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NO. 10



Frank Pierce



THE LIFE  
OF  
GEN. FRANK. PIERCE,  
OF NEW-HAMPSHIRE,  
THE DEMOCRATIC CANDIDATE  
FOR  
PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES.

---

BY D. W. BARTLETT.

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TO THE  
AUTHOR

TO THE  
DEMOCRACY  
OF THE  
UNITED STATES,  
This Volume  
IS RESPECTFULLY DEDICATED.

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## P R E F A C E .

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THE nomination of General FRANKLIN PIERCE to the Presidency by the National Democratic Convention at Baltimore—sudden and unexpected to a large portion of the people of the Union—has created a strong and natural desire to obtain a reliable record of his life. This volume has been prepared to meet that desire. Friends in whose judgment we have been accustomed to confide, advised to the undertaking; and we have endeavored to throw aside all personal or political preferences, and prepare a candid and impartial life of General PIERCE. The fact that no complete life of the candidate of the Democracy had been published, was in itself, a strong argument in favor of the project. General PIERCE has ever been a retiring man, never courting popularity and fame, and, therefore, he is less known to the people at large than other personages whom we might mention, yet who are far infe-

rior to him in intellect, statesmanship, and all the attributes which are to be found in the character of a perfect *man*. We have written the book for the million, who desire to know all that can be known of "the coming man"—the man whose destiny it is to occupy the Presidential Chair.

The candid reader will discover General PIERCE, as a man and private citizen, to be generous, gentlemanly, and exceedingly attractive in all his qualities of mind and manner. As a soldier, he will appear able, courageous and sagacious.

Of all the base inventions of political party presses, the charge of cowardice on the part of General PIERCE, while in Mexico, as preferred by certain Whig journals, is the basest. The most respectable journals of that party, however, have refused to propagate so infamous a libel upon the character of one of our bravest generals.

As a statesman, General PIERCE will be found able, intelligent and honest. His course and views upon the subject of Slavery, we present without any remark either of approval or dissent, for the public wishes not *our* opinions, but *the facts* of General

PIERCE'S private, professional and political career. These we have endeavored faithfully to present. We feel confident that all our statements may be implicitly relied upon, yet we wish to say here, distinctly, that General PIERCE is not responsible for a line in this volume. Certain leading facts we obtained from him or distinguished Democrats in New-Hampshire, and we have received valuable advice from prominent Democrats in other parts of the Union; but for this volume, we stand alone responsible.

It is but just to remark that circumstances have compelled us to prepare the volume with great haste, so that the reader who is expecting a volume of elegant writing, stands in a fair way to be disappointed; but he who desires a candid, unpretending, yet reliable record of the public career of FRANKLIN PIERCE, may—we trust we may say it without egotism—consult our pages with safety.      D. W. B.





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LIFE OF FRANK. PIERCE.



## CHAPTER I.

Benjamin Pierce, Father of Gen. Pierce—His Early History—Anecdote of him—His Family—Political Career—Personal Appearance—His Generosity—Anecdote.

FRANKLIN PIERCE is the fourth son of the late Gov. BENJAMIN PIERCE, of Hillsborough, New-Hampshire. His ancestors were all plain, honest and intelligent Democrats, fond of serving their country in time of war on the field of battle—in time of peace as loyal citizens. Benjamin Pierce, the father of the subject of this volume, was a very extraordinary man. He was a native of Chelmsford, Massachusetts. He never received a liberal education; in fact, he was almost entirely a self-educated man, gaining his knowledge more from men than books. At the early age of seventeen he bade farewell to his plough, and enlisted as a common soldier in the great war of the American Revolution. On the 19th of April, 1775, the revolutionary committee sent couriers out in every direction; one of them drove up before the farmhouse of the father of Benjamin Pierce, and told his brief tale of the news of the battle of Lexington. The simple account of the courier was all that was needed to fire the brave heart of the young farmer, and he shouldered his musket, and with the bless-

ings of his parents, started on foot for the seat of war. He soon arrived in Boston, where he enlisted as a private in the regiment commanded by Colonel Brooks. He was in the great battle of Bunker Hill, the 17th of June following, and there distinguished himself by his bravery. In one of the many important actions in which he was subsequently engaged, during the hottest of the battle, when the leaden rain was fiercest, young Pierce saw the flag of his regiment wave to and fro, and as if the bearer were unable longer to uphold it. Although the act was accompanied with the greatest danger, he rushed forward, and grasping it, held it proudly in its proper place, while the old bearer dropped dead at his feet. And until the action was finished and the victory complete, he continued to uphold it. The brave action was noticed, and the next morning the young farmer was rewarded with an ensigncy. His superior bravery, and his military talents, attracted attention, and when the Revolutionary War was brought to a termination, he quitted the army with the rank of captain. Such was the wretched pecuniary condition of the treasury, that the soldiers were paid off for their services in a depreciated currency, and Benjamin Pierce found that he possessed only about two hundred dollars.

He was necessitated, therefore, to retire to the wilderness, where lands were cheap, and purchase him a farm. Wandering one day in the region of what is now the town of Hillsborough, N. H., he

stopped by a pleasant stream, which contained a plenty of the finest trout. This was an excellent recommendation of the spot in the eyes of the captain, and spying a log-hut in the distance, he sought its proprietor, and put to him the question:

“Will you sell your farm?” The reply was “Yes.”

“How large is it?” asked the captain. “One hundred and fifty acres, with a half-dozen of it cultivated.”

“I will give you just one hundred and fifty dollars for it,” said Captain Pierce, “and that is all the money I have to spare.” After a little thought, the man accepted the offer, and Captain Pierce settled down in the wilderness as a farmer.

In the fall of the year 1786, General Sullivan, who was then a resident of New-Hampshire, determined upon forming the militia of Hillsborough county into a brigade, and appointed Benjamin Pierce a brigade-major. His services were of great value to the militia of New-Hampshire, and he finally rose to be brigadier-general.

The first wife of Benjamin Pierce, Elizabeth Andrews, of Hillsborough, died at the early age of twenty-one, leaving a daughter, who is now the widow of the late distinguished General John McNeil. He again married Anna Kendrick, of Amherst, N. H., by whom he had three daughters and five sons. She was a woman of excellent character, and died just two months before her husband.

One of the daughters died before attaining the age of womanhood, and the remaining two became accomplished women. The eldest married General Solomon McNeil, of New-Hampshire; the youngest became the wife of Hugh Lawrence, Esq., of Boston. They both died in the year 1837, leaving behind them families to mourn their loss. The only sister, therefore, living, of Gen. Frank Pierce, is the widow of Gen. John McNeil, and the daughter of Gov. Benjamin Pierce by Elizabeth Andrews, his first wife. Mrs. McNeil is a very accomplished, affable, witty woman, and is loved and admired by a large circle of friends.

The sons of Benjamin Pierce were, in the order of their ages, Benjamin U., J. Sullivan, Charles S., Franklin, and Henry D. Sullivan and Charles died young; the eldest, Benjamin U., entered Dartmouth College, and commenced reading law, but when the war of 1812 opened, his enthusiasm was so great that he forsook his situation for the army, where he soon rose to the rank of brevet-colonel. He was a brave and accomplished officer and gentleman. He was married three times, and left three daughters at his death in 1850, to mourn his loss. He gained considerable renown in the Florida War, and was in many respects like his brother, Franklin Pierce. He was exceedingly amiable and kind, was graceful in his manners, and everywhere he was known was loved.

The youngest son of Governor Benjamin Pierce,



Col. Henry D. Pierce, is now scarcely forty years of age, and is a drover and farmer. He is wealthy, intelligent, and has been elected to the Legislature of his native State for several terms.

But to return to the sketch of old Governor Pierce's life: In 1789, he was elected from Hillsborough to sit in the House of Representatives at Concord, and continued to represent that town in the House for twelve consecutive years. In 1803, he was elected a member of the Governor's Council, in which office he continued until 1809, when he was appointed Sheriff of Hillsborough county. This office he occupied for four years. For many years following he was either Sheriff of the county which was his residence, or he was a member of the Governor's Council.

In 1827, Benjamin Pierce was elected Governor of the State of New-Hampshire; in 1828, in times of great political agitation, he was for once defeated in his election, but he was triumphantly re-elected again in 1829. After this he lived in retirement to a good old age. He died April 1st, 1839, at the age of eighty-one years, and his remains were deposited in the town burying ground.

Benjamin Pierce, as we have before remarked, was an extraordinary man, and from him the present distinguished Franklin Pierce has derived many of his best qualities. Without the advantages of early education—without opulent and powerful friends, Benjamin Pierce grew to be the most influ-

ential man in New-Hampshire. His influence in the county of Hillsborough was overwhelming, and indeed, throughout the State. He was, in fact, a man of great native talent. Shrewd, good-natured, and possessed of common-sense, he soon took his position as a leader of men. In personal appearance he was striking. He was rather short, and thick-set, had a rigid, honest-looking face, resembling, to a degree, the best portraits of Gen. Jackson. His eyes were bright and merry, his nose was prominent, his lips expressive of firmness, while his hair, during the latter portion of his life, was as white as snow. He had always a full flow of animal spirits, and was lively in temperament. He was a universal favorite—fearless, frank-hearted—entirely devoid of all aristocratical pride—he was well calculated to please the great body of the people. He was exceedingly fond of hunting and fishing, and as soon as he had brought his farm in Hillsborough under cultivation, he constructed a pond, in the centre of the lawn in front of his house, which he at all times kept well stocked with trout. He was a man of the most humane disposition. He was constantly engaged in some kind and generous work, and he gave to the poor and deserving a portion of his wealth. In 1818, there was considerable excitement in reference to the oppressive laws which obtained in reference to debtors. Under the laws then in force in the State of New-Hampshire, (and indeed the majority of all the States of the Union)

an unfortunate, though strictly honest man, was liable to be thrown into the most foul of all dungeons, where he must remain till death should come to release him. There were cases of the imprisonment of the noblest of men—of men who had fought and bled in the wars of their country—and who, for misfortune alone, were doomed to rot their lives out in the confined dungeons of a prison.

In the jail at Amherst, New-Hampshire, there were, in 1818, three aged prisoners; one of them had remained there for four years, in the closest confinement. When Benjamin Pierce was elected Sheriff of the county, one of his first acts was to appoint a day for the releasement of these prisoners. The people thought the occasion worthy of a public meeting, and when the day arrived, the 20th of November, 1818, they all assembled in front of the prison, when Sheriff Pierce, after having opened the door of the prison, addressed them as follows :

“Moses Brewer, Isaac Lawrence, and George Lancy—By the return made me by Israel W. Kelly, Esq., my predecessor in the office of sheriff for the county of Hillsborough, it appears that you, Moses Brewer, was committed, December 13, 1814; and you, Isaac Lawrence, was committed December 27, 1815; and you, George Lancy, July 2, 1817:

“MY UNFORTUNATE FELLOW-CITIZENS: The feelings excited by a view of your situation are inexpressible. That those heads, silvered by age and

hardship, and those hearts, throbbing with kindly emotions, should be held for this long period of time by their fellow-citizens, without the imputation of a crime, in a captivity unparalleled even in the annals of the French Bastile, or Algerine slavery, always viewed by us with sentiments of inexpressible horror, is more than my nature is able to endure. To be immured in a dungeon, standing on the very soil of liberty, and in the midst of men boasting its high privileges, is, in my mind, with which the ideas and the value of freedom are closely interwoven, infinitely worse than to be enslaved in a foreign land, by enemies and barbarians, from whom nothing better could be expected. But as an officer of the county, I have a duty to perform. I must either be governed by the law, and suffer you still to remain, the devoted victims of unavoidable misfortune and honest poverty, shut out from the genial light of heaven and the vital air, God's equal gift to all; to endure, perhaps perish under the privations incident to our situation, and the stern ravages of approaching winter; forlorn and destitute, with no friend to comfort, no society to cheer, no companion to console you—or, I must be directed by the powerful impulse of humanity, pay the debt myself, and bid you leave this dreary and gloomy abode.

“My unfortunate fellow-citizens: My duty to myself will not suffer longer to remain here an old companion in arms, who fought for the liberty of which he is deprived, for no crime but that of being

poor. My duty to my country, whose honor is deeply implicated by your sufferings—and it is one of my first wishes that it should be untarnished—and my duty to my God, who has put into my power to relieve, irresistibly urge me to the latter course. This, I am sensible, takes from me a large sum of money; however the liberal and generous people, among whom it is my happy lot to reside, may participate; if not, none but my children will have any right to reproach me; and I am confident they will do no more than say their father was generous to a fault. In this view, go; receive the uncontaminated air which is diffused abroad for the comfort of man; go to your families and friends, if you have any. Be correct in your habits. Be industrious—and if your tottering and emaciated frames are so far exhausted as to prevent your getting a comfortable support, apply to the good people for relief—and may the best of heaven's blessings accompany you the remainder of your days."

This act was one of the noblest ever performed in this selfish world of ours, and we venture to say has scarcely ever had its equal among the acts of the public men of the country.

In almost every town in New-Hampshire, there are persons who well remember old Governor Pierce, and remember him with the liveliest affection too. His grave is in a pleasant spot, and is surmounted by a plain monument, which is in good taste, for Gov. Pierce was of all men plain and unaffected.

## CHAPTER II.

Birth of Franklin Pierce—Preparation for College—Anecdote—His religious friend, Zenas Caldwell—Solving a Problem—Military and Civil Law in conflict—Takes his Degree—Studies Law—Elected to House of Representatives—Made Speaker.

We now come, after a very hasty and brief sketch of his father's family, to the present General FRANKLIN PIERCE. He was born at Hillsborough, the 23d day of November, 1804. Being a child of strong promise, at an early age Gov. Pierce sent him out of town to obtain his education. An elder brother, then in the army, had the sagacity to perceive the powers of his mind, and was exceedingly anxious that he should receive a thorough education. For several years he attended school in the neighboring towns of Hancock and Frankestown. While a resident of the latter town, he lived with the mother of the late lamented Judge Woodbury, who was a lady of superior mind and attractions. Over Frank she had a most beneficial influence, as he very often acknowledged. He left Frankestown for Exeter Academy where he completed his preparatory studies, and entered Bowdoin College at the precocious age of sixteen, in the year 1820. During his first two years in college, Frank Pierce was not distinguished for his devotion to his studies. He was not

dissipated, but having naturally a full flow of spirits, he was a little wild. But among all his classmates he was extremely popular. Possessing frank manners and a generous disposition, it could not well be otherwise. Some of the members of his class have since become highly distinguished. A few of the names we will mention; Calvin E. Stowe (since Rev. Dr. Stowe,) was its brightest scholar. Among his intimate collegiate friends, were the Hon. James Bell, John P. Hale, the Free Soil Senator, and who, up to 1845, was one of his warmest friends, Jonathan Cilley, and that most beautiful of all American prose writers, Nathaniel Hawthorne. We have said that Frank Pierce was not, during his first two years, a brilliant scholar, owing to his fondness for society and his high spirits. While pursuing the study of Algebra, he one morning, in hastily running over his lesson for the day, came to an abstruse problem, which could not be solved without time and patience. Unfortunately he was not just then in possession of those valuable articles, and being in the room of his classmate, Stowe, and casting a glance at his slate, he saw the problem worked out most charmingly! It was the work only of a few minutes, and *the copy* on his own slate was complete. It was barely completed before the hour of recitation arrived. The tutor commenced with Pierce, half expecting that he would have failed in solving the problem, when, to his surprise, he saw the proper result upon the slate of the young colle-

gian. He took the slate, looked at it, and said in his wonderment :

“Well, Pierce! where did you get this?”

Now Frank Pierce could no more tell a lie than he could be guilty of any other wicked and mean action, and supposing that the tutor was soberly asking him a question he wished answered, he replied :

“Where did I get it? *Why, from Stowe's slate, to be sure!*” The reply came with such a perfect *sang froid*, that the class burst into merry laughter, while the tutor, if he was displeased with Pierce's want of study, became thoroughly convinced of his honesty of character. And this has ever been one of the finest traits in his character. He has never so much as tergiversated. He can never lie—is never inconsistent.

He soon became acquainted in college with his class-mate, Zenas Caldwell, of Maine, brother of the late Prof. Meritt Caldwell, of Dickinson College. Zenas Caldwell died the year after leaving college, and was a most devoted Christian of the Methodist persuasion. He soon conceived a strong affection for Frank Pierce, notwithstanding his levity and youthfulness. It seems as though he must have had a presentiment that Pierce was destined to a life of extended influence and power, for he was exceedingly anxious to win him over to the paths of piety. It was in vain that Pierce tried to shake him off; he clung to him as a brother, not boldly and offen-



sively, but in a mild, affectionate, yet determined manner. The result was most happy indeed: Pierce gave up his levity, his carelessness, became devoted to his books, got up early and sat up late, became truly an excellent scholar, and, what was more pleasing to Zenas Caldwell than all the rest, became deeply impressed with the truths of religion, and to this day, his sympathies are with the Methodists. Long since the devoted young Christian gave up his spirit to his Maker, but his gentle, winning, religious conduct in college, still has its powerful influence over one of the brightest minds in America. It is not speaking beyond the truth to say that it has added a steadiness and sobriety to the life of Franklin Pierce to this day, and will to the day of his death. In a recent conversation with General Pierce, he alluded to his old class-mate in the most feeling manner. When his collegiate course was about half finished, young Caldwell persuaded him to accompany him home, to Hebron, in Maine. It was in the winter, and the common district school in Hebron was without a teacher, and the brothers Caldwell influenced him to assume the dignities of a teacher's life. He was paid fourteen dollars per month for his services, at that time and place reckoned very high wages. Look at the future President of the United States the teacher of a district school! And in our humble opinion, the one office is as noble a one to fill as the other.

Entering the school-house, he found *nine* different

kinds of arithmetic in use! His first act was to send down to Portland for a copy of each. At last, in the course of the winter, he came upon a very blind problem, which, amid all the cares which pressed upon him, he could not solve. He took the book containing the problem home to his boarding-house, and walked the floor incessantly. It was in vain that he thought. He went back to his school-room the next morning, dejected, and delivered a long lecture to his scholars upon the propriety of their solving their own problems, as it would do them but little good were he to show them the process. The same night in his room, he again worked painfully at the incorrigible problem; and when about to give up in despair, while walking the room, he chanced to cast his eye upon a little recess in the chimney. Turning a button and opening the door, without any particular object in view, he saw a sheet of paper covered with figures, and looking carefully upon it, what was his astonishment to discover the very problem over which he had so long puzzled his brains, wrought out carefully to a correct result. In a moment he saw the principle which he had overlooked, and which was a key to the answer sought.

After three months within the walls of a country school-house, Frank Pierce bade them farewell without much sorrow, that he might again pursue his collegiate course.

While in college, his young friends formed a mil-

itary company and elected him its captain. In marching to and fro between two given points, he found it very convenient to march across a portion of the green near the mansion of the President of the college. After doing so once or twice, the President gave out his orders to Captain Pierce, that in future he must desist from marching so near his house. When the next parade-day came on, the young captain, as before, marched his company across the aforesaid green, whereupon the President, who was a small and thick-set man, came out, and in a furious manner, thus accosted young Pierce :

“ Did you not hear, sir, the orders which I gave you recently in reference to crossing this green ?”

“ I did sir,” he replied calmly.

“ And why did you not obey them ?” asked the President, still angrier than before.

“ Because it was an unjust order. It puts us to great inconvenience to obey you, while it certainly does you no harm for us to go past your house.”

“ I will have you to know,” said the President “ that here civil law is superior to military !” And he retired to his house. He made a violent attempt to expel Pierce from college, but through the interference of friends, desisted from further action upon the matter.

Mr. Pierce took his degree in the year 1824, with high honors, and left Bowdoin College and his numerous circle of friends there with regret, for among them he had spent some of the happiest portions of

his life. Here he bade farewell to his devoted friend, Zenas Caldwell, who had taken such a deep interest in his welfare, who died two years later, at the age of twenty-six.

The three following years were spent successively in the office of Hon. Edmund Parker, at Amherst, N. H., Hon. Levi Woodbury, at Portsmouth, and in the law school of Judge Howe at Northampton, Massachusetts.

In 1827 Mr. Pierce was admitted to the bar, and opened an office opposite to his father's mansion in Hillsborough. At this time Gov. Benjamin Pierce enjoyed a commanding influence in New Hampshire. His popularity was such as is not often witnessed in the world of politics. As a matter of course, the success of Franklin Pierce was almost instantaneous. Under common circumstances a young lawyer is obliged to make his abilities known to the world before he can hope for success. But in this case the high position and popularity of Gov. Pierce gained for his son immediate practice. But had he lacked eminent abilities, it would soon have been discovered, and he would have lost that patronage which he secured from the reputation of his father. He needed not only great abilities but severe and constant labor, to maintain the position which it was on all heads conceded he must take. We need not say that he not only met the highest expectation of his friends, but far exceeded them. He rose daily in their esteem and admiration.

Mr. Pierce at once espoused the cause of Democracy with unbounded zeal, and such was the confidence reposed in him by his fellow-townsmen that in the second year of his practice, at the age of twenty-five, he was elected to represent the town of Hillsborough in the State Legislature at Concord. The three successive years he was also elected to that body, and such was their opinion of his abilities, that in 1832 and 1833 he was made Speaker of the House of Representatives. At this time there was great agitation throughout New-Hampshire in reference to General Jackson. The State, in the year 1829, came out boldly and grandly in favor of the hero of New-Orleans. Benjamin Pierce was elected Governor by more than two thousand majority, and an entire Congressional delegation in favor of Jackson's administration was chosen, and a legislature returned strongly Democratic. The following year the agitation became greater, and the Democracy achieved a still more brilliant victory over their opponents. Their candidate for the Governorship was elected by four thousand majority, and Isaac Hill was elected to the United States Senate. Through all these exciting scenes Mr. Pierce, though a young man, took an important part. On the 15th of June, 1830, a convention of the Democratic party was convened at Concord. An address and resolutions were adopted, which at that time were of great significance. They clearly define the nature of the Constitution; show how the extravagant system of ap-

propriations by the general government lead "to wide-spread, general corruption, tending directly to consolidation or disunion of the States, the destruction of democratic principles, and the extinction of liberty;" they also endorsed the re-nomination of Andrew Jackson as the Democratic candidate for the next Presidential term. In 1831, as we have said, the Democrats of New Hampshire elected their candidates for the State, and for Congressional offices. The House of Representatives consisted of two hundred and twenty members. Franklin Pierce was put in nomination by the Democrats, and he was elected as follows: for Frank Pierce 155: all other votes 58.

The following year, 1832, he was again elected to the Speakership. Thus in a very few years, Frank Pierce had raised himself to a commanding position in his native State. In his own party, among his own adherents, his position was most amiable and indeed he was beloved and admired by his political enemies. Although young, yet he continued to conduct himself in so modest yet able a manner as to raise the admiration of the older leaders among the Granite Democracy of New Hampshire.

A political critic, in noticing his career at this portion of his life, remarks:

"Thus, in five years, he attained an enviable position among his associates; and won it, not by undermining rivals, or by adroitness in political intrigue, but by a firm adherence to political principle, eloquence in debate, unquestioned capacity

for public business, unvarying courtesy and exhibition of frankness and manliness of character. So honorable was his ambition, that, while he was ranking his associates, he retained their love and commanded their respect.”

## CHAPTER III.

Elected to Congress — Character as an Orator — Speech on Revolutionary Claims.

IN the summer of 1833, Mr. Pierce was elected from his native district to the lower House of Congress, for the term of two years, and took his seat in that body in December of the same year. He was at this time a graceful orator and gentleman, but twenty-nine years of age, popular at home among his constituents, and as may well be supposed, soon became a favorite in the best circles of Washington society. Young, fond of society, and of a genial nature, it would not have been strange, had the temptations which were scattered thickly about him, seduced him, to a degree, from a rigid attention upon the transactions of the House. But such was not the case. At all times, he was to be seen in his seat. When any important vote was taken, the name of Franklin Pierce, of New-Hampshire, is invariably to be found on the records of Congress. He never interrupted the proceedings of either House with what are vulgarly denominated "speeches made for Buncombe." We have been indeed surprised, in our search among the Congressional records for his speeches, to discover the prac-



tical nature of every speech ever delivered by him in Congress, either in the House of Representatives or the Senate. Scarcely another man is living who has spent as many years in Congress, without speaking, occasionally to say the least, for the sake of political capital at home. There are several reasons why Mr. Pierce never pursued such a course. In the first place, his modesty of character, and his love of the practical, extinguished in his heart all desire for popular displays ; and in the second place, he has always been so popular among the people of New-Hampshire, that there was never at any time any need of his resorting to the ordinary methods of keeping alive a half-expiring reputation, viz : by franking thousands of his speeches to his constituents—by making a violent ado about nothing, in Congress, for the purpose of preserving his name fresh in the memories of his political supporters and friends. The Democratic party has generally a very handsome majority in New-Hampshire, and Frank Pierce was always sure of a heavy majority, whenever nominated for any office.

The first speech of any importance and length made by Mr. Pierce in the House of Representatives, was delivered February 27, 1834, and was upon the subject of Revolutionary Claims. We present it here, not because it is, in the ordinary acceptation of the term, a brilliant performance, but because it shows the excellent sense of the young orator, and his conscientious desire to oppose all ex-

travagance in the public expenditures. Through all his speeches there runs the same vein of economy. Though personally extremely liberal—far too much so for the good of his purse—he has always strongly opposed extravagance in the public expenditures. It is this fact, disclosed by the speeches of Mr. Pierce, which constitutes him a safe statesman and an exceedingly fit man for the Presidency of this nation. It is not every passionate orator, it is not every stump-speech-maker, who can properly fill the august Presidential chair. But a man who is opposed to extravagance and to corruption, and who is religiously honest and consistent in his character, though inferior to Daniel Webster in his intellectual acquirements, may be a far safer President than any mere orator, or intellectual personage of however magnificent talents. General Pierce is an honest man—a consistent man; and the people never will be deceived in him or by him. But we will proceed with his speech on a bill reported by a committee of the House, “To provide for the settlement of certain Revolutionary Claims:”

### SPEECH

ON “A BILL TO PROVIDE FOR THE SETTLEMENT OF CERTAIN REVOLUTIONARY CLAIMS.”

“Mr. Pierce, of New-Hampshire, thanked the House for having kindly deferred, on the suggestion of his indisposition, the consideration of the bill which had just been read; and he felt under par-

ticular obligations for the generous courtesy manifested on that occasion by the gentleman from Virginia, a friend of the bill, [Mr. Mason,] upon his right. He had expressed, the other day, when moving the postponement of the bill, his conviction that it had been passed to a third reading without having received all the consideration due to its importance. That conviction had been strengthened by further examination and subsequent reflection. Nothing, however, but a sense of what he conceived to be his duty, as an humble member of that body, could have induced him to arrest its progress then, or now to ask, for a few moments, the indulgence of the House. He should be brief in his remarks, having nothing to say for political effect, or for home consumption; but with the opinions he entertained of the bill, he should do injustice to himself did he permit it to pass *sub silentio*, feeble and unavailing as his voice might prove. He had hoped that its importance, and the new order of things to be had under it, would have called up some gentleman whose experience and whose reputation might have insured general attention. He had waited to the last moment, and waited in vain, and now, upon its passage, he called upon gentlemen to pause before they proceeded to provide, by presumption, for satisfying claims of any character, from any quarter.

“Mr. P. said he was not insensible of the advantages with which the bill now under consideration came before the House. It came, as he understood,

with the unanimous approbation of a committee entitled to the most entire respect; and it related to services, the very mention of which moved our pride and our gratitude. They were services beyond all praise, and above all price. He spoke of the Revolutionary services generally. But while warm and glowing with the glorious recollections, which a recurrence to that period never fails to awaken; while we cherish with affection and reverence the memory of the brave men of that day, now no more; while we would grant, most cheerfully grant, to their heirs all that is justly due, and which we do extend to those who still survive; our grateful thanks, and our treasure also, he trusted we should not, in the full impulse of generous feeling, disregard what was due from the gentlemen composing this House, as the descendants of such men. What, then, sir, (said Mr. P.) are the objects to be answered by the bill, and what are its provisions? The general object is plainly and briefly stated in the introduction of the committee's report. They say:

““ Finding many petitions before them, asking the commutation of five years of half-pay, promised by the resolution of Congress of the 22d of March, 1783, to certain officers of the Revolutionary army, they have been induced, by several considerations, to present to the same a bill, the object of which is to remove these and some other similar claims from the action of the committee, and of Congress, and have them settled at the Treasury Department.’

Mr P. would not be disposed at any time, much less was he disposed now, when so much was said as to the tendency of power, and of patronage, and of responsibility to the Executive, to cast from us any duties which have been performed, or any responsibilities which have been hitherto vested here, unless the reasons for such transfer shall appear obvious and conclusive. It was more than fifty years since the passage of the resolution referred to by the committee as the foundation of commutation claims. The subject for making suitable provision for the officers of the army of the Revolution, was one of the deepest and intense interest, not only to the officers, themselves but to the country generally, from 1778 down to the passage of the commutation resolve of 1783. Mr. P. apprehended that individuals having substantial claims against the government did not often remain ignorant of the fact, and he was curious to know how it happened that these claims had slumbered during the whole of this period.

Considering the frequency and earnestness with which the subject was urged upon Congress by the Father of his Country, and the anxiety with which it was regarded by the officers themselves, it was not to be presumed that any were so listless as to remain in the dark with regard to their own rights. In his judgment, it was reasonable to suppose that the number of legal and just claims would by this time have been so far diminished, as to leave little

for the action of Congress, or of any other department. Since, however, that which might have been naturally expected to occur seemed but to have obtained in this particular instance, he knew not that he should have raised any particular objections to sending the claims to the Treasury Department, providing they were to go there relying upon their own merits, and depending for their allowance upon evidence ordinarily required of revolutionary services, and not upon presumptions. If the bill did not embrace the rules that are to be required as fixed principles, and to which he trusted he should be able to satisfy the House there were strong if not insurmountable objections, it would still be exceptionable. He understood that it was not formerly the practice of Congress to allow interest upon these claims, even where they were brought by satisfactory evidence within the provisions of the resolution of 1783; and it struck him that a different practice never should have obtained, except in cases where the claimant furnished sufficient reason for his delay, showing that it was attributable to no fault or negligence on his part. If correct in this view, it would be clearly wrong to sanction the principles generally, as is provided by the third section of the bill.

In speaking of what he considered to be the most objectionable feature of the bill, Mr. P. said he should confine himself chiefly to its operation upon those who were entitled to half-pay

for life, under the resolve of 1780, at the second important change in the arrangement of the army after its establishment, and to some portion or the history of the subsequent action of Congress upon the subject, it might be proper for him to call the attention of the House. By the resolution just referred to, those who were reduced by the arrangement which then took place, as well as those who served to the close of the war, were entitled to half pay for life. That this provision was made under very peculiar circumstances, was matter of history; and it was well known to all within the reach of his voice, that it was regarded with jealousy and dissatisfaction, both by the soldiers who have behaved with equal valor, and endured equal hardships, and by the citizens generally. They regarded it as anti-republican; they thought it setting up, in the then young republic, invidious distinctions, and establishing, for that generation at least, a privileged and pensioned class, inconsistent with the equal rights for which they had been contending, and at variance with the genius and spirit of such a government as they hoped to see established and maintained.

In March, 1783, a change was made and what was the moving cause of that charge? A memorial from the officers themselves. The preamble of the resolution recites that, "Whereas, the officers of the several lines under the immediate command of his excellency, General Washington, did by their

late memorial, transmitted by their committee, represent to Congress that the half pay granted by sundry resolutions was regarded in an unfavorable light by the citizens of some of these States, who would prefer a compensation for a limited term of years or by a sum in gross, to an establishment for life, &c. To satisfy the memorialists and the country five years full pay was granted in lieu of half pay for life, and it is for this commutation that petitions are pouring in upon you, and claims, arising under the resolution just referred to, and those, the adjustment of which the bill proposes to transfer to the Treasury Department with rules of evidence which might possibly facilitate, as the committee suppose, the allowance of some just claims, but which will at the same time open a wide door for imposition and for the assertion of rights which have no legal or equitable foundation, and which may still be honestly urged by the heirs of deceased officers. Sir, (said Mr. P.) is it not admitted by the report that this will be the operation to some extent?

Speaking of these rules, the committee say: "It is possible that their universal application may lead to the allowance of some claims which do not come strictly within the original terms, but this will be no new evil; and it is certain if they are not applied many just claims must be rejected for the want of technical proof." To the correctness of this last clause he must be excused for withholding his assent. If evil has heretofore arisen or is liable to arise,



from application of the said rules of evidence, is that now to be used as an argument in favor of transferring duties from the House to one of the Departments and transferring them with instructions binding the Secretary, and making certain the continuance of the evil? He trusted not. If presumption and not evidence was to be the ground on which claims are to be allowed in any instance, would it not be more wise to retain them here, where a spirit of liberality and yet a sound discretion, may be exercised in each particular case, according to its circumstances, than to give them a direction anywhere else, accompanied by instructions which it was admitted might lead, and which in his humble judgment would inevitably lead, to the acknowledgment of many unjust claims?

Again, the committee say, "If there is any apprehension that the principles here declared are too liberal, it must be recollected that the tendency of legislation for individual claims is constantly to enlarge the basis of right; while the effect of transferring them to another tribunal, more judicial in its character, will probably be to retain that basis essentially within the limits fixed at the moment of transfer. If, therefore, it should be supposed, or even admitted, that the principles asserted in the bill are more liberal than the present practice of Congress, it may be considered certain that in its continued action, they would soon be surpassed in liberality." That is, if we are acting upon too liberal principles—

too much upon presumption — we had better at once send out these presumptions to be the guide of others, than longer to trust ourselves. Why? Because “The tendency of legislation for individual claims is constantly to enlarge the basis of right,” and we are in danger of being further from those principles which should govern prudent legislators, watchful of the interests of those whom they represent, as they would be of their own, than we now are. Mr. P. said, however just this might be in point of fact, he was not yet prepared to admit it as a principle of action; and, while no one would lend his support more readily to any claim that might come here sustained by proper evidence, he trusted the correctness of such a proposition might never find support in any vote of his.

Speaking of the operation of the limitation acts, the committee say further: “Driven from the ordinary means of redress, individual claimants, from time to time, resorted to Congress for relief. At first, it may have been matter of consideration and of serious question, whether relief should be afforded after the limitation had expired, and the party was at least held to account for his delay, but in process of time it became, as it now is, a matter of course to grant relief in every case in which the claimant brings himself by proof within the terms of the resolution on which the claim is founded, and has not been already paid.” Mr. P. trusted that wrong practice and precedent, founded

in error, were not to be regarded as a guide here. He solemnly believed that if precedent and practice were to be relied upon, gentlemen might readily find justification for going almost any length in any direction. In the case before the House, it was so exceedingly probable, that all claims founded in right were adjusted, and so fallible and uncertain was human testimony, after a lapse of fifty years, that he had no hesitation in declaring it as his firm conviction, that the former course was the proper one; and that applicants who came in after the extension act 1792, should always have been held to account for their delay. It was not, of course, intended to give commutation to those, or the heirs of those, who received certificates in 1784, or who have, at any time since, under any circumstances, received commutation.

Before, then, examining more particularly the presumptions which this bill directs the Secretary to assume, let us consider, for a moment, what are the natural presumptions in the case. The commutation provided for by the resolutions of 1783, was originally directed to be adjusted by commissioners or other accounting officers, appointed by Congress; and it was supposed that certificates were almost universally granted in 1784. Why should it not have been so? They were ready, upon application and the production of the proper evidence; and he put it to the House, whether the provisions of that resolution, and the rights accruing under it, considering

the circumstances under which it was passed, upon the application of the officers themselves, must not have been known to every officer living within the limits of the United States? Mr. P. thought it utterly incredible that it should have been otherwise. Whenever there had been any action upon the subject of pensions in latter times, what period had elapsed before that action, whether favorable or unfavorable, and almost every particular attending it, had, through one channel or another, reached the humble dwelling of every survivor of that noble band. But upon the supposition of their remote situation from the accounting officers, some might, by possibility, have been precluded from obtaining their rights. An act was passed on the 27th of March, 1792, suspending the operation of the limitation act, for two years, and, under this extension, remaining claims, or such as were presented, were adjusted at the Treasury Department, by what were then termed 'certificates of registered debt.'

Again, he inquired whether it was within the bounds of reasonable probability, that any claims were held up after this period, if they were ever intended to be enforced? Sir, (said Mr. P.,) it is to be remembered that, during all this time, it was not, as it unfortunately now is. There were hosts of living witnesses among the officers with whom the claimants served, and the soldiers whom they commanded. Nor is the advantage which the officer had, from his position over the private soldier, of

proving every particular connected with his service, and its duration, to be overlooked. Men engaged in the same great cause, and serving in the same camp, were no strangers to each other. Never, perhaps, was there a band bound together by such ties of affection, intimacy, and confidence. Genius, honor, and unshaken valor, then went hand in hand, and were in exercise, not from low considerations of personal aggrandizement, but to vindicate a nation's rights. The links that bound men together at that day, exist not now. Their intimacies and their friendship were those which, perhaps, from our very natures, can only spring up and flourish amidst the mutual dangers and privations of a camp. At the period of which he spoke, every incident of the exciting and eventful struggle through which they had just passed, must have been fresh and vivid in the recollections of all. Nothing need then have been left to doubt, nothing to presumption. But this is not all. From 1794 down to this hour, there had been the same opportunity to obtain equitable rights, by application to Congress, that exists at present. With these facts before us, (said Mr. P.,) if the natural presumption be not that all just claims have been satisfied according to the provisions of the resolutions of 1783, he confessed that the conclusions at which he had arrived were singularly erroneous.

The House had nothing to do with the question of the value of the certificates; they were, without

doubt, nearly valueless in the hands of a large portion of the original holders. This subject was most satisfactorily discussed in the able and elaborate reports made to both Houses at the first session of the 21st Congress, when the act was passed providing for the officers who were entitled to half pay by the resolve of 1780, and for the non-commissioned officers and soldiers who enlisted for and served to the close of the war.

The views taken in these reports were interesting and instructive upon this subject. But he was considering what was the natural presumption as to commutation rights still existing; and, if his views were in any tolerable degree correct, it was diametrically opposed to the legal presumption to be established by the passage of this bill.

