

*Manuscript of the sermon*

*W. F. Otis.  
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SERMON

ON THE DEATH OF

HON. HARRISON GRAY OTIS.

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THE STAY AND THE STAFF TAKEN AWAY.

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A

# SERMON

PREACHED

AT THE CHURCH IN BRATTLE SQUARE,

ON THE DEATH OF THE

HON. HARRISON GRAY OTIS,

NOVEMBER 5, 1848.

BY S. K. LOTHROP,

PASTOR OF THE CHURCH.

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# SERMON.

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ISAIAH III. 1, 2, 3.

FOR BEHOLD THE LORD DOETH TAKE AWAY FROM JERUSALEM THE STAY AND THE STAFF —  
THE PRUDENT AND THE ANCIENT — THE HONORABLE MAN, — THE COUNSELLOR AND THE  
ELOQUENT ORATOR.

THE contemplation of human society leads directly to the contemplation of God, as its author and preserver. To every reflecting mind it suggests the existence of some power more than human, by which it is ordered and controlled. As a subject of study and investigation, it is grand, solemn, and, in some respects, mysterious and unfathomable, presenting, in all its aspects, points of deep and moving interest. Its vastness, its continuance amidst perpetual changes, its various conditions and multiplied occupations, — all in a measure happy, all to some extent directly opposed, yet all harmoniously blending, — its evils and abuses and their remedy — its peace, prosperity, and improvement, and the best modes of promoting them, — the causes of its present, and the influences that are operating to determine its future condition, — these are themes that sometimes baffle human judgment and bid defiance to human wisdom. The original institution of civil government is veiled in dark-

ness, and the legitimate sources and limits of its authority are matters yet in dispute. After ages of experience, with the recorded study and conjecture of untold generations before them, men are not agreed as to some of the first principles of their association in civil communities. Contradictory theories are urged and advocated; legislation appears to be only a series of experiments and government a continued struggle; and if men fall into their proper places, and communities are on the whole orderly and happy, it seems to be evidently owing, not so much to the influence of civil institutions, or the operations of reason and conscience, as to the hand of God guiding men's movements through the instinctive tendencies of their nature.

We behold a vast multitude whom no man can number. Their voice is like the sound of many waters. Their movement like the deep roll of mighty thunders. They are perpetually changing, yet forever the same. The race faints not amid the ruin of its members. Death is continually striking, but his blows make no permanent blanks, leave no lasting tokens of bereavement in society. As individuals the people are dust, as a body they are lasting as time. By the commingling of youth with age, a perpetual infusion of new life preserves the vitality, the even temperature, and the cheerfulness of society. As the human frame is constantly changing its particles but preserving its identity by something not subject to the laws of matter, so society is constantly changing its members, but preserving its identity. It is another, and yet the same.

Again, we contemplate this vast multitude, and we find each one thinking, feeling, contriving, working, in the first instance and chiefly for himself. His interests are in a measure opposed to every other man's interest. He has selfish ends, and pursues an unsocial path. When we look at the variety of human interests and pursuits, and consider the force of human passions and the prevalence of vicious principles and propensities, we are left to wonder that chaos does not come back upon the social world, and darkness overspread the great deep of men's minds and hearts. But, comparatively, it is seldom that convulsions and disorder disturb the elements of social peace and happiness. Men come forward and assume with ease and contentment their proper places in society. Like water, each finds his level, and, like water, each rises when a vacuum is presented. Genius walks forward with confidence and occupies without dispute the station for which its great and noble nature was created, while mediocrity finds delight in the home and the duties assigned to it; and all feel a secret, unseen web woven around them, whose bonds, gentle but indestructible, keep them in their proper place. All feel themselves carried steadily on through the violence of their passions and the tumult of their contentions to the great end designed by Infinite Goodness, the social happiness and progress of the race.

Human legislation, — man's wisdom, — does not seem to be the chief, much less the sole instrument, by which this result is produced; for, to a much greater extent than we imagine, the result is the same under all govern-

ments, and may be found where legislation has been both weak and wicked. It is produced through God's providence, who has formed man for society, and overrules him in it, appointing alike the good and evil that befall the individual and the race. Thus does the contemplation of society lead directly to the contemplation of God, as its author and preserver, the being, who, amid all earth's changes and fluctuations, amid all the various and doubtful aspects of human affairs, presides over mortal destinies, and causes the wrath of man to praise him, and the remainder of wrath restrains.

