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LIFE

AND

PUBLIC SERVICES

OF

HENRY CLAY.

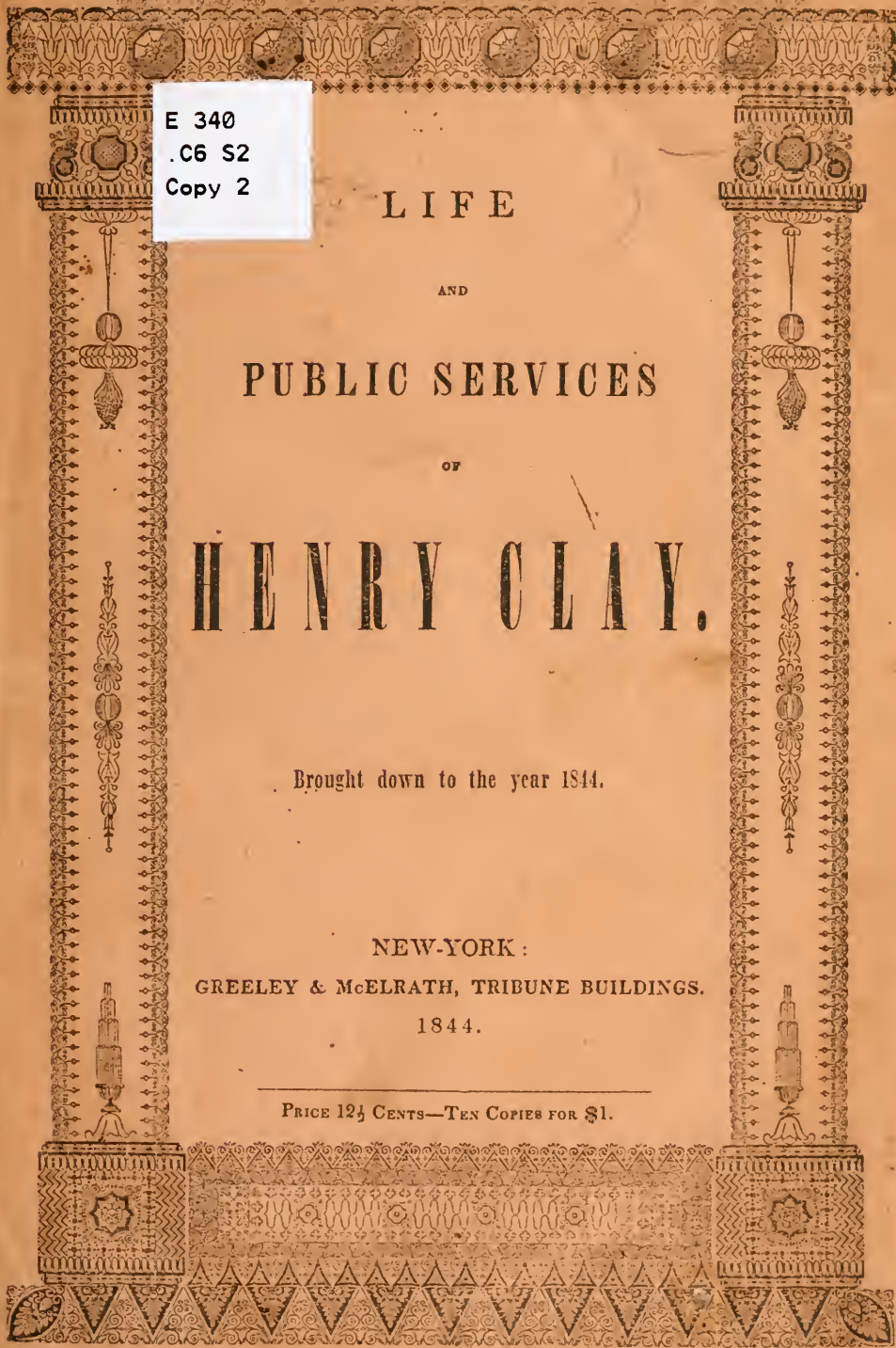
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THE  
LIFE AND PUBLIC SERVICES  
OF  
HENRY CLAY.

BY EPES SARGENT, ESQ.,  
OF NEW YORK.

NEW EDITION,  
REVISED, ENLARGED AND BROUGHT DOWN TO THE YEAR 1844,  
BY THE AUTHOR.

NEW YORK:  
GREELEY & McELRATH, TRIBUNE OFFICE, 160 NASSAU STREET.

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## P R E F A C E .

THE name of the Author having been associated with another "Life of Clay," recently issued from the Press, he takes this occasion to say, that the present is the only one, in the preparation of which he has been, in the least degree, concerned.

The first edition of this work appeared during the autumn of 1842, at which time there was no published memoir of Mr. Clay (so far as the writer's knowledge extended), except that by George D. Prentice, Esq. which terminates with the close of John Quincy Adams's administration. To this eloquent biographical sketch, the Author takes pleasure in acknowledging his indebtedness for a number of interesting facts.

The new and improved edition of his "Life of Clay," now offered to the public, has been carefully revised—some errors have been corrected—several omissions have been supplied—and the Memoir has been brought down to the year 1844.

Powerful and memorable as has been the influence which Mr. Clay has exerted upon the legislation of the country during the last forty years, the crowning felicity of his public career remains to be fulfilled and recorded. To his biographer of 1845 we leave the task of chronicling that auspicious event, to which the People of the United States now look hopefully forward as to the day-spring of a new era of prosperity in the government.

E. S.

NEW YORK, MARCH, 1844.



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THE LIFE  
AND  
PUBLIC SERVICES  
OF  
HENRY CLAY.

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CHAPTER I.

Birth and Parentage—His early days—The Mill-boy of the Slashes—Studies Law—Hears Patrick Henry—Removes to Kentucky—Debut at a Debating Society—Becomes a successful Practitioner—Cases in which he distinguishes himself—He advocates the policy of gradually Emancipating the Slaves in Kentucky—Opposes the Alien and Sedition Laws—Is elected to the General Assembly—Instances of his Eloquence—Affair with Col. Davess—Appears at the Bar for Aaron Burr—Subsequent Interview with Burr in New-York.

HENRY CLAY is a native of Hanover county, Virginia. He was born on the 12th of April, 1777, in a district of country familiarly known in the neighborhood as the *Slashes*. His father, a Baptist clergyman, died during the revolutionary war, bequeathing a small and much embarrassed estate and seven children, of whom Henry was the fifth, to the care of an affectionate mother. The surviving parent did not possess the means to give her sons a classical education; and the subject of our memoir received no other instruction than such as could be obtained in the log-cabin school-houses, still common in the lower parts of Virginia, at which spelling, reading, writing and arithmetic are taught.

In 1792, his mother, who had become united, in a second marriage, with Mr. Henry Watkins, removed to Woodford county, Kentucky, taking all her children, with the exception of Henry and his oldest brother. It was always a subject of regret with Mr. Clay, that he was deprived at so early an age of his mother's counsel, conversation and care. She was a woman of great strength of mind, and was tenderly attached to her children.

He had been only five years old when he lost his father; and, consequently, his circumstances in early life, if not actually indigent, were such as to subject him frequently to hard manual labor. He has ploughed in cornfields, many a summer day, without shoes, and with no other clothes on than a pair of Osnaburg trowsers and a coarse shirt. He has often gone to mill with grain to be ground into meal or flour; and there are those who remember his youthful visits to Mrs. Darricott's mill, on the Pamunkey river. On such occasions he generally rode a horse without a saddle, while a rope sup-

plied the place of a bridle. But in the absence of a more splendid equipment, a bag containing three or four bushels of wheat or corn was generally thrown across the horse's back, mounted upon which the future statesman would go to mill, get the grain ground, and return with it home.

At the age of fourteen, he was placed in a small retail store, kept by Mr. Richard Denny, near the market-house in the city of Richmond. He remained here till the next year, (1792,) when he was transferred to the office of the Clerk of the High Court of Chancery, Mr. Peter Tinsley. There he became acquainted with the venerable Chancellor Wythe, attracted his friendly attention, and enjoyed the benefit of his instruction and conversation. The Chancellor being unable to write well, in consequence of the gout or rheumatism in his right thumb, bethought himself of employing his young friend as an amanuensis. This was a fortunate circumstance for the fatherless boy. His attention was thus called to the structure of sentences, as he wrote them down from the dictation of his employer; and a taste for the study of grammar was created which was noticed and encouraged by the Chancellor, upon whose recommendation he read Harris's *Hermes*, Tooke's *Diversions of Purley*, Bishop Lowth's *Grammar*, and other similar works.

For his handwriting, which is still remarkably neat and regular, Mr. Clay was chiefly indebted to Mr. Tinsley. Chancellor Wythe was devoted to the study of Greek. He was at one time occupied in preparing reports of his decisions, and commenting upon those of the Court of Appeals, by which some of his were reversed; and in this work he was assisted by his amanuensis. After the reports were published, he sent copies to Mr. Jefferson, John Adams, Samuel Adams, and others. In these copies he employed Henry Clay to copy particular passages from Greek authors, to whom references had been made. Not understanding a single Greek character, the young copyist had to transcribe by imitation letter after letter.

