have been taking a long, pleasant, and agreeable journey through parts of our common country which it has not been my good fortune heretofore to have visited. I return full of pleasure and pride for what I have seen in that portion of our common country which we denominate the "*far West.*" And although I must hasten home to prepare for my public duties, which must so soon commence, yet the request of my friends in Rochester, made so early and so kindly, has prevailed on me to have the pleasure of passing this day in your midst, and in this thriving city, which I visited twelve years ago, and which has since sprung up into such beauty as to leave no indication by which I might know that this was the town I then visited. But not to waste words, let me say, in the language which one plain Republican may employ to another, that for all your kindness and for all the expressions of your friendship, I thank you.

The address read to me by my friend Mr. Childs alludes to the political state of the country at present. This is the all-absorbing topic wherever I have been. The currency of the country seems to occupy the minds of all. If upon this topic

<sup>1</sup> At a meeting held in the Court House Square, Rochester, N. Y. Printed from the report in the Boston Daily Advertiser, August 5, 1837.

I have any thoughts which are worthy your consideration, they are at your service. But I have no desire to obtrude my political sentiments upon any man or any set of men. One man's opinions are entitled to as much respect as another's, and all are accountable for them. God forbid that I should desire to conceal any opinions or sentiments of mine. There is nothing in the opinions which I hold that I wish for a moment to keep back from my fellow citizens. I wish to make no evasions. There is nothing hid within my bosom which I am not willing should be laid naked before God and man.

Fellow-citizens, I have endeavored to understand the questions which are at this moment agitating the country; and from the position which I have occupied for so many years, and the subjects which I have been called upon to discuss, it would be strange had I no opinions of my own. I have opinions; but I wish not to dictate their acceptance, but merely to express them. And express them I will, let the consequences be what they may.

Then, fellow-citizens, what is the great difficulty at present existing in the country? We are not threatened with bad crops. There are no unemployed manufactories. There is neither war, nor famine, nor pestilence. What, then, is the difficulty? It is what we may call a social evil, resulting from the exercise of the powers of the social government. What is that evil? There may have been some over-trading and over-producing; but all such ideas are indefinite. No man can say what he means by over-trading; and before there is just ground for making this charge, he must prove that there has been more produce in market than could command a price. What evidence have we that there has been over-producing? In all my journey I have heard of no wheat or corn which could not command a high price. Before the unfortunate suspension of specie payments, merchandise sold well and stocks sold well. Over-trading and over-producing *may* exist; but to me the terms are too indefinite for comprehension.

But there *is* a cause for our present difficulties. What is it? In answering this question, I do not wish to, and shall not, trifle with the subject. I know there are men here who differ from me in sentiment. I respect their opinions, and will cast



no reproaches or imputations against them. I reproach no man. I attribute no oblique motives to any man ; but I speak to you as the arbiters of political sentiments. I say to you what I would say to generations coming after me ; and I will express such sentiments as I would wish to, and am willing should, go down to posterity, if anything of me does go down to posterity.

Let it not be supposed that I am speaking the sentiments of a partisan — that I am saying to-day what I shall take back to-morrow. For if, after my country's good, there is one thing that I have sought more than another, since the commencement of my public life, it has been a character for consistent patriotism — for an attachment to the whole country ; and, to mar the happiness of what little of life remains to me, I will not sacrifice what of such character I have acquired.

Now, then, fellow-citizens, in the opinion of us all, the difficulty under which the country is now suffering is the derangement of its currency. We have no legal money. We are a commercial people, full of enterprise and zeal. But what will these avail, or how can they be successfully exerted, without a lawful standard of money ? So completely deranged is the currency, that no man can now pay a lawful debt lawfully. Every man knows this, and every man feels it. No matter how many splendid houses you may own, or how many working mills or rich fields, — with all these you are poor, so far as the legal transaction of business is concerned. The question is, can any of you pay a lawful debt lawfully ? When that cannot be done, it is in vain to say that a people is prosperous, happy, or wealthy, or that it is in the enjoyment of the rights and blessings which government ought to confer upon it. It is expected that every government will take care of the currency, regulate the exchanges, and keep healthy all the avenues of trade. This is a doctrine which has existed in all ages. Government has always had the guard and supervision of the currency. A well-regulated currency never has existed, and never can, without the exercise of such supervision, and a well-regulated government cannot exist without such a currency.

We live in a complex state of government. We have a government which extends over all the States, and we have

State governments. Now, with which of them does the power to regulate the currency reside? With the General Government, or with the twenty-six separate State governments? This is the great question now before the people. This is the great question which the people must decide. Upon it there are two sets of opinions at present existing in the country.

According to one, the whole subject ought to be left to the States and to the State banks. That was General Jackson's opinion. When he negatived the bill for continuing the late bank, in 1832, he did it upon the ground that he wanted no such institution, as a fiscal agent, to assist in the operations of the treasury; and that as to the general currency of the country, the State banks would certainly furnish us as good a one as we then had, and probably a better. These sentiments are still entertained, it is supposed, by the Administration which has succeeded General Jackson. Upon this ground the late Administration surrendered all the control which the General Government had over the currency of the country to the State banks, in a quitclaim assignment to them and to their assigns forever, saying that they could furnish as good a currency as was then enjoyed, and perhaps a better.

But there is another set of opinions upon this subject. There is a class of political men who hold that the superintendence of the currency belongs to Congress; that it is the appropriate constitutional duty of the General Government to regulate the currency; that the State government cannot satisfactorily perform this duty; that it is an indispensable part of the commercial regulation of the country, which is an express power of Congress, charged upon that body by the Constitution, by precept upon precept, and line upon line; and that Congress, by a national bank, or some other means, was bound to take proper care of the currency, to maintain a sound, uniform measure of value and medium of exchange. This was his (Mr. Webster's) opinion, always entertained, and often expressed by him. He had urged it with all the power he could command, upon Congress and upon the country in 1832, and upon divers subsequent occasions. This opinion certainly was strengthened and confirmed by recent events. We have been sadly taught that there *must* be a general regulator of the

currency, which can give a uniform rate of exchange between Nova Scotia and the extreme South. It is for this purpose, among others, that the Constitution has made us one people; and whoever undertakes to maintain that we can throw this power back upon the States, strikes out one great link in our chain of union. That is my opinion.

We all know, fellow citizens, the motives which induced the organization of this government. We know that there was none which operated stronger upon the minds of the statesmen and patriots of that day than the desire to regulate the commerce between the different States. This power they gave to Congress. It can regulate commerce between the States. But how can it do this unless it has the power to regulate the great agent and instrument of commerce — money? None say that the different States have power to declare war, form treaties, or despatch ambassadors. Yet it would be just as reasonable to say that they have such power, as that they have either the power or ability to regulate the great instrument of commerce — money. They cannot do it; there is no authority to confer such power upon them. That belongs to the General Government. It is the duty of Congress to make that which regulates the value of property in New York regulate its value in Massachusetts or Mississippi. What created such confusion in the old confederacy? Was it not the inability of the Government to regulate the currency? The currency of that day was necessarily and unavoidably, totally deranged. Why, if a man started upon a journey, on a slow horse, he could n't breakfast and dine on the same money. It was to get out of this difficulty that the Constitution gave the power to Congress to regulate commerce between the States. This was the object of it.

Now this is the question to which we have come at last: Is the power to regulate the currency with Congress, and shall it be exercised by Congress? or is it with the States, and the fifteen hundred State banks, and shall it be exercised by them? This is the question, and the time has come when it must be settled one way or the other.

The Administration, in 1832, decided in favor of the latter, and abandoned the whole subject of the currency to its fate.

They openly and avowedly relinquished it to the States and to the State banks. In pursuing this policy I do not impugn their motives; but that they erred is my opinion. I so told them at the time; and from that day to this I have been denounced as a bank agent and an aristocrat, who had no regard to the interests of the common people. But I should have been unworthy of the kind regards you have shown me, fellow citizens, had I not held these denunciations in silent contempt.

In the course which I have pursued I have acted in the light of the Constitution. I never wish to consider myself wiser than that sacred instrument. I never wish to put the business and prosperity of the country at hazard, or to jeopard the daily bread of the poor laborer, by my presumptuous arrogance in trying experiments.

Men in public life have discussed this question, and made up their minds. Their opinions are formed. But it is a question which none but the whole people can decide, and he (Mr. Webster) desired nothing more than that after a calm examination, and the benefits of the light of experience, they should decide it. In favor of the opinion which he entertained, he had the authority of forty of the forty-eight years which the government had existed. His opinion was, that Congress had the power to regulate the currency of the country. This was the opinion of Washington. In the second and third years of his administration he and his associates undertook to make the currency of the country uniform.

To forward this undertaking a United States bank was discussed, and although there was a contrariety of opinions, yet a bank was established in 1791. It had a perfect effect. The currency was regulated and commerce flourished. This bank lasted twenty years. During these twenty years State banks grew up, and there were men then, as now, who maintained that State banks were sufficient to regulate the currency of the country. There were, at the time when the first bank charter expired, eighty-eight State banks. The arguments of those in favor of testing the power of State banks prevailed, and the United States Bank was not rechartered. What was the result?

In 1814 all the banks in the country suspended specie payments, except a few in New England, who paid specie for all the bills they issued, and issued no bills. I took a seat in the House of Representatives in 1813. The war terminated in 1815. But the banks did not resume specie payments. My experience has taught me, and so has your experience taught you, fellow citizens, that banks may be very unanimous in agreeing to *suspend* specie payment; but it is a difficult matter to say that they always evince the same unanimity about when they shall *resume*. In this instance they did not resume in two years after the close of the war. Nor would they have resumed then, but for the agency of the General Government. What did they do? Why, they chartered the late National Bank, and adopted other means which it was my good fortune to introduce. They resumed specie payments in February, 1817.

While the bank existed, the State banks continued specie payments. Seeing the good effect which it had in restoring and regulating the currency of the country, Congress, in 1832, when its charter was about to expire, voted that it should be continued, and passed a bill for that purpose. But General Jackson vetoed the bill. In doing this he departed directly from the policy which had prevailed in the government for forty of the forty-eight years of its existence. The General himself called it an "*experiment*" — an experiment to try State banks; an experiment to carry on the government in a new manner, and without the agencies which it had before employed. I do not censure him for this. He said he could get along without a national bank. He no doubt thought so. He was, however, mistaken. He could n't do it; and that's the whole of it.

In two years after the expiration of the United States Bank, we find that the State banks have shut up shop. They tell their creditors they will pay to-morrow; pay when they can; can't pay at all. Now, is it for us to set up a set of political metaphysics as our rule of conduct, instead of living up to the Constitution, and to that line of conduct which, for forty years, has proved to be profitable to the country?

Let us now, fellow-citizens, look at the professed objects of

this "*experiment*" — at the reasons which induced a radical departure from Washington and his compatriots, and Madison and his compatriots. Two objects were to be accomplished by it. It was:

1st. To diminish the circulation of bank paper.

2d. To increase the circulation of specie.

Now, how have these been accomplished? What has been the result? I have from 1832 seen the result. Although not a prophet, I have foretold it. I knew, as well as man could know what is to take place in the future, that what has happened would happen. It is notorious that since the moment when General Jackson first manifested a disposition to put an end to the Bank of the United States, the banking capital of the country has increased more than threefold. The determination to destroy the national institution was the signal at which thousands of individuals went forward to establish new banks and to pour new issues of paper into circulation. They moved, too, with confidence, for they knew very well that when General Jackson put his foot down against anything, he was in no hurry to take it up again.

The other object was to increase the circulation of specie, to put more money in our pockets, to enable the gold to peep through "interstices of our long silken purses," and to "flow up the Mississippi." But has this object been attained? Has not the result of the "*experiment*" already been, that there is no specie in the country at all? Why, when we meet an eagle we meet him as a stranger, or as a long absent friend, and ask him how he has been.

Then the result of the "*experiment*" has been a threefold increase of bank paper, and not a dollar of specie to be had.

For his part Mr. Webster said he regarded this whole experiment as a rash and presumptuous innovation; as an instance of self-respect, self-confidence, and self-sufficiency, as extraordinary in its original character as it was calamitous in its results. He did not understand how any public man could justify himself in carrying on such experiments upon the happiness, the prosperity, the business, and the means of living of twelve millions of people.

As to the two proposed objects, his own opinion was not that

the State banks are to be crushed, or unnecessarily or injuriously cramped in their operations. Far from it! But still it was the duty of Government, by some institution, or some measures of its own, to endeavor to keep their issues within reasonable bounds, and to save the country from a flood of irredeemable paper.

As to coming to an exclusive metallic circulation, he had always regarded it as a chimera, impossible, and perfect folly. He was astonished that any sensible man should indulge either the hope or the desire for such a state of things. There is but so much specie in the world, and we can only have our proportion of it.

It was boasted that we had eighty millions of specie in the country. Suppose it were a hundred; and suppose we could retain that amount, and use it as a currency. It would be totally insufficient to carry on the business of the country independent of the use of any bank paper, without such a reduction of prices as no society or community would submit to. If we were to establish an exclusive metallic currency, I doubt whether the wheat of the county of Monroe would be worth more than twenty-five or thirty cents a bushel. It is no answer to this to say that other things would fall in price in the same ratio. If we were now beginning anew, if we were now just setting up a community, such an idea would have weight in it. But we have a community formed, with all the numerous relations of debtor and creditor. Men have entered into contracts to pay dollars, not bushels of wheat; and having made these contracts when wheat was a dollar a bushel, what right has the Government, by an experimental alteration of its money system, arbitrarily, and without regard to production, to consumption, or to supply, to reduce the price to twenty-five cents? According to the average price of produce, the farmer pays his debt of a dollar with one bushel of wheat. But if this new system should be established, he would be obliged to give four bushels of wheat to pay the same amount of debt.

Such a contraction of currency would cause a revolution. No nation on earth could stand it. Turkey herself would revolt. The notion, therefore, of an exclusive metallic currency, in the present state of things, was ridiculous. It was mere

solemn trifling with matters of high public interest. It was political quackery in one of its worst forms. Its adoption would ruin commerce and prostrate the manly vigor of the country.

But suppose an exclusive specie circulation to be practicable, it would be in every way objectionable. It exists but in the despotisms of the East. If introduced here, it would throw all commercial power into the hands of the sleepy aristocrat. It would cut up by the roots all the hopes of those, in every part of the country, who, though without capital in money, are yet young, enterprising, industrious, and stirring to gain respectable livelihoods.

We may say as often as we please that "those who trade on borrowed capital ought to break;" but it is an absurd sentiment from whosoever mouth it falls, and it is not at all consistent with our American practice or our American policy. The United States have acted, and acted most advantageously, on a system of regulated credit. The Government itself began on credits. Its first breath — the earliest inflation of its infant lungs — was credit. By credit it funded the debt of the Revolution, and so provided for its payment. On credit it opened the custom-house and wooed the spirit of commercial enterprise. On credit it made the earliest disposition of its public lands; and this credit it has sought to maintain by just laws, by sound principles, by the inviolability of contract, and by sustaining a sound, uniform national currency. The discounts of the banks have enlarged this credit; and, while within proper bounds, their operation is useful, especially in those parts of the country which are new and most deficient in accumulated capital.

Credit, reasonable and just credit, has cleared these forests, opened these roads, constructed this canal, built these mills, erected these palaces, and given being to this important city, hardly reduced from the wilderness thirty years ago. He who decries the use of credit reviles the history of the whole country. He is a man who says in effect that these great improvements ought not to have been undertaken; and that canals and railroads, flour mills and cities, are not blessings, but afflictions. Depend upon it, if we were to come to an exclusive



gold and silver currency, we should throw all these things into the hands of lazy, aristocratic accumulated capital. Most rich capitalists are drones. They are not working bees. They live upon the accumulated honey of the industrious; but to a ten-fold greater extent would they do so if the system of credit was abolished. Enterprise and industry, with no assistance but honesty, good habits, and a spirit of improvement, would be crushed by the same blow that would demolish credit. You all act upon credit. Is it not so? We can, therefore, never return to an exclusive metallic currency. But if we could, I would stand here till midnight to prove to you that it would be entirely impracticable.

But while no respect could be entertained for those opinions which demand a gold and silver currency exclusively, it was yet to be remembered that irredeemable bank paper was as bad, if not worse. I hardly know which *is* the worst — the humbug of the one, or the fraud of the other. It would be pitiable if we were obliged to countenance either. The present state of things is unconstitutional, illegal, and not to be tolerated. Every man is bound to seek to change it. The paper of all the banks, the very best of them, is depreciated. It will depreciate more and more. Irredeemable paper never was, and never will be, kept at par. Nothing can justify the present state of things. All that can excuse it is necessity. Both Government and people are in the same condition, as neither have the means of paying their lawful debts in a lawful manner.

In the language of the law, gold and silver are the only money. For purposes of commerce, paper, when regulated and under the supervision of the Government, is found to be perfectly safe. Is it possible to have a better currency than existed in this country five years since? Could the exchanges be more uniform? Were not the facilities of commerce as perfect as they could be? He did not wish to charge the local banking institutions with rashness, or to say that they were not conducted by prudent men; but all experience shows that they require a regulator. He was sure that it was the decision of every man at all acquainted with the wants of the country, who would throw aside non-committalism, that a national bank was necessary. He did not say that a bank was indispensable;

but insisted that it was the duty of the General Government, by *some* measure, to exercise its corrective power over the currency of the country.

Fellow-citizens, I will only further say that there are exigencies in the history of popular governments when the supreme power must speak out, when the masters must direct and the servants obey. The public men have all expressed their opinions, and are decided; they have taken sides. The question, then, whether the States or General Government have the power of maintaining a uniform standard of value must be decided by the people themselves. If they decide that the States have that power, I will bow to the decision, although it is my conviction that such a decision would destroy the strongest bond which holds the Union together. But if they decide that the General Government alone has the power to regulate the currency, God be thanked! they have the power to carry out their decision.

I shall very soon be called upon to take my seat in the Senate of the United States. I shall go there to hear what the Administration have to say. If they come forward and recommend anything which is not opposed to the Constitution, and if such is calculated to benefit the country, I shall be forward in yielding it my support. I will cavil with no man, nor will I carry with me party feelings. I will act conscientiously, as I expect to answer for my conduct here and hereafter. If they say with Thomas Jefferson that they have been in error, and recommend such a bank as received the sanction of Washington — with all my heart. If they recommend such a bank as received the sanction of Madison — with all my heart. But if they bring forward new “experiments” to patch up the old one, then will I say — I will have nothing to do with them to the going down of the sun.

It appears to me, fellow-citizens, that we have reached a new era. The eyes of the whole people seem to be opened, and they begin to look for themselves. We are not so much under the influence of names as we have been; nor does individual authority go for as much as it has done. I look to the past for experience. I wish to see the country go ahead, and to see the old boggling “experiment” concern closed up.

Gentlemen, while I say that no immediate relief is to be expected, I am no preacher of panics. I desire to inspire no distrust or despondency. The country cannot be easily ruined. It is young, great, strong, and full of activity. But my faith is in the people. I look for the law pronounced by the voice of the lawful sovereign; and when pronounced, I shall respect it and abide by it. The great and interesting question is before the people. Their interest is the great stake, and I doubt not they will decide it wisely. Let it not be said that we cannot obtain from our Constitution all the good designed by it. Let us at least try it fairly and honestly. If the people can be roused, if they will take their own affairs into their own hands, I have no fears of the future. The country will resuscitate itself. These fields will not become barren; these streams, so favorable to industry, will not cease to flow; this benignant sun will not forbear to shine. The blessings of position, of climate, of soil, and, above all, of a free and glorious Constitution, are all our own; and although clouds hang over us to-day, they will be dispersed, if we prove true to ourselves, as surely as the heavenly luminary above us disperses the mists of the morning.

Fellow-citizens, I take my leave of you. Strangers as we are, we have got a common country and a common inheritance of liberty. Our children must enjoy together these free institutions, or together lament their downfall. As a fellow citizen and a countryman, as one bound to you by common ties, and wedded with you to a common fortune, I take an affectionate leave of you, and join my ardent wishes with yours, for the prosperity and happiness, through all ages, of the good land which we possess. May free-born spirits ever be ready to defend and protect it, and may a gracious Providence continue to visit it with His distinguished blessings!

# Remarks at the Abbot Festival

EXETER, N. H., August 23, 1838.<sup>1</sup>

ON taking the chair Mr. Webster remarked that he esteemed it a high honor to preside on an occasion of so much interest. We are collected together, said he, for the especial purpose of paying the tribute of heartfelt gratitude to one who is now closing his long and useful career as preceptor in this place. Before the exhibition of the business of the occasion, said Mr. Webster, it is appropriate, according to the usages of New England on such occasions, to look for the blessing of Heaven upon the occasion.

He afterwards spoke at some length, and the following is an abstract of his remarks :

Mr. Webster stated that, as the organ of the Alumni, the duty fell on him of presenting to their respected friend a memorial of their high estimation of his services. But before performing this duty, he hoped to be excused for alluding to some incidents in the annals of this institution.

He called to the remembrance of the audience the fact that the Academy was endowed at an early day in a dark period in American history, and paid a just tribute to the philanthropy and wisdom of the founder, in rearing the institution on the most liberal, just, and consistent system. He spoke of the Seminary as the place to which he was indebted for an important portion of his education. He adverted to a remark of the eloquent author of *Agricola*, that what he esteemed the happiest circumstance of his fortune was that he was placed where he enjoyed the best early advantages ; and who of us, he asked, will not say that we have here enjoyed the like good fortune?

<sup>1</sup> On the occasion of the celebration by the Alumni of Phillips-Exeter Academy of the fiftieth anniversary of the services of Dr. Benjamin Abbot as Principal of the Institution. Printed from the report in the *Portsmouth Journal*, September 1, 1838.

He spoke of piety, religion, morals, as the leading objects of those who had ever been selected for the oversight of the institution. The duty of man to his Maker, to his fellow men, and to himself, have ever here been inculcated. The progress of the scholars, he remarked, has been pressed forward by all the motives of emulation. He spoke of a philosophy which puts at defiance all motives which utilitarians cannot adopt; but emulation is a passion implanted in man, to which it is his duty to attend. A distinguished divine, upon the subject of the passions of man, has said that the impulses of our heart are given to regulate the life. Let us use them to a good purpose. As in religion and in morals, so in letters: emulation in action and feeling, acts instantly. Boys, he remarked, must be taught to *feel* well, as well as *act* well. To expect pupils free from feelings of emulation in boyhood and youth, is as unnatural as to expect to find them with bald heads and beards.

He spoke of the Academy as a free school, for the equal benefit of other towns and other States, and of the necessity of a general education, as it is the nature of our institutions that every man must be a public man, — for he is called daily into public life, and to the exercise of his rights in discharge of public duties. He adverted to the influence of the instructor in forming the mind and inculcating habits of usefulness on those intrusted to his care, as of paramount importance. It is not he who chisels the marble or draws upon the canvas, that performs the greatest work; but it is he who works upon the mind, gives it its form and paints enduring images upon it. Marble will not last forever, human skill has found no coloring which will endure; but the labor upon the mind, in the influence which it is continually extending, will be felt forever. In paying due respect to the office of teachers, the ancients were in advance of later ages. Who were the heathen philosophers, he asked, whose fame has come down through the lapse of ages? Were they not the teachers of youth? Philip of Macedon thanked the gods, not so much that they had given him an Alexander, as that they had given him an Aristotle for his instructor.

After remarking on the importance of impressing upon society the necessity of instructing the young in the knowl-

edge of letters, he addressed more particularly the venerable preceptor.

You see around you, sir, said he, pupils who have been instructed by you. We have come together to offer you to-day the tribute of our hearts. We have all been here, sir, at different years; we have all, sir, been called up to your chair to be examined in our various studies. We remember, sir, when we were brought here by our parents; we remember well the kind looks with which you received us, and the affection which you manifested towards us. You governed us, sir, by a steady and even temper, but you governed us with that kindness which won our hearts.

We have here, sir, formed a little republic, we have had a public opinion; but, sir, there never was yet an Exeter boy who could obtain respect or countenance by setting himself up against your will. You, sir, have sat at the board of this Seminary for half a century; you have sat with Gilman, with the elder Buckminster, with Haven, with Appleton; you have also sat with many who are yet among us, as well as with those who have passed to their final reward. We might call to remembrance the younger Buckminster—the father and son taken almost together; the younger Haven, how many hopes were resting on him, when at an early age he, too, was called away.

After noticing others of the former pupils, and paying just tribute to their memories, Mr. Webster closed his remarks by saying:

We do not regret, sir, that you have arrived at that age when you must retire from your trust. You, no doubt, have desired it, and, be assured, sir, that we have prayed for it; for you have all that makes old age desirable,—the reverence and respect of all around you. And now, sir, I present you with this token of our remembrance. We greet you with the best feelings, and with hearts full of hope for your welfare and happiness.

# Remarks on Common Schools

HANOVER, MASS., September 3, 1838.<sup>1</sup>

MR. WEBSTER said, he felt the resolution before the meeting to be of vital importance to the welfare of the community. The ultimate aim was to elevate and improve the primary schools, and to secure competent instruction to every child which should be born. No object is greater than this; and the means, the forms, and agents are each and all important. He expressed his obligations to town schools, and paid a tribute to their worth, considering them the foundation of our social and political system. The town schools need improvement; for if they are no better now than when we attended them, they are insufficient to the wants of the present day. They have till lately been overlooked by men who should have considered them. He rejoiced at the noble efforts here made of late, and hoped they might be crowned with entire success. Our schools have not looked beneath the superficies. The reading is often mere parrot reading; every parent sees this. Everything is by rote: words without ideas. Another defect is the multiplicity of books. Parents have thought there must be learning where there were so many books. This is an evil instead of a good. It has become the fashion to teach everything through the press. Conversation, so valued in ancient Greece, is overlooked and neglected; whereas it is the richest source of culture. We teach too much by manuals, too little by direct intercourse with the pupil's mind; we have too much of words, too little of things. Take any of the common departments, how little do we really know of the practical detail, say geology. It is taught by books; it should be

<sup>1</sup> At a meeting of the Plymouth County Association for the Improvement of Common Schools. From the report in the Portsmouth Journal, September 29, 1838.

taught by excursions in the fields. So of other things. We begin with the abstracts, and know little of the detail of facts; we deal in generals, and go not to particulars; we begin with the representative, leaving out the constituents. Teachers should teach things. It is a reproach that the public schools are not superior to the private. If, said he, I had as many sons as old Priam, I would send them all to the public schools. The private schools have injured, in this respect, the public; they have impoverished them. They who should be in them are withdrawn; and like so many uniform companies taken out of the general militia, those left behind are none the better. This plan of a Normal School in Plymouth County is designed to elevate our common schools, and thus to carry out the noble ideas of our pilgrim fathers. There is growing need that this be done. He considered the cost very slight; it cannot come into any expanded mind as an objection. If it be an experiment, it is a noble one and should be tried. Mr. Webster here went through with the items of expense, the loaning of the sum, the trustees, etc., and saw no defect in the scheme. He closed with expressing his good wishes for the speedy and permanent elevation of our town schools to the point demanded by the advanced condition of society.

The resolution passed by an unanimous vote — and the meeting was dissolved.



# Remarks on Education<sup>1</sup>

HE alluded first to the universal interest felt in all ages in the subject of education. He glanced at its importance to every individual as involving that culture both of intellect and the heart, and essentially connected with his present and eternal happiness. And the youth of this age and country, he said, should be sensible of the peculiarly propitious circumstances in which they are placed, and appreciate the privileges by which they are distinguished from those of every past generation, and every other land. To see the truth and force of this, we need only cast our eye up and down this beautiful valley of the Connecticut, adorned not more by its natural scenery and fertile soil, than by the numerous and flourishing seminaries of learning scattered over its bosom.

The spot where he stood seemed peculiarly favored, presenting on the one hand, an academy, annually furnishing the colleges from twenty-five to fifty young men, to be liberally educated; on the other hand, a high school delightfully located and in efficient and prosperous operation; and here a college, young indeed, but a most honorable monument to the patriotism and piety which laid its foundations. The very infancy of the Institution, he would remark, had its peculiar advantages, and the circumstances which to many young men might seem disadvantages, were far less so than is often supposed. Costly apparatus, and splendid cabinets, have no magical power to make scholars. In all circumstances, as a man is, under God, the master of his own fortune, so he is the maker of his own mind. The Creator has so constituted the human intellect, that it can grow only by its own action, and by its own action it will most certainly and necessarily grow. Every man, therefore, must, in an important

<sup>1</sup> An Abstract of an Address relating to Amherst, Mass., and Hanover, N. H. From a manuscript in the New Hampshire Historical Society. It bears no date.

sense, educate himself. His book and teacher are but helps; the work is his. A man is not educated until he has the ability to summon, in any emergency, all his mental powers to vigorous exercise, and control them in that exercise to effect his purposed object. It is not the man who has seen most, or read most, or heard most, who can do this; such an one is in danger of being borne down like a beast of burden by an overloaded mass of other men's thoughts. Nor is [it] the man who can boast merely of native vigor and capacity; the greatest of all the warriors that went to the siege of Troy, had not the pre-eminence because nature had given him strength and he carried the largest bow, but because self-discipline had taught him how to bend it.

He said it was his opinion that among the improved modes of teaching, which characterize the present state of the science and the art, those would be found most useful that should have the greatest tendency to bring the mind of the student near to the mind of the teacher. Mind is excited by close intercourse, — by contact, as it were, with mind. The attention of both parties must be drawn by a constant attraction to some common point. Let the powers of the student be examined, tried, exercised, strengthened, guided by this kind of intercourse. Let it extend to every study, and be applied to every little thing in the whole course of instruction, and be felt daily and hourly. Of such communion of mind with mind, of such action of mind upon mind, the effects will be at once displayed; it is like what is often seen around the beautiful mountain which adorns this horizon, when, drawn mutually together, cloud approaches cloud; then, and then only, is there a transmission and reception and interchange of the electric fluid.

He closed his remarks (to which this abstract by no means does justice) by painting the anguish of heart, which, in the just retribution of Heaven, must torture the man who, when his country and his religion calls for his services, too late finds that he has abused the privileges resulting from a free government and from Christianity, and has wasted the short but precious portion of his immortal existence which was allotted for his self-education.

# Speech at the Baltimore Convention

MAY 4, 1840.<sup>1</sup>

MR. WEBSTER said that he feared the attempt to make himself heard, would be a vain one. Never before had the land in which we lived seen a spectacle like the present. We count men by the thousands. They are here from the borders of Canada to the rivers of Georgia. They are here from the sea-coast and the heart of the country. The States are here, every one of them, through their representatives. The "Old Thirteen" of the Republic are from every city and every county, between the hills of Vermont and the rivers of the South. The *new* thirteen, too, are here, without a blot or a stain upon them. The twenty-six States are here. No local or limited feeling has brought them here — no feeling but an American one — a hearty attachment to the country. We are here with the common sentiment and the common feeling that we are one people. We may assure ourselves that we belong to a country where one part has a common feeling and a common interest with the other.

The time has come, continued Mr. Webster, when the cry is change. Every breeze says change. Every interest of the country demands it. The watchword and the hope of the people is that William Henry Harrison should be placed at the head of affairs. We may assure ourselves, continued Mr. Webster, that this *change* will come — come, to give joy to the many, and sorrow only to the few. Mr. Van Buren's administration is to be of one term, and of one project, and that project new to us, not yet consummated. It is new to our country, and so novel that those with whom it originated, after hammering it for years, have not been able to give form or shape to the substance.

<sup>1</sup> Boston Courier, May 8, 1840.

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All agree, continued Mr. Webster, that we have hard times, and many supposed the remedy to be hard cider. Changing his subject and his manner, he exhorted the members of the Convention to go hence fully impressed with a solemn sense of the obligations they owed to the country. We were called upon to accomplish not a momentary victory, but one which should last at least a half century. It was not to be expected that every year, or every four years would bring together such an assemblage as we have now before us. The revolution should be one which should last for years, and the benefits of which should be felt forever. Let us then act with firmness. Let us give up ourselves entirely to this new revolution. When we see the morning light grow bright, it is the sign of the noon-day sun. This sign around me is no less ominous of the brightness which is to succeed the present rays of light.

Go to your work, then, said Mr. Webster, in conclusion. I will return to mine. When next we meet, and wherever we meet, I hope to say that this Convention has been the means of good to you and to me and to all. I go to my appropriate sphere and you to yours — each to act, I trust, for the good of the country in the advancement of the cause we all have so much at heart.

# Speech at the Whig Festival

ALEXANDRIA, June 11, 1840.<sup>1</sup>

MR. WEBSTER said he had never before the happiness of addressing any considerable number of his fellow citizens south of the Potomac river, and he would not deny that he embraced the occasion with the greatest pleasure. The particular object of the meeting was one in which all his feelings entered most warmly, to commemorate the brilliant achievement of the opposition party of Virginia, at the spring election; and to do honor to those who in that contest upheld the cause of the Constitution and our republican liberty. The Virginia spring election wrought a change, and was productive of the most beneficial consequences. Before that struggle, doubts were entertained with regard to the manner in which the South would act. Before that time, how much soever of feeling and interest in behalf of the opposition there might be here and there in the South, there was not any certainty that the feeling and interest were general, or that the South would make a firm, united stand against the men in power. That question, so important to the adversaries of corruption and misrule — so important to their great cause — was solved at the spring elections. It was then made manifest that union and harmony exist among the free independent citizens of every section; and whether we succeed or fail, our fate is identified with the most distinguished and illustrious men from every quarter of our country.

In this connection, Mr. Webster said that, as a member of the national Legislature, he could not forbear giving his testimony to the conduct of the opposition members from Virginia — to their ability, their zeal, their devotedness to their duties. He knew them well — and no man could more highly appreciate their character and services. He then repeated the

<sup>1</sup> Reprinted by the Boston Courier, June 18, 1840, from the Baltimore American.

expression of his high satisfaction at being able to address, directly, a Southern audience, on topics in which the North and South have a common interest. He knew he was listened to by Virginians — full of the feelings of Southern men — and pledged as deeply to the fortunes of the South, as deeply as men can be on this side of the grave — and here, before such an auditory, he desired to declare his determination to do all in his power to prevent the success of those measures which would divide the Whigs of the South from the North. On those questions, you (exclaimed Mr. Webster) are Whigs, and I am a Whig!

You, he continued, are Virginians. I belong to the old Bay State! But our enemies shall not separate the Whigs of the old Bay State from the Whigs of the Old Dominion.

Here he was again interrupted by three loud cheers. Those three cheers (said he, rising in enthusiasm commensurate with that of the audience) shall be heard of at Bunker Hill, on the anniversary of the memorable battle there, and the hills of Massachusetts shall reverberate with the cheers of her people, answering back the cheers of Virginia.

What is it, he asked, our enemies rely upon to separate us? That we of the North meditate injury against you. (A voice in the crowd — “We will never believe it.”) No, gentlemen, do not believe it. I stand here, and in the name of my fellow citizens of the North, I repel it as a total and unfounded calumny. We of New England are bound to you by our sacred compact, the Constitution of the United States. That instrument secures all your rights, and all property to be governed and disposed of as you see fit; and I tell you, for one, that not one jot or tittle of that compact shall ever be violated with my consent. What, fellow citizens, have you to fear from the people of Massachusetts? What have you to apprehend on this vital subject from that son of your soil, descended from your best Virginia stock, your own William Henry Harrison — that child of Virginia with the blood of the Revolution and of independence coursing in his veins? Can you believe that when he is called from his farm and his plough, to administer the Government, he will lay ruthless hands on the institutions among which he was born and educated?

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“No! no!” was responded by his auditory as with one voice.

I say No, too, continued Mr. Webster. We of the North and South will join in fellowship and friendly communion on this matter. I stand in the presence of distinguished men from the Southern States; and I now summon them into Court;—and I ask them as witnesses to declare to you whether I and my political friends of the North entertain any feelings different from their own, in regard to your entire and undivided control over this subject, and their other state concerns. Let them say whether we may not all come to that condition which existed when Virginia and Massachusetts took counsel together, — in the days of the Revolution, — when Washington and Hancock joined their thoughts, their feelings, their hopes, and acted together in a glorious cause — when Massachusetts and Virginia men stood together, braving danger and death. How many bones of Northern men lie at Yorktown? How many sons of Massachusetts were present when the British laid down their arms at the foot of Virginia?

Leaving these local concerns of the States, Mr. Webster next turned to more general subjects. Every day, he said, furnishes evidence that there is to be a great revolution in public opinion. The men in power, and their measures, are to receive a rebuke, such as no administration ever received. The distinguished orator here dwelt with great power and effect on the leading acts in their long career of mischief, and their effects upon all classes and conditions of the people. The administration, he maintained, was to blame for all the suffering that had oppressed and worn down the country. The Government had taken a wrong direction since the close of the last administration. Their policy was boldly avowed to be, to feed, clothe and take care of themselves. When any set of men, in this country, presume to act on the maxim of the French king, — “I am the state,” — they will quickly find out they have made a mistake. By November next, the American people will tell this administration, they have something to say on that subject. From the pledges of the men now at the head of affairs, no hope of a change of measures can be entertained, until there is a change of men. But, said Mr. Webster, the change will

come! So sure as that sun shall set in the West, will relief to the country rise in the West!

Mr. Webster referred to General Jackson as an extraordinary man; but the measures which he left to be carried out have been directed by very ordinary men. Their fatal error commenced with the very beginning of the administration. It gave itself a death blow before its very being was well known. Being deprived of General Jackson's precedent of a fiscal agency, the state banks, and finding no footstep to follow in, the administration resolved magnanimously to give up the subject altogether. The gentlemen say the people will take care of themselves; and the people, to say truth, have determined to take them at their word. They are much obliged to them, and henceforth will take care of themselves.

Fellow citizens (he continued), there must be no cessation in our warfare. We must not stop or falter in our opposition to the administration and its measures till our lost prosperity is restored — the Government brought back to its ancient purity, wisdom, and dignity, till prices assume their former level, till labor commands its just and ready reward, — in short, till the causes of our reasonable complaints are removed. Not till then should we lay down our arms. On the 4th of July next I hope to meet my fellow citizens in Faneuil Hall, and I will bear to them greeting from you. Has the administration yielded to any portion of our countrymen the benefits they had a right to expect? (Cries of "No! no!") I say no. Have you an interest in anything which will not be maintained by William Henry Harrison? Can we lose anything by a change? Let us, then, go forward together. We have made William Henry Harrison the bearer of our standard, and while he holds it, it shall not fall, unless we fall along with it.



# Speech at Patchogue, N. Y.

SEPTEMBER 22, 1840.<sup>1</sup>

MY FRIENDS — I desire, in the first place, to return thanks to those gentlemen now here assembled from the counties of King's, Queen's, and Suffolk, who have met me to-day on my approach to this town, and tendered me a most cordial and hearty welcome.

My friends — if, at a somewhat earlier period of my life, I had been found upon this part of Long Island, with my angling rod or my gun upon my shoulder, it would not have been much wondered at, especially by those who know my taste for those recreations for which your Island is distinguished.

I come, however, at this time, not to shoot birds or to take trout, but to confer with the intelligent people on those important subjects which agitate not only this Island, but the whole of our country. And this is a little extraordinary, and may be so considered and spoken of hereafter by others. It is extraordinary that I should come from old Massachusetts, a distance of two or three hundred miles, to address the people of old Suffolk on such an occasion. But, my friends, there are many other things that are also extraordinary, at this period, to be considered. The times are extraordinary; the state of public affairs is extraordinary; and there are those who think that our Government at Washington is an extraordinary one; and extraordinary efforts are making all over the country to effect a change in that government.

I come here, however, to make no charges, — to bring no railing accusations against any man or set of men. I come merely to express a few poor opinions, and come even more disposed to hear than to speak.

<sup>1</sup> At a Whig meeting held at Patchogue, Suffolk County, Long Island, N. Y. Boston Courier, September 25, 1840, reprinted from the N. Y. Herald report.

I come, to-day, to hear the sentiments of the people of Suffolk County on those topics that agitate the times. I am much too old to make an oratorical speech. I am too old for that! If, my friends, there have been times and occasions in the course of my past career in which I might have wished to attempt a display of anything like oratory, that time is far gone by.

But although I do not wish to do this, yet I have opinions upon the present state of things, and I come to speak those opinions plainly to you, and to hear yours in return. I come to make no flourishes nor figures, but to make a plain speech to the intelligence of this county.

That the times are most extraordinary, no one will attempt to deny. That fact is admitted by all. And the question is, what ought to be done in relation to the present state of things? I do not come here to revile or to reproach any one, or to set up a standard of excellence for myself or my friends, as being pure and without reproach; but I come to speak to the whole people of this place on the subjects which alike interest all.

Party distinctions are but transient; but the distinction that we should all be proud of, and that should particularly distinguish the great people of this great nation, is, that we are free and independent, — the only true free people on the face of the earth. And this is the distinction that shall ever be deeply prized by me, and by my children to the last moment of our lives.

Now, my friends, you know I have been some time in public life, and I have been too long in the councils of the nation not to be in some degree a marked character. Not “marked down,” as you say of quail and partridges, — no, not just yet. But I am somewhat marked, and what I say will therefore be marked and commented upon by others than yourselves.

You’ll be addressed to-morrow by a gentleman of high talent — a distinguished supporter of the administration, one of the most distinguished, certainly in that portion of the councils of the nation to which I belong. He’ll not say — but others will say for him — it will be said, and all the papers favorable to the administration will say — “Don’t believe Webster, that old aristocrat; he never tells the truth; he’s an aristocrat, and you can’t believe anything that he says.”

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Now, my friends, it would be very strange if I, who have grown up among the people, and as it were of the people, should, at my time of life, take to aristocracy. I have ploughed and sowed and reaped the acres that were my father's, and that now are mine. By the aid of those valuable institutions, public schools, and the guidance and assistance of the best of parents, I was enabled to get such an education as fitted me to come to the bar; I have been some time in public life: I never held an office in the course of that life, except such an one as comes directly from the bestowment of the people; I have had no money out of the public treasury, except the pay as a member of Congress; I have no family relations — no one in any way or shape — none with blood of mine flowing in their veins, that ever held an office or touched a cent of the public moneys.

After all this, I shall still be told that I'm an aristocrat. Very well. Prove it. If I am one, I am quite false to my origin and connections, as well as to my nature. By what vote of mine in the public councils of the country, am I to be proved an aristocrat?

I do not come here, however, to speak of men (much less of myself) but of principles; and therefore what such men as I am are, is comparatively unimportant. It has indeed happened to me to be in Congress for many years. If in the course of that time I have done anything that was worthy of approbation, it was done in the exigency of peculiar events, when I thought the Constitution was in danger, and when it was my duty to uphold it.

My prejudices for one set of men and another set of men, never made me cease to defend that glorious Constitution which our fathers obtained by a miracle, and which flourished by a miracle ever since.

It was in 1832 or '33 that the great question of nullification excited so much attention. South Carolina set up her opinion against that of all the other States, and said that she would maintain that opinion by force of arms. She raised an army, armed the soldiers, adopted every means of defence, and prepared to resist the laws of the United States at the Charleston custom-house.

It was then that General Jackson came out with his procla-

mation. He said that one State ought not to resist all the States, and I thought so too. It was not democratic. Some persons, on the contrary, said it was the true meaning of the Constitution. You know who was at the head of that movement. It was Mr. Calhoun, then also at the head of a great party. By a close vote, that great question was decided. Myself and my own friends were not favorable to Jackson's policy; we were unfavorable to his financial policy in relation to the Bank of the United States; but did we join those who were opposed to General Jackson in this great movement, in order to crush his administration? I could have done it in a single hour. In the position in which things then stood, if we could have consented to have seen the Constitution beaten down and trampled under foot, we had the whole play in our hands.

Was it for me, in a great contest like this, to say that we did n't like our leader, although he was upholding the Constitution, and therefore unite with the enemies of that Constitution, in order to crush both it and him? Oh, no. And I tell you, that when that affair was over, General Jackson, with a degree of grateful respect which I shall always properly remember, clasped my hand and said, "If you and your Northern friends had not come in as you did, Calhoun and his party would have crushed me and the Constitution."

And yet I shall go for a very bad aristocrat. And echo will tell, in a thousand ways, from Brooklyn to Montauk Point, that Mr. Webster is a sad old aristocrat, and knows nothing of democracy, and particularly of the democracy of this country.

On the other hand, our opponents know Suffolk well; they study it; they know that it was distinguished in the Revolution for its stern democracy, tried and proved. They remember that it produced the L'Hommedieus and the Floyds, and the Smiths and the Joneses — and they'll all come down here tomorrow as the Pharisees came of old — with their phylacteries, and the garbs of Democracy. And the word "Democracy," "Democracy," "Democracy," will occur as often among them as "ditto," "ditto," "ditto," in a tradesman's bill (laughter), or five shillings and eight pence in an attorney's bill.

Now, all I have to say to you, my friends, is, look at facts!

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Words are cheap—promises easy and cost nothing. But there is an old adage among farmers, that “fine words butter no parsnips.”

How do you do when you go out into the South Bay to shoot ducks? Don't you bough 'em all round, and manœuvre with the most specious appearances on the outside and in front? But isn't there an old king's arm behind all, and isn't there plenty of good gunpowder and lots of double B shot; and when you get well in among 'em, don't you let 'em have it? Now, then, what I have to say to you is, don't be web-footed!

I claim no more patriotism than others; but I claim just as much! Have I no stake in this fair inheritance of our country? Don't I wish to go down to my grave with my full share of its honors and its glories? Have I no interest or desire to protect what I have, that it may descend unblemished to my children and to my children's children? The man that says I am an aristocrat—is a liar!

I may be mistaken. I may err. I submit to the judgment of those who can see more clearly than myself when I am at fault. But the man that will not meet me fairly with argument, and uses idle and abusive declamation instead—and then will not come within reach of my arm, is not only a liar, but a coward.

In common with many others, I think it is necessary to change the administration. I don't mean to call names. It is not my habit to attack persons,—I leave that to those who feel ill-natured. I discuss principles; and at this moment (alluding to the news from Maine) I feel particularly good-natured.

I have no galled withers—I have nothing to fear; but, on the contrary, am hopeful of everything. I don't want to triumph in what is called the prospects of our party in the coming election. That election is settled already. But I wish all fair men who have hitherto supported the administration, to think and study facts—not to take their opinions from me, but to examine, inquire for themselves—throw off the shackles of party, and be guided by their own honest judgment.

I do not wish to give pain to any one. Stop! I take that back. Yes, I would like to give pain to some. Of those who

wish to support the administration, — if I could tell such facts as I know to some of them, as would put them in that kind of pain that would not let them sleep of nights, — I certainly should like to give such persons a little of that kind of pain.

I desire to put it upon that issue, — that if the measures of the present administration have been democratic, support them; if not, do not so. But do not take names for things, and professions for principles. By democratic measures, I mean such as the good old democrats of past times would have supported. Such measures as Chancellor Livingston would have supported; such as Mr. Jefferson would have supported; such as Virginia, the old pure school of democracy, would have supported. Such measures I advise you to support. But examine and inquire well for yourselves, and decide as you find.

The democratic head of this Democratic Government passed the Sub-Treasury Bill. Was this by a law of Congress, or a law of the executive? In 1837, when Mr. Van Buren proposed this measure, there was no one in Congress in favor of it. It was not liked, and it got very little support. Well, he held out four successive sessions of Congress, that his measure belongs to the important question of how best to keep all the public money; and yet, with this important subject, and executive influence, and the fatiguing drill of four sessions, it only at last got into the House of Representatives. And what was done then? It lay there for three months. It became a subject for considerable debate and dispute; at last it passed, and out of the two hundred and fifty members (I believe that's the number) who voted for it, they did n't alter a word or syllable — they did n't, as we say in common parlance, dot an *i* or cross a *t*.

Well, it was passed; and I'll venture to say that even the Parliament of Paris, in the ten years that preceded the Revolution, never passed an edict so completely submissive to royal authority, as did the House of Representatives, by passing the Sub-Treasury Bill, conform to executive authority.

How very democratic this conduct was! The people chose members of Congress to make laws, and they pass just such

laws as the President wishes them to pass. And I, who complain of this course of procedure, am an old aristocrat, and not to be believed.

Now ask our friends, when they come here to-morrow, if all the House dared to alter a syllable of that law; if they did n't pass it just in such a shape as the executive desired and dictated. And if they did — and they can't deny it, they won't deny it, — was there ever such a complete automaton? Such a perfect play of those little fellows — I won't mention names, as I might commit a breach of privilege — brought about by some one person, who moves the wires as he pleases.

Now, if the regular increase of executive influence be democratic, then by all means go for a renewal of Mr. Van Buren's lease. He'll give you enough of that. Why, as things are now, the office-holders can't live or breathe, but as they conform to the desires of their superiors; and yet the Constitution under which we live says that he has no superiors. Is not this, then, a gross attempt to fetter the free minds of a free people? They give a man an office, and say he is no longer a free agent. What shameful perversion of democracy!

And now let us see how it is with respect to the augmentation of the number of office-holders. Is it the present administration that extends the number? Take the custom-house of the city of New York as a criterion; I won't go to Illinois, or to Michigan, to the land offices there, because you can't easily see and examine for yourselves. But take your own great city, and take the published official documents, and you'll see that the custom-house officers are double in number to what they used to be. Where there were one hundred, now there are two hundred; for five hundred there are a thousand. And what is all this increase for? It can't be because they are wanted to attend to the legitimate business of the custom-house; because there were not half the number, when the duties were much greater. Very well, then, they must be wanted for an illegitimate purpose.

Now, as to the expense of the Government, we all know that in Adams's time thirteen million dollars a year was the most

that was spent. The expenses then never averaged that sum. Now, at the close of 1837, they were run up to thirty-nine millions! I don't say that this is conclusive that the Government has been wasteful and extravagant. There has been occasion this year for extraordinary expenditures. We have had a Florida war, which Adams had not. And in my opinion, if he had been in office, we never should have had it.

Here, then, are the facts. They complain that Adams's administration was wasteful and profligate, because it spent only thirteen million dollars. Now, then, call on them to show why they spend thirty-nine millions. It's a case that calls for an account, a strict and correct one; and they ought to render it.

To recur a moment to the custom-house of New York. The expenses now are three-fold more than they were in Jonathan Thompson's time. Inquire how this is; and obtain a full and satisfactory answer, and then ponder over it. It does not appear like that truly stern economy that should characterize a democratic government.

A recent governor of this Commonwealth, in his place in the Senate, expressed the true feelings of his heart, and those of his party, when, flushed with the triumphs of victory, he was justifying the removal of every one from office that was opposed to his party and his measures. He then made use of that remarkably characteristic expression, "Do not the spoils of victory belong to the conquerors?"

That is applied to a party that seize on all the offices, and turn out all that differ from them when they obtain the victory. Is that democratic? Are the offices merely made to be sported with in this way? Are offices made for mere adventurers? Is that the spirit of the Constitution of this free country?

In a word, is that democratic? Stick to the old text. Is not the government instituted for the good of the people? Should not a government be checked so as to possess no more power than good people require? Should a government have any more money at command than is absolutely necessary for its simplest wants? All this used to be democratic!

But take a view of what the present Government calls de-



mocracy. Why, you may look for a description of it in all the books, from the Primer to the English Reader — run the range of the whole vocabulary, and you'll not find a word about it in all the good old democratic schools.

Then keep to this. Are the measures of the present administration democratic? Why the leading measure, and the only measure, is the Sub-Treasury. From Alpha to Omega, it's all "Sub-Treasury!" — "Sub-Treasury!" — "Sub-Treasury!" And its echoes have not yet ceased, and will not cease, till the administration go out of office. It puts one in mind of Orpheus going to seek Eurydice, — this cry:

"Eurydice the woods,  
Eurydice the floods,  
Eurydice the rocks and hollow mountains rang."

And with our Government it is —

Sub-Treasury the woods,  
Sub-Treasury the floods,  
Sub-Treasury the rocks and hollow mountains ring.

But this subject I shall consider more fully by and by. It draws after it another principle that is inseparable from its doctrine; and this is, that it is useful to reduce the prices of labor; that it is necessary to curtail the wages of the working man. The supporters of the Sub-Treasury scheme have said this; they have all said it. I do not see why Mr. Buchanan alone should be singled out to have this declaration fastened on him; he only said in a clear manner, what the others said not so clearly. And, it is, perhaps, not because they wish ill to the working man. But they have adopted the plan of the Sub-Treasury; and this plan, as a natural consequence, leads to the restriction and contraction of the currency, and as a matter of course to a reduction of prices. Well, they say that wages ought to be reduced. They must take up that position, or give up the Sub-Treasury; and if they give that up, they give up themselves.

You may take Calhoun, and Buchanan, and Walker, and Tappan, and you'll find that they have all declared this; they *all* say that it is necessary to reduce the prices of labor. I aver that! Mr. Tappan declared that labor ought to come

down to eleven cents a day. This I did not hear him say; he did not say it in Congress; but there are numerous affidavits of the fact that he said it out of Congress. I have heard the declarations of the leaders of the party in relation to this subject; I have seen and read their references to Cuba; I have seen the debates in the House of Representatives on the subject, published by authority; and this is the burden of the whole, that the wages of labor ought to come down.

They say that the poor petty states of the Mediterranean, — Naples, Corsica, Sardinia, Genoa, and others, — are proper examples for the people of the United States! Was ever anything heard so monstrous? Why, my friends, these gentlemen are party-mad; they have a sort of feeling on this subject that comes near insanity. They forget where they are; they forget that they are American citizens; they forget who and what are the laborers of this great nation, or they would never hold up to them the petty sovereignties of Europe as examples.

And is this course of conduct democratic? Why, the laborers of this country constitute fifteen out of sixteen of the entire population; I mean all who labor; all those who labor on their own farms, for they are laborers in the truest sense of the word; and all those who labor in shops, or in their own humble dwellings, on their own capital, or on the capital of others, these are fourteen out of fifteen of the whole people. And any system that professes to reduce the price of labor, reduces the wages of all these men. Is that good democratic doctrine? Let old Suffolk answer. (Loud cries of "No! No!") Is that the doctrine which constitutes the greatest good of the greatest number?

This doctrine, my friends, originated in a total misapprehension of the state of the laborers here, and the laborers in other countries. Look at Suffolk, for instance. You are not quite as democratic here as we are in old Massachusetts. You have many large farms, of from three hundred to five hundred acres in each, that have come to you by inheritance and other ways. We have scarcely any of these in Massachusetts. Well, how is it here? Don't you labor on your own farms? You know how you are enabled to manage in this way. But how many

of you, I would ask, can educate families on mere rent roll property? How many can give their children proper education by the income they obtain from land which they pay a rent for? None. In Massachusetts, none can afford to spend four thousand or five thousand dollars to bring up a family, out of property which they rent. But here, nine-tenths of you work on your own land. In Europe ninety-nine out of every one hundred work on other men's lands. Is your labor, by your own hands, at your own ploughs, in your own barns, reaping and thrashing your own wheat—lords of the soil, as you really are—to be compared to that of Europe, where ten thousand of the laborers don't own, amongst the whole of them, enough land to make one a grave? No. There's a vast difference in the state of the two. And the idea of comparing them arose altogether from a misapprehension of the condition of the laborers of the two countries. The example of Europe has miserably misled them to advocate the propriety of reducing the prices of labor here to the European standard.

A year ago I was in England, in the south of England, which is a little the poorest part of the country, and I was in the centre of England and in the north. And I was very particular to find out how the laborers fared there. It was a subject that deeply interested me, and I made particular inquiries to find out all about it. I wanted to know everything about it. And if I went away from my country an American, I came home three hundred thousand times more an American, to the backbone, than I was when I left here.

On the 22d of September, last year, I was in the south of England; and I found the price of labor there for a good man was seven shillings a week, and he has to board himself and his family. In the centre of England, which is the richest and best part of the country, and where the soil is more productive, in the midst of the harvest time, a good man can only get eighteen pence a day, or about thirty-three cents a day, and board himself and his family. In the south of Scotland he gets no more, and in the north he does n't get so much.

And in the midst of the best season of the year for laborers,

I have seen thousands of them going along the roadside with their sickles on their shoulders, desirous of working for one shilling sevenpence a day, and couldn't get it. That's labor in other countries — that's labor in Europe. Do we want to come to that? (Cries of "No! no!")

And now what I wish you all to do, is not to take my opinion or statements for this; but to go home and examine the subject for yourselves. And you will see that the Sub-Treasury scheme leads to this. Its friends say it does. Mr. Tappan says that the wages of labor must and ought to come down to eleven cents a day; and they, I think, must be disposed to thank him for little who will thank him for that. But go home and inquire all about this. Don't take the statement of that old aristocrat, Mr. Webster, for truth, unless you find it so.

There is not a more thoroughly independent set of people in the world than the community in this same county of Suffolk. Here you are all of you farmers. You have your fine lands stocked with cattle, your woods filled with game, your broad and beautiful bay; and when you have no desire to plough the land, you can take your boat and plough the ocean.

It is true that your soil is not so fertile as that of Michigan, Kentucky, or some of the Western and Southern States. But you have one great advantage which they have not. You are near a great market, and that market must be supplied. If prices are bad, it is true that you suffer a little. But prices are never so bad as to distress any of you, on account of the many resources which you have to avail yourselves of.

Well, in this respect you are fortunate. But remember that the country is not all so fortunate, and so well situated as you are. There is the great commercial interest that has suffered, and that is still suffering so deeply; and there are the great manufacturing districts that are suffering. I do not mean merely the large cotton and woollen manufactories of the Eastern States, but the small ones scattered all over the Northern States, where they make shoes and hats, and carriages and harnesses. All these are completely cut up, and their business is gone.

And now, my friends, it is for you, as you value not only

your own prosperity, but the welfare of the whole community, the prosperity of your neighbors and fellow citizens, to say whether you don't wish to see all portions and all classes of this great country flourishing and happy. And then look at the Sub-Treasury scheme and say if it is a scheme under which all classes of the community can flourish!

Inquire, carefully and fully, into the state of business all over the country; ascertain what has caused all the prostration in trade and commerce. For I think you hear and see much more of the storm than you feel yourselves. Providence has kindly protected you from the violent changes that have affected all those communities in the country whose prosperity depends upon the production and disposal of some one great article, as the cotton and tobacco of the South, or the wheat of Ohio and the West.

How fortunately you are situated! You raise all that is necessary to supply your wants yourself. You live well — I believe you have a sort of universal taste for that kind of thing, by what I have seen since I have been amongst you. You send the surplus of your produce to market. Remember, only the surplus. If prices are high, that affects only the surplus. If prices are low, still it is only the surplus that is affected. And if prices are down one-half, only the surplus feels that fall.

But it is not so with the cotton of the South. The planter can't eat it, he can't drink it, he can't smoke it. He has to sell the whole of it, and if prices fall, the fall runs through the whole. And he has to buy all that he wants for his own use out of the diminished sum which his produce yields him.

But with you the case is very different. You consume nine-tenths, and sell one-tenth. The same thing holds true of the great grain regions that I have stated of the cotton regions, and so of all those districts that raise provisions and produce for exportation. You have the great market of New York close to you; the people there must eat, and you must feed them. But take Ohio and Michigan. If the market for their produce falls, it affects the farmers' products and labor for the whole year.

Now, then, carefully examine these subjects, and you will find that the war against labor is a war against the very

vitality of the United States. And I wish the price of labor to be kept up. There is no more sure criterion of the prosperity of a country than when you hear everybody say, "Our wages are high!" If wages are high, depend upon it the great mass of the community are happy and prosperous.

How different is the situation of our glorious America from the condition of Europe.

Do the laborers of the countries there send their children to schools, furnish them with all kinds of excellent books, and educate them in a manner to fit them for filling any station in the country? Why, there, such a thing is never heard of. Such a thing is not known in those countries where the cheap jackets come from, where you hear so much of the cheap labor obtained through the land. They never are and never will be able to do as you do.

Away, then, with the insane project of reducing the price of the labor of those hard hands and honest hearts who are the pride, support, and glory of the country. Away at once and forever with all comparisons that are to degrade these men — such men — to the level of the laborers of Europe.

And now, then, in leaving that subject, I say that the whole doctrine of the administration, in regard to the price of labor, is not a very democratic doctrine.

Now, let us examine a little into this militia business, as some call it — this standing army project, as others call it. Some say it is Mr. Van Buren's plan; others declare that the whole project originated and ended with Mr. Poinsett. I will state the principal points of this project. And what'll I do next? Why, I'll not call Mr. Van Buren a Cæsar, or a Cromwell, or a great military hero — no, I'll not do that — who wishes to overturn the liberties of his country.

I'll bring no railing accusation against the Government. But I'll tell you to get a copy of this project of Mr. Poinsett's; read it carefully — study it well until you thoroughly understand it; and then you need not rely on an old aristocrat for a description of its absurdities. And then I'll ask you to say if that is a very democratic measure.

I will tell you a few of its provisions, and in doing so, I'll treat it somewhat historically. Mr. Van Buren's last message

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to Congress was dated on the second of December. You remember there was a difficulty in organizing the House at first, and it was late in the month before the message was read to the members. Well, here is his last message to Congress, which contains the outline of this project of Mr. Poinsett's. (Here Mr. Webster took from his hat the document in question.)

You know it has been customary, in compliance with a law of Congress, for the last ten or fifteen years, for the heads of departments to furnish and send in a report in relation to all important matters connected with their department. Well, in accordance with this, Mr. Poinsett reported an outline of a plan for training the militia, as it was called. Mr. Van Buren connected this outline with his general message to Congress, and said that he could not too warmly recommend it to the consideration of the members.

Well, about two months after this, Mr. Poinsett, in compliance with the call of Congress, sent in the full details of this plan. But before this time, the outline of it, as embodied in Mr. Van Buren's message, had spread over the country, and had attracted considerable attention. It had particularly aroused the attention of that good old Commonwealth, that was also religiously jealous and watchful of liberty; I mean Virginia, one of the first and best of democratic States, and one that has always remained true to its principles.

This project of Mr. Poinsett, the mere outline of which had only reached them, aroused the whole State. It spread like wildfire through the country; it drew on it universal attention, and has done more to revolutionize Virginia than all other causes put together. It caused that ancient mother of States to put forth all her energies, all her talent, and her heart to effect the prostration of the projectors of this plan, and did more to work a change than can by possibility be believed.

Well, here is this plan of Mr. Poinsett's in all its details, and here are Mr. Van Buren's remarks on the subject as contained in his message:—

“The present condition of the defences of our principal seaports and navy yards, as represented by the Secretary of War, calls for the early and serious attention of Congress; and as

connecting itself intimately with the subject, I cannot recommend too strongly to your consideration the plan submitted by that officer for the organization of the militia of the United States.”

I mean to state facts. When I merely deliver my opinions, you may take them as you please, for what you consider them worth; but when I have to state facts, I feel it a solemn duty which I owe to others and to myself to make nothing but entire and exact statements. I will read the substance of that outline for your satisfaction and information, which was to provide for organizing the militia on a large scale, and which the President sent to Congress, indorsed with the above recommendation, and which was written on the thirtieth of November. Here it is:—

Mr. Webster here read the plan proposed by Mr. Poinsett for organizing the militia, as contained in Mr. Poinsett’s report on that subject laid before Congress.

Here, then (he continued), we have a plan for raising two hundred thousand soldiers who are each to serve for eight years, and their number permanently kept up by voluntary enlistment or by compulsory drafts. We see here a project for dividing the United States. It was first to be into eight districts, but was afterwards changed to ten; to keep one hundred thousand men under arms in one body in a state of training for four years, and then to keep one hundred thousand in another body in what is called a state of reserve. The first one hundred thousand are to be drilled and disciplined for four years; then they are to pass into the condition of a corps of reserve; and their places to be supplied by a fresh one hundred thousand, and so on to the end of the chapter. Well, this plan was presented to the President by Mr. Poinsett; the President laid it before Congress; he said, “this plan I cannot too cordially recommend to you.”

Well, in a month or two after the message was sent to Congress, Mr. Poinsett sent in his plan—and what was it? He estimated the whole militia force of the United States at one million five hundred thousand. These he divided into three classes. The first class included the whole, which he



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called the mass. Then one hundred thousand men were to be drawn from the States by voluntary enlistment, or by draft, if necessary, in proportion to the population of each State. They were to be drilled once or twice a year, or oftener, if the President saw fit.

The great State of New York alone made one district. There was no other State large enough. Her number to be contributed to the whole body is eighteen thousand. These were all to turn out, whether they would or no. The place for drilling was to be appointed where the President saw fit, and they were to be drilled by such rules as the President might think proper to prescribe.

Another clause in this celebrated plan says, that when these one hundred thousand men are called out for drill, they are to clothe and arm themselves effectually, and are to be considered to all intents and purposes as being in the actual service of the United States. That brings them within the force of the general law now existing, which says that when the militia are called into actual service of the United States, they are to be deemed subject to all the rules and articles of war which regulate and control the standing army.

Those one hundred thousand, thus drilled for four years, pass then into the state of an army of reserve; and another one hundred thousand supply their place, and undergo the same treatment. So that, if this law pass, we shall have at all times one hundred thousand men under drill, and one hundred thousand men drilled, ready to be called into actual service at any time; and the rest of the whole force to be called on in case of an emergency.

And this is the great militia plan of Mr. Poinsett and Mr. Van Buren. However, do you get it, and read it. Don't trust me in the matter. It is an important one. But above all, don't go to the polls till you have read it. I have here an authenticated copy; I'll leave it with you, if any press in the county will undertake to print it.

I say flatly that this plan is unconstitutional. You've all read the Constitution; you know what it says. You know that those noble and glorious fathers of that great instrument, in their extreme anxiety to preserve inviolate the

sacred liberties of the country, were jealous, above all, of the militia. They were afraid to trust the President with too much power, by giving him the control over the militia. Look back at the debates and proceedings of those who framed that instrument.

The Constitution says that Congress shall have power to call out the militia.

“To provide for calling forth the militia to execute the laws of the union, suppress insurrections, and repel invasions ;

“To provide for organizing, arming, and disciplining the militia, and for governing such part of them as may be employed in the service of the United States, reserving to the States respectively the appointment of the officers, and the authority of training the militia according to the discipline prescribed by Congress.”

And there the Constitution stops. That is to say, when an invasion takes place, or a rebellion breaks out in the country, the President may call on Congress to exercise the power delegated to it by the Constitution, and to provide for the calling forth the militia to execute the laws of the Union, suppress insurrections and repel invasions. But if the Constitution stands thus, the President cannot have the power to call out and prescribe such rules to this new militia as the plan proposes.

The Constitution expressly says that the training of the militia shall be reserved to the States themselves. This act of Mr. Poinsett or Mr. Van Buren says that they shall be trained when and where the President thinks fit, and according to such rules as he may prescribe. Now lay the two side by side. Put that and that together, and see how they compare with each other. Take them home, read the Constitution, and read the other, and you'll find them just as I say.

And now, then, to resort to the line of my argument. What do we want with all this force of two hundred thousand men? In a time of peace, of universal tranquillity and repose, with no neighbors on our frontier that we care a button for, with none on earth that we are afraid of, to have

an armed force in the pay of the Government, and entirely under its control, of one hundred thousand! Is that a very democratic doctrine? Is it very democratic to put all this military power in the hands of the President? If it is, I should like to know in what school that democracy was learned.

What good patriot would wish to do this? What good patriot would want to possess such power? I don't mean that this thing would be dangerous in the hands of the mere President of to-day. I don't mean to charge him with desiring to place himself at the head of two hundred thousand, to control the liberties of a free people. Indeed, Mr. Van Buren says in one of his letters that he never had an idea of doing so; he says, moreover, that he should as soon think of placing himself at the head of two hundred thousand wild beasts. And between you and me, — I mean no disrespect, — I should think that he would look about as well at the head of one as at the head of the other.

But I'll ask what government, through the histories of the Republics of Greece and Rome — what government of a popular form in any age or part of the world, ever fell, but by surrendering its rights to those who said that they would not do any harm; and who, perhaps, in their own day and generation, never did do any harm.

Still, I don't believe that there is any prospect that we shall be embroiled in a war in our time. I don't believe that any European army would be foolish enough to come here to attempt to trouble us. And if it did, the only things that we want to repel an army are steam batteries and shore forts, well manned. But in the name of common sense, what do you want with one hundred thousand men in the interior, armed and under the pay of Government, in a time of universal peace?

But what we want is a good system of shore defence. We have a great many good forts, from Georgia to Maine, along the line of our coast, but there is n't a man in them. I am willing to go all lengths for any reasonable expense, necessary to support a proper system of national defence — to man

these forts, to erect steam batteries, to furnish ammunition. All this I go for.

But look at this subject in every point of view, and examine well all its important bearings, and say if you mean in your day to set such an example. For my own part, I can say that I don't mean to do it.

Still I don't mean to charge it on the Government, that they desire to have this system in effective operation, in order that they may control the votes of the men. But just look at the thing. With one hundred thousand men scattered through the different States, in large bodies of five thousand and ten thousand men, all in the pay and under the control of the Government, that Government might, by possibility, exercise over these men, through the process of the right of suffrage, an influence that would be very dangerous to the Constitution.

But then, in another point of view, just look at the inconvenience attending the prosecution of this plan. The place appointed for drilling for this State may be Buffalo; and those who live at Montauk Point would have to be armed and equipped at Buffalo, to drill, according to the regulations of the standing army. Or the place appointed might be Montauk Point; and those who live at Buffalo would have to go down to Montauk Point to drill.

It is true that some are exempt from this inconvenience. The office-holders of the custom-house, post-office, and so on, are exempt; but all the rest have got to go, and no mistake.

But there is another point to be considered in relation to this law. I do not know how it is in your State, but in the New England States we have a large number of that respectable body of people called "Friends," and in all the New England States, all the militia laws have an exemption in favor of all those who have conscientious scruples against serving in the militia. But there is none here in this place; all must go — broad-brims and all. They have all got to march when the time comes.

Now, whatever we ought to do in case of war, or an important emergency, there is no sense, no justice, in making

men neglect all the duties of domestic and social life for all such projects — such humbugs.

Look at it. Go read it. If the bill becomes a law there will be no exceptions. Stop. I said none. The custom-house officers, post-office clerks, and other office-holders, will be exempt; their services are required elsewhere; they have more important duties to attend to for the administration than drilling in the militia. They have to drill in another manner.

Now, my friends, if this measure were at all necessary, the expense would be nothing; if it were necessary the inconvenience would be nothing. If invasion required us to march to the frontier or sea-board, all would go; but there must be an occasion; there must be a cause, and then all would go cheerfully.

But after all, this project is a poor apery, a miserable mimicry of foreign establishments. And, by the by, it's one of the great mistakes in the conduct of this Government that it is so prone to ape foreign governments. It is so in the case of labor; it is so in the case of the Sub-Treasury; for the plan of which every miserable petty monarchy in Europe was looked to for an example. And it is so in the case of this military project.

Yet Mr. Poinsett is quite a gentleman. But then the fact is that he is scheming. Mr. Poinsett wants to produce a striking impression, and I think he'll succeed.

But what we want to get at is this. Ask our friends, when they come here to-morrow, did Mr. Van Buren see this outline? Did his message contain it? And ask if he recommended it; then ask if the Constitution says that the training of the militia shall be left to the States themselves? and bring them right up to the bull ring!

I shall not be here to reply to what they say. I shall leave that to you. They will say that Mr. Van Buren is not answerable for this project; that he did not see it in detail. That Mr. Van Buren says he never read it, till it was sent to Congress. Well, then, if he did not read the outline, ask them another question. Ask them what Mr. Van Buren has done with Mr. Poinsett since he has read it.

General Jackson used to say that what his secretaries did he took the responsibility of. That they were pens, which wrote what he told them. I don't think, however, that that was a correct course to take. But on the other hand, Mr. Van Buren has seen this plan ever since March last, and had leisure to think it over and act upon it. Very well. Then where is Mr. Poinsett? (A pause.) Why, (laying his hand on the reporter's shoulder), just as close and cosey as he ever was.

Now, if he thought his plan was a dangerous one, why did he not dismiss the Secretary? If he thought it was only an injudicious plan, still he should make the sacrifice. And I say, that so long as he retains them all in office, after he hears and sees all that they do, he makes it all his own. He says, "Oh, but I did n't see it." Very well, you see it now, don't you? "Yes." Well, what do you say now? "Why, I don't say anything about it."

Now, this is a very important subject. Look at what Virginia has done. Look at the conduct of Leigh, and all the great men there; they have completely changed their views. This has created a revolution in Virginia, because they are so jealous of liberty.

I will not go into particulars about the Sub-Treasury. It is founded on a false principle; in my judgment it is wrong altogether; and therefore I am less anxious to go into details.

It is founded on a law that government should take care of itself and its dues, and leave the people to take care of themselves in everything that relates to the currency. No man wishes to deny that we ought to have a sound currency. A currency of sound paper based on specie. But the Government is bound to regulate the commerce between the States and within the States; and how are we to regulate that, if we can't regulate the foundation of commerce, which is — money?

How is commerce and the exchanges now? Devoid of all regulation. If you are in New York and happen to have some Philadelphia money with you, you can only get ninety-five cents on the dollar for it. Why, it is a thing unheard of, that the rate of exchange should be five per cent between two large cities, not one hundred miles apart, and only six hours' travel distant.

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What should we think of it, if we were to hear the rate of exchange between Liverpool and Manchester, or London, was five per cent? What would be said, if the Prime Minister of England thought proper to collect the Queen's taxes in a particular kind of money, and the large rents in the same, and pay the salaries of government officers in the same way, and leave all the rest of the community to take their chance to get what they could and how they could?

Why, not only would he not be able to keep his place, but he might think himself uncommonly fortunate if he was enabled to keep his head. And yet our Government acts in such a way. It takes all sorts of care of itself, and leaves the people to do that which it knows they can't do. For the people can't make a currency — it's the government's business to do that — and it won't do anything of the kind for the people. How very democratic that is!

Mr. Van Buren says that the people have no more right to call on the Government to furnish a uniform and wholesome system of exchanges, than they have to call on the Government for horses and wagons to transport their merchandise to market.

Is that an analogy for a statesman? Is that an argument for the head of a government? Can the people regulate the currency? Can the States do it? Certainly not.

It is a national, a government affair; and when the general Government, that can do it, says that it won't do it, where are the people to look for it to be done?

A friend of mine, on my return from Europe, asked me if I remembered telling him before I went, that in six months time all the Southern banks would suspend. I told him that I did not remember saying so. But I also told him that if they were all to resume to-morrow, in a very short time, not so soon perhaps as six months, they would all suspend again. And while we have so many banks without control, it will continue to be so as long as the Government refuses to regulate matters.

We may have a good currency by accident, at times; so a ship at sea, without rudder or compass, may fall in with favorable tides and winds, and reach her destined port by accident. But it will be next to a miracle if she does so; and it will be

next to a miracle if we get a good currency by accident. We want, certainly, a good firm hand at the helm, and a good look-out ahead to guard against all chances and emergencies.

I say, therefore, that a government that puts its own interests above the interests of the people, in the great matter of a circulating medium, is not a democratic government.

I don't mean to say much about the expenses of the Government. But there is one point that requires a passing notice. The Florida war. Up to March, 1839, we had expended seventeen million dollars for that; and I suppose by this time that twenty millions have been expended. Well, what is the Florida war, after all?

Six years ago, General Jackson told me that there were not over seven hundred fighting men among the Seminoles in Florida. And there's a report down to 1838, which says there were not then six hundred fighting Indians. And against this poor array of poor Indians, we have spent twenty million dollars.

Does not this require looking into? I tell you that the Florida war is a job. And until there is a loud expression of public opinion against it, the job will go on. This is my opinion.

Those who live on the frontier, who trade alternately with the Indians and contract for the army, are making large fortunes by this war. Do they want it to cease, bloodhounds or no bloodhounds? No, no. If the war were to last till the ingathering of the Jews, they would be glad of it. For it enriches them.

Why, among other items, we find forty steamboats chartered at four hundred and sixty-five dollars a day, and others at four thousand dollars a month.

Then there are two or three prices paid for corn, seven dollars a day for a horse and cart; twenty dollars a cord paid for wood brought from New Orleans to one of the forts, and when it reached the landing in Florida, the oak trees were so thick they could n't get it to the fort.

There is the matter of defalcations — that deserves a word. I will bring no railing accusation against the administration, because some of its subordinate branches have defaulted. I'll



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not say that the Government appointed bad men to office knowing them to be bad. But I remember that I asked General Jackson once, when the defalcations in the Indian Department became so enormous, how it was that nearly all the Indian agents turned out to be such rogues? "The Lord knows," said he, "for I don't!" "I try to select honest men for the office, but as soon as they get out of my sight, they all turn rascals." So it is with the present administration; they, no doubt, mean very well, but they are uncommonly unfortunate.

And, now, I'll tell you another question to ask my brother Wright, when he comes here to-morrow. He's a fair man, and he'll answer truly, if he answers at all. But he won't like to, though. Ask him if there is any money in the treasury. Ask him about the five millions which the Government were authorized to take up, — to exchange with the banks for specie — not to borrow, remember; oh, no. Ask him if Mr. Van Buren has not already exchanged four million nine hundred thousand dollars of it? He has n't one hundred thousand dollars left of the five millions. He has exchanged it all for specie with the banks — not borrowed a cent.

The expenses are heavy; the treasury is poor. The appropriations of Congress, in 1837, were thirty-nine millions. This was the regular appropriation. But there have been many irregular appropriations.

The amount of defalcations by the custom-house officers and the land officers, during the present administration, has been two million dollars. There has been more stolen than during the whole of the previous administrations put together.

No wonder, then, that the treasury is poor. There are so many regular appropriations, and so many irregular appropriations by individuals, that the treasury is like a cask, tapped at both ends; and that, you know, will soon run dry.

But as the treasury is poor, many have asked, how are you going to replenish it? What would you do? Why, go to the custom-house and tax luxuries. Lay a duty on the silk goods which are imported annually to the amount of twenty millions of dollars from Canton and France, which do not now pay a cent of duty.

Why not lay a tax on the wines, that to the value of two

millions of dollars are imported annually here, which don't now pay a cent. Is this the doctrine of democracy; to tax everything else but luxuries?

There is the plan of Mr. Rhett of South Carolina, the firm friend of Mr. Calhoun, the firm friend of Van Buren, who wishes to tread in the footsteps of General Jackson. Well, what does he propose? Not to tax luxuries, but to levy a direct tax on houses and land.

Is this democracy? Is this true democratic doctrine? We last year imported one hundred and fifty millions more than we wanted, as if it were done solely to ruin and overrun our domestic manufactures. Yet Mr. Van Buren says we ought not to borrow any money abroad for canals, railroads, and other species of internal improvements, but send our produce abroad, and import more goods.

Well, what do we want any more goods for? Do we want any more silks, or cloths, or cottons that flood in upon us, crushing our manufactures? (Cries of "No! no!") Yet in his last annual message, Mr. Van Buren reprobates the policy of borrowing money on canals, railroads, and state stocks, because if we don't do so, we can import more foreign comforts.

Well, for my part, I have enough of foreign comforts. I want more American comforts. I want our common home supported and made prosperous, and the people at home will be much better off for it.

Then there is the subject of the assumption of the state debts by the general Government. Within the last few years, you know there has been a great system of internal improvements matured and carried on. This has made New York a debtor state; and Indiana a debtor state, and several of the others are debtor states. Now, on this subject, there can be found no better ground of accusation against the Government than this question of the assumption of state debts.

You remember that, based on Mr. ——'s resolution on this subject in Congress, came Mr. Grundy's report, as long as the shore of your beautiful island, the sole object of which was to depress American credit abroad, and the burden of which was, that it was the policy of the Whigs, if General Harrison was

elected, to pass a law for Congress to assume the debts of the States.

And more than all, it was even said, my friends, that I went to England to see the holders of these state bonds, and that I saw Mr. Baring, and made arrangements by which I was to get a good fee, provided I would use my influence to get Congress to assume the state debts.

Why, my friends, I never heard of the thing till I heard of it in my seat in the national councils. I know no authority possessed by Congress by which it can assume the debts of the States. No one ever proposed such a thing, except one man; and I'll tell you who he was presently. No one supposes it constitutional. I would as soon think of proposing to put every man, woman, and child in the country on the pension list, as to propose such a thing.

But one man has several times not only mentioned this matter, but recommended the assuming the state debts! And that's Levi Woodbury!

And in one instance the Government did assume the state debts. When there was money in the treasury, Mr. Van Buren recommended that Congress should buy the state bonds issued for state railroads and canals. (Here a loud voice in the crowd cried out, "Not Van Buren—it was Woodbury.")

I ask Mr. Van Buren's pardon. I meant Mr. Woodbury. For as one star differeth from another star in glory, so do men differ from one another. And I will not do injustice to Mr. Van Buren by comparing the two men.

In one instance I have said it was done. You know that Mr. Smithson left a large legacy to be applied to certain purposes in this country. Well, Congress passed a law promising solemnly that the money should be kept safely and properly; and yet Mr. Woodbury went and put it into the weakest state bonds in the Union. Arkansas has the whole of it.

And now he began to talk about the assuming the state debts being a Whig measure; he who was the first to propose and the first to do it. Ask Mr. Wright about that. He'll not deny it. He can't. But he'll say (here Mr. Webster modulated his voice to imitate Mr. Wright), "Gentlemen, I don't justify it; but the Secretary of the Treasury, no

doubt, acted to the best of his judgment, and it is n't for me to judge him in his official acts."

In dismissing the subject, I'll repeat the question, whether a government that seeks to enlarge its power by every means, and in every possible form — that seeks to obtain the disposal of a large military force, that supports a system to reduce the price of labor, that has one currency for the Government, and another worse than nothing for the people, that exhausts a treasury by jobs, and evinces no desire to replenish it in a proper manner, — I repeat, whether a government that does these things, has any right to your support as a democratic government, and then I leave the subject.

And now let me observe that you have two men before you as candidates for the presidency, Mr. Van Buren and General Harrison. I shall not say much about them. We all know what General Harrison is. He is the son of one of the signers of the Declaration of Independence; he comes of a good stock; he was bred in a good school, where he early imbibed the true democratic principles of Mr. Jefferson; he has proved himself a brave man by his defence of his country against foreign and domestic foes; and he has well and ably filled several civil offices for his fellow citizens.

I believe, also, that he is a man who will practise what he professes. They say that he lives in the West. And they talk about what he eats, — I mean what he drinks, — and the house he lives in. They say he drinks hard cider and lives in a log-cabin. Well, I believe a man may be very honest for all that. And I think, too, that he is much better than they who are all talk and no cider.

I have been in his log-cabin. He lives in it still. And he has made an addition to it, as many of us do. He keeps a horse. Well, I found him to be a very hospitable gentleman; the string of his latch is not pulled in. And I give him my confidence.

And now I'll give you one other opinion, and you may judge of the values of the others by the accuracy of that. And it is that General Harrison will be the next President of the United States.

I say that he will be elected. He will have a large major-

ity in your own State; he will have a large majority in my own State; he will have a large majority in all the New England States, and he will have a large majority in most of the other States of the Union. And, if we were so disposed, even now, and were to use our utmost efforts to effect it, we could no more prevent his election than we can stay the going down of the sun.

And, if this opinion does not turn out to be true, then say that you 'd not believe a word said by that old aristocrat, Mr. Webster!

And I am sure that he would be glad to know that you of this good old democratic county support him. His family were from New Jersey, but settled and lived on Long Island; and it would gratify him to receive the support of the farmers of Long Island.

A voice: "His wife is a native of Southold."

I am informed that his wife is a native of this county — of Southold. Well, that's another reason why you should support him, and why he will feel proud of that support.

But if, in the free exercise of your right and honest judgments, you vote for the other man for President, General Harrison will not reproach you for it. It will make no difference to him. Your interests and my interests, and all our interests, he will consider as confided to him, and he'll do justice alike to all.

Gentlemen, thanking you for the patience with which you have heard me express my opinions on these important topics, and hoping and believing that should I never have the pleasure to see you *all* again, yet hoping and believing with those I do see that I shall be able to rejoice with good feeling, and to grasp the hand of every American, with the assurance of good times and a return to prosperity; — in the hope of all this, and the full assurance of all this, I bid you an affectionate farewell.

# Speech at New York

NOVEMBER 4, 1842.<sup>1</sup>

THE news of the ratification by Great Britain of the Treaty of Washington having been received, the Chamber of Commerce of New York waited in a body on Mr. Webster for the purpose of expressing their high sense of his service in negotiating the treaty. Mr. Webster made the following reply :

IT so happened, Mr. President, from reasons to which it is not necessary to allude on the present occasion, that the adjustment of certain questions in dispute between the United States and Great Britain had made little recent advance towards a termination, until a change had taken place in the administration of both governments. Soon after that event an occurrence took place upon the northern frontier, producing considerable excitement and some alarm for the peace of the two countries. In this position of affairs, the English Government thought proper, both as a measure of respect to the American Government, and as the best means of facilitating an amicable settlement of difficulties, to send a mission to the United States. The President received that mission in the spirit in which he considered it had originated, and it was his pleasure to direct me, under his authority, to undertake the management of the subsequent negotiations. It was not to be reasonably expected that the final result of these negotiations should, amidst the variety of opinion that necessarily prevailed, prove entirely acceptable to every individual in the community. I trust, however, that I may flatter myself that the general result of those negotiations appears, in the opinion of the great mass of our countrymen, to be entitled to confidence. Mr. President, the occurrence to which I have alluded as having taken place on the northern frontier was soon followed by another at the south, which was regarded with great interest by our fellow citizens of the Southern States. This made it necessary,

<sup>1</sup> From the report in Niles' Register, November 12, 1842.

in the judgment of the President, that in the conduct of the negotiations, a view should be taken of all the questions immediately pending between the two governments, and which interested some of our people at the North and some of them at the South, and some in all portions of the country. And it is no merit, gentlemen, because it is a mere matter of duty to bring to the discussion of these subjects of controversy between our own government and foreign states, a disposition to take a large and comprehensive view of things — to be actuated by a general, I may say, an universal American spirit and American feeling, knowing no local divisions and governed by no exclusive regard to any particular interest.

And I need not say to you, sir, who have so much experience in these affairs, that the strength, power, and efficiency of all our transactions with foreign governments depend essentially on the cordial unanimity of the people and their representatives, and on the latter being sustained by the general voice of the whole community. Because no government that has not this general strength and support stands a fair chance in its conduct of important affairs with the great and powerful and acute governments of modern times. No one, therefore, Mr. President, need make any merit of acting on all such subjects with this spirit of impartiality and justice. It must necessarily happen that in the conduct of such a government as ours — including such a variety of interests, stretching out over such a vast continent and composed of so many distinct governments besides the general one — it must happen in such a state of things that we shall have differences of opinion, differences of judgment in regard to domestic affairs. This cannot be avoided and cannot be expected to be avoided. Nevertheless, in our transactions with foreign states, and especially the leading governments of the other world, all of whom watch, if not with jealousy, yet with care, their interests, public duty and the safety and honor of the country require that we should present to all foreign nations a firm, united, unbroken front. It is this union — it is the general conviction gone abroad in the world that the American people will sustain their own institutions, that they will maintain their own interests from injury, and their own

honor from stain — it is that conviction gone abroad in the world that places us where we are, and makes us what we are. And these are sentiments, gentlemen, that you and I and every American citizen are bound to cherish, to diffuse, and to maintain. It is, to be sure, not the part of national or of individual greatness to indulge in too much self-complacency or self-regard, but neither any individual nor any nation fulfils its own destiny, accomplishes its own high career, or performs all its duty, unless it makes a just estimate of itself. No nation runs the career designed for it by Providence until it justly appreciates the position it holds in the great family of the nations of the world, and forms that just estimate of its own rights, powers, and duties which challenges the respect of the whole world. In these respects, gentlemen, the times are auspicious. We were taught by him whose arm was principal in achieving the independence of our country, by him whose prudence and wisdom set this system of government originally in motion — we were taught by him in his great legacy to the American people to guard ourselves against those influences, preferences, prejudices, antipathies which might separate us from each other and interpose between the affections of any part of the American people and their own government. And, gentlemen, as I have just said, the times are auspicious for cultivating this sympathy, and at this moment the American people are united in all their sympathies. We have no cause of dissension, and it is my opinion that at this moment there is diffused through this vast republic, from end to end, animating the great mass of bosoms and hearts in it, the sentiment that we are united in the maintenance of our own government, in the maintenance of all its just principles, and in the maintenance of all our rights in relation to other states upon the globe, whether they be powerful or powerless, old or young, great or small.

Gentlemen, in the progress of the civilization of mankind, great changes have been wrought by commercial intercourse, by the general advance of knowledge, and by the benign influence of the Christian religion. And those changes are as clearly indicated by the subjects upon which nations now pass treaties, as by any other mark or proof whatever. In



ages past, treaties were alliances for war or defence against war; or they were merely unjust compacts amongst the strong to divide the spoils of the weak; or they were for the advancement of the interest of crowns or the succession of princes, and for what has been called in former days, the maintenance of the balance of power. Treaties, in our days, gentlemen, have assumed a new character, not that these subjects are excluded altogether from them. But then a new class of subjects has been introduced, proving the advancement of the age and influence of commerce and civilization and Christianity, and these subjects are commercial regulations, the pacific settlement of differences that may happen to arise between different states, the adjustment of such controversies as may arise amongst nations having common interests at stake; they are more especially, as illustrated by one great instance, the instruments of union amongst Christian nations exerting the power of Christian states to put an end to cruelty and barbarism that have been handed down to us from former ages. Gentlemen, as I have said, treaties have been entered into, and wars have been waged, immense treasures exhausted, and torrents of blood poured out to maintain "the balance of power" amongst the nations of the earth, — that is to say, to keep the strong from oppressing the weak has been sought to be effected by alliances, by war, by armies, by foreign subsidies, and by military aid. But thanks to the civilization of the age, thanks to that commerce which unites all civilized countries, and thanks especially to that religion which has become so influential in the concerns of the age and over the minds of men, there is now a mode of sustaining the balance of power, far beyond and infinitely above all that subsidies, and armies, and navies can accomplish. It is a moral power; it is the judgment of mankind. It is the promptitude with which a whole generation bursts out in indignation upon the attempts of the strong by union or by power to oppress the weak! It is not in this age that any nations can associate themselves together to perpetuate such a deed as the partition of Poland. All the armies of Europe could not sustain any power who would undertake to do it. The weakest nations

on the earth have their security now, not in armies or navies, but in that sense of general justice, in that feeling of right, which pervades a civilized age, and which sees, with intuitive sagacity, in every state, that if injury and oppression be inflicted on one it may come to all; and, therefore, all resist it in every case from the beginning. We have this security, therefore, for the general preservation of the peace of the world, in the general feeling of the world, that its rights must be preserved. It is because nations not interested in a particular dispute will not sit silent, will not be quiet, but, on the other hand, will be loudly indignant, when wrong is attempted to be done. It is this general conviction that secures the weak against the aggressions of the powerful. Gentlemen, these are general considerations not inapplicable I hope to the state of things before us. But connected with the negotiations which have taken place, there are some subjects of a character to be interesting only to the immediate parties to the negotiations. The "boundary question," for instance, had nothing in it to arrest the general attention of the civilized world, because it involved nothing more than the adjustment of a disputed line of boundary; and when that should be done in a manner satisfactory to the parties concerned, other nations of the earth had no particular interest in it. Yet there are other questions involved in the negotiations, and brought out in the discussion, in which not only England and America, but all civilized and commercial nations had a deep interest. I speak now of those questions which respect the freedom of the seas, public law, the immunity of flags, and the extent of the general rights of all nations on the ocean. These questions, interesting to-day between two states, are interesting to-morrow to other states; they are, in short, of importance to the whole civilized world. I am not, therefore, surprised to find that the topics which have been discussed and the principles which have been asserted on these last named subjects have attracted the regard and attention not only in England and the United States, but in France, in Germany, in Prussia, in Russia, in Austria—in short, throughout the whole commercial world. And why? Because these are principles in which the whole commercial world has an

interest, and because at this day there is a general disposition amongst all powers that the principles of public law respecting the immunities of flags, and rights of nations upon the ocean should be settled. If it be the judgment, sir, of those whom you represent, that any advance has been made towards the settlement of these questions in a manner favorable to the rights of all nations, and conformable to the interests of the United States, I shall consider myself as having accomplished, under the direction of the chief magistrate of the nation, something for the benefit of the country.

Mr. President and gentlemen, I must not take leave of you without tendering my acknowledgments to the mayor of the city and the president of the board of aldermen for the very kind hospitality which they have extended to me, in the opportunity given me to see those of my friends and fellow citizens also, as chose to call on me this morning. Nor can I, Mr. President, part from the occasion without tendering my best wishes for the prosperity and health and happiness of the citizens of New York. I desire to congratulate you and them, sir, especially upon the accomplishment of a work which seems to me to be one of the wonders of the age. I mean the work which supplies the city with pure water. It appears to me, that a work of greater beneficence, and public spirit, a work indicating more enterprise and resolution, and I may add, a bolder defiance of expense, has seldom been undertaken by any people. There is a value in it especially which gives me high pleasure to reflect upon. It is that while those who choose may have it introduced into their own houses for a moderate sum, there is ample provision for every poor man and every poor family in the city to obtain abundant supplies of this essential element of life, fresh from the fountain, that reaches every house and tends to promote the health, cleanliness, comfort, and longevity of every individual. And it is of no small importance, gentlemen, in the crowded streets and small tenements of a vast city, that in heats and drought of summer, amidst occasional sickness and pestilence, every family and every individual may be abundantly supplied with the pure liquid — with the water which nature furnishes us for health, for comfort, for all the uses of life. I see, there-

fore, with high satisfaction that the enterprise, skill, and capital of this city have caused a river—a whole river—to be deflected from its natural course, and passing through mountains and crossing other rivers, to pour itself amongst and diffuse itself amidst a population of three or four hundred thousand people. Gentlemen, I cherish the hope that in other respects the prosperity of your city may, with the general prosperity of the country, be widely enlarged and permanently increased. The business of the country is depressed it is true, but the enterprise and skill of the country are not annihilated. External circumstances have differed, but the men are the same. There is still the old “go ahead” feeling amongst us, and I cannot doubt that time and the steady exercise of industry and enterprise will secure for you a long career of prosperity, of eminence, and of growth amongst the cities of the world. The city of New York is the great commercial emporium not of a state—not of the United States only, but of a whole hemisphere, the whole western continent; at the same time the enterprise of its merchants, its facilities both of inland and external trade have connected it largely with every branch of commerce over the globe, and unless a general, and nothing less than a general stagnation of mercantile affairs takes place over the world, we can entertain no doubt that the prosperity of this city will be supported and secured by fortunate circumstances, fully improved by the skill, enterprise, and wisdom of its inhabitants. Gentlemen, I pass not on this occasion to any subject beyond those to which the president of the board of trade has alluded. I repeat my acknowledgments for the expression of approbation and kindness they have been pleased, through you, sir, to make to me. I desire not only to acknowledge, but to say with emphasis that what I have done, has only been in the performance of a common duty—that I have spared no labor and no toil to accomplish what the interests of the country seemed to require, and what it has been your pleasure to commend. I now take leave of you, sir, and of the persons about me, by tendering to you all my personal regard, and offering you my hearty wishes for the prosperity of your city.

# Speech at Baltimore

MAY 18, 1843.<sup>1</sup>

ROBERT GILMORE, Esq., one of the oldest and most respectable merchants in Baltimore, acted as chairman, and among the guests, who were upwards of one hundred in number, were included almost all the prominent and influential men in the mercantile and professional community of the favored capital of Maryland.

After toasts to "The Union, now and forever — one and inseparable," "The President of the United States," "The Constitution — its authors, expounders, and defenders," and "The Memory of Washington," the Chairman rose and said:

I could have wished to express in adequate terms my sense of the eminent services rendered to our country, and, indeed, to the whole commercial world, by the distinguished statesman whom we have this day assembled to honor, in the late negotiations between this country and Great Britain, which have so happily resulted in uniting still more closely two nations whose interests are so intimately connected. May God long preserve in unbroken unity those bonds of peace! But unaccustomed as I am to public speaking, and suffering severely from an affection of the throat, I am constrained to confine myself to these few remarks. I now offer you the toast:

"Our Guest — Daniel Webster."

The sentiment was received with great applause.

Mr. Webster then rose, and was received with loud cheers. He returned thanks as follows:

I TRUST none of you will doubt that I receive with peculiar gratification this mark of your respect for my well-intended efforts to serve the country; and I feel obliged to you, sir, who have, I well know, long since retired from active life, for doing

<sup>1</sup> Delivered at the dinner given Mr. Webster by the merchants of Baltimore. From the pamphlet report; New York, John S. Taylor & Co., 1843.

me the honor of filling the chair this evening. I hope I may consider it a proof of respect, and founded on an acquaintance of many years. The gratification which the occasion affords is certainly greatly enhanced by the consideration that, as you, sir, have remarked, the gentlemen who compose this respectable meeting come here actuated by no party motives, by no sinister or partisan designs, by no wish to promote or to depress the cause of mere politicians. Because I know that, in the absence of such feelings, I have an assurance that this meeting is what it purports to be, a compliment to an honest purpose to serve the public, not unattended, perhaps, with some degree of success, and conscious that in these endeavors to serve the country I have been free from, and far above, all party feeling, all local and sectional objects of policy, I do think that I perceive in this a compliment not altogether inappropriate.

Mr. President and gentlemen, I know not how best to return to you my thanks — to make some not unbecoming acknowledgment for this proof of your attention and regard. But as I feel myself to be in one of the principal cities of the Union, distinguished for its commercial intercourse, its rapid career, its patriotic character, and as I feel that the present period is one of great interest to the commercial community, perhaps I cannot do better than occupy the few moments I may be permitted to address you, in offering some suggestions touching the commercial interests of the country, and the policy in regard to them which the time demands.

It is a truth most trite, but not the less important, that the great interests of society are all mingled. The commercial, the agricultural, the manufacturing pursuits of individuals are entwined, if I may so speak, around the same column, are supported by the same trunk, and must flourish together or fade together. And he is a friend to neither who would attempt to set up an opposition between the one and the other. This is a truth, however common, which cannot perhaps be too often repeated; because in the contests of interests in the struggle for preference by law, in favor of the one or against the other, this general union, I may say this common destiny, is not always understood, or, if understood, is not always regarded. In a country like this, especially where the greatest number of inhab-

itants find support from the pursuits of agriculture, where great masses again are fed, and housed, and clothed by manufactures, and where there are also other classes whose houses and pursuits are on the seas, the very first principle of legislation should imply the recognition of this essential connection between the interests of these various pursuits, and the high importance of always regarding them as having a general destiny. Agriculture furnishes the means of sustenance to human beings, but it does not supply them with cheap and comfortable clothing; what, then, would become of agriculture without manufactures, and of these, in their turn, if there were no buyers of the manufactured article? The commercial interest is dependent upon both, for there must be commodities to be transported and exchanges to be accomplished, before the vessels destined for this transportation can be engaged or the agents find employment and reward.

Mr. President and gentlemen, allow me on this occasion to express what I feel — that it is to the commercial interests, to the animation, and the spirit, and the enterprise of the great commercial cities of the country, that we are to attribute, in the first place, the original movements in favor of the great works of internal improvement, by which we are now so honorably distinguished. This results from the nature of the case. The capital is in the cities, the means of communication are in the cities, the stimulus is in the cities. Where was the origin of the canals and railroads, and all the great works that distinguish modern times — where but in active commercial places? And where has individual treasure been poured out like water, not on the ground of a hope for a rich return in the shape of interest or dividends, but for an appropriate reward in general improvement — where else has individual property been poured forth with such affluence as it has been in the cities of the United States? I have seen the many enterprises in which you have been engaged, and particularly that great work, worthy of Rome when Augustus was at the head of the empire, worthy of Napoleon if his thoughts had not been turned more on works of war than of peace, worthy of any empire — the communication by steam between the waters of the Chesapeake and the Ohio River; a work that proposes to surmount some of

the ridges of the Alleghanies, to penetrate others, to proceed from tide-water by steam power on the land, until the power of steam on the land surrenders to the power of steam on the water, and which, exercised on one element or on the other, connects the great valley of the West with the ocean.