These general reflections have been suggested by the events in Hebrew history connected with the text. In its original connection, what is here declared is prophetic. The words form part of that memorable passage, in which the prophet foretells the total ruin and destruction that should come upon the Hebrew nation, in rebuke and punishment for their sins. As a prophecy, the passage had its fulfilment in the Babylonish invasion and captivity, and in the subsequent subjection of the Jews to the Persian, the Greek, the Roman power. By some critics it is regarded simply as a prediction of the first of these events; by others, as having special reference to the last, — the complete destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans, and the dispersion of its people after their rejection and crucifixion of the Saviour. The fact that on the medal which Vespasian ordered to be struck in commemoration of that event, Jerusalem is represented in the very posture described by the last words of this chapter, — that of a disconsolate mother bewailing the

unhappy fate of her children, — is regarded by some as a confirmation of this interpretation, an evidence that in that early age the passage was considered to have its particular fulfilment in the Roman conquest. The question is not important, because in both cases the prophecy had its fulfilment; in both, the condition and sufferings of the Jewish people corresponded with the general predictions of the prophet. Among these sufferings, not the least was to be the loss of all their great men, — the men of eminent ability and talent, who were or had been the stay and staff of the community, competent to fill its high trusts and offices, and discharge the most important functions of civil and social life. “For behold, the Lord doth take away from Jerusalem and from Judah, the stay and the staff, the mighty man and the man of war, the judge and the prophet, and the prudent and the ancient, the captain of fifty and the honorable man, and the councillor, and the expert artificer, and the eloquent orator, and will give children to be their princes, and babes shall rule over them.”

To us, that portion of these verses which I have selected for the text, is not so much a prophecy as the expression of a fact, — a declaration which has its constant fulfilment in the orderings of God’s providence in all communities. Continually does he take away the stay and the staff, the great and the good, the men whose enlarged and comprehensive minds, whose far-seeing wisdom, whose eminent talents and unbending integrity, have been the light and confidence of society, whose prudence and experience have been its guide in great

emergencies, whose firmness has maintained its rights, upheld and guarded its interests, for many years. They may be spared long, and permitted to do and enjoy much for themselves and others. They may pass the ordinary bounds of human life, may remain when most of their contemporaries are gone, and, with a heart of youth in the frame of age, with the fire of a holy patriotism burning beneath the frosts of eighty winters, with a vigorous intellect, keen and sagacious, its clear vision undimmed, its strength unbowed, they may make themselves felt, and exert a wide and beneficial influence upon public and private affairs, up to the last hour of a long life. But that hour must come, and they must be taken away.

"Who is the champion? who the strong?  
 Pontiff and priest, and sceptred throng?  
 On these shall fall  
 As heavily the hand of Death,  
 As when it stays the shepherd's breath  
 Beside his stall?"

The death of the most humble individual has in it something solemn and affecting. While it is a bereavement to some fond hearts, crushing the hopes and destroying the happiness of some humble family, it is a lesson and a warning to all, proclaiming the universal dominion of death, teaching, what none doubt but few feel as they ought, that all are exposed to the same calamity, that all are pilgrims and strangers on earth, liable at any moment to have the tabernacle of flesh dissolved, and the soul summoned to another world. But when the Lord taketh away the stay and the staff, when the prudent and the ancient depart, when they whose wisdom has illumined the councils, whose genius has

adorned the annals of their country, whose names have been a power to stir men's sympathies, mould their opinions and guide their actions, who have filled a wide place in the community's regards, and been the admiration and the pride of many hearts, — when such die, the spectacle is deeply instructive and affecting. It is public proclamation, as it were, under the hand of God, of that declaration of the prophet, "all flesh is grass, and all the goodness thereof is as the flower of the field. The grass withereth, the flower fadeth, because the spirit of the Lord bloweth upon it. Surely the people is grass."