Leaving the office of Mr. Tinsley the latter part of 1796, he went to reside with the late Robert Brooke, Esq., the Attorney General, formerly Governor of Virginia. His only regular study of the law was during the year 1797, that he lived with Mr. Brooke; but it was impossible that he should not, in the daily scenes he witnessed, and in the presence of the eminent men whom he so often heard and saw, be in the way of gathering much valuable legal information. During his residence of six or seven years in Richmond, he became acquainted with all or most of the eminent Virginians of the period, who lived in that city, or were in the habit of resorting to it—with Edmund Pendleton, Spencer Roane, Chief Justice Marshall, Bushrod Washington, Wickham, Call, Copeland, &c. On two occasions, he had the good fortune to hear Patrick Henry—once, before the Circuit Court of the United States for the Virginia District, on the question of the payment of the British debts; and again before the House of Delegates of Virginia, on a claim of the supernumerary officers in the service of the State during the Revolutionary War. Mr. Clay remembers that remarkable man, his appearance and his manner, distinctly. The impression of his eloquent powers remaining on his mind is, that their charm consisted mainly in one of the finest voices ever heard, in his graceful gesticulation, and the variety and force of expression which he exhibited in his face.

Henry Clay quitted Richmond in November, 1797, his eldest brother having died while he yet resided in that city. Bearing a license from the Judges of the Virginia Court of Appeals to practise law, he established himself in Lexington, Kentucky. He was without patrons, without the countenance of influential friends, and destitute of the means of paying his weekly board. "I remember," says he, in his speech of June, 1842, at Lexington, "how comfortable I thought I should be, if I could make £100 Virginia money per year; and with what delight I received the first fifteen shilling fee. My hopes were more than realized. I immediately rushed into a lucrative practice."

Before assuming the active responsibilities of his profession, he devoted himself with assiduity several months to his legal studies. Even at that period the bar of Lexington was eminent for its ability. Among its members were George Nicholas, James Hughes, John Breckenbridge, James Brown, William Murray, and others, whose reputation was sufficient to discourage the most stout-hearted competition. But true genius is rarely unaccompanied by a consciousness of its power; and the friendless and unknown youth from Virginia fearlessly entered the field, which, to a less intrepid spirit, would have seemed pre-occupied. He soon commanded consideration and respect. He was familiar with the technicalities of practice; and early habits of business and application, enabled him to effect an easy mastery of the cases entrusted to his charge. His subtle appreciation of character, knowledge of human nature, and faculties of persuasion, rendered him peculiarly successful in his appeals to a jury; and he obtained great celebrity for his adroit and careful management of criminal cases.

An anecdote is related of him about the time of his first entrance upon his profession, which shows

that, notwithstanding his fine capacities, he had some native diffidence to overcome before they were fairly tested. He had joined a debating society, and at one of the meetings the vote was about to be taken upon the question under discussion, when he remarked in a low but audible whisper, that the subject did not appear to him to *have been exhausted*.

"Do not put the question yet—Mr. Clay will speak," exclaimed a member, who had overheard the half-hesitating remark.

The chairman instantly took the hint, and nodded to the young lawyer in token of his readiness to hear what he had to say. With every indication of extreme embarrassment, he rose, and, in his confusion, began by saying: "*Gentlemen of the Jury*"—unconsciously addressing his fellow-members as the tribunal, to which he had perhaps often made imaginary appeals in his dreams of a successful début at the bar. His audience did not add to his agitation by seeming to notice it, and, after floundering and blushing for a moment or two, and stammering out a repetition of the words "*Gentlemen of the Jury*," he suddenly shook off all signs of distrust and timidity, and launched into his subject with a promptitude and propriety of elocution, which excited general surprise.

To those familiar with the perfect self-possession of Mr. Clay's manner in after life upon all occasions, the most trying and unexpected, this instance will present an amusing contrast; for the evidence is not on record of his ever having failed for an instant in his resources of repartee or of argument in debate.

Shortly after this early essay in public speaking, he was admitted as a practitioner before the Fayette Court of Quarter Sessions, a court of general jurisdiction. Business soon poured in upon him, and during the first term he had a handsome practice. His manners and address, both in personal intercourse and before a jury, were unusually captivating. Frank in avowing his sentiments, and bold and consistent in maintaining them, he laid the foundation of a character for sincerity and honor, which amid all the shocks of political changes and the scurrility of partizan warfare, has never been shaken or tainted. In the possession of these attributes, beyond the reach of cavil or of question, is to be found the secret of that inalienable attachment among the vast body of his friends, which has followed him throughout his career.

One of the most important cases, in which Mr. Clay was engaged during the first three or four years of his professional life, was that in which he was employed to defend a Mrs. Phelps, indicted for murder. This woman was the wife of a respectable farmer, and until the time of the act for which she was arraigned, had led a blameless and correct life. One day, in her own house, taking some offence at a Miss Phelps, her sister-in-law, she levelled a gun, and shot her through the heart. The poor girl had only time to exclaim, 'Sister, you have killed me,' and expired. Great interest was excited in the case, and the Court was crowded to overflowing on the day of trial. Of the fact of the homicide there could be no doubt. It was committed in the presence of witnesses, and the only question was to what class of crimes did the offence belong. If it were pronounced murder in the first degree, the life of the wretched prisoner would be the forfeit; but, if manslaughter, she



would be punished merely by confinement in the gaol or penitentiary. The legal contest was long and able. The efforts of the counsel for the prosecution were strenuous and earnest; but Mr. Clay succeeded not only in saving the life of his client, but so moved the jury in her behalf by his eloquence, that her punishment was made as light as the law would allow. He gained much distinction by the ability he displayed in this case, and thenceforth it was considered a great object to enlist his assistance in all criminal suits on the part of the defendant. It is a singular fact, that in the course of a very extensive practice in the courts of criminal jurisprudence, and in the defence of a large number of individuals arraigned for capital offences, he never had one of his clients sentenced to death.

Another case, in which he acquired scarcely less celebrity, was shortly afterward tried in Harrison County. Two Germans, father and son, had been indicted for murder. The deed of killing was proved to the entire satisfaction of the Court, and was considered an aggravated murder. Mr. Clay's efforts were therefore directed to saving their lives. The trial occupied five days, and his closing appeal to the jury was of the most stirring and pathetic description. It proved irresistible, for they returned a verdict of manslaughter. Not satisfied with this signal triumph, he moved an arrest of judgment, and, after another day's contest, prevailed in this also. The consequence was, that the prisoners were discharged without even the punishment of the crime, of which the jury had found them guilty.

An amusing incident occurred at the conclusion of this trial. An old, withered, ill-favored German woman, who was the wife of the elder prisoner, and the mother of the younger, on being informed of the success of the final motion for an arrest of judgment, and the consequent acquittal of her husband and son, ran toward the young advocate, in the excess of her gratitude and joy, and throwing her arms about his neck, kissed him in the eyes of the crowded court. Although taken wholly by surprise, and hardly flattered by blandishments from such a source, young Clay acquitted himself upon the occasion, with a grace and good humor, which won him new applause from the spectators. All great emotions claim respect; and in this instance so far did the sympathies of the audience go with the old woman as to divest of ridicule an act, which, in the recital, may seem to have partaken principally of the ludicrous.

Notwithstanding his extraordinary success in all the criminal suits entrusted to him, the abilities displayed by Mr. Clay at this period in civil cases were no less brilliant and triumphant. In suits growing out of the land laws of Virginia and Kentucky, he was especially distinguished; rapidly acquiring wealth and popularity by his practice. It is related of him, that on one occasion, in conjunction with another attorney, he was employed to argue, in the Fayette Circuit Court, a question of great difficulty—one in which the interests of the litigant parties were deeply involved. At the opening of the court, something occurred to call him away, and the whole management of the case devolved on his associate counsel. Two days were spent in discussing the points of law, which were to govern the instructions of the Court to the jury, and

on all of these points, Mr. Clay's colleague was foiled by his antagonist. At the end of the second day, Mr. Clay re-entered the Court. He had not heard a word of the testimony, and knew nothing of the course which the discussion had taken; but, after holding a very short consultation with his colleague, he drew up a statement of the form in which he wished the instructions of the Court to be given to the jury, and accompanied his petition with a few observations, so entirely novel and satisfactory, that it was granted without the least hesitation. A corresponding verdict was instantly returned; and thus the case, which had been on the point of being decided against Mr. Clay's client, resulted in his favor in less than half an hour after the young lawyer had entered the Court-house.

For an enumeration of the various cases in which Mr. Clay was about this time engaged, and in which his success was as marked as his talents were obvious, we must refer the curious reader to the records of the Courts of Kentucky, and hasten to exhibit the subject of our memoir on that more extended field, where his history began to be interwoven with the history of his country, and a whole nation hailed him as a champion worthy of the best days of the Republic.

As early as 1797, when the people of Kentucky were about electing a Convention to form a new Constitution for that State, Mr. Clay may be said to have commenced his political career. His first efforts were made on behalf of human liberty, and at the risk of losing that breeze of popular favor, which was wafting on his bark bravely toward that haven of worldly prosperity and renown.

The most important feature in the plan for a new Constitution, submitted to the people of Kentucky, was a provision for the prospective eradication of slavery from the State by means of a gradual emancipation of those held in bondage. Against this proposal a tremendous outcry was at once raised. It was not to be questioned that the voice of the majority was vehemently opposed to it. But young Clay did not hesitate as to his course. In that spirit of self-sacrifice, which he has since displayed on so many occasions, in great public emergencies, without stopping to reckon the disadvantages to himself, he boldly arrayed himself on the side of those friendly to emancipation. In the canvass, which preceded the election of members of the Convention, he exerted himself with all the energy of his nature in behalf of that cause, which he believed to be the cause of truth and justice. With his voice and pen he actively labored to promote the choice of Delegates who were pledged to its support. He failed in the fulfilment of his philanthropic intentions, and incurred temporary unpopularity by his course. Time, however, is daily making more apparent the wisdom of his counsel.