The prosperity of the commerce of the country, then, as connected with individual happiness, as connected with the growth of our States, as connected, I may add, with the revenue of the country, and as connected with all the works of internal improvement which unite us by so many ties — North to South and East to West — the prosperity of this commerce is of the highest and most important consideration for all public men and all intelligent citizens. I may be permitted, sir, to say that we see all around, in every part of the country, that there exists a conviction of this truth, that we are now at the end — no: I am incorrect in that expression — I was about to say at the end of a universal peace of twenty-five years. God grant we may be far from the end of it! But I say we are at a period when a universal peace of twenty-five years has prevailed. During that period all the civilized nations of the world have been turning their thoughts from war to peace; have given their attention to their own improvement, the advancement of their own interests, agricultural, commercial, and manufacturing. So that while there is not now going on a contest of armed force, there is going on a very severe, a very well-maintained, contest on many sides in regard to the protection of the arts, the furtherance of the pursuits of labor, and a general improvement in all ranks of society. In short, we live in an age — it is our good fortune to live in an age — in which governments and individuals are thinking more of benefiting themselves than of annoying or destroying their enemies.

This appears to me, gentlemen, to have led to a very general feeling, by no means confined to this country, but pervading a great part of Europe, of this character — men, public and private men, have adopted a strong opinion that the intercourse of the principal nations of the world may be made the subject of treaty, of stipulation; which term I use in a much more enlarged sense than that usually attached to it. We find this a common topic of discussion in the Houses of Parliament in England, in the



Chambers of France, in our own Legislatures, and, indeed, throughout the commercial world. It seems to have its origin in the opinion — a just one — that if nations seek their own interests, whether of revenue or those which are called protective, by the regulation of duties, it is wise for them, before resorting to independent legislation, with the view on the part of one to countervail the acts of others, to consider whether it be not more expedient that the parties should seek to come to an understanding, instead of at once adopting this almost hostile legislation. The commercial intercourse of nations is affected in our day, almost in all nations, certainly in the principal nations, by two considerations; namely, revenue, and the encouragement and protection of the home industry. Sometimes the one prevails, and sometimes the other. But all nations at the present moment appear to be manifesting a great degree of acuteness in the perception of what their interests, whether financial or industrial, seem to require. We know that between England and Russia there has latterly been a new commercial treaty — not very important, I think. We know that attempts have been made to accomplish a treaty between England and France, and between England and Portugal. We know that a recent attempt has been made in a case very important to us, and which, in its results, might have been very important to our commerce. I allude to the attempt to form anew a commercial treaty between England and Brazil. The repeated failure of others, I confess, may very well inspire us with a doubt as to the practicability of this regulation of commerce by treaty stipulation. I do not mean to speak either with much confidence or much distrust on this subject. I am of opinion, however, that, with respect to us here in America, the experiment is worth the trial. But at the same time it is to be remembered that not too strong confidence should be entertained of a favorable result, because in that case, pending the existence of that confidence, and before the result is ascertained, there may be a very inconvenient stagnation of affairs produced. The peculiar point in our foreign commercial relations which in this regard has latterly attracted the most attention is the relations between the United States and England; and this in two aspects. In the first place, duties on the products and manufactures of the two countries

respectively ; and in the next place, the state of the intercourse between the United States and the Colonial Provinces of England on this Continent and in the West Indies. The direct trade between us and England stands upon a real principle of reciprocity ; I do not know that in either country there exists much disposition to disturb it, so far, I mean, as respects the transportation of commodities or the carrying of goods. It is fair, equal, just. The trade between the United States and the British Colonies on the Continent and the West Indies has quite a different character. It is not my purpose to go into that matter at present. But with regard to the direct intercourse between us and England great interest is excited, many wishes expressed, and strong opinions entertained in favor of an attempt to settle duties on certain articles by treaty, or arrangement. I say, gentlemen, by “ arrangement,” and I use that term by design. The Constitution of the United States leaves with Congress the great business of laying duties to support the government. It has made it the duty of the House of Representatives, the popular branch of the government, to take the lead on such subjects. There have been some few cases in which treaties have been entered into, having the effect to limit duties, but it is not necessary — and that is an important part of the whole subject — it is not necessary to go upon the idea, that if we come to an understanding with foreign governments upon rates of duties, that understanding can be effected only by means of a treaty ratified by the President and two-thirds of the Senate, according to the form of the Constitution. Because, following the example of the government in what now exists, the arrangement between the United States and England touching the colonial trade, it is practicable to give to an understanding between the two governments the force of law by ordinary acts of legislation. We all know that the present basis of trade between the United States and the British Provinces is constituted by the concurrent or conditional acts of the Legislatures of both countries. Our Senate and House of Representatives have, therefore, passed upon it ; and so have both Houses of Parliament ; and if the executive governments of the two countries should enter into any negotiations upon the subject of duties, and should come to an agreement, this would still be subject to

the approval or disapproval of Congress, and could not be, properly speaking, a "treaty." But if one party by law provided for certain duties, the other party by law could provide for the equivalent. I mention this because I see it often stated that to regulate duties by treaty would be to deprive the House of Representatives, one great branch of the national Legislature, of its just authority; and I am of that opinion. I think that the treaty-making power should not be extended, unless in cases of great importance, to any such subjects.

It is true a treaty is the law of the land. But then, as the whole business of revenue and general provision for all the wants of the country is undoubtedly a very peculiar business of the House of Representatives, or of Congress, I am of opinion, and always have been, that there should be no encroachment upon that power by the exercise of the treaty-making power, unless in cases of great and evident necessity. Well, then, gentlemen, if there be a constitutional mode of arranging these subjects by means of negotiations between the two governments, what is there, I would ask, in our present relations with England which makes it desirable that such an attempt should now be made? All that can be said is, that the leading interests of the United States are all at present in a considerable degree of depression. The commercial interest, the manufacturing interest, and, so far as I am able to perceive, the agricultural interest, are all equally depressed. If I look at the price-current in the great wheat-growing States of the West, or in the plantation States of the South, I perceive, as all perceive, great depreciation of prices, and a great discouragement to activity and emulation. What is there, then, in our condition, what is there in the intercourse between the two countries, that might justify an attempt to come to a mutual stipulation? Well, gentlemen, on this subject I, of course, speak without any authority. It is not for me to assume more than any of you. But it is true that an opinion has become somewhat current that with England there might be an arrangement favorable to both countries. That agreement must, of course, be founded on what would be regarded as an adequate consideration. Now, as to the objects favorable to the United States, which it is supposed might be provided for in

that agreement, I may mention them. The admission into England upon lower rates of duty of several of our large agricultural products would be one of the most prominent advantages. It has been suggested, for example, that England might be induced to make a very important reduction in the duties on tobacco, and I confess I have never been able to see why she should not do so. The tobacco duty in England is a mere matter of revenue. It has no collateral or ulterior object. It is so much money collected for the public purpose of the kingdom. The question, therefore, in the mind of an English statesman, it seems to me, can only be whether a reduction of duty would diminish the aggregate revenue. We all know that it very often does the contrary. If, then, with regard to this article, the diminution of the duty one-half would augment the importation one-half, it is equally beneficial to the revenue, a good deal better for the tobacco raisers, and I suppose would not be at all disagreeable to those who consume the article. (A laugh.) It is also supposed — the duty, to be sure, is not a very heavy one, but is still of some importance — that the regulations respecting the admission into England of cotton and rice might undergo material and beneficial changes. These are articles of considerable importance to the plantation States of the South, a part of the country certainly at present as much depressed as any other. Then, again, there is that great staple agricultural product of ours, the maize, or, as it is called, the Indian corn. I have not heard it suggested from any quarter that England would modify her corn laws, but it has been suggested — I know not with what degree of plausibility, and I pray you to receive what I now say as only suggestion — that in regard to this article of cheap and wholesome food, Indian corn, it is possible that England might be disposed to stipulate for its introduction into her ports at a low and fixed rate of duty. Now, if there be a probability of that, I may say even a slight probability, it is at least worthy of inquiry. It is true that this is a very great wheat-producing country, but it is much more a great corn-producing country. Our maize is the great grain product of the United States. Statistical tables show that five bushels of Indian corn are produced to one bushel of wheat. Now, however small the part might be which should be prob-

ably exported — if only five or ten per cent — everybody can see that its introduction on favorable terms into the English markets would be highly advantageous to the producers. I am aware, sir, that many of you understand this subject much better than I do, that it is an article of heavy freight, and yet it is brought from Maryland, Virginia, and the Carolinas to Boston, and thence distributed through the East. The question then is, whether it is reasonable and expedient to entertain the purpose, to try the experiment, of arranging with England for the diminution of the duty on this and other articles. Considering this question, every one naturally asks, Where is the *quid pro quo*? Where is to be the equivalent? By holding out, what inducements may we hope that any of those benefits thus supposed to be possible can be obtained? Undoubtedly, the only inducement we can hold out to England is a modification of the tariff of the United States. This includes, obviously, many questions. Our tariff and duties are for revenue and protection. And how efficiently either one or other of those objects could be maintained under important modification is a question of great delicacy and difficulty. I mean to express no confident opinion on this point. But this I do mean to say, because it is a settled conviction of my own judgment, *if by any great operation that should unite the interests and opinions of all parts of the country, we can place American industry and American labor on a permanent foundation*, that is a much more important consideration than the degree to which protection should extend. (Applause.) Depend upon it, gentlemen, it is change and the apprehension of change that unnerves every working-man's arm in this country. (Loud applause.) Changes felt or changes feared are the bane of our industry and the prostration of our power.

I live in a part of the country full of industry, with some capital, with great activity; and when I go amongst my neighbors they uniformly say to me, "For mercy's sake, tell us what we are to expect; lay down your law, prescribe your rule, let us see what is to be the course of the government, and we can then apply our industry, invest our capital, and adapt our circumstances to this state of things, be it what it may — cool us or freeze us; warm us, heat us, scorch us — do what you please, but

make your purpose known, and stick to it!" (Thunders of applause.) Now, I am of opinion that if, under any comprehensive system of policy, we could bring about a result in which the North and the South, the East and the West, should concur, it would be a result eminently favorable to agriculture, to the grain-growing and plantation States; reasonably favorable also to the manufacturing and commercial interests; and if on this we could stamp a feature of permanence, if we could make an impression on it that should last for twenty years, we would soon have a much better state of things than we have seen for years and years past.

I have already said, gentlemen, that without mutual stipulations it is quite evident that governments will soon be driven to "countervail," as it is called — to retaliate. If one will not accept the products of another, the nation whose products are thus rejected will seek to retaliate, to countervail, and thus to diminish the intercourse of the two nations. It seems to me that before we attempt to venture on countervailing legislation or retaliatory legislation, to produce a state of things desirable to us, it is much wiser to see in the present friendly disposition of nation to nation, if it be ever practicable to come to a better result by a more amicable kind of procedure. Now, gentlemen, we have fallen into some errors in the course of treaty stipulations. I do not mean our country in particular, but all countries. We have indulged too much in generalities in the terms of these treaties. We speak of placing each other on the ground of the most favored nation. In my opinion, whatever treaty stipulation is entered into between States, that stipulation should be specific, indisputable, unequivocal, precise. All these general expressions in treaties, that A treating with B, and holding intercourse with him, should be placed on the footing of the most favored nation, are impracticable in a great degree, and are in many cases wholly unintelligible. What does the phrase "ground of the most favored nation" mean? There is no practicable meaning to it in many cases, because our treaties are with countries which deal in such various commodities that there cannot possibly be a common standard. We make a treaty with Russia, in which, for instance, we stipulate that so much duty shall be laid on a ton of iron, and no more than so much

on a hundred weight of hemp. We then make a treaty with the Celestial Empire, whose only traffic is in silks and teas, and we tell them that we place them in the position of the most favored nation. How are we to do it? How can we give to Russia a tariff which can be applicable to the Chinese? The whole history of this generalization of treaties is productive of nothing but mischief, quarrels, and confusion. We have treaties with France, Portugal, and Belgium, using these general terms, and the moment Congress passes an act laying duty, we have complaints from one or all of these States of infractions of their treaty; and these complaints are not always easily answered, and, on the other hand, not always easy to be removed. In all such cases the stipulations, therefore, should be specific. I will add, that it does not follow that, because one nation enters into stipulations with another, it is a league, or combination, against the interests of other States. These subjects must be looked on in the light of mutual regulations, stipulations leading to mutual advantage. There is nothing derogatory to other States, nothing injurious, because the same impulses that lead to a favorable course with one nation may lead to a like favorable intercourse with other nations. For example, I put the case, not as one in which I prefer to make a practical experiment, but simply as an illustration of the general principle. Let us advert to the state of trade between this country and Brazil, to see if the interests of both countries would not require or justify some stipulation to the mutual advantage of the two. What is the state of trade between Brazil and the United States? I ought to take humiliation to myself for assuming to speak of such a subject here, before gentlemen most of whom are better acquainted with it than I am myself. But I use it to illustrate the general view I take of the whole matter. There is no more unequal trade in the world than that between the United States and Brazil. Its advantages are greatly on one side. The United States take some five millions (I believe a trifle more) of Brazilian products untaxed, and half a million slightly taxed — I mean her sugar. And what do they receive from us untaxed? Nothing at all! Their taxes on commodities from the United States are excessively high. They tax the products of the labor and the land of this country and sea, thirty, forty,



and forty-eight per cent! We take five millions untaxed, and half a million slightly taxed.

How do they stand with England under the treaty between that country and England? Her stipulation by treaty, which still exists, was, and is, that English commodities should not be taxed more than fifteen per cent. English cotton, clothing, &c., is taxed only fifteen per cent, and ours from thirty to fifty per cent! Yet England taxes the products of Brazil as high as one hundred per cent on some commodities. We take Brazil coffee free, and England taxes it twelve cents per pound. According to the English interpretation, the treaty between England and Brazil does not terminate till 1844. Brazil insisted that it expired in 1842, for I believe the Brazilian Government is anxious to get rid of it. On the whole, however, she was forced to yield to the English construction, so that the treaty was declared to remain in force till 1844. In the meantime a highly distinguished and able person was sent from England to renew the treaty; and I must say that I think the Brazilian Government manifested some address on that occasion, according to general account and rumor. Brazil insisted that the treaty expired in 1842; England, that it lasted till 1844. Brazil yields, and then says to the English Minister sent to renew the treaty, "If the treaty last till 1844, as you say — and we submit to what you say — we will take till 1844 to consider what new treaty we will make." (Laughter.) Watching the progress of events, you will take it for granted that our Government has not been so inattentive to the great interests of the commerce of the country as not to signify to Brazil the strong light in which we should look upon every agreement on her part to give to others a preference over us, considering the present state of intercourse between her and ourselves.

In short, there is no case in the whole world, so far as now occurs to me, more proper for uniting, on our part, for favorable terms. What is the trade of the United States with Brazil? We now receive her great article of product, coffee, free. We receive her sugar at two and one-half cents a pound duty. And we have a great advantage in this respect, that we have no colonial interests to protect. England is restrained in her disposition to admit Brazilian products, from the circum-



stance that she has colonial products of like character, and that she is bound to give preference to them. That would be a very good reason for her; but it constitutes one of the advantages of our situation to which we are fairly entitled, and no man can say that there is any reciprocity or justice in our vast consumption of Brazilian commodities without duty, at a moment when our products are so highly taxed in every Brazilian port. And this shows the fallacy of an argument which is understood to have been suggested by the British Government in its communications with the Brazilians on this subject. They say, "It is true that the United States take a good deal of your coffee, but we take more; and we are paymasters even for a part of what they take." There is a little approach to taunt in that argument. It is true that the severe duties on American manufactures in Brazil exclude vast quantities of these manufactures; and therefore we do import from Brazil merchandise to a far greater amount than that of which we send in return, and we pay the difference out of other earnings of ours, usually by means of exchanges on London, made good from other sources of property or industry. Now, if we entered the Brazilian markets on as good terms as England, we could pay on the spot, and not be in a condition to ask England to pay our debts to the Brazilian merchants.

I perceive, gentlemen, that I am going into these subjects much too far; and I have alluded to them because, in a government like ours, an enlightened public opinion must, on such subjects, precede legislative enactment, or the adoption of measures by government; and because I feel that the time has come when the interests of the country require that such opinion should be formed and expressed one way or the other. I have said, gentlemen, that these two States are instances of the importance and utility of commerce — of exchanges. We are very remote from Brazil — none the worse for that. The inhabitants have a different climate, different products, different habits. So much the better for all that. It has been said, amidst the various beings and properties of things which constitute this globe, that

"All nature's difference keeps all nature's peace!"

It may be said with as much truth that in matters of commer-

cial intercourse it is difference of climate, of soil, of products, and of habit that really unites States. It is this very difference in their pursuits that gives them an identity of interest in one respect; that is, in the mutual interchange of commodities. Indeed, with respect to Brazil — the other end of the continent, and much the largest power on it except our own — one might say that the products of both countries seem to contribute very much to what is common to both in the daily enjoyments of life. We drink with pleasure the coffee of Brazil at our breakfast-table, and sometimes taste its sugar; whilst the Brazilians do not, I believe, at the same meal, reject rolls made from American flour, or a rasher of Maryland bacon. (Laughter.) The two countries, of all others on the continent, or perhaps in the world, are so placed, that the most beneficial commercial intercourse might exist between them.

Well, gentlemen, parting from this subject, I will conclude with a few remarks on another. It so happened that very soon after I entered upon the duties of the office which I lately held, it was the pleasure of Congress to call upon the department for reports on the tariff and commercial regulations of other countries, and the effects of “reciprocity treaties,” as they are called, into which the Government has entered with various countries at various times from 1825 to a late period. I do, gentlemen, entertain the strongest belief that all this principle of supposed reciprocity in the carrying trade, acted upon by the Government, is wrong — a mistake from the beginning, and injurious to the great interests of the country. What is it? By this sort of reciprocity, which is called a reciprocity treaty, we give to the nation with which it is concluded a right to trade between us and other nations on the same terms as we trade ourselves. We give to the Hanse Towns and the other States of the same class the right to fetch and carry, between us and all the nations of the world, on the same terms as we do; and practically they can do it much more profitably. In my opinion, the true principle — the philosophy of politics on this subject — is exhibited in the old navigation law of England, introduced by some of the bold geniuses of Cromwell’s time, and acted upon ever since. The principle is this, the rule is this: Any nation may bring commodities to us in her

own vessels, and carry our commodities to her own ports, we having the like privilege ; but no nation shall bring the products of a third nation, or carry between us and that nation. It has been said by a very distinguished person not now living that the rule of the navigation laws had its foundation in this idea : England sought in her arrangement to secure as much of the carrying trade of the world as she could, and what she could not get herself she sought to divide among all other nations. In one sense that is doubtless a selfish policy, so far as it indicates a disposition to obtain all she could ; but this is certainly not a very extraordinary selfishness.

In other respects, its operation is the most just, the most philosophical and most beneficial that could be desired. We may see this in a variety of ways. It does tend, to a certain extent, to increase the means of that State which has the greatest mercantile marine, and can sail and transport goods cheapest ; but at the same time it does give to all others the advantage of carrying their own goods.

Suppose England can carry cheaper than any other nation in the world, and suppose all the nations in the world should adopt the current notions of free trade, and open their ports to all that choose to enter ; the nation that could carry cheapest would go on step by step, till she monopolized the whole carrying trade of the world. Does not every one see that such a State must soon become master of the whole world ? Or suppose there were two great nations like Great Britain and the United States found to be the cheapest carriers. If all the other nations should agree upon the full commercial liberty, and open their ports to all nations, without distinction and on equal terms, and to permit all to come and go without regard to the goods they had, these two great States would inevitably take the carrying trade of the world — take the shipping of the world, the maritime power of the world, and the government of the world — if they could agree among themselves, into their own hands. (Loud applause.) And back to that principle must we come at last.

We ought to give to every nation the right of bringing her cargo here in her ships, if she gives to us the like privilege. But by these reciprocity treaties, to give for the carrying of a

nation of Europe, to a town like Bremen, all the ports along a coast of one thousand five hundred miles, with seventeen millions of people, when she has scarcely two hundred thousand of her own, pray, what sort of reciprocity is this? (Loud applause.) It is very much like the fable of the horse and the cock who were walking together. The cock thought to make a reciprocal agreement with the horse, "I'll not tread on you," said he, "if you'll not tread on me." (Laughter and applause.)

Now, gentlemen, I know that nothing is so dull as statistics. But I will venture here, in this city of Baltimore, and before a body of men as much interested in the matter as any other, to present in that repulsive form of statistical figures some of the results arrived at in the course of investigations instituted in pursuance of a resolution of Congress.

Let us take the history and present state of our trade with Bremen for an example. Bremen is one of the Hanseatic towns, and the United States had formerly a considerable trade with that city in American vessels. Before 1827, sixty to eighty such vessels arrived and cleared annually.

On the 20th of December, 1827, a commercial convention was entered into between the United States and the Hanseatic Republic of Lubeck, Bremen, and Hamburg. The first article of this convention is in the following terms :

"Convention of Friendship, Commerce, and Navigation, between the United States of America and the Free Hanseatic Republics of Lubeck, Bremen, and Hamburg, concluded at Washington, December 20, 1827.

#### ARTICLE I.

"The contracting parties agree, that whatever kind of produce, manufacture, or merchandise of any foreign country can be, from time to time, lawfully imported into the United States in their own vessels, may be also imported in vessels of the said Free Hanseatic Republics of Lubeck, Bremen, and Hamburg, and that no higher or other duties upon the tonnage or cargo of the vessel shall be levied or collected, whether the importation be made in vessels of the United States or of either of the said Hanseatic Republics. And, in like manner, that whatever kind of produce, manufacture, or merchandise of any foreign country can be, from

time to time, lawfully imported into either of the said Hanseatic Republics, in its own vessels, may be also imported in vessels of the United States; and that no higher or other duties upon the tonnage or cargo of the vessel shall be levied or collected, whether the importation be made in vessels of the one party or of the other. And they further agree, that whatever may be lawfully exported, or re-exported, by one party in its own vessels, to any foreign country, may, in like manner, be exported or re-exported in the vessels of the other party. And the same bounties, duties, and drawbacks shall be allowed and collected, whether such exportation or re-exportation be made in vessels of the one party or of the other. Nor shall higher or other charges of any kind be imposed in the ports of the one party on the vessels of the other than are, or shall be, payable in the same ports by national vessels."

The fourth article of the same convention provides that any vessel shall be regarded as a Hanseatic vessel which is owned by a Hanseatic citizen, and of which the master and three-fourths of the crew are also Hanseatic citizens, or subjects of the Confederated States of Germany. But the vessel may have been *built* anywhere, without injury to her national character.

Citizens of these Republics may buy vessels in Norway, Sweden, or elsewhere, wherever they can buy cheapest, and such vessels become at once Hanseatic vessels under this convention.

This is a matter of importance to some of these ports, which are not considerable ship-building ports. The merchants of the place can buy their vessels already built. The Government of the United States agreed to this stipulation, although the cautious example of England was before it, as by the English convention with the same Republic, two years before, it was required that vessels should have been *built* in one of the Republics, as well as owned by its citizens, in order to be regarded as Hanseatic vessels.

In consequence of our Convention of 1827 the number of American vessels entering the port of Bremen has vastly fallen off, and in some years has been as low as twenty-five. To show this falling off of our tonnage, and the increase of Bremen tonnage, it may be stated that from 1826 to 1830 five-sevenths of the arrivals in Bremen from the United States were American vessels and two-sevenths Bremen; from 1831 to 1836,

three-sevenths American, and four-sevenths Bremen; and from 1836 to 1840, one-fifth American and four-fifths Bremen.

I have a statement of the amount of exports from the United States to the Hanse Towns in 1841, and the national character of the vessels transporting such exports, and their respective numbers and tonnage.

Mr. Webster then read the statement referred to, and proceeded as follows:

These tables show that, of the vessels entered from the Hanse Towns into the United States in 1841, 99 were foreign and only 53 American; and of the vessels departing from the United States to the Hanse Towns, 137 were foreign and only 45 American. That the value of the merchandise exported from the United States to the Hanseatic cities was \$3,188,346 in foreign vessels and only \$1,372,370 in American vessels; and that of the amount in value of the imports into the United States, \$2,151,377 was brought by foreign tonnage and no more than \$298,587 by American tonnage, being more than seven to one against American navigation. Nor is this all. The Hanseatic vessels have several very strong inducements to come to the United States. In the first place, they may bring hither any commodities, *from any country*, on the same terms as our own vessels.

In the second place, they have great advantages in engaging for the transportation of the crowds of emigrants who leave Germany and Switzerland every year for the United States, amounting sometimes to fifteen thousand in a single year from Bremen alone. Making these profitable voyages out, they can afford to take return cargoes to any port of Europe into which they may be admitted, at low rates of freights. They are therefore able to underbid our own vessels. I have it on very good authority, that of the tobacco shipped from Baltimore for some years past to the Hanseatic Towns, say thirty thousand hogsheads annually, seven-eighths have been exported in Bremen vessels; and your very respectable fellow-citizen, the collector of this port, has, at my request, furnished a statement of the exports of tobacco from this port to the Hanse Towns for 1841 and 1842:

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EXPORTS OF TOBACCO from Baltimore to Bremen, and the other Hanse Towns, for the years 1841 and 1842, viz. :

In 1841	. . . . .	17,997 hhds.	Value \$879,641
In 1842	. . . . .	19,703 "	847,831
		<u>37,700</u>	<u>\$1,727,472</u>
Of which,			
Shipped in 1841, in Am. vessels		2,904 hhds.	\$132,686
Do. 1842, do. . . .		2,460 "	106,832
		<u>5,364</u>	<u>\$239,518</u>
Ship'd in 1841, in Brem. vessels		15,093 hhds.	746,955
Do. 1842, do. . . .		17,243	740,099
		<u>32,336</u>	<u>\$1,487,954</u>

It is further to be considered, as I have already said, that Hanseatic vessels can load anywhere, under the provision of the treaty, abroad as well as at home; and the returns show that one-fourth part of the Hanseatic tonnage which entered the United States, in 1841, came from other countries than their own — principally from South America, Mexico, and the Baltic. Bremen vessels, also, sometimes take cargoes from the Hanse Towns to the Mediterranean, thence come to the United States, with produce of that region, and thence home, or to any part of the world.

Now there are advantages peculiar to their condition to which these enterprising people are fairly entitled, and of which no narrow or monopolizing policy should seek to deprive them. The main one is, the smaller cost at which they sail their vessels. The customary rates of seamen's wages in Bremen vessels is stated not to exceed five dollars per month, while American seamen are paid from twelve to fifteen dollars. The monthly sailing expenses of a Bremen ship are supposed not to exceed one-half of the monthly expenses of an American ship of the same tonnage. Certainly, to these fair advantages over others (if low wages are to be regarded as an advantage), it does not become us, out of an excess of liberality, to add others.

We cannot buy cheap vessels in the Baltic and make them American vessels. Our navigation laws forbid this. Why should we allow to citizens of other States, then, privileges which we deny to our own?

It may be added that the whole population of Bremen is hardly more than fifty thousand; that most of the capital of the city is employed in navigation, and that import duties are very

light — I believe only what may be regarded as a charge for warehousing. But while they are entitled to all the natural advantages of their condition, and of their own skill and enterprises, surely we are not called upon to aid them further, by putting them on positively a better footing than our own citizens.

Our existing stipulations with these cities are one-sided and partial in their operation. They ought not to continue. The power reserved in the treaty, of putting an end to it after twelve years from its date, and on one year's notice, ought, in my opinion, now to be exercised, as more than twelve years have expired. The whole subject will then be open for new negotiation, or for such provisions as Congress may see fit to adopt.

It is not unlikely that these small commercial republics will one day find their position in the German Customs Union ; in which event they would be embraced in any commercial treaty which might exist between the United States and the twenty-eight or thirty millions of people comprised within that Union.

The following statistics, compiled from the annual statements of the commerce and the navigation of the United States, will show the rapid increase of Hanseatic tonnage in our ports :

Statement of the tonnage of Hanseatic vessels entered and cleared in ports of the United States, from 1830 to 1840, both inclusive.

<i>Years.</i>	<i>Tonnage Entered.</i>	<i>Tonnage Cleared.</i>
1830 . . . . .	9,653	9,006
1831 . . . . .	11,176	12,309
1832 . . . . .	22,351	19,540
1833 . . . . .	29,285	27,208
1834 . . . . .	25,265	24,513
1835 . . . . .	28,218	28,421
1836 . . . . .	39,525	43,056
1837 . . . . .	70,703	65,538
1838 . . . . .	37,538	39,636
1839 . . . . .	41,139	38,067
1840 . . . . .	41,874	44,772

It being the practice in the Treasury Reports to express the amount of tonnage employed in the commerce of the United States with other nations, by two general classes, namely, "American," and "Foreign," there are no means of determining the nationality of these vessels, and consequently of ascertaining what proportion of the trade with each nation is carried on in its own vessels, and what proportion in those of other powers. It has also been the practice to state the number and



tonnage of vessels of each foreign power entered and cleared during each commercial year, into and from the United States, without designating the countries from which they entered, and for which they cleared: thus leaving it almost entirely to conjecture to ascertain to what extent vessels, availing of privileges conferred by treaties, have been enabled to engage in the carrying trade between the United States and nations other than those to which they respectively belong. In the report of 1841, the countries of departure and destination of vessels are given, so that a much more accurate estimate of the state of commerce and navigation can be obtained.

Mr. Webster here read a statement of the trade and navigation of the Hanse Towns, compiled from the report referred to:

It appears from the foregoing statements that the tonnage of Hanseatic vessels entering ports of the United States direct from the Hanse Towns, was more than double the amount of American tonnage entering from the same places, and that the value of imports from the said towns in Hanseatic vessels was about six times greater than the value of imports from the same places in American vessels; that the tonnage of Hanseatic vessels clearing from the United States direct for the Hanse Towns was nearly three times greater than that of American vessels clearing for the same places, and that the value of exports from the United States to the Hanse Towns in vessels of the latter power, was double that of exports to the same places in vessels of the United States. It also appears that of 44,578 tons (Hanseatic) which entered the United States, 10,325, or nearly one-fourth part, entered from countries other than the Hanse Towns, and that of 47,117 (Hanseatic) cleared from the United States, 5,762, or nearly one-eighth part, cleared for countries other than that to which they belonged.

I would here stop, gentlemen, but there is another important consideration. We are destined, I trust, to act in the world the part of a great maritime nation. We have no inferior game to play — no subordinate part to act. It is no assumption to say, that, in whatever constitutes national power, national character, or national hope, we are at the head of the nations of this great Continent. It is no assumption to say, either, that in whatever

respects commerce and the seas, and the character exhibited upon the seas, for national defence or national glory — we may have rivals, but we admit no superior! (Thunders of applause.) What becomes us then? How are we to maintain this conspicuous position? How are we to maintain our national respectability, resting as it always must on our national strength; in the contest that may arise between the vigor of our own arm and the vigor of that arm that may be raised against us?

How are we to do this without founding for ourselves a wise, a cautious, a comprehensive policy, not marked on the one hand by narrowness or meanness of spirit, nor on the other by an excessive or foolish liberality; a policy that shall rear up and maintain and furnish employment to a body of seamen who are to defend our rights when assailed on the boundless ocean? In ships, and in seamen to man our ships, must the foundation of a military marine be laid. The carrying trade, or a just part of it, must be ours — the fisheries of New England, of the whole Pacific — I may say the American fisheries, have spread over the world; the hardy men who enter on these enterprises, and follow them upon the western coast, from Cape Horn to Norfolk Sound, the coast of Japan, in the Indies, in the Red Sea, and wherever they can pursue their hazardous vocation — these are one source of supply, in cases of necessity. It is from the seamen navigating our commercial marine that our military power on the ocean is to be formed, when occasion requires. This must forever be the foundation of that maritime respectability which it is our aim to maintain now and forever amongst the nations of the earth. Gentlemen, I will detain you no longer. I have felt it to be my duty, as the best homage I could pay for this mark of your civility and respect, to express myself upon subjects which, whether my sentiments be right or wrong, are of great importance to your city; and not to it only, but to the whole country, and regarding which I have a strong desire to see a marked degree of public attention. Mr. President, I thank you and the gentlemen present for the kindness manifested to me on this occasion. Let me propose to you:

“Prosperity to the inhabitants of the Monumental City — always distinguished for commercial enterprise, for public spirit, and for the warmest, most cordial hospitality.”

# Speeches at the State Agricultural Fair, Rochester, N. Y.

SEPTEMBER 20 AND 21, 1843.<sup>1</sup>

ON the second day of the fair, September 20, after remarks by Mr. Van Buren and other speakers, Mr. Webster rose and said :

I have made a rapid journey, fellow-citizens, of five hundred miles for the pleasure of meeting here the representation of the farmers of the great State of New York. I am just discharged from the cars of the railroad, not having changed my raiment nor had a moment's rest since I left the city of New York. I find you assembled here, gentlemen, and, at the request of a committee who have done me the honor to wait upon me, I come to present myself before you, to offer you the congratulations of a poor but ardent farmer of Massachusetts, at this congregation of the farmers of New York. (Cheers.) Acquainted with agricultural pursuits from my earliest days, and, in the course of a life not now a very short one, having used all the opportunities which presented themselves consistently with my other duties to instruct myself in the principles and practice of the great primitive art, I have called myself but one of the humblest of its professors and practitioners. But what I lack in knowledge and experience I have endeavored to make up in zeal and diligence; and I go as far as he who goes farthest in my deep conviction of the super-eminent importance of this great work of man, the foundation of all civilization in every part of the world, the cultivation of his mother Earth by his own hand.

Gentlemen, if this were the fitting time of day, or I were in a fit condition to address you, or you in a condition to indulge

<sup>1</sup> New York Weekly Tribune, September 30, 1843.

me patiently, I would even now venture to say something upon this interesting subject — interesting to all classes of men — which has assembled you together here. (Cries of “Go on.”)

Gentlemen, I have said that agriculture is the first step in the civilization of man; and so it is. It was, I think, the remark of a French philosopher, that “Man began to be civilized when he could restrain his wanderings in the forest as a barbarian or his migrations as a shepherd, and fix himself down to the necessity of tilling the earth.” And if we run out into all the acquisitions and attainments of human society, the useful arts and the fine arts; if we trace the polished productions of the Grecian pencil; if we trace the architecture of Rome and of the whole modern world, and every other art of our own society, we shall find that they spring uniformly and necessarily from the first great principle and element of human civilization — the cultivation of the earth and the production of fruits for the sustenance of man.

Gentlemen, it is your good fortune to inhabit a region of the earth, of mild climate, of rich soil, and under circumstances in every way conducive to promote the highest human happiness. There is nothing, gentlemen, that I know of that more deserves the consideration of those who would study infinitely the foundation and elements of a strong intellectual society than that disposition of things by Providence which enables men, owners of the soil, to cultivate it in temperate latitudes and zones of the earth.

Gentlemen, I find that after so long a journey without rest, and under the feeling of a heavy cold, I may not trust myself to enter into any considerable conversation (so to name what I cannot call a speech) with you this evening. I have come to see the productions of your fields and gardens; to be able to carry home something of instruction to my neighbors by whom I am surrounded. I shall have the pleasure of being with you to-morrow. (Cheers and cries of “Good.”) And I shall then have great happiness in meeting and holding personal conversation with each and all of you. And I will conclude for the present by assuring you that I have come, not without some inconvenience, for the pleasure of this meeting; and I hope and am assured that this Exhibition of the Agricultural Asso-

ciation of New York will enable me to give a good account thereof to the good people of Massachusetts.

At the supper held at Smith's Dining Saloon, opposite the Eagle Tavern, on the following evening, September 21, James S. Wadsworth, Esq., who presided, arose and said that many who knew him, and who would not be very likely to suppose him possessed of any very profound knowledge of constitutional law, might be surprised to learn that he was at one time a pupil of their distinguished guest. But such, he said, was the fact. He pursued his studies in the office and under the direction of Daniel Webster, and all would agree that if he had profited but little by his studies, it was by no means for want of an able teacher. It was during the period, he said, when, to use a farmer's expression, he was "sowing his wild oats" — a time not very favorable for severe study, or for very extensive acquirements in any branch of learning; and to this fact might be attributed, perhaps, something of his failure to profit by his teachings. In rising to introduce their guest to the honored gentlemen present, Mr. Wadsworth said he should pass over all the great acts of Mr. Webster's eminently useful life, and what he had done in the service of his country, and all the great deeds and eloquent words with which he had made his name distinguished and honored throughout the world. The history of his life was the history of his country; and to history he would leave the appropriate task of describing and commemorating them. For the present he wished only to propose "The health of the Farmer of Marshfield."

After the cheers had subsided, Mr. Webster rose and replied in substance as follows :

Mr. President and Gentlemen : I am greatly obliged for the kind manner in which the president of this society has referred to the circumstances of our early acquaintance and intercourse. I am proud, gentlemen, of such a pupil; and if he learned anything under my instruction relative to the profession to which I belong, I am sure he is fully competent now to pay back the principal, with accumulated interest, from knowledge connected with the present pursuit to which he and you, gentlemen, are so greatly attached.

Gentlemen, owing perhaps in some measure to this early and friendly consideration of the president of your society,

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and to the general kindness of all the persons connected with it, I had the honor to be invited to appear on this occasion, and to make the annual address usual upon the celebration of your anniversary. It happened not to be in my power to accept the tender of this great honor. But in declining it, I suggested to my friend that, as I sometimes had occasion to visit western New York, partly to visit some family connections and other friends, and as I always embraced such an opportunity with the greatest pleasure, I might be in this region in the course of the autumn, and that, if so, I would endeavor to arrange my time so as to be present at the anniversary of the Agricultural Society. I come, gentlemen, in the fulfilment of that intimation. I come with great pleasure, notwithstanding the heat of the weather and the length of the journey, to be present at this great meeting of the representatives of the agricultural interests of this great State (cheers); and I would most gladly, gentlemen, so far as may be in my power, do something, or say something, by way of compensation for the kindness which you have manifested towards me, and as expressing the grateful feelings with which I acknowledge the honor you have done me in extending to me this invitation.

Gentlemen, the occasion is an agricultural occasion. The topics which have assembled us together here are agricultural topics. They carry us to the consideration of that great interest of society, the cultivation of the earth, from which we ourselves were taken. And, gentlemen, in examining the exhibition which has been made to-day of animals, and of the products and improvements of the mechanical arts, and especially the improvements in the great science and practice of agriculture, I have been struck with the vast advantages which *agriculture*, in the appropriate sense of the word, holds out to the great mass of the society in which we live. The cultivation of the earth is not all of agriculture in its proper or common sense. That depends very much on climate and condition. We speak of agriculture as that great pursuit of society in which the great mass of men are engaged, in temperate climates, and in a soil adapted to produce the variety of things which are useful for food and for the raiment of man.

But there is another cultivation of the fields, appropriate to tropical climates, which has received the usual denomination of the *plantation* — the *planting* interest of society. Now, gentlemen, what has most forcibly struck my attention, suggested by what I have seen and heard and witnessed to-day, is the vastly superior advantages, to individuals and to society, of the truly agricultural over the plantation interests. I desire no better exemplification of the truth of the general sentiment which I have advanced, than that suggested by the comparison — if we may not more properly call it a contrast — exhibited by those who cultivate the fields of western New York and those who cultivate equally rich soils which lie beneath a tropical sun. I would compare the agriculture of western New York with the plantation interest of the West Indies. Now, does anything exhibit a broader contrast between different pursuits — both dedicated to the cultivation of the land, both rearing products for human consumption — than we find between your circles and those found in the plantation tracts of Cuba or Jamaica, not only as affecting individual happiness, but as touching the riches, the strength, the order, the power, the intelligence of human society?

The difference appears to be this: tropical cultivation, the raising of sugar, rice, coffee, for example, is rather a matter of commerce than of agriculture. It consists mainly in the production of one article. The production of that article depends on the expense incurred for soil and labor of that sort appropriate to its cultivation: and this is all capital. Whenever one would enter upon tropical culture he invests his capital in the soil, and, as we all well know, a portion of it also in labor. It becomes, therefore, rather of the nature of a commercial undertaking, than the plain and homely, but healthy and beneficent, field cultivation. The consequence is such as a philosophic inquiry would lead us to expect. One is uncertain, precarious, changeable, partaking of the vicissitudes of trade and commercial enterprise. The other is a home interest, always substantially the same; liable, it is true, to those vicissitudes which attach themselves to all human concerns, but securing to him who enters upon the cultivation of his own lands, by the labor of his own hands, a competency, and prom-

ising to guard him against the accidents of life as far as is possible for the most fortunate of human beings. The contrast is evident when we examine carefully the condition of him who trusts to tropical cultivation — suppose of coffee. He raises one thing for sale, and one only, and buys of others everything else. He has one commodity to carry to the market of sale, and twenty to seek in the market of purchase. What is the consequence of this state of things to his finances, to his means of living, of security and comfort? We see at once that as he produces but one article, and that article a commodity subject to the fluctuating prices of the commercial world, a depression in its price affects him through the whole extent of his annual income. If, for example, the price of that article falls ten per cent, he loses ten per cent of his expectations; that is, the loss goes through the whole product. If it rises, he is enriched. If it falls, he is impoverished. And, therefore, estates which are rich to-day may be poor to-morrow; and no man not possessed of a vast capital can rely upon his property for the support and comfort of his family and the education of his children from year to year.

Now, contrast with this the state of the farmer of western New York, or of New England, or of England, or any other strictly agricultural society. The farmer of the western part of New York raises a great variety of articles, as we have seen by the exhibitions of to-day. There is collected every species of useful productions fit for human nutriment, animal and vegetable. There are the fleeces of his flock, capable of being turned to a great extent into the production of raiment for himself and family. In this variety, therefore, there is a great advantage. He has the means of securing to himself an independence; and it is true of an individual as of a nation, that without independence no man is a man, nor can ever be a man. (Cheers.) It is this which gives him personal respectability; for you will perceive that if he has provisions and fleeces, his table is supplied, his family, to a great extent, is clothed; and if prices fall, how far is he affected?

Gentlemen, this reflection might be pursued at great length. It might be made to appear to what extent it affects the character of society. Why, what is the society in a plantation es-



tablishment in the West Indies? There is no society! There is a capitalist, and there is labor of a particular description; but a society, a society of intelligent, free spirits, there is none, none, none, and there never can be! It is, therefore, in the temperate climate — in the rich and favored spots of God; it is, therefore, gentlemen, beneath such a sun as shines on you and on such an earth as that which you tread, that the truest development of a strong society is to be made that can ever be witnessed on the earth. Gentlemen, everybody knows that at the foundation of all that is important in human life lies this great business — the cultivation of the earth. If it were for his sins that man was condemned to till the land, it was the most merciful judgment that Almighty benignity could have inflicted upon him!

Now, gentlemen, in regard to the great interests of agriculture, there are things which individuals may do for themselves. And there are things, too, which the collected sense, the collected agency of individuals, that is, which Government must do for them. What they *can* do for themselves, they must be left to do for themselves. But, as I have said, there are great objects, great interests, great arrangements, which are necessary for the enrichment of the fields of agriculture, for every one who tills them, which belong to Government and Government is not in the fulfilment of its duties when it disregards or neglects them. Individuals may judge, on such instruction as they can obtain, of the character of soil and of climate. They may judge of the implements and modes of husbandry. This is the scope, indeed, of judgment, of experience, of association, of a comparison of ideas and a comparison of experiments which institutions like yours are particularly intended to bring together. You have here spread out the means of judging what implements of agriculture, what modes of cultivation, are best adapted to produce any desired result; and the study of these constitutes the education of the farmer. This is to be done by individuals and by individual associations. But there are other things in agriculture, as in other interests of society, which need the aid of government. It would be strange if it were otherwise; strange, indeed, if government, the collected agency of the whole people, should find employ-

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ment with regard to other things, and yet be discharged from all duty with regard to that elementary, that indispensable interest, the cultivation of the fields.

There are interests of agriculture too large and distant for individuals to govern and regulate. These, government must attend to. What are they? I shall not go through them all, because it does not become me, and because I am not about to read lectures to government in general, and to our own government in particular. But there are things which individuals cannot do for themselves, and which, therefore, are the very objects which it is the duty of government to do for them. So it is in other respects. If an individual cannot protect himself against assault and violence, the government must protect him. If individuals cannot open for themselves a market, government must do it for them — the general agency of society must be called in. The whole theory of government, if we separate it from divine right, if we consider it as existing for the good of the governed, implies that government is to do for individuals what individuals cannot do for themselves. Now there are things which individuals cannot do for themselves, for they require the contributions of many; they require arrangement, system, regulation, assessments, administration. And what are they?

In the first place, so far (and I wish to speak of it no farther), so far as the interest of agriculture is concerned, its first demand on government is, after that protection (I do not use the word in a political sense), after that protection of the law which secures to every man the earnings of his own labor — after this the duty of government to agriculture is to give an easy transmission of its products to the place of sale and consumption; because, in our climate — in any climate — human life, if we carry our ideas beyond mere necessity, calls for things, the products of other climates, the fruits of the labor of other persons in other parts of the world; and, therefore, there is always a necessity for commercial exchange, for disposing of the surplus productions of one climate for those of another, and thus becoming possessed of what are commonly regarded as the luxuries of life, but which are its comforts, and which are the products of the labor of different quarters.

Therefore, one great object and duty of government is to see that the products of the farmer may be easily and speedily transported to the place of consumption or sale. I need not say, gentlemen, that you in western New York are a striking, and I doubt not a grateful, example of the excellent system of laws and policy which has prevailed in your State, and given you an easy transmission for the products of your rich soil and industrious labor to a place of sale or consumption. (Cheers.) Who is there here now that does not feel the beneficence, the wisdom, the patriotism of Clinton and the other projectors of your vast internal improvements! (Loud cheers.) Party violence or party injustice may dim for a time, and prejudice may injure, and malignity may rail; but there cannot be — I am sure there is not — an honest man in all western New York on whose heart the memory of Clinton is not indelibly engraved! (Enthusiastic applause and cheers.) Gentlemen, in this respect your position ennobles you beyond anything on the face of the earth. New York City has been brought very near your doors. The great emporium of this great continent lies close before you. You are rich in your home market — a market of purchase and of sale. All New York is at your feet. You can deal with her as if you lived in one of her wards — I mean for all the purposes of commerce.

And, gentlemen, if I might contemplate a condition of society in which, with regard to the discharge of all great duties, nothing was left to be desired, I should look at western New York, with her favored climate and fertile fields, with those improvements she has completed and those others which she contemplates, an object of interest not only to all the States of this great Union, but to the feelings and hopes and highest aspirations of every man. As an American, with pride would I look upon these great works commenced, completed and to be completed, all existing in fulness and perfection that the world may see what a republican government, wise in its councils, liberal in its policy, can do for the advancement of the great interests of society. (Cheers.) Gentlemen, the farmer of New York has no just reason to envy those who live amid the coffee fields, the sugar canes, the orange groves, the palm trees, and cocoas, and the pineapples of the tropics.

Far otherwise. His wheat fields, his grass fields, his herds and flocks, and his forests are infinitely richer.

Gentlemen, there is another great object which properly falls to the care of government, of interest to all tillers of the land who have an easy and cheap transmission to market — it is, of course, the existence of such markets. There must be markets of sale, of consumption. Why will a man toil to fill his granaries and cellars beyond the wants of his own family, unless somebody will buy the surplus which he has to sell, and by means of which, therefore, he may be able to buy elsewhere what he cannot raise upon his own farm? A market, therefore, a market of consumption, is a paramount object to all agriculturists who cultivate rich soils beneath kindly skies and a warming sun, and who raise more than is necessary for the sustentation of life. It is absolutely indispensable. I do not say that it is entirely within the control of government. I know that it is not. There are many considerations which affect the market, such as the policy of other nations, the course of trade, the condition of society, and a thousand other causes which modify all government. But, after all, it is and must be a great object of government. Looking only at the question as a political question (and God forbid that I should use the word “political” in a party sense), it is certainly a matter of interesting inquiry where the surplus productions of labor shall find a sale. This is a matter for government in an enlarged political, philosophic, and, I may say, philanthropic, consideration of its duties. A good government seeks to promote the interest of all citizens, of all vocations. I have said that to this object a market is necessary. What is it to you that your fields here in the Genesee Valley abound in the richest wheat, I believe, on the face of the earth — what is it to you, beyond the consumption of your own households, if there is no demand, no market for it? The means of transportation may exist, but at the end of all must also be a market.

How is this to be had? Without to-night entering upon any debatable ground of politics, upon anything that does not partake of elementary truth — and I say it under the conviction that it is a matter of elementary truth — to which every true American citizen who will not give way to names, but thinks

that there is something in things will assent — I say that it is in the power of government, that it is the duty of government, to a considerable extent, to take care that there should be a demand for agricultural products. (Cheers.) I am not about, gentlemen, to enter upon the question, the debatable subject, of a protective tariff, to any considerable extent. But I nevertheless do say — at least I do think, and why should I not say it? (Cheers, and cries of “Say it,” “Out with it,” “Go on”) — I do say, gentlemen, that the agriculture of this country is the great matter which demands protection. It is a misnomer to talk about the protection of manufactures; that is not the thing we want or need: it is the protection of the agriculture of the country! (Repeated cheers.) It is a furnishing to the surplus productions of that agriculture a market, a near market, a home market, a large market! (Cheers and cries of “That’s it;” “That’s what we want.”) Why, gentlemen, many of my friends and neighbors in my own State have invested their capital in manufactures. Of course they desire employment in this branch of industry. But suppose they do not get it: cannot they turn their capital into other channels, into a thousand other pursuits, to-morrow? Are they shut out from all other ways of living? Do you suppose that the protection of this interest is as important to them as it is to you? Is it as essential, as absolutely necessary, to their interests as to yours? Not by ten thousand times! You want a market for your productions. You want consumers. You want open mouths and unclad bodies to eat and drink and wear the surplus productions you have provided for them. You want a home market, a steady demand for your agricultural products. And this is, and must be, furnished by the commercial classes, the seafaring classes, and all other classes of non-producers. Now, gentlemen, I certainly admit that those who have invested their capital in manufactures have a great interest at stake, and it is just that they should have secured by law a reasonable protection to that interest. But I do also insist, in spite of all the sophistry and all the folly (as I must call it) of this age — and this age is full of sophistry and folly on this subject — that the great thing to be looked for is that we have at home a demand for the surplus products of our agricul-

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ture, and on the other side a home demand for the products of manufacturing industry. This neighborly exchange it is, this neighborly intercourse among ourselves, this supplying our wants from city to city, from village to village, from house to house, — this, this it is which is calculated to make us a happy and a strong people.

Now there is on this subject, especially among our brethren at the South, a strange infatuation. They are respectable men, reasonable men — candid men, in some respects — in most respects; and yet see how they reason upon this subject. Gentlemen, I belong to Massachusetts. (Applause. Cries of “Good,” and three deafening cheers for Massachusetts.) I have taken the pains to inquire what sums of money Massachusetts pays to Virginia and Carolina, to say nothing of New York, every year for their agricultural products; and it amounts to several millions. If we take the eastern part of Virginia and the eastern part of North Carolina, what have they for sale but agricultural products purchased by the manufacturing and commercial classes of New England? Nothing on the face of the earth — and we pay them many millions. We are their only customer. Does England take their grain? Certainly not, and yet, owing to causes which it would be easy to explain if it were proper, owing to prejudice, owing to their peculiar notions — for notions are quite as common there as in New England, though New England is the “land of notions!” (laughter and cheers) — there is a perfect reprobation of any idea of protection giving them any sale for their agricultural products, although they find, day by day, that we buy and pay them for their products by manufactures of the North — and it is the only thing they get a dollar for; and are ready to drive us into raising corn and all agricultural products for ourselves — they being agricultural, and finding the article continually becoming cheaper, and no persons except us to buy of them!

Now that’s a strong case, though perfectly true of eastern Virginia and of North Carolina. Why, gentlemen, I live on the sandy seashore of Massachusetts, and I get along as well as I can. I am a very poor farmer upon a great quantity of very poor land. But my neighbors and I, by very great care — I hardly know how — continue to live on. We pay for

what we purchase, though, for my life, I could hardly tell how; this only I know, that they all get paid in some way. And yet these men complain that we do not raise what we want ourselves but buy of them! There seems to be much truth in an old saying, that "maxims which have a seeming sense take firmer hold, and endure longer in the mind, than those which are founded on nature and experience."

Men like dogmas; they like theory. If they can pick up or scrape together a string of apothegms or enigmas, the fact and truth and all the human talent in the world can never argue them out of them. Equal delusions prevail in other parts of the country, as, for instance, the notion that protection to manufactures is a thing peculiarly beneficial to those engaged in those pursuits. Far from it. As I have said, the capital of Massachusetts can go to commerce, or can go to farming. But what can he do whose farm is his sole estate but till it? Can he transport it or go into other pursuits? The fact is, protection to this class of society is, next to the beneficence of Heaven, whose sun shines and whose rains fall upon us, the highest object, the most absolute necessity to those who cultivate the land, and raise from it more than suffices for the wants of themselves and their families.

Now, gentlemen, we are Americans. We have a vast country, a variety of climate, and various pursuits. We have agricultural States and we have plantation States. We have manufacturing interests and commercial interests. And our business is not to array our various interests into a belligerent and hostile state, not to inflame our own passions or others concerning the measures of government for the protection of our particular interests; but let us make the whole a great national, I may say a family, concern. We should aim not to produce the impression that one interest is set against another, but that we all go for those laws and measures which will be most conducive to the general good. We should remember that we are citizens of the United States; that as such we are interested in the United States and in every State — that we are interested in the concerns of all classes and of every class; and I do firmly believe that moderation and wisdom and perseverance and truth and reason will ultimately prevail over all

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the influences which seem to separate the interests of one class from those of another.

Why, what I have said in relation to the necessities or wants of agriculture is strictly true with regard to our brethren of the South engaged in the plantation interest. The first market for their cotton, and the best market, is with the Northern and New England manufacturers of that article, and it is absolutely astonishing that this is not perceived. The North takes one-third of their cotton, and that the first third, and fixes the price; it is sold with small charge for freight and still brings a high price. And I say it is absolutely astonishing that those whose living depends on the production and sale of this article should not see to what an extent it depends upon the consumption and manufacture of the article in our own country. These truths, these elements of political economy, are as true on the James River and in Alabama as here; and let popular prejudice become informed and kind feeling mark all discussions of the subject, and we shall come to see how much our happiness and honor depend upon a free and just and liberal intercourse among ourselves.

Gentlemen, I am too long in troubling you with these remarks. (Cries of "Go on.") I believe that they are founded in truth. I wish for everything that will promote the union of the American family. I wish for the prevalence of everything which shall make every man, from Maine to Georgia, feel that his interests are clearly bound up with those of every other man from Maine to Georgia.

May I say, sir (turning to the president), five words about myself? (Cheers and shouts of "Yes, fifty or five hundred.") It was under the full conviction of these truths that, meeting a few months ago some intelligent friends from Baltimore, I alluded to our commercial relations, a subject to which I had devoted for two years the most anxious and painful labors of my whole life. (Some one cried out "Three cheers for the treaty," and they were accordingly given, with great enthusiasm.) I assure you, gentlemen, that although friendly to all treaties of peace, nothing was farther from my mind at this moment than the treaty recently concluded with Great Britain. I mean our commercial relations; and if the



time shall ever come when we can for a while forget our parties, and attend to things instead of names — if the time shall ever arrive when there shall be a business party in the country, which I have a faint hope may some time happen — God knows (Cheers and laughter) we shall find that the subject of our commercial relations, as they have for several years past existed, and as they now exist, is highly interesting, and of the utmost importance to every citizen of the country. But I propose only to say now, that, having occasion, I spoke at Baltimore of the effect of an arrangement entered into very unfortunately many years ago, to the great detriment of our navigation interests, as is now fully shown by the great progress which foreign shipping is making upon the shipping of the United States.

It is most true that under existing acts the shipping of some of the small northern States of Europe is thrusting itself into branches of our trade to which these States have no natural right, and would be encroaching upon our coasting trade were they not prevented by the absolute prohibition of law. I will only say, to illustrate the matter, that between the great markets of the United States and the Empire of Brazil, where our commercial intercourse was most extensive, the nations of the north of Europe, Hamburg, Bremen, &c., under reciprocity treaties, as they are called, though there is anything but reciprocity in them, carry on the trade to the exclusion of our own vessels. In this way, under treaty stipulations, our trade is drawn from us and we submit, and I have found it quite impossible to rouse the country up to a sense of this great injury. I said at Baltimore that the time was coming, and perhaps now is, when, with regard to the great matter of commercial stipulations, some advisable arrangement might be made between us and some of the great States of Europe. I think so now. I do not retract at all. I am confident of its truth, and, unless I mistake, recent events give it additional evidence.

What I said was this: England excludes most of our agricultural productions — her corn laws exclude them; yet she is anxious to extend the intercourse between herself and us. The great power of steam has extinguished distance. England lies close to New York. Twelve or thirteen days only make

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the communication. And it is of no consequence whether by some sudden revolution of nature, or by some decree of Providence, the distance between different countries becomes less, or whether by the ingenuity of man the means of transmission and intercourse are increased, because we measure things by time. England is not more than half as distant from us, for every purpose of international intercourse, as she was thirty years ago. Well, then, the countries are lying side by side. How shall we deal with her and with the other great commercial States of Europe? Are we to proceed on the principle of reprisals, of hostile or retaliatory legislation?

That has been tried with regard to the tonnage of the United States. We made provisions in favor of our tonnage in carrying on our commerce with England. England made retaliatory provisions to favor her tonnage, and so we came to carry one way and she the other. So far as the direct trade is concerned, we have no complaint to make. It furnishes an example of equality and proves the danger and folly of retaliatory stipulations. I said to my friends in Baltimore that I believed the time was coming when some arrangement might be made between England and this country. I took special care to say that this must be effected by Congress on this side, and by Parliament on the other — by conditional enactments, as the condition of the trade between the United States and the West India Islands has been since 1832. Congress said to England, “If you will do so, we will do so; if you will pass such laws, we will pass such other laws.” The negotiations were carried on in England by Mr. McLane, under General Jackson, on this side, and Earl Grey on the other. The result was accepted by Congress, which passed the necessary laws on our part and England on hers.

It happened that we made a bad bargain that time; but that is a matter to be considered. I only cite this as authority for treating upon this subject by conditional legislation, and in what I said at Baltimore I intended faithfully to declare that I did not desire that the arrangement should be made by the treaty-making power, the President and the Senate, to the exclusion of the more popular branch of Congress, but that it was to be done by Congress and congressional legislation

and acts of Parliament. And in the face of that (I suppose I expressed myself obscurely, though that is a fault I cannot help)—in the face of that there were men whose sense of justice and whose love of truth did not restrain them from saying that Mr. Webster was in favor of putting the whole matter under the treaty-making power, to be settled under John Tyler and his administration! No! gentlemen, no, no! I do not, and I will not, answer what an inflamed party press may say, unless I find that they greatly misrepresent matters seriously affecting my character and usefulness as a public man—which I have ceased to be; yet I am willing, when a suitable occasion offers, to exhibit the truth as it is, and to place myself as I wish to be placed before the judgment of my fellow-citizens.

And now, gentlemen, I say that is the present state of the world, living in peace, and having now lived in peace for a longer period of time, I think, than has ever happened before—for when has there been a time of a longer duration of peace among the powers of Europe?—and living at a time when the spirit of peace prevails, we may well call to mind the words of the poet, who says that “war’s a game, which, were their subjects wise, kings would not play at.”

Thank God! the people *are* wise; and unless in a clear question of national honor or national interests, the people will not have war, for the will of crowned heads must yield to the happiness of the people themselves. Now, gentlemen, I say that in this state of things it is our duty to look carefully, wisely, but in a spirit of conciliation, towards all nations connected with us—to “compare notes,” as we say; to see in what our interests are identical; to give up nothing, nothing, nothing essential to the protection of our industry and the return for the labor and work of our own hands. But let us consider what may be done to bring about these results, either by mutual legislation or by some more formal arrangement.

I believe in the practicability of this; it may not be in my time, but it is sure to happen, it is sure to happen. The spirit of Christianity, the spirit of our own example in liberty and independence, is bringing it on. America acts back upon Europe; and this reaction is tremendous—I say tremendous;

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it is fearful; but only to those who wish to uphold the old monarchies and dominions of Europe. It is not tremendous, but grateful, acceptable, glorious to the great mass of Europe, who believe that government is to some extent the offspring of general consent, and that man, *man*, the people, are entitled to have a direct, powerful, and controlling agency in its organizations. I know, gentlemen, that these sentiments will prevail. At least I believe it, I believe it. I believe that the interests of peace and virtue, that the great interest of our common religion, I believe that the great body of conscientious men in all countries, have in some degree come to control the government—to say to it, “Thus far shalt thou come, but no farther, and here shall thy proud waves be stayed.”

And I think I see this, gentlemen, in everything and everywhere. I have evidence of it in the cautious policy of England—cautious, cautious, but yielding to the overpowering necessity of the case; yielding to the overpowering dominion of public sentiment. I would not here, or anywhere else, venture to discuss the policy of foreign countries, and I abstain. I leave them, as I hope they will leave us, to look after their own interests, we pursuing ours. Yet there can be no question that the spirit of free inquiry is abroad all over the earth. And this is right: it is as it should be in a Christian age, and in an age unrivalled in knowledge and intelligence among the great masses of society.

Now, gentlemen, I'm growing garrulous and will bring my remarks to a conclusion. I have the happiness to believe that the tendencies of things are to produce new efforts. I believe that the policy of England is and has been, and will be more and more, towards a more and more liberal intercourse, an intercourse favorable to our great interests, to all the interests of the North and Middle States and equally favorable to all the friends of the South. It is most certain that within a few months a new and great change has been produced in our intercourse with England, a very great change. Articles produced in your State are yearly becoming more and more introduced—provisions finding a market in Europe! In the last six months quite a new

trade has sprung up between us and England in the article of provisions. While I was in New York I took occasion to inquire of some practical merchants and valued friends how the matter was; and they said, quite to my astonishment, that cargoes of lard, butter, cheese, beef, pork, &c., were shipped to England every day, and that a vessel of the largest class, within the last twenty days, had left New York loaded entirely with the article of provisions, to the exclusion, as it happened in that case, though I do not mention it as a matter of triumph, of a single pound of cotton or tobacco. This is quite a new trade, as everybody knows. Who ever thought, eighteen months ago, that a large cargo, entirely of provisions, would go to a London market! Who does not rejoice and feel the beneficent influence of this upon both nations! The people of England are better fed, the agriculture of New York is better encouraged, and the interests of both are better promoted.

Gentlemen, I will proceed no further. I say the time has come when we must attend to things, *things*, THINGS. I say the time has arrived when we must give up the enchantment of names and attend to the great interests of commerce and agriculture; when men must be sunk — and I am willing to sink, and it will be no great sinking either! — when things must be regarded, measures regarded, and names disregarded; and though I am not one to give up opinions lightly and without occasion, the time has arrived for practical measures; when we must attend to the things which belong, I had almost said to our peace — if it did not appear in some sort profane to apply to ordinary affairs words made sacred by a higher meaning; but I will say, to the things which belong to our interest. We must be practical; we must look at things; we must see the results of measures and the bearing of everything that relates to the interests of all classes of people in the United States. For, gentlemen, we may be sure that, however local interests may prevail, we shall all, when we approach the close of life, regard with satisfaction everything which we have done under the impulse of a large, a broad American feeling; and we shall look with regret on everything contracted, or personal, or local, which

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the interests of individuals may have led us to cherish in our hearts. Let us remember, then, gentlemen, that our interests are the common interests of the United States. Let us remember that there is not a man in the Union, from the Atlantic to the Rocky Mountains, from Maine to Mississippi, in whose interest and welfare and political rights we are not concerned. Let us have souls and hearts and minds big enough to embrace the great empire which God has given us; and while conscious that beneath His benignant rule we enjoy distinguished blessings, religious and civil and social, such as have been showered upon no other men on the face of the earth, let us go boldly on determined, now and forever, living and dying, to be fully American, American altogether!

Gov. William H. Seward then spoke, and concluded his remarks by asking all to drink "*Health, prosperity, and happiness to Daniel Webster!*" Mr. Webster then said:

With the gentleman who has just now addressed you, and who has repeatedly been elected to preside over the councils of the great State of New York, it has been my fortune to have only a general and political acquaintance. I am proud of his respect and regard. I wish him well; and I have to say to him, that, whenever he shall appear among the people of New England, assembled on any occasion like this, his character, his integrity, his patriotism, his Americanism will arouse a feeling which will shake the roof of the house where the people shall gather together. "I give you," said Mr. Webster, advancing toward Governor Seward and extending to him his hand, which was heartily shaken across the table, — "*I give you the right hand of American fellowship! May this great Empire State, and our New England Confederacy, ever value and regard the sentiments and character of William H. Seward.*"

Mr. Gowen, of Pennsylvania, then spoke on Pennsylvania's debts, &c.; after which Mr. Webster rose and said:

May I be permitted, gentlemen, to occupy your attention for a few minutes again, or have I already exhausted your patience? (Loud cries of "No," "No," "Go on," "Go on.")

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I am not entitled to be heard here to any great extent (cries of "Yes, you are;" "We're always glad to hear you," &c.), but the suggestions of the gentleman from Pennsylvania have called my mind to a topic, in my judgment, of overwhelming importance to the honor and credit of our common country.

Mr. President and gentlemen, what are the credit and character, abroad, of this glorious country to which we all belong? We are rich; we are powerful; we have all the means of accomplishing whatever virtuous human desire can embrace. But what is our credit? And I am not one of those disposed to complain of or to stigmatize in any way the efforts of the States of this great Union, who have sought for funds abroad to carry on the enterprises and improvements which their sense of utility has projected.

On the contrary, I think that the circumstances of the times and the necessities of the case may justify, at least to a considerable extent, the engagements into which some of the States, especially the Western States, have entered abroad. Among those which have thus justifiably become involved is the State of Pennsylvania, the richest State in the Union, in my judgment — perhaps I ought to except New York — but, taking her mineral, commercial, and agricultural facilities into consideration, I do not know on the face of the earth, excepting England, a richer State than Pennsylvania. [Governor Seward: "*Take off her debt!*"] My friend, Governor Seward, says, "Take off her debt." Her debt — her debt. What can be the debt of a State like Pennsylvania, that she should not be able to pay it, that she cannot pay it, if she will but take from her pocket the money that she has in it? England's debt is engrafted upon her very soil; she is bound down to the very earth by it; and it will affect England and Englishmen to the fiftieth generation. But the debt of Pennsylvania, the debt of Illinois, the debt of any State in this Union, amounts not to a sixpence in comparison. Let us be Americans! but let us avoid, as we despise, the character of an acknowledged insolvent community.

What importance is it what other nations say of us, or what they think of us, if they can, nevertheless, say, "You don't pay your debts"? Now, gentlemen, I belong to Massachusetts;

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but if I belonged to a deeply indebted State, I would work these ten fingers to their stumps—I would hold plough, I would drive plough, I would do both, before it should be said of the State to which I belonged that she did not pay her debts. That is the true principle; let us act upon it; let us “go it” to its full extent. If it costs us our comforts, let us sacrifice our comforts; if it costs us our farms, let us mortgage our farms. But do not let it be said by the proud capitalists of England, “You do not pay your debts! You republican governments do not pay your debts.” Let us say to them, “We *will* pay them, we will pay them to the uttermost farthing.” That is my firm conviction of what we ought to do. That is my opinion; and waters cannot drown, fire cannot burn, it out of me. If America owes a debt, let her pay it, let her pay it. What I have is ready for the sacrifice. What you have, I know, would be ready for the sacrifice. At any rate, and at any sacrifice, do not let it be said on the exchanges of London or Paris, do not let it be said in any one of the proud monarchies of Europe, “America owes, and cannot or will not pay.” God forbid! Let us pay, let us pay.

Let us say to them, “Produce your bond, and take your money, principal and interest. Add it all up and take your money.” Let us say to them, “We are not your slaves; we are not paupers; we will not be your debtors; we will pay. Produce your bond; here is your money, take it.” And until that is done, my friends, you and I cannot feel as if we could draw a free breath. I do not want to be indebted to the capitalists of Europe; if we owe them anything, let them produce their bill. If my professional earnings are of any worth—if they are wanted, if my farm is wanted, if the conveniences of life for myself, for my wife and children, are wanted—so far as I am concerned, so far as America is concerned, come and take them. That is the right ground to take, and let us take it. In the North and South, in the East and West, if there live any who are descended from the fathers of the Revolution, any in whose veins runs a drop of their blood, and in whose hearts lives a particle of their proud spirit, let them rise up and say that, if we owe Europe, Europe shall be paid.



## 194 Addresses Hitherto Uncollected

I wish to breathe the breath of an independent man. A citizen of a proud and honored country, I abhor the idea that my daily happiness is to be marred by the consciousness that anything disgraceful hangs on the country or any part of it. Let us, gentlemen, be proud of our country; but let us preserve for that country the character of a just and debt-paying nation. Let it never be said among the nations of Europe that the United States of America — the nation that had its birth in the glorious scenes of '76, the country of Washington, the example and great type of all modern republics — cannot, or will not, pay its debts!

Mr. Webster sat down amid the loud and enthusiastic applause of the assembly.

After the reply of Hon. Christopher Morgan, Jr., to a complimentary toast, Mr. Webster made the following remarks:

I am unwilling to let the occasion entirely pass without some remarks in definite reference to the City of Rochester. It is many years ago, — it is more than twenty, — since I first visited what is now the City of Rochester. It was then — a place of *stumps*, but a place of promise. I saw here then the infinite advantages which a fall of two hundred and fifty feet in this great river must give to such a place. I saw, in its immediate vicinity, a wide country, fitted by its soil for the production of everything that could contribute to the happiness of man. I found that now and then a man had crept in from the north of the State, or from my own State of New Hampshire, and was engaged, perhaps, in making shoes upon a very small scale. I wandered over the region and pondered upon its future destiny. I went all through this section and fished at the bottom of Niagara. I came to this spot, an attorney-at-law from Massachusetts, looking at and meditating upon the fact that here, at a single point where a city might be built, was a fall of water two hundred and fifty feet in height. Why, if the Thames fell two hundred and fifty feet in London, London would be all the world! Yet here you have it, and what is there like it? Nothing in the world. In 1802, — and even then most of us were born, — this section was only known as the corner of Gorham and Phelps. Some Massachusetts people had come

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and secured a tract and given it to an Indian, if he would build a mill upon it. And now, only a few years later, what part of the world is there which shows such a rapid, such a sudden creation, such an *ebullition* of human power as this City of Rochester, aforesaid, in the County of Monroe? When I was here, twenty years ago, on the spot where the Eagle Tavern now stands, just opposite to this, I had a very comfortable dinner in the midst of roots and stumps and things equivalent! And I enjoyed it very much, — for God commend me to roots and stumps and things equivalent, in a *growing* country. This city is one of the creations of our American world. I do remember, gentlemen, when I was fitting — and I was never very well fitted — for collegiate life, that it was a thing of great notoriety in New England that a man, fearless of Indians, had advanced into this western country as far as Whitesborough, a little above Utica! But the thing was even then in progress. Here was a rich country; it was under the administration of us, of Americans, of people of energy and character, who would, whenever there was a chance, *make* something.

But I am occupying too much of the attention of this meeting. Let me give in conclusion

“The City of Rochester and the Mayor thereof.”

# The Nomination of Clay

MAY 2, 1844.<sup>1</sup>

I ENJOY, gentlemen, quite an unexpected, but sincere pleasure, in finding myself in the midst of this vast assembly of the Whigs of the United States. And I come among you for the single purpose of adding one more humble but decided voice, to those tones of sentiment which, springing from this multitude, shall bear over the land the tidings of the decisive approbation and confirmation of the proceedings of the Nominating Convention yesterday. We are assembled, brethren, to perform one of the most responsible duties which can devolve on freemen, the citizens of a great country, in time of peace. We are assembled to take measures and to express opinions, preparatory to the ensuing election for President and Vice-President of the United States. In a time marked with uncommon interest, in the presence of the future, which seems to be full of great events, we are assembled to take counsel together for the election of those high officers who, for four years to come, are to exercise great influence on the prosperity, happiness, and honor of the country.

Gentlemen, an assembly composed of persons from every part of the land and from every walk in life; persons who have honored themselves and who have honored the country in the highest posts of public service, those who have distinguished themselves in the halls of Congress, on the benches of our judicature; those who are ornaments of every profession;

<sup>1</sup> Delivered at the convention to ratify the Whig nominations for the Presidency and Vice-Presidency, held at Canton, near Baltimore, Md. The speech is printed from a report in the Philadelphia North American, containing manuscript corrections, and preserved in the New Hampshire Historical Society collection of Webster papers; it was also reported in the New York Express, but the North American version seems to be the better one. The Express report of a paragraph near the end of the speech is, however, fuller than that of the North American and it has, therefore, been substituted.

those who are interested in the commercial, agricultural and mechanical pursuits of the country, an assembly thus composed has upon wise deliberation submitted to this meeting the result of their selection: and they have come to that result with unanimity almost unparalleled. They have presented for our consideration, and for the consideration of the country, candidates for offices of President and Vice-President, entirely likely, in my judgment, to form the one, the single, the only rallying point, of all good Whigs.

Whigs of the United States! I address you who are here in your own persons, and I would say to you all, how is it, by what means, under what auspices, you intend to accomplish the consummation of those nominations which a wise and considerate assembly has made? Let me remind you that when our fathers resolved that they would achieve the independence of their country, they announced to the world as their own reliance and as the presage of their ultimate success that important declaration, "our cause is just, our Union is perfect." We have a duty to perform, less dangerous and less glorious than fell to the lot of our fathers. We are not born to create an independent system; we are not born to erect a durable and free government, which shall spread the light of civil liberty all over the earth, but we are born with an inheritance composed of a constitution, and institutions of civil liberty; and we are charged with the high remaining duty of their preservation, and therefore, in the discharge of this duty, let us borrow not only their language but their sentiments, their patriotism, their devotion. Let the declaration go forth from this immense assemblage to the Gulf of Mexico, to the falls of the Missouri, to the extreme North and the extreme East, and let it go in a tone and with a vigor that shall encourage every Whig heart, and strengthen every Whig mind in the sentiment, that "our cause is just, that our Union is perfect!"

The convention has presented as a candidate for the Presidency of the United States, Henry Clay. For thirty years and more, Mr. Clay has been eminently and prominently in public service. He has served his country faithfully, usefully, and honorably at home and abroad. His long career of service,

the position in which he has stood before the country, and all the indications of public sentiment in all quarters have shown that he was the man on whom, above all, popular preference had concentrated. And under these clear indications of public judgment and the public will, I, for one, do rejoice with the truest sincerity, that there has not been found a dissenting voice, not a doubtful voice to break the unanimity of the result. It is true that in the course of a life, not a short one, passed in the public counsels with Mr. Clay, there have been questions of practical administration, some of them questions unimportant, on which we have not agreed; and there have been occasions when we have taken different views to insure proper action in the public councils. On those occasions we have differed, and we have acted on those differences with equal conscientiousness, and I trust with an equal degree of mutual respect. I know of no great national constitutional question; I know of no great interest of the country, still less do I know any question touching important political relations, in which there is any difference between the distinguished leader of the Whig party and myself. And even under present circumstances it might be more becoming in me, instead of expressing any personal respect for him, to have confined myself to say that he is a Whig, that he is the selection of a Whig convention, that he is pointed to by all the Whigs in the country, and that I am a Whig, and that with regard to the part which I am to act, there is no more doubt, I trust, of my disposition than there is of my duty.

The same convention, gentlemen, has presented a candidate for the second office in the country. It was not expected that the convention would come together with a previously settled opinion in this respect, as was found to exist, and known to exist with regard to the first office. Several most worthy gentlemen had been proposed by their friends of the several States of each, and all of them well deserving the public regard, and fit for the office for which their friends designated them. Among them a selection has been made, and, in my judgment, there could not have been made a better. There is not in the country a man of purer character, of a more sober temperament, of more accessible manners, of more fine, unflinch-

ing, unbending Whig principles, than Theodore Frelinghuysen. Not only does he enjoy respect and regard, but such is the purity of his life, the amiableness of his character, the ease of his intercourse, that he has as strong a hold as any man I know, not only on the regard, but the love and affection, and fervid attachment of all who know him.

The State of New Jersey needs no passing compliment from me; we all know her character, ancient and recent, for patriotism; we all remember her Revolutionary services and her Revolutionary sufferings. We have all heard, we all know that patriotic Revolutionary dust lies at Princeton, at Trenton, at Monmouth! Some of us have heard from our fathers' lips, we all know from the history of the country, that at the season of the deepest gloom of the Revolutionary War, that little army of Whigs which was the only support of Washington, and the only stay against the enemy from overwhelming the country, were the patriots of New Jersey tracking their paths over the snows red with blood from their naked feet: we know throughout its whole course that the whole population, all Whigs, administered of the little they had, that they divided their food and divided their raiment among the suffering martyrs in the cause of their country. And if the occasion has now come, rendering it proper, I am sure that every person present will derive gratification from it, to remember New Jersey, that patriotic and gallant State, and with entire cheerfulness and readiness, pay her a mark of regard in the proposition to confer the second office in the Government on one of her most distinguished and cherished sons. Gentlemen, the duty before us and other true Whigs of the country, is to restore that ascendancy which circumstances have impaired. It is to re-establish Whig principles and Whig measures. It is to re-affirm the sentiments on which we acted in 1840; to do that work over again, and to do it anew in such a way, God willing, that it will hold. The present circumstances of the country are full of indications of prosperity. It is our duty and our purpose to hold on to what has been obtained, to pursue further what is desirable, and yet to obtain and accomplish for the country and the preservation of all its interests, the purity of the free system under which we live,

and the prosperity of all ranks and classes of the community. The Whigs are called upon to establish, to settle, to bring to a state of steadiness and repose the great interests of the country. Who will say now, that every interest in the country is not in a condition to be prosperous and successful? If we prosper with things as they are; if we leave off this everlasting agitation; if we trust the Legislature of the country; if we repose in the steadiness and inviolability of the public faith, we leave each one free with strong hands and stout heart to pursue his vocation according to the circumstances in which he may be placed, and sure of the reward of his industry.

These objects are to be accomplished, and accomplished only by establishing true and sound Whig measures. Mr. Clay will be President of the United States if we do our duty. If, however, we do not do our duty, so far as we can now foresee, Mr. Van Buren will be President of the United States. You will observe, gentlemen, I qualify the prediction by the remark attending it, if we desert not our duty. If Mr. Clay should be President, we know from his general character, the general principles of his administration, and the general measures he would support. We know, at least, we shall understand him. When he is right we shall see he is right. And if he is wrong, we shall be able to see in what his error consists.

Now I would not speak with personal disrespect of any gentleman whom a large portion of the people propose to make President. But I must say, with great respect, in regard to Mr. Van Buren, that I have not made such a proficiency in a knowledge of the English tongue; I have not studied so far its shades and varieties of meaning; I have not compassed all its broad and narrow phrases, positive, negative, or equivocal; as always to be sure, or ever to be sure, that when he communicates his sentiments to the people, I know what he means. I hope it will not exceed the decorum of the occasion, if I suggest that in my judgment that distinguished individual might save himself considerable trouble in writing, and those who read, a great deal of reading if he would adopt some settled, some short formula of answering questions. When two gentlemen meet in the morning, we know that each says to the other, "How do you do to-day?" and the other answers by saying, "Thank you, pretty much as usual." Or if he be

my countryman who makes the answer, he would say, "Well, I don't know, thank ye, pretty much as usual." Now, I think this Yankee form of answering questions would be of great assistance in the political correspondence of the gentleman on a newly arising question of national concern, if he would, when asked his opinion, answer, "Well, I don't know, thank ye, pretty much as usual."

I never could agree, gentlemen, to that maxim of the poet,

The form of government let fools contest,  
What e'er is best administered is best.

I know, we all know, that there are certain forms of government that are more likely to be administered well than other forms. There are certain forms of government, in the elements of which enters a higher and deeper regard for the public interest, than enters into other forms. But, nevertheless, it is a most important truth, too often overlooked in public and national affairs, that no form of government, no matter how constructed, can work out the safety and prosperity of the people without an honest and skilful administration.

Government is not a mechanical machine producing its results like a cotton-spinning jenny or nail-making machine. It is a moral process calling for character, for intelligence, for honesty, and good intentions. Constitutions of government and elementary laws are essential, absolutely essential guides to public servants; as the stars, the sun, and the moon are essential to direct the navigator across the deep; or as the lighthouses, scattered along a thousand miles of coast, are necessary to the preservation of those who follow the sea. Notwithstanding all these lights hung out at every promontory, unless there is skill at the helm of the vessel, she will go ashore or be wrecked on the breakers. So it is with regard to political affairs. We require restraints. But if we have rulers who will not regard them, and will not see the light, the vessel will be sunk.

It is, therefore, an incumbent duty on every generation, on all men, on the subject of free government, at all times, to act with vigilance, and I will say, jealousy; for republican jealousy, if not carried to excess, is a virtue, towards those who administer government, to see that all the securities and guards of public



liberty are properly observed. Now I do not deem it too much to say, nor in the least unjust, that in order to maintain the Constitution under which we live, this duty of guardianship, this conservative, imperative obligation of protecting what we have received from our ancestors, devolves upon us, according to our principles, according to the name and character which we bear. We call ourselves Whigs. Who are our ancestors? Why some of them I see here. I see those who have the badges of '76 on their breasts. They are Whigs. Washington and his noble band of compatriots were Whigs. Those who formed the Confederacy were Whigs; those who undertook the later administrations, secured and upheld Washington in the earlier movements, were Whigs.

We have a name, then, of lofty renown, a renown that must never be sullied, a name won amid wounds, and scars, and blood, denoting great and self-sacrificing patriotism, and enrolling upon its record the highest characters that emblazon our history. It belongs to us then, if true to ourselves, tenderly to guard and to cherish the honor of such a name, and to remember with it, the spirit there is attached to it. Our destiny now cannot be dis severed from it, and while nothing should be done to frighten us from our propriety, nothing should lead us to give up one of the principles that belong to it.<sup>1</sup>

It is our duty to preserve the Constitution and to see from time to time, that its administration is confided to honest, faithful, and able hands; to take care that so long as we have an interest in it, we do not disgrace the fairest inheritance ever enjoyed by any nation. Virtuously, honestly, patriotically acting, we can support it for our time with the blessing of Providence. We can leave it with an injunction to support the Constitution under which we live, and all our great interests; and let us so conduct ourselves, and teach those who may come after us, that if in the vicissitudes of human affairs, that grand constitutional structure, the great work of the world, that noble achievement of our fathers shall be destroyed, there shall be no record which shall justly ascribe that catastrophe to Whig violence, Whig misrule, or Whig ambition.

<sup>1</sup> This paragraph is from the report of the speech which appeared in the New York Express.

# Speech at Faneuil Hall, Boston

MAY 9, 1844.

THE contemporary report in the Boston Courier said, that Mr. Chipman's remarks having been concluded, a general call was made for Daniel Webster, who accordingly mounted the rostrum, and was greeted with the most enthusiastic applause; long-continued shouts, the waving of hats by the men, and of handkerchiefs by the ladies in the galleries proclaimed the welcome which Boston ever extends to the greatest of her citizens, and marked the interest and pride which Massachusetts never can cease to feel in the noblest of her representatives.

It was some minutes before the voice of Mr. Webster could be heard; but when silence was restored, he addressed the meeting as follows:—

GENTLEMEN, FRIENDS AND FELLOW CITIZENS: When I was invited, some ten or fifteen days ago, to be present at this meeting, called for the purpose of giving a response to the nominations to be made by the National Convention at Baltimore, I accepted the invitation with pleasure, not having then any idea of being at Baltimore myself. But it so happened that afterwards I did attend the Ratifying Convention in that place, and if by my presence there I gave any satisfaction to the universal Whig mind throughout the country, I am much more than paid for my attendance.

I had an opportunity on that occasion of expressing to the representatives of all the Whigs of the country, my entire and hearty concurrence in the results of the great, wise, and patriotic convention there assembled, from all parts of the land, to select candidates to the two chief offices of the Government, for the support of the Whig party. But nevertheless I have great pleasure in being present here to-night, and in acting in the true theatre of Massachusetts, and before an assembly of her

sons, the same part I was willing to perform before an assembly of representatives from the Whigs of all the country.

Gentlemen, I think there can be no doubt that the proceedings of the Baltimore Convention were such as, in both their great results, gratify, and ought to gratify the Whigs of the whole country.

In regard to the nomination for the first office, the convention had nothing — or, at least, but little — else to do, than to give utterance to the general, I may say, universal feeling which had taken possession of the public mind. It was not necessary for any one there, neither is it necessary for me, here, to enlarge on the discussion of the propriety of that nomination.

I do not come among you to-night to extol the character of the gentleman who has been selected as the Whig candidate for President. I have already said that the nomination meets my entire and hearty approbation. I come neither “to bury Cæsar” nor “to praise him.”

To praise, to commend Henry Clay! For me, who have spoken so often, here and elsewhere, my opinion of the merits of him whom the Whigs have selected as their candidate, without — so far as my knowledge extends — a dissenting voice, for me to praise him were indeed “wasteful and ridiculous excess.” And as to burying him, gentlemen, however appropriate that may be to those who are his competitors, it is very inappropriate to him.

I concur with equally sincere gratification, gentlemen, in the nomination for Vice-President. I hardly dare venture to speak of the gentleman named for this office, because, besides my great respect for him as a public man, besides my high regard for his public virtues and public services, I cherish a particular, I may say an affectionate, esteem for the loveliness of his private character, for all those virtues which adorn his private life.

Gentlemen, our candidates are now before us. They are before us under auspices of perfect union, so far as I know, and the only question which remains for us to consider is, whether by an effort of ours — a reasonable and judicious effort — we can elect them.

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With regard to the nomination for Vice-President, it has the entire concurrence of the party. No doubt Massachusetts would have been gratified if the gentleman whose name she sent to the convention had been chosen, and if the good of the cause had allowed that body, in its conscience and discretion, to select the gentleman whom this State had recommended. But, as has been remarked, there were several candidates, and for one I can only say, that they all were worthy, and that whoever had been selected would have received my hearty support. But I will say further of Mr. Davis, that I have been long acquainted with him in the public service in Congress, as well when a member of the House of Representatives, as afterward in the Senate; and it is with great pleasure that I now, as at all times, bear cheerful testimony to the merit of his services.

I do not mean, gentlemen, to derogate in the slightest degree from his merit in other respects, when I mention two particular subjects in which we feel great interest, and in which we are greatly indebted to him. And first, a matter in which the people of this Commonwealth feel an especial interest; I mean the just claim of Massachusetts upon the general Government, growing out of the war with Great Britain. It is now eighteen or twenty years since Mr. Davis mastered this subject in all its bearings, and he has had much to do in carrying our claim through the Senate, till its acknowledgment by that body, as being in accordance with the policy of our Government and the principles of law.

But there is a higher and more general ground on which he should be esteemed. In my opinion, hardly any man in the country, during the last twenty years, has done more to protect our home industry, to protect the work of our citizens, and the labor of our countrymen, than John Davis. Both in the House and Senate his conduct was always uniform, his arguments able, his course favorable to the advancement of that cause. But he is as much entitled as any man, within my knowledge, to the praise of being an able and zealous friend to American industry.

I say nothing of the other candidates presented to the convention. It is enough that the selection was made after fair

discussion, and in a friendly spirit. The result was one in which all good Whigs cordially unite, and if Frelinghuysen is not elected on the same ticket with Clay, it will be because the Whigs have not the power — which we all believe they have — to accomplish the end they have proposed to attain.

Now, gentlemen, our candidates being before the people, the question naturally comes up, what are we to do? The field is open; the career is before us. What remains for us to do in order to accomplish our own wishes and the desire of our whole party?

Gentlemen, the first pledge of our coming success is our own union. A union of purpose, a union of action, such as has but once before existed since the termination of Mr. Adams's administration.

[Here there was some disturbance in the hall, owing to the density with which the people were packed together, and Mr. Park said that if each one of the audience would take care to keep still himself, without regarding his neighbor, everything would go on pleasantly and every one would be able to hear. Mr. Webster rejoined, "That, sir, is what I believe would be called *self-government*."] ]

Next, gentlemen, to the good omen we have in this our own union, is that which is nearly as advantageous for us, though not so good for our adversaries — the notorious disunion in their ranks. It is quite certain that the party opposed to us is broken into fragments, and undecided which way to look. But we may not rely too much on this discord of theirs. They have among them strong principles of cohesion, and we do not know what glue and putty and plaster may do to bring the party together again.

I am happy to say that during my political life, I have known no time when the great principles of the Whig party, which I consider the cardinal principles of good government, were so generally received by Whigs in all parts of the country as now. I will allude to but one of these, — a just and reasonable protection of American industry in raising a revenue; in other words, a tariff.

Now, gentlemen, I feel much respect for the Whigs of the South, for the nationality of sentiment they have manifested

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upon this point. I esteem them for bursting the shackles of local prejudices, for their broad and general feeling for the interests of the whole country, which does them infinite honor and greatly promotes our advantages. I honor such men as Berrien, Mangum, Archer, and others, who, living in a very different state of society from ours,—born and bred in an atmosphere, shall I say perfumed with the odor of different doctrines from those which we cherish, have acknowledged and agreed to the great doctrine that protection to the labor of the country is a political axiom of the highest importance.

But I will not dilate upon this topic, because a just appreciation of this doctrine is now rapidly spreading over all the land,—from east to west, from north to south; because I feel that all attempts to agitate the subject, to reverse the general sentiment upon it, will utterly fail; and because I entertain the confident hope,—may I not say belief?—that the present Congress, when it shall see fit to rise, will leave the subject undisturbed.

Gentlemen, the men we have selected as our candidates, are before the people. Their names we have submitted to the public for support or rejection. And what is it that it becomes us to do as disinterested and patriotic members of this great confederacy? Clearly to support the men we have chosen as fit to carry out our principles, with our hearts and our hands, to slacken not our efforts till we see the day, which we confidently believe will arrive, when the people of the whole country shall ratify the nominations just made by their representatives.

But more particularly, what are *we* to do? It has ever been my aim, if I could, to address myself on public occasions to the promotion of some particular good purpose; and if the time has ever existed when I was supposed to speak but for this, I trust it has gone by. I wish to make my system of thought and of action conducive to the great public good, and, so far as in me lies, I shall always endeavor so to do. And I hope the few more remarks, of a practical nature, which I have to offer, will not be considered as opposed to this spirit.

Our candidates are before us. The principles of the contending parties are well known to the people, and it remains

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for the people, but more particularly for the young men, the active and intelligent young men of the country, to take their part in the work which is to be done.

There are two agencies to be invoked: intelligent young men of the country, and an intelligent and honest press. The battle is with them, and theirs shall be the honor and the glory of the conquest.

The press! Who is there at the present day that does not regard it as the great lever of the human mind! For myself, I honor the press. I honor all its honest and conscientious conductors. I regard it as one of society's greatest agents for good or for evil. It addresses mankind daily. Not a valley nor a mountain side, not a village nor a hamlet, not a home nor a man, but has its happiness, its knowledge, its moral sentiment, I may say, more or less affected by the press. And while I would not diminish the responsibility resting upon its conductors, I am willing to accord to their duties, well performed, my entire meed of approbation. I wish to see no diminution in the zeal, no flagging in the ardent exhortation of the Whig press of the country. I may say that I wish to see even more argument, more reason, more rational persuasion in its columns; because I do believe, and I candidly avow my opinion, that many honest men in the country rank themselves among our opponents through ignorance, or misrepresentation of our principles. Our great want has been to reach the mind, to touch the intellect of these, and this can best be done through a well-regulated press.

My purpose now, as I have said, is to offer some few practical suggestions on the state of our country and party. One leading fact which addresses itself to the mind in the connection I have been pursuing, is that in our New England there are not only many cities, towns, and villages, which are the centre of general information, but many hamlets removed from the sphere of its influence. I submit it to every man at all acquainted with the country, whether this is not true. In the cities and large towns, where papers are daily printed, and received by every mail, from all quarters of the country; where one man meets another, and interchanges intelligence with his neighbor every hour, there you will find forty-five out

of every fifty of such cities, towns, and villages to be Whig. But along the mountain sides, in the remote glens and recesses of civilization, where a man has access to and reads but one newspaper, adhering to one school of politics, what can we expect from such a man but entire acquiescence in that school, and determined aversion to all others?

Now, my friends, I say here, as I said at Baltimore, we must make ourselves missionaries. We must carry light into dark places. We must raise our voices and expound our principles; we must diffuse knowledge among those who are not so favored as ourselves. And for this end, there is no more advantageous means than public addresses and meetings, throughout the whole country. It is of the highest importance to meet men in their own localities; because an invitation to attend a public address will always attract more or less of those opposed in sentiment to the speaker, and there is ever some chance, that truth spoken, or new views presented, may change such hearers from their erroneous to a correct opinion. And, therefore, I say that it is not sufficient for us to only hold great conventions, but we must go abroad amongst the people; we must endeavor to convince the unconvinced; to argue conclusively and persuasively against error; and to bring our neighbors into an adherence to those great principles of government and political action, on which we think the preservation of the country and the Constitution depends. Gentlemen, there is a power in truth — there is a power in truth — which under the most inauspicious circumstances, finally works itself out, and makes itself acknowledged.

Fellow citizens, in my opinion, the great principles of the federal Constitution and the real interests of the country received a shock sixteen years ago, in the election of General Jackson to the Presidency, from which it is but just recovering. It is hardly too much to say that he caused a revolution, — I do not so mean it in the strict sense of the word, — but I do mean to say that by the strength of his determination, by the force of his iron will, which would submit to no counsel, by the principles he carried into his cabinet, by the opinions to which he adhered and on which he acted, — pretty much in defiance of law and the Constitution, — he did much to unhinge the



liberty and destroy the well-being of the republic. His doctrines tended directly to the subversion of all free government. He pronounced distinctly that he was the only representative of the whole American people. Where did he learn that doctrine?

The Constitution speaks of no sole representative of the people; it speaks of the President as no representative at all. The people choose their representatives themselves by States and in districts; our whole fabric of government is a limited system, and when any one man takes it upon himself to say he is the whole representation of the people, he means just what General Jackson did. And what did he mean? I will not say he did not mean to govern well, — as he understood the matter, — but he meant to govern at any rate. No will but his own should have any effect. This was his idea, and while the Constitution speaks of checks and balances, his idea, his understanding was that his single department of government embraced and absorbed all the others.

I think the country is now returning from this doctrine. Certainly, no one now pretends to walk in the footsteps of General Jackson, with his own gigantic strides, and I therefore incline to the belief that we are coming back to a just view of the various relations of government, and to a reasonable consideration of its powers and duties. But I will pursue this point no further.

The Whigs have selected their candidates and presented them to the people. The principles they profess and will maintain, are consistent with those which the Whig party has maintained up to the present time. And what change do we want in those principles? We see, under their influence, when they are carried out, all the interests of the country springing up fresh and budding, like the shrubs and the plants and the flowers, under the genial ministry of spring, putting forth their shoots luxuriantly, and bearing abundant fruit. What need, therefore, of change from these principles and these effects? Why not continue to support such principles and enjoy such fruits undisturbed by new agitations, unseduced by novel experiments?

As I have said, we can elect both our candidates. It is not

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in the chapter of probabilities, hardly in that of accidents, that they can be beaten. Whether one or the other of the gentlemen spoken of as opposing candidates shall run against us, or whether they shall all unite in a joint team, that team is sure of defeat. Let us rejoice, then, in the prospect before us. Blessed by Providence with personal good health, with prosperity in business, with bright hopes for the laboring and industrial classes, and with a certainty of success in the political contest to come,—I beg to ask what is there which should not inspire us with joy?

Gentlemen, I wish once more, on this public occasion, to signify my hearty concurrence in all the proceedings of the Baltimore Convention. And I pledge myself and my character, to exert whatsoever influence I may possess to carry into effect the nominations of that body; to sustain the men who will uphold the principles of the Whig party,—that party which I regard as the true American party of the Revolution and for all coming ages,—nay, which I look upon as holding in its hands all that makes us great at home, or respected by foreign nations.

# Address at Portsmouth, N. H.

MAY 17, 1844.<sup>1</sup>

MR. PRESIDENT: I hardly know whether personal or political friends in any other part of the country could at this time have induced me, even briefly, to address them in a public manner. I have deemed it a duty incumbent on me to decline addressing public assemblies; for the business of popular addresses seems to devolve more justly on younger men who are coming forward among us, and on whom the responsibility of sustaining the purity of our political institutions must rest. Nevertheless, visiting, as I do, the town in which I spent many years of the most active portion of my life, when your fathers, occupying the places which you now fill, were my associates and friends, I should do injustice to my feelings not to respond to the call that has now been made.

I am happy, my townsmen, for such still I hold you, to enjoy this occasion to renew my early recollections; I am happy to be among you at a time when you are convened for the purpose of receiving the report of your delegates.

The party to which we are attached is denominated the Whig party. A convention of this party has been held to nominate officers for the nation. Of the result you have already been informed. It happened to be my lot to take a part in the proceedings of one of the conventions. I have spoken freely in approval of the nominations there made, and shall endeavor to give the nominees my hearty support, believing that by their election the true principles of our Government will be carried out. You are Whigs; I have the honor of belonging to the same party. There is no doubt, my brethren, that in attempting to sustain Whig doctrines and Whig measures we are acting in direct concert with the feelings of the Whigs of old times. Were our Bartlett and Whipple and Sullivan and Langdon and Gilman and Meshech Weare and Christopher Toppan, and the great and good of their times

<sup>1</sup> Portsmouth Journal, May 25, 1844.

here, they would co-operate in our efforts and assist in establishing the principles we are inculcating.

Sir, I am not intending to comment on Whig principles, but I will say that their systems of popular rights and measures are widely different from those of the party who oppose them. I regard it as the duty of good citizens to maintain the honor and independence of our country on principles of peace, so far as they can thus be sustained in mutual relations with other powers. Government was made for man, not man for the government. It is a Whig doctrine to maintain the Constitution of our country as it is; not to seek for change, but strictly to carry out its principles. The powers of the Government are to be sustained; not allowing encroachments on any point to disturb the equal balance of the whole. At the same time, it is an elementary Whig principle that the executive power, in all its scope, shall be strictly guarded against encroachments on the rights of the people, not curtailing the legitimate powers of the Government, but placing upon its executive such a check that no interest between it and the people may conflict.

In regard to moral elevation, all Whigs, if good Whigs, are on the side of law and order, — against all popular outbreaks, all disrespect to the majesty of the law, while even in high places it makes us sometimes hang our heads in shame to see the small regard paid to these essential principles of good government.

Whatever is in favor of the increase of knowledge should be encouraged. Internal improvement is a Whig measure. A great principle of the party, as illustrated by the history of the last ten years, has been the encouragement of domestic industry. The grand object of the Government, so far as it can be brought to bear upon it, is to afford employment and give proper support to industry. It is one of the most gratifying features of the times that these sentiments prevail alike everywhere through our country, — the same on the banks of the Savannah, and on the banks of the rivers of New England. It would be unjust to suppose that bestowing encouragement to labor is giving encouragement to one class over another.

The equitable reciprocity of trade is essential to the general prosperity. I may misapprehend, but it is my opinion that

much of the derangement the navigation interest has suffered for some years past, has been from the operation of the commercial treaty with Great Britain, signed in 1830. The carrying trade, as the experience of our town (I still will call it so) has illustrated, needs no comment. The operation of that treaty may be seen by looking at the port of Charleston: where twenty years ago scarcely a foreign ship entered, at present are seen more foreign than American ships waving their flags over the depression of our mercantile interests.