Such proclamation has repeatedly been made to us of late. The year which is now approaching its close will never be forgotten by some here present, on whose hearts it has left the record of sad bereavement and deep private sorrow. Memorable throughout the world for the public convulsions which have shaken thrones and kingdoms, it is even more memorable for the number of great and distinguished men who have departed this life since it commenced. They have been summoned from their earthly honor, station, usefulness, wealth, to pass within the veil, and render an account of the great stewardship intrusted to them. Our own country, especially our own city and immediate neighborhood, afford sad and signal illustration of this remark. Within a few months of each other, John Quincy Adams, Jeremiah Mason, Harrison Gray Otis, have gone down to the grave. They were among the few bright links that remained to connect us directly with the men of the Revolution.

Their lives covered the whole of our existence as an independent nation. Their names were associated with most of the important events in our history. Widely different from each other in the distinguishing traits, both of their characters and their talents, they were all eminent in the public services they had rendered, in the public influence they had exerted, in the honorable stations they had occupied and adorned. The death of three such men, whose large experience, deep wisdom, varied learning, and eloquent speech, had made them "the stay and the staff," burning and shining lights, in whom for so long a season we were permitted to rejoice, enables us to understand, to the full extent of its meaning, the declaration of the prophet in the text.

Of these three distinguished persons, the last mentioned was from childhood a worshipper, and for many years a communicant, at this church. His memory could recall the time when the foundations of these now venerable walls were laid. He sat at the feet of the third Pastor of this church, the celebrated Samuel Cooper, whose ministry closed sixty-five years ago. Under his teachings he received his earliest religious impressions, and from his instructions, as well as from other influences amid the struggle of the Revolution, he imbibed those broad, generous, elevated, liberal, political and religious principles, that formed his character and guided his conduct. For several years, through the infirmities of age, his dignified form has seldom appeared in our assembly of worshippers; but to the last he retained a lively interest in our prosperity and welfare. Within the past week I have



followed his earthly remains to their last resting-place at Mount Auburn. His character and fame are public property. They belong to the city of which he was a native, to the state of which he was an ornament, to the country which he loved and served with his high capacities and in various stations, to the best of his ability and judgment. They belong to us, to this church and congregation, to which for so many years he had been joined in the holy fellowship of Christian faith. For our own improvement, and in just tribute to a name that will not soon be forgotten, I am prompted to speak of him, and to speak as he would have had me, truly and soberly. In one of my last interviews with him, not long before his death, he alluded to this point in reply to a question put by me, and gave expression to a thought which, previously, I had not unfrequently heard him utter. "I could desire," he said "to pass away quietly and unnoticed; but, if you think proper to say any thing about me when I am gone, say, as I am sure you will, the truth. Nothing true can be said about my character, or principles, or conduct, that I am afraid or ashamed to have said. There is little to extenuate, if nought be set down in malice." I shall hope not to forget or violate this injunction.

The late HARRISON GRAY OTIS was born in Boston on the 8th of October, 1765. He was the descendant of a highly respectable family, that came to this country in 1630, and settled in the neighboring town of Hingham. His father, Samuel Allyne Otis, was, in early life, an honorable merchant in this city, and, subsequently, the first Secretary of the Senate of the United States, under the

Constitution, which office he held till his death. He was less distinguished than his brother, the celebrated *James Otis*, to whose eloquence and efforts, the cause of American Independence was so largely indebted, but much respected and honored as one of the intelligent and active patriots of the memorable period of the Revolution. His mother was Elizabeth Gray, daughter of Harrison Gray, a person of considerable distinction in his day. Mr. Gray's sympathies led him to side with the mother country, in the struggle between her and her colonies. He resigned the office of Treasurer and Receiver General, which he had held for several years, and became what is known in our history as a Tory Refugee. He went first to Halifax, and thence to England, in the Spring of 1776. His daughter sympathized with her husband in his political principles and opinions, and many of the prominent traits of mind and heart, in the character of her son, are to be traced to her generous and noble spirit, and the influence of her amiable and energetic qualities.

