

BRIEF OUTLINE  
OF THE  
**LIFE OF HENRY CLAY.**

BY OLIVER OLDSCHOOL.

[The first of a series of Tracts for general circulation, now being published at the office of the Whig Standard, Washington, D. C.—Price, for the Life of HENRY CLAY, 16 extra large octavo pages: for 100 copies, \$2; for 500, \$9; for 1,000, \$16; for 5,000, \$70. The successive numbers of the series will comprise eight pages each, and will be sold at one-half the above prices. Orders enclosing the cash, or from a known responsible source, will be attended to.

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*Mr. Clay's name interwoven with the annals of his country.*

It is given to but few men to interweave their own actions and principles with the transactions of their country, to exercise such a controlling influence upon public men and public measures, as to make their own a part of the history of their country. Fortunate, indeed, is the nation, if her master spirits are actuated by that noble ambition which seeks to promote her happiness and prosperity; which strives to perpetuate freedom and the blessings that flow from a government of laws administered with wisdom and integrity; and which has its highest reward in the contemplation of a people united, prosperous, and contented; and in the verdict of "well done, good and faithful servant."

Excepting Mr. Adams, who has been longer upon the stage of life, no man of the present age has taken a more active and prominent part in the public affairs of this country, than HENRY CLAY. For more than thirty years he has stood before the nation as an orator, unrivalled; as a statesman of extraordinary sagacity, forecast, and energy; as a man of eminent talents, generous, high-souled sentiments, the strictest honor and integrity, and the chivalrous friend of universal freedom. His name has become familiar to the lips of the American people "as household words," his policy identified with the prosperity, and his fame the property of the nation.

*His birth-place and Parentage.*

Hanover county, Virginia, has the honor of being the place of his nativity. He was born on the 12th of April, 1777. By the death of his father, a Baptist clergyman, in 1781, he was left an orphan-boy; poverty his only inheritance, Providence his protector and guide. He was, however, blessed with a mother who combined a sound understanding with kind and amiable feelings. "I knew her well," said a distinguished gentleman, now in the Senate of the United States; "I knew her well, when a boy, and used to love to go to her house; she was an excellent woman: so kind, so indulgent, and always took such a motherly interest in the lads of her acquaintance; nothing she had was too good for us, and there was no stint in her measurement."—Much as we admire Henry Clay the Orator, the Statesman, the distinguished Speaker of the House of Representatives, the Minister Plenipotentiary, the Secretary of State, the grave and able

Senator, the favorite of the people, yet do we love far more to dwell upon "the orphan-boy" following the plough in the slashes of Hanover, and occasionally trudging his way to a distant mill, to provide bread for a widowed mother and younger brothers and sisters.

It is an evidence of the goodness of his heart that, in the privacy of the domestic circle, surrounded by those to whom he can unbosom himself, nothing so delights him as to recur to the scenes, the labors, the incidents, and the enjoyments of his boyhood; anecdotes of which he often relates with infinite humor and zest. This feeling gushes forth in his speech at Hanover, on the 10th of July, 1840, which he then visited for the first time after some forty-three years' absence. On that interesting occasion, surrounded by nearly the whole population of the county, who had assembled to welcome one of whom they had heard so much, and was so proud as a native of their county, Mr. Clay said:—"I have come here to the county of my nativity, in the spirit of a pilgrim, to meet, perhaps for the last time, the companions and the descendants of the companions of my youth.—Wherever we roam, in whatever climate or land we are cast by the accidents of human life, beyond the mountains or beyond the ocean, in the legislative halls of the country, or in the retreats and shades of private life, our hearts turn with an irresistible instinct to the cherished spot which ushered us into existence. And we dwell with delightful associations on the recollection of the streams in which, during our boyish days, we bathed,\* and the fountains at which we drank; the pine fields, the hills and the valleys where we sported, and the friends who shared the enjoyments with us.—Alas! too many of these friends of mine have gone whither we must all shortly go, and the presence here of the small remnant left behind attests both our loss and our early attachment. I would greatly prefer, my friends, to employ the time which this visit affords in friendly and familiar conversation on the virtues of our departed companions, and on the scenes and adventures of our younger days; but the expectation which prevails, and the state of our beloved country, impose on me the obligation of touching on topics less congenial with the feelings of my heart, but possessing higher public interest."

The farm which had belonged to his father was small, and its cultivation, which was continued by his mother, with young Harry's assistance, for several years, afforded the family a scanty subsistence. But the labor performed on that piece of land, sterile as it was, undoubtedly laid the foundation of that strong and vigorous constitution which has enabled Mr. Clay to perform such extraordinary labor through a long life of professional and public service, and to preserve unimpaired his mental and physical vigor. It also gave him a knowledge of farming and a taste for rural occupations, which have grown with his growth and strengthened with his years. "There is not," said a gentleman to me, who for many years has been his neighbor and friend, "there is not a better farmer in the western country than Mr. Clay; and there is no better judge of cattle, horses, and stock generally: nor one who manages his farm to better advantage."

*He becomes a Clerk in the office of the Court of Chancery.*

Mrs. Clay married again in 1792, and removed with her husband to Kentucky, leaving Henry, "a boy of fifteen years of age, in the office of the High Court of

\* Mr. Clay often relates to his intimate friends the circumstances of his ploughing, when a lad, and how, when he unharnessed the horses at noon to feed them and got his dinner, he used, in warm weather, to go to the creek hard by, water the horses, and, while they were feeding, cool himself by bathing. "I then thought the creek," said he, "a monstrous stream, and indulged not a little complacency that I dared plunge into it, and stem its rapid current. But what was my surprise and disappointment, when I visited it, to find it nothing more than a small branch! It was one of the largest streams I had then ever seen." Mr. Clay remembered a hickory tree which stood by and shaded the spring from which he used to drink, and was anxious to see the tree and get some nuts opened more from it, as well as to drink again at the spring, but was disappointed on finding the tree had decayed, and, like many of his early friends and companions, had fallen. The fountain, however, still bubbled with its cool and delicious waters.

Chancery, in the city of Richmond, without a guardian, destitute of pecuniary means of support, to steer his course as he might or could." The education of the poor has never been attended to in Virginia and other Southern States, in the manner its importance demands; but in those days there were less facilities of acquiring a common school education, than at the present day. Circumstanced as young Harry was, he had few opportunities of improving his mind by means of instruction: for him the "schoolmaster" was rarely "abroad." Usually the children of the wealthy were instructed by private teachers brought into the family; hence the poor, unable thus to acquire an education, were scantily supplied even with the common rudiments of learning. While in the High Court of Chancery he felt the want of that education of which poverty had deprived him, and availed himself of the opportunity to supply, as far as it was in his power to do so, his deficiency.

But, if he owed little to the schoolmaster, he was deeply indebted to a bounteous Providence for an understanding clear and powerful; a disposition social, lively, and winning; and a deportment easy, manly, and impressive. It might with truth be said,

"The elements  
So mix'd in him, that Nature might stand up  
And say to all the world, 'This is a man.'"