Sir, (continued Mr. P.,) we are told that the evidence of records is exceedingly imperfect; and I assure the House that such is the fact to a much greater extent than I had supposed, before applying to the Department for information. The muster rolls had been almost entirely destroyed by fire, and all the records, from various casualties, were broken, but this deficiency of record evidence was, in his estimation, much more the misfortune of the Government than of the claimants who came here after the lapse of fifty years. But pass your presumptions, sir, (said he,) and you will have little occasion for evidence. It is said that the rules which are to be regarded as fixed principles by the Depart-

ment, provided this bill pass, are the same as those which the committee have adopted in the investigation of claims coming before them. If so, and they accorded with the sentiments of the House, he confessed it was a matter of very little consequence whether they were applied here or elsewhere; and he was happy that the bill had been reported, that the opinion of the House might be deliberately and understandingly expressed upon the propriety of their adoption. Sir, (said Mr. P.,) will not their operation be that of a new law upon the subject of commutation? Look at the first presumption of the bill. It has the advantage of being plain; there is no ambiguity about it—"It being established that an officer of the continental line was in service, as such, on the 21st of October, 1780, and until the new arrangement of the army, provided for by the resolution of that date, was effected, he shall be presumed, unless it appear that he was then retained in service, to have been reduced by that arrangement, and therefore entitled to half-pay for life, or the commutation in lieu of it." The *onus probandi* was shifted; the burden of proof was not left where it was intended it should rest—with the claimant—but it was thrown upon Government. He presumed it was not expected that the Government would send agents abroad to obtain negative evidence from living witnesses. How, then, was it to be shown, in the present imperfect state of the records, that an officer was not reduced, and did

voluntarily leave the service? The effect of such instructions would virtually be to give commutation to all those who were in service on the 21st of October, 1780, and until the new arrangement was effected, instead of to those only who were actually reduced, as was originally contemplated.

He called the attention of the House to the second presumption: "2d. A continental officer, proved to have remained in service after the arrangement of the army under said resolution of October, 1780, shall be presumed to have served to the end of the war, or to have retired, entitled to half-pay for life, unless it appear that he died in the service, or resigned, or was dismissed, or voluntarily abandoned an actual command in the service of the United States." This, also, manifestly made new provision, granting commutation to those who were in service after the new arrangement in 1780, instead of to those who actually served to the close of the war; for, in the state of record evidence, as declared by the committee, how was it possible for the Government to prove, in very many instances, that the claimant, or the ancestor of the present claimant, "died in the service, or resigned, or was dismissed, or voluntarily abandoned a command in the service of the United States?" There was no possible means of doing it.

Mr. P. would pursue the subject no further. If there was no fallacy in these premises, and the conclusions were legitimate, they were sufficient for his purpose. The House would not think of passing



the bill in its present shape. He ought not longer to ask the attention of gentlemen, for which he was already under great obligation. Such were some of the objections to the bill that had occurred to Mr. P., and thus much he thought it his duty to say. For the committee making the report he entertained the highest respect; and he believed that he was no less disposed than they were to grant, to the uttermost farthing, all that was due to Revolutionary officers or their heirs. But (said Mr. P.) pass this bill, and you will do great injustice to the country; you will make a most exhausting draft upon your treasury, to answer, it may be, some equitable claims that may as well be liquidated without it, and you will, it is morally certain, be compelled, under it, to acknowledge a vast number which have no foundation in justice—no foundation anywhere, except in lost records and violent presumptions.

## CHAPTER IV.

## SPEECH ON THE DEPOSITE QUESTION.

On the 28th of April, 1836, in the House of Representatives, Mr. Pierce, of New-Hampshire, rose and remarked that, not seeing the gentleman from Virginia, (Mr. Dromgoole) in his seat, he would move to take up the resolution submitted by that gentleman, calling on the Treasury Department for certain information in reference to the deposite of the public moneys, and the amendment thereto offered by another gentleman from Virginia, (Mr. Wise.) Mr. P. thought it was due to the Secretary of the Treasury and to themselves, that the resolution should be taken up and disposed of.

Objection being made, Mr. Pierce moved to suspend the rules, which was agreed to, ayes 103, noes not counted. The resolution was then read, the question pending being the amendment of Mr. Wise, as modified at the suggestion of Mr. Calhoun, of Massachusetts, proposing also to raise a select committee to inquire into the various subjects connected with the deposits of the public moneys in certain local banks, Mr. Bond, who had spoken on two former days, addressed the House for the third time on the subjects embraced in the resolutions. The nation found itself in possession of about thirty-

seven millions of dollars, all of which was in the hands of the deposite banks, which moneys were unsafe, he contended, in those institutions, because the banks were not sufficiently responsible to the Government for those moneys, and because of the small capital of those banks. He alluded to the communication from the Secretary of the Treasury, about the time the deposites were removed, in which it was stated that the domestic exchanges would be improved by that removal, and to the circular of the Clinton Bank of Columbus, a young institution, with a smaller capital than many others in that part of the country, which refused to take the notes of specie paying banks in its own neighborhood, and received those of distant banks, which, he argued, would have the tendency of deranging the exchanges. This system, he said, would have the effect of compelling those who had money to pay for public lands to get their moneys shaved by brokers, for the purpose of getting moneys which this bank would receive. These deposite banks might transfer moneys to those brokers, which could be used for the purpose of shaving. When our moneys were in this uncertain state, he did not think gentlemen ought to sit and fold their arms, and not go into an examination of the condition of those moneys. If the investigation was not now gone into, it would give the guaranty to those banks that an investigation would never be had, and, as a consequence of this, they would go on in their speculations, and he fear-

ed that, by the next December, they should have an account of empty boxes. He asserted, without fear of contradiction, that many of the deposite banks were not able to repay the money to the Government which they were entrusted with, and pay the debts due to other creditors. It was, to be sure, asserted that the banks had four dollars to one to pay their Government deposites with. But it must be recollected there were other creditors to be paid besides the Government. He alluded to the agent of the deposite banks, and asked if he was not an agent of the Government, why it was that he had a room in the building occupied by the Treasury Department? This he did not consider proper, and contended that no individual should be allowed to have an office in the same building with the Treasury Department, who was not connected with it, and responsible to the head of that Department. He went into an examination to show the amount of moneys the Government had lost by local banks, and argued that the same result might again be expected.

Mr. Pierce of New-Hampshire, followed. Mr. Speaker: I do not propose to discuss the deposite question, though there are few more fruitful subjects, as experience has taught us, and none presenting more ample materials with less of laborious research. What power Congress possesses over the deposit banks—whether they are safe or unsafe—whether they constitute a United States bank to all

intents and purposes, as the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. Calhoun) alleges—and whether that is to be made an objection to them in a certain quarter, as depositories of public moneys, are questions which will very properly come under our consideration, when the bill upon your table, for which a special day has been assigned, shall be taken up. At present, the question legitimately before the House appears to me to be : What is the appropriate and judicious mode of seeking the information contemplated alike by the original resolution presented by the gentleman from Virginia, (Mr. Dromgoole,) and the amendment proposed by his honorable colleague, (Mr. Wise.) To this question I should have confined myself, exclusively, but for certain extraordinary assertions and grave charges which have been preferred against the Secretary of the Treasury ; and to repel even these may be regarded as the work of supererogation ; for, in this country, there is, fortunately, so much intelligence—the avenues to correct information, open to all, are so multiplied and various, that no administration, and no public officer, can suffer long from mere bold, sweeping denunciation. And he who expects to make a successful attack, with such weapons alone, does great injustice to the character of the yeomanry of this county, in whose hands are its destinies. They are watchful of their public servants, jealous, if you please ; but they are at the same time just. They are not convinced, and they cannot be alarm-

ed by mere naked charges. They look beyond the charges to the evidence upon which they are predicated, and so, I trust, will this House do, before they adopt any new and extraordinary course of proceeding. Whether Mr. Whitney, whose name has been so often introduced in the course of this debate, is the agent of a corporation, or any number of corporations—the agent of individuals, or no agent at all, is to me an affair of perfect indifference. If he is not a public officer, or in pay of the Government (and I understand that neither is the fact,) the nature of his agencies, if such he have, and the compensation he may receive for his services, are matters into which I have as little curiosity as right to inquire. Whether he occupies a room in the block of buildings, a portion of which is rented for the accommodation of the Treasury Department, or a room on the opposite side of the avenue, are questions in which the House can feel no possible interest, however much gentlemen may attempt to make of it in debate.

But there are other subjects, as the gentleman from Ohio has justly observed, of the highest importance. For instance, if the Secretary of the Treasury, or any agent of the Department by his order, or with his approbation, has adopted a new rule, with regard to what money shall be received for public dues, operating injuriously upon any portion of the country, it deserves prompt consideration; the cause should be inquired into without delay. This

charge, the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. Bond,) has distinctly made. I shall not, in replying, retort the harsh terms the gentleman has thought proper to apply to the Secretary, but I will pronounce his position erroneous, and assert that the terms, in this respect, have never been more liberal, except during the suspension of specie payments, than since the removal of the deposits from the United States Bank. The same construction has been given to the laws relating to this subject from the days of Mr. Hamilton's administration to the present time. That the gentleman's complaint in this particular is unreasonable and without foundation, is shown conclusively by a report of the Secretary of the Treasury, read in the Senate on Tuesday last; and I will not take up the time of the House by pursuing a proposition which, in that report is clearly demonstrated. I thank the gentleman, Mr. Speaker, for having called the attention of the House, particularly to the deposite bank of the State which I have the honor in part to represent—the Commercial Bank at Portsmouth, which the gentleman denominates, I suppose, by the way of eminence, "*the special pet in particular of the Secretary of the Treasury.*" Now, a moment's examination will show what constitutes, in the gentleman's estimation "a special pet in particular." On the 18th of the present month, there was on deposite in the Commercial Bank at Porthsmouth, one hundred and nineteen thousand seven hundred and thirteen dollars;

out of which the pensions of the State, your appropriations for the Navy Yard at that place, and all other expenditures accruing there, are to be paid. At the same date there was on deposit in the city of Cincinnati alone, more than two millions of dollars.

Mr. Bond : The Commercial Bank at Cincinnati, by what authority I know not, has established an agency at St. Louis, Missouri, and much the greater part of the public deposit held by that bank is at this agency, and not in the State of Ohio.

Mr. Pierce resumed : It is quite immaterial ; the bank at Cincinnati is responsible for it. There was on deposit in the State of Ohio at the date before given, two millions four hundred and fifty-five thousand one hundred and thirty-six dollars, which is more than quadruple the amount on deposit in New Jersey and Delaware, and all the New England States together, with the exception of Massachusetts. Such, sir, is the evidence of favoritism on the part of the Secretary, of which the gentleman from Ohio complains ; and he is at liberty to make the most of it. The Secretary, in his annual report, under the head of ‘ Deposit Banks and the Currency,’ says “The payments to creditors, officers and pensioners, have been punctual and convenient, and the whole fiscal operations through the State Banks have as yet, proved highly satisfactory. Incidental to this, the facilities that have been furnished to the commercial community in domestic exchanges,



were probably never greater, or at so moderate rates." This the gentleman does not hesitate to pronounce false. I do not say this of his assertion, but will content myself with opposing to that assertion facts, of which he may dispose at his leisure. The deposite banks are required to state, on the back of their semi-monthly returns, the rates of exchange at the places where they are located, and on the 18th of the present month, those returns show that at the various points where complaints have been made—at New-Orleans, Mobile, Cincinnati, Baltimore, Philadelphia, and the Atlantic cities—in no instance has exchange been higher than one per cent., in many a half and a quarter, and others at par.

Mr. Bond: I said it was stated in a newspaper, received yesterday from Cincinnati, that the notes of all the Ohio banks out of the city were at a discount of four per cent.; and that a friend of mine now here (but who resides in Cincinnati) had just informed me that exchange could not be had there on Philadelphia or New York, for less than one to one and a half per cent., and that no considerable amount could be had at either of these rates.

Mr. P. resumed. Undoubtedly, and the gentleman's friend has been no more unfortunate in finding high rates of exchange than individuals and the teeming press in other places. I do not say that there is a panic-manufacturing spirit abroad, but I feel bound to rely upon official statements from the different

points, in preference to the declaration of any individual or newspaper paragraphs.

Decided exception has been taken to one of the articles of agreement entered into between the Government and the deposit banks. It is in the following words: "If the Secretary of the Treasury shall think it proper to employ an agent or agents, to examine and report upon the accounts and condition of the banks in the service of the Government, or any of them, the said bank agrees to pay an equitable proportion of his, or their expenses, and compensation according to such apportionment as may be made by the said Secretary." Is it not the duty of the Secretary, as a faithful public officer, to make every provision that prudence can suggest for the safe keeping of the public moneys? Should he hold no control over the agents of his own appointment? While the banks consent to a stipulation of this kind, it is difficult to conceive why the representatives of the people should object. But my object, in referring to this article, which is regarded with so much alarm, is chiefly to state that no agent has ever been appointed by the present Secretary, and that the power has been exercised only on two occasions since the withdrawal of the deposits from the United States Bank, with neither of which has the mysterious Whitney had any connection; one of those agencies, which was to examine into the condition of the Union Bank at Baltimore, suggestions against its solvency having been made during

the panic era, consisted of Mr. Reverdy Johnson, then, and I believe now, a decided opponent of the present administration, and Mr. Howard, of Baltimore. About the same period, upon similar suggestions, Judge Ellis, of Mississippi, was appointed to inquire into the state of the Planters' Bank; these are the only occasions on which the power has been exercised. Where, Mr. Speaker, is the evidence of inducement on the part of the present Secretary to conceal aught from the public eye, as charged by the gentleman from Virginia, (Mr. Wise) or where is the evidence of the more extraordinary charge of the same gentleman, that the Secretary has done it? Is it to be found in the document which I hold in my hand, going fully and minutely into the subject, and showing how and where every *dollar* of your money was deposited at the time of date? No sir, no sir! The Secretary has not only given a specific and detailed statement upon the subject, but he has more than once appealed to you, to take away his present broad latitude of discretion, under which, without your legislation, he is compelled to act, and that request is repeated in this very report. The Secretary says: "The Department is aware that in the present overflowing condition of the Treasury, the regulation of these operations, with the selection and superintendence of the deposit banks, is a task of no small difficulty or delicacy, and when governed by a strict and uniform adherence to sound princi-

ples, as has been attempted, must necessarily lead to many disappointed applications. But in the absence of that specific legislation on the subject, which has been, and still is earnestly requested, the Department has not hesitated (it is hoped faithfully) to discharge, and frankly to explain, the duties and the high and painful responsibility, which so much discretionary power has imposed." I believe this high responsibility could barely be entrusted to abler, or more faithful hands ; but I would not have it rest even there. All I say is, let us attend to our own appropriate duties, before we heap grave charges upon co-ordinate departments of the Government. If the gentleman from Virginia, (Mr. Wise) was not misled himself, his remarks in relation to the report of which he complains, as not containing the whole truth, were manifestly calculated to mislead the public. That report was not made by the present Secretary, but by another distinguished individual, who has been recently appointed by the President and his constitutional advisers, to which body of constitutional advisers that report was made, to a situation which, in point of dignity and high responsibility, is hardly inferior to that of the Chief Magistracy itself. I could add nothing, if I were disposed, to such a commentary on the report, and the gentleman making it.

## SPEECH

## ON THE WEST POINT ACADEMY.

THE following speech was delivered by Mr. Pierce June 30, 1836, upon a Bill making appropriations for the Military Academy of the United States for the year 1836. It will be found by the reader to be able and statesmanlike :

Mr. Pierce, of New-Hampshire, rose and addressed the chair as follows : “MR. CHAIRMAN—An attempt was made during the last Congress to bring the subject of the re-organization of the Military Academy before the country, through a report of a committee. The same thing has been done during the present session, again and again, but all efforts have proved alike unsuccessful! Still you do not cease to call for appropriations; you require the people’s money for the support of the institution, while you refuse them the light necessary to enable them to judge of the propriety of your annual requisitions. Whether the amount proposed to be appropriated by the bill upon the table is too great, or too small, or precisely sufficient to cover the current expenses of the institution, is a matter into which I will not at present inquire, but I shall feel bound to oppose the bill in every stage of its progress. I cannot vote a single dollar until the resolution of inquiry, presented by my friend from Kentucky, (Mr. Hawes,) at an early day in the session, shall

be first taken up and disposed of. I am aware, sir, that it will be said, because I have heard the same declaration on a former occasion, that this is not a proper time to discuss the merits of the institution; that the bill is to make provision for the expenses already incurred in part, and whatever opinions may be entertained upon the necessity of a re-organization, the appropriation must be made. I say to gentlemen who are opposed to the principles of the institution, and those who believe that abuses exist, which ought to be exposed and corrected, that now is their only time, and this the only opportunity, during the present session, to attain their object, and I trust they will steadily resist the bill, until its friends shall find it necessary to take up the resolution of inquiry, and give it its proper reference.

Sir, why has this investigation been resisted? Is it not an institution which has already cost this country more than three millions of dollars, for which you propose, in this very bill, an appropriation of more than one hundred and thirty thousand, and which at the same time, in the estimation of a large portion of the citizens of this Union, has failed, eminently failed, to fulfill the objects for which it was established, of sufficient interest and importance to claim the consideration of a committee of this House, and of the House itself? I should have expected the resolution of the gentleman from Kentucky, (Mr. Hawes) merely proposing an inquiry, to pass without opposition, had I not witnessed the

strong sensation, nay, excitement, that was produced here at the last session, by the presentation of his yet unpublished report. Sir, if you would have an exhibition of highly excited feeling, it requires little observation to learn that you may produce it at any moment, by attacking such laws as confer exclusive and gratuitous privileges. The adoption of the resolution of inquiry, at the last session of Congress, and the appointment of a select committee under it, were made the occasion of newspaper paragraphs which, in tone of lamentation and direful prediction, rivaled the most highly wrought specimens of the panic era. One of those articles I preserved, and have before me. It commences thus: "*The architects of ruin.* This name has been appropriately given to those who are leading on the base, the ignorant, and the unprincipled, in a remorseless war upon all the guards and defences of society."

I introduce it here merely to show what are, in certain quarters, considered the *guards and defences of society*. After various compliments, similar to that just cited, the article proceeds: "All this is dangerous as novel, and the ultimate results cannot be contemplated without anxiety. If this spirit extends, who can check it? 'Down with the bank;' 'down with the Military Academy;' 'down with the judiciary;' 'down with the Senate;' will be followed by watch-words of a worse character." Here, Mr. Chairman, you have the United States Bank

first, and then the Military Academy, as the *guards* and *defences* of your country. If it be so, you are indeed feebly protected. One of these guards and defences is already tottering. And who are the *architects of ruin* that have resolved its downfall? Are they the base, the ignorant, and the unprincipled? No, sir. The most pure and patriotic portion of your community; the staid, industrious, intelligent farmers and mechanics, through a public servant, who has met responsibilities, and seconded their wishes with equal intrepidity and success, in the camp and in the cabinet, have accomplished this great work. Mr. Chairman, there is no real danger to be apprehended from this much dreaded leveling principle.

From the midling interest you have derived your most able and efficient support in the most gloomy and trying periods of your history. And what have they asked in return? Nothing but the common advantages and blessings of a free Government, administered under equal and impartial laws. They are responsible for no portion of your legislation, which, through its partial and unjust operation, has shaken this Union to its centre. That has had its origin in a different quarter, sustained by wealth, the wealth of monopolies, and the power and influence which wealth, thus accumulated and disposed, never fails to control. Indeed, sir, while far from demanding at your hands special favors for them-



selves, they have not, in my judgment, been sufficiently jealous of all legislation conferring *exclusive* and *gratuitous* privileges.

That the law creating the institution of which I am now speaking, and the practice under it, is strongly marked by both these characteristics, is apparent at a single glance. It is *gratuitous*, because those who are so fortunate as to obtain admission there, receive their education without any obligation, except such as a sense of honor may impose, to return, either by service or otherwise, the slightest equivalent. It is *exclusive*, inasmuch as only one youth out of a population of more than 47,000 can participate in its advantages at the same time; and those who are successful, are admitted at an age when their characters cannot have become developed, and with very little knowledge of their adaptation, mental or physical, for military life. The system disregards one of those great principles which, carried into practice, contributed perhaps, more than any other, to render the arms of Napoleon invincible for so many years. Who does not perceive that it destroys the very life and spring of military ardor and enthusiasm, by utterly foreclosing all hope of promotion to her soldier and non-commissioned officer? However meritorious may be his services, however pre-eminent may become his qualifications for command, all are unavailing. The portcullis is dropped between him and preferment, the wisdom of your laws having provided

another criterion than that of admitted courage and conduct, by which to determine who are worthy of command. They have made an Academy, where a certain number of young gentlemen are educated annually at the public expense, and to which there is, in consequence, a general rush, not so much from sentiments of patriotism, and a taste for military life, as from motives less worthy—the avenue, and the only avenue, to rank in your army. These are truths, Mr. Chairman, which no man will pretend to deny, and I leave it for this House and the nation to determine, whether they do not exhibit a spirit of exclusiveness, alike at variance with the genius of your Government, and the efficiency and chivalrous character of your military force.

Sir, no man can feel more deeply interested in the army, or entertain a higher regard for it, than myself. My earliest recollections connect themselves fondly and gratefully with the names of the brave men who, relinquishing the quiet and security of civil life, were staking their all upon the defence of their country's rights and honor. One of the most distinguished among their noble band now occupies and honors a seat upon this floor. It is not fit that I should indulge in expressions of personal respect and admiration, which I am sure would find a hearty response in the bosom of every member upon this committee. I allude to him merely to express the hope, that on some occasion we may have, upon this subject, the benefit of his

experience and observation. And if his opinions shall differ from my own, I promise carefully to review every step by which I have been led to my present conclusions. You cannot mistake me, sir. I refer to the hero of Erie. I have declared myself a friend of the army. Satisfy me, then, what measures are best calculated to render it effective, and what all desire it to be, and I go for the proposition with my whole heart.

But I cannot believe that the Military Academy, as at present organized, is calculated to accomplish this desirable end. It may, and undoubtedly does, send forth into the country much military knowledge; but the advantage which your army, or that which will constitute your army in time of need, derives from it, is by no means commensurate with the expense you incur. Here, Mr. Chairman, permit me to say that I deny utterly the expediency and the right to educate at the public expense, any number of young men who, on the completion of their education, are not to form a portion of your military force, but to return to the walks of private life. Such was never the operation of the Military Academy until after the law of 1812; and the doctrine, so far as I have been able to ascertain, was first formally announced by a distinguished individual, at this time sufficiently jealous of the exercise of executive patronage, and greatly alarmed by what he conceives to be the tendencies of this Government to centralism and consolidation. It may

be found in the report of the Secretary of War, communicated to Congress in 1819.

If it shall, upon due consideration, receive the sanction of Congress and the country, I can see no limit to the exercise of power and Government patronage. Follow out the principle, and where will it lead you? You confer upon the National Government the absolute guardianship of literature and science, military and civil; you need not stop at military sciences—any one in the wide range of sciences, becomes at once a legitimate and constitutional object of your patronage; you are confined by no limit but your discretion; you have no check but your own good pleasure. If you may afford instruction at the public expense, in the languages, in philosophy, in chemistry and in the exact sciences, to young gentlemen who are under no obligation to enter the service of their country, but are in fact, destined for civil life, why may you not by parity of reasoning provide the means of a legal, or theological, or medical education, on the ground that the recipients of your bounty will carry forth a fund of useful knowledge that may at some time, under some circumstances, produce a beneficial influence, and promote “the general welfare?” Sir, I fear that even some of us may live to see the day, when the “general welfare” of your constitution will leave us little ground to boast of a government of limited powers. But I did not propose at this time to discuss the abstract question of constitutional rights.

I will regard the expediency alone; and whether the former exists or not, its exercise in an institution like this, is subversive of the only principle upon which a school, conducted at the public expense, can be made profitable to the public service—that of making an admission into your school and an education there secondary to an appointment in the army. Sir, this distinctive feature characterized all your legislation and all executive recommendations down to 1810.

I may as well notice here, as at any time, an answer which has always been ready when objections have been raised to this institution—an answer which, if it has not proved quite satisfactory to minds that yield their assent more readily to strong reasons than to the authority of great names, has yet unquestionably exercised a powerful influence upon the public mind. It has not gone forth upon the authority of an individual merely, but has been published to the world with the approbation of a committee of a former Congress. It is this—that the institution has received at different times the sanction of such names as Washington, Adams and Jefferson; and this has been claimed with such boldness, and in a form so imposing, as almost to forbid any question of its accuracy. If this were correct in point of fact, it would be entitled to the most profound respect and consideration, and no change should be urged against the weight of such authority, without mature deliberation, and thor-

ough conviction of expediency. Unfortunately for the advocates of the institution, and fortunately for the interests of the country, this claim cannot be sustained by reference to executive documents, from the first report of General Knox, in 1790, to the close of Mr. Jefferson's administration.

The error has, undoubtedly, innocently occurred, by confounding the Military Academy at West Point as it was, with the Military Academy at West Point as it is. The report of Secretary Knox just referred to is characterized by this distinctive feature—that the corps proposed to be organized were “to serve as an actual defence to the community,” and to constitute a part of the active force of the country, “to serve in the field, or on the frontire, or in the fortifications of the sea coast, as the commander-in-chief may direct.” At a later period, the report of the Secretary of War, Mr. McHenry, communicated to Congress in 1800, although it proposed a plan for military schools, differing in many essential particulars from those which had preceded it, still retained the distinctive feature just named as characterizing the report of Gen. Knox.

With regard to educating young men gratuitously, which, whatever may have been the design, I am prepared to show is the practical operation of the Academy, as at present organized, I cannot perhaps, exhibit more clearly the sentiments of the Executive, urgent as was the occasion, and strong as must have been the desire to give strength and efi-

ciency to the military force, than by reading one or two paragraphs from a supplementary report of Secretary McHenry, addressed to the chairman of the Committee of Defence, on the 31st of January, 1800. The Secretary says:

“Agreeably to the plan of the military Academy, the directors thereof are to be officers taken from the army; consequently no expense will be incurred by such appointment. The plan also contemplates, that officers of the army, cadets and non-commissioned officers shall receive instructions in the Academy. As the ration and fuel which they are entitled to in the army will suffice for them in the Academy, no additional expense will be required for their maintenance while there.

“The expenses of servants, and certain incidental expenses relative to the police and administration, may be defrayed by those who shall be admitted, out of their pay and emoluments.”

You will observe, Mr. Chairman, from the phraseology of the report, that all were to constitute a part of your actual military force; and that whatever additional charges should be incurred were to be defrayed by those who might receive the advantages of instruction. These provisions, just, as they are important. Let me call your attention for a moment to a report of Colonel Williams, which was made the subject of a special message communicated to Congress by Mr. Jefferson, on the 18th of March, 1808.

The extract I propose to read, as sustaining fully the views of Mr. McHenry, upon this point, is in the following words:

“It might be well to make the plan upon such a scale as not only to take in the minor officers of the Navy; but also any youth from any of the States who might wish for such an education, whether designed for the Army or Navy, or neither, and let them be assessed to the value of their education, which might form a fund for extra or contingent expenses.”

Sir, these are the true doctrines upon this subject; doctrines worthy of the administration under which they were promulgated, and in accordance with the views of statesmen in the earlier and purer days of the Republic.

Give to the officers of your army the highest advantages for perfection in all the branches of military science, and let those advantages be open to all in rotation, and under such terms and regulations shall be at once impartial toward the officers, and advantageous to the service; but let all young gentlemen who have a taste for military life, and desire to adopt arms as a profession, prepare themselves for subordinate situations at their own expense, or at the expense of their parents or guardians, in the same manner that the youth of our country are qualified for the professions of civil life. Sir, while upon this subject of gratuitous education, I will read an extract from “Dupin’s Military Force of Great



Britain," to show what favor it finds in another country, from the practice and experience of which we may derive some advantages, however far from approving of its institutions generally. The extract is from the 2nd vol., 71st page, and relates to the terms on which young gentlemen are admitted to the junior departments of the Royal Military College at Sandhurst.

"First; the sons of officers of all ranks, whether of the land or sea forces, who have died in the service, leaving their families in pecuniary distress; this class are instructed, boarded and habited, gratuitously by the State; being required only to provide their equipments on admission, and to maintain themselves in linen.

"Secondly: The sons of all officers of the army above the rank of subalterns, actually in the service and who pay a sum proportioned to their ranks, according to a scale per annum regulated by the supreme board. The sons of living naval officers of rank not below that of master and commander, are also admitted on payment of annual stipends, similar to those of corresponding ranks in the army. The orphan sons of officers, who have not left their families in pecuniary difficulties, are admitted into this class, on paying the stipends required of officers of the rank held by their parents at the time of their decease.

"Thirdly: The sons of noblemen, and private gentlemen who pay a yearly sum equivalent to the

expenses of their education, board and clothing, according to a rate regulated from time to time by the commissioners."

Sir, let it be remembered that these are the regulations of a government which, with all its wealth and power, is, from its structure and practice, groaning under the accumulated weight of pensions, sinecures, and gratuities; and yet you observe that only one class, "the sons of officers of all ranks, whether of the land or sea forces, who have died in the service, leaving their families in pecuniary distress," are educated gratuitously. I do not approve even of this; but I hold it up in contrast with your own principles and practice.

If the patience of the committee would warrant me, Mr. Chairman, I could show, by reference to executive communications, and the current legislation of Congress, in 1794, 1796, 1802, and 1808, that, prior to the last mentioned date, such an institution as we now have was neither recommended nor contemplated. Upon this point I will not detain you longer; but when hereafter confronted by the authority of great names, I trust we shall be told where the expressions of approbation are to be found. We may then judge of their applicability to the Military Academy as now organized.

I am far from desiring to see this country destitute of a Military Academy; but I would have it a school of practice, and instruction, for officers actually in the service of the United States: not an

institution for educating, gratuitously, young gentlemen, who, on the completion of their term, or after a few months' leave of absence, resign their commissions, and return to the pursuits of civil life.

If any one doubts that this is the practical operation of your present system, I refer him to the annual list of resignations, to be found in the Adjutant General's office.

Firmly as I am convinced of the necessity of a re-organization, I would take no step to create an unjust prejudice against the institution. All that I ask, and so far as I know, all that any of the opponents of the institution ask, is, that after a full and impartial investigation, it should stand or fall upon its merits. I know that there are graduates of the institution who are ornaments to the army, and an honor to their country, but they, and not the seminary, are entitled to the credit. Here I would remark, once for all, that I do not reflect upon the officers or pupils of the Academy; it is to the principles of the institution itself, as at present organized, that I object. It is often said, that the graduates leave the institution with sentiments that but ill accord with the feelings and opinions of the great mass of the people of that Government from which they derive the means of education, and that many who take commissions possess few qualifications for the command of men, either in war or in peace. Most of the members of this House have had more or less intercourse with these young gentlemen; and I

leave it for each individual to form his own opinion of the correctness of the charges. Thus much I will say for myself, that I believe that these, and greater evils, are the natural, if not the inevitable result of the principles in which this institution is founded; and any system of education established upon similar principles, on Government patronage alone, will produce like results, now and for ever. Sir, what are some of these results? By the Report of the Secretary of War, dated January, 1831, we are informed that, "by an estimate of the last five years, (preceding the date,) it appears that the supply of the army from the corps of graduated cadets has averaged about twenty-two annually, while those who graduate are about forty, making, in each year, an excess of eighteen. The number received annually into the Academy, averages one hundred, of which, only the number stated, to wit, forty, pass through the prescribed course of education at schools, and become supernumerary lieutenants in the army." By the report of the Secretary of War, December, 1830, we are informed that "the number of promotions to the army from this corps for the last five years, has averaged about twenty-two, annually, while the number of graduates has been at an average of forty. This excess, which is annually increasing, has placed eighty-seven in waiting until vacancies shall take place, and show that, in the next year, probably, and in the succeeding one, certainly, there will be an excess

beyond what the existing law authorizes to be commissioned. There will then be one hundred and six supernumerary brevet second lieutenants, appurtenant to the army, at an average annual expense of \$80,000." Sir, that results here disclosed were not anticipated by Mr. Madison, is apparent from a recurrence to his messages of 1810, 1811.

In passing the law of 1812, both Congress and the President acted for the occasion; and they expected those who should succeed them, to act in a similar manner. Their feelings of patriotism and resentment were aroused, by beholding the privileges of freemen wantonly invaded, our glorious stars and stripes disregarded, and national and individual rights trampled in the dust.

The war was pending. The necessity of increasing the military force of the country was obvious and pressing, and the urgent occasion for increased facilities for military instruction, equally apparent.

Sir, it was under circumstances like these, when we had not only enemies abroad, but, I blush to say, enemies at home, that the institution, as at present organized, had its origin. It will hardly be pretended that it was the original design of the law to augment the number of persons instructed, beyond the wants of public service.

Well, the report of the Secretary shows that for five years prior to 1831, the Academy had furnished eighteen supernumeraries annually. A practical operation of this character has no sanction in the

recommendation of Mr. Madison. The report demonstrates, further, the fruitfulness and utility of this institution, by showing the fact that but two-fifths of all those that enter the Academy, graduate, and that but a fraction more than one-fifth enter the public service.

This is not the fault of the administration of the Academy; it is not the fault of young gentlemen who are sent there. On your present peace establishment, there can be but little to stimulate them, particularly in the acquisition of military science. There can hardly be but one object in the mind of the student, and that would be to obtain an education for the purposes of civil life. The difficulty is, that the institution has outlived both the occasion that called it into existence, and its original design.

I have before remarked, that the Academy was manifestly enlarged to correspond with the army and militia actually to be called into service. Look, then, for a moment, at facts, and observe with how much wisdom, justice, and sound policy, you retain the provisions of the law of 1812. The total authorized force of 1813, after the declaration of war, was 58,254; and in October, 1814, the military establishment amounted to 62,428. By the act of March, 1815, the peace establishment was limited to 10,000, and now hardly exceeds that number. Thus you make a reduction of more than 50,000 in your actual military force, to accommodate the expenses of the Government to its wants. And why

do you refuse to do the same with your grand system of public education? Why does that remain unchanged? Why not reduce it at once, at least to the actual wants of the service, and dispense with your corps of supernumerary lieutenants? Sir, there is, there can be but one answer to the question, and that may be found in the war report of 1819, to which I have before had occasion to allude. The Secretary says, "The cadets who cannot be provided for in the army, will return to private life, but in the event of war, their knowledge will not be lost to the country."

Indeed, sir, these young gentlemen, if they could be induced to take the field, would, after a lapse of ten or fifteen years, come up from the bar, or, it may be, the pulpit, fresh in military science, and admirably qualified for command in the face of an enemy.

The magazine of facts, to prove, at the same glance, the extravagance and unfruitfulness of the institution, is not easily exhausted; but I am admonished, by the lateness of the hour, to omit many considerations which I regard as both interesting and important. I will only detain the committee to make a single statement, placing side by side some aggregate results. There has already been expended upon the institution more than three millions, three hundred thousand dollars. Between 1815 and 1821, thirteen hundred and eighteen students were admitted into the Academy; and of all

the cadets who were ever there, only two hundred and sixty-five remained in the service at the end of 1830. Here are the expenses you have incurred, and the products you have realized.

I leave them to be balanced by the people. But, for myself, believing as I do, that the Academy stands forth as an anomaly among the institutions of this country; that it is at variance with the spirit, if not the letter, of the Constitution under which we live; so long as this House shall deny investigation into its principles and practical operation, I, as an individual member, will refuse to appropriate the first dollar for its support.



## CHAPTER V.

Election to the U. S. Senate—Correspondence—Speech on the Defences of the Country—Speech on the Armed Occupation of Florida—Speech on Removals from Office.

IN 1837, Mr. Pierce was elected by a large majority of the New-Hampshire Legislature to take his seat in the United States Senate. He took his seat in that body the 4th of March, 1837, the day on which Mr. Van Buren was inaugurated as President. The session was an extra one, called for the purpose of legislating for the commercial relief of the then prostrate country. During the terrible depression of that and following years, there was a strong disposition on the part of Congress to stimulate trade by vicious methods, and Mr. Pierce opposed all such schemes. Ranged against him in debate often were such men as Choate, and Clay, and Webster, but his speeches were of the kind which tell upon an audience of thinking men. He boldly opposed the plan of using Government funds as a basis for discount, and advocated, with all his powers, the separation of all Government monies from the concerns of the banks.

During his course in the Senate, the Independent Treasury Bill came up for discussion, and at that time many of its present warmest supporters were

doubtful of the expediency of adopting it. But Mr. Pierce, from the very first, spoke and voted for it, and experience proves the sagacity of his mind in thus discovering its excellencies before it had been put into operation.

While in the Senate, Mr. Pierce served on some of the most important of the Committees—on the Judiciary, on Military Affairs, on Pensions, etc., etc. He was emphatically a working member; he was not afraid to be called such. Indeed, his ambition was not to be known as a fine orator, but as a worker, and one who had served his constituents and the country at large, faithfully and with ability. And he won not only the reputation of being an orator, but the reputation of being a very honest and useful man.

In June 1838, one year after his election to the U. S. Senate, Mr. Pierce changed his residence from his native town of Hillsborough to Concord, his present place of residence. His large circle of friends in Hillsborough could not allow the occasion to pass without a testimonial of their affection for Mr. Pierce, and consequently invited him to a public dinner. The following is the correspondence which took place in reference to it:

*Hillsborough, August 25, 1838.*

HON. FRANKLIN PIERCE:

Sir—The Democratic Republicans of Hillsborough embrace the opportunity your short stay furnishes, to tender to you an invitation to partake

with them of a public dinner, at such time as may be most convenient to you, before you take your leave of Hillsborough.

In discharging the duty imposed upon them, the committee beg leave to assure you, that the tender they make is no unmeaning compliment.

Your childhood was with them, and so has been your riper years. Educated in their midst, one of themselves, the ties that have so long bound you to them cannot be easily sundered; and it would be doing violence to their feelings, to suffer the present occasion to pass without an opportunity of calling up those recollections that will ever be to them a source of the highest satisfaction.

You have stood by them at all times. You have been to them even as a son and a brother. Their interests have been your interests, their feelings your feelings. And it is with the sincerest pleasure that they offer you this testimonial, however small, of the estimate they place upon your character, public and private.

The committee cannot but express their regret at the necessity which is about to separate you from the republican citizens of Hillsborough. Long and intimately have you been known to them; and wherever you may go, they beg leave to assure you that you will carry with you their kindest wishes for your welfare.

With esteem and respect we have the honor to be yours, &c.                   TIMOTHY WYMAN, &c.

*Hillsborough, Sept. 15, 1838.*

GENTLEMEN: Your letter in behalf of the Democratic Republicans of Hillsborough, inviting me to partake of a public dinner at such time as might suit my convenience, was duly received.