Mr. Otis was prepared for college partly in Boston, and partly at Plymouth and Barnstable, passing a portion of his boyhood at school in these latter places.\* He was graduated at Cambridge at the age of eighteen, in 1783, receiving the first honors of a class in which were several

\* During the two months which intervened between the battles of Lexington and Bunker Hill, Mr. Samuel Allyne Otis removed his family to Barnstable, where they remained till after the British troops evacuated Boston in 1776. In one of her letters to her father, at this period, Mrs. Otis says, speaking of the subject of this notice, "I shall enclose you a letter from Harry of his own writing and inditing, which will enable you to form some judgment of his genius, which his tutor tells me is very uncommon."

other men, who subsequently became eminent in public and professional life. Among them were the late William Prescott and Artemas Ward of this city, Ambrose Spencer of New York, and Wm. King Atkinson of New Hampshire. At college he was distinguished for his ready acquisition of some of the more abstruse departments of knowledge, for his rich attainments as a classical scholar, and, also for his very brilliant and graceful oratory. Even thus early it was said by his young friends, that the mantle of his eloquent uncle James Otis had fallen upon him, a declaration which was subsequently confirmed in the judgment of those, who in their youth heard the one and in their age listened to the other.

Upon leaving college, Mr. Otis determined to devote himself to that profession which has given so many noble minds to the world,—a profession which, in its high purpose, aims to be the voice of calm reason, arbitrating among the concerns of men, a power to separate the problem from its accidents, to discern the principle amid the circumstances which obscure it, to ascertain and determine justice and right in the conflicts between man and man,—a profession which, for its best exercise and fulfilment, requires a rare combination of mental and moral qualities, and the complete command and frequent application of every intellectual faculty. The fact that Mr. Otis pursued his studies for this profession under the direction and influence of that distinguished patriot and jurist, the late Judge Lowell, is a sufficient evidence both of the thoroughness with which he studied Law, and of the high conceptions he entertained of the character, the

duties and obligations of his profession; and, were other evidence of this wanting, it would be found in his early professional eminence.\* Almost instantly upon coming to the bar, in a profession whose early paths are proverbially rugged and thorny, and the ascent slow and difficult, his eminent talents, aided undoubtedly by the favorable circumstances of the times, gave him a rank among the very first; and, at an age when young men of the present day are well content to get any business at all, he was employed as senior counsel and advocate in many of the most important causes that came before the courts.† In conducting these causes he displayed an extent and thoroughness of legal knowledge, a logical vigor and acumen, which sustained and constantly added to his reputation as a young man of talent; while his winning and persuasive eloquence, investing the dry details of argument with the charm of classical allusion and appro-

\* In his boyhood, Mr. Otis had been promised, and had expected to pursue his legal studies at the Temple Inns, London, but the confiscation of his grandfather Gray's property, and the derangement of his father's affairs, by the Revolution, compelled him to relinquish this anticipated privilege.

† The following incident is an evidence of his early success, and of the confidence he inspired. A few weeks after he opened his office, the father of the late Mr. Abraham Truro, a gentleman still remembered in this city, needing the services of lawyer at an early hour in the morning, found none of the profession in their chambers but Mr. Otis, whom he consequently employed. Mr. Otis having at this time no books, and no other means of obtaining any, borrowed of Mr. Truro fifty guineas, which he expended in purchasing a law library. At the close of his first year's practice at the bar, the loan was repaid out of his professional income.

*A mistake. It was 116 from the Boston 1786. & owned by M. M.*

*Hays Esq*

priate illustration, made him a favorite with the people, and gave him great popular influence.

In alluding to this early period of his life, as compared with his political career, I have heard him express the passing regret, that he had not kept strictly within the walks of his profession, and sought there an eminence and usefulness, that might well satisfy the noble ambition of a noble mind. But this was probably only a momentary feeling. His Country, then a young Republic just launched into being, needed the services of all who could help to mark out and guide her course; and whatever was the result of those services in his own case, he could not, and did not, on deliberate reflection, regret that he had rendered them. He resisted, however, for several years the repeated solicitations that were made to him to be a candidate for political office, and yielded to them at last in obedience to convictions of duty. In 1796, he was nominated one of the seven Representatives which Boston then sent to the Legislature of the State, and was returned by a large majority.