Obscure, oppressed by poverty, unknown, with no friend to whom he could look for counsel or assistance, there must have been moments when the orphan felt all the loneliness of his situation; and, with those inward longings and aspirations which a powerful mind could not but have occasionally prompted, he must have sometimes exclaimed, in bitterness of spirit,

"Ah! who can tell how hard it is to climb  
The steep where Fame's proud temple shines afar;  
\* \* \* \* \*  
Check'd by the scoff of Pride, by Envy's frown,  
And Poverty's unconquerable bar!"

But poverty in vain opposed to him her "bar." In the Chancery office he had occasionally to transact business with some of the most distinguished men then at the Virginia bar, and on her bench. Henry Clay was not made to pass through the world unnoticed: place him in a crowd of thousands, and, though entirely unknown, his commanding manner and marked features would soon attract attention and inspire respect. He was no more designed by Providence,

"In life's low vales remote to pine alone,  
Then drop into the grave unpitied and unknown,"

than a Cæsar, a Napoleon, or a Chatham. Such master spirits do not sit down and pine, nor give way to despondency. They are as conscious of power to rise upon the strength of their own wing, and by their own unaided energies, as the eagle that soars aloft in the blue vault of heaven.

*Attracts the notice of Chancellor Wythe and Governor Brooke.—Reads law.*

It was his good fortune to attract the notice and win the friendship of Chancellor Wythe and Governor Brooke, by whose persuasion, at the age of nineteen, he commenced the study of law, and read chiefly in the office of the latter, then Attorney General of the State, and under the auspices of the former, for whom he acted as private secretary. The friendship of these men of eminent worth and abilities, he retained to the latest day of their lives,—no slight evidence that he possessed a spirit and principles congenial with their own, and that they found in him that which great and good men can admire.

*Is licensed to practice by the Judges of the Court of Appeals.*

Young Clay, for we must no longer call him "the orphan boy," was licensed

to practice law by the Judges of the Court of Appeals, in Virginia, 1797, when he was but twenty years of age.—He had now to select a place to locate himself:

“The world was all before him, where to choose,  
And Providence his guide.”

*Removes to Lexington, Kentucky*

His only surviving parent had been five years settled near Lexington, Kentucky, and it is probable that filial affection had no little influence in directing his steps to the West. That State was then new, and he doubtless saw a field where he could put in his plough and sickle, and gather a harvest. But, if he calculated on finding a bar destitute of able lawyers and eloquent advocates, he was much deceived; for, new as the country was, the bar at Lexington, where he settled, was at that time distinguished for the eminent ability of its members. His aspirations were at this time, however, extremely moderate, for he has himself said that he remembered how comfortable he thought he should be if he could make £100, Virginia money, (\$333) a year; and with what delight he received the first fifteen shilling fee!

*He is cherished as a son.*

But Mr. Clay had no sooner appeared in one or two cases, than business flowed in upon him so rapidly, that in less than a year from his entrance into the State, he had an extensive and lucrative practice. The people of Kentucky, proverbially warm-hearted, generous, and susceptible of strong emotions, love those who possess the same qualities. Mr. Clay was a man after their own hearts; and at once they took him to their bosoms, and cherished him with as fond a regard and as unalterable an attachment, as if he had been “to the manor born.” He came to the State fatherless, penniless, and, with the exception of the few he had left behind him, friendless. She proved to him a parent, friend, and benefactor: has he not repaid her with more than filial attachment?

*His early career at the Bar.*

His career at the bar was brilliant and successful. Possessing an intuitive knowledge of men, and master of the human passions; with a voice, at his bidding sweet as the silver-toned lute, or loud and powerful as the trumpet blast, alternatively indulging in wit, irony, pleasantry, pathos, and indignation,—no wonder the heart was in his hands a pipe he could sound from the lowest note to the top of its compass, and that his influence over juries was unprecedented and irresistible. But we have little to do with Henry Clay the lawyer and the advocate: it is in a higher sphere of life we must now view him.\*

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\*It is but just to Mr. Clay to state, that his being a lawyer did not render it necessary, in his opinion, that he should advocate, indiscriminately, right and wrong. So far from this, as no pecuniary temptation or reward could induce him to engage in an unjust cause, so no fear of offending the affluent and the influential prevented him from advocating the cause of the poor but injured man. An illustration of this highly honorable trait in his professional character is to be found in the following anecdote:

About the time that Mr. Clay commenced the practice of law in Kentucky, there was depending in one of the courts of his circuit an action of slander, brought by some poor and humble citizen against a very wealthy and influential individual, who was so notorious for the intrepidity and violence of his temper, that the poor plaintiff found it difficult to engage counsel to plead his cause. The court came on at which the cause stood, and young Clay was in attendance from his residence at Lexington. He was then but little known. The poor plaintiff appealed to him, and he at once undertook his case, with his characteristic decision and boldness. This was soon understood among all the parties interested about the suit; and the irritated defendant was heard to make threats, and even ventured a formidable intimation to the young lawyer that he would hold him responsible for any offence he might give in the argument of the case.

The trial came on, and the angry and formidable defendant seated himself close by the young lawyer, with stern and lowering looks. But Clay was not to be awed. Provoked by the attempt to intimidate him in the performance of his professional duties, he pleaded the cause of his injured client with all his youthful ardor, and, in a spirit of defiance, poured out a flood of indignant eloquence and denunciation upon the head of the defendant. The defendant was bold and reckless, but he felt that he had met a man as fearless as himself; and with involuntary admiration of the audacious eloquence of the young advocate, he went up to him as soon as he had closed his speech, offered him his hand, said he never wished him again to appear against him, and concluded by retaining him in all his future suits. They were friends ever after.

I have dwelt thus upon the early part of Mr. Clay's life, because, though less brilliant and less known than his public career, for one, I feel a stronger sympathy and love for "the orphan boy," in the russet garb of poverty, following the plough, or struggling, unaided and alone, at the age of fifteen, for a scanty subsistence as an humble clerk, than I do for the Statesman and Legislator. But it is as a public character the people wish to know him. The youth may be interesting to individuals, but the nation is only concerned in the *man*, his capacities, his labors, his principles, and his influence upon public measures.

*He takes an active part in favor of the gradual emancipation of slaves.*

As early as 1797, Mr. Clay took an active, and for so young a man, a prominent part in the questions which then agitated the people. One of these was the propriety of providing, by the Constitution then about to be formed, for the gradual emancipation of the slaves, and the abolition of slavery in that State. In this controversy his pen and his voice were enlisted in behalf of liberty. He looked upon slavery as an evil entailed upon the people, of which some measure ought to be adopted gradually to relieve the country. This advocacy of the emancipation of the blacks, by a process intended to accomplish it in a manner not injurious or unjust to those who held that species of property, rendered him for a time unpopular; the owners of slaves considering him inimical to their interests. Though his exertions in this philanthropic cause proved unavailing, yet he has ever adhered to the principles he then avowed, and endeavored to carry them out through the means of the Colonization Society, of which he was one of the principal founders, and has been, since the death of the venerable Chief Justice MARSHALL, President. His desire was, and has ever been, to do justice to the blacks, but not injustice to the whites.