Sincerely desirous of exchanging salutations with all my friends, before those relations which have so long subsisted between us should be severed, I have delayed giving an answer, with the hope that my other engagements would allow me this pleasure. In this expectation, I am sorry to say, I find myself disappointed. I have received too many substantial evidences of the kind regard and true friendship of the citizens of Hillsborough to need any new assurance of their partiality, and yet, I would not disguise the fact that your testimony in parting, as to the manner in which my duties in public and private life have been discharged, is flattering to my feelings, especially so, as coming from those who have known me longest and most intimately.

I shall leave Hillsborough with no ordinary regret. There are a thousand reasons why it can not be otherwise—I have hitherto known no other home.

Here may have passed away many of the happiest days and months of my life. With these streams and mountains are associated most of the delightful recollections of buoyant and happy boyhood—and in my early intercourse with the generous, independent and intelligent yeomanry of Hills-

borough, I became attached to, and learned how highly to appreciate that class of the community which constitutes the true nobility of this country. I need hardly say that I shall never cease to remember my birth-place with pride as well as affection, and with still more pride shall I recollect the steady, unqualified and generous confidence which has been reposed in me by its inhabitants. With unfeigned regret, gentlemen, that I am unable to accept the invitation you have communicated in such kind and flattering terms, please to accept for yourselves and to communicate to my fellow-citizens, whose organs you are on this occasion, the assurance of my warm thanks and sincerest interest in whatever relates to their prosperity and happiness, individually and collectively.

I am, gentlemen, with the highest respect, your friend and obedient servant,

FRANKLIN PIERCE.

TIMOTHY WYMAN, Esq.

The course of Mr. Pierce in the Senate was such that he won encomiums from all quarters. Said the *Boston Post* of June 19th 1849 :

“New Hampshire has just cause of pride in her youthful Senator. To a grace and modesty of manner, which always attract when he addresses the Senate, he has added severe application to business, and a thorough knowledge of his subject, in all its relations, and henceit is, though one of the

youngest, he is one of the most influential in the distinguished body of which he is a member. Without seeking popularity as a debater, Mr. Pierce, in the quiet and untiring pursuit of public duty, and the conscientious discharge of private responsibility, has acquired a permanent reputation, which places him among the most useful and efficient public men in the country."

Said the editor of the New England *Puritan*, a religious journal :

"Of Franklin Pierce, I cannot do otherwise than speak well; for it happened to me, during a short term of official service in Bowdoin College, during the Presidency of Dr. Allen, to know him as a scholar there, and while resident in this region, to know him as a Senator. A very frank, gentlemanly, unobtrusive man is he, strongly devoted to his political principles, kind and constant in his friendship, venerating the institutions of religion, and while living here attending upon the most evangelical preaching in the city."

Mr. Pierce was known in the Senate as an advocate of an economical administration of the Government, a strict construction of the constitution—in fact he was a thorough republican of the old Jefferson school.

The following speech was delivered by him in the U. S. Senate, July 14th, 1840, upon the subject of the National Defences :

## SPEECH

## ON THE DEFENCES OF THE COUNTRY.

Mr. Pierce, in behalf of the committee on Military Affairs, asked to be discharged from the further consideration of "the memorial of Gen. Edmund P. Gaines, proposing a system of national defence, and praying its adoption by Congress." And also from "the memorial of the Military Convention, holden at Norwich, Vermont, praying for the revision and alteration of the system of military defences of the United States."

Mr. P. said the inquiry had been repeatedly made, "What are the views of the committee upon this subject?" and before the question was taken upon the motion just submitted, he would briefly respond to that interrogatory, presuming, however, to speak for no member but himself.

The present session, it was well known, had for several reasons, not been propitious for the discussion and adoption of any improvements in the plan of our national defences. This had been sufficiently manifested by the character of the debate that took place some days since upon one branch of the general question—the re-organization and discipline of the militia. But, although the committee had not deemed it expedient at this time to present a report, it had been deferred from no want of a deep conviction of its importance. He would rejoice if the

public mind could be effectually directed to the subject; and he hoped that he might at least be able to call the attention of Senators to the memorials, which (although parts of each would doubtless be regarded extravagant) contained, nevertheless, practical views and suggestions well worthy of consideration, in connection with the very important measures of which they respectively treated—measures, he would take occasion to remark, that had been discussed with great ability in the report of a board of officers, communicated to the Senate by the President, in April last. He hoped the subject would be taken up at an early day in the next session, and be so deliberately and definitely acted upon, as to give our mode and means of defense, efficiency, uniformity, and the advantage of a settled system. We could now do it with the light of enlarged experience, and the benefit of many experiments made at the expense of others. In this age of progress, and in this land of invention, and almost boundless resources, we were not the people to stand still. We had not stood still. But while individual and private enterprise had kept pace, in all the various pursuits of life, with the best improvements of the day, it must be admitted, that considering our position upon the globe—the immense extent of our maritime frontier—the mode in which we must be assailed, if ever successfully assailed, by a foreign foe—the easy access to our most commanding harbors—the vast importance and exposed condition



of our great commercial cities, especially since the successful application of steam power to ocean navigation—that we had been singularly regardless of the advances and improvements which, in other countries, especially in France and England, had, within the last few years, materially changed, and were now rapidly changing the character of defensive and offensive operations, both on the land and the sea. We should not shut our eyes to these things. We should not remain unmindful of changes in the art and practice of war, exceeded in importance only by those which followed the discovery of gunpowder in the fourteenth century.

There were some things about the military defences of this country, which might be considered as settled, in relation to which there could be little if any difference of opinion. For instance—he regarded it as certain, that no large standing army was ever to be maintained here in time of peace, while our free institutions remain unshaken. In this we differed entirely from those nations with whom, from our position and political relations, we were in the greatest danger of being drawn into collision. It was equally certain, in his judgment, that the stationary fortifications, in the best condition, with abundance of *materiel*, and well manned, would prove wholly inadequate to the defense even of our large commercial cities. It must be regarded as not less clear, that no foreign power could ever embark in the Quixotic enterprise of conquering

this country, unless its Constitution should be first trampled in the dust by its own children. Such a project could never be soberly contemplated, he might safely assert, while we were a united people. During the Revolution—in the weakness of our infancy—the invaders could scarcely command more territory than they were able immediately to occupy. The possession of any particular place, however important in itself, would be of little consequence, as bearing upon the ultimate result of a conflict. We had no great metropolis like Paris, which, in possession of one power or another, could control the country. And from the nature of our institutions, and the extent of our territory, we never could have. The leading purposes of an enemy, therefore, would be, by the celerity and boldness of his movements on our coast, to keep up a constant alarm; to harass and cut off our commerce; to destroy our naval depots and public works; and if possible, to lay our great commercial cities under contribution or in ashes. It was against prompt movements and vigorous exertions for objects like these, for which we should prepare and provide. Our fortresses were not to be invested and made the objects of long, regular siege; they were not, for reasons to which he had before adverted, of sufficient consequence in this country, whatever might be the case in others, possessing limited territory and different situation. In the nature of things this would not take place, and it need not be contem-

plated in their construction. France and England had, and always must maintain, large and well appointed standing armies: they were the indispensable appendages of regal power and dominion, without which no monarch in Europe could retain his crown a single year. They had not only them, but they had the means of planting them upon our shores; nay, of quartering them in the heart of our cities, before we could set in order our insufficient, and now deserted fortresses, or call into the field any effective force, organized as our militia at present was; indeed, in some of the States there was no organization whatever; it was wholly disbanded, and men whose thoughts were never elevated above the contemplation of loss and gain, were out in the newspapers with their calculations to show *exactly* how many dollars and cents would be saved annually by the "disbandment" of this safe and sure auxiliary in our defence.

Sir, said Mr. P., can anything be more deplorably characteristic of the prevailing spirit and passion of the age?

If he was right on these points, we were not in a condition to warrant the folding of our arms in security. We were at peace, but we might be involved in war, we knew not how soon. This we did know, that the only sure way to keep it far off was to provide for its approach.

He was not disposed to give color to any unnecessary alarm, but he felt bound to say that the indi-

cations of a speedy and pacific termination of the difficulties growing out of the North-eastern boundary question, which seemed to have strongly impressed other minds, had wholly failed to impart any fresh confidence to his. He feared that they would prove specious rather than substantial. He could not help feeling strongly upon this subject of national defences, because he had witnessed the lethargy in which the spirit of the nation, easily roused to every thing else, had seemed to slumber here. Within the last five years war clouds had lowered most portentiously upon our horizon, and on one or two occasions seemed ready to burst, and scatter far and wide the calamities of that dreadful scourge. What was the effect upon the Government and the country, when, upon a question of *money*, we were upon the eve of a war with one of the most powerful and gallant nations upon the face of the earth. Did we manifest a willingness to apply our money in preparation for the contest? No. He would be ashamed to state, there in his place, the total want of any thing like adequate means of defense. In Congress there was, as usual, no want of patriotic demonstration in the way of speeches, but they were followed by nothing like decisive action. Through the country there appeared to be a profound repose, and blind trusting to luck in the face of admitted imminent danger. In the beneficent ordination of Providence, and through the energy and wisdom of that very extra-

ordinary man, who always proved equal to great occasions, the impending danger was happily averted. How had it been more recently, when, for a long time, there had been a *quasi* war along our whole border, from St. Johns to the lakes? In what condition did the evening of the 2nd of March, 1839, find the country? In what state did it find us in our places here? Like the nation generally—calm and undisturbed. Senators then present would not soon forget the scene that followed the arrival of the Eastern mail that night. The stirring report soon passed around the chamber, “there has been a battle upon the Eastern frontier; the blood of our citizens has been shed upon our own soil.”

A change came over the spirit of our dream. Every countenance was lighted up with high excitement. We were, at last, when the strange spell of fancied security could no longer bind us, roused as from the delusion of a charm—we woke as from the trace of years—as from a dream we opened our eyes upon a full view of the nearness and magnitude of our danger. He would never forget the bearing on that occasion, nor the burning words of an honorable Senator on the other side of the chamber, not now in his place. That Senator seemed to feel that by our culpable neglect to provide the means of defence, we had almost invited aggression, and that we ought ourselves to take our places in the fiercest of the eddying storm, which it was then supposed had already burst upon our bor-

der brethren. Every word, as he then understood, he believed was heartily responded to. What was done? All that could be, under the circumstances in which we were placed. The Constitutional term of one branch of Congress had but a few more hours to run. There was but a little time for deliberation, but we showed that there was one contingency in which we could merge every thing like party, and present an unbroken front. We passed a bill, placing at the disposal of the President, the whole militia of the United States, to be compelled to serve for a term not exceeding six months—to raise 50,000 volunteers—“to equip, man, and employ in active service, all the naval force of the United States—and to build, purchase, or charter, arm, equip and man, such vessels and steamboats on the northern lakes and rivers, whose waters communicate with the United States and Great Britain, as he shall deem necessary.” This fearful responsibility was cast upon one individual. This vast command, with ten millions of dollars, to make it effectual, was committed to the sole discretion and patriotism of the President. No man, who loved his country, could but deprecate the necessity of placing such tremendous and fearful powers in the hands of one man, however wise and disinterested.

He warned the people against such another crisis. Sooner or later, it would come, and perhaps unattended by that good fortune which had borne us thus far on in peace. At all events, it was the most

fatal temerity to depend upon it, and neglect the necessary preparation. What should be done? Where lies the most obvious, the most unquestionable, and cheapest means of defence to the country? These are questions to which the memorialists undertook respectively to respond. He did not, of course, propose at this time particularly to examine the report of the board of officers, to which he had before adverted, but he would take the liberty to remark, that the positions assumed were much more questionable than the ability with which they were discussed and defended. There was at least one point of agreement between the memorialists, and one in which he thought both were right. It was as to the entire insufficiency of land or stationary defences to protect our harbors, and secure the approaches to them. That this had been fully illustrated in more than one instance, even when wind and sails had been relied upon, he might safely assert, without intending to discuss the relative power of floating and stationary batteries. How much less the security now, with the general and free application of the propelling power of steam, it required no particular science, or military knowledge to judge. He referred particularly to the passing of the castle of Crohenburgh, and the successful attack of Lord Nelson upon Copenhagen in 1801, to the attack upon Gibraltar by the French and Spanish in 1782, and the assault upon Vera Cruz, and the reduction of the strong castle of San

Juan de Ulloa, a year ago last November, all of which had been cited on both sides in the controversy between floating and stationary defences. Gentlemen would be more safe in reading the official and authentic accounts, and drawing their own conclusions, than in trusting to the statements of the supporters of the one system or the other. Mr. P. said he would by no means dispense with the stationary fortifications, upon which he had so much relied; in many positions they were indispensable, but, in his judgment, the system, with us, had already been carried too far in respect to the number of works, and in some instances, as to the vast expense incurred upon individual works. Our country was too broad—too immense in its sweep, to rely upon such works. No man would be so visionary as to indulge the chimerical scheme of making a sea coast of more than 3,000 miles impervious to attack. There were not only a great number of harbors and road-steads along the coast that could not be thus defended, but almost innumerable indentations, affording safe anchorage, from which a superior naval force might land any number of troops, notwithstanding the entire completion of the most extensive plan of stationary fortifications ever yet dreamed of. They could not be compelled to land under the guns of a battery, or to place themselves within its range. Unless they should be met successfully upon their chosen element, they would take their own time, and pretty much their own place, to disembark.



The contest then would be in the open field, between our armies and theirs—generally between the steadiness and thorough discipline of their veteran, but mercenary regiments upon a foreign soil; and the valor and desperate energy of ours, fighting, it might be, within sight of their own homes.

That we were now sadly deficient in the means of defence, was a fact admitted by all. In that condition we ought not to remain. We should provide our harbors, that hold out the greatest temptation to an invading foe, in addition to the stationary fortifications, with the best floating defences known to the world. We should make, as soon as it can be done consistently with other demands upon the revenue, our navy equal at least to one-sixth of that of Great Britain. We should never go for conquest.

We had, in territory, in climate, and resources, all that any people should desire, and the armament alluded to was believed to be as large a proportion as England would ever be able to spare from other points, and detach to our seas. Consistently with the demands upon the revenue! He would not say that. He held that, with the wealth and great resources of the country, we should make our revenue equal to this demand. Want of funds should hereafter be regarded as no good excuse for neglecting defences, universally admitted to be indispensable for the honor and safety of our country. If the current revenue was not sufficient for these and other objects of like magnitude and necessity, let arti-

cles of luxury and ornament, such as wines and silks, which are annually imported and consumed in the country, be taxed to raise the means. The navy of Great Britain consists at present of five hundred and fifteen ships and twenty-three steamers, and mounted more than twenty-two thousand guns; France, two hundred and thirty ships; America, fifty-two in all, and thirty-eight effective, mounting only three thousand guns. Now the least with which we should be satisfied in our naval armament, was an increase at the lowest of fifty per cent. In the mean time, we should provide for an organization of the militia, to be efficient and uniform throughout the United States.

Thus prepared, with our large cities in a suitable state of defence, and with six hundred thousand disciplined citizen soldiers, so enrolled and organized as to admit of being promptly mustered and called into the field, we should be ready for that which, under such circumstances, would hardly be pressed upon us.

He would not be understood as admitting, for a moment, that he would not, even unprepared as we now were, expel in a little time any invader that should venture to set foot upon our soil. He entertained not a doubt of it, because the same spirit that in 1793 prompted the celebrated decree of the French convention, which proclaimed that—

“ From the present moment, till that when all the enemies shall have been driven from the territory of

the Republic, all Frenchmen shall be in permanent readiness for the service of the armies; the young men shall march to the contest; the married men forge arms and transport the provisions; the women shall make tents and clothes, and wait in the hospitals; the children shall make lint of old linen; the old men shall cause themselves to be carried to the public squares to excite the courage of the warriors, and preach hatred against the enemies of the Republic; the battalions, which shall be organized in every district shall be ranged under a banner with this inscription: 'The French nation risen against tyrants.'"

The spirit which rendered that people invincible, and crowned their arms with such a succession of splendid victories over the veteran troops of the allied powers, as astounded the civilized world would animate our Countrymen from one extremity of the Union to the other; but let every man consider what dreadful sacrifices must precede the final result, if war come upon us in our present defenceless state. While our citizens were taking their places under the fold of the banner which the Republic would throw over them—a slow process at least for want of organization—our gallant little army, to which the country looked with pride and confidence, would be sacrificed; the blood of our most valuable citizens would perhaps stain the pavements of their own streets; and more property be destroyed in one commercial city than would now defray the entire

expenses of perfect protection and security. This, Mr. P. said, was what might happen ; and was that against which moderate patriotism and ordinary prudence should provide. He urged the hope that when this storm of politics should have passed away, the Senate would take the subject up in the spirit and with the enlarged views of statesmen, acting for the common interest of their common country.

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The following speech was delivered by Mr. Pierce in the Senate, Jan. 9th, 1840.

### SPEECH

#### ON THE ARMED OCCUPATION OF FLORIDA.

Mr. Pierce said : Having determined to support this bill, not without some hesitation, it was my intention, after the full and minute exposition made by the Chairman of the Committee on Military Affairs, (Mr. Benton,) to give a silent vote ; and I should have done so but for the extraordinary course of argument pursued on the other side, and the sweeping denunciations of the Executive, in which gentlemen have chosen to indulge—denunciations which I cannot but regard as wholly unwarranted and unjust. If Senators will withdraw their thoughts from these general charges of a want of zeal, forecast, and energy on the part of the Executive—lay aside all prejudices which such charges may be cal-

culated to engender—and consider, for a moment, the nature of the territory in which our troops have operated, and must continue to operate—the character of the foe—our present means, and the condition of that country—they will be more likely to do justice to the distinguished individual now at the head of the War Department, whose conduct in relation to the operations on that ill-fated peninsula, I have, during this debate, heard censured for the first time, and much more likely to adopt those legislative measures, which the exigencies of the case, with a full view of all the difficulties and embarrassments with which it is surrounded, may require. There is much truth in the remark of Gen. St. Clair, in the introduction to the history of his own disastrous Indian campaign. He says: “In military affairs, blame is almost always attached to misfortune; for the greatest part of those who judge, (and all will judge,) have no rule to guide them but the event.” Now, sir, in this country, there has never been a case where the event of military operations was so much calculated to lead the mind to erroneous, unjust, and uncharitable conclusions, as those which we are now considering. That the Florida war has, in all its aspects, been most disastrous and melancholy, many of us feel—all are ready to admit. The blood of our patriotic citizens has been poured out there like water, the lives of many of our most able officers and faithful soldiers have been sacrificed, and the resources of the nation

have been drained in a hitherto fruitless attempt to remove cruel, artful, and treacherous bands of savages, whom no treaty obligations can bind, and whose tender mercies are manifested in the deliberate and indiscriminate murder of helpless infants and defenceless mothers. Now that portions of our army, varying from four to ten thousand men, should have been, during the last five years, within our own territory, in a conflict with remnants of savage tribes, not embracing at any time, it is believed, more than twelve or fifteen hundred warriors; and that, with the exception of the roads and improvements which have been made, the geographical knowledge that has been acquired, and the experience gained, which, I trust, we shall not be disposed to disregard, we are in a condition barely better than that which called our troops there in the first instance, is certainly very extraordinary upon the face of it; and yet, if gentlemen, here and elsewhere, will carefully examine this map, make themselves acquainted with the topography of the country, and notice the fact that, below a line drawn from Tampa Bay to a point near New Smyrna, nothing was known to any white man of this immense territory; that it was wholly unexplored except by the savage, who was familiar with all its recesses and fastnesses; that in almost every direction it was impassable for troops, and especially for baggage trains; that for long distances together a column could not advance, without constructing cor-

duroy roads; that, in consequence of the deadly climate, the active campaigns could only be continued from October to April; that the foe would show himself but at places where he could not be reached, except at the greatest disadvantage; and that his force has always been divided and scattered over this extent of 45,000 square miles, their wonder at this want of success will cease. They will see that it has arisen from natural causes, from causes which no human sagacity could foresee, turn aside, or overcome.

The Senators on the other side, I have been pleased to notice, have done justice to the officers and soldiers who have served in those campaigns. Never was commendation better merited. Never were men sent into such a deadly climate upon such disheartening, thankless service. There is, and has been, nothing to stimulate individual ambition, and the dangers of the climate alone have equaled all the dangers of active campaigns under ordinary circumstances. Still, the spirit of our countrymen has not been wanting even there. A single instance of shrinking from duty or from danger; a single instance where the fight has not been sought when there was a prospect of bringing on an engagement; a single instance, in a word, where a soldier's duty has not been performed in a manner becoming a soldier of the Republic, has not come to my knowledge. No, sir. Surrounded by disadvantages, and environed by circumstances chilling to military ar-

dor, there has been on all occasions, an exhibition of bravery, of cool, determined courage, and patient endurance, not surpassed in the history of any warfare. Here, at least, we concur in ascribing no fault, in passing no censure.

It would have been gratifying to me, if Senators could have regarded the conduct of the Secretary of War in a similar spirit, because, to any generous mind, it is painful to be forced upon subjects of censure; and in this instance, I believe the foundations of the charges to be entirely imaginary. If the Secretary is to be held accountable for the disasters of that war, it is important to him and to the country, that these denunciations assume a form somewhat more specific; that the charges be made so definite as to admit of a definite answer. Now, sir, I call upon the Senators from South Carolina and Kentucky, (Messrs. Preston and Crittenden,) to inform us where they find the evidence of the Secretary's impotence and want of energy; where and on what particular occasions it has been manifested. From the date of his first official letter to General Jessup, in March, 1837, to the present time, do gentlemen find any thing to censure in the instructions given to the different commanding officers in Florida? If so, what instructions? Do they object to the suggestions of the Secretary in his various reports, except that in relation to the measures now under consideration? If so, let them be indicated. We shall then have something to direct our inqui-



ries, some thing upon which the judgment can rest. But now we can only meet these general charges by as broad and general denials, and support such denials by calling the attention of the Senate to what the Secretary has done. To this, without reading copious extracts from the documents on your files, I shall briefly advert.

Soon after he entered upon the duties of his office, he received from Gen. Jessup intelligence that the war in Florida was over, unless renewed by the imprudence of the inhabitants. This hope proved like similar hopes previously indulged—illusory. In the August following, propositions were again made by several of the chiefs for peace; but the Secretary, as the correspondence and public documents abundantly show, was not turned aside for a moment from his purpose of terminating the war in the campaign of 1837–38, if a strong force, abundant supplies, munitions promptly furnished, and all the facilities for prosecuting the campaign with vigor and effect, could accomplish the object. As early as September, arrangements had been made for six hundred volunteers from Tennessee, six hundred from Louisiana, six hundred from Missouri, with three hundred riflemen, spies, and an Indian force, to co-operate with the Florida militia, and the strong regular corps of artillery, infantry, and dragoons, already at the disposal of the commanding General.

Although the Secretary had always manifested

the strongest desire to spare the further effusion of blood, and to save that deluded, faithless and cruel people from extermination, he still declared, from the first, that his only hope was in an active and vigorous prosecution of the war. When the Cherokee delegation went to Florida, with the avowed purpose of persuading the Seminoles to the treaty terms, General Jessup was expressly advised that the mission was not to delay for a moment military operations. There was, on the part of the Secretary, no procrastination, no delay. Munitions of war were transmitted in season; supplies were forwarded in abundance, and the troops were in the field, ready for active operations, at the time proposed. General Jessup was at the head of about ten thousand men, and his force was certainly sufficiently diversified in character. There were regulars and militia, artillery, infantry, dragoons, marines, and riflemen, spies, and Indians; and with this strong, and as was at that time supposed, well-appointed force, the General commenced his campaign, to the event of which the country looked with hope and confidence. He attempted, as the Senator from South Carolina would express it, to drag the territory as with a net; and with what success? Our hopes withered, and our hearts sickened at the result. The commanding General, I believe, put forth all his energies, and his troops furnished to him no ground of complaint; but he shared the fate of his predecessors. The foe was neither caught,

conquered, nor killed. I institute no comparisons between the different Generals who have commanded in Florida. They have been alike triumphant whenever they have met the foe, and alike unsuccessful in expelling him from the country. These failures are, and will continue to be, attributed to different causes. I find the paramount obstacles in the climate, the nature of the country and the character of the enemy; and my belief is that unless you make Florida passable in every direction, and can march a column extending from the gulf on the one side, to the ocean on the other, this process of sweeping the Territory, as with a net, must prove fruitless. It is a very easy thing to discourse here of sweeping a country, embracing forty-five thousand square miles, situated in the tropical regions, with a climate genial to the savage, but deadly to the white man—portions of it, still unexplored, abounding in provisions suited to the habits of the Indian, and furnishing secure retreats, known and accessible to him alone—but to do it is an *impossibility*. Experience proves it to be so; it has been tried again and again, with regular troops, and militia, with infantry, with mounted men, with Indians, and with one uniform result. Twenty thousand men, for such a purpose, in the then state of the Territory, would have been no more effectual than five hundred. But gentlemen will perceive, by glancing at the face of the country, as delineated on this map, that although all has not been accomplished,

much has been done to make the provisions of the bill under consideration operative and effectual. You will observe that our troops, at different times, under the different Generals, in various columns, and in almost every direction, have marched the entire length of the peninsula, from Okeefenokee Swamp to the Big-water, at the head of the Everglades; but while they were passing down, the Indian was stealthily threading his way up; and while they were beating up the marshes, and searching for his trail in the region of Kissimmee river, murder and rapine announced his presence in the fertile and settled Alachua country. At the close of 1838, such had been the results. The Secretary of War had tested the inefficiency of mounted men—they could not operate in that country; the enormous expense of the militia had been abundantly demonstrated, and the total failure of the whole was painfully obvious. Under these circumstances, what were the duties of the head of the Department? This is a question which I shall answer only by stating, further, what was his action, and leave the country to judge of its propriety. When Gen. Jessup was permitted to return to his appropriate staff duties in this city, all the troops which could be spared from our exposed and unsettled frontiers in other quarters, were left in the Territory under the command of that vigilant, energetic, and able officer, General Taylor.

In prosecuting any campaign, it is well known

that much must, of necessity, be left to the judgment and military genius of the commander, to be exercised on the spot. In October, 1838, the Secretary gave Gen. Taylor general instructions as to the manner in which the succeeding campaign should be conducted. In those instructions the protection of Middle Florida against the incursions of the Seminoles was made the first object. To attain this, the establishment of an interior and exterior line of posts, to extend across the peninsula, from the Gulf to the Ocean, was recommended. These and various other suggestions contained in the letter of the Secretary, of October 8th, 1838, formed the basis of Gen. Taylor's instructions for that campaign. Unfortunately, the great and first object of the Secretary was not secured, and the exposure encountered, and the immense labor performed by the columns of the army, under the direction of Gen. Taylor and Col. Davenport, were crowned with no better success than that which had attended similar attempts before. In the mean time the wisdom of Congress interposed. Military operations were suspended, and negotiations substituted in their place; not upon any suggestions of the Secretary, be it remembered, but against his known and expressed opinions. The result of the negotiation is written in blood. The obligations of the treaty were not regarded for a moment; they were not intended to be observed on the part of the Indians at the time of its execution, as is proved by the burnings, robbe-

ries, and murders that immediately followed—some of them within four miles of one of the oldest, if not the oldest town within the limits of the United States. »

“ Such is the very brief and imperfect outline of what the Secretary of War has done, and for his full, complete and triumphant vindication against the general charges preferred I refer to the public documents and correspondence upon your files, embracing the details of the history to which I have thus cursorily adverted. The eye of the Secretary could not be expected to reach where it is not given to mortal vision to penetrate. He could not be expected to accomplish that which it is not given to man to achieve. I believe, with all the difficulties of the case, he has made the best of the means in his power. In considering the measure now proposed, it is material to remember not only the failure of the large armies, with the immense expense incurred, and the disastrous terminations of every attempt at negotiation, but also to bear in mind the very important fact, that there is no war in the Territory, and has been none for a long time, in the proper acceptation of the term. There has been no fighting for more than two years. The Indian force now remaining does not probably exceed from three to five hundred men, scattered in small bands over this extended area. That they should be expelled as soon as practicable, by all reasonable means, is universally conceded ; but the Secretary who would

sanction a recommendation to saddle this country with the expenses of an army of twenty, fifteen, or ten thousand men, as has been suggested, to *hunt* these three hundred savages, would not only find little support for his recommendation here, but less before the people, who are wisely and justly jealous of large standing armies. To expel the last vestige of these banditti, and to give peace and security to the whole of that peninsula, must be the work of time.

In the meanwhile, the settler in his home, and the shipwrecked mariner upon the coast, must find protection in our arms, and feel that there is security from Indian barbarity. To attain these objects, the instructions already given for the disposition and employment of the force now there, and the legislative measures we are considering, are well adapted, and, in my judgment, sanctioned by sound policy, drawn from past experience and present knowledge. Troops are now stationed along the Atlantic coast for the protection of commerce at New-Smyrna, St. Lucie's Sound, at Jupiter Inlet, and other convenient and commanding points. Protection, too, is afforded on the Gulf. By the exertions of General Taylor's force, now actively employed, as I notice by a letter of the 11th ult., the settled portions of the Territory will soon be relieved from every individual of this murderous race. What more, then, is proposed to be done? For the protection of the coast, as we have seen, provision

has already been made. That the settler may cultivate his fields by day, and repose in peace with his family at night, a cordon of posts, at short distances from each other, is to be established from the mouth of the Withlacoochee, by Fort King, to a point near New-Smyrna, connected by good roads, when necessary, and the intermediate spaces guarded by constant patrols. In addition to this, the Secretary, in his report, asks that the Executive may be empowered to raise one thousand men, who are to be armed, drilled, and equipped, Expressly for this service, and to serve during the war. Judging from the spirit of liberality recently manifested on the other side, I anticipate no objection to this recommendation. With the regular army stationed on the coast, and at the cordon of posts before indicated, such a body of men can hardly fail to prove in the highest degree serviceable in their active operations between Fort King and Cape Sable. They will, undoubtedly, in conjunction with such regular troops as can be spared from the posts, be able to keep some of the small bands of marauders in constant motion, and so to harass them, by pursuing their trails, and disturbing them in their places of retreat, as to make emigration, which they so much dread, preferable to such a life. The Indians will soon learn that, while they are effectually shut out from the coasts and the white settlements, this is a force which is to be permanent—to remain there as long as they remain, and to be constantly in motion.



To carry out, to a certain extent, Gen. Taylor's idea of "covering the whole country," this bill proposes ten thousand armed settlers instead of the armed force of mere soldiers, which has been tried and failed. As was intimated at the opening of my remarks, I cannot indulge the sanguine hopes with which some of the most ardent friends of the bill seem to be inspired; but there are, undeniably, many strong considerations by which it is recommended. The expulsion of the savage must, at best, be the work of time. The establishment of ten thousand hardy settlers, considering the geographical position of the peninsula, and its vast importance in any future war to all the southern country, as a point of attack and defence, would, in itself, be an object richly worth the 3,200,000 acres of land provided for the whole number, should so many settlers be obtained. The bill is well guarded, both for the Government and the settler. An important provision is, that the pay is to depend upon the success of the project. The bounty is not to be granted until the work is performed.

Now, sir, I take our own experience in this war as my guide. It is idle to go abroad for illustrations to enforce our peculiar views. The Senator from South Carolina, (Mr. Preston,) to show what may be done with a competent force in Florida, called the attention of the Senate to the expulsion of the formidable banditti from Italy by the energetic measures of Napoleon; but the gentleman should

recollect that the arms of the conqueror, which could easily and effectually beat up the narrow Pontine marshes, could have done nothing in the unexplored, impenetrable hammocks and deep morasses of our broad peninsula. I might ask the Senator what was the success of the French arms in their own district, La Vendee? Were they equally triumphant there? No, sir. Notwithstanding that peculiar country of yet more peculiar people presented a most terrible and sanguinary theatre of war, literally covered with fire and blood, they rose, as it were, from every conquered field, with new energy and fresh power of resistance; and although, in December, 1793, the Vendean were apparently left to perish in a body between Savenai, the Loire, and the marshes, by the bayonets of the French soldiers, the war was not terminated, but broke out afresh in the following spring. It became merely a war of devastation. The whole insurgent country was enclosed by the camps of the Republican armies, under the command of General Turreau, from which incendiary columns were sent forth to burn the woods, the hedges, the copses, and frequently the villages themselves; they seized the crops, and drove away the cattle. And yet we are informed that the Vendeans resisted this kind of warfare in a manner to render it everlasting. Now, sir, where was the secret spring of power on the part of these people, to resist this vastly superior numerical force? It was in the country, in its con-

figuration, and in their skill and courage to profit by it.

Look at the interesting country of Circassia, the fervid patriotism and wild gallantry of whose people are now attracting the attention and wonder of the world. It presents at this moment the astonishing spectacle of a free population which has preserved its independence and its individuality in an almost barbarous state, though surrounded by more civilized nations.

Russia has exerted its enormous military power to reduce these tribes, inhabiting the borders of the Black Sea, and the strong defiles and fastnesses of the Caucasian mountains, without ever gaining any considerable advantage. The war upon the Circassians, cannot have been sustained by the Russian Government at an expense of less than from five to ten thousand men annually since 1805; and yet they not only defy the Russian power, but, if recent reports are true, are signally victorious over the Russian armies.

Sir, to what do you attribute the success of the wild people upon this isthmus in maintaining their independence? Not, surely, to their means of warfare, nor yet to their numbers, but undoubtedly to the singular topography of the country, and the daring bravery and indomitable fortitude of its hardy and fierce population. I make these references in reply to the Senator from South Carolina, remarking at the same time, that I place no reliance whatever upon the historical authorities, introduced in the

course of this debate, either for or against this bill. The cases are not parallel. If you will determine what a given military force can accomplish, you must take into the calculation the circumstances by which they are to be surrounded, and the obstacles they are to encounter, the topography of the country in which they are to operate, its climate and productions, and the character of the enemy to be subdued. In all these particulars Florida stands by itself, and a *large* force having proved unavailing, I am disposed to try a smaller one, to be raised expressly for this service, and the armed settlers.

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## SPEECH

### ON REMOVALS FROM OFFICE.

We give below a few extracts from an able speech delivered in the U. S. Senate in 1842, by Gen. Pierce, on the question of Removals from Office, immediately after the inauguration of Gen. Harrison :

“Democratic administrations have turned out some—many if you please—political opponents, to give place to political friends, and on the single ground that they had the right to prefer their friends to their opponents. But on this point let me observe, that no man can say, from his individual knowledge, how it is over the whole country ; but here we can know, and here we do know, the fact that a majority of the subordinate officers in the

Executive departments have, during the last twelve years, been opposed to General Jackson's and Mr. Van Buren's administration.

"They were faithful and competent officers, I believe; at all events they were not reached by the spirit of proscription. Where, for the last twelve years, your political friends have enjoyed a majority of the places, how have our friends been treated now that the tables are turned? They have not escaped your sharper and broader axe, wielded against your open and universal professions.

"But whatever was done by the late administrations was not done under false pretences. We put forth no canting hypocritical circulars; we stood before the nation and the world on the naked unqualified ground that we preferred our friends to our opponents; that to confer place was our privilege which we *chose* to exercise. I ought not to say we *chose*, sir; for I will say—what those friends best acquainted with me know—that there was nothing in the administration of General Jackson which I so uniformly failed to justify, as the removal of one worthy officer to give place to another.

"But that removals have occurred is not the thing of which I complain. *I complain of your hypocrisy.* I charge that your press and your leading orators *made promises to the nation which they did not intend to redeem*, and which they now vainly attempt to cover up by cobwebs. The Senator from South Carolina, near me, (Mr. Calhoun) remarked

yesterday, that he had no language to express the *infamy* which, in his judgment, must attach to that man who had been before the people raising his voice in the general shout that proscription was to be proscribed, and was, in the face of such action, now here begging for place at the footstool of power. If my heart ever responded fully, unqualifiedly, to any sentiment, it was to that. Fortunately, before the keen scrutiny of our countrymen, disguises are vain, masks unavailing. The *practice* of the present administration has already fixed upon its *professions* one of two things—the stamp either of truth or falsehood; the people will judge which.

“One word more and I leave this subject—a painful one for me, from the beginning to the end. The Senator from North Carolina, in the course of his remarks the other day, asked, ‘Do gentlemen expect that their friends are to be retained in office against the will of the nation? Are they so unreasonable as to expect what the circumstances and the necessity of the case forbid? What our expectations were, is not the question now; but what were your pledges and promises before the people. On a previous occasion, the distinguished Senator from Kentucky (Mr. Clay) made a similar remark: ‘An ungracious task, but the nation demands it.’ Sir, this demand of the nation—this plea of ‘*state necessity*,’ let me tell gentlemen, is as old as the history of wrong and oppression. It has been the standing plea—the never-failing resort of despotism.

“The great Julius found it convenient, when he restored the *dignity* of the Roman Senate, but destroyed its *independence*. It gave countenance to, and justified, all the atrocities of the Inquisition in Spain. It gave utterance to the stifled groans from the black hole of Calcutta. It was written in tears upon ‘the Bridge of Sighs’ in Venice; and pointed to those dark recesses, upon whose gloomy portals there was never seen a returning footstep.

“It was the plea of the austere and ambitious Strafford, in the days of Charles the First. It filled the Bastile of France, and lent its sanction to the terrible atrocities perpetrated there. It was the plea that snatched the mild, eloquent, and patriotic Camille Desmoulins from his young and beautiful wife, and hurried him upon the hurdle to the guillotine, with thousands of others equally unoffending and innocent. It was upon this plea that the greatest of generals, if not of men—you cannot mistake me—I mean him, the presence of whose very ashes within the last few months was sufficient to stir the hearts of a continent—it was upon this plea that he abjured that noble wife, who threw around his humble days light and gladness, and by her own lofty energies and high intellect encouraged his aspirations. It was upon this plea that he committed that worst and most fatal act of his eventful life. Upon this, too, he drew around his person the imperial purple. It has in all times, and in every age, been

the foe of liberty, and the indispensable stay of usurpation.

“Where were the chains of despotism ever thrown around the freedom of speech and of the press, but on this plea of ‘*State necessity?*’ Let the spirit of Charles the Tenth and of his ministers answer.

“It is cold, selfish, heartless; and has always been regardless of age, sex, condition, services, or any of the incidents of life that appeal to patriotism or humanity.

“Wherever its authority has been acknowledged, it has assailed men who stood by their country when she needed strong arms and bold hearts; and has assailed them when, maimed and disabled in her service, they could no longer brandish a weapon in her defence.