On the manufacturing interest, there is much difference of opinion in the different political parties. I see that the whole delegation of this State in Congress are opposed to such measures as give encouragement to this department of home enterprise. I ask myself whether it is the matured sentiment of the people of New Hampshire that the capital invested in the manufacturing establishments in Dover, Somersworth, Manchester, Nashua, and other places, should be withdrawn, the establishments closed, and the enterprise abandoned? It surely cannot be.

Labor is only sustained by capital, and when this is withdrawn, that must suffer. How is it with the farmers of New Hampshire? Where there is a population increasing so much as is the natural result of manufacturing establishments, a better market is made for their produce, and their labor finds a better reward. Were the political views of the opponents to this interest fully carried out, this with more important advantages enjoyed by other classes of the community, together with the capital, would be lost to the State.

I must say, that the opposition manifested by our political opponents to the internal improvements of the State by laying railroad tracks, etc., is not according to the policy of the Whigs. Improvements are ever springing up, and going on, and if we take hold of the car we shall advance with it, but if we do not, we may remain stationary while others accomplish the journey.

Although I hail as a native of New Hampshire, it might be deemed presumptuous in me to rebuke or find fault with any peculiar State policy; yet I cannot forbear inquiring, How is it that while every other State in the Union is partaking of the advantages offered by railroad communication, — how is it that

in this State strong efforts are made to shut it out? I leave the question with you.

In our National Government there is every encouragement that all will be right. I believe there is a majority of Whig Electors in the United States, and that they feel the importance of a sound administration of the Government on the principles upon which it was formed, and I see no reason to doubt that the Whig nominations made at Baltimore will prevail. But all things, past events have strikingly reminded us, are in the hands of an over-ruling Providence, — we know not what may be.

We know, however, that whether successful or not successful, we are right. If the great interests of the community are to be preserved, then Whig principles must succeed. If the Constitution falls, it will be destroyed only by removing the Whig basis on which it rests. We have support in the full confidence that the Whigs of the present day are actuated by the same spirit with the Whigs of the Revolution, and aim at the same great results — and if we might be supposed to hear their minstrelsy over us at this time, it would be to cheer us on in our course.

The future is not within our power — no one knows what is assigned to his lot; human life is uncertain, human destiny is unknown, — but we have a country which will be spared for future generations: human life is short, but institutions of government should be made to endure; the creatures of to-day may be of but small importance, but this Constitution of the greatest Republic in the world, extending over so vast a territory, from its effects on the prosperity and happiness of untold generations, has a value incalculable. However it may happen to us, however it may be with the events which are beyond our control, — let us see to it that the basis of our free institutions, so long as left in our keeping, is sacredly preserved.

The following resolution was then adopted:

Resolved, That in the well-remembered features of Daniel Webster, our honored guest, we recognize “the Defender of the Constitution;” the slayer of Nullification; the Champion of Domestic Industry; the able Diplomatist; and the sagacious, patriotic, and honest Statesman.

# Speech at Trenton, N. J.

MAY, 1844.<sup>1</sup>

FELLOW CITIZENS OF NEW JERSEY: My attendance here to-day is an exception to a general rule of conduct which I have found myself obliged to prescribe. I have found it necessary to come to the resolution of abstaining in general from meeting large assemblages of my fellow citizens, for the purpose of addressing them. Disposed, I hope, to do my duty, as a good citizen, and a good Whig, in carrying forward the cause of all good Whigs, and in supporting the acceptable men now before the public, I must nevertheless, as a general practice, suffer the duty of addressing large bodies of the people to devolve on others, who, to at least an equal degree of ability, may add something more of vigor and of effect. I am engaged, necessarily engaged, in private and professional pursuits, which require attention. But I have thought that, under the circumstances of the case, being near at hand and being strongly desirous of complying with the wishes of some friends, I might forego my general resolution for the purpose of meeting you here to-day.

I had the pleasure of meeting the representatives of all the Whigs of the Union at Baltimore. I have since attended a meeting of the people of Boston, assembled to receive their delegates, and I made a short visit to my native State. Gentlemen, with these and this occasion, I must beg leave to close my addresses to the large assemblies which will occur so frequently in the progress of the present election.

We are met, gentlemen, to hear the concurrence of the Whigs of New Jersey in the proceedings of the Baltimore Convention. We find that concurrence to be, so far as I know, unanimous and hearty. There is no dissent here or elsewhere. The favorites of the people for the first and second offices are before us; and so far as I know, or can learn, in every part of

<sup>1</sup> Boston Courier, June 1, 1844, reprinted from the New York Courier and Enquirer.

the country with which I am acquainted, they will be cordially supported. There is no mistake about that matter.

The state of the country is somewhat peculiar. All that we hoped would have been accomplished by the revolution of 1840 has not been accomplished. It seems necessary to renew the struggle. And so far as we can now judge, the struggle must be upon the same general topics of controversy as those we went upon in 1840. We do not know at this hour who will be selected to lead those opposed to the Whigs, nor do I suppose it to be very material. It is enough for us to know that we stand upon our own, our *own* old Whig principles; that we mean still to support, as far as may be in our power, the true and genuine Whig measures we have adopted, and, whether opposed by one, or by another man's name, whether the opposition be strong or feeble, we mean to do our duty, we mean to achieve a victory, if we can. (A voice, "We are going to.") I think so!

Now, gentlemen, it would be unpardonable in me to run over all the topics of discussion or questions of dispute between the great parties which divide the country. There are some leading ones already adverted to by the able and eloquent gentlemen who have preceded me, and I shall say a few, and only a few, words upon them.

It gives me unfeigned satisfaction to find that, in the addresses which have here been delivered to you by the able and distinguished and popular gentlemen from two of the most important Southern States, upon one of these leading topics, *the* leading topic I think I may say, — there was a conviction, expressed on behalf of themselves and the Whigs of the State from which they came, a conviction of the sound principles and the salutary tendency of the great doctrine of protection to American industry. Our State has been extremely changed in this respect by the events of the last year; and I suppose I may congratulate you, gentlemen, as I certainly take to myself gratulation, in the persuasion I feel that we have got around a great point, we have got over a great difficulty, we have achieved a great purpose and accomplished a great end in regard to the tariff policy of the country. What I refer to is, that at the present session of Congress, in the House of Representatives, having a majority of our political adversaries, a



proposition substantially to alter the tariff law of 1842, has signally and finally failed. Now the causes of this result are quite as gratifying as the fact itself. And what are these causes ?

In the first place, I think the question has been admirably discussed in Congress at its present session. The whole subject has been explored with new industry and with great talent, by members of Congress from this State and from other States, among the foremost in debating and in legislative talent in the country. The sources of its constitutional power have been explored. The question has been traced to the times of Washington, to the times of the Constitution, and to the times before the Constitution; and from all this it has been seen that, from the time of the distresses of the country after the peace of '83 to the adoption of the Constitution, and afterwards, through all the early administrations of the Government, an acknowledged object of the Constitution was the protection of the manufacturing and other industry of the United States against the cheaper labor and the greater capital of Europe.

In the next place, I ascribe much of this influence, much of this happy influence, which has produced the defeat of this measure in Congress, to the generous, the enlightened, the manly manner in which the Southern Whigs have come out and manifested their opinion on this subject. They have felt, and they have become willing to say, to declare, that they do not see that all their cotton fields have been blighted by the tariff, that all the hopes of the Southern planter, and all the comforts of Southern life have been destroyed by the system of protection to our national industry. They have maintained their ground in a high, a noble, a statesmanlike manner. They entered boldly into the discussion, and they reposed on their own high character, and on the merits of this great question itself, and on the intelligence of the people of their own States, to sustain the opinions they have held, and to answer for the public policy they have pursued. And their reliance is proved not to have been in vain.

In the third place, I believe that since the subject has been more discussed, the great body of the farming interest in the United States has come to understand it a great deal better.

It has been charged everywhere that the protective policy favors the rich manufacturers, the corporate bodies who have large investments, the capitalists who have employed operatives under them. Now I do not suppose there is a more plain proposition in the world, a proposition more capable of proof and demonstration than this, that in the condition of things in this country, a policy which, in protecting the manufacturing industry, gives employment to persons who are not producers of agricultural commodities, but who are consumers, is highly and substantially beneficial to all parties concerned in the farming interest. Without going into any great theory on this matter, without laying down any general propositions, or drawing general inferences, let me address myself to this assembly, mostly composed of the farming interests of New Jersey. The great interest of New Jersey is a farming interest. The interest of next importance is the manufacturing. There can be little chance of mistake in assuming that these two interests make up the aggregate of New Jersey pursuits.

The appeal, false and delusive as it is, is always made to the farming interest, that the effect of the protective policy is to raise the prices of those articles which the farmer has to purchase. If this were true, it would answer only half the question; because every farmer is interested in the prices on both sides, — the price of what he has to purchase, and the price of that which he has to sell. If it were true that the tariff policy enhanced the price of that which he must purchase, that would not settle the question. He would inquire and ask whether it would not have a corresponding or a greater effect in enhancing the price of what he has to sell.

But now I appeal to you, and to all men everywhere, who will yield themselves to fact, who will give up dogmas for truth, — I appeal to every man here, if, in point of fact, those articles which are required for consumption in New Jersey cannot be procured cheaper now than at the commencement of the protective policy in the United States. Is not the cloth you need for your wives and children as cheap? Cannot you obtain all the commodities, all the comforts of life, as cheaply? I suppose there is no doubt of that. They are cheaper — cheaper not only in regard to the money price, but in com-

parison to what you have to exchange for what you wish to purchase. And now, gentlemen, what is the great interest of the great body of the farmers of the United States? I take the body of New Jersey farmers as an illustration of all the rest.

What is their interest? Undoubtedly it is to have a fair price for that which they raise by tilling their own lands — a reasonable price — a near and permanent market for the products of their labor. Now, how is this to be secured? We know it cannot be found abroad. As for talking of finding such a market abroad, it is idle, it is a mockery. There is no such market. Where then shall we find it? Where but in these collections of persons who are not producers themselves, but who are consumers, — those who manufacture cloths and fabrics of all descriptions, and bring them to pay for the agricultural products of other parts of the country? It seems to me to be the most destructive policy in the world, to check this domestic industry of the country, to put down these domestic manufactures, or seriously to diminish their success, because it will annihilate, it will suppress, it will obliterate, that great market which it is most important that every American farmer should possess. Why, is it nothing to the farmers of western New Jersey, that the artisans and manufacturers of Philadelphia are flourishing and able to buy and consume the produce they have to sell? Is it nothing to those farmers of New Jersey who live near Newark and Paterson, whether the manufacturing establishments of Newark and Paterson go on, and give to them what they have to buy, and furnish a market for what they have to sell? And what is true in this respect of neighborhoods, of counties, or States, must be seen to be as true for the whole grain-growing, produce-raising, agricultural part of the community, and of the whole country.

There is more, gentlemen, to be said on this topic than I could think of passing before you. But there is one thing I will remark, taking your own State as an example, and it is a fair one, for I consider New Jersey, on the whole, an agricultural community. Her people live by their industry in the cultivation of the land, and the times, the progress of events, the general improvements which are taking place in society, in

regard to those who are engaged in other pursuits, have made a peculiar case. It has been well said that agriculture is not a steam engine. For in the nature of farming pursuits, it is a thing incapable of such improvements as the progress of the arts and the use of machinery have conferred on other departments of labor. You cannot plough by steam, you cannot hoe your corn, or thresh your grain, or make your harvests by steam. All the labor of agriculture is substantially, as it was a hundred years ago, a manual operation. Agriculture thus shares not half the benefits, the saving of expense, and other improvements, effected in the mechanic arts. I hope farming industry has been aided by discoveries of science, that there is more thrift and a better economy in its details. But this great, broad, almost universal pursuit of society, in the nature of the case, is not capable of availing itself to the same extent as other branches of industry, of the inventions of science, and new modes of applying artificial power. But meantime the general progress of society goes on; life becomes more expensive, the education of the children costs more, the general habits of life require more outlay. If it be true that the agricultural interest has not, and cannot, diminish the cost of production; and if, on the other hand, the necessary expenses of the vast mass of the population of this vast country are rather increasing, is it not of the first importance to the general happiness to keep up the prices of agricultural productions to a reasonable and a just rate,—a rate which shall afford a fair remuneration to the farmer? And if it is just and expedient, if it be the part of political wisdom to maintain the rates of such products, so as to afford a fair remuneration for agricultural labor, so as to enable the farming interest to maintain itself, then I say we can accomplish this only by finding somewhere in our own country, a near market; somewhere in our own country, a people not agriculturists, not producing, themselves, but ready to buy and pay a good price for that which the farmer has to sell.

I look, therefore, upon it as altogether a wrong statement of the question, to say that a tariff for protection is alone beneficial, or mainly beneficial, to manufacturers. I regard it as essential to the interests of agriculture, which may be regarded

as the foundation of the country, inasmuch as it creates a market for its productions. And I am disposed to pass the few moments allowed us here, in discussing these things which lie at the foundation of the prosperity of the country, and which, if I understand the matter, form the platform of Whig principles.

Well, then, shall we have this tariff or not? The tariff is settled so far; but it is a party question; it has been introduced into party contests, and we know that among those who are opposed to us, party feeling is strong. There is much concession, much tenacity, a great deal of glue to cause them to adhere. What has been the result? You observe that all the drill and discipline of the party was brought to bear upon it. A tariff or no tariff is the great and leading line of distinction between the two parties. If not, what is? Unless, as is now said, the question of the annexation of Texas, of which I wish to say nothing now, is to swallow up all others, this question must still be regarded as one of those in dispute between the parties; now, how do we stand in regard to it? Here are five or six highly respectable gentlemen, some of whom I have the pleasure to know, representing this State in the Congress of the United States; how are their votes found? We, of course, suppose them sufficiently attached to their party to induce them, so far as they can in conscience, to support their party; what did they do? Every one of them, I believe, felt compelled, either by conscience, or by his responsibility to his fellow citizens, his electors (which is generally a tolerably good conscience for a political man), they felt compelled to give their votes against their party, and in favor of their constituents, and in favor of New Jersey. This was the proposition to repeal the bill laid on the table, avowedly, I believe, its everlasting rest. They belong, I need not say, to the majority in the House. And now, what is to be the result? What are we to expect? Is it to be supposed that these gentlemen, thus honestly voting against the objects, and principles, and spirit of their party, on their responsibility to their constituents, will come home among you and urge you to support, for the first and second offices in the nation, men who they have reason to think will labor not with them but against them — men who

will be obliged to advocate views prejudicial to the interests of the people of New Jersey? I wish to speak with all respect of those gentlemen. I have alluded to them only as an instance in which conscience, a sense of duty and responsibility, have obliged men to differ on great principles from their party.

Passing from this, let me say a few words on another topic.

In the contest of 1840, the currency question formed a material element.

I shall not now enter upon the discussion of that question, with any view of examining the respective measures, adopted or proposed, at any time, by any party, for the purpose of securing a safe collection of the revenue, or providing a proper currency for the commercial transactions and general business of the community.

I have nothing to say of Sub-Treasuries, National Banks, or Exchequers. On all these subjects my opinions have been sufficiently often expressed, and I have nothing new to add.

But the present state of things is interesting, as well as gratifying; and abounding as it does, in many blessings, and much prosperity, it is not without its dangers. There are dangers and evils, as well as benefits and advantages, in that mixed circulation of coin and paper which now exists among us. That that mixed circulation will continue, seems certain. That far the greater part will consist of paper, until there shall come another day of disaster to the banks, seems certain also. That this circulation, in its present state, while the banks which issue paper are solvent, and do not issue it in excess, is convenient, and as beneficial as any local circulation can be, may be also admitted. But neither of these things is more certain, than that danger hangs round the system, calling for care and discretion, oversight, and watchfulness, from the Government, or in the absence of the exercise of any powers of the Government, from the banks themselves, and from the community.

I have ever been, and am still of opinion, that this guardianship and superintendence of the currency, is one of the constitutional, appropriate, and necessary exercises of the authority of the National Government. But that point I do not now propose to argue or to touch. But I wish to state what I consider the danger to be, and whence it arises, to the end that

the country may not be led to forget the existence of that danger, although it be not, at the present moment, standing in an appalling attitude before us.

Indeed, I have nothing to say, but what has been often said, and better said, before. The topic, however, seems not altogether inappropriate, as it is likely to mingle itself, more or less, with the ensuing election, as well as being at all times of high importance to the public.

What I have to say I shall endeavor to say in the fewest words and in the clearest manner possible, without pretending to novelty or regarding my opinions of more value than those of others.

Gold and silver are the universal standard of value, and medium of payments, among all civilized nations. All the coin in the world belongs to all the commercial nations in the world, each having naturally a share in it, proportioned to its commercial business and use. If bills of exchange were unknown, then coin would exchange hands, from country to country, in order to pay debts, and settle balances, as the course of trade should have created such balance, on the one side or the other. Coin is the universal solvent of commercial balances, the general paymaster, whose office it is to square accounts, arising from the interchange of commodities. If produce exported becomes debtor to produce imported, coin must pay the difference; and where exports throw a credit over imports, coin returns to adjust the accounts. All this is as simple in the order of things as is the proceeding of a farmer who goes to a market town with the produce of his farm, and with money in his pocket, if he wishes to buy more than he has to sell, or bringing home more money, if his sale exceed his purchases.

But in the intercourse of nations, there are things which affect the simplicity of this proceeding, and render it a little more complicated, without changing its nature. The one of bills of exchange is universal. Bills of exchange prevent, in a very great degree, in a settled state of trade, the actual transmission of coin from country to country. They run the round of the whole mercantile world, bringing nations to a settlement, each one with all the rest, one paying its debts to another, by drawing on its funds in the hands of a third, and leaving coin

to be called for, only where balances of debt are considerable, or appear to be accumulating at some one point. London may be regarded as the centre of exchanges for Europe, and the city of New York, for this country; Paris, Hamburg, and Amsterdam being auxiliaries to London, and Boston, Philadelphia, Baltimore, Mobile, and New Orleans auxiliaries to New York. The state of exchange, then, at any time, between New York and London, shows substantially the state of trade, in the aggregate, between this country and Europe, and the balances actually existing, or soon to arise, on the one side or the other. Speculations founded in calculations respecting future events, such as the probable amount of the staple articles, for the year, or the result of manufacturing industry, the probable rise or fall of prices, and other such things, affect, to a certain degree, the actual rate at which bills of exchange are bought and sold, and thus qualify that which would otherwise be the mere result of facts, with more or less of the influence of opinion. Still, the general and the safe index of the state of trade, is the state of the exchanges.

To an accurate understanding of this subject, however, it is necessary to bear in mind, that the nominal exchange between the United States and England does not correspond with the real commercial exchange; by reason of the difference, which the laws of the two countries have established in regard to the value of gold, and of the incorrect estimate, usually made here, in the business of exchange, of the value of the pound sterling. In exchange, the pound sterling is received at \$4.44; its real value may be put at \$4.80; and so the law of Congress regards it. This difference amounts to 8 per cent. So that when a bill of exchange is bought in New York payable in London, in sterling money, if the premium given for it do not exceed 8 per cent, it is really purchased at about par; and in this state of exchanges there is no danger of the export of specie.

This topic may be thought to be not altogether fit for discussion here. But I have made these remarks upon it for reasons which I have already stated, and for the purpose of preparing the way a little for opinions which I entertain on the subject of a mixed metallic and paper currency, and the influences of this currency on foreign trade, and which opin-



ions I wish briefly to state. And I wish to do this at this time, because I think that I foresee that in the progress of no great number of years, probably sooner than most men suppose, the currency question will again come to be a question of great interest.

Gold and silver, as I have already said, constitute the standard of value, and medium of payment among nations. The same is true, in effect, in domestic trade and among individuals. But here comes in the modern use of bank paper as the representative of gold and silver, which supplies the place of coin, and almost supersedes it in domestic transactions. Most commercial countries authorize the circulation of the paper, and this circulation is greater or less according to circumstances and to the habits of the people. In the United States and England it is large, in France it is less.

I am not now speaking of Government securities, irredeemable treasury notes, or anything of that kind; I am speaking of bank notes, promising payment in specie on demand, and circulating as cash. In the United States such bank notes are issued by many hundred different banks. They pass from hand to hand as money, and little gold and silver are seen in the daily business of life. This state of things is convenient, so far as local circulations are concerned, and while the use of paper is restrained within just limits. But then comes the question, what are the just limits? and who is to preserve them? What is the standard by which we are to decide the question of excess, or no excess? and who is to support this standard?

Is there, or is there not, or may there be, or cannot there ever be, excess, so long as the banks are able to redeem their paper? What do we mean by excess or over-issues, or injudicious superabundance of paper?

To answer these questions we must remember that the true operation of bank paper is of a representative character. It represents coin. But this representative, like other representatives, sometimes forgets its constituents, and sets itself up to be somebody, or something; when, of itself, it is nobody, and nothing. The one-dollar bill, which you have in your pocket, is no better than blank paper, except so far as you have confidence that it will, whenever you wish, bring a dollar into your

hands. A bank note, professing to represent coin, and being a true representative, acts a respectable part in the drama of commercial affairs; but when it sets up for itself, or offers itself in an independent character, it only "presents the person of moonshine." The security of paper, first against the insolvency of banks, and secondly, against the general evil of over-issues, and inflated circulation, consists in maintaining a just and direct relation between the amount of paper, and the gold and silver which it represents. I do not, of course, say, a relation of equality, but just a relation, and a direct relation. In other words, I mean to say, that when the course of trade withdraws specie from the country, then the amount of circulating paper should be proportionately diminished. Bank notes will not pay foreign debts. Strangers will not trust this representative of coin. They cannot judge of his credentials, and therefore demand the presence of the constituent himself. Here, I think, lies one of the great temptations to excessive issues of paper. Then trade is such that balances are rising against us abroad, and the exportation of specie commences. There are those who always desire an enlargement of the paper circulation, to supply the deficiency and to keep up prices. But enlargement of paper issues, under such circumstances, is the first step towards a crisis, commercial distress, and revulsion.

This country is full of enterprise. No people have more. Almost every man is active; while, at the same time, and for the same reason, capital is less abundant than in older countries. These circumstances keep up a demand for loans and discounts, especially in times of activity; and although it is doubtless true that a well-conducted system of paper circulation may, to some extent, act as expansion of capital, and in that way be useful in a new country, yet men are too apt to delude themselves with the idea that paper is currency.

But I am now considering, mainly, paper currency at home, in its consequences upon importations and other branches of foreign trade, and a just limit to its discounts.

An opinion has prevailed in England, and I suppose still prevails, that it is safe in banks to discount every good bill of exchange, or promissory note, which bill or note is "business paper," as it is called; that is, if it has been given, in a real

transaction of buying and selling. This has been, therefore, the rule with the Bank of England.

Now, if by this no more were meant than that it might be safe for the bank itself, so far as its own interests were concerned, to discount all such paper, the proposition might be admitted. Business paper, generally speaking, may be regarded as safe paper. But that all good business paper may be discounted by banks, and the discount paid in bank notes without danger or injury to the public from an excess in the paper circulation, is a proposition which I do not admit and which I think of dangerous tendency. I am persuaded that enlightened bank directors, disposed to regard the public good as well as the interests of their own stockholders, can never act on such a principle. It is a fundamental error; and in a country so full of enterprise, and so much disposed to activity as ours, its practical tendency is to stimulate business too highly, to inflate prices unnaturally, to cause over-trading, over-production, and over-action, in all departments of business. It swells the amount of paper beyond its just relation to specie, and exposes the country to sudden revulsions. While specie is departing to pay debts abroad, it is the effect of this shallow and short-sighted policy to increase the paper circulation at home. How can such a course of things terminate, but in disaster and distress?

We are now just recovering from a deep and long continued depression. All branches of business give evidence of revival, and of healthy action. The danger is, that we shall not be content to make haste slowly; that a spirit of speculation may spring out of our state of prosperity, when it shall become flushed. The danger is, that paper will be issued in excess, prices become extravagant, and the symptoms of crisis be upon us before we are aware. All this may not happen; but the only security that it shall not happen lies in this, namely, that bank issues be kept within just bounds, with direct reference to the amount of gold and silver.

Let me illustrate my meaning by a supposed case. Suppose the amount of coin in the banks of New York to be five millions. Suppose them to have issued, in paper, three millions for one, that is to say, fifteen millions. I do not intend to say

that this is a just proportion, but it may be assumed, for illustration. Now, suppose the holders of these fifteen millions demand a million of specie for exportation. Then fourteen millions of paper remain, resting on a basis of four millions. If a second million of specie be called for, then thirteen millions of paper rests on three millions of specie, and so on. Now, it is evident, that if such a process as this begins, and threatens to go on rapidly, without contraction, general distress, and perhaps explosions of the banks themselves, would be the inevitable and immediate consequences.

This catastrophe, and the tendency of things towards it, is to be guarded against, by just restraints upon the amount of discounts, by waiting the course of trade, and observing continually the index of exchange. It is not sufficient guard to look at the supposed responsibility of paper offered for discounts, or to inquire whether it arose in any case from real transactions of sales and purchases. If the exchanges indicate that exportation of specie may be apprehended, more caution is necessary; and when exportation ordinarily commences, it should be met by an immediate and corresponding diminution of the paper circulation. This will slacken that exportation, check it, and finally stop it. The process may be inconvenient for the moment. It may more or less depress prices, and dash men's hopes a little. But it is infinitely better to meet the occurrence, by its proper remedy, in the beginning, than to attempt to hold up against the natural course of things, to maintain trade in an artificial and forced state, tending every day to a final, ruinous, and overwhelming fall of prices, and to a general prostration of credit.

That which every branch of industry in this country most needs is reasonable and steady, not extravagant or fluctuating prices; sudden changes deprive men of employment, and distress families. Steady occupation with reasonable gain, constant markets with fair prices, with no apprehension of sudden change; and the security which a man feels that that *is* money which he has taken *for* money; freedom from alarm, and panic, and no fear of disorder or violence; these things compose the elements of general and enduring prosperity among the industrious and producing classes of the community.

In the present state of things, in the absence of all oversight by Government, the continuance of the public prosperity very much depends on the banks themselves. Subject to no control but their own discretion, they ought to feel responsible for the exercise of that discretion.

The great cities near to us, and other great cities, the sources of a great proportion of bank paper, are jointly called on to guard the country against such evils as it has already more than once experienced. There ought to be an understanding among the leading institutions, and a just disposition to discountenance everywhere, either extravagant lending or extravagant borrowing. I do not presume to admonish the banks; but I hope they will receive these suggestions, as made in a friendly spirit. If discretion and candor, in this respect, be not exercised, our present state of health will itself bring on disease; our very prosperity will plunge us in disorder. We are well instructed by experience, let us not be lost to experience. Let not all the good, all the comforts, all the blessings, which now seem in prospect for all classes, be blighted, ruined, and destroyed, by running into danger which we may avoid. The rocks before us are all visible, all high out of water. They lift themselves up, covered with the fragments of the awful wreck and ruin of other times. Let us avoid them. Let the master, and the pilots, and the helmsman, and all the crew, be wide awake, and give the breakers a good berth.

Gentlemen, there is another subject connected with our foreign policy, to which it may be proper to advert as one of those which will require the wisest counsels of the wisest men, if we succeed in obtaining a change of the government. A commercial reform has become necessary; we have heedlessly and thoughtlessly, in the exercise of an ill-judged generosity in years past, entered into what are called reciprocal treaties with other nations. They are all fallacious. There is no such thing as reciprocity in fact in these treaties, however reciprocal they may be in principle. There is no real reciprocity between us and Bremen, or between us and Sweden. They are contrary to all the practice that is before us, to all former usages, to the great principles of all our early navigation acts, and they ought to be terminated. I do not go into detail on this subject, for I

know that New Jersey is not as much interested in commerce as other States. But the matter is one of great public interest, which must be considered and disposed of within the next four years, and on that account, among others, the great interests of the country demand for the public council, wise, experienced, and safe men.

There is another matter connected with the administration of the Government, of a nature to touch the great principles of the Whig party. I see here circulated to-day among the people, some remarks made by me some time since on the increase of executive power. I am glad to see them again thrown before the people. I stand by them. I hold now as I held then, that the executive power of the country has been dangerously increased, is increasing, and ought to be diminished. Now, gentlemen, in the organization of this Government, the great difficulty with your fathers and my fathers, was how to constitute the executive power. They knew how to make a House of Representatives, for they had become accustomed to popular elections, which they had enjoyed for a hundred years. They knew how to constitute a Senate; for they might constitute that as they had in the old Congress, by members appointed by legislatures of the States. For all that, they had precedents and practice. It was a high road and an open way. But they never had a supreme executive power, with high authority; none of the European examples applied. The most of them held their places by hereditary right, and they were only examples of inherent, monarchical, arbitrary power. With the exception of a few cases, like the Polish kings and some minor instances in the cantons of Switzerland and elsewhere, they had no precedent for the establishment, by popular election, of an executive, with such power and limitation as should make the office sufficiently efficient and energetic to protect the law and yet never be dangerous to the liberty of the people, nor encroach upon the liberties of the other departments.

I do not say they failed entirely in their effort to accomplish this. I think they did not fail. I think they provided for an executive under the Constitution, such as would by prudence and wisdom and sober discretion on the part of the people,

answer the great purposes of the executive, and yet not endanger the liberties of the people, nor encroach on the other departments. Experience has proved it. Washington proved it, and his successors proved it. They showed that the thing was practicable. They showed that, by electing good men, men of eminent virtue and eminent talent, men who should love fame more than office, men who would stand upon their own characters in their own generation, and upon the reputation they might hope to enjoy, more than the immediate possession of office, the executive provided in the Constitution might answer all public exigencies. I do not say that the Constitution has provided an executive always safe or wise, placed in whosoever hands it might be. They expected no such things. They looked to the country at all times and under all circumstances to fill the high offices with men capable, patriotic, and of high character.

In my opinion it has come to pass,—I do not speak of recent occurrences, but I go back to the state of things upon which I have been remarking—it has come to pass that the executive power has a strong tendency to the personal aggrandizement of the man who, for the moment, happens to hold it; a strong tendency to make him consider himself, in some vague sense, the representative of the American people, clothed with certain undefined authority, as if he were above the Constitution; a tendency to lead him to assume names not known to the Constitution, and to forget that he is limited in authority, as he is limited in time, and that he is no more the representative of the American people, than he is the representative of all the nations of the earth.

I adhere to the sentiments on this subject I uttered seven years ago. I have looked them over to-day in the print in which they have been circulated. Here they are. I believe they are all true, and I believe it is one of the first duties of the American people to look with a sharp, I will not say an extreme jealousy, but I will say to exercise a close watchfulness of the progress of executive power. Let them see to it that the head of that department, placed to exercise the office of President, does not make its patronage the property of favorites or dispose of its power for his self-aggrandizement.

Let them go back to Washington and his successors, and find there examples for all who may come after them.

Gentlemen, we are assembled here as Whigs. Let us now take a short survey of Whig principles: a reasonable protection to the labor of the country, the maintenance of a sound currency, all practicable reform and extension of commerce, the conservation of the Constitution, and the preservation of their respective powers to the several departments. I take it all these are articles of the Whig creed. If they are not its articles, then I withdraw my subscription to that creed. Now, I ask if any of these things are inconsistent with the highest interests of the people? If there is any one person here who does not belong to the Whig party — I ask him, if in all this, if in a reasonable protection to labor, a sound currency, jealousy of the executive, he can see anything not compatible with the best interests of the country? He will say, perhaps, not; the Whig principles are good enough, but their practice does not come up to them. I have for this a ready answer. I will say to him, you just then adopt Whig principles, carry them out, and show that you are better Whigs than we are, and we'll give you the lead in the Government of the country. If our principles be good, sound, and practical, then I say it is the part of a wise man and a good citizen to support them. We have all the same interests to promote, no matter to what party we belong. The farms we all cultivate adjoin each other. We are governed by the same laws. The convention that is assembled here makes a constitution for you all. The sun of the Constitution, the light of Government, falls on all, as the light of heaven and the light of the firmament. If, then, we have a common interest, is it not time to consider what it is: is not now an occasion for coming together and holding conference, to see if we shall not all unite in the support of that common interest? Why should we always be divided by a name? or why should we be divided by men? My friends, let me tell you that, in my esteem, men are nothing, or next to nothing. In this great country, of twenty millions of people, what is any individual? A symbol of good or bad principles, a rallying point for uniting all who may uphold the principles of which he is the champion: but, after all,



what is any individual, or any individual's ability and usefulness? Principles are everything: measures are everything. What we do now is done for ourselves and for our posterity.

Let us go into the contest with all these feelings; we have Clay and Frelinghuysen, honored names! to cheer us onward. But our hopes—at least my hopes—my purposes, are not merely to carry an election, to enjoy a triumph. I wish to establish great measures, essential to the good of the country and the happiness of the people. Let us do something now that may remain. I would call upon you of New Jersey, and especially upon the young men who are here, to act upon this and upon all occasions with an honest, pure, patriotic, and intelligent devotion to duty.

Gentlemen, there remains much to be done. I like all this display, these collections of good Whigs and of good feeling: I like these banners flying, and all the show of ardor and zeal, because they are proofs of good resolutions. If you please to say so, they are the effervescence of a good spirit: but they are proofs that a good spirit exists. But let me tell you—let me tell you, that the humblest flag which shall be found upborne and floating after victory, the coarsest piece of bunting, shot through, though it may be, like a sieve, and all in rags and tatters, if *after* the battle it still remain floating in the breeze, is worth vastly more than a thousand glossed and handsome standards which before the battle display their silken folds to the winds. Let us take care and see that such a flag is ours after the contest. Let us see something floating when the battle is fought, and not be called upon to skulk away with our beautiful banners and glorious badges, and to hide in some ignoble corner.

Now, gentlemen, we have much to do; and you younger men have much and more than I. You have to address the well-meaning, the well-disposed,—and there are thousands such,—in the other party. You must ask them whether they do purpose to support men who, so far as they and you can judge, are opposed to the interests of the country, and whether they will leave what they conscientiously believe to be for the good of the country under the talismanic power of party. You must converse thus among your neighbors. Do your duty, and do

not consider the work accomplished till the Whig triumph has been made secure by a strong and decisive majority in November next.

Gentlemen, I will detain you not a moment by saying anything of the distinguished men selected at Baltimore — as the persons under whom you rally. I need not do that. The first voice of dissent has not yet been heard. Mr. Clay has been before the country for thirty years, and has, at several times before, been thought of for the same high office. Circumstances have prevented an unanimity heretofore. But there is now that unanimity. And I not only hope, but I believe, that this united effort will result in his triumphant election. Still less need I speak a word to you of Mr. Frelinghuysen; he is known to you as well as to me. A native of your own State, a cherished son of New Jersey, he is worthy of all confidence, and he enjoys it all. I can only say, for one, that if it were in my power to-day to remove him from the place he holds, as nominated for the Vice-Presidency, and to put any other man at my pleasure in his place, I would hold on to him with both my hands and all my heart, and keep him just where he is.

Gentlemen, we are assembled as Whigs, on ground distinguished by Whig conduct, by Whig endurance, by Whig suffering, by Whig bravery, and by Whig victory in early times. For myself, I claim nothing; but, as a member of the great Whig party, I do claim a participation in a noble and glorious inheritance. I claim to be of that party, and one of them by regular descent from Washington and the Whigs of the Revolution. And if there be any Whigs at this day, who set themselves up as wiser than Washington and his associates and co-patriots, they are Whigs with whom I do not associate. I believe, conscientiously, that if we were now to appeal to every Revolutionary man on the face of the whole continent, who had seen those perilous times, if you were to take every living man who had a scar to show from the Revolution, every one who limps from the loss of a leg in the Revolutionary times, and put to them the question, ninety-nine out of every hundred of them would cry out, Success to the Whig cause! Go to the neighborhood of any battle-field you please. I have tried it at Bunker Hill, at Concord, and Lexington,

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and I say that none of the men there, whom God has preserved to us from the scenes of the Revolution, does not now feel all his sympathies and all his affections running, voluntarily and copiously, in favor of the Whigs.

You live, gentlemen, in the neighborhood of scenes renowned in the history of the great Whig party and its immortal leader. If there is anything in local associations, if the mind is moved by what the eye sees, if it is touched by what recollection brings to memory, I know no place more calculated to excite the feelings, to animate the patriotism, or to console Whigs for whatever disappointment they may be forced to undergo, than the scenes which surround us. Here at one time the whole Whig force of the country was concentrated in that cold and bloody winter of '75 and '76. Gentlemen, I never read in my life, I cannot read now, the history of the transactions at Trenton during '75 and '76, without a thrill of emotion. More than thirty years ago, in the early part of my life, and when I was not known to ten persons in New Jersey, I was led to go through all this scene, so memorable for that campaign, to gratify, I will not say a curiosity, but an anxiety, a patriotic feeling, as I may call it, to trace the operations of the suffering patriots and heroic minds of our army. I followed the march of Washington from the ferry eight miles above, down the river road and the Pennington road, to the battle in which the Hessians were captured. I returned with him, examined the battle-fields, and traced his steps to the White House, and so along the Quaker road to the Friends' Meeting House at Princeton.

I examined along the field where Mercer fell, the house to which he was carried, the house in which he died. All this I did when I was very young. I did it under the direction of a distinguished citizen of New Jersey, ever honored among you while he lived, eminent for services in both Houses of Congress — I mean the late Richard Stockton of Princeton, and a son of that Richard Stockton who set his name to that immortal instrument, the Declaration of Independence. And, gentlemen, when I consider how near the whole cause of Revolutionary Whigs was to being lost by the complete capture of the whole American army, with its immortal leader at its head, and consider their Providential escape from superior forces, I feel, in the first

place, a devout sentiment of gratitude to Providence for so remarkable a preservation, and next an overwhelming regard and admiration for that skill and fidelity and judgment which guided their leader, and for the steady attachment, the loyal devotion to liberty of that gallant band.

If so glorious results followed Washington's movements in '75 and '76, what battle-place more worthy to be a rallying ground for Whigs of the present day than this! The day is not so dark as then. On that dark day the patriotic efforts of the Whigs shed light upon this bright day. Let the efforts of the Whigs of this day spread over it a still greater and brighter light, and a superior lustre!

I shall not have the happiness soon again to see such an assembly of New Jersey people. For one I rejoice, I sincerely rejoice, at the opportunity of having met you. Let us return to our homes, to our places of appropriate duty, and determine that, for us and our household, we will adhere to the Whig faith of our ancestors; that we will give in not at all to any temporary purpose, to any personal purpose, to any partisan purpose, the feeling that we have a country, that we have a public liberty bought by the blood of our fathers, transmitted to our hands for safe keeping. Let us hand it down to our children; let us teach them its value, and tell them what to do themselves; let us leave them a parent's blessing, connected with a parent's solemn injunction, never to desert the true interests of their country.

# Speech at Boston

JULY 4, 1844.<sup>1</sup>

MR. DIMMOCK having announced to the meeting "the Defender of the Constitution," a deafening shout of welcome burst forth. Mr. Webster made the following observations :

I NEED not say, friends and fellow citizens, that I am quite obliged for the kind manner in which you have received the reference to myself. You all know how highly and how deeply I regard the good feeling of my friends and neighbors, the Whigs of Boston, and I will not waste time by any further remarks on that point.

We are assembled, gentlemen, to celebrate the birth of the independence of our country, — a service always grateful to Whigs, because they are Whigs, because the declaration and accomplishment of independence were great Whig achievements. The Whigs have an ancestry, a character in history ; and I deem it a fortunate circumstance that we bear that name. It goes back, as you are aware, further by a hundred years than the American Revolution.

All know that when there sprang up in England the opposition to the Stuarts and to tyranny, the adherents of the throne gave to their opponents, in ridicule, the name of Whigs. They took it. And like many other names which were given in scorn and derision, they have made it illustrious. The name of Whig designates principles. Sidney, Cooper, Sir Robert Howard, the Earl of Devonshire, — all were bright instances which lent lustre to the name of Whig in the early days of the party. At a later period, Chatham, Burke, Fox, John Baring, and Dunning — all were Whigs, so far as they could be consistently with the allegiance they owed to the Crown.

<sup>1</sup> At the celebration by the Boston Clay Club, No. 1. From the report in the Boston Courier, July 8, 1844.

But their splendor, bright as it was, was dimmed by that of the American Revolution, and of the Whigs, with Washington at their head, who accomplished it. It was Whig suffering, Whig perseverance, Whig patriotism, Whig valor, Whig wisdom, that gave us, first, independence, and then a united government.

All the world knows the principles of the Whigs. The security of private rights; the guarding against undue executive power; the guarding against military encroachment; the preservation of the *habeas corpus*; of trial by jury; of national honor and national faith! All these are spread everywhere among the Whigs of America. All these are Whig principles; and, until they perish, the Whig party will not perish. Whigs, therefore, can justly go back to the 4th of July, 1776, with enthusiasm; they can slake their thirst at the well from which their fathers drank, and whose waters in the hour of distress and agony gave them nerve and strength for the contest, and finally led them to a glorious victory. We may all well labor with alacrity and cheerfulness — not for mere party triumph as party triumph, but because our success will carry back the country and will carry us back, to all the great and just principles on which our Government was built.

There are circumstances which make this consideration peculiarly acceptable to us now. First, the present state of things strongly indicates that the course of Whig principles is onward. The country is becoming satisfied that its prosperity is identified with the Whig cause and the Whig policy. And is it not so? If one were to investigate, to interrogate our opponents, to inquire of them what it is that renders them hostile to our policy and our measures, I fancy they would be extremely puzzled to give an answer which would be satisfactory to any reasonable person. Do they expect that if they succeed in overturning what we have been enabled to set up, if they scatter to the winds what we have effected and what we are laboring to strengthen and improve, that any interest of the country will be benefited? Who is the man of candor and justice, throughout the land, that will say he thinks the honor of the country safer in the hands of the other party than in the hands of the Whigs? That he thinks its interests better cared for by our opponents than by ourselves? That

they have managed, or will ever manage, the administration of the Government with juster economy — though, gentlemen, economy should not be carried too far — than the Whigs? Who, in fact, can give us any other reason for his opposition than that “you are in and we are out”? Gentlemen, this matter will be considered fairly by posterity. It is even now fairly viewed by the civilized world. And if I am challenged by my opponents to refer the question, not to any one particular part of the world, but to the lovers of civil liberty everywhere, to all those who can, and will, judge fairly and truthfully, — I accept the challenge. And I refer it to them to say whether the policy of the Whigs, from George Washington down to the present day, or the policy of their adversaries, gives greater evidence of sound principles, will better secure the real happiness of the country! I have no fears for the judgment.

I ought not to have interrupted you by making my entrance when you were listening to my friend from Georgia, who has addressed you. There are circumstances in addition to his great and eminent talent, to his known worth, to his distinguished position, which make his presence here peculiarly interesting. He comes from Georgia — that “bright, particular star” in the horizon of the South. He comes among us with a heart full of fraternal emotions, with feelings that he belongs to the country. And though he belongs to one part and we to another and a distant region, he knows that we are bound together by indissoluble ties. And, as he justly says, it is time that the whole Whig party of the country should look with a single eye to the foreign and domestic policy of our Government. He has said that between all the States of the Union there should be the freest and fullest intercourse, and with regard to other nations, against which we are competent to defend ourselves if compelled so to do, we should observe entire reciprocity in commercial relations. I agree to this doctrine, and I believe, as he has said, that it is the belief of the whole Whig party.

And permit me here to call your attention, by a word, to the treaty recently entered into with the Hanse towns, and which the Senate refused to ratify. The report of the Senate on that

treaty was made by a committee of which the gentleman from Georgia is a distinguished and able member; and with great propriety the report objects to the principle on which that treaty was based, and denies it to be reciprocal in any just sense — though it has been dignified with the appellation of a “treaty of reciprocity.” One leading principle of that report is that the matter of raising revenue and imposing and regulating duties on imports, is a legislative and not a judicial function. And though there may be, here and there, an exception, as in the case of the treaty with France concerning the Louisiana purchase, yet such cases are but anomalies; they are not the rule. The duty belongs to Congress; it is not a part of the constitutional power of the President. I will only say, in addition, that no instructions for any such treaty left a department of the Government, while I was in that department.

And in relation to the domestic policy of the country. I think my friend from Newburyport (Mr. Hunt) has placed that matter on the right ground. There has been the greatest possible misrepresentation concerning it all. Protection, a tariff, it has been said, is but for the benefit of manufacturers, capitalists, and corporations, — that name of terror everywhere. And it is urged that it is greatly injurious to all the rest of the people. But the speech you have heard takes the true view. There can be no greater object of desire to the producer, the agriculturalist, than a quick, a fair market. And where shall that be found? If duties are laid on imports just so far and no farther than will afford the lowest amount of revenue absolutely essential to the support of the Government; if beyond this we admit the manufactures of other nations free; if again the American producer is allowed, and can command an unrestricted market for his produce abroad, — then indeed will he be more speedily enriched than when living under a protective tariff. There is, undoubtedly, a one-sided aspect in which this question may be viewed, for there is a one-sided aspect to everything. But is that the aspect in which a statesman, or any man of judgment, would regard anything whatever? And where, abroad, can the American agriculturalist dream of commanding such a market? The true view is that it is as much the interest of the producer to sell dear as to buy cheap.



He can best secure this object by establishing a system of mutual interchange of commodities at home. What we can supply to Georgia, she had better take from us, what she can furnish us, we had better take from her, than for either to go further and fare worse. A reciprocal intercourse between the States, barter and sale among themselves,—where a country is so large as ours, extending from the tropics almost to the frigid zone, possessing so many varieties of soil and climate that it is capable of producing within itself all it may want,—these constitute one great means of securing our happiness as a people. Our trade among ourselves will eventually, and not at a very remote period, be greater than the internal trade of all Europe. Look at the prospect, and then tell me what, indeed, our domestic trade will not be, if we can continue in the enjoyment of permanent, moderate, and reasonable protection?

Ours, gentlemen, is now a contest for preservation. We say to our opponents, and say truly, so far as regards the policy of protection and domestic trade—

— “ We want no change ;  
And, least of all, such change as you would bring us ! ”

The country prospers. The twenty-seventh Congress did good, did remarkable good ; and if we only can preserve that good, we need not fear the future. Our country, as you have forcibly been told by others, is prosperous in a high degree. It is for us to continue the causes of such prosperity. And with what have we to contend ? Party feeling. Personal ambition. The love of office. Against these we bring the experience of more than fifty years, the counsels and the wisdom of those who have preceded us, and, more than all, a party firmly united in support of a policy which has proved itself eminently successful. We have principle. We have union. And, with effort, we shall have success. I am sensible, fellow citizens, that I should violate the propriety of the occasion, did I detain you longer. Let me propose —

“ The Whig cause ! Proved to be the true cause of American liberty and independence.”

# Speech at the Whig Mass Meeting

SPRINGFIELD, MASS., August 9, 1844.<sup>1</sup>

MR. ASHMUN, who presided, read the following extract from a letter written by William H. Seward, Governor of New York, who was unable to be present.

“The earliest studies of every citizen in the history of democracy in America, carry him at once to Faneuil Hall, the council chamber of Boston, and to Lexington and Bunker Hill, the battle-fields of Massachusetts.

“When sedition raised her thousand clamors, and fears of the dissolution of the Union came thick and fast upon me in a foreign land, opening a sad prospective of commotions, declining public virtue, and the calamities of endless civil war, the voice of Massachusetts, delivered by Daniel Webster, defending our glorious Constitution, not for her interests, or her sake, or her glory alone but for the peace, welfare, and happiness of the whole American people, quelled the storm, dispelled all alarm, and reassured mankind of the stability of *Liberty and Union — Then and Forever, One and Inseparable!*”

Fellow citizens, continued Mr. Ashmun, it is now my pleasure, as well as duty, to announce to you that Daniel Webster is here with us to-day. And I, therefore, now introduce to you our Commonwealth's favorite son, the great defender of the glorious Constitution of our Union.

Mr. Webster spoke as follows:

It is not the imposing aspect of this great assemblage, nor the pageantry of brilliant and lengthened processions, nor yet any desire, on my part, to address a political meeting, that has brought me among you to-day. My opinions on the political questions which are now before the country, are, I believe, sufficiently known; they have been long entertained, often

<sup>1</sup> Boston Courier, August 12, 1844.

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expressed, and are not likely to be changed. But I am here to-day from a pure impulse of duty ; as a citizen of Massachusetts, owing to her people obligations, which certainly I shall never be able to repay, I have come to meet this great assembly of the citizens of her western counties, to express my opinion on the great importance of the contest in which they are engaged, and the bearing which the results of that contest will have on the happiness and character of the country, not only in our day, but in the days of our children for countless generations to come.

Gentlemen, it is one of the peculiar circumstances which seems to attend our political institutions, that, though the country may be prosperous in all its relations, we are yet called upon, from day to day, to enter into contests, arguments, and disquisitions, as though neither prosperity, nor reason, nor experience, had settled anything. Commerce and agriculture, and the mechanic arts are now flourishing — two of them in an especial degree. And the agriculture of the North and the plantation interest of the South, though perhaps not in so bright and palmy a state as they might be, are yet in a highly respectable condition. And yet, at this very time, when our prosperity as a nation far transcends the prosperity of any other nation to which we can be compared, we are threatened with a change, a total change in all the policy which has contributed to produce such prosperity.

Fellow citizens, it is proposed —

First — to change our territory ; to extend its limits by the annexation of a foreign country.

Second — to change our Constitution ; to engraft upon that instrument what I had almost thought the repudiated doctrine of state interference.

Third — to change the whole policy of protection to domestic industry.

Upon these points I desire to express my opinions, and I shall do so in very few words. I beg it to be understood that I speak with no reference to latitude or longitude, with no fear of either Northern men or Southern men, — though with entire respect to both, — but as belonging to the whole country, on questions which, as I conceive, affect the whole country.

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And, first, as to the enlargement of our territory by the annexation of Texas. For whose interests is that? On what ground ought that to be effected? My opposition to that measure is neither temporary in its nature nor character. It would be the same if Mexico were agreed to the annexation, as it is not; it would be the same were Texas to cost us nothing, as though it cost us much. It is founded, principally, on the sentiment which has been illustrated and enlarged upon here to-day. The great, fundamental, everlasting objection to the annexation of Texas, is that it is a scheme for the extension of the slavery of the African race. I submit to gentlemen from the South here present, and I see many, whether any sensible, judicious, and wise man there, has wished, or now wishes, for the agitation and discussion of this question, at the same time that I submit to the people of the North, as lovers of liberty everywhere, whether they desire or approve of it.

Annexation brings with it the creation of States with a slave population. Disguise it as you may, the object, the motive of its advocates has been, and is, the extension of the slave interest, the slave market, and slave control. We may just as well come to the truth at once. The public documents before the people, garbled as they have been, show this fact,—that the annexation of Texas is sought for, from fear that, if it be not annexed, it will become a free territory. This is expressly avowed by the Secretary of State (Mr. Calhoun), who urges annexation from this very fear, that otherwise Texas may be a free country. And, gentlemen, this fear is not altogether unfounded. It is within my knowledge that representations have been made to the government of Texas, stating that large emigration to that country was much thought of among the people of the north of Germany; that these emigrant Germans would bring in white labor, white principles, white votes, and would finally acquire power enough to prevail over the adverse principle and interest; and that thus—who can bear to think of it!—thus Texas would become a free country. This, I know, has been represented to the Texan government. And it is to secure the institution of slavery against that result in Texas, that we are called upon to annex that country to our own.

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But, fellow citizens, I do not believe that the intelligent mind of the South wishes for any such thing. It is very natural that the unthinking portion of the people there should anticipate great advantages from the acquisition of so large a territory, adapted to their own productions, with a fresh and unexhausted soil; it is very natural that those who do not deeply reflect upon consequences, who do not regard matters in their political bearing, should find it easy to get up an enthusiasm among themselves on this subject of annexation. But it is my firm belief that the mind, the thought of the South does not wish it. If I thought it were not so, I should be very sorry.

Gentlemen, so far as regards slavery in this country, I agree entirely with what has already been said to you, and with the motto on one of your banners, to which allusion has been made. I say to slavery, under the Constitution, "thus far, and no farther." The Constitution, at the time of its adoption, found each State with the power of regulating its institutions, in this respect, for itself; and the Constitution so left the matter. Each State could continue slavery, if it should so choose, each could manumit the slaves within its borders, each could render itself entirely a free State. And, both before the adoption of the Constitution and since, many States have actually acted for themselves with regard to the institution. Some have manumitted their slaves, others have not. And there have been instances, among the present slave-holding States, where emancipation was formerly much nearer at hand than it seems to be now. I well know that, about fifteen years ago, public opinion on this point, in various parts of Maryland and Kentucky, was greatly in advance of its present state. Now, gentlemen, as the Constitution left this matter of slavery, I am content it shall stand. (Great applause). I can see no benefit to either party to this question in breaking up the Constitution. (Renewed approbation). And I advise the South not to risk that breaking up by the attempt to force more slavery into the Constitution, with the same sincerity with which I would advise the North against the foolish attempt to force out what is already in. The Constitution has provided nothing for the perpetuation of slavery. It leaves that with the States them-

selves. And it appears to me one of the very foolish extremes into which the minds of men will sometimes run, to talk of the dissolution of the Union and overthrow of the Constitution, for either purpose, — the one of the abolition, the other of the perpetuation of slave institutions.

I shall not argue before this assembly of intelligent citizens that Mr. Polk was nominated at Baltimore expressly for Texas. It is sufficient to remember that whenever we hear of one, we hear likewise of the other, that they are always together, that, like Castor and Pollux, when one is mentioned the other follows of course. It is evident, on the very face of it, that Polk was nominated because he was the man on whom the leaders of the annexation project could most confidently rely to carry out their scheme, and for no other reason. And this leads my mind to a reflection which fills me with profound humiliation. The gentlemen who represented the New England and Northern States in the Baltimore Convention, went to secure, most of them instructed to insist on, the nomination of Mr. Van Buren. He had avowed himself against the annexation of Texas; they were against it also. And had he succeeded, they would now be as loud as any in opposition to the project. But Mr. Van Buren was out-voted or out-manceuvred, I know not which, and Mr. Polk was nominated. And now, at once, as by a miracle, a change is wrought in all the sentiments of these gentlemen, and we hear from them almost a universal shout for the annexation and for Texas. It does appear to me that this is an instance of an abandonment of principle, and a lack of self-respect, which I know not where can be paralleled. I agree entirely, gentlemen, with those who say, and have told you, that Polk is the synonym of Texas. It is indeed said, in some quarters, that because Polk is elected, the annexation of Texas does not necessarily, and may not actually, follow. But let us not be beguiled by pretences so flimsy. The object of the party which has nominated Mr. Polk is the extension of slavery, by the creation of new States, in which slavery shall be a fundamental institution. This is what Mr. Polk is selected to effect, and what he and his party will secure, if success shall be his.

The distinguished gentleman, my friend from New York.

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(Mr. Granger), has said that this is an era, an epoch in our history. It is true, but he might well have gone further. It is an epoch in the history of human liberty, in the history of human slavery, and in the history of the tyranny of one race over another. The progress of human sentiment has long favored the abolition of slavery, and, to a great extent, such abolition has been carried out by the efforts of philanthropy and true policy, acting in co-operation with each other. And it will, indeed, be an epoch, a new era, in the history of human liberty, the manner in which this contest before us shall be decided. Therefore it is that I am before you to express my deep conviction of the importance of the struggle, to express more especially my interest, my desire, to see how Massachusetts will bear herself, — whether her majority shall be broken into factions, her crest sheared of its glory, herself deprived of her weight and influence in the Union!

I know very well that if all the citizens in Massachusetts who entertain similar opinions on this subject will act together, our majority will be strong and decisive. If the third party, as it is called, will but unite with the Whigs in defeating a measure which both alike condemn, then, indeed, the voice of Massachusetts will be heard throughout the Union. But here is the misfortune; that though both these parties think alike on this subject, there are other topics on which their differences will prevent unity of action on it, and unity of principle, without unity of action, is of no avail for any practical purpose. If there be one person belonging to that third party here, of him I would ask what he intends to do in this crisis. If there be none, let me request each one of you who may know such a man, to put the question to him, when you return home. No one can deny, that to vote for Mr. Polk is to vote for the annexation of Texas, or if he should deny, it is not the less true. I tell you, that if Polk is elected, annexation follows — inevitably! Because the same stream of public opinion which makes him President, will also give him a Congress. Suppose the same thing should happen in the Congressional elections here, as happened two years ago. In Massachusetts, there were four or five members who were not chosen, — from this district, the Berkshire district, and the

two districts of Essex, — owing to the differences between the Whigs and the third party. Election after election was held, but with no result, and at a time when every Massachusetts vote was worth everything. The venerable statesman to whom reference has been made, and of whom the whole State is proud (John Quincy Adams), was then, in one branch of Congress, endeavoring to pass a bill which should restore to the people the shamefully violated right of petition. He failed by one vote. We had that vote in Massachusetts, but refused it to him, and all because of minor differences between two parties, either of whose candidates would have given precisely the same vote on this subject. The question was lost, because the third party would not vote for a Whig, who would have used all his influence in favor of the very measure which that third party supported. Does such conduct become wise men of Massachusetts? I say directly, that every man who votes for Polk, gives a vote for the annexation of Texas; and every man who votes for the third party candidate, gives half a vote for the same object, because he places himself in a position, all of whose influences, bearings, and results, tend directly to that end. I question not the motive of the man who casts such a vote; but his act is just as I have pronounced it to be, and if annexation does take place, he is answerable for it to his conscience and his country.

We hear it said every day, gentlemen, by members of the third party, that they cannot support the Whig candidates, even on this question, because their opinions are not deep enough nor broad enough. But is that a good reason in this case? Do we act from such considerations in our private affairs? Who of us, in private life, refuse to employ men to do what we wish done, and for which we know they are exactly and completely qualified, because in some other respects they may happen to be either a little behind or a little ahead of our own opinions? No one. And it seems to me that no one, who is wise, would carry such a principle into political action; but still there are men who desire the extinction of slavery, who persist in measures directly adapted to continue and extend it.

The question is before us, and on us, and on our fellow citizens depends the part which Massachusetts will take.



But again, gentlemen, upon another point: I trust that, however our interests may be disregarded by our opponents, no particular affront will be offered to our understandings. And it is an affront for anybody to pretend that Mr. Polk, the candidate of the other party, is not deadly hostile to the protection of American industry in every form. All who know him, know this. If I were called on to select from the ranks of the party one man, more opposed than another, to protection in all its shapes, he would at once be my choice. And those who nominated him knew his opinions on this topic as well as I know them, and it was because he stood directly on their ground, as to a tariff as well as the annexation question, that he was chosen and is supported as their candidate. All the talk about incidental and fair protection is nothing, and they know it. The people, too, should know it, and are, I believe, fast learning the lesson.

Now let us review our principles, let us examine our political creed; if there be anything wrong, let us change it — if there be aught erroneous, let us alter it. But if our principles be true, if our policy be judicious, if our measures are indispensable for the common interest of the whole community, — then let us not be cheated, let us not be carried away, let us not be deluded by idle speculations as to what this man, or the other man, if elected, may or may not do; but let us vote for those who, we know, will promote the good of the land by adhering to our principles, pursuing our policy, and carrying our measures into full effect.

I believe there is nothing more defined and well settled than the great Whig platform. Its principles are, — a sound currency, protection to labor, love of order, the supremacy of the law, support of the Constitution as it is, the rights of the States under the Constitution, and no State rights over it (and this point is as important as the other), the maintenance of the great institutions of our fathers, in all their purity, and their transmission, unimpaired, to our children. We adhere to all these, and now let us all act a manly part in supporting them. Here is a great occasion; let us perform our duty in a manner acceptable to the spirit of the Constitution. We are closely allied to the past and to the future, and everything, every consideration which can move a good citizen, calls on us to be true

to our doctrines, our Constitution, and our country. Gentlemen, there is a sound heart in Massachusetts; there are sound heads in Massachusetts; and if we can do anything towards reconciling differences of opinion among ourselves, we know that we are sure of a strong majority. But, fellow citizens, even if misguided opinion and opposition shall yet continue, even if the — I had almost said foolish — desire of distinction shall yet flourish among some of our people, and prevent them from cordially uniting with us in our great battle, — still let us not despair. There are Whigs enough, sound, unflinching Whigs enough, in Massachusetts, to throw a large majority. If they come out as they ought, and as this meeting is an indication that they will, we shall obtain such a majority over both opposition and defection.

Let us ask our opponents if they propose to do anything for the happiness, prosperity, and honor of the people, more or better than we do. Gentlemen, it is no such thing. Their object is two-fold; first, the extension of our territory, and the perpetuation of slavery; and second, the utter destruction, root and branch, of the whole system of domestic protection. People of Massachusetts, judge ye, to-day, between the two parties! Call upon your neighbors to judge also! And as ye shall decide, make your opinions known and felt!

It was my principal object, in addressing you, to merely suggest some ideas and reflections adapted to the times, and the position of the country. But before closing, I would say that I heartily concur in the commendations you have heard bestowed upon the Whig Senators from the Southern States, for their action upon the tariff and upon annexation. Their conduct has been noble, and I honor them for it. And now, gentlemen, I have done. I have stated my honest opinion that it is an affront to any man of sense to say that the election of Mr. Polk will not tend directly, immediately, and conclusively to the annexation of Texas, the extension of slavery, and the destruction of the tariff. It is for you to say whether you will, or can, give any support to such measures. Gentlemen, I thank you for the welcome you have given me, the flattering attention you have paid to what I had to say, and I will trespass no longer on your time.

# Remarks at Taunton, Mass.

SEPTEMBER 10, 1844.<sup>1</sup>

I AM very happy, fellow citizens, to be among you, and with you, on this occasion, and I am quite happy and ready to perform any duty which may be assigned to me. I congratulate you, in the first place, on the fine morning we enjoy, and next, upon the large number, the great masses of people who have left their habitual vocations in life to assemble here on this occasion, graced as it is especially by all that gives refinement and delicacy to the intercourse of life.

It is very well, perhaps, that the part assigned to me to-day does not require any great effort of speech, because a severe influenza would prevent me from talking, even if I would. But even were it otherwise, I could hardly presume, here and on this occasion, among my own friends and neighbors, to occupy much of your time under the present circumstances. Surrounded as I am by very many gentlemen from different portions of this Union, well known to you all, and whom, by the kind disposition of my obliging friends, I am allowed to present to you to-day, I could not presume to detain you, nor to occupy your attention for any length of time. I shall have the pleasure to introduce to you several gentlemen from other States.

But I cannot suppress, nor would I suppress, one sentiment which forces itself upon me. There is one duty which is seriously incumbent upon me, and that is to signify the depth of my own conviction as to the importance of the present crisis in our political affairs, my deep feeling in regard to the condition in which our country now stands. We are here to discuss, to consider, our duties and our privileges. We are here with the special purpose of designating one citizen from amongst our numbers worthy of our support for Congress. It is a serious, a sober, a solemn duty. It rests upon our consciences deeply ;

<sup>1</sup> At a meeting of the Whigs of Bristol County. From the report in *The Nettle*, September 11, 1844.

it is no holiday business; it is a great duty which we owe to our country, ourselves, and our children.

Gentlemen, there are subjects of infinite importance connected with this election. The protection of American industry, of our own labor, the very furnishing of bread to us and to our children, — these are some of the great questions concerned, and it is necessary for us to see by whom our interests are maintained, and by whom they are disregarded. We must be satisfied as to whom we may look for protection, and we must reject those who embrace the licentious doctrines of free trade. To be sure, our opponents, in this region, endeavor to gloss over their free trade principles, because they know that free trade will not go down. But let us look at the reality of things. Let us see what is the doctrine of our opponents without modification, without qualification, without gloss. Let us see what New Hampshire, and the rest of those who believe with her, say on this point. We have no need to go far, for we all know the sentiments of New Hampshire. But here in Massachusetts, here where we strip these questions from all the gloss which elsewhere is spread over them, here we see what the real and true question is; here we see on which side is the verdict of the people; and here we decide, with the voice of the working people, as to the merit of one or the other side of the matter.

Gentlemen, there is another question which demands our most serious attention. It is the Texas question. The star newly risen in the horizon of the south, has for us the deepest interest, and assumes an importance with which we may not trifle. The question is of the utmost importance to the Union under which we live. The perpetuity of that Union is involved in the decision of this question. And, gentlemen, now that these topics of high and solemn consideration are before you, now that duties, important and solemn, press upon us, and now that the whole support of the Whig candidates in this county and this district rests upon your efforts, now, gentlemen, need I ask you in what spirit you will encounter your opponents?

Gentlemen, I have done. It but remains to me to introduce, after the good old Pilgrim fashion, a clergyman who will invoke the blessing of Heaven upon our proceedings.

# Speech at Boston

SEPTEMBER 19, 1844.<sup>1</sup>

GENTLEMEN, Whigs of Massachusetts, Whigs of the United States: A common cause; the love of our common liberty; our warm affections for the institutions of the country in which we live; and a deep and solemn concern for the preservation of those institutions, and the promotion of the great interests of that country, have brought us together here to-day. I behold before me, in this vast assembly, freemen, intelligent fellow citizens, persons patriotically devoted to the great cause of the country, of the Union, and of every State of the Union. And in behalf of the Whigs of Massachusetts, I bid you all a cordial and a hearty welcome. Whigs of Georgia, of Louisiana and Mississippi, from the whole South and West, as well as from the nearer and gallant States of Rhode Island and Vermont, gallant and true hearted Whigs, too, from Maine, and, indeed, from every State, all, all are here assembled in support of the Whig cause; not the cause of Massachusetts, not the cause of any one State, but the cause of our common liberty, of our common country, of good government, to which I trust we are all attached, — for the promotion and advancement of this great and glorious cause we are now, and here, gathered together.

Gentlemen, to-day we lay no offering on the altar of personal, local, or sectional preference. For myself, I desire, I am sure we all desire, to tear from our hearts every ligament which binds us to any one man, to any one portion of the country as distinguished from another and from all, every sentiment which rises within us to teach us that we are aught but Americans, and Americans altogether.

We have visited, to-day, many scenes — sanctified, I had almost said — celebrated, certainly, as the scenes of Revolu-

<sup>1</sup> At a Whig meeting held on Boston Common. From the report in *The Nettle*, September 25, 1844.

tionary occurrences. They have carried us back to the times of our fathers, to the companionship of those men who stood up for liberty, against the greatest power of the known world, who sustained liberty with fearless hearts, who fought for liberty with strong hands, and who successfully accomplished the American Revolution. The American Revolution! What true man is there, throughout the land, who is not filled with indescribable emotions, when his mind is carried back to the great event of the age, and the circumstances connected with it — the American Revolution!

Gentlemen, there are some things which are diminished in importance and interest by the lapse of time. The comet which passes over our hemisphere, is seen, wondered at, and forgotten. The great luminaries of the sky above us are noticed, shine, go out, and also fade from particular remembrance. Not so, however, with the great achievements of our fathers. Not so with the great achievements of all those men connected with contests for freedom and establishment of freedom. Not so, especially, with the deeds of those men who carried out the American Revolution. For the further we recede, in point of time, from their day, the more expanded appears the disc of their glory, larger and larger grows their reputation; and when the whole of the work which they so nobly begun shall be accomplished — when freedom and good government shall be spread over the whole earth — then, but not till then, will their fame have reached the full height.

And, gentlemen, the deeper we drink of the waters of Revolutionary patriotism, the more we imbibe the spirit of the American Revolution, the better for us. The more we fortify our minds, the more we strengthen our hearts and our determinations, by a recurrence to the sentiments which animated the men who performed that great work, by so much the more shall we be better men, better citizens, better patriots, better in every respect.

I bid you all welcome in the spirit of the Revolution; in the spirit of the thirteen States which accomplished it, which established the Union under which we live, which we respect, which we love, under which we mean to die, which we will defend with all our power to the last gasp. In that spirit I again

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say to you, to every one of you here in attendance, here to promote the great and good cause in which we all are engaged, welcome, welcome, welcome! We stand by the principles which that spirit upheld, we gather around the standards which that spirit raised, and we will do our best to keep unsullied the national glory which that spirit established.

But, gentlemen, I will further say that we are met now, the people are here to-day, in the spirit of the Revolution of 1775, to resist, to the utmost of their ability, the attempted revolution of 1844. We come in the spirit of the old Revolution to protest against the new; to preserve uncontaminated what our fathers achieved by a war, and established through their wisdom; to guard our institutions against innovation, against tampering, against rash experiment; in other words, to preserve, whole and pure, the institutions which were established for us, and left to us by the Whigs of 1775. The surrounding objects cry to us to do this, to succor and maintain these institutions, and we obey the call. Now, if there be any reason for this great assembly, if there be anything serious in the political considerations which now agitate the whole country, it is because something is attempted which amounts to a change in all our political affairs — not to say a change in the very form of our Government itself — equal at least to a revolution. If there be any object of serious magnitude which presses itself on the minds of the people, menacing in form and dangerously near in time — it is the portending, the threatened change in our national identity, in the first place, and, secondly, the change in the well established principles of the Government, with regard to that great system of protection which is building us up. It is not for me, in these brief remarks, which necessarily must be merely of an introductory nature, it is not for me now to enlarge upon these topics. But, with your permission, I will simply say a few words on these points.

I will first allude to the proposed change in the territorial limits of the country, by the admission of Texas, and then to the attempt to subvert what you and I, what we all consider the fundamental policy of the Government.

As to Texas. We well know that this question of annexation has been much agitated, that it is one of the most stirring

topics which has been, or can be, presented to the consideration of the whole United States. The project has been submitted to Congress, and it was defeated, — thanks to the gallant and glorious Whig Senate, — but now it is made a principal issue before the people, and our attention is compelled to it. I will not now descant upon its dangers, upon its hazards, upon its evils. They have repeatedly been spoken of by your Whig brethren, they are full in view before the public, they suggest themselves at once to every mind. The question is, if we desire to keep the United States as they are, — without diminution and without augmentation, — if we wish to preserve our present established boundaries, the question is, how are we to accomplish this? Well, every one can answer this inquiry at once. There are two candidates for the presidency before us. The one, not only for Texas, but selected only because he was a Texas man, one who would never have been thought of but for Texas, who will never be remembered but in connection with Texas. There can be no doubt, — it is idle to argue the matter, — that every man who means to vote, and does vote, for Mr. Polk, means to vote and does actually vote for the admission of Texas. To deny this would be as reasonable as to deny that a man who, with a deadly weapon in his hand, should inflict a deadly wound upon another, was actuated by a deadly motive. No subterfuge can get rid of this, no gloss can cover it up. The question is — Polk and Texas, or no Polk and no Texas.

Then, on the other hand, there is Henry Clay. His opinion on this subject of annexation has been repeatedly expressed, and, gentlemen, allow me to say here, in this connection, that I know of no man who has taken the ground of opposition to this project earlier than myself. It did happen to me, some seven years ago, in a speech made at a meeting in the city of New York, to state my views on this matter, and those views have not been changed. I spoke them then, not being, and never being afraid of committal on what I thought valid grounds. Those grounds are no less valid now than they were then. I have no new sentiment upon the question. And I, for one, say that, under the present circumstances of the case, I shall heartily give my vote to Mr. Clay. Among



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other things, because he is pledged against the annexation of Texas; with the opinions he has expressed in his speeches and letters, there can be no controversy on the point. Those opinions are my opinions. He holds, and I hold distinctly that annexation must and does tend to the extension, promulgation, and perpetuation of slavery. If there be any here, any elsewhere, who think that annexation can advance the freedom of any one, — I care not of what color, for I would regard those of all colors, — from that man I must differ. With me, annexation must be opposed, firmly, readily, and steadily.

Mr. Clay is against annexation, except it can be effected with the common consent of the whole country. He has said that he regards the Union as a grand co-partnership, into which no new member can be admitted against the will of any one of the general co-partners. And he holds himself bound to oppose annexation, without that general consent. Here is his pledge, and I stand upon it. I believe in his honor and principle. We will take him at his word, and he dare not forfeit it.

Gentlemen, there are questions in which time is all important. And with Mr. Clay we are sure of safety for four years. That will give us time to see whether annexation, if to take place at all, can be effected without war, without disgrace, without dishonor, without violation of national faith. And, therefore, situated as the country is and as we are, in my humble judgment, there is but one course to pursue. Those who would avoid the contingency of there being no choice by the people, which event would throw the election into the House of Representatives and secure the elevation of Mr. Polk, those who would oppose the annexation of Texas and the extension of slavery, all those must vote for Clay. Personal and local preferences we may, and do, have. But we can accomplish no good to the country except by a thorough and entire union of the great Whig party; not to be brought about through selfish motives, not to be affected by personal predilection, but from a high regard to the welfare of the country, and, above all, certain in itself. And, fellow citizens, if we are all agreed as to the great result it is desirable to obtain, if our object is the same, then, in this respect as well as others, “our cause is just, our union is perfect.”

It is not, gentlemen, the sentiments I utter which make me hoarse, nor is it the presence of those who surround me, which causes me embarrassment. But my illness is by no means slight, and I must beg you to take that as my excuse for any defect which may strike you in my remarks. I will, however, say a few words more.

I wish to present to the candor and conscience of every man in this assembly, and every man in the country, who thinks annexation an evil to be deprecated, and who, nevertheless, hesitates or doubts as to whether it is his duty to support the Whig candidates, that annexation cannot be prevented now except by the election of the Whig ticket. This consideration I hold to be fit for every man's serious deliberation in his own closet. It is fit for all, in their retirement, looking at the grave questions presented to them, and acting before that power which finally is to judge them, to weigh deeply and decide conscientiously these matters. Does any man mean, so far as he is able, to oppose the extension of slavery, to prevent the violation of our national faith, and the staining of our national honor? If he does, is there anything in the world, anything in the scope of human view, which can accomplish his end, but the success of the Whig cause? Most assuredly, most assuredly not. Such a man cannot, by any possibility, vote for our opponents. Will he vote for the third party? That is a question for him solemnly to consider and decide. Will he stay away from the polls and not vote at all? Gentlemen, is there, can there be, a single American citizen in the land, a single participant in the blessings of free American government, entitled to a vote, who, at a crisis like this, would or could skulk from his duty, keep from the polls and neglect to vote? What a reproach upon our people and our country that such an idea could be entertained for a moment! Gentlemen, the elective franchise is a great trust. He who neglects it, sports with that trust. We owe to our country the high and solemn duty of voting for our officers, and every consideration of honor and patriotism binds us to fulfil the obligation. It is our first duty to inform ourselves, as well as we can, upon the questions of the day, to give an honest vote, and then we may leave the consequences to God.

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Now, in view of the great interests involved in this election, can any true American citizen vote for the third party? The inquiry may not, perhaps, be so important in Massachusetts, and the other States which vote by majorities, but in those States where the plurality system prevails, it is of the utmost consequence.<sup>1</sup> In such States, and indeed, to consider the matter fully, in every State, does not he who is opposed to slavery and the annexation of Texas, and yet supports the third party ticket, vote directly against that which alone can prevent the consequences and evils that he so much would deplore? I can come to no other conclusion. I wish this question to be put to the whole country. I wish every man to think of it, to judge according to the dictates of his own conscience, and I am willing to leave it to his own reflection what his feelings hereafter will be, if evil should be the result of the contest, and he feels that he has not done his utmost to prevent that evil! I put it and leave it to every man whether, after the election, he will not feel much better in the consciousness that he has exerted all practicable and honorable means to avoid evil, than as though he had thrown away his vote, neglected his privilege of franchise, and left things to a mischievous result.

I do not intend to refer at length to the danger our country will experience from the establishment of the doctrine set forth by the advocates of annexation, but I may ask one question. Is there not a territory to the North as well as to the South of us, and if the South will have Texas, why should not the North insist on other parts of the continent, and where, if we begin to disturb the existing balance of power, shall we stop?

It is said that if the United States do not take Texas, England will; and a distrust and jealousy of England are appealed to in aid of the Texan annexation scheme. Now, let me say that there never was a more absurd suggestion than that the government of England seeks, or would dare to seek, or would dream of receiving any annexation, any special privilege, commercial or otherwise, at the hands of Texas, while Texas continues to be a slave-holding country. If Sir Robert Peel

<sup>1</sup> The Whigs carried Massachusetts, but if the third party votes in New York had been given to Clay he would have been elected.

were to start any such proposition in the House of Commons, there is not a man on all his ministerial benches who could hold up his head or his hand in its support. Not a man in Great Britain could for a moment resist the torrent of public indignation which such a course would draw down on him who took it; not a ministry could support any such doctrine and hold office one hour. The people of England have declared, and show that they adhere to the declaration, that, so far as their influence goes, there shall be no toleration, above all, no extension of slavery. Why, does not every one know that in adjusting the British tariff, the duties on separate articles of produce have been so regulated as to give free labor a great advantage over slave labor?

Here some one called out, — “They are all slaves in England.”

All slaves in England? My friend, did not your fathers come from England free men? What blood do you inherit? All slaves in England? Let me say that all the liberty there is on the globe, out of the United States, is in England. The liberty there, to be sure, is inferior in some respects to that which we enjoy, — it is burdened with a monarchical establishment and an aristocracy; but freedom — all the freedom on the face of the earth except our own — a free press, the freedom of speech, the right to hold free public meetings, the trial by jury, the *habeas corpus* act, — all these are enjoyed in England, where, according to the gentleman, they all are slaves!

Now, gentlemen, having said thus much concerning the annexation of Texas, it is proper to attempt to solve the problem of the future destiny of that country, and to consider what should be our course in relation to her. For even if not received into the United States, she will still continue to exist — and what shall we do respecting her? I have an opinion on this point, early formed and yet unchanged. I was in favor of acknowledging the fact of Texan independence, because it was a fact; because nations and governments are obliged to take notice of the establishment of new governments; and because I held to the doctrine that whether the revolution in Texas was just or unjust, she had established her independence and was entitled to be acknowledged as independent. And I hope

I may flatter myself that that opinion has not been unfavorably received by the people of this country, and that I have never shown myself unfavorable to a just appreciation, on our part, of the progress of the Texan republic. But now, what is to be done? The path is plain, as it seems to me. Texas has secured her independence. She established it suddenly, indeed, and we were all surprised, as we well remember, at hearing of that battle by which it was effected. She has maintained that independence. And though she has not made so much progress as could be desired, still there she is, and the true policy of all countries is to acknowledge her as an independent nation, to continue friendly relations with her, and for none to seek or expect of her any special privileges. She is entitled to protection as an independent power at the hands of all other powers, in the same way that the minor powers of Europe are entitled to, and do actually receive protection from their stronger neighbors against aggression from any one European nation. They could be crushed in a moment if the general public sentiment would allow of it; but they are secured by the hallowed principle of public right, the sentiment that every nation which has accomplished and is able to maintain its independence, shall be acknowledged, supported, and upholden against aggression. If Texas has placed, or can place, herself in that position, who can complain of her being recognized? Certainly no one. But she must work out her own destiny; we must leave her to her own course,—no nation desiring or expecting any special privileges from her.

But, fellow citizens, Mexico has not acknowledged the independence of Texas, though it is many years since she has made any important effort to recover her dominion over that country. There have, to be sure, been several marauding expeditions into her territory, but nothing that deserves the name of a national war. The age is marked with anomalies of that kind. I have seen at Washington, a diplomatic representative from Texas, Texas not being acknowledged by Mexico; a diplomatic representative from Mexico, Mexico not being recognized by Spain; and a diplomatic representative from Spain, while Spain herself, under some of her constitutions at least, was not recognized by Russia and some other European

powers. Yet these various countries, through their ministers, all stood on the ground of perfect equality with our Government, and so they ought. This, then, is the point. The whole world is interested in the preservation of peace among nations, and while all admit that Mexico has a right to try to reconquer Texas, all must and do deny that she has any right to disturb the whole commercial policy of the world, by a war without fighting. If she wants to subjugate Texas, let her try it; if she succeeds it will be done; if not, let her give it up and own that she is beaten. But this bloodless war, this continuance of declared hostility without any real or active operations, is what all other nations have a right to complain of. And I may say, further, that if my advice had prevailed, an earnest, I had nearly said decisive, representation would have been made by us to Mexico, in conjunction with the nations of Europe, that she must either fight the matter out with Texas at once, or do as others have done, and acknowledge her independence.

And now, my friends, a word or two with regard to the protection of American manufactures.

When protection is spoken of, it implies first something and somebody to be protected, and something and somebody to be protected against.

When we mention protection to American industry, what do we mean? What is to be protected and against whom is it to be protected? If there be any true meaning to the phrase, it is that American labor — American hand labor — is to be protected against the cheaper labor of European operatives, and that it is to be done by giving to ourselves, or keeping among ourselves, the great market for our own productions. This doctrine is founded in the great fact that labor in Europe is cheaper than with us. The laborer there is poorly paid, poorly clad; he is considered a degraded being; he has no participation — or but slight participation — in government; he lays up nothing; he earns nothing but the mere daily support of his family, and not always that; he lives poor; he dies poor; and he leaves his children to the same biography. That is the character of the laboring classes in the old world, and what is the condition of that labor, in door or out door, compared with ours? Could we live on it? No. We could not live on it,

we cannot and we will not submit to it. A laborer in England can obtain one shilling a day, which is equal to twenty-two cents, he providing his own board; and one and sixpence a day, or thirty-three cents, is a liberal price, even in the harvest season. And the question with us is, whether we shall place ourselves in competition with these rates. For one, I say no. (General shouts of "No, no!")

I desire that every man in the country should talk with his neighbor on these topics, and furnish those who may not be so well acquainted as himself, with the facts of the case. Our maxim is — "live and let live." We are competent to supply ourselves, by the interchange of commodities, with all that we require, at least so far as the principal necessaries of life are concerned.

It is the universal cry with our opponents, and it is the loudest where the facts are least known, that protection is useful to the capitalist, to corporations, that it builds up large fortunes for a few, but depresses the interest of laborers. And even in our own State of Massachusetts, there are those evil spirits abroad who seek to make war between different classes, to excite one against another, men filled with hatred, envy, malice, and all uncharitableness. I must say it, for, upon my conscience, since the serpent crept into paradise to corrupt, seduce, and ruin our first parents, I do not know of a more wicked spirit, either in man or serpent, than that which actuates these individuals. If you, any of you, find such men at work, mark them, stigmatize them, as pirates, as enemies to the whole human race; take care to consider them. They come but for evil, but to break up and destroy the whole relations of the community; they are fit for no society except the society of their early prototype. Gentlemen, the assertions they make are false. Corporations with us are but a more convenient form of partnership; any five men may become one here; and here, where great fortunes do not abound as in Europe, they are a most convenient and beneficial device.

Fellow citizens, I say that whatever enhances wages, whatever increases the price of labor, is expressly for the benefit of labor and against that of capital. Because the increase is so much taken from the general, common stock and placed in the

hands of the laborers. And of all things on earth, that which we, as American citizens, ought most to desire, is a high rate of wages, an ample reward for labor. If that exists in a country, the people of that country can live, can educate their children, can support public worship. In such a country there never has been, and never can be, any overgrown fortunes on the one hand, nor, on the other, any of that poverty, that absolute beggary, which unfortunately prevails in some countries of the earth.

Let me, in regard to this matter of corporations, read to you an extract from a letter written by the able Representative of this district in Congress. He mentions several cases, but I will take one only, the Merrimac Mills at Lowell. There are, in this corporation, three hundred and ninety proprietors, divided as follows: Forty-six merchants and traders; sixty-eight females; fifty-two individuals retired from business; eighty administrators, executors, guardians, and trustees; twenty-three lawyers; eighteen physicians; three literary institutions; fifteen farmers; forty secretaries, clerks, students, etc.; forty-five manufacturers, mechanics, machinists, etc.

Among these latter forty-five are included individuals in the actual employment of the company, by whom stock to the amount of sixty thousand dollars is owned.

Is there any species of property more equally and beneficially distributed than this? Does this statement show anything like aristocracy? Does it not rather exhibit a convenient and, in every respect, desirable mode of investment for all who have, or by their labor can acquire, anything to invest? Gentlemen, any one who cries out "aristocracy" in our system of society, and our system of manufacturers, ought to cry out "scarecrow," to show at once that he uses the word merely as a bugbear to frighten people out of their senses.

Gentlemen, before the Constitution of the United States was adopted, it was debated here in the Old South, by the leading men of the State, and it was considered one of its cardinal merits that it would protect and foster the mechanic arts. Paul Revere said so; Judge Dawes said so; the people assembled at the Green Dragon (which we have passed to-day) said so; and it was of this assembly of mechanics and artisans that



Paul Revere said, "There were more of them than the stars in heaven." Everybody advocated protection then, and you must remember that, in those days, there were no corporations, there was no machinery. The human hand was the great machine, and all tongues here then insisted on the doctrine of protection to the work of the hands. So it should be now. Our adversaries talk of Lowell and Amoskeag! Why do they not talk of the shoemakers of Lynn, the hatters of Boston,—of all who work in their own shops? For, in fact, these are the people mainly interested in the matter, and the manufacturers' concern is but trifling in comparison.

It is said that the farmer is the dupe of this protective policy; that he is to be ruined by the tariff. I have frequently endeavored to state my conviction, that the greater the number of consumers the better for the farmer; and this point has been so often urged that it is unnecessary to dilate on it here. A member of Congress from Pennsylvania (Mr. Stewart) has made a speech on this subject, which embraces a great deal of valuable information, particularly in regard to iron, in the manufacture of which Mr. Stewart himself is engaged. He states that for every ten dollars expended in American iron, eight go to the farmers and laborers in the immediate neighborhood of the manufactory. Of course this is so much saved from foreign labor, and paid to our own. And so it is of everything else which we can manufacture.

Is any one certain that but for the protection on wheat and rye, we should not be supplied from the Black Sea, the Baltic Sea, and from Poland? We all remember that, not very long since, grain was imported from those quarters at a profit. Take off the protection which the tariff affords, and the same will again be the case. And does any one suppose that we could cover our own heads with our own hats but for the tariff? The duty now works the exclusion of the English article entirely, and of the French in a great measure. But take off the tariff, and our domestic manufacture will fall to the ground. The shoemakers, of whom I see many thousands from Plymouth, Essex, and elsewhere, depend altogether on a tariff of protection. Remove that, and their business will revert to what it was three or four years ago,—scarcely anything. Just

so with all trades. Blacksmiths, whitesmiths, brass founders, all others, — all depend on protection for support.

But more than all are the leather dealers interested in protection. I ask the gentlemen here, from Essex, how they could maintain any branch of that amazingly extended business, but for the custom-house? They would go down without remedy. So of the glass manufacturers. So of the drapers and tailors. Before the adoption of the Constitution, ready-made clothing was imported from France and England in great quantities. The duty has been fixed at fifty per cent. But take that off, and I undertake to say that in two years there will be more clothing imported than would supply two such populations as that of the United States.

I pray all to examine this question for themselves, and to talk with their neighbors upon it. It comes home to every man's family; let every one examine for himself, and see what is best for his own interest and the interest of all; let the people do this, under the influence of no inflated party topics, and to the people I am willing to leave the result.

After these suggestions, and they are but suggestions, I will conclude with one or two remarks of a practical nature.

We that have come here to-day, are come not merely to enjoy the show and festivity of the occasion, not merely to salute each other as friends and fellow citizens, but to take counsel together, to strengthen the resolutions and fortify the purposes with which we enter into the contest. Everything here is useless, illusory, and vain if we do not this. The time for action approaches. For important action, for decisive action. And as everything in the way of mass conventions has hitherto been, and is, vain and worthless except so far as it inspirits us for the real work we have to do, I beg to ask you to go to work thoroughly and effectually. There are three things which I mean to propound to every Whig here, and I conjure him to answer upon his faith and his honor, his allegiance, his interest, and his conscience. And I expect no mere huzza assent. But from the conscience, honor, and fidelity of all of you, I ask a reply to

First — Will you, and every one of you, God sparing your life and health, laying aside all personal preferences, will you and

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every one of you, vote for the Whig candidates at the approaching election?

A general shout of "Yes! yes! yes!" was the answer.

That then is recorded.

Second — Will you, and every one of you, pledge yourselves and himself that, so far as depends on your and his unremitting exertions, no Whig voter in the country shall fail to be present at the polls and deposit his Whig vote?

Again from the multitude there came an affirmative response.

Again, I have before said, fellow citizens, that among our adversaries — for I must call them so — there are very many honest men. Misled they are by designing and selfish individuals, but they are honest themselves, and they have the same interests that we have. And if we can get near them, if we can talk to them, if we can compare notes with them, we shall be able to get more or less to go with us. Now

Third — Will each of you, to the utmost of his ability, penetrate with light the regions of darkness, and make at least one new-born Whig?

Again arose the cheers of the assembled Whigs.

This is the way to carry an election, if it can be carried at all. And I recommend to the young men, to the Whig Clubs and Clay Clubs, to carry home and practice on these ideas. Let them be truly workingmen in the good cause, and the consequences may be left to God.

Would to God, gentlemen, that I could see nothing to be lamented in the state of public opinion in our own Commonwealth. But when I see a whole party moved from one side to the other of a vital question by the mere waving of the party flag, blown from their often assumed ground, like a feather, at party breath, I cannot but lament. But we need not despair.

We can keep Massachusetts where she is, if we will. We are bound to those who have gone before us, to those now with us, and to those who from the vistas of the future are looking to us, not only to follow, but to get a good example. I saw on one banner in the procession to-day, the

words "millions are behind us." They refer, I suppose, to this occasion, but to me they have a deeper significance, and I confess they went to my very heart. Yes, fellow citizens. Along the track of future time, unborn generations are coming to stand where we now stand; millions and millions will judge our conduct, to form their opinion on our course, and to pronounce on us that awful verdict of reprobation or applause from which there will be no escape. And now let us play the man for Massachusetts — not frivolously, but soberly and seriously. We are arrived at a crisis in the affairs of the country. If we succeed, our reward will be permanent prosperity. If we fail, clouds and darkness rest upon the prospect which my feeble vision cannot penetrate.

Now, gentlemen, fellow citizens, and fellow Whigs, I take my leave of you, by expressing my fervent hope that, as Whigs, you will do your duty, as, by the blessing of God, I intend to do mine to the utmost of my power.

# Speech in New York

OCTOBER 9, 1844.<sup>1</sup>

FELLOW CITIZENS: Notwithstanding the hoarseness of my voice and the influence of the damp air of the evening, I cannot but present myself before you to express my sincere thanks for this unexpected manifestation of your kindness and regard, and to pour out, from the fulness of my heart, my congratulations on the bright prospects of the Whig cause. It is not even for you, far less is it for myself — for you are a part of the country, and I am nothing; but it is for the country, it is for the whole country, for this great inheritance of liberty and free government, that I desire to pour out my whole soul in thankfulness to Almighty God; and out of respect to the intelligence of my countrymen, for the manifestation which they have made, everywhere and every day, of their determination to maintain their liberties, and support such measures as shall sustain the great interests of the country.

Gentlemen: It is a trite remark, but a true remark, it has been said often, but always with propriety and justice, that this is a crisis in our affairs. If we get through it propitiously, national prosperity awaits us; but if, on the other hand, we fail, we must fall back to a state in which there shall be no prosperity and no eminent success in any department of life. I say *if* we fail, but we don't mean to fail, and we won't fail. On the contrary, as we have reason and justice and true policy and patriotism and the pure love of country with us, so we have that which will carry us safely through this severe and arduous struggle. We have heard to-day from Pennsylvania! We heard some days ago from Maryland! And even in the region of the East we hear good tidings from Connecticut!

<sup>1</sup> At a Whig gathering in front of the Astor House. Reprinted by The Nettle, October 16, 1844, from the New York Commercial Advertiser report.

But I have always thought, my friends, and still think, that such is the position of things in this country, that there is no chance, no reasonable prospect of maintaining good government, of supporting good laws, and of sustaining public prosperity, without the concurrence of the great central mass of the community. What can we do without Pennsylvania? What can we do without Ohio? But above all, and for all, and once for all, what can we do without New York? It is your distinguished fortune to be citizens of the great State of the Union, distinguished by the possession of every interest that can exalt you in greatness and importance. You are great in agricultural interests, vast beyond all others in your commercial importance, and great in domestic industry and prosperity.

I call upon you, therefore, as citizens of the great State, not improperly called the Empire State, where is the emporium of our commerce, where too is the largest mass of free electors, and the congregation of every interest dear to society, I call upon you as friends and fellow citizens, to enter with all your hearts upon this great struggle; to lay aside, for the short time now remaining, everything else for the great question now before the public. It is no common question. It cannot occur every day, and it is now, once for all. And if anywhere we can find a man entitled to our confidence,—if looking beyond Tennessee, or even beyond Texas, we can find a better man than James K. Polk, let us do and do it heartily.

Now, gentlemen, the very necessity of the case requires that when a great party, acting for certain great purposes, and impelled by one great and united feeling, has made its selection of a worthy and eminent man, the allegiance of every man to his principles requires him to go for the nomination of his friends in the person of Henry Clay. I wish, gentlemen, I had a clearer voice, but you will pardon the imperfection with which I speak, as I have had some exercise this way lately, and am not entirely fresh from scenes like this. The time has now come in the affairs of this country, in my judgment at least, when every great interest of the country, of the highest and lowest, the rich and the poor, requires the united, untiring, and vigorous effort of every lover of the public weal.

The Whig Convention at Baltimore nominated Henry Clay to be President of the United States. In the circumstances of the country they could make no other nomination. The general voice of the people had fixed the nomination of Henry Clay before the Baltimore Convention assembled. He had been long before the country. He had served the country in various capacities, and always with reputation, both at home and abroad. And he received the nomination. It is now our duty to carry that nomination into effect, and heartily and powerfully to labor to promote it.

If his enemies revile him, that does not give him the less claim to our favor. We believe in his eminent talents. We have confidence in his general knowledge and his great experience. I, for one, am willing to trust the interests of the country in his hands.

And now as to the questions which the occasion presents. What are they? There is an attempt to mystify and mislead those who have not the means of good information on this subject. The great question of all—I mean, of course, the tariff—is one that seeks to benefit the great mass of the community. They may cry out to eternity against the corporations, and monopolizing manufacturers, and about the rich being benefited at the expense of the poor, by the operation of a protective tariff. Such talk goes for nothing. It is all a fraud and a cheat. The great principle, the commanding object, or proposition, is to give to our own people, to every man that has two hands and a healthy constitution, means of employment, and therefore means of living. It goes not to fill the pockets of the rich manufacturer, to the exclusion of the laboring man from its benefits. It has nothing to do with corporations. And after all, what are corporations? They are only so many proprietorships, wherein the parties combine for the purpose of raising capital to carry on their trade. There is not here—there cannot yet be—large capital in the hands of one person, as in England, where a man may own ten coal pits, or iron works, or any other property. We are obliged to unite for the purpose of raising capital to carry on the business of the country, and these corporations are but so many partnerships, the necessary result of small capitals,

which must be united in a country where operations are carried on that require large capital.

But the great object is to give employment to men, — to carry on and to carry out the great system of exchange of commodities at home; to place the hats we manufacture against the shoes we make, the iron we produce against the leather we manufacture, — anything that constitutes an exchange of commodities between the different trades of our community, and thus protect ourselves against the poorly fed, poorly clothed, and uneducated labor of Europe.

Gentlemen, the laborer, the free man in this country, who earns his bread by the sweat of his brow, by the exercise of his skill, or the toil of his hands, requires to be educated. Let us have, I will not say a vain-glorious, boasting imagination, but let us have a just sense of our own condition as a community. Are we not a free people, every one of whom possesses the elective franchise, and is a part of the Government? We elect our rulers. Is not this the very thing we now propose to do? And what does all this require? Does it not require some degree of — nay, entire — personal independence? Does it not require some degree of education? Is it not requisite that every man who possesses the franchise and is to elect his own rulers, should be elevated above the pauper condition of the laborer of Europe? And this is the whole matter: the people are the governors of the country, and the Government cannot be rightly administered unless they have some degree of knowledge, and education, and independence. Everything, therefore, which gives employment to the masses and makes them independent and free men, raises them in the scale of society, and makes them the safe, as they are the real government of the country, and it is that very thing on account of which the franchise may be safely trusted in their hands.

Now, gentlemen, if I understand anything of the great Whig principles, as they have been transmitted down from the days of Washington until now, they are exactly the same by which he sought to maintain the commerce and agriculture of the country. We claim a government for protection, and our first object is to protect the interests and maintain the independence of the artisans and mechanics of our cities and



villages. A great attempt is made now-a-days to draw away attention from this part of the question, by representing the dangers of having manufactures on too large a scale. That is but the dust of the balance. The principle of protection is for the benefit of all classes, and more especially for the laborer, whether it be in wood, brass, or iron, the weaver, shoemaker, tailor, everybody who lives by the exercise of his own industry.

No one desires to carry the tariff so far as to be ruinous to the commerce of the country. Else why was the Constitution of this country adopted? If you will go back, or if I had time to refer you to those early periods of the Constitution, I should show you what I now avow to be true, that the great interest which carried it was the manufacturing interest, and that it was framed with the desire to protect the labor of this country against the low-priced labor of England. For my part, I never wish to see labor cheap in the United States. God forbid that I should. I look on a high rate of wages as the greatest possible proof of the general prosperity of the great mass of the community. You may go through all possible calculations, denounce it as a narrow policy, talk about the leaning to capital as you please, still I say that where labor is highest and best rewarded, there always has been, is now, and ever will be the best state of things.

I fear I shall not be able to talk much longer, for my hoarseness does not go off with speaking; but let me say, in all sincerity, that with regard to the pending questions, I have as little personal interest as any individual. I hold no office, I seek no office, and I desire none, but I do aspire to the distinction of doing something for the general prosperity of the country.

I have lately been among your fellow citizens in Pennsylvania, and we have now heard from Philadelphia, I may say the first gun! — we shall hear the others. We cannot say what will be the result, but there is enough to cheer us, so that we need not despair of success; and there is enough to call upon us, by our love of country and our desire to do something for its best interests, to go forward. Let our motto and our march be, “onward.” If we have obtained advantages, we must not let them slip. And above all, let us not despair. We can succeed

and we will succeed. We will rescue this country, the land of our fathers, from misrule. We can do it and we will do it.

And now, fellow citizens, I go back from some little attention to public affairs to my own State of Massachusetts. I shall tell my fellow citizens there what I have seen and heard in the cities south of this, and especially will I tell them of this vast assemblage, of your disinterested patriotism, and of the fixed determination of thousands of resolute men to carry for the Whig cause, this great—I had almost said imperial—city of New York. Aye, and they will carry it, and, in carrying the city, they will carry the State, and in carrying the State they will secure the elevation of the Whig candidate to the Presidency of the United States.

# Speech at Pepperell

PEPPERELL, MASS., November 5, 1844.<sup>1</sup>

FELLOW CITIZENS: The people of this Commonwealth are on the eve of an election which cannot but be regarded as highly important, by all sensible and considerate men, of all parties. They are about to be called to the choice of the Governor and Lieutenant-Governor, the Senators and Representatives, composing the state Government, for the following year, — a duty, of itself, always one of great interest to the free people of a free State. But there is something of an extraordinary character conferred upon this occasion, by the circumstance that this is the period, also, at which Massachusetts is to give her voice and her vote, for the President and Vice-President of the United States for the next four years.

Unhappily, there does exist, in the country, a considerable degree of difference of opinion respecting public men and public measures. Without any doubt, some portion of this difference arises from the different views which men, equally intelligent and equally honest, may and do take upon questions touching the great public interests. But I think that no observing man can doubt that there is another cause for that variance besides the difference in judgment, — a cause which, indeed, confirms and widens that difference. I believe, gentlemen, that if there were less of party attachment, less disposition to follow party lead, and more to exercise individual judgment and intelligence — I persuade myself that, if this were the state of things, there would be less difference upon the great subjects which have been discussed during the summer, and upon which we are now called to record our approbation, or disapprobation, as citizens of the Commonwealth.

<sup>1</sup> Boston Courier, November 7, 1844.