*He opposes the Alien and Sedition Laws, and becomes prominent.*

The next important question, in the discussion of which he bore a prominent part, was one relating to the politics of the day, and, upon which, he ranged himself with the Republican party. He took decided ground against the Alien and Sedition laws, and in favor of popular rights. He considered these laws and other measures of the elder Adams's administration as an infringement of the liberties of the people and the press, and he entered into the opposition to them with an energy so indomitable, a zeal so ardent, an eloquence so persuasive, and an ability so unlooked for, that, notwithstanding his youth, he became the master spirit of the Republican party of Kentucky.

*Is elected to the Legislature.*

In 1803, while absent, Mr. Clay was taken up by the citizens of Fayette county, without the least intimation of their intention having been communicated to him, and elected to the Legislature, where he at once took rank with the first men in the State, not one of whom was his equal in talents, energy of character, or power of eloquence.

*Is elected to the Senate of the United States.*

In 1806 he was elected to the Senate of the United States for the unexpired term, one year, of General Adair, who had resigned his seat. Being the youngest Senator, and a new member, he had, of course, little opportunity of distinguishing himself. Nevertheless the people of the District of Columbia, and of Alexandria especially, have occasion to remember him even then, for a very able speech he made in favor of the erection of a bridge over the Potomac, on the Alexandria road, and carrying the question for the friends of this *internal improvement*.

*He is again elected to the Legislature, and renders important services to the Jurisprudence of the State.*

Mr. Clay was now again elected to the Legislature of his own State, and dis-

tinguished himself by a powerful speech against a resolution which had been introduced to prohibit the reading of any British decision or elementary work on law in the courts of Kentucky. This resolution was the offspring of a narrow mind, and appealed to the prejudices of the ignorant; against which he had to contend. But the subject was worthy of his great powers, and called forth from him a masterly speech. Perhaps none but the bench and the bar can truly appreciate the magnitude and importance of the question, and the incalculable service he rendered the jurisprudence of the State, by defeating the resolution. Had he sought popularity rather than the welfare of the State, he would, on this occasion, have thrown himself into the current of prejudices which he so successfully and nobly resisted, and floated on its fallacious surface. But then, as ever after, he stopped not to ask what course was popular, but what was right.

*Is a second time elected to the Senate of the United States.*

In 1809 he was again elected to the Senate of the United States for the remainder of Mr. Thruston's time, two years. It was then that he may properly be said to have commenced his brilliant career on that high stage of action, upon which he so long stood conspicuous before the nation, and from which he voluntarily retired on the 31st of March last.

At the time Mr. Clay, for the second time, entered the Senate of the United States, the European powers were prosecuting bloody wars against each other. Jealous of the peaceful condition of the United States, and her growing prosperity, and perhaps piqued that they could not enlist her in their quarrels, the belligerent powers seemed to vie with each other in committing depredations upon our commerce, and in perpetrating the most flagrant violations of our neutral rights. Each did this, under pretence that we were aiding the other belligerent power by trading with her; but the pretence was as flimsy as their conduct was insolent and unjustifiable.

*His first speech in favor of encouraging American Manufactures.*

There was a disposition at this time in the American Congress to make preparation to repel these aggressions by force, and with this view a bill was brought forward appropriating a sum of money for the purchase of munitions of war, including cordage and sail cloth. To this Mr. Clay moved an amendment, requiring the Government to give a preference to articles of *American* growth and manufacture; and on this proposition addressed the Senate in favor of *encouraging domestic manufactures*, then first taking ground in favor of, and warmly advocating, the great principle of THE PROTECTIVE POLICY, to which he has, from that day to the present, firmly and undeviatingly adhered.

*Opposes the re-charter of the first U. S. Bank.*

Two other important questions came before the Senate while Mr. Clay was a member, and in which he bore a prominent part, namely: the claim of the United States to West Florida as far as the Perdido river, which he supported; and the recharter of the first Bank of the United States, which he opposed.

*He is elected to the House of Representatives and Speaker of that body.*

Upon the close of Mr. Clay's Senatorial term, he was, in the summer of 1811, elected to the House of Representatives of the United States, and on the first day of the session, and the first of his appearance in that body, was appointed Speaker; a circumstance unparalleled in the history of legislation. While he continued to occupy the Speaker's chair, which he did till 1814, questions of the highest moment agitated Congress and the nation, and taxed the powers of the leading men of both political parties.

*Advocates the war with England.*

The government had exhausted every means, short of a resort to arms, to protect the property of its citizens, and preserve its own rights; but in vain. The

only alternative left was a declaration of war, or a shameful submission to injuries heaped upon injuries. Mr. Clay's voice was for war. He felt indignant at the insults and injuries we had received from England, and thundered forth his indignation in tones that reverberated along every hill and through every valley in the United States. "It is asked," said he, "what *new* cause of war we have? In reply, I will ask, what *old* cause of war is avenged? Has Great Britain abstained from impressing our seamen, and depredating upon our property? I have in my hands an account of a recent capture of the ship Hannibal, worth, with the cargo, \$300,000, near our own coast, on a voyage to France. I have no doubt that the late Indian hostilities on the Wabash were excited by the British. Is not this a cause of war?" Such appeals, frequently made as they were, roused the spirit of the nation; the fire of patriotism burned intensely in his bosom, and from its strong heat the flame was lighted up throughout the wide extent of the land, but more especially west of the Alleghanies, and among our gallant naval tars. The declaration of war, which was made on the 18th June, 1812, found these prepared and burning for the contest, in which, ere long, they won imperishable glory.

The declaration of war had been violently opposed in Congress, by some of the ablest men in the nation, with whom Mr. Clay triumphantly grappled. The war itself was opposed by a portion of the people, and this opposition greatly embarrassed and weakened the Government. Owing, perhaps, in some measure to this circumstance, the American armies met with many reverses. But during the darkest hour of gloom, when the Government was almost without means or credit, and the troops had been disheartened by privation, suffering, and defeat, the voice of Mr. Clay reverberated from the Capitol, trumpet-tongued, roused the drooping spirits of the nation, nerved the arm of the soldier, and inspired all with new hope, and energy, and patriotic ardor; and he soon had the satisfaction to see victory, which had long made the decks of our gallant little navy her favorite resting place, spread her wings over our army, and perch upon its standard.

*He is appointed one of the American Commissioners to negotiate peace.*

In 1814, Mr. Clay was appointed by Mr. Madison one of the commissioners to negotiate a treaty with England. His colleagues were John Quincy Adams, James A. Bayard, Albert Gallatin, and Jonathan Russel. They met the British commissioners, Lord Gambier, Henry Goulburn, and William Adams, at Ghent, where the treaty which bears that name was concluded. On completing this important negotiation, and in so happy a manner, he proceeded to London, where, in conjunction with two of his colleagues, Messrs. Adams and Gallatin, he entered on another of great importance, which resulted in a commercial convention, since made the basis of our commercial arrangements with many foreign powers.

*Returns to the United States; is received with distinction; and again elected to the House of Representatives, and Speaker.*

On his return to the United States, he was received with distinguished marks of respect wherever he went; but in no part of the country with more affectionate regard than in his own Kentucky, whose people were not less proud of their adopted son, than they were devotedly attached to him. He was re-elected to the House of Representatives, and again, almost unanimously, appointed Speaker, continuing to be re-elected and to fill the Speaker's chair until March, 1825, when he accepted the office of Secretary of State tendered him by Mr. Adams.