Mr. Clay has not faltered in his views upon this great question. They are now what they were in 1797. In maintaining the policy of this scheme of gradual emancipation he has ever been fearless and consistent. Let it not be imagined, however, that he has any sympathy with that incendiary spirit which would seem to actuate some of the clamorers for immediate and unconditional abolition at the present time. His views were far-sighted, statesman-like and sagacious. He looked to the general

good, not merely of his contemporaries but of posterity; and his plan stretched beyond the embarrassments of the present hour into the future. A more just, practicable and beneficent scheme than his, for the accomplishment of a consummation so devoutly to be wished by humanity at large, could not have been devised.

It resembled that adopted in Pennsylvania in the year 1780 at the instance of Dr. Franklin, according to which, the generation in being were to remain in bondage, but all their offspring, born after a specified day, were to be free at the age of twenty-eight, and, in the mean time, were to receive preparatory instruction to qualify them for the enjoyment of freedom. Mr. Clay thought, with many others, that as the slave States had severally the right to judge, every one exclusively for itself, in respect to the institution of domestic slavery, the proportion of slaves to the white population in Kentucky at that time was so inconceivable, that a system of gradual emancipation might have been adopted without any hazard to the security and interests of the commonwealth.

Recently a charge was made by the principal opposition paper at the South, that Mr. Clay had joined the Abolitionists; and the ground of the charge was the avowal that he had written a letter to Mr. Giddings, of Ohio, approving the leading views of that party. Upon inquiry, it appeared, however, that the letter was written by Cassius M. Clay, a namesake. In noticing the erroneous statement, Mr. Clay remarked, in a letter to a friend—"I do not write letters for different latitudes. I have but one heart, and one mind; and all my letters are but copies of the original, and if genuine, will be found to conform to it, wherever they may be addressed."

Would that every candidate for the Presidency might say this with equal sincerity and truth!

Notwithstanding the failure of his exertions in arresting the continuance of negro servitude in Kentucky, Mr. Clay has never shrunk from the avowal of his sentiments upon the subject, nor from their practical manifestation in his professional and political career. For several years, whenever a slave brought an action at law for his liberty, Mr. Clay volunteered as his advocate; and he always succeeded in obtaining a decision in the slave's favor. Oppression in every shape would seem to have roused the most ardent sympathies of his soul, and to have enlisted his indignant eloquence in behalf of its unfriended object. The impulses, which urged him at this early day to take the part of the domestic bondsmen of his own State, were the same with those, by which he was instigated, when the questions of recognizing South American and Grecian Independence were presented to the consideration of a tardy and calculating Congress.

During the administration of John Adams, in 1798-9, the famous alien and sedition laws were passed. The popular opposition with which these extraordinary measures were received, is still vividly remembered in the United States. By the "alien law," the President was authorized to order any alien, whom "he should judge dangerous to the peace and safety" of the country "to depart out of the territory within such time" as he should judge proper, upon penalty of being "imprisoned for a term not exceeding three years." &c.

The "sedition law" was designed to punish the abuse of speech of the press. It imposed a heavy pecuniary fine, and imprisonment for a term of years, upon such as should combine or conspire together to oppose any measure of Government: upon such as should write, print, utter, publish, &c., "any false, scandalous and malicious writing against the Government of the United States or the President," &c.

Mr. Clay stood forth one of the earliest champions of popular rights in opposition to these memorable laws. Kentucky was one of the first States that launched their thunders against them; and though many speakers came forward to give expression to the indignation which was swelling in the public heart, none succeeded so well in striking the responsive chord as our young lawyer. He was soon regarded as the leading spirit of the opposition party; and it was about this time that the title of "THE GREAT COMMONER" was bestowed upon him.

A gentleman, who was present at a meeting where these obnoxious laws were discussed, describes the effect produced by Mr. Clay's eloquence as difficult adequately to describe. The populace had assembled in the fields in the vicinity of Lexington, and were first addressed by Mr. George Nicholas, a distinguished man, and a powerful speaker. The speech of Mr. Nicholas was long and eloquent, and he was greeted by the most enthusiastic cheers as he concluded. Clay being called for, promptly appeared, and made one of the most extraordinary and impressive harangues ever addressed to a popular assembly. A striking evidence of its thrilling and effective character may be found in the fact that when he ceased, *there was no shout—no applause*. So eloquently had he interpreted the deep feelings of the multitude, that they forgot the orator in the absorbing emotions he had produced. A higher compliment can hardly be conceived. The theme was a glorious one for a young and generous mind, filled with ardor in behalf of human liberty—and he did it justice. The people took Clay and Nicholas upon their shoulders, and forcing them into a carriage, drew them through the streets, amid shouts of applause. What an incident for an orator, who had not yet completed his twenty second year!

Four years afterwards, when Mr. Clay was absent from the County of Fayette at the Olympian Springs, he was brought forward, without his knowledge or previous consent, as a candidate, and elected to the General Assembly of Kentucky. He soon made his influence felt in that body. In 1804, Mr. Felix Grundy, then an adroit and well-known politician, made an attempt in the Legislature to procure the repeal of a law incorporating the Lexington Insurance Office. He was opposed at every step by Mr. Clay; and the war of words between the youthful debaters drew to the hall of the House throngs of spectators. Grundy had managed to secure before hand a majority in his favor in the House; but the members of the Senate flocked in to hear Clay speak, and so cogently did he present to their understandings the impolicy and unconstitutionality of the measure under discussion, that they refused to sanction it after it had been passed by the other branch, and a virtual triumph was thus obtained.

It is recorded of Mr. Clay, that, in the course of the legislative session of 1805, he made an effort to



procure the removal of the seat of Government from Frankfort; and his speech on the occasion is said to have been an inimitable specimen of argument and humor. Frankfort is peculiar in its appearance and situation, being sunk, like a huge pit, below the surrounding country, and environed by rough and precipitous ledges. "We have," said Mr. Clay, "the model of an inverted hat; Frankfort is the body of the hat, and the lands adjacent are the brim. To change the figure, it is *nature's great penitentiary*; and if the members of this House would know the bodily condition of the prisoners, let him look at those poor creatures in the gallery."

As he said this, he pointed with his finger to half a dozen figures that chanced, at that moment, to be moving about in the gallery, more like animated skeletons than respectable compounds of flesh and blood. The objects thus designated, seeing the attention of the whole assembly suddenly directed towards them, dodged, with ludicrous haste, behind the railing, and the assembly was thrown into a convulsion of merriment. This *argumentum ad hominem* proved irresistible. The members of the House agreed that it was expedient to remove the seat of Government, but it was subsequently found impossible to decide upon a new location, and the Legislature continues to hold its sessions at Frankfort.

It was an early resolution of Mr. Clay, that no litigants, rich or poor, should have occasion to say that for the want of counsel they could not obtain justice at every bar where he could appear for them. Col. Joseph Hamilton Daviess, at that time United States District Attorney, and a man of influence and distinction, had committed an assault and battery at Frankfort on Mr. Bush, a respectable citizen, and a tavern-keeper at that place. The bar of Frankfort declined instituting an action for the latter against Col. D. Bush finally appealed to Henry Clay, who promptly undertook the case, and brought the suit in Lexington. In the argument of a preliminary question, Mr. Clay felt it his duty to animadvert with some severity upon the conduct of Col. Daviess; whereupon the latter, after the adjournment of the Court, addressed a note to him, remonstrating against his course, and expressing a wish that it should not be persevered in. Mr. Clay immediately replied that he had undertaken the cause of Mr. Bush from a sense of duty; that he should submit to no dictation as to his management of it, which should be according to his own judgment exclusively; but that he should hold himself responsible for whatever he did or said, in or out of Court. A challenge ensued; Mr. Clay accepted it, and proceeded to Frankfort for the hostile meeting. There, by the interposition of mutual friends, the affair was accommodated in a manner honorable to both parties.

In the autumn of 1806, the celebrated Aaron Burr was arrested in Kentucky, on a charge of being engaged in an illegal warlike enterprise. The sagacity and penetration of that extraordinary man were never more clearly evinced than in his application to Mr. Clay to defend him. Mr. Clay believed, and it was generally believed in Kentucky, that the prosecution was groundless, and was instituted by Col. Daviess, whom we have already mentioned, who was a great admirer of Col. Hamilton, and who disliked Burr because he had killed Hamilton in a

duel, and was moreover, his opponent in politics. Mr. Clay felt a lively sympathy for Col. Burr, on account of his being arrested in a State distant from his own, on account of his misfortunes, and the distinguished stations he had filled. Still he declined appearing for him, until Burr gave him written assurances that he was engaged in no enterprise forbidden by law, and none that was not known and approved by the Cabinet at Washington. On receiving these assurances, Mr. Clay appeared for him; and thinking that Burr ought not to be dealt with as an ordinary culprit, he declined receiving from him any fee, although a liberal one was tendered.

Burr was acquitted. Mr. Clay shortly after proceeded to Washington, and received from Mr. Jefferson an account of the letter in cipher, which had been written by Burr to General Wilkinson, together with other information of the criminal designs of Burr. Mr. Clay handed the written assurances above mentioned to Mr. Jefferson at the request of the latter.

On his return from Ghent, Mr. Clay made a brief sojourn in the city of New-York, and visited, among other places of interest, the Federal Court, then in session, escorted by his friend, the late Mr. Smith, then Marshall, formerly a Senator from New-York. On entering the court-room, in the City Hall, the eyes of the bench, bar, officers, and attendants upon the Court, were turned upon Mr. C. who was invited to take a seat on the bench, which he politely declined, and took a position in the bar. Shortly after, a small gentleman, apparently advanced in years, and with bushy, gray hair, whom Mr. Clay for an instant did not recognize, approached him. He quickly perceived it was Col. Burr, who tendered his hand to salute Mr. Clay. The latter declined receiving it. The Colonel, nevertheless, was not repulsed, but engaged in conversation with Mr. Clay, remarking, that he had understood that, besides the treaty of peace, the American Commissioners had negotiated a good Commercial Convention with Great Britain. Mr. Clay replied coldly, that such a convention was concluded, and that its terms would be known as soon as it was promulgated by public authority. Col. B. expressed a wish to have an hour's interview with him, and Mr. C. told him where he stopped—but the Colonel never called. Thus terminated all the intercourse which ever took place between Henry Clay and Aaron Burr. And yet even out of materials like these Detraction has tried to manufacture weapons for its assaults!