Previous to his election to the Legislature there are two incidents in his life worthy of notice. One of these indicates the public estimation in which he was early held; the other gives some intimation of his own moral principles and feelings at that time. In 1788, three months before he was twenty-three years of age, Mr. Otis was appointed to deliver before the authorities and citizens of Boston, the Fourth of July Oration. No one, I believe, has ever been called to perform this service in this city, at so early an age. At that critical period in

our history, the oration on the Fourth of July was regarded as a much more important matter than it is now. It was, in fact, more important. It was a great occasion, and afforded one of the most direct and powerful means of influencing both the opinions and the feelings of the people on subjects of public and political interest. The appointment of Mr. Otis to this service, at so early an age, is conclusive evidence not only of the public respect for his talents, but also of the public confidence in his sound judgment and principles. In the winter of 1791 – 92, an effort was made to repeal a statute then existing, which absolutely prohibited theatrical entertainments and exhibitions. Some of the most popular and influential men of the town were advocates for the repeal. Mr. Otis, with the venerable Samuel Adams and others, made strenuous efforts to resist and prevent the repeal, and they were successful in postponing it for several years.

In 1796, Mr. Fisher Ames, who had represented this district in Congress from the adoption of the Constitution, having expressed his determination to retire at the close of his term, Mr. Otis was chosen to succeed him. It is no disparagement to the many able and distinguished men then living in this district, to say that one more worthy or better fitted to fill the place of such a man as Mr. Ames could not have been found. Questions of great moment agitated the public mind. The opinions, principles and policy of the two great political parties that had grown up under the Constitution, and, in some measure, out of the Constitution, had become more distinct and more at variance. While neither party was void of

anxiety or deficient in zeal, the federalists especially felt the necessity of selecting their very ablest men to take part in the national councils, and help sustain the policy disclosed and the measures pursued by Washington. Upon the maintenance of this policy, and adherence to these measures, they believed the peace and prosperity and glory of the country to depend.

It was, therefore, no ordinary honor, no small distinction, that, at such a critical period, and at the early age of thirty-two, Mr. Otis should have received this mark of public confidence, and been clothed with the high trust of representing, in the Congress of the United States, one of the most important commercial districts in the Union. That confidence was well repaid in the ability, firmness, and independence, with which he fulfilled the trust. He was among the most efficient members of the House during the time he held his seat.\* On retiring from Congress, he resumed the practice of law in this city, and devoted himself assiduously to professional duty for several years.

The political excitement and violent party spirit that prevailed over the land during the first fifteen years of the present century, were so great, that no man, however disposed to be quiet, could avoid participating in them, to some extent. The state of the country was too critical, and the measures pursued and the questions at issue too

\* Mr. Otis served two terms in Congress as Representative. Toward the close of Mr. Adams's administration, he was appointed District Attorney, which office he held till Mr. Jefferson appointed the late George Blake his successor.

important, for any good citizen, who felt his responsibilities, to remain an inactive and indifferent spectator. During all these years, therefore, whether in or out of office, Mr. Otis was active in political affairs. He was often a member of the Massachusetts Legislature, where he exerted a large influence upon the political action of the State. At different times he was repeatedly chosen Speaker of the House of Representatives, and President of the Senate. We can readily believe the declaration, that he discharged the duties of Presiding Officer with an ease, urbanity, promptness and impartiality, that have seldom been equalled and never surpassed. He often left the chair to participate in debate, and thrill the assembly by an eloquence as manly and vigorous as it was polished and graceful. Among those with whom he sympathized, and in conjunction with whom he acted at this period, were such men as Theophilus Parsons, Nathan Dane, Fisher Ames, Rufus King, George Cabot, Thomas Davis, Christopher Gore, Samuel Dexter, William Prescott, John Brooks, John Phillips, Timothy Bigelow. It would be much to say of any man, and it is just and true to say it of Mr. Otis, that he possessed the confidence and friendship of these men. They put him forward as a leader on many important occasions. They had the highest respect for his intellectual ability, his wisdom and judgment as a statesman, his patriotism and his integrity.