Every elector, while he holds a privilege important to himself, holds also an important trust, for the exercise of which he is responsible to others. Because no man's vote does, or can affect himself alone, but must affect the whole common weal of which he is a member. He is bound to give his vote according to his conscientious opinions, for the public good and the interest of the whole country. This is his sober and solemn duty on all great occasions where the public liberty is at stake or important principles are dependent on the result. Gentlemen, it is, on this, and on all similar occasions, my first wish that the people may exercise their own individual judgment, without prejudice or bias; that they may bring the subject under discussion and consideration to their own reflection, and approve, or disapprove, according to their own hearts.

Fellow citizens, all free and popular governments are founded on the supposition that the people have intelligence enough, virtue enough, patriotism enough, to decide rightly upon questions before them, because everything rests on the decision of the majority. The theory is that the people can take care of themselves, that they have knowledge enough so to do. Not, indeed, that all individuals have an equal degree of information, because they cannot all have equal opportunities of acquiring such information; not that all should be equally acquainted with the ramifications and details of constitutional law, because all have not had an equal chance to become conversant with them. But because, on all matters touching the great constitutional principles under which they live, the presumption necessarily is that the people, the great mass, have intelligence and virtue enough to decide correctly and honestly. If that presumption be removed, then there is an end of all good popular government also.

Now, gentlemen, the right of suffrage, of voting, exists by law in some countries where, after all, there is not much exercise of individual choice, because the many are under influences which subject them to the control of others besides themselves, — as we know to be the case in Europe, and in England especially. There, many small landholders have the right to vote, but it is supposed, and justly enough, too, that they are subjected to the influence of their great landed proprietors — an aristo-

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cratic influence. This is well complained of. It is to be lamented, wherever it exists, and is entirely inconsistent with a government, republican as ours, entirely free, as ours. The control of the few over the many, and that the many should be willing to follow the lead of the few, is, in other countries, to be ascribed, in a great degree, to the influence of wealth. In our country we have sought, so far as possible, to guard against this by establishing an absolute equality of right, and a general equality — not absolute, for that is out of the question — of property. With us, not very long after the settlement of the country, the English laws respecting the transmission of property were disallowed or rejected. We have no law of primogeniture, no regulation by which the eldest son is to inherit, alone, the family estate. The father's property is divided, equally, among the sons and daughters, and if a man is foolish enough to seek to keep up an estate by entail, the law interferes to cut off his purpose. So that the genius of our Constitution is to distribute property generally, and generally to preserve equality in the condition of men. We are secure, therefore, as far as we can be secure, from the influence of the few over the many, on account of accumulated wealth. But it is a question whether there may not be, whether there has not been, whether it does not now so happen that, under the bonds of party, of attachments to party leaders, there is not an aristocracy of opinion, like the aristocracy of wealth in other countries. In other words, whether men are not too willing, under the influence of excited party feeling, to follow the lead of others, to the neglect of their own conscience and judgment. I confess I fear this tendency. And it seems to me, that upon the great subjects which now divide the people, there could not be in the country, and especially in Massachusetts, the difference of opinion which we now see, if each man would exercise his own private judgment, without regard to with whom he agreed, or from whom he differed. I may as well, gentlemen, proceed to state a remarkable proof of this disposition to obey party mandates amongst ourselves, as remarkable a proof, I believe, as ever was afforded.

Among the great questions which now excite the country, perhaps at the head of them all, is that of the annexation of Texas to the United States. Texas, as you know, separated

herself from Mexico. She declared herself independent. And though her independence has not been acknowledged by Mexico, yet, after a sort, she has maintained it, and Mexico has not had the power to make any considerable inroad upon it. Mexico, the parent country, has abolished slavery; Texas, the severed province, has established, and still maintains it. And what is now proposed, is to add Texas to the United States, as a slaveholding country.

Now, it was natural enough, that at the North there should be much opposition to this project. Nay, it was natural enough that this opposition should be unanimous. And it did, in fact, once appear that just such, and just so perfectly unanimous, was the expression of opposition by men of all parties. In accordance with this feeling, the Legislature of Massachusetts, at two successive sessions, expressed this sentiment of opposition, once, I believe, with entire unanimity, and again when the unanimity was broken only by some dozen or twenty voices, out of three or four hundred. And I would call your attention, in the first place, to the sentiments which the Legislature of Massachusetts expressed in 1843.

Here Mr. Webster read Resolves of the Massachusetts Legislature against the annexation of Texas, stating, (1), "that under no circumstances whatever can the people of Massachusetts regard the proposition to admit Texas into the Union, in any other light than as dangerous to its continuance in peace, in prosperity, and in the enjoyment of those blessings which it is the object of a free government to secure;" (2), "that the Senators and Representatives of Massachusetts in Congress be requested to spare no exertions to oppose and if possible to prevent the adoption of the proposition referred to it," etc.

Mr. Webster then said:

That was in 1843. But not satisfied with this distinct expression of opinion, the Legislature of 1844 renewed the declaration of the sentiment of Massachusetts, upon this topic, by passing these resolutions:

Resolved, that the power to unite an independent foreign state with the United States is not among the powers delegated to the General Government by the Constitution of the United States.

Resolved, that the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, faithful to

the Compact between the people of the United States, according to the plain meaning and intent in which it was understood and acceded to by them, is sincerely anxious for its preservation; but that it is determined, as it doubts not the other States are, to submit to undelegated powers from no body of men on earth: *that the project of the annexation of Texas, unless arrested on the threshold, may tend to drive these States into a dissolution of the Union, and will furnish new calumnies against republican governments by exposing the gross contradiction of a people, professing to be free and yet seeking to extend and perpetuate the subjugation of their slaves.*

Resolved, that his Excellency the governor be requested to transmit a copy of these resolves to each of the Senators and Members of the House of Representatives of the Commonwealth in Congress, and a copy of the same to the Executive of the United States and of the several States.

Now, gentlemen, he continued, I believe I am correct in saying that these resolutions, which I have now read, were concurred in by every member of the House of Representatives of Massachusetts, with, perhaps, a dozen or twenty exceptions. There was not one single exception in the delegation from the whole county of Middlesex. There was not one man in Middlesex who, in January last, was trusted, by your suffrages, with any portion of your power, that did not hold to the doctrine expressed in these resolutions, fully, fairly and in so many words. Let me read one of them again:

Here Mr. Webster reread the second of the Resolutions of 1844 and proceeded as follows:

I suppose,—let me add, indeed, I entertain no doubt,—that this resolution, supported by every man from Middlesex, expressed the feeling of all parties in the county, that ninety-nine out of every hundred felt this sentiment thoroughly, cordially, heartily, and were grateful to their representatives who gave it words. And now, what has occurred, what has happened to work so entire a change in the sentiment and opinion of that party which calls itself democratic? Has Texas changed? Has slavery changed? Has the danger of annexation, thus forcibly set forth, been sunk? Has any new element, not then known, entered into the consideration of the

matter? Not the slightest. Gentlemen, I feel mortified — as a man — as a Massachusetts man — as an American citizen — as one who feels a pride in the renown of his country — I feel mortified at the fact that any party, that any men, should so change their opinions, without any cause, as these Democrats, as they call themselves, of Massachusetts, have done; that any men should show themselves so ready to eat their own words, to take back their own most solemn acts, to declare that they had said what they did not mean; or that, for some reason or other, unknown to themselves as well as to the rest of the world, they had changed their opinions! I wish the question put — I am not authorized, neither would it be graceful in me, to ask the question of your representatives, but I may inquire of the people, if there has been any for this change? None can be assigned. And is it not mortifying that upon a great question, a measure which its advocates themselves admit and declare to be vital to the continuance of the Union, a great mass should suddenly wheel at the dictation of the party leaders! I state this as an example of the lamentable tendency of things to which I have alluded — that a party here should be as ready and willing to follow party lead, as the tenantry upon an English estate to forsake the course they followed under a former landlord, at the mere bidding of a new. And I say, therefore, that there may be, with us, an aristocratic influence of the few over the many, as pernicious as the influence of wealth over large masses in other countries. Can there be a stronger proof of this than this very example? Remember that the question is admitted to be of great importance, allowed to be vital to the Union; look at the declarations of the party in the Legislature; read the instructions given to the representatives of Massachusetts in Congress, to oppose the annexation of Texas to the utmost, — and then behold this very party, these very men, in the short space of six months, entirely changing ground, and now going for Texas, slaves and all!

There are now proposed to us different persons as candidates for the offices of President and Vice-President of the United States. And in connection with this subject of the annexation of Texas, is proposed for the Presidency, James K. Polk of



Tennessee. I have had considerable acquaintance with Mr. Polk. It was my fortune to be in Congress for the whole time of his service in that body; we served together in one House for several years, and while he continued there, after my leaving, I was at the other end of the capitol. I do not mean to speak with the slightest disparagement of Mr. Polk, or of any one. It is not my habit. I would offend nobody. I would be personal to nobody. So far as I know, Mr. Polk, in the general bearing of his life and character, is a respectable man. His neighbors, from time to time, have reposed confidence in him, and I do not know that he has forfeited that confidence. But then, at the same time, it is perfectly true that nobody would have thought of Mr. Polk for President, were it not for the project of annexing Texas; because he has not that weight, that experience in public affairs, that pre-eminent talent or ability, which would point him out as peculiarly qualified for the station. And I may safely ask you, and all, whether, at the time the Baltimore Convention assembled, any one dreamed of Mr. Polk as a candidate for the Presidency? Did any five of you ever know that there was such a man as James K. Polk? He may be a respectable person in the class of second or third rate men; but I must say, and do say, that it was his position, and not his character, which made him a candidate for the Chief Magistracy. Few knew him, and few know by whose influence he was nominated. Who is responsible for Mr. Polk? Who nominated him? Not the people, certainly; for the people in this case are obliged to take up a man nominated to their hands. In my judgment, their nomination of Mr. Polk is not sufficient indorsement of his fitness or qualifications, and unless you know him so well as to be satisfied yourselves, I believe it will not be sufficient for you.

Fellow citizens, it is a circumstance of grave import to my mind, that, after fifty years' administration of this Government by great and eminent men, known to the whole country, the chief office is in danger of falling into the hands of a man unknown to the people and to the country. Hitherto we have always had distinguished men at the head of affairs. I need not say, here, that Washington, John Adams, Jefferson, Madison, Monroe, were distinguished men, — *their* names have

passed into history. Most of them were deeply connected with the war of the Revolution and the establishment of the Constitution, — all possessed, in a very high degree, the confidence of the country, and were well known to all citizens of the country. When this succession of great men and early patriots ceased, came John Quincy Adams and Andrew Jackson, men of greatly different character and attainments, but, nevertheless, both well known and highly distinguished. Mr. Adams had been in Congress; he had been an able minister abroad; he had been Secretary of State for eight years during the administration of Mr. Monroe; he was universally respected as a man of great learning and ability. On the other hand, Mr. Jackson, though most distinguished in a military view, had yet held high civil office in his own State, and had been a member of the Senate of the United States, so long ago as the administration of Washington. Yet, had he been otherwise utterly unknown to the world, his brilliant achievement at New Orleans would justly have made him celebrated. I shall not say which of these two was the fittest for President, but I will say that they both were distinguished men. When Mr. Adams was spoken of, nobody asked *who* is John Quincy Adams; when Mr. Jackson's name was mentioned, nobody said *who* in the world is Andrew Jackson. Everybody knew who they were, and what they had done. Then came Mr. Van Buren. I am neither about to commend nor condemn his political character. I will only say that, considered as a man who had grown up since the Revolution, and the adoption of the Constitution, and with reference to the circumstances in which he had been placed, he, too, might very well be called a distinguished public man. He had been Governor of New York; he had long been in the Senate; he had been Secretary of State; he had been Minister to England, and, — what is of more importance still, — the people themselves had passed upon his merits and elected him to the Vice-Presidency. Thus we see the administration of the Government, from the time of Washington down, confided to a line of distinguished public men, all known to the people of the whole country, and not dependent upon certificates or recommendations from any few men in any quarter.

Now, as I have said, it is, in my mind, a matter of very grave importance, that we seem about to change all this; to sanction a system of operations by which a few men may meet and nominate for the Presidency an individual entirely unknown to nine-tenths of the people, and whom we must take, if we take him at all, as a country school committee takes a school-master, on the strength of the recommendation he has in his pocket.

But there is one other element in this matter which still more deserves the deep reflection of every man who has the honor, the interest, the welfare of the country at heart. Wherefore was Mr. Polk nominated? Because he, more than any other, would uphold the nation against foreign aggression? Because he was possessed of eminent abilities for domestic administration? Because he commanded, in an especial degree, the esteem and confidence of the great body of the people? All know that it was no such thing. He was nominated and brought forward, and it is now endeavored to elect him, for one single, one sole object,—and that the very object against which your representatives solemnly protested, and against which they instructed the Congressional delegation from Massachusetts to spare no exertion and no effort. Yet for that single object was Mr. Polk brought forward. You know, in your neighborhood, and I know, in my neighborhood, who supports him. Mr. Polk's nomination was thus founded of a single object. If chosen, his administration will be necessarily limited to one idea. He cannot be weak enough to imagine that he owes his elevation to the strength of his general character as a public man. He must always recollect the particular, the sole, the single purpose for which he is taken from his private residence in Tennessee, and placed in the President's house in Washington. This purpose he will of course accomplish if he can; or rather he will aid others to accomplish; for a convenient and useful instrumentality is the only light in which those by whom he has been proposed, appear to regard him.

But let me ask if this be not a precedent of dangerous tendency? Does it not run athwart all our experience, all the teachings of our history, thus to take up, as a candidate for our

highest station, an obscure man, singly and simply that one object may be accomplished, — and that object, too, declared to be dangerous to the existence of the country, by the very men who support that candidate? I leave it to every man's judgment, and I ask of every man how long this free Government can be preserved, if, at the recurrence of every four years, the party leaders, instead of selecting a prominent man, even of their own party, should, for their own peculiar purposes, their private, and, it may be, sinister ends, select a man almost unknown, prop him up by certificates, and persuade their followers that they have nothing to do but to vote for, and support, the party nomination? It is natural that every man should desire to act with his party. I feel that desire myself, and I blame no one for entertaining it, to a certain extent. But upon a question vitally important to the public interest, or the existence of the country, it is not too much to ask of any man to pause and consider, if, by following the lead of his party, he does not violate his duty to his country. I ask no more than this of any man, and I leave it to the conscience of every one to answer the question, in regard to this matter of the annexation of Texas.

It is not proper for me now to go into the full consideration of this topic. It has been often discussed, the public papers have been full of it, you yourselves have heard many speeches respecting it.

But I hold this to be the fact, that the annexation of Texas must tend to the increase and perpetuation of slavery, and that is reason enough for me to oppose it, now, at all times, and under all circumstances. In a speech made in New York, some seven or eight years ago, I took occasion to declare that I never would give my consent to any measure whose tendency was to extend the slavery of the African race on this continent. From the principle which I then declared, I have not yet departed. And I hold the scheme of annexing Texas to be the very thing, of all others, which would produce that effect. I am told, however, that there are men, whom I must regard either as very sophistical or very shallow, who go about and argue that the annexation of Texas would diminish slavery; that the slaves would, in time, pass off from Virginia, North

and South Carolina, and our other slave States, gather together in Texas, and leave the rest of the country free of them. Gentlemen, this is all a miserable, shallow humbug. What would be the obvious effect of annexation? Why, to throw a large amount of cotton lands into cultivation. But who would cultivate them? Why, slaves of course, for slavery exists in Texas already. And what would be the effect of this but to enhance the value of slave labor and of slaves? Are not slaves raised for the market? Are they not sold in the market? And will not the opening of a new market for their disposal increase their value where they are raised, by increasing the demand? Run over, in your minds, the effect of annexation, and you will not fail to see what great inducements it will afford to the South to breed and raise slaves. How ridiculous, how preposterous, to talk about its diminishing slavery! It must inevitably increase and extend it.

Besides, was there ever anything more absurd than to consider the object of a measure apart from what its authors avow to be that object? The treaty of annexation was framed by the Secretary of State, Mr. Calhoun, — a very distinguished man, — under the direction of the President. Mr. Calhoun sent a letter to the Senate respecting it. And what did he say? Did he tell Senators that annexation would diminish slavery? Not at all. Precisely the reverse. You will see, in his letter, that he recommends annexation *in order to establish and maintain slavery*. There it is, in so many words. I do not put them into his mouth — they are his own. He argues that unless Texas be annexed, slavery cannot be maintained, and therefore he recommends annexation. Now, when the negotiator of a treaty announces in writing his views of the object and effect of that treaty, and that object, that effect is to extend and maintain slavery — can there be anything more ridiculous than for those who support that same treaty to give the negotiator a flat contradiction, and to contend that it will diminish slavery?

There is another notion which, I am told, is used by many as an apology for their change of opinion since January last. It is that, if the United States do not take Texas, England will. Gentlemen, if there be any one thing more absurd than all others, it is this pretence. England take Texas? England

take Texas? And take her with slavery too? Why there is not a minister, there is not a public man in England who dares suggest such a measure. England has abolished slavery throughout all her colonies, and is it to be supposed that she would take another with slavery? No such thing! England will not take Texas with slavery, and Texas will not let herself go without retaining it. To maintain slavery in both countries, is the object and aim of Texan annexation, and no man who possesses the slightest information or knowledge, can believe that any government in England — Whig, Tory, Radical, or Conservative — could think, for one moment, of taking Texas and slavery. And in saying this, I mean to say that the popular feeling of Europe, and of England especially, is so strong against the continuance of slavery, that not a public man could stand for one hour, who should propose to put slavery, in any spot on earth, under the broad ægis of English power. Gentlemen, be not deceived. Ask yourselves if England would take Texas as a slaveholding country — consider the question according to your knowledge of her whole policy, and you must see that she would not.

I have thus far spoken of the Texas question as deeply interesting to us and to the country, in connection with the increase of slavery. There are other considerations appertaining to it, which have been set forth very strongly by others. Many objections have been urged against annexation by a gentleman with whom I do not agree on most political questions, and with whom, on this, least of all, did I expect to concur. I mean Mr. Benton, the Senator from Missouri. He belongs to a slave State, and I should have thought that he, sooner than most others, would have found a way to get over all difficulties in the way of annexation. I supposed, at first, that those who announced and brought forward the project of annexation, could count on his support. It has turned out otherwise.

Here Mr. Webster read an extract from a speech by Thomas H. Benton, and then proceeded as follows:

Well now, gentlemen, upon this subject, Mr. Benton's opinion is better than mine. He says that the movement originated, in a great measure, in private speculation, with "land speculators

and stock-jobbers," and I believe it is all true. But he goes further, as you will see by another extract, which I will read:

"Mr. Benton presented it as the design of the Texas Treaty not to get Texas into the Union, but to get the Southern States out of it, and showed that the whole treaty and all the correspondence relating to it was studiously and artfully contrived for that purpose. To pick a quarrel with Great Britain, and also with the non-slaveholding States, on the subject of slavery, was the open, undisguised object of the negotiator from the beginning to the ending. To array the slaveholding against the non-slaveholding half of the Union, was his open and continued effort. To present the acquisition of Texas as a southern, sectional, slaveholding question, wholly directed to the extension, perpetuation, and predominance of slavery, was his expressed and avowed object."

Now here is the object of Mr. Calhoun, as stated by Mr. Benton. Let one friend judge another, though, perhaps, he may be more partial than I should be, who, politically speaking, do not profess to be a friend to either.

Gentlemen, there is another great subject of consideration, which is exceedingly interesting and important, particularly to us in Massachusetts. It is the tariff. It is natural for us to wish to know the opinions of Mr. Polk upon a question so deeply affecting the North. And what does Mr. Polk think of affording protection to free labor? For, after all, the question is, what policy will prove most beneficial and useful to labor,—I may say, to the free white labor of the country? How does Mr. Polk hold concerning the tariff? At present he holds his tongue. But there has been a time when he spoke, and that with no ambiguous voice. I say to you that, in Congress, and down to the close of the last state contest in Tennessee, in 1843. Mr. Polk proclaimed himself to be, uniformly, through and through, opposed entirely to the protective system, and in favor of free trade. He says so himself, and I know of no reason to doubt his word. His neighbors all say so, and they must be supposed to know. But it happens that there does exist a curious state of things amongst Mr. Polk's supporters. Not here at the North, for here all who advocate his election are anti-tariff men. They avow it themselves, and in your own

county papers it is published from week to week, that Mr. Polk is altogether opposed to the tariff; and the tariff itself has been denounced in most unmeasured language. But in some States, as in Pennsylvania, where the whole people support the tariff, he is made to assume an entirely new character. Nothing is left of him but his name. Here Mr. Polk is anti-tariff, — there he is tariff; and I have seen myself, in some villages of Pennsylvania, flags and banners bearing the inscription — “Polk, Dallas, and the tariff of 1842, forever.” But in South Carolina it is — “Polk and Dallas forever, and down with the tariff of 1842.” What is there of consistency in this? Is Mr. Polk in favor of the tariff of 1842, or is he not? He does not choose now to say; the question has respectfully been put to him by committee after committee, from various quarters, yet he is silent. But in Congress he did say. In Tennessee he has said. You know that it is the custom, at the South, for candidates to go about among the people everywhere, from court-house to court-house, from regimental muster to regimental muster, and deliver their sentiments upon public questions to the multitudes assembled. When a candidate for governor of Tennessee, in 1841, and again in 1843, Mr. Polk pursued this course, and made more than a hundred speeches in which he uniformly stated the difference, on the subject of protection, between himself and his competitor, Governor Jones, to be that he was entirely opposed to protection, and Mr. Jones was for it. He made this the issue; he went to the election on this ground; and he was defeated.

Mr. Webster here quoted two letters upon Mr. Polk's anti-tariff views, from Governor Jones and Mr. Watson of Tennessee.

But why go to all these proofs as if they were necessary to establish the fact that Mr. Polk is hostile to the tariff! Does not the whole anti-tariff party support him? Are not the free-trade party in South Carolina, Alabama, and Arkansas, his firm adherents? Wherever a free-trade meeting is held at the South, are not its members pledged to support Mr. Polk, and are not all Southern friends to the tariff opposed to him? I do not mention these things to reproach Mr. Polk for his opinions. He has a right to his own sentiments; he was



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brought up in them; they were, for a long time, the sentiments of Tennessee, but she has seen fit to change hers. Mr. Polk has not changed his, and I rather commend, than blame, him for his adherence to his original views, if he is not convinced that they are erroneous.

Now, gentlemen, the question for us to consider is, what is the value, the object of the system of protective policy, and whether it ought not to be upheld. And this also has been so much discussed that it would be unpardonable in me to take up a great deal of time on it now.

I consider the general principles of the tariff to be —

First; that it is a policy deemed necessary to extend and multiply the variety of occupations among men, by those who think that the true greatness of a country depends on the encouragement bestowed on all the various pursuits of its citizens, whether engaged in agriculture, commerce, manufactures, or the mechanic arts. I know of no country far advanced in civilization and happiness, whose people are confined to one single pursuit, and I regard a nation much happier, much better educated, much better refined, much more moral, in proportion as its avenues of industry are multiplied, and the modes of its labor varied.

Second; to render each branch of labor useful to the rest; to connect them all together; to bind one to another so as to form a perfect chain of mutual dependence.

Third; to promote the great interest of labor by securing the highest recompense. For, in other words, and more emphatically, the higher the reward of labor, the greater the prosperity of the people.

Fellow citizens, our leading interest is labor; our country is destined to labor; we are brought up to labor; and I hold it to be an indisputable maxim that to raise the rate of wages for labor is the most effectual of all possible means to increase the general happiness of mankind. No country is out of the range of enjoyment and happiness, where the rate of wages for labor is high, and, on the contrary, the people of no country — I care not where they may be, nor under what form of government they may live — can be, in the mass, prosperous or happy with a very low rate of wages. On these ideas the whole

system of a protective tariff is founded, and what are the objections to it?

A very common one is that any duty imposed on the importation of an article raises the price of that article, and that the consumer is obliged to pay the increase. To this I would in the first place give the same answer which Washington gave, in his message of 1796. Suppose that a duty does somewhat increase the price of the article; is it not better to pay a little more for what we want to those who will take of us what they want, and what we have to dispose of, and who will pay us more than they would others, than to buy a little cheaper abroad, of those who will take nothing that we have to sell, and will receive nothing in payment for what we buy except the common medium of gold and silver? In Washington's opinion, it was better, and it is in mine. For there are two things to be considered. First, the price of the article, and, second, our ability to buy it. And, if a system, which enhances a little the price, at the same time still more enhances our own ability to buy — does it not do us good? We must take this protective system as a system, if we take it at all. I dare say there may be some defects in the details of the present tariff. I doubt not that a lawyer, like some of those who declaim against it, may pick flaws in some of its provisions. It is their business to pick flaws. But we all know that the tariff was forced through Congress under the unhallowed operation of the previous question, and that the friends of protection were obliged to take it as it stood, or to get nothing. As a system, then, we must look at it. And, as a system, what are the other objections to it?

One of the first Jeremiads, one of the loudest complaints, is the alleged discrimination in favor of the rich, by the low duties on jewelry, and the oppression of the farmer by the high duties on iron log chains. "Watch-chains," say the orators against the tariff, "are taxed but seven and a half per cent, while the iron chain on yonder team, belonging to a hard-working farmer, is made to pay thirty per cent. This is Whig policy. Always legislating in favor of the rich, and to keep down the farmer!" Well, gentlemen, if this were Whig

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policy, I, for one, should not be a Whig twenty-four hours after I were convinced of the fact. But let us look at the matter, and we shall see what flimsy, what arrant nonsense, all this talk is.

Jewelry, say these gentlemen, pays but seven and a half per cent. Now, I do not know whether they will consider it any answer to their argument, but in the first place their assertion is not true. Jewelry, of gold or silver, pays a duty of twenty per cent; mock or imitated jewelry, one of twenty-five per cent; and there is nothing which can be regarded as jewelry taxed so low as seven and a half per cent, except the watches and parts of watches, which, as you know, are brought over in separate pieces, to be put together in this country. It is true that they pay but seven and a half per cent, and the reason will readily occur to everybody. It is one of the rules of all governments, it is a course always observed, in laying a tax on importations, to have regard to the facility with which the article may be smuggled. For, if the article be easy of concealment and transportation, and the duty be remarkably high, the certain consequence will be smuggling. Thus, in the case of watches, seven and a half per cent was as much as it was deemed safe to impose, in the shape of duty, because what would be easier than for a messenger from Europe to conceal half a dozen watches on his person and smuggle them in? In this article there is great value in little compass, and experience teaches us that where smuggling is easy and duties are high, smuggling will constantly occur. It is a seeming paradox, but a certain truth, that, in such cases, the higher the tax imposed, the less the amount received. And this, I suppose, is the reason why the duty on watches was fixed at so low a rate.

But this is a lately discovered crime, if it be a crime, in the Whig tariff. At the last session of Congress, Mr. McKay, in the House of Representatives, and Mr. McDuffie, in the Senate, introduced into either branch a bill to alter and amend the existing tariff. And it does so happen that, in all this matter of the gold chains of the aristocracy and the log chains of the farmer, both these gentlemen recommended that the tariff should stand as it is. Now, inquire of the next man who tries to

enchain your attention on this point, whether these democratic bills did not propose precisely what is enacted in the Whig tariff of 1842, so far as regards these articles.

You are told, again, by these gentlemen, of the great duty on coarse cottons, such as farmers use, and that it is a prejudice against the farming interest which keeps these cottons high. Let us look at this a little, remembering all the while that we must take the tariff as a system. And, by the by, I ought to have said before, that, in the long run, protection does not raise the prices of goods. Because, by encouraging our own labor, our manufactures go ahead, and the consequence is that the competition between the makers, at home and abroad, renders the goods cheap. Gentlemen, you have in your county the first power-loom ever set up in the country. By power-loom I mean a loom worked by steam or water power, in contradistinction from the power of the human hand. This is at Waltham, and it was erected soon after the peace of 1815, by an ingenious and enterprising individual — Mr. Paul Moody. He went into the manufacture of coarse cottons, which had before been brought from India, and so high was the price that the first cloth made at Waltham brought thirty-three cents a yard. And now, in consequence of the competition created by the protective system, you may buy better cotton at Lowell, Manchester, Waltham, anywhere, for seven and a half cents a yard. The price of this article, of which every farmer uses some, has been reduced, through the tariff, to the present low point from the former high one. Yet these professed friends of the farmer and of the people cry out against it! Gentlemen, I state these facts on my veracity. I know it to be true that cloth which can now be bought for seven cents and a half, used to cost thirty-three. Tell that to the next man that comes along trying to persuade you that you are ground to powder by the protective system, as between the upper and nether mill-stones!

I am, moreover, informed that a gentleman of some distinction from a neighboring State has been travelling around and speaking against the tariff. I am somewhat reluctant to comment on the declarations or arguments of any man who is not present to explain or defend them, but I am well informed that

this gentleman has denounced, as a crying evil, the high duties on boots and shoes, which, as he says, are entirely to the prejudice of the farmer, merely to please the shoemaker. Now I am willing, for argument's sake, to admit that the farmers of Middlesex do pay, for their boots and shoes, to their own neighbors, something more than they would be obliged to pay in Boston for French boots and shoes if the duty were taken off. But has the farmer, on the whole, any reason to complain of this? Does he want a change? Is the farmer here to throw his neighbor, the shoemaker, out of employment, by buying wholly abroad? Is that the sentiment of the farmer? Is it the sentiment of the public? Do we not rather feel that the welfare and prosperity of each one of us, is a part and parcel of the common good? Does the farmer look with envy and jealousy on the awl, bench, and lapstone of the shoemaker? Would he not rather keep him employed and see him earn a living, as he, himself, is earning his own? But supposing not. What, then, says the shoemaker? "Certainly, Mr. Farmer, your doctrine of taking off the duty on shoes is a fair doctrine, but it is fair only on one side. I shall be content if you will apply it to the other. Just take off your duty on foreign wheat, rye, and potatoes, and then you may abolish that on shoes as soon as you please." What will the farmer say to this? Why, gentlemen, it is as true as that we stand here, — or perhaps not exactly so, for that is a physical truth; but it is as true as anything demonstrable by reason, that taking off the duty from wheat, flour, rye, and potatoes might cause a depression in the price of those commodities. Wheat now pays twenty-five cents per bushel; flour about a dollar and forty cents per barrel; rye twenty cents per bushel; and potatoes ten cents.

At this point, an individual in the crowd interrupted the speaker, and inquired the duty on butter and cheese.

Mr. Webster said: I will tell you, sir, with a great deal of pleasure. And, by the way, the question reminds me of the attempts made by some to cast ridicule on the Whig tariff, for its absurdity in imposing a duty on foreign cheese; "as if," say they, "a pound of cheese ever came from England."

Gentlemen, a great deal of cheese does come from England and other parts of Europe, every year, and is consumed in this country. The duty on cheese is nine cents a pound, and on butter five cents. I suppose, with regard to the latter article, there is not much danger of competition from Europe.

Here, the gentleman who had interrupted, spoke again, and said that he had himself brought large quantities of cheese from Europe, some of which had been sold in Southern markets as high as fifty cents a pound.

But to leave these good things of the table and come back to grain. I know it is not long since heavy cargoes of rye were imported into this country from the Black Sea; and it is the opinion of men, versed in the matter, and competent to judge, that in productive seasons, vast quantities of wheat would be exported from the countries on the Baltic to the United States were it not for the duty. And I leave it for you to say how long it would be, if the ten-cent duty on potatoes were removed, before every man, woman, and child, in Lowell, Waltham, Nashua, and everywhere around, would eat Nova Scotia potatoes.

But then again it is said that the farmers are ruined by the tax upon the importation of salt. This duty is as old as the Government itself, and it has always been persisted in. Upon this point I beg leave to read, as more condensed, and more to the purpose than anything I could say, an extract from a recent letter from a member of Congress from Massachusetts, Mr. Grinnell of Bristol County, a very respectable and intelligent man, and well acquainted with the subject.

Mr. Webster here read from the letter referred to, and then spoke as follows:

You will thus see that manufactures of iron are charged thirty per cent, while the duty on the raw material, that is, iron in bolts and bars, is charged seventy per cent. This foreign raw material comes in competition with the produce of the iron mines of Pennsylvania, a State where all the people are in favor of protection, and who will hearken to no one who does not support a protective tariff through and through. And, as

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if with a special and direct eye to Pennsylvania, we find, in these bills, this heavy duty of seventy per cent on raw iron, while, when manufactured, it is charged only thirty. That is to say, the labor of the mechanic in our country is less protected than the capital of the mine owner! Is it not so? Certainly that is the proposal in these bills of Messrs. McKay and McDuffie, and if they consider that a wise and beneficial way of administering the Government of the country, why, — so be it.

Then, too, these lovers of the farmer talk about wool, and how shocking it is that foreign wool should be admitted at a duty of eight cents a pound. Well, it is so admitted. Coarse, hairy wool from Smyrna, in Asia Minor, Buenos Ayres, and the other warm climates, which it is necessary to mix with our own finer article, and which is not worth seven cents a pound where it is produced, is thus brought in to mix with ours. It was just so thirty years ago, when I first went to Congress. And it is just as much a part of the protective system to admit this coarse, but necessary wool, at a low rate, as it is to admit dye stuffs and other essential articles which we do not produce ourselves. Yet the farmer is injured, cry the opponents to the tariff! It is no such thing. If this wool were not brought in, the farmers would, indeed, be hurt, for the manufacturers could not successfully go on without it, and if they were to stop, what would become of the fine wool of the farmers, the raising of which has lately become so important and lucrative!

And, again, the poor farmers are oppressed because, while there is a high duty on boots and shoes, there is a low one on raw hides. Terrible indeed! Outrageous! I do not know what those who put forth an argument like this may think of their audience, or how much respect they may have for the intelligence of the people, when they make such a comment upon the circumstance of there being a low duty on hides. True, the duty is low, and for good reason.

Gentlemen, we have many breeds of good stock in this country; we have the Durham, the Ayrshire, the Herefordshire, and our own native Devonshire, which, when proper care is taken, I think perhaps as good as any of them. But amongst

them all we have not one breed which wears more than one skin on the back of one animal. And before these gentlemen can take the tariff to task for the low duty on raw hides, they must introduce a race of cattle which shall have three, or four, or half a dozen skins a piece. Does not everybody know that cattle are raised here mainly for other purposes than to obtain their hides? We raise for work, the ox; for milk, the cow; and for beef, both. The skins are valuable, to be sure, but the principal object is beef. And in no country whatever, which is full of people, full of arts, and of various occupations, can there be produced raw hides enough for home consumption. The hides that we import come from California and Buenos Ayres, where cattle are valued only for their skins, are slaughtered only for their skins, and where the carcasses, after the skins are taken, are left to perish. The skins are exported to the United States, as the sole article of value in the whole animal. And there would be just as much propriety in complaining of the tariff for not laying a heavy duty on otter, fox, and beaver skins, because there may possibly, in the course of a year, be taken half a dozen of those animals in Massachusetts, as there is in this case.

One or two words more, gentlemen, and I will relieve you from the tedium of these remarks.

You have, within your own county, two of the most considerable manufacturing places in the country, Lowell and Waltham. Near your borders, in the neighboring State of New Hampshire, there are likewise many manufacturing establishments at Nashua, Manchester, New Ipswich, and other places. What influences do these establishments exert on the interests of the farmer? Do you, as farmers, wish them destroyed? Do you wish to see the Concord, the Nashua, and the Merrimack roll their useless tides to the ocean, as they did forty years ago? What is the real interest of the farmer, more than a near, a good, and a sure market? And where will the farmers of Middlesex find such a market if these manufactories be swept away? If there is any one here who has not thought upon the subject before, let him reflect whether it is not the true interest of the farmer to find people ready to buy what he has to sell. Has any one estimated how much provision, fuel,



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and other products of the county, is consumed in these manufacturing villages. A gentleman in the little town of Pelham has taken the trouble to ascertain the facts with regard to that place, and the result is that, with a population of only about one thousand, that town disposes to these manufacturing villages, per annum, of wood, ten thousand dollars; milk, seven thousand dollars; apples and other fruit, two thousand dollars; hay and grain, five thousand dollars; potatoes, etc., two thousand dollars; butter and cheese, two thousand dollars; granite and stonework, five thousand dollars,—in all thirty-three thousand dollars.

Here is an annual product of between thirty and forty thousand dollars, disposed of from a town of but a thousand people, and all this is the product of soil and labor. Could they have found so ready a market or have obtained so profitable a return elsewhere? Pray, gentlemen, let us look at this matter, and see if this system of protection does not act upon all classes for their mutual benefit. But most emphatically for the advantage of the farmer! I say that, looking with a single and exclusive eye to the interests of the agricultural class of the community, it is the imperative demand of the farmers that protection should be afforded to that class of manufactures which will employ the numbers who will consume what they have to dispose of. Suppose that these manufacturing establishments should be broken up, and the operatives sent to the West to engage in agriculture! Of course there would be fewer to buy, and more to sell agricultural productions. The interest of the farmer, however, is directly opposite to this, because the more to buy and the fewer to sell, the greater the price he can obtain. Then as to the wages paid to the operatives in the mills. In Waltham, eighty thousand dollars, and in Lowell over one million, eight hundred thousand dollars are annually paid for wages. Where do these sums go? To whom do they do good? Do they go abroad and benefit the foreign laborer? Not at all. The money goes to our own workmen, principally of our own State, and carries comfort, support, relief, through the whole of their families. I put it to every one of you if this is not, essentially, the operation of the manufacturing

system, which, itself, depends almost wholly upon the protective tariff.

Gentlemen, these are dry matters of detail. I should not so far have detained you upon them, if I had not found that, with respect to the tariff's operations, there was an attempt made to create among the farmers, the impression that the tariff was unfavorable to their interests. In my own judgment, the tariff in its present condition, is useful to the farmer and important for his interests. I admit that agricultural products are now low — lower than I wish. I hope soon to see them rise. But we can expect no rise in price from foreign demand, and we must look for it, where I hope to see it, in an increase of demand among our own people. And I trust that a protective policy may ever be pursued by our Government, for protection benefits agriculture, — and agriculture, as it is the great interest of the country, should be the great concern of the Government. Its advance, or decline, decides the condition of the nation, — whether it shall be great or weak, prosperous or miserable!

In my opinion, the question before us is, whether we are strong-minded enough, and virtuous enough to bear prosperity. Can we content ourselves with what we have proved to be for our advantage, or are we to be led away by new theories — are we to follow new guides, who will lead us no man knows whither. Gentlemen, I have no more interest in the decision of the questions before the country than any one of yourselves. I feel that I have a stake in the common prosperity for myself and my family. You have, each, the same. I feel deep concern in the prosperity of the country, the perpetuation of the Government, the sacredness of our liberties. You feel the same. I desire the promotion of the real interests of the country. So do we all. I wish to see every man, every family, well clothed, well fed, well housed, and well educated. So also do you. And it was the feeling, common to all of us, which brought me here to-day, at no little personal inconvenience, for the purpose of addressing you, and of taking counsel with you upon the great subjects on which we are so soon to be called on to act.

A great, a permanent, a vital question, is involved in the

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election before us. So I think, and, so thinking, I shall act: and I desire to leave with you now, the request, the beseeching, earnest request, that, as intelligent men, as lovers of the country, as patriots, as men who desire to secure the perpetuity of our glorious institutions, as friends to liberty, as men content to live and let live, you will bestow on these topics your serious consideration. Put them to your own conscience, and I am content to abide the issue.

# Speech at Faneuil Hall, Boston

NOVEMBER 8, 1844.<sup>1</sup>

FELLOW CITIZENS: What if the field be lost! All is not lost! The high sense of duty, the determination to do that duty, the unconquerable will, the courage to resist, the firm purpose, the devoted adherence to our principles,—to their maintenance, their support, their success,—these are not lost! In these we have not seen any falling off. And whatever the results of the present election, so far as they have been decided, may be,—whatever may be our prospects,—our cause, the cause of our country, of our common weal, of our common truth, is still the same! We ourselves are the same.

Whigs of Boston, if the information received by the mails this morning had been the same as that which came yesterday, it was my purpose to respectfully ask of your committee of arrangements to excuse me from attending at this meeting. The assembly would then have been one of congratulation, and unmixed joy; but it was my wish, in such a case, to retire to the rest and repose of my own home, rather than mingle with the crowds assembled at a public meeting. But clouds have collected around the prospect. Unexpected and disastrous disappointments have been set before us. But, whatever other parts of the country may have done, whatever they may have induced to decide, it is still our duty, at all events, to maintain the firmness, the patriotism, the Whig principles of Massachusetts.

Gentlemen, it may be that the national elections assume an unfavorable aspect, at the present moment. But Massachusetts, upon the ground she has taken, does not stand alone.

<sup>1</sup> At the Whig meeting held shortly after the Presidential election. The news indicated the defeat of Clay. From the report in the Boston Courier, November 9, 1844.

Three, out of the six New England States, have already declared themselves on her side. New Jersey, Ohio, and Maryland have done the same. And there is every reason to believe that Delaware, North Carolina, Georgia, Louisiana, Tennessee, Kentucky, and Indiana will enroll themselves in the same ranks. Even if the Whigs should be defeated, therefore, they are still a glorious band. Their purpose is not broken, and their strength is respectable. But what if it were otherwise? What if Massachusetts should stand

“ Among the faithless, faithful only she.”

What if the honor beaming upon her ancient brow, should blaze upon her brow alone! What of all this! Is not the securing of this a sufficient, or, if not a sufficient, is it not a great object for the Whigs of Massachusetts to attain?

It is too late for me to go thoroughly into the topics which have been presented to you during the present election. The moment for action is at hand. The past we have seen, and now approaches the time for us to do our duty. And, in the first place, if there were nothing else for us to do, than to secure our own state Government, this, in itself, would be worthy of all our effort. The result, in this respect, touches closely all our concerns, all our relations of social life, and all our enjoyments of the fruits of a wise and parental government. And by all means, therefore, if the national elections are disastrous, are we the more bound to secure our own triumph in our own State.

Gentlemen, I do not think that any political party ever went before a people upon plainer issues than those now made between the two great parties of this country, of Texas and the Tariff. I have expressed everywhere, and on every occasion, my deep mortification at the views taken on these subjects by our political opponents. It is as plain as the sun in heaven, that the policy, the system of domestic protection, is in the highest degree essential to the prosperity of the State. And it is, also, in the highest degree extraordinary, that the sentiment of Massachusetts should not be unanimous upon the question of Texan annexation. But still more extraordinary and astonishing it is, that considering the almost unanimous expression of opinion on this point, by the people of Massachusetts, we

should behold an entire great party, within a few short months, wheeling completely around, at the word of the leaders, and, as by a miraculous change, brought into the unqualified support of a measure, which they, themselves, had declared fatal to the existence of the Union.

Fellow citizens, it would be, at this moment, a useless task for me to attempt to investigate the causes of this change. It may not be proper to investigate them at all. But why, we may ask, why should two free white States, New York and Pennsylvania, go against us, if they so have done? There can be but one cause, and that so conspicuous and prominent that no one can shut his eyes to it, no one but must deplore its effect.

I approach the subject at once, for it is useless to try to keep it back. And I say that, in my mind, there is a great necessity for a thorough reformation of the naturalization laws. The results of the recent elections, in several of the States, have impressed my mind with one deep and strong conviction; that is, that there is an imperative necessity for reforming the naturalization laws of the United States. The preservation of the Government, and consequently the interest of all parties, in my opinion, clearly and strongly demand this. All are willing and desirous, of course, that America should continue to be the safe asylum for the oppressed of all nations. All are willing and desirous, that the blessings of a free government should be open to the enjoyment of the worthy and industrious from all countries, who may come hither for the purpose of bettering their circumstances, by the successful employment of their own capital, enterprise, or labor. But it is not unreasonable that the elective franchise should not be exercised by a person of foreign birth, until after such a length of residence among us, as that he may be supposed to have become, in some good measure, acquainted with our Constitution and laws, our social institutions, and the general interests of the country; and to have become an American in feeling, principle, character, and sympathy, as well as by having established his domicile amongst us. Those already naturalized, have, of course, their rights secured; but I can conceive no reasonable objection to a

different provision in regard to future cases. It is absolutely necessary, also, in my judgment, to provide new securities against the abominable frauds, the outrages, flagrant perjuries, which are notoriously perpetrated in all the great cities. There is not the slightest doubt, that in numerous cases, different persons vote on the strength of the same set of naturalization papers; there is as little doubt that immense numbers of such papers are obtained by direct perjury; and that these enormous offences multiply and strengthen themselves beyond all power of punishment and restraint by existing provisions.

I believe it is an unquestionable fact, that masters of vessels, having brought over emigrants from Europe, have within thirty days of their arrival, seen those very persons carried up to the polls, and give their votes for the highest offices in the national and state governments. Such votes, of course, exercise no intelligence, and, indeed, no volition of their own. They can know nothing, either of the questions at issue, or of the candidates proposed. They are mere instruments, used by unprincipled and wicked men, and made competent instruments only by the accumulation of crime upon crime. Now it seems to me impossible, that every honest man, and every good citizen, every true lover of liberty and the Constitution, every real friend of the country, would not desire to see an end put to these enormous abuses. I avow it, therefore, as my opinion, that it is the duty of us all to endeavor to bring about an efficient reformation of the naturalization laws of the United States.

I am well aware, gentlemen, that these sentiments may be misrepresented, and probably will be, in order to excite prejudice in the minds of foreign residents. Should such misrepresentation be made or attempted, I must trust my friends to correct it, and expose it. For the sentiments themselves, I am ready to take the responsibility myself, and I will only add, that what I have now suggested, is just as important to the rights of foreigners, regularly and fairly naturalized among us, as it is to the rights of native-born American citizens.

The present condition of the country imperatively demands this change. The interest, the real welfare of all parties, the honor of the nation, all require that subordinate and different

party questions should be made to yield to this great end. And no man who esteems the prosperity and existence of his country, as of more importance than a fleeting party triumph, will, or can, hesitate to give in his adherence to these principles.

Gentlemen, there is not a solitary doubt that, if the elections have gone against us, it has been through false and fraudulent votes. Pennsylvania, if, as they say, she has given six thousand for our adversaries, has done so through the barest fraud. Is it not so? And look at New York. In the city there were thrown sixty thousand votes, or one vote to every five inhabitants. You know that, fairly and honestly, there can be no such thing on earth. And the great remedy is for us to go directly to the source of true popular power, and to purify the elections.

Fellow citizens, I profess, to be a lover of human liberty, especially to be devoted to the great example of freedom set forth by the republic under which we live. But I profess my heart, my reputation, my pride of character to be American.

Mr. Webster here mentioned one or two circumstances, illustrative of his argument on this point, and then referred to the doctrines and examples of Washington, John Adams, Jefferson, Madison, and Monroe, concluding as follows :

Following the principles of these great men, walking in the footsteps of Adams, Washington, Hancock, Jefferson, and others ; let us answer to their exhortations by pledging ourselves that, living or dying, prosperous or unprosperous, we will show ourselves in our strength with a glorious unanimity worthy of such glorious measures.



# Remarks on Commercial Treaties

NEW YORK, March, 1845.<sup>1</sup>

MR. PRESIDENT, may I avail myself of this opportunity to refer to what is now occurring in this country from which you descended or where you were born, as being of interest to all mankind. We have seen developed in Germany a system that is to have great influence upon the destinies of Christendom.

I refer to the Customs Union ; I look upon that as opening new views of intercourse between States, and establishing new prospects for the future.

The progress of free intercourse among nations in modern times has everywhere made rapid advances, but nevertheless it has found itself frustrated by what is known, among governments, having colonies, as a colonial policy, a policy founded on the idea of a restricted trade and exclusive intercourse between the colony and the mother country. There can be no real reciprocity on this hypothesis between nations having colonies and those which have none. For nations having colonies consider them as part of themselves. But we, who have no colonies, have a north and a south, an east and a west, with climates, products, and interests as dissimilar in many respects as colonies and mother country. And yet we are, in the regard of other nations, as in fact, one nation ; and when we make treaties, we commit and engage ourselves as one nation.

In your country, gentlemen, a like union is established. Your German union presents a like spectacle ; and when you offer reciprocal treaties, you offer as we do, trade with millions

<sup>1</sup> At the Annual Festival of the German Benevolent Society of New York, Mr. Webster was present as a guest, and in reply to a complimentary toast, briefly expressed his sentiments on the subject of the German Zoll Verein, or Customs Union. From the report in Niles' Register, March 29, 1845.

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and tens of millions, your union including now more than twenty-eight millions, and therefore a real reciprocity as to numbers. The commercial union of Germany proceeds upon this principle, that as Germans are one, so to speak, in language, with a common origin, common wants, and common literature, they must have a common commerce and a common destiny. Nobody can rejoice more than I in this new hope for nations,—indeed in this new nationality,—and without being prepared to say what we can do, encumbered as we are with what are called reciprocal treaties, but of which the reciprocity is all on one side, I may be permitted to say that nothing in modern times has arisen to encourage the hope of the eventual settlement of the commercial intercourse of nations upon a true philosophical basis, so much as German Union.

# Tribute to Andrew Jackson

JULY, 1845.<sup>1</sup>

AT the meeting of the New York Historical Society, in the city of New York, Gen. P. M. Wetmore, having offered resolutions on the occasion of the death of General Jackson, Mr. Webster, who was present, made the following remarks:

It is both proper and natural that the Historical Society should take notice of the death of one of its own members, — one who has filled exalted stations in the country, and has been distinguished by successive elections to the Presidency of these United States. The death of a citizen who had attained that elevation by the favor of his country, has never failed to produce a greater or less degree of public emotion. I am old enough to remember the deaths of all the Presidents who have deceased, from Washington downward; and each has made an impression of sobriety and sorrow, more or less intense, on the feelings of the people, and called forth testimonies of respect from the country, and from public bodies.

This is just. It is proper to notice an event which takes from among us an eminent citizen, distinguished by high marks of public regard. It is now a long time since General Jackson became connected with public life as a member of Congress — I believe fifty years. And I do not remember, at the moment, whether any person associated with him in the House of Representatives at that time is now living except the venerable gentleman who is now the president of this society. There may be others, but I recollect no one except Mr. Gallatin.

The character of General Jackson, while he lived, was presented in two relations to his country. He was a soldier, and had commanded the armies of the republic, and he had filled the office of chief magistrate. So far as regards his military reputation and merits, I partake fully in the general estimate. He was a soldier of dauntless courage, vigor, and perseverance, an officer of skill and sagacity, of quickness of perception, and

<sup>1</sup> Niles' Register, July 5, 1845.

of prompt and resolute execution of his purposes. There is, probably, no division of opinion, at home or abroad, as to his merits in these particulars.

During the whole of his civil administration, it happened that I was a member of the Senate of the United States; and it was my misfortune to be obliged to differ with him, in regard to most of his leading measures. To me this was painful, because it much better suits my temper and feelings to be able to support the measures of Government, than to find myself called upon by duty to oppose them.

There were occasions, however, in the course of his administration, in which no duty of opposition devolved upon me. Some of these were not unimportant. There were times which appeared to me to be critical, calling for wisdom and energy on the part of the Government, and in which measures proposed, and opinions expressed by him, seemed to me to be highly suitable to the exigency. On these occasions I supported those measures with the same sincerity and zeal as if I had never differed from him before, or never expected to differ from him again. There is no doubt that he sought to distinguish himself by exalting the character and honor of his country. And the occasion on which it was uttered, rendered somewhat remarkable his celebrated sentiment in favor of the preservation of the Union. I believe he felt the sentiment with the utmost sincerity, and this cannot be denied to be one strong proof of his devotion to the true interests of his country.

He has now ceased from his earthly labors; and affects the public interests of the State only by his example, and the influence of his opinions. We may well suppose that in the last days and hours and moments of his life, and with the full consciousness of the change then before him and so near, one of his warmest wishes would be, that whatever errors he might have committed should be passing and transitory, in their effect upon the Constitution and institutions of his country. And while we may well ascribe this praiseworthy and benign dying sentiment to him, let us, with equal ingenuousness, cherish the feeling that whatever he has accomplished for the real good of the country, its true character and real glory, may remain a just inheritance attached to his memory.

# Speech on the Oregon Question

NOVEMBER 7, 1845.<sup>1</sup>

AFTER the applause following the remarks of Mr. Winthrop had ceased, the President of the meeting, Mr. Loring, said: "Fellow citizens, I have the pleasure to announce to you the Defender of the Constitution." Amidst three times three cheers, Mr. WEBSTER came forward. As soon as the applause had subsided, he said:

I THINK, gentlemen, there can be no question where we are. (Renewed cheering.) This is FANEUIL HALL. It is filled as it was wont to be filled in the days of our fathers, by firm, intelligent, and disinterested lovers of American liberty. It is filled as we have seen it filled in our day and generation, and as may Heaven order it may be filled hereafter, by our children and our grandchildren, united in entertaining the great principles which lie at the foundation of our glorious Republic.

I have not been willing, gentlemen, to deny myself the performance of the duty of meeting here to-night the Whigs of the County of Suffolk or City of Boston. An important election, doubtless, is pending. We are truly in something of a crisis, and it is a peculiarity of the times in which we live that year after year we find ourselves involved in important crises. It is perfectly true that for eighteen or twenty years, every new recurrence of this season of the year, which calls upon us to exercise our elective franchise, has found us in something of a crisis! Because the great question of the interior policy of the country, — the great question which relates to the labor and industry of the country, has, from the commencement of the administration of General Jackson, been a subject of perpetu-

<sup>1</sup> At the Whig Caucus, Faneuil Hall, Boston. The speech was reported for the Boston Daily Advertiser by Charles and Edward Everett Hale, sons of Nathan Hale, the Editor of the Advertiser, and printed in the issue of November 10, 1845.

ally recurring debate and contest before popular bodies, and both Houses of Congress. But if we live — if it is our fortune to live — in a time when these crises succeed each other annually, or, in other words, when we are called upon annually to exercise our elective franchise as free people of the State, there is imposed upon us, as there was imposed upon generations which have gone before us, the great duty of maintaining public liberty by the exercise of that perpetual vigilance which is supposed to lie at the foundation of free institutions.

Gentlemen, there are topics before the country, before the people of this Commonwealth, on which I have on this occasion to address a few words to you. The immediate occasion which now calls us together is the election of officers of the State Government. Those who have administered that Government for the last year are the candidates of the Whigs for re-election. I shall say nothing of the manner in which their duties have been discharged by them; for if there is any objection made to their conduct that objection has not reached me. I know of no reason connected with his official duty which should prevent any one of us, who as a Whig adheres still to Whig principles, from giving his support and his vote for the re-election of George N. Briggs and John Reed. But then, it is undoubtedly true that every State election, I mean every general State election, has some bearing on those great, general questions of national policy, the decision of which is confided to the general Government, in which the people of the Commonwealth have a deep and abiding interest. It is my purpose to offer a few remarks only on one or two of those national questions this evening.

Gentlemen, one of the most prominent and most important duties confided to the general Government is the care and preservation of the foreign relations of the country. The foreign relations, in a peculiar manner, are entrusted to the discretion, the authority, and the power of the general Government. At the present moment all perceive that in regard to our foreign relations there is one, and, I am happy to say, but one question of exciting interest. It is of a nature so delicate and important that while there rest upon it the peace and happiness of the country, it is nevertheless a question upon which it is not

easy to speak with security and care before a public audience. I refer, gentlemen, to the question now pending as a question of main interest between the United States and Great Britain on the subject of Oregon.

I suppose it is the sentiment of every sensible and just man that the preservation of the peace of the country on honorable terms, and under circumstances favorable to the great interests of the country, is an object in itself highly desirable. I suppose I may take it for granted that, in the judgment of this assembly, the public peace of two great commercial countries which hold together a daily intercourse exceeding that between any other two countries in the world, shall not be lightly disturbed. And upon the foundation of these general ideas I wish to say a word or two upon a subject which seems within a few days to have excited considerable alarm.

The only question now remaining out of all those which have excited attention between the countries, is the question of the Oregon Territory. What is that question? How does it stand? The Oregon Territory embraces that part of the continent which lies west of the Rocky Mountains, and between the Rocky Mountains and the Pacific. It is not necessary to go into the history of the discovery of the territory, or of the rights which one or the other party find to it. It is enough to say it is in dispute between England and the United States, and has been in dispute for forty years. This controversy seems now to be approaching a sort of crisis; and there are, from time to time, symptoms of alarm on one side of the Atlantic or the other, as to the consequence of the course of policy which either Government may pursue. Let us look fairly and calmly and see how it stands. The territory, as I have said, has been the subject of claim, in whole or in part, by both Governments, for a great many years.

It has constantly been subject of negotiation, and yet the Governments have not been able to agree. As far back as 1818, not being able to come to terms of agreement, they stipulated by a convention, which is in force at this present moment, that the whole territory should be thrown open to both countries until the boundary was finally settled. That was the provision of convention, which was confined at first to

a limit of ten years, afterwards continued by agreement indefinitely, — or until one of the two nations expressed a disposition to terminate it. That signification of a disposition to end it has never been given by either party, and the whole country of Oregon at this moment is open to the hunting, the settlements, the commerce, and the ships of both nations, under treaty stipulations.

Now, gentlemen, I desire to speak with the utmost care, and I hope that I may not be in the slightest degree misunderstood, while I proceed to make a few remarks on this subject. And in the first place, I say to you, and through you to the country, what all know, that in the whole scope of this question it appears that this is a subject for negotiation, for discussion, for amicable settlement; and so it has been regarded by both Governments for the whole length of time. It was because the two Governments could not agree as to the proper division of the territory, or upon any other satisfactory arrangement, that in 1818, they determined on joint occupation until they could come to some understanding about it. And with the same spirit, this Government, at three different times, in 1818, in 1824, in 1826, has proposed to the British Government a straight line of division, the parallel of 49°, all north of which should be assigned to England, and all south belong to America. While the English Government did not accede to this proposition of our Government, it did not insist upon any right to the whole of Oregon. Therefore the position is that, by the admission of both Governments through this long series of years, the question is one for discussion and negotiation and compromise and amicable settlement.

Now, gentlemen, I read with interest, of course, the discussion upon this subject in the House of Commons three months ago, resulting in an expression of opinion from the British premier which received the sanction of that House. And I am willing to avail myself of the language of that minister upon this subject, and apply it to our side of the question as he did to his. I have nothing to complain of as to the temper of that language; I am free to say that it was a temper becoming a large-minded, liberal, and just statesman. But what the British minister said in the House of Commons — in its sum and



substance — was that England had rights in regard to this question which must be and would be respected. I adopt the same language on our side, and say that we also have rights that ought to be, must be, and will be respected.

Now, gentlemen, I do not propose to express to you an opinion upon this subject. I have no better opinion than any one of you as to the manner in which this adjustment ought to be made, but I have full confidence, the utmost confidence, that it *can* be made; that it can be made by wise and moderate measures in a manner perfectly consistent with the honor and with all the rights of all parties.

I am the more confident of this when I look a little forward and see the state of things which is not far in advance. Where is Oregon? On the shores of the Pacific, three thousand miles from us and twice as far from England. Who is to settle it? Americans mainly; some settlers undoubtedly from England; but all *Anglo-Saxons*; all men educated in notions of independent government and all self-dependent. And now let me ask if there be any sensible man in the whole United States who will say for a moment that when fifty or a hundred thousand persons of this description shall find themselves on the shores of the Pacific Ocean, that they will long consent to be under the rules either of the American Congress or the British Parliament. They will raise a standard for themselves, and they ought to do it. I look forward to the period when they will do this as not so far distant but that many now present, and those not among the youngest of us, will see a great Pacific republican nation. I believe that it is in the course of Providence and of human destiny that a great State is to arise, of English and American descent, whose power will be established over the country on the shores of the Pacific; and that all those rights of natural and political liberty, all those great principles that both nations have inherited from their fathers, will be transmitted through us to them, so that there will exist at the mouth of the Columbia, or more probably farther south, a great *Pacific republic*, a nation where our children may go for a residence, separating themselves from this Government, and forming an integral part of a new government, half-way between England and China; in the most healthful, fertile, and

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desirable portion of the globe, and quite too far remote from Europe and from this side of the American Continent to be under the governmental influences of either country.

This state of things is by no means so far off as we may imagine, by no means so remote from the present time as may be supposed; and looking to this state of things, this question becomes one upon which intelligent and well-disposed men might very readily come to an agreement.

But, gentlemen, in this point of view is this a subject upon which it is proper by popular appeal, or by loud representations of patriotism, or by a sort of stormy defiance of the power of a great nation on our side, — is it proper, on the other side, by cries about the maritime ascendancy of England, the great wealth, the dignity, the power, the martial prowess of England, is it a question on which, by outcries of this sort on either side of the ocean, these two great communities are to be embroiled and plagued in all their commercial and friendly relations, — or to be compelled to run into the horrors of war? No, gentlemen, the spirit of the age is against it!

I have said, I will not undertake to express an opinion as to the manner in which the question may be settled. I will say, however, what appears to be natural. It is well known that the forty-ninth degree of north latitude is the boundary line between the western part of this country and the British provinces, as far as the foot of the Rocky Mountains. It seems to be natural enough, if the two Governments contemplate a change, that they should agree to an extension of this same line westward; that the two should keep on abreast, side by side, with the same line of division till they reach the Pacific Ocean. It is well known that about where the Columbia River crosses the forty-ninth parallel, it makes a turn and flows nearly southward. Very well. Suppose it made as sudden a sweep to the northward. England would then naturally say, this river, which has been making westward, sweeps to the northward; instead of making with it a great bend to the north, we will leave it and go on straight to the Pacific Ocean on this parallel of forty-nine degrees. For the same reason, it is not unnatural for the United States to say, since it proves that the river makes a circuit to the south, instead of following that circuit, we will

go straight upon the forty-ninth parallel till we meet the shore of the Pacific Ocean.

This very proposition has been made to the British Government three successive times. It was made in '18, in '24, and in '26, — again and again, to follow up the forty-ninth parallel, westward from the Lake of the Woods, not only to the foot of the Rocky Mountains, but over the mountains and onward to the ocean.

I am not about to say whether this is a proper division of the territory or not. But I do say, that its having been so often repeated in this manner, twenty-five and twenty and eighteen years ago, is an admission that there is something to negotiate about, and treat about for either side, — that it is not a question free from difficulty on either side.

Now, gentlemen, who is the man at the head of either Government, who will take upon himself the responsibility of bringing on a war between two nations like Great Britain and America upon a question of this kind, until he is prepared to show that anything and everything that he could do has been done to avoid such a terrible ultimate result? (Mr. Webster was interrupted by renewed cheers.) If a British minister, under whose administration a war should ensue on the question, cannot stand up in Parliament and show that it is not his fault — cannot show that he has done everything which an honest and sensible man can do to avert the conflict, I undertake to say that no power or popularity can uphold his shaking position for an hour. (Cheers.) And in the same sense and spirit I say, that if in this country any party shall, before we are aware of it, plunge us into a war upon this question, it must expect to meet a very severe interrogatory from the American people, — must expect to prepare itself to show that it has done all it could, without any bias from the pride of success or the love of war, — all that it could do to keep the nation safe from so great a calamity, with the preservation of its rights and its honor.

Gentlemen, it appears to me that any man, Prime Minister of England or President of the United States, who should unnecessarily light up the flames of war upon such a subject (flames, let me add, that will burn over the whole globe), may well consider the genius of his country addressing to him the

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words which the orator of Rome supposed the genius of his country would address to him if he did not quell the Catiline conspiracy: "*An cum bello vastabitur Italia, vexabuntur urbes, tecta ardebunt; tum te non existimas invidiæ incendio conflagratum.*"

No, gentlemen, the man who shall incautiously, or led on by false ambition or party pride, kindle those fires of war over the globe on this question, must look out for it, — must expect to be himself consumed in a burning conflagration of general reproach.

There will be a public indignation before which no popularity, public or private, can stand, — it will melt down every monument of the dead, it will destroy all respect for the living, it will burn up every vestige of respect for individual worth, if unnecessarily, if recklessly, if ambitiously, it has plunged the subjects and citizens of two civilized Christian States of the world into war, — a war which shall cause the loss of millions of wealth, shall turn cities to smoke, shall cost thousands and hundreds of thousands of lives; and those smoking cities, and that destruction of property, and that sacrifice of life, shall be found over the whole globe, in every latitude and longitude surrounding the ball on which we live.

Now, gentlemen, I do not propose that on this subject we take any alarm. I propose that we keep ourselves cool and calm. In some of the Southern cities there is now some agitation from fear of war. I regret this much. I hardly say I regret the feeling — that is natural. But I regret the cause. It is a common mistake of men not in the most elevated position, that they think they can play the small patriot safely, in a small style. (Laughter.) These are they who think that they can talk of a war with England and any other nation, and get credit for their patriotism and lofty love of country, but keep the game in their own hands. That may not happen. At any rate that is not the way nor the course which just and lofty and respectable men feel on the great question of peace or war.

This constant speculation, this supposition that war may come, is half as bad as war itself. It interferes in all the business and arrangements of life. It confounds and confuses

men in regard to their own business plans. What we want is settled peace, and the conviction that peace will remain until there is some just and sensible cause for war.

On this subject I have only further to say that, while it is our duty not to take or spread alarm, to believe and trust that the Government, that the country will act soberly and wisely and justly, it is a less difficult thing than some people imagine to begin a dispute whose result no man in the end can control. Let the Government only be sure that it is right, — in the words of one of the late Presidents of the United States, let us claim all that is right and ask for nothing that is wrong, freely and magnanimously and without any particular array of patriotic declaration.

Among other great questions upon which the election of next Monday must have some bearing, is that system of laws which we call the tariff, which has received the general support of the people of the State. Every man expects a ferocious attack upon the whole system. Every man expects, since the Government now in power was established by the general voice of the anti-tariff States, that an attempt will be made to destroy that whole policy. How far they will succeed I know not. There are circumstances of encouragement, — circumstances of an opposite character. But my question is with the people of Massachusetts. What have the people of Massachusetts to expect from any change? Taking the Act of 1842 as a general law, of general operation, what good have the good people of Massachusetts to expect from any change? The question is whether the tariff is conducive to the prosperity of Massachusetts. What is the criterion? I put it upon one ground only. I do not inquire what profits are made by the rich capitalist, or whether or not a few individuals grow rich under its influence; but I put the question: Are the laboring classes well off? Are their wages high? Is labor in demand — (and these questions comprise the prosperity of five-sixths of the community) — Are they in good condition? I ask these questions; and if you give me a country where labor is in demand and the laboring classes well off, I call that a happy country, — tariff or no tariff.

Does any man suppose that if the tariff of 1842 were repealed

it would raise the price of wages in Massachusetts? There are parts of it which, had we opportunity, we might doubtless alter to advantage; it has its imperfections; but take it as a whole, does any man suppose that if it were destroyed to-day, and the grand favorite system of a horizontal duty, as they call it, of twenty per cent should be levied in its stead, that the labor of Massachusetts would be recompensed as it is now? I observe that the Government organ quotes the example of England to support this theory of *ad valorem* duties, and a revenue standard; and the rate of twenty per cent is fixed upon as just right. Now I have reason to know that from the beginning of this Government down, from General Washington's administration to this time, the average of all the duties, reducing specific duties to *ad valorem*, would amount to an average *ad valorem* duty of more than thirty-four per cent.

Another fact is, that while we are constantly told of the example of England in this matter, and of her liberal policy, and are advised as all those who read our Government journals must remember, to follow in the footsteps of Sir Robert Peel, and adopt his liberal policy, — I have seen it demonstrated by competent writers of England that the average rate of duty in that country this day, even under Sir Robert Peel's new system, is no less than forty-nine per cent. Forty-nine per cent! and yet we are to follow the example of England, and bring down our duties to twenty per cent.

One thing more, gentlemen. There has always been an attempt, for the last twenty years or more, to show that this protective policy helps the rich only, building up such establishments only as Lowell and Springfield, and other places where large operations are carried on. This is not the foundation of the system and never was. If you go back to the adoption of the Constitution, or if you look at the state of things amongst us as it is now, the fact is, that it is in the manufactures of a more individual character, the shop manufactures, those of the workers in iron, in brass, of the artisans working in their own shops, with the assistance of their wives and children, these are the interests for the benefit of which the system was founded in Washington's time and is now.

And let every man think of this, and when he is told of the

aggrandizement of the great capitalists at Lowell and Dover and Providence and elsewhere, let him look at the many hundreds of thousands of small capitalists, hammering over their own anvils, making hats in their own shops, obtaining by these processes of manufacture support and education for their families, and then let him remember that without the duties at the Customs there is not one of these manufactures that could survive twelve months.

Gentlemen, the election is before us. We should be here to-night with no possible doubt of the result of next Monday's balloting, were it not that in the course of years of prosperity there have grown up — I will hardly say divisions among the Whig party — but that some of them have separated from us, drawing off from us friends, many good men who think with us upon these great questions, particularly in regard to the peace of the country, the protective policy and the maintenance of the Constitution of the United States and of Massachusetts. These have withdrawn effectually all their aid from us in support of these great objects for the sake of what they call a "separate organization." I allude to the party called the Liberty party, and to the Native American party.

I cannot speak of either of these parties in terms of reproach or unkindness. I think of them "more in sorrow than in anger." I must look upon some of them as upon our brethren who were with us but lately, listening and speaking in our councils in this very hall. I mean, gentlemen, the Native Republican party, of whom it is the farthest thing from my mind to speak or think with any unkindness. They are bone of our bone, and flesh of our flesh. I lament — deeply, fervently lament, the course they think it their duty to pursue. What can they do? What can they do? If there is anything in this country which is a cherished object of the Whigs, it is a reformation of the naturalization laws. Who of all the Native American party will go farther for this purpose than I have gone, and am willing to go still under the Constitution, for the protection of American, Native American rights, and the purity of the ballot box.

Within the limits of the Constitution I am willing to go as far as he who goes the farthest. I am *older* than some of the

Native Americans themselves. I have seen the pernicious influence of these foreign votes for the last thirty years, and have raised my voice when there was some chance to make it heard; and I have been met by that party, that political party, that always counts upon every foreigner as certainly as any monarch of Europe counts upon his serfs, I have seen that there was no remedy for the evil but a revision of the naturalization laws. For this I have done all in my power; I will do all in my power. And what I lament is that those who have united for this very purpose, themselves take away a great part of the strength necessary to accomplish what they desire, and which, let me tell them, we desire as much as they do. And I put this to them as a matter of conscience, for I hold that every man who holds the elective franchise holds it as a trust. We may say that he may vote as he has a mind to if he takes care not to injure others. He is as much bound to give a correct decision as if he were acting upon a jury under oath. Every man's vote affects the interests of every other man, and when we say that he has a right to vote as he has a mind to, we must reduce it to this, that he has a right to vote right. Now I put it to every man — and there shall be neither taunt nor reproach in my language — what can he propose to himself favorable to the amelioration of the naturalization laws by a separate organization. On the contrary, I do firmly believe that every vote withheld for this reason from the Whig candidate is like an express resolution to diminish the power, the chance, and the prospect of a revision of the naturalization laws.

These gentlemen will send no members to Congress, but if they go on they will prevent the sending by the Whigs of those who would probably advance their objects, and they thus promote the electing of those who are opposed to their objects.

It will be admitted to be a general principle of morals that every man who foresees an evil and can prevent it, and does not choose to prevent it, is himself responsible for that evil, and I would apply that remark not only to the Native American party, but by an awful application to another party that exists among us.



Who are they who are responsible on this principle of general morals for the annexation of Texas and the spread of negro slavery over another great portion of the globe? Men to whom the evil was pointed out, and who in the exercise of a common intelligence could not but have foreseen it.

There could not have been a man in the United States who did not see that in withholding his vote from the Whig candidate he aided directly the election of the Locofoco candidates for President and Vice President, and that the choice of these Locofoco candidates must inevitably result in the annexation of Texas. Was it not proclaimed from every hilltop? It was told to Mr. Birney and his followers again and again: "If the Whig candidate is chosen, Texas is out and you know it; if he is not chosen, Texas is in and you know it."

But they said, "We do not vote for Mr. Polk."

Very well. But you had the same means of preventing the annexation of Texas; you knew your own power. By joining those as anxious as much as you are, or as you profess to be, to prevent it, you could prevent it. If you did not join them, it would take place. You did not join them, and it did take place.

Gentlemen, this is a subject on which I have deep feeling — very deep feeling; and I think it must stand on the pages of history as the recorded judgment of mankind, that those among us who asserted themselves to be in a peculiar and marked degree, friends to universal liberty, have by their own deliberate act fastened the chains of slavery on a great portion of the black race over a vast extent of this continent. It is to me the most mournful and most awful reflection.

I know that thousands of gentlemen who took such a course say that they meant well. They meant well. I am not to scrutinize their motives, they must answer for those elsewhere, — but I beseech them, now, not to fall into another such mistake. It is thought, it is an idea, I do not say how well founded, that there may be yet a hope for resistance to the consummation of the annexation of Texas. I can only say for one, that if it should fall to my lot to have a vote on such a question, and I vote for the admission into the Union of any State with a Constitution which prohibits even the Legis-

lature from ever setting the bondman free, I shall never show my head again, depend upon it, in Faneuil Hall!

But, gentlemen, suppose it to be so; suppose the case, that in the ensuing session of Congress, your numbers fairly and freely protest against the consummation of this annexation; why, how are we to stand in Massachusetts? How are we to stand in Massachusetts? Are we to have the gentleman who is nominated by the Locofoco, the Governor of the State, and to fight the battle under his auspices? By dissensions among ourselves, and lists of several other candidates, are we so to prostrate ourselves? While we are to sustain these great principles in Congress, are we to be unsustained at home? No, gentlemen. But I say again, that every man who gives a vote for any other man than George N. Briggs, does in that respect all in his power to weaken the authority with which his representatives in Congress can stand up and protest longer against consummating this annexation.

I may not flatter myself, perhaps, that any person belonging to that party hears me, but if there be such, I beseech him in brotherly love and kindness, and as a partaker in the general sentiments which they entertain, to consider whether he is not defeating their best objects by pursuing the course which they have adopted. I would beseech brethren to come back upon that old platform, broad enough to sustain us all, on which we set out together as Whigs; on which, as Whigs, we achieved something for the good of the country; on which, and not otherwise, letting by-gones be by-gones, rallying under the great name which our ancestors bore, as Whigs we can accomplish a good for the Constitution and the country which no other name among us is able to accomplish here or hereafter.

But, gentlemen, there are among us those who are willing to do old duty under the old name: Whigs, without variation or change. What is the duty devolving upon us? What are we to do under some circumstances of discouragement? What are we to do? The answer is plain. We are to do our duty, our whole duty, with all the affections of our hearts and all the powers of our minds, and then to trust to Providence. If anything should happen to tarnish the fame of Massachusetts, anything which should cause deep regret for

her or for the country, let us so conduct ourselves that the poignancy of personal self-reproach shall not be added to these sources of regret and mortification.

Gentlemen, let us lay aside every other call of ordinary duty until we have done our utmost to establish our principles in the election of our candidates. I am here necessarily engaged in professional affairs. The town in which I reside is so far distant that I must devote two days to go thither and vote there. But I should go if it cost ten days. Let us all do our duty, unfalteringly, laboriously, soberly. And when after Monday the question is asked, which certainly will be asked, beginning at Rhode Island, and spreading as far as Georgia, and westward to Wisconsin, "How stands old Massachusetts?" let you and I be able to hold up our heads and say, "Look at her and see how she stands!"

# Remarks at Harvard College

APRIL 30, 1846.<sup>1</sup>

MR. WEBSTER said he rose for the purpose, mainly, of expressing the gratification he felt and the thanks he owed for the manner in which it had pleased the President to signify his presence, and in which his friends around him had received the announcement of his name. But the occasion was due to science, to learning, to gratifying recollections of the past, to bright and aspiring hopes for the future welfare of the University — and it would be quite out of place and quite obtrusive to introduce personal topics or political matters, foreign or domestic. Should he speak of these last,— and especially of some of recent occurrence,— in the dialect suited to them, his language would scarcely be *expectatur oratio in lingua Latina*, nor yet *in lingua vernacula*; but *declamatio et objurgatio, expectantur in pessima jargone!* He would not, however, refer to them.

He had not, he said, had the honor and pleasure to be educated within these halls, but among the best and ablest of his associates and contemporaries, both in professional and public life, were numbered many who graduated at Harvard, and who took rank among her best fruits and her highest honors.

He supposed Massachusetts to be the only Commonwealth in which a wise, and, for the time, a liberal provision for the means of obtaining a liberal education, was made at the very foundation of the State. The College, at the very first organization of the State, was projected and designed for, and devoted to the promotion of the common interests of man. Setting out with the Commonwealth, it had held progress with the Commonwealth; and so far as the Commonwealth had grown and become prosperous, just so far had the interests and well

<sup>1</sup> At the inauguration of Edward Everett as President of the College. From the report in the Boston Courier, May 1, 1846.

being of the College been cared for. And to-day, the Governor of the Commonwealth had been seen to induct into office, as President of the College, one of the State's most distinguished citizens.

The President had said no more than was just, in his remarks upon the character and merits of his predecessor.<sup>1</sup> There were certain offices which might be well filled by a selection, almost at random, from a body of well-informed citizens; but there were others which demanded of the incumbent great and peculiar qualifications. To fill such, properly and with honor, required talent of a high order, scholarship, urbanity, affability, easiness of access, and a spirit well qualified for teaching. Such an office was the Presidency of Harvard University, and such requisite qualifications were all found combined in the late President. And it was paying no mean compliment to the gentleman newly installed, to say that to him, from his predecessor, there was no fall in respect to any of these high attributes.

Mr. Webster said he would no longer detain the company, but if his knowledge of Latin would serve him for the purpose, he would endeavor to frame the sentiment he designed to offer, in that tongue. He then proposed:

*Amici et sodales; salutem presidis electi et nunc inaugurati pro bono; — viri in quo junguntur, genius præclarissimus, doctrina excellentissima, integritas firmata, mores urbani, et amor virtutis et quoque honestæ famæ, non superanda.\**

<sup>1</sup> Josiah Quincy.

\* Friends and companions: I give you the health of the President elect and now, for our good, inaugurated; a man in whom are joined most distinguished genius, most excellent learning, firm integrity, urbane manners, with a love of virtue and of honorable fame, not to be surpassed.

# Speech at the Whig State Convention

BOSTON, September 23, 1846.<sup>1</sup>

MR. CHAIRMAN AND FELLOW CITIZENS: I deem it a great piece of good fortune to be for a few moments in so large a body of

<sup>1</sup> Printed in *The True Whig Sentiment of Massachusetts*.

This convention was the scene of a struggle between the Anti-slavery Whigs and those who looked upon the protective tariff and the unity of the Whig party as of chief importance. Resolutions were reported from a committee by J. Thomas Stevenson, one of the so-called "Commercial" Whigs, and Stephen C. Phillips offered resolutions amending and adding to the committee's report, his resolutions making opposition to slavery the chief political duty. A violent discussion ensued. At this juncture Mr. Webster, who had been sent for, entered the hall. Edward L. Pierce in the *Memoir of Charles Sumner* thus describes the effect of Webster's presence.

"The scene is still vividly remembered by men now old, or middle-aged, who were then young. The great orator, endowed with a marvellous presence, such as has been the gift of no other, ancient or modern, walked slowly the length of the hall, the delegates parting as he advanced, and took his seat near the platform. The whole scene changed. As soon as he was seen entering, the debate was suspended, the disorder ceased, and all eyes turned to him. Both parties, just now in fierce discussion, rose and joined in loud cheers for him. The applause was universal and prolonged; and when it subsided the assembly was still. Webster's presence, without a word from his lips, had sealed the fate of the amendment. . . . The regular series was unanimously passed, the supporters of the amendment generally not voting. Webster, as soon as the resolutions were disposed of, took the platform 'amidst tremendous and prolonged cheering.' He spoke very briefly, hardly more than five minutes, but with profound attention and prodigious effect. What he said was intended to inspire party enthusiasm, and was an implied rebuke of attempts to press the introduction of disturbing questions on which the party as a national organization could not be united. It was then that he uttered the sentence so impressive at the time, and so often repeated since. '*Others rely on other foundations and other hopes for the welfare of the country; but for my part, in the dark and troubled night that is upon us, I see no star above the horizon promising light to guide us but the intelligent, patriotic, united Whig party of the United States.*'"

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the Representatives of the Whigs of Massachusetts. Wherever they are assembled, there is an odor of liberty about them that I love to inhale. There is an avowed attachment to liberty, and to the institutions of their fathers, that warms a heart not now indeed youthful, but which does not yet cease to beat in accordance with everything favorable to the progress of human liberty either at home or abroad.

Gentlemen, of such a party as the Whig party, composed of intelligent, honest, patriotic, and conscientious men and masses of men, it is not to be supposed or expected, that on all great questions of public interest, and the subordinate divisions of those questions, it should be entirely unanimous; but experience shows that without an absolute unanimity, a community of feeling and a community of purpose brings about a co-operation which is necessary both for action and result. There are important topics in relation to which gentlemen here present, whom I hold high in my regard, and warm in my affection, differ from me; and as to which they see a line of duty not apparent to me. Others may look to other sources, or rely upon other foundations for their hopes of the country; but I confess, sir, that at this period of my political life, not now an early one, I am full of the feeling that there is but one ground upon which the good men of this country can rest their trust. I see in the dark and troubled night which is now upon us, no star above the horizon, but the intelligent, patriotic, *united* Whig party of the United States.<sup>1</sup>

Gentlemen of the Convention, the hour of your separation has arrived, and I will not detain you. I rejoice with you in the general unanimity which has characterized your proceedings. I partake in the happiness you feel in the prospect of re-electing the tried candidates for the executive offices of the State, whom you have this day re-nominated, and of maintaining the general supremacy of Whig policy in the Commonwealth. I rejoice with you in the hope of obtaining the power to arrest

<sup>1</sup> It will be noticed that this passage, as given in the report of the speech printed in "The True Whig Sentiment of Massachusetts," does not precisely agree with the remarks quoted in Pierce's *Life of Sumner*. The speech was also reported in *The Boston Atlas* and *The Boston Journal*, but in both of these reports the passage differs from the quotation in Mr. Pierce's work.

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whatever threatens to extend slavery, or to mar the industrial pursuits of our people. I rejoice with you in every anticipation of success and prosperity in which we are allowed to indulge, and I agree with you in believing that there is nothing that can promote the cause of happiness and liberty, in the present state of political affairs, but the firm maintenance of the Whig principles which Massachusetts has so long sustained. Gentlemen, I am thankful to you for every token of your kind and respectful regard, and take leave of you by sincerely wishing that the harmony of the Whig party, which has been evinced here to-night, may lead to its usual consummation, — great and entire success.



# Speech at Faneuil Hall, Boston

NOVEMBER 6, 1846.<sup>1</sup>

AT the Whig Rally held at Faneuil Hall, resolutions were offered by Mr. George Ticknor Curtis and adopted, containing this statement:

“We do hereby adopt the declaration recently made on this subject by our illustrious fellow citizen, Daniel Webster, that ‘In the dark and troubled night that is upon us there is no star above the horizon to give us a gleam of light, excepting the intelligent, patriotic, and united Whig Party of the United States.’”

Mr. Webster was greeted with enthusiastic cheers, and spoke as follows:

MR. PRESIDENT AND FELLOW CITIZENS: I had not anticipated the pleasure of being present on this occasion. It is my wish rather to avoid, than to seek, opportunities of addressing large public bodies. While it is my purpose to discharge, as well as I am able, the duties which devolve upon me, as a citizen of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, I must, as a general rule, leave the discussion of particular subjects before you to younger, as well as abler hands.

Gentlemen, in a little while, — I think about six or seven weeks, — great changes have taken place, not only with regard to political parties, but with respect to the great political prospects of the country.

There are many of my fellow citizens who heard me on a former occasion, and many of the gentlemen here present, this evening, who have heard me declare that it was difficult, and always would be difficult, to maintain sound principles unless we could make an impression for good upon the great central portion of our Union. We had done excellently in the East, excellently in the South and the South East, and excellently in the steady West. But, nevertheless, while New York, Pennsylvania, and Ohio were against us, our difficulty was

<sup>1</sup> Boston Daily Atlas, November 9, 1846.

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great. We required them to come forward in the great work of maintaining sound Whig principles. Here was our hope. And now or later, to-morrow if not to-day, we trusted that they would array themselves on the right side.

That day has come. The brightening of that morning has dawned upon us, and they are here, to-day, not against, but with us.

Gentlemen, let me remind you that every election, since the policy of the administration has been developed, has been, more or less, adverse to that administration. The results in Maryland, in New Jersey, in Florida, in Georgia, in Ohio, in Pennsylvania, in New York, all prove this. And will any man say, can any one suggest, that one single State has sanctioned the policy of the present administration ?

The most recent demonstration has been in New York. The state of this election is very well known to all of you, and I do not know of anything new to communicate, except the following telegraphic despatch dated at five o'clock this afternoon, which I will read :

“ The good news of yesterday is more than confirmed by telegraph from Buffalo, and, through this afternoon; John Young's majority will not be less than eleven thousand; twenty-three Whigs are elected to Congress out of the thirty-four, and at least seventy Whig members of the Assembly out of the one hundred and twenty-eight. Under the term Whigs we do not include any Anti-Renters or Hunkers. Massachusetts will respond to this next Monday, will she not ? ”

Gentlemen, will not Massachusetts respond ?

Now, gentlemen, there remains an important question to be answered. It is this. What has produced this great change in the political policy of the people? And upon this question I confine my remarks to the State of New York, the change in which is the most recent and important of all.

And what is it ?

It has been said by some that the anti-rent vote, the universal suffrage vote, etc., would greatly affect the result. We have also heard it said that the personal enemies of Governor Wright would turn the scale of the election. But let me assure you that the case lies much deeper than all this.

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There are counties on the river which have given positive Whig majorities — such as Long Island, and the river counties — wherein the question did not turn upon the local questions affecting the personal choice of members. But, throwing aside these returns for the Assembly, and all the local questions connected with them, it is now certain that the Whigs have elected the Governor of New York by eleven or twelve thousand majority. Not only is this a very handsome majority for the Governor, but when we look at the Congressional delegation, we find that more than two-thirds are ours. Throughout the whole State we ran for members of Congress, and throughout the whole State we are far ahead. But instead of choosing twenty-three, the Whigs ought to have chosen twenty-six members. Unhappily, in the city, and in Kings County, the Whigs and the Native Republicans were divided. Amongst the former I must say that there are men of intelligence, and, I am glad to say, men of the best character. They have all great personal and political respectability, and I should be glad if all could be chosen. I should be happy, too, could, at the same time, some others of our candidates for Congress have been elected. James Monroe, inheriting not only the name, but the virtues of his ancestor; Van Wagenen; Phoenix. Unhappily this division amongst our party, and amongst the agents we employed, defeated all, and let in the enemy. This was unhappy. But it does not become me to impute blame to anybody, on this account. It was one of the infirmities of human nature.

Gentlemen, I shall go, on Monday, to the meeting in the town in which I live, and there deposit my vote. I shall find many well-meaning men who differ from me, though they do not write “conscience” upon their flag. Some of my worthy neighbors will give their votes for the candidates of the third party, with the certainty that their votes can only avail to keep the district unrepresented, or let in the opposition candidate. I wish, that upon this subject, I could address myself — feeble as my voice might be — to every voter in the district in which I live.

The evil which threatens us is not to be overcome by railing or reproach, but by reasoning with our neighbors, by repre-

senting to them the true consequences of their conduct, and by showing them its inevitable result.

It is as clear as anything can be, that those persons who voted the third party ticket in 1844, suffered Mr. Polk to be elected and Texas to be annexed. And, therefore, so far as their permission extended, they suffered what we call the Mexican War to be sprung upon us. The Mexican War! It was proclaimed on the house-tops by the opposition, that the annexation of Texas would involve a war with Mexico, and denied by the other side. And yet those who professed to be the most zealous for peaceable annexation, did just what they could to bring about a war.

But to return to the causes which have brought about these changes in the Middle States. What has caused them?

They are all to be referred to the recent measures of Congress, not owing to the change of fifty or a hundred here and there in the State of New York, but because the reflecting men of all parties — the masses, the troops, have come over from the opposite side and voted the Whig ticket. In the most effectual manner they have signified their utter disapprobation of the war, the new tariff, the sub-treasury, and the various other projects of the administration. Tried on this standard, New York has gone Whig, and especially as to members of Congress has she gone Whig out and out. The result here opens quite a new view, quite new prospects; and if, as I trust, the Whigs will act becomingly and moderately and discreetly, we shall hold the majority we have gained.

Gentlemen, I do not suppose that the sub-treasury did much for the administration in New York. That is not yet in operation, and its benefits are not yet perceived. Much as is the influence of the Union, it cannot refer all these results to the sub-treasury, either on one side or the other. The tariff and the war have had their share.

But I do not propose, I have not time, to enter into the details of either of these.

The Mexican war is universally odious throughout the United States, and we have yet to find any Sempronius who raises his voice for it.

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Here some one in the gallery asked: "Who voted for the war?"

Nobody at all. The President made it without any vote whatever. And that leads me to say that the war, in its origin, was a Presidential war. But the Constitution declares that Congress alone shall have the power of declaring war; and I beg to know where, when, and how they so declared it. Every one does know that our army was ordered, by the President, to advance from the Nueces to the Rio Grande, thereby invading a foreign territory. And because the Mexicans resisted this encroachment on their soil, we have next the proclamation of the President that war exists between Mexico and the United States. The proclamation of the President stated that explicitly.

But, gentlemen, there is another question here. Texas had become a part of this Union. We had received her as a State, and had assumed her boundary, the Nueces. Why should we not treat with Mexico for that? Why, when all new territory of the United States was bounded by the Nueces, and every thing beyond that was claimed by Mexico, and in the actual possession of Mexico — why, then, I say, should the President of the United States have ordered the army south of the Nueces, to take possession of the Mexican land? That was the origin of the war, and that was against the spirit of the Constitution of the United States. Congress alone has the power to declare war, and yet it is obvious under the present construction, that if the President is resolved to involve the country in a war, he may do it. This, I say, is a great misjudgment on the part of the President; it is a clear violation of his duty; in my judgment it is an impeachable offence.

The great objection to this war is, that it is illegal in its character. There has been a great violation of duty on the part of the President. He has plunged the country into war, whereas, unless in case of invasion of our actual limits, he has no right so to do. In that case of such invasion, the power does exist in the President to take measures to repel aggression. But to go out of our limits, and declare war for a foreign occupation of what does not belong to us, is no part of the power invested in our President by our Constitution.

So much for the origin of the war.

Mr. Chairman, I wish to speak with all soberness in this respect, and I would say nothing, here, to-night, which I would not say in my place in Congress, or before the whole world. The question now is, for what purposes, and to what ends is this present war to be prosecuted.

And in speaking of this, let me, in the first place, put myself right before the people. Individually I have no respect for the government of Mexico. The people of that country are the worst governed on the face of the earth. They are subject wholly to military despotism, and it matters not whether Paredes, Almonte, Santa Anna, Ampudia, or any one else wields the supreme power. They are all, and only, military chiefs.

And I say, also, that Mexico should have come to terms with us before. The United States have well-founded claims against Mexico. There is no doubt of that. And I have as little doubt, and as little hesitation, in saying that Mexico has behaved most wrongfully towards us. She has acted ruinously for her own interests, and injuriously for her own character, in all respects.

Mexico is a republic professedly formed on our own model. I could wish — we all wish — that she could find amongst her sons another Washington. But the truth must be told. And the truth is, that all the republics made out of the Spanish dominions in America have been most miserable failures. Mexico, especially, has no principle of free government about her at all.

But to indulge these considerations is not to discharge our own duty of inquiry into the objects and ends of this war. Who knows anything about the war, except that our armies have reached to Monterey, and will reach to Mexico, if they can? And what then? Is the whole country to be fortified, taken possession of as American territory, — a territory equal to the formation of forty new States? These are questions which it is time for us to put with sobriety and seriousness. It is time for us to know what are the objects and designs of our Government.

It is not the habit of the American people, nor natural to

their character, to consider the expense of a war which they deem just and necessary ; but it is their habit, and belongs to their character, to inquire into the justice and necessity of a war in which it is proposed to involve them.

In a war like this, commenced by the authority of a President alone, while we look earnestly at its origin, we may properly regard, also, its probable expense.

I have been at some pains to ascertain the facts in this respect, and I submit to your consideration the results at which I have arrived.

Mr. Webster here read tables of statistics derived from the monthly statements of the Treasurer of the United States and the Register of the Treasury, showing that the balance in the Treasury had diminished \$7,221,000 in five months, April 27 to Sept. 21, and that there had been an excess of expenditures over receipts amounting to \$9,014,000 in five months, the excess, being at the rate, per annum, of \$27,633,600.

He continued as follows :

According to the President's message to Congress last December, the receipts for the year ending 30th June, 1845, were twenty-nine million, seven hundred and sixty-nine thousand dollars. If they are the same the present year, it would appear that the Government is expending money at the rate of fifty-one million dollars per annum. But as payments are, probably, not made so fast as debts are incurred, it may, I think, be fairly estimated that our present annual expenses are at least double the revenue, that is to say, at least, sixty millions.

So that the result is that the Government, for the last five months, has been paying at the rate of sixty millions per annum, or twice the amount of the revenue. And this does not include the outstanding claims.

All this is to be met. And how is it to be met ?

Congress has given authority to the Secretary of the Treasury to issue Treasury notes, and to effect a loan. The notes have been issued, and the loan has been applied for, — at a high rate of interest, six per cent ; but as the existing debt is not above par, it is doubtful whether the new issue can be obtained on favorable terms.

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And here appears the absurdity of the sub-treasury scheme. And I must say, that if Government were to set itself at work most effectually to thwart its own financial measures, it could not contrive a better means than the sub-treasury for that purpose. Government, for instance, asks for a loan now, and obtains it from the capitalists. In January next, it requires another loan of say ten millions, all to be paid in specie. Where will it be found? It would require all the specie in New York and Boston to make up the sum. As the matter now stands, the scheme is impracticable; by its operation, if carried into effect, the wheels of Government would be clogged; the administration would be obstructed upon its own course and Government would be deprived of all means of action.

It is agreed by all that the administration is not, at present, remarkably strong in financial affairs, taking into consideration the present war, and it seems to be pretty certain that it will be hard work, rather an up-hill business, to carry that war on. And provided that every dollar which Government gets is locked up, as required by the sub-treasury act, the machine will soon come to a stand-still. Gentlemen, let me refer you to the tariff. That question was one of the causes which operated largely in the recent New York election. In counties where, for years before, we had not been able to secure a majority anywhere, the Whigs have now majorities in every town and district. The tariff law of 1846 is found to strike directly at the labor of the country and the interests of labor. I have asked a friend of mine what caused the remarkable change in his district, in New York, and he replied that his was not an agricultural, but a manufacturing district, and the new law was a death-blow to nearly all its interests. So of nearly all places where manufactures are established.

Mr. Chairman, it is the Mexican war, the tariff of 1846, and the presidential vetoes, which have produced the great changes we see around us.

Sir, there are two surprises which have been sprung upon the people of the United States.

The first was the nomination of Mr. Polk at the Baltimore convention; for surely no people was less prepared for any



great event than this people for that nomination. When the event was first made known, as you are all aware, the great question was, "Who, under Heaven, is James K. Polk?" But party allegiance was so strong that it overcame the surprise, and convinced the people that Mr. Polk was an especially fit man to maintain and support the interests of the country, and the interests of Pennsylvania in particular.

The second surprise was the Mexican war. Who expected that? But upon the 11th day of May the war did exist, according to the President's declaration. Our army was then in a critical condition. I had then, gentlemen, occasion to be absent from Congress and at home, never anticipating such a state of things. The war bill, which you have so often heard referred to, passed on the 11th, fourteen members voting against it in the House, and two in the Senate. And upon what ground was it passed? Surely, on the part of the Whigs, that the country was unexpectedly in a state of war, that our army was in an exposed situation, and that it was absolutely necessary to sustain it. I arrived in Washington a few days afterwards, and never did I hear the suggestion from anybody, that a vote for that bill involved an approval of the course of the administration. Never did I hear of such a thing then.

Your excellent Representative, than whom very few men, indeed, enjoy more the esteem, respect, and confidence of the great Whig party of the United States, was one who voted for the bill. The opposition to it, and to him, springs up here and nowhere else. The members from the liberty-loving State of Vermont, those from Connecticut — are they accused? And Amos Abbott, from your third district — is there a voice raised against him? Mr. Vinton, of Ohio, one of the most able, intelligent, and influential members of Congress, and for whom every Whig member would this day, with all his heart, cast his vote for Speaker — was anything said against him? Not one word.

Fellow citizens, I am grieved, sorry, that at this late time a clamor should be raised against your member for his vote on that occasion. I do not think it quite fair; it is not reasonable nor just, it is not at all like Boston.

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Sir, we live in a day of uncommon prosperity. Heaven has been gracious to us, beyond our hopes. We have been blessed with health. Education has flourished. Commerce and agriculture are prosperous. We have an enterprising and thriving population. But, Mr. Chairman, excess sometimes leads to discontent; and I am afraid that something of that nature is the case with us. While I admit that to the genial influences of our climate, the character of our soil, the energy of our people, much of this prosperity is owing, I cannot shut my eyes to the fact that the protective power over all these — carrying us onward to honor and renown — is the Constitution of the United States. And it is, therefore, with the greatest regret, that I hear any suggestions of doing away with that instrument. I entertain no such counsel. I am for taking the Constitution as our fathers left it to us, and standing by it, and dying by it. I agree that it has been violated. The admission of Texas — another slave-holding State — was a violation of the Constitution. But how was that accomplished? I would indulge in no bitter expressions against our Southern brethren. They had education, and habit, and prejudice, all to sustain them in their course. But what shall we say to those members of Congress from the North, from New Hampshire, and Connecticut, and Maine, who voted for it? How they so acted, and why they so acted, is almost utterly incomprehensible. How they have since been rejected by the people, is comprehensible enough.

I agree that the annexation of Texas struck a blow at the influence of free institutions. New England might have prevented it if she would, but her people would not be roused. Thank God I did not slumber over that danger.

But if the Constitution be violated — what is our duty? To destroy it? To cast it aside? Surely not. But to renovate and restore it. To be more alive to our own duties under it, and more earnest in performing them. If we are true to ourselves, let me say to you, there can never be another annexation of slave territory to this Union under Heaven. Never — never! But if the people, under the influence of party feeling, and for the sake of the dry and stale loaves and fishes in the gift of party, shall neglect their duty, then there is

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no limit to such annexation, from the Rio Grande to Patagonia.

Gentlemen, has not the Constitution given this people great prosperity? Has not our commerce flourished under it? Has it not made our flag honored and respected in every sea on earth? Has it not fostered our manufactures? Where would the country have been without it? Where would our own Massachusetts have been without it? Not the Massachusetts that she now is.

I will not, I cannot, contemplate — I cannot endure to turn my eyes to the state of things consequent on an abandonment of the Constitution.

Some have spoken of it as violated, and therefore at an end. But is it not plain that to abrogate it involves the abandonment of oaths, the perpetration of violence, the shedding of blood, the existence of civil war? To speak of disunion, therefore, without violence and bloodshed is nonsense. We may, it is true, make a revolution more or less bloody, but it will be a revolution still.

Sir, no true Whig can for a moment contemplate disunion. The project has been charged upon the Whig party, but it is a false charge. From the Orient to the extremity of the West, an American is known — not as a citizen of Massachusetts or any other State — but as a citizen of the United States. It is the Union which gives us our character abroad, and may we all and ever, in the language of the Father of his Country, “frown indignantly” on all attempts to dissever it. It was formed amidst the agitation of the whole European world. The subsequent storms which convulsed that quarter of the globe reached us likewise, and what carried us safely through them? What but this Constitution of the United States? With Him at the helm, the Constitution was the ark which bore us over the political ocean of the world, agitated by a thousand whirlpools, as if Æolus had let loose all his winds, and while in Europe there was but one Palinurus who is generally spoken of as the pilot who “weathered the storm,” we had in America a yet greater pilot, who not only “weathered” the storm, but controlled it.