## CHAPTER II.

Elected to the Senate of the United States—His first Speech, in favor of Internal Improvements—Is chosen Speaker of the Kentucky House of Assembly—Speeches and Reports—Resolutions in favor of American Manufactures—Duel with Humphrey Marshall—His sentiments in regard to Duelling—Taken his seat a second time in the United States Senate—Speaks in behalf of Domestic Manufactures—Lays the foundation of the American System—Speech on the line of the Perdido—Labors of the Session—Third Session of the Eleventh Congress—The United States Bank—He becomes a member of the United States House of Representatives—Is chosen Speaker on the first ballot—Critical state of Public Affairs—Is in favor of a War with Great Britain—Speech on the bill for raising Troops—On a Naval Establishment—Carries his Measures—Our Naval successes.

On the twenty-ninth of December, 1806, Mr. Clay produced his credentials, and took his seat in the Senate of the United States. He had been elected

by the Legislature of the State of Kentucky to fill a vacancy occasioned by the resignation of the Hon. John Adair; and, from the journals of Congress, he seems to have entered at once, actively upon the discharge of the duties of his new and exalted position. His first Speech was in favor of the erection of a bridge over the Potomac River; and at this period we perceive the dawning of those views of 'Internal Improvement,' which he afterwards carried out so ably, and his advocacy of which should alone be sufficient to entitle him to the lasting gratitude of the Country. He amused the Senate on this occasion by quoting a passage from Peter Pindar, as applicable to a Senator by whom he had been assailed, and who was remarkable for the expression of superior sagacity which his countenance was wont to assume when he rebuked the younger members of the body. The picture was apt and graphic:

"Thus have I seen a magpie in the street,  
A chattering bird, we often meet;  
A bird for curiosity well known,  
With head awry, and cunning eye,  
Peep knowingly into a narrow-bone."

This Speech was soon followed by his presentation of a Resolution advocating the expediency of appropriating a quantity of land toward the opening of the Canal proposed to be cut at the Rapids of the Ohio, on the Kentucky shore.

The subject of appropriations for Internal Improvements was at that time a novelty. So far as it related to the establishment of Post-Roads, it had, it is true, been discussed in February, 1795; but no formal opinion of Congress was expressed, so as to be a precedent for future action.

A Committee, consisting of Messrs. Clay, Giles and Baldwin, was now appointed to consider the new Resolution, and on the twenty-fourth of February, 1807, Mr. Clay made an able Report to the Senate, in which we find the following passage:—"How far it is the policy of the Government to aid 'in works of this kind, when it has no distinct interest; whether, indeed, in such a case, it has the 'Constitutional power of patronage and encouragement, it is not necessary to be decided in the present instance.'" A few days afterward, he reported a bill providing for the appointment of Commissioners to ascertain the practicability of removing the obstructions in the navigation of the Ohio at the Rapids. This bill passed the Senate by a vote of eighteen to eight.

The following resolution, presented the day of the passage of the bill, shows that Mr. Clay thus early in his career was deeply impressed with the importance of a system of Internal Improvement. He may truly be called the father of that system, which has so incalculably advanced the general prosperity of the Republic:—

"Resolved, That the Secretary of the Treasury be directed to prepare and report to the Senate at their next session, a plan for the application of such means as are within the power of Congress, to the purposes of opening Roads and making Canals; together with a statement of undertakings of that nature, which, as objects of public improvement, may require and deserve the aid of Government; and, also, a statement of works, of the nature mentioned, which have been commenced, the progress which has been made in them, and the means and prospect of their being completed; and all such information

as, in the opinion of the Secretary, shall be material in relation to the objects of this resolution."

The resolution was passed with but three dissenting voices.

During this session an attempt was made to suspend the  *Habeas Corpus Act*, for the purpose of enabling the President to arrest, without going through the forms and delays of the law, Col. Burr, of whose evil intentions there was now sufficient proof. Mr. Clay did not speak on the motion, but his vote was recorded against it, not through any tenderness towards Burr, but because of the danger of instituting such a precedent against the liberty of the citizen. The motion was, however, carried in the Senate, but defeated in the House of Representatives.

Mr. Clay's election to the Senate of the United States had been but for the fraction of a term, amounting to a single session. In the summer of 1807, he was again chosen by the citizens of Fayette to represent them in the Kentucky Legislature, and at the next session he was elected Speaker of the Assembly. In this position he did not content himself with faithfully discharging the ordinary duties of a Speaker. He entered the arena of debate, and took an active part in most of the important discussions before the House. A motion having been made to prohibit the reading in the Courts of Kentucky of any British decision, or elementary work on Law, he opposed it with a vigor and eloquence that could not fail of effect. More than four-fifths of the Members of the House had evinced a determination to vote for the motion. It was argued that the Americans, as an independent people, ought not to suffer themselves to be governed, in the administration of justice, by the legal decisions of a foreign power. Mr. Clay had to contend against a most formidable array of popular prejudice. To obviate one of the most potent arguments of the friends of the motion, he ingeniously moved to amend it by limiting the exclusion of British decisions from Kentucky to those only which have taken place since the 4th of July, 1776, the date of American Independence, and suffering all which preceded that period to remain in force. He maintained that before the declaration of our independence, the British and Americans were the same nation, and the laws of the one people were those of the other. He then entered upon one of the most eloquent harangues that ever fell from his lips. He exposed the barbarity of a measure which would annihilate, for all practical uses in the State, the great body of the Common Law; which would "wantonly make wreck of a system fraught with the intellectual wealth of centuries, and whelm its last fragment beneath the wave."

Those who had the good fortune to hear Mr. Clay on this occasion, describe his speech as one of transcendent power, beauty and pathos. A gentleman, who was a partaker in the effect produced by his eloquence, says:—"Every muscle of the orator's face was in motion; his whole body seemed agitated, as if every part were instinct with a separate life; and his small, white hand, with its blue veins apparently distended almost to bursting, moved gracefully, but with all the energy of rapid and vehement gesture. The appearance of the speaker seemed that of a pure intellect wrought up to its



'mightiest energies, and brightly glowing through the thin and transparent veil of flesh that enrobed it.'

It is almost needless to add that Mr. Clay prevailed on this occasion in turning the tide in his favor, and the original motion was rejected.

A report drawn up by him in 1809 upon a question of disputed election is worthy of notice in this place. The citizens of Hardin County, who were entitled to two Representatives in the General Assembly, had given 436 votes for Charles Helm, 350 for Samuel Hayercraft, and 271 for John Thomas. The fact being ascertained that Mr. Hayercraft held an office of profit under the Commonwealth, at the time of the election, a constitutional disqualification attached and excluded him. He was ineligible, and therefore could not be entitled to his seat. It remained to inquire into the pretensions of Mr. Thomas. His claim could only be supported by a total rejection of the votes given by Mr. Hayercraft, as void to all intents whatever. Mr. Clay contended that those votes, though void and ineffectual in creating any right in Mr. Hayercraft to a seat in the House, could not affect, in any manner, the situation of his competitor. Any other exposition would be subversive of the great principle of Free Government, that the majority shall prevail. It would operate as a fraud upon the People; for it could not be doubted that the votes given to Mr. Hayercraft were bestowed under a full persuasion that he had a right to receive them. It would, in fact, be a declaration that disqualification produced qualification—that the incapacity of one man incapacitated another to hold a seat in that House. The Committee, therefore, unanimously decided that neither of the gentlemen was entitled to a seat.

Such were the principles of Mr. Clay's Report. It was unanimously adopted by the House; and its doctrines have ever since governed the Kentucky Elections.

In December, 1808, Mr. Clay introduced before the Legislature of Kentucky a series of Resolutions approving the Embargo, denouncing the British Orders in Council, pledging the coöperation of Kentucky to any measures of opposition to British exactions, upon which the General Government might determine, and declaring that "THOMAS JEFFERSON is entitled to the thanks of his Country for his ability, uprightness and intelligence which he has displayed in the management both of our Foreign Relations and Domestic Concerns."

Mr. Humphrey Marshall opposed these Resolutions with extraordinary vehemence, and introduced Amendatory Resolutions of a directly opposite tendency; but Mr. Marshall was the only one who voted in favor of the latter. Mr. Clay's original Resolutions were adopted by a vote of sixty-four to one.

Soon after this event, Mr. Clay introduced a Resolution recommending that every Member, for the purpose of encouraging the Industry of the Country, should clothe himself in garments of Domestic Manufacture. This Resolution was at once most emphatically denounced by Mr. Humphrey Marshall, who stigmatized it as the project of a demagogue, and applied a profusion of harsh and ungenerous epithets to the mover. Mr. Clay retorted, and the quarrel went on until it terminated in a hos-

tile encounter. The parties met, and by the first shot Mr. Marshall was slightly wounded. They stood up a second time, and Mr. Clay received a hardly perceptible flesh wound in the leg. The seconds now interfered, and prevented a continuance of the combat.