*His course upon great public measures—the Tariff—National Bank, &c.*

During this period of his public services, questions of great moment came before Congress, and agitated the nation. The war had left the country burdened with a heavy debt: the currency was deranged, and in a sad condition. The bills of non specie-paying banks, and the small bills issued by irresponsible corporations and individuals, constituted the whole circulating medium south and west of

New England. The manufactures which had sprung up during the war, were now to be protected or suffered to fall under European competition, capital, and skill. The payment of the public debt was to be provided for; the currency restored; confidence in the national faith re-established; and, in short, order was to be brought out of chaos, and prosperity out of the utmost depression. The two great and leading measures to bring about this were the establishment of a National Bank, and the passage of such a Tariff bill as should answer the two-fold purpose of raising revenue and giving protection to our infant, but rapidly growing, manufactures. Both these measures were sustained with all the energy and resources of his genius; and both were accomplished. He had opposed the re-charter of the United States Bank in 1811; his prejudices had been enlisted against it, the party to which he belonged opposed it as a party measure, and he deemed it unnecessary. But time and experience had convinced him of the necessity of such an institution, and his magnanimity would not permit him to adhere to an error of judgment merely through pride of opinion or apparent *consistency*, as if he were not consistent who frankly acknowledges his error, and does all in his power to retrieve it.

Mr. Clay, in advocating the establishment of the United States Bank at this time, but followed in the footsteps of Mr. Madison, Mr. Gallatin, Mr. Crawford, Mr. Calhoun, and other distinguished Republican leaders, and acted with the Democratic party. It was a *party* measure, and those who now condemn *him* for the course he pursued, must also condemn all those distinguished men whom I have named, as well as the whole Republican party.

*He advocates the recognition of the Independence of the South American Republics.*

Among the most honorable and praiseworthy acts of Mr. Clay's life, and which exhibits him in the high and enviable character of the friend of liberty and the rights of man, is the part he took in urging the Government of the United States to recognise the independence of the Republics of South America, which had thrown off the yoke of Spain, and maintained their independence with such gallant bravery. His various speeches in behalf of these Republics, and in support of the policy proposed, were among the most eloquent and spirit-stirring he ever delivered: every sentence was replete with the burning sentiments of patriotism, and that generous enthusiasm which the struggles of an oppressed people, determined to shake off the yoke of tyranny, and resolved to be free, cannot fail to inspire every lover of civil liberty. So inspiring was the eloquence of Mr. Clay, in advocating the recognition of South American Independence, that his speeches were translated into Spanish, read at the head of the patriot armies, and drew some years after a letter from Bolivar, expressing his admiration for his brilliant talents and ardent love of liberty. "All America, Columbia, and myself," said Bolivar, "owe your excellency our purest gratitude for the incomparable services you have rendered to us, by sustaining our course with a sublime enthusiasm."

*His course in reference to Internal Improvements.*

In 1818 came up the question of internal improvements by national means, which was supported by Mr. Clay with his accustomed energy and ability. To his unwearied efforts and unceasing eloquence, the continuation of the Cumberland or national road over the Alleghany mountains, through Ohio, &c., was mainly owing, and his labors in favor of this valuable improvement are commemorated by a stone monument erected on the road, surmounted by the genius of liberty, and inscribed with the name of "HENRY CLAY." He was in favor of a general system of internal improvements by means of roads and canals; but the South arrayed itself against the principle, and the States having undertaken these works, each within its own limits, it was finally abandoned, or at least not pressed.



*The Missouri Question.*

During the winter of 1818-19, was agitated in Congress the celebrated Missouri question, and was, for many weeks, debated with great heat and acrimony of feeling on both sides: at one time it seemed to threaten the most disastrous consequences. On this occasion Mr. Clay stepped in, when all hope of compromise seemed to be gone, and, by his judicious mediation, inducing the two parties to adopt a middle course, averted the terrible catastrophe which all had reason to fear would follow, and brought the matter to a peaceful termination. It was on this occasion that he won the proud title of "the great pacificator."

*Discussion of the Tariff in 1819-20.*

The Tariff of 1816 not giving adequate protection to our infant manufactures to enable them to maintain themselves against the competition of Europe, a new bill was brought forward in the House in 1819-20, which was supported by all the strength of Mr. Clay's great powers, and upon which he delivered a speech replete with principles of the soundest political philosophy, and sentiments of the most ardent patriotism. A single sentence embodies the great maxim of his whole public course in reference to this vastly important subject. "Mr. Chairman," said he, "I frankly own I feel great solicitude for the success of this bill. [The Tariff bill then under consideration in committee of the whole.] **THE ENTIRE INDEPENDENCE OF MY COUNTRY ON ALL FOREIGN STATES, AS IT RESPECTS A SUPPLY OF OUR ESSENTIAL WANTS, HAS EVER BEEN WITH ME A FAVORITE OBJECT.** The war of our Revolution effected our political emancipation. The last war contributed greatly towards accomplishing our commercial freedom. But our complete independence will only be consummated after the policy of this bill shall be recognised and adopted." The bill passed the House of Representatives, but failed in the Senate.

*The Tariff Act of 1824.*

The depressed state of the various branches of business, agricultural, commercial, and manufacturing, continued unrelieved till 1824, when the Tariff question was again agitated in Congress, and a remedy for the evils the country was suffering, was sought in the enactment of a new Tariff law. The debate upon this measure was conducted with extraordinary ability on both sides. The friends of the bill were led by Mr. Clay, who, in rising to deliver his masterly speech in support of it, appeared deeply sensible of the immense responsibility that rested upon him. Impressed with this feeling, he solemnly invoked the aid of the MOST HIGH, and "ferently implored His divine assistance; that He would be graciously pleased to shower on the country His richest blessings; and that He would sustain, on this interesting occasion, the individual who stood before Him, and lend him the power, moral and physical, to perform the solemn duties which belonged to the public station."

His efforts, and those who acted with him, were now crowned with success, and prosperity soon began to shed her invigorating beams upon the land, and to warm the industry of the country once more into life and activity. From the passage of this bill to the removal of the deposits, in 1833, no country ever witnessed more palmy days, in all that concerned business and advancement in wealth.

*He advocates the cause of Grecian Liberty.*

It was at this period that Greece, having thrown off the shackles of Turkish slavery, was maintaining a noble, but apparently a hopeless, struggle for freedom and independence. No one then old enough to take an interest in the affairs of the world, can forget with what warm hearted sympathy the Americans viewed this contest, nor what ardent prayers went up to the God of battles to nerve the arm of the Christian against the Moslem host, and to crown the efforts of Greece, ancient, classic, Christian Greece, with victory. No one can forget with what

generous zeal even our fair country-women undertook the benevolent and philanthropic labor of collecting food and clothing for the starving and naked Greeks, driven from their smouldering homes by their ruthless enemies, and compelled to flee to the mountains and live in caves, and upon roots and berries. The tale of the barbarities committed upon the women and children harrowed every bosom, and drew tears from every eye; while the heroic deeds of a Marco Bozzaris, and his companions in arms, fired the American soul with unbounded admiration.