This Constitution, therefore, is the rallying point of all true

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Whigs, and should be so, forever. If we were now to say, because we suffer some temporary grievance from its provisions, that therefore we would destroy it, get rid of it, we should act just as wisely as if we struck down the sun from heaven, because the moon sometimes eclipses his light, or a cloud passes over his disc.

# The Relief of Ireland

FEBRUARY 9, 1847.<sup>1</sup>

HON. GEO. M. DALLAS, Vice-President of the United States, was President of the Meeting.

Hon. George Ashmun, Chairman of the Committee on Resolutions, called upon Mr. Webster to report a series of resolutions which had been adopted by the Committee.

Mr. Webster then rose and said:

I TAKE great pleasure, Mr. President, in complying with the request of the Committee, as expressed by my honorable friend (Mr. Ashmun), its chairman, and have prepared a few brief resolutions, which I will submit to the meeting.

The occasion is quite a new one. A famine, bringing want and distress on a great portion of a whole people, is unprecedented in Christendom in this age. The calamities of Ireland have been heard and read throughout the country, and have touched all American hearts. New improvements in communication have brought nations into nearer neighborhood with each other, and we hear the cries of suffering Ireland almost as fresh and as strong as if they had come from a part of our own country. In this land of abundance, we know nothing, by our own experience, of famine; and can hardly conceive of people dying, in families and by groups, through want of food. No heart can be so hard as not to melt at the details, apparently authentic, of the shocking distress existing in some parts of Ireland. It is a fit time for the activity and exertion of a national charity, and the flying moment should not be lost. While the ministrations of mercy are as beneficent as those of angels, let us render them, as far as we can, as swift also in carrying relief and consolation. Our object is not ostenta-

<sup>1</sup> At a meeting for the relief of the suffering poor of Ireland, held at Odd Fellows' Hall, Washington. National Intelligencer, February 11 and 13, 1847.

tion or parade. It is not to utter the sounds of empty brass, or of tinkling cymbals, but to do a deed of effectual charity, and to do it promptly, that the objects of our compassion may hear tidings of kindness and of relief from across the ocean before death shall terminate their sufferings.

Mr. President, I propose to the meeting these resolutions :

I. That the famine now existing in Ireland is so extensive, and is attended in many places with such appalling scenes of distress, as to present a proper case for national sympathy and charity.

II. That the enlightened and improved spirit of the age, the dictates of humanity, and the authority of our holy religion, all suggest to the People of the United States that such unexampled calamity and suffering ought to overcome in their regard all considerations of distance, foreign birth, and residence, and difference of national character, and that it is enough that they are men, women, and children, and as such belong to our own intellectual human nature.

III. That, taking into consideration the necessity of prompt as well as general action, in order to produce a beneficial result, and that in this city are assembled, at the present moment, many persons from all parts of the country; it has appeared fit that measures for a general national movement in favor of the suffering poor of Ireland should commence here :

Therefore

*Resolved*, That this meeting recommend to the People of the United States a general contribution in money or provisions, the proceeds to be forwarded, with all practicable despatch, to the scene of suffering.

*Resolved*, That his honor the Mayor of New York, the Hon. Moses H. Grinnell, of the city of New York, and the Hon. Cornelius W. Lawrence, Collector of Customs of the said city, be requested to act as a General Committee to receive contributions, and to forward the same to such ports and places in Ireland, and place them in such hands for distribution, as they in their discretion may think advisable.

*Resolved*, That his honor the Mayor of New Orleans and — be requested also, as a General Committee, to receive such contributions as may be more conveniently forwarded to that city, and to forward the same to such ports and places in Ireland, and place them in such hands for distribution, as they in their discretion may think advisable.

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*Resolved,* That it be recommended to the inhabitants of all the cities, towns, and villages in the United States immediately to appoint committees to receive contributions and make collections to be forwarded to the General Committees in New York and New Orleans, and that the amount of all contributions be transmitted by the said General Committees in flour, Indian corn, or meal, and other provisions, as the said committees may deem expedient.

*Resolved,* That the general committees be requested to make public, from time to time, the progress of the contributions, and the amounts transmitted to Ireland.

*Resolved,* That the Mayor of Washington, the Hon. Edward A. Hannegan, of the Senate of the United States, the Hon. Hugh White, Wm. W. Woodworth, of the House of Representatives of the United States, W. W. Corcoran, Thomas Carbory, R. C. Weightman, William Gunton, William A. Bradley, B. B. French, W. E. Robinson, Gregory Ennis, and G. Bailey, Jr., Esqrs., of the city of Washington, be a committee to receive contributions from the inhabitants of Washington and persons now resident therein.

The resolutions were adopted.

# The Mexican War

SPRINGFIELD, MASS., September 29, 1847.<sup>1</sup>

MR. PRESIDENT: With others who have the honor of representing this Commonwealth in the Congress of the United States, I have come here to-day, solely at the request of the Whig State Committee. I need hardly say, sir, that it gives me great pleasure, on this, as on former occasions, to meet so large and respectable a representation of the Whigs of Massachusetts.

In the more especial duty assigned to the Convention, of selecting candidates for the chief offices of the State, I had no original duty assigned to me. I may venture, however, sir, to express my gratification at the great unanimity which has marked the proceedings of the Convention, in presenting to the people of Massachusetts, again, persons so well known for their principles, so well known for their opinions, so well known for the fidelity with which they adhere to principle and opinion.

I suppose, Mr. President, that, so far as those of us who belong to Congress were expected to take any part in the deliberations of this assembly, it was only looked for, that we should express our opinions upon the present state of national affairs, in the crisis, I think an imminent one, at which we have arrived. I could have desired, sir, that some of my colleagues, of better health and more ability, had preceded me in submitting any remarks to the meeting; but as it is, sir, being apparently called upon, I am here, ready to express my opinions, humble as they are, frankly, on any subject and every subject that is interesting to the people of this Commonwealth. There is nothing I wish to put forward; thank God, there is nothing I shrink from.

<sup>1</sup> At the Whig State Convention. It was in this speech that Mr. Webster claimed the Wilmot Proviso as his "thunder."

From a newspaper broadside report, in the New Hampshire Historical Society.



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We are, in my opinion, in a most unnecessary, and therefore most unjustifiable war. I hope we are near the close of it. I attend carefully and anxiously to every rumor and every breeze that brings to us any report that the effusion of blood, caused, in my judgment, by a rash and unjustifiable proceeding on the part of the Government, may cease. In this state of public affairs, in this state of excitement of public feeling, which we know, upon this subject of the war, pervades all classes, and all ranks, I have first to say, sir, that any counselling from me, and I am sure that any counselling which this body would receive from me, will not intrench upon the loyalty which we owe to the Constitution of the country, and the obedience which we are bound to pay to the laws.

We are bound, sir, to consider the nature of the Government under which we live. There must be in every government some supreme power, some ultimate will, from which there is no peaceable appeal. In mixed monarchies, like that of England, the sovereign will resides with the king and the parliament. In despotic governments it reposes solely in the breast of the monarch, as in Russia, Austria, and elsewhere. But with us, under our free republican and representative government, this public will, which we all agree must in the end prevail, unless from peace we resort to force, consists in the expressed opinion of the majority, ascertained according to the principles of the Constitution. Within the limits prescribed by the Constitution, and pronounced agreeably to its forms, we must submit to this will and opinion, or we give up all government and surrender ourselves to a state of anarchy. The law of majority, according to our established forms, a majority ascertained in agreement with the principles of the Constitution, is the law which you, and I, and all of us are bound to obey.

Sir, I should hardly have adverted to this, if I did not think that I see, afloat in the community, signs somewhat of a dangerous tendency. I agree that all powers may be so abused as to require resistance, whether it be the power of an autocrat, of a king and parliament, or of a majority; for all power in human hands may be so far abused, its abuse may make so flagrant a case, as to render it just, in the forum of conscience, to resist its power. That is not the exercise of a political right,

under the Constitution of the country, but the exercise of a natural right, against the Constitution. Now, sir, I suppose we are all here to-day, with a design to act, here and elsewhere, in our several capacities, in the exercise of our political rights under the Constitution of our country, and not in the exercise of our natural rights against the Constitution. Sir, there is not one of us here, who has had the honor of bearing any office, high or low, in the United States Government, or any State Government, who has not sworn that he will support the Constitution of the United States ; and no man is ignorant that the Constitution of the United States confers on Congress the power of making war. And therefore there is no man so ignorant as not to know, when that power has been exercised according to the forms of the Constitution, that the expressed will of Congress is the law of the land, and is the rule of every citizen's civil obligations.

We may oppose, and are often in duty bound to oppose, counsels which we think lead to war, or other disastrous consequences. I hope that, for one, I have not been altogether negligent of this duty ; but when the deliberations of Government result in a law, then that law is of course to be regarded. I have already said, that I regard the present posture of public affairs as imminently critical and dangerous ; and that it calls for the most serious and anxious consideration of all Whigs throughout the country. But let our counsels be as temperate as they are firm and decided.

There are those who think that violence is strength. That I hold to be a great mistake. Violent counsels are weak counsels ; violent conduct is weak conduct ; violent language is always weak language. Our highest purposes, I may say, our boldest resolves, then most recommend themselves to the acceptance of the community, when they are announced certainly with clearness and force, but also with decorum and dignity, with a just respect for ourselves and a just respect for others. The great dramatist instructs those who would excel in the power of moving men's minds, not to tear a passion to rags and tatters, but, in the torrent and whirlwind of their emotions, to observe a just temperance. It is, sir, sobriety of sentiment, and sobriety of language, which proves men in earnest. Allow

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me to say, it is not the noisest waters that are the deepest; nor has it always been found that that spirit which is most inclined to vapor when danger and disaster are at a distance, is the firmest in breasting them on their near approach.

With these remarks, sir, upon the tone and temper, which, in my opinion, belong to all constitutional Whigs, here and elsewhere, I shall proceed to make a few remarks upon the leading and most interesting topic of the day.

I have said, sir, that we are engaged in a war, in my opinion unnecessary, and, therefore, unjustifiable. I hold it to be a war unconstitutional in its origin. I hold it to be a war founded on pretexts. Sir, the law of nations, embodying the general sense of mankind, instructs us that the motives of war are good or vicious. Where war is founded on a conviction of necessity, in a sole desire to promote the public good or defend the national interest, it is a good motive. When founded in any oblique purpose, or unjust purpose, when waged only for conquest, for gain, for acquisition, for renown, to gratify private ambition, or for party purposes, the motive is vicious. And the law of nations goes farther. It maintains this distinction, that there may be causes for a war which would justify the war so far as the opposite nation was concerned, and yet not furnish a good motive for a war; because good motives for a war, while they require always a good cause, require something else. They require that the war should not be waged except from necessity, and for just and important rights of the country.

Now, sir, the law of nations instructs us that there are wars of pretexts. The history of the world proves that there have been, and we are not now without proof that there are, wars waged on pretexts; that is, on pretences, where the cause assigned is not the true cause. That, I believe on my conscience, is the true character of the war now waged against Mexico. I believe it to be a war of pretexts; a war in which the true motive is not distinctly avowed, but in which pretences, afterthoughts, evasions, and other methods are employed to put a case before the community, which is not the true case.

I think, sir, there are three pretexts, all unfounded, upon which this war has been attempted to be justified, in various

modes and on various occasions. The President of the United States, in his war message of the 11th of May, 1846, puts the ground of declaring war upon the fact that the Mexican government had invaded the territory of the United States, and shed American blood upon American soil. Now, in my judgment, this is not a correct statement of the case. The President of the United States had ordered the army of the United States, as early as January, 1846, to move beyond what Mexico insisted was the boundary of Texas, and place itself on the Rio Grande. After that position had been taken, blood was indeed shed on the left bank of that river. But was that American soil? It was soil claimed, indeed, by the United States, but which claim Congress had never asserted. It was territory claimed also by Mexico, as much and as firmly as the city of Mexico itself; and it was, at the time, in the actual possession of Mexico. The most favorable presentment, therefore, is this: that we, having a claim to territory of which the other party was in possession, marched an army into it to take possession. Is not that war upon our side? I am of opinion, therefore, that the declaration in the message of the 11th of May, 1846, upon which the act of Congress, of the 13th, was founded, the declaration that war existed "by the act of Mexico," cannot be made out by any evidence in point of fact. And if so, then the cause assigned in the President's message was a pretext.

Now, I look upon the war as commenced when the army of the United States was ordered to advance into territory claimed by Mexico, and actually possessed by her. If it were our own case, I have no doubt that we should regard such an invasion of our possessions as an act of war.

But, although this was the main point upon which the recognition of war was placed by the President, no sooner was the war declared than further pretexts were resorted to. One was, the refusal of the Mexican government to receive our Minister; but where was that ever made a cause of war? and especially of executive war? Because a foreign government chooses not to have diplomatic intercourse with us, is it for the President to say that that is a just cause of war? It is no just cause; and, even were it just and proper, it is no sudden emergency, authorizing the executive to plunge the Govern-

ment into hostilities; especially when Congress is in session, ready, at any moment, to receive official information from the President, and to act upon it. I look upon it, therefore, that this ground is a mere pretext.

Then comes another. Mexico, it is said, had declined and refused to pay the debts due from herself to citizens of the United States. I believe that is true. But that was not put forth as the cause of war in the message of the President, on the 11th of May, 1846. It is not in the act of Congress of the 13th of May. It is not, therefore, the cause put upon record for the act of the Government. It is an afterthought. And here, again, this matter of debts and claims of citizens of the United States upon Mexico is of long standing, and was well known to Congress, to whose attention it had often been called. Yet Congress, the constitutional, and only constitutional war-making power, had never judged it proper to declare war against Mexico on this account. The conduct of Mexico was as reprehensible six months before, as on that day; but there had been manifested no disposition to make it a cause of war with her.

To say, therefore, that this war was founded upon the refusal of Mexico to pay her debts, is a pretext, and nothing but a pretext.

Well then, sir, what was, in truth, the real object of the war? If all these things were pretexts, what was, in fact, the true motive? So far as we can now scrutinize the motives, so far as we can look into the designs and objects of our rulers, what was the motive, the purpose, the impulse of the heart, which led to the measures that brought about this war? Why, sir, I have a poor opinion of my own sagacity, I do not pretend to see farther into such matters than other men, — but to me it is as plain as a turnpike; as visible as yonder sun now shining upon us.

Sir, an eminent person, belonging to the party in administration, most eminent certainly of all that do belong to it, so eminent that it strikes one rather oddly that the administration should not belong to him, rather than he to the administration — I mean Mr. Calhoun, one of the most practical politicians and debaters in this country, — a gentleman who is not apt to

concede away his case, declared, in the last session of Congress, that if there had been no annexation of Texas, there would have been no war. And he went farther, and said that the immediate cause of war was the order for the march of our army from Corpus Christi to the Rio Grande.

But how did the war grow out of this annexation? This is a case in which, correctly to answer this question, we must adopt proper distinctions, and follow the light afforded by ascertained facts.

Now, Mr. President, I do not stand here at this time, nor have I at any time been, an advocate or apologist for Mexico. I have a very poor opinion of her government, in all its states, and at all times. I pity the people of Mexico from my heart, and I should pity them more if they appeared to me to have sense enough to understand the misery of their own condition. I believe the government of that country to be among the very worst in the civilized world, pretending to regard the rights of the people. This republic, which, by the way, is no republic at all, but a military anarchy, has been, I am sorry to say, for years and years the prey of every miserable military upstart that could find money enough to sustain a miserable army. I have no sympathy, therefore, with any government, or men connected with any governments, of Mexico, for the last twenty years. I go farther, sir. And I say that, in my judgment, after the Battle of San Jacinto, in 1836, and the events of the next six or seven years, Mexico had no reason to regard Texas as one of her provinces. She had no power in Texas, but it was entirely at the disposition of those who lived in it. They made a government for themselves.

This country acknowledged that government; foreign states acknowledged that government; and I think, in fairness and honesty, we must admit that in 1840, '41, '42, and '43, Texas was an independent state among the states of the earth. I do not admit, therefore, that it was any just ground of complaint on the part of Mexico, that the United States annexed Texas to themselves. But Mexico did take offence at the annexation. Long as Texas had been independent, notorious as was the fact that the governments of Europe, as well as our own, had admitted the nationality of Texas, Mexico persisted in saying

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that it was her province; and she would not live on terms of entire amity and friendly confidence with the United States, although she did not go to war. Her Minister, Almonte, went home; she would not receive our Minister; she became gloomy, sulky, and discontented; and that was the condition of things immediately after the annexation of Texas, and at the commencement of Mr. Polk's administration.

I think that the object of the war was simply this. Mr. Polk became President of the United States in March, 1845. In June, 1845, Santa Anna was banished from Mexico to Cuba, on what is called half pay. He seems to have been discontented with his situation at Cuba, and I am strongly suspicious that the "half pay" never was paid. Through 1845, the condition of things between us and Mexico was thus angry and unsatisfactory.

Not to trouble you, sir, with many dates, allow me to approach a period of some interest. It was in January, 1846, that the army of the United States, which, in the summer preceding, had been ordered to take its position at Corpus Christi, was now ordered to advance to the Rio Grande. The reason given by Mr. Buchanan for this order, among other things, was, that it might be at hand, in case Mr. Slidell was rejected by Mexico, to act as Congress should authorize. Now, there had been an opinion, I believe very far back, from the time of Santa Anna's release from imprisonment in Texas, that he was rather more favorable to the acknowledgment of Texan independence than any other of the military chiefs of Mexico. At any rate, after his banishment by Paredes, the sentiment became general that he was more favorable to peace with the United States than the government then existing.

The President of the United States sent his war message to Congress on the 11th day of May, 1846, placing the existence of the war upon the fact that Mexico had invaded our territory and shed the blood of our people. On that very day he despatched orders to Commodore Connor, at Vera Cruz, that in case Santa Anna should come that way, he should not obstruct his passage into Mexico. Now, how came it into Mr. Polk's imagination that Santa Anna was likely to come that way? At about the same time, if I remember aright, Mr. Slidell

Mackenzie, brother of our Minister to Mexico, was despatched to Cuba. It appears, too, from the correspondence, that our Government also had an agent in Cuba, by the name of Brown. And it is notorious that it was a matter of public conversation in Cuba, that Santa Anna was to return to Mexico, with the concurrence of the President of the United States. I state this on good authority. Mark the coincidence of time and purpose. The President said in his communication, at the opening of the session of the last Congress, that he did not see any prospect of putting an end to our difficulties while Paredes was in power. I think his precise words were these: "Scarcely a hope of adjusting our difficulties could be cherished, while Paredes remained at the head of the Mexican government." What were those difficulties, sir? Our chief difficulty, certainly, was that Mexico would not assent to the annexation of Texas. This was the great trouble.

Now, sir, I would call the attention of this meeting to a matter not unknown, but which, it seems to me, has not received the weight, the scrutiny, which it deserves. I again premise, that the war message of the 11th of May, placed the war on the ground of actual invasion by Mexican troops, and the murder of American citizens upon American ground. Now, about the 1st of June a proclamation was drawn up, which, on the 6th of June, was despatched to General Taylor, to be by him distributed throughout all Mexico, and that purported to set forth to the people of Mexico the causes of the war. I have this proclamation, and I hope the gentlemen of the press will publish it.

Well, what did the proclamation say to the people of Mexico, as to the causes of the war? Anything about invasion of American territory and murder of American troops? Not a word like it—not one word. That proclamation goes upon the old matter of the debts, and upon the refusal to receive Mr. Slidell as our Minister, and upon a supposed declaration by Paredes, which I cannot find anywhere, that war did actually exist. But the fact alleged in the war message of May 11th, and the fact enacted, if a fact can be enacted by legislative power, that war existed by Mexican invasion, is not alluded to, stated, or intimated, in the proclamation to the Mexican



people. On the contrary, speaking through General Taylor, the administration uses the following language to the Mexican people, in this proclamation :

“Your government is in the hands of tyrants and usurpers. They have abolished your state governments, they have overthrown your federal constitution, they have deprived you of the right of suffrage, destroyed the liberty of the press, despoiled you of your arms, and reduced you to a state of absolute dependence upon the power of a military dictator. Your army and rulers extort from the people, by grievous taxation, by forced loans and military seizures, the very money which sustains the usurpers in power. Being disarmed, you were left defenceless, an easy prey to the savage Comanches, who not only destroy your lives and property, but drive into a captivity, more horrible than death itself, your wives and children. It is your military rulers who have reduced you to this deplorable condition. It is these tyrants, and their corrupt and cruel satellites, gorged with the people’s treasure, by whom you are thus oppressed and impoverished, some of whom have boldly advocated a monarchical government, and would place a European prince upon the throne of Mexico. We come to obtain reparation for repeated wrongs and injuries ; we come to obtain indemnity for the past and security for the future ; we come to overthrow the tyrants who have destroyed your liberties ; but we come to make no war upon the people of Mexico, nor upon any form of free government they may choose to select for themselves. It is our wish to see you liberated from despots, to drive back the savage Comanches, to prevent the renewal of their assaults, and to compel them to restore to you from captivity your long lost wives and children. Your religion, your altars and churches, the property of your churches and citizens, the emblems of your faith and its ministers, shall be protected and remain inviolate. Hundreds of our army, and hundreds of thousands of our people, are members of the Catholic church. In every State, and in nearly every city and village of our Union, Catholic churches exist, and the priests perform their holy functions in peace and security, under the sacred guarantee of our Constitution. We come among the people of Mexico as friends and republican brethren, and all

who receive us as such shall be protected, whilst all who are seduced into the army of your dictator shall be treated as enemies. We shall want from you nothing but food for our army, and for this you shall always be paid, in cash, the full value. It is the settled policy of your tyrants to deceive you in regard to the policy and character of our Government and people. These tyrants fear the example of our free institutions, and constantly endeavor to misrepresent our purposes, and inspire you with hatred for your republican brethren of the American Union. Give us but the opportunity to undeceive you, and you will soon learn that all the representations of Paredes were false, and were only made to induce you to consent to the establishment of a despotic government."

Well, now, sir, What was that tyranny, that despotism? Why it was Paredes, a military chieftain, who had succeeded Santa Anna, another military chieftain, according to the order of Mexican succession for the last twenty years. The despotic authority here alluded to, we find Mr. Polk speaking of, in his message to Congress of December last. Speaking of Paredes he says: "There was good reason to believe, from all his conduct, that it was his intention to convert the republic of Mexico into a monarchy, and to call a foreign European prince to the throne." Now, where was Santa Anna all this time, and what was he doing?

He, Mr. President, was then in Cuba. But some time in June, or thereabouts, he left Cuba, made his way to Vera Cruz, and was there admitted into Mexico by Commodore Connor, according to the order of our Government. Before he reached Mexico he had made his proclamation. That is to say, he had caused pronunciamientos to be made in various districts, for putting down Paredes and preventing the establishment of a monarchy. The injunction was that the orders of Paredes should not be obeyed, because they had been issued with the "evident object of making the nation appear to call for a monarchy, with a foreign prince to govern it." Now, whether Santa Anna borrowed from our President, or our President borrowed from him, or whether the remarkable coincidences of idea and language, in the two proclamations, were only the jumping conclusions of two great geniuses,

I do not know. But here is the fact. The sentiments of both were the same, and they were pronounced at the same time. When General Taylor was invading Mexico on the north, and issued the proclamation sent to him from Washington, Santa Anna's agents were possessed of his plan of pronunciamiento, to the same effect, containing the same ideas, and expressed in the same language. Thereupon, Salas, who commanded the troops in Mexico, deposed Paredes about the 1st of August, 1846, and he was well understood to be acting as the agent of Santa Anna.

Now, sir, in the elaborate commentary on these transactions, in the executive message of last year, the President of the United States acknowledges, and he could not deny, that his object was to overthrow the government of Paredes; that is to say, that he sought by war to revolutionize the government of another country. This is openly avowed. He says, indeed, that he saw no other way of getting rid of our difficulty with Mexico, than by bringing about a revolution in Mexico. I confess, sir, that, when I first read that message, I was struck with equal mortification and astonishment. We, of the United States, citizens living together under this Constitution, and twenty millions of us, while we have a just cause of war against Mexico, cannot get rid of the difficulty without attempting to subvert the temporary existing government of that miserable nation, and play off one contemptible military chieftain against another! We foment insurrection; we foment rebellion; we promise succor and support to those who shall rebel against the existing government of their country! Can anything less become us than this! Aside from the want of dignity — which, it seems to me, almost covered the Government with disgrace, in fomenting a revolution in a neighboring country — it certainly appears to me that it was extremely weak, ill-judged, and inexpedient.

Well, sir, Santa Anna got to Mexico, under the permission of the President of the United States. General Taylor distributed the proclamation with which he had been furnished by his Government. The President admits, in his message of December last, that he then hoped for counsels more favorable to the United States from the authority of Santa Anna, than

from the authority of Paredes. These more favorable counsels respected, of course, the acquiescence of Mexico in the annexation of Texas to the United States. How far he has been disappointed in this hope, the event has shown. To what extent our own President and the Mexican military chieftain entered into a precise agreement, of course I cannot say; but there was a general understanding between them, is evident from all the circumstances of the case. Whether Santa Anna was unable or unwilling to carry out that understanding, or whether he found the sentiment of the nation too strong for him, I leave you to judge; but the fact is, we find him, soon after, at the head of the army, and in direful and bloody conflict with the army of the United States. He had come to Mexico, either at the suggestion, or at least, by the permission of the President of the United States. He had put himself at the head of the Mexican armies; but, instead of moving towards peace, he moved only towards war and conflict and battle. And, sir, whatever else may be said of the circumstances, ordinary or extraordinary, that have waited upon the fortunes of the President of the United States, it must be admitted that in one respect, at least, his case is somewhat singular. He has made war, he has seen great armies fighting numerous battles, and it has so happened that he has had the selection of the commanders on both sides!

The precise object of this war is proved by facts and circumstances sufficient, I think, to satisfy any reasonable man. That object was to establish a government in Mexico, by the restoration of Santa Anna, which should yield the question of Texan annexation, and give us no more trouble on that account. How grievously that calculation has been disappointed, let subsequent events show. This, then, is the real ground and origin of the war, and all the rest, so far as appears to me, is mere pretext; and I hope those whose business it is to spread information upon these important subjects before the people will look at that proclamation of the 6th of June, will compare what the Government of the United States therein says, with what the President said in his message of the 11th of May, and what Congress enacted in conformity with that message, the hypothesis that war arose from invasion

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by the Mexican forces, of our soil, and the murder of our citizens.

Sir, I have before alluded to the declaration of Mr. Calhoun that if there had been no annexation of Texas, there would have been no war. Now I choose to say that I concur in your own declaration, sir, so forcibly expressed by you, in your place in the House of Representatives, that "the direct consequence of this act of iniquity is the present war." I have endeavored to show that it was to remove, to pacify, the opposition in Mexico to this plan that our own Government entered on these operations. Mr. Calhoun is right. It is too plain that annexation was the primary cause of the war. Does anybody suppose we should have gone into the war, have undertaken to depopulate Mexico, merely because she did not pay her debt, or had refused to receive Mr. Slidell? No, sir. No one so supposes. Would Congress have declared war on any such pretext? I think not; I believe not. Then the war grew out of annexation; and it was, I do not say a necessary, but certainly not an unnatural consequence of that step. But, what is remarkable, the grievance is on the part of Mexico, and we make the war. She suffers the wrong, as she esteems it, and we give the first blow. We make the war because she complains of injury, and will not give up complaint.

Now, it cannot be of much consequence, except to myself, what the acts of so humble an individual on this subject may have been. But it is one consolation to me to know that always, from the beginning, I have opposed the scheme of Texan annexation with the whole of my ability. Ten years ago, sir, at a meeting of political friends in New York, where there was a good deal of difference of opinion on that question, and I was advised not to commit myself upon it — I did commit myself, and there it stands — and I am thankful for it. I was opposed to it then, and have been opposed to it, under every circumstance, ever since. And my opposition was founded on the ground that I never would and never should — I repeat, now I never will, I never shall — give my vote in Congress for any further annexation of territory to this country with a slave representation.

We hear much, just now, of a panacea for the danger and

evils of slavery and slave annexation, which they call the Wil-mot Proviso. That, certainly, is a just sentiment, but it is not a sentiment to found any new party upon. It is not a sentiment on which Massachusetts Whigs differ. There is not a man in this hall who holds to it more firmly than I do, not one who adheres to it more than another. I feel some little interest in this matter, sir. Did I not commit myself in 1838 to the whole doctrine, fully, entirely? And I must be permitted to say that I cannot quite consent that more recent discoverers should claim the merit, and take out a patent. I deny the priority of their invention. Allow me to say, sir, it is not their thunder.

Mr. President, if any newly acquired territory were to be free territory, I still should deprecate the acquisition. I think we have now a large and ample domain, and a degree of similarity of character, of identity of interest, that binds us together, from the Penobscot to the Gulf of Mexico. But if we go on with extension, annexation, over California, and I know not how far towards the south pole, we cannot say how long such similarity will continue to exist. May not the probable tendency of such a policy be directly towards a despotic government, or a series of despotic governments? Sir, I apprehend that, for the practical success of a republican government, there should be this degree of identity in popular character and local institutions. It may not be so with others. The Emperor of Russia may govern his European subjects by one code, and his Asiatic dominions by another; because between them there is no strong association, no great common interests. But in a republic, where similar interests belong to all, similar character, to a greater or less extent, is found in all, and where exactly the same laws must prevail over all, this cannot be. It does seem to me, sir, to be a very dangerous experiment to set about extending our territory over an almost unknown tract, larger than the whole of the old thirteen States, and run the risk of a sufficient identity of character and interest between our own people and those we annex.

More enterprising spirits may choose to take that risk. I hesitate.

Again, sir, this annexation disorganizes and deranges the

system of our Government. Suppose that, out of this territory, as large as that of the old thirteen, but five new States should be made. They would have, at the beginning, five members of the House of Representatives, but they would have ten Senators — shall I say Southern Senators — in Congress. Does not everybody see that this entirely breaks up all the intended proportion in our system of government? What calculation can be made in anything connected with the hope of its perpetuity, under such a state of things?

Sir, men there are whom we see, and whom we hear speak of the duty of extending our free institutions over the whole world, if possible. We owe it to benevolence, they think, to confer the blessings we enjoy on every other people. But while I trust that liberty and free civil institutions, as we have experienced them, may ultimately spread over the globe, I am by no means sure that all people are fit for them; nor am I desirous of imposing, or forcing, our peculiar forms upon any nation that does not wish to embrace them. When people are fit for free institutions of self-government, they will seek them and have them, in some form or other, perhaps different, and better for them, than those of our own country. But you cannot make freemen out of persons unaccustomed to self-government, and ignorant of what true freedom is. And until a people have acquired that knowledge, they are not fit to compose a free state.

I had the honor, Mr. President, for a short time, to be connected with the executive Government. While in the department of State, it was represented to me, and I felt, that it was a matter of much importance to the commercial interests of the country, to obtain some port upon the Pacific, if it could properly and without danger be obtained from Mexico. The port contemplated was that of San Francisco. It was in contemplation, either to obtain a direct cession of that port, on fair terms, or to arrange with Mexico that American ships might enter the harbor, and American citizens transact business in the place, as in our own cities. This was a matter of commercial arrangement, somewhat after the manner in which Portugal holds Macao in China. I certainly thought it then of considerable importance, and I think so now. But it never

entered my head that, to accomplish this object, useful in itself, so far as it went, we should annex a large territory to the United States, to come into the Union, in one or the other form allowed by the Constitution.

Sir, this is our position. Peace may soon come. I hope to hear it before the dawn of another morning. But I cannot conceal from myself that peace may bring with it a crisis more dangerous than war. We know not what new controversies it may bring to us. We cannot tell the terms nor conditions of peace, nor can I now presume to say what course it will be the duty of honest and honorable men in Congress to take upon the treaty. I can only hope that when that important era shall arrive, I may, for one, be directed to the true performance of that duty.

There has been a proposition, Mr. President, to resist the acquisition of any more territory whatever ; and last year the Whig members of the Senate voted in favor of that course. Whigs from the North and South were united on that. The Democratic Senators voted the other way. The Northern Democracy (they call themselves so, and I may therefore use the term) wished, and wish now, to carry on the war, acquire all the territory we may, and receive it into the Union, relying on the Wilmot Proviso to keep out slavery. On the other hand, the Southern Democracy would acquire the territory, but make no prohibition of slavery. The sections of the Democracy both agreed as to obtaining new territory, and therefore united in support of the war and of acquisition, leaving it to be settled afterwards whether the annexed country should be free territory or slave territory. That dispute was to be a secondary matter. Now, sir, allow me to say that I have not seen one intelligent and fair man of the South who objects to the influence of the North being exerted to prevent the increase and extension of slave power. Certainly no man of sense can complain of this. I do not know the man who says it is unreasonable in us, or may not rightly be done by us. The apparent, obvious inequality of free and slave representation, so wholly inconsistent with the fundamental principles of republican government, we may properly resist. But what is past must stand. We cannot go back. What is established must stand. And



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I say here to-day, that, with the same firmness with which I would resist any further increase of slave representation, I would resist any hazard to the maintenance of the Constitution, by disturbing existing rights under its provisions.

But Southern gentlemen, sir, do complain of the Wilmot Proviso in one thing, that it is unequal; that, if new territory be acquired under it, it will be settled by families from the North, without slaves, who do not need slave labor, while the people of the South cannot settle it, or live in it, because they cannot take their slaves with them if they emigrate, and cannot do without them. It tends, they say, to establish against them a derogatory distinction, a mortifying distinction. But look at the force of this argument. I am always happy to meet gentlemen of character and ability from the South, upon this ground, but what is it? How stands the case now? They admit that the disproportionate representation between the North and South, as it now exists, is a clear inequality; but if new territory is to be had, and more slave representation allowed, is not that manifestly a plain augmentation of such inequality? Most certainly, it cannot be denied.

I am not a prophet, sir, nor the son of a prophet. But if I were to prophesy, the very last subject on which I should dare to venture a prediction would be the course of the Northern Democracy on this subject of the extension of slavery. The predictions of the almanac respecting the state of the weather would be just as reliable as any I could make of their probable proceedings. I hope there are some among them, I am glad to believe there are many of them, who would go with us in support of the sentiment of the Wilmot Proviso; but when we come to the real question, the vote, who and how many can we rely on to help us? Sir, what occurred the other day at Worcester may serve to shed some light on the matter. We find there no expressed adhesion to the principle, but the reverse. The Wilmot Proviso was scouted out of the assemblage of the Democracy of Massachusetts; at least, I have so understood. And the Democratic, or Loco-Foco members of Congress from Maine and New Hampshire — are we quite certain that they will abandon the Administration, and support the proviso against the slave power?

We can only say, and in my judgment, I can only say, Mr. President, that we are to use the first and last, and every occasion that offers, to oppose the extension of slave power. But I speak of it here, as in Congress, as a political question, a question for statesmen to act upon. We must so regard it. I certainly do not mean to say that it is less important in a moral point of view — that it is not more important in many other points of view. But as a legislator, or in any official capacity, I must look at it, consider it, and decide it, as a matter of political action.

Sir, I am quite aware that I am using far too much of this sunlight, and I hasten to a few closing observations.

If peace come, it will bring with it some terms, I know not what. How we are to deal with the treaty must be deferred until we have got it, and have seen what it is. But suppose that peace should not come; that the armistice should be broken off; and that Congress assembles, with the war in active prosecution. What shall be done then? Now this is a very natural question — what is the answer? I would not venture to anticipate what may be suggested in such an emergency, but my own mind is perfectly clear. I hold the war-making power to be intrusted to Congress. The Constitution places it there. I believe that Congress was surprised into the recognition of war on the 13th of May, 1846. I believe that if the question had been put to Congress before the advance march of our troops, not ten votes could have been obtained to pronounce that there was then an existing state of things which amounted to, or justified war, or to declare war against Mexico.

But war does now exist, and what is our duty? I say for one, that I suppose it to be true, — I hope it is true, that a majority of the next House of Representatives will be Whigs; will be opposed to the war. I think we have heard from the East and the West, the North and the South, some things that make that pretty clear. Suppose it to be so. What then? Well, sir, I say for one, and at once, that unless the President of the United States shall make out a case which shall show to Congress that the aim and object for which the war is now prosecuted, is no purpose not connected with the safety of the

Union, and the just rights of the American people — then Congress ought to pass resolutions against the prosecution of the war, and grant no further supplies. I would speak here with caution and all just limitation. It must be admitted to be the clear intent of the Constitution, that no foreign war should exist without the assent of Congress. This was meant as a restraint on the executive power. But if, when a war has once begun, the President may continue it as long as he pleases, and prosecute it for whatever purposes he pleases, free of all control of Congress, then it is clear that the war power is substantially in his own single hand. Nothing will be done by a wise Congress hastily or rashly, nothing that partakes of the nature of violence or recklessness; a high and delicate regard must of course be had for the honor and credit of the nation; but after all, if the war shall become odious to the people, if they shall disapprove the objects for which it appears to be prosecuted, then it will be the bounden duty of their representatives in Congress to demand of the President a full statement of his objects and purposes. And if these purposes shall appear to them not to be founded in the public good, or not consistent with the honor and character of the country, then it will be their duty to put an end to it, by the exercise of their constitutional authority. If this be not so, then the whole balance of the Constitution is overthrown, and all just restraint on the executive power, in a matter of the highest concern to the peace and happiness of the country, entirely destroyed. If we do not maintain this doctrine; if it is not so, — if Congress, in whom the war-making power is expressly made to reside, is to have no voice in the declaration or continuance of war, if it is not to judge of the propriety of beginning or carrying it on, — then we depart at once, and broadly, from the Constitution.

Sir, I need not say that I have as much respect for distinguished military achievement as any man. I would not see any laurels that belong to it withered. I honor those who are called on, by professional duty, to bear arms in their country's cause, and do their duty well. I would obscure none of their fame. But I will say here, and to them, that it is the solemn adjudication of nations, and it is the sentiment of the Christian

world, that a war waged for vicious purposes, or from vicious motives, tarnishes the lustre of arms; and darkens, if it does not blot, what otherwise might be a glorious page in the history of the nation that makes it.

Mr. President, I have done thus what I was informed would be expected of me. I am sorry it has been performed so imperfectly. But I cannot sit down without saying to the Whigs of Massachusetts, here and throughout the Commonwealth: Let us stand by our principles. There is hope; there is confidence; there is trust. And he, and every one, who will do his duty honestly and fully, in accordance with just and true principles, will save himself from the reproach of his conscience, and may help to save his country from calamity. Let us stand, then, by our Whig principles. It is no moment to falter in the path, nor to move one step to the right, nor one step to the left, of the direct road. Great names have gone before us. We profess the same principles which they held, and through which they have made our country illustrious. Let us follow their example. We may not see our way clear out of the difficulties which now surround us. We may be tossed upon an ocean where we can see no land — nor, perhaps, the sun or stars. But there is a chart and a compass for us to study, to consult, and to obey. That chart is the Constitution of the country. That compass is an honest, single-eyed purpose to preserve the institutions and the liberty with which God has blessed us.

## NOTE.

The Editor of the Boston Atlas, General William Schouler, stated in the issue of Nov. 21, 1850, that Mr. Webster wrote articles for that paper in 1847, against acquiring territory from Mexico. Mr. James Schouler states that his father's posthumous papers reveal nothing concerning them, and that he has no means of identifying the articles. The Atlas of 1847 contains the following papers on the Mexican War, all of which are unsigned: Jan. 16, "To the Editor"; Jan. 29, The Volunteer Appropriations; March 25, "The Legitimate Fruits"; May 5, "The War with Mexico"; May 10, "The War"; May 15, "A Chapter on the Mexican Claims"; June 25, "Affairs in Mexico"; July 28, "The Wilmot Proviso"; July 29, "How Much Longer shall the War Continue?"; Aug. 19 and Aug. 27, "The Wilmot Proviso: No More Territory"; Sept. 21, "Shall we have Peace?"; Oct. 2, "The War in Mexico"; Oct. 9, "The Negotiations for Peace"; Oct. 11, "The Peace Negotiations."

# Speech at the Whig Convention, Abington, Mass.

OCTOBER 9, 1848.<sup>1</sup>

I CONGRATULATE you, fellow citizens, upon this bright and lovely October morning. I hope it may be auspicious of good results for that day when we shall meet in our respective districts, to act upon matters in regard to which we meet here, this day, to confer. If I could have foreseen that by assenting to come to this Convention as a delegate from Marshfield, I should have placed myself in a condition to be called upon for a public address, I should have felt obliged to decline that invitation, because it was not my purpose further, or on other occasions than had already occurred, to take part in political discussion before the people.

Fellow citizens, my opinions upon the great national question now depending, the election of a President and Vice President of the United States, have been heretofore expressed by me in the hearing of some of you. I do not propose now to dwell, at any length, upon that general question. I presented it then, and I present it to-day, as a question with two sides to it: on the one side, the election of General Taylor, on the other, the election of General Cass, as President of the United States. If there be any third side to this question, I cannot discern it.

Gentlemen, it is well known from my own declaration, as well as from other sources, that, on general principles, I was not advising nor recommending the nomination of General Taylor to the Whigs as their candidate for the Presidency. On the contrary, so far as is reasonable and just, I opposed that nomination; but I did it upon general principles, of course, not in any way indicating a want of respect for his

<sup>1</sup> From a pamphlet report.

services as a military man, or for his character and qualities as a citizen. It would be idle now and improper to enter into a statement of any reasons for that opinion, because the time for considering that question has passed, and the Whig Convention, according to the usages of the party, have nominated General Taylor. He is the only Whig candidate before the people, and the only Whig candidate who can receive any vote for the office of President; and therefore it becomes a question for the consideration of all those who are attached to the Whig cause, believing it to be the cause of the country, whether there is any other course for them to pursue, but to acquiesce in the decision of the majority of their brethren, and to sustain the nomination.

And, in one respect, I am sure that every member of this meeting, and every Whig of Massachusetts, will agree with me; that if it be proper to support General Taylor as the nomination of the Whig party, it is proper to make that support generous, manly, efficient, effectual. A hesitating, faltering, halting support would do more harm than good. Now, gentlemen, having been, as I have said, from principle, opposed to the nomination of a military man, I am the more desirous of doing justice, and complete justice, to all the personal and professional qualities and merits of General Taylor; and, also, to that degree of fitness which he possesses, and which may enable him to discharge the high duties of the office for which he is proposed, honorably to himself and usefully to the country. I have said, and it gives me pleasure to repeat, that I believe him to be a man of strong and excellent sense, a man of undoubted integrity, of solidity and sobriety of character, and of the most honorable and patriotic purposes and intentions. I believe him to be a Whig. (Applause, "That is to the purpose.") Thank you, sir, — and I think he has made as good a platform for himself as other people, elsewhere, have made for themselves.

And here let me say, that I think the objections which have sometimes been stated against General Taylor, that he has accepted nominations, and has been willing to receive support, from quarters not Whig, are entirely unreasonable. Why, it is known that he was nominated in various parts

of the country, by political parties of various sorts and descriptions, before he was nominated by the Whig Convention, and that he had accepted such nominations. And if he has laid down, as I think he has, a clear and manly exposition of his principles, and if upon the statement of these principles, any portion of his fellow citizens are willing to support him for office, how is it possible for him to refuse their support? Would it not be ridiculous in General Taylor to say, Gentlemen, I learn you have nominated me, and tendered me your support for the Presidency; but you are Democrats and Locofocos, and I am a Whig. Pray, withhold your support, and go and vote for somebody else.

Again, it has been said that he has declared that if elected President, he would be the President of the country, and not of a party; and if I did not think he would, I, for one, would not vote for him. The office to which he is to be elected, if he is to be elected at all, is the high office of President of the United States. It is the duties of that office, of President of the United States, which he will be sworn to perform and execute, according to his best abilities. Why, gentlemen, Presidents of the United States may be, and ordinarily are, chosen by a party; but when they are chosen, they become Presidents of the United States. And what man ever degraded himself by saying, after he was chosen, that he was President, not of the United States, but of the particular party which elected him? We have had no President since the days of Washington who has not been chosen by a party and a party vote. But who ever heard that John Adams, or James Madison, or the younger Adams, set themselves up, when chosen, to be Presidents of a party, and not of the United States, according to the provisions of the Constitution? Why, what a figure would General Taylor have made, if he had stated the reverse of what he has stated? If he had stated that, instead of being President of the United States, he would be President of a party, what honorable man would have supported him for an hour? I think, therefore, that all the exceptions which have been made in certain quarters to this declaration of General Taylor's are unfounded, and I am happy to have an opportunity of expressing my opinions to that effect.

Gentlemen, there has been reason to suppose, and there are those who still suppose, that General Taylor, by the popularity of his name and the estimate of his services, may receive support from States not Whig. I hope these wishes and anticipations may be realized; perhaps there is some prospect that, to some extent, they may be; but still, in my opinion, our reliance should be that this gentleman, the nominee of the Whig party, can be elected by Whig votes in Whig States; and I do not think it is safe for us to calculate upon any other ground of success. There are Whigs enough in the Union, if they will unite, to choose General Taylor; there is no doubt of that. More or less doubt is supposed to be entertained, in consequence of recent events and the rising of a new party, as to the result in some of these Whig States. I hope that doubt is not well founded. In regard to our own State, no man supposes that there is any doubt that in the end General Taylor will receive the vote of Massachusetts. There are great States, great Middle States, some of them Whig, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania; the two first named of these States are important, and I hope reliable for a Whig vote in this critical state of public affairs. Yet in these central States, as elsewhere, there is probably some regret among some men that other candidates, or another candidate, had not been selected.

In these central States, and especially in these Whig States, I have the honor of knowing many good and true men, in public life and in private life. I know their devotion to the cause of their country, and, as subservient to the best interests of that country, their devotion to the Whig cause. And if I could draw them around me to-day, as you are around me, and if I could speak to men in these central States, Whigs, as I now can speak to you, I think I might venture to address some of them in the language of long acquaintance and established friendship. And I should say to them, "Overcome your dissatisfaction; relinquish your preferences; forget your disappointments, and strike one united and strong blow for the maintenance of the Whig cause and for the good of the country."

Gentlemen, we have had a twenty years' controversy with



the great party of our opponents, upon certain great principles, constitutional and practical. These principles have not changed; the opinions of our opponents have not changed in regard to them, and I trust we have not altered our opinions in respect to their importance. The construction to be given to the Constitution of the United States stands, perhaps, at the head of these. We hold that the Constitution is to be received, understood, and administered according to that construction which has been received from the foundation of the Government, by Congress, by the judicatures of the country, and by the general sense of the community. (A voice from the crowd, "And by Daniel Webster, the great expounder.") Very poor authority, as compared with others. Our opponents, on the contrary, hold that every man called to take a part under the Government, may construe the Constitution for himself, be his own interpreter, and disregard the practice of the Government, and the authority of the most solemn judicial decisions. In other words, we take our notions of Constitutional interpretation from General Washington, and the practice of the Government for half a century; and they take theirs from the opinion of General Jackson. (Laughter.)

In the next place, there is that vital practical question under our system, the tendency to increase the authority of the executive power, by a more and more reckless exercise, every year, of the power of removal from office for the sake of patronage; and by a freer use than ever of the veto power, lodged in the hands of the President. Our adversaries think that the removal of the best men from office for party purposes is just and salutary: just in principle, because it is to award the spoils to the victor; and salutary in practice, because it keeps alive the hopes and aspirations of party. They think also that these frequent exercises of the veto power are all salutary; that the President holds but a proper check over the legislation of Congress, and that it is fit and proper for him to exercise that power upon questions of expediency as well as upon questions of constitutional law, and upon all questions in regard to which, in his opinion, the legislation is unwise.

And then we come, fellow citizens, to another great topic

which cannot be kept long out of sight, which is close upon us; and however other circumstances have, for a moment, withdrawn our attention from it, we shall meet it ere long, and I fear in no very agreeable or satisfactory shape. I mean the great question of protecting the labor of the country, and its manufactures, by providing for them, to a reasonable extent, a market at home for the product of that labor, and the consumption of those manufactures. In my opinion, gentlemen, this is a most vitally important subject, now directly before us. True, the time is not long enough to discuss anything, but I may express a short opinion, and I will do it, and I shall do it distinctly; and that opinion is, that without a revision of our laws respecting duties in our custom house, without such a revision as shall adopt discriminating duties and specific duties, the prosperity of this country, the success of men in business, and the earnings of labor, can never be restored to their ancient state. That is my opinion.

Now I say that not one of these things will be done if General Cass is elected President of the United States; and as any notion that anybody but General Taylor or General Cass will be elected, is idle, whosoever among us suffers himself to be drawn away by new names, Christian names, or surnames, or cognomens of any description, to a new party, is but listening to “sounding brass and a tinkling cymbal.”

And, then again, the improvement of lakes and harbors, for the protection of the lives and properties of men; that is another point upon which the President that now is, like those who have been Presidents before, has applied the veto power, and defeated laws passed almost unanimously by Congress, or rather, almost unanimously by the popular branch of the National Legislature.

One other topic. In what spirit are the foreign relations of this country to be hereafter conducted? Are they to be conducted in a peaceful spirit?—a spirit which seeks to be at peace, on just and honorable terms, with all the nations of the earth, and to maintain with those nations useful commercial relations? Or are they to be conducted in a spirit of querulousness, and readiness to quarrel, in a spirit that seeks occasion for aggrandizement and war, in a spirit that yields itself up to a

notion of the "manifest destiny" of the United States, and is ready to carry the systems established among us, over other nations, willing or unwilling to receive them, and by foreign acquisition and conquest to seek to make ours a great and magnificent empire?

In connection with this part of the case, I have said formerly what I say now, that I believe General Cass to be one of the most dangerous men, *the* most dangerous man in the community to be trusted with these relations. I know nothing in his history that shows him to be governed by a prevalent desire of an honorable peace. I do not mean to say that he would rush into a war in which he might not expect the support of the people; but I say that the tendency of his politics, and the tendency of those who support him, especially in some parts of the country, is towards war, aggrandizement, and the annexation of new territory. I have now stated the leading principles and points of policy of the Whig party; and the question now is, whether we are to abandon all these.

And here let me say, fellow citizens, that among the things which I deeply regret is this, that the attention of the Whigs, and I will say more emphatically, the attention of the Whig Press, has been called too much away from the discussion of these things, to discuss matters about men. While we are disputing whether General Taylor is a Whig, a matter, I think, about which there is no question; and while we are disputing whether Mr. Van Buren is a true liberty man, a matter about which I think there is as little question (laughter), we leave this great vital interest, the protection of labor, just spoken of, too much out of sight. I would invoke the attention of all Whigs,—Whigs of the North, of the Centre, and of the South,—to an attempt to rally the public judgment upon this great interest.

Gentlemen, some of the favorers of this "new light" of the Free Soil sun instruct us not to look backward; I hope we may be permitted to look a little forward; I hope we may not be compelled to reduce ourselves to his condition who is described as one

"Who ne'er looks backwards; onward still he goes;  
Yet ne'er looks forward further than his nose."

I pray you, fellow citizens, to look forward, to contemplate the condition of things, if General Cass is elected President. I have given you a summary of our Whig doctrines and principles, which we have supported, through good report and bad report, for twenty years, principles with which we all, I hope, are deeply imbued, principles which we all feel, or which I feel, to be essential to the preservation of the Constitution and the best interests of the country. I desire you now to look forward, and see what will happen to the country, and to these important principles and sentiments, and these great interests, if General Cass is elected President. I will tell you exactly what will happen. General Cass will say that every one of these doctrines has been repudiated, put down, and condemned, by that very majority of the people which makes him President. Who can stand up in Congress, after such a result, and say that the public voice desires a modification of the tariff of 1846? He will say that the public voice has made him President to keep the tariff where it is. Who can complain of the operations of the Sub-Treasury, in which, if I understand aright, in this day of scarcity of money, many millions are locked up from the commercial and business world? He will say that this Sub-Treasury was in full existence and operation in November, 1848, when a majority of the people, knowing that he was for it, and knowing that our candidate was against it, supported him, and chose him President of the United States. And so of everything else. I do not say that this will be fair argument, I know it is, in some respects, altogether an unfair argument, but it is a plausible argument; it will answer his purpose, and he will stand upon it. You may depend upon it that will be his course. So much, gentlemen, for the general question respecting the election of a President of the United States.

But recent events have raised another question, which has come to affect very materially the domestic government of the State of Massachusetts. A party has arisen and has been organized in this State, which calls itself the Free Soil party. I think there is a good joke by Swift, or some writer of his time, who wished to ridicule some one who was making no very tasteful use of the words "*natale solum*:"

“*Libertas, et natale solum!* —

Fine words! I wonder where you stole 'em.”

Now I will not say these words, “Free Soil party,” are stolen from anybody; but the sentiment is possessed by a sort of petty larceny. Gentlemen who join this Free Soil party in the State of Massachusetts, pretend that they are better lovers of liberty, warmer and more consistent opponents of the slave power, than those they leave behind them. I do not admit this. I do not think they can prove it. I think we are just as good anti-slavery men and Free Soil men as they are, although we do not set ourselves up, by way of eminence and pre-eminence, above our neighbors.

Now what is the history of this Free Soil party? Some years ago, indeed before Mr. Van Buren's election to the Presidency, or about that time, there was known to be a schism to some extent in the great Democratic or Locofoco party of New York. This schism increased by degrees, although for many years Mr. Van Buren was acknowledged to be the general head of the party, and was supported by both branches of this schism. In process of time, it grew wider and wider, until Governor Wright was a candidate for a second election to the office of Governor, when some of the party, denominated the Old Hunkers, either grew cold in his support, or abstained from giving him any support; and by this time the other branch of the party had adopted the name of Barnburners. This schism went on until it came to an actual outbreak, a year and a half or two years ago, — an actual outbreak, a state of hostility, between the two branches of the party. But this party now called the Barnburners existed as one branch of the great Democratic party of New York, long before any question arose about the Wilmot Proviso, or any opposition in that party to the progress of slavery, or the extension of the slave territory. And up to the time of the annexation of Texas, and throughout that important crisis, every member of both branches of the party in New York went straight forward and right ahead in supporting the annexation of Texas, slavery and all. If there were an individual exception, I do not recollect it.

But by this time the efforts of the Whigs alone had raised a

strong sentiment in the North against further annexation of slave territory. I say the Whigs *alone*, for nobody belonging to the other party, North or South, East or West, stirred a finger in that cause; or if there were any, they were so few as not to be discernible in the mass, until the Whigs of New England, Ohio, and other Middle States, had accomplished a great excitement, a new feeling in the public mind; and then this portion of the Democracy of New York, now denominated the Barnburning party, seized upon this state of excitement, thus brought about by Whig effort, and attached this principle to their creed, to give them a pre-eminence over their rivals. This is the history of the Buffalo Convention. In its origin, it had no more to do with free principles, than it had to do with the Masonic Institution, or the Anti-masonic feeling in the community. It was a mere contest for power and predominance in the party in New York. And now having engrafted this very just sentiment upon their old creed, and holding fast to all the rest of their "Thirty-nine articles," they expect that the Whigs of Massachusetts will take service under them; that they will engage, and enlist, I had almost said, be subsidized, to maintain the predominance of one branch of the Democratic party of New York over the other! For one, I propose to do no such thing. I do not like the service.

I have said, gentlemen, that in this Buffalo platform, this Collect of the new school, there is nothing new. Nothing has been pointed out as new.

Gentlemen, the people of Massachusetts have lately had the pleasure of reading a communication from one of their oldest and most distinguished, and best regarded fellow citizens: I mean the Hon. Harrison Gray Otis, a gentleman far in the decline of life; I think he completed yesterday his eighty-third year. His sun casts the long shadows far and far into the east, but is itself bright, and placid, and grateful. He has written with the vigor of youth and the wisdom of age. I see that some of those who undertake to instruct the public mind on great questions of public policy, think it courteous and dignified to call this letter a "humbug." If it is so, then humbug signifies uncommon power of composition, great

political wisdom, chastened by long experience, the enunciation of sound and solemn public political truths, and great practical wisdom in their application. I wish we could see more of such humbug as that.

Mr. Otis, gentlemen, if he were not as he is, a man who has filled a large space in the eyes of his country, who has run a long and useful career in public service, and who has discharged his every duty to the acceptance of those who have employed him in stations of public trust, if all these were not, as they are, his merits, he bears a name that should entitle him to respect. He is of the family of that Otis, that distinguished son of this old colony, James Otis, the very man that, by the testimony of John Adams, put the ball of the Revolution in motion. (Applause.) When from such an advanced period of life, he speaks to the people of Massachusetts, I am sure that a majority of them, whatever others may do or say, will hear him with great respect. I wish his letter may be read by every voter in the State.

After reading this letter, I referred to Mr. Otis's speech in the Senate of the United States, delivered in January, 1820, and I undertake to say, that from that speech there may be made, without the addition or the alteration of a sentence, or a phrase, as good an anti-slavery platform as that which has been constructed by the architects of the Buffalo Convention.

Now, gentlemen, it is proposed by some Whigs to join with others of another party, and to carry this new party into the State election, and to attempt, by means of it, to revolutionize the Government of Massachusetts. Why do they do this? They profess to nominate a President of the United States, because they are dissatisfied with the nominations already made. Some of them do not like General Cass, and others do not like General Taylor. Very well; might they not have followed the example of Pennsylvania, and other States, and limited their opposition to these national candidates? Was it necessary for them, for any just purpose, to carry that opposition so far as to attempt to disorganize and revolutionize the State of Massachusetts? Now we see some Whigs, I think not many, but I see them with as much grief as surprise, who have

acted with us all along for years, who have been friends of Governor Briggs and Lieutenant Governor Reed, and have supported them cordially, but who now join an association, one professed object of which is to defeat their re-election and bring in new men.

And pray what have Governor Briggs and Lieutenant Governor Reed done since last year? Nothing. What did they ever do in their lives that any of these gentlemen complain of? Not a single thing. Not a single vote, sentiment, or word, so far as I have observed, has ever been given or uttered by Governor Briggs or Lieutenant Governor Reed, on this question of slavery, which any of these disciples of the Free Soil school find fault with. What then is to be said in such a case? Why it appears to me, gentlemen, to be a very extraordinary predicament in which they have placed themselves. They will judge for themselves, but so it seems to me. Here are men who have not only constantly supported Governor Briggs, but have received office at his hands, nay, have sat with him, side by side, in council, year after year, advising and concurring, so far as I know, in all his measures and recommendations. Now when men under these circumstances come out to oppose him, I think they may be called upon, fairly, to give such a reason for their conduct as shall satisfy the just and intelligent of the community.

What are the reasons which they give? Why, the only reason is, "We have found it necessary to withdraw our support from the person nominated for the Presidency by the Whig party; and we have thought it expedient to set up Mr. Van Buren for President; and Mr. Briggs will not go for him; and Mr. Reed will not go for him!" And who ever thought they would? Because Governor Briggs and Lieutenant Governor Reed will not join in this attempt to make Mr. Van Buren President, then, these men join an association, one of the professed and avowed objects of which is to defeat, as far as they can, every Whig nomination in the State of Massachusetts. I do not judge any man's conscience; I leave that to himself; but certainly I, for one, shall not envy the feelings of these gentlemen, when they find, at the close of the ensuing election, that they have done all in their power against their



oldest and best friends, without accomplishing the least thing which they desired themselves.

They talk of putting down in this Commonwealth, the “minions of slavery.” Pray, who are the minions of slavery? Is Governor Briggs one of them? Is John Reed, a native of this county, known in it as well as any other man, and known all over the State as well as any other man, is he a minion of slave power? My friend who sits by me here, whom I have been proud to call my friend in public and private life for thirty years, William Baylies, nominated for Elector in this district, is he one of the minions of slavery that these Free Soil men talk about?

(From the crowd, “No, nor a Van Buren Whig either.”)

Far from it. The Whigs of the ninth district have nominated a gentleman to represent them in Congress. I have not the pleasure of his acquaintance; but I understand that he is a very respectable man, a good Whig, and as much opposed to the extension of slavery as any man in the Commonwealth,—I mean Mr. Fowler of Fall River, and he is another “minion of the slave power,” whose election they will defeat if they can. If he should be returned to Congress he will in all probability, upon every question touching slavery, give just such a vote as they would desire him to give. On every other question, he will give a Whig vote, and for that reason these Whigs who have joined the Free Soil party will defeat him if they can! That is the truth of it. In that district, a gentleman whom I have not the honor to know, a very respectable man, I dare say, Mr. Morton, always a member of the Locofoco party, a young man in that party and devoted to its principles, out and out, has been nominated by a Free Soil convention for a seat in Congress; and these Whigs who have joined the Free Soil party will vote for him; mind that, they will vote for him. I think the occasion is extraordinary. I think the minds of men are taking in this respect a strange bias. It looks to me as if reason hardly held her control over their minds and over their passions.

Gentlemen, it is well known that there is nothing valuable in this Buffalo platform which does not meet the approbation, and the entire approbation, of all the Whigs of the Middle and

Northern States. Suppose now that all of us who are Whigs should go and join the Free Soil party, what would be the result? Why, so far, nothing would happen but that the Whig party would have changed its name. That would be all. Instead of being the Whig party, it would be the Free Soil party. We should be all there, exactly upon the same principles upon which we have already stood; but then they propose to go further, and do that which I agree would be a great change: that is, to put Mr. Van Buren at the head of the Whig party!

Gentlemen, children at school, you know, often amuse themselves in drawing fantastical images, putting the heads of some animals upon the bodies of others, and thus producing resemblances of all monstrous, all prodigious things. Now, I think if one of these juvenile limners had a fancy to try his hand at political caricature, and should draw the Whig party, and put Mr. Van Buren's head upon it, — or him at its head, rather, — he would make an image that would create more laughter than the celebrated Gerrymander.

Gentlemen, it is not to be disguised that we are in a crisis. Whether we look to the state of affairs in the nation, or whether we look to these newly rising questions and newly rising parties among us in Massachusetts, they present a case, I think, calling upon the Whigs to do their duty. I am not distrustful of the result. I am not distrustful of the result, if I can be assured that there will be a union and energy among those who wish to maintain the ascendancy of the present strength of our Whig party in the country. Gentlemen, Massachusetts is not apt to be daunted at the prospect of opposition. That is not the character of the Whigs of this State. They have made their most successful efforts under circumstances of great discouragement. I have no doubt they will make successful efforts on this occasion.

Fellow citizens of Plymouth County, now and here, I terminate what I have to say in public, on the political questions now before the country. I deeply regret that anything should occur to weaken the strength of the Whig party or cloud its prospects; for I sincerely believe that its success is intimately blended with the preservation of the Constitution and the great interests of the country.

Gentlemen, the Whig party may encounter misfortunes, it may commit mistakes; but, for one, I shall follow its fortunes, because I am more willing to trust myself, and trust the country, upon Whig principles and Whig policy, than upon those of any other political party or association. (Great applause.) I believe that these principles and that policy have come down to us from the days of Washington. I see that this Whig party stretches from the North to the South, from the East to the West, comprising much of numbers, much of intelligence and virtue, much of disinterested patriotism. In a country like ours, it is not an easy thing to form a party that shall not be local, but that shall be sound and constitutional, and that shall spread over all the country, possessing in every State more or less weight, influence, power, and numbers. I look to the preservation of that party; I look to it as a great security, even if it prove to be a minority. The Whigs, if united and strong, and patriotic and persevering, though they may be a minority for twenty years, are capable of rendering the country great service. For one, therefore, *I am for supporting, decidedly, and with alacrity, the nomination, which, under all the circumstances, the Whig convention has seen fit to make, looking to its success as the only means of escape from great and threatening dangers.*

# Remarks at Dedham, Mass.

SEPTEMBER 26, 1849.<sup>1</sup>

THE President observed that the society was honored by the presence of a distinguished gentleman who had proved himself, amongst other great things, a most excellent farmer; and though Uncle Sam had not yet seen fit to confide to him the sole management of the great national farm, yet the fruits of his industry, skill, and genius were abundantly manifested in the prosperity of the domain. He would give:

“*Daniel Webster* — The Defender of the Constitution. — As a statesman, he has exhausted the fountain of honor; as a senator, he has secured all the splendid trophies of eloquence; but as a farmer, his boundless intellect finds an adequate and exhaustless field, in the greatness and magnificence of his nature.”

Mr. Webster, on rising to respond, was greeted with long continued cheers.

He said he had cheerfully made some sacrifice, both of convenience and health, to the pleasure of being there, and of meeting such an assembly of the citizens of Norfolk as he saw before him. Some of them were friends whom he had heretofore had the pleasure of knowing, but the greater part — and especially the most of the younger portion — were strangers to him personally. They were gentlemen whose acquaintance he had not had an opportunity to cultivate. But he was very happy to congratulate all upon the agreeable commencement of the society; and he adopted with all his heart the language of the reverend clergyman to whom they had listened, in praying that they might prove to be a prosperous, happy, and joyous people. Prosperous — in all the external affairs of life; happy — in all the privileges of civil and religious

<sup>1</sup> At the Norfolk County Cattle Show and dinner, attended by a large number of gentlemen of the highest political distinction in the State. From the report in the Boston Daily Advertiser, October 2, 1847.

liberty; and joyous, so far as the word might properly be applied — in the entertainment of a chaste and subdued, yet buoyant feeling of all the blessings vouchsafed to them.

As to the intellectual entertainment which had been spoken of by the President — when he looked around and saw by whom the tables were filled, he felt how little could be expected from him, and was relieved from some embarrassment that otherwise he might have felt. The company had already listened to his Excellency the Governor, and there were others yet to come. Here was the worthy Representative of the district in Congress, able as well to defend the rights of his constituents elsewhere, as to confer with them to-day here; the farmer of Quincy, whom he would call venerable, did not the sprightliness of his mind, the activity of his memory, and the freshness of his heart deny him the liberty of applying that epithet. And another, of whom it might be said that no lawyer was so good a farmer as ex-Governor Lincoln, who, in consequence of the rapid growth of his city, had made a great crop by cutting up a part of his farm into house lots.

He saw also, and had great pleasure in seeing present, an early friend of his own, — himself a native of this county, and whose ancestors were among its most respectable citizens. He meant, of course, ex-Governor Everett, — one who had gone through a long career of eminent public service. All who had the pleasure of being associated with him as a member of Congress, would remember him as one who brought to his station a degree of learning, industry, and eloquence which few equalled, and none could have surpassed. Afterwards he was well known and honored by all as the Governor of this Commonwealth, then subsequently as the representative of our National Government to the most important court of Europe. Known already, both at home and abroad, for his education, scholarship, and literary talent, in this last capacity he displayed above all a profound knowledge of the laws of nations, and of the history, politics, and policy of the nations of the whole world. And how well these qualities enabled him to perform the duties of his post — not we in Massachusetts alone, nor in the country at large, but the people of the whole civilized world well knew. Again, as the respected and honored head

of the chief institution of learning on this continent, we knew his career. And he was yet within a period of life which would well justify him (Mr. Webster) using the common Yankee privilege in venturing to predict that no further honor was beyond his desert, no more exalted station beyond his capacity. Then, too, the present excellent Governor, in his address, had sown and reaped a very various and somewhat exhaustive crop. But little was left for any one else.

Yet he would say, however, that there was one thing which had not been much dwelt upon here, of no little interest and importance, that the great practical truth and characteristic of the present age was, that great public improvements were carried out by means of voluntary association. This principle — the principle of voluntary association — of bringing minds together to act upon each other, was the great principle and truth of the age. Its germ, to be sure, was to be seen centuries ago, in the old world. It was to be traced in the establishment of cities in the feudal age; it was still further extended in the professional associations of Europe at a subsequent period. But it was long, both in the old country and in this, before the idea was brought to bear upon agriculture and the tillage of the soil. The reason of this was obvious. Merchants, traders, and others, congregating in large cities, could meet together at almost any hour — summoned by the peal of almost any bell — to interchange their sentiments on any topic of moment.

Not so with farmers. They were scattered all over the country; their labors were mostly solitary — here upon the plains, and there in the deepest recesses of the hills; they had no exchange, no coffee-house, lyceum, where they could assemble together conveniently. Such, too, in a great measure, was the case with them now, and hence it had become essential that these annual fairs should be held. Hence the necessity that they should be universally attended, — not so much for the sake of the exhibition, or of any discourses to be delivered, or lecture to be given, as for the sake of interchanging sentiments, of comparing the experience of one with that of another, of mingling together and keeping up a communication of ideas. Every man obtained a great part of whatever knowledge he might possess by conversation and communication with others.

Books, indeed, might do something in this respect, but nothing in comparison with free communication. If we should deduct from the aggregate of each man's knowledge whatever he had learned by communication and conversation with his fellow-man, very little would be left, and that little not worth much at best. It was intercourse with each other that made men sharp and active and enterprising; and therefore, if there should not be, at any annual exhibition of an agricultural association, a handsome pair of steers, or a likely cow in the whole county, still if there were men assembled together in social intercourse, then the exhibition would be productive of much good.

Mr. Webster proceeded to remark that he lived in a neighboring county, the land in which, though not generally so good as that of Norfolk, yet bore a strong resemblance to it in some portions. He meant to use no tropes or figures of rhetoric, but to speak as a plain man, plainly. He was a poor farmer who had come up here to learn from better farmers than himself; but there were a few suggestions which he would submit.

He had long been persuaded, from reading and from observation abroad, that there was one branch of agriculture much neglected, if not wholly disregarded here, to which the soil of Norfolk, Plymouth, Bristol, etc., was favorable, and which received great attention in England. He meant the root culture, — the raising of turnips, carrots, etc. He thought the time was coming when these counties would be obliged to devote their chief attention to this crop. In England it was regarded as a most important and essential branch of agriculture, and it was perfectly certain — such was its value — that should it be abandoned, England to-morrow must fall, from inability to pay the interest on the national debt. (Mr. Webster here entered into a somewhat detailed statement of the advantage of attending particularly to this crop, and of its effects upon the wealth of a country, so far as it depended on its live-stock or its production of animal food for consumption. He expatiated upon the utility of cultivating the green crop. He said that, with reasonable care, pains, and skill applied to this branch, Norfolk and the adjoining region might be made as renowned

for stock for market as the county of the same name in England.)

He repeated that he wished well to the society which he now addressed, and to everybody engaged in agriculture. But at the same time he must say that agriculture would be found dead and lifeless unless sustained by corresponding prosperity in other branches of industry. The producer was nothing if there were no consumer, and therefore a just regard for the interests of commerce and manufactures should be as dear to the farmer as his pride in his handsomest stock. There could not be a sound, good, healthy, thriving agricultural interest, where there were but starving and wretched mechanics; there could be no good farming without a commercial corresponding interest. He spoke of farming, here, as the phrase was understood in New England, and not as applied to a plantation. In the one sense, it meant the cultivation of land by one who raised whatever was ordinarily necessary for the support of his family, with perhaps a surplus for sale or barter; in the other, it signified the production of one single article, from the proceeds of the sale of which all other necessaries were to be supplied. This last could not be considered as farming, for its adequacy to the annual wants of the establishment depended on the fluctuations of the market with respect to the one article produced. It more properly belonged to commerce than to agriculture. The farming interest of New England was essentially different from any such thing, and it as much depended for prosperity upon all other classes of society as upon itself. There was a common connection of interest between them all. One would not rise while others fell, nor could one fall while others rose.



# Remarks at Boston

APRIL 29, 1850.<sup>1</sup>

AFTER remarks by Benjamin R. Curtis, Mr. Webster arose in the carriage and was received with loud cheering by the vast assemblage which had gathered to meet him.

Mr. Webster said that it was with great pleasure that he met so large an assemblage of his friends at a time when his private affairs had called him from the seat of government to his own home. As you have said, sir, the duties of the winter in the public councils of the country have been arduous. I am sorry to say that those arduous duties are not done with. The public affairs of the country have not yet made so much progress towards satisfactory adjustment, as to remove all the anxiety which has been felt about the adjustment of the subjects under discussion. But I feel authorized to say that there is now reason to expect that further reflection, that a generous comparison of various wishes where we disagree, will bring about that improved state of public feeling, in the reproduction of which all our expectations of useful discharge of public duty, all our expectations of useful legislation, must depend.

I cannot but feel, sir, that I stand in the presence of my friends. I must regard this gathering as the personal tribute of your welcome to me. You do not welcome the politician, and this is not an opportunity for discussing those questions which now agitate the community and the government,—questions which can leave little repose in the mind of any intelligent man, till he can see some probability that from their discussion an adjustment may come, in favor of the prosperity, peace, happiness, and continued union of the country.

Gentlemen, I have felt it my duty, on a late occasion, to

<sup>1</sup> At a reception held in Bowdoin Square. From the report in the Boston Daily Advertiser, April 30, 1850.

make an effort to bring about some amelioration of that excited feeling on this subject which pervades the people of the country everywhere — North and South : — to make an effort also to restore the government to its proper capacity for discharging the proper business of the country. (Cheers.) For now, let me say, it is unable to discharge that business. That it may regain that capacity, there is a necessity for effort both in Congress and out of Congress. Neither you nor I shall see the legislation of the country proceed in the old harmonious way, until the discussions in Congress and out of Congress upon the subject to which you have alluded, shall be in some way suppressed. Take that truth home with you ; and take it as truth ! Until something can be done to allay the feeling now separating men and different sections, there can be no useful and satisfactory legislation in the two Houses of Congress.

Mr. Curtis, and gentlemen, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts has done me the honor to place me as her representative — as one of her representatives — in Congress. I have believed that she would approve, in me, any honest, cautious, and sincere effort to allay the dissension which we see among the people of the country, and to restore Congress to its constitutional capacity for action. I have believed that the Commonwealth of Massachusetts would support her representatives in that course. I have believed that a general sentiment of the whole country would favor and encourage their efforts in it ; and I have the satisfaction now to believe, that, in that belief, I shall not be disappointed. (Cheers.) However that may be, that effort I shall repeat. (Renewed cheering.) In that course of pacification I shall persevere, regardless of all personal consequences. (Three cheers.) I shall minister to no local prejudices, I shall support no agitations having their foundations in unreal, ghostly abstractions. I shall say nothing which may foster the unkind passions, separating the North from the South. May my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth, before it may utter any sentiment which shall increase the agitation in the public mind on such a subject ! (Cheers.)

Sir, I have said that this is not an occasion for political discussion. I confess that if the time and circumstances gave an opportunity, I should not be indisposed to address the people

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of Massachusetts directly upon the duty which the present exigency of affairs has devolved upon her — this great and glorious Commonwealth! Upon the duty, at least, which it devolves upon us, who represent her in the National Legislature. This will not be such an opportunity. I shall have an occasion, in my seat in the Senate, to which I shall immediately return, to give my opinions upon some topics of an interesting character — topics, in regard to some of which, there exist both mis-statement and misapprehension, — the greatest mis-statement, the greatest misapprehension, especially so far as I am concerned. I may simply mention one of these. It is the question respecting the delivery of fugitives from service. With regard to that question, there exist the greatest prejudices, the greatest misapprehensions. I do not wonder at these misapprehensions. I am well aware that this is a topic which must excite prejudice. I can very well feel what the prejudices are, which it must very naturally bring up in the minds of the good people of this Commonwealth. But, Mr. Curtis and gentlemen, there are, in regard to that topic, duties absolutely incumbent on the Commonwealth, duties imposed by the Constitution, absolutely incumbent on every person who holds office in Massachusetts under her own constitution and laws, or under those of the nation. She is bound, and those persons are bound to the discharge of a duty, — of a disagreeable duty. We call upon her to discharge that duty as an affair of high morals and high principles. We show it to her — and we ask her to resolve upon the performance of *duty*, though it be a disagreeable duty. Any man can perform an agreeable duty; it is not every man who can perform a disagreeable duty. Any man can do what is altogether pleasant. The question now is whether Massachusetts, — whether the old State of Massachusetts, — improved by two centuries of civilization, renowned for her intellectual character, mighty in her moral power, conspicuous before the world, a leading State in this country, ever since it was a country, a leading State in the Union, ever since it was a Union, — the question is, whether Massachusetts will shrink from or will come up to a fair and reasonable and moderate performance (and no more than a fair and reasonable performance) of her sworn obligations.

I think she will.

Sir, the question is, whether Massachusetts will stand to the truth, against temptation! Whether she will be just against temptation! Whether she will defend herself against her own prejudices! She has conquered everything else in her time; she has conquered this ocean which washes her shore; she has conquered her own sterile soil; she has conquered her stern and inflexible climate; she has fought her way to the universal respect of the world; she has conquered everybody's prejudices but her own. The question now is, whether she will conquer her own prejudices! I shall return to the Senate, to put that question to her, in the presence of that common mother, who shall deal it to her heart.

In the mean time, let me repeat that I tread no step backwards. I am devoted to the restoration of peace, harmony, and concord out of Congress; and such a degree of mutual co-operation in Congress as may enable it to carry on once more the legitimate business of the Government.

The Union for the preservation of which I strive, the Union of States for which I strive, is not merely a union of law, of constitution, of compact, but, while it is that, it is a union of brotherly regard, of fraternal feeling throughout the whole country. I do not wish that any portion of the people of this country shall feel held together only by the bonds of a legal corporation, — bonds which some of them may think restrain their limbs, cramp their affections, gall and wound them. I wish, on the contrary, that they shall be bound together by those unseen, soft, easy-sitting chains that result from generous affections and from a sense of common interest and common pride. In short, fellow citizens, my desire is, and my labor is, to see that state of things produced in which, filling all bosoms with gratitude, all hearts with joy, illuminating all faces, spreading through all ranks of people, whether rich or poor, whether North, South, East, or West, there shall exist the balm of all our suffering, the great solace of all our political calamities, the great security of everything prosperous, and great, and glorious, in the future, and that is, **THE UNITED LOVE OF A UNITED GOVERNMENT.**

# Remarks at the Revere House

BOSTON, November 4, 1850.<sup>1</sup>

MR. STURGIS, after a few prefatory remarks, gave as a toast: "The powerful and fearless defender of the Union. The whole people enjoy the result of social intercourse with him in his hours of relaxation."

Mr. Webster replied with great eloquence and earnestness. He began by saying, I am a Union man: an out and out Union man; but it would be bad taste in me, on an occasion like this when there are so many topics of interest, to speak of political matters only. He then alluded to the mission of the distinguished Turk, and said, He comes among us as the guest of the United States: not as the guest of a fraction, but the *United*,—not as the guest of a dissevered and broken country, but as the guest of the *United* States of America—States spreading over a vast territory, of various products and climates, and of interests and institutions; yet, thank God, they are all *United* States. It is in the capacity of *united* citizens of *united* states that we are now assembled to welcome to our festivity a distinguished man from a distinguished country; and it is in the capacity of united Americans that we can appear respectable. Others may speculate, theorize, and go crazy, if they please, in arguing to the contrary, said Mr. Webster, but I say it is only as a united people we can ever be prosperous at home or respected abroad. He had always resisted the opponents of the Union, and he should always continue to do so. He professed to know something of the sentiment of the people of this vast and beautiful country, and he did not hesitate to declare it a sentiment in favor of harmony.

<sup>1</sup> At a dinner given to Amin Bey by some of the merchants of Boston. From the report in the Boston Daily Advertiser, November 6, 1850.

An institution, not of our creating, must not disturb the harmony of these happy States. Crazy and mischievous men may attempt it; but they will soon find their efforts restrained. The people of this country are the people of one country, said Mr. Webster, and they are anxious to preserve the Union, however bounded, and washed by whatever waters. Local strifes are temporary — the Union is perpetual. I speak with emphasis, said he, because I wish to give utterance to a heart that knows no secret on the question of the harmony of the great family of States. I was born to the Union, and I shall stand by it. The slavery question, New England can only interfere with as a meddler. She has no more to do with it than she has to do with the municipal government of a city in the island of Cuba. But whatever course others might pursue, Mr. Webster declared that all his efforts should hereafter — as in former days — be in favor of the Union.

# Speech at Annapolis, Maryland

MARCH 25, 1851.<sup>1</sup>

GOVERNOR SPRIGG offered the following toast :

“DANIEL WEBSTER — Maryland shows her attachment to the Union by honoring its ablest defender.”

After the applause had subsided, Mr. Webster rose and addressed the gentlemen of the convention, as follows :

MR. PRESIDENT AND GENTLEMEN : I beg leave to assure you that I esteem most highly this testimony of respect. I find myself in the political capital of the loyal, Union State of Maryland ; I find myself at a table at which many of the most distinguished men of that State, of all parties and descriptions of politics, are assembled. And it is on that account that I regard this as a particular and striking mark of respect and honor to myself. But, gentlemen, I am nothing ; it is the cause that is everything. You are pleased to honor me only because I support, so far as my ability will allow, that cause which is dear to us all, and dear to all good men in the country. It is the cause of the Union. It is the cause of the preservation of the States. It is the cause upon which depends the maintenance of all those political associations and principles which have made the United States what they now are.

It is not for me to argue the value of the Union in this company. I came here rather to be refreshed and edified by what I have heard of the proceedings of this Convention already, upon that subject. Its resolutions of the 10th of December are to me an expression so powerful, so authentic, and so conclusive of the judgment of Maryland, that I read them at first,

<sup>1</sup> Printed from the pamphlet report: Washington: Gideon & Co., Printers, 1851.

The speech was delivered at a dinner given to Mr. Webster by the Reform Convention of Maryland. George Ticknor Curtis, in “The Life of Webster,” says this speech and that delivered at Harrisburg “ought to find their place in a connected narrative of the exertions he (Mr. Webster) was making to perpetuate the feeling toward the Union that he had done so much to create.” Mr. Curtis states that these speeches were delivered in 1852, but the correct date is 1851.

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and have read them since, and read them now, with undiminished delight. Why, gentlemen, I should no more think of arguing the question of the importance of the Union in this assembly, than I should think of going back to argue the propriety of the Declaration of Independence, or to argue the expediency and the glory of having adopted the Constitution under which we live, or of arguing the general utility and honor and renown of Washington's administration. Who doubts all these things here? I am sure not one. I come, then, gentlemen, as a learner, not as a teacher; I come to partake of the sentiments that fill all your hearts; I come to be edified and instructed by those noble and patriotic expositions which have been made in this Convention, formed, as I have said, of distinguished men of all parties, coming together with earnest convictions, and affirming their opinions in favor of the Union, and whatsoever tends to strengthen that Union, by a unanimity which cannot fail to be regarded. Allow me to say, gentlemen, that your resolutions of the 10th of December will reach to the extreme North, the extreme South, and the extreme West, and everybody will say that, amidst all the vagaries which may prevail elsewhere, the respectable, and eminent, and distinguished State, the central State of Maryland, is union to the backbone, and thoroughly.

There are associations, there are collections, which naturally influence the minds of men. I have passed around to-day among scenes which were visited in old times by Washington. I have been in the room where he performed that crowning act of his military life, the resignation of his commission. I remember that he said on that occasion, "having finished the work assigned me, I now claim the indulgence of retiring from the service of my country." Gentlemen, Washington, with all his sagacity, did not comprehend his own destiny. He did not see the long track of influences which were to follow his revolutionary character. Nay, nor when, many years afterwards, he retired from the civil administration of the country, did he then cease to exercise an influence on the public concerns and sentiments of his country. And he never will cease. He said, "having finished the work assigned me, I retire from public service." He has never yet performed the work assigned him,



and he never will, until the end of time ; because, gentlemen, that great and glorious work still subsists, and is going on ; he is still upholding, by his precepts, his exhortations, and his example, the importance and the value of this Union of the States. In that respect he works now, and will work ever, so long as his memory shall not be effaced from the records of mankind. I think I hear him say to-day, in the language which he expressed when he sent the present Constitution of the United States to Congress, "in all our deliberations we have kept steadily in view that which appeared to us the greatest interest of every true American, the consolidation of our Union, in which is involved our prosperity, felicity, safety, perhaps our national existence." I hear him say that to-day, and I hear him say further to-day, in the words of his Farewell Address, "indignantly frown upon the first dawning of every attempt to alienate any portion of our country from the rest, or to enfeeble the sacred ties which now link together the various parts." Every exhortation, every admonition, every sentiment that proceeded from him, rings in these times, constantly in my ears. Nay, I think I hear him say now, in the abodes of the blessed, that, if it were permitted to him, to revisit the earth, and be re-clothed with the bones and the flesh which are mouldering at Mount Vernon, he would appear to his countrymen as when he stood at the head of their armies, or as he appeared to the country in the course of his most glorious administration of this Government, and conjure and adjure them, by every consideration that ought to have weight with men, "Hold on fast by that Constitution which is the only security for the liberty which cost me and my associates seven years of war, of fire, and of blood."

Gentlemen, forgive me ; when I think in these times that there are so many that are apparently disposed to undervalue the maxims, and the character, and the exhortations of Washington, I confess I find myself borne away, often beyond the power of self-restraint ; I fear sometimes beyond the limits of propriety. Our country consists in its elements of liberty ; in its institutions of constitutional law ; and, blessed be God, our country, America, consists next in the great example of those who have gone before us, and have left that example for our

imitation and encouragement. We are not Americans if we resist the examples of our predecessors, any more than if we trample upon the Constitution, the work of their hands. If we have real American hearts in our bosoms, everything they said and everything they did, to honor and ennoble their country, impresses us with sentiments of profound respect and regard.

Gentlemen, will you allow me to interrupt the course of my remarks by proposing to you, out of the fulness of my heart, "*The glorious and immortal memory of George Washington!*" (This toast was drunk standing.)

(Mr. Webster resumed.) Mr. President and gentlemen: In the lapse of years, and in the rising of one generation after another, it may very possibly happen, and we are sure that it does happen, and has happened, that the exact principles of the Union of these States are not always properly understood. It may not be amiss, therefore — though I do not propose to entertain this company by discourse upon commonplaces — it may not be amiss to recur now to what I conceive to be the original principle upon which these colonies were united, the objects for which they were united, and the limitations upon these objects. These thirteen colonies, all of English origin, were settled on this continent at different times, and under different circumstances. They had differences of religious opinions; they established differences of local law and administration; they were, some of them, quite remote from one another, but they were all subject to the crown of England. And when, in the course of events, they all thought, and thought truly, they had just cause of complaint against the tyranny of England, their object was to unite in a common cause against a common enemy. How unite? For what purposes unite? For what ends unite? Why, it never entered into their conceptions that they were to consolidate themselves into one integral government; that they were to cease to be Virginia, Maryland, Massachusetts, and Carolina. Not at all. But they were to unite for those great purposes which should enable them to make a stand against the injustice of the English Government. They were to unite for common defence and the general welfare. They were to come to an

agreement upon things necessary for that purpose, and nothing else. The objects of common defence, and the general welfare, and afterwards the objects connected with commerce and revenue, which were important to all, were all they adopted as principles and objects of union and association. Nothing beyond that.

As I have said, they had differences of religious opinions. Maryland, your Maryland, was settled as a Catholic country, always tolerant, always liberal, persecuting nobody. Virginia was rather inclined to the religious notions of the Episcopal Church of England. The people of the North were not only Protestants but Dissenters. They were of the school of Cromwell and Sir Henry Vane. But what of that? When all these colonies came together for the general purpose of defence against a common enemy, what did they do? Did they seek to merge, and confound, and consolidate all these States into one great community? No such thing. They meant to unite upon those objects which were necessary for the common defence; and they meant to leave everything else in the control of the States, to do just as they thought proper. That was a day of liberality and of justice. It was a day in which religious opinions produced no effect upon the general sentiments of the country in regard to the association of all the States for common objects. Why, sir, did anybody at the North, did any Protestant descending from ancestors inheriting the principles of Cromwell, or of Harry Vane, whoever he was, feel any less confidence in the integrity and entire patriotism of Charles Carroll, because he was a Catholic? Not at all. Nor did Maryland hesitate to accord the meed of patriotism, whenever it was due, to the Adamses, to Alexander Hamilton, to Rufus King, or whoever else belonged to the North, because they were of different sentiments in religion. Their association was political. It was founded upon general policy and union; a sort of confederacy, at that time, to resist the common enemy, and to do whatever was necessary for the common good. Gentlemen, I hope, for one, never to see this original idea departed from.

Now we come to other propositions. There were differences of laws. The Southern States, without their own fault, by a

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course of events for which they were not responsible, had slavery established amongst them. Did not all the States know that? Did not they deal with them upon that basis? Did not they recognize that state of things? Entirely, entirely. That was a matter of local legislation, of State right and State administration, with which the North at that time had not the slightest inclination to interfere in any respect whatever; and they ought not to have had, because it was one of those things that did not enter into the general scope of that political association which the colonies meant to establish.

Gentlemen, I concur in the sentiments expressed by you all; and, thank God, they were expressed by you all in the resolutions passed here on the 10th of December. You say that "the Constitution of the United States has accomplished all the objects, civil and political, which the most sanguine of its framers and friends anticipated, and the affections of the people of Maryland are justly riveted to its principles by the memory of the characters of the wise and good men who formed it, as well as by the blessings they liberally bestow throughout the world." That is my sentiment. My heart is in it. Altogether, I live and breathe, I walk and sleep — I had almost said, I pray to God daily, in the very sentiment of that resolution. Then you go on to assert a sentiment equally just. You say that a proper appreciation of those blessings would lead every State in the Union to adopt all such measures as may from time to time be necessary to give complete and full effect to any provision in the Constitution, or the laws pursuant thereto, intended for the protection of any part of this great common country. True, — every word true. And allow me to say, that any State, North or South, which departs an iota from the sentiment of that resolution, is disloyal to this Union.

Further, so far as any act of that sort has been committed, such a State has no portion of my regard. I do not sympathize with it. I rebuke it wherever I speak, and on all occasions where it is proper for me to express my sentiments. If there are States, and I am afraid there are, which have sought, by ingenious contrivances of State legislation, by roundabout and crooked courses of policy, to thwart the just operation and ful-

filment of the laws of Congress passed to carry into effect the compacts of the Constitution, that State, so far, is entitled to no regard from me.

At the North, there have been certainly some intimations in certain States of such a policy.

At the South, another danger seems to have arisen ; and it is a subject of very serious lamentation to me. It would seem that there is a disposition in some quarters to secede from the Union of these States. "Secede !" a word of ominous import. Secede from what? Secede from this Government, which has carried the country to such a pitch of glory in sixty or seventy years? To secede from all the honor and renown which it has accomplished? And to secede where? Whenever there is *a terminus a quo* there is *a terminus ad quem*. Where are they going? Whoever entertains such sentiments I regard with a spirit of commiseration. I think it is a malady of the mind. I think that their feelings have become entirely diseased. I think that they know not what they do. And yet, gentlemen, I do not think it the part of prudence to criminate, or to taunt, or to provoke. Leave them to their own consideration. Let them dwell on secession many days and inwardly digest it. And, so far as I have any voice in the councils of the country, this meditation of theirs shall never be disturbed ; not a breath shall ruffle their sensibility, until it comes to a point where something is done which comes to an actual conflict with the Constitution and the laws.

It is painful when we reflect that a State so highly distinguished, so full of high spirits and cavaliers, a State which took such an active part in the Revolution, and which took such an active part also in the early administration of the Government, which has produced so many men who have honored the country, and honored themselves in the public service ; it is painful, I say, and humiliating, to consider that their successors, the present generation, seem willing to forget all the glories of their country, and to take one stripe and one star and walk out of the Union with them.

A returning sense of patriotism and propriety will check them. I do not know what might happen if there had been a more general spirit of disunion. But I cannot persuade myself

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that honest and honorable men, ingenuous men, young men who wish to live for glory, and renown, and character, will ever leave that Union which their fathers established, that Constitution which has made their State, like all the other States, what it is, when they come to sober moments of reflection.

I hope that while we maintain, as the State of Maryland has maintained, fixed and determined sentiments in favor of the Constitution, we shall hold no parley, and I hold no parley, with anybody who would infract it in the slightest degree. While we maintain the necessity of establishing and sustaining those laws of adjustment which were passed by the last Congress, to settle the country; while we hold on to them with firmness and decision, I hope, nevertheless, we shall take a course not to provoke, or taunt, or insult those who feel a difference of sentiments. I hold the importance of maintaining those measures to be of the highest character and nature, every one of them, out and out, and through and through. I have no confidence in anybody who seeks the support of those who wish to alter or modify these constitutional provisions. There they are. Many of these great measures are irrepealable. The settlement with Texas is as irrepealable as the admission of California. Other important objects of legislation, if not in themselves in the nature of grants, and therefore not so irrepealable, are just as important; and we are to hear no parleying upon it. We are to listen to no modifications or qualification endangering their security. They are passed in conformity with the requisitions of the Constitution; and they must be performed and abided by, in whatever event, and at whatever cost.

His Excellency the Governor of Maryland was pleased to allude to me as one who had run some risks among his own people for the good of the country. What should I have been good for, if I had not been willing to do it? I do not consider myself born to any great destiny, but born to one destiny, and that is, to uphold, with mind and heart and hand, the Constitution of this country. If this prophecy fail, my attachment to the Constitution of the land will never fail, so long as I have breath.

Now, gentlemen, allow me to say, that, in looking over the

annals of your beautiful city of Annapolis, I find, what I should have expected to find, that when the definitive treaty of peace was proclaimed here in February, 1783, it was ordained to be a day of general thanksgiving. It was celebrated, and, according to the good fashions of Maryland, there was a dinner and a ball. Among the toasts on that occasion, the first having taken notice of the great blessing of the restoration of peace, I find that the second was, "The United States — may their confederacy endure forever!" That confederacy has been changed into a more beneficial form of government. It has become a Constitution better calculated to secure the rights of us all. But I echo the sentiment of Annapolis, and I say, in different words, though in the same sense, "*The Constitution of the United States — may it endure forever!*"

After Mr. Webster had concluded, remarks were made by Governor Lowe, Senator Pratt, and others. Chancellor Johnson offered the following sentiment:

"*Our Distinguished Guest*: When his calumniators shall have been forgotten, he will be remembered as the great constitutional lawyer of his day; unsurpassed in his advocacy of Republican Institutions, and of the union of these States."

Mr. Webster being about to retire, the Hon. William Cost Johnson rose, and addressed the company as follows:

"MR. PRESIDENT: I shall tax you, and this distinguished assemblage but for a moment; and in that moment offer a sentiment of my own heart, which sentiment, I am sure, abides in every bosom around me, to one whose life, from youth, has been dedicated to teaching the purest morals and the most exalted patriotism; whose highest ambition has been to see this glorious nation advance in prosperity and honorable renown; and whose wonderful efforts of light and life will pass to other ages, and be read side by side with Cicero and Tacitus. I propose the health, the prosperity, the long life of Daniel Webster."

The company drank the toast with many cheers. Mr. Webster responded in a most happy manner to the remarks of Mr. Johnson, and then retired.

# Speech at Harrisburg, Pa.

APRIL 1, 1851.<sup>1</sup>

THE Hall of the House of Representatives was crowded with a large and intelligent audience—all the seats in the interior being occupied by members and by ladies. At half-past seven Mr. Webster entered the Hall amidst bursts of the most enthusiastic applause.

After brief introductory remarks by Governor Johnson, Mr. Webster arose and addressed the assembly as follows:

GENTLEMEN—Senators and Members of the House of Representatives, and fellow citizens of Pennsylvania—I should be insensible indeed to the highest rewards of public service if I did not appreciate the terms of commendation in which it has pleased your excellent Executive to address me, and the warm and cordial manner in which in your kindness you have received me on the passing visit which it is my happiness to have been able to pay you.

Let me say to you that nothing could be more just and true than what his Excellency the Governor has said respecting the general, national, broad and comprehensive political character of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. She has been called, and not without strong claims to the title, the Keystone of the Arch of the Union. She is vast in extent, and abundant in wealth and resources, and remarked for the industry and intelligence of her citizens. Her rivers on the east connect her with the Atlantic, her rivers on the west connect her with the Mississippi and the Gulf of Mexico. Above all, or equal to all, she has vast resources in point of mineral wealth beneath her soil that entitle her to a position beyond that of any of her sister States. She has improved her advantages with diligent industry, and while seeking to promote virtue and to render herself worthy before the nation, and to fulfil her part in the great mission of the country, she has been governed by local

<sup>1</sup> From the North American and United States Gazette, Philadelphia, April 2, 1851.



prejudices, local attachments, and narrow feelings, less than any other State in the Union. I admire Pennsylvania. I admire her for the moderation and firmness, the good sense and patriotism, which have animated her in the discharge of her obligations, and in view of questions so well calculated to disturb the general political harmony.

Your Governor has done me more than justice in what he has said of my public services. It is a long time since I entered public life, quite too long for myself, and perhaps for my family, but I assert for myself one merit only, and of that I may be proud, as it attaches me to the great State of Pennsylvania, and it is the merit of embracing the country, and the whole country, in what I have said or done in one public station or another in my general political career in the dispositions of Providence.

Pennsylvania, indeed, could not have been an insignificant State under any circumstances. If she had remained great in her resources, in her soil, and in her people, what, after all, would the State of Pennsylvania have been, if detached and isolated from the other States of the Union? Compared with your Pennsylvania, as you now behold her, what would she have been, with her mineral treasures, her mineral resources, with no power to develop them, without any protection from the national flag that carries them in pride and triumph to the ends of the earth? It is that comprehensive course of politics which rejects local ideas, and a narrow view of political principles, which has enabled this whole people to speak of the country as their country, and has made the State of Pennsylvania what she now is, and what I hope she may long continue to be, as I before said, the keystone of the arch of the Union.

If I had happened to have been before this assemblage in this place one year ago to-day, on the first of April of last year, I should have met you with a far less gladsome heart than I now do, for it is not to be denied that occurrences of great import have taken place within that last year, that measures have been adopted by the general concurrence of men of all parties calculated to adjust local differences and settle the agitating questions of the country. It is time that

we should feel kindly one towards another, that we should feel that we are one people, that we have one interest, one character, one liberty, and one destiny.

I bore a humble but honest part in the procurement of the adjustment established by the last Congress ; if not everything that all could wish, it is as much as one could rationally hope for. I trust to your own perception to see the great degree of cheerfulness prevailing in society around you, and the general progress of all interests under the influence of the industry of your people, and I ask you whether I do not meet you under better auspices, for you, and for me, for united liberty, and for established fraternization among governments of the same republican faith, than I would have a year since.

It is not my purpose, and I do not wish to weary you by discussing any political question. This is an age for discussing political questions. This is an age of discussion and we are a people of discussion, but all that I know has been said so often that I am afraid to repeat it. I have come here to repeat in person what I have endeavored to express by letter, — my profound acknowledgments to the Legislature of your State for the kind manner in which they were pleased to take notice of a recent act of my official life ;<sup>1</sup> it is a compliment, the remembrance of which I shall carry with me to the grave.

It has appeared and does appear that the time has come in the progress of affairs, in view of the growth of the country, its vastly increased population and highly elevated character in the scale of improvement, when we, the descendants of those who achieved the Independence and established the Constitution of this country, are bound to speak out to the whole world of mankind and bear testimony to the cause of popular republican government.

Let other governments do as they will : it is not our duty to traverse the earth and make proselytes. Our business is to make proselytes by our example, to convert man to republicanism by showing what republicanism can do in promoting the true ends of government. By this we can do more than a thousand emissaries, more than ten thousand Peter the

<sup>1</sup> The Legislature of Pennsylvania had formally thanked Mr. Webster for the Hulsemann Letter.

Hermits. We will place in the political firmament a sun, bright-glowing and cheering, the warming influence of which all shall feel and know. Our destiny is great, and any man falling short of its full comprehension is not fully competent to conduct the affairs of government. Our situation is peculiar. We are remote from other countries, and we have power, thank God, to defend ourselves. And while enjoying the benefits, and seeing and knowing the glorious results of our political system, are we afraid to compare it with any other in the world,—to compare the security of life, property, industry, and reputation, as witnessed in the United States, and the several States, with their preservation under any other government of the earth? Revolutions cannot shock us. We have no dynasties to overturn, and we have none to erect in their stead; but the great, broad, general, beneficent current of usefulness and virtue flows by us, like your noble river, until it mingles with the mighty ocean.