Mr. Clay was once again called upon in the course of his political career, by the barbarous exactions of society, to consent to a hostile encounter; but we are confident that no man at heart abominates the custom more sincerely than he. The following passage in relation to this subject occurs in an address, which, in his maturer years, he made to his constituents: "I owe it to the community to say, that whatever heretofore I may have done, or by inevitable circumstances might be forced to do, no man in it holds in deeper abhorrence than I do that pernicious practice. Condemned as it must be by the judgment and philosophy, to say nothing of the religion, of every thinking man, it is an affair of feeling about which we cannot, although we should, reason. Its true corrective will be found when all shall unite, as all ought to unite, in its unqualified proscription."

When the bill to suppress duelling in the District of Columbia came before the Senate of the United States in the spring of 1838, Mr. Clay said, no man would be happier than he to see the whole barbarous system forever eradicated. It was well known, that in certain quarters of the country, public opinion was averse from duelling, and no man could fly in the face of that public opinion, without having his reputation sacrificed; but there were other portions again which exacted obedience to the fatal custom. The man with a high sense of honor, and nice sensibility, when the question is whether he shall fight or have the finger of scorn pointed at him, is unable to resist, and few, very few, are found willing to adopt such an alternative. When public opinion shall be renovated, and chastened by reason, religion and humanity, the practice of duelling will at once be discontinued. It is the office of legislation to do all it can to bring about that healthful state of the public mind, and although it may not altogether effect so desirable a result yet he had no doubt it would do much towards it, and with these views, he would give his vote for the bill.

In the winter session of Congress in 1809-10, Mr. Clay took his seat a second time in the Senate of the United States. He had been elected by the legislature by a handsome majority to supply a vacancy occasioned by the resignation of Mr. Buckner Thruston, whose term wanted two years of its completion. From this period the public history of Mr. Clay may be found diffused through the annals of the Union. The archives of the republic are the sources from which the materials for his biography may be henceforth derived. When time shall have removed the inducements for interested praise or censure, posterity will point to the records of his civic achievements, glorious though bloodless, no less as furnishing a well established title to their admiration and gratitude than as a perpetual monument of his fame.

The predilections which Mr. Clay had early manifested in behalf of American manufactures and American principles, were unequivocally avowed in his first speech before the Senate on being elected a second time to that body as far back as April, 1810. A bill was under discussion appropriating a sum o



money for procuring munitions of war, and for other purposes; and an amendment had been proposed, instructing the Secretary of the Navy, to provide supplies of cordage, sail-cloth, hemp, &c, and to give a preference to those of American growth and manufacture. Mr. Lloyd of Massachusetts moved to strike out this part of the amendment; and a discussion arose concerning the general policy of promoting domestic manufactures, in which Mr. Clay boldly declared himself its advocate.

The fallacious course of reasoning urged by many against domestic manufactures, namely, the distress and servitude produced by those of England, he said would equally indicate the propriety of abandoning agriculture itself. Were we to cast our eyes upon the miserable peasantry of Poland, and revert to the days of feudal vassalage, we might thence draw numerous arguments against the pursuits of the husbandman. In short, take the black side of the picture, and every human occupation will be found pregnant with fatal objections.

The sentiments avowed thus early in our legislative history by Mr. Clay are now current throughout our vast community; and the "American System," as it has been called, is generally admitted to be not only a patriotic, but a politic system. But let it not be forgotten, that it is to the persevering and unremitting exertions of Henry Clay, that we are indebted for the planting and the cherishing of that goodly tree, under the far-spreading branches of which so many find protection and plenty at the present day.

The amendments advocated by Mr. Clay on this occasion were adopted, and the bill was passed. The first step toward the establishment of his magnificent "system" was taken.

Another speech in which he distinguished himself during the session, is that upon the question of the right of the United States to the territory lying between the rivers Mississippi, and Perdido, comprising the greater part of Western Florida. This important region, out of which the States of Alabama and Mississippi have since been formed, was claimed by Spain as a part of her Florida domain. The President, Mr. Madison, had issued a proclamation declaring the region annexed to the Orleans Territory, and subject to the laws of the United States. The Federalists maintained that we had no claim to the Territory—that it belonged to Spain—and that Great Britain as her ally, would not consent to see her robbed.

Mr. Clay stepped forth as the champion of the democracy and the President, and eloquently vindicated the title of the United States to the land. His arguments evince much research, ingenuity and logical skill; and on this as on all occasions, he manifested that irrepressible sympathy with the people—the mass—his eloquent expressions of which had gained him in Kentucky the appellation of the GREAT COMMONER. Mr. Horacy, one of the Senators from Delaware, had denounced the fate of the Spanish king. Mr. Clay said in reply: "I shall leave the honorable gentleman from Delaware to mourn over the fortunes of the fallen Charles. I have no commiseration for princes. MY SYMPATHIES ARE RESERVED FOR THE GREAT MASS OF MANKIND; and I own that the people of Spain have them most sincerely."

With regard to the deprecated wrath of Great Britain, Mr. Clay said, with a burst of indignant eloquence, which is but inadequately conveyed in the reported speech: "Sir, is the time never to arrive, when we may manage our own affairs, without the fear of insulting his Britannic majesty? Is the rod of British power to be forever suspended over our heads? Does Congress put on an embargo to shelter our rightful commerce against the piratical depredations committed upon it on the ocean? We are immediately warned of the indignation of England. Is a law of non-intercourse proposed? The whole navy of the haughty Mistress of the Seas is made to thunder in our ears. Does the President refuse to continue a correspondence with a Minister, who violates the decorum belonging to his diplomatic character, by giving and deliberately repeating an affront to the whole nation? We are instantly menaced with the chastisement which English pride will not fail to inflict. Whether we assert our rights by sea, or attempt their maintenance by land—whithersoever we turn ourselves, this phantom incessantly pursues us!"

The strong American feeling, the genuine democratic dignity, which pervade this Speech are characteristic of the man and of the principles, which, throughout a long and trying public career, he has steadfastly maintained. And yet we find new-fledged politicians and dainty demagogues of modern fashionable manufacture, charging this early and consistent leader of the Democracy—this friend and supporter of Jefferson and of Madison—this main pillar of the Party, who originated and conducted to a glorious termination the last War—charging him with Federalism and Aristocracy! Every act of his life—every recorded word that ever fell from his lips gives the lie to the imputation.

Mr. Clay's labors during this Session appear to have been arduous and diversified—showing on his part unusual versatility, industry and powers of application. He was placed on several important Committees, and seems to have taken part in all discussions of moment. On the 26th of March, 1810, from the Committee to whom was recommended a bill granting a right of preëmption to purchasers of Public Lands in certain cases, he reported it with amendments, which were read; and, after undergoing some alterations, it was again recommended, reported, and finally passed by the Senate. Mr. Clay was the early friend of the poor settler on the Public Lands, and he has always advocated a policy which, while it is extremely liberal toward that class, is consistent with perfect justice to the People at large, who are the legitimate owners of the Public Domain.

On the 29th of March Mr. Clay brought in a bill supplementary to an act entitled "An Act to Regulate Trade and Intercourse with the Indian Tribes, and to preserve Peace on the Frontier." The bill was referred to a Committee, of which he was appointed Chairman; and to his intelligent labors in their behalf, the People of the West were indebted for measures of protection of the most efficient character.

The 20th of April succeeding, on motion of Mr. Clay, the bill to enable the People of the Orleans Territory, now Louisiana, to form a Constitution and Government was amended by a provision requiring that the Laws, Records and Legislative Pro-

ceedings of the State should be in the English language. On the 27th of the same month he had leave of absence for the rest of the Session, after accomplishing an amount of public business that few men could have despatched with so much promptitude, ability and advantage to the Country.

The Third Session of the Eleventh Congress commenced on the 3d of December, 1810. Mr. Clay was once more in his seat in the Senate.

The subject of renewing the Charter of the United States Bank was now the great topic before Congress. Mr. Clay had been instructed by the Legislature of Kentucky to oppose a recharter; and his own convictions at the time accorded with theirs. He addressed the Senate at some length in opposition to the proposed measure. He lived to rectify his opinions on this important question; and his reasons for the change must be satisfactory to every candid mind. They are given in an Address to his constituents in Lexington, dated the 3d of June, 1816.

In a Speech to the same constituents, delivered the 9th of June, 1812, he alludes to the subject in these terms:

"I never but once changed my opinion on any great measure of national policy, or any great principle of construction of the National Constitution. In early life, on deliberate consideration, I adopted the principles of interpreting the Federal Constitution, which had been so ably developed and enforced by Mr. Madison in his memorable Report to the Virginia Legislature; and to them, as I understood them, I have constantly adhered. Upon the question coming up in the Senate of the United States, to recharter the first Bank of the United States thirty years ago, I opposed the recharter upon convictions which I honestly entertained. The experience of the War which shortly followed, the condition into which the Currency of the Country was thrown, without a Bank, and, I may now add, later and more disastrous experience, convinced me I was wrong. I publicly stated to my constituents, in a Speech at Lexington, (that which I had made in the House of Representatives not having been reported) my reasons for that change; and they are preserved in the archives of the Country. I appeal to that record; and I am willing to be judged now and hereafter by their validity.

"I do not advert to the fact of this solitary instance of change of opinion, as implying any personal merit, but because it is a fact. I will, however, say that I think it very perilous to the utility of any public man to make frequent changes of opinion, or any change, but upon grounds so sufficient and palpable that the public can clearly see and approve them."

Many important subjects were discussed by the Senate during the Session of 1810-11; and Mr. Clay was in all of them conspicuous. His zeal and efficiency in the Public Service began to attract the eyes of the whole Country. He was not the Representative of Kentucky alone. His capacious heart and active mind, uncontracted by sectional jealousies or local bigotry, comprehended the entire Union in their embrace.