It was during the session of 1823-4, that Mr. Webster brought forward a proposition to make provision to defray the expense of deputing a commissioner or agent to Greece, whenever the President should deem it proper. In support of his proposition, Mr. Webster made a most eloquent and powerful appeal in favor of suffering humanity; but the opposition was opposed by those who thought such an act on our part might be construed by the Grand Sultan as evincing an unfriendly feeling towards the Sublime Porte, and involve us in trouble. Some were understood to oppose the resolution on account of the source whence it originated, Mr. Webster having been a federalist. Mr. Clay, ever above any such ungenerous feeling and unworthy motive, rebuked them in a dignified and eloquent manner. "I have long had the pleasure," said he, "of knowing the honorable gentleman from Massachusetts, and sometimes that of acting with him; and I have much satisfaction in expressing my high admiration of his great talents. But I would appeal to my republican friends, those faithful sentinels of civil liberty with whom I have ever acted, shall we reject a proposition, consonant to our principles, favoring the good and great cause, on account of the political character of its mover? Shall we not rather look to the intrinsic merits of the measure, and seek every fit occasion to strengthen and perpetuate liberal principles and noble sentiments? *If it were possible for republicans to cease to be the champions of human freedom, and if federalists became its only supporters, I WOULD CEASE TO BE A REPUBLICAN; I WOULD BECOME A FEDERALIST.* The preservation of the public confidence can only be secured, or merited, by a faithful adherence to the principles by which it has been acquired."

*Mr. Clay becomes a candidate for President.*

We come now to an epoch, perhaps the most important, thus far, in Mr. Clay's public life. It will be remembered that five candidates were in the field for the office of President, to succeed Mr. Monroe, whose term of service expired on the 3d day of March, 1825; namely, Mr. Adams, Mr. Crawford, Gen. Jackson, Mr. Clay, and Mr. Calhoun; though the latter was withdrawn from the canvass for the Presidency, and was run by his friends as a candidate for Vice President.

*Other candidates.*

The old federal party having already disbanded and dispersed, party organization no longer existed; and as all the candidates were prominent Republicans, and had been leaders of that party in its most trying days, they had to depend solely upon personal popularity, and the estimation in which the people held their public services, their experience, judgment, and capacity to discharge the duties of the station to which they aspired. The canvass was carried on generally without bitterness or acrimony, except, perhaps, between the friends of Mr. Crawford and Mr. Calhoun, between whom a personal rivalry and hostility had long existed, though they were both, as well as Mr. Adams, members of Mr. Monroe's cabinet. Some hostility was also apparent between the friends of Mr. Crawford and Gen. Jackson; the former not looking upon the General as a sound Republican, and pronouncing his election, in advance, as "a curse upon the country." According to the constitution, if one person does not receive a majority of the whole electoral votes, and two or more are voted for, the House of Representatives is required to elect a President from one of the three persons having the highest number of electoral votes. It was very probable that no one of the candidates would

receive a majority of the electoral votes, and that the election would be carried to the House of Representatives, of which Mr. Clay was a member; in which case, if not one of the three highest returned, the duty would devolve on him to give his vote to one or the other of his rivals.

*The election by the House of Representatives.—Mr. Clay's course.*

This anticipated contingency occurred. Occupying a high position, and being known to possess great influence with his friends, especially the Kentucky and Ohio delegations, he was treated with distinguished consideration by the friends of the various candidates, and seemed in his own language, addressed to a friend at the time, to be "enjoying, whilst alive, the posthumous honor usually awarded to the venerated dead." But this was only the fattening of the ox for the slaughter.

The election came on, and a most solemn and imposing scene, gentlemen present and partaking in it, describe it to have been. Mr. Clay and the Kentucky and Ohio delegation voted for Mr. Adams, who was unexpectedly elected on the first ballot. Slander began at once to be busy with his name; those who a short time before courted, now vituperated him; at first only in whispers, but at length openly. A member of Congress from Pennsylvania was made the mouth-piece of Mr. Clay's villifiers, who had not the courage to assume the responsibility of the vile imputations they induced their tool to father, against his wishes and his better feelings.

*The cry of "BARGAIN and corruption" raised.*

The charge of "bargain and corruption" was uttered from an irresponsible quarter; the cry was taken up by the presses in the interest of the candidates who had been defeated, and the changes were rung upon it with every possible variation, exaggeration, and expression of holy horror. It was in vain to deny the charge: it had been made by no responsible person, and no one could therefore be called to substantiate it. The country rang with this cry of "mad dog," until a considerable portion of the American people fully, and doubtless honestly, believed it.

Conscious of his own innocence, firm in the rectitude of his own course, and sustained by a clear and approving conscience, Mr. Clay bore the opprobrium attempted to be cast upon him, with becoming fortitude and dignity, confident that the time would come when truth must again make her voice heard, and relying on the people, in whose intelligence and honest intentions he had always great confidence, to do him justice, whenever the excitement of the times had died away, the mists of prejudice been dispelled, and they should become convinced that they had brought in a verdict of guilty against one as innocent as themselves.

Time has cleared away much of the mist that then blinded the eyes of a portion of the people, and assuaged the prejudices then excited: they can now look back *calmly* to the subject, and weigh the evidence in the well-balanced and impartial scales of Justice; and I beg of them to do so, and then to reconsider, and either to reverse or confirm their verdict, as their deliberate judgment shall dictate.

*The first time the charge is made in a tangible form.—CARTER BEVERLY letter.*

The first tangible shape in which this charge of "bargain and corruption" appeared, was in a letter published in Fayetteville, N. C., and dated Nashville, 8th March, 1827. It was subsequently ascertained that this was written by Mr. CARTER BEVERLY. In that letter he said,

"He (Gen. Jackson) told me this morning, *before all his company*, in reply to a question I put to him concerning the election of J. Q. Adams for the presidency, that Mr. Clay's friends made a proposition to his friends, that, if they would promise, *for him*, not to put Mr. Adams in the seat of Secretary of State, Clay and his friends would, *in an hour*, make him, Jackson, president. He most indignantly rejected the proposition, and declared he would not compromit himself; and unless most *openly and fairly* made the President by Congress, he would see the whole earth sink under him, before he would bargain or intrigue for it."

Mr. Carter Beverly not being known, many were disposed to doubt whether Gen. Jackson ever made such an assertion as the above extract contains, and "*before all his company.*" This induced Mr. Beverly to address a note to General Jackson, who replied. His letter was dated Hermitage, June 5, 1827, and stated that he had been "informed by the friends of Mr. Clay, that the friends of Mr. Adams had made overtures to them, saying, if Mr. Clay and his friends would unite in aid of the election of Mr. Adams, Mr. Clay should be Secretary of State. That the friends of Mr. Adams were urging, as a reason to induce the friends of Mr. Clay to accede to their proposition, that if I was elected President, Mr. Adams would be continued Secretary of State, (inuendo, there would be no room for Kentucky.) That the friends of Mr. Clay stated, the west did not wish to separate from the west; and if I would say, or permit any of my confidential friends to say, that, in case I was elected President, Mr. Adams should not be continued Secretary of State, by a complete union of Mr. Clay and his friends, they would put an end to the Presidential contest in an hour. And he [the member of Congress who called on Gen. Jackson] was of opinion it was right to fight such intriguers with their own weapons."