“It has afflicted the feeble and dependent wife for the imaginary faults of her husband.

“It has stricken down innocence in its beauty, youth in its freshness, manhood in its vigor, and old age in its feebleness and decrepitude. Whatever other plea of apology may be set up for the sweeping, ruthless exercise of this civil guillotine at the present day—in the name of Liberty, let us be spared this fearful one of ‘state necessity’ in this early age of the republic, upon the floor of the American Senate, in the face of a people yet free.”



## CHAPTER VI.

His Congressional Career—Subject of Slavery—Resigns his Seat—  
Again appointed to the Senate, but will not accept—Correspondence  
—Offered a seat in the Cabinet of Mr. Polk.

WE have now given to the reader some of the most important of General Pierce's congressional speeches. They are all, it will be evident, at once of an eminently practical nature. They were not delivered upon subjects calculated to elicit enthusiastic eloquence, but upon vital questions of political economy—upon questions which deeply concerned the well-being of the nation. Upon such questions Mr. Pierce in Congress adopted a style of speech at once striking and simple. That he is the master of remarkable eloquence no man will deny who has ever heard him in one of his best efforts at the bar. But he preferred a working life and a plain, unvarnished style. His speeches resemble closely those of Cobden and Peel and Russell, and many others of England's most renowned parliamentary debaters. There is none of the clap-trap of popular eloquence, but clear convincing logic, which carries conviction straight to the heart. He was not noted in the House or Senate for speech-making, for he scarcely ever took part in debate; but his votes are on every page of the Congressional journals. We might pro-

ceed to give his votes upon the important questions which were before Congress during his participation in its proceedings, but it is hardly necessary to do so, as he always voted strictly with the Democratic party. He was a Democrat of the Jefferson stamp,—clear-sighted, warm-hearted, and with strong sympathies for popular rights, and his votes were in accordance with his principles.

Upon the embarrassing question of slavery, he pursued a straight-forward course. He voted to sustain the right of petition, when that simple question of right was presented in 1837, but he was invariably opposed to all agitation upon the subject and gave his votes to that end. In May, 1836, Mr. Pinckney, from a select committee on the subject—Mr. Pierce being a member of said Committee—made a report concerning the disposition of all memorials in regard to negro slavery, concluding with the following resolutions :

“Resolved, That Congress possesses no constitutional authority to interfere in any way with the institution of slavery in any of the States of this confederacy.

“Resolved, That Congress ought not to interfere in any way with slavery in the District of Columbia.

“And whereas it is extremely important and desirable that the agitation of this subject should be finally arrested, for the purpose of restoring tranquility to the public mind, your committee respectfully

recommend the adoption of the following additional resolution, viz :

“Resolved, That all petitions, memorials, resolutions, propositions or papers, relating in any way or to any extent whatever, to the subject of slavery,” or the abolition of slavery, shall, without being printed or referred, be laid upon the table, and no further action shall be had thereon.”

Mr. Pierce voted in favor of the passage of the above resolutions, and they were passed by the House of Representatives. Still later, upon the pure question of the *right to petition*—not the expediency of entertaining petitions—Mr. Pierce was in favor of affirming said right, though at all times, as at present, entirely opposed to all agitation upon the subject of slavery. To the people of the South he is therefore unobjectionable, touching this point, and that portion of the people of the North which is anti-slavery in feeling, can at least admire the consistency of Franklin Pierce, and his unswerving honesty of character. What he was ten years ago he is to-day. He came not into the support of the Compromise measures for the sake of office but simply because he had always favored any such measures whose object was the defeat of all agitation upon the subject.

When Franklin Pierce entered the lower House of Congress, he at once became the ardent friend and supporter of General Jackson. The almost sublime character of the hero of New-Orleans was

fully appreciated by him. His sternness of will, his fearless courage, his integrity of heart, constituted him a hero indeed, and Franklin Pierce revered those qualities in him, and loved and respected the man. At that time Andrew Jackson had a host of inveterate and unscrupulous enemies, who pursued him with a ferocity of purpose and an intensity of hate scarcely ever before witnessed in political life. Mr. Pierce, from this cause alone would have been inclined to become his friend, but he also believed, indeed knew, that Jackson was persecuted because he had dared to become the open enemy of the most gigantic of frauds and monopolies—because he had dared to speak out manfully, and act for the best interests of *the whole people*, instead of a small class of great capitalists. Mr. Pierce spoke out boldly in defence of the brave old hero, justifying his course, his policy, and his sincere desire to act not only constitutionally, but also to act for the prosperity, the lasting prosperity, of the nation.

In many respects Mr. Pierce resembles General Jackson. He has the same iron will, the same honesty of character, and the same strong sympathies for the masses. But he possesses certain qualities which were never Jackson's. General Pierce is a graceful, polished man. There are few public men in the country who have such a power to make friends as he; therefore, during his residence in Washington he made a wide circle of warm personal friends. Clay, Webster, and many others of

those opposed to him in their political views, were his sincere friends. His manners are so winning and easy, his good nature so great, that he has very few personal enemies in the land.

In February, 1842, Mr. Pierce resigned his seat in the U. S. Senate to the great sorrow, not only his constituents, but of his friends in Washington. The causes for this step were mainly of a personal nature. His wife was always of a retiring disposition, and was ill-suited with the excitement of Washington life, and when to this was added the misfortune of poor health, she was compelled to leave Washington, and Mr. Pierce felt it to be his duty to accompany her to Concord, and therefore resigned his seat in the Senate.

The following is a copy of the letter which he addressed to the President of the Senate:

*Washington, June 28, 1842.*

SIR: Having informed the governor of New-Hampshire that on this day my seat in the Senate of the United States would become vacant by resignation, I have thought proper to communicate the fact to you and the Senate.

In severing the relations that have so long subsisted between the gentlemen with whom I have been associated, my feelings of pain and regret will readily be appreciated by those who know that, in all my intercourse during the time I have been a member of the body, no unpleasant occurrence has

ever taken place to disturb for a moment my agreeable relations with any individual Senator.

With a desire for the peace and happiness of you all, for which now, in the fullness of my heart, I find no forms of expression, I have the honor to be, with the highest consideration,

Your obedient servant,

FRANKLIN PIERCE.

Hon. SAMUEL L. SOUTHARD,  
President of the Senate.

At this time Mr. Pierce was only thirty-seven years of age, possessed of fine talents, and manners which won for him universal popularity, and his political prospects were never brighter at any period of his public career. He was just at an age, too, when the fires of political ambition are apt to burn hottest in the hearts of men. He had friends everywhere. He could reasonably hope for any promotion, yet he quietly, calmly resigned his exalted office, his ambition, and retired with his wife to the pleasant shades of Concord, upon the banks of the romantic Merrimack. The act was not only striking and singular, but it was heroic. Amid the violent competition after office and place which characterizes these "latter days," it is refreshing to be able to look at one, who, for the sake of some good and noble purpose, coolly relinquishes the most fascinating prospects of fame and power! Mr. Pierce now devoted himself exclusively to his profession, and soon came into a practice worth seven or eight

thousand dollars per annum. In another portion of the work, we shall speak more at length in reference to General Pierce's abilities as a lawyer and pleader at the bar. The fact of his income is sufficient here to prove that his talents were held in high esteem by the people of New-Hampshire.

For three successive years, Mr. Pierce had little visible connection with politics, though he was the most influential man in the Democratic party of New-Hampshire.

In 1845, Mr. Pierce was appointed, by the Governor, to fill the vacancy in the U. S. Senate, occasioned by the resignation of Judge Woodbury. Mr. Woodbury was in the Senate, it will be remembered when he was appointed to the Superior Bench by Mr. Polk. He accepted the appointment, and at once resigned his seat in the Senate. It became the duty of the Governor of New-Hampshire to appoint a successor. Such was Mr. Pierce's popularity, that at once all the presses in the state pointed him out as the most suitable man to fill the vacant seat. He was urged with vehemence by the most influential men in the State to accept the position.

The following is the correspondence between him and Governor Steele :

“ STATE OF NEW-HAMPSHIRE, }  
*Concord, Oct. 9, 1845.* }

“ HON. FRANKLIN PIERCE :

“ *Dear Sir :* It has become my duty to appoint a Senator to the Senate of the United States, to fill

the vacancy occasioned by the resignation of Hon. Levi Woodbury. And as I know of no one whose appointment would give more general satisfaction to the citizens of this State than that of yourself, I therefore tender to you, Sir, the office of Senator to the Senate of the United States, from the date of these presents until the pleasure of the Legislature of this State shall be made known at their next session.

Truly yours,

“JOHN H. STEELE,

“*Governor of the State of New-Hampshire.*”

“*Concord, October 11, 1845.*”

“HIS EXCELLENCY, JOHN H. STEELE:      •

“*Sir:* On my return to town last night, I found your official letter of the 9th inst. I acknowledge, with unfeigned gratitude, this evidence of your confidence, and regret, on many accounts, that I cannot accept the appointment.

“It would be pleasant again to meet many with whom I was for years associated—pleasant to accede to your wishes and the wishes of other true and long-tried friends—pleasant to maintain, as well as I might be able, the interests and honor of our State, in the exalted station you have been pleased to assign me. But, with all these considerations urging an acceptance, I find others, which, fairly weighed, constrain me to decline. My personal wishes and purposes, in 1842, when I resigned a seat in the Senate, were, as I supposed, so per-



fectly understood, that I have not, for a moment, contemplated a return to public life. Without adverting to other grounds, which would have much influence in forming my decision, the situation of my business, professional and otherwise, is such that it would be impossible for me to leave the State suddenly, as I should be called upon to do, and be absent for months, without sacrificing, to a certain extent, the interests, and disregarding the reasonable expectations, of those who rely upon my services.

“That my interest in the honor of New-Hampshire, and my devotion to the great principles, the firm maintenance of which has secured to her a proud position, and an enviable name in all parts of the Union, suffers no diminution in retirement, I trust may be made sufficiently apparent in every contest through which we may be called to pass in support of those principles, and in vindication of that honor.

“I am, with the highest consideration, your excellency’s obliged friend and servant,

“FRANK PIERCE.”

About this time the President of the United States offered him the office of District-Attorney of New-Hampshire, which he accepted, as the duties which belonged properly to it came in the line of his profession. He continued to hold this office until 1847.

In 1845, a convention of the Democracy of the State nominated Mr. Pierce to the office of Governor, but in a most eloquent speech, he declined this honor.

In 1846, his old friend, President Polk,—with whom he had served in Congress before—offered him a seat in his Cabinet. He was well aware of the great abilities and thorough devotion to principle which characterized Mr. Pierce, and was anxious to secure his services at Washington. In his letter to Mr. Pierce, the President says:

“It gives me sincere pleasure to invite you to accept a place in my Cabinet, by tendering to you the office of Attorney-General of the United States. I have selected you for this important office from my personal knowledge of you, and without the solicitation or suggestion of any one. I have done so because I have no doubt your personal association with me would be pleasant: and from the consideration that, in the discharge of the duties of the office, you could render me important aid in conducting my administration. In this instance, at least, the office has sought the man, and not the man the office, and I hope you may accept it.”

The following reply of Mr. Pierce will bear a careful examination:

“*Concord, N. H., Sept. 6, 1846.*

*My Dear Sir:* Your letter of the 27th ult. was received a week since. Nothing could have been

more unexpected; and, considering the importance of the proposition in a great variety of aspects, I trust you will not think there has been an unreasonable delay in arriving at a decision. With my pursuits, for the last few years, and my present tastes, no position, if I were in a situation, on the whole, to desire public employment, could be so acceptable as the one which your partiality has proffered.

“I ought not, perhaps, in justice to the high motives by which I know you are governed, to attribute your selection to personal friendship; but I cannot doubt that your judgment in the matter has been somewhat warped by your feelings. When I saw the manner in which you had cast your Cabinet, I was struck by the fact that from the entire range of my acquaintance formed at Washington, you could not have called around you men with whom it was my fortune to be better acquainted, or of whom I entertained a more delightful recollection, than Mr. Buchanan, Mr. Walker, Mr. Mason and Mr. Johnson. A place in your cabinet, therefore, so far as personal association is concerned, could not be more agreeable, had the whole been the subject of my own choice.

“When I add, your important measures in the foreign and home administration of the Government have commanded not merely the approbation of my judgment, but my grateful acknowledgements, as an American citizen, you will see how de-

sirable, on every ground connected with your administration, the office tendered would be to me; and yet, after mature consideration, I am constrained to decline. Although the early years of my manhood were devoted to public life, it was never really suited to my taste. I longed, as I am sure you must often have done, for the quiet and independence that belongs only to the private citizen, and now, at forty, I feel that desire stronger than ever.

“Coming unexpectedly, as this offer does, it would be difficult, if not impossible, to arrange the business of an extensive practice, between this and the first of November, in a manner at all satisfactory to myself, or to those who have committed their interests to my care, and who rely on my services. Besides, you know that Mrs. Pierce’s health, while at Washington, was very delicate—it is, I fear, even more so now, and the responsibilities which the proposed change would necessarily impose upon her, ought, probably, in themselves, to constitute an insurmountable objection to leaving our quiet home for a public station at Washington.

“When I resigned my seat in the Senate in 1842, I did it with the fixed purpose never again to be voluntarily separated from my family, for any considerable length of time, except at the call of my country, in time of war, and yet this consequence, for the reason before stated, and on account of climate, would be very likely to result from my acceptance.

“These are some of the considerations which have influenced my decision. You will, I am sure, appreciate my motives. You will not believe that I have weighed my personal convenience and ease against the public interest, especially as the office is one which, if not sought, would be readily accepted by gentlemen who could bring to your aid attainments and qualifications vastly superior to mine.

“Accept my grateful acknowledgments, and believe me, truly and faithfully, your friend.

“FRANK PIERCE.”

The good taste, the modesty, and the beauty of this letter must be apparent to every reader. It also must be evident to every unprejudiced mind, that General Pierce has, during his whole political life, been a modest, retiring man. We see him resigning his seat in the most august legislative body in the Union at the call of affection. We see him refusing the highest office within the gift of his native State; refusing to accept an appointment to the United States Senate and finally refusing a seat in the Cabinet of the President, when invited in the most flattering, in the most pressing manner. Truly, this is not an ordinary political character, and in looking at his life and acts, one is carried back to the earlier days of our republic, when offices sought men—not men offices.

While the great mass of politicians have been

straining every nerve, pulling every wire, courting every popular breeze, that they might obtain place and power, Frank Pierce has shunned the avenues to great distinction, has refused the most inviting and flattering offices of preferment, that he might live in the bosom of his family, at Concord. It is just such men who *deserve* the highest places within the gift of the people. Not your designing, ambitious politician, but the capable, modest statesman, who prefers the quiet and retirement of his home, but who, for the sake of his country, consents to *take* office—is the character *fit* for office! And in the great contest, now soon to occur, which shall decide who shall fill the Presidential chair, it will not be forgotten that Frank Pierce never sought the nomination—that it was rather forced upon him—and that, therefore, he the more deserves a most triumphant election!

## CHAPTER VII.

Mr. Pierce as a Soldier and General — The Breaking out of the Mexican War — Mr. Pierce Enlists as a Private — Appointed Brigadier-General — Sails for Vera Cruz — Attacked at National Bridge — Joins Gen. Scott at Puebla — His Course through the War — His Return — Reception at Concord — His Speech.

AT the time that Mr. Pierce declined the brilliant appointment, tendered him by the President of the United States, he remarked that he could never again consent to leave his family, except at the call of his country, in time of war. When, therefore, the Mexican war broke out, it found him pledged to the service of his country. A requisition was made upon the State of New-Hampshire, for a battalion of volunteers, and Mr. Pierce was among the first to put down his name, as a private soldier. The company was raised in Concord, and Frank Pierce went through all the drill exercises, as a private. The Ten Regiment Bill was passed by Congress, and the President tendered to him the appointment of Colonel of the Ninth, which appointment he accepted. When the law for the organization of the new ten regiments was passed, President Polk appointed Mr. Pierce Brigadier-General. The appointment was everywhere received with enthusiasm. Mr. Pierce was the son of an old and heroic

soldier, who had fought in the battles of the Revolution. In his youth he had listened to tales of the camp, and early learned to admire the patriotism and courage of the heroes of the Revolution. Col. Ransom was of this regiment. He was a brave officer, and Mr. Pierce wrote to the President, asking that he, Colonel Ransom, be appointed Brigadier-General; but the President needed the abilities of Mr. Pierce, and insisted upon his accepting the appointment. His commission, as Brigadier-General, is dated March 3, 1847. At this time, General Low, of Concord, asked Mr. Pierce if it was true that he had decided to leave his home, and all its endearments, for the plains of Mexico. General Pierce's reply was :

“ I have accepted of the commission. I could not do otherwise. I was pledged to do it. When I left the Senate, it was with a fixed purpose of devoting myself exclusively to my profession, with the single reservation, that if my country should become engaged in war, I would ever hold myself in readiness to serve her in the field, if called upon to defend her honor and maintain her rights. War has come, and my plighted word must and shall be redeemed.”

General Pierce and Col. Ransom at once proceeded to Boston, making the Tremont House their head quarters until the work of preparation was completed. It is told of General Pierce, that, in bidding farewell to his many friends, one of them



expressed the hope that he would return in safety and honor.

“I will come back with honor, or I will not come back.” was his reply.

General Pierce sailed from Newport, in the bark Kepler. Large numbers of the troops on board were sick, and suffered from the want of water, being upon a short allowance. Under these circumstances, Gen. Pierce shared his own allowance with his men, and mingled with them to encourage them. It was characteristic of the man, for kindness is his nature. On the 28th of June, he arrived at Vera Cruz. Here he encountered pestilence and disease, and was himself taken very ill. But amid disease and death, he had constant and careful thought of the men under his charge. His benevolence was never weary. He spent his money freely, and soon became exceedingly popular. He soon recovered from disease, and with but a small loss, left Vera Cruz in the middle of the terrible month of July, for the interior of Mexico. His brigade was made up as follows: the ninth regiment, New-England men; the twelfth, from Texas, Missouri, Arkansas, Northern Mississippi and Louisiana; and the fifteenth, raised in Ohio, Iowa, Wisconsin, Michigan, and the eastern part of Missouri, and the western part of Indiana. The whole force consisted of 2,500 men. His line of march was a most harassing one, beset on all sides by Mexicans and guerilla bands, whose object was to intercept all

recruits, on their march to succor General Scott, in the interior, and whose main work was to plunder and massacre. The great object of General Pierce, on the other hand, was, not to give battle, but to avoid it—to present General Scott with the greatest possible number of healthy soldiers, within the smallest space of time.

Fifteen miles from Vera Cruz, the courage and decision of Gen. Pierce were put to trial. He was there attacked by a fierce guerilla party, and gave an order to charge upon the chapparal. His Colonel, “the brave Ransom,” disputed the propriety of the movement, but Pierce replied, firmly and boldly: “I have given the order!” The enemy was completely routed after some severe fighting. At the National Bridge he was again attacked by the guerillas, who barricaded the bridge with chapparal. He ordered Captain Dupreau to dash over the barricade and charge the enemy. The order was promptly executed, and with success. In this skirmish Gen. Pierce received two bullets through his hat.

On the 1st of August, Gen. Pierce was at Perote, and advised Gen. Scott of the state of his command, as follows :

“I shall bring to your command about twenty-four hundred, of all arms. To-morrow morning at four o’clock I shall leave here for Puebla, and shall make the march in four days.”

The men under his care were principally northern recruits ; they had suffered much by disease ; had

been attacked five times by guerilla parties, and yet General Pierce had lost scarcely a man, though in the heart of an enemy's country.

On the 6th of August he joined General Scott at Puebla, with his command in excellent condition.

General Scott received him with open arms, and with the warmest encomiums. Military critics were agreed in the opinion that this feat alone—that of marching a large army through an enemy's country without loss—would have established his reputation as a military man. The skill, patience, judgment and vigilance he exhibited are not at once appreciated by the masses, but it is well known to men used to the field, that greater generalship is often required for such a feat than for one of the most brilliant actions in battle.

We cannot do better than give the further account of General Pierce's Campaign, in Mexico, in the words of an eye witness, one of his friends, a most reliable man, and at present a citizen of Washington. The account was furnished for the columns of the *Boston Post*:

“In accordance with my promise to you in Washington, I will state what I know of General Pierce's military services and character in Mexico. I shall only have to state what I have repeatedly said to mutual friends the last four years. I had no personal acquaintance with General Pierce till I met him in Mexico. Our acquaintance has its date

from the battle field of Contreras, where I was associated on duty with his command, and where it was particularly my good fortune to make the acquaintance of our own gallant New-England regiment, the 9th infantry, commanded by the intrepid Ransom. From that day to this the fame of that regiment has been dear to me, and particularly the fame of General Pierce, the brigade commander of the regiment, its first colonel, and one who, by voice and hand, contributed, so largely to raising it, and sending it to the field.

“What I shall say of General Pierce will not rest upon my individual testimony, but will simply express the convictions of every man, in that gallant army, who knew General Pierce, from General Scott down to the private soldiers, who found in their commander, Pierce, a counsellor and friend, one who smoothed the pillow of disease, and poured oil upon the deep wounds of the battle. General Scott, in all his dispatches, refers to General Pierce in terms of the warmest commendation and in appointing him one of the commissioners to arrange the armistice, gave his emphatic testimony to his character and services.

“Well do I know, that if an insane and wicked party press shall slander his good name in connection with his military services, it will carry unspeakable sorrow and disgust to the heart of our common, renowned commander, Gen. Scott. The mutual friendship and confidence which sprung up between

these two men, in Mexico, has continued to this day. Each has delighted on all proper occasions to do justice to the other. Should Gen. Scott be the Whig candidate for the Presidency, the country will be gratified with the spectacle of two of its noble sons, themselves devoted friends, being the respective standard bearers of the two great parties. It will, indeed, under such circumstances, be a contest of honor, in which, on both sides, nothing but laurels will be won.

“I well remember Gen. Pierce’s arrival at Puebla with our last reinforcements, 2,500 men. Our eyes were fixed on Mexico. The order had been given for the march. We had already heard how well that command had been conducted from the *tierra caliente* to the plain of Perote, through a country swarming with enemies. The bridge of the Plan del Rio had been broken down, and Bodfish, of Maine, was already known to the whole army as having suggested and executed a simple expedient, which enabled the command to cross the stream without loss. At the National Bridge it was known that Pierce, at the head of his command, cool and collected under a shower of bullets, had forced the enemy’s stronghold, with but little loss to his command. His attention to the various wants of his men, his vigilance by day and by night, his skill in availing himself of the experience of his staff, his uniform good sense, and his unobtrusive modesty, went before him, and had already won golden opin-

ions for him. Indeed, we were told that frequently at night he came into camp on foot, his horse having been yielded to some feeble soldiers. He seemed to have but one desire, and that was entirely to do his duty to his country, and the individual men of his command.

“ Thus, on his arrival at Puebla, after a rapid and successful march, during the hot season, and under untoward circumstances, he was warmly greeted, and drew the highest encomiums from the general-in-chief, and the command was in such good condition that the next morning the advance, under the veteran Twiggs, commenced the movement upon the capital.

“ We entered the valley, moved round Chalco, forced the entrenched camp at Contreras, won the splendid victory of Churubusco, and had Mexico at our feet. From the first movement against Contreras, in some thirty-two hours, the enemies' force was scattered, and, as we then hoped, the great object of the campaign gained.

“ In these operations the brigade of Pierce shared in the flank movements upon Contreras, and nobly did its duty. The operations of the 19th have been much misunderstood.

“ The plan from the outset of the battle was to amuse the enemy in front by a bold demonstration, and under cover of it to despatch a force against their left flank, which, occupying strong villages and the roads to the city, would cut them off from

all reinforcements, and thus place them entirely at our mercy. This plan was pursued, though the movement upon the road and villages was not prosecuted, with all the disposable force, with the promptness that could have been desired. The staff officers in the front fully appreciating the necessity of vigorous measures to drive back the skirmishers to the camp, and to completely deceive the enemy, recommended a very bold course. Guns and men were pushed forward with all the fierceness and unflinching constancy of a real attack. The almost impracticable character of the ground is well known. The whole field was a volcanic rock of honey-comb projection, rising into sharp points at every turn, and making it very difficult for strong men to make their way. Our troops were delayed but not deterred by these difficulties. First Smith and then Pierce were sent to the front simultaneously, with Riley and Cadwallader to the flank and rear. Both Smith and Pierce brought up their commands in admirable order. The skirmishers were in great force in the pedregal, and resisted our advance with great vigor and confidence. The splendid pieces of Valencia from the entrenched camp, were sending balls and shells through our ranks. Well do I remember their harsh and hissing accents, of all things calculated to terrify and dismay new troops.

“ At this moment, in face of the skirmishers, and in view of the camp, with its well served artillery, Pierce brought up his brigade, the New England

regiment, led by Ransom, in the advance. It was their first essay in the valley. As a New England man I rejoiced in their noble conduct as they rushed through the storm of fire, passing near the position of the batteries and driving the enemy's skirmishers before them. Without a pause in the attack, they forced the enemy from point to point, drove him into his camp, crossed themselves, the stream flowing near its front, and took a position within three hundred yards of the main force of the enemy. This bold, unflinching, and most gallant movement did much to cause the enemy to concentrate all his troops in the camp, fixed his attention upon the front attack, and was a vital element in the success of the great flank movement and real attack against the rear of the enemy.

“Pierce led his command most gallantly; but pressing eagerly to the front, still mounted, his horse became restive under the heavy fire, plunged violently, and threw him heavily to the ground upon the sharp rocks, and injured him so severely as to disable him for a time to continue with his command. He refers to it in his official report, and it was simply one of the many numerous accidents on that field. Many strong men fainted from sheer exhaustion.”

“Two other general officers, Pillow and Twiggs, were unable to follow their commands. Twiggs was badly hurt by falling into one of the holes in the rocks whilst making his way on foot, and neither of



them were able to join their commands till after the crowning victory of the next morning. Pierce's command, however, passed the night on the field, in front of the camp, and Pierce passed the night with it.

“At nightfall, on the nineteenth, although the enemy had not been driven from his camp, he had gained positions surely placing the victory in our hands. Amid the pelting storms of the afternoon and night, with loss of food and sleep, our men did look forward with some anxiety to the day. But no stain of misconduct rested on a single officer or man, and each had made the firm resolve to do all and dare all for his country.

“Pierce, though badly injured and in great suffering, was in front in the midst of his command, and the brigades of Riley, Shields, Smith and Cadwallader were in the villages, and on the road leading to the city of Mexico. From this strong position, Smith, to whom the command had been most magnanimously yielded by his senior, Shields, in consequence of his having preceded him on the ground, and knowing from personal observation more of the field, determined to attack the entrenched camp before daylight in the morning, and break the whole of Valencia's command into pieces, before succor could be brought. The camp was to be reconnoitred, the paths thereto marked, and the troops led out in the night. The rain was still falling in torrents. Scarcely a man had had food or

sleep. The officers of engineers and of the staff groped their way with their hands, the path so slippery that they were constantly thrown upon the ground, and they marked the route by cutting down the maguey plant which lined the wayside. They conducted the troops by feeling their way along the cut magueys with their hands. Such were the difficulties in organizing the attack in the village. On the front, orders were received from General Scott soon after midnight—who, knowing the facts of the whole field, the meditated attack of Smith, and the resolution of his troops, the good spirits of the men in front under Pierce, and who, in consequence, looked forward with calm confidence to a glorious victory—to organize the command, and be ready to co operate in the attack on the camp.

“Pierce had, after nightfall, withdrawn his troops from their advanced position on the rivulet, and in the pedregal, where they were necessarily much scattered, to near the base of the hill, where they were brought together and put in order to pass the night, and be ready for the duties of the morrow.

“These troops, the 9th and 12th infantry, scattered bodies of the rifles and other commands, were conducted back slowly and painfully over the pedregal to the stream occupied by them the previous day, and were at dawn in readiness for the attack.

“This movement was personally conducted by Ransom, Pierce not having the physical strength, from the injuries of the previous day, to make his

way through the rocks. It must be remembered that this movement was made in the dark, in the midst of rain, over sharp and slippery rocks, and one like that accomplished by Smith, deemed by the enemy to be utterly impracticable.

“Thus at daylight, and struggling with such difficulties, our troops reached their positions, and the attack was made. In seventeen short minutes the entrenched camp and large numbers of prisoners were in our hands. The whole command of Valencia was entirely broken into pieces. Riley in the fierce storm of the camp, Cadwallader and Dimick (temporarily commanding Smith’s brigade) in support, Shields holding the villages, and Pierce in front, first holding the attention of the enemy, thus carrying out the ideas of the previous day, and afterwards participating in the fight, all gloriously did their duty, and are entitled to the gratitude of their country.

“The spirit and enthusiasm of the army now rose to the culminating point; fatigue was no longer felt; the sick and feeble man became for the time well and strong; the anxious bivouac and the toils of the pedregal were forgotten. All eyes were turned towards the city of Mexico; all hearts burned to pursue the enemy and strike the great blow of the war. The spontaneous and irresistible impulse of ten thousand men in arms was promptly availed of by the commander-in-chief, and by commanders of all grades. Shields, Twiggs, Pillow, Smith,

Pierce, Cadwallader and Riley, all at the head of their respective commands, urged on our troops. Worth also put his division in movement in front of San Antonio, and after dispersing its retreating garrison, 3,000 strong, pressed forward on the high road to Mexico. It was no time for groping reconnoissances, or nice calculations as to the circumstances of the ground. The victory of Contreras drove the enemy through San Angel and Cuoycan, and the advance under Twiggs, uniting with Worth, attacked with such terrible energy the enemy retreating through the strong position of Churubusco, that *there* the enemy was compelled to make his final stand, some miles from the city. In a few moments, the roar of cannon and the incessant rattling of musketry developed the whole field, and immediately the general-in-chief threw his reserves into the action. First Pierce and then Shields was sent to attack and cut off the enemy's retreat upon the capital. It was the grand strategic movement of the field. Pierce, 'just able to keep the saddle,' in suffering and anguish from the accident of the previous day, and only fit for a sick bed, at the head of his command, steadily pursued his way.

"It was through thick corn, over wide ditches, filled with water and marshy ground. The day was oppressively hot. No actor in that field will ever forget the desperation with which it was contested, or the awful and incessant thunders of the fight. On the front the shouts of the assailants and defen-

ders mingled in hoarse tones of defiance. For two hours the contest was maintained with equal hand, and no serious impression was made upon the enemy's line, till the decisive and splendid flank movement of Pierce and Shields distracted his attention and compelled him to change his order of battle.

"It is not my design to go into details. Suffice it to say that after extraordinary exertions and experiencing great loss, the whole reserve, under the command of Shields, drove back the overwhelming force of the enemy, and relieved all parts of the field. Worth joined his victorious troops with Shields, the convent soon held out the white flag, and the city and valley of Mexico lay at our feet.

"The foregoing narrative will show the important part assigned to Pierce, at the head of the reserve, to decide the fortunes of the day. It is surprising that in his feeble condition he should have undertaken to lead his troops and struggle with the difficulties of the ground. He, however, boldly led them into the presence of the enemy, and endeavoring to make his way on foot, fell, faint and exhausted, under the heavy fire of that field. But his friends rejoiced that he had strength enough to do a noble, gallant and important part. The impression which he made upon the army at this time, will best be shown by the following quotations from the official reports :

"General Scott says, in his report of the *battle of Churubusco* :

" 'Accordingly, the two advanced divisions, and

Shields' brigade, marched from Contreras, under the immediate orders of Major General Pillow, who was now joined by the *gallant Brigadier General Pierce*, of his division, personally thrown out of activity, late the evening before, by a severe hurt received from the fall of his horse.' . . . .

“‘Next, (but all in ten minutes) I sent *Pierce*, (just able to keep the saddle) with his brigade, (Pillow's division) conducted by Capt. Lee, engineer, by a third road, a little farther to our left, to attack the enemy's right and rear, in order to favor the movement upon the convent, and cut off the retreat towards the capital. And, finally, Shields, senior brigadier to *Pierce*, with the New-York and South Carolina volunteers, (Quitman's division) was ordered to *follow Pierce closely*, and to take command of our left wing.’

“‘*All these movements* were made with the *utmost alacrity* by our gallant troops and commanders.’

“‘It has been stated that some two hours and a half before, *Pierce*, followed closely by the volunteer brigade—both under the command of Brigadier General Shields—had been detached to our left to turn the enemy's works; to prevent the escape of the garrisons, and to oppose the extension of the enemy's numerous corps from the rear, upon and around our left.’

“‘Considering the *inferior numbers* of the two brigades, the objects of the movement were difficult to accomplish.’ . . . . .

“‘The battle was long, hot and varied; but ultimately success crowned the *zeal* and *gallantry* of our troops.’ &c. . . . .

“‘*Brigadier General Pierce*, from the hurt of the evening before—under pain and exhaustion—fainted in the action.’

“‘Several other changes of command occurred on this field.’

“General Worth, in his report, says :

“‘The division commander cannot forego the opportunity presented, to acknowledge his obligations and express his admiration of the gallant bearing of Major General Pillow and Brigadier Generals Shields, Cadwallader and *Pierce*, with whom he had the gratification of concert and co-operation at various critical periods of the conflict.’

“General Pillow, in his report of this battle, says :

“‘During this movement, I met with Colonels Ransom’s and Morgan’s regiments, 12th infantry, under Capt. Wood, and the howitzer battery, under Lieut. Reno, parts of my division, forming *General Pierce’s* brigade, which had been moved by order of the general-in-chief, under command of *General Pierce*, against a large body of the enemy to the right and rear of the main work, when they had been in conjunction with Shields’ brigade, engaged in a fierce, open field fight with a large force.’

“‘*General Pierce*, though still suffering severely from his injury of the preceding day, had nevertheless been on duty, and *in command of his brigade during the day*, and until a few moments before, when he had fainted from pain and exhaustion, and *been carried from the field.*’ . . . . .

“‘I cannot withhold the expression of my sense of the deep obligations I am under for the success and honor due to my command, to *my two brigadier generals*, (Shields and Pierce) whose *promptitude, skill and daring*, were equal to *every emergency*, and who, in the absence of discipline in their commands, met and overcame every obstacle, and *led on their commands to honor and distinction.*’ . . .

“The above extracts show clearly General Pierce’s standing in the army at that time. Great regret was expressed at his unfortunate accident, but great admiration for the noble manner in which he bore himself under it. His appointment as one of the commissioners to arrange the armistice, was considered as exceedingly judicious and highly merited. It gave universal satisfaction.

“The armistice failed, and resort was again had to arms. The bloody field of Molino, and the protracted struggle for the city attested how rapidly the enemy had rallied from his defeat and the prowess and constancy of American troops. At Molino 3,000 Americans, under the gallant and lamented Worth, drove 14,000 Mexicans from their chosen position



into and under cover at Chepultepec. What by General Scott was expected to have been a slight brush proved to be the most terrible conflict of the war, and the brigades of Pierce and Riley were ordered up to support it. Thus General Scott, in his reports states, “. . . But the battle was won just as Brigadier Gen. Pierce interposed his corps between Garland’s brigade (Worth’s division) and the retreating enemy.’

“This gave offence to Worth, as intimating that without Pierce his own command would not have maintained the field. Whereas the particular expression grew out of the gallant manner in which Pierce brough this command to its assigned position, and which was observed by Scott from a commanding position, where he overlooked the whole field. Within three days, officers in this city, of the old army, have spoken of it with great admiration. Two who accompanied Pierce to his position, speak of his extraordinary coolness and composure as a shell came streaming from Chepultepec through the ranks of his command. From its direction, every one feared that it would strike Pierce and kill both him and his horse. Happily no one was injured.

“In the final operations about Chepultepec, it was necessary, as a preliminary step, to re-occupy the field of Molino, and in that position to plant batteries against Chepultepec. Our troops had been withdrawn from the position since the battle of the 8th. Pillow’s division, Cadwallader’s and Pierce’s

brigades, were ordered to drive the enemy from it, and hold it against whatever force might be brought against them. The order was gallantly executed; but the enemy had been previously withdrawn. Pierce marched out with his company early in the morning of the 12th September, and though scarcely able to move a step, from his enfeebled condition, growing out of his great exertions in bringing up his command at Puebla, and from fatigue and exposure at Contreras and Churubusco, he remained in the field till mid-day, when the batteries were playing upon Chepultepec, and when it was certain that no further active operations would be prosecuted during the day. He then reluctantly returned to the quarters of General Worth, in the village of Tacubaya, a short distance only from the field, so prostrated that he was not able to leave his bed for some thirty-six hours. It is one of the saddest experiences to a gallant and patriotic soldier to be prevented by sickness, wounds or infirmity from sharing the glories and dangers of the battle field with his companions in arms.

“Twiggs was thus thrown out of the earlier operations at Monterey; Persifer F. Smith, at Cerro Gordo; the gallant Colonel C. F. Smith, perhaps the model soldier of the old army, from Molino. So with Pierce. I have often conversed with Worth's officers in relation to Pierce. Attracted by his frank and cordial manner, they esteemed him for his manly and disinterested character, and had unbounded

confidence in his prudence, judgment and gallantry. They speak of his despondency at not being able to lead his men in the last great battle of the valley. But he felt in a measure consoled from the reflection that his own gallant staff officers were in the field, and that his intrepid friend Ransom, his first choice to command the New England Regiment, was to lead them. Alas, poor Ransom! Not only a bright ornament to his own New England, but to the whole country — one of the noblest and best soldiers of that memorable campaign. Leading his regiment with consummate skill, and pressing forward with his usual order, he was shot through the head, and fell a willing sacrifice to his country.

“This is not the place to describe how Chepultepec yielded to the firm, unyielding and enthusiastic assault of our troops under Pillow and Quitman, or how Worth, on the two great causeways of approach, drove the enemy into the city, and took possession of the gates of Belen and of Cosnu. The resistance at both points was stern and protracted. Santa Anna was in the front ranks, cheering on and leading his men at every point of danger. It is due to his extraordinary gallantry and exertion, that at night-fall, he retained possession of the city. Quitman, after securing the Belen gate at half-past one o’clock, was obliged to cover his troops the remainder of the day. He could not move a step under the pitiless and terrible fire of the citadel. Worth occu-

pied one square within the Cosnu gate, strong and easily defensible buildings being still in the hand of the enemy to repel his further progress.