At the expiration of his second fractional term of service in the Senate of the United States, having returned to Kentucky, he was elected a member of the Federal House of Representatives. Congress convened on the day designated by Proclamation, the fourth day of November, 1811; and, on the first ballot for Speaker, 123 members being present, he was chosen by a majority of 31, over all opposition.

The affairs of the Nation were never in a more critical position than at this juncture. The honor of the Republic was at stake. A long series of outrages perpetrated against our Commerce by England and by France had reached a height, at which farther toleration would have been pusillanimous. Under the Berlin and Milan Decrees of Napoleon, our ships were seized and our property confiscated by the French in a manner to provoke the warmest indignation of a free People. Great Britain vied with France, and finally far surpassed her in her acts of violence and rapine toward us. Each of the belligerent nations sought a pretext in the conduct of the other for her own injustice.

At length France, in answer to our remonstrances, repealed her odious Decrees so far as we were concerned, and practically abandoned her system of seizure and oppression. Great Britain did not follow her example.

A year had elapsed since the French Decrees were rescinded; but Great Britain persisted in her course,—affecting to deny their extinction. The ships of the United States, laden with the produce of our soil and labor, navigated by our own citizens and peaceably pursuing a lawful trade, were seized on our coasts, and, at the very mouth of our own harbors, condemned and confiscated. But it was the ruffianly system of impressment—by which American freemen, pursuing a lawful life of hard-ship and daring on the ocean, were liable to be seized, in violation of the rights of our flag, forced into the naval service of a foreign Power, and made, perhaps, the instruments of similar oppression toward their own countrymen;—it was this despotic and barbarous system that principally roused the warlike spirit of Congress and the Nation. And Posterity will admit that this cause of itself was an all-sufficient justification for hostile measures. The spirit of that People must have been debased indeed, which could have tamely submitted to such aggressions.

The feelings of Mr. Clay on this subject seem to have been of the intensest description. Though coming from a State distant from the sea-board, the wrongs and indignities practiced against our mariners by British arrogance and oppression, fired his soul and stirred his whole nature to resistance. To him, the idea of succumbing a moment to such degrading outrages was intolerable. The Nation had been injured and insulted. England persisted in her injuries and insults. It was useless to temporise longer. He was for war, prompt, open and determined war. He communicated to others the electric feelings that animated his own breast. He wreaked all his energies on this great cause.

In appointing the Committee on Foreign Relations, to whom the important question was to be referred, he was careful to select a majority of such Members as partook of his own decided views. Peter B. Porter, of New York, was the Chairman; and, on the 29th of November, he made a Report, in which the Committee earnestly recommended, in the words of the President, "that the United States 'be immediately put into an armor and attitude demanded by the crisis, and corresponding with the 'national spirit and expectations.'" They submitted appropriate Resolutions for the carrying out of this great object.



On the 31st of December, the House resolved itself into a Committee of the Whole, Mr. Breckenridge in the Chair, on a bill from the Senate, providing for the raising of twenty-five thousand troops. Of this measure, Mr. Clay was the warmest, and at the same time most judicious, advocate. He addressed the House eloquently in its behalf, and urged it forward on all occasions with his best energies.

He contended that the real cause of British aggression was not to distress France, as many maintained, but to destroy a rival. "She saw," continued he, "in your numberless ships, which 'whitened every sea—in your hundred and twenty thousand gallant tars—the seeds of a naval force, which in thirty years would rival her on her own element. She therefore commenced the odious system of Impressment, of which no language can paint my execration! She DARED to attempt the subversion of the personal freedom of our mariners!"

In concluding, Mr. Clay said he trusted that he had fully established these three positions:—That the quantum of the force proposed by the bill was not too great; that its nature was such as the contemplated War called for; and that the object of the War was justified by every consideration of justice, of interest, of honor and love of country. Unless that object were at once attained by peaceful means, he hoped that war would be waged before the close of the Session.

The bill passed the House on the 4th of January succeeding; and, on the 22d of the same month, the Report of the Committee, to whom that part of the President's Message relating to a Naval Establishment was referred, being under discussion, Mr. Clay spoke in favor of an increase of the Navy, advocating the building of ten frigates.

In his remarks, on this occasion, he contended that a description of naval force entirely within our means was that, which would be sufficient to prevent any single vessel, of whatever metal, from endangering our whole coasting trade—blocking up our harbors, and laying under contributions our cities—a force competent to punish the insolence of the commander of any single ship, and to preserve in our own jurisdiction the inviolability of our peace and our laws.

"Is there," he asked, "a reflecting man in the nation who would not charge Congress with a culpable neglect of its duty, if, for the want of such a force, a single ship were to bombard one of our cities! Would not every honorable member of the Committee inflict on himself the bitterest reproaches, if, by failing to make an inconsiderable addition to our little gallant Navy, a single British vessel should place New-York under contribution!"

On the 29th of January, 1812, the bill to increase the Navy passed the House by a handsome majority. To Mr. Clay's eloquent advocacy of the measure, the Country is largely indebted for the glorious naval successes which afterward shed a new and undying lustre upon our history. But for the gallant and effective Navy, which sprang up under such auspices, the main arm of our defence would have been crippled. While we contemplate with pride our achievements upon the sea—the memorable deeds of our Lawrences, Decatur, Hulls,

Bainbridges and Perrys—let us not forget the Statesman, but for whose provident sagacity and intrepid spirit, the opportunity of performing those exploits might never have been afforded.

### CHAPTER III.

Mr. Clay prefers a seat in the House to one in the Senate—Reasons for making him Speaker—The President recommends an Embargo—The measure opposed by John Randolph and Josiah Quincy—Defended by Mr. Clay—His intercourse with Randolph—War declared—The Leaders in the House—Mr. Cheves and Mr. Gallatin—Mr. Clay appointed to confer with President Madison—Anecdotes—Events of the War—Motives—Federal Abuse—Clay's Reply to Quincy—Effects of his Eloquence—Passage of the Army Bill—Madison re-elected President—Mr. Clay resigns the Speaker's Chair, being appointed Commissioner to Ghent—His services during the War.

THE cause of Mr. Clay's transference from the Senate to the House of Representatives was his own preference, at the time, of a seat in the popular branch. His immediate appointment as Speaker was, under the circumstances, a rare honor, and one never, before or since, conferred on a new Member. Among the qualifications which led to his selection for that high station was his known firmness, which would check any attempt to domineer over the House; and many Members had a special view to a proper restraint upon Mr. John Randolph of Virginia, who, through the fears of Mr. Varnum, and the partiality entertained for him by Mr. Macon, the two preceding Speakers, had exercised a control which, it was believed, was injurious to the deliberations of the body.

On the first of April, 1812, the following confidential communication from the President to Congress was received:

"Considering it as expedient, under existing circumstances and prospects, that a general embargo be laid on all vessels now in port or hereafter arriving, for the period of sixty days, I recommend the immediate passage of a law to that effect.

"JAMES MADISON."

This proposition was immediately discussed in the House in secret session, Mr. Clay took an active part in the debate. He gave to the measure recommended by the President his ardent and unequalled support. "I APPROVE OF IT," said he, "BECAUSE IT IS TO BE VIEWED AS A DIRECT PRECURSOR TO WAR."

Among the most vehement opponents of the measure were John Randolph, of Virginia, and Josiah Quincy, of Massachusetts. Mr. Randolph said that the honorable Speaker was mistaken when he said the message was for war. Mr. R. had "too much reliance on the wisdom and virtue of the President to believe that he would be guilty of such gross and unparalleled treason." He maintained that the proposed embargo was not to be regarded as an initial step to war—but as a subterfuge—a retreat from battle. "What new cause of war," he asked, "or of an embargo has arisen within the last twelve months? The affair of the Chesapeake is settled: no new principles of blockade have been interpolated in the laws of nations. Every man of candor would ask why did not, then, go to war twelve months ago."

"What new cause of war has been avowed!" said Mr. Clay in reply—"The affair of the Chesapeake is settled, to be sure, but only to paralyze the spirit of the country. Has Great Britain abstained from impressing our seamen—from depredating upon our

property? We have complete proof, in her capture of our ships, in her exciting our frontier Indians to hostility, and in her sending an emissary to our cities to excite civil war, that she will do everything to destroy us: our resolution and spirit are our only dependence. Although I feel warmly upon this subject," continued he, "I pride myself upon those feelings, and should despise myself if I were destitute of them."

Mr. Quincy expressed in strong terms his abhorrence of the proposed measure. He said that his objections were, that it was not what it pretended to be; and was what it pretended not to be. That it was not embargo preparatory to war; but that it was embargo as a substitute for the question of declaring war. "I object to it," said he, "because it is no efficient preparation; because it is, not a progress towards honorable war, but a subterfuge from the question. If we must perish, let us perish by any hand except our own. Any fate is better than self-slaughter."

Against this storm of opposition Henry Clay presented an undaunted front. As the debate was carried on with closed doors, no ample record of it is in existence. But a member of Congress, who was present, says: "On this occasion Mr. Clay was a flame of fire. He had now brought Congress to the verge of what he conceived to be a war for liberty and honor, and his voice rang through the capitol like a trumpet-tone sounding for the onset. On the subject of the policy of the embargo, his eloquence, like a Roman phalanx, bore down all opposition, and he put to shame those of his opponents, who flouted the government as being unprepared for war."

The Message recommending an embargo was referred to the committee on Foreign Relations, who reported a bill for carrying it into effect, which was adopted by the House. In the Senate it underwent a slight alteration in the substitution of ninety for sixty days as the term of the embargo. This amendment was concurred in; and on the fourth of April, Mr. Crawford reported the presentation of the bill to the President, and that it had received his signature.

Through the indefatigable exertions of Mr. Clay and his associates, the attitude of resistance to aggression was now boldly assumed—the first step was taken towards a definite declaration of war.