The important event in his life during this period, — the first fifteen years of the present century, — was his connection with the Convention which met at Hartford, in



December, 1814. Of this body he was a prominent member, and in the popular mind at the present day his name is more intimately associated with it than that of any other man. To enter into the details of this matter would not be proper on this occasion or in this place; but in speaking of the public career of Mr. Otis, it cannot be passed over in entire silence. Without discussing, therefore, the wisdom or expediency of the measure, I will briefly say, in justice to the motives and the memory of as patriotic and upright statesmen as ever trod the soil of New England, and as an expression of individual opinion, founded upon a somewhat thorough and impartial study of the history of that period, that I believe the object of that Convention to have been to allay excitement among the people of New England, not to increase it, — to check any desire or tendency towards disunion that may have existed, not to encourage or promote it, — to protect the rights, the property, the interests and the homes of the people of the northern and commercial States, through the Government, acting in its legislative channels, and not to array these rights and interests against the Government, and thus bring in anarchy, rebellion and disunion. To this conclusion, I suppose candid and intelligent men of all parties at the present day are fast approaching, if they have not already reached it. The wisdom and policy of the measure will always admit of question, but the time will come probably, as the objects contemplated are better understood, when to have been a member of this Convention shall no longer be adduced as a stigma and reproach, but an

honor ; and it shall be generally admitted, that if censure and disgrace belong any where, they rightfully attach to those who, clamorous for the thing before it was held, were the first to cry out against, and the most persevering in their attempts to cry down, the men who personally took part in it.

In 1814, the Legislature, to facilitate the administration of justice, instituted a new Court, specially for the County of Suffolk, called the Boston Court of Common Pleas. Mr. Otis received the first appointment of Judge of this Court, and took his seat on the first Tuesday of May, in that year. He remained on the bench nearly four years, resigning in April, 1818.\*

In 1816, when Governor Strong signified his intention to retire from the Chief Magistracy of the Commonwealth, it was the wish of his friends to nominate Mr. Otis as his successor. But the war had terminated, peace was restored, and no particular emergency in the affairs of the country or the Commonwealth existed. He would not permit his friends, therefore, to bring forward his name as a candidate.

In 1817, Mr. Varnum's term in the Senate of the United States expired, and the Legislature, by a strong vote, chose Mr. Otis to represent the State in that high Council of the Nation. Here he fully maintained and added to the reputation he had acquired as an able statesman and a most eloquent orator. His speech in reply to Mr. Pinckney in the debate on the Missouri question, abounds in all the elements of the highest eloquence, and is on a level with the noblest speeches that have ever

\* He was succeeded by the late William Prescott.

been made in that august assembly. In his office of Senator, while he was faithful to all the broad, general concerns of the Nation, he was particularly faithful, energetic, and independent in watching over the interests of this Commonwealth, and in pressing its claims for compensation for expenses incurred during the war of 1812. He resigned at the expiration of the fifth year of his senatorial term, and, on the retirement of Governor Brooks from the Executive Chair in 1823, he became the candidate of the Federal party for the office of Chief Magistrate; his competitor was the late Dr. Eustis. The election was closely contested, with considerable party excitement. Mr Otis failed, — a small majority of the popular vote being in favor of Dr. Eustis. In conversing with him once about this portion of his life, he said, “My failure in the Gubernatorial election of 1823 was a mortification, and a severe disappointment to me at the time, but I look back upon it now without regret. I regard it now as the most fortunate event of my life; I have been a happier and better man since I was thrown out of political life, than I should ever have been had I remained in it.”

After this election, Mr. Otis retired from public life, save that he held for two or three years the office of Mayor of the city.\* For the last eighteen years he has lived wholly in the retirement of private life, in the enjoyment of a green old age and the society of his friends, in the exercise of a large, refined and graceful hospitality, — the pride, the ornament and the charm of the social circles in which he mingled. As a citizen

\* He was Mayor of the City for the years 1829, 30, 31.

and a man, he has always retained his interest in public affairs, and in whatever appertained to the good of this city, the Commonwealth, and the country at large; and through his pen and the press he has occasionally given to the public his thoughts and opinions upon various subjects of public interest. His last act of this kind was his letter upon the Presidential election now pending, published only a few weeks ago. There will of course be differences of judgment as to the conclusions reached in this letter, and some dissent from them, but all will admit that it shows an unabated vigor of intellect, an undiminished ardor of patriotism, and is altogether an extraordinary production to come from the pen of any man at eighty-three years of age. This effort hastened perhaps an event that could not have been far distant; sudden, unexpected and sad bereavement also helped to accelerate it. His strength failed rapidly, and, without any marked disease or severe suffering, he gently passed away, so calmly, so peacefully, that we may apply to him the words of the poet, so often applied to the death of the aged:

“Of no distemper, of no blast he died,  
 But fell like autumn fruit that mellowed long,  
 E’er wondered at because he dropped no sooner;  
 Fate seemed to wind him up to fourscore years,  
 Yet freshly ran he on three winters more,  
 Till like a clock worn out with eating Time,  
 The wheels of weary life at last stood still.”