*Mr. Clay promptly repels the charge, and demands the name of the witness.*

Here, then, for the first time, was an assertion of the fact that there was an *attempt* at least, on the part of Mr. Clay or his friends, at "bargain and corruption," made by a responsible and known person,—such an assertion as Mr. Clay could notice; and he immediately came out with "a direct, unqualified, and indignant denial," and demanded the name of the member of Congress alluded to by Gen. Jackson in his letter to Carter Beverly.

*General Jackson gives the name of James Buchanan.*

On seeing Mr. Clay's prompt, explicit, and unqualified denial of this charge, and his demand for the name of the person alluded to, Gen. Jackson issued an address to the public, dated Hermitage, July 18, 1827, in which he said, referring to his letter of the 5th of June to Carter Beverly:

"This disclosure was made to me by Mr. James Buchanan, a member of Congress from Pennsylvania, a gentleman of the first respectability and intelligence.

"The character of Mr. Buchanan, with me, forbids the idea that he was acting on his own responsibility, or that, under any circumstances, he could have been induced to propose any arrangement, unless possessed of satisfactory assurances, that, if accepted, it would be carried fully into effect. A weak mind would seldom or ever be thus disposed to act, an intelligent one never."

From this it appears that it all was a matter of *inference* with General Jackson. Mr. Buchanan had a conversation with him, and he *inferred* that he called upon him as Mr. Clay's friend and by Mr. Clay's authority! But what does Mr. Buchanan himself say—the *only* witness called upon or *named* by Gen. Jackson, to support his charge—what does *he* say!

*Mr. Buchanan denies ever having made any such proposition—his letter.*

Extract from Mr. Buchanan's letter to the Editor of the Lancaster Journal, dated 8th August, 1827:

"I called upon Gen. Jackson on the occasion which I have mentioned, *solely as his friend*, upon my own individual responsibility, and *not* as the agent of Mr. Clay or any other person. *I never have been the political friend of Mr. Clay*, since he became a candidate for the office of President, as you very well know. Until I saw General Jackson's letter to Mr. Beverly of the 5th ult., and at the same time was informed by a letter from the editor of the United States Telegraph, that I was the person to whom he alluded, *the conception never once entered my mind*, that he believed me to have been the agent of Mr. Clay and his friends, or that I intended to *propose terms of any kind* for them; or that he could have supposed me capable of expressing an opinion that it was right to fight such intriguers with their own weapons."

"*I had no authority from Mr. Clay or his friends, to propose any terms to Gen. Jackson in relation to their votes. NOR DID I EVER MAKE ANY SUCH PROPOSITION*; and I trust I would be as incapable of becoming a messenger upon such an occasion, as it was known General Jackson would be to receive such a message."

Here, then, is the whole testimony of General Jackson's own witness—the only one called, or pretended to exist—to sustain this often repeated and heinous charge

of "bribery and corruption." Let any man of candor point out the paragraph, the sentence, the word, the syllable, that sustains the charge! Do not every word and every sentence give a plain, explicit, downright denial of the charge, and of every circumstance of it? Most clearly, positively, and unequivocally, beyond the possibility of a doubt. But will it be believed that the charge was iterated and reiterated after this positive refutation of it? It was even so. It was got up to excite the prejudices of the people against Mr. Clay, and those who first brought it forward, finding that it answered their purpose, had no thought of retracting it, even though they *knew* it to be a falsehood of the basest kind, and had been proved to be so. It was the instrument of as foul, as base, as malignant a conspiracy, as ever was formed for the destruction of man. No man, who then had a hand in this nefarious attempt to blast the fair fame of Mr. Clay, can now be found who is willing to acknowledge his agency in it, or that he ever *believed* that there was the least truth in the charge, except Mr. Beverly himself, who has, in a letter addressed to Mr. Clay, candidly acknowledged the wrong he did him, and made the most ample apology. Others, however, more guilty, want the magnanimity and grace to do him that poor justice, even at this late day.

*Mr. Beverly's letter of recantation.*

The letter of recantation from Mr. Beverly to Mr. Clay, is dated Virginia, Middlesex County, Urbana, February 8, 1842. He says:

"It will be no doubt matter of some astonishment to you in receiving from me the present address. I will not preface it with any kind of apology, because, in doing it, I justify my mind in the discharge of an act of conscience and a duty that I feel the utmost pleasure in performing.

"Although the time is quite far gone since I became very innocently instrumental in circulating throughout the country a very great attack on your character and virtue as a gentleman, and certainly a very heavy one as a public man, I feel exceedingly desirous to relieve you, as far as I can, from the slander; and my own feelings from the severe compunction that is within me, on having been, though neither directly or indirectly, your personal accuser, yet that I was drawn directly into the representation of an attack upon you. \* \* \* \* \*

"I again say that I am most thoroughly convinced that you were most untruthfully, and, therefore, unjustly treated; for I have never seen any evidence to substantiate at all the charge. \* \* \* \*

Signed, CARTER BEVERLY."

Is it necessary to add any thing further in refutation of this foul and unfounded charge of "bargain and corruption?" The great mass of the American people are lovers of justice, and, when convinced that injustice has been done, have that generosity of spirit and kind feeling which prompts them to repair injury. Prejudice will doubtless, however, induce some to close their eyes against the light of truth, and their hearts against conviction. Into the minds of such, though truth shone with the brightness of the sun at noon day, its rays could not penetrate—all would be darkness. Still, however, it may not be useless, and is but justice to Mr. Clay, to add the testimony—the solemn asseveration, of one individual more. In replying to an address welcoming him to Maysville, Kentucky, in which among other things Mr. Adams was thanked for his noble defence of the great statesman of the West, in his letter to the Whigs of New Jersey, \* Mr. Adams said:

"I thank you, sir, for the opportunity you have given me of speaking of the great statesman who was associated with me in the administration of the General Government, at my earnest solicitation—who belongs not to Kentucky alone, but to the whole Union; and is not only an honor to this State

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\*The following extract of a letter from Mr. Adams to a committee of the citizens of New Jersey, who had addressed him on his retirement from the Presidency, is the defence of Mr. Clay alluded to:

"Upon him (Mr. Clay) the foulest slanders have been showered. Long known and appreciated, as successively a member of both Houses of your National Legislature, as the unrivalled Speaker, and, at the same time, most efficient leader of debates in one of them; as an able and successful negotiator for your interests in war and in peace with foreign powers, and as a powerful candidate for the highest of your trusts:—the Department of State itself was a station which, by its bestowal, could confer neither profit nor honor upon him, but upon which he has shed unfading honor, by the manner in which he has discharged its duties. Prejudice and passion have charged him with obtaining that office by bargain and corruption. *Before you, fellow-citizens, in the presence of our country and of Heaven, I PRONOUNCE THAT CHARGE TOTALLY UNFOUNDED.* This tribute of justice is due from me to him, and I seize, with pleasure, the opportunity afforded me, by your letter, of discharging the obligation."

and this Nation, but to mankind. The charges to which you refer, I have, after my term of service had expired, and it was proper for me to speak, denied before the whole country; and I here reiterate and reaffirm that denial; and as I expect shortly to appear before my God, to answer for the conduct of my whole life, should those charges have found their way to the Throne of Eternal Justice, I WILL, IN THE PRESENCE OF OMNIPOTENCE, PRONOUNCE THEM FALSE."