On assuming the duties of the Speakership, Mr. Clay had foreseen, from the peculiar character and constitution of mind of that remarkable and distinguished man, John Randolph, that it would be extremely difficult to maintain with him relations of civility and friendship. He, therefore, resolved to act on the principle of never giving and never receiving an insult without immediate notice, if he were in a place where it could be noticed. Their mode of intercourse or non-intercourse was most singular. Sometimes weeks, months would pass without their speaking to each other. Then, for an equal space of time, no two gentlemen could treat each other with more courtesy and attention. Mr. Randolph, on entering the House in the morning, while these better feelings prevailed, would frequently approach the Chair, bow respectfully to the Speaker, and inquire after his health.

But Mr. Randolph was impatient of all restraints, and could not brook those which were sometimes

applied to himself by the Speaker in the discharge of the duties of the Chair. On one occasion he appealed to his constituents, and was answered by Mr. Clay. The case was this: Mr. Clay, in one of his morning rides, passed through Georgetown, where Mr. Randolph, the late Mr. J. Lewis, of Virginia, and other members of Congress boarded. Meeting with Mr. Lewis, that gentleman inquired of him, if there were any news? Mr. Clay informed him, that on the Monday following, President Madison would send a message to Congress, recommending a declaration of war against Great Britain.

The day after this meeting, Mr. Randolph came to the House, and having addressed the Speaker in a very rambling, desultory speech for about an hour, he was reminded from the chair, that there was no question pending before the House. Mr. Randolph said he would present one. He was requested to state it. He stated that he meant to move a resolution, that it was *not* expedient to declare war against Great Britain." The Speaker, according to a rule of the House, desired him to reduce his resolution to writing, and to send it to the chair; which he accordingly did. And thereupon the Speaker informed him, that before he could proceed in his speech, the House must decide that it would now consider his resolution. Upon putting that question to the House, it was decided by a large majority, that it would not consider the resolution; and thus Mr. Randolph was prevented from haranguing the House farther in its support. Of this he complained, and published an address to his constituents.

Some expressions in this address seeming to require notice, Mr. Clay addressed a communication under his own name, to the editor of the National Intelligencer, in which he reviews the questions at issue between him and Mr. Randolph, and vindicates the justice of his recent decisions in the chair.

"Two principles," he says, "are settled by these decisions; the first is, that the House has a right to know, through its organ, the specific motion which a member intends making, before he undertakes to argue it at large; and in the second place, that it reserves to itself the exercise of the power of determining whether it will consider it at the particular time when offered, prior to his thus proceeding to argue it."

Every succeeding Congress has acknowledged the validity of the principles thus established by Mr. Clay. They seem essential to the proper regulation of debate in a large legislative body."

A bill from the Committee on Foreign Relations was reported to the House on the third of June, 1812, declaring *War between Great Britain and her dependencies and the United States*. On the eighteenth it had passed both Houses of Congress; and the next day the President's proclamation was issued, declaring the actual existence of War. On the sixth of July, Congress adjourned to the first Monday in November.

Mr. Clay, Mr. Lowndes, Mr. Cheves, and Mr. Calhoun, were the leaders, who sustained and carried through the declaration of War. Mr. Clay, fully impressed with the conviction, that the honor and the highest interests of the country demanded the declaration, was ardent, active and enthusiastic in its support. To him was assigned the responsible duty of appointing all the Committees. Mr. Madison's Cabinet was not unanimous on the subject of war,



Mr. Madison himself was in favor of it, but seemed to go into it with much repugnance and great apprehension. The character of his mind was one of extreme caution, bordering on timidity, although he acted with vigor and firmness when his resolution was once taken. Mr. Gallatin, the Secretary of the Treasury, was adverse to the war.

It was the opinion and wish of Mr. Clay, Mr. Cheves, and their friends, that financial as well as military and naval preparations should be made for the conduct of the war, and previous to its declaration. Accordingly, Mr. Gallatin was called upon to report a system of finance appropriate to the occasion. He had enjoyed a high reputation for financial ability; and it was hoped and anticipated, that he would display it when he made his required report. But the disappointment was great when his report appeared. Instead of indicating any new source of revenue—instead of suggesting any great plan calling forth the resources of the nation, he reported in favor of all the old odious taxes—excise, stamp duties, &c. which had been laid during previous administrations. It was believed, from the offensive nature of the taxes, that his object was to repress the war spirit. But far from being discouraged, Mr. Clay and his friends resolved to impose the duties recommended.

Mr. Cheves was at the head of the Committee of Ways and Means, and went laboriously to work to prepare numerous bills for the collection of taxes as suggested by the Secretary. After they were prepared and reported, it was for the first time discovered that the Executive, and more especially Mr. Gallatin, were opposed to the imposition of taxes at the same session during which war was declared. This was ascertained by the active exertions of Mr. Smiley, a leading and influential member from Pennsylvania, and the confidential friend of Mr. Gallatin. In circles of the members, he would urge in conversation the expediency of postponing the taxes to another session, saying that the people would not take both war and taxes together."

Mr. Clay and his friends were aware that the levying of taxes, always a difficult and up-hill business, could not be effected without the hearty concurrence of the Executive, and therefore reluctantly submitted to the postponement—a most unfortunate delay, the ill effects of which were felt throughout the whole war. Mr. Cheves, who had plied the laboring oar, in preparing the various revenue bills, was highly indignant, and especially at the conduct of Mr. Gallatin, of whom he ever afterwards thought unfavorably.

The negotiations with Mr. Foster, the British Chargé d'Affaires at Washington, were protracted up to the period of the Declaration of War. The Republican party became impatient of the delay. It was determined that an informal deputation should wait upon Mr. Madison to expostulate against longer procrastination; and it was agreed that Mr. Clay should be the spokesman. The gentlemen of the deputation accordingly called on the President, and Mr. Clay stated to him, that Congress was impatient for action; that further efforts at negotiation were vain; that an accommodation was impracticable; that the haughty spirit of Britain was unbending and unyielding; that submission to her arrogant pretensions, especially that of a right to im-

press our seamen, was impossible; that enough had been done by us with a view to conciliation; that the time for decisive action had arrived, and war was inevitable.

By way of illustrating the difference between speaking and writing, and *acting*, Mr. Clay related to Mr. Madison an anecdote of two Kentucky Judges. One talked incessantly from the Bench. He reasoned every body to death. He would deliver an opinion, and first try to convince the party that agreed with him and then the opposite party. The consequence was that business lagged, the docket accumulated, litigants complained, and the community were dissatisfied. He was succeeded by a Judge, who never gave any reasons for his opinion, but decided the case simply, for the plaintiff or the defendant. His decisions were rarely reversed by the appellate Court—the docket melted away—litigants were no longer exposed to ruinous delay—and the community were contented. Surely, said Mr. Clay, we have exhausted the argument with Great Britain.

Mr. Madison enjoyed the joke, but, in his good-natured, sly way, said, he also had heard an anecdote, of a French Judge, who after the argument of the cause was over, put the papers of the contending parties into opposite scales, and decided according to the preponderance of weight.

Speaking of the opposition of the Federal party Mr. Clay remarked, that they were neither to be conciliated nor silenced—"let us do what we sincerely believe to be right, and trust to God and the goodness of our cause."

Mr. Madison said, that our institutions were founded upon the principle of the competency of man for self-government, and that we should never be tired of appealing to the reason and judgment of the people.

Such deference did Mr. Madison have, however, for the opinion and advice of his friends, that shortly after this conference, he transmitted his war message to Congress.

The second session of the twelfth Congress took place at the appointed time. Events of an important character had occurred since it last met. The war had been prosecuted; and we had sustained some reverses. General Hull, to whom had been assigned the defence of the Michigan frontier, had, after an unsuccessful incursion into the neighboring territory of the enemy, surrendered ingloriously the town and fort of Detroit.

An attack was made on a post of the enemy near Niagara, by a detachment of regular and other forces under Major-General Van Rensselaer, and after displaying much gallantry had been compelled to yield, with considerable loss, to reinforcements of Savages and British regulars.

But though partially unsuccessful on the land, the Americans had won imperishable trophies on the sea. Our public ships and private cruisers had made the enemy sensible of the difference between a reciprocity of captures, and the long confinement of them to their side. The frigate *Constitution*, commanded by Captain Hull, after a close and short engagement, had completely disabled the British frigate *Guerriere*. A vast amount of property had been saved to the country by the course pursued by a squadron of our frigates under the command of Commodore Rodgers.



A strong disposition to adjust existing difficulties with Great Britain had, in the mean time, been manifested by our Government. Our Chargé des Affaires at London had been authorized to accede to certain terms, by which the war might be arrested, without awaiting the delays of a formal and final pacification.

These terms required substantially, that the British orders in council should be repealed as they affected the United States, without a revival of blockades violating acknowledged rules; that there should be an immediate discharge of American seamen from British ships. On such terms an armistice was proposed by our Government.

These advances were declined by Great Britain from an avowed repugnance to a suspension of the practice of impressment during the armistice.

Early in January, 1813, a bill from the Military Committee of the House, for the raising of an additional force, not exceeding twenty thousand men, underwent a long and animated discussion in committee of the whole. The opposition on this occasion rallied all their strength to denounce the measure. Mr. Quincy, to whom we have before alluded, made a most bitter harangue against it and its supporters. "Since the invasion of the buccaneers," said Mr. Q. "there is nothing in history like this war." Alluding to some of the friends of the administration, he stigmatized them as "household troops, who lounged for what they could pick up about the government house—toad-eaters, who lived on eleemosynary, ill-purchased courtesy, upon the palace, who swallowed great men's spittle, got judgements, and wondered at the fine sights, fine rooms, and fine company, and, most of all, wondered how they themselves got there."