But I look no further; I do not contemplate what might happen to Pennsylvania, when, separated from her neighbors, she may stand alone, nor will it be forced upon me except by the reality of fact. I look to a long existence of general prosperity and republican liberty. For myself, I believe that ages and ages hence the United States will be free and republican; still making constant progress in general confidence, respect, and prosperity. It will be the greatest solace of my life to be able to say, when my career on earth closes, that I have done something, though little, towards preserving the glorious institutions of my country.

# Speech in Front of the Revere House, Bowdoin Square, Boston

APRIL 22, 1851.

A STAGE had been erected, consisting, according to the contemporary newspaper report,<sup>1</sup> of tables, placed one upon top of another, lashed together, and covered with a carpet. After remarks by Capt. Newell H. Thompson, Mr. Bell and the other members of the Committee waited upon Mr. Webster, and brought him into the presence of the meeting, which greeted him with loud and repeated cheers. He mounted the extemporaneous platform described, and spoke nearly as follows :

FELLOW CITIZENS OF BOSTON : FELLOW CITIZENS : You rather take me by surprise this morning ; but it is a very agreeable surprise to me. I am much pleased to see your cheerful and satisfied faces : as much so as to see the cheerful face of that luminary which shines now in the heavens above us. And if you are half as glad to see me as I am to meet you, there is a great quantity of human happiness and good feeling at this moment in Bowdoin Square.

Gentlemen, a long and violent convulsion of the elements has just passed away, and the heavens, the skies, smile again upon us. There is often an analogy between the occurrences in the natural, and occurrences in the moral and political world. Sometimes political agitations pass away, bringing after them sunshine, joy, and gladness. May it be so now. I greet you as citizens of Boston ; I welcome you, offer you my heart and hand ; I present to you my warmest gratitude for what you and your fathers have done for me, from the days of my early manhood, when I came from the North to dwell among you, to partake your fortunes for good or for evil to the end of my life.

<sup>1</sup> Boston Daily Advertiser, April 23, 1851.

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I am not vain enough to suppose that I have rendered any very essential service to my country in my day and generation ; but if I may suppose that I have rendered any service, however little or however much, I owe it mainly to the constant, warm, unwavering friendship and support of the people of Boston. I shall, ere long, follow your fathers and my fathers to man's last home ; but while I live and breathe, while I have language or thought, while my heart beats or my tongue moves, I shall feel and speak of Boston as my home, as the cherished object of my public and private, of my political and friendly rewards.

Gentlemen, you do not expect to hear any discourse from me. I come to see you and you come to see me ; it is not an occasion for the discussion of any political topic. You do not expect me to deliver any opinions of my own, or to state the grounds of any political transactions.

Let me congratulate you, and ask you to congratulate me, that the events of the last year or two have placed us under better auspices ; we see clearer and breathe freer ; we feel new assurance that the rich blessings which we have inherited from our fathers will endure, will be perpetual, will be immortal — if any institutions of man or of earth can be immortal. The youngest of your children, the youngest of your grandchildren, will grow up to manhood with the proud feeling that they were born to, and that they will inherit imperishable liberty in these United States of North America, and in this ancient, beloved, and under all circumstances by me venerated, Commonwealth of Massachusetts. Why, fellow citizens, we need not be vain ; we need not be too much self-satisfied after all. Who among you is there who would exchange his own political and social condition for that which befalls the inhabitants or residents of any other country under the wide scope of the canopy over us ! Where is the foreign country that would satisfy you ? Nowhere. You stay at home satisfied. The institutions of your own country give you entire satisfaction. You enjoy political power universally disseminated under a republican government framed upon popular principles. Every citizen feels that he is a man. If he is governed, he is also one of the governors. He has a voice in every great transaction of public policy and national concern. Let others praise what

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they will and admire what they please. Let others prefer a government more royal, more despotic, or more democratic. For myself, and I believe for you, I may say we are satisfied with our condition, as people of the United States and citizens of Massachusetts. Our free, popular, and glorious representative government makes us known reputably all over the world.

Gentlemen, let us despair of nothing, let us despair of nothing, in behalf of our country. We shall see it go on in continuous prosperity. We already see the returning sense of the community. The love of liberty, and let me add with all the emphasis I can pour out from my breast, the love of UNION; that will keep us together. (Cheers.) If I had ten thousand voices, if I could reach the shores of the Pacific, if I could gather this whole vast nation within the sound of my voice, I would say, fellow citizens, *Union*, UNION, UNION, now and forever!

What are all these petty distinctions? What are all these cavils? These questions? These sectional quarrels? They are not dust in the balance; they are not fit to inhabit the heart of a true American; for the heart of a true American embraces the whole country, and if it is not big enough for that, he had better tear it out and throw it from him!

What little I have done, I repeat, is mainly attributable to the support you and your fathers have given me. I am not unmindful, not ungrateful. I find you, as I have found you in the past, and as I am sure I shall continue to find you for what remains to me of life. Let me say to you, and let me entreat you to deliver to your children what I say: as Boston found me thirty years ago, she finds me to-day, without variation or a shadow of change. I shall go to my grave full of the gratitude which I shall cherish for her and for her support of me.

Gentlemen, I bid you adieu, an affectionate adieu. By the blessing of God, I shall see you again (long-continued cheering), under circumstances, it may be, which will enable me to express somewhat at large (cries of "good") my opinions on the aspects of public affairs. All this is in the hands of the Providence that is over us. To Him I commend myself, I commend you, I commend all the great interests of our dear, our beloved country. Gentlemen, farewell.

# Speech at Syracuse

MAY, 1851.<sup>1</sup>

FELLOW CITIZENS OF SYRACUSE, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN : I thank you cordially for the pains you have taken to meet together this afternoon, forming so broad an assemblage, to welcome me to your important and growing city of Syracuse.

I have known this place, by occasional visits, for many years ; some of those visits were made before you, whose happy faces I see before me, were born, or when you were in infancy. I have watched its progress with interest, connected as it has been with the interest of the great saline product of the State, and as the capital of the noble County of Onondaga, which I have always regarded with admiration.

Ladies and gentlemen, the President and his friends were invited, three weeks ago, to attend the celebration of the completion of that great line of communication, the Erie Railroad. We left Washington with no other purpose, certainly none on my part, than to perform that agreeable duty. I had not the slightest expectation of being here, nor had I the slightest idea, or wish, of being called upon to address you, or any other body of citizens of the United States, upon the political topics of the day.

Ladies and gentlemen, my time of life for such public discourses and illustrations may be considered as pretty much over. There is a time for all things, and there has been a time when it was not unpleasant to me to meet masses of ladies and

<sup>1</sup> From the pamphlet report, Mirror Office, New York.

This speech and that delivered at the dinner given to Mr. Webster at Syracuse were made during his visit to the State of New York, in company with President Fillmore and the members of the Cabinet, to join in celebrating the completion of the New York and Erie Railroad. Mr. Webster also spoke at Buffalo, Rochester, and Albany. The reports of his remarks at Rochester, May 22, 1851, which were printed in the Rochester papers of the time, are brief and incomplete, but his Speeches at Buffalo and Albany are included in his Collected Works.

gentlemen in the open air, and to speak upon topics which were not disagreeable to them, and certainly not to me. But there must come a time, as we advance in life and age, when what we do for the public must be more in the closet, and less in the field.

Nevertheless, ladies and gentlemen, a large number of the people of Syracuse having signified to me, by letter, that it was their desire that I should meet them to-day, and address them on public subjects, as far as may be in my power, I gladly conform to their request.

On the great question of the day, my fellow citizens, I have no secrets. I have nothing to conceal and nothing to boast of. I trust that all of you know pretty well who I am, and what I am, and what my principles of political conduct have been for the last thirty years. They are not likely to be changed; and it is not likely that any earthly inducement will prevail upon me to depart from those settled notions and opinions which I imbibed in early life, which I have followed in the councils of this country, for good or for evil, for thirty years, and the correctness of which my judgment approves more and more every day of my life.

Ladies and gentlemen, I know very well that on the agitating questions of the present day, I have not the happiness to concur with all the people of Syracuse, or the county of Onondaga, or other parts of the State of New York. I know there are varieties of sentiments, and I know the sources of that disagreement. Some of them are very justifiable, and some of them, I am sorry to believe, are not capable of much defence. But I know there are differences of feeling brought about by differences of association, by different reading, and by different degrees of knowledge and information respecting public affairs.

But, since I am requested to address you you must take from me the honest sentiments of my own heart, the convictions of my own conscience. I lay no claim to your approval of my views, and I ask no favorable reception of them, farther than you see the suggestions I make to you are worthy of your regard. You are here in the centre, the very centre, of the greatest State in the Union, the place where frequently assemble representatives of all parties and all views, and you



have here all sorts of sentiments advanced, all sorts of doctrines espoused, and you have a very fair opportunity of forming a judgment, — a fair, conscientious judgment, — of all great questions before the public.

Now, ladies and gentlemen, it is a matter of notoriety all the world over, and especially in Syracuse, that the origin of the important questions that for two years have agitated the country is the condition of the Southern States in respect to the institution of slavery in those States, and the rights of the parties connected with that institution in the Government under which we live.

You cannot state, more strongly than I feel to be true, that this original, ancient, unhappy institution of the slavery of the African races in the Southern States is forever and ever to be deplored. It has been, in the course of our history, as much deplored by the Southern States as by ourselves, and to sixty years ago was more deplored by them than by us.

When the Constitution of the United States was adopted, the Northern people did not feel the evils of slavery, because it was not among them to any great or growing extent. The Southern people did feel the evils, because it was among them; and they all thought, and all said, it was an evil entailed upon them by the British Government, for which they were full of lamentation and regret, and if they knew how to get rid of it, they would embrace any reasonable measure to accomplish that end.

Such were the feelings and such the opinions of the principal men of the South; of such men as Chancellor Wythe, Jefferson, Mason, and other leading men of the South, who were concerned in the formation of the Constitution of the United States. And if you, young men, will look into the history of those times, you will find what I state to be true, that the Southern people were more filled with regret at the existence of slavery than the Northern people were.

The thirteen were colonies originally of English origin; coming here at different times, settling along the coast under various circumstances, all united by a common origin, they found themselves oppressed by the mother country in '75, and in '76 declared their independence. That was an act of

Union ; it was a united act of the thirteen colonies ; it was that united act that made us free from the dominion of England ; and, united under that act, the colonies fought the war of the Revolution, and afterwards established a common government. There was at that time no more idea of prohibiting slavery in the Southern States than there was of introducing it into the Northern States. These domestic State institutions and State establishments were considered as the proper subjects for the legislation of States themselves.

For purposes of general defence and general welfare, and for purposes of commercial equality, and similar objects, the States afterwards agreed to become one government ; and as to all the rest, it was expressly agreed that every State should take care of its own rights, and regulate itself in relation thereto at its own discretion. Upon these principles we came together under the Constitution which was then adopted ; and Washington, unanimously chosen by all the people, was our first President.

That was before your day, fellow citizens, and before mine, but it is a matter of history ; and from it you know that this question of the existence of slavery in the Southern States never became an agitating subject for more than fifty years afterwards. For more than fifty years the Northern States never supposed that they had anything to do with it ; but, in process of time, and in the progress of things, public sentiment has changed at the North. There is now a strong and animated, sometimes an enthusiastic, and sometimes a religious feeling, against the existence of slavery in the South. But persons entertaining such feelings and sentiments, as I think, disregard the line of their own duties, and adventure upon fields which are utterly forbidden.

Ladies and gentlemen, there are in this country Abolition Societies and Abolition Presses ; and it is no new thing for me to say, for I said it twenty years ago, and have held the opinion ever since, that, in my opinion, all these things have prejudiced the condition of the slave. Twenty years ago, a convention of the whole people of Virginia was held, to deliberate on changing her Constitution, and there was a free discussion of the policy of liberating the slaves, and of gradual emancipation.

The question was freely and openly discussed, and there was no fear, no reserve. I followed, in that respect, the advice of Jefferson and Madison and Marshall, with all of whom I have conversed upon this subject, and all of whom desired to see a way in which the gradual emancipation of the slave population of the South might be accomplished. And as I said, twenty years ago that question was freely and openly discussed by Marshall and other persons at the convention called by the people of Virginia. Everybody knew what was going on, and it was perfectly safe to come out and maintain, as a general proposition, that it would be for the benefit of the South to provide for the gradual emancipation of the slaves.

It was about that time that Abolition Societies were established in New England, and, in my opinion, they have done nothing but mischief; they have riveted the chains of every slave in the Southern States; they have made their masters jealous and fearful, and postponed far and far the period of their redemption. This is my judgment; it may not be yours.

Well, what has been the consequence? We have had occasions in which, in our political system, questions have arisen on the extension of slave territory. It arose in the case of Texas, and nobody found me then voting for the addition of one foot of slave territory to the United States. Ah! even before many persons who now shout the loudest for liberty knew what liberty was, I declared, in the city of New York in 1837 (and it has been on record ever since, and you can all see it), my fixed purpose that, under no circumstances, and under the pressure of no exigency, would I agree to take Texas into this country as a slave State, or a slave territory. From that position I have not departed; but our good representatives in the Senate and in the House of Representatives from the State of New York, from the Empire State, voted for the admission of Texas, while I resisted it in vain.

I state it not as a reproach, but as a fact, that some of the gentlemen from New York, then distinguished in the Houses of Congress, in spite of all I could say or do, voted to bring Texas, as she was, into the Union, as a slave State, and with

the solemn stipulation of the privilege of making out of herself four more slave States.<sup>1</sup>

What are they, and where are they now? They are Free-soilers of the first water, and they loudly denounce Mr. Webster. I believe he has been denounced here. Is not this Syracuse? I believe they hold conventions here; they denounce Webster as the fit associate of Benedict Arnold; and Professor Stuart, Dr. Spencer and Dr. Lord and Dr. Dewey, and others of that stamp, as being no better. I would be glad to strike out Benedict Arnold; as for the rest, I am proud of their company.

This is the truth; and before the throne of God, and before the tribunal of an intelligent people, there is nothing valuable but *truth, truth, truth*. It is not glossary or commentary that is valuable; it is not that thing called eloquence, never of the

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Webster opposed the resolution for the admission of Texas in a speech delivered in the United States Senate, December 22, 1845, printed in his Collected Works. He then stated that, with respect to the annexation of Texas to the Union, he had felt it his duty steadily, uniformly, and zealously to oppose it, and that, while he held with as much integrity and faithfulness as any citizen, to all the original arrangements and compromises under which the Constitution was adopted, he never could persuade himself to be in favor of the admission of other States into the Union as slave States with the inequalities which were allowed and accorded by the Constitution to the slave-holding States then in existence.

The question was on the third reading of the resolution, which passed the Senate by a vote of thirty-one to fourteen. On the same day a resolution for the acquisition of Cuba was submitted by Mr. Levy of Florida. On the following day Mr. Webster rose and said: "Mr. President, by this morning's mail I have received memorials signed by several thousands of our fellow citizens remonstrating against the admission of Texas as a slave State. The bill for the admission of Texas passed yesterday. *These memorials, therefore, are a little too late for Texas, but they may do for Cuba.*"

The joint resolutions for the annexation of Texas were passed by Congress, March 1, 1845, there being twenty-seven votes for the admission and twenty-five against it. These resolutions pledged the United States to permit at least four more States to be formed out of Texas, and that they should be admitted into the Union with or without slavery, if found below the Missouri Compromise line of 36° 30'. Thirteen of the twenty-seven votes in favor of annexation came from the free States, and four of these were from New England. Mr. Webster had been recently elected to the Senate, but did not take his seat until four days after the annexation resolutions had passed.

greatest value, and often mischievous ; but it is that which can stand the test of time and eternity alone — *truth*.

Now it is *truth*, that from my earliest introduction into public life, up to the present time, I never voted, I always refused to vote, for the acquisition of one inch of slave territory to the United States. But that goes for nothing, for nothing.

It is equally true that the Constitution of the United States, in so many words, declares that persons bound to service in one State, under the laws thereof, escaping into another, shall not be discharged therefrom, but shall be delivered up to the person to whom such service is due.

Now, I have sworn, again and again, to support that Constitution, and so has every person who has held office under the State Government, as solemnly sworn before God to support that Government ; that is, so far as depends upon him, to take care that no fugitive from labor, coming into a free State, be discharged from that labor, but shall be restored.

Well, what are we to do, then, as conscientious persons ? How are we to treat this matter ? Are we at liberty to say that all this is imagination, all nonsense, and we will do as we please ? Shall we say here is no obligation binding on our conscience ? You might as well say there are no obligations in domestic relations. Our political duties are equally matters of conscience, as are the duties arising out of our domestic ties and most endearing social relations. That is my opinion.

Now, ladies and gentlemen, I would wish that all the human race, of every color, were as happy as we are, and as capable of self-government. So far as men are qualified for self-government, so far as they are happier by being able to take care of themselves, so much the better. But we are to consider what we do, and we are not to rush on under the influence of a false philanthropy and mistaken humanity. If you satisfy me that we can do anything for the benefit of the Southern slave, constitutionally, I will do it. I have said, and I say again, I would vote in Congress, were I in that body, to restore to Virginia all the public lands the general Government has had from her, and all the proceeds of the same up to this time, if by that means it would enable her to provide some way for

the emancipation of her black population. Can I do more? Can you do more? And if we cannot do that, can we do more than to leave it to an all-wise Providence to bring about the result?

At the commencement of 1850, a year and a half ago, I was a member of Congress. I had been there a great while, perhaps most of you think quite too long (laughter), but there I was. We had acquired these new territories from Mexico, all against my wishes. I voted against each and all of them. California had no attractions for me. I did not wish to bring into this Government the agitating question about the further extension of slave territory. Your Senators from New York did wish it, and voted for it, against many votes of Southern gentlemen, who felt as I did, and who wished to avoid the controversy. Such were Berrien and Badger, Southern men. Their constituents wished them to vote for bringing in the new acquisitions, but they saw the evil of it, and they said, *No!* and voted against it. But the Northern States voted for it, very many of them, New York and Rhode Island, and even one-half of Massachusetts.

They said we will try an experiment. Good Heavens! try an experiment to see whether it will dismember the Union! Make an acquisition which may destroy it! Try an experiment upon the nation with as much unconcern as we try an experiment in chemistry! . . .

Well, this territory came in. It turned out as I foresaw. I will not say I foresaw the whole; I foresaw a part.

California was settled by a rush of people from the Northern and Middle States, and they made that Government free at once. So far, so good. She came in as a State, with the star of freedom in her forehead, and I rejoice at it. But no doubt it was a serious disappointment to the Southern people that some parts of California were not set apart for slave population and slave culture.

What next? There were those two territories of New Mexico and Utah, and a great conflict between the North and the South, whether the Wilmot Proviso should be applied to New Mexico.

I examined that subject; I knew it was distasteful and repugnant to the South; and I asked myself whether any such

provision was necessary; whether in the course of human events, whether in the geographical conformation of the country, and the habits of the people, there was the least ground to suppose that New Mexico would ever be a slave country. I thought there was not.

I thought that by the law of nature, superior to all the Wilmot Provisos the world ever saw, the mountains of New Mexico must sustain a free population. Therefore I would not consent merely as a taunting reproach to apply the Wilmot Proviso to the mountains of New Mexico, any more than I would apply it to the Canadas.

Well, *that* is the burden of my offence. But throughout New York and New England this refusal to apply the Wilmot Proviso is charged against me as a falsification of all the principles of liberty I have supported all my life.

I made that declaration on the 7th of March, 1850. You know the sound of reproach that rang through the whole country; you know how Webster, who was supposed to be the friend of liberty and of the Constitution, was reviled everywhere for his departure from that course.

In forty days from the time I made that speech, and expressed my opinion that it was not necessary to have a controversy with the South upon that subject, because the law of nature had excluded slavery from New Mexico, the people of New Mexico assembled and formed a constitution which excluded it altogether.

Now, what I have to complain of, — I do not mean to complain of anything; but the truth is, that of all the presses in Western New York and New England that reviled me so much and so violently for affirming there was no necessity for applying the Wilmot Proviso to New Mexico, there is not one of them that has taken back the charge when they saw the truth of my assertion verified by facts. Did they say Webster was right, and we wrong? No; not one of them.

Now, my fellow citizens, we come down to the commencement of the year 1850. There was a general agreement, not universal, a general consent, of the majority of Congress to bring in California under her Constitution of freedom. But what was to be done with those two territories?

There was a more vital question. You know Texas accomplished her independence by her revolution against Mexico; and afterwards by her Constitution, as she said, Texas embraced all the country east of the Rio Grande. That was disputed. I do not say Texas was right; but that was her claim. Then we had admitted Texas in '45, without any statement of her boundaries; but taking her as she represented her own boundaries to be. When she came into the Union, under the law of '45, and when we acquired New Mexico, a question immediately arose as to whom New Mexico, east of the Rio Grande, belonged,—whether to the United States or to Texas. This was very much a matter of dispute. Now who should settle this question? Texas was an extreme Southern State, full of ardent young men ready for any enterprise for what they considered the support of their rights, who were going to take possession by force of arms, of what they thought were Texas lands. At that time there were six or seven States of the South that had passed resolutions of separation, or leading to separation, or calling conventions to consider the question of separation, and were ready to take up the cause of Texas, and assist in enforcing her rights. Such was the state of things.

I confess, that for one, I thought it a subject of the greatest importance to settle this question of the Texas boundary by a just compromise, by any fair and equal arrangement, so that the peace of the country might be preserved. Without going more at length into the matter now, I wish to say, that, in my opinion, there was great danger of civil war. From the condition of Texas herself, and considering the thousands upon thousands of persons in the Southern States who were only waiting an opportunity to make an outbreak, and were ready to join the standard of Texas, which would give them the chance for military display,—I say there was the greatest danger of civil war.

I know very well, had Texas taken the first step, the Government of the United States would easily have subdued her. As a military matter, it was easy to foresee that result. But then as a political matter, as a matter connected with the view which the statesman should take of it, who can see the result of the shedding of blood by the Government?



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I thought, therefore, and think still, that every reasonable sacrifice that could be made to settle the boundary of Texas and to take away the topic of disunion from among us should be made.

But there remained other matters. I thought there ought to be a proper government for Utah and New Mexico. We have in all such cases, heretofore, established a territorial government. We did establish it, and that was one of the measures of that Congress, and in my opinion a very proper one.

And this leads us to the consideration of the question of the recent enactment of what is called the Fugitive Slave Law. I have said that you and I are not responsible for the existence of slavery in the South, no more than in the Island of Cuba, and we have no more to do with the one than the other. It is as far removed from all your political duties, and my political duties, as the slaves in the West India Islands. Well, here they are, and here is an original compact of the States, that persons bound to service or labor in one State, escaping into another, shall not be discharged, but be returned.

Now, in General Washington's time, in 1793, Congress passed an act for carrying this part of the Constitution into effect. It was thought wise at the time to leave the execution of that law pretty much in the hands of State tribunals; State magistrates and officers and judges were authorized to execute that law. It was so administered for fifty years, and nobody complained of it. Things went on until this new excitement of the slavery question, this abolition question, was brought up, and then some of the States, Massachusetts, Ohio, and others, enacted laws making it penal to execute this law of Congress.

Then the statute became a dead letter in this part of it; when, of course, it became a matter of necessity to provide for the execution of this constitutional enactment by the authority of the Government of the United States, or give it up altogether. Well, I made no question myself, that if we meant to fulfil the contract of the statute, if we meant to be honest, it was our duty to make a provision, which, by the authority of the Government itself, should carry into execution the provisions of

the Constitution. And that is the origin of the present Fugitive Slave Law.

I do not say the law is perfect. I proposed some amendments to it, but was called from the Senate before it was adjusted.

The law passed, and I have not yet heard the man whose opinion is worth a sixpence, who has said that that law is not perfectly constitutional. The Judges of the Supreme Court of the United States, of New York, of Massachusetts, all say the law is a constitutional one, passed in perfect conformity to the requirements of the Constitution. What then? Is it not to be obeyed? Are not those who are sworn to obey the Constitution, to enforce that law? Is it not a matter of conscience, of conscience?

But what do we hear? We hear of persons assembling in Massachusetts and New York, who set up themselves over the Constitution, above the law, and above the decisions of the highest tribunals, and who say this law shall not be carried into effect. You have heard it here, have you not? Has it not been so said in the County of Onondaga? (Cries of Yes, yes.) And have they not pledged their lives, their fortunes, and their sacred honor to defeat its execution? Pledged their lives, their fortunes, and *sacred honor!* — for what? For the violation of the law, for the committal of treason to the country; for it is treason, and nothing else.

I am a lawyer, and I value my reputation as a lawyer more than anything else, and I tell you, if men get together and declare a law of Congress shall not be executed in any case, and assemble in numbers to prevent the execution of such law, they are *traitors*, and are guilty of treason, and bring upon themselves the penalties of the law.

No! no! It is time to put an end to this imposition upon good citizens, good men and good women. It is treason, *treason*, TREASON, and nothing else (cheers), and if they do not incur the penalties of treason, it is owing to the clemency of the law's administration, and to no merit of their own.

Who and what are these men? I am assured some of them are clergymen, and some, I am sorry to say it, are lawyers, and who the rest are, God only knows.

They say the law will not be executed. Let them take care,

for those are pretty bold assertions. The law must be executed, not only in carrying back the slave, but against those guilty of treasonable practices in resisting its execution.

Depend upon it, the law will be executed in its spirit, and to its letter. It will be executed in all the great cities; here in Syracuse; in the midst of the next Anti-Slavery Convention, if the occasion shall arise; then we shall see what becomes of their lives and their sacred honor.

Do not debauch your own understandings, your own judgments; do not render ridiculous your own sympathy, humanity, and philanthropy, by any such ideas.

The course of your duty towards all that are in bondage, within your power and influence, is plain. Happily the teaching of the sacred book, which is our guide, instructs us in that matter. What we can do, we will do, to let the oppressed go free, to succor the distressed, and to visit the prisoner in affliction. We must do our duty, and we must content ourselves with acting conscientiously in that sphere of life in which we are placed; politicians in their sphere, individuals in their sphere, and all of us under the deep, earnest sense of obligation that our Creator has impressed upon us.

It is not unfrequently said by a class of men to whom I have referred, that the Constitution is born of hell; that it was the work of the devil; and that Washington was a miserable blood-hound, set upon the track of the African slave. How far these words differ from words that have saluted your ears within yonder hall, you will judge.

Men who utter such sentiments are ready at any moment to destroy the charter of all your liberties, of all your happiness, and of all your hope. They are either insane, or fatally bent on mischief.

The question is, therefore, whether we will sustain the Government under which we live; whether we will do justice to the Southern States, that they may have no excuse for going out of the Union. If there is anybody that will not consent that the South shall have a fair hearing, a fair trial, a fair decision upon what it thinks the Constitution secures to it, I am not of that number.

Everybody knows that I am a Northern man, born in the extreme North, bred and brought up in notions altogether irreconcilable to human slavery, and why should I have any sentiments in common with the South on that subject?

But when it is put to me as a public man, whether the people of the South, under the stipulations of this Constitution, have not the right of a fair law from Congress for returning to them the fugitive slave, I say they have; and I could not say otherwise.

Ladies and gentlemen, you will pardon me for the gravity of these remarks. I had rather talk with you in private or public on other subjects; upon the prosperity and happiness we all enjoy; upon the growth of this beautiful portion of New York; and, in short, upon anything rather than upon the Fugitive Slave Law, or Texas, or New Mexico; but I came here at the solicitation of the people of your city, to speak upon public topics. You will accept my thanks for the kind manner in which you have been pleased to receive me, and I wish you and your families all, life, happiness and prosperity.

# Speech at a Dinner given to Mr. Webster at Syracuse

MAY, 1851.<sup>1</sup>

B. DAVIS NOXON, Esq., gave the following toast :

“The Constitution and its greatest Expounder ; the Union and its ablest Defender.”

Mr. Webster arose, amid great applause, to reply.

I AM happy to meet you, and to enjoy this quiet, social, and agreeable dinner with you. Mr. Noxon has done me too much honor to allude to me in the terms which he has chosen, in connecting my services with the Constitution of the country, and the Union.

It has so happened that all the public services which I have rendered in the world, in my day and generation, have been connected with the general Government. I think I ought to make an exception. I was ten days a member of the Massachusetts Legislature (laughter), and I turned my thoughts to the search of some good object in which I could be useful in that position ; and, after much reflection, I introduced a bill which, with the general consent of both Houses of the Massachusetts Legislature, passed into a law, and is now a law of the State, which enacts that no man in the State shall catch trout in any other manner than with the ordinary hook and line. (Great laughter.) With that exception, I never was connected, for an hour, with any State Government in my life. I never held office, high or low, under any State Government. Perhaps that was my misfortune.

At the age of thirty I was in New Hampshire, practising law, and had some clients. John Taylor Gilman, who, for fourteen years, was Governor of the State, thought that, a young man as I was, I might be fit to be an Attorney-General of the

<sup>1</sup> From the pamphlet report, Mirror Office, New York.

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State of New Hampshire, and he nominated me to the Council ; and the Council taking it into their deep consideration, and not happening to be of the same politics of the Governor and myself, voted, three out of five, that I was not competent, and very likely they were right. So you see, gentlemen, I never gained promotion in any State Government.

Gentlemen, to be serious, my life has been a life of severe labor in my profession, and all the portion I could spare of that labor, from the support of my family and myself, has been devoted to the consideration of subjects connected with the general history of the country ; the Constitution of the country ; the confederation out of which the Constitution arose ; the history of all the Congresses which have assembled before and since the formation of that Constitution ; and, in short, if I have learned anything, or know anything (and I admit that it is very little), what I do know, and what I do understand, as far as I understand anything, is the Constitution of the United States, the history of its formation, and the history of its administration under General Washington, and from that time down to this.

I sometimes, gentlemen, draw around me a sort of presentation of characters and persons who composed the first administration of Washington. I like to look back, I like to go back to those original fountains, and draw in their pure waters. There is nothing that strikes my judgment and my feelings stronger than to go back to New York in April, '89.

General Washington had been elected President. So uncertain was it, then, what would be the success of the new Government, that the 4th of March went by four weeks before there was a quorum of either branch of Congress. And I have seen several original letters, addressed to members of Congress, urging them to come on, to form a government.

Many of the choice spirits, and all the eminent men that he had known through the period of the Revolution, staunch, good, strong men, disciplined, tried in the great school of adversity, were there. There was Hamilton, a marvel, a perfect marvel ; young, a man almost self-educated, a man of intuitive genius ; for nobody knows when or where he obtained the knowledge which distinguished him at so early a period.

General Washington saw he was fit to be placed at the head of the finances of the Government ; a great post, which was to decide whether the Government could go on or not ; because the country was poor, and the Congress of the country was untried. At that time there was no general flag, no law regulating commerce ; and the question was, whether any revenue could be derived from it.

And then there was Gen. Henry Knox, who in September was placed at the head of the War Department, a good soldier. In the same month, Washington placed John Jay at the head of the Judiciary ; that gave confidence to the courts of the United States. No man ever ascended the bench of justice with a purer and higher character than John Jay. Afterwards he sent him on a most important mission to England, and placed in that station Ellsworth, of Connecticut. He invited Jefferson, though not in the country, to become Secretary of State. In short if one might draw before him now the scene as it existed when Washington was inaugurated, and see his sedate and serene manner, a manner which to some, perhaps, seemed austere ; and if we could have him before us this day, and look at him as he sat in his first Cabinet, it would make one of the most striking historical pictures that could be committed to canvas. But we go further back, to '74 ; '74 is the great era in our history, the time of the meeting of the first Congress in Philadelphia.

And those remarkable papers that distinguished that Congress, and especially that capital paper addressed to England, by John Jay ! There we see the great basis of that popular system which our fathers maintained through the Revolution, and which constitutes the basis of the present Constitution of the United States.

Well, they fought through the Revolution ; they came out conquerors, and peace took place in '83. Now allow me to say that there is no more interesting period in our history than that which ensued between the peace of '83 and the establishment of this Government.

The States were all separate, all poor ; none had any commerce. There was the debt of the Revolution unpaid, millions upon millions ; and the Government then existing could not lay any tax, and could not collect any duties.

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Of all periods in our history, if you, young men, will study it, if those who hope to be distinguished in the history of our country hereafter will study it, that portion of our history from the peace of '83 to the establishment of this Government, is fullest of instruction of all others. Then it was that the ceaseless activity of Hamilton and Madison exhibited itself. They were the two great motive powers, the one North, the other South. Hamilton was ten years the younger, but he was the elder in everything but years, and Madison followed him in matters of the highest moment.

If, gentlemen, you should have occasion to recur to the reports of Congress, in '83, upon the necessity of such a government as could lay uniform duties, and make a uniform commerce, and establish a uniform government, so that there should be the same commerce of Massachusetts and of Virginia, there you will see all the elements laid down.

It is in these pursuits, and in the study of these questions, that I have, perhaps, devoted more of my time than a more strict regard to myself and my family would justify. But I must confess they have been the pursuits of my life.

Then we arrive at the assembly of gentlemen from several of the States, in '86. There were Madison and Hamilton, and a few others, twelve in all, I think, whose object was to bring the States to the same conclusion, that goods imported should pay a uniform duty. After a session of two weeks, they concluded to recommend the calling of a convention to make a constitution of government for the whole United States. That recommendation was sent to the old Congress, and by them sent to the old States. And in May, 1787, the convention that formed the present Constitution met in Philadelphia.

So the formation of the Constitution went on by slow degrees, and wise and experienced public men came to the conclusion that these States could not be prosperous without a general Government, and that Government founded upon the principle of a Union in things common and general to all, and the State's power and authority reserved wherever the general Union, and the purposes of it, did not require an interference.

These things are all historical. It is in the nature of things that men go on from step to step, according to the exigency of



the case. They found a Union was necessary, a common commercial system necessary ; and all these things were provided for in the Constitution under which we live. If we look at it, we shall see it is a matter of compromise and agreement from first to last. The Northern States were commercial, and what had they to gain? They had to gain a protected commerce abroad, and an exclusive right of the coasting trade, and of the domestic trade of the country, as against foreign influences. The South yielded all that. They agreed to place in Congress the entire control over the commerce of the country, both domestic and foreign. And therefore we all know that the first Congress that ever assembled placed the entire coasting trade of the country in American hands. Foreign ships could not, after that, trade between Boston and Virginia. And at that day the commerce was mostly New England and New York commerce, and so it has remained to this day. And now it employs a vast tonnage and thousands of ships. And all of it, from Maine to California, is confined to American vessels. No foreigner interferes. They could carry much cheaper and be more useful to Southern consumers ; for it is a fact that the vessels of Northern Europe, of Sweden and the Hanse Towns, navigate the seas cheaper than we can, because they do not pay so much wages to their hands as we do, nor feed them so well.

All this is preserved, and preserved under this Constitution, to the commercial interests of the North. Well, this is the great boon which my country of New England and yours of New York have received from the Government. It has carried their flag all over the world.

Then the Constitution went on to declare other things.

In the first place, it placed the foreign relations of the country in a right position. In the next place, it regulated uniform duties, and that was of the utmost importance. Why? There was the little State of Delaware that had a good port of entry, and Rhode Island which had an admirable port of entry. The State of Rhode Island had the power of assessing duties high or low, as she saw fit, and by underbidding the States of New York and Massachusetts could support her Government, and educate all the children in the State besides, from her

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revenues. While Rhode Island was out of the general Government, the State could regulate the duties of imports into Newport, and could so underbid the State of Massachusetts as to raise enough to maintain its whole Government. It was, therefore, a great sacrifice to give up what was, in fact, a subsistence, and come in under a general system. But it was done. The North and South all agreed to it. That is what has made New York, Philadelphia, and Boston. Gentlemen, there were compromises on both sides, but of that I have said enough to-day, as regards Southern rights acquired under the Constitution. Then, gentlemen, there is a larger view of this matter, a national view. We were no nation before '89. We had no flag, and there was no power in Europe that would treat with any State, nor had any State a treaty with any foreign power.

It was only when the Constitution of the United States had been adopted; when the Government was organized under it, in the city of New York, in April, '89; when laws were made, imposing uniform duties in every port; when there was a common flag, a common authority, — it was then, and only then, that we became a nation such as we now are. If there is any man more conversant with history than I am, who can find out any records, ancient or modern, who can refer to anything that has occurred since the flood, so illustrative of the power of a great, united government, as our own history has shown, I should be glad to see it. Whether it be poetry, or fiction, or imagination, I defy any man to produce anything equal to it from any source.

And I may say, in consequence of the allusion which has been made to me, that it has been in the study of these topics, of the principles of this Constitution, of the manner of its administration, that I have spent all that part of my life, not now a short one, which I could spare from the severe duties of my profession; and I must say, gentlemen, that I go back every day of my life to the model of Washington's administration. And I say to you here to-night, were I to draw the character of a President, such as Washington, were he on earth, would approve, Washington himself should stand before me, and I would copy his master-strokes and imitate his designs.

It was a marvel, a perfect marvel, for a man to come up to

the civil government from the head of our armies, who possessed so much moderation, so much caution, so much wisdom and firmness, and who at once entered upon the civil administration of the Government with so much prudence, and in a manner to give so much satisfaction, and that has left on the whole a character more remarkable and more renowned than any other public man ever possessed.

Thus it has happened, we have had great models. In the course of succeeding times we may have great models. We have sometimes thought that this administration, or that, has gone wrong, but they all at length have worked into the same line, and we are now, after the lapse of more than sixty years, in the possession of the same Constitution, adequate to the accomplishment of all good purposes; and I think, if we have the good sense and forbearance to keep together, there is nothing we may not expect to attain to. We have had dangers, but they have been overcome; and I flatter myself that we shall remember that our forefathers fought together, and achieved our liberties together, established this Government together, that it was their united wisdom that gave the first impulse to the laws setting the Government in motion.

We have prospered under it, and have gloried under it, and it has raised our name, and fame, and character (I would not boast) higher than that of any nation upon the earth. (Prolonged cheers.) I say it in the fulness of my conviction, there is not a name given under Heaven which touches in so thrilling a manner the races of millions of the civilized people of the world as the American nation, the country of Washington. I hope to live to a good old age; I hope to see nothing that will mar that name; but if it be the pleasure of God in His all-wise Providence to cast a cloud over that prospect; if it be in the future that this country, this glorious nation, this renowned Government shall fall to pieces, thankful to Him for the life that I have lived, I shall be more thankful if He shall take me to Himself before I see such a state of things.

# Speeches at Capon Springs, Va.

JUNE 28, 1851.<sup>1</sup>

WHILE upon a brief visit with his family at Capon Springs, Mr. Webster was entertained at a public dinner, given to him by two or three hundred of the yeomanry of that region, without respect to party. There were persons present who had travelled fifty miles (one old Revolutionary soldier having *walked* in the burning sun fifteen miles) for the purpose of paying their respects to the "Defender of the Constitution." Sir Henry L. Bulwer, at the time Minister from the Court of St. James, was present at the dinner and made remarks. Mr. William L. Clarke, who presided, proposed the following toast :

"Daniel Webster, our distinguished guest: the jurist and statesman who has illustrated the glory of our country. The champion of the Constitution and the Union, who has sown the seed of constitutional liberty broadcast over the civilized world."

Mr. Webster rose to reply amid deafening applause. He said :

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN: FELLOW CITIZENS OF VIRGINIA: It is my first duty to express, however inadequately, my gratitude to you, one and all, for this unexpected token of respect. I am aware that many of you have come from great distances; many of you, I know, have come upon the saddle, under a burning sun; and you have done this to tender me this token of your regard. I know also that many of you have left your estates and harvest fields, at a time when every hour, whether of proprietor or workman, is so important. For this, gentlemen, I thank you. I am afraid this courtesy has been to you costly and inconvenient, and therefore, gentlemen, it sinks more deeply in my heart. I thank you, gentlemen.

It has been my fortune, gentlemen, to have seen much of Eastern Virginia and of Southern Virginia; in past times, also, gentlemen, I have seen something of Western Virginia, those

<sup>1</sup> From the pamphlet report, Gideon & Co., Printers.

counties bordering on the Ohio river; but not until this week has it been my fortune to have seen anything of the beautiful and renowned valley where I now stand. I esteem it a great pleasure to have had a few days' leisure, or at least a few days that I could spare from my official duties, to follow the course of the Potomac, penetrate the Blue Ridge, and, turning to the left along the valley of the Shenandoah, see something of the country between the Blue Ridge and the Alleghany. My journey through your country thus far has been one of great gratification and admiration. I am free to confess that, from the time I crossed the Potomac, and, leaving it, went with the train upwards along the valley of the Shenandoah, I have seen a country abounding in fertility and remarkable for its vast riches and beauty. I have seen the great grain-growing countries of New York, and of Ohio, and other Western States; of England, from Herefordshire to the borders of Scotland; but I have never seen any wheat-growing region surpassing that which I crossed between Harper's Ferry and Winchester. I have been told that the same rich country extends beyond, and is to be found through Shenandoah, Rockingham, and Augusta counties. I hope, gentlemen, soon to have an opportunity of witnessing the truth of that statement. I admire, too, your mountain scenery; I admire it for its sublimity and grandeur; though, perhaps, these mountains are not adapted to that high degree of cultivation for which the valley is so remarkable, still they are picturesque, and give rise to thoughts and feelings which tend to elevate and dignify the man who beholds them. I assure you, gentlemen, I should feel most happy, if my time would permit, and I hope before long I may have the opportunity, to proceed still further in this region of the State, to go westward to the banks of the South Branch of the Potomac, and see that great corn-growing and cattle-raising country of which I have heard, and of which I have read so much, for nearly half my life. But this, at present, my time will not allow. This is my first visit to this part of Virginia, but I hope, gentlemen, it will not be the last.

There are two elements which constitute a country; soil and climate are one, men and women the other. Here

they are both to be found. But, even if there were no men and women in this region, the country would still be valuable and beautiful ; and if it were as barren as yonder rock (pointing through the window to a jutting cliff which overhangs the spring), but was filled with intelligent men and refined and educated women, like those who now throng this wide hall, it would be most admirable still. So, if either were here, your country would be beautiful and fascinating, and you, gentlemen, know how enchanting it must be and is, when both are so happily combined.

But I must now turn my attention to the toast which has been read by my friend, a friend of long standing, at the head of the table. I must attribute its terms to the partiality of friendship, and I am sure that they are somewhat extravagant. I disclaim having done anything in support and defence, and in the maintenance of the Constitution, except what I have done in co-operation with other abler men ; with men of high character and true devotion to their country and its political institutions. I was bred, gentlemen, indeed, I might almost say I was born, in admiration of our political institutions. I have studied them long, and in fact have studied little else of a political nature. All the public acts of my life have been performed in the service of the general Government. I have never held any office under any State government ; and, with the exception of a few days only, I have never been a member of the State Legislature. I am, as you may know, a lawyer, and from necessity a laborious one. I know not how the bread of idleness tastes, for I have never had a bit of it in my mouth. This, perhaps, savors of self-commendation, but I hope it may be pardoned. If, in the discharge of my public duties, and in the performance of my public services, my private interests have suffered and been neglected, I am amply compensated by the hope that if I leave no broad estate, no rich accumulations, I shall leave at least an inheritance not entirely disreputable to those who shall come after me.

I profess, gentlemen, to have acted throughout my life upon those principles which governed your ancestors and my own New England ancestors, in the times that tried men's souls ;

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that is to say, in the revolutionary struggle, and in that other most important period which witnessed the establishment of a general government. All know that in this last high and important proceeding, Virginia took an eminent lead. She saw that, to the disgrace of the country, the debt of the Revolution remained unpaid; and that gallant officers and brave soldiers, who had brought wounds and scars and broken limbs from the battle-fields of liberty, were reduced to poverty and want, and that some of them were almost literally begging their bread. The great and good men of other States felt the same evil, and their hearts were wrung by a similar anguish.

An English poet has said, that there was a time when for an Englishman it was fame enough

“That CHATHAM’S language was his mother tongue,  
And WOLFE’S great name compatriot with his own.”

Now, gentlemen, it is fame enough for me, if it may be thought that in my political conduct I have maintained, defended, and acted upon the principles of Virginia and Massachusetts, as these principles were proclaimed and sustained in the two great epochs in the history of our country, the Revolution, and the adoption of the present constitutional Government. If I have worked steadily to this end, I am sure that, whether much has been done or little has been done, it has been directed towards a good purpose. All that I say to-day, and all that I may say on similar occasions, I wish to be in the spirit of Washington and Madison, Wythe and Pendleton, and the proscribed patriots of Massachusetts, Hancock and Samuel Adams. If these and other great founders of our liberty and fathers of our Constitution erred, then have I erred; then have I been the most incorrigible of political sinners. But if they were right, then I venture to hope that I am right also; and “neither principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come,” shall eradicate that hope from my breast.

The leading sentiment in the toast from the Chair is the Union of the States. THE UNION OF THE STATES! What mind can comprehend the consequences of that Union, past, present, and to come? The Union of these States is the

all-absorbing topic of the day; on it all men write, speak, think, and dilate, from the rising of the sun to the going down thereof. And yet, gentlemen, I fear its importance has been but insufficiently appreciated. Like all common blessings, however great, it has been of late years too little the subject of reflection. The unthinking and careless hardly take heed of that atmosphere, which supports their lives from day to day and from hour to hour. As the sun rises in the morning, follows its track through the heavens, and goes down at night, we notice its course, enjoy its light and heat, and when we see it sink beneath the western horizon, we have no doubt, we do not think of the possibility, that it may not appear for another day. We are in no fear of perpetual darkness, or the return of chaos. So it is with our political system under a United Government and National Constitution. To these most of us were born; we have lived under their daily blessings, as if those blessings were not only matters of course, but imperishable also. But, alas, gentlemen, human structures, however strong, do not stand upon the everlasting laws of nature. They may crumble, they may fall; and republican institutions of government will assuredly sooner or later crumble and fall, if there shall not continue to be among the people an intelligent regard for such institutions, a great appreciation of their benefits, and a spirited purpose to uphold and maintain them. And when they shall crumble and fall, the political catastrophe will resemble that which would happen in the natural world were the sun to be struck out of heaven. If this Union were to be broken up by nullification, separation, secession, or any event whatsoever of equally repulsive name and character, chaos would come again, and where all is now light, and joy, and gladness, there would be spread over us a darkness like that of Erebus. Yes, gentlemen, I have little patience with those who talk flippantly of secession and disunion; they do not appear to me to understand of what they speak, nor to have the least idea of its consequences. If they have any meaning, I do not comprehend that meaning. Suppose this Union were dissolved to-day, where should we be to-morrow? I think a state of things would arise in which I should feel disposed to take shelter in the caverns of the moun-



tains, or seek some other place of obscurity, in which I should not witness the degradation and ruin of the country. Every anticipation of such an event presents a gloomy and horrible picture ; it is a vast Serbonian bog, in which no man could be happy unless he thought he was about getting out. Those who love the Union ardently, and who mean to defend it gallantly, are happy, cheerful, with bright and buoyant hopes for the future, and full of manly firmness and resolution. But secession and disunion are a region of gloom, and morass, and swamp ; no cheerful breezes fan it, no spirit of health visits it ; it is all malaria. It is all fever and ague. (Laughter and great applause.) Nothing beautiful or useful grows in it ; the traveller through it breathes miasma, and treads among all things unwholesome and loathsome. It is like the region of your great Dismal Swamp ; it is all

“Tangled juniper, beds of weeds,  
With many a fen where the serpent feeds,  
And man never trod before.”

For one, I have no desire to breathe such an air, or to have such footing for my walks.

Gentlemen, I am aware that the respect paid to me to-day is in consequence of my support of the adjustment measures of the last Congress. Although I wished to raise no false alarm, nor create any fears, yet, I believed in my conscience, that a crisis was at hand ; a dangerous, a fearful crisis ; and I resolved to meet it at any hazard, and with whatever strength I possessed. A true patriot, like a faithful mariner, must be prepared for all exigencies ; in the words of the old song :

— “He is born for all weathers ;  
Let the winds blow high or blow low,  
His duty keeps him to his tethers,  
And where the gale drives he must go.”

The support of the Union is a great practical subject, involving the prosperity and glory of the whole country, and affecting the prosperity of every individual in it. We ought to take a large and comprehensive view of it ; to look to its vast results, and to the consequences which would flow from its overthrow. It is not a mere topic for ingenious disquisition, or theoretical or fanatical criticism. Those who assail the Union

at the present day seem to be persons of one idea only, and many of them of but half an idea. They plant their batteries on some useless abstraction, some false dogma, or some gratuitous assumption. Or, perhaps, it may be more proper to say, that they look at it with microscopic eyes, seeking for some spot, or speck, or blot, or blur, and if they find anything of this kind, they are at once for overturning the whole fabric. And, when nothing else will answer, they invoke religion and speak of a higher law. Gentlemen, this North Mountain is high, the Blue Ridge higher still; the Alleghany higher than either; and yet this higher law ranges farther than an eagle's flight above the highest peaks of the Alleghany. No common vision can discern it; no conscience, not transcendental and ecstatic, can feel it; the hearing of common men never listens to its high behests; and therefore one should think it is not a safe law to be acted on, in matters of the highest practical moment. It is the code, however, of the fanatical and factious abolitionists of the North.

The secessionists of the South take a different course of remark. They are learned and eloquent; they are animated and full of spirit; they are highminded and chivalrous; they state their supposed injuries and causes of complaint in elegant phrases and exalted tones of speech. But these complaints are all vague and general. I confess to you, gentlemen, that I know no hydrostatic pressure strong enough to bring them into any solid form, in which they could be seen or felt. They think otherwise, doubtless. But, for one, I can discern nothing real or well-grounded in their complaints. If I may be allowed to be a little professional, I would say that all their complaints and alleged grievances are like a very insufficient plea in the law; they are bad on general demurrer for want of substance. But I am not disposed to reproach these gentlemen, or to speak of them with disrespect. I prefer to leave them to their own reflections. I make no arguments against resolutions, conventions, secession speeches, or proclamations. Let these things go on. The whole matter, it is to be hoped, will blow over, and men will return to a sounder mode of thinking. But one thing, gentlemen, be assured of, the first step taken in the programme of

secession, which shall be an actual infringement of the Constitution or the Laws, will be promptly met. And I would not remain an hour in any Administration that should not immediately meet any such violation of the Constitution and the Law effectually, and at once. And I can assure you, gentlemen, that all with whom I am at present associated in the Government entertain the same decided purpose.

And now, gentlemen, let me advert to a cheering and gratifying occurrence. Let me do honor to your great and ancient Commonwealth of Virginia. Let me say that in my opinion the resolutions passed by her Legislature at the last session, in which some gentlemen now present bore a part, have effectually suppressed, or greatly tended to suppress, the notion of separate governments and new confederacies. All hopes of disunion, founded upon the probable course of Virginia, are dissipated into thin air. An eminent gentleman in the Nashville Convention ejaculated, "Oh, that Virginia were with us! If Virginia would but take the lead in going out of the Union, other Southern States would cheerfully follow that lead." Ah, but that "if" was a great obstacle! It was pregnant with important meaning. "If Virginia would take the lead." But who, that looked for any consistency in Virginia, expected to see her leading States out of the Union, since she took such great pains, under the counsels of her ablest and wisest men, to lead them into it? Her late resolutions have put a decided negative upon that "if," and the country cordially thanks her for it.

Fellow citizens, I must bring these remarks to a close. Other gentlemen are present to whom you expect to have the pleasure of listening. My concluding sentiment is,

*"The Union of the States: May those ancient friends, Virginia and Massachusetts, continue to uphold it so long as the waves of the Atlantic shall beat on the shores of the one, or the Alleghanies remain firm on their bases in the territories of the other!"*

Mr. Webster was called upon later in the evening to deliver a second speech, which was not fully reported, a few notes only being taken. He said:

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Whatever may have been the differences of opinion which have heretofore existed between the Democratic and Whig parties on other subjects, they are now forgotten, or at least have become subordinate; and the important question that is now asked is, Are you a Union man? The question at this time is, the Union, and how we shall preserve its blessings for the present, and for all time to come. To maintain that Union, we must observe, in good faith, the Constitution and all its parts. If that Constitution be not observed in all its parts, but its provisions be deliberately and permanently set aside in some parts, the whole of it ceases to be binding; but the case must be clear, flagrant, undeniable, and in a point of vital interest. In short, it must be such as would justify revolution; for after all, secession, disruption of the Union, or successful nullification are but other names for revolution. Where the whole system of laws and government is overthrown, under whatever name the thing is done, what is it but revolution? For it would be absurd to suppose that by whole States and large portions of the country, either the North or the South has the power or the right to violate any part of that Constitution, directly, and of purpose, and still claim from the other observance of its provisions. If the South were to violate any part of the Constitution intentionally and systematically, and persist in so doing year after year, and no remedy could be had, would the North be any longer bound by the rest of it? And if the North were deliberately, habitually, and of fixed purpose, to disregard one part of it, would the South be bound any longer to observe its other obligations? This is indeed to be understood with some qualification, for I do not mean, of course, that every violation by a State, of an article of the Constitution, would discharge other States from observing its provisions. No State can decide for itself what is constitutional and what is not. When any part of the Constitution is supposed to be violated by a State law, the true mode of proceeding is to bring the case before the judicial tribunals; and if the unconstitutionality of the State law be made out, it is to be set aside. This has been done in repeated cases, and is the ordinary remedy. But what I mean to say is, that if the public men of a large

portion of the country, and especially their representatives in Congress, labor to prevent, and do permanently prevent, the passage of laws necessary to carry into effect a provision of the Constitution, particularly intended for the benefit of another part of the country, and which is of the highest importance to it, it cannot be expected that that part of the country will long continue to observe other constitutional provisions made in favor of the rest of the country; because, gentlemen, a disregard of constitutional duty, in such a case, cannot be brought within the corrective authority of the judicial power. If large portions of public bodies, against their duty and their oaths, will persist in refusing to execute the Constitution, and do in fact prevent such execution, no remedy seems to lie by any application to the Supreme Court. The case now before the country clearly exemplifies my meaning. Suppose the North to have decided majorities in Congress, and suppose these majorities persist in refusing to pass laws for carrying into effect the clause of the Constitution, which declares that fugitive slaves shall be restored, it would be evident that no judicial process could compel them to do their duty, and what remedy would the South have?

How absurd it is to suppose that when different parties enter into a compact for certain purposes, either can disregard any one provision, and nevertheless expect the other to observe the rest! I intend for one to regard, and maintain, and carry out, to the fullest extent, the Constitution of the United States, which I have sworn to support in all its parts and all its provisions. It is written in the Constitution:

“No person held to service or labor in one State, under the laws thereof, escaping into another, shall, in consequence of any law or regulation therein, be discharged from such service or labor, but shall be delivered up on claim of the party to whom such service or labor may be due.”

That is as much a part of the Constitution as any other, and as equally binding and obligatory as any other on all men, public or private. And who denies this? None but the abolitionists of the North. And pray what is it they will not deny? They have but the one idea; and it would seem

that these fanatics at the North and the secessionists at the South are putting their heads together to derive means to defeat the good designs of honest and patriotic men. They act to the same end and the same object, and the Constitution has to take the fire from both sides.

I have not hesitated to say, and I repeat, that if the Northern States refuse, wilfully and deliberately, to carry into effect that part of the Constitution which respects the restoration of fugitive slaves, and Congress provide no remedy, the South would no longer be bound to observe the compact. A bargain cannot be broken on one side and still bind the other side. I say to you, gentlemen, in Virginia, as I said on the shores of Lake Erie and in the city of Boston, as I may say again, in that city or elsewhere in the North, that you of the South have as much right to receive your fugitive slaves, as the North has to any of its rights and privileges of navigation and commerce. I desire to be understood here among you, and throughout the country, that in hopes, thoughts, and feelings, I profess to be an American; altogether and nothing but an American. And that I am for the Constitution, and the whole Constitution. I am as ready to fight and to fall for the constitutional rights of Virginia, as I am for those of Massachusetts. I pour out to you, gentlemen, my whole heart, and I assure you these are my sentiments. I would no more see a feather plucked unjustly from the honor of Virginia, than I would see one so plucked from the honor of Massachusetts. It has been said that I have, by the course I have thought proper to pursue, displeased a portion of the people of Massachusetts. That is true, and if I had dissatisfied more of them, what of that? I was in the Senate of the United States, and had sworn to support the Constitution of the United States. That Constitution made me a Senator of the United States, acting for all the States, and my vote was to bind the whole country. I was a Senator for the whole country. What exclusive regard had I to pay to the wishes of Massachusetts upon a question affecting the whole nation, and in which my vote was to bind Virginia as well as Massachusetts? My vote was to affect the interests of the whole country, and was to be given on matters of a high Constitutional character. I assure you, gentlemen, I

no more respected the instructions of Massachusetts, than I would have respected those of Virginia. It would be just as reasonable to expect me to vote as the particular interests of Massachusetts required, as it would be to expect that, as an arbitrator, a referee, or an umpire between two individuals, I was bound to obey the instructions of one of them. Could I do that? Have I descended, or am I expected to descend, to that level? I hope not.

Gentlemen, instructions from States may properly be regarded as expressions of opinion by well informed political men, and in that view are entitled to respect. But that a Senator in Congress, acting under the Constitution, and bound by his duty and his oath, to act, in all things, according to his conscience, for the good of all the States, should, nevertheless be absolutely bound by the will of one of them, is preposterous. Virginia has not consented that her rights, under the Constitution, shall be judged of by the Legislature of Massachusetts; nor has Massachusetts agreed that hers shall be judged of by the Legislature of Virginia. But both have agreed, that their rights and interests shall be judged of by persons, some of whom are appointed by each, and all bound to decide impartially. That men, mutually chosen to decide the rights of parties under a compact, are yet to be bound, each to the will of the party appointing him, is an absurdity, exceeding all other absurdities.

Mr. Webster also adverted, at considerable length, to the consequences of a dissolution of the Union, and pointed out the present and prospective power and glory of the United States. He spoke of the struggle now going on in Europe between constitutional government and arbitrary power; and incidentally mentioned his having alluded to this subject in a letter addressed by him, some time since, to the Austrian *charge d'affaires*. He proceeded, at some length, to trace the system of republican governments; the practical operation of popular representation; and the inevitable necessity that the will of the majority, constitutionally exercised, should be the supreme law; and that the law, thus ordained, being the States' collected will, should be obeyed. In conclusion, he

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said: These, gentlemen, are my sentiments. I intend to hold fast to them for the remainder of my life, in the hope that, when I die, I may close my eyes on free, happy, united America!



# Remarks at the Railroad Jubilee at Boston

SEPTEMBER 17, 1851.<sup>1</sup>

MAY it please your Excellency this occasion is not mine. Its honors and its duties are not due to, or from me. The State, the great State, the old State, the old patriotic Bunker Hill and Faneuil Hall State of Massachusetts has invited the President of the United States within her borders. To your honored person and to your honored office, may it please your Excellency, this visit is paid. Sir, I am a good deal touched with the kind, the too kind, reception which you have given us.

As I have said, sir, the occasion belongs to the President and to those of his Cabinet who are strangers. Thank God, I am no stranger here. I am of Massachusetts. Bone of her bone, and flesh of her flesh, and I would rather rejoice in taking a part with you, may it please your Excellency, as the Governor of the State, and with my fellow citizens who surround you, in paying honor to the United States, than in acting any part, or demanding any part towards myself.

And, may it please your Excellency, I wish in the first place to say that from the bottom of my heart I wish entire success to your administration of the great affairs of this State. In whosoever hands those affairs fall, if they are fairly and

<sup>1</sup> Reception given President Fillmore on the first day of the Jubilee in celebration of the completion of the great lines of railway communication between Boston, Canada, and the Great West, and the establishment of a line of American trans-atlantic steamers. Among the other speakers were the President, Hon. Henry Wilson, Governor Boutwell, Hon. A. H. H. Stuart of Virginia, Secretary of the Interior, Hon. Charles M. Conrad, Secretary of War, Mayor Samuel Walker, of Roxbury, Colonel Schouler, and Mayor Bigelow of Boston.

Printed from the report in the National Intelligencer, September 20, 1851.

*Millard Fillmore*

From a Photograph from life, in the possession of  
Mr. W. J. Baker, Buffalo, N. Y.









A. W. Elson & Co. Boston



impartially administered, those hands shall have my hand in their support and maintenance.

In the next place I wish to say that I devoutly wish that the great interests of the Commonwealth may prosper. Our interests are various. They are complex. We have a million of people living on a very small surface, on a sterile soil and beneath an inclement sky; and yet we are full of happiness and all are, as we say in the country, "well-to-do in the world, and enjoying neighbors' fare." Now that must be owing to wise legislation. It must be owing to great economy and prudence among the people. It must be owing to a system of education. It must be owing to something that is not in the earth, nor in the sky, but in the soul and heart of man and woman and child. And these I hope will prosper.

I hope, too, that every concern of this great Commonwealth under your administration and those of your successors may prosper; and above all, *above all*, a sentiment I can never repress and hardly postpone, my ardent prayer is that this whole country, bound together as it is by ties of interest, of affinity, of association, may continue to be bound together forever, until that thing shall happen which I know will never happen under God's blessing — until the Constitution of the country shall prove a curse to it. Never, *never*, NEVER.

Why what is it that supports all these interests? What is it? Here is a mass of commerce. Who protects it? Here is a vast interest in manufactures. Who protects it? Here is a coasting trade running from Newburyport round to California. Who protects it? What laws? What government? In short, wherever we turn our eyes, we see that this State is not only an agricultural State, but a commercial State, a manufacturing State, a State mixed up with all the interests that belong to society; and beyond all these visible and demonstrable interests and a vast many Yankee notions besides, we live under the laws of the general Government, and should perish if those laws were abrogated.

Sir, you have alluded to the period in which I have passed some part of my life in the administration of the affairs of the country. The years of human life wear away, sir. I shall



perform such services for no such other length of time. But with every increasing year and day and hour, the more I contemplate the history of this country, the great destiny of this country, the more I see it and contemplate it as stretching from sea to sea and from the rivers to the ends of the earth, the more I see it exhibit the American genius at home and abroad, the more I see what exhibitions of skill have astonished Europe in this, our day, and in this, our summer, the more I am surprised and gratified. Why, sir, the bitterest, the ablest, the most anti-American press in all Europe within a fortnight has stated that "in everything valuable, in everything that is for human improvement exhibited at the World's Fair, the United States goes so far ahead of everybody else as to leave nobody else in sight." It is like the position of Jove among the gods. Jove is first, and there is none second. And in another paper influential in the councils of Great Britain, the editor says "the time is coming" — he might almost have said, and now is — "when America shall command the ocean, and both oceans, and all oceans." This results partly from the skill of individuals, partly from the untiring ingenuity of the people, and partly from those great events which have given us the ocean of one world on one side, and the ocean of the other world on the other. They appear to have filled the minds of the people with astonishment. And it brought to my mind a story told of a gentleman not now living. It was related to Mr. John Lowell about thirty years ago. Returning to Europe after the peace of 1815, the gentleman to whom I have referred was spoken to by some one of the great personages of Europe, who, alluding to the naval power of the United States, said that he hoped the European Powers would now be permitted to traverse the ocean quietly; and the response was, "Yes, with *our* leave!"

May it please your Excellency, I hope that all health, happiness, and prosperity, will attend you henceforward through life.

# Remarks at the New Hampshire State Agricultural Society Fair

MANCHESTER, October 9, 1851.<sup>1</sup>

AFTER an address of welcome by Hon. S. H. Ayer of Manchester Mr. Webster made the following remarks:—

MR. AYER, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN, CITIZENS OF MY NATIVE STATE: If I were to say to you on this occasion, that I thank you for this kind welcome, I should but use old and common language, unsuited to the warmth of my heart and the deep gratitude which this occasion inspires. Allow me to say that there is not on the face of the earth, a spot in which such a welcome as this, by such an assembly as this, would carry so much cheering gratification to my heart. I am here in the State which gave me birth. I am here in this State of my early education and association; I am in the State where the bones of my ancestors repose; I am in the State in which all my early associations were formed; and I can say with the greatest truth, that never in my life, although my visits to New Hampshire have not been frequent, have I crossed any rod of it without feeling with a glow, this is my own, my native State.

Professional and public duties have assigned me occupation elsewhere for many years. I have no more lost sight of New Hampshire, than a traveller at the North can lose sight of Mount Washington. I here feel it to be my early home, and if it has so happened that I have done any public service which by any form of reflection can do honor to New Hampshire, I shall not have paid back the deep debt of gratitude which I owe.

Gentlemen, human life passes away rapidly. I may not have another occasion like this to meet so vast an assemblage. I see

<sup>1</sup> From the Boston Journal, October 10, 1851.

here faces that I have known in my earlier life, and a thousand faces, children of those. I see on all the faces around me as bright and glowing a smile as the sun shows from the heavens in the midst of which he now rises. I thank you, fellow citizens, for this welcome. Once more I come among you to renew old recollections and old acquaintances, and form some acquaintances with the younger generation which have grown up since I was an inhabitant of the State myself. I look upon it as a bright day in my history. I shall spend it with you with the greatest pleasure. I hope I may have occasion of seeing as many of you as may be convenient, and for the present, Mr. Ayer and fellow citizens, I bid you good morning."

After an address by Hon. Marshall P. Wilder of Dorchester, Mass., Mr. Webster spoke as follows:—

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN: I hardly know how to occupy the very few moments in which it is proper for me to address you. I come here to-day as a visitor and a guest, to see and to hear, and exchange congratulations with my countrymen and countrywomen of New Hampshire. But it is too late in the day, if the occasion were proper, for the discussion of any subjects except those which belong to that particular object in regard to which your eloquent friend has so fully and ably discoursed.

On these occasions I know very well that there is some limit to patience and to strength. You may desire to see me as one of your original fellow citizens. You may desire to hear my voice, but I am sure you do not desire to hear me discuss topics such as I have discussed, and commonly discuss elsewhere, on an occasion so closely confined in its appropriateness to one object.

I will say to you, ladies and gentlemen, that if there be any one thing in my heart stronger than any other wish, it is that all the various pursuits of life, protected by law, prosecuted by scientific discovery, and guaranteed by free government, may continue to prosper in this our land.

Your fathers and my fathers — generations that have gone before us — united the character of soldier and farmer. They fought the enemy, and they fought the inclemency of the weather, and they struggled with the soil. The mechanic arts

they pursued and enjoyed no farther than was necessary to carry on those great elementary operations of a farming country. They lived in a cold region — a region of six months of winter, and a short summer during which they were to provide for this great length of inclement weather. They went therefore zealously to work to defend themselves from a savage foe, and cultivate the fields for their own subsistence. And I am old enough to have seen — and seen since I was a member and practised at the bar — those who have been shot and wounded in their own corn fields, by Indian muskets, on this river just above us.

Now all is changed. Wars of that kind have ceased and come to an end. He who was once half soldier and half farmer, has now become altogether farmer, or else he has gone to the mechanic arts — to those various improvements which enrich and adorn society — and our State of New Hampshire is as great a participator in these improvements, as any part of the country. And I need not say to you, gentlemen, I need not say to you, that this new face of things, this great change that has come over us, while it is partly owing to peace on the frontiers, which has released in former years so many of the people of New Hampshire from border wars, that peace itself has been promoted, and all the arts that we see flourishing around us, and the increase of wealth which we behold, are the fruits, first of all of the enterprising character of the people, and next, of the good government under which it has pleased Almighty Providence to allow us to live.

Friends and fellow citizens, — we are a nation. We are at the head of this Western World. No man can appreciate what is due to himself as an American citizen, or what are the duties incumbent on him as such, who does not feel that he is one of twenty-five millions of people who are setting a great example of freedom and republicanism to the rest of the world. And if he be narrow, or local, or prejudiced, if he be as blind as a mole, if he cannot see an inch before him, he cannot comprehend his destiny. He does not know the place he fills amidst the human race. Therefore, I think that it is incumbent on us all, on all these occasional public meetings, that we see, and know, and feel the progress of our own prosperity,

and remember that it is the result of those institutions which our fathers founded for us, and which it is our duty always and at every sacrifice to maintain.

Gentlemen, the hour of the day, if nothing else, would prevent me from discussing any of those subjects which more appropriately belong to another sphere. The eloquent gentleman who welcomed me at the cars this morning was kind enough to say, that in this vast assembly there was no political party. There was a general attachment to the Union. I believe it. I do not believe that the soil of New Hampshire can produce any of the opposite poisonous plant. It is as free from all noxious weeds of that description as any part of the country. I am glad of it; for mere barrenness on the naked tops of the Goffstown Hills or White Mountains is far to be preferred to the richest soils which produce nothing but plants of mischievous, poisonous growth.

I delight to dwell upon the consideration that I am a New Hampshire man, and now among New Hampshire men. I delight to feel that I stand on my native soil, in the neighborhood of those whom I have regarded from my infancy. I am able to recollect that the tomb of the great Hero of Bennington is near us; I am proud to remember that many of my own friends, and especially my own father, were with him on that occasion, and know that on these hills, in early life, I have seen his comrades, I have often seen him. And now, gentlemen, if we turn back to our own New Hampshire people, if we remember the men who shed their blood, and employed their counsels for the liberty of this country, if we think of Bartlett, and Whipple, and Thornton, of the Gilmans, the Langdons — and all those patriots of two or three generations ago who founded our New Hampshire Government, who connected us with the great government of the Union, who sought with all their hearts, and recommended with all their powers, always as far as was proper, to lead the people into its adoption — and if we could to-day see them all here, Josiah Bartlett, William Whipple, John Taylor Gilman, and the rest, and ask them how we should deport ourselves in the present crises of our country, what would they say — if any should say we were for breaking off from this union, were for cutting loose the

ties that are binding us together — would they not say we were *Stark* mad — departing from everything they had taught us.

Gentlemen, let me assure you that in my conviction the thunderbolt that rives the hardy oak and splits it from its top to the ground into ten thousand pieces, and scatters those pieces over the earth, may be a more sudden mode of destruction, but it is not a surer mode of destruction than a spirit of disunion will show, if it is let forth in its angry zeal upon this united government under which we live. Its fragments will cover the earth, and we shall feel the smoke of its sulphur as we live.

Now, gentlemen, let us stand where our fathers stood. Let us say we are Americans, one and all; that we go for the general liberty, the general freedom, the general security of the whole American Republic; that we know where we are, and who we are; that we know who is looking at us from every part of the earth, anxious to see whether we shall falter and fail and come to nothing, and anxious to see whether we will go on and adhere to our father's principles and our own principles, and build up to the end of time the most glorious government the world has ever seen.

My choice is made, and I know that it is your choice. You do not mean that any stigma of departing from the good principles of your fathers shall rest on you. Not one.

Gentlemen, again I say that it would be pleasing for me to pass days with you. But the hours of this day are rapidly passing away. I must take my leave of you. Carry my affectionate regard, every one of you, to your own family and your own fireside, and say that to-day you have seen one son of New Hampshire, whom circumstances had led away from his native State for years, come back full of New Hampshire sentiments, full of the sentiments of his fathers and your fathers; and that he has left them in your charge and prayed you to give them in charge to your children forever and ever.

In the evening Mr. Webster thus addressed a torchlight procession which had halted in order to greet him.

FELLOW CITIZENS: I am very much obliged to you for stopping in the progress of your illuminated procession through the

city, to pay me the compliment of a call. I hope the evening is as agreeable to you as the whole day has been to me. I would testify to the pleasure that I have experienced here during the day and evening, and tender you my best wishes that the evening may pass off agreeably to yourselves, and that health and happiness may attend you and all your families.

I have received with great gratification, gentlemen, the compliments of the different corps and bodies and societies of which Mr. Luce has made mention. I have been struck with the beauty in which the military and fire companies, the body of marshals and city police, and everybody and all connected with the ceremonies of this day, have exhibited themselves. It is highly creditable, especially in so young a city — for it is hardly more than fifteen years since I traversed these plains when there were not ten houses in sight; but now here is a city as orderly, as respectable, and as well managed as any older, longer settled, and I had almost said, better disciplined, but not better disciplined members of other communities.

Your city, gentlemen, is destined to a great growth. It is in the course of things that this point upon the river, near the great falls of the Merrimack, the greatest in New Hampshire, must become, and will become ere long a vastly great commercial place. I remember it, and it does not seem to be long ago, when with the exception of Gen. Stark, who lived above, and Col. MacGreggor who lived the other side of the river, there were hardly a dozen or twenty houses in view. Things have changed. You have all come together from various parts of the country, and you have formed associations, and friendships and connections in domestic life and in business, and in public life, as if you had been here all your days. Such is the facility, and such the enterprise with which the American people everywhere associate together, and become acquainted with one another.

Gentlemen, one can hardly tell what is to be the ultimate result of the formation of these new cities all along this river, and in other parts of the country, upon the morals, the intelligence and the happiness of man. Thus far the experiment seems to have been entirely successful — morals are attended to, learning is attended to, religious instruction is attended to

in this new city of Manchester, with as much regularity, punctuality and honesty of purpose as in all the farming towns in the country. Perhaps more so.

Associations in considerable numbers bring them together, inspire them with a love of social order, of moral instruction, of religious education, and make them feel their importance to one another as well as their importance to their own families. But I must not detain you who wish to go to other parts of the city. I say to you, once more, I thank you for stopping your illuminated procession and paying me the compliment of a call, and I hope you will go through the evening with entire satisfaction to yourselves.



# Speech at the Kossuth Banquet

WASHINGTON, January 7, 1852.<sup>1</sup>

I HAVE great pleasure in participating in this festival. It is a remarkable occasion. He who is your honored guest to-night has led thus far a life of events that are viewed as highly important here, and still more important to his own country. Educated, spirited, full of a feeling of liberty and independence, he entered early into the public councils of his native country, and he is here to-day fresh from acting his part in the great struggle for Hungarian national independence. That is not all his distinction. He was brought to these shores by the authorities of Congress. He has been welcomed to the capital of the United States by the votes of the two Houses of Congress. I agree, as I am not connected with either branch of the Legislature, in joining, and I do join, in my loudest tone, in the welcome pronounced by them to him. The House of Representatives,—the immediate representatives of the people,—full themselves of an ardent love of liberty, have joined in that welcome; the wisdom and sobriety of the Senate have joined in it; and the head of the Republic, with the utmost cordiality, has approved of whatsoever official act was necessary to bid him welcome to these shores. And he stands here to-night, in the midst of an assembly of both Houses of Congress, and others of us met here in our individual capacity, to join the general acclaim, and to signify to him with what pleasure we welcome him to the shores of this free land — this asylum of oppressed humanity. Gentlemen, the effect of the reception thus given him cannot but be felt. It cannot but have its influence beyond the ocean, and among countries where our principles and our sentiments are either generally unknown or generally disliked. Let them go forth — let it be borne on all

<sup>1</sup> Boston Daily Advertiser, January 12, 1852.

the winds of heaven — that the sympathies of the Government of the United States, and all the people of the United States, have been attracted toward a nation struggling for national independence, and toward those of her sons who have most distinguished themselves in that struggle.

I have said that this cannot be without its effect. We are too much inclined to underrate the power of moral influence, and the influence of public opinion, and the influence of principles, to which great men, the lights of the world and of the age, have given their sanction. Who doubts that, in our own struggle for liberty and independence, the majestic eloquence of Chatham, the profound reasoning of Burke, the burning satire and irony of Colonel Barré, had influences upon our fortunes here in America? They had influences both ways. They tended, in the first place, somewhat to diminish the confidence of the British ministry in their hopes of success in attempting to subjugate an injured people. They had influence another way, because, all along the coasts of the country, — and all our people in that day lived upon the coast, — there was not a reading man who did not feel stronger, bolder, and more determined in the assertion of his rights when these exhilarating accounts from the two Houses of Parliament reached him from beyond the seas. He felt that those who held and controlled public opinion elsewhere were with us; that their words of eloquence might produce an effect in the region where they were uttered; and, above all, they assured him that, in the judgment of the just, and the wise, and the impartial, his cause was just, and he was right; and, therefore, he said, “ We will fight it out to the last.”

Now, gentlemen, another great mistake is sometimes made. We think that nothing is powerful enough to stand before autocratic, monarchical, or despotic power. There is something strong enough, quite strong enough, and, if properly exerted, will prove itself so, and that is the power of intelligent public opinion in all the nations of the earth. There is not a monarch on earth whose throne is not liable to be shaken by the progress of opinion, and the sentiment of the just and intelligent part of the people. It becomes us, in the station which we hold, to let that public opinion, so far as we form it,

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have a free course. Let it go out; let it be pronounced in thunder-tones; let it open the ears of the deaf; let it open the eyes of the blind; and let it be everywhere proclaimed what we of this great republic think of the general principle of human liberty, and of that oppression which all abhor. Depend upon it, gentlemen, that between these two rival powers, — the autocratic power, maintained by arms and force, and the popular power, maintained by opinion, — the former is constantly decreasing, and, thank God, the latter is constantly increasing. Real human liberty and human rights are gaining the ascendant; and the part which we have to act in all this great drama is to show ourselves in favor of those rights, to uphold our ascendancy, and to carry it on until we shall see it culminate in the highest heaven over our heads.

On the topics, gentlemen, which this occasion seems to invite, I have nothing to say, because, in the course of my political life — not now a short one — I have said all that I wish to say, and all that I wish to transmit to posterity, connected with my own name and history. What I said of Greece twenty-five years ago, when our friend was too young to be in political life, I repeat to-night, *verbum post verbum*, exactly what I said then. What I said of Spain at a later period, when the power of the restored Bourbons was exerted to impose upon Spain a dynasty not wished by the people of Spain, that I repeat in English, and Spanish, and French, and in every other language, if they choose to translate it.

May I be so egotistical as to say that I have nothing now to say upon the subject of Hungary? Gentlemen, in the autumn of the year before last, out of health, and retired to my parental home among the mountains of New Hampshire, I was, by reason of my physical condition, confined to my house; but I was among the mountains whose native air I was born to inspire. Nothing saluted my senses, nothing saluted my mind or my sentiments but freedom, full and entire; and there, gentlemen, near the grave of my ancestors, I wrote a letter which most of you may have seen, addressed to the Austrian *chargé d'affaires*. I can say nothing of the ability displayed in that letter; but, as to its principles, while the sun and moon endure, and while I can see the light of the sun and the moon,

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I stand by them. In a letter, dated February last, moved by these considerations, which have influenced all the Christian world, making no particular merit of it, I addressed a letter to the American minister, at Constantinople, at the court of the Sublime Porte, for the relief of Louis Kossuth and his companions in exile; and I happen to know that that letter was not without some effect. At any rate, it is proper for me here to say that this letter, and that one to which I have before alluded, were despatched with the cordial approbation of the President of the United States. It was, therefore, so far the act of the Government of the United States in its executive capacity. Now, I shall not further advert to these topics to-night, nor shall I go back to ancient times, and discuss the provisions of the Holy Alliance; but I say that, in the sentiments avowed by me, I think, in the years 1823 and 1824, in the cause of Greece, and in the more subsequent declarations of opinion, there is that which I can never depart from without departing from myself. I should cease to be what I am if I were to retract a single sentiment which has been expressed on these several occasions.

Now, gentlemen, I do not propose, at this hour of the night, to entertain you, or attempt to entertain you, by any general disquisition upon the value of human freedom, upon the inalienable rights of man, or upon any general topics of that kind; but I wish to say a few words upon the precise question, as I understand it, that exists before the civilized world, between Hungary and the Austrian Government. I wish to arrange the thoughts, to which I desire to give utterance, under two or three general heads.

And, in the first place, I say that wherever there is, in the Christian and civilized world, a nationality of character—wherever there exists a nation of sufficient knowledge and wealth and population to constitute a government, then a national government is a necessary and proper result of nationality of character. We may talk of it as we please, but there is nothing that satisfies the human mind in an enlightened age, unless man is governed by his own country and the institutions of his own government. No matter how easy be the yoke of a foreign power, no matter how lightly it sits upon the shoulders,

if it is not imposed by the voice of his own nation and of his own country, he will not, he cannot, and he *means* not to be happy under its burden.

There is, gentlemen, one great element of human happiness mixed up with others. We have our social affections, our family affections; but, then, we have this sentiment of country which imbues all our hearts, and enters into all our other feelings; and that sentiment of country is an affection not only for the soil on which we are born, it not only appertains to our parents and sisters and brothers and friends, but to our habits and institutions, and to the government of that country in all respects. There is not a civilized and intelligent man on earth that enjoys entire satisfaction in his condition if he does not live under the government of his own nation, his own country, whose volitions and sentiments and sympathies are like his own. Hence he cannot say: "This is not my country; it is the country of another power; it is a country belonging to somebody else." Therefore, I say that wherever there is a nation of sufficient intelligence and numbers and wealth to maintain a government, distinguished in its character and its history and its institutions, that nation cannot be happy but under a government of its own choice.

Then, sir, the next question is, Whether Hungary, as she exists in our ideas, as we see her, and as we know her, is distinct in her nationality, is competent in her population, is also competent in her knowledge and devotion to correct sentiment, is competent in her national capacity for liberty and independence, to maintain a government that shall be Hungarian out and out? Upon that subject, gentlemen, I have no manner of doubt. Let us look a little at the position in which this matter stands. What is Hungary? I am not, gentlemen, about to fatigue you with a long statistical statement; but I wish to say that, as I understand the matter, and I have taken some pains to look at it, Hungary contains a sufficient population to constitute a nation.

Mr. Webster here read tables of the population and area of Hungary, showing a population of from fourteen to fifteen millions and an area of 112,000 miles. He continued his speech as follows:

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Hungary is about the size of Great Britain, and comprehends nearly half of the territory of Austria.

It is stated by another authority that the population of Hungary is nearly 14,000,000; that of England (in 1841) nearly 15,000,000; that of Prussia about 16,000,000.

Thus it is evident that, in point of power, so far as power depends upon population, Hungary possesses as much power as England proper, or even as the kingdom of Prussia. Well, then, there is population enough, there are people enough. Who, then, are they? They are distinct from the nations that surround them. They are distinct from the Austrians on the west, and the Turks on the east; and I will say, in the next place, that they are an *enlightened* nation. They have their history, they have their traditions, they are attached to their own institutions — institutions which have existed for more than a thousand years.

Gentlemen, it is remarkable that on the western coast of Europe political light exists. There is a sun in the political firmament, and that sun sheds his light on those who are able to enjoy it. But in Eastern Europe, generally speaking, and on the confines between Eastern Europe and Asia, there is no political sun in the heavens. It is all an arctic zone of political life. The luminary that enlightens the world in general seldom rises there above the horizon. The light which they possess is, at best, crepuscular, — a kind of twilight; and they are under the necessity of groping about to catch, as they may, any stray gleams of the light of day. Gentlemen, the country of which your guest to-night is a native is a remarkable exception. She has shown through her whole history, for many hundreds of years, an attachment to the principles of civil liberty, and of law and of order, and obedience to the Constitution which the will of the great majority has established. That is the fact; and it ought to be known wherever the question of the practicability of Hungarian liberty and independence is discussed. It ought to be known that Hungary stands out from it above her neighbors in all that respects free institutions, constitutional government, and an hereditary love of liberty.

Gentlemen, I have taken the pains to prepare some facts

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from an intelligent writer, and that writer is a lady. She must of course be great authority. She says :

“The Hungarian nation has been distinguished from its first appearance in history for uniting to a passionate love of liberty a scrupulous reverence for law. The Magyars did not enter the plains of Dacia an undisciplined rabble. From the first they possessed a fixed form of government, and were distinguished for their subordination to their leaders and their laws. To these habits of discipline, in which the Magyars were trained, to their love of order and regard for law, it is to be ascribed that they did not pass away, like the common hordes of barbarian adventurers, but established a permanent kingdom in the country they invaded. To these qualities, not less than to their courage, is to be ascribed their successful maintenance of their constitutional rights against all the attacks of a Power before which the liberties of so many other nations have fallen.

“The ancient institutions of the Magyars were eminently democratic. Their chief ruler was elected by the votes of the people. For the first century after their establishment in the country he received only the title of *Vezer*, or leader. In the year 1000 they bestowed the title of King on Stephen, of the family of Arpad, the leader under whose guidance they had entered Pannonia. The power of the King was, however, strictly limited. The consent of the people was necessary to give efficacy to every royal act. The excellent prince who first filled the throne of Hungary had no disposition to infringe the liberties of the people. On the contrary, he endeavored to guard them against the encroachments of future sovereigns. He framed a code of laws founded on the ancient institutions of the Magyars, which has ever since been regarded as the highest authority. These statutes were drawn up for the guidance of his son Emeric, whom he educated as his successor in the kingdom. The enlightened and humane spirit in which these decrees were composed gives a very high idea of the civilization and political advancement of Hungary at this period. We find in them an express recognition of the principle of universal equality, ‘*Omnes homines unius sunt conditionis.*’ ”

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It is in the following terms that he prescribes the duty of a King towards his subjects :

“ ‘ Let them be to thee, my son, as brothers and fathers ; reduce none of them to servitude, neither call them thy servants. Let them fight for thee, not serve thee. Govern them without violence and without pride — peacefully, humbly, humanely. Remembering that nothing elevates but humility, that nothing abases but pride and an evil will.

“ ‘ My son, I pray thee, I command thee, to show thyself propitious, not only to thy kindred, not only to princes, to leaders, to the rich, not only to thy country people, but likewise to strangers, and to all that come unto thee. Be patient with all, not only with the powerful, but with those lacking power. Bear ever in thy mind this precept of the Lord, “ I will have mercy, and not sacrifice.”

He recognizes the right of the people to depose an unworthy prince :

“ ‘ If thou art mild and just, then shalt thou be called a King, and the son of a King ; but if thou art proud and violent, they will deliver thy kingdom to another.’ ”

The princes of this dynasty (the house of Arpad), with few exceptions, were just and patriotic Kings, who understood the origin and true objects of government, and held their power for the benefit of the people, not for their own selfish aggrandizement. There are traits recorded of many of them which prove them to have been the worthy successors of St. Stephen. “ The Republic is not mine,” said Gèza II., “ it is I who belong to the Republic. God has raised me to the throne in order that I may maintain the laws.” In 1222 Andrew II. issued the celebrated code of statutes known by the name of the “ Golden Bull,” by which the decrees of St. Stephen were confirmed and some new laws added to them, designed to secure yet further the liberties of the people. The “ Golden Bull ” has been termed a charter of aristocratic privileges. It was so in the same sense that the great charter of English liberties may be called so. The “ Golden Bull ” corresponds very closely to the Magna Charta of King John, both in its provisions and as regards the class of persons whose liberties it was designed to protect.



As to St. Stephen, I will not say how he ought to stand as a Christian, but will say that on the political, and especially on the Royal Kalendar, he ought to be regarded as a saint, and to have a day strongly marked in red letters.

Gentlemen, my sentiments in regard to this effort made by Hungary are here sufficiently well expressed. In a memorial, addressed to Lord John Russell and Lord Palmerston, said to have been written by Lord Fitzwilliam, and signed by him and several other peers and members of Parliament, the following language is used, the object of the memorial being to ask the mediation of England in favor of Hungary :

“ While so many of the nations of Europe have engaged in revolutionary movements, and have embarked in schemes of doubtful policy, and still more doubtful success, it is gratifying to the undersigned to be able to assure your lordships that the Hungarians demand nothing but the recognition of ancient rights, and the stability and integrity of their ancient Constitution. To your lordships it cannot be unknown that that Constitution bears a striking family resemblance to that of our own country.”

Gentlemen, I have one other reference to make, and then I shall take leave of you.

You know, gentlemen, that in “ Measure for Measure,” Shakespeare, speaking of the Duke of Vienna, says: “ If the Duke, with the other dukes, come not to composition with the King of Hungary, why then, all the dukes fall upon the King.” “ Heaven grant us its peace,” says another character. “ Thou concludest,” says the first speaker, “ like the sanctimonious pirate that went to sea with the Ten Commandments, but scraped one out of the table — thou shalt not steal! Ay, that he raz’d. Why, ’t was a commandment to command the captain and all the rest from their functions; there’s not a soldier of us all that, in the thanksgiving before meat, doth relish the petition well that prays for peace.”

Now, I am afraid that, like the Dukes of Austria in former times, the Emperor of Austria, in our time, doth not relish the petition for peace, unless it be founded on the utter extermination of the nationality of Hungary.

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Gentlemen, I have said that a national government, where there is a distinct nationality, is essential to human happiness. I have said that, in my opinion, Hungary is thus capable of human happiness. I have said that she possesses that distinct nationality, that power of population and that wealth which entitle her to have a government of her own, and I have now to add, what I am sure will not sound well upon the Upper Danube, and that is that, in my humble judgment, the imposition of a foreign yoke upon a people capable of self-government, while it oppresses and depresses that people, adds nothing to the strength of those who impose that yoke. In my opinion, Austria would be a better and a stronger government to-morrow if she confined the limits of her power to her hereditary and German domains, especially if she saw in Hungary a strong, sensible, independent neighboring nation; because I think that the cost of keeping Hungary quiet is not repaid by any benefit derived from Hungarian levies or tributes. And then again, good neighborhood, and the good-will and generous sympathies of mankind, and the generosity of character that ought to pervade the minds of governments, as well as those of individuals, is vastly more promoted by living in a state of friendship and amity with those who differ from us in modes of government, than by any attempt to consolidate power in the hands of one over the rest.

Gentlemen, the progress of things is unquestionably onward. It is onward with respect to Hungary; it is onward everywhere. Public opinion, in my estimation at least, is making great progress. It will penetrate all resources; it will come more or less to animate all minds; and in respect to that country for which our sympathies to-night have been so strongly invoked, I cannot but say that I think the people of Hungary are an enlightened, industrious, sober, well-inclined community; and I wish only to add, that I do not now enter into any discussion of the form of government that may be proper for Hungary. Of course, all of you, like myself, would be glad to see her, when she becomes independent, embrace that system of government which is most acceptable to ourselves. We shall rejoice to see our American model upon the Lower Danube and on the mountains of Hungary. But this is

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not the first step. It is not that which will be our first prayer for Hungary. That first prayer shall be that Hungary may become independent of all foreign power — that her destinies may be intrusted to her own hands, and to her own discretion. I do not profess to understand the social relations and connections of races, and of twenty other things that may affect the public institutions of Hungary. All I say is, that Hungary can regulate these matters for herself infinitely better than they can be regulated for her by Austria; and, therefore, I limit my aspirations for Hungary, for the present, to that single and simple point, — Hungarian independence, Hungarian self-government, Hungarian control of Hungarian destinies. These are the aspirations which I entertain, and I give them to you, therefore, gentlemen, as a toast: “*Hungarian Independence* — Hungarian control of her own destinies; and Hungary as a distinct nationality among the nations of Europe.”



*My Dear Niece;*

*I pray your acceptance of this, with*

## AN ADDRESS

*an assurance, that if it were Ten*

DELIVERED BEFORE THE

*Thousand times more valuable, it*

NEW YORK HISTORICAL SOCIETY,

*would not surpass my affection*

FEBRUARY 23, 1852,

*For You.*

*BY* Daniel Webster

DANIEL WEBSTER.

*Mrs. Harriet W. Paige*

PULCHRUM EST BENEFACERE REIPUBLICÆ; ETIAM BENEDICERE HAUD ABSURDUM EST.

*July 10. 1852.*

*Valiant.*

NEW YORK:  
PRESS OF THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY.

MDCCCLII.

# The Dignity and Importance of History

FEBRUARY 23, 1852.<sup>1</sup>

THE object of your association, gentlemen, like that of others of similar character, is highly important. Historical societies are auxiliary to historical compositions. They collect the materials from which the great narrative of events is, in due time, to be framed. The transactions of public bodies, local histories, memoirs of all kinds, statistics, laws, ordinances, public debates and discussions, works of periodical literature, and the public journals, whether of political events, of commerce, literature, or the arts, all find their places in the collections of historical societies. But these collections are not history; they are only elements of history. History is a higher name, and imports literary productions of the first order.

It is presumptuous in me, whose labors and studies have been so long devoted to other objects, to speak in the presence of those whom I see before me, of the *dignity and importance of history*, in its just sense; and yet I find pleasure in breaking in upon the course of daily pursuits, and indulging for a time in reflections upon topics of literature, and in the remembrance of the great examples of historic art.

Well written history must always be the result of genius and taste, as well as of research and study. It stands next to epic poetry, among the productions of the human mind. If it

<sup>1</sup> An address delivered before the New York Historical Society. Printed from the pamphlet report: New York: Press of the Historical Society, MDCCCLII. It contains the following Dedication:

I dedicate this address to Hon. Luther Bradish, President of the New York Historical Society, as a proof of private friendship and public regard.

requires less of invention than that, it is not behind it in dignity and importance. The province of the epic is the poetical narrative of real or supposed events, and the representation of real, or at least natural, characters; and history, in its noblest examples, is an account of occurrences in which great events are commemorated, and distinguished men appear as agents and actors. Epic poetry and the drama are but narratives, the former partly, and the latter wholly, in the form of dialogue; but their characters and personages are usually, in part at least, the creations of the imagination.

Severe history sometimes assumes the dialogue, or dramatic form, and, without departing from truth, is embellished by supposed colloquies or speeches, as in the productions of that great master, Titus Livius, or that greater master still, Thucydides.

The drawing of characters, consistent with general truth and fidelity, is no violation of historical accuracy; it is only an illustration or an ornament.

When Livy ascribes an appropriate speech to one of his historical personages, it is only as if he had portrayed the same character in language professedly his own. Lord Clarendon's presentation, in his own words, of the character of Lord Falkland, one of the highest and most successful efforts of personal description, is hardly different from what it would have been, if he had put into the mouth of Lord Falkland a speech exhibiting the same qualities of the mind and the heart, the same opinions, and the same attachments. Homer describes the actions of personages which, if not real, are so imagined as to be conformable to the general characteristics of men in the heroic ages. If his relation be not historically true, it is such, nevertheless, as, making due allowance for poetical embellishment, might have been true. And in Milton's great epic, which is almost entirely made up of narratives and speeches, there is nothing repugnant to the general conception which we form of the characters of those whose sentiments and conduct he portrays.

But history, while it illustrates and adorns, confines itself to facts, and to the relation of actual events. It is not far from truth to say, that well written and classic history is the epic

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of real life. It places the actions of men in an attractive and interesting light. Rejecting what is improper and superfluous, it fills its picture with real, just, and well drawn images.

The dignity of history consists in reciting events with truth and accuracy, and in presenting human agents and their actions in an interesting and instructive form. The first element in history, therefore, is truthfulness; and this truthfulness must be displayed in a concrete form. Classical history is not a memoir. It is not a crude collection of acts, occurrences, and dates. It adopts nothing that is not true; but it does not embrace all minor truths and all minor transactions. It is a composition, a production, which has unity of design, like a work of statuary or of painting, and keeps constantly in view one great end or result. Its parts, therefore, are to be properly adjusted and well proportioned. The historian is an artist, as true to fact as other artists are to nature, and, though he may sometimes embellish, he never misrepresents; he may occasionally, perhaps, color too highly, but the truth is still visible through the lights and shades. This unity of design seems essential to all great productions. With all the variety of the Iliad, Homer had the wrath of Achilles, and its consequences, always before him; when he sang of the exploits of other heroes, they were silently subordinated to those of the son of Thetis. Still more remarkable is the unity in variety of the Odyssey, the character of which is much more complicated; but all the parts are artfully adapted to each other, and they have a common centre of interest and action, the great end being the restoration of Ulysses to his native Ithaca. Virgil, in the Æneid, sang of nothing but the man, and his deeds, who brought the Trojan gods to Italy, and laid the foundation of the walls of imperial Rome; and Milton of nothing, but

“Man’s first disobedience, and the fruit  
Of that forbidden tree, whose mortal taste  
Brought death into the world and all our woes.”

And the best historical productions of ancient and of modern times have been written with equal fidelity to one leading thought or purpose.

It has been said by Lord Bolingbroke, that “History is



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Philosophy teaching by example;" and, before Bolingbroke, Shakspeare has said :

“ There is a history in all men’s lives,  
Figuring the nature of the times deceas’d ;  
The which observ’d, a man may prophesy,  
With a near aim, of the main chance of things  
As yet not come to life, which in their seeds,  
And weak beginnings, lie entreasured.  
Such things become the hatch and brood of time;  
And, by the necessary form of this,  
King Richard might create a perfect guess,  
That great Northumberland, then false to him,  
Would, of that seed, grow to a greater falseness,  
Which should not find a ground to root upon,  
Unless on you.

Are these things, then, necessities?  
Then let us meet them like necessities.”

And a wiser man than either Bolingbroke or Shakspeare, has declared :

“ The thing that hath been, it is that which shall be; and that which is done is that which shall be done: and there is no new thing under the sun.”

These sayings are all just, and they proceed upon the idea that the essential characteristics of human nature are the same everywhere, and in all ages.

This, doubtless, is true; and so far as history presents the general qualities and propensities of human nature, it does teach by example. Bolingbroke adds, with remarkable power of expression, that “ the school of example is the world: and the masters of this school are history and experience.”

But the character of man varies so much, from age to age, both in his individual and collective capacity; there comes such a change of circumstances, so many new objects of desire and aversion, and so many new and powerful motives spring up in his mind, that the conduct of men, in one age, or under one state of circumstances, is no sure and precise indication of what will be their conduct, when times and circumstances alter; so that the example of the past, before it can become a useful instructor to the present, must be reduced to elementary principles in human nature, freed from the influence of condi-

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tions which were temporary and have changed, and applied to the same principles, under new relations, with a different degree of knowledge, and the impulses arising from the altered state of things. A savage has the passions of ambition, revenge, love, and glory; and ambition and love, revenge and the hope of renown, are also elements in the character of civilized life; but the development of these passions, in a state of barbarism, hardly instructs us as to the manner in which they will exhibit themselves in a cultivated period of society.

And so it is of religious sentiment and feeling. I believe man is everywhere, more or less, a religious being; that is to say, in all countries, and at all times, he feels a tie which connects him with an Invisible Power.

It is true indeed, and it is a remarkable fact in the history of mankind, that in the very lowest stage of human existence, and in the opposite extreme of high civilization, surrounded with everything luxurious in life, and with all the means of human knowledge, the idea of an unseen and supreme Governor of the Universe is most likely to be equally doubted or disregarded.

The lowest stage of human culture, that of mere savage existence, and the intellectual and refined atheism, exhibited in our own day, seem to be strangely coincident in this respect; though it is from opposite causes and influences that men, in these so different conditions, are led to doubt or deny the existence of a Supreme Power. But both these are exceptions to the general current of human thought and to the general conviction of our nature.

Man is naturally religious; but then his religion takes its character from his condition, his degree of knowledge, and his association; and thus it is true that the religious feeling, which operates in one state of society, and under one degree of light and knowledge, is not a safe example to prove its probable influence under circumstances essentially different. So that, when we regard history as our instructor, in the development of the perceptions and character of men, and in the motives which actuate them, there comes a concomitant rush of altered circumstances, which are all to be considered and regarded.

History, therefore, is an example which may teach us the general principles of human nature, but does not instruct us greatly in its various possible developments.

What Dr. Johnson said, in his comparison of Dryden and Pope, is not inapplicable to this topic, "Dryden," said he, "knew more of man in his general nature, and Pope in his local manners." Dryden's sentiments, therefore, are the exemplar of human nature in general, Pope's of human nature as modified in particular relations and circumstances; and what is true of individual man, in this respect, is true, also, of society and government.

The love of liberty, for instance, is a passion or sentiment which existed in intense force in the Grecian Republics, and in the better ages of Rome. It exists now, chiefly, and first of all, on that portion of the Western Continent in which we live. Here, it burns with heat and with splendor beyond all Grecian and all Roman example. It is not a light in the temple of Minerva, it is not the vestal flame of Rome; it is the light of the sun, it is the illumination of all the constellations. Earth, air, and ocean, and all the heavens above us, are filled with its glorious shining; and, although the passion and the sentiment are the same, yet he who would reason from Grecian liberty, or from Roman freedom, to our intelligent American liberty, would be holding a farthing candle to the orb of day.