Such, my friends, is a brief outline of the life of one widely known and highly honored, who has departed from among us. It would be difficult to fill up the sketch and make it a full picture, by a just analysis of

his powers, and a faithful delineation of his character. I shall not attempt it. One or two things I feel prompted to say.

There was so much grace, polish and beauty in every thing Mr. Otis said and wrote, that some, I think, have failed to do justice to his intellectual ability, have overlooked the vigor, grasp, comprehensiveness, and acute penetration of his mind. The action and play of his mental power were so easy, that one was apt to forget the profound and subtle nature of the subjects with which he was dealing. His power of nice analysis and sharp discrimination was extraordinary, and the broad and deep wisdom of his thought was often as remarkable as the language in which he clothed it was brilliant and beautiful.

It is worthy of observation that the great men of a city, those who are distinguished and influential in their day, are seldom persons born in it. They are persons born in the country, reared under other influences, and attaining distinction by a force of character which may be chiefly traced to these influences.

Among the sons of Boston, those born within its limits, reared and educated under its influences, Mr. Otis, in the brilliancy and versatility of his talents, in his various accomplishments as a scholar and an orator, in all the attributes of a great mind, stands in the very first rank. It would be difficult to say who could rightfully stand before him.

Again, there was so much courteousness and urbanity in his manners, that many who did not see him often and know him well, might be led to do injustice to his sincerity,

and to the real goodness and kindness of his heart. His heart was not without its failings, faults of temper and disposition, with which he had to struggle. These faults were not unobserved by others, or unknown to himself. In the unreserved and confidential intercourse to which he admitted me, he has sometimes spoken of them, and spoken of them in the spirit and with the humility of a Christian. Some of them were faults that leaned to virtue's side.

The manners are in general an index of the heart. In Mr. Otis, that courteousness which an Apostle enjoins was, to a large extent, the fruit of that love and good will which the Saviour inculcates. He was a sincere man. He never forgot or deserted a friend. He never cherished and perpetuated an enmity. He was just and charitable in his judgment of others, and, in his domestic relations, an example of all that was kind, tender, and affectionate. There is one strong manifestation of his sincerity in the undeviating uprightness and firmness of his public career. In this respect, that career was one of which no man need be ashamed. His ambition was not stronger than his principles, nor his love of office greater than his love of consistency and integrity. It is not too much to say of Mr. Otis, at least it may be regarded as probable, that, if at any time between 1800 and the close of the war of 1812, he had deserted his party and changed his political relations, abandoned his former political opinions, (the temptation to do which was at one time presented to him in an alluring form,) his ability, talents, manners, and many popular qualities, were

such, that he might have secured almost any political office he desired, might have gratified his highest ambition, might have reached, perhaps, the first and most august honor in the gift of the nation. But he would not do it. Through evil report and good report, through honor and dishonor, he clung to his political faith and principles; and in so doing a distinguished name, which was identified with the cause of American liberty in its early struggle, has been left by him unsullied, to extend its inspiring influence to many generations yet to come.

Brethren, there is nothing to lament or regret in the death of our distinguished fellow-citizen. He will be missed in the family circle where, though old, he was a stay and a staff, a centre of strong attraction, and a charm to unite all hearts. He will be missed in our public walks, for he was identified with much that was interesting and important in our history, — a link connecting us directly with the men of our Revolutionary struggle and heroic age, a representative of a class of which but one or two others remain, and which cannot be perpetuated, or come up again under the present forms and tendencies of society among us. But it was meet that he should depart. To his family there are abundant consolations in the memory of his life, and in the expressions of firm faith, and deep humility, and holy trust and hope, with which he met the approach of death. To all of us there are lessons of instruction and words of warning and admonition in his death. Let us not fail to gather them up and apply them to our hearts.















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