“In these positions our troops passed the night. Both Quitman and Worth made preparations to storm the city in the morning. Quitman strengthened and enlarged his batteries with the determination to batter and storm the citadel. Pierce, at his solitary quarters towards dark, learned from Captain Hardcastle, just from Worth, whose room he occupied, how affairs stood, and that the final struggle for the mastery in the valley would take place the next morning. ‘The city will be stormed and the final victory of the war will be achieved to-morrow,’ says Hardcastle. ‘I will then join my command immediately,’ replied Pierce, and he got up and attempted to dress himself. Hardcastle, however, remonstrated, and urged him to remain in bed till morning to save his strength, saying to him that his services would not be needed till then. He acquiesced, and learned from Hardcastle the further particulars of the field.

“The greater portion of his own brigade was with Quitman, and a portion with Worth. Quitman’s position, under the fire of the citadel, was one of vastly more danger and difficulty than Worth’s. The square within the garita, occupied by Worth, led at once into the heart of the city, and his advance by the slow process of the miner was certain.

Quitman could only assault the citadel by passing over an open space, and the citadel itself was separated from the adjacent suburb of the city.

“Pierce, in the course of the night, joined Quitman, in readiness for the morn. It is true that commissioners passed through Worth’s command in the night, and announced to General Scott, at Tacubaya, that the city was evacuated. But this was known to very few persons in the army, and as General Scott refused to listen to the terms proposed by the commissioners, these few feared the army would return and do battle for the city.

“At dawn, therefore, Quitman made his arrangements to commence the attack, and it was not till broad daylight that, by personal observation, he discovered that the citadel had been abandoned. He pushed on with his command, and soon seized the National Palace, and hoisted thereon our own glorious stars and stripes.

“During the day, a desultory street fight was kept up; many officers and men were killed and wounded, and not till the night of the 14th was the city completely in our hands.

“In these final operations, therefore, Pierce led his command to the field of Molino, where a severe contest was expected, and remained on the ground till it was certain the attack would not be made till the following day; and, after confinement from utter prostration, to his sick bed for thirty-six hours, he joined, in the night, his command at the point

of greatest difficulty and danger, when, on all sides, the final battle was expected to come off. It redounds especially to his credit, and shows his gallantry and resolution, his assuming the command of his brigade at these two critical junctures."

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Another writer, who was a witness to General Pierce's gallantry in the battles of the Mexican war, thus sums up his recital of the General's military career :

"1. General Pierce was at Vera Cruz with 2,500 men, in June, 1847, where, contrary to his expectations, he was obliged to remain more than three weeks, in consequence of a want of requisite provisions, while he was, for more than four weeks, in Terra Calienti, the vomito region. At length he marched for Vera Cruz, with a train which, when closed up, extended two miles. He went through a country, and over a road, strong in natural defences, swarming with guerillas, dogged at every step by a wily enemy, with constant alarms and reports of attacks, and was assaulted six times on his road, yet he reached Puebla without the loss of a single wagon, and with his command in fine order. The conduct of the General, in this march—his energy, his sleepless vigilance, coolness in difficulty, good judgment and skill in availing himself of the services of his staff—won the highest encomiums from military men of the old line, and elicited the warm

commendations of General Scott. This march alone proved him to possess the qualities of an able and successful commander.

“ 2. General Pierce was in action at the National Bridge. Here the Mexicans were strongly posted. The place furnished strong natural advantages. Across the main bridge they had thrown a barricade, and on a high bluff which commanded it, they had added breastworks. There was no way in which this position could be turned, and the General’s artillery would have been ineffective for the most commanding point in which it could be placed. He determined to cross under the fire of the enemy’s escopetes. His order to storm these works was admirably executed. Lieutenant Colonel Bonham’s battalion rushed forward with a shout, under a heavy fire from the enemy, that struck down many of his men. But they pressed forward and leaped the barricade, followed by Capt. Dupreau’s company of cavalry. In ten minutes, the enemy were in flight in every direction. General Pierce was by the side of Colonel Bonham in this attack. Both had narrow escapes. The Colonel’s horse was shot, and a ball passed through the rim of the General’s hat. This was a well devised and gallant affair, and the fame of it went before General Pierce, and he was handsomely spoken of in the army. This was the first action of much account in which he was engaged.

“ 3. General Pierce was again in action at Contre-

ras, on the 19th of August. His brigade was ordered to attack the enemy in front. He came in sight of the Mexicans at 2 o'clock in the afternoon, and led his men in the attack. He was under a galling fire of the enemy three hours. As he was leading his brigade through a perfect shower of round shot and shells from the strong entrenchments in front, and the musketry of the infantry, his horse, being at full speed, fell under him upon a ledge of rocks. He sustained severe injury by the shock and bruises, but especially by a severe sprain in his left knee, which came under him. At first, he was not conscious of being much hurt, but soon became exceedingly faint. Dr. Richie, a surgeon in his command, assisted him, and administered to him. In a few moments, he was able, with difficulty, to walk, when he pressed forward to Captain Magruder's battery. Here he found the horse of Lieutenant Johnson, who had just received a mortal wound. He was permitted to take this horse, was assisted into the saddle, and continued in it until 11 o'clock that night. At 9 o'clock he was the senior officer on the field, when he ordered his command to a new position. The night was dark, the rain poured in torrents, and the ground was difficult, yet the General still kept on duty. At one o'clock, in his bivouac, he received orders from General Scott by General Twiggs and Captain Lee, when, at the head of his command, he moved to take another position, to be in readiness to aid in the operations of the next



morning. Such was General Pierce's service in the afternoon and night of August 19th.

"4. At daylight, on the morning of the 20th, his command assailed the enemy with great intrepidity, and contributed much to the consummation of the work begun on the previous day. That morning, Valencia, with seven thousand troops, was defeated. Gen. Pierce still kept the saddle, and was at the head of his brigade. He was ordered to pursue the flying enemy, and as he passed the enemy's works the scene was awful. The road, he says, and adjacent fields were everywhere strewed with the mangled bodies of the dead and dying. 'We continued the pursuit,' he says, 'until 1 o'clock, when our front came up with the enemy's strong works at Churubusco and San Antonio.' Then, (after 1 o'clock,) this great conflict commenced.

"At San Angel dispositions had been made to attack in reverse, the enemy's works on the San Augustine road. General Scott ordered him to march his brigade, in concert with that of the intrepid General Shields, across the open country between Santa Catarina and the above road, in order to cut off the retreat of the enemy. This position was promptly reached. The enemy's line was found in perfect order, extending as far in either direction as the eye could reach, and presenting a splendid show. He was vigorously and successfully attacked. At the head of his command, General Pierce arrived at a ditch, which it was impossible for his

horse to leap. He dismounted, and, without thinking of his injury, he hurried forward at the head of his brigade, for about three hundred yards, into the midst of the enemy's fire. Turning suddenly upon his knee, the cartilage of which had been badly injured, he fainted and fell upon a bank in direct range and within perfect reach of the Mexican shot. The rout of the Mexican force was soon complete. Colonel O'Hara, who saw him, and served with him in this battle, says 'he was found in the foremost rank of battle, and through most of that bloody day, he was the spirit of the wing in which he was placed.'

"5. General Pierce's next service was his connection with the armistice, which the enemy asked, it was supposed, with a view to peace. He had not taken off his spurs, nor slept an hour for two nights, in consequence of the pain of his knee and his engagements in the field. It was after he had been borne insensible from the battle, and had just recovered from his faintness, that he received notice of the honorable distinction that had been conferred upon him, in being appointed one of the commissioners to arrange the terms of an armistice. He obeyed the summons, was helped into his saddle, rode two and a half miles to Tacubaya, and met the commissioners at the house of Mr. McIntosh, the British consul-general. The conference commenced late in the afternoon, and at four the next morning the articles were signed.

“6. General Pierce’s next service was in connection with the battle of Molino del Rey, September 8th. His brigade was ordered into action by Gen. Scott, who commended the zeal and rapidity of its movement. Though the battle had been decided before it reached the field, yet General Pierce brought his command under fire in such fine order as to win praise from the old officers. Here he was for some time engaged in the honorable service of covering the removal of killed and wounded, and the captured ammunition, from the field. While so occupied—Col. Riley in his official report writes—‘the 2d infantry—temporarily under the orders of Brigadier General Pierce—became engaged with the enemy’s skirmishes at the foot of Chapultepec.’ It was in these skirmishes that he exhibited the gallantry that called forth the encomiums of his brother officers, and excited the enthusiasm of the men. It was at this time that he led a portion of his command, to repel the enemy’s attacks, with a chivalric courage that caused him to be spoken of with admiration. The duty assigned to him was worthily performed.

“7. General Pierce’s next service was in connection with the battle of Chapultepec. His brigade was assigned an important position on the 12th—the evening previous to the battle—which it was prompt to take. But the General had been for thirty six hours previous confined to his bed, and was not with his brigade. And it was owing to this illness that he was not, on the 13th, by the side of the

brave Ransom and Seymour, storming the heights of Chapultepec. Ill as he was, however, to the surprise of his brother officers, he left his bed on the night of the 13th for the purpose of sharing in the contemplated storming of the Mexican capital on the following morning. It was a most eventful night. The brave General Quitman had literally fought his way by the gate Belen to a point within Mexico, where, under cover of darkness, he was raising defences in the position he had won to shelter his corps. At this time he was under the guns of a most formidable citadel, which had yet to be conquered. It was such times that called forth the indefatigable energy of the accomplished engineers. Sand bags were procured. Parapets were completed; formidable batteries were constructed; a 24 pounder, and 18 inch pounder, and an 8 inch howitzer, were placed in position—such heavy labor being cheerfully done by the men under the very guns of the great Mexican citadel. Now, one of the gallant regiments in this post of real danger and glory, was the New-England ninth—part of Pierce's command. And during the night, while the vigilant Quitman was overseeing these trenches, General Pierce reported to him in person, received orders to protect Steptoe's light battery, and received General Quitman's thanks for his prompt execution of the orders. At that time there was not an officer in the army who did not expect an assault at daylight. But in the morning a white flag came from

this very citadel, and gave the first joyful news that Santa Anna had evacuated Mexico!

“8. While such was the specific service of General Pierce, his general bearing, as to his relations with his command, from the time he landed in Mexico to the hour of his departure, was such as to win golden opinions from all. From the time he left Vera Cruz until he reached the valley of Mexico, he was every rod either in the saddle or on foot. This could be said of but few officers, for in consequence of change of climate, or of the water, or of exposure, many were obliged to take an ambulance. Thus did he share the fatigues of his troops. He attended to their wants in sickness, he was by their side when wounded or dying; he received their last requests. Hence, because he had a heart to sympathize with them was he idolized by his men. His gentlemanly bearing and republican manners made him a great favorite with all. Hence the universal testimony was, that he had conducted as a general officer, with great honor and eminent usefulness. ‘Old Army’—written by one who was an eye witness of the career of General Pierce, and who says *‘he has reason to believe that every officer of the old army would sustain him in what he writes’*—says, ‘that in his service in Mexico he did his duty as a son of the Republic; that he was eminently patriotic, disinterested, and gallant; and that it has added a laurel to his beautiful civic wreath. As a citizen, he has been ready to make sacrifice for his

country. As a soldier and commander, he has shown gallantry before the enemy, and was eminently the friend and father of his command.'

“Such is a plain and simply just record of General Pierce’s military services in Mexico. At the call of the law he was prompt, as a citizen-soldier, to rally to the standard of the law, and to expose his life freely for his country. He did this gallantly. But war is not his profession. He becomes a soldier only when his country has battles to fight; and when these are over, he throws by his sword and mingles in the quiet duties of private life. Such was the spirit and principle of the men of the revolution; and General Pierce went on to the battle fields of Mexico with the same idea with which his father before him went to Bunker Hill. Those who can present such a record, establish a valid claim on the candor of their countrymen; and the latter will not unmoved see wanton aspersions cast on their fair fame.”

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The following letter from Colonel Smith, of New-Hampshire, a gentleman distinguished by his services to Americans in Mexico, during the invasion of that country by our army, contains valuable testimony in reference to the conduct of General Pierce, on the 19th and 20th of August, and 8th of September:

“ *Gilmanton, N. H., June 24, 1852.*

“You are probably aware that at the commencement of the war with Mexico, I had been more than fifteen years a resident of the city of the Aztecs. During the war I was twice expelled from the city, the suspicions of the government having been awakened, and its displeasure incurred in consequence of the manner in which I treated Major Gaines, Major Borland and the other Encarnacion prisoners. Immediately after the second order for my expulsion, desiring to control my own movements, I made my escape, passed the mountains in two nights, on horseback, having bribed a famous guerilla chief, Colin, who accompanied me with five of his desperate associates. I carried despatches from — to General Scott, then at Puebla, which I delivered at four o'clock in the morning, and afterwards continued with the noble commander, he availing himself of my minute knowledge of the country, until I again entered the city with the American army. I arrived at Puebla two days before General Pierce's brigade arrived there, and was never prouder of my country, and never so proud of my native state, as when that fine command marched into the city. All balconies were crowded, and such a reinforcement spread general joy through the army. The circumstances of the march—the energetic, prudent and skillful manner in which it had been performed—the daring courage manifested by the commander, particularly in crossing the National

Bridge, when his hat was shot from his head—were of course the subjects of much conversation, and secured for General Pierce high admiration and entire confidence. And these, I may safely say, were never abated during the campaign.

“I do not propose to give you details of that campaign, but to state some facts within my own knowledge in relation to the operations of the 19th and 20th of August, and the 8th of September. On the 19th August I was at St. Augustine, about seven miles from Contreras. Pierce’s brigade marched out early to open the road across the mountain for the artillery, which followed that afternoon. I did not see General Pierce again till near noon the next day. I had been with General Scott’s staff all the morning of the 20th, and had heard of the dangerous injury General Pierce had sustained by the fall of his horse on the pedregal, the afternoon before. The horse was supposed to have caught his fore foot in the cleft of a rock, being at a hard gallop. The preservation of the life of the General, seems here, as at the National Bridge, to have been providential. Although the bones of the horse were broken, so that he was left upon the spot, the tenacity with which the rider held to his command during that day and the next, was the wonder of all. He rode, during the residue of that evening, the horse of the gallant Lieutenant Johnson, who had just been shot in his saddle.

“I met General Pierce on the 20th, near Coya-



can; General Twigg's division had advanced on the road towards the church at Churubusco, and when I met Pierce, the heavy firing of the batteries had opened. I shall never forget his appearance, as he rode at the head of that noble brigade, destined to suffer so terribly in the afternoon. He was exceedingly thin, worn down by the fatigue and pain of the day and night before, and then evidently suffering severely. Still there was a glow in his eye as the cannon boomed, that showed within him a spirit ready for the conflict.

“The brigade was soon formed on the west side of the plaza of Coyacan, opposite the church. I was familiar with all the roads and paths in that neighborhood, and informed General Scott, who was in his saddle, under a tree, near the church, from which he was issuing orders to different members of his staff, that I knew a route by which the enemy could be attacked in rear. Having decided at once to send Pierce's brigade, and to support it by other troops that might be at his command, he despatched me to call General Pierce. I did so; and when he rode up, a conversation, in substance, and as near as I can recollect, in the following words took place:

“General Scott said: ‘Pierce, my dear fellow, you are badly injured—you are not fit to be in your saddle.’ ‘Yes, I am,’ said Pierce, ‘in a case like this.’ General Scott said: ‘It is temerity; we shall lose you, and cannot spare you. I ought to

order you back to St. Augustine. You cannot touch your foot to the stirrup.' 'I can, one of them,' said Pierce, 'and that is enough for to-day. This will be the last great fight, and I must lead my brigade.' The order was then given, I acting as guide, by the direction of General Scott, Major Lee, of the engineer corps, accompanying the command. The brigade moved rapidly forward for about a mile, when we came to a ditch, as I recollect, ten or twelve feet wide, and six or eight deep. Pierce was lifted from his saddle, and as if to tread upon impossibilities, he led the brigade, then under fire, in his crippled condition, for a considerable distance on foot, when he fell from exhaustion and suffering, too great even for his energies. He refused to be carried from the field, and remained until the final rout of the enemy. More inflexible determination and daring courage, I do not believe was ever exhibited upon a battle field.

"On the night before the battle of Molino del Rey, General Pierce's brigade was at the hacienda of San Borjia, about one mile from Tacubaya, where it had been held from the earliest dawn under arms. You know how General Worth's most gallant division suffered. The carnage on the field was dreadful. General Scott despatched me to accompany my friend, Major Gaines, with an order for General Pierce to advance. They were ready on an instant, and moved rapidly forward. I was upon the field and witnessed Pierce's fine movement upon the

King's Mill, to relieve Colonel Garland, who had been fighting to that hour. He advanced with the ninth infantry, (and, as I recollect, second artillery, not of his brigade proper.) The enemy whose fire had nearly ceased, upon the movement of these new regiments, re-opened with round shot and shell from Chepultepec. I well remember that the bay horse which the General took from the States, became, under fire, difficult to manage, and was well nigh plunging over a precipice close by the King's Mill, at the bridge, in consequence of the bursting of a shell, but a few feet from him. Nothing could have been more cool and admirable, than this whole movement.

“I made the acquaintance of General Pierce, thousands of miles from our native land, under circumstances that ‘tried men’s souls.’ I found him there, what all know him to be here, and I cannot withhold this act of justice from one who has as brave a heart, and as self-sacrificing a spirit, as ever warmed a true man’s bosom. I know General Pierce needs no vindication of his military conduct. His merit in this respect is proclaimed by the united voice officers and men—those who participated and who know. But at the same time he may not be displeased with these hasty reminiscences from me. I have been so long from the country, that I feel but little interest in mere party conflicts. Your obedient servant,

NOAH E. SMITH.”

In closing our brief sketch of General Pierce's military career in Mexico, we will adduce a few of the many testimonials, from the pens of distinguished personages, in his favor. We do this partly because of the base attempt, on the part of some of his political enemies, to traduce his military character.

Here is an extract from the letter of an officer in the ninth regiment, to his friends at home :

“I am sorry he is going, as I don't know of a man who would do better for the men under his command, or one that the soldiers would like so well. Bravery goes a great way toward making a man respected in the army and Gen. Pierce has as good a reputation for that, as even his immediate commander, General Pillow. I imagine I can see him now upon that black horse at Contreras. He gave us a word or two as we filed past, in a shower of shot and shells, in return for which we gave him a cheer. I saw him too, at Cherubusco, notwithstanding he was hardly able to sit on his horse, with the bullets flying round him.”

Extract of a letter from C. F. Low, dated Mexico, Dec., 1847 :

“To my great surprise I find that General Pierce will leave to-morrow, with the train for Vera Cruz. He has borne himself with great honor and usefulness as a general officer. It is said of him here, that after the terrible battles of the valley of Mexico, he visited the wounded and dying soldier, and

with an untiring vigilance and open hand administered, without stint or measure, to the alleviation of their sufferings. We all regret, especially those of us from New-England, his purpose to retire from the service.”

A letter in the Boston Courier, dated Mexico, Dec., 13th, 1847, says :

“General Pierce has only been in the army during the present campaign, but in the course of that time has deservedly become one of the most popular men in Mexico.”

The New-Orleans Picayune, (whig) thus speaks of him :

“GEN. PIERCE.—This gentleman arrived here yesterday in the New-Orleans, and we see it announced with regret in the papers from Mexico, that he intends resigning his commission. During the short time he has been in the service no officer has more distinguished himself by his promptitude, energy, and courage, and we hope that the report may prove unfounded.”

From the New-Orleans Delta :

“To enumerate all the gallant officers who came over in the New-Orleans, and to notice in proper terms their several claims to the praise and honor of their countrymen, would fill up an entire paper. We cannot, however, omit to notice some of this gallant delegation from our invincible army, whose names and history are most familiar to us. Among

those we regret to perceive the name of General Pierce. We say 'regret,' because we are informed that his return here is in fulfillment of a determination to resign his command in the army. He has been forced to this determination by considerations of a private nature. The commander-in-chief, and the whole army, and especially his own brigade, deeply regret his resignation, and parted from him with great sorrow."

The American Star, published in the city of Mexico, gives the following just notice of his character and services :

"BRIGADIER-GENERAL PIERCE.—Among the distinguished officers of the American army, who return to the United States, with the train which leaves the city to-day, is Brigadier-General Franklin Pierce, of New-Hampshire. The Americans in the city will deeply regret the departure of this accomplished gentleman and officer, and certain we are that their best wishes for his future happiness will go with him. It is General Pierce's gentlemanly bearing, his urbane and republican manners, which have made him so great a favorite with both officers and men. It is his purpose, we believe, to resign the place which he now occupies in the army, immediately upon his return to his residence. Like others of different grades attached to the army, he left the endearments of home at the call of the Government, to participate in the battles of his country.

He left, also, a lucrative profession, which none other than a patriotic motive could have induced him to relinquish. The sacrifice, however, was most cheerfully met. General Pierce has won a high reputation in the United States for his courage and bravery, as every paper that reaches us bears evidence. He left Vera Cruz in the middle of July, with one of the largest reinforcements for General Scott, and the most extensive trains that have left that city since its bombardment.

“In the several battles before the city, General Pierce’s brigade behaved most nobly, as all our readers are well aware, and the General conducted himself most gallantly at Contreras, Churubusco and Molino del Rey, though, in the first named action, he sustained a severe injury, by a plunge and fall of his horse among the rocks of Padierna. During the storm of Chepultepec, he was confined to his room by indisposition, or he would have been charging with his men over the precipitous heights where his gallant friend, the lamented Ransom, fell. But though General Pierce has thus honorably distinguished himself, he is not ambitious of retaining his high position in the service, and thus acquiring distinction in the army. He prefers the quieter and gentler pursuits of professional life, and we know that he will be welcomed to his pleasant home in New-England with hearts as warm as ever beat in the human bosom. He will return to his native hills with new laurels, and with the prayers of all that

he may long live to enjoy the company and society of those who are dear to him. Many fears, since his departure from New-England, have been expressed in the public papers and private letters, that General Pierce had either fallen a victim to the climate of the *tierra caliente*, or under the guns of the enemy. His friends and relatives, however, are now assured of his safety and health, and they will greet him with as warm a welcome as an honored son of New-England ever received. Happiness go with him."

The following letter to the Editors of the Louisville *Democrat*, from Cassius M. Clay, we doubt not, speaks the sentiments of every man in the army who was acquainted with General Pierce. Mr. Clay could surely have no other motive but to do him justice :

"*White Hull P. O., July 18, 1848.*

"*Eds. Democrat:* In your paper of the 5th inst., your correspondent 'C.' represented the Hon. Garet Davis as naming General Pierce as one of the 'bad' appointments of President Polk. I know that in the heat of debate, party expressions are frequently used, not intended to have the effect which they necessarily have when put in print. And from the Hon. G. Davis' usual character of fairness, I am willing to award to him no desire to injure the character of any gallant officer for political ends. But whatever may be the designs of others, I take



pleasure, in addition to the official reports in regard to General Pierce, to say that there was but one opinion of General Pierce, so far as I learned, among the officers of all parties in Mexico. There was complaint of 'bad' appointments by the President—bad, not only by putting civilians over old soldiers of the regular army, but bad '*per se*'—but of these, General Pierce was not one. No considerations ought ever to cause injustice to be done any one. As a political opponent, though personal friend, of General Pierce, my humble testimony to his high worth, intelligence and gallantry, can only be of the least consideration, because here in Kentucky, he is *not* well known, and *therefore* less honored.

Your obedient servant,

C. M. CLAY.

In December of this year, after it was fully ascertained that there would be no more fighting, General Pierce returned home, and on resigning his commission at Washington, left for Concord. His reception by the people of Concord was most enthusiastic. The people, though the day was a rainy one, came out by thousands. A committee was appointed to conduct General Pierce into the Town Hall, where Gen. Low presided. He was accompanied by his aid, Lieut. T. P. Pierce. When he had entered the hall, Gen. Low arose and spoke as follows :

## GEN. LOW'S SPEECH.

“FELLOW CITIZENS: You have not come here to-day to hear me speak, but to listen to the tones of him whom you have so often heard with pleasure and delight. You have come to unite in a patriotic and grateful service; not to discuss any of the great political subject of the day, or the fitness of this or that man for public office. Ours is the more agreeable duty of paying the tribute of respect and gratitude to the gallant soldier who has fought the battles of our country upon the blood-stained fields of Mexico, and to tender to him our thanks for his services, also to express our thanks for the services of the brave men whom he has led in those actions. Of the high motives, of the profound sense of honor from which he acted, I can bear witness. After I had been informed that he had accepted a commission as colonel of the New-England regiment, I took the liberty of asking him if it was true that he had decided to sunder the tender ties of husband, father, and give up the peaceful enjoyments and comforts of home, which he possessed in such an eminent degree. He replied—‘I have accepted of the commission. I could do no otherwise. I was pledged to do it. When I left the Senate, it was with a fixed purpose of devoting myself exclusively to my profession, with the single reservation, that if my country should become engaged in war, I would ever hold myself in readiness to serve her in

the field, if called upon to defend her honor and maintain her rights. War has come, and my plighted word must and shall be redeemed.' He did redeem his pledge. His commission of colonel was superseded by that of brigadier general, and he went forth with the sons of New England. Well we remember how we followed him and his command in our minds, through the pestilential camp at Vera Cruz; then step by step to the National Bridge and Jalapa, where a curtain, as it were, was shut down upon him and his brave band, and cut them off from our view. Every breeze, every whisper, every report which the power of lightning could waft to us, was sought with avidity. Great was the anxiety from the uncertainty that rested on the fate of our friends. But the curtain was lifted. The black cloud rolled away, and the battle field lay revealed to us. Then what admiration and astonishment did we feel! There we beheld nine thousand troops driving before them thirty thousand of the best appointed army ever raised in Mexico. They are pursued over ravines and artificial trenches, cut by the labors of a hundred thousand peons, by one small but gallant army, rushing on line upon line, hill upon hill overwhelming redoubts, storming fortifications, capturing the capital of the enemy, and planting the flag of our country upon the principal palace. Here we see our friend triumphantly leading on his command. But this is not all we see of him. We behold the camp after the hour of battle has passed

away. We behold it wrapped in the silence of night. We see the killed and the wounded, and we look for our friend. We find him passing unattended through the long line of tents, in which were to be seen the palid cheek and exhausted frame of the dying soldier. To minister to them is the business of his lonely rounds. He visits the tents; he hears their last words, and receives their last mortal request, and expends upon them his last shilling to procure for them necessaries which they could not, in such a place, otherwise obtain. Is not such a son worthy of the State that gave him birth? (Cheers) Turning to General Pierce, he continued: I can say no more sir. Your services are understood here; and now, in the name of this meeting, and in my own behalf likewise, I bid you a hearty welcome home to your adopted town. And in the name of all the people in every town in this State, I congratulate you, upon your safe return to the capital of your native State."

#### GEN. PIERCE'S REPLY.

General Pierce now advanced to the front of the platform to reply. He was evidently laboring with deep emotions, the nature of which could be well gathered from the tone and topics of his remarks. Although one of the most forcible and fluent speakers in the country, he on this occasion avoided every thing in the shape of speaking for effect. He talked right out on matters which intensely interested his audience.

“He said, whatever had been his portion of the danger encountered or exposure endured, or the long sad days and sleepless nights of those he had left behind, none of which would have occurred to him but for the remarks of the President, he had been more than compensated by the reception he had met, setting aside the consciousness of duty performed. He felt an embarrassment in addressing the meeting that he could hardly account for. He felt profoundly grateful to that Being, who not only watches over the nations of the earth, but over the welfare of the humblest individual. He did not take to himself the honor of attracting such a numerous and excited assembly as stood before and around him. The gathering was on account of the great number of their gallant sons, brothers, and friends, that had formed a part of his command. They had come to hear not only of those who live, but of those who, having displayed their devotion to their country, now repose on a foreign soil. A set speech to an audience actuated by the feelings which he perceived, would be altogether out of place. It would be a sort of desecration to attempt any display on such occasions. Upon the main topic which they must be anxious to hear about, he could not frame a set speech. They wanted to hear of the Ninth regiment, the glorious New-England regiment, which was assembled in such hot haste, and in such hot haste met the enemy. There was not a generous or just man in the State who had not pro-

nounced in favor of their motives. Laying aside all the ties of home, and the fair promises of youth and its enjoyments, and suffering the partings which press the life-blood from out young hearts, they responded to their country's call, with a high moral purpose that could not be exceeded. During the three weeks at Vera Cruz, caused by a want of mules and wagons for transportation—a delay aggravated by wide-spread sickness—he never heard a murmur from a soldier under his command. A more cheerful set of lads they could not have been if they had been at home by their own happy firesides. Their subsequent exploits had been read in the official reports. He would not detail them. On the march, in the fight, everywhere, one predominant feeling animated them. The question was not, who should be ordered forward; but which corps should be allowed to go forward first. The only dispute was upon claims to be first led against the enemy. At night they were cheerful in their tents, and longing for the morning, which should bring with it the order to move forward to battle. New-Hampshire had no occasion for any other feeling than that of pride in regard to her sons who belonged to the command. They had proved themselves brave, devoted, self-sacrificing spirits. And Concord, too, was well represented among them. There was Henry Caldwell, one of the bravest and most determined soldiers in the army. There was sergeant Stowell, who was shot, plump through the heart, at

Churubusco. As his last breath flowed he whispered to me—‘Do the boys say I behaved well? if I have, write home to my people.’ Then there was sergeant Pike, who had his leg shot off in advancing along on a causeway swept by three batteries. Two amputations, which did not answer the purpose, were performed, and a third was deemed hopeless. Die he must, it was thought. ‘I know better than they do,’ he said. ‘I’ll try another; and when they cut it again I hope they will cut it so that it will stay cut.’ A third amputation was performed, and he lived through it. He and the others named were printers. In the new levies, the printers exceed by twenty per cent. those of any other vocation; and on account of their intelligence and high spirit they have proved the most efficient soldiers in the field.

“General Pierce also named Brown and Swett, of Concord, as particularly distinguished; and Captain Cady and Lieuts. Potter and Dana, of the old line. Nor did he forget sergeant West, of Manchester, who fell at the head of his column; and was always there when there was any fighting to be done. But in mentioning the men of New-Hampshire, or of New-England, he would claim for them no superiority over others. The present army was made up of artillery, cavalry, the old army, and the new levies, representing every State of the Union, and it was not in the power of man to say which had done the best service. To many it had been matter of great surprise that the new levies had

fought as they had done. But it is in the race. He would take from the audience before him a regiment who would do the same. In executing manœuvres and in forming combinations in front of an enemy, by wheeling, countermarching, &c., old soldiers are undoubtedly better; but when it came to close fighting, as in storming or charging, it was the man that did the work, and not the manœuvring; and in such work, the men who had never before been under fire or handled a bayonet, stood well side by side with the long trained soldiers. Another cause of the success of our troops, new and old, was the conduct of the officers, who, from the highest to the lowest, led and cheered on their columns. Hence the disproportion in the loss of officers and men. Hence the loss of that most brave and accomplished of officers of the ten new regiments—Colonel Ransom. He kept pressing up—pressing up—till he was shot dead at the head of his column. The same was true of Colonel Martin Scott, the first shot in the army—a son of New-Hampshire. He raised himself above the protection of a wall. A brother officer begged him not to expose himself unnecessarily. He replied—‘Martin Scott has never yet stooped.’ The next moment a shot passed through his heart. He fell upon his back, deliberately placed his cap upon his breast and died. Colonel Graham, after receiving six severe wounds, continued at the head of his men, and upon receiving a seventh through the heart, slowly



dropped from his horse, and as he fell upon the ground, said—‘Forward, my men!—my word is always—forward!’ And so saying, he died.

“Having referred to Lieutenants Foster and Daniels, and to several officers of the old army, General Pierce proceeded to say, he had to retract opinions he had formerly entertained and expressed, in relation to the Military Academy, at West Point. He was now of the opinion that the city of Mexico could not have been entered in the way it was, but for the intelligence and science in Military Affairs, of the officers of the old army, mostly from West Point. Services were rendered by the officers of the topographical engineers and ordnance, which could not have been rendered, but by men who had received the most complete military education. The force of the Americans had been overrated. Only 7,500 effective men left Puebla to attack a city of 250,000 inhabitants, defended by 35,000 of the best troops ever raised in Mexico, 100 pieces of cannon, and the finest fortifications ever raised, in addition to the natural defences of marshes and lakes.

“In conclusion, he said he was not here to discuss any matters of controversy, but to meet his friends. Yet the subject of war was necessarily presented to their consideration by the occasion. Before entering in it, it was his belief that the war had been irresistibly pressed upon us. If he had doubted before, conversations he had had with the

most intelligent Mexicans, would have confirmed him in the opinion that the war was unavoidable on our part. Four of the Mexican commissioners were in favor of the propositions submitted by Mr. Trist, but they were overawed by threats and demonstrations of the mob in Mexico, stimulated by opponents to the then existing government. Even now the puros will go to the last extremity against a peace. They say it is the first time within the last twenty years, that they have been under any protection. They are in favor of merging the nationality of Mexico in that of the United States. They say they care nothing for a nationality which has afforded them no protection in either civil or political rights. Their rights are protected by American arms.

“Again, the course a very large number of the public presses in the United States has pursued, has created obstacles to peace. Mexican papers are filled with articles and speeches from the United States, denouncing the war on our part, and justifying Mexico. The Mexican editors publish them with the remark that nothing remains to be added by them, to make out the justice of their course towards the United States. On the same day that he saw in a Jalapa paper a whole page of extracts from American papers, he saw stuck up on the trees, the proclamation of General Salas to the guerillas, ending with the watchword—‘Death to the Yankees, without mercy.’ Thus was furnished from

our own country, the food which fed the ferocity that pursued the army at every turn, and caused the butchering of every soldier who fell into their hands. In the office of the Secretary in Mexico, extracts from American papers were found filed away in their pigeon holes. They had been used in framing their proclamations.

“Should the Mexicans find the Americans standing together on the question of the war, peace would follow almost instantaneously. An opportunity is now presented to make peace by strengthening the hands of President Herrera, and the peace party, who have obtained a majority in Congress.”

Having renewed his expressions of gratitude for his reception, General Pierce now sat down.

To show the friendship which General Pierce has ever entertained for General Scott, we subjoin the following letter of his, to Colonel Greene, editor of the *Boston Post*.

“GEN. SCOTT. It is now certain that Gen. Scott has been deprived of his command in Mexico. This is said to have been done on the recommendation of Gen. Pierce, who, doubtless, thinks Scott did not do him *justice* in his official reports. If the signs of the times are to be trusted, the people will deprive the men who have involved the country in the present infamous war, of their ill-used power, quite as summarily as James K. Polk, at the suggestion of Franklin Pierce, has deprived Gen. Scott of his command in Mexico.”

“*Lowell, Feb. 1, 1848.*”

“DEAR SIR: The above paragraph was sent to me under cover of a blank envelop, without any indication of the paper from which it was clipped. If the article referred to myself alone, I should have allowed it to pass, as I have in other instances, without any notice from me. But having observed similar suggestions in other papers, it is perhaps due to the administration, and to the distinguished General from whom I am now widely separated, but to whom I hope ever to be united by sentiments of respect and personal friendship, that I furnish a correction. The paragraph has not the slightest foundation in truth. I was never consulted by the national Executive in relation to the matter to which it refers. From the day my command joined the main army at Puebla, to the hour I left the city of Mexico, there was never a moment when the kindest relations did not exist between the general-in-chief and myself; and I trust I am not likely soon to forget, or lightly appreciate the confidence and friendship which, under all circumstances, he was pleased to extend to me. I need not say, that nothing can be more unpleasant, than for officers who have just returned from the seat of war, to find imposed upon them, the necessity of contradicting statements so untruthful and indelicate.

Your friend and servant,

FRANK. PIERCE.

Col. C. G. GREENE, *Editor of the Boston Post.*”

During this year, the State Legislature voted to General Pierce a splendid sword, as a token of their esteem of him as a man, and of his gallantry as a soldier. We give a few extracts from his reply to the committee, who were delegated by the Legislature, to present it to the General :

“ I accept this splendid weapon from the people of New-Hampshire, with an abiding sense of the personal regard which has never seemed to grow cold. May I not be permitted to say, without reference to my political associations, that I receive it as one among multiplied evidences, so far as the men of my own time of life are concerned, of something like a fraternal esteem and confidence, which it has been my highest purpose to merit, and is my firmest never to lose. In the mean time, I am not unmindful of another and higher consideration, which actuated the Legislature. The sword, though given to me, was designed and received as a token of the estimation in which you hold the services and sacrifices of the officers and soldiers of the brigade, which it was my good fortune to command; and to them I would have the grateful thoughts of my friends turned to-day; to the noble dead; to the men who, with their life-blood, sealed their devotion to the rights and honor of the Republic; to the gallant living, who, having fulfilled their mission amid the untried scenes of an eventful campaign on a foreign soil, are now unobtrusively and usefully pursuing the avocations of civil life at home.

“Your thoughts and purposes in this matter are not circumscribed by the limits of New-Hampshire or New-England. You embrace the 12th and 15th regiments, no less warmly than the 9th. It will ever be a matter of gratification to me, that the three regiments of my brigade were composed of men from the extreme south, north and west of the Union, because it illustrated, in an hour of trial and danger, that unity which is our strength. The question never arose, during the varied scenes of that summer, on what side of a geographical line a man was born or reared; he stood upon the field by your side, an American officer or an American soldier, with an American heart—and that was enough for any of us to know. It was a glorious brotherhood. The highest hope of patriotism looks to the permanence and all-pervading power of that feeling. It is the panoply under which, whatever is dear and precious in our institutions, will repose in security. Over it may the stars and stripes float forever!”

## CHAPTER VIII.

General Pierce on the Religious Test Question — His Speech — Letter to the Stark Monument Committee.

GENERAL PIERCE now devoted himself to the duties of his legal profession. About this time a State Constitutional Convention was held in New-Hampshire, to revise the Constitution, and General Pierce allowed himself to be elected a member of that body, by the citizens of Concord. The Convention met at Concord in November, 1850, and among its members were Ichabod Bartlett, Levi Woodbury, and Edmund Parker, and many other of the master minds of the State. It was, perhaps, the most dignified body which ever met in New-Hampshire, containing all the men of influence in both parties. General Pierce was elected President of the convention by a vote of 257 to 6. The course pursued by him at this convention constitutes an important portion of his life, inasmuch as in it he came out boldly for religious freedom. No sooner had the nomination of General Pierce to the Presidency become fairly known, than party presses at once began to accuse him of approving the Religious Test which is a part of the Constitution of the State of New-Hampshire. This Test in theory excludes all

Catholics from office in the State, though, to a certain extent, it has become obsolete, and a dead letter. From the first moment of his political life, General Pierce has been entirely opposed to this odious clause in the Constitution.