The magnificent funeral oration of Pericles, over those who fell in the Peloponnesian War, is one of the grandest productions of antiquity. It contains sentiments and excites emotions congenial to the minds of all lovers of liberty, in all regions and at all times. It exhibits a strong and ardent attachment to country, which true patriots always feel; an undaunted courage in its defence, and willingness to pledge and hazard all, for the maintenance of liberty. I cannot deny myself the pleasure of quoting a few passages from that celebrated address, in a translation which I think much closer to the original Greek than that of Smith:

Mr. Webster here quoted at some length from the oration referred to, and then proceeded as follows:

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How terse, how Doric, how well considered is the style of this unsurpassed oration! Gentlemen, does not every page, paragraph, and sentence of what I have read, go home to all our hearts, carrying a most gratified consciousness of its resemblance to what is near and dear to us in our own native land? Is it Athens, or America? Is Athens or America the theme of these immortal strains? Was Pericles speaking of his own country, as he saw it or knew it; or was he gazing upon a bright vision, then two thousand years before him, which we see in reality, as he saw it in prospect?

But the contests of Sparta and Athens, what were they in lasting importance, and in their bearing on the destinies of the world, in comparison with that ever memorable struggle which separated the American colonies from the dominion of Europe? How different the result which betided Athens, from that which crowned the glorious efforts of our ancestors; and, therefore, this renowned oration of Pericles, what is it in comparison with an effort of historical eloquence which should justly set forth the merits of the heroes and the martyrs of the American Revolution?

The liberty of Athens, and of the other Grecian Republics, being founded in pure democracy, without any principle of representation, was fitted only for small states. The exercise of popular power in a purely democratic form cannot be spread over countries of large extent; because, in such countries, all cannot assemble in the same place to vote directly upon laws and ordinances, and other public questions. But the principle of representation is expansive; it may be enlarged, if not infinitely, yet indefinitely, to meet new occasions, and embrace new regions. While, therefore, the love of liberty was the same, and its general principle the same, in the Grecian Republics as with us, yet not only were the forms essentially different, but that also was wanting which we have been taught to consider as indispensable to its security: that is, a fixed, settled, definite, fundamental law, or constitution, imposing limitations and restraints equally on governors and governed. We may, therefore, inhale all the fulness and freshness of the Grecian spirit, but we necessarily give its development a different form, and subject it to new modifications.

But history is not only philosophy, teaching by example; its true purpose is, also, to illustrate the general progress of society in knowledge and the arts, and the changes of manners and pursuits of men.

There is an imperfection, both in ancient and modern histories, and those of the best masters, in this respect. While they recite public transactions, they omit, in a great degree, what belongs to the civil, social, and domestic progress of men and nations. There is not, so far as I know, a good civil history of Rome, nor is there an account of the manners and habits of social and domestic life, such as may inform us of the progress of her citizens, from the foundation of the city to the time of Livy and Sallust, in individual exhibitions of character.

We know, indeed, something of the private pursuits and private vices of the Roman people at the commencement of the Empire, but we obtain our knowledge of these chiefly from the severe and indignant rebukes of Sallust, and the inimitable satires of Juvenal. Wars, foreign and domestic, the achievements of arms, and national alliances fill up the recorded greatness of the Roman Empire.

It is very remarkable that, in this respect, Roman literature is far more deficient than that of Greece. Aristophanes, and other Grecian comic writers, have scenes richly filled with the delineation of the lives and manners of their own people. But the Roman imitators of the Grecian stage gave themselves up to the reproduction of foreign characters on their own stage, and presented in their dramas Grecian manners also, instead of Roman manners. How much wiser was Shakspeare, who enchained the attention of his audiences, and still enchains the attention of the whole Teutonic race, by the presentation of English manners and English history?

Falstaff, Justice Shallow, and Dogberry are not shrubs of foreign growth transplanted into the pages of Shakspeare, but genuine productions of the soil, the creations of his own home-bred fancy.

Mr. Banks has written a civil history of Rome, but it seems not to have answered the great end which it proposed.

The labors of Niebuhr, Arnold, and Merivale have accom-

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plished much towards furnishing the materials of such history, and Becker, in his *Gallus*, has drawn a picture, not uninteresting, of the private life of the Romans at the commencement of the Empire.

I know nothing of the fact, but I once had an intimation, that one of the most distinguished writers of our time and of our country has had his thoughts turned to this subject for several years. If this be so, and the work, said to be in contemplation, be perfected, it will be true, as I have no doubt, that the civil history of the great republic of antiquity will have been written, not only with thorough research, but also with elegance of style and chaste, classical illustration, by a citizen of the great republic of modern times. I trust that when this work shall appear, if it shall appear, we shall not only see the Roman consul and the Roman general, the Comitia and the Forum, but that we shall also see Roman hearths and altars, the Roman matron at the head of her household, Roman children in their schools of instruction, and the whole of Roman life fully presented to our view, so far as the materials, now existing in separate and special works, afford the means.

It is in our day only that the history and progress of the civil and social institutions and manners of England have become the subjects of particular attention.

Sharon Turner, Lingard, and, more than all, Mr. Hallam, have laid this age, and all following ages, under the heaviest obligations by their labors in this field of literary composition; nor would I separate from them the writings of a most learned and eloquent person, whose work on English history is now in progress, nor the author of the "*Pictorial History of England*." But there is still wanting a full, thorough, and domestic, social account of our English ancestors, that is, a history which shall trace the progress of social life in the intercourse of man with man; the advance of arts, the various changes in the habits and occupations of individuals; and those improvements in domestic life which have attended the condition and meliorated the circumstances of men in the lapse of ages. We still have not the means of learning, to any great extent, how our English ancestors, at their homes, and in their houses, were

fed, and lodged, and clothed, and what were their daily employments. We want a history of firesides; we want to know when kings and queens exchanged beds of straw for beds of down, and ceased to breakfast on beef and beer. We wish to see more, and to know more, of the changes which took place, from age to age, in the homes of England, from the castle and the palace, down to the humblest cottage. Mr. Henry's book, so far as it goes, is not without its utility, but it stops too soon, and, even in regard to the period which it embraces, it is not sufficiently full and satisfactory in its particulars.

The feudal ages were military and agricultural, but the splendor of arms, in the history of the times, monopolized the genius of writers; and perhaps materials are not now abundant for forming a knowledge of the essential industry of the country. He would be a public benefactor who should instruct us in the modes of cultivation and tillage prevailing in England, from the Conquest down, and in the advancement of manufactures, from their inception in the time of Henry IV., to the period of their considerable development, two centuries afterwards.

There are two sources of information on these subjects, which have never yet been fully explored, and which, nevertheless, are overflowing fountains of knowledge. I mean the statutes and the proceedings of the courts of law. At an early period of life, I recurred, with some degree of attention, to both these sources of information; not so much for professional purposes, as for the elucidation of the progress of society. I acquainted myself with the object and purposes and substance of every published statute in British legislation. These showed me what the legislature of the country was concerned in, from age to age, and from year to year. And I learned from the reports of controversies, in the courts of law, what were the pursuits and occupations of individuals, and what the objects which most earnestly engaged attention. I hardly know anything which more repays research, than studies of this kind. We learn from them what pursuits occupied men during the feudal ages. We see the efforts of society to throw off the chains of this feudal dominion. We see too,

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in a most interesting manner, the ingenious devices resorted to, to break the thralldom of personal slavery. We see the beginning of manufacturing interests, and at length bursts upon us the full splendor of the commercial age.

Littleton, Coke, Plowden, what are they? How their learning fades away and becomes obsolete, when Holt and Somers and Mansfield arise, catching themselves, and infusing all around them, the influences and the knowledge which commerce had shed upon the world!

Our great teachers and examples in the historical art are, doubtless, the eminent historians of the Greek and Roman ages. In their several ways, they are the masters to whom all succeeding times have looked for instruction and improvement. They are the models which have stood the test of time, and, like the glorious creations in marble of Grecian genius, have been always admired and never surpassed.

We have our favorites in literature, as well as in other things, and I confess that, among the Grecian writers, my estimate of Herodotus is great. His evident truthfulness, his singular simplicity of style, and his constant respect and veneration for sacred and divine things, win my regard. It is true that he sometimes appears credulous, which caused Aristotle to say of him, that he was a story-teller. But, in respect to this, two things are to be remarked; the one is, that he never avers as a fact that which rests on the accounts of others; the other, that all subsequent travels and discoveries have tended to confirm his fidelity. From his great qualities as a writer, as well as from the age in which he lived, he is justly denominated the "Father of History." Herodotus was a conscientious narrator of what he saw and heard. In his manner there is much of the old epic style; indeed, his work may be considered as the connecting link between the epic legend and political history; truthful, on the one hand, since it was a genuine history; but, on the other, conceived and executed in the spirit of poetry, and not the profounder spirit of political philosophy. It breathes a reverential submission to the divine will, and recognizes distinctly the governing hand of Providence in the affairs of men. But, upon the whole, I am compelled to regard Thucydides as the greater writer.



Thucydides was equally truthful, but more conversant with the motives and character of men in their political relations. He took infinite pains to make himself thoroughly acquainted with the transactions that occurred in his own day, and which became the subject of his own narrative.\*

It is said, even, that persons were employed by him to obtain information from both the belligerent powers, for his use, while writing the history of the Peloponnesian War.

He was one of the most eminent citizens of the Athenian Republic, educated under the institutions of Solon, and trained in all the political wisdom which these institutions had developed in the two centuries since their establishment. A more profound intellect never applied itself to historical investigation; a more clear-sighted and impartial judge of human conduct never dealt with the fortunes and acts of political communities.

The work of Herodotus is graphic, fluent, dramatic, and ethical in the highest degree; but it is not the work of the citizen of a free republic, personally experienced in the conduct of its affairs. The history of the Peloponnesian War, on the other hand, could only have been produced by a man of large experience, and who added to vast genius deep personal insight into the workings of various public institutions. As Thucydides himself says, his history was written not for the entertainment of the moment, but to be "a possession forever."

There can, it seems to me, be no reasonable doubt that the first works by which man expressed his thoughts and feelings in an orderly composition, were essentially poetical. In the earliest writings of which we know anything with distinctness, we have an union or mingling of poetry and fact, embodying the traditions and history of the people among which they arose.

Like other intellectual culture, this form of history appeared first in the East, and, from the days of Moses and Joshua down to our own times, it has there retained substantially the same character. I mean, it has been a remarkable mixture of the spirit of history and of epic poetry. In Greece, we may

\* See Book V., § 26.

observe originally the same state of things ; but the two forms of composition at length became separated, though the Greek historical art, when highest, never loses all its relations to the epic. The earliest Greek poets were religious and historical poets, dealing in the traditions and mythology of their country, and so continued down through Homer. Herodotus was by birth an Asiatic Greek, and was quite imbued with the oriental spirit. In his time, of public records there were none, or, at the most, there were only local registers of public events, and their dates, such, for instance, as those kept by the priesthood in the temples at Delphi and Argos, or the registers of particular families. He travelled, therefore, to collect the materials for his history. But he made of them one whole, and laid one idea at the bottom, with as much epic simplicity as Homer did in the Iliad. His subject was the contest of Greece with the Persians, and the triumph of Grecian liberty, or, more strictly, the great Grecian victory over the barbarians who had conquered the world, as then known. The relations between Herodotus and Homer are not to be mistaken ; he not only has episodes, like the long one about Egypt, and formal speeches, which were common in historical works till the sixteenth century of our era, and have not been unknown since,\* but he has dialogues. One of his series of speeches, which partakes of the character of a dialogue, shows a remarkable advancement in political knowledge for that age ; I mean that in which the conspirators against the Magi of Persia, previously to the elevation of Darius, discuss the different forms of government, almost in the spirit of Montesquieu. But all these things are kept in their proper places by Herodotus. He feels the connection of his subject all the way through ; how one event proceeds from another, and how, in the spirit of epic unity, everything tends to the principal result, or contributes to it directly.

In Thucydides, the art of history is further advanced, though he lived very little later than Herodotus. He probably had read or heard his history, though that is doubted.

Thucydides did not, indeed, make one whole of his work, for he did not survive the war whose history he undertook to

\* They are adopted, for instance, by Botta.

relate; but he is less credulous than Herodotus; he has no proper dialogue; he is more compact; he indulges very little in episodes; he draws characters, and his speeches are more like formal, stately discussions. And he says of them, they are such as he either heard himself, or received from those who did hear them, and he states that he gives them in their true substance.

There is nothing to create a doubt that personally he heard the oration of Pericles; and it is remarkable that, throughout the most flourishing period of Greek literature, both poetical and historical, productions were composed to be heard, rather than to be read; and the practice of listening to their rehearsals led the Greek people to attain great accuracy, as well as retentiveness, of memory.

In short, Herodotus' work seems a natural, fresh production of the soil; that of Thucydides belongs to a more advanced state of culture. Quintilian says of the former, "*In Herodoto omnia leniter fluunt;*" of the latter, "*Densus et brevis et semper instans sibi.*"

Xenophon, in his *Hellenica*, continues Thucydides. He was a military leader, and familiar with the affairs of state, and though not so deep a thinker, was a more graceful and easy writer. Polybius, living in a much later period, is defective in style, but is a wise and sensible author. His object is not merely to show what has been, but to attempt the instruction of the future, making his work what he calls a demonstrative history, fitted for the use of statesmen. He is the last of the really good Greek historians.

The Romans had the great Greek masters, in prose and poetry, all before them, and imitated them in everything, but approached their models nearly only in eloquence and history. Like the Greeks too, they had early poetical histories, historical legends, and songs. Ennius wrote a sort of epic history of Rome. Cæsar, one of the most distinguished of all great men, wrote accounts of what he had done, or what related directly to himself. The clearness, purity, and precision of his style are as characteristic of him as any of his great achievements.

Sallust followed more closely the Greek models. Each of his two remaining histories is an epic whole, — short, indeed,

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but complete, fashioned with the greatest exactness, and remarkable for a dignity and stateliness of style which Cæsar did not seek, and which would not have been fitting for his personal memoirs.

Livy had another purpose; there is an epic completeness in his great work, though it has come down to us in a mutilated state. "*Majestas populi Romani*" was his subject, and he sacrifices much to it, even, not unfrequently, the rigor of truth. His style is rich and flowing. Quintilian speaks of "*Livii lactea ubertas*," the creamy richness of Livy. His descriptions are excellent; indeed, there is a nobleness and grandeur about the whole work well fitted to his magnificent purpose in writing it.

Tacitus comes later, when he could no longer feel so proud of his country as Livy had done. He had much of the spirit and the power of Thucydides. Both were great, upright men, dissatisfied with their times; the one, because of the ascendancy of demagogues among the people, the other, with the imperial vices and the growing demoralization of his age. Tacitus is, however, free from passion, and is a wise, statesmanlike, and profound writer, throughout. Of both his History and Annals considerable portions are lost. We cannot, therefore, tell how much of completeness and proportion there may have been in either. But the nature of the period he discusses in each, — a period, as he says, "*opimum casibus, atrox præliis, discors seditionibus, ipsa etiam pace sævum*," not less than the severity of his own nature, forbade poetical ornament. In character-drawing, he is hardly excelled by any one. By a single dash of his pencil, he sometimes throws out a likeness, which all feel and acknowledge; and yet it has been thought that some degree of falling off in the purity and elegance of the Latin language is discernible in his pages.

Of the Roman historians my preference is strongly for Salust. I admire his reach of thought, his clearness of style, as well as his accuracy of narration. He is sufficiently concise; he is sententious, without being meagre or obscure, and his power of personal and individual description is remarkable. There are, indeed, in his style, some roughnesses belonging to the Roman tongue at an earlier age, but they seem to

strengthen the structure of his sentences, without especially injuring their beauty. No character-drawing can well exceed his delineation of Catiline, his account of Jugurtha, or his parallel between Cæsar and Cato. I have thought, sometimes, that I saw resemblances between his terse and powerful periods, and the remarks and sayings of Dr. Johnson, as they appear, not in his stately performances, but in the record of his conversations by Boswell.

In turning to peruse once more the pages of Sallust, to refresh myself for the preparation of this address, I was struck by the coincidence of a transaction narrated by him, with one which we have seen very recently in our own country.

When Jugurtha had put to death Hiempsal, and expelled Adherbal from his rightful throne, the latter (who was born in Numidia, and not in Hungary) came to Rome to invoke what we should call, the intervention of the Roman people. His speech, delivered on that occasion, in the Senate, as Sallust has given it, is one of the most touching ever made by a man in misfortune and suffering from injury, to those having the power of granting relief or redress. His supplication to the Senate is founded on the broad and general idea that the Roman people were just themselves, and as they had the power, so it was their duty, to prevent or punish high-handed injustice, threatened or inflicted by others.

While I confess myself not competent to sit in judgment on the great masters of Roman story, still it has always struck me that in the style of Livy there is so much fulness, so much accumulation of circumstances, as occasionally tends to turgidity. I speak this, however, with the greatest diffidence. Livy seems to me like the rivers under the influence of copious spring floods, when not only is the main channel full, but all the tributary streams are also tending to overflow; while Sallust, I think, takes care only that there shall be one deep, clear, strong, and rapid current, to convey him and his thoughts to their destined end.

I do not mean to say that the skilful use of circumstance, either in the hand of a historian or a poet, is not a great power, — I think it is. What we call graphic description, is but the

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presentation of the principal idea, with a discreet accompaniment of interesting concomitants.

The introduction of a single auxiliary thought or expression sometimes gives a new glow to the historical or poetical picture. Particularity, well set forth, enchains attention. In our language, no writer has understood this better than Milton. His poetical images and descriptions are sure to omit nothing which can make those images and those descriptions striking, distinct, and certain, while all else is industriously repelled.

Witness the fall of Vulcan, which is stated with such beautiful detail, so much step by step, and terminated by such a phrase and comparison at the end, as greatly to enhance the idea, both of its length and its rapidity.

“Men call'd him Mulciber; and how he fell  
From Heaven, they fabled, thrown by angry Jove  
Sheer o'er the crystal battlements; from morn  
To noon he fell, from noon to dewy eve,  
A summer's day; and with the setting sun  
Dropp'd from the Zenith like a falling star,  
On Lemnos the Ægean isle.”

His description of vocal music in the “Allegro” is another instance of the same kind:

“And ever against eating cares,  
Lap me in soft Lydian airs,  
Married to immortal verse,  
Such as the meeting soul may pierce  
In notes, with many a winding bout  
Of linkèd sweetness long drawn out,  
With wanton heed, and giddy cunning,  
The melting voice through mazes running,  
Untwisting all the chains that tie  
The hidden soul of harmony.  
That Orpheus' self may heave his head  
From golden slumber on a bed  
Of heap'd Elysian flowers, and hear  
Such strains as would have won the ear  
Of Pluto, to have quite set free  
His half-regain'd Eurydice.”

I hardly know anything which surpasses these exquisite lines, so poetical, and, at the same time, so thoroughly and absolutely English, and so free from all foreign idiom.

Several stanzas of Gray's "Elegy in a Country Churchyard" are also remarkable for the power and accuracy with which rural scenery is presented, by grouping together many interesting objects in one picture.

Another poetical instance of the same beauty is the "Burial of Sir John Moore."

There are remarkable instances of the same skill in writing in some of the English prose writers, and especially in the productions of Daniel De Foe. No boy doubts that everything told of Robinson Crusoe is exactly true, because all is so circumstantially told; I believe I was about ten years of age when I first read Robinson Crusoe, and I remember still the distress and perspiration which I was thrown into by his dangerous condition in his boat. "There was a current on both sides, a strong eddy under the shore. The sea was making a great breach upon that point. It was not safe to keep the shore, for the breach, nor leave it for the stream. He could do nothing with his paddles, and there was not a breath of wind. A great depth of water, running like the sluice of a mill, carried him farther and farther from the eddy, which was on the left hand, so that he could not keep his boat on the edge of it, and as the current on the north side and the current on the south side would both join at a few leagues distant, he thought himself irrecoverably gone." And I thought so too. No man doubts, until he is informed of the contrary, that the historian of the plague of London actually saw all that he described, although De Foe was not born till a subsequent year.

It is a well known saying that the lie with circumstance is exceedingly calculated to deceive: and that is true, and it is equally true, not only that fictitious history gains credit and belief by the skilful use of circumstance, but that true history also may derive much additional interest from the same source.

In general, however, historical facts are to be related with rather a close and exclusive regard to such and such only as are important.

The art of historical composition owes its origin to the institutions of political freedom. Under the despotism of

the Ganges and the Indus, poetry flourished with oriental luxuriance from the earliest times; but in the immense compass of that rich, primeval literature, there is no history, in the high sense of that term. The banks of the Nile were crowded with historical monuments and memorials, stretching back into the remotest antiquity; and recent researches have discovered historical records of the Pharaohs in the scrolls of papyrus, some of them as ancient as the books of Moses. But in all these, there is no history composed according to the principles of art. In Greece, the epic song, founded on traditional legends, long preceded historical composition. I remember when I thought it the greatest wonder in the world that the poems of Homer should have been written at a period so remote that the earliest Grecian history should have given no probable account of their author. I did not then know, or had not then considered, that poetical writings, hymns, songs, accounts of personal adventures like those of Hercules and Jason, were, in the nature of things, earlier than regular historical narratives. Herodotus informs us that Homer lived four hundred years before his time. There is, nevertheless, something very wonderful in the poems of the old Ionian.

In general, it is true of the languages of nations that in their earlier ages they contain the substantial bone and sinew characteristic of their idiom, yet that they are rough, imperfect, and without polish. Thus Chaucer wrote English; but it is what we call old English, and, though always vigorous and often incomparably sweet, far remote from the smoothness and fluency belonging to the style of Pope and Addison. And Spenser wrote English, but, though rich, sonorous, and gorgeous, it has not the precision and accuracy of those later writers. It would seem that many books must be written and read, and a great many tongues and pens employed, before the language of a country reaches its highest polish and perfection. Now the wonder is, how a language should become so perfect, as was the Greek of Homer, at the time when that language could have been very little written. Doubtless, in succeeding ages, the compass of the Greek tongue was enlarged, as knowledge became more extended, and new things called for new words; but, within the sphere of Grecian knowledge, as it



existed in the time of Homer, it can scarce be questioned that his style is quite as perfect and polished as that of any of his successors, and perhaps more picturesque. The cause of this apparent anomaly is, that the language had not only been spoken for many centuries, by a people of great ingenuity and extraordinary good taste, but had been carefully cultivated by the recitation of poetical compositions on a great variety of religious and festive occasions.

It was not until the legislation of Solon had laid the foundation of free political institutions, and these institutions had unfolded a free and powerful and active political life in the Athenian Republic; until the discussion of public affairs in the Senate and the popular Assembly had created deliberative eloquence, and the open administration of justice in the courts, and under the laws established by Solon, had applied to the transactions between the citizens all the resources of refined logic, and drawn into the sphere of civil rights and obligations the power of high forensic oratory: it was not until these *results* of the legislative wisdom of Solon had been attained, that the art of history rose and flourished in Greece. With the decline of Grecian liberty began the decline in the art of historical composition. Histories were written under the Grecian Kings of Egypt; and a long line of writers flourished under the Byzantine Emperors; but the high art of historical composition, as perfected in the master-works of Herodotus, Thucydides, and Xenophon, had perished in the death of political freedom.

The origin, progress and decline of history, as an art, were nearly the same in Rome. Sallust and Livy flourished at the close of the Republic and the commencement of the Empire. The great works of Tacitus himself are thought by many to betray the beginning of decline in the art, and later writers exhibit its fall.

The art of history again revived with the rise of the Italian Republics; and since the revival of literature, at the close of the middle ages, it will probably be found that three things naturally rise into importance together; that is to say, civil liberty, eloquence, and the art of historical writing.

Other foundation is not to be laid for authentic history than

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well authenticated facts; but, on this foundation, structures may be raised of different characteristics, historical, biographical, and philosophical. One writer may confine himself to exact and minute narration; another, true to the general story, may embellish that story with more or less of external ornament, or of eloquence in description; a third, with a deeper philosophical spirit, may look into the causes of events and transactions, trace them with more profound research to their sources in the elements of human nature, or consider and solve, with more or less success, the most important question, how far the character of individuals has produced public events, or how far on the other hand public events have produced and formed the character of individuals.

Therefore one history of the same period, in human affairs, no more renders another history of the same period useless, or unadvisable, than the structure of one temple forbids the erection of another, or one statue of Apollo, Hercules, or Pericles should suppress all other attempts to produce statues of the same persons.

But, gentlemen, I must not dwell upon these general topics. We are Americans. We have a country all our own; we are all linked to its fates and its fortunes; it is already not without renown; it has been the theatre of some of the most important human transactions, and it may well become us to reflect on the topics and the means furnished for historical composition in our own land. I have abstained, on this occasion, gentlemen, from much comment on histories composed by European writers of modern times; and, for obvious reasons, I abstain altogether from remarks upon the writers of our own country.

Works have been written upon the history of the United States, other works upon the same subject are in progress, and, no doubt, new works are contemplated, and will be accomplished.

It need not be doubted, that what has been achieved by the great men who have preceded our generation, will be properly recorded by their successors. A country in which highly interesting events occur, is not likely to be destitute of scholars and authors fit to transmit those events to posterity. For the

present, I content myself with a few general remarks on the subject.

In the history of the United States there are three epochs. The first extends from the origin and settlement of the Colonies, respectively, to the year 1774. During this, much the longest period, the history of the country is the history of separate communities and governments, with different laws and institutions, though all were of a common origin; not identical indeed, yet having a strong family resemblance, and all more or less reference to the Constitution, and common law of the parent country.

In all these Governments the principle of popular representation more or less prevailed. It existed in the State Governments, in counties, in large districts, and in townships and parishes. And it is not irrelevant to remark, that, by the exercise of the rights enjoyed under these popular principles, the whole people came to be prepared, beyond the example of all others, for the observance of the same principles in the establishment of national institutions, and the administration of sovereign powers.

The second period extends from 1774, through the great event of the Declaration of Independence, in which the Colonies were called States, and, through the existence of the Confederation, down to the period of the adoption of the present Constitution. The third embraces the period from 1789 to the present time.

To avoid dealing with events too recent, it might be well to consider the third era, or epoch, as terminating with the close of President Washington's administration, and going back into the second, so far as to trace the events and occurrences which showed the necessity of a general government, different from that framed by the Articles of Confederation, and which prepared the minds of the people for the adoption of the present Constitution. No doubt, the assembly of the first Continental Congress may be regarded as the era at which the union of these States commenced. This took place in Philadelphia, the city distinguished by the great civil events of our early history, on the 5th of September, 1774, on which day the first Continental Congress assembled. Delegates were present from New

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Hampshire, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Connecticut, New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Delaware, Maryland, Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Georgia.

Let this day be ever remembered! It saw assembled from the several Colonies those great men whose names have come down to us, and will descend to all posterity. Their proceedings are remarkable for simplicity, dignity, and unequalled ability. At that day, probably, there could have been convened on no part of this globe an equal number of men, possessing greater talents and ability, or animated by a higher and more patriotic motive. They were men full of the spirit of the occasion, imbued deeply with the general sentiment of the country, of large comprehension, of long foresight, and of few words. They made no speeches for ostentation, they sat with closed doors, and their great maxim was "*faire sans dire.*" It is true, they only wrote; but the issuing of such writings, on authority, and at such a crisis, was action, high, decisive, national action. They knew the history of the past, they were alive to all the difficulties and all the duties of the present, and they acted from the first, as if the future were all open before them. Peyton Randolph was unanimously chosen President, and Charles Thomson was appointed Secretary. In such a constellation, it would be invidious to point out the bright particular stars. Let me only say, what none can consider injustice to others, that George Washington was one of the number.

The proceedings of the assembly were introduced by religious observances, and devout supplications to the Throne of Grace for the inspirations of wisdom and the spirit of good counsels.

On the second day of the session it was ordered that a committee should be appointed to state the rights of the Colonies, the instances in which those rights had been violated, and the means proper to be pursued for their restoration; and another committee to examine and report upon the several statutes of the English Parliament which had been passed, affecting the trade and manufactures of the Colonies. The members of these committees were chosen on the following day. Immediately afterwards Congress took up, as the foundation of their

proceedings, certain resolutions adopted, just before the time of their assembling, by delegates from towns in the county of Suffolk, and especially the town of Boston.

Boston, the early victim of the infliction of wrong by the mother country, the early champion of American liberty; Boston, though in this vast country she may be now surpassed by other cities in numbers, in commerce and wealth, can never be surpassed in the renown of her revolutionary history. She will stand acknowledged, while the world doth stand, as the early promoter and champion of the rights of the Colonies. The English crown frowned upon her with severity and indignation; it only made her stand more erect and put on a face of greater boldness and defiance. The Parliament poured upon her all its indignation; it only held her up with greater illumination, and drew towards her a more enthusiastic attachment and veneration from the country. Boston, as she was in heart, in principle and conduct in 1774, so may she remain till her three hills shall sink into the sea and be no more remembered among men.

Gentlemen, these early proceedings of the citizens of Boston and other inhabitants of the county of Suffolk deserve to be written where all posterity may read them. They were carried to the representative of royalty by the first distinguished martyr in the cause of liberty, Joseph Warren. How fit that he who was not long afterwards to fall in the defence of this liberty, and to seal his love of country with his blood, full of its spirit and its principles, should be charged with its remonstrances to the throne of England! No encomium, no eulogy upon the State of which I have the honor to be a citizen, can exceed that which is expressed in the unanimous resolution of the first American Congress of the 8th of October, 1774, in these words:

*“Resolved, That this Congress approve the opposition of the Massachusetts Bay to the execution of the late acts of Parliament; and if the same shall be attempted to be carried into execution by force, in such case all America ought to support them in their opposition.”*

Gentlemen, I will not believe that the ancient Commonwealth of Massachusetts can ever depart from her true character or

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cease to deserve this immortal honor; I think it impossible. But should she be left to such forgetfulness of herself and all that belongs to her, should she temporarily or permanently stray away from the paths of her ancient patriotism, should she, which Heaven avert, be willing to throw off her original and all-American mantle and to disrobe herself, in the presence of the world, of all her nationality of character, there are others who would eagerly seize that mantle, and who would show themselves capable of wearing it with grace, dignity, and power. I need not say here where those others are to be found. I am in the city in which Washington first took upon himself the administration of the Government, I am near the spot on which all hearts and all hopes were concentrated in 1789. I bring the whole scene, with all its deep interests, before me. I see the crowds that fill and throng the streets, I see the ten thousand faces anxious to look on him to whose wisdom, prudence, and patriotism the destinies of the country are now committed. I see the august form, I behold the serene face of Washington; I observe his reverent manner when he rises in the presence of countless multitudes, and, looking up with religious awe to heaven, solemnly swears before those multitudes and before Him that sitteth on the circle of those heavens, that he will support the Constitution of his country, so help him God!

And I can hear the shouts and acclamations that rend the air, I see outpouring tears of joy and hope, I see men clasping each other's hands, and I hear them exclaim: "We have at last a country; we have a Union; and in that Union is strength. We have a government able to keep us together, and we have a chief magistrate, an object of confidence, attachment, and love to us all."

Citizens of New York, men of this generation, is there anything which warms your hearts more than these recollections? Or can you contemplate the unparalleled growth of your city, in population and all human blessings, without feeling that the spot is hallowed and the hour consecrated, where and when your career of prosperity and happiness began?

But, gentlemen, my heart would sink within me, and voice and speech would depart from me, if I were compelled to believe that your fidelity to the Constitution of the country, signal and

unquestioned as it is, could ever exceed that of the State whose soil was moistened by the blood of the first heroes in the cause of liberty, and whose history has been characterized from the beginning by zealous and uniform support of the principles of Washington.

This first Congress sat from the 5th day of September until the 26th of October, and it then dissolved. Its whole proceedings are embraced in forty-nine pages; but these few pages contain the substance and the original form and pressure of our American liberty, before a government of checks and balances and departments, with separate and well defined powers, was established. Its principal papers are: an address to the people of Great Britain, written by John Jay; a memorial to the inhabitants of the British colonies, written by Richard Henry Lee; a petition to the King and an address to the inhabitants of Quebec, written by John Dickinson.\*

There is one resolution of the old Congress, adopted on the 14th of March, 1776, which has never received so much attention as it deserves.

It is in these words:

*Resolved*, That it be recommended to the several assemblies, conventions, councils, or committees of safety, immediately to cause all persons to be disarmed within their respective Colonies, who are notoriously disaffected to the cause of America, or who have not associated and refuse to associate to defend by arms the United Colonies against the hostile attempts of the British fleets and armies."

Extract from the minutes.

CHARLES THOMSON,  
Secretary.

\* In a copy of the printed journal of the proceedings of the Provincial Congress of 1774, which belonged to Cæsar Rodney, and which contains interlineations, probably in his handwriting, the petition to the King is stated to have been written by John Adams, and corrected by John Dickinson. Its authorship is claimed also for Richard Henry Lee, by his biographer, probably on the ground that he was the chairman of the committee, and may have prepared the original draft of the petition which was recommended, Mr. Dickinson being at the same time added to the committee; and it is included in the edition of Mr. Dickinson's writings published at Wilmington during his lifetime, and superintended by himself. Mr. Rodney's copy of the journal ascribes the memorial to the inhabitants of the British colonies, to William Livingston. But there is the best proof that it was written by Richard Henry Lee.

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Several of the governors of the States, conventions, councils, or committees of safety took immediate measures for carrying this resolution into effect. The proceedings in consequence of it have been preserved, however, only in a few States. The fullest returns which can be found are believed to be from New Hampshire and New York. The form adopted was a recital of the resolution of Congress, and then the promise, or pledge, in the following words :

“In consequence of the above resolution of the Continental Congress, and to show our determination in joining our American brethren in defending the lives, liberties, and properties of the inhabitants of the United Colonies: We, the subscribers, do hereby solemnly engage and promise that we will, to the utmost of our power, at the risk of our lives and fortunes, with arms, oppose the hostile proceedings of the British fleets and armies against the United American Colonies.”

In the mountainous State of New Hampshire and among the highest of its mountains, then containing only a few scattered settlements, was the township of Salisbury. The Merrimac River, forming its eastern boundary, now so pleasant in scenery, and with so much richness and industry on its banks, was then a roaring and foaming stream seeking its way, amidst immense forests on either side, from the White Mountains to the sea. The settlers in this township were collected, and the promise or pledge proposed by the Continental Congress, of life and fortune, presented to them. “All,” as the record says, “freely signed except two.”

In looking to this record, thus connected with the men of my own birthplace, I confess I was gratified to find who were the signers and who were the dissentients. Among the former was he from whom I am immediately descended, with all his brothers, and his whole kith and kin. This is sufficient emblazonry for my arms, enough of heraldry for me.

Are there young men before me who wish to learn and to imitate the spirit of their ancestors, who wish to live and breathe in that spirit, who desire that every pulsation of their hearts and every aspiration of their ambition shall be American and nothing but American? Let them master the contents



of the immortal papers of the first Congress, and fully imbue themselves with their sentiments.

The great Lord Chatham spoke of this assembly in terms which have caused my heart to thrill, and my eyes to be moistened, whenever I recollect them, from my first reading of them to this present hour :

“When your Lordships look at the papers transmitted us from America, when you consider their decency, firmness, and wisdom, you cannot but respect their cause and wish to make it your own. For myself, I must declare and avow that in all my reading and observation, and it has been my favorite study (I have read Thucydides and have studied and admired the master-states of the world), that for solidity of reasoning, force of sagacity, and wisdom of conclusion under such a complication of difficult circumstances, no nation or body of men can stand in preference to the general Congress at Philadelphia. I trust it is obvious to your Lordships that all attempts to impose servitude upon such men, to establish despotism over such a mighty continental *nation*, must be vain, must be fatal. We shall be *forced ultimately to retract* ; let us retract while we can, not when we must.”

This first Congress, for the ability which it manifested, the principles which it proclaimed, and the characters of those who composed it, makes an illustrious chapter in our American history. Its members should be regarded not only individually, but as in a group; they should be viewed as living pictures exhibiting young America as it then was, and when the seeds of its public destiny were beginning to start into life, well described by our early motto as being full of energy and prospered by Heaven :

“Non sine Dis, animosus infans.”

Some of the members of this Congress have lived to my time, and I have had the honor of seeing and knowing them; and there are those in this assembly, doubtless, who have beheld the stately form of Washington, and looked upon the mild and intelligent face, and heard the voice of John Jay.

For myself, I love to travel back in imagination, to place myself in the midst of this assembly, this Union of greatness and patriotism, and to contemplate as if I had witnessed its

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profound deliberations and its masterly exhibitions, both of the rights and of the wrongs of the country.

I may not dwell longer on this animating and enchanting picture. Another grand event succeeds it, and that is, the convention which framed the Constitution, the spirited debates in the States by the ablest men of those States, upon its adoption, and finally the first Congress, filled by the gray-haired men of the Revolution, and younger and vigorous patriots and lovers of liberty, and Washington himself in the principal chair of state, surrounded by his heads of department, selected from those who enjoyed the greatest portion of his own regard, and stood highest in the esteem of their country.

Neither Thucydides nor Xenophon, neither Sallust nor Livy, presents any picture of an assembly of public men, or any scene of history which, in its proper grandeur, or its large and lasting influence upon the happiness of mankind, equals this.

Its importance, indeed, did not at the moment strike the minds of ordinary men. But Burke saw it with an intuition clear as the light of heaven. Charles Fox saw it; and sagacious and deep thinking minds over all Europe perceived it.

England, England, how would thy destinies have been altered if the advice of Chatham, Burke, and Fox had been followed!

Shall I say altered for the better? — certainly not. England is stronger and richer at this moment than if she had listened to the unheeded words of her great statesmen. Neither nations nor individuals always foresee that which their own interest and happiness require.

Our greatest blessings often arise from the disappointment of our most anxious hopes and our most fervent wishes:

——— “Let us know,  
Our indiscretion sometimes serves us well,  
When our deep plots do fail; and that should teach us,  
There’s a divinity that shapes our ends,  
Rough hew them how we will.”

Instead of subject colonies, England now beholds on these shores a mighty rival, rich, powerful, intelligent like herself.

And may these countries be forever friendly rivals. May their power and greatness, sustaining themselves, be always directed to the promotion of the peace, the prosperity, the enlightenment, and the liberty of mankind; and if it be their united destiny, in the course of human events, that they be called upon, in the cause of humanity and in the cause of freedom, to stand against a world in arms, they are of a race and of a blood to meet that crisis without shrinking from danger and without quailing in the presence of earthly power.

Gentlemen, I must bring these desultory remarks to a close. I terminate them where perhaps I ought to have begun,—namely, with a few words on the present state and condition of our country, and the prospects which are before her.

Unborn ages and visions of glory crowd upon my soul, the realization of all which, however, is in the hands and good pleasure of Almighty God, but, under His divine blessing, it will be dependent on the character and the virtues of ourselves and of our posterity.

If classical history has been found to be, is now, and shall continue to be, the concomitant of free institutions and of popular eloquence, what a field is opening to us for another Herodotus, another Thucydides, and another Livy! And let me say, gentlemen, that if we and our posterity shall be true to the Christian religion, if we and they shall live always in the fear of God, and shall respect His commandments, if we and they shall maintain just moral sentiments and such conscientious convictions of duty as shall control the heart and life, we may have the highest hopes of the future fortunes of our country; and if we maintain those institutions of government and that political union, exceeding all praise as much as it exceeds all former examples of political associations, we may be sure of one thing, that while our country furnishes materials for a thousand masters of the historic art, it will afford no topic for a Gibbon. It will have no decline and fall. It will go on prospering and to prosper. But if we and our posterity reject religious instruction and authority, violate the rules of eternal justice, trifle with the injunctions of morality, and recklessly destroy the political constitution which holds us together, no man can tell how sudden a catastrophe may overwhelm us that

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shall bury all our glory in profound obscurity. Should that catastrophe happen, let it have no history! Let the horrible narrative never be written! Let its fate be like that of the lost books of Livy, which no human eye shall ever read, or the missing Pleiad, of which no man can ever know more than that it is lost, and lost forever!

But, gentlemen, I will not take my leave of you in a tone of despondency. We may trust that Heaven will not forsake us, nor permit us to forsake ourselves. We must strengthen ourselves and gird up our loins with new resolution; we must counsel each other, and, determined to sustain each other in the support of the Constitution, prepare to meet manfully and united whatever of difficulty or of danger, whatever of effort or of sacrifice the Providence of God may call upon us to meet. Are we of this generation so derelict, have we so little of the blood of our revolutionary fathers coursing through our veins, that we cannot preserve what they achieved? The world will cry out "shame" upon us if we show ourselves unworthy to be the descendants of those great and illustrious men who fought for their liberty and secured it to their posterity by the Constitution of the United States.

Gentlemen, exigencies arise in the history of nations when competition and rivalry, disputes and contentions are powerful. Exigencies arise in which good men of all parties and all shades of political sentiment are required to reconsider their opinions and differences, to readjust their positions, and to bring themselves together, if they can, in the spirit of harmony. Such a state of things, in my judgment, has happened in our day. An exigency has arisen, the duties and the dangers of which should sink deep within all our hearts. We have a great and wise Constitution. We have grown, flourished, and prospered under it with a degree of rapidity unequalled in the history of the world. Founded on the basis of equal civil rights, its provisions secure perfect equality and freedom; those who live under it are equal and enjoy the same privileges. It is to be presumed that all wise and good men of the nation have the same end in view, though they may take different means to obtain that great end, — the preservation and protection of the

Constitution and Government. If, then, they have one and the same object, they must unite in the means and be willing each to surrender something to the opinions of others, to secure the harmony of the whole. Unity of purpose should produce harmony of action. This general object then, being the preservation of the Constitution, the only efficient means to accomplish this end is the union of all its friends. The Constitution has enemies, secret and professed, but they cannot disguise the fact that it secures us many benefits. These enemies are unlike in character, but they all act for the same purpose. Some of them are enthusiasts, self-sufficient and headstrong. They fancy that they can strike out for themselves a better path than that laid down for them, as the son of Apollo thought he could find a better course across the heavens for the sun.

“Thus Phaeton once, amidst the Ethereal plains,  
Leaped on his father’s car, and seized the reins,  
Far from his course impelled the glowing sun,  
Till nature’s laws to wild disorder run.”

Heat, in the intellectual constitution of these enthusiasts, is distributed just exactly as it should not be; they have hot heads and cold hearts. They are rash, reckless, and fierce for change, and with no affection for the existing institutions of their country.

Other enemies there are, more cool and with more calculation. These have a deeper and more fixed and dangerous purpose; they formerly spoke of a forcible resistance to the provisions of the Constitution; they now speak of secession. Let me say, gentlemen, that secession from us is accession elsewhere. He who renounces the protection of the “stars and stripes,” will assuredly shelter himself under another flag; that will happen from inevitable necessity.

These malcontents find it not difficult to inflame men’s passions; they attribute all the misfortunes of individual men of different States, sections, and communities, all want of prosperity — to the Union. There is a strange co-operation of what are called antagonistic opinions. Extremes meet and act together.

There are those in the country who profess, in their own words, even to hate the Constitution because it tolerates in the

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Southern States the institutions existing therein; and there are others who profess to hate it, and do hate it, because it does not better sustain these institutions. These opposite classes meet and shake hands together, and say: "Let us see what we can do to accomplish our common end. Give us dissolution, revolution, secession, anarchy, and then let us have a general scramble for our separate objects." Now the friends of the Constitution must rally and unite. They must forget the things which are behind, and act with immovable firmness, like a band of brothers, with moderation and conciliation, forgetting past disagreements and looking only to the great object set before them,—the preservation of the Constitution bequeathed to them by their ancestors. They must gird up their loins for the work. It is a duty which they owe to these ancestors and to the generations which are to succeed them.

Gentlemen, I give my confidence, my countenance, my heart and hand, my entire co-operation to all good men, without reference to the past, or pledge for the future, who are willing to stand by the Constitution.

I will quarrel with no man about past differences, I will reproach no one, but only say that we stand together here in a most interesting period of our history, with the same general love of country, the same veneration for ancestry, and the same regard for posterity; and let us act in that spirit of union which actuated our ancestors when they framed the institutions which it is ours to preserve. But I will not carry my toleration so far as to justify, in the slightest degree, any defection from that great and absolutely essential point, the preservation of the Union; and I think every man should make his sentiments known on this point. For myself I have no hesitation, and cannot act with those who have. Other questions, questions of policy, are subordinate. This is paramount. Every man who is for the Union should come out boldly and say so, without condition or hypothesis, without ifs and ands and buts. What Cicero says on another occasion is fully applicable to this: "*denique inscriptum sit, patres conscripti, in fronte uniuscujusque civis, quod de republica sentiat.*" Let every man bear inscribed on his forehead what are his sentiments concerning the republic. There are persons weak enough,

foolish enough, to think and to say that if the Constitution which holds these States together should be broken up, there would be found some other and some better chain of connection. This is rash! This is rash! I no more believe it possible that if this Union be dissolved, held together as it now is by the Constitution, especially as I look on these thirty-one States, with their various institutions, spreading over so vast a country, with such varieties of climate, — I say, I no more believe it possible that this Union, should it once be dissolved, could ever again be re-formed, and all the States re-associated, than I believe it possible that, if, by the fiat of Almighty power, the law of gravitation should be abolished, and the orbs which compose the Universe should rush into illimitable space, jostling against each other, they could be brought back and re-adjusted into harmony by any new principle of attraction. I hardly know whether the manner of our political death would be an aggravation, or an alleviation of our fate. We shall die no lingering death. We shall fall victims to neither war, pestilence, nor famine. An earthquake would shake the foundations of the globe, pull down the pillars of heaven, and bury us at once in endless darkness. Such may be the fate of this country and its institutions. May I never live to see that day! May I not survive to hear any apocalyptic angel crying through the heavens, with such a voice as announced the fall of Babylon, Ἐπεσεν, ἔπεσεν, ἡ Ἀμερικὴ ἡ μεγάλη, καὶ ἐγένετο κατοικητήριον δαιμόνων καὶ φυλακὴ παντὸς πνεύματος ἀκαθάρτου.

Gentlemen, inspiring auspices, this day, surround us and cheer us. It is the anniversary of the birth of Washington. We should know this, even if we had lost our calendars, for we should be reminded of it by the shouts of joy and gladness. The whole atmosphere is redolent of his name; hills and forests, rocks and rivers, echo and re-echo his praises. All the good, whether learned or unlearned, high or low, rich or poor, feel this day that there is one treasure common to them all, and that is the fame and character of Washington. They recount his deeds, ponder over his principles and teachings, and resolve to be more and more guided by them in the future. To the old and the young, to all born in the land, and

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to all whose love of liberty has brought them from foreign shores to make this the home of their adoption, the name of Washington is this day an exhilarating theme. Americans by birth are proud of his character, and exiles from foreign shores are eager to participate in admiration of him; and it is true that he is, this day, here, everywhere, all the world over, more an object of love and regard than on any day since his birth.

Gentlemen, on Washington's principles, and under the guidance of his example, will we and our children uphold the Constitution. Under his military leadership, our fathers conquered; and under the outspread banner of his political and constitutional principles will we also conquer. To that standard, we shall adhere, and uphold it, through evil report and through good report. We will meet danger, we will meet death, if they come, in its protection; and we will struggle on, in daylight and in darkness, aye, in the thickest darkness, with all the storms which it may bring with it, till,

“ Danger's troubled night is o'er,  
And the star of Peace return.”



# Remarks at City Hall, New York

FEBRUARY 24, 1852.<sup>1</sup>

MR. MAYOR AND GENTLEMEN: The very kind and favorable terms in which you have been pleased to speak of my efforts to be useful, leaves me little more on the present occasion to say, than to express my grateful thanks to the Common Council of the City of New York for the polite and friendly invitation extended to me; and to you, Mr. Mayor, for the undeserved terms of respect in which you please to address me. Mr. Mayor, I have been a good while in the public service, — longer, a great deal longer, than in some respects has been useful to me, and I have feared, sometimes, longer than might prove useful to the community. But I can say that from the first to the last, above all ordinary selfish motives, it has been my constant aim to render some service to my native land in this my generation, and to obtain and secure from my fellow citizens throughout the country, some degree of their approbation and regard. If I have obtained or should obtain the accomplishment of that object, I shall feel that my highest aspirations have been gratified. I have endeavored through life to cherish one idea, and that is that there is but one America upon earth; but one free, large American Government upon earth; that there never was another, and that if Providence should leave us to such a disregard of the blessings which we enjoy under it, no other shall succeed it so long as the sun shall shine in heaven. It is not in the nature of things that this great experiment can be tried and then thrown by, and other great experiments rise in their stead. Our system is a well-considered Union of the States, a Union in which no more is granted to the general Government than is necessary to enable that general Government to take care of those large interests in which all the people of the States are concerned. All beyond this is left to

<sup>1</sup> New York Daily Tribune, February 25, 1852.

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the States themselves, to their Legislature and Government, and all to be managed according to the discretion of this Government, and the whole people of these States, while nothing is transacted in the Councils of Washington that is not supposed to be necessary for the general good of the whole. That is our system. It is peculiar. The world has known nothing like it. If this experiment should fail, the world is not likely hereafter to know another; and since the Constitution of the United States has been such an overflowing fountain of good to all, since it has so much protected our peace at home, so well maintained our honor abroad, and raised us to such a consideration of dignity among the nations of the earth, that we have nothing now to fear from any nation, and can challenge and demand from each its respect for us and our rights, I am among those who look with the deepest concern upon any domestic occurrences that will weaken this bond of brotherhood, which wishes to raise region against region, the South against the North, the East against the West, and sow the seeds of dissension and distrust and mutual animosity in the field in which we should all look to reap a golden harvest of common affection and common regard.

Mr. Mayor, my walks in life have been very much among the masses, and from my birth upward I think I have seen and known enough of the people of this country, and I am sure that if they are not misled, and if they do not give way to temporary prejudices or feelings, there is not upon the face of the earth a people who are more deeply imbued with a sober, sensible, and, at the same time, ardent affection and love of Liberty than these people of the United States. The great desire of all is to have a government that shall protect industry, protect labor, secure property, secure reputation, and give to every man according to his talent, and virtue, and industry, a chance to rise according to his own merits, and not borrowing consequences from his birth, or ancestry, or the artificial circumstances that may surround him, but standing upon his own ground, and upon his own feet, that he may rise to such an elevation as his talents and virtues demand. And long may it be that such a state of things will continue. Who can say, who can define, who can tell us what is to be expected from a change?

Here are thirty-two sisters revolving round a common centre, like the planets, all enjoying the same light and illumination, all enjoying its protection, and keeping steady in their places by its even, equal, and tranquil gravitation; and in all the States, all men and all parties are entirely at liberty to establish and maintain their own domestic affairs, their agriculture and commerce and manufactures, while here is raised up over all, that great flag of which we are all proud, held up in the face of nations to show that whatever rivers may divide us, however high or however low a man may be, he is to be protected in all that belongs to him as an American freeman. And you, nations of the earth, take care how you infringe upon the rights or prosperity of any one of them.

Mr. Mayor and gentlemen, there are countries in the world in which individuals enjoy no happiness but under their own roof, and what is under their own roof they are not sure will always be protected for their own enjoyment. There are others in which treasures are hidden in order to be preserved. There are countries in which the people dare not speak, lest their household rights and their domestic security should be invaded. There are none of those things known among us. Not only does every man live in the enjoyment of what is peculiarly his own, but let me say that there belongs to the country a common treasure, a common fountain of enjoyment in which every man may drink, and that is the honor and glory and renown of the country common to us all. We are all participators of that great fountain. We are happy because we see our neighbors happy. We are happy because we see our country stable and honored. That is a happiness such as devolves upon few of the families of the human race, or has devolved upon them in any previous epoch. But I am detaining you. I repeat my thanks to you, Mr. Mayor, and to the Common Council of this City, for the high terms, so much beyond my merits, in which you are pleased to speak of my public career; I tender to you again my grateful thanks, and I give to you all the best wishes of a warm American heart.

# Remarks on Fenimore Cooper

NEW YORK, February 25, 1852. <sup>1</sup>

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN: I deem it a very high distinction to be called upon to occupy the chair of this meeting.

The object of the meeting, ladies and gentlemen, is to contribute to the erection of an appropriate statue to the memory of a distinguished citizen of New York, who has not only honored the State to which he belonged, but honored the country of which he was a citizen, by his long, distinguished and eminent contributions to American literature.

There are, ladies and gentlemen, roads to fame of various characters; armies lead to destruction — military achievements transmit distinguished individuals to the knowledge of posterity — political life also presents those to the contemplation of mankind, and to the history of the country, who have rendered services to their country in their day and generation. He in whose memory and whose honor we are now assembled, to bear a part and make a contribution, was not a soldier in arms, nor was it his lot to command the applause of listening senates, although by the great diffusion of his literary productions — by his taste and talent and industry — he had become, before his decease, so much an object of national regard, that we may all say of him, with truth, that “he was able to read his future in a nation’s eyes.”

Ladies and gentlemen, is there anything more to be desired than that reputation which is made by addressing itself to the taste and the cultivation, the morality and the religion of civilized men in a civilized country? Can any person deserve greater praise than he who contributes to the literature and to the moral culture of the age in which he lives?

<sup>1</sup> At the Commemorative Services held at Metropolitan Hall, New York, in honor of James Fenimore Cooper. From the New York Evening Post, February 26, 1852.

I should not be here to-night, ladies and gentlemen, to raise my feeble voice in praise of the memory of Fenimore Cooper, however distinguished by genius, talent, education, and the art of popular writing, if in the character of these writings there was anything to undermine our religious faith, or to debauch the morality of the country. Nothing can atone, in genius or in talent, for such an injury as that would be to the young and rising generation of the community.

Ladies and gentlemen, as far as I have become acquainted with the writings of Mr. Fenimore Cooper, these writings uphold all good sentiments, sustain all good morals, and maintain just taste; and after religion and morals and good taste, the next thing I have to say is, that all of his writings from beginning to end are patriotic — American throughout and throughout.

It is, therefore, ladies and gentlemen, that I deem it an honor to be here on this occasion to bear my humble part in whatsoever may be necessary to rear a proper statue or monument to the memory of Fenimore Cooper. I consider him as having contributed largely to the character of American literature at home and abroad. He is known everywhere. His writings have been read not only all over this country but wherever our language is read; and wherever they have been read, they have inspired good morality and good taste. Mr. Fenimore Cooper showed the power, imbued with deep principle, of amusing, and to a great extent enlightening the rising generation, without any injury to their morals or any solicitation of depraved passions. This is his great praise; and what is more honorable, and what is more likely to endure, than the fame that is secured by writings of this tendency — full of amusement and information, founded on our own American habits, on our own American scenery, and therefore likely to go on improving the generations which are to succeed us, and in transmitting the original American character from his generation to the generations which should succeed him?

I have said he was an American. Ladies and gentlemen, I suppose there is no author, living or dead, who imbued his own mind with a fresher and stronger feeling of the generation which went before him in his own country — who understood

our original forest scenery — who understood the character of those who preceded us, from the settlement of this country to his own time, better than himself, or who has infused more largely the spirit of that time into his compositions, and thereby transmitted them for the edification of those who shall come after us.

He has gone. He has left a name behind him which is ours to cherish and to honor; and so far as marble or bronze can perpetuate it, let marble and bronze be employed; but it is rather, I think, for the purpose of manifesting our own gratitude for his well deserving efforts, that we contribute, by these material fabrics, to transmit him to our children.

The monuments of Fenimore Cooper are his works. “Let us,” says Cicero, “remain — as to brass, it may perish; as to columns, they may be thrown down. The earth itself may be shaken until all its structures are prostrated.” But living in an enlightened age — in an age of literature and science — in an age of history, and poetry, and recital, the monument of Fenimore Cooper exists in the minds of men, and is transmitted from man to man in the ordinary succession of generations. While mind, memory and taste — love of religion — love of country and good morals, prevail, his monument is in the hearts of the people. Ladies and gentlemen, my duty on this occasion is very simple. It is to signify my sense of the honor conferred on me by being called to the chair of this meeting, and to prepare you for the remarks which are now to succeed.

Mr. Bryant<sup>1</sup> will now proceed to pronounce a discourse upon the life, character, and genius of Fenimore Cooper.

Mr. Webster closed the meeting with the following remarks:

It has been said with great truth, by a profound philosopher, “Call no man happy until death,” and the reason of that I take to be the vicissitudes of life and the changes of human feeling, and of the objects of human pursuit, so that before the end of life comes, the character is often changed. *Finis coronat opus*. He in honor of whose memory we are assembled, for the purpose of erecting a suitable monument, has accom-

<sup>1</sup> William Cullen Bryant.

plished and finished his career of human existence. "After life's fitful fever he sleeps well." His career has been closed, and his character is accomplished, and it remains a monument of itself. The perturbations of life cannot affect him; his race is finished; and now, ladies and gentlemen, what has he left to this country?

You all remember the eloquent and ingenious funeral oration of Mark Antony over the body of Julius Cæsar. Antony presented what he called the will of Cæsar, by which, as Antony proclaimed, he made the Roman people the universal legatee of all that he possessed. Well, and suppose he had, what would it have been? The spoils of war, and rapine, and conscription, wrung from oppressed provinces—a physical wealth which perishes. Could he have bestowed on the Roman people ten times the wealth he possessed what would it have been compared with the intellectual legacy left by men of letters and talent, to the country? What are all the riches which could be bestowed on the American nation, compared with that? Who is not grateful to Cooper for consecrating his great attainments, the emanations of his genius, and the fruits of his studies, to the benefit and the glory of his country? In this respect Mr. Webster said he thought the honor and renown of literary men were to be regarded. The products of mind are imperishable while men are civilized; and therefore it is that the treasures of the understanding, the outpourings of the heart, and the creations of the intellect exceed in value the bequests of all the kings of the earth. It is due to the memory of the man in whose honor we are met—it is due, said Mr. Webster, to ourselves, to raise a memorial as a proof of our gratitude to him who has left us such an inheritance, who has made such an addition to our intellectual wealth. This was the view to be taken of the present occasion—an occasion which had thrown upon him a most agreeable duty.

# The Colony of Liberia

NEW YORK, February 27, 1852.<sup>1</sup>

MR. WEBSTER remarked that it was about twenty years since his attention had been called to the subject of colonizing the colored people of this country in Africa. At that time he was made Vice-President of one of the societies. Bushrod Washington was its President, and after him Mr. Jay. The subject excited very general interest, and since the topic to which allusion had been made (slavery) had become more considered, the interest in the colony of Liberia had become more and more rife. The colonization enterprise, like most benevolent enterprises, began with individuals. Clarkson and Wilberforce labored long before they could enlist the sympathies and influence of the Government in its behalf. Such was true here. Private and individual effort set those springs in motion which are finally to move the machinery of government.

For my part, said Mr. Webster, I know of no reason why this enterprise should not receive the fostering care of the Government. Colonization is no longer an experiment. Its success is now beyond dispute. Just before the late Rufus King left his seat in the United States Senate, he proposed that the proceeds of the sales of the public lands should be devoted to the colonization of the free colored people, and I must say that I have heard and know of no good reason, why this would not be a measure of expediency and propriety.

On a recent occasion (the anniversary meeting at Washington), I took occasion to express my views on this point. The colony of Liberia has certainly given proof of the power of self-government. The community there appears to be one of much intelligence. Their affairs seem to be conducted with much prudence

<sup>1</sup> At the residence of Anson G. Phelps, Esq., Mr. Webster was invited to express his views upon the Colonization of Liberia. A large party of gentlemen were present, nearly all of whom were friends of colonization. Reported by the New York Express, and reprinted in the Boston Courier, March 2, 1852.



and sagacity, and I do not see why we should not recognize them as a government, as we have recognized countries possessing a people inferior in intelligence. The government of the Sandwich Islands I take to be less intelligent than that of Liberia. They have, it is true, a nominal king, who is a native, but four out of five of the persons composing the government, are foreigners. Some of these persons have come from our own country; some were selected from the missionaries; some came from the North, some from this section, and some from the South. We deem it no disparagement to hold intercourse with this people, and Mr. Webster saw no good reason why the colony of Liberia might not be as much favored.

Mr. Webster afterwards gave a lucid and instructive account of the negotiations in this country which led to the recognition of the independence of the Sandwich Islands. It so happened that in 1841 or 1842, he wrote, with the assent of the President, to our Minister at London, Mr. Everett, upon this very subject. He proposed to Lord Aberdeen, who was the Prime Minister, and who was a very frank and fair man, that the Sandwich Islands, before they should be seized upon by any one nation, should have their protection guaranteed by all. His Lordship wrote to Mr. Everett to know if Mr. Webster was in earnest, — so doubtful are diplomatists sometimes that men mean all they say, — and on being assured that he was in earnest, he assented at once to the idea, and England recognized the independence of the Sandwich Islands, and upon the suggestion which came from the United States. The agent of the islands, thus encouraged, pursued his way to Belgium, and enlisted the sympathies of the queen in his behalf. She was a devout woman and interested in the work of spreading the cause of religion among the heathen. She, in turn, enlisted the action and sympathy of the king, her husband, and Belgium recognized the independence of the Sandwich Islands. So much could the influence of a good woman accomplish. Nor did she stop here. Being the daughter of Louis Philippe, she wrote to her father, and the French government became interested also in this far-off people.

# Remarks at Trenton

MARCH 26, 1852.<sup>1</sup>

SENATORS AND ASSEMBLYMEN OF NEW JERSEY: I think it becomes me on this imposing, and I may say overwhelming occasion, to do little more than express in the fewest words, and those the most significant, my acknowledgments of the honor you have conferred upon me.

However humbly I may think of myself, and I do think most humbly, it is not for me to disparage your judgment, nor ought I now to do it. I feel, so far as motives, patriotic motives, and a steady purpose to maintain the liberty and Constitution of the country through a protracted life, are concerned, that nothing more than justice has been awarded, and I owe much to your love of your country, and your partial kindness.

Allow me to say that there is no State in the Union — not even that in which I was born, or that in which I have so long lived, and which has honored me with a place in the public councils — whose soil I tread with more exciting recollections of Revolutionary times and the subsequent history of our country, than New Jersey. At an early period of my life, I traversed your State from end to end, and visited every spot where the blood of Americans, of the men of New Jersey, was spilled in the defence of liberty. I feel a hallowed regard for those scenes; I feel the deepest sympathy for the suffering of the sons of New Jersey, and of other States, who were obliged, in the march of the American army, to track a pathway of blood across the State.

It is impossible I should forget how much, at the most critical period of the Revolution, is owing to the unconquerable patriotism of Jerseymen.

<sup>1</sup> At a reception at the New Jersey Capitol tendered Mr. Webster by the State Legislature. From the report in the Boston Courier, March 29, 1852.

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It has been my fortune through the last thirty years to become acquainted in the councils of the nation, with eminent sons of New Jersey, and I can say with truth and sincerity, I have found among them, without distinction of political feeling, the loftiest principles, the purest patriotism, and a just devotion to the principles of the Constitution.

Let me add, in respect to the resolutions of the Legislature of New Jersey, that they could have proceeded from no source standing higher in my regard and political affection.

It would not become me to say more on this occasion, except I feel it to be a dictate of clear duty, that in regard to those portions of my public services alluded to by Mr. Zabriskie, both on the first occasion and on the latter, while seeking to perform the duties devolved upon me in the Department of State, I had the entire approbation of the Chief Magistrate of the United States. And on recent occasions, I feel it a duty to say there has been an entire coincidence of sentiment between the distinguished citizen at the head of the Government and myself.

Senators and Representatives, let me say that it has been your pleasure to confer upon me such a mark of distinction as I have never received before. Let me say, with an humble and grateful heart, that I shall carry the recollection of this mark of respect to the end of my life.

# Remarks at New York

MAY 26, 1852.<sup>1</sup>

MR. PRESIDENT AND GENTLEMEN OF THE ST. NICHOLAS SOCIETY: I deem it a piece of great good fortune to pass a few minutes with you on coming into town. I had the honor to receive an invitation to be present at your dinner. I was obliged to decline because of my personal condition. I am a little disabled. I have not two arms; I cannot say, like the glorious Dutch who defended Leyden, that I have one arm with which to eat and another with which to fight; but fortunately, gentlemen, as there is but little fighting to be done, I get on pretty well with one arm. Gentlemen, I am happy to be here; I am happy in recalling to my recollection all the early associations connected with the Government of the Netherlands and our own early history, when we were weak and depressed and without means and credit, and found both in Holland. Your ancestors and your nation I shall never forget, so long as I remember with gratitude anything on earth. I never can forget that the Dutch yielded us sympathy — yielded us, as we say in our day, material aid, and when our prospects were threatened with blight, gave us the timely assistance of the sinews of war. I have ever felt kind sentiments towards that nation; my heart beats towards the gentlemen who helped us in our hour of extreme necessity. I have ever felt a deep interest in their fortunes. I have raised my voice and swung my hat for forty years for Orange Boven.

Mr. Webster continued for some time in a review of the example which Holland in her early struggles for liberty had given to the nations of the earth, and in eulogy of her sound and steadfast character, and concluded by offering as his sentiment:

“*Captain Devroe of the ‘Prince of Orange,’* — his Government and his Nation. May Providence prosper them.”

<sup>1</sup> At the entertainment given to the officers of the Dutch frigate by the St. Nicholas Society. From the report in the Boston Daily Advertiser, May 29, 1852.

# Address Delivered in Faneuil Hall

MAY 22, 1852.<sup>1</sup>

MAYOR SEAVER, in introducing Mr. Webster, said:<sup>2</sup>

We have assembled in this Cradle of American Liberty to meet an honored fellow citizen, one whom we always delight to see and to hear. This is the appropriate place to meet him; these walls have often resounded with his patriotic eloquence; the echoes of his voice still linger upon our ear, but we wish them to be waked once more, that our veneration for Washington and our love for the Union may be strengthened by his words of wisdom and warning.

I am happy to say that the circumstances under which we meet our honored and distinguished friend are fortunate and peculiar. He comes hither by the unanimous invitation of the members of both branches of the city government, without distinction of party, to exchange with us the kind congratulations and warm sympathies of the heart.

Mr. Webster delivered the following address:

MR. MAYOR AND GENTLEMEN OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF BOSTON: I tender you my hearty thanks, my deep-felt gratitude for this unexpected expression of your regard towards me, as one of your fellow citizens; and I thank you, particularly, Mr. Mayor, an old and constant friend of mine, for the kind manner in which you have been pleased to express your own sentiments toward me on this occasion.

And now, fellow citizens of Boston, by the good providence of God, I am here amongst you once more. I am glad to see every face that illumines and is illumined in this assembly. This occasion is altogether agreeable. I left the place of my appropriate public duties at the approach of summer, to visit my home, and to see to personal affairs which demanded attention; I came with no purpose or expectation of addressing

<sup>1</sup> From the pamphlet report, Boston, 1852.

<sup>2</sup> A full report of Mayor Seaver's remarks will be found in the pamphlet.

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popular assemblies, or of meeting any mass of my fellow citizens. But I have been arrested in my journey, by the vote of the City Council of Boston, inviting me with a unanimity which affects my feelings deeply, to meet my fellow citizens here, not as a public man, but as a private man; not as one who exercises any share of the public authority, but as one of themselves: as one who has passed the greater part of his life in the midst of them, enjoying their association and acquaintance, and cultivating their regard.

Gentlemen, I have come here to-day to speak upon no political question, nor to discuss anything growing out of the present state of opinion in the community, about which men differ. In the first place, fellow citizens, I abstain from all such topics because this is not a fit occasion. This, I take it, is a friendly, social, personal, neighborly meeting, and not one assembled for political purposes. And you will allow me to say, in the next place, that if this were a fit occasion for me to express political sentiments, I have no new opinions to express, no political new character to assume. What I think upon important pending topics has been so often spoken and written by me, with full heart and honest purpose, within the last two years, that nothing remains to be said. And what also are my opinions upon the general policy of the country, foreign and domestic, I need not now repeat. I say to you to-day that I have nothing to add and nothing to retract. I have neither explanation nor qualification to offer. I propose to you, and to my fellow citizens throughout the country, no platform but the platform of my life and character. I have no new promises to make, and no assurance to give but the assurance of my reputation. I am known; what I have been and what I am is known, and upon that knowledge I stand to-day, with my countrymen, and before my countrymen; and the rest is theirs.

Nevertheless, gentlemen, although it be not an occasion for the public discussion of controverted questions, it is an occasion on which we may feel where we are, and what are our relations to each other and to the country. This is FANEUIL HALL — OPEN. The ornaments on its walls are pictures of the great and immortal founders of our Republic. No man with a proper regard for the past, with proper feelings for the present,

with just aspiration for the future,—no man can stand in Faneuil Hall, surrounded by these images of our ancestors, these portraits of revolutionary characters, without reflecting that he is on a spot consecrated by early associations, ennobled by early efforts for liberty, and the history of which is to be transmitted to all posterity by durable records.

Gentlemen, here we are in what we justly call the Cradle of American Liberty; here we are in the place which gave birth to the great events, military and civil, with which the revolution of our country commenced; and in all time past, and in the present time, and until the love of liberty is extinguished in future generations, this place will be held in the most affectionate remembrance.

Fellow citizens, I hope it may not be irreverent for me to say that as the Jews in the days of their captivity in Babylon were wont to offer prayers to God daily, with their faces turned always toward Jerusalem, so the patriotic and ingenuous youth of this and succeeding generations who wish to learn and to know the true origin of the independence of the country, and its early achievements in the cause of liberty, who wish to imbibe into their own hearts the fulness of the spirit of that liberty, will keep their attention turned constantly to this spot, whence issued the light which in 1775 illuminated a continent.

But, gentlemen and fellow citizens, not to pursue even these general remarks too far, I turn to other topics more suitable to the occasion. The path of politics is a thorny path. It is delightful sometimes to turn aside from it, and to walk along over the velvet verdure of a gentle vale, flushed with all the flowers and enriched with all the fruits of personal friendship and social regard. It is for one of these walks that we meet to-day, leaving the rough road of disputatious politics, and walking over no frozen and no burning marl, but among glades of pleasant recollections of the past and grateful enjoyment of the present.

Gentlemen, we cannot shut our eyes, and the intelligent part of mankind does not shut its eyes, to the extraordinary degree of prosperity to which this country has risen under the present popular form of government; and of that prosperity the nature

of that government is the true secret. There may be some things which we might wish were better, many which might be worse. But, on the whole, where does the sun, from its rising to its setting, throw its beams upon a people more prosperous, more happy, more growing in reputation and renown, than these States of United America?

Now, gentlemen, whence do these blessings flow? Whence comes all the prosperity we enjoy? How is it that on this whole continent, from the frozen zone to Cape Horn, there is no people like that of the United States; no people which can show a growth like theirs; no government or people that can stand up before the world like the Government and people of the United States, and present themselves boldly and fearlessly to the respect, awe, and even to the admiration, of all nations? How is this? In my opinion, gentlemen, all, or a great part, of our prosperity is to be referred to our early acquaintance with the principles of regulated, constitutional, popular liberty, and our early adoption of these principles in the establishment of the republican form of government. The Tory writers of England, whose aim, as you well know, gentlemen, it has generally been to show that the people are best governed when they have little or no share in the government, maintain that those above can govern those below better than those below can govern themselves, and that government as such has little to do with the essential elements of individual happiness. That is not our theory. We hold that there is nothing above, and nothing below; that all stand on an equality; each enjoys his part of the public prosperity and suffers his portion of the public adversity; each at the same time bearing his part and exercising his appropriate portion in the political concerns of his country. Dr. Johnson, one of the writers of this school, says:

“How small, of all that human hearts endure,  
That part that laws or kings can cause or cure!”

Now, the truth is, that kings and laws can cause or cure most evils belonging to social or individual life; they can establish despotism; they can restrain political opinion; they can prevent men from expressing their free thoughts; they can deny the exercise of religious liberty; kings and laws can impose intolerably burdensome taxes; they can exclude the



masses from all participation in the government; they can bring about a state of things under which the public good and the public liberties will be destroyed and trodden down by military power; they can obstruct the progress of education and knowledge; they can render men servile serfs, indeed almost brutes, *quatuor pedibus exceptis*; and they can darken, blind, and almost extinguish the intellectual element of humanity. Is not this much? Are not these great evils? Who does not feel that the political institutions of his country, according as they are good or evil, are the main sources of his happiness or misery? It is true, it is very true, that a man's condition may depend in many respects on personal circumstances; on his health, or on the state of his family, on his means for living, and for the education of his children; but his fortune, good or evil, is influenced deeply, mainly, and essentially by the laws of his country. And that, I take it, is the great solution of the question, now no longer a matter of doubt, but heretofore a question subsisting all over Europe, — the true nature of the happiness and prosperity of the people of the United States. But I say to you, and to our whole country, and to all the crowned heads and aristocratic powers and feudal systems of this world, that it is to enlightened self-government — the great principle of popular representation and administration, the system that lets in all to participate in the counsels that are to assign the good or evil of all — that we owe what we are, and what we hope to be.

Why, gentlemen, who does not see this? Who supposes that anything but the independence of the country would have made us what we are? Suppose that mother England had treated us with the utmost indulgence, that the counsels most favorable to the colonies had prevailed, that we had been made a spoiled child, I say to you as I have said before, and shall continue to say till the time of my death, that it is not in the nature of any colonial system of government to raise a country and raise a nation to the highest pitch of prosperity and respectability. It is independence, self-government, the liberty of the people to make laws for themselves, that has elevated us from the subdued feeling of colonial subjection and placed us where we are. It is independence:

“Hail, independence! hail thou next best gift  
To that of life and an immortal soul!”

Gentlemen, I have said that our blessings grow essentially from our form of government, from the satisfaction of the people with that form, and their desire to help on the general progress of the country. There is no true American who does not rejoice in the general welfare, and partake in it; who does not take delight, day and night, in reflecting that our progress is onward, that the people grow more happy, and more and more enlightened, successful, and renowned every day. This is a source of individual happiness to every honest American heart. Whatever his condition may be, however fortunate or unfortunate, in whatever circumstances of elevation or depression he may find himself, he still partakes of the general prosperity of the country. He has, in short, a dividend (if I may use a commercial expression), — he has a dividend, payable not quarterly, but daily, out of the fund of general happiness which the country enjoys.

And now, let me ask, on what portions of the globe, in how many regions that men call civilized, does the same thing exist? There are undoubtedly some other nations in which the people feel the same individual interest in the proceedings of government, but there are few. And take nations as a whole; look over the continent of Europe, and among the many millions who constitute the subjects of its arbitrary governments, how many feel that their own individual happiness and respectability are objects of the care and kindness of the authority which is over them? Does not the mass content itself with the hope that the government may cease to be so oppressive on their industry, so burthensome with taxation, and so full of restraint on their personal liberty? How many arbitrary sovereigns care mainly about the individual prosperity of their subjects, and, instead of considering the means by which their government may become an important rival to another and be able to maintain a contest by standing armies and heavy taxation, concern themselves solicitously for the interests of those that are governed, who pay for the gorgeous appendages of military power, and the means and appliances of despotism?

The truth is, that the general theory of politics which has sprung out of the feudal system, has mainly been to strengthen governments as against one another, to make one throne a match for other thrones, and to this end to maintain armies and navies by severe and oppressive taxation on the people. The theory of the feudal system is that of rival and hostile governments as between nations, and as between government and people, that of leader and dependent—and the better instruction or greater elevation of the masses in their character as men, never entered into its notions.

Compare our condition with theirs. Why, there are more men in the United States, I had almost said, attached to their government, loving their government, feeling keenly everything that tends to the disparagement of their government, alive to everything that conduces to the interest of their country, and rejoicing that they live in it, than you can find on ten thousand millions of acres among nations called civilized in the old world, but living under arbitrary sway.

Now, gentlemen, we are all Bostonians. We live here on this little peninsula, —little in territory, not little in intelligence, circumscribed in acres, not circumscribed by any limited boundary in the respect of the civilized world. But we Bostonians live here and partake of the general prosperity of our country. We are not exclusive. We desire that every enjoyment that we ourselves possess, should be participated in by others; and we enjoy the reputation of our whole country, its renown and its honor.

We may consider ourselves commercially as a nation constantly increasing, as a sovereign community growing daily more powerful. We see that the national spirit and enterprise are gathering strength with its growth; and further than that, we are sure that in those mental and intellectual efforts which mark the age, we have made respectable progress, and at the present moment are not without distinction.

Thirty years ago it was asked, "Who reads an American book?" It may now be asked, "What intelligent man in all Europe does *not* read American books?" Samuel Rogers reads them. Henry Hallam reads them. Macaulay reads them. McCulloch reads them, Lord Mahon reads them, and

sometimes finds himself answered when he comments on them. And there is not an intelligent man in England who does not read American authors, and especially our legal and historical works. And in France, Thiers and Guizot read them, and throughout the vast population of France there is no doubt that there is a greater devotion paid to the study of our popular institutions, to the principles which have raised us to the point at which we now stand, than there is paid to the monarchical institutions and principles of government of every other part of Europe, and all the books defending them. America is no longer unknown for science or for literature. I will not mention the authors of our own day, now living, who have so much attracted the attention of the world by their literary productions, especially in the department of historical composition.

Rather a curious incident happened lately in which my name had nearly become enrolled with those of men of letters; for there is of course no end to blunders. There appeared an article in the Royal Gazette of Madrid, intended to be civil to the American Secretary of State, in which he was declared to be the author of that great and illustrious production, known and honored in most countries as Webster's Dictionary of the English Language. Ye shades of Noah Webster! How will you not be offended at this intrusion on your rights and your repose. "He make my dictionary!" he will exclaim; "he never could have made my spelling-book!" And this would be true. I must beg leave therefore, to disclaim the compliment of the Royal Gazette of Madrid, and decline to be classed with men of letters. In the literary sense of that phrase, I certainly am no man of letters; although, when official duties require it, it is true that I have sometimes written a letter.

Well, gentlemen, this is a friendly meeting. We assemble socially, in a friendly spirit, to interchange personal regards, and to congratulate one another upon the prosperity and fair prospects of the country. Let us enjoy, both with cheerfulness and gratitude, the blessings which Providence has poured out around us —

"Hence, loathèd Melancholy!

But come, thou Goddess fair and free,  
In Heaven yclep'd Euphrosyne.

And in thy right hand lead with thee  
The mountain Nymph, sweet Liberty.

To live with her and live with thee  
In unreprieved pleasures free."

Gentlemen, the growth of this city is remarkable, and in any other country would be most remarkable. I came here to take my residence among you in the year 1816. The population of Boston was then 40,000. It is now 140,000. And its increase in wealth, in commerce, the arts and manufactures, has kept pace with the increase of the population.

And now what is Boston? What is the character of Boston? What are the essential elements of her prosperity? Why, she is nearly unrivalled on the face of the earth for her important efforts in behalf of, and extensive benefits for, her own citizens, and for the improvement of mankind. What will you say, when you are informed, though perhaps you all know, that the amount of public taxes in this city, for the purpose of education alone, is equal to one-quarter of the whole tax laid by the public authorities? Where do you find that elsewhere? Where do you find another Boston in this respect? Where do you find one-quarter of the whole tax, paid by individuals, flowing from the public, devoted to education, in addition to the very great amounts paid to the teachers of private schools? Nowhere else that I know of.

The city of Boston pays more than \$200,000 a year for the support of religious instruction and public worship. Where do you find that elsewhere? Tell me the place, the city, the spot, the country, the world over, where so great an amount in proportion to the population is paid for religious instruction. That is Boston. This principle which we inherited from our ancestors, we cultivate. We seek to educate the people. We seek to improve men's moral and religious condition. In short, we seek to work upon mind as well as on matter. And in working on mind, it enlarges the human intellect and the human heart. We know when we work upon materials immortal and imperishable, that they will bear the impress which we place upon them through endless ages to come. If we work upon

marble, it will perish; if we work on brass, time will efface it. If we rear temples, they will crumble to dust. But if we work on men's immortal minds, if we impress on them high principles, the just fear of God, and love for their fellow-men, we engrave on those tablets something which no time can efface, and which will brighten and brighten to all eternity.

And, my friends, that charity which seeketh not her own, that charity which endureth all things, beareth all things, hopeth all things, is not more conspicuously exhibited in any part of the globe than among our own people. The personal attendance on the poor, the bounties of all those who have the means to promote the happiness of the necessitous, and administer to their welfare, are just themes of praise. And above all that, let me say, and let it be known to those who wish to know what Boston has been, what Boston is, what Boston will be, what Boston has done and will do, let me say that Boston has given within the last twenty-five years between five and six millions of dollars for educational, religious, and charitable purposes throughout the United States, and throughout the world.

Gentlemen, my heart warms, my blood quickens in my veins, when I reflect upon the munificent gifts, grants, and provisions made for the purpose of education, for the morals, enlightenment, and religious instruction of the citizens, and for the relief of the poor, by the affluence of Boston. And I never think of all this without having my attention attracted to a venerable gentleman now near me, Hon. Thomas H. Perkins. Will he, at my request, rise and show his benevolent countenance to this crowd of his fellow citizens?

God bless him! He is an honor to his city, an honor to his State, and an honor to his country. His memory will be perfumed by his benevolent actions, and go down as sweet odor to our children's children.

Gentlemen, the happiness of mankind is not always in their own control; but something accidental, or rather, to speak more properly, providential, in the course of things, governs it. We live in an age so infinitely beyond the ages that preceded us, that we can consider ourselves now, in this our day and generation, as emerging from the dark ages, and just getting

into the light. We begin to see where we are. We begin to see a new world. A new rush of ideas comes over us.

Gentlemen, when the great Humboldt stood on the mountains of the lofty equatorial regions amidst their gorgeous forests and foliage, their unsurpassed flowers, their genial warmth, and under the brilliant constellations of the South, his heart burst out in an effusion of sympathy towards the inhabitants of the other parts of the earth. "How unhappy," said he, "are those members of the human race who are doomed to live in those melancholy regions which we call the temperate zones!" And so this generation, gentlemen, upraised from the temperate zones of former times, and culminating at the recently-attained and elevated tops of present knowledge and science, looks back with some indifference upon the history of past times. We think them torpid, uninformed, and unenterprising; and well may we think them so, comparatively, in the effulgence of the splendid light of science, skill, invention, enterprise, and knowledge which has burst upon our times.

Gentlemen, Mr. Locke says that time is measured by the passage of ideas through men's minds. If that be so, we live a great while in a few revolutions of the earth around the sun. If new ideas, new thoughts, new contemplations, new hopes, constitute life, why then we have lived much, whether we have lived many or few years, according as they are usually estimated. The age is remarkable. New thoughts press, and new inventions crowd upon us. We used to say, proverbially, that a thing was done as quick as *thought*; but that is a lingering mode of expression now-a-days. A great many things are done much quicker than some men think. Thought cannot keep up with electricity. While we are talking, the thoughts cannot travel as fast as electricity can give them to the world. While I am now speaking, the word which last left my lips has already been seized by lightning, and before I can utter a few sentences more, will be read not only in New York and Washington, but also in Savannah, New Orleans, Cincinnati, and St. Louis; and my words will all be read with some interest, not because they are mine, but because they proceed from Faneuil Hall, from which place all know that, in important periods of

the past, no voice was heard but that of determined, resolute, national patriotism.

So, gentlemen, we live much, though our years may be few. For my part, I hardly envy the patriarchs for the many years of their lives. They neither saw as much nor enjoyed as much as we see and enjoy. In truth, I do not think very highly of the felicity of Methuselah's longevity.

Fellow citizens, let us be grateful for all our blessings, and perform our duties cheerfully and readily, as men, as patriots, and as Christians.

We all feel that we have a country, not Boston alone, nor Massachusetts alone, but composed and bound up by that vast union of independent States which are united under a common Constitution. The inhabitants of these States are all fellow citizens, and he is narrow in his prejudices and his politics who would reject any of those citizens from the great American brotherhood.

We see here, to-day, delegate members from one of the greatest Christian denominations in the United States, coming from the North probably, certainly from the South and West, and who is not glad to see them? They come as friends; and who would wish to see them in any other capacity? And as for myself, gentlemen, I say to them, I bid you welcome. I bid you welcome to Faneuil Hall, the birthplace of American liberty. Welcome to Boston, the seat of commerce, enterprise, and literature. Welcome to Massachusetts, the home of public education. We welcome you for your many Christian virtues, and for the good you have accomplished in this country and abroad. In the course of my life I have not been an uninterested reader of your history. I know something of Charles Wesley. Dying at a great age, shortly after our independence was secured, these were his last words: "The workmen die, but the work goes on!" The workmen who framed the institutions and the Constitution of our country have passed away, but their work lives after them. Those same institutions and that same Constitution have been upheld by us, and I trust will be sustained by our children forever. Although the workmen may die, yet may the work go on.

I have read, many years since, the biography of John Wesley,



an extraordinary person, the great founder and apostle of the society, who died, I think, in 1791, at the advanced age of eighty-three years. His last words were, "The best of all is, that God is with us." Those sentiments have been wonderfully illustrated in the subsequent history of Methodism, of which Southey said so strongly that it was "religion in earnest."

Now, gentlemen, we must not prolong this occasion further. My friend Mr. Hillard has lately quoted an extract from some stanzas, written long ago, and which I remember from my youth, although I had not remembered their authorship. These may properly be referred to on the present occasion. One line is —

"Solid men of Boston, make no long orations."

This I take to myself, and am bound to obey the injunction. The concomitant line falls in remarkably with the prevailing spirit of these times and the occurrences of to-day.

"Solid men of Boston, drink no strong potations."

Let us all give heed to these admonitions.

But now, gentlemen, we cannot scan the future. To some degree the past may interpret it; but in its whole length it lies far beyond our vision. We must commit ourselves and our country to the hands of Providence. We may indulge hopes, high and exalted hopes, humbly and meekly before God, but confidently and fearlessly before men, that the prosperity and happiness which we of this generation enjoy will descend to our latest posterity with ten thousand times the brilliancy of yonder setting sun!

#### NOTE.

In April, 1851, it was proposed to give Mr. Webster a public reception at Faneuil Hall, but the Board of Aldermen refused to allow the hall to be used. The Common Council of the City of Boston thereupon extended an invitation to Mr. Webster to meet them in Faneuil Hall. His letter to Francis Brinley, declining the invitation, is printed in *Letters Hitherto Uncollected*, pp. 609-610. See, also, in the same volume, Mr. Webster's letter to David Henshaw, pp. 616-617, and his letter to Hon. Benjamin Seaver, accepting the unanimous invitation of both branches of the City Government, pp. 646-647; also *Private Correspondence*, Vol. II. pp. 429-431.

# Remarks before the Agricultural Convention at Washington

JUNE, 1852.<sup>1</sup>

MR. WILDER, AND GENTLEMEN OF THE UNITED STATES AGRICULTURAL SOCIETY: I am happy to see you, one and all. You do me no more than justice when you call me farmer of Marshfield. My father was a farmer, and I am a farmer. When a boy among my native hills of New Hampshire, no cock crowed so early that I did not hear him, and no boy ran with more avidity to do errands at the bidding of the workmen than I did. You are engaged in a noble enterprise. The prosperity and glory of the Union are based upon the achievements of agriculture.

Gentlemen, I will say to you what I have never before said, that when, at forty-five years of age, I was called to Dartmouth College to pass my second graduation, I determined, in my humble manner, to speak of the agricultural resources of the country, and to recommend, for their more full development, organized action and the formation of agricultural societies; and if memory does not betray me, it was about the period of time that the first agricultural societies in this country were formed in old Berkshire and Philadelphia. And though I have never seen that unimportant production since that day, the partiality of some of my curious friends (bowing and laughing) may be gratified by exploring among the slumbering archives of Marshfield. When, some thirty years ago, I was at Marshfield, and some of my kind neighbors made a call to inquire into the state of a matter involving a bit of law, I told them, "I have come to reside among you as a farmer, and here I talk neither politics nor law."

Gentlemen, I am naturally a farmer. I am most ardently attached to agricultural pursuits, and though I cultivate my

<sup>1</sup> The Private Life of Daniel Webster, by Charles Lanman, pp. 131-132.

lands with some little care, yet from the sterility of the soil, or from neglected husbandry on my part, in consequence of my public engagements, they afford no subsistence to myself and family. To you, farmers of the West and South, the soil of Marshfield may look barren and unfruitful. Sometimes the breezes of the broad Atlantic fan you; sometimes, indeed, unkindly suns smite you, but I love its quiet shades, and there I shall love to commune with you upon the ennobling pursuit in which we are so happily engaged.

Gentlemen, I thank you for this visit with which you have honored me. My interests and my sympathies are identified with yours. I shall remember you and this occasion which has called you together.

I invoke for you an abundant harvest, and if we meet not again in time, I doubt not that hereafter we shall meet in a more genial clime, and under a kinder sun. Brother farmers, I bid you good-morning.

*Winfield Scott*

From a Photograph from life









A. W. Elson & Co Boston





# Remarks at Washington

JUNE 21 and 24, 1852.<sup>1</sup>

I THANK you, fellow citizens, for this friendly and respectful call.

I am very glad to see you; some of you have been engaged in an arduous public duty at Baltimore, — the object of your meeting being the selection of a fit person to be supported for the office of President of the United States. Others of you take an interest in the result of the deliberations of that assembly of Whigs.

It so happened that my name, among others, was presented on the occasion; another candidate, however, was preferred.

I have only to say, gentlemen, that the convention did, I doubt not, what it thought best, and exercised its discretion in the important matter committed to it.

The result has caused me no personal feeling whatever, nor any change of conduct or purpose. What I have been, I am in principle and in character, and what I am, I hope to continue to be. Circumstances or opponents may triumph over my fortunes, but they will not triumph over my temper, or my self-respect.

Gentlemen, this is a serene and beautiful night. Ten thousand thousand of the lights of heaven illuminate the firmament. They rule the night. A few hours hence their glory will be extinguished.

“Ye stars that glitter in the skies,  
And gayly dance before my eyes,  
What are ye when the sun shall rise?”

Gentlemen, there is not one among you who will sleep better to-night than I shall. If I wake, I shall learn the hour from

<sup>1</sup> Just after the Nomination of General Scott to the Presidency by the Whig Convention. From the Boston Daily Advertiser, June 24 and 28. The report of Mr. Webster's remarks of June 24 was reprinted from the New York Commercial Advertiser and that of his remarks of June 24 from the National Intelligencer.

the constellations, and I shall rise in the morning, God willing, with the lark ; and though the lark is a better songster than I am, yet he will not leave the dew and the daisies, and spring upward to greet the purpling east with a more blithe and jocund spirit than I shall possess.

Gentlemen, I again repeat my thanks for this mark of your respect, and commend you to the enjoyment of a quiet and satisfactory repose. May God bless you all.

On June 24 Mr. Webster was waited upon by the Mississippi Delegation to the Whig Convention at Baltimore, and addressed by General Starke on behalf of the delegation.

He responded to General Starke in a few brief and eloquent remarks. He thanked the Delegation from Mississippi, whom he would be proud hereafter to number among his friends, for the kindness and consideration that had prompted their visit. He had no complaints to make against the action of the Convention, as he felt that he, probably of all others, under the circumstances, was least competent to decide upon the wisdom of that action. His failure to receive the nomination inspired him with no very deep regret, so far as he was personally concerned ; but the disappointment which some of his friends who had taken a warm interest in his behalf had been subjected to, had, he confessed, affected him deeply. He understood and appreciated fully the difficulties that surrounded the Southern delegates in the Convention, and assured them that he cherished not a single unkind feeling for not having been honored with their votes. He regretted that their policy had been necessary, only because it would write a false chapter in the history of the country. By the record it appeared that in all the numerous ballotings the Southern delegates had failed to cast their votes for him, even after the hope of success for their favorite candidate had been abandoned ; but the causes that prevented them from coming to his support were *not* of record. He supposed he would be compelled to submit quietly to this apparent reflection upon his public life ; but still, knowing the circumstances that influenced them, it did not in the slightest degree affect his feelings towards his Southern friends. He concluded some general remarks with a high

eulogy upon the character and great conservative principles of the Whig party, and urged upon the delegation the necessity of rigidly adhering to them ; for upon their maintenance and supremacy, he said, depended the prosperity and perpetuity of our Republican Government. He concluded by thanking the Delegation in the warmest terms for the invitation to visit their State, and assured them that if ever he travelled to the South he would certainly visit all the principal cities of the State, and accept the hospitality they so generously offered.

# Speech at a Reception at Boston

JULY 9, 1852.

AT a meeting of "The Webster State Committee of Correspondence," held in Boston on the 25th of June, Messrs. Franklin Haven, George T. Curtis, J. Thomas Stevenson, Peter Harvey, and C. R. Ransom, of Boston, Samuel H. Walley, of Roxbury, and Benjamin K. Hough, of Gloucester, were appointed a committee to make arrangements for a public reception of Mr. Webster, on his arrival from Washington, it having been understood that he was about to leave that city on a short visit to his home in Massachusetts. After the result of the Whig National Convention it was deemed proper by the committee that the citizens of Massachusetts, without distinction of party, should have an opportunity to express the veneration and attachment which, it was well known within the limits of the State, were felt by them towards Mr. Webster.

It was, at first, intended by the Committee of Arrangements, that the procession, to be formed as an escort, should be of a wholly civic character; but it was no sooner known that there would be a procession, than the committee received, through the chief marshal, offers of military escort of a voluntary nature, so pressing and so full of feeling for the honor of the occasion that it was impossible for them to adhere to their original determination. It became apparent at once that the military of Boston and of other places were about to demand as their right, the duty of performing the escort, and the result was the assembling of a body of troops larger than ever before appeared in New England, upon a service purely voluntary, and expressing by their presence that it was a sentiment that called them to the arduous duties of an unusually sultry day.<sup>1</sup>

At an early hour of the forenoon, the shops and stores began to

<sup>1</sup> The description of this remarkable demonstration and the report of Mr. Webster's Speech are from the account of the reception prepared by the Committee of Arrangements.

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close, and the city put on the garb of a national holiday. The various thoroughfares were thronged with people, multitudes of whom were strangers. The streets through which the procession was to pass were very generally decorated; innumerable busts and portraits of the great statesman were displayed upon the balconies and walls of the houses.

Mr. Webster, who was tarrying at the house of Hon. Samuel H. Walley in Roxbury, entered a barouche at half-past three o'clock, and accompanied by the Committee of Arrangements, proceeded towards the dividing line separating Roxbury and Boston.

Upon the arrival of Mr. Webster across the line, he was met by General Tyler, the chief marshal, who, in a few brief words, tendered to him the civic escort which had been arranged. General Edmands also tendered to him a military escort of a purely voluntary character. Mr. Webster thanked them both, and to General Edmands he said:

“Please to accept for yourself, and to communicate to the members of the escort, my most affectionate regards. I am one who was early taught the value of our citizen soldiery, and I believe a volunteer militia constitutes the only needful defence of a free country.”

The procession, at a quarter past four, took up its line of march for Boston Common.

Along the whole route, there was a heartiness and depth of feeling in the popular manifestations, such as is seldom seen. A dense crowd lined the streets; the door-steps, balconies, and windows of the houses were crowded with men, women, and children, who seemed to have come forth as if to bestow an unwonted and unparalleled ovation upon one who deserved the purest feelings of their hearts. Old men crowded to the carriage to greet the object of this extraordinary display. Women held up their infants, that they might say, in after life, they had seen the Defender of the Constitution on his triumphal entry into Boston. Cheer followed cheer, bouquets and garlands were showered upon the carriage, towards which all eyes were turned, and every possible token by which a people can evince affectionate admiration and respect, was lavished by the vast multitude, as the procession wound its slow way through the crowded streets.

The head of the procession reached the Common at about seven o'clock, and entering the Charles Street gate at the foot of Beacon Street, the military escort formed in line facing to the west, and towards a platform erected near the Charles Street Mall, about

midway between Beacon and Boylston Streets. Mr. Webster, accompanied by the Committee of Arrangements, the invited guests, and other persons, then alighted from the carriages, and entering by the gate, passed in front of the troops, and ascended the platform. At this point, the amphitheatre formed by the elevated ground opposite the platform presented a most impressive scene. Along the base of the hill, upon the flat parade ground, were paraded the troops in line, and in their rear, an immense crowd of persons of both sexes extended to the summit of the hill. As soon as the formality of the military salutes was over, all barriers were removed, and the crowd rushed towards the platform, which was immediately surrounded by an immense and eager audience.

Mr. J. Thomas Stevenson, after referring to the occasion which had brought the assembly together, addressed Mr. Webster as follows :

SIR: Upon this occasion of your return, the people have sent no delegates to welcome you, but have come themselves; they have come with their hearts in their hands. Look around you upon this sea of men's countenances, bounded almost, like the ocean, by the horizon. As you have passed through the public ways, it has been a swelling stream tributary to this ocean here. Its very silence speaks to you. All that you see is real; no man is here for a selfish object, or with an ulterior purpose. No man is here because he holds an office or because he wants an office. This vast assemblage is the result of no pre-concerted arrangements, presenting a seeming beyond the truth. No party bugle has sounded a call for this gathering. All that has been done was to notify the public of this opportunity. See how the public has seized it!

Public gratitude will take some form of public expression, as the full heart will speak, and this multitude is here to greet you as a faithful teacher and a wise guide.

We thank you for what you have done to secure to this young Republic her proper rank in the scale of nations. We greet you as a statesman.

We thank you, as we stand on Boston Common, for what you have done for the freedom of the seas; for your masterly solution of the complex question of the right of search,—a solution so grand that it gives to the flag of our country the power to protect

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every American vessel on every sea, yet so simple that every American boy who reads the discussion of it wonders that it took a man to make it. We greet you as the defender of commercial rights.

We thank you for the prolific seeds of true republicanism which you have scattered broadcast through the land. Who ever closed a volume of your published works without feeling himself more fit for a republican after its perusal?

We thank you for what you have done to bind together this great family of States; rejoicing that whether you have stood here in the neighborhood of your family altar, or in the capitol, amid scenes of sectional strife, or nearer to our southern border, — wherever within the limits of this great nation you have stood, you have been able to say, “This is my country; how can I serve her?”

We greet you as **THE AMERICAN**. We thank you for what you have done to enshrine the Constitution of our common country upon the inner altar of the temple of our hearts. We greet you as its great defender.

We thank you that, in your advocacy of the citizens' rights, you have not failed to remind them of their duties — for if the former are not to be surrendered, the latter are to be performed. We greet you as the Champion of the Union.

We thank you for what you have done to still the unnatural turbulence of the sea of domestic strife, and to preserve the relations of peace with foreign countries with honor to your own. Surrounded by all the blessings of peace, we do not forget that you have three times averted the horrors of foreign war. We greet you as the great treaty-maker.

We thank you for that fidelity to political principles which you have done so much to establish in the hearts of our people, which carries with it its own reward — is its own reward. That jewel is a treasure which he who earns it cannot lose by accident, nor be robbed of by design. It is his amid all changes and through all dangers. It is a treasure in his own keeping, and the breath of another cannot tarnish it. It is his for an ornament — it is his for a praise — it is his for a consolation under all circumstances; and, in a republic, it is his with a talismanic power over the policy of his country, whether he be in office or out of office.

We thank you for the genuine patriotism which has been not only a conviction of your understanding, but the passion of your



heart, — rejoicing that, from the beginning, you have shaped your course by that fixed star, and never by any wandering meteor, however brilliant, that flashes and is gone.

We thank you for your long public services. It rarely happens to a man to be justified in feeling that he has served his country through more than a whole generation, always with honor both to himself and to her.

And now, sir, let us welcome you to the scenes of many fond memories. We welcome you to the heart of hearts of a commonwealth which knows you. We welcome you to armies of friends who are proud of your position. We welcome you to your home, and to that temporary retirement which you are seeking, and which we know will not be wholly uninterrupted by public cares. We welcome you as the American patriot, whose name the people of this community are willing should be associated with that of Washington. And, as we all welcome you, it is “an hundred thousand welcomes.”