What man is there in this country so base as now to repeat this foul, this malicious, this branded libel?

*He retires to private life, and is, for the third time, elected to the U. S. Senate.*

At the close of Mr. Adams's administration, on the 3d of March, 1829, Mr. Clay retired to his own quiet Ashland, to cultivate his farm, and the enjoyments of private life. From these, however, he was, in 1831, drawn by the Legislature of his own State, which elected him for the third time to the Senate of the United States. With his public course since he entered the Senate, where he continued nearly eleven years, and with the various measures originated and adopted by him, the public are probably more familiar than with his public acts previous. It is the fortune of few men to fill so large a space in the public eye, or to accomplish so much for his country's welfare, during a whole life, as Mr. Clay has during this period of his senatorial service. The acknowledged leader of the party to which he belonged, its chief measures have originated with him, and all of them had his able co-operation and support. Having been, however, the greater portion of his time in a minority in the Senate, and the whole of the time up to the 4th of March, 1841, in a minority in Congress, neither he nor the party to which he belonged could carry any measure through to a final law. In the winter of 1832, the Tariff question came up and was discussed: on which occasion Mr. Clay delivered a speech in defence of the AMERICAN SYSTEM, in which the policy of protection was most ably and clearly expounded, maintained, and defended.

*A bill brought forward and passed to recharter the U. S. Bank.*

Another subject deeply agitated the public mind at this time, and was acted on at the same session by Congress: this was the recharter of the United States Bank. Gen. Jackson had brought the subject to the view of the National Legislature, and thus to the nation itself, in his first annual message in December, 1829; subsequently in 1830, and again in 1831. Mr. McLane, the Secretary of the Treasury, recommended the recharter of the bank, and stated his reasons at large at the commencement of the session of 1831-32. Mr. Dallas, then a member of the Senate, brought forward the bill to recharter the bank, and it was passed by very decided majorities in both Houses of Congress.

*It is vetoed by Gen. Jackson—Mr. Clay's speech on the occasion.*

The bill was vetoed by Gen. Jackson, for a variety of reasons assigned by him in his memorable veto message. On this message Mr. Clay addressed the Senate, and commented with freedom, but with dignity and force, upon the novel doctrines advanced by the President, and especially upon that which declares every public officer who takes an oath to support the Constitution, is at liberty to support it as he understands it; and that the President, in this respect, is independent of the Supreme Court, the tribunal established for the purpose of deciding upon, and settling constitutional questions; a doctrine fraught, as he declared, with universal nullification, destructive of all subordination, authority, and fixedness, and subversive of government.

*Distribution of the proceeds of the Public Lands—How Mr. Clay came to bring forward his plan.*

At the same session of Congress (1831-32) Mr. Clay first brought forward his great measure of distributing the proceeds of the sale of the public lands among the States, which has since found so much favor with the people of the United States, and become a cardinal principle of the Whig party, and one of vital importance to the country. Mr. Clay had been placed on the Committee of Manufactures; to this committee the subject of the Public Lands was referred by the Senate, a majority of whom were his political opponents, notwithstanding there was a standing committee on the public lands, appointed under long established rules! For what purpose a subject so incongruous as the public lands to those expected to occupy the minds of this committee, was referred to it, it is impossible to conjecture, unless it was intended thereby to embarrass Mr. Clay, and involve him in difficulty with one portion of the country, or another. The reference of this subject to that committee was the more extraordinary, inasmuch as there was not a single member from the new States upon it, and but one, Mr. Clay, from the Western States. He earnestly protested against the reference, and insisted upon its impropriety, but was overruled by a majority, including a majority from the new States. The subject, however, being thus thrown upon him by those who sought to involve him in

difficulty, he brought to it all the powers of his understanding, and, after a thorough investigation, matured the plan and bill, which he reported to the Senate. The attempt made by a majority of the Senate, composed of his political enemies, to embarrass him, now recoiled upon their own heads. But if the reference, in the first instance, of this subject to the Committee on Manufactures was unprecedented, the disposition made of Mr. Clay's able report from that committee was still more so.

This was hardly read in the Senate before it was violently denounced, and, without being considered by the Senate, was referred to the Committee on Public Lands—the very committee to which Mr. Clay had, in the first place, insisted the subject ought to be referred. After some days this committee made a report, and recommended a reduction of the price of the public lands immediately to one dollar per acre, and eventually to fifty cents per acre, and the grant to the new States of fifteen per cent. on the net proceeds of the sales, instead of ten per cent., as proposed by the Committee on Manufactures, and *nothing to the old States.*

He thus exposes the attempts that had been made, and were making, to rob the old States of their interest in the public domain, and he came forward with a measure that meted out justice to all; to the East and to the West; to the North and to the South; to the old States, and to the new. Speaking of the *right of the whole to the public lands*, said he:

“The right of the Union to the public lands is incontestable. It ought not to be considered debatable. It never was questioned but by a few, whose monstrous heresy, it was probably supposed, would escape animadversion from the enormity of the absurdity, and the utter impracticability of the success of the claim. The right of the whole is sealed by the blood of the Revolution, founded upon solemn deeds of cession from sovereign States, deliberately executed in the face of the world, or resting upon national treaties concluded with foreign powers, or ample equivalents contributed from the treasury of the people of the United States.”

His plan of distribution was no sooner reported to the Senate, and made known to the country, than it became triumphant. The bill passed the Senate at that session, but was not acted on in the House; it was gaining favor with the country, however, and so great was its popularity, that it passed at the next session by more than two-thirds of both branches of Congress. It was then sent to the President, Gen. Jackson, for his signature; but, instead of signing, or returning it with his reasons for withholding his signature, he *pocketed it!* Had it been returned, there cannot be a doubt but it would have become a law, and of this he was fully aware.

“It was a measure suggested by one who shared no part in the President's counsels or affections; and although he had himself, in his annual message, recommended a similar measure, he did not hesitate to change his ground in order to thwart the views of its author.” Personal hostility induced him to resort to the novel mode of killing the bill by smothering it in his pocket! Before another session of Congress commenced, the order went forth—the measure was denounced—the faithful were required to surrender their own opinions, and sustain their chief; and lo! it was done!—From that day to the present, those who claim to belong to the *democratic* sheep-fold have been required to eschew the distribution of the proceeds of the public lands among the people of the States, its rightful owners, as a “*federal measure.*” Is it possible for a nation to have the benefit of benign measures, when those which are calculated to promote the general good are defeated through mere personal pique or prejudice towards the individual with whom they originate, and because their adoption would add a leaf to the chaplet that adorns his brow? A wise people will not inquire *who* originated a measure, but whether the measure itself is likely to prove beneficial or otherwise.