The present Constitution of New-Hampshire was formed in the year 1792, and has never since been altered. The legal method of amendment is first by a vote of the people to call a convention for that purpose; second the adoption of amendments by such convention; and third, the ratification of such proposed amendments *by a two-thirds vote of the people*. Since General Pierce first entered upon the stage of public life, the question of the revision of the Constitution has seven or eight times come before the people, and every time he has used his influence to secure said revision, *and avowedly for the main purpose of abolishing the obnoxious and oppressive Religious Test*. Every time, however, until 1850, the friends of a convention were defeated. In 1850, every Democratic press in New-Hampshire advocated the calling of a convention to abolish all religious tests in the Constitution, and a convention was called by a vote of the people. The subjects of the Religious Test and Property Qualification were taken up at an early day. Such was General Pierce's anxiety to induce the convention to amend the Constitution in reference to the Religious Test, that he left the chair, and entered the arena of debate.



On the fourth day of the session, November 11, the "Bill of Rights" being under consideration in committee of the whole, Judge Woodbury moved to strike out the word "protestant" in the sixth section, where it provides that the Legislature may authorize towns, parishes, &c., to make provision for the support "of public *protestant* teachers of piety, religion and morality." As there were other amendments to be proposed to this article, Judge Woodbury withdrew his motion, and the article was passed over. At a subsequent stage of the proceedings, as appears by record, General Pierce proposed to Judge Woodbury to renew the above motion, which he did; and the word "protestant" was stricken out. The following is Judge Woodbury's speech made on the occasion—one of the most convincing ever made upon a similar subject. We copy it here, because General Pierce's speech followed it, and is connected with it in a manner, as he refers to it in terms of great commendation:

#### RELIGIOUS TESTS.

On motion of Mr. Parker, of Nashua, the Convention resolved itself into the Committee of the Whole, on the report of the Committee on Property Qualifications and Religious Tests. (Mr. Sawyer, of Nashua, in the chair.)

RELIGIOUS TESTS.—The first resolution striking out all religious tests, was taken up.

Judge Woodbury, made the following remarks:

“MR. CHAIRMAN : Being opposed to the test, that some of our principal offices shall not be filled, except by persons of the Protestant religion, I ask leave to offer a few reasons for it. I do it quite as much to vindicate our fathers, in part, for inserting it, as myself for resisting it. Constitutions, it is conceded, ought to be durable instruments, being the great fundamental laws passed by the people, and lasting at times, as ours has, without a shadow of a change for half a century ; yet I am willing, when a provision like this becomes hostile to the tolerant spirit of the age, and a more enlightened public opinion, to expunge it at once from our system of government. I do this too, the more readily at the present moment, in order to present another illustration to the world, how easily laws and even constitutions, where objectionable, can be changed and re-changed in this free country without a resort to violence, and to measures treasonable to public liberty and the safety, as well as the best interest of our blessed Union. Nor is it that I oppose religion, but support it. I am neither deistic nor innovating rashly.

“On a little examination, it will be found that this test crept into the constitution originally, under a temporary impulse, and without having any influence on the affairs of the State, practically, as they then stood. This is the vindication of our fathers.

“Tradition says—and I probably had it in early life, from the venerable parent of the member from

Epping, (Mr. Plumer)—that parent, the Nestor of the politicians of that generation, and sole survivor of the convention of 1791—that the provision was inserted in 1784, to repel taunts which had been flung out by some, after the French alliance, that there was to be an alliance also with the French religion, and the establishment of it here. The provision fell then still born—so few Catholics existed in the State. But in 1791, the impropriety of retaining it on principle became so manifest, that after one or two ineffectual efforts, the convention voted to erase it, and a majority of the people concurred with them; yet not being quite two-thirds, the provision remained, though against the will of a decided majority.

“The principle of the test was, even then, so odious, that, as Catholics increased since in the State, from a mere handful as then, another convention would, I think, long ere this, have been called for expunging this alone, had they become numerous, or had the test been much more than a *brutum fulmen*, or used practically to oppress them. If any soreness against Catholic persecution of the Puritans abroad, mingled with this, and rendered prejudices stronger with some against erasing the test, they ought, for more recent persecution by Laud and the Episcopalians in England, to have excluded them also. But it was right to exclude neither. Now, under more auspicious circumstances, we have, and I trust will, improve the opportunity to do

justice to all. There is now no dread of French influence or French religion. The rights of all Christians, at least to equal freedom and power, in our system of government, have become a practical question, and should of course be settled on broad, enlightened and humane principles. Fifty years, with their discussions and researches, and experiments, have poured a flood of light over the true nature of liberty of conscience, and all its great safeguards. Let us, then, do what our fathers themselves would, if now living, under increased light and experience.

“How does the question stand under republican principles of government? By them constitutions and laws are made more to protect rights than to confer them. They are made for protecting liberty, equality, conscience, property and life, rather than to give most of these, or to establish any particular set of religious opinions. This is not, that religion is a minor concern, and not in some view the greatest for an immortal being, but rather that religion is a concern between God and man, and seldom to be interfered with by governments. Such intolerant interference has caused oceans of blood to flow, and millions to perish at the stake, and was one of the great causes which expelled our fathers to a wilderness and the mercy of savage foes. The republican government afterwards established here, should, if true to republican principles, shield all in their religious tenets while conducting peacefully,

and protect all in their pursuits and worship, however different, while acting as good citizens, or it becomes suicidal, and, like despotism, persecutes differences of opinions, and introduces the grossest irregularities.

“How does the question stand on the principles of our bill of rights?”

“It is forced to admit that each sect should enjoy, and it does now enjoy here, the privilege to hold property. If to hold that, why not protect by laws which each helps to make? It concedes to each sect the right to sue for injuries to character, for injuries to children and wife, and to worship God in freedom. Why not, then, let them aid in legislating to protect all these? You hold out the husk, but withdraw the kernel. You allow firearms, but neither gunpowder nor lead to load them, and make them effective. In the bill of rights, you pledge also to all sects equality, but afterwards by this test, you make all but Protestants unequal. You will promise entire freedom of conscience to all, and treat it in the 4th article as so high a privilege, as not to be in any way unalienable, and yet you leave others than Protestants defenceless as to it, by disfranchising them from filling offices to secure it by legislation.

“It is contrary to the Declaration of Independence, and of the very first article in your bill of rights, declaring all men equal. You do not thus give to all men equal privileges. It is also in the

teeth of the same bill of rights, to say one sect shall not be subordinate to another, and still disfranchise one, or let one hold offices forbidden to others. It is likewise contrary to all sound experience and reason to say, as we do, that Catholics may vote, but not be voted for; and that they may be well competent for one duty and not the other. So it is inconsistent to say, as we do, that they may be jurors or judges, yet not legislators—or agree, as we do in the Constitution of the Union, that Catholics may be fit and safe for members of Congress, Senators, Cabinet Officers, yea, Presidents, and yet denounce them as unfit and unsafe at home, to represent one hundred and fifty polls in one of our small townships. It is, in truth, much like the great grievance which led to our Revolution—*taxation without representation*. All other than Protestant sects are virtually deprived of representation, as they are made ineligible to the Legislature. Their opinions and wishes are unheard there, from themselves. They are branded. They are driven forth as with the mark of Cain, for servitude and ignominy.

Why not as well explicitly say—and not do it covertly—that none but Protestants are fit for a republic? Why not say that Catholic Maryland is unfit?—Catholic Hungary?—Catholic Ireland?—Catholic France? Why halt at half-way measures? Why not say it is a mere creed in religious faith, and not the mind, heart, morals, which renders men suitable for self-government? or that we establish

government for the former alone, and not to secure liberty, character, property and life?

Indeed, this test debars man from what we allow to the degraded African, as he is eligible here to hold office as well as to vote. It seems often to have been overlooked; likewise that these tests are restraints or chains on those who make them, as well as on others. The Protestant himself cannot now vote here for a Catholic any more than a Catholic vote for one, though the candidate may be on all hands confessedly the best qualified man for State Representative, Senator, or Governor.

If urged that the power to make such tests in constitutions exist, it is no argument for the moral and political right to do it than it is because we have the naked power, that we have also the moral and political right to unite Church and State, create an inquisition, or, having stripped other sects of the privilege to hold office, to go further, and rob them of equal rights to earth, air, fire, and water, and the same hopes and means for happiness, both in time and eternity. One profession alone in business might, on a like ground, be admitted to sit in the Legislature—such as merchants or lawyers. While the present test continues, it is with an ill grace we can call other countries bigoted, who, like England have emancipated the Catholics, and made contributions for their education. All the former fears as to their numbers or political principles have now become groundless. In most Catholic countries Jesuitism is

banished, and the inquisition abolished, and the Pope himself has become quite a reformer and republican, and Catholics generally are not believed in morals or the religious sentiment to be behind the age, or the true standard for public liberty. What other sect shall throw at them the first stone? What one vindicate the present exclusion, and not admit that if other than Protestant sects had a majority here, these last should not also be stripped of power? and that our ancestor's complaints of penalties and disfranchisements were ill founded? It is doing what we have always censured in others. The error is that this exclusion concedes in principle, that religion is to be regulated by a majority rather than the sincere conviction and conscience of each individual; that only certain sects are moral and intelligent enough to exercise political power, which is fallacious and false under our forms of freeschools and universal education; or that reason and Providence cannot uphold correct principles without our feeble aid and our proscriptions; and that Deity or his adorable Son need persecution of some sects to sustain and render triumphant pure religion. So, if it be insisted that one denomination must be better and more trustworthy than the rest—which may as well be done even among Protestants—why not trust to that one alone and proscribe all the rest, though Protestant? Which shall be that special favorite? So, which one profession shall, under a like system, rule?



“What sect do Sidney, or Locke, or Jefferson, or Madison think fit to be trusted with legislative power? How is this, too, in our neighboring republics? Do they thus ostracise a part? On the contrary, they had the experience of the Revolution to aid them—by the Catholic Carrols and Lafayettes being moral and brave as the most Puritanical—and many others of that creed have fought side by side with us since at Chippewa and Bridgewater, and under the walls of Mexico, and shown that their creed is not deserving proscription. In short, without going further into the question now, it seems to my mind not only unjust to other sects, but not reputable to us as a people, or to the age in which we live, to retain this test longer.

“Without fatiguing the convention with more on this occasion, I will only add that considerations like these have led to the abolition of such tests in many other of our sister States, and in the Constitution of the United States, and in my view, require us to imitate their wise example.”

General Pierce now rose, and made the following brief but able remarks. We copy from the record:

“Mr. Pierce, of Concord, said that he could concur heartily in all that the gentleman from Portsmouth had uttered, except in his last remark. It was quite obvious that, so far from having taxed the patience of the committee, his speeches upon both

the great subjects embraced in the resolutions under consideration had been listened to with unqualified gratification. Not because he threw the weight of his high character and the power of his arguments into the scale on the side of right in a case where there was hesitancy—where the judgment of members was not definitely formed—where there was a shade of doubt as to the result; but because it was desirable that the grounds on which we proceed in matters of such grave import should be stated, as they had been, with singular force of reasoning and beauty of illustration. It was also a service well rendered, not less in vindication of the past than the present. The motives of the fathers of the present Constitution and of the people in 1792, had been placed in their true light. So much was due to them. It was also due to this convention, and the people whom they represent, and due to the reputation of the State abroad, that it will be well understood that both of the provisions—the religious test and the property qualification—had been a dead letter, at least as long as the chairman (Mr. Sawyer) had participated to any extent in the councils of the State. They had been practically inoperative from Mr. P's earliest recollection. The chairman would remember that many years ago, at a time of high party excitement, it was suggested that a member of the House of Representatives occupied his seat without the requisite property qualification. But two objections at once occurred to

any action upon the subject : the first was, that investigation and action, instead of rejecting one member, might probably vacate twenty seats ; the second was, that no member could probably be found to move in the matter so utterly repugnant to public sentiment.

“The religious test in the Constitution had undeniably been a stigma upon the State, at home and abroad. It had been repeatedly named to him, and once at least in a foreign land, as unworthy of the intelligent and liberal spirit of our countrymen. Although he at times felt keenly the reproach, he had uniformly referred, as he had no doubt other gentlemen had done, to other parts of the Constitution as illustrating the true and free spirit of our fathers, and to these as, at least for many years, a blank. The great question of religious toleration was practically settled, and settled in a manner never to be reversed while we retain our present form of government, more than thirty years ago. The provisions now claiming the attention of the committee could hardly be said to involve an open question. They had been the subject of discussion in every lyceum, every academy, debating club, every town ; and there was perhaps no subject upon which public opinion and public feeling was so uniform and decisive. The substance—if substance they ever had—having long since passed away, he rejoiced that the proper occasion had at length arrived to dispense with the form.”

To make the further history of this important matter clear, we quote from the pen of Mr. Butterfield, of the Concord *Patriot*, one of the most important men in New-Hampshire :

“ The resolutions abolishing the religious test and property qualifications were unanimously agreed to in committee ; and the committee then rose and reported them to the convention. The question was taken at once, in the convention, on the adoption of the resolution striking out the religious test, and it was adopted, only *seven* members voting against it.

“ The convention made a great number of amendments to the Constitution—making almost an entire new one, in fact. Changes of a very important character, relating to the basis of representation, the judiciary, &c. &c., which the people never expected, were made. These, and the great length and expense of the session, rendered the convention rather unpopular, and the opposition press seized upon these facts to prejudice the convention and its doings, in the minds of the people, holding the Democratic party responsible for the whole. The consequence was, that when the amendments were submitted to the people, thus prejudiced against them and their authors, in advance, the whole were rejected together. They were acted upon at the annual meetings, when other matters engrossed the minds of the people, and not much more than half of the voters of the State voted upon them.

“The convention met again in April, 1851, to receive the verdict of the people upon their doings. A large portion of the members were in favor of adjourning at once, without submitting any further propositions to the people. But Judge Woodbury and General Pierce strenuously urged that the sense of the people should again be taken upon striking out the odious tests in question. Some of the leading federal members opposed this as an insult to the people; but the majority were prevailed upon to try the question again. Accordingly, they were again submitted, at the last annual election. The result was just what was anticipated. In the bustle and excitement of a most fiercely contested election, with the prejudice excited against the convention by the opposition press, but about a third part of the voters acted upon them; and they were again rejected. No man of candor and intelligence will contend that this was a deliberate expression of the sentiments of the people of this State upon the question of religious toleration. Those sentiments were expressed thirty years ago, when the Toleration act was passed—an act whose spirit is in direct opposition to this test. Everybody admits that no expression of their sentiments upon the merits of the question under consideration, has yet been obtained. The vote in most towns was taken at a most exciting political contest, after the principal business of interest to the mass of voters had been done, and the larger proportion of them had left for

their homes; and it is a libel upon the people of New-Hampshire to represent this as a deliberate expression of their views upon the great question of religious freedom and equality.

“Something has been said in the papers in regard to the degree of responsibility which attaches to the two parties for this result. All we have to say upon this point is, that for more than twenty years, the federal press and leaders unitedly opposed, and thereby prevented, the call of a convention for the avowed purpose of expunging these tests from our Constitution; that they favored a convention in 1850 only when they saw plainly that one would be called in spite of them; that if they had not sought, by all means in their power, to render that convention and its doings odious to the people, these amendments would undoubtedly have been approved and these illiberal and unjust features of our Constitution would have been expunged. These are plain truths, known to be so by the people of this State. We know that, at the last session of the convention, a number of the leading federal members, including one of their late candidates for Governor, strenuously opposed the amendment in question; while General Pierce and all the other leading Democratic members advocated it.

“Such are the simple facts in regard to this matter, and from them the people abroad can judge for themselves what truth there is in the charge against General Pierce that he opposed the aboli-

tion of the religious test. It has not even a shade of truth to rest upon ; and its authors will find that instead of injuring him, it will re-act upon them with fearful effect, when the truth is placed before those whom they have sought to deceive."

In the early part of 1850, General Pierce was invited to attend a meeting, called to take measures for the erection of a monument to the illustrious General Stark of Revolutionary memory. To this invitation of the committee, he replied as follows :

*"Concord, Feb. 22, 1850.*

"GENTLEMEN: Your note of this date, inviting me to attend a meeting 'to be held in the City Hall of Manchester, on the 2nd day of March, at 7 o'clock P. M., for the purpose of taking measures to erect a monument to Major General John Stark,' has just been received. I fear that my engagements at court in Belknap county will prevent me from participating with you in this preliminary meeting ; but whether present or absent, you will need no assurance of my earnest co-operation in the successful prosecution of an object which must make a strong appeal to the heart of every patriotic son of New-Hampshire. It will, I am confident, be the work of our whole population. Fathers and sons, mothers and daughters, will heartily unite in an enterprise around which must ever cluster so many proud and grateful recollections, and they will make the

column worthy of one of the bravest and most self-sacrificing spirits of an age of heroes. How naturally and inseparably united in association are the names of Washington and Marion, Stark and Sullivan ; and how fresh and delightful, on this anniversary, the memories of these great men, their associates. They lived and labored in a common cause, with unflinching fortitude, at a period full of discouragement, danger and privation. In what was the crowning element of their final and complete triumph? Doubtless, in so far as human instrumentalities were concerned, in the bond of brotherhood and patriotism that knit together all hearts and nerved all hands. A participator in that struggle made this entry in his military journal, May, 1777. 'The maxim adopted by our enemies is 'Divide and conquer.' We enjoin the command, 'Unite and be invincible.' 'Liberty or death'—'Unite or die'—are the mottos which blazon the chronicles of the day, and embellish the military standards of almost every militia company.'

"The value of whatever will revive and strengthen this sentiment cannot be over-estimated, while every proposition, every act, every idle word, calculated to weaken it, is a proposition, an act, a word, false to humanity, and treasonable to human liberty.

"God forbid that, while at the North and the South the present generation are erecting monuments commemorative of the events of the Revolution, and of the services of its distinguished leaders,



they shall, by encouragement or countenance to sectional distrust, cast a pall over all the bright hopes of the future.

“In the fortunes of war Molly Stark was not made a widow at Bennington, but the monument will call up saddening but glorious memories of the fields of Lexington and Bunker Hill, Yorktown and the Cowpens, and of the many homes never after gladdened by the sound of a husband’s and a brother’s voice. Will it not profitably remind us of the price at which the present power, freedom, and prosperity of the great confederacy were purchased, and necessarily of the only means by which they can be sustained and perpetuated?

“I shall look with interest for an account of your proceedings.

I am, very respectfully,

Your friend and servant,

FRANK. PIERCE.

Hon. H. AYER, etc., etc., Committee.

## CHAPTER IX.

Gen. Pierce as an Orator—His success in Examining Witnesses—His power as a Plealer—His Plea in the Wentworth Case.

GENERAL PIERCE, as an orator, stands in an exalted position. He has all the natural graces of oratory—is a man to make a deep impression upon an audience by his *manner*—is impassioned, yet logical, in all his speeches. He never yet made a poor speech, and succeeds best with but little preparation—upon the spur of the moment. Unfortunately, his best efforts are unreported. His finest pleas at the bar are not preserved. As a lawyer, he has long ranked among the very first in the Union. He is not surpassed by a single lawyer in New-Hampshire, in the eloquence of the bar; not even by that brilliant and far-famed man, Ichabod Bartlett, of Portsmouth. He is one of the most skillful managers of suits, and has a peculiar faculty in pumping the truth out of a witness. In this respect he is greatly like the late Daniel O'Connell. A witness in his hands can conceal nothing. He is an excellent reasoner, but his great power lies in his appeals to the feelings of a jury. There is no lawyer in New-England, who has greater success in winning verdicts than General Pierce. It is almost proverbial, in New-Hampshire, that a man is sure

of a favorable verdict, with Frank Pierce, as counsel and attorney. His eloquence is of a peculiar nature: it is like that of the French, full of brilliancy, animation, and yet is profound. He also has a powerful command of sarcasm, and uses it with great effect occasionally, though it is entirely foreign to his nature to treat any one with severity. It is very unfortunate that the most distinguished of General Pierce's speeches at the bar are not preserved. The only one ever reported we will present to the reader. It was badly reported, but still, it will give the reader a faint idea of his legal talents. It was made in defence of Asa and Henry T. Wentworth, charged with the murder of Jonas L. Parker, March 26, 1845. The case was tried before the Police Court, Judge Potter on the bench, of Manchester, N. H., in May, 1850. The case at the time excited great attention throughout the country, and the most of our readers will recollect it. The case was a mysterious one, and General Pierce's plea was able, ingenious, and eloquent, and would, of itself, place him among the first advocates of this or any country:

ARGUMENT OF GENERAL PIERCE,

*In behalf of Asa and Henry T. Wentworth, before the Police Court at Manchester, July 2d, 1850.*

“When your honor indulged me with an adjournment this forenoon, it was with the hope and intention on my part, to abridge materially the remarks

I proposed to submit in this case, as well as to omit a further discussion upon those points so eloquently and ably argued by my friends who have preceded me. It will be my purpose to discuss as calmly and dispassionately as I can, the evidence bearing upon the two respondents for whom I appear.

“My friend who first preceded me, has said that in arguing the case, he labored under no ordinary embarrassment. I must confess that I also am affected by feelings of a similar character. I have, from the outset, labored under great apprehensions—not from the evidence that has been introduced, but from the tremendous and unparalleled, if not unscrupulous exertions, that have been made by the retainers of the Government, to procure testimony, and inflame the public mind against these prisoners. I have entertained, from the first, no doubt of the innocence of the accused. But the extreme danger of the prisoners, I could not but know full well. When I have seen here an array of men from almost every section of the State—when I have seen here the active and energetic sheriff of the county of Rockingham, and his jailor and deputies—all putting forth their utmost exertions to hunt up evidence, and create a prejudice against these men—when I have seen here felons unloosed from the jails of our own and a neighboring State, and wretches raked from almost every locality, to be used as witnesses, I confess I have labored under some apprehensions. It was fearful in itself, and I could not be insensible

of the extreme danger in which my clients were placed. I saw, in the beginning, that their guilt was here a foregone conclusion—not a conclusion to be regarded in the light of an opinion—for nothing is to be dignified with the name of opinion, which is taken up without research, and held without knowledge. It cannot be denied that popular prejudice was fully aroused, and it seemed almost like folly to attempt to secure an impartial investigation. Yet perhaps I should say that this tribunal is as free from partiality and prejudice as the common lot of humanity will permit. No, I cannot say this; for I do not believe it. Your honor would be more than human not to be influenced in some degree by this strong current of popular prejudice. Still, I may be permitted to hope, and I do ask your honor to rise above this prejudice, and to decide the case upon the law and the testimony.

“At South-Berwick the hypothesis laid down by the Government was, that Horace Wentworth was the man who committed the murder, that Clark planned it, and that my clients were near to aid and assist. I take it for granted that they abide by this hypothesis now; for if they intend to change it, every consideration of justice and fairness requires that we should be informed of it. I take it for granted that Horace Wentworth, who, it is charged, committed the murder, and Clark, the man who, upon the hypothesis of the Government, planned it, having proved, what the Government seemed to re-

quire, incontestably their absence and innocence, are to be discharged. Taking that for granted, I ought not, perhaps, to suppose, for a moment, that my clients, after an examination of a hundred days, are to be held to answer further.

“The idea of holding the accessories without the principal, is too absurd to be indulged; and yet, I wish by marshaling this evidence, which has been placed before your honor somewhat disjointedly, to show, not that my clients cannot be holden, but that they also are incontestably innocent. And on this ground, and with this purpose, I shall proceed.

“Let me call your attention to the nature and circumstances of this startling murder—a murder more remarkable for the boldness of its conception, the pertinacity with which the plan once adopted was carried out, and the desperate recklessness of its final consummation, than any, so far as I know, that has hitherto marked the history of crime.

“During the evening, Parker is sitting in the saloon. While he is still there, and before it is yet late, the murderer comes to the door of his dwelling, adjoining the saloon, to call him out. The man is seen; yet, with unflinching boldness, he rings the bell. None but the most desperate and hardened villain would, under these circumstances, have dared to go on. He was a man schooled in crime, one who had murder in his heart, and yet, as the testimony shows, could put a smile on his face. All the evidence proves him to have been acquainted with

Parker, and to have been a man of powerful strength. Fellows' testimony, as at first given in his deposition, proves them to have been intimate acquaintances. But when this prosecution is commenced, and it is sought to charge Horace Wentworth with this fearful butchery, it is found necessary to make it appear that the man who called Parker out was a stranger, because it cannot be proved that Horace and Parker ever saw each other in their lives. Hence it is that Mr. Fellows is brought in here to swear now, that they did not seem to be acquainted, and that Horace Wentworth is a perfect *fac simile* of the man. But we produce here a copy of his deposition, given immediately after the murder, and dash to the ground this contrived testimony to meet a contrived case.

“You have heard the positive testimony of Mrs. Gilman—the woman called upon by Cilley's illustrious compeer, and asked to describe the man she saw on the night of the murder, walking up Manchester street with Parker. After giving to him the same description she has given here upon the stand, Dr. Gregg asked if she ‘can't say he was a little slimmer?’ and getting no satisfactory reply, then attempts to frighten her from testifying in this case. She says she was stooping in the street, on her way home from a singing school, to find a chain which she had dropped, when Parker and the murderer passed along. Parker came up to her with a lantern, stopped a moment until another light was pro-

cured, and then went on. You will notice here how this statement is corroborated by Dr. Morrill, for it was at just about this spot, that he says he saw a light crossing the street. Mrs. Gilman and Mrs. Fogg bear witness, as does also Dr. Morrill, to the stout, athletic frame of the man with Parker on that fatal night. Mrs. Fogg followed behind them several rods. They were walking together arm in arm, engaged in familiar conversation. And here I will take occasion to say that I have been surprised that any reliance or importance, should have been placed by any one, either in the man's gait, or the size of his boots. He undoubtedly disguised as much as he could his general appearance, and most probably did not then have on the boots he usually wore. On the next morning, the awful tragedy was revealed. We may now inquire, what was the character of the struggle that took place on the spot of the murder. Every thing goes to show that it was protracted and violent. There can be no doubt that the first stroke was upon Parker's neck, and was intended to completely sever the trachea and dispatch him without a murmur. This failed, and a terrible struggle ensued. Dr. Crosby swears to us that the perforated wound upon the neck might not have proved fatal, and that it would not at once disable the man, or diminish his strength. If Horace, then a mere boy, had been his assailant, what would have prevented the muscular and agile Parker, from seizing him and dashing him at once



to the ground? It could not have been a struggle between Parker and this boy, but between two powerful men. The prints in the snow indicated that they closed, and that both came twice to the earth before the final fall. Who was that man? Was it a stripling not yet twenty-one years old, whose cheeks the bloom of boyhood had not yet deserted? No; he was a man of strength and prowess, confident of his muscular power. He had dabbled his hand in blood before. It was no new experiment. Horace Wentworth could not have ventured into such a desperate encounter. The moral impossibility of his dashing off suddenly and at once into such a depth of crime, is as great as the moral impossibility of a child's performing the labor of a man.

“I now come to inquire, what was at that time the situation of the two respondents for whom I appear? Where were they? It has again and again been rumored that I should not here adhere to the *alibi* set up for Henry T. Wentworth, at Saco and South Berwick. I shall do it. My position is this—that Henry T. Wentworth was on that night at Saco. I maintain that there is no evidence of his having been any where else. First, where was he on Tuesday night preceding the murder? It is proved by Maybury, the Government witness, that he was at Saco, and that he had there conversation with him between eight and nine o'clock in the evening. Next, where was he the morning but one after the murder? At Saco, as proved also by

Maybury. How was it possible for him to have left Saco, after Maybury saw him on Tuesday night, and traverse, unseen, a distance of eighty miles, so as to reach Manchester on Wednesday evening? How did he come here? No man saw him on the way; no man heard of him; no man noticed his absence from his business in Saco. He managed this matter with perfect secrecy until he arrived within a mile and a half of the scene of the murder. He then overtakes Samuel Bartlett, and next finds himself seated by his side on a load of sand. Was there ever anything so absurd?

“On the morning after the deed, the news spread like lightning. It was known in every direction, and every one was on the lookout. And yet on this morning, as testified by Eliza Jane Smith, he left Asa’s house. Where did he go? Is there no man who can say he saw him going across the country, or passing in that direction? He is the first man at Saco, in whose hands a handbill containing an account of the murder was seen on Friday morning. How could he have gone back those eighty miles and nobody have seen him? If he had been absent from his business, would not scores have noticed it at Saco, at the time, and remembered it? How improbable is such a story! And will not your honor require more than ordinary proof before you can believe it? If it is to be made out at all, you are to have it established by conclusive evidence. Now, to my mind, the testimony of Maybury alone, is

sufficient to overbear everything that has been put into this case against our position. They were rival coach drivers at Saco, and had Henry been absent at that time, he must have noticed that departure. Yet he says he did not, though he heard Henry talking about Parker, on the very evening he must have started for Manchester, if he started at all; and when the news of the murder comes down, Henry is the first man at the depot who shows him a handbill, and at the same time informs him that it was the very Parker who had just before been down there.

“ I turn now to the testimony of Samuel Bartlett. Did ever so absurd a story as his gain credit any where in a court of justice? Look at the improbabilities of his testimony. He swears that Henry was on foot, and overtook him and his team within a mile and a half or two miles of Manchester. When he had got opposite to him, Bartlett said to him, ‘ Henry, how are you?’ Henry at first made no reply, but on being addressed a second time, said, ‘ I wish you would not call me Henry, for I do not want to be known.’ Bartlett then invited him to get up and ride with him, and to avoid observation, as he says, he took a seat upon the off side of the load. Bartlett’s son, Philip, and Moses Drew, were with a team immediately behind, but how a seat upon the off side could better conceal Henry from their observation, than one upon the nigh side, we are left by the witness wholly unin-

formed. On their way to the city they got off the wagon several times, and then Henry would step along before Bartlett, that he might not be seen. I do not know how to argue testimony of this character. It is too glaringly false and absurd to gain belief anywhere. He can tell nothing of his appearance—he does not know whether he wore a hat or a cap, or whether he had, or had not on, an outside garment, nor even whether his clothes were white or black. He only remembers that he told him not to call him Henry, and by way of sharpening his attention, asked him to say nothing about him, for he did not want it known that he was in Manchester.

“It has been asked, why we did not allow Mr. Bunton to be put on the stand to corroborate this statement? Simply for the reason that his testimony upon this point, or the testimony of any man of his habits, cannot be reliable. There is a man of character and standing here, a member of the investigating committee, whom the Government might have called to the stand. Why have they not produced Mr. Morrison to substantiate this evidence of Bartlett? Is it not because his story cannot be substantiated by any fair, credible testimony? But what is the nature of the communication Bartlett now swears he made to Mr. Morrison, two or three weeks after the murder? He told him—not that Henry rode up on the day of the murder, but ‘*about that time.*’ He did not then fix it as being the night

of the murder, and he did not so inform Mr. Morrison. If such information has been given to a member of this committee, I ask why it was necessary to send Colonel Chase and Mr. Rowell, to Saco, to ascertain where Henry was on the night of the murder. If Bartlett had already informed them that he saw Henry here, there surely would have been no sort of occasion for all this. The truth in regard to the matter is, if Morrison received any such information at all, he considered it as nothing more than a drunken vagary, and unworthy the slightest attention. Do you suppose if Bartlett had disclosed this fact to Mr. Morrison, at a time when the evidence shows that Henry was suspected, Morrison would not have inquired who was with him? and would not the boy Philip have been seen to ascertain whether he would corroborate his father? Philip is now produced by us upon the stand, and swears that he knows nothing about the matter, and that he did not see Henry Wentworth from the time he left Manchester, in the fall of 1844, until he saw him here at this trial. He also testifies that he never heard this fact mentioned by his father, until a very short time previous to the Saco examination. This testimony is very material, and throws discredit upon Bartlett's whole story.

“Again, Bartlett's prevarication and attempted deception in regard to his books are enough in themselves to overthrow and impeach his entire testimony. In answer to my question where he had left

his books, I ask your Honor if he was not guilty of positive falsehood? And when the book is finally produced, is it not palpable that the date 1845, which he exhibited, was once 1844? and is it not also evident that the word 'March' has been written over a spot where another has been effaced? The load of sand is all right, by which he says he fixes the date—the charge to Bunton is right, and squares well with his testimony—every thing is all right but the infamous forgery the book bears upon its face.

[Here General Pierce was interrupted by Bunton, who was understood to say. "I say the books are all right—Bartlett tells the truth," or something to that effect.]

"There, sir, is the man whom the government has taunted me with not wishing to see on the stand, sitting in a drunken reverie. There he sits, bloated and besotted. Oh, I blush for my native county, that such characters should be brought forward to sustain this prosecution.

"Bartlett again swears that he fixes the time of his seeing Henry on this day by the fact, that on this particular night he left his load of sand upon the Head lot—a thing which he says he never did before or since. But in this he is directly contradicted by his son Philip, who swears that this was the spot where their loads were usually left. So much for the story of Samuel Bartlett. And I now ask your Honor and every body else, if upon such

testimony you would hang even a dog of bad reputation.

“But let us look at this case further. Asa Wentworth removed from Manchester to Saco in 1848, where he has since been struggling to acquire a pittance for those for whom every good man at his time of life labors more than for himself. A year and a half ago he is arrested at Saco for this murder. A seven-weeks' examination ensues, and nothing being found against him, he is honorably discharged. Scarce a year is passed, when he is again arrested on the same charge. In order that he may be prevented from obtaining witnesses, or be ruined in procuring their attendance, he is dragged thirty miles from his home to undergo another examination. With a fiendlike barbarity, the poor privilege of visiting his home and arranging his disordered business is denied him, while he is delayed near the confines of New-Hampshire. He is at last brought to Manchester, where he is compelled to go through with another long protracted examination. For more than a hundred days this investigation at South Berwick and here has been proceeding, and now that the evidence has closed there is not a respectable and intelligent man in the court room, who believes, or will stand up and say, that upon this evidence any grand jury, that ever was empannelled or ever will be empannelled, in the county of Hillsborough, can ever find an indictment against him. Why, then, oppress these men farther?

“We next come to the testimony of Mrs. Eliza Jane Smith. I would like to be informed who it was that first fished up this wretched prostitute and brought her here to testify? Who aided in manufacturing her story, and drilled and trained her for the court room? She was not capable of framing this story herself. Some one must have done it for her. Why was she, I ask, brought here? It grew out of the fact that there is testimony in this case going to show that there was a wagon that night stationed near the spot of the murder—loud talk was heard near the woods. The murderer probably ran up to this wagon which was provided to carry him away. But being all covered and reeking with blood after his tremendous struggle, he was told it would not answer for him to get in. It was seen by some sagacious and unprincipled man, either here or at Saco, that it was necessary to train this abandoned woman to meet this part of the case—a woman so vile and besotted that the government counsel had her instructed before she came upon the stand, even as to the obligation of an oath. Not only this, but she has evidently been trained in every material part of her testimony. What a fiction is her whole story! Henry comes in ‘the afternoon—Horace comes before him—Henry goes out into the shed—comes in again—puts on his circular cape and pulls down his cap—leaves the house, and at a late hour returns—he calls aloud in the entry for the girls, and asks for a shirt—this wo-



man procures one for him — he takes it and hands to her in a few minutes his own, blooded to the elbow, and then retires to bed. The next morning he rises early, between four and five o'clock, and asks for something to eat. While sitting at the table, an hour before the murder of Parker is known, he speaks out abruptly and says to her, 'if you ever say anything about what took place here last night, I will send you where I have sent Parker.' He then gets up from the table, and without looking for, or speaking about his blooded shirt, he leaves the house and is seen there no more.

“When the learned solicitor comes to this part of the case, if he argues her testimony, let him say on his honor, and his conscience, if he can, that he believes her himself. He will have his hands full if he ventures to become sponsor for such witnesses as Eliza Jane Smith, John Brown, Sam Bartlett, Wiley, Sarah Lewis, and Sal Peavy. No man who ever sat as a traverse juror, would think of convicting a man of the merest petty larceny, on the evidence of these witnesses. How, then, can these men be committed? I have heard out of doors rumors of more testimony to come in hereafter. It is not true. There is no more testimony. It is as false as the alkoran. Are counsel contending here for a triumph?—a triumph where four men's lives are at stake! Surely, they cannot be capable of sporting thus with the liberty of my clients. Mrs. Eliza J. Smith, swears that she lived and worked at

Asa Wentworth's house, four months. She may possibly have been there in the course of her vagrant life, but she never did live there at all. She was never known to Mrs. Asa Wentworth—that respectable woman who came here and looked her in the eye, as she was emitting that vile perjury on the stand. Who are the persons called, to prove her there? Sarah Lewis, who says she saw her there two or three times about five years ago; Frost, who says he has seen her about there once or twice; Stevens, and Mrs. Diadama Sanborn. We prove, however, by Dr. Colburn, who produces his books to establish the fact, that Mrs. Sanborn was taken sick in January, 1845, when his visits commenced, and that those visits were continued until after the middle of March. He says that whenever he called, he always found Mrs. Sanborn confined to her bed. Her testimony then to this point is clearly incorrect.

“But Mrs. Smith's testimony itself, is conclusive of the fact that she never lived there. She knew nothing at all about the arrangements in the house. She located Mrs. Wentworth's kitchen in the back part of the house where Joel's family resided, and the rooms actually used for a kitchen she designated as the parlor. She did not know that Mrs. Wentworth's little daughter resided that winter in the family, and when Mrs. Wentworth sat directly facing her, here in the court room, she could not point her out. She could see no one who looked like her. And at last, when the woman herself was

actually shown to her, she said, in answer to my question, that it was not Mrs. Wentworth. Then what a buzz there was among the retainers for the Government.

“But whom have we called to show that she did not live there. Not those who have once or twice casually happened there, or were occasionally passing. First, we have Joel Wentworth and his wife, whose family lived in the same house; then John Holmes, Dr. Colburn, Mrs. Wiley, who lived opposite and was in there daily; John Adams and Jacob B. Moore, the portrait painter, all of whom swear they never saw her there. And then over and above all, we have the government witness brought down from East Topsham, Vt., Edward Craig, the man who, as she says, took his meals there all the time she lived in the family, and he too, swears that he never knew of such a woman being there. To cap the climax of this tissue of falsehoods, Mrs. Smith has been instructed to swear, and actually does swear, that she saw on the evening of the murder, a woman attending the ball, who was pointed out to her as Mrs. Annis. While the truth is, there was then no such woman as Mrs. Annis in existence. The name of the woman at that time, was Ann Mann, and she did not become Mrs. Annis till long afterwards—so much for the testimony of that vile and infamous child-killing strumpet, Eliza Jane Smith.