Mr. Webster then addressed the multitude as follows:

MR. STEVENSON AND FELLOW CITIZENS: This honor which you confer on me as much exceeds all my expectations as I feel that it exceeds my merits. I owe it all to your kindness, to your friendship, and to your constant regard. I rejoice in it; I am proud of it. Nothing on earth can be more gratifying to me than to come to the bosom of a community in which I have lived for so many years, and which for so many years I have endeavored to serve to the best of my ability, and find that I am not disowned.

Gentlemen, the hour of the afternoon will allow me to address to you but a few remarks, but I will, out of the abundance of the heart, speak to you. I am known of you; I have lived among you more than half my life; I have been honored by the favor, both of the citizens of Boston and the Legislature of Massachusetts, and with all humility and all modesty, before you, I am ready to account for the manner in which I have discharged the duties which their kindness devolved upon me.

It is now, gentlemen, thirty years since I came to this City of Boston. In my early manhood I had had some, but not much, experience in political affairs. I had left the world of politics, as I thought, forever, and I came here to pursue my

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profession, to earn my living, and to maintain and educate my children. From my brethren of the bar, I received a most cordial welcome. From all the citizens of this then town, now city, the kindest reception. It was enough for me, and fulfilled all my expectations in life, that I should be able moderately to provide for my own necessities by my professional labors, and enjoy the pleasures of the intellectual and agreeable society of the town of Boston. I remained here, gentlemen, some years in pursuit of these private objects, neither looking for, nor desiring any change in my position.

But no man knows his own destiny — at least, I did not know mine. As I was sitting in my office, poring over Mansfield and Blackstone, in the autumn of 1822, there came a committee to me. They did not look like clients. I did not believe they had any lawsuits. Thomas H. Perkins was chairman. Another of the members is now living, — Mr. William Sturgis, — and they stood up straight in my presence. I threw down my lawbooks, and they said: “Sir, we have come to tell you your destiny. You must give up these lawbooks. We come to tell you that on Monday next you will be chosen to represent the City of Boston in the Congress of the United States. We come to make no request, we come to enter into no discussion, we take no answer,” and Colonel Perkins made a graceful bow, and with his committee went off.

Well, gentlemen, I submitted to what I supposed to be the will of the good people of Boston, and although it has interfered with private purposes and private emoluments, I do not regret it, but rejoice at it. And if I may feel this day that my conduct in that capacity, and in the capacity in which I afterwards served as senator, be satisfactory to this great and ancient and glorious State of Massachusetts — whether in riches or in poverty, or in health or in sickness — I am rewarded.

Now, gentlemen, I must be allowed to say to you that from my earliest age, — from the moment when I began to read and understand political matters and political history, the political history of Massachusetts had been a sort of *beau idéal* to me. I have studied it from my earliest youth, and loved it and honored it always; and I wish to say to you to-night, what

was Massachusetts when I became a member of Congress, at the bidding of the people of Boston? What was she? To answer this question I must go back to her history. The great history of Massachusetts begins with the revolutionary struggle of the country, and what was that? For what did Massachusetts struggle? For what did she offer to pour out her blood like water, and exhaust all her treasures as if they were worthless, and run all the risk of war, and of civil strife, and of the gallows, and of execution as traitors? What did she do it all for? Why, depend on it, gentlemen, it was not any narrow principle, any local object, any sectional concern of her own. She did not brook the power of England for a strip of land, of fifty miles width—between Connecticut and New Hampshire. She did not do it even to protect this glorious bay before us, so beautiful, and studded and gemmed with so many islands and islets. No, no, no. Massachusetts struck for the liberty of a continent! It is her everlasting glory—everlasting unless she terminates it herself—that hers was the first effort ever made by man to separate America from European dominion. That was vast and comprehensive. We look back upon it now, and well may we wonder at the great extent of mind, and genius, and capacity, which influenced the men of the Revolution.

Gentlemen, friends, fellow citizens: Let me tell you that Massachusetts had all America in her heart when she summoned her whole strength into her arm, and gave a blow for the liberty of the American world. It was nothing less than that; it was nothing less than that. Warren did not die for Massachusetts only. Her soil is honored by receiving his blood; but the world is not wide enough to circumscribe his fame. All the generations of mankind upon this continent will never be able to make recompense for his devotion to republican institutions, and his death in the cause of liberty.

Well, gentlemen, that is the original character of Massachusetts; that is the foundation of all her renown that is worth possessing. It is her original devotion to liberty as a cause—to the whole of America, as a country. Her renown, in that respect, is placed on deep, well laid, and firm foundations; foundations never to be disturbed, unless in some day of dark-

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ness and of death,—in some moment of folly and of frenzy and of madness, she shall herself subvert, with that same arm, the foundation of all her greatness and glory. That will not happen. I pray Almighty God, at least, if that is to happen, the judgment of that day may be postponed till my head shall be covered with the sods of the valley.

Well, gentlemen, let us adhere to that spirit of union, of nationalism, of Americanism, and let no narrow, selfish, local policy — no trifling concern of the day and the moment — influence the counsels of Massachusetts. In the day that made Massachusetts what she was, and what she has been, her policy was large, comprehensive, united. She never drew a breath that was not a national breath. She never had an aspiration which did not embrace all the colonies, and if the crown of Great Britain on that day had offered her an exemption from all the rigid enactments; if it had offered her free trade, unrestricted by colonial legislation; if it had offered twenty seats in the House of Commons, and two hundred noblemen, — she would have rejected them all. She struck for principle — she risked, for America. If America could free herself, she wished to be free; and if America was to be subjugated, and that was the will of God, she was willing to be subjugated, and remain in subjugation until a more fortunate hour should arise for the freedom of the whole.

Now, gentlemen, let us dwell on that, and any man, at this day, who sets up peculiar notions and sectional distinctions, who would have us believe that her interests are essentially disconnected from, and alien to, the interests of other members of this republic, is an enemy to you, is an enemy to the republican cause, and an enemy to freedom all over the world.

That was the original character of Massachusetts, which I learned in early life, and which inspired me with veneration and devotion. I think I understand it. I think I have read every page of her history. I have known some of the great men of that day personally. I never saw John Hancock, or Samuel Adams, or James Otis. I have known John Adams, Robert Treat Paine, Elbridge Gerry, and other great men of that period, and I have listened to them as to oracles teaching me, as a young man, the proper performance of my duties, if I should have public duties to perform.

Well, then, succeeding to this revolutionary epoch, came the constitutional epoch. The condition of the country at the close of the war showed the necessity of a more efficient form of government than that which then existed. It was a great thought. It was, if one may say so, a fearful experiment. It appeared so to some of the wisest and best men of Massachusetts. It appeared to those men, at the head of whom was Sam Adams, that it might be dangerous to create a central government with authority to act directly upon the people and not obliged to act through the interference of the States. But Samuel Adams, however jealous of liberty, was a wise man. He saw the necessity of such a government, and he yielded to it; and in yonder old State House — or rather, I believe, it was in the Old South — he gave his vote for it. I think I behold him now, in his half-Quaker dress, with his broad-brim hat, his gold-headed cane, not less than five feet long, and after all the discussion and all his doubting, crying out, “Aye,” and the whole assembly echoing, re-echoing the shout of rejoicing.

The Constitution went into operation, and the country had the good fortune to place Washington at the head of affairs. You all know how it revived everything. Massachusetts went under that Constitution, sacrificing her peculiar rights to the general good, and suffering the general Government to possess and enjoy her commerce, which was more than the commerce of any other State in the Union three times over — yielding the whole to the best interests of the new government. And she has, from that day to this, experienced a rich reward for all she sacrificed by the protection which that government has afforded her, by upholding her flag all over the world, and instead of holding up her venerable Indian with the bow and arrow, maintaining the stars and stripes from ocean to ocean, and river to river.

There were great men in that day of the establishment of the Constitution, many of whom I have seen and heard. There was Gorham, and Cabot, and Strong, and Sedgewick, and Sewall, and Goodhue, and Ames, and other persons connected with the adoption of the Constitution, and the administration of Washington. There were Eustis, and Samuel Dexter, and

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General Varnum, of Middlesex, all eminent and distinguished in their day and generation. Now by this time the people of this Commonwealth had been formed into parties, and different sentiments divided them in relation to the public concerns of the general Government, and different sentiments prevailed in respect to the administration of affairs at home. Rival candidates were put forth for offices, and sometimes one succeeded, and sometimes another. Various successes attended various party movements, down to the period of 1823, when it was my fortune, for the good or evil of the country, to be placed amid its councils. (Cries of "Good." Mr. Webster: "I thank you.")

Now let me say, that down to that period, that is, fifty years from the period of independence, there was not in all the parties in Massachusetts, from Berkshire to Cape Cod, to be found an eminent man with the slightest tincture of disunion sentiment about him. There was not a man who was not willing to thank God, daily, that we had been so successful in establishing a government which had secured to us such an eminent degree of prosperity. And when I went to Congress from the City of Boston, there was not a man in Congress who entertained disunion feelings, and if it had been so, he could not have held his place one hour after the people had had the opportunity to decide upon his merits.

Now, gentlemen, that was Massachusetts when I came into her councils, in 1823. That was the Massachusetts which I embraced, and which did me the honor to embrace me. That was the Massachusetts which I had honored, historically, from the Revolution downwards.

The character of nations and of men, gentlemen, is made out of facts. It is not the portraiture of the pencil, so much as it is the narrative of the pen. History tells us what Massachusetts was, when she did me the honor to call me into her service, and in that character I honored her, and still honor her, if not as the first, among the first of all the true, patriotic Union States. I will not say she was *primus inter pares*, but I will say she was not *secundus inter pares*. If she did not go before all others, I aver no others went before her.

This being the character of Massachusetts, this her attach-

ment to the Constitution and to the Union, with some differences of sentiment as to State and national politics, but after all, the ruling sentiment being attachment to the Constitution, attachment to the cause of American liberty, attachment to that great principle of government that first made America what she is—this being the characteristic of the State, I entered into her service with all the devotion of my heart, and I gave to it whatever ability I possessed.

Now, gentlemen, from the time I entered into the Congress of the United States at the wish of the people of Boston, my manner of political life is known to you all. I do not stand here to-night to apologize for it. Less do I stand here to demand any approbation. I leave it to my country, to posterity, and to the world, to say whether it will or will not stand the test of time and truth.

Now, gentlemen, I have only to say to you that at my present time of life I am not likely to adopt any sudden change. What I have been, I propose to be. No man can foresee the occurrences of future life. I profess to foresee nothing. The future is distant, the present is our own, and for the present I am content with expressing my utmost gratitude to you and assurance of my perpetual regard.

But I ought to thank you a little more particularly for this generous, spontaneous outpouring of such a multitude to greet me. I thank you for your civic procession,—for all the kindness of individual citizens, many of whom are known, and many of whom, especially the young, are unknown to me. I ought also to express a particular debt of gratitude to the military who have accompanied us as escort. You all know, gentlemen, it is not my fortune to be, or to have been a successful military chieftain. I am nothing but a painstaking, hard-working civilian, giving my life, and my health, and my strength to the maintenance of the Constitution, and the upholding, according to the best of my ability, under the Providence of God, of the liberties of my country.

# Speech at Marshfield

JULY 25, 1852.<sup>1</sup>

MR. SPRAGUE, NEIGHBORS AND FRIENDS: I thank you from the very bottom of my heart for this warm welcome home, which so many of you have assembled to offer to me to-day. It was unexpected. I had not looked for such a testimonial of your regard. But it draws from me, as it ought to draw, the most grateful acknowledgments of my heart. It is not the graceful display of vehicles, nor the numbers of your cavalcades, but the fact that you, among whom I have so long lived and dwelt, and who know me so well, have manifested such esteem, that calls forth my gratitude; and I pour out to you, friends and neighbors, on my part, from the bottom of my heart, the feelings of mutual and reciprocal regard and friendship; and it is my sincerest prayer that Almighty God will preserve you and yours in prosperity and happiness.

Friends and neighbors, it is now above twenty years that I have been in the midst of you, passing here, on the side of the sea, all that portion of the years when I have been able to enjoy some relaxation from the cares of my profession, or the duties of public life. Happy have they been to me and mine, for, during all this period, I know not of an unkind thing done, or word spoken to me or mine, or to any one near and dear to me.

Gentlemen, most of you are farmers, and I take a great concern in your interests, because I have a wish to promote the general prosperity of the whole country. Others of you have your occupations on the seas. Some of you I have found there, and have had the pleasure to mingle in your pursuits, — a pleasure I hope to enjoy again.

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Webster's last public address. From the report in the Boston Daily Advertiser, July 26, 1852.



Gentlemen, Mr. Sprague has been pleased to refer to recent occurrences. As to some of them, or, at least, to one, it may not be fitting in me to say one word now. The time has not yet come. But I would say, I may venture to hope without presumption, that I am not entirely unknown at home or abroad. And I say further, if I have anything good or valuable, I hold it in my own keeping, and I will not trust it to the waywardness of others.

Friends and neighbors, the time at which you offer me this welcome is not altogether inappropriate. I am about to be among you. The place I occupy must soon be vacated in the ordinary course of events; and it may be vacated very shortly. I am sensible of the kind manner in which the events of my life have been recited. I am willing to admit that I am glad to receive the approbation of my countrymen in any manner they may be disposed to express it. I am willing to believe, in relation to the occurrences alluded to by Mr. Sprague, that, by the blessing of Providence and the favor of my countrymen, I have done something to uphold the Constitution and liberty, and maintain the rights of my country. There is an end to all human labors and efforts. I am no longer a young man; but I am thankful, nevertheless, for the measure of strength I still enjoy. I hope to enjoy the pleasure of your kindness and society for some years to come, if such may be the pleasure of the Almighty.

Mr. Sprague has made allusion to recent occurrences, threatening disturbances on account of the fisheries. It would not become me to say much on that until I speak officially, and under direction of the head of the Government. And then I shall speak. In the mean time, be assured that that interest will not be neglected by this Administration under any circumstances.

The fishermen shall be protected in all their rights of property, and in all their rights of occupation. To use a Marblehead phrase, they shall be protected hook and line, and bob and sinker. And why should they not? They employ a vast number. Many of our own people are engaged in that vocation. There are among you some who perhaps have been on the Grand Banks for forty successive years, and there they have hung on to the ropes in storm and wreck.

The most potent consequences are involved in this matter. Our fisheries have been the very nurseries of our navy. If our flag-ships have met and conquered the enemy on the sea, the fisheries are at the bottom of it. The fisheries were the seeds from which these glorious triumphs were born and sprung.

Now, gentlemen, I may venture to say one or two things more on this highly-important subject. In the first place, this sudden interruption of the pursuits of our citizens, which had been carried on more than thirty years without interruption or molestation, can hardly be justified by any principle or consideration whatever. It is now more than thirty years that they have pursued the fisheries in the same waters, and on the same coast, in which, and along which, notice has now come that they shall be no longer allowed these privileges. Now, this cannot be justified without notice. A mere indulgence of so long continuance, even if the privilege were but an indulgence, cannot be withdrawn at this season of the year, when our people, according to the custom, have engaged in the business, without just and seasonable notice.

I cannot but think the late despatches from the Colonial Office had not attracted to a sufficient degree the attention of the principal minister of the Crown, for I see matter in them quite inconsistent with the arrangement made in 1845 by the Earl of Aberdeen and Edward Everett. Then the Earl of Derby, the present First Minister, was Colonial Secretary. It could not well have taken place without his knowledge, and, in fact, without his concurrence and sanction. I cannot but think, therefore, that its being overlooked is an inadvertence. The Treaty of 1818 was made with the Crown of England. If a fishing-vessel is captured by one of her vessels-of-war, and brought in for adjudication, the Crown of England is answerable, and then we know whom we have to deal with. But it is not to be expected that the United States will submit their rights to be adjudicated upon in the petty tribunals of the provinces, or that they will allow our vessels to be seized by constables or other petty officers, and condemned by the municipal courts of Canada and Newfoundland, New Brunswick, or Nova Scotia! No, no, no! Farther than this, gentlemen, I do not think it expedient to remark upon this topic at present;

but, you may be assured, it is a subject upon which no one sleeps at Washington. I regret that the state of my health caused my absence from Washington when the news came of this sudden change in the interpretation of the treaties. My health requires relaxation. I shall feel it my duty, as soon as my health and strength will justify me in undertaking the journey, to return to my post, and discharge the duties devolving upon me to the best of my abilities.

And now, gentlemen, I consider the welcome you have to-day given me as a personal kindness — a tribute of personal regard. I have always found your houses, your hands, and your hearts open to me; and, I trust I may say, that you have never found my own closed against you, whether calling upon business or for the purpose of social intercourse and good neighborhood.

Gentlemen, I deem it a great piece of good fortune, coming from the mountains as I did, that I came where I did; that, when I came from the mountains, I descended to the seashore. Many people, when they come down here, wonder what in the world could have induced Mr. Webster to come to Marshfield. I answer, partly good sense, but more good fortune. I had no particular fancy for rich lands, but I had for a kind neighborhood; and myself and friends, when I came here, had a well-understood covenant, that I would talk to them about farming, but not a word about law or politics.

You have kept your word, and I hope I have kept mine; and now, my friends and neighbors, accept from a grateful heart my warm acknowledgments that you have come here with countenances so open and frank, to give me the assurance of your personal regards and continued friendship.

Again I thank you with all my heart, and my prayers are that the Almighty Power will preserve you, and shower down upon you and yours the blessings of happy affection and peace and prosperity!

Autobiographical Papers  
And Conversations  
Hitherto Uncollected



# Autobiographical Reminiscences

1825.<sup>1</sup>

“MY father sent for me in haying-time, to help him, and put me into a field to turn hay, and left me. It was pretty lonely there, and, after working some time, I found it very dull ; and, as I knew my father was gone away, I walked home, and asked my sister Sally if she did not want to go and pick some whortle-berries. She said yes. So I went and got some horses, and put a side-saddle on one, and we set off. We did not get home until it was pretty late, and I soon went to bed. When my father came home he asked my mother where I was, and what I had been about. She told him. The next morning, when I awoke, I saw all the clothes I had brought from Dr. Wood’s tied up in a small bundle again. When I saw my father he asked me how I liked haying. I told him I found it ‘pretty dull and lonesome yesterday.’ ‘Well,’ said he, ‘I believe you may as well go back to Dr. Wood’s.’ So I took my bundle under my arm, and on my way I met Thomas W. Thompson, a lawyer in Salisbury ; he laughed very heartily when he saw me. ‘So,’ said he, ‘your farming is over, is it?’”

“My Greek and mathematics were not great while I was in college, but I was better read in history and English generally than any of my class, and I was good in composition. My Latin was pretty strong too.”

“In 1804, the Clerk of the Court of Common Pleas of Hillsborough County died, and Chief-Justice Farrar immediately offered the place to me. The receipts of this office were full fifteen hundred dollars a year, and you may imagine that I felt

<sup>1</sup> Related by Mr. Webster to some friends in a drive from Boston to Salem, and preserved by George Ticknor. From *The Life of Daniel Webster* by George Ticknor Curtis.

as if my fortune was made. My brother and I were both in debt, our father was old, and his estate mortgaged. I had been looking to this office, but hardly with hope, and here it was — here was the appointment to what, as I may say, had been the ambition of the family ever since the Revolution. It was fifteen hundred a year. Why, I could pay all the debts of the family, could help on Ezekiel — in short, I was independent. I had no sleep that night; and, the next morning, when I went to the office, I stepped up the stairs with a lighter heart than I ever had before. I told Mr. Gore of my good fortune.<sup>1</sup> ‘Well, my young friend,’ said he, ‘the gentlemen have been very kind to you; I am glad of it. You must thank them for it. Certainly they are very good; you must write them a civil letter. You will write immediately, of course.’ I told him that I felt their kindness and liberality very deeply; that I should certainly thank them in the best manner I was able; but that I should go up to Salisbury so soon, I hardly thought it was necessary to write. He looked at me as if he was greatly surprised. ‘Why,’ said he, ‘you don’t mean to accept it, surely!’ The bare idea of not accepting it so astounded me that I should have been glad to have found any hole to have hid myself in; the very centre of Symmes’s would have been welcome to me. I told him, as soon as I could speak, that I had no thought of anything else. ‘Well,’ said he, ‘you must decide for yourself; but come, sit down, and let us talk it over. The office is worth fifteen hundred a year, you say. Well, it never will be any more. Ten to one, if they find out it is so much, the fees will be reduced.\* You are appointed now by friends; others may fill their places who are of different opinions, and who have friends of their own to provide for. You will lose your place; or, supposing you to retain it, what are you but a clerk for life? And your prospects as a lawyer are good enough to encourage you to go on. Go on, and finish your studies; you are poor enough, but there are greater evils than poverty; live on no man’s favor; what bread you do eat, let it be the bread of independence; pursue your profession,

<sup>1</sup> Christopher P. Gore, in whose office at Boston Mr. Webster studied law. See *Autobiography, Private Correspondence*, Vol. I. pp. 18–21.

\* The MS. adds, “Within two years of this time the fees were reduced.”

make yourself useful to your friends, and a little formidable to your enemies, and you have nothing to fear.'

"I could say nothing to all this, and Mr. Gore's opinion that I could do something as a lawyer encouraged and flattered me. He told me to come the next morning, and talk a little more with him; I went home, and passed another sleepless night.

"The obtaining this office had been a darling object with my father. Its possession would make the family easy; and he had hastened to send me word that the prize was won. I certainly considered it a great prize myself, not that I did not love my profession, not that I did not hate the clerkship, and all clerkships, but simply from a desire to reach that high point of terrestrial bliss, at which I could feel that there was a *competency* for our family, myself included. I had felt the *res angustæ* till my very bones ached. Mr. Gore peremptorily shut me out from this opening paradise. I need hardly say that I acquiesced in his good advice, though it certainly cost me a pang. Here was present comfort, competency, and, I may even say, riches, as I then viewed things, all ready to be enjoyed, and I was called upon to reject them for the uncertain and distant prospect of professional success. But I did resist the temptation; I did hold on to the hope which the law set before me. One very difficult task remained, however, to be performed, and that was to reconcile my father to my decision. I knew it would strike him like a thunder-bolt. He had long had this office in view for me. Its income would make him, and make us all, easy and comfortable; his health was bad, and growing worse. His sons were all gone from him. This office would bring me home, and it would bring also comfort and competency 'to all the house.' It was now mid-winter."

"Well, sir," continued Mr. Webster, in 1825, "after talking further with Mr. Gore, I made up my mind to refuse the clerkship at all risks. I went to Mr. Taylor, and told him I wanted some money, and that I should pay him some time or other. He said I should have as much as I wanted. I told him I must have a good deal — three or four hundred dollars. He gave it to me, and, with this in my pocket, I hired a sleigh, and set off for home. I got home one afternoon, just at sunset, and saw



my father in his little room, sitting in his arm-chair. He was pretty old then, and tall, and very thin. His face was pale, and his cheek sunken, and his eyes — which were always large, and very black — seemed larger and blacker than I ever saw them. He seemed glad to see me, and, almost as soon as I sat down, he said: ‘Well, Daniel, we have got that office for you.’ ‘Yes, father,’ said I, ‘the gentlemen were very kind, I must go and thank them.’ ‘They gave it to you without my saying a word about it.’ ‘I must go and see Judge Farrar, and tell him I am much obliged to him.’ And so I talked about it very carelessly, and tried to make my father understand me. At last he began to have some suspicion of what I meant; and he straightened himself up in his chair, and looked at me as if he would look me through. ‘Daniel, Daniel,’ said he, ‘don’t you mean to take that office?’ ‘No, indeed, father,’ said I; ‘I hope I can do much better than that. I mean to use my tongue in the courts, not my pen; to be an actor, not a register of other men’s acts. I hope yet, sir, to astonish your honor in your own court by my professional attainments.’

“For a moment I thought he was angry. He rocked his chair, slightly; a flash went over an eye, softened by age, but still as black as jet; but it was gone, and I thought I saw that parental partiality was, after all, a little gratified at this apparent devotion to an honorable profession, and this seeming confidence of success in it. He looked at me for as much as a minute, and then said very slowly, ‘Well, my son, your mother has always said you would come to something or nothing. She was not sure which; I think you are now about settling that doubt for her.’ This he said, and never a word spoke more to me on the subject. I stayed at home a week, paid any little bills that came in, bought what was necessary for the family, promised to come to him again as soon as I was admitted to the bar, and returned to Boston.”

# Autobiographical Notes<sup>1</sup>

I WAS born January 18th, 1782; at Salisbury, N. H. — Grace Fletcher was born January 16, 1781, at Hopkinton.

We were married at Salisbury, by Rev. Mr. Worcester, at the House of I. W. Kelly Esqr., Sunday Eve, May 24, 1808.

Grace, our eldest child, was born at Portsmouth, April 29th, 1810 (I was at Hopkinton Court.)

Daniel Fletcher Webster was born at Portsmouth July 23, 1813.

Julia was born at Mt. Vernon, in Boston, Jan. 16, 1818.

Edward was born, in Somerset Street, Boston, July 20th, 1820.

Charles was born, in Somerset Street, Dec. 31, 1822.

Mrs. Webster died, at Dr. Perkin's, Fulton Street, New York, Jan. 21, 1828.

Grace died, at Mt. Vernon, Boston, Jan. 23d, 1817.

Charles died, in Summer St. Dec. 18, 1824.

We came to Boston, to live, August 14th, 1816; with our two children Grace and Daniel.

We stayed a fortnight or three weeks, at Mrs. Delano's; and then went to housekeeping, on Mount Vernon.

We moved from Mt. Vernon to Somerset St. (Dec. or Nov.) 1819.

We left the house in Somerset St. May 10th, 1822, and passed the Summer, at Mr Welle's house, in Dorchester.

In the latter part of Nov. we came to Town, and went to lodgings at Mrs Le Kains, in Pearl St. where I left Mrs Webster, to attend the Court, during the winter, at Washington, and the Spanish Claims.

<sup>1</sup> From a manuscript, in Mr. Webster's handwriting, in the New Hampshire Historical Society.

In 1823, Spring, May eleventh, we again returned to Dorchester. We set off for Congress, taking Julia and Edward with us, and leaving Daniel and Charles, with Hannah, at Mr Greens, Jamaica Plain, Nov. 10, 1823. Mrs Webster returned, on the rising of Congress, June 19th. I did not get home till June or July 1st. We again went to Dorchester.

Nov. 1824 — We moved into the House in Summer St. belonging to Mr Thorndike. I went to Washington, leaving the family behind.

In Dec. I visited Virginia with Mr & Mrs Ticknor, and was there, on Charles death — which I heard of, soon after my return to Washington.

In March 1825 after Mr Adams election, I returned home.

1825–26–27. — We lived in the House in Summer St.

Nov 1825 We all went to Washington, Mrs. W. Daniel, Julia, Edward — with Hannah.

We returned in May 1826 — say 21st May.

In Nov. 1826 I went to W. leaving the family at home. I returned in March 27th, 1827.

In June 1827 Mrs. W. had a violent attack of Erysipelas.

July 15th, 1827, Mr Bliss died.

July the first, Mrs. W. & I and Julia went to Nantucket.

In Nov. 23d we left home for Washington. Mrs. W. Julia, Edward, and I. Mr Paige and Daniel went with us as far as Fuller's. I need not mention the disasters we met with.

We arrived at New York on Sunday morning. Mrs. W. took her room and never left it.

I graduated at Dartmouth College, Aug. 1801.

Admitted, at the Court of Common Pleas in Boston, March 1805. Vide see Entries on admission Book.

Commenced practice in Boscawen, April, 1805.

Left Boscawen, and removed to Portsmouth, Sept. 1807.

Was elected member of Congress from New Hampshire in Nov. 1812, and re-elected, Aug. 1814 —

Was elected, for the Suffolk District, Nov. 1822. Re-elected, Nov. 1824, again elected, Nov. 1826.

In June 1827, was chosen a Senator, for 6 years.

In the Summer of 1817, Mrs. Webster and I visited her mother, at Roxbury, if I mistake not. She went up with

William Paige, I went after her, and ascended Monadnock, and brought her and Daniel home in a Chaise.

In 1818, we made a journey to Connecticut River, (with Mr & Mrs Callender) — visited her Mother — and returned by way Northampton and S field.

In 1819, we went to New York, Philadelphia & Albany, with Eliza and Daniel, Leaving Julia.

After our return I attended the Commencement at Dartmouth College. Found Mrs. W. unwell of a rheumatic fever, on my return, and We went and stayed a while, at Framingham.

In 1820, Edw. being an infant we first went to Sandwich. Leaving him with Mrs. Ackerman. Hannah went with us. She and Danl were at Boscawen when Edward was born. We went to Sandwich the 7 following Summers. One year we went from Billings, Blue Hills. I believe the year of Mrs. Paige's death. Probably 1821. After we came home we stayed some-time at Mr Hall's, Brookline. Same year, 1822, we left Nancy Paige at Dorchester and took Danl and Julia, leaving Edward and Charles at Home

In 1823, left our servant Gleason sick, at Dorchester. Had all the children and Hannah. Came home by way of New Bedford.

1824 — went all together in the Stage —

1825 — Mrs W and I in the chaise. Hannah and the children in the stage and Abel by Water.

1826 — I think we went the same way children in the stage with Mr Hale's family.

1827. — Mrs W. and I in the chaise children in the Stage, Danl on Horseback.

Mrs. Blake died 10 of May, 1826.

## Mr. Webster's Parents<sup>1</sup>

WHEN speaking once, at length, of his father and mother and their life in the log house, Mr. Webster said: "They endured together in this hut all sorts of privations and hardships; my mother was constantly visited by Indians who had never before gone to a white man's house but to kill its inhabitants, while my father perhaps was gone, as he frequently was, miles away, carrying on his back the corn to be ground, which was to support his family."

Mr. Webster once repeated to me, with great pride, a little speech made by his father before giving his vote for the Constitution, and requested me, if I ever had an opportunity, to do something to perpetuate it. It is well known that when the convention of New Hampshire first assembled, in February, 1788, a majority of the delegates were found to be under instructions from their towns to vote against the Constitution. This was the case with Colonel Webster. But the convention was adjourned to meet again in June; and, in the mean time, Colonel Webster obtained from his constituents permission to vote according to his own judgment. When the vote was about to be taken, he rose, and said: "Mr. President, I have listened to the arguments for and against the Constitution. I am convinced such a government as that Constitution will establish, if adopted — a government acting directly on the people of the States — is necessary for the common defence and the general welfare. It is the only government which will enable us to pay off the national debt — the debt which we owe for the Revolution, and which we are bound in honor fully and fairly to discharge. Besides, I have followed the lead of Washington

<sup>1</sup> Life of Webster, by George Ticknor Curtis, Vol. I. pp. 3 and 9-10.

through seven years of war, and I have never been misled. His name is subscribed to this Constitution. He will not mislead us now. I shall vote for its adoption."

I have taken the words of the speech from Mr. Nesmith's Memoir. They are substantially the same with those repeated to me by Mr. Webster. Judge Webster was one of the electors of the President in New Hampshire, when Washington was first chosen to that office.

## Mr. Webster's Will, 1836<sup>1</sup>

I, DANIEL WEBSTER of Boston, in the County of Suffolk, do hereby make & declare this my last will & testament, hereby revoking all wills by me heretofore made —

It is my will that all my just debts be paid, a memorandum of which will be found among my papers. In order to raise money for that purpose, I direct my Executors to collect all the debts which may be due to me at my decease, & to sell & dispose of the following described property, viz; the vacant lot in Summer Street in Boston, between the lot on which my house stands, & the house of Mr. White now occupied by Mr. Paige; my books; my wine; my furniture & other personal property, except as herein after Excepted; and also all or any of my property in lands, city lots, Companies, Corporations &c, in Michigan, Ohio, Indiana, Illinois & Wisconsin, or such parts thereof as may be necessary & may be sold to most advantage. And for the like purpose, if necessary to sell my land in Derry, New Hampshire, & my farm & lands in Franklin, New Hampshire, & if further necessary, to sell also such parts of my Marshfield property as may be thought best for the good of my heirs; I intending to leave it in the discretion of my Executors to sell such of the above mentioned property first, as may be in their judgment best — not confining them to the order in which the parcels are here Enumerated; first of all, however, applying to the payment of debts, the proceeds of any policy or policies on my own life, which may be running at my death.

There being a conveyance of my house in Boston in which I now reside, by marriage settlement in trust to my wife for life, & remainder to my heirs, as will appear by the deed, if no other arrangement be agreed on, as better, property must be sold, to pay off a mortgage of nineteen thousand Dollars on

<sup>1</sup> From a paper, in Mr. Webster's handwriting, in the New Hampshire Historical Society.

the House ; so that it may follow the trusts of the settlement unincumbered.

I give to my beloved wife the coach, pleasure waggons, & coach horses, any hundred volumes of my books which she may prefer, & the furniture which she brought into the house with her, two thousand Dollars worth of plate, & two thousand Dollars a year, during the lifetime of her father, which is to be in full satisfaction of her right to Dower out of my estate.

I give and devise the rest & residue of my property real & personal to my children, equally to be divided among them ; Except as here in after Excepted ; that is to say, that in regard to articles which are valuable as keepsakes or tokens, I dispose of such articles, as follows — viz.

To my wife, I give the picture of myself by Alexander.

To my son Daniel Fletcher, I give the vase presented to me by citizens of Boston, the watch in my pocket, & the picture of myself by Stuart.

To my daughter Julia, I give her mother's picture by Harding, her mother's watch, and all the little articles which were her mother's, a small picture of myself taken when young ; & the little bust, or head of myself, by Ball Hughes.

To my son Edward, I give the plate presented me by Amos Lawrence, the snuff box presented to me by Mr. Bradley, and the large gold watch which I wore in his mother's life-time — and my Washington medals — and as I have advanced seven thousand Dollars to Fletcher on his marriage, the whole of this is to be reckoned & charged, as part of his portion.

I hereby nominate & appoint my wife Caroline Le Roy Webster, & my son Daniel Fletcher Webster, and the survivor of them, Executrix & Executor of this my last will & testament. In testimony whereof I have hereunto set my hand & seal this         day of November in the year Eighteen hundred & thirty six.

DAN<sup>L</sup> WEBSTER (Seal)

Signed, sealed, published, and declared by the said Daniel Webster, as his last will & testament, in the presence of us, who at his request, & in his presence & in the presence of each other, have hereunto subscribed our names, as witnesses<sup>1</sup>— it being on two sheets, each of which bears my name.         D. WEBSTER

<sup>1</sup> Henry W. Kinsman, Charles H. Thomas, Timothy Fletcher.



# The Annexation of Texas<sup>1</sup>

MARCH 19, 1845. Mr. Webster introduced the Texas question. I showed him my original bill and stated Mr. Calhoun's three proposed amendments, in all of which . . . Webster concurred. He continues opposed to the annexation of Texas, and especially to my bill with its six new slave states, which he says would have revolutionized the Government. He says the bill as it passed the House as to the annexation by Congress is the same plan as first suggested in my Texas letter, and differs only in details but not in principle from my bill. He says its constitutionality can not now be questioned by any judicial power, but adds that Mr. Calhoun and myself may live to regret this dispensing with the conservative  $\frac{2}{3}$  vote of the Senate. He says that in some contingency that may occur we may wake up some morning and find the Canadas and perhaps all British North America annexed by a joint resolution by a bare majority of the two Houses of Congress. He differs with me as to Oregon. Says our title is not demonstrable beyond the 49th parallel, that the Frazer River Country is British, and hopes I will not get the country into a war for 54.40. Says my plan of getting England to let us have all of Oregon will not answer—that she will not yield beyond 49, and that I cannot carry a mere *ad valorem* revenue tariff, and if I do it will bankrupt the Treasury and Country. Thinks the tariff of '42 may be beneficially reduced, but prefers specific duties; wishes me great success in the department<sup>2</sup> and increased reputation, and will most cordially support me and with great pleasure, whenever he can do so conscientiously. Hopes

<sup>1</sup> Memoranda of Robert J. Walker. From Letters and Times of the Tylers, Vol. III. pp. 152-153.

<sup>2</sup> Mr. Walker was Secretary of the Treasury during President Polk's administration.

we may have many conferences as to public affairs. Expressed great admiration for Mr. Calhoun as a man and as a logician — thinks, if he had lived in the days of Luther and Calvin, or of Locke, Stewart or Reid, he could have demolished them all in theological or metaphysical discussion. To which I added, yes, he possesses also unsurpassed administrative powers, and as a statesman he is sublime even in his errors.

# Mr. Webster's Record of his Children

MAY 11, 1848.<sup>1</sup>

MY daughter, Julia, the wife of S. A. Appleton, died at her husband's house, No. 30 Winter Street, Boston, April 28, 1848, at fifteen minutes past eight o'clock in the evening.

There were present, at her decease, her husband, myself and wife, her brother, Daniel Fletcher Webster, and his wife, Mr. and Mrs. Paige, and their daughter, Mrs. Caroline Blatchford, Miss Mary Fletcher, Miss Ellen Fletcher, Dr. John Jeffries, Miss Fellows, the nurse, and other domestics.

Her funeral was attended Monday afternoon, May 1st. The Episcopal Service was read by Bishop Eastburn, and the body was deposited in my tomb, under St. Paul's Church, in Boston.

My son, Edward Webster, a major in the regiment of Massachusetts Volunteers, serving in Mexico, died at San Angel, eight miles from the city of Mexico, of a typhoid fever, on the night of the 23d of January, 1848. Henry Pleasants, his faithful servant, who was in the room with him, says he died in his sleep. He did not suppose himself to be so near his end.

The doctor had ordered drink to be given him at certain intervals. His servant woke him in the night, and gave him his drink. He took it, and said, "That will do, Henry," and turned over, and lay down again. When Henry went to him he was dead.

His funeral was attended by the regiment, the Episcopal funeral services read, and military honors performed. The

<sup>1</sup> Life of Webster, by George Ticknor Curtis, Vol. II. pp. 330-332.

best possible care was taken by his military friends to preserve the body. It was sent home under the care of Lieutenant Wing, attended by Henry Pleasants, with all his effects and his horse; and arrived in Boston on Monday, the 1st of May, a few hours before his sister was committed to the tomb. The body was taken to the same tomb on Thursday, the 4th of May, from Mr. Paige's house, in Summer Street, under a military escort, and attended by relatives and friends; a most appropriate and fervent religious service having been performed, at the house, by Rev. Mr. Lothrop. Mr. Blatchford, Mr. Jaudon, and Mr. Draper, came from New York to attend the funeral.

On the 10th of May I planted two weeping elms on the lawn, in front of the house at Marshfield, as a kind of memorial to the memory of a lost son and daughter. They are to be called "The Brother and Sister;" there being present myself and wife, and my son, Daniel Fletcher Webster, and wife, and my daughter's two eldest children, viz., Caroline Le Roy Appleton and Samuel Appleton. My daughter left five children, viz., Caroline Le Roy, Samuel, Julia Frances, Daniel Webster, and Constance Mary.

Edward Webster was never married. Charles B. Haddock and Mary Anne Sanborn, full cousins of the deceased, were present at their funerals. Two other full cousins are living, viz., Mrs. Alice B. Whipple, of Brooklyn, New York, and Mrs. Emily Webster, of Boscawon, New Hampshire.

Written at Marshfield, *May 11, 1848.*

DANIEL WEBSTER.

The inscriptions, afterward placed by Mr. Webster on the monuments erected near his family tomb, at Marshfield, are these:

GRACE FLETCHER WEBSTER,

BORN, *January 16, 1781.*

DIED, *January 21, 1828.*

Aged 47 years.

"Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God."

GRACE FLETCHER WEBSTER,

BORN, *April 29, 1810.*

DIED, *January 23, 1817.*

Aged 7 years.

CHARLES WEBSTER,

BORN, *December 31, 1822.*

DIED, *December 18, 1824.*

Aged 2 years.

MAJOR EDWARD WEBSTER,

BORN, *July 20, 1820.*

DIED, in Mexico, *January 23, 1848.*

Aged 28 years.

JULIA WEBSTER APPLETON,

BORN, *January 16, 1818.*

DIED, *April 28, 1848.*

Aged 30 years.

"Let me go, for the day breaketh."

JULIA W. APPLETON.

CONSTANCE MARY APPLETON,

BORN, *May 30, 1847.*

DIED, *March 15, 1849.*

Aged 2 years.

# Fragment of Journals<sup>1</sup>

IN Sept. 1849 I suffered from Catarrh, as usual in that month; but in the course of the month paid some attention to the claims of the Land Companies, before the Mexican Commission. About the 1st of October, I went to the White Hills

The New Hampshire Festival was held Nov. 7th; & my speech on the occasion was printed. Decr. I took my seat in the Senate some days after the commencement of the Session; having been detained by ill health. I do not recollect that I took much part in the Debates of the Senate, in Decr. Jany, & February. I was a good deal occupied in the Supreme Court On the opposite page is a list of the cases, argued by me, in the course of the Term.<sup>2</sup> 1850. My Speech on Mr. Clay's Propositions was deliv<sup>d</sup> on the seventh of March, being Thursday. It occupied, in delivery, 3 hours & 11 minutes. Fletcher Webster, Edward Curtis, Peter Harvey, C. W. March, S. Jaudon, John Young, & I. F. Thayer were present, as were Sir H. L. Bulwer &c. 200,000 copies of the Speech, or more have been published in this City. No newspaper in S. Carolina published it, or extracts from it.

<sup>1</sup> From a paper, in Mr. Webster's handwriting, in the New Hampshire Historical Society. It is endorsed, "Mr. Webster's Journal of his occupations in 1849-50 to Mar. 7th."

<sup>2</sup> The following list of cases is on the reverse of the paper.

Williams & uxor v Berry	} Jan. 15, 16, 17, 18
Same agt First Presbyterian Church	
Same vs Ball	
Reed vs Locks & Canals	Jan: 2, 3, 4
Moody vs United States	} Jan: 11
Mills vs Co. of St. Clair	
Le Roy vs Baldwin	} Jan: 28, 29, 30
" vs Beard	
" vs Nichols	
Shultz v Bank of Georgia	Feb. 4, 5, 6, 7, 8
Wilson vs Simpson	April 3, 4.
Page vs Fleming & als	April 16, 17, 18

# Henry Clay

JANUARY 21, 1850.<sup>1</sup>

ON the evening of January 21st, in a state of the weather which rendered it very unfit for Mr. Clay to be abroad, his name was announced at Mr. Webster's house, without previous intimation of his visit. He had come, he said, to express to Mr. Webster his anxieties concerning the country, to unfold to him his plan for composing the differences between the two sections, and to ask Mr. Webster's aid. The following memorandum, made by a gentleman who was at Mr. Webster's house during and after the interview, will be read with great interest :

“ MONDAY EVENING, *January 21, 1850.*

“ At seven o'clock this evening, Mr. Clay came to Mr. Webster's house, and held a long interview with him concerning the best mode of action to settle the difficulties growing out of slavery, and the newly-acquired Territories. I heard a part of the conversation. Mr. Clay retired after an interview of about an hour. Mr. Webster called me to his side, and spoke to me of Mr. Clay in words of great kindness. He said he agreed, in substance, with Mr. Clay; that he thought Mr. Clay's objects were great and highly patriotic; that Mr. Clay seemed to be very feeble, had a very bad cough, and became quite exhausted during the interview; that he had no doubt it was Mr. Clay's anxious desire to accomplish something for the good of the country during the little time he had left upon earth. That perhaps Providence had designed the return of Mr. Clay to the Senate, to afford the means and the way of averting a great evil from our country.

“ Mr. Webster said, further, that he regarded Mr. Clay's plan as one that ought to be satisfactory to the North, and to the reasonable men of the South; that he had not reflected enough upon any part of it, but his first impression was, that he could adopt the

<sup>1</sup> Life of Webster, by George Ticknor Curtis, Vol. I. pp. 397-398.

whole of it;\* and, if, upon further consideration, he should hold his present opinion, he would devote himself to this cause in the Senate, *no matter what might befall himself at the North*; that as to the Wilmot Proviso, that was no shibboleth for him; that from Niblo's Garden, in 1837, to this day, he had declared his purpose not to assist in giving slavery a new home in any Territory of the United States. But, he added, if New Mexico be let alone, she will no more have slavery than California; that it is useless, and more than useless to be interdicting slavery where it could not exist, and with the sole effect of needlessly irritating the South. He said that Mr. Clay told him that some of the Democratic Senators and most of the Whigs, except those from the North, would approve his purposes, though it would not suit the violent disposition of Georgia."

The opinion that Mr. Webster entertained of his great compeer Mr. Clay, . . . recorded from a note taken at the time, and when the latter was on his death-bed, gives us a new insight into his character. It was uttered at his own table, and is as follows :

"Mr. Clay is a great man, beyond all question a true patriot. He has done much for his country. He ought long ago to have been elected President. I think, however, he was never a man of books — a hard student, but he has displayed remarkable genius. I never could imagine him sitting comfortably in his library, and reading quietly out of the great books of the past. He has been too fond of the world to enjoy any thing like that. He has been too fond of excitement — he has lived upon it; he has been too fond of company, not enough alone; and has had few resources within himself. Now a man who can not, to some extent, depend upon himself for happiness, is to my mind one of the unfortunate. But Clay is a great man, and if he ever had animosities against me, I forgive him and forget them." <sup>1</sup>

\* I have heard Mr. Webster say, that he told Mr. Clay that, while he was not then prepared to concur in all the details of his plan, as a general system for settling the pending difficulties, he could approve of it, with perhaps some modifications, and that he should give it the utmost attention.

<sup>1</sup> Private Life of Daniel Webster by Charles Lanman, p. 129.



# Conversations with Charles Lanman<sup>1</sup>

SOME one remarking that no newspaper had correctly printed a Latin quotation in one of his letters, and that it required a scholar even to correct proofs: "Doubtless," he replied — "but the man of mechanical pursuits, of any engrossing pursuit, can not attend to classical studies — can not, indeed, retain what in earlier youth he may have acquired. I find it so. Life is too short for study. One life is required for a complete mastery of ancient classics, of Grecian and Roman lore — another for the full understanding and ready use of English poetry, from Chaucer down to the present time; while another should be devoted to modern sciences. I grow more convinced and more ashamed of my ignorance daily; and I fear that in all my productions I recede more and more from the terse expression of my younger days — that I grow diffuse, and indulge in unnecessary repetition.

"My style was not formed without great care and earnest study of the best authors. I have labored hard upon it, for I early felt the importance of expression to thought. I have rewritten sentence after sentence, and pondered long upon each alteration. For, depend upon it, it is with our thoughts as with our persons — their intrinsic value is mostly undervalued, unless outwardly expressed in an attractive garb. Longinus tells us that the most sublime passage to be found in any language is this in the Bible: 'Let there be light, and there was

<sup>1</sup> Selections from four articles by Charles Lanman, entitled "Daniel Webster's Social Hours," containing anecdotes, reminiscences, and conversations, published in Harper's New Monthly Magazine, July–Oct., 1856. Charles Lanman was Mr. Webster's private secretary and was with him at Marshfield, in his last days. He stated that he did not purpose to give Mr. Webster's "very words, but his meaning, and so far as recollection serves, the order of his thoughts."

light: ' the greatest effort of power in the tersest and fewest words — the command and the record one exertion of thought. So should we all aim to express *things* in words."

"I endeavored carefully to study, while in England," said Mr. Webster, "the practical working of its political institutions. It struck me, among other things, that representation rested too exclusively upon the material basis of property; that intelligence did not enjoy its proper influence in the House of Commons. This, true before, had become more manifest since the passage of Lord Grey's Reform Bill, which professed to give a more equal representation. Under the rotten-borough system, as it was called, it is true that a pugilist, like Gully, or some other less qualified person, would occasionally get into the House, but under that system Burke, Sheridan, Gibbon also obtained seats. Now, none but the wealthy — the hereditary proprietors of large landed estates in the country or the rich commercial classes — can undergo the expense of a canvass.

"In our country a man represents the district in which he resides, where he is personally known to many of his constituents, and, by reputation, to a large majority. Though poor, he may have influence from his moral and intellectual character; and, without the prestige of an inherited name, may easily acquire a personal superiority.

"Besides, where the avenues to fortune are equally open to all, and where almost every man gains an easy competency, corruption is both more difficult and less necessary. The elective franchise is not tampered with, and the constituency remains honest. They may be deceived but cannot be bought.

"In my opinion, the greatness of England does not consist in her political constitution, much as that constitution has been commended by foreign as well as native writers of eminence. Kings, Lords, and Commons, however nicely adjusted their relative powers seem to be, are not the true constituents of her internal vigor. It is rather the free municipal organization of her commonalty that has rendered England more prosperous than other States of Europe, in the last hundred years or more, saving the body politic from those dangerous revulsions which have in the same period of time harassed and retarded many of her neighbors. The attempted imitation of the English Con-

stitution a half century since by France proved abortive, as sound political observers predicted must be the case, from the absence in that country of an organic development of democracy in the form of municipal corporations. There was no break-water between the rage of ignorant, impoverished, turbulent masses, and the rashness of dreamy, hot-headed theorists."

Speaking one day of the early Romans, Mr. Webster said that he could almost believe every thing related by historians of their extraordinary virtues, public and domestic, when he dwelt upon the fact that, though their laws authorized divorce, yet, for the first five hundred years, no individual ever availed himself of such a license! "It was the domestic training" he said, "*it was the mothers* who made a Publicola, a Camillus, and Coriolanus. Women, protected by the inviolability of the nuptial bond, were invested with a dignity that gave authority to instruction, and made the domestic hearth the nursery of heroes."

"Public virtue," he said, "fell with private morality. Under Imperial Rome divorces were sought for and obtained upon the most frivolous pretexts, and all domestic confidence was destroyed. The inevitable consequence was the loss of all public morality. Men who had been false to their private obligations, would not be true to their public duties; Cæsar divorced his wife, and betrayed his country.

"The sanctity of the nuptial bond is, in my opinion, one of the principal if not the chief causes of the superior refinement, freedom, and prosperity enjoyed at the present time by Christian nations."

Mr. Webster was very familiar with, and often quoted, in familiar conversation, Scott's Poems. Two passages particularly delighted him, which he said brought the scenes and parties before him. The first was the beginning of the First Canto of the "Lady of the Lake:"

"The stag at eve had drunk his fill,  
Where danced the moon on Monan's rill,  
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.  
Then, as the headmost foes appeared,  
With ours brave bound the copse he cleared,  
And stretching forward, free and far  
Sought the wild heaths of Uam-Var."

“I have been to the very spot,” continued Mr. Webster, “where this antlered monarch took his start that day; and so naturally and vividly had the poet impressed the scene and its incidents upon me, that I should hardly have felt a deeper conviction of truth at Marathon or Salamis.

“The other passage which strikes me as being so true to nature, occurs in the ‘Lay of the Last Minstrel:’

“ ‘The stag-hounds, weary with the chase,  
Lay stretched upon the rushy floor,  
And urged, in dreams, the forest race,  
From Teviot-stone to Eskdale moor.’

“Here we see that convulsive twitching of the limbs, the involuntary action of the nerves, which we have often noticed in dogs while sleeping — a suppressed growl, perhaps, or broken cry. It is the observation of such natural traits that stamps the true poet. Homer is full of them; and Scott, who was ever studying nature, gives to his descriptions the beauty and force of truth. I always read him with pleasure and instruction.”

“It is the fashion of the present day,” said Mr. Webster, “to decry Pope, or those who fail to abuse neglect to read him. A return, however, to true taste will take place, and Pope resume his proper throne on the English Parnassus. Later poets have stolen his thoughts, and, as if to conceal the theft, denied his wealth. But a *nugget* (as our Californian friends would say) of his brain, hammered and flattened by present writers, fills a whole volume. He furnishes the capital of a hundred traders in poetry of our day.

“The caliph who destroyed the Alexandrian library has been perhaps not unjustly censured by subsequent ages; yet he consumed, doubtless, much that was worthless, and something, it may be, obnoxious. We do not need so general a cremation; but there is much of our later literature that would be better for the test of fire.”

“Every new discovery of geological science,” said Mr. Webster, “aids to confirm the narrative of the inspired historian; but geologists themselves sometimes, though with the intent of reconciling their discoveries with the Mosaic writings, build up untenable theories. Of these is M. de Luc, a celebrated French

geologist of the last century, whose works I have been lately reading. He contends that the Deluge was not a general inundation, as both the Mosaic account and all historical tradition have taught us to believe ; but a mere change of the solid and fluid portions of the earth's surface, so that what was formerly land became sea, and vice versâ : and this hypothesis he endeavors to show does not militate against the account of the great Noachian flood, as contained in the sacred text. But he does not take into consideration the fact, which may have been unknown to him, that many spots have been found in the midst of vast tracts of the ancient bottom of the sea thickly covered with trunks of trees and the accumulated remains of land animals.

“ In my opinion the Mosaic history, rightly interpreted, speaks not only of the one great revolution on the earth's surface and character from the general deluge, but of several, perhaps as great, catastrophes of nature, however originating. I do not recollect at the present moment any particular passage in the sacred text illustrative of this belief, but I cherish the conviction from a general impression. The inspired writer fixes, with a precision that admits of no hesitation, the primitive dwelling-place of man in the central region of Western Asia, amidst four inland seas — the Persian and Arabian gulfs on the one hand, and the Caspian and Mediterranean seas on the other — between the two great rivers of that central region, the Tigris and the Euphrates. The third river of Paradise has been sought for farther to the north, in the region of Mount Caucasus ; and some contend to have found it in the river Phasis. The fourth river, spoken of in Holy Writ, ancient commentators claimed to be the Nile ; but the description of its course is so widely different from the present situation of that river, that a vast change in the earth's surface must have occurred to occasion the discrepancy.

“ There is another circumstance to be explained, and which can only be done by the supposition of some convulsion of nature. It is this : the one source in Paradise, in which these four rivers had their rise, and whence they were to shed fertility and gladness over the earth, can not be found. It has escaped the most patient and minute research. To reason

from analogy, and from circumstances which the sacred text justifies, may not this source have been dried up by some volcanic eruption, which we know to have dried up large rivers, and effected even greater changes? Geological observation attests many vestiges of such changes; the Dead Sea in Palestine itself may be included among the lakes that reveal a volcanic origin. The irruption of the Black Sea into the Thracian Bosphorus, and the presumed irruption of the Mediterranean into the ocean, as well as many other partial revolutions in the earth and sea, show what changes have taken place, not necessarily to be ascribed to the last general deluge.

“The study of geology, which may be called the Private Life of the Earth, is full of interest, and wholly corroborative of the Scriptures.”

“Moses,” said Mr. Webster, one day after dinner, when the conversation turned on the Sacred Writings — “Moses interests me more than any character in sacred or profane history. He appears to me, in all respects, the most extraordinary personage of whom we have any record. The true standard of comparison is, perhaps, the relative position of a man to his age — his contemporaneous altitude. Undoubtedly he was ‘versed in all the science of the Egyptians,’ as has been said of him; for he had received the most learned instruction under the immediate care of an Egyptian princess, who took the warmest and most enlightened interest in his welfare. The whole extent of Egyptian science in those days we cannot fully know; but this we do know, that in the natural sciences, in astronomy, mathematics, and even in medicine, they were the masters of the Greeks; and that the deepest thinkers among the latter — the sect of Pythagoras, as well as, afterward, the large-minded Plato himself — gained from them the rudiments of their teachings, or caught, at least, the first outline of those mighty speculations which ever since have astonished mankind. With these sciences, and with such speculations, Moses was familiar; but the nation he led out of bondage was not capable of appreciating them. It was for this reason, without doubt, that Moses withheld from them the high philosophy he had acquired from his Egyptian education — knowing it would rather serve to puzzle their

understandings and perplex their judgments than to move and govern their hearts. And, indeed, we cannot but perceive from his history that a higher, nobler, grander motive than any desire to perpetuate or aggrandize the science of Egypt pervaded and quickened the conduct of this great man. Whether we look upon him as the founder and mighty lawgiver of the Hebrew nation, or as the guide and teacher of the Hebrew people, we see that his whole intent was to inculcate a principle, wholly foreign to Egyptian science — *the direct, complete, and constant responsibility of man to his great Creator*. This was the fundamental principle, higher far than the vain science of the schools, though that might dive and penetrate, through magical power, into the profoundest mysteries of Nature; this was the fundamental principle that Moses strove, with all the energy of his genius and affluent imagination, to stamp upon the mind of the chosen people.

“The Writings of Moses, compared with those of other Asiatic authors so much nearer than ourselves to the source of primitive revelation, have this important difference — that whereas the latter serve but as the lights in the stern of a vessel to irradiate the past, his project their far shadows into futurity. They are, in their essence, eminently prophetic; and, coming down to us through a long line of ages, repeated by the Royal Psalmist, and resounding through that voice of warning and promise in the Desert, they still serve as prophecies, and await their final and full confirmation in God’s own time.

“Moses was the first and greatest writer in the Hebrew language, and the first that gave form and rules to the Hebrew language. He may have borrowed the Hebrew letters, as Cadmus is said to have borrowed the Greek, from the Egyptian hieroglyphics; but he took good care to exclude all their natural symbols, in order to remove from his people every thing, however remotely, suggestive of images and idolatry.

“The more I study his writings, and compare them with those of Confucius and of the Indian and earlier Persian lawgivers and sages, the more I discover his vast intellect and superiority; while his conduct, both in Egypt and afterward during the forty years’ sojourn in the Arabian desert,

proves that his moral qualities were as extraordinary as his intellectual power. By mingled firmness and kindness, by attention to their physical wants as well as religious instruction, he showed himself as beneficent as he was great. There was nothing inaccessible to the grasp of his mind, nothing insignificant to the goodness of his heart."

The author of "Daniel Webster and his Contemporaries," has well remarked that it was impossible for any one to listen to Mr. Webster's discourses upon the Sacred Writings, or to his recitations, without believing in their inspiration or *his*. No layman, perhaps, was ever more familiar with them, or more deeply imbued with their spirit.

With what a deep and moving intonation he was wont to repeat Isaiah's announcement of the Messiah's coming!

"The Hebrew poets," said Mr. Webster, "borrow a great deal of their imagery from common life; and to have invested familiar subjects with the greatest dignity is a commendation, I should say, peculiar to them. Homer, who has attempted the same, and not without success, still falls far below the sacred writers in boldness and sublimity. What other writers, indeed, of ancient or modern times, would have dared, or daring could have succeeded, in conveying a shadow or outline of this glorious delineation from imagery taken from the wine-press? Much of the force and beauty of the language we lose, of course, in the translation — much from our ignorance of the rules of Hebrew versification, of which, indeed, we retain only the division of the verses; but changed, emasculated as it is, where shall we look for its like?"

"I have met with men in my time," Mr. Webster said on another occasion, "accounted learned scholars — who knew Homer by heart, recited Pindar, were at home with Aeschylus, and petted Horace — who could not understand Isaiah, Moses, or the Royal Poet. Why is this? Why in cultivating profane poetry, should they neglect sacred — so far superior in original force, sublimity, and truth to nature?"

"Moses, like Homer, had antecedent poets. We perceive in the productions of both a certain maturity of beauty and



strength, not wholly theirs, but the aggregate energies of their own and preceding minds. Indeed the writings of Moses have direct reference to, even where they do not purport to be extracted from, the works of others; for instance, to the poem of the Moabites on the victories of their king, the prophetic blessing of Jacob, the address of Lamech to his wives, the execration of Noah upon Ham. These, for many reasons unnecessary now to be mentioned, were doubtless extant before the time of Moses, in the form of traditions which constituted in those days the sole literature of the people, and were subsequently collected by him and reduced to writing as a more certain means of preservation than memory. And many times he seems to have adopted in his code popular proverbs, the accumulated wisdom of centuries expressed in a sententious, compact, metrical form, and therefore more impressive and better preserved.

“From the time that at my mother’s feet or on my father’s knees I first learned to lisp verses from the Sacred Writings, they have been my daily study and vigilant contemplation. If there be anything in my style or thoughts worthy to be commended, the credit is due to my kind parents in instilling into my early mind a love for the Scriptures. My father had a sonorous voice, an untaught yet correct ear, and a keen perception of all that was beautiful or sublime in thought. How often after the labors of the day, before twilight had deepened into obscurity, would he read to me his favorite portions of the Bible, the Book of Job, the Prayer of Habakkuk, and extracts from Isaiah! It was doubtless his impressive manner on such occasions, his suffused eye, his broken voice, and reverential intonation, that gave me a taste for the inspired authors, and preserved me from that danger of neglect into which our early familiarity with these books—a familiarity in the meantime rather with the sound of the words than with their sense and beauties—too often threatens to precipitate us.

“The Book of Job is a complete epic, only instead of wars and combatants we have argument and orators. Its action is entire and complete, as the unity of the epic demands; or, as Aristotle expresses it, it has a beginning, middle, and end.

The professed subject of the Iliad is the anger of Achilles, which sent to Hades the souls of many heroes untimely slain. The Greeks, throughout the whole duration of this anger, are every where routed, and at one time even driven to their ships, which they barely save from conflagration. But when a full reconciliation has been effected between him and Agamemnon, he rushes again to the field, victory ensues, and the poem concludes. Some critics have, indeed, objected to the completeness of this epic that the unity or connecting principle is sometimes lost sight of by the author; for throughout many of the books of the poem Achilles does not appear at all, being idle in his tent, removed from our sight and sympathies, while we are wholly engrossed in the changing fortunes of the two armies.

“Now the subject of the Book of Job is the fate of a good man eminent for his piety and integrity, abounding in riches and reputation, suddenly precipitated into the lowest depth of misery. This the Greek poets have told us is what the gods themselves contemplate with the greatest admiration, the spectacle of a good man struggling with adversity, and still preserving his manhood untainted. Though deprived of his immense possessions, bereaved of his children, and afflicted with the most loathsome disease; in the midst of his bodily and mental anguish, Job utters no complaint, breaks into no vain repinings, but bows his head submissively to the Divine will. In the expressive language of the historian, ‘In all this, Job sinned not, nor charged God foolishly.’

“The middle of this epic, corresponding with that portion of the Iliad which describes the various contests between the Greeks and Trojans, is the sustained and at times irate controversy between Job and his friends — perhaps the greatest visitation of Providence upon him. It is carried on with vehemence on either side, characterized always by ability, and occasionally rising to sublimity. With what expressive figures Job paints the condition of the wicked.

“With what beautiful and attractive imagery, too, he brings before us his past life! What an authority he shows us to have possessed before his people!

‘If I came out to the gate, nigh to the place of public resort,  
 If I took up my seat in the street,  
 The young men saw me, and they hid themselves;  
 Nay, the very old men rose up and stood:  
 The princes refrained talking,  
 Nay, they laid their hands upon their mouths.  
 The nobles held their peace,  
 And their tongue cleaved to the roof of their mouth.’

“As this man accounted so holy, of such stainless integrity, went through the public streets, the old men not only rose, but stood till he had passed beyond their recognition; an undertaking to them in decrepitude and weakness of no little labor. But such, in this golden age of patriarchal simplicity, was the reverence paid to him who feared God and eschewed evil!

“And in what book or in what tongue shall we find a more graphic and vivid description than this of the war-horse?

‘For eagerness and fury he devoureth the very ground,  
 He believeth it not when he heareth the trumpet.  
 When the trumpet soundeth, he saith, Ha, ha!  
 Yea, he scenteth the battle from afar,  
 The thunder of the captains and the shouting.’

“‘He believeth it not when he heareth the trumpet!’ That is, the confirmation of his wishes is so far beyond his even most sanguine expectations, that he dare not trust to his senses! He doubted more than he hoped, and still fears to believe. The clangor of the trumpets is his life; the thunder of the captains and the shouting the breath of his nostrils. He paweth the ground in his impatience, he scattereth the foam from his face, and champeth the bit with his teeth. His neck is clothed with thunder, and the earth trembles with the sound of his steps.

“Isaiah may be occasionally more sublime, and David superior in tenderness and in variety of style; but the author of Job, in force and fidelity of description is unrivalled. The dignity of his imagery, also, and his elevated diction, are worthy of his theme.

“These beautiful descriptions, and many others that I might bring forward, serve, in the light of episodes, to illustrate or relieve the main action of the Epic — as, in the Iliad, the parting of Hector and Andromache, or the appearance of Helen

before the old generals on the walls of Troy, who, though they look upon her as the cause of all their troubles, can not suppress their admiration of her beauties. Such diversify and embellish the narrative, and soften the catastrophe.

“Job is not represented so faultless as to be beyond the reach of our sympathies. The author, whoever he was, had too much art for this. Though approaching so near to the perfection of virtue, this man of Uz had no little alloy of human infirmity. He had endured without repining the loss of wealth and children, as well as the agony of disease; but his last infliction — the visit and pretended condolence of malignant censors in the guise of friends — finally irritated him into certain intemperate attestations of innocence, and vehement, though indirect, murmurs against the Divine will. These, however, may be attributed to a sudden passion, arising from pertinacious and ingenious malice, and are not to be considered as belonging to settled character. They prove him, in fine, to have been a man possessed of integrity, but too conscious of it — a devout man, but rather presumptuous from that fact — a man visited by almost every complication of misery, both bodily and mental, and, under its overpowering pressure, temporarily hurried beyond the limits of finite endurance. He is patient and long-enduring, but yet remote from that insensibility to misfortune which the Stoics vainly affected.

“His submission — sincere, unreserved, and final — to the will of God, and his subsequent restoration to greater wealth and happiness, concludes the epic. Its design is to teach men the superior wisdom of the Almighty; that having in due consideration the weakness and corruption of our common nature, and looking up to the infinite wisdom and purity of God, we should abandon all reliance upon our own unaided strength, and implicitly adopt His decrees as the guiding and sole rules of our life.

“Oftentimes, in Hebrew poetry, I have noticed that the author, in the unrestrained vehemence of his passion, is led, as if insensibly, from the relation of an event into an imitation or representation of it; while at other times the dialogue form is too apparent for misconstruction. This,” Mr. Webster said, “was evidently the case in the celebrated passage in Isaiah, in

which the Messiah, hastening to vengeance, is introduced conversing with a chorus, as in a Greek tragedy :

“ Chorus. ‘ Who is this that cometh from Edom ? ’ etc.

“ Messiah. ‘ I, the announcer of righteousness, mighty to save.

And some contend the Greeks borrowed the chorus from the Hebrews.

“ I read often, and always with increased pleasure,” said Mr. Webster, “ the prayer of Habakkuk, as it is called. It may properly be denominated an ode, and has been accounted one of the best specimens of its class. He has been considered an imitator of former poets, and perhaps with justice ; but this may be said of him, he has borrowed nothing which he has not improved. The design may have been another’s — the execution is his own.

“ The Hebrew poets have this advantage, that in the awful dignity of their subject they not only immeasurably surpass all other authors, but go beyond the confines of human genius. They celebrate the praises and the power of the Holy One under the influence of direct inspiration, and thus become the organs through which His greatness, and justice, and immensity reach our apprehensions.

“ And what,” continued Mr. Webster, “ can be more beautiful, more expressive than the closing lines of this ode ?

“ ‘ Although the fig-tree shall not blossom  
Neither shall fruit be in the vines:  
The labor of the olive shall fail,  
And the fields shall yield no meat;  
The flock shall be cut off from the fold,  
And there shall be no herd in the stalls :  
Yet I will rejoice in the Lord,  
I will joy in the God of my salvation.’

“ Here is a regular alternation and correspondence of parts, so different from the style and tone of prose. The cadence of the sentiment and the arrangement of the words are wholly poetical. Without doubt, they were composed originally in verse, or some kind of measured numbers ; but having lost the ancient pronunciation of the Hebrew language, we can not ascertain satisfactorily the nature of Hebrew verse.

“‘The labor of the olive’ — what an energetic simile! As if the olive, of its own accord, supplied or withheld its fruit; as if it had volition and powers inherent in itself. ‘The fields shall yield no meat!’ how much more forcible and poetic than if he had said, ‘The fields shall yield no produce, no crop, or return.’”

“The whole ode or ‘prayer,’ indeed, is full of vivid images, embellishing and strengthening the earnest ideas they illustrate.”

Mr. Webster when, the cares of State laid aside, he was alone with his own familiar friends, liked to go back to his early training, and to the scenes and events of his childhood in New Hampshire. His memory was richly stored, too, with the romantic adventures and picturesque narratives which distinguished the settlement of his native State more than that of any other State of the old Thirteen. The incursions and massacres of the Indians, the jealousy and almost constant hostilities of the French, as well as, later, the stirring character of the Revolutionary war, he often dwelt upon, and always with eloquent animation. “New Hampshire,” he was wont to say, “needs but a Scott to outshine Scotland. There is more romance in the foray of the Indians than in a creagh of the Gael, and richer material for the novelist in the adventures of Lovewell or Stark than in any of the exploits of the Black Douglas.”

It was while sojourning at his place in Franklin, New Hampshire, a beautiful country residence on the Merrimac River, near the confluence of the Pemigewasset and Winnipiseogee, that Mr. Webster mostly indulged in reminiscences of his youth, the *genius loci* inspiring him. He lived his early life over again, and never felt happier.

“As far back as I can recollect,” he said on one occasion, “I had a great passion for poetry, and devoured all I could command. At ten or twelve years old I could repeat word for word a greater part of Dr. Watts’s Psalms and Hymns, and no other poetry has since appeared to me so affecting. I have forgotten much that I have acquired since, but to this day I can repeat, almost literally, the devotional lines I was then so fond of.”

“I remember that my father one day brought home a pamphlet copy of Pope’s *Essay on Man*. I need not say I read with avidity. I read, reread, and then commenced again; nor did I give up the book till I could recite every word of it from beginning to end. We had so few books that to read them once or twice was nothing. We thought, as a matter of course, they were all to be got by heart. Many a time since I have thought of this when I have heard that sagacious advice quoted of one of the ancient writers (Pliny, was it not?), *Legere multum, non multa*.

“I recollect one occurrence that shows the great value we attached to books. The close of the year had brought along the next year’s almanac — an encyclopædia to us then of useful and entertaining knowledge; with what anticipation of delight did we await its promised coming! A page was devoted to each month, and on the top of each page were four lines of poetry, some moral, some ludicrous, and some sentimental. The almanac came one morning and before night my brother and myself were masters of its contents, or at least of its poetry and anecdotes. We discussed and laughed over it during a long December evening, and then went to bed upon it; awakening some time before the morning light, we renewed our conversation and recitations. It so happened that we had a difference of recollection about one word in the third line of *April’s* poetry. A variation of so much importance was not lightly to be passed over. We could not settle it by argument; each was positive in his own recollection, and there was no umpire. But the *fact* could easily be ascertained by inspection of the book. I arose, groped my way to the kitchen, lighted a candle from the embers of the hearth, and proceeded to a room in another part of the house in search of the almanac; found it, and carried it to our room. The disputed passage was examined, and I believe I was found to be in the wrong. I blew out the candle and returned to bed. The consequences of my nocturnal exploration came nigh being serious. It was about two o’clock in the morning, and just as I was again going to sleep, I thought I saw signs of light in the room I had visited. I sprang out of bed, ran to the room, and opening the door, found it was all on fire. I had let fall a spark, or touched the light to something that had communicated fire to a parcel of cotton clothes; they had communi-

cated it to the furniture and to the sides of the room, and the flames had already begun to show themselves through the ceiling in the chamber above. A pretty earnest cry soon brought the household together. By great good-luck we escaped. Two or three minutes more and we should have been in danger of burning together. As it was, I think the house was saved by my father's presence of mind. While others went for water, he seized every thing movable which was on fire, and wrapped them up in woollen blankets. My maternal grandmother, eighty years of age, was sleeping in the room."

"My college life," said Mr. Webster, "was not an idle one. Besides the regular attendance on prescribed studies and duties, I read some little of English history and English literature. Perhaps my reading was too miscellaneous—a habit into which we too easily fall—for nothing is more dangerous to the mind than indiscriminate indulgence in books. I even paid my board for a year or more by superintending a little weekly newspaper, and making selections for it from books of literature and from contemporary publications."

"Previous to the year 1763," said Mr. Webster, on one occasion as he was dwelling upon incidents of his own and his father's life, "the settlements in New Hampshire had made little or no progress inward into the country for sixty or seventy years, owing to the persevering hostility of the French in Canada and of the bordering Indians, who were under French influence. People in our days can not understand the constant anxieties of our fathers arising from such a source. They were obliged always to be in arms and on the alert, and many an interesting story I have heard from these old frontiersmen of such stirring times. But this potent cause of repression having been effectually removed by the cession of Canada to England by the treaty of Paris, in 1763, companies were got up in various parts of New England to settle the wilderness between the inhabited portion of the Eastern States and Canada. Colonel Stevens, who distinguished himself in the preceding French war, associating himself with some other persons about Kingston, in New Hampshire, obtained from Benning Wentworth, Governor of the Province, the township of Salisbury, called at first Stevenstown. It is situated at the head of the



Merrimac River, and very near the centre of the State. My father joined this enterprise, and about 1764 pushed into the wilderness. He had the discretion to take an ally, the best of allies, along with him, a wife; intending, whatever else he might want, not to lack at least good company. The party *travelled out the road* or path (for it was no better), and then were obliged to make their way (not *finding* one) to their destined places of habitation. My father camped a little beyond the other comers, and when he had built his log-cabin and lighted his fire, his smoke ascended nearer to the North Star than that of any other of His Majesty's New England subjects.

“His story of this early settlement was deeply interesting, at least to me. The settlers doubtless suffered much. The mountainous nature of the country, the very long winters, with prodigious depths of snow, and the want of all roads to communicate with the country below, often induced great hardships. But the settlement increased, and when the war of the Revolution broke out, ten or eleven years after, the place contained nearly two hundred men capable of bearing arms. War on their own soil, and even at their own doors, was no strange sight to these hardy pioneers; and the arms which they had laid aside on the conclusion of peace with the French were easily resumed, and became as effective, in their practised hands, against a still harsher foe. My father was their Captain, and he led them forth, with other New Hampshire troops, almost every campaign. He commanded his company at Bennington, at White Plains, at West Point, and at the time of Arnold's defection. There were not braver nor better troops in Washington's army. I have some little articles, the *spolia proelii* of Bennington, which I keep in honor of my father. The last time I ever saw General Stark, under whom my father fought at Bennington, he did me the compliment of saying that my complexion was like that of my father, and that his was of that color so convenient to a soldier, that burnt gunpowder did not change it!”

## Conversations with Prof. Felton<sup>1</sup>

FROM time to time, on meeting his rural neighbors, he would stop to talk over with them the subjects of agriculture in which they had a common interest; and it was pleasant to witness the kindly and affectionate intercourse between him whose fame filled the world, and the homely neighbors and friends who,

“ Along the cool, sequestered vale of life,  
Had kept the noiseless tenor of their way.”

To one who anxiously inquired after his health, he said, “ I am not good for much. My strength is nearly gone. I am no match for you now. I am scarcely a match for your grandson yonder.” To the question, whether the love of Nature grew stronger in him with the progress of time, he answered, “ Yes, undoubtedly. The man who has not abandoned himself to sensuality feels, as years advance and old age comes on, a greater love of mother Earth, a greater willingness, and even desire to return to her bosom, and mingle again with this universal frame of things from which he sprang.”

Stopping at the brow of the hill, where lies the old burying ground, occupied by the graves of the early Pilgrim families of Marshfield, he gazed thoughtfully on the spot where his own tomb and the monuments of his deceased kindred stand, and remarked that “ he disliked to have the grave surrounded by circumstances of melancholy; he wished a quiet spot, not likely to be disturbed by the noise and tumult of the world, with a few deciduous trees. Such a spot is this: the clatter of railroads and the bustle of business are not likely to break the silence here; and here I shall lie, when my time shall come, perhaps at no distant day.”

<sup>1</sup> At Marshfield, shortly before Mr. Webster's death. From an article by Professor C. C. Felton, *American Whig Review*, December, 1852.

To the question what had been the studies by which his style was formed, he said, "When I was a young man, a student in college, I delivered a Fourth of July oration. My friends thought so well of it that they requested a copy for the press. It was printed, and I have a copy of it now — the only copy in existence. (In this he was mistaken.) Joseph Dennie, a writer of great reputation at that time, wrote a review in a literary paper which he then edited. He praised parts of the oration as vigorous and eloquent; but other parts he criticised severely, and said they were mere *emptinesses*. I thought his criticism was just; and I resolved that whatever else should be said of my style, from that time forth there should be no *emptiness* in it. I read such English authors as fell in my way — particularly Addison — with great care. Besides, I remembered that I had my bread to earn by addressing the understanding of common men — by convincing juries — and that I must use language perfectly intelligible to them. You will therefore find, in my speeches to juries, no hard words, no Latin phrases, no *feri facias*; and that is the secret of my style, if I have any."

He spoke of Kossuth's eloquence with admiration of its beauty and ingenuity. He thought "his genius wonderful, and his resources extraordinary, but that he was rather an enthusiast, possessed of the idea that he was born with a mission to fulfil, than a statesman; that his political ideas were not well defined, nor fixed, nor consistent; that he was doubtless a sincere lover of his country, but was a poet, rather than a sound reasoner on affairs of state and the condition of the world." He stopped at a farm-house near his estate, and calling the farmer to the door, said, "Well, Mr. A., you are engaged to work for Fletcher to-day, I hear." "Yes, sir." "That's right; now, do you come over to my house, take my gun, and go out and shoot some of the plovers I just saw alight in the pasture yonder, and Fletcher will pay you for the day's work, and I will pay you for the birds." Such pleasantries seasoned his salutations to all the rural neighbors whom he chanced to meet.

. . . . .  
He mentioned with regret that he had so seldom enjoyed, for

any length of time, the society of literary and scientific men. "I have kept very bad company," he exclaimed, with a merry laugh. "I have lived among lawyers, and judges, and jurymen, and politicians, when I should have lived with nature, and in the company of students of nature."

Yet he seemed to have an inward consciousness that his days were drawing to their conclusion. In speaking of plans for the future he invariably added, "if my life is spared;" and once, when he was urged to dictate an autobiography, he replied, "My friends have in their possession all the facts of my life which will be of any consequence to the public to know; but perhaps, if God spares my life three or four years longer, I may do it."

# On Christianity<sup>1</sup>

“LAST Sabbath,” said Mr. Webster, “I listened to an able and learned discourse upon the evidences of Christianity. The arguments were drawn from prophecy, history, and internal evidence. They were stated with logical accuracy and force; but, as it seemed to me, the clergyman failed to draw from them the right conclusion. He came so near the truth that I was astonished that he missed it. In summing up his arguments, he said the only alternative presented by these evidences is this: Either Christianity is true, or it is a delusion produced by an excited imagination. Such is not the alternative, said the critic; but it is this: The Gospel is either true history, or it is a consummate fraud; it is either a reality, or an imposition. Christ was what He professed to be, or He was an impostor. There is no other alternative. His spotless life, His earnest enforcement of the truth, His suffering in its defence, forbid us to suppose that He was following an illusion of a heated brain.

“Every act of His pure and holy life shows that He was the author of truth, the advocate of truth, the earnest defender of truth, and the uncomplaining sufferer for truth. Now, considering the purity of His doctrines, the simplicity of His life, and the sublimity of His death, is it possible that He would have died for an illusion? In all His preaching, the Saviour made no popular appeals. His discourses were all directed to the individual. Christ and His apostles sought to impress upon every man the conviction that he must stand or fall alone—

<sup>1</sup> From “A Eulogy on Daniel Webster delivered before the Students of Phillips Academy, Andover, Mass., Dec. 29, 1852,” by Prof. Edwin D. Sanborn, who said: “A few months before his decease while sitting with him alone, by his own fireside, I heard him discourse most eloquently upon the great truths of Christianity and the proper method of teaching them.”

he must live for himself and die for himself, and give up his account to the omniscient God as though he were the only dependent creature in the universe. The Gospel leaves the individual sinner alone with himself and his God. To his own Master he stands or falls. He has nothing to hope from the aid and sympathy of associates. The deluded advocates of new doctrines do not so preach. Christ and His Apostles, had they been deceivers, would not have so preached.

“If clergymen in our day would return to the simplicity of the Gospel, and preach more to individuals and less to the crowd, there would not be so much complaint of the decline of true religion. Many of the ministers of the present day take their text from Saint Paul, and preach from the newspapers. When they do so, I prefer to enjoy my own thoughts, rather than to listen. I want my pastor to come to me in the spirit of the Gospel, saying, ‘You are mortal; your probation is brief; your work must be done speedily. You are immortal, too. You are hastening to the bar of God! the Judge standeth before the door.’ When I am thus admonished, I have no disposition to muse or to sleep. These topics have often occupied my thoughts; and if I had time, I would write upon them myself.”

# Mr. Webster's Last Will

1852.<sup>1</sup>

IN THE NAME OF ALMIGHTY GOD!

I, DANIEL WEBSTER, of Marshfield, in the County of Plymouth, and Commonwealth of Massachusetts, Esquire, being now confined to my house with a serious illness, which, considering my time of life, is undoubtedly critical, but being, nevertheless, in the full possession of all my mental faculties, do make and publish this my last Will and Testament.

I commit my soul into the hands of my heavenly Father, trusting in his infinite goodness and mercy.

I direct that my mortal remains be buried in the family vault at Marshfield, where monuments are already erected to my deceased children and their mother. Two places are marked for other monuments, of exactly the same size and form. One of these, in proper time, is to be for me; and perhaps I may leave an epitaph. The other is for Mrs. Webster. Her ancestors and all her kindred lie in a far-distant city. My hope is, that after many years she may come to my side, and join me and others whom God hath given me.

I wish to be buried without the least show or ostentation; but in a manner respectful to my neighbors, whose kindness has contributed so much to the happiness of me and mine, and for whose prosperity I offer sincere prayers to God.

Concerning my worldly estate, my Will must be anomalous and out of the common form, on account of the state of my affairs. I have two large real estates. By marriage settlement, Mrs. Webster is entitled to a life estate in each; and after her death, they belong to my heirs. On the Franklin estate, so far as I know, there is no incumbrance except Mrs. Webster's life estate. On Marshfield, Mr. Samuel Froth-

<sup>1</sup> From "Webster and His Master-pieces," by Rev. B. F. Tefft.

ingham has an unpaid balance of a mortgage, now amounting to twenty-five hundred dollars. My great and leading wish is to preserve Marshfield, if I can, in the blood and name of my family. To this end, it must go in the first place to my son, Fletcher Webster, who is hereafter to be the immediate prop of my house, and the general representative of my name and character. I have the fullest confidence in his affection and good sense, and that he will heartily concur in anything that appears to be for the best.

I do not see, under present circumstances of him and his family, how I can now make a definite provision for the future, beyond his life. I propose, therefore, to put the property into the hands of Trustees, to be disposed of by them as exigencies may require.

My affectionate wife, who has been to me a source of so much happiness, must be tenderly provided for. Care must be taken that she has some reasonable income. I make this Will upon the faith of what has been said to me by friends of means which will be found to carry out my reasonable wishes. It is best that Mrs. Webster's life-interest in the two estates be purchased out. It must be seen what can be done with friends at Boston, and especially with the contributors to my life annuity. My son-in-law, Mr. Appleton, has most generously requested me to pay little regard to his interests or to those of his children; but I must do something, and enough to manifest my warm love and attachment to him and them. The property best to be spared for the purpose of buying out Mrs. Webster's life-interest under the marriage settlement is Franklin, which is very valuable property, and which may be sold, under prudent management, or mortgaged, for a considerable sum.

I have also a quantity of land in Illinois, at Peru, which ought to be immediately seen after. Mr. Edward Curtis, and Mr. Blatchford, and Mr. Franklin Haven, know all about my large debts, and they have undertaken to see at once whether those can be provided for, so that these purposes may probably be carried into effect.

With these explanations, I now make the following provisions, namely :



Item. — I appoint my wife, Caroline Le Roy Webster, my son, Fletcher Webster, and R. M. Blatchford, Esquire, of New York, to be the executors of this Will. I wish my said Executors, and also the Trustees hereinafter named, in all things relating to finance and pecuniary matters, to consult with my valued friend, Franklin Haven; and in all things respecting Marshfield, with Charles Henry Thomas, always an intimate friend, and one whom I love for his own sake and that of his family; and in all things respecting Franklin, with that true man, John Taylor; and I wish them to consult, in all matters of law, with my brethren and highly-esteemed friends, Charles P. Curtis and George T. Curtis.

Item. — I give and devise to James W. Paige and Franklin Haven, of Boston, and Edward Curtis, of New York, all my real estate in the towns of Marshfield in the State of Massachusetts, and Franklin, in the State of New Hampshire, being the two estates above-mentioned, to have and to hold the same to them and their heirs and assigns, forever, upon the following *Trusts*, namely:

*First.* — To mortgage, sell or lease, so much thereof as may be necessary to pay to my wife, Caroline Le Roy Webster, the estimated value of her life-interest, heretofore secured to her thereon by marriage settlement, as is above recited, if she shall elect to receive that valuation in place of the security with which those estates now stand charged.

*Secondly.* — To pay to my said wife, from the rents and profits and income of the said two estates, the further sum of five hundred dollars per annum during her natural life.

*Thirdly.* — To hold, manage and carry on the said two estates, or so much thereof as may not be sold for the purposes aforesaid, for the use of my son, Fletcher Webster, during his natural life; and after his decease, to convey the same in fee to such of his male descendants as a majority of the said Trustees may elect, they acting therein with my son's concurrence, if circumstances admit of his expressing his wishes, otherwise acting upon their own discretion; it being my desire that his son Ashburton Webster take one, and his son Daniel Webster, Jr., the other, of the said estates.

Item. — I direct that my wife, Caroline Le Roy Webster,

have, and I hereby give to her, the right during her life to reside in my mansion-house at Marshfield, when she wishes to do so, with my son, in case he may reside there, or in his absence; and this I do, not doubting my son's affection for her or for me, but because it is due to her that she should receive this right from her husband.

Item. — I give and bequeath to the said James W. Paige, Franklin Haven and Edward Curtis, all the books, plate, pictures, statuary and furniture, and other personal property, now in my mansion-house at Marshfield, except such articles as are hereinafter otherwise disposed of, in trust to preserve the same in the mansion-house for the use of my son Fletcher Webster during his life, and after his decease to make over and deliver the same to the person who will then become "the owner of the estate of Marshfield;" it being my desire and intention that they remain attached to the house while it is occupied by any of my name and blood.

Item. — I give and bequeath to my said wife all my furniture which she brought with her on her marriage, and the silver plate purchased of Mr. Rush, for her own use.

Item. — I give, devise and bequeath, to my said Executors all my other real and personal estate, except such as is hereinafter described and otherwise disposed of, to be applied to the execution of the general purposes of this Will, and to be sold and disposed of, or held and used, at Marshfield, as they and the said Trustees may find to be expedient.

Item. — I give and bequeath to my son, Fletcher Webster, all my law-books, wherever situated, for his own use.

Item. — I give and bequeath to my son-in-law, Samuel A. Appleton, my California watch and chain, for his own use.

Item. — I give and bequeath to my grand-daughter, Caroline Le Roy Appleton, the portrait of myself by Healey, which now hangs in the south-east parlor at Marshfield, for her own use.

Item. — I give and bequeath to my grandson, Samuel A. Appleton, my gold snuff-box with the head of General Washington, all my fishing-tackle, and my Selden and Wilmot guns, for his own use.

Item. — I give and bequeath to my grandson, Daniel Webster Appleton, my Washington medals, for his own use.

Item. — I give and bequeath to my grand-daughter, Julia Webster Appleton, the clock presented to her grandmother by the late Hon. George Blake.

Item. — I appoint Edward Everett, George Ticknor, Cornelius Conway Felton and George Ticknor Curtis, to be my literary executors; and I direct my son, Fletcher Webster, to seal up all my letters, manuscripts and papers, and at a proper time to select those relating to my personal history, and my professional and public life, which in his judgment should be placed at their disposal, and to transfer the same to them, to be used by them in such manner as they may think fit. They may receive valuable aid from my friend George J. Abbot, Esq., now of the State Department.

Item. — My servant William Johnson is a free man. I bought his freedom not long ago for six hundred dollars. No demand is to be made upon him for any portion of this sum, but so long as is agreeable I hope he will remain with the family.

Item. — Monica McCarty, Sarah Smith and Ann Bean, colored persons, now also and for a long time in my service, are all free. They are very well-deserving, and whoever comes after me must be kind to them.

Item. — I request that my said Executors and Trustees be not required to give bonds for the performance of their respective duties under this Will.

In testimony whereof, I have hereunto set my hand and seal at Marshfield, and have published and declared this to be my last Will and Testament, on the twenty-first day of October, in the year of our Lord eighteen hundred and fifty-two.

(Signed) DANIEL WEBSTER. (Seal)

Signed, Sealed, Published and declared, by the said Testator, as and for his last Will and Testament, in the presence of us, who, at his request, and in his presence, and in the presence of each other, have set our names hereto as subscribing witnesses, the word "our" being erased in the third line from the bottom of the fifth page, before signing.

(Signed) GEORGE J. ABBOT,  
JOHN JEFFRIES,  
CHARLES H. THOMAS.

The following memorandum is from a copy in the New Hampshire Historical Society.

My Island farm, so called, contains about 150 acres. With a very fair new built tenants' house, &c., I should think with care it might be disposed of for \$3000. I do not know how saleable it might be, on account of the remoteness of its situation. But it is excellent land, and has this year been the most productive & remunerative of any of my real estate here.

It is under a mortgage of 1300 dollars, as I think, to the Hingham Savings Bank.

Mr. Thomas knows all about it. This property if a purchaser offers may be sold for the benefit of the Marshfield estate.

I do not know whether the whole or any part of it is within the Marriage Settlement.

The above was dictated by Mr. Webster to me on the 21<sup>st</sup> October 1852, at the time he was preparing his Will.

He directed me not to incorporate it in the Will, but to leave it a memorandum for the guidance of his Executor.

GEO. T. CURTIS.

# Inscription by Mr. Webster for his Monument

OCTOBER 15, 1852.<sup>1</sup>

LORD, I believe; help Thou mine unbelief.

Philosophical argument, especially that drawn from the vastness of the universe in comparison with the apparent insignificance of this Globe, has sometimes shaken my reason for the faith that is in me; but my heart has assured, and reassured me, that the Gospel of Jesus Christ must be a Divine Reality.

The Sermon on the Mount cannot be a merely human production. This belief enters into the very depth of my conscience. The whole history of man proves it.

DAN'L WEBSTER.

<sup>1</sup> From a paper in the Greenough Collection. George Ticknor Curtis in his Life of Webster says that "When he first dictated this inscription, he said to Mr. Abbot: 'If I get well, and write a book on Christianity, about which we have talked, we can attend more fully to this matter. But, if I should be taken away suddenly, I do not wish to leave any duty of this kind unperformed. I want to leave somewhere a declaration of my belief in Christianity. I do not wish to go into any doctrinal distinctions in regard to the person of Jesus, but I wish to express my belief in His divine mission.'"





# Speech on the Abolition of Slavery

[1840.]<sup>1</sup>

INTRODUCE this topic by a reference to the value of the *Union*, & to your known sentiments upon that subject. Slavery was not misunderstood by our fathers. They acted as conscientious, religious men in reference to existing circumstances. We must do so. Their toleration of slavery, enabled them to secure important enactments to arrest the slave trade. Suppose they had acted upon the idea, that they must tolerate in no form & to no extent the evil which stood in their way. The slave states would have been banded together, & the slave *trade* would have had powerful aid & succor, &c, &c.

Before 1789 the subject of slavery, in states where it existed, was a subject of course entirely under the control of the legislative power of the State. In this condition the Constitution found things; & our New England fathers, in agreeing to the Constitution, agreed to leave all things, in this respect as they found them. They acknowledged the existence of slavery, which did actually exist, & one well known provision of the Constitution is founded on this recognition. Nothing has since occurred, either to diminish the power of the States over this matter, or to give any power to Congress. Congress has no power over it. No branch of its authority reaches to it. This was admitted, by all Northern men, in the early history of the Government, & can be denied by nobody. I wish to say here, in the heart of Massachusetts, what I have said in Virginia that the Gen<sup>l</sup> Gov<sup>t</sup> has no right whatever, to interfere, in any way, with slavery in the States. This is what I have always said, & what I took some pains to say, in Jan. 1830 in the Debate on Mr. Foot's Resolutions. And while such incessant efforts are making in the South to alarm the people of that quarter about the intentions & purposes of Northern Whigs, in regard to this

<sup>1</sup> From a manuscript, partly in Mr. Webster's handwriting, in the New Hampshire Historical Society. The paper is endorsed, in another hand, "about 1840."



subject, I have deemed it proper to declare, & to repeat, my own view of our Constitutional obligations, & so far as I know, the view also of all other Northern Whigs. It is represented in the Southern States that we would exercise the powers of Congress, or exercise assumed powers in Congress, to the overthrow of the rights of our Southern brothers, which our fathers guaranteed to the people of the Southern States. I therefore feel bound to say, so far as I am concerned, & so far [as] you design, those representations are untrue.

I am willing to express my opinions; equally unequivocally, in regard to slavery in the District of Columbia.

I have no doubt that Congress does possess Constitutional power to abolish slavery in the District of Columbia; because the Constitution gives it exclusive power of legislation over the District, without any limitation or restraint whatever. I have expressed this opinion often, especially when Mr. Calhoun's Resolution was under discussion, two or three years ago.<sup>1</sup>

And I think that the people have an undoubted right to petition Congress on this subject; & that the rule of the last House of Representatives, ag<sup>t</sup> receiving such petitions was a denial of a Constitutional right.

The propriety of abolishing slavery in the District is quite another thing. That is a question of justice, & of expediency. If the abolition of slavery in the District were proposed either by payment to owners or otherwise, to-day, I certainly should not vote for it, against the sense of the people themselves.

It is to be considered, that this District is in the heart of large slaveholding States, & that Congress is the legislature of the District, & to some extent bound by the will of the people of the District. These States ceded the District for the convenience & accommodation of Congress, and the establishment of a seat of Government. This was all that Congress needed, & all it could receive, under the Constitution. To these States, slavery, its continuance or abolition, & the time & manner of abolition, are questions of vital importance, & go deep into the whole fabric of society.

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Calhoun introduced resolutions on the subject of slavery December 27, 1837, and Mr. Webster addressed the Senate on Mr. Clay's substitute resolution, January 10, 1838. (See Collected Works.) The speech here printed might therefore have been delivered in 1840. In the second paragraph he remarks: "I wish to say here in the heart of Massachusetts, what I have said in Virginia" &c. He spoke at Barre, Worcester County, Mass., July 4, 1840, but a report of the speech has not been found.

The direct interest which the U. States have in the subject is comparatively a very small one; its discussion in Congress naturally agitates, & alarms surrounding States; & therefore, my opinion is, & always has been, that the smaller interest should wait, till the larger interest had moved. I verily believe that the abolition of slavery in the District at this moment, would be an injury to the general cause, which those who recommend it profess a desire to support.

Situated as we are, in this Country, with no power to interfere with the States, we must wait for the operation of moral causes. We must encourage temperate & cool reflection. Nothing can be done by violence.<sup>1</sup> Every man of observation knows, that the temper & disposition of the whole Southern Country is far less disposed to a calm & dispassionate consideration of the subject now, than it was eight years ago. This is because so great pains have been taken to persuade the South, that the North is ready to break down the Constitution, & all its securities, in order to accomplish emancipation. It is time to put an end to these fears. It is time to declare that no such unconstitutional purposes are entertained. And it is time to cease from violent agitation, and in this, as in other efforts intended to benefit mankind, to proceed by the surer ways of reason, persuasion & truth.

There are those who openly scoff at the Union, & deride the Constitution, as an instrument inconsistent with the rights of man. They avow the opinion that it ought not to stand in the way of the accomplishment of their object.

Such persons, if they mean any thing, recommend civil war. Happily, they are few. The great body of the People, having entered into the Union, mean to abide by its terms, & for one, while I have any part to act in public life, I shall take no liberties with the Constitution of my Country.<sup>2</sup>

I feel it to be the duty of every man, having the views which you & I entertain of slavery, to do all in his power; by the exercise of moral influences, to ameliorate its condition & to terminate its existence — and so far as these ends may be promoted by means, not against the restraints of the Constitution, & in the

<sup>1</sup> The words "and agitation," originally written here, have been crossed out. In Mr. Webster's handwriting on the margin is the following memorandum: "Leave out that word because it is not necessary & is one of the ideas to which the Abolitionists cling with tenacity."

<sup>2</sup> What follows is mostly in another hand, with occasional changes in Mr. Webster's handwriting.

assent of those, who are thereby affected, I would hasten to adopt them. The exercise of political power for moral ends, is worse than useless, if it go in advance of popular approbation. Is it not manifestly our duty then, on this subject to strive to restore that quiet state of the public mind, when free from apprehension of violation of political rights, our Southern brethren upon whom the relation of master & slave, has been cast by inheritance, shall under the influences of moral & religious feelings be again induced to consider, as it is their province alone to consider, how & at what time, they can best accomplish deliverance from what we hold to be so great an evil.

We all know that before our Southern brethren were alarmed, at what they took to be approaching aggression of their constitutional rights, there was not only in the District of Columbia, but in several of the Slave holding States a favorable condition of the public mind tending to the emancipation of slaves & to the establishment of provision for their subsequent happiness. The subject was discussed, in State Conventions, & in the Halls of legislation. I desire to see that condition of public opinion restored, & if the North will but confine itself to what it may lawfully, justly & constitutionally do upon this subject, the cause of philanthropy & freedom will not only be restored to what it has lost, in the last few years, but will move onward with the peaceful aid of truth & justice unresisted free to sustain & hasten its advance.

*Memorandum on the abolition of the Slave Trade.*<sup>1</sup>

1751. The Quakers agree no longer to hold slaves.

1776 (July 4) Constitution of the United States, Section 9th, declaring that the migration or importation of such persons as the Governments of the States then existing should choose to admit, cannot be prohibited by Congress before 1808.

1778 (October) Law of the State of Virginia, prohibiting the introduction of negro slaves from any country out of the United States, or from any part of the United States, except by persons intending to settle in the States.

1788 Act of British Parliament for the better regulation of the Slave trade.

1792 (May 16) Decree of the King of Denmark for the cessation of the slave trade in his dominions after 1802.

<sup>1</sup> From a manuscript owned by Hon. George F. Hoar. It is not in Mr. Webster's hand, but bears this endorsement in his handwriting: "Memoranda of Acts regulating the abolition of the Slave trade."

1792. Bill for the abolition of the Slave trade passed by House of Commons of Great Britain, but rejected by the Lords.

1792 (Dec. 21) Act of Legislature of South Carolina, similar to the above Virginia Act, to be in force for two years from date;—subsequently continued in force by other acts until 1800, when the prohibition was made perpetual.

1794 (March 22) Act of Congress of the United States, prohibiting citizens and vessels of the United States from engaging in the slave trade, between the United States and any foreign country or between any foreign countries.

1796. Act of the Legislature of Maryland similar to the Virginia Act.

1798. Act of Legislature of Georgia, similar to the Virginia Act.

1800. Act of Legislature of South Carolina similar to the Virginia Act.

1803 (Feb. 28) Act of Congress of the United States, forbidding the importation of negroes into any State which by its laws prohibits such importation, unless they be seamen, natives of a country beyond the Cape of Good Hope.

1807 (Mar. 2.) Act of Congress of United States prohibiting the introduction of negroes as slaves into the United States, or any of its territories, from any foreign country, after January 1st, 1808.

1807 (Mar. 25) Act of the British Parliament for the abolition of the slave trade by British subjects or in British vessels, and between the British dominions and any foreign country.

1811. Act of Parliament increasing the penalties for slave trading.

1815 (Mar. 29) Decree of Napoleon for the abolition of the slave trade in French dominions.

1817. Decree of Louis 18th for confiscation of vessels engaged in the slave trade.

1818 (Apr. 20) Act of Congress increasing the penalties against vessels and persons attempting to import slaves into the United States.

1820 (May 15) Act of Congress, declaring guilty of piracy any citizen of the United States belonging to the crew of any vessel owned wholly or in part by the citizens of the United States, or navigated wholly or in part for such, which is engaged in importing negroes into the United States as slaves or in enslaving free negroes.

