It was undoubtedly the truth, as Mr. Clay asserted, that for many years various pretensions had been put forth concerning the public lands, one of which was, that they belonged of right to the States in whose limits they were situated; another, that they should be ceded to these States by the United States; another, that their price should be graduated down to almost nothing; and all had in view either their actual or virtual surrender by the General Government. Mr. Clay saw that if not secured to the old States, their interest in the public domain would soon be gone forever, and the plan of distribution which he brought forward was designed, not only to settle our policy in regard to this immense national interest, but to settle it upon the immutable principles of justice—even-handed justice to all. No sooner, however, was there a prospect of his plan being adopted, than the very men who had clamored for “*the lion's share*” of the public domain, who had sanctioned scheme after scheme for wasting and squandering the lands, and had protested against their being considered as a source of *revenue*, turned short around and became equally clamorous against the proceeds being taken from the treasury! Such is the consistency of mere demagogues! In his speech on distribution in the Senate, on the 28th January, 1841, Mr. Clay thus notices the contradictory and inconsistent course of his opponents:

“All at once these gentlemen seem to be deeply interested in the *revenue* derivable from the public lands. Listen to them *now*, and you would suppose that heretofore they had *always* been, and hereafter would continue to be, decidedly and warmly in favor of carefully husbanding the public domain, and obtaining from it the greatest practicable amount of revenue, for the exclusive use of the General Government. You would imagine that none of them had ever espoused or sanctioned any scheme for wasting or squandering the public lands; that they regarded them as a sacred and inviolable fund, to be preserved for the benefit of posterity, as well as this generation.”

\* \* \* “I proceed to the documentary proof. In his annual message of December 4, 1832, President Jackson says: ‘*It seems to me to be our true policy that the public lands shall cease, as soon as practicable, to be a source of revenue.*’”

From the report of Mr. King, chairman of the Committee on Public Lands, to whom his (Mr. Clay's) report was referred in 1832, Mr. Clay read the following:

“This committee turn with confidence from the Land Offices to the Custom-houses, and say, *here are the true sources of Federal revenue!* Give the lands to the cultivator! and tell him to keep his *money*, and lay it out in their cultivation!”

"Hear how President Jackson lays down the law in 1833:

"On the whole, I adhere to the opinion expressed by me in my annual message of 1832, that it is our true policy that the public lands shall cease, as soon as practicable, to be a source of revenue, except for the payment of those general charges which grow out of the acquisition of the lands, their survey, and sale.

"It was but the other day we heard the Senator from Arkansas (Mr. Sevier) express some of these sentiments. What were we told by that Senator? 'We will have the public lands. We must have them, and we will TAKE them in a few years.'

[Mr. Sevier said, "So we will."]

"Hear him! Hear him! He repeats it. Utters it in the ears of the revenue-pleading Senator (Mr. Wright) on my left. And yet he will vote against distribution."

*South Carolina nullification—the Compromise Act.*

The reiterated attacks upon the protective system by the advocates of the doctrine of free trade, together with the fact of the extinguishment of the public debt and an overflowing Treasury, had, in 1833, greatly operated upon public opinion, and brought about a conviction that protective duties were not so necessary as they had been considered, and were, perhaps, as the South declared them to be, oppressive to them, and unjust in their operation. South Carolina had also undertaken to nullify the revenue laws of the United States, and threatened open resistance and rebellion, should the General Government attempt to enforce them. Discontent had been sown among the people of the South, who had been made to believe that they were oppressed, and that their wishes and interests had been disregarded by the national Government. These discontents had been fomented, and the hopes of the Southern people encouraged by the course of the Federal Administration, which, at the very moment that it threatened and recommended the use of the power of the whole Union, proclaimed aloud the injustice of the system which it was about to enforce. In the language of Mr. Clay, "these discontents were not limited to those who maintained the extravagant theory of nullification; they were not confined to one State; but were co-extensive with the entire South, and extended even to the Northern States." A majority of the party then dominant, since defeated, was then, as now, opposed to the tariff policy. Under all these circumstances, Mr. Clay deemed that policy in imminent danger: "It is," said he, "in the hands of the Philistines, who would strangle it;" and he flew to its succor. The celebrated Compromise Bill was introduced, and, after much debate, finally passed.

Mr. Clay, with whom this great measure of conciliation originated, and to whose moderation, firmness, patriotism, and abilities, its success was due, was, on this occasion, hailed by a very large portion of the country, north, south, and west, as "the great pacificator and saviour of the country."

The compromise bill being accepted by the South as "a concession from the stronger to the weaker party," it proved, as its author designed it should, a tranquillizing measure, and secured to the country, and especially to those engaged in manufacturing, a stability of policy for a number of years, far more important to them than heavy duties with uncertainty and fluctuation.

*Is nominated for the Presidency.*

In 1832 Mr. Clay was nominated and supported by the Whigs, (then called National Republicans.) General Jackson was then in the full tide of power, and a third candidate being in the field, (Mr. Wirt, nominated by the Antimasons,) he was defeated.

*Declined in 1836.*

He declined being a candidate in 1836; but his nomination was pressed with honest zeal by a large portion of the Whig party, in 1840, and confidently expected; but, for reasons into which it would be out of place here to enter, the nomination fell upon another distinguished patriot, and he not only bowed with respectful submission and acquiescence to the expressed will of the convention, but at once bent all his energies to secure the election of his successful rival, exhibiting a magnanimity and patriotic disinterestedness that challenged the admiration even of his opponents. A cause thus sustained could not fail of success. The people came forth in their might, and victory crowned the efforts of those who sought reform.

*He retires from the Senate.*

On the 31st of March, 1842, Mr. Clay withdrew from the Senate of the United States, on which occasion he took leave of his fellow-members in a speech fraught with noble sentiment and touching pathos. Since that time he has devoted himself to agricultural and rural pursuits; in these he takes great delight, being one of the most practical, industrious, methodical, and successful farmers in the whole Western country. There is a purifying influence in the cultivation of the soil, that as seldom fails to reach the heart as it does to invigorate the frame of man; and he who delights to till the ground will find himself not less favored than the fabled Antæus, to whom was given new strength and energy as often as he touched his mother earth.

In this brief and imperfect outline of the life of the great Statesman of the West, I have attempted no labored panegyric; his works are his best praise. His name is interwoven with some of the proudest records of American history. When these shall be blotted out by the hand of oblivion; when the events of the last war with Great Britain shall have been forgotten, and the noble struggles to break the galling bonds of servitude, by the patriots of South America and the heroes of Greece shall no longer be remembered, then will the name of HENRY CLAY cease to raise a thrill of emotion in the American bosom, and the recollection of his high-souled and self-sacrificing patriotism, and constant devotion to his country, his manly and fervid eloquence, excite no throbb of pride in the hearts of his countrymen. But, till that day shall come, it will stand in letters of gold upon that bright scroll inscribed with the names of all those statesmen, patriots, and sages, whose eminent services are held in cherished remembrance by the American People, and whose enduring fame is the brightest gem in their country's crown of glory.