“We now come to consider the testimony of Mrs.

Ann Maria Annis. She says she attended the ball at Asa Wentworth's house on the night of the murder—that she went there and returned on runners. She thinks she saw Henry T. Wentworth standing at the door of the hall for a minute, as she stood up for a dance, but does not undertake to swear positively. Now, the single fact that there was on that night no snow on the ground, and no sleighing at all in the streets, is sufficient to show that she is mistaken. But we are, fortunately, able to fix this matter beyond all doubt. Mrs. Annis says, that on her return that night from the ball, one of the horses was injured, which caused a detention on the way, till the driver could go back and procure another horse. She could not tell whether the driver was Joel Wentworth or John Holmes. Now we prove by John Holmes that on the night of the *fifth* of March of that year, he went around with an omnibus on runners to collect females to attend a ball at Asa Wentworth's. He says he went over the river that night to Amoskeag, after Ann Maria Annis. After the ball broke up, he started to carry her home, but before he had gone a great distance, one of his horses was disabled, and he returned to the house and dispatched another driver with a fresh horse. He fixes this date by a charge made against Asa Wentworth at the time, for toll and his time on his book, which is produced here in court. Nathan R. Perkins is also produced, who testifies that he drove the carriage for Asa Wentworth, on the

night of the 26th of March—the night of the murder—that no other carriage was to his knowledge driven to the ball that night, and that he did not go over the river or carry any such person as Mrs. Annis. This fact he also is able to fix by a memorandum made at the time. So that we meet Mrs. Annis here not only with two witnesses, but with two records. But conclusive as this is, it is not all.

“Joel Wentworth swears that he has been acquainted with Henry T. Wentworth from his childhood, that he had charge of, and stood at the hall door where Mrs. Annis says she saw Henry, from early in the evening till the party retired. That Henry was not at the door, nor about that house that night, so far as he knows, nor for months before or after. I will now merely glance at the testimony of Mrs. Elizabeth Salpaugh, and shall then leave this part of the case. She appeared to be a very intelligent and highly respectable female, and gave in her testimony with perfect candor and fairness. She was at Asa’s on the night of the murder, and heard the cries of the murdered Parker, ‘Oh, don’t, Oh, don’t.’ She saw a man there who was called Wentworth, but she cannot say it was either of the prisoners. Most probably it was Joel Wentworth, who swears that he stood at the door of the ball-room during the most of the evening. It must forcibly strike every one, that if ever an absence of Henry T. Wentworth from Saco, at that time could be proved, it could have easily been done by the

officers who were sent there, when all these events were as fresh as the incidents of this day. We have put on the stand the Marshal of your city, J. M. Rowell, an old and experienced officer, and Col. Chase, both of whom were sent down there immediately after the murder, to inquire about Henry T. Wentworth. They both made an investigation, formed their conclusions, and reported them to the committee of vigilance. We were not allowed to inquire what those conclusions were. But they cannot be a subject of doubt.

“As to the testimony of Reuben J. Wiley, in regard to the \$1000 bill, of which he says he had a glimpse, I need say but little. The only particular description he can give of the bill, is, that the word ‘Boston’ was in black letters near the bottom of the bill. I think that your Honor will say that this word on the bill presented here in Court, is printed in light letters. Of itself, this testimony is most meagre. But when we look at Wiley’s infamy, the story is told. Who is Reuben J. Wiley? A man who, last July, was traveling the country with a prostitute, while his own wife was lying on a sick bed, and deserted—a man who was dragged from a Massachusetts jail, where he was confined for crime he had committed, and his testimony is trumpeted upon the stand to sustain this prosecution.

“The evidence of Messrs. Adams and Harris, I do not deem it necessary to argue at all, as I do not know what possible bearing it can have upon this case.

“I next come to the testimony of Mr. Richard G. Smith. This is the witness of whom it has been vauntingly said that he could not be shaken or disturbed by any examination that we might think proper to give him. I have seen this gentleman before, but never before have I seen him so pale and uneasy, so restless and confused, as he appeared here upon the stand. Never did a witness on his cross-examination, seem more like a mere child in my hands. He swore that Joel Wentworth once told him that he knew Henry was here on the night of the murder. But this statement does not at all conflict with the testimony of Joel Wentworth, and can therefore have no material bearing upon this case. This witness swears to you that he attended the examination at Saco. He went down, as he says, upon his own hook, and the Government paid him for it on their own hook. He says he was gone a week or ten days, and states to you, here on his oath, that the nearest sum he can fix upon as the amount he received from the Government for his invaluable services, is \$400. He could not call it a dollar more or a dollar less. He did not go into the court room while he was there, and did nothing whatever. A most remarkable instance of generosity on the part of the Government, or what is perhaps fully as probable, a most striking indication of falsehood on the part of the witness!

“I have now noticed, I believe, all the witnesses whose evidence bears upon the case of Henry T.

Wentworth. I wish, however, to call your attention for a moment to a portion of the testimony of John H. Brown—incidentally given by him, and with a far different intention—which goes to prove Henry T. Wentworth's innocence. Brown says that he saw Henry here the fall after the murder, and that he went with him to show him the spot where the murder took place, and that Henry asked him to go and show him. Did a murderer ever go to the scene of his guilt, and lament over the death of his victim? But Henry goes to the spot with Brown. While there, Henry tells him that he had not been in Manchester before, since the fall previous. I say that this is conclusive that Henry knew nothing of the murder. Brown points out to him the place where the body was found—shows him where the head lay, and where the feet lay; and as Henry called to mind the memory of a murdered acquaintance, Brown says he became somewhat affected; he thinks he shed a tear. Tears are no evidence of weakness; are they of guilt? But the wretch, John Brown, who, as proved by Hayward, Seville and Cheney, was not, as he says he was, in Boston on the night of the murder, shed no tears. It did not affect him; he was past any such feeling.

“I now come to the testimony against Asa Wentworth. I have spoken of some of that evidence already. And here I will take occasion to do an act of justice to a gentleman I see here near me; I mean Mr. Samuel Perkins. He was summoned in



here on account of what I then considered a somewhat extraordinary circumstance, mentioned by the witness, John Adams. I am now perfectly satisfied that what Mr. Perkins has said is strictly true, and I wish to acquit him, here publicly, of any actual or intentional misstatement.

“ We will now proceed to examine the testimony of John S. Elliott. He says that he was at Asa Wentworth’s house, one night, some time after the murder, playing cards, and that Asa’s wife came into the room and said she ‘ could tell who came there the night Parker was murdered, and looked pale.’ Now who is there, for a moment that supposes she applied that remark to her husband? As if she would furnish evidence to convict her husband of a crime for which his life must pay the forfeit. There can be no doubt that she referred to John Adams, as Adams says he always understood it, and as McQuestion told him.

“ Now, as to the testimony of Mrs. Downing, in regard to the interview between Asa and Mrs. McQuestion. ‘ Do you think that they will prove it against you that you murdered Parker?’ ‘ No! it was a dark night, and nobody saw us.’ Can your Honor for one moment believe that this testimony is true; that he then made a confession of guilt? Aside from its great improbability, and inconsistency, it is contradicted from beginning to end by Mrs. McQuestion, the very woman who, it is said, carried on the conversation with Asa, and a lady of

irreproachable character. I ask your Honor if there has been a single witness on the stand who has appeared better than she? She has been long a resident of this city. If they can impeach her, why have they not attempted it?

“Stephen C. Hall, whom we have called to the stand, says that he saw Asa in his own bar-room on the night of the murder, after 9 o'clock, when Zimri Lew came in, and informed them of the outcry he had just heard in the woods.

“There is but one point left, and that is the question of Asa Wentworth's property. Are counsel going to argue this point to the Court? Argue what? Why, they show that in the fall of 1844, he was sent to the Amherst jail for selling liquor; that about that time, he purchased his place of Stephen C. Hall, for \$1000, and paid \$150 down, and gave notes for the rest, payable in one, two, and three years. It appears that the whole amount was finally paid in just before the expiration of the three years, and that the largest amount paid in at any one time after the first payment, was one hundred dollars. Since his arrest, all his property at Saco has been laid under attachment, and the effect of this examination will be to strip him of every cent's worth of property he has in the world. This matter of property has, I understand, been often used against Asa Wentworth, and much of the popular excitement against him, has, in this particular, been fanned by the rankest falsehoods. On this point I

defy investigation. I proposed to the solicitor in the outset, that an auditor should be sent to Maine to investigate this matter fully. If it cannot be shown that all he has, or all he has had, is the result of his honest and hard earnings, I will consent that they may go to prison.

“I now feel, may it please your Honor, that my duty in this case has been performed. I entertain no more doubt of the innocence of these four men, than I do of my own. During this examination, I have already said I had fears, not from testimony, but from the forestalling of opinion out of doors. The pressure has been from without. Public sentiment has been cheated, misled, abused. From the evidence itself, I can fear nothing. Before no jury can they incur the least danger. Yet, should they be sent to the gloomy cells of the prison, I tremblingly apprehend that over the remains of my younger friend, whose feeble frame is before me, the cold clods will rest before the day of trial shall arrive. Then will his fiend-like pursuers have accomplished one purpose ; and not satisfied with this, they may perhaps, like harpies, go to his grave, and with the ferocity of the hyena, howl and scratch over his remains. His eldest brother, Asa, is here to-day, ruined in property and broken in spirit, with nothing to live for but his wife and children. Yet he must be sent to prison, because there must be a victim—not because any one can believe him guilty, but because there must be a triumph. Triumph! what

a word to be used on an occasion like this, when the personal liberty of men, nay their lives, are ultimately involved! The scope and effect of such a decision, I have no language to express. While they are here to-day, there is sorrow and weeping at that home outraged by their absence.

“ ‘ My spouse and boys dwell near thy hall,  
 Along the bordering lake,  
 And when they on their father call,  
 What answer shall she make ?’

“ ‘ He is in Amherst jail.’ ‘ Why,’ asks his child, with earnest gaze, ‘ was my father guilty of crime ?’ ‘ No, my son, but they have pursued him with blood-hound ferocity. They have raked the purlieus of houses of correction and of prisons in New-Hampshire and Massachusetts, and upon the testimony of felons charged him.’

“ Did it not almost seem to the court, when that tittering, fiend-like prostitute, Eliza Jane Smith, and others hardly less vile, succeeded each other upon the stand, that the government must have swept the great ultimate prison house of unreclaimed atrocity and unforgiven crime with a drag-net ?

“ Sir, if these men are to be committed, they are to be held not only without evidence, but against evidence. They are to be ground down beneath the iron heel of oppression.

“ I have been told that the warning of Lochiel was ringing in my ears. If these men are oppressed farther, there are those to whom the warning of the

seer will yet be applicable, in those ears it will ring like a funeral knell—

“Wo! wo to the riders that trample them down.”

“I have now done my duty — all I need and can do — poorly and feebly at best, but sir, all I can do — and the responsibility now rests with you and the Government.”

The prisoners were triumphantly acquitted.

## CHAPTER X.

General Pierce at Home—His Family—His Popularity—Anecdote—His Generosity—Personal Appearance—The Compromise Question—Nominated to the Presidency by the N. H. Democracy—Declines—Letter to Colonel Lally.

CONCORD, the residence of General Pierce is one of the most retired, most beautiful of all the inland towns of New-England. Containing about ten thousand inhabitants, surrounded by an industrious population of agriculturalists, it combines the advantages of a residence in the city and country. The streets are wide, and lined with pleasant shade trees; the beautiful Merrimac flows pleasantly through the town; the winds in the summer are fresh and cool, from the heights of the White Mountains, and, in short, it is one of the pleasantest summer homes in the Union. The law office of General Pierce is situated upon Main street. His law-partner, Mr. Minot, is a young but able and gentlemanly man. General Pierce has no home at present, as, with his wife and child, he boards at a private house in the southern part of the village.

In November, of 1834, during his second year in Congress, General Pierce married Jane Means, the youngest child of Rev. Dr. Appleton, late President of Bowdoin College. This was the result of an in-

timacy formed while he was studying law at Amherst, which was the residence of her maternal relatives. They have had three children, and all of them sons. The first of these died in infancy; the second, Frank Robert, a lovely and beautiful child, died in 1844, at the age of five years; and the youngest now lives at Concord with his parents. His name is Benjamin, and he is eleven years old. Mrs. Pierce is an accomplished woman, but of late years has suffered much from poor health. The death of Frank Robert was a terrible stroke upon her, and she has never completely recovered from it. Ever since, she has been more or less of a pensive, melancholy disposition, exceedingly retired and modest. General Pierce is beloved by his family, and indeed he is one of the most devoted of husbands and fathers. For the sake of his wife he has often relinquished the highest honors which were pressed upon him; for her sake he has retired from the highest places to the stillness and quietude of a life in the country.

It has been our great pleasure to see General Pierce at home among his people in "the old Granite State," and we were surprised to discover with what universal affection he is held. His popularity in New-Hampshire is unbounded—his name never is mentioned without the greatest enthusiasm. During his campaign in Mexico, General Pierce was loved as well as admired by the soldiers under his command. Shortly after the war was brought to a

close, one of the soldiers in the Ninth Regiment wandered up into New-Hampshire, and one day entered the yard of a fine looking mansion, to ask for a glass of water. The owner asked him to sit down, saying :

“Friend, from what place do you come?”

“From Mexico!” answered the old soldier.

“Oh! indeed—you fought in the war then?”

“Yes,” he replied, after satisfying his thirst.

“And did you know anything of Frank Pierce there?” asked the gentleman.

“Yes, I fought under him.”

“And a downright coward he was, if report speaks truly,” said the gentleman. The old soldier started up as if a thunderbolt had fallen at his feet. He eyed the man closely for a minute in astonishment, when he repeated :

“He was a coward, I say, was he not?” In a moment the soldier’s ire was roused, and he put himself in an attitude for fighting.

“Another word of that sort, sir, and I’ll pitch you out of the window!”

“Ha! ha! you are rather fast, my man, this is *my* house.”

“Devil a bit do I care *whose* house it is : if you (or any other man) dare to call Frank Pierce a coward to my face, you will get soundly thrashed for it. Good morning sir!”

The one great secret of General Pierce’s popu-



larity is his kind-heartedness. He has a word for all his friends, whether high or low; he has a purse always open to the call of the suffering and oppressed. You can always find him in his place at church on Sundays, and on week-days he is ever ready to assist the poor and unfortunate with his money and his talents.

A fact which speaks volumes for General Pierce's generosity is this: that although he has been in lucrative offices, and for the past few years in the receipt of an income of near ten thousand dollars a year, from his professional services, yet he is a poor man! He is not to-day worth ten thousand dollars—and we dare say never will be worth that sum, so generous is he in all his actions.

The following anecdote of him is told by one of his friends:

On a certain occasion, two men had been arrested on suspicion of murder. He heard of it, and at once looked after their interests. "I do not know," said the person of whom he asked information about the character of the men, "whether they will be able to reward you for your services." "That is not the point," he replied. "Who are the men?" He learned their names, and he said, "This must be looked into. I hardly think they can have done it." The justice had ordered them committed; but Mr. Pierce, believing there was no good ground for the commitment, brought them before another

magistrate on a writ of *habeas corpus*—and when the grand jury met, nothing could be found against them, and they were discharged.

Upon a certain occasion, a poor young man in New-Hampshire, was imprisoned upon a charge of theft. General Pierce defended him, though without any hope of getting paid for his trouble. During the trial he became thoroughly convinced of the innocence of his client, though the circumstantial evidence against him was very strong. He exerted himself to the utmost to save the poor young man, but all was in vain. The verdict was against him, and the poor fellow was marched off to prison. But General Pierce tried to raise his dejected spirits by hopes of a pardon. He spent time and money to effect his object, and at last was successful. The young man was set free! And what was the result? Why, that the young man became one of the best of men, and is this day one of the steadiest citizens of New-Hampshire! There are a thousand such anecdotes which we might relate, all going to show how noble, and how generous is the character of Frank Pierce, but we have no room to repeat them.

The personal appearance of General Pierce is elegant and commanding. He is within a few inches of six feet in height; is rather slight and thin than inclined to obesity; has a very pleasant and impressive address. His eyes are bright and piercing; his hair is greyish; his forehead, and indeed, face, very fine, open and frank in their expression. It is

difficult to gain a fair idea of the man from a portrait. You need to *see* the gentleness of his manners, *feel* the kindness of his nature, and witness the easy politeness of all his actions. There is not a spice of the aristocrat in the man; he is as polite to a beggar as to a prince, as free and generous to a country farmer as to a Senator in the halls of Congress.

In his habits he is strict and severe. In several conversations with him, we could not fail to observe with what solemnity and reverence he alluded to the hand of Providence in all things. He is not a member of any Church, but generally attends worship at the Congregational Church in Concord.

We now come to the scenes of 1850—the agitation in reference to the Compromise Scheme, etc., etc. With this agitation General Pierce was not specially identified; yet it would be unfair to deny that his course in reference to the compromise has been distinct and bold. His views on these measures were expressed in a private letter to a distinguished Senator, under date of May 9, 1850. We give the following extracts:

“I have been so constantly occupied in court that no leisure moment has presented itself for the acknowledgment of your noble speech upon Mr. Bell’s proposition for a compromise of the question, which has so deeply agitated Congress and the country during the last few months. I appreciate your kind

remembrance of me personally. As a New-Hampshire man, I hear your name pronounced only with pride; as an American citizen, I acknowledge with gratitude the eminent public services that have signalized your course along the whole line of your useful life.

“It grieves me to observe that the spirit of concession and honorable compromise is not stronger and more prevailing at Washington. I have no apprehension that the disruption of this Union is at hand; but I foresee consequences appalling in this daily use of the terms ‘north and south,’ as terms of antagonism. What are the North and South but component parts of our common country—parts which should be regarded as absolutely inseparable; not united merely by reciprocal rights and obligations arising under the Constitution, but bound together by ties of affection, common interest, and reciprocal respect; recognizing at all times, and above all, that noble band of brotherhood which concentrated the genius, and courage, and patriotism that achieved our independence, that has sustained the country in all its trials—that bond to which the republic is indebted for a career more rapid and wonderful than any that has hitherto marked the march of civilization and civil liberty?”

“You have doubtless observed that a great effort is being made to give currency to the impression, that the opinion and sentiments advanced by yourself find nothing like a general response in New-

England. I do not believe the fact to be so in this State. Our people set a value upon the Union which language cannot express; they look for a compromise—expect a compromise—conceived in a spirit of justice and patriotism, firmly and manfully.”

In January, 1852, the Democracy of New-Hampshire presented General Pierce as their candidate for the Presidency. The General declined the honor in the following language:

“*Concord, January 12th, 1852.*

“DEAR SIR: I take the liberty to address you, because no channel more appropriate occurs to me through which to express my thanks to the convention over which you presided on the 8th instant, and to the masses there represented.

“I am far from being insensible to the steady and generous confidence so often manifested towards me by the people of this State; and although the object indicated in the resolution, having particular reference to myself, be not one of desire on my part, the expression is not on that account, less gratifying.

“Doubtless the spontaneous and just appreciation of an intelligent people, is the best earthly reward for earnest and cheerful services rendered to one's state and country; and while it is a matter of unfeigned regret that my life has been so barren of

usefulness, I shall ever hold this and similar tributes, among my most cherished recollections.

“To these, my sincere and grateful acknowledgments, I desire to add, that the same motive which induced me several years ago to retire from public life, and which since that time controlled my judgment in this respect, now impel me to say, that the use of my name, in any event, before the Democratic National Convention at Baltimore, to which you are a delegate, would be utterly repugnant to my tastes and wishes. I am, with the highest respect and esteem, your friend,

“FRANK. PIERCE.

“HON. CHAS. G. ATHERTON, Nashville, N. H.”

The following is the last letter of General Pierce, before the meeting of the National Democratic Convention at Baltimore. It is addressed to Colonel Lally, of New-Hampshire :

TREMONT HOUSE, *Boston*, *May 27th*, 1852.

“I intended to speak to you more fully upon the subject of the compromise measures than I had an opportunity to do. The importance of the action of the convention upon this question cannot be overestimated. I believe there will be no disposition on the part of the South to press resolutions unnecessarily offensive to the sentiments of the North. But can we say as much on our side? Will the North come cheerfully up to the mark of constitutional right? If not, a breach in our party is inev-

itable. The matter should be met at the threshold, because it rises above party, and looks at the very existence of the confederacy.

“The sentiment of no one State is to be regarded upon this subject; but having fought the battle in New-Hampshire upon the fugitive slave law, and upon what we believed to be the ground of constitutional right, we should of course desire the approval of the democracy of the country. What I wish to say to you is this. If the compromise measures are not to be substantially and firmly maintained, the plain rights secured by the Constitution will be trampled in the dust. What difference can it make to you or me, whether the outrage shall seem to fall on South Carolina, or Maine, or New-Hampshire? Are not the rights of each equally dear to us all? I will never yield to a craven spirit, that from considerations of policy would endanger the Union. Entertaining these views, the action of the convention must, in my judgment, be vital. If we of the North, who have stood by the constitutional rights of the South, are to be abandoned to any time-serving policy, the hopes of democracy and of the Union must sink together. As I told you, my name will not be before the convention; but I cannot help feeling that what there is to be done will be important beyond men and parties—transcendently important to the hopes of democratic progress and civil liberty. Your friend,

“FRANK. PIERCE.”

## CHAPTER XI.

The National Convention — Letter of the Committee — Gen. Pierce's Reply — Remarks.

It is not necessary for us here to give a detailed report of the doings of the Democratic National Convention, which met at Baltimore on Tuesday, the 12th of June. Its course is well known. The protracted struggle between the friends of several prominent candidates has become a matter of history. After four days spent in earnest attempts to come to a decision, on the thirty-sixth ballot, the Virginia delegation cast their vote for FRANKLIN PIERCE, of New-Hampshire. On the forty-eighth ballot, Mr. Pierce polled 55 votes. On the forty-ninth ballot, North-Carolina first came to the support of the Granite Statesman, amid tumultuous applause. The Mississippi delegation followed in the same track; then came Tennessee and Alabama. By this time, the whole Convention was one mass of enthusiasm. State after State wheeled into the support of Franklin Pierce, until the vote stood—For General Pierce, 282; all others, 11. Loud huzzas followed the announcement of the vote. It was in vain for the officers of the Convention to attempt to restrain the wild manifestations of delight on the part of the audience. Out of doors, the



thunder of cannon was soon heard, and the streets were full of people, filled with enthusiasm.

FRANKLIN PIERCE was then declared to be the unanimous choice of the Convention for the Presidency.

The Committee of Resolutions reported the following, and, by a vote of 167 ayes to 97 nays, they were adopted, and now constitute—

#### THE DEMOCRATIC PLATFORM.

*“Resolved,* That the American Democracy place their trust in the intelligence, the patriotism, and the discriminating justice of the American people.

*“Resolved,* That we regard this as a distinctive feature of our political creed, which we are proud to maintain before the world, as a great moral element in a form of government springing from and upheld by the popular will; and we contrast it with the creed and practice of Federalism, under whatever name or form, which seeks to palsy the will of the constituent, and which conceives no imposture too monstrous for the popular credulity.

*“Resolved,* Therefore, that, entertaining these views, the Democratic party of this Union, through their delegates assembled in a General Convention of the States, coming together in a spirit of concord, of devotion to the doctrines and faith of a free representative government, and appealing to their fellow citizens for the rectitude of their intentions,

renew and re-assert, before the American people, the declaration of principles avowed by them when, on former occasions, in general Convention, they presented their candidates for the popular suffrages.

“1. That the Federal Government is one of limited powers, derived solely from the Constitution, and the grants of power made therein ought to be strictly construed by all the departments and agents of the Government ; and that it is inexpedient and dangerous to exercise doubtful constitutional powers.

“2. That the Constitution does not confer upon the General Government the power to commence and carry on a general system of Internal Improvements.

“3. That the Constitution does not confer authority upon the Federal Government, directly or indirectly, to assume debts of the several States, contracted for local internal improvements, or other State purposes, nor would such assumption be just or expedient.

“4. That justice and sound policy forbid the Federal Government to foster one branch of industry to the detriment of any other, or to cherish the interests of one portion to the injury of another portion of our common country ; that every citizen and every section of the country has a right to demand and insist upon an equality of rights and privileges, and to complete and ample protection

of persons and property from domestic violence or foreign aggression.

“5. That it is the duty of every branch of the Government, to enforce and practice the most rigid economy in conducting our public affairs, and that no more revenue ought to be raised than is required to defray the necessary expenses of the Government, and for the gradual but certain extinction of the public debt.

“6. That Congress has no power to charter a National Bank; that we believe such an institution one of deadly hostility to the best interests of the country, dangerous to our republican institutions and the liberty of the people, and calculated to place the interests of the country within the control of a concentrated money power, and above the laws and will of the people; and that the results of Democratic legislation, in this and all other financial measures upon which issues have been made between the two political parties of the country, have demonstrated to candid and practical men of all parties, their soundness, safety, and utility, in all business pursuits.

“7. That the separation of the moneys of the government from banking institutions, is indispensable for the safety of the funds of the Government, and the rights of the people.

“8. That the liberal principles embodied by Jefferson in the Declaration of Independence, and sanctioned in the Constitution, which makes ours

the land of liberty and the asylum of the oppressed of every nation, have ever been cardinal principles in the Democratic faith; and every attempt to abridge the privilege of becoming citizens, and the owners of soil among us, ought to be resisted with the same spirit which swept the alien and sedition laws from our statute book.

“9. That Congress has no power under the Constitution to interfere with or control the domestic institutions of the several States, and that such States are the sole and proper judges of everything appertaining to their own affairs, not prohibited by the Constitution; that all efforts of the abolitionists or others, made to induce Congress to interfere with questions of Slavery, or to take incipient steps in relation thereto, are calculated to lead to the most alarming and dangerous consequences; and that all such efforts have an inevitable tendency to diminish the happiness of the people, and endanger the stability and permanency of the Union, and ought not to be countenanced by any friend of our political institutions.

“*Resolved*, That the foregoing proposition covers, and was intended to embrace, the whole subject of slavery agitation in Congress; and therefore the Democratic party of the Union, standing on this national platform, will abide by and adhere to a faithful execution of the acts known as the Compromise measures, settled by the last Congress—the act for reclaiming fugitives from service or labor

included—which act being designed to carry out an express provision of the Constitution, cannot with fidelity thereto, be repealed, or so changed as to destroy or impair its efficiency.

“*Resolved*, That the Democratic party will resist all attempts at renewing in Congress, or out of it, the agitation of the Slavery question, under whatever shape or color the attempts may be made.

“*Resolved*, That the proceeds of the public lands ought to be sacredly applied to the national objects specified in the Constitution; and that we are opposed to any law for the distribution of such proceeds among the States, as alike inexpedient in policy and repugnant to the Constitution.

“*Resolved*, That we are decidedly opposed to taking from the President the qualified veto power, by which he is enabled, under restrictions and responsibilities, amply sufficient to guard the public interest, to suspend the passage of a bill whose merits cannot secure the approval of two-thirds of the Senate and House of Representatives, until the judgment of the people can be obtained thereon, and which has saved the American people from the corrupt and tyrannical domination of the Bank of the United States, and from a corrupting system of general Internal Improvements.

“*Resolved*, That the Democratic party will faithfully abide by and uphold the principles laid down in the Kentucky and Virginia resolutions of 1792

and 1793, and in the report of Mr. Madison to the Virginia Legislature in 1799; that it adopts those principles as constructing one of the main foundations of its political creed, and is resolved to carry them out in their obvious meaning and import.

*Resolved*, That the war with Mexico, upon all the principles of patriotism and the laws of nations, was a just and necessary war on our part, in which no American citizen should have shown himself opposed to his country, and neither morally nor physically, by word or deed, given aid and comfort to the enemy.

*Resolved*, That we rejoice at the restoration of friendly relations with our sister republic of Mexico, and earnestly desire for her all the blessings and prosperity which we enjoy under republican institutions, and we congratulate the American people upon the results of that war, which have so manifestly justified the policy and conduct of the Democratic party, and insured to the United States indemnity for the past, and security for the future.

*Resolved*, That in view of the condition of the popular institutions in the Old World, a high and sacred duty is devolved with increased responsibility upon the Democracy of this country, as the party of the people, to uphold and maintain the rights of every State, and thereby the union of the states, and to sustain and advance among them constitutional liberty by continuing to resist all monopolies

and exclusive legislation for the benefit of the few, at the expense of the many, and by a vigilant and constant adherence to those principles and compromises of the Constitution, which are broad enough and strong enough to embrace and uphold the Union as it is, and the Union as it should be, in the full expansion of the energies and capacity of this great and progressive people.”

The following correspondence between the Committee appointed by the National Convention and General Pierce, (to acquaint General Pierce with his nomination,) took place immediately after the Convention—the Committee going in person to Concord.

## LETTER OF THE COMMITTEE.

“*Concord, June 17, 1852.*”

“SIR: A National Convention of the Democratic Republican Party, which met in Baltimore the first Tuesday in June, unanimously nominated you as a candidate for the high trust of the President of the United States. We have been delegated to acquaint you with the nomination, and earnestly to request that you will accept it. Persuaded as we are, that this office should never be pursued by an unchastened ambition, it cannot be refused by a dutiful patriotism.

“The circumstances under which you will be presented for the canvass of your countrymen, seem

to us propitious to the interests which the Constitution entrusts to our Federal Union, and must be auspicious to your own name. You come before the people without the impulse of personal wishes, and free from selfish expectations. You are identified with none of the distractions which have recently disturbed our country, whilst you are known to be faithful to the Constitution—to all its guarantees and compromises. You will be free to execute your tried abilities within the path of duty in protecting that repose we happily enjoy, and in giving efficacy and control to those cardinal principles that have already illustrated the party which has now selected you as its leader—principles that regard the security and prosperity of the whole country, and the paramount power of its laws as indissolubly associated with the perpetuity of our civil and religious liberties.

“The Convention did not pretermitt the duty of reiterating those principles, and you will find them prominently set forth in the resolutions it adopted. To these we respectfully invite your attention.

“It is firmly believed that to your talents and patriotism the security of our holy Union, with its expanded and expanding interests, may be wisely trusted, and that amid all the perils which may assail the Constitution, you will have the heart to love and the arm to defend it.

“With congratulations to you and the country upon this demonstration of its exalted regard, and



the patriot hopes that clusted over it, we have the honor to be, with all respect, your fellow citizens,

J. S. BARBOUR,  
J. THOMPSON,  
ALPHEUS FELCH,  
PIERRE SOULE.

HON. FRANKLIN PIERCE, New-Hampshire."

GENERAL PIERCE'S REPLY.

*"Concord, N. H., June 17, 1852.*

"GENTLEMEN: I have the honor to acknowledge your personal kindness in presenting me this day your letter, officially informing me of my nomination by the Democratic National Convention, as a candidate for the Presidency of the United States. The surprise with which I received the intelligence of my nomination was not unmingled with painful solicitude, and yet it is proper for me to say that the manner in which it was conferred was peculiarly gratifying.

"The delegation from New-Hampshire, with all the glow of State pride, and with all the warmth of personal regard, would not have submitted my name to the Convention, nor would they have cast a vote for me under any circumstances other than those which occurred.

"I shall always cherish with pride and gratitude the recollection of the fact that the voice which first pronounced, and pronounced alone, came from the mother of states — a pride and gratitude rising above

any consequences that can betide me personally. May I not regard it as a fact pointing to the overthrow of sectional jealousies, and looking to the permanent life and vigor of the Union, cemented by the blood of those who have passed to their reward — a Union wonderful in its formation, boundless in its hopes, amazing in its destiny?

“I accept the nomination, relying upon an abiding devotion to the interests, honor, and glory of the whole country, but, above and beyond all, upon a Power superior to all human might, a Power which from the first gun of the Revolution, in every crisis through which we have passed, in every hour of acknowledged peril, when the dark clouds had shut down over us, has interposed as if to baffle human wisdom, outmarch human forecast, and bring out of darkness the rainbow of promise. Weak myself, but in faith and hope I repose my security.

“I accept the nomination upon the platform adopted by the Convention, not because this is expected of me as a candidate, but because the principles you embraced command the approbation of my judgment, and with that I believe I can safely say there has been no word nor act of my life in conflict with them.

“I have now only to offer my grateful acknowledgments to you, gentlemen, to the Convention of which you are members, and to the people of our common country.

“I am with the highest respect, your most obedient servant,

“FRANKLIN PIERCE.

TO HON. J. S. BARBOUR, J. THOMPSON, ALPHEUS FELCH, PIERRE SOULE.”

The news of the nomination of General Pierce to the Presidency has created throughout the country the utmost enthusiasm. To the General himself, it came suddenly and unexpectedly. Full of modesty, he had not the slightest expectations of such honors. But there were others who foresaw, from the peculiar circumstances, from General Pierce's universal popularity and fitness for office, that his chances for a nomination were by no means slight. The day upon which the final ballot was taken, General Pierce was in Cambridge. A friend in Boston, upon receiving the news of his nomination, immediately rode over to apprise him of the result. He chanced to meet the General in his carriage, and accosted him with—

“Have you heard the news from Baltimore?”

“No. Who is nominated?”

“Yourself, General. Allow me to congratulate you!”

“No man has heard the news with more surprise than myself,” replied modest yet illustrious General Pierce. His conduct, since the nomination, has been a proof of his excellent wisdom of character. The majority of men would have been elated with such honors, but it is not so with Franklin Pierce.

From the first he has conducted himself in a retiring manner. Instead of feeling elated at his nomination, he has rather seemed to grow serious under the sense of his great and solemn position. It is no light matter for a man to assume the responsibilities of the Presidency, or to become the candidate of the great Democratic party of the United States for that high office. In a conversation which we had the honor of holding with General Pierce a short time since, he said that the whole matter—his nomination—the coming struggle, etc., etc.—was entirely distasteful to him, and he would not consent to run as the party's candidate, did he not believe it to be his duty so to do. And we saw by his whole demeanor that he spoke from the heart.

The following letter from Mr. Pierce was addressed to the Philadelphians in reply to an invitation to participate with them in the celebration of our National Anniversary on the 5th inst. :

*“Concord, N. H., June 30, 1852.*

“GENTLEMEN: There are many reasons why it would be peculiarly gratifying to me, to accept your kind invitation, and pass the next Anniversary of Independence as a Nation, in Philadelphia.

“Wherever an American citizen is found on the recurrence of that day, whether upon his own or upon a foreign soil, his thoughts instinctively turn to the consecrated locality of the most sublime spec-

tacle presented in the history of governments, and his heart beats quicker and warmer for his own country, and most earnestly for the disenthralment of the oppressed everywhere, as his free glance is turned toward 'Independence Hall.'

"The suggestions of severe prudence may, for the moment, be less controlling, but it is well that, once in every year, full latitude be given to the impulses that gush out, and the generous ardor that glows for the firm establishment of constitutional liberty throughout the world. It is well that we recount the sacrifices at which this glorious Union, with all its multiplied and multiplying blessings, was purchased. It is well that, in the midst of our congratulations, we remember that in the weakness of our infancy as a people, not only words of cheering were sent across the ocean to greet us, but upon its bosom were borne to our shores hearts to sympathize and arms to strike. How the cherished memories of the noble dead of other lands, whose blood mingled with that of our fathers in the struggle that followed the declaration, the anniversary of which you are to commemorate, come thronging with the gray dawn of that day of general jubilee! So may they every come! So *will* they ever come, while we are faithful to the Constitution, true to our mission, and heedful to the lessons of wisdom which have descended to us.

"Independent of the inspiring associations to which I have adverted, it would be pleasant to par-

ticipate in the National festival in Philadelphia, because I should meet numerous friends whose acquaintance I enjoyed at Washington, many years ago, and more, perhaps, for whom I formed ties of unalterable attachment, in that different field of service, to which so many of your citizens were called, in 1847.

“With these strong inducements for compliance, you will readily appreciate the deep regret I feel, in being compelled to deny myself the pleasure of meeting the sterling Democracy of your city and county, as proposed.

“I have made arrangements to attend the anniversary of the Society of the Cincinnati, instituted by the officers of the American army, at the close of the Revolution, of which my father was an original member. There is no longer hope of meeting the patriarchs, whose names appear with that of the Father of his country, upon the old constitution of the Society, but I feel a strong desire to be with their descendants on that day.

“Accept, gentlemen, for yourselves, and present to the Democracy for whom you speak, my grateful acknowledgments. With the highest respect,

“Your fellow-citizen,

“FRANK. PIERCE.

“Committee—ANDREW HAGUE, W. F. SMALL,  
JACOB LEWIS, O. F. FOGUERAY, W. ENGLISH,  
J. O. TOBIAS.”

## CHAPTER XII.

Reception of the News of the Nomination of General Pierce in New-Hampshire — Meeting of the State Legislature — Mr. Sargent's Speech — Mr. Wells' Speech — Mass Meeting of the People at Concord — Meeting at Boston, at Washington, at New-York, Hartford, etc. etc. — Letters of Mr. Buchanan, Ex-President Van Buren, Messrs. Cass, Houston, Douglass, etc. etc. — Concluding Remarks.

THE nomination of General Pierce, as we have already remarked in a previous chapter, has been ratified by the people in all parts of the Union with great enthusiasm. Old feuds have been healed by it, old differences adjusted, and a larger vote will, in November, be polled for Franklin Pierce, than could have been polled for any other man whose name was before the Convention. This is not merely our individual opinion, but that of some of the ablest men in the nation.

We have not room for a detailed account of the many great ratification meetings which have been held over the country, but will give a few extracts from some of the best speeches made at such assemblages.

As soon as the news of General Pierce's nomination reached New-Hampshire, the whole State was alive with excitement. Bells were rung; cannons

were fired, and joy was pictured upon almost every face. The State Legislature was in session at Concord, and a meeting of the Democratic members composing it was soon gathered, in response to the nomination. Governor Martin took the chair, supported by a large number of vice-presidents. Among the many excellent speeches made on the occasion, we quote those of Mr. Sargent, of Wentworth, and Mr. Wells, the President of the Senate :

Mr. Sargent spoke as follows :

*“Mr. President and Gentlemen :* I do not rise to make a speech. I am no speech maker, and if I were, am in no state of preparation at the present time to make one. But there is no Democrat who cannot say something, if need be, on an occasion like this. And if he is not called upon to *speak*, every true man must feel an interest in the subject which calls us together at the present time. (Cheers.) We meet as members of the Legislature of New-Hampshire, as Democrats of the Granite State, to respond to the nomination of General Franklin Pierce, of our State, as a candidate for the Presidency of the United States. (Cheers.)

“I had the honor, Mr. President, at the Democratic State Convention, held in this Hall, on the 8th day of January last, to introduce the resolution recommending General Pierce to the Baltimore Convention, as a candidate for the Presidency, which resolution was then unanimously adopted. In intro-



ducing that resolution, I only obeyed the impulse, and embodied the deep and all-pervading sentiment of the people of Grafton county, and of the State. There is but one feeling on the part of the Democrats of New-Hampshire in relation to General Pierce, and that is a strong and abiding affection, and an unbounded desire to honor him who is so universally known to be the friend of the people, the advocate of popular rights, the known supporter of the Union, and of our glorious Constitution. (Loud cheers.)

“The Baltimore Convention have seen fit to honor the Democracy of New-Hampshire by nominating her favorite as a candidate for the Presidency of the nation—a station higher, more responsible, more honorable, and more important than any other place or office in the world. This nomination will be responded to by the Democracy of this State, and of the nation, with a unanimity and an enthusiasm which will secure his triumphant election by an overwhelming majority. (Applause.) I set the State of New-Hampshire down as good for 20,000 majority for General Pierce. (Some one here suggested 10,000.) ‘No,’ said Mr. S., ‘I will not take off a single vote from the number I have stated. (Immense applause.)

“Allusion has been made to the other candidates who were before the Baltimore Convention. The Democracy of New-Hampshire have been through

one contest under Hon. Lewis Cass, as their leader and standard-bearer, and nobly did they then conduct themselves, and honorably and triumphantly did they come out of the contest, the banner State of the Union. (Cheers.) There is perhaps no man, next to General Pierce, under whom our Democracy would sooner and more cheerfully rally, in another contest, than General Cass. No man stands higher in the estimation of the nation than he. (Applause.) The Democracy of our State would be equally ready to rally under the standard of Buchanan, Douglass, Marcy, or either of the other distinguished statesmen who were before the Convention as candidates for this high office. (Cheers were here given for these eminent men.) But when it was found that neither of these could get the nomination, it was asked, 'Where is the man whose talents, courage, experience, patriotism and attachment to the Union and the Constitution, will make him the man of the nation, and raise him above all sectional preferences and local prejudices?' In looking over the men of the nation, General Pierce was at once seen by all to be the man who possessed all the qualities necessary for the station, together with the elements of an unbounded popularity that would insure his triumphant election.

“Mr. S. then spoke of the compliment that had been paid to the New-Hampshire Democracy by the nomination. They had always proved true to the

Union, and their course has insured for them and for their State the respect and confidence of the whole Union. (Loud plaudits.)

“Mr. S. then alluded to the fact that we had heretofore had several candidates for the Presidency presented by different parties, who were sons of New-Hampshire, but who had emigrated from the State, (alluding to Cass and Webster,) none of whom had been elected. ‘But now,’ said he, ‘we have a candidate who is not only a son of New-Hampshire, but still a resident in New-Hampshire—a man of the people, a man who will only leave the soil of his native State to take a short trip to the White House, which General Pierce is sure to do on the fourth of March next.’ (A perfect storm of cheers greeted this statement.)

“Mr. S. assured the other States of the fidelity, the purity and the reliability of the New-Hampshire Democracy. He briefly reviewed General Pierce’s course in his own State, in the House and Senate of the United States, and his brave conduct and high standing as a General in the Mexican war. He further alluded to his high qualifications as a jurist and a statesman, and closed by expressing his entire confidence that these qualifications were such as would dignify the exalted position to which General Pierce had now been called—such as would secure his triumphant election by the people, and secure to the country peace, prosperity, honor and

union. (Loud applause followed the conclusion of Mr. Sargent's address.)

The following is Mr. Well's speech :

“MR. PRESIDENT : We have assembled here this evening to make a declaration of our feelings and opinions responsive to the nomination of General Franklin Pierce, as a candidate for the President of the United States.

“Had the National Convention presented to the Democracy of the country, the name of either of the distinguished gentlemen proposed to the Convention for that exalted station, I am fully confident that a warm and generous response would have been made by the Democratic members of this Legislature, and by the sterling Democracy of the old Granite State. But when, unexpectedly to the most of us, one of our citizens is selected for that distinguished and honorable position, I know we shall be excused by our brethren in other States, for manifesting more than the ordinary interest on occasions of this character, when they learn the deep, intense, and affectionate regard, which the people of New-Hampshire entertain for him who has been so highly honored. (Loud cheers.) To the generous and judicious delegation of the old Dominion, we will first tender our warmest and kindest thanks for presenting to the Convention the name of General Pierce: (Cheers.) and we will long cherish in our

hearts the sentiments of gratitude due to the State of Tennessee, (cheers) for the warm approval by her delegation of Virginia's noble stand. (Renewed cheers.) Long and faithfully have New-Hampshire and Virginia been linked together to maintain the faith of our political fathers, and rejoiced are we still—to know, that her faith and confidence in us is still firm and enduring. (Applause.) The Democracy of Tennessee have the right to claim paramount love and affection for the life and memory of Andrew Jackson, for he was of them, and among them, and his ashes consecrate their soil; (applause,) but devoted as were his kindest friends, and warm as may be the affectionate remembrance of his virtues, no section can in truth exceed the State of New-Hampshire in reverence for his memory; nor did men of truer hearts or stronger hands stand by him, in his fearful conflicts with federalism and mammon, than stood for him and around him in the State of New-Hampshire. (Loud cheers.)

“New-Hampshire also brought forward in the convention of 1844 the name of the pure hearted and patriotic James K. Polk; and when at his election, the Democracy of New-England in all save two of the States, was prostrated and paralyzed, the flag of Polk and Dallas floated in triumph on the rugged hills of New-Hampshire. (Cheers.)

“I allude to these States because of our peculiar connexion with them in times which have passed; but I believe I utter the sentiments of this

assembly, and of the entire Democracy of this State, when I say, that New-Hampshire is profoundly grateful to the members of the National Democratic Convention, for the distinguished consideration shown her in selecting as the nominee for the Presidency, her noble and patriotic son ; (loud and reiterated cheers,) and that we assure them, and their constituents, that in making this nomination, they have secured in our belief the triumph of the Democratic party, in the next Presidential election. (Applause.) For if a candidate of exalted moral worth ; of high literary and legal attainments ; of endearing social qualities ; of vigorous, comprehensive intellect ; one thoroughly schooled in the theory and practical operation of Government ; a son of the Revolutionary stock, and who cherishes the principles established by the Revolution, a statesman of enlarged views, rooted in the Constitution, and the theory of a republican Government ; one in whom the love of country is a religious sentiment ; one who in his administration will make the Constitution his polar star, and who regards the preservation of the American Union as the sheet anchor of rational liberty here, and throughout the world ; one who will follow no path but that which the lamp of truth illumines, and who will mete out to each and all, their legal constitutional rights—if, I repeat, a candidate possessing such qualities and qualifications, *can* unite the Democratic party of this nation, all honor is due to the sagacious men of the Balti-

more Convention, for presenting to the country the name of General Franklin Pierce of New-Hampshire. (The climax was greeted with three heartfelt cheers.) They will unite; relying confidence in the nominee will, I verily believe, bring into one fraternal circle, the great family of American Democracy. They will go into the contest shoulder to shoulder, hand in hand, and heart in heart, and produce by a united effort that glorious sentiment of Democratic Union, which pervaded the whole party, when it was guided by the spirit of him who sleeps his last sleep in the shades of the Hermitage. (Sensation.)

“The action of the Baltimore Convention furnishes fit themes for deep and candid New-England consideration. Though once the ill-starred district, which Hartford Convention federalism sought to separate from the American Union, and annex to the British Provinces; though at times it seemed that all its political power and influence would be merged in the caldron of federalism; though bigotry and fanaticism have run loose and wild throughout its whole extent, yet the untiring efforts of Democratic freemen, have so preserved its character and political integrity, that our confiding brethren of other States have rewarded their exertions by this distinguished act of faith and confidence; so that now for the first time in our country’s history, we are rejoicing at the certain prospect of a Democratic New-England President. (The applause at this point was liberal and earnest.)

“ Well may the booming cannon echo from hill to hill. (Cheering.) Well may the loud huzza ring out from Madawaska to those verdant hills where rest the ashes of Ethan Allen. (Cheering renewed.) Well may the storm of joy roll on from the rugged mountains of New-Hampshire, to the land of the Charter Oak. (Loud cheers.) Well may the rejoicing voices of thousands go up from the base of Bunker Hill, to float away and mingle with the hoarse roar of the surf on Plymouth Rock. (Applause.)

“ Well may the true-hearted Democracy of New-England congratulate themselves upon the assurance of uniting with their political brethren from all sections of this great Republic, around a New-England Democratic President, and renewedly pledge themselves to the faithful support of our common Constitution, and the preservation of the American Union. (Rapturous applause.)

“ How often has it been asserted by our opponents that the South would never consent to vest political power in the hands of northern men. But now examine the record and judge as to the truth of the allegation! With 112 votes in the Convention from slave States, only six were cast for a candidate in that section of the country; but, on the contrary, all the candidates were from the northern States, and were mainly of New-England birth, and New-England sentiments. (Cheering.) Does this show that exclusive selfishness which has been so



often asserted? By no means. It shows, rather, what we all know to be true, that the love of country is the paramount sentiment with the true republicans of the South. (Immense cheering.) That they, like us, are willing to deposit political power wherever it is deserved, and that all they require is the reasonable assurance of an honest and efficient administration of the Government, the compelling all to perform their legal obligations, and securing to all their Constitutional rights. (Loud applause.)

“The history of the country is full of evidence that the Democracy of the South have ever been ready to sustain the whole country in all its domestic and foreign difficulties. (Cheers.) Point me to a national controversy when the Democracy of the South did not unite, heart and hand, with the Democracy of the North, to sustain our national rights and our national honor. (Renewed cheers.) Tell me of a battle scene on the mountain wave, where southern blood was not freely shed in defence of the stars and stripes—the common flag of our common land. (Applause.) Designate, if you can, the battle field, from Chippewa to Monterey, from Brooklyn Heights to the city of Mexico, where the bones of the brave men of the South are not crumbling into dust with those of the patriotic sons of the Northern States. (Rapturous applause.)

“Away, then, with such false and groundless accusations! (Liberal applause.) The good and true men of the South, like the good and true men of the

North, fully realize the necessity and propriety of confidence and union in our party ; (Cheers.) and this nomination, in my belief, will produce that result so perfect and complete, that the political power in this country will be so permanently established in Democratic hands, that federalism and fanaticism will be forced into the dark valley of despondency, where they will hang their harps upon the willows, and mourn the blighted prospects of longer disturbing or distracting the Democratic party.”

A mass meeting of *the people* of Concord was held, at which Mr. Peabody, of the native town of General Pierce, said :

“ He had but the moment before arrived in town from Hillsborough. It was not two hours since, when the joyous news of General Pierce’s nomination to the Chief Magistracy of the United States, first greeted the ears of his delighted fellow-townsmen, the yeomanry of old Hillsborough. The announcement thrilled like an electric touch through the hearts of the sterling Democracy of that fine old town, the birth-place of Franklin Pierce. The school-mates of his boyhood, the companions of his youth, and the friends of his maturer years, grasped each others’ hands in an ecstasy of delight, and called down blessings upon the head of him in whose honors they shared as in the honors of a brother. They had watched his growing fame with unmeasured delight. They had seen wave after wave of

popular applause bear him onward towards the proud position which he now occupied in the face of the whole world. As a statesman and a soldier, his praises had been recorded on every heart in the land. And at every step of his course, his townsmen had exclaimed: 'His wisdom and his virtues have merited it all. His blushing honors rest upon a noble and deserving brow, and in his triumphs we rejoice!'

"Not only his native town, but the whole State rejoiced in his nomination. The warm heart and splendid talents of General Pierce had long been recognized and admired throughout our whole borders; and every son of the old Granite State was ready to shout with joy that the mantle of so many illustrious Presidents was now to rest upon the shoulders of a worthy son of New-Hampshire. New-Hampshire, the home of the Starks, the Cilleys and the Pierces—New-Hampshire, the patriotic defender of our nation's liberties, the foremost in her love of our glorious Union—had at last received the reward that was her due. Let us be thankful that the wisdom of our national Convention had selected General Pierce for our standard-bearer in the campaign which had this day commenced.

"That he will be triumphantly elected to the Presidential chair, no one could doubt. But let it be the aim of every true man among us to work with unflagging energy until the desire of our hearts should be accomplished. Let us proclaim to the

whole world the wisdom, the virtues and the generosity of the man, until every heart should be fired with the truth, and the voices of the whole people should come up in one prolonged shout, declaring Franklin Pierce, of New-Hampshire, to be the next President of the United States." (Loud cheers.)

At an immense ratification meeting held in Faneuil Hall, Boston, the Hon. S. H. Ayer, of Manchester, N. H., made the following speech:

Hon. S. H. Ayer, of Manchester, N. H., was introduced to the meeting, and replied to the great cheering with which he was received, that he was sure the response was in favor of the State in which he lived.

"Mr. Ayer said, a newspaper in Boston—the Atlas—had spoken of New-Hampshire as a plague spot in the Union. He did not doubt that New-Hampshire would prove to be a plague spot to Massachusetts. He had recently seen an article in a Virginia paper in the same strain, with the sneering remark in reply to the question of who is Gen. Pierce, that he is a native of a State away up among the rocks, where the sun does not shine more than three hours out of the twenty-four. He would tell the editors of such papers, that the sun which beams over New-Hampshire, was destined to shine in such a manner as that there will be no more Galphinism and no more Gardnerism, and that the men of this country will not be shot down like dogs in other

countries, as they have been during the present national administration. (Great cheers.)

“Mr. Ayer said he would answer the question how it was that the nomination of Gen. Pierce had been effected. It was true that Gen. Pierce had been nominated by a State Convention in New-Hampshire, yet he went to the Convention at Baltimore, with one purpose, that of being true to the man who should appear to be the choice of the Convention. Mr. Pierce in reply to the nomination of the State Convention, positively declined being a candidate, and the delegates of New-Hampshire cast their votes for Cass. (Cheers.) New-Hampshire had known Gen. Cass, and had watched his progress as he left his home for a residence beyond the mountains, and through the various official positions with which he had been entrusted, and her delegates never deserted him until his vote fell below fifty, and even then they did not give him up until they consulted with the delegates of Michigan, whether they should go for any other candidate. Then it was that the idol of New-Hampshire was brought forward by the delegation of glorious old Virginia. (Cheers.) There was no need that it should be asked why he did not answer the Scott letter; no one mentioned it as an objection, for every one said we know just where Pierce is. (Cheers.)

“Mr. Ayer said his personal knowledge of General Pierce, extended from his own boyhood, was

continued while a student in his office, and in taking his practice in Hillsborough, his native town. He knew him for as pure a man as lived in New-Hampshire, or in the country. After he had served nine years in Congress, four in the House and five in the Senate, he resigned his seat, saying at the time, he had endeavored to serve his country with fidelity, but he must in future endeavor to do something for his own family. He was nominated for Governor of New-Hampshire, but declined the nomination. He was with him when he received the letter from President Polk, tendering him the office of attorney-general of the United States. He said to him, 'of course you will accept of it.' His reply was, 'that he should not accept of it, nor of any other office under the Government, except in the defence of his country in war.' (Applause.) This he wrote in reply to President Polk. A gentleman at the Baltimore Convention, related a conversation with President Polk, at the time he nominated Mr. Pierce as colonel, and subsequently as brigadier-general, in which President Polk gave his opinion that General Pierce would yet be President of the United States.

“The federal papers, said Mr. Ayer, had endeavored to ridicule the pretensions of General Pierce as a soldier. It was only necessary, in reply, to quote what General Scott at Puebla said, on receiving a letter from General Pierce, that he was coming to his aid with a reinforcement of 2,500 men. General

Scott said of him that he was an old soldier, that his appearance was that of a man who had served at least fifteen years in the army. General Scott had also said in relation to the calumnies sought to be cast upon General Pierce, that there was no braver man in Mexico than he was. And General Pierce would be supported by multitudes of old soldiers in the Mexican war.

“He had seen letters from all the prominent candidates before the Baltimore convention, and they all cheerfully supported the nomination, and promised their hearty support. (Applause.) The Boston papers say either Mr. Webster or General Pierce must be President. (Cheers.) Mr. Webster himself has said, ‘General Pierce is an honorable man, and will make a good President.’ Mr. Clay has said, ‘I regret that the nomination has not fallen on General Cass; but Pierce is a very good man.’ Mr. Ayer closed by quoting from a letter of Governor Seymour, of Connecticut, in congratulating General Pierce, assuring him that when the order is given, ‘forward, the ninth,’ the old ninth regiment and the whole line of Democracy will move forward in unbroken strength, and secure him the victory. Mr. Ayer sat down amid great applause.

At Washington a mighty gathering of the people took place, to ratify the doings of the National Convention. We quote the concluding portions of General Cass’ speech :

“I trust I know myself well enough to know that my time for public office is fast passing away, and that no possible event can ever place my name again before the American people for the Presidency; and if I did not know this you do, and so does the whole country. My ambition is to serve the people of Michigan, to whom I owe a debt of gratitude I can never repay, yet a little longer in the station I fill by their confidence and kindness. One word more, my fellow-citizens; let us enter into this contest with a determination to conduct it upon principles—upon those great issues which constitute the difference between the Whig and Democratic parties. That will be a noble strife, in which we may all engage with honor. But let us reject and denounce, as unworthy of our cause, that low abuse which unfortunately is too prevalent upon such occasions. We seek higher objects, and should employ higher means. Let us indignantly frown upon every man who so far forgets himself and the cause he professes to support, as to quit the contest of principle to descend to that of scurrility. We are better without such a man than with him. There are honorable points of difference enough between us and the Whigs to engage all our attention, and to call forth all our energy, without entering into such a field of warfare. Recollect that we are brethren of the same mighty family, equally interested in its honor and prosperity; and though we differ upon many important principles of government and



administration, yet we all seek the same common object—the preservation and perpetuation of our glorious institutions, the world's best hopes and our own. Let the rivalry between us be hereafter which shall best strive for this great end; it will be a rivalry of the understanding and of the heart, not of the tongue: of patriotism, and not of abuse.”

The Hon. Henry Dodge wrote to the meeting the following letter:

“ *Washington, June 10, 1852.*

“ DEAR SIR: I regret that circumstances prevented my attendance at the ratification meeting held last night. No individual, present or absent, more heartily approves the nomination of Franklin Pierce and William R. King, for President and Vice-President, than I do. I know both of our nominees well, and regard them as eminently qualified and worthy of the stations for which they have been named, and shall most cordially support them.

“ Most respectfully, your obedient servant,

“ HENRY DODGE.

“ J. D. HOOVER, Esq., President Jackson Democratic Association.”

In New-York, a grand ratification meeting was held. At one time twenty thousand of people were present. Stanton, O'Connor, Van Buren and others made enthusiastic speeches. We quote a paragraph from Mr. Van Buren's speech. He said:

“ I am anxious only that two great men, nom-

inated for the highest honors which the country can bestow, shall be successful. I have known Pierce from boyhood. I have known him to be a true unflinching radical Democrat—as a faithful, honest, disinterested public officer, in civil, as well as in military life. I have known him to be a modest unassuming man, and above all, an honest man; abundantly capable of discharging with honor the high duties which will be imposed upon him. I shall support him honestly and cheerfully. (Cheers.) I may say the same about the distinguished gentleman whose name is on the ticket, besides that of Mr. Pierce; I mean Mr. King from Alabama. I know him too, from childhood, and a more upright, capable man, as a statesman, citizen, or foreign ambassador, never lived. He is the soul of chivalry and honor; he is of true courage—a uniform unflinching Democrat. Such a ticket I cheerfully support. I can stand—I *will* stand upon the platform laid down at Baltimore. (Prolonged cheers.) I will not stop to cavil by what vote that platform has been adopted, what circumstances fostered it, or how it was made public. I say, I approve of that platform, and cheerfully support it.

In Hartford there was also an immense gathering of the people to ratify the doings of the Convention. We give Gov. Seymour's letter to the meeting:

“*Hartford, June 12th, 1852.*

“GENTLEMEN: Feeling obliged to decline the honor of presiding at the ratification meeting for this evening, I cannot permit the opportunity to pass, without some proof of my warm satisfaction with the nominations of the late Democratic National Convention.

“The name of General Pierce is associated in the minds of all those who have the pleasure of acquaintance, with the noblest qualities of the intellect and heart. As a civilian, his life presents a record of tried devotion to the cardinal principles of the Democratic party, those principles which have given a true construction to the Constitution, the bond of our Union, and which in times of danger to the Union, have been brought to bear in its defence. His military services originated in a patriotic zeal to serve his country, when there was a call for volunteer strength to maintain the honor of our flag, and nobly did he perform his duty to that country against the common enemy.

“I rejoice to see that the nomination is received with great applause throughout New-England, from a State which has furnished us with a candidate, to Connecticut which will stand by New-Hampshire and her gallant son—and with corresponding enthusiasm at the West and South, thus *vindicating* the *nationality* of the party which has placed his name in nomination for the Presidency, and gave him for an associate, W. R. King of Alabama.

“I need hardly remind you, that in the coming contest, no brighter augury of success can be named than that which is to be found in the perfect union of the Democratic party at the present time. In that union is *strength*, and the hopes of *certain victory*. I remain very truly,

“Your friend and fellow-citizen,

“THOS. H. SEYMOUR.”

But it is in vain that we attempt to even mention all the enthusiastic ratification meetings which have been held over the country. North and south, east and west, in Boston and New-York, in Philadelphia and Washington, in New-Orleans and St. Louis, and in all the smaller cities of the land, great meetings have been held by the people, to express their satisfaction at the nomination of General Pierce to the Presidency.

The following letter of Mr. Buchanan is of great importance, and for that reason we preserve it here.

LETTER FROM HON. JAMES BUCHANAN.

“*Wheatland, (near Lancaster,)* }  
*June 14th, 1852.* }

The *Washington Union* publishes the following letter from Mr. Buchanan, in reply to a letter from a large number of Democrats in Bradford county, expressing wishes for his election, and inviting him to pay them a visit in the course of the canvass.

He deferred answering it until after the action of the Convention :

“GENTLEMEN : I have delayed on purpose to answer your kind communication of the 20th ultimo until the result of the Baltimore Convention should be known. With every feeling of a grateful heart, I thank the intelligent and faithful Democracy of Springfield township for their favorable opinion, and for the earnest and friendly hope expressed by them ‘that the Democracy of the Union would respond to the wishes of Pennsylvania in the National Convention.’ In this hope they have been disappointed ; but yet all of us have much reason to be satisfied with the nomination of Franklin Pierce and William R. King.

“They are sound, radical, state-rights democrats, who will employ their best efforts to expel from the halls of Congress and the purlieus of the treasury, the hosts of stock-jobbers, contractors, and speculators by which they are now infested, and to restore the purity, simplicity and economy of former times in the administration of Government. I know them well, having served in the Senate with both for several years, at a most critical and important period of our political history ; and I speak with knowledge when I say they are the very men for the times. Public economy, reform, and a strict construction of the Constitution, according to the Virginia and Kentucky resolutions of 1798 and 1799, ought to be watchwords of the Democratic

party throughout the pending contest; and Pierce and King will prove to be the able and faithful representatives of these great principles.

“General Pierce first entered the Senate of the United States on the 4th of March, 1837, and continued to be a member, until the 28th day of February, 1842, when he resigned. This period embraces the whole of Mr. Van Buren’s administration and the first year of that of Gen. Harrison and Mr. Tyler. He had previously served as a member of the House of Representatives from December, 1833, until the 4th of March, 1837, throughout General Jackson’s second term of office.

“When General Pierce first made his appearance in the Senate, he was one of the youngest, if not the very youngest, of its members. Modest and unassuming in his deportment, but firm and determined in his principles and purposes, it was not long before he acquired the respect and esteem of his brother Senators.

“From deep conviction he was a state-rights Democrat—sound, unwavering and inflexible; and I venture to predict that when his votes shall be scrutinized and tested by the touchstone of Democratic principles, they will present as fair a record as those even of the lamented Wright himself. His innate modesty and comparative youth prevented him from addressing the Senate very frequently; and yet I well recollect some of his efforts, which would have done no discredit to the oldest and

ablest members of the body, then in its most palmy days. When he spoke he was always prepared ; his voice was excellent, his language well chosen and felicitous ; and he had an earnestness of manner proceeding evidently from deep conviction, which always commanded the attention of his audience.

“ No candid and honorable man, of any party, well acquainted with General Pierce, will, I am convinced, deny to him the intellectual qualifications necessary to render his administration of the government wise, able, and successful. Besides, unless I am greatly mistaken, he possesses determination of character and energy of will, without which no individual is fitted to perform high and responsible executive and administrative duties, such as pertain to the office of President of the United States. My own observation, as well as the history of the world, have taught me that these are qualities which do not always belong to great senators and distinguished orators.

“ The Democracy will not ask that their candidate shall be elected because of his great military exploits ; and yet his military services constitute a beautiful episode in the history of his life. It is no small distinction for General Pierce to have merited the official and emphatic endorsement of the commander-in-chief of our army in Mexico—an army composed of heroes—for gallantry and good conduct on the field of battle.

“ Of Colonel King, our candidate for Vice Pres-

ident, I can say emphatically that he is one of the purest, the best, and the most sound-judging statesmen I have ever known.

“He is a firm, enlightened, and unwavering Democrat, and an amiable, honorable, and benevolent gentleman. From the day when, yet a youth in 1812, as a member of the House of Representatives, he voted for the declaration of war against Great Britain, until the present hour, his life presents one consistent and beautiful portrait. As President of the Senate he is without a superior; and should it ever be his fate, in any contingency, to discharge the duties of President of the United States, he will conduct the Government with wisdom, sound discretion, and enlightened patriotism.

“But why should I insist upon the merits and qualifications of our candidates? Their nomination by the highest tribunal of the Democratic party is the strongest presumptive evidence of their worth, and ought to be sufficient of itself to rally to their support every true-hearted and faithful Democrat.

“As Democrats we should always yield our personal preferences for men when great principles require the sacrifice. Man is but the creature of a day, whilst principles are eternal. The generations of men in succession rise and fluctuate, and sink, and are forgotten; but the principles of democracy, *of progressive democracy*, which we have inherited from our Revolutionary fathers, will endure to bless



mankind throughout all generations. As Democrats we believe that not only the prosperity and glory of the country, but even the preservation of our blessed Union, depend upon a faithful observance of these principles in the administration of the Federal Government. And I ask, in what manner can that ascendancy be secured but by a sacred adherence to regular nominations? This is the only bond which can unite, consolidate, and render invincible, the great party of which we are all proud to be members.

“If, as soldiers in the ranks of the Democratic army, we should desert the good old cause of democracy merely because we might prefer a different leader, we shall then soon become broken and disorganized, and an ignominious defeat must be the inevitable consequence. In union, and in union alone, there is strength. Good and great old democratic Pennsylvania will never forsake her principles merely because she might possibly have preferred other agents than Franklin Pierce and William R. King, to carry her will into effect. She will never thus prove recreant to her own true glory and to her highest interest.

“In what light would we regard a professing Christian who should desert his holy religion and his church merely because he preferred a different bishop or pastor to preside over it from the individual the majority had selected? No, no, my Democratic fellow-citizens, we must neither be for Paul

nor Appollos, except but as the mere but worthy agents to carry out the great and fundamental doctrines of the democratic faith on which we are all united. Principles rather than men ought ever to be our motto.

“It has been our glory and our strength, in the past time, that we have never concealed our principles from the public eye, but have always proclaimed them before the world. The late Baltimore Convention, in obedience to our will, has erected a platform of principles in the midst of the nation, on which every true Democrat can proudly stand. Does the man live, be he Democrat or Whig, who, knowing Franklin Pierce and William R. King, believes they will prove faithless to any one of these principles? The great Democratic party of the Union have delivered to these, their chosen candidates, a chart by which they stand pledged, in the most solemn manner, to guide the ship of state; and my life upon the issue, they will never deviate from the prescribed course. In voting for these candidates, then, every Democrat will be voting for his own cherished principles, and sustaining the platform of his party.

“I fear I shall not be able to accept your kind invitation to pay you a visit during the Presidential canvass. With the strongest disposition to cultivate the personal acquaintance and friendship of my brother Democrats of Bradford county, I must yet leave the public discussion of the principles involv-

ed in the present contest to younger and abler Democrats. I have, during so long a period, served in the character of a speaker before the people, that I trust my Democratic fellow-citizens throughout the State, considering that I am now more than sixty years of age, will give me an honorable discharge from the active duties of the campaign.

“With sentiments of the highest respect, I remain your friend and fellow-citizen,

“JAMES BUCHANAN.”

“Theodore Leonard, Isaac Cooley, Elam Bennett, John Salisbury, Frederick Leonard, Charles Salisbury, J. L. Philips, Esqs., and many others.”

The annual celebration of the Tammany Society took place in New-York on the 5th of July, and the enthusiasm of all present in reference to the coming election, was most cheering. Several important letters, addressed to the committee, from distinguished Democrats, were read on that occasion, a few of which follow :

FROM EX-PRESIDENT MARTIN VAN BUREN.

*Lindenwald, July 1, 1852.*

“GENTLEMEN: I beg you to accept my thanks for the invitation to meet the Tammany Society on the 5th inst., with which you have honored me. It revives recollections reaching to a far distant day, of similar meetings, at which I had the pleasure of acting in the promotion of our cause, with a long array of disinterested and patriotic men, many of

whom have been forever removed from such scenes, whilst some are yet amongst you, honored members of your society, lingering, like myself, on the verge of life. A summons from the survivors of such a band and their younger associates together, for the support of principles which we imbibed in boyhood, and to which we have since devotedly adhered, I cannot regard with other feelings than those of deep interest, mingled with regret, that the gratification of thus meeting them is denied to me.

“In a public letter, some years since, addressed by me to the Democracy of the city of New-York—of which your society constitutes a highly respectable and influential part—I stated that I had, since the expiration of the Presidential term, deemed it due to that high office, and to those whose friendship and confidence raised me to it, to abstain as far as possible from an active participation in party politics. The opinion as to the proprieties of my position, coinciding with my preferences and views in other respects, has remained unchanged, and nothing can be further from my wishes or intentions, than to pursue a different course at this advanced period of my life. I am, therefore, constrained to throw myself upon the indulgence of your society, in declining their invitation.

“But I cannot, gentlemen, allow the opportunity you have presented, to pass without renewing the assurances which were given in the letter referred to, of my deep sense of the vigorous and effective

support that for so long a period, and through so many and such trying vicissitudes in my public career, I received from the Democracy of your great city. Differences of opinion have, it is true, since arisen between large and respectable portions of your associates and myself, upon points which your invitation well describes as 'foreign to the objects and political relations of your society.' In regard to these, we have each pursued the course that we deemed right, and that our judgments approved; and I am, I hope, too just to extend grudgingly to others, as well entitled, the exercise of a right I claim for myself, or to allow the personal asperities which unhappily seem to be inseparable from collisions of opinion upon most public questions, and against an indulgence in which men best disposed cannot always guard themselves, to weigh against, much less to cancel claims upon my gratitude and esteem that I can never either forget or disown. I can, therefore, with truth, say that the sentiments towards your society, and their political brethren of the city, long and cordially entertained by me whilst the relation of constituent and representative existed between us, are not less kind or less sincere now when that has ceased, and can never be restored.

“There is every probability, gentlemen, that what is so earnestly desired by all sincere Democrats—a fair field for the discussion before the people, of the conflicting principles of the respective parties, of the administration of the federal government—will be

once more afforded. At too many of our Presidential elections, circumstances in the actual condition of the country, or considerations personal to one or the other of the candidates, have, by the address of politicians, been used to prevent a proper attention to that great issue by the people. In the coming contest, there is, I think, great reason to expect that no such obstacles can, to any serious extent, be brought into successful operation. The disturbing subject of slavery has, by the action of the two great parties of the country, been withdrawn from the canvass between them, and the no less exciting questions in regard to a National Bank, and the uses and deposit of the moneys of the people, which so convulsed the whole country by appeals to individual interest and cupidity, have been finally settled by the adoption of the Democratic policy.

“In regard to the personal characters of the respective candidates, the prospects are not less propitious. The Whig nominee, in that chivalrous spirit which belongs to his character, has commenced his first political campaign with a frank admission of the private worth and claims to public confidence of his opponent—a concession which I am very sure General Pierce will be, at all times, ready to reciprocate.

“A Presidential election, held under the circumstances to which I have adverted, must, in seems to me, result in the success of the Democratic candidate. No well informed and candid mind can doubt

that a large majority of the people of the United States prefer the political principles for the administration of the federal government, of which Mr. Jefferson was the first and greatest advocate, and which have, in the main, guided the counsels of the Democratic party. The Whig nominee is the open and bold opponent of the most important of those principles, and the decided advocate of political doctrines, which are, in the estimation of every sound Democrat, in deadly hostility to the spirit of our free institutions.

“On the other hand, Gen. Pierce and Mr. King have both been brought up in the true Democratic faith, and spent their lives among the straightest of their sect. They are honest men, long tried in public life, possessing talents abundantly adequate to the successful discharge of every duty, and private characters above all cavil or reproach. They have been fairly nominated, and ought to receive, and I am confident will receive, the vote of every single-minded Democrat in the country. If my life is spared, they shall have mine.

“I am, gentlemen, very respectfully, your friend  
and servant, M. VAN BUREN.”

FROM HON. LEWIS CASS.

“*Washington, July 5, 1852.*”

“GENTLEMEN: I have but this moment received your invitation to attend the celebration on this day, of the anniversary of National Independence, by

the Tammany Society, and must answer you hastily. By some accident, I know not what, the preceding invitation to which you refer did not reach me.

“It would afford me great pleasure to meet the Society upon this interesting occasion, were circumstances such as to permit it. But they are not, and it only remains for me to thank you for your kind recollection and to express my cordial concurrence in your sentiments, which should find a response in the heart of every Democrat. Let the contest among us be, not who has done best in the time that is passed, but who will do best in the time that is coming, that has come, indeed, and that demands our united, vigorous, centering action. With that we shall succeed, and that we shall have. Everywhere in the ranks of our party, the cry is heard—the good of all demands the exertion of all—and well may old Tammany—patriotic, democratic old Tammany—set us the example of a sacrifice of individual preferences upon the altar of our party, and urge us all to come to the good work, determined to accomplish it; your society has always adhered to the cause of the country, in peace and war, with as true, patriotic ardor, as ever the love of country called forth, and well may we say, that we can never be defeated when united, for victory is sure, so long as we follow your example. Our principles are founded in free institutions, and are hallowed by time, and by the blessings they since brought with them, and our nominees are



worthy of the party; and thus we have motives for exertion as powerful and encouraging, as ever called the Democracy of the county to the support of their principles and of men, by whose judicious selection alone can principles be practically maintained.

“I am, gentlemen, with great regard, truly yours,  
“LEWIS CASS.”

FROM HON. STEPHEN A. DOUGLAS.

“*Washington, June 26, 1852.*

“GENTLEMEN: You will accept my thanks for your invitation to attend and participate in the festival of the Tammany Society, on the 5th of July. I am truly rejoiced at the cordial reunion of the great republican party of New-York, and of the nation, with the ticket and platform presented by the Baltimore Convention. A complete and glorious triumph surely awaits us. I take great pleasure in accepting your invitation, and will be with you on the occasion referred to. I have the honor to be very truly yours,

“S. A. DOUGLAS.”

FROM HON. SAM HOUSTON.

“*Washington, June 25, 1852.*

“MY DEAR SIR: As it would not be in my power to attend the celebration of the birth day of our National Independence by the ‘Tammany Society or Columbian Order,’ and my temporary absence, when the invitation arrived, I did not reply immediately.

“Some days previous to the receipt of your request, I had consented to unite with the citizens of New-Hope, Pennsylvania, and Lambertsville, New-Jersey, in celebrating our anniversary.

“It would afford me much pleasure to be present at “old Tammany,” and unite in all the feelings of the order. I do sincerely hope that such an impulse will be given there as will secure the support of the whole Democracy of the Empire State to Pierce and King.

“The Democracy united will secure to us victory. A triumph we can and must have. Truly thine,  
“SAM HOUSTON.”

Extract of a letter from Hon. J. Letcher, of Virginia :

“WASHINGTON, June 16, 1852.

“The approaching Presidential election is one of the utmost importance and interest, and it behooves every Democrat to exert himself in behalf of the distinguished nominees of the Baltimore Convention. They are gentlemen of high character, distinguished talent, enlarged experience in public affairs, unquestioned patriotism and the soundest republican principles. They have been long tried, and in prosperity and adversity have proved true to the faith and interests of the Democratic party. They are men of national views, and feelings, and principles, and will so administer the government as to put an end to the sectional strife that has so

long existed, and effect a restoration of peace and tranquillity, by a full recognition of the constitutional rights of all sections of the country—north, south, east and west.”

Extract of a letter from Hon. R. Strange, of North Carolina :

“ *Fayetteville, N. C., Jane 30, 1852.*

“ . . . I am greatly rejoiced to hear of the renewed union of the great republican party of New-York, whose divisions have so seriously threatened with ruin the whole republican party of the United States. Believing, as I do, that the destinies of this great nation depend on the maintenance or downfall of republican principles, the first wish of my heart has ever been for their preservation, and all that I own would be cheerfully divided to their security. . . . It is cheering, then, on the eve of one of the most important Presidential elections that our country has ever witnessed, to behold the dense columns of New-York Democracy gathering to their standard, and with the principles of 1798 in their hearts, sending forth the general shout of Pierce and King.”



And now our work is done. We have given the reader a faithful portrait of General PIERCE as a private citizen, as a lawyer, as a law-maker, as a soldier and a statesman. In whatever position it has

been his fortune to be placed heretofore, he has been equal to all the demands of the occasion. As a private citizen, the reader has found him to be noble and generous, more than fulfilling his duties to society; as a lawyer he is most eloquent, and as a soldier fearless in time of battle; and as a statesman he ranks with such men as Jackson and Van Buren and Polk. That he will preside over this nation with ability, dignity and impartiality, no candid man can doubt. That he will more than justify the most sanguine expectations of his friends, we are confident. There are few men in the country who have the administrative ability of General Pierce; there are few men who have his firmness of purpose; and in short there are few men who would fill the Presidential Chair with so much grace, dignity and ability. That the American people will in November elect him to that position, we cannot entertain a doubt, for throughout the Union, North and South, East and West, the Democracy are united, and therefore invincible.







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