Napoleon Bonaparte and Thomas Jefferson came in for no small share of the same gentleman's abuse.

On the eighth of January, Mr. Clay rose in defence of the new army bill, and in reply to the violent and personal remarks, which had fallen from the opposition. His effort on this occasion was one of the most brilliant in his whole career. It is imperfectly reported; for Mr. Clay has been always too inattentive to the preparation of his speeches for the press. To form an adequate idea of his eloquence we must look to the effect it produced—to the legislation which it swayed.

That portion of Mr. Clay's speech, in which he vindicated his illustrious friend, Thomas Jefferson, from the aspersions of the leader of the Federalists, has been deservedly admired as a specimen of energetic and indignant eloquence. It must have fallen with crushing effect upon him who called it forth:

"Next to the notice which the opposition has found itself called upon to bestow upon the French Emperor, a distinguished citizen of Virginia, formerly President of the United States, has never for a moment failed to receive their kindest and most respectful attention. An honorable gentleman from Massachusetts (of whom I am sorry to say it becomes necessary for me, in the course of my remarks, to take some notice,) has alluded to him in a remarkable manner. Neither his retirement from public office, his eminent services, nor his advanced age, can exempt this patriot from the coarse assaults of party malevolence. No, sir; in 1801 he snatched from the rude hands of usurpation the violated constitution of the country, and *that* is his crime. He preserved that instrument in form and substance and

spirit, a precious inheritance for generations to come, and for this he can never be forgiven.

"How vain and impotent is party rage, directed against such a man! He is not more elevated by his lofty residence upon the summit of his own favorite mountain, than he is lifted by the serenity of his mind, and the consciousness of a well-spent life, above the indignant passions and feelings of the day. No! his own beloved Monticello is not less moved by the storms that beat against its sides, than is this illustrious man by the howlings of the whole British pack let loose from the Essex kennel!

"When the gentleman, to whom I have been compelled to allude, shall have mingled his dust with that of his abused ancestors—when he shall have been consigned to oblivion, or, if he live at all, shall live only in the reasonable annals of a certain juncture, the name of Jefferson will be hailed with gratitude, his memory honored and cherished as the second founder of the liberties of the people, and the period of his administration will be looked back to as one of the happiest and brightest epochs in American history.

"But I beg the gentleman's pardon. He has indeed secured to himself a more imperishable fame than I had supposed. I think it was about four years ago that he submitted to the House of Representatives, an initiative proposition for an impeachment of Mr. Jefferson. The House condescended to consider it. *The gentleman debated it with his usual temper, moderation and urbanity.* The House decided upon it in the most solemn manner; and, although the gentleman had somehow obtained a second, the final vote stood, *one for, and one hundred and seventeen against the proposition!* The same historic page that transmitted to posterity the virtue and glory of Henry the Great of France, for their admiration and example, has preserved the infamous name of the fanatic assassin of the excellent monarch. The same sacred pen that portrayed the sufferings and crucifixion of the Saviour of mankind, has recorded for universal execration the name of him who was guilty—not of betraying his country—but—a kindred crime—of betraying his God!"

In other parts of his speech, Mr. Clay electrified the House by his impassioned eloquence. The day was intensely cold, and, for the only time in his life, he found it difficult to keep himself warm by the exercise of speaking. But the members crowded around him in hushed admiration; and there were few among them who did not testify by their streaming tears his mastery over the passions. The subject of impressment was touched upon; and the matchless pathos with which he depicted the consequences of that infernal system—portraying the situation of a supposed victim to its tyrannic outrages—thrilled through every heart. The reported passage can but feebly convey a conception of the impression produced. As well might we attempt to form an adequate idea of one of Raphael's pictures from a written description, as to transcribe the eloquence of Clay on this occasion. Even were his glowing words fully and correctly given, how much of the effect would be lost in the absence of that sweet and silvery voice—that graceful and expressive action—those flashing eyes—which gave life and potency and victory to his language!

In conclusion, Mr. Clay said:—"My plan would be to call out the ample resources of the country, give them a judicious direction, prosecute the war with the utmost vigor, strike wherever we can reach the enemy, at sea or on land, and negotiate the

\* When the proposition was made to impeach Thomas Jefferson, Mr. Clay is said to have risen, and exclaimed in reference to the mover, "Sir, the gentleman soils the spot he stands upon."

'terms of a peace at Quebec or at Halifax. We are told that England is a proud and lofty nation, which, disdainful to wait for danger, meets it half way. Haughty as she is, we once triumphed over her, and, if we do not listen to the counsels of timidity and despair, we shall again prevail. In such a cause, with the aid of Providence, we must come out crowned with success; but if we fail, let us fall like men—lash ourselves to our gallant tars, and expire together in one common struggle—  
**'FIGHTING FOR FREE TRADE AND SEAMEN'S RIGHTS!'**

The Army Bill, thus advocated by Mr. Clay, passed the House on the 14th of January, 1813, by a vote of seventy-seven to forty-two.

On the tenth of February, the President of the Senate, in the presence of both Houses of Congress, proceeded to open the certificates of the Electors of the several States for President and Vice President of the United States. The vote stood: *For President*, James Madison, 123; De Witt Clinton, 89.—*For Vice President*, Elbridge Gerry, 131; Jared Ingersoll, 86. James Madison and Elbridge Gerry were accordingly elected—the former for a second term. The War Policy of the Administration was triumphantly sustained by the People.

The first session of the Thirteenth Congress commenced the twenty-fourth of May, 1813. Mr. Clay was again chosen Speaker by a large majority, and his voice of exhortation and encouragement continued to be raised in Committee of the Whole in vindication of the honor of the Country and the conduct of the War. The President, in his Message, alluded to the spirit in which the war had been waged by the British, who "were adding to the savage fury of it on one frontier, a system of plunder and conflagration on the other, equally forbidden by respect for national character and by the established rules of civilized warfare."

Mr. Clay eloquently called attention to this portion of the Message, and declared that if the outrages said to have been committed by the British armies and their savage allies should be found to be as public report had stated them, they called for the indignation of all Christendom, and ought to be embodied in an authentic document, which might perpetuate them on the page of history. Upon his motion, a resolution was adopted, referring this portion of the President's Message to a Select Committee, of which Mr. Macon was Chairman. A Report was subsequently submitted from this Committee, in which an abundance of testimony was brought forward, showing that the most inhuman outrages had been repeatedly perpetrated upon American prisoners by the Indian allies of British troops, and often under the eye of British officers. The report closed with a resolution requesting the President to lay before the House, during the progress of the war, all the instances of departure, by the British, from the ordinary mode of conducting war among civilized nations.

The new Congress had commenced its session at a period of general exultation among all patriotic Americans. Several honorable victories by sea and land had shed lustre on our annals. Captain Lawrence, of the *Hornet*, with but eighteen guns, had captured, after a brisk and gallant action of fifteen minutes, the British sloop of war *Peacock*, Captain

Peake, carrying twenty-two guns and one hundred and thirty men—the latter losing her Captain and nine men with thirty wounded, while our loss was but one killed and two wounded. York, the capital of Upper Canada, had been captured by the army of the centre, in connection with a naval force on Lake Ontario, under Gen. Dearborn; while the issue of the siege of Fort Meigs, under Gen. Harrison, had won for that officer an imperishable renown as a brave and skilful soldier.

In August of the preceding year, the Emperor Alexander of Russia had intimated to Mr. Adams, our Minister at St. Petersburg, his intention of tendering his services as Mediator between the United States and Great Britain. The proposition had been favorably received, and assurances had been given to the Emperor of the earnest desire of our Government that the interest of Russia might remain entirely unaffected by the existing war between us and England, and that no more intimate connections with France would be formed by the United States. With these assurances the Emperor had been highly gratified; and in the early part of March, 1813, the Russian Minister at Washington, M. Daschkoff, had formally proffered the mediation of his Government, which was readily accepted by the President. It was rejected, however, by the British Government, to the great surprise of our own, on the ground that their commercial and maritime rights would not thereby be as effectually secured as they deemed necessary; but, accompanying the rejection, was an expression of willingness to treat directly with the United States, either at Gottenburg or at London; and the interposition of the Emperor was requested in favor of such an arrangement.

In consequence of the friendly offer of the Russian Government, Messrs. Albert Gallatin and James A. Bayard had been sent to join our resident Minister, Mr. Adams, as Envoys Extraordinary at St. Petersburg. The proposal of the British Ministry, to treat with us at Gottenburg, was soon after accepted, and Messrs. Clay and Jonathan Russell were appointed, in conjunction with the three Plenipotentiaries then in Russia, to conduct the negotiations. On the 19th of January, 1814, Mr. Clay, in an appropriate Address, accordingly resigned his station as Speaker of the House. The same day a Resolution was passed by that body, thanking him for the ability and impartiality with which he had presided. The Resolution was adopted almost unanimously—only nine Members voting in opposition.

Mr. Clay had always asserted that an honorable Peace was attainable only by an efficient War. In Congress he had been the originator and most ardent supporter of nearly all those measures which had for their object the vigorous prosecution of hostilities against Great Britain. On every occasion his trumpet-voice was heard, cheering on the House and the Country to confidence and victory. No auguries of evil—no croakings of despondency—no suggestions of timidity—no violence of Federal opposition could for a moment shake his patriotic purposes, diminish his reliance on the justice of our cause, or induce him to hesitate in that policy, which he believed the honor and—what was inseparable from the honor—the interests, of the Country demanded.



The measure of gratitude due him from his fellow citizens, for his exertions in this cause alone, is not to be calculated or paid. But in that scroll where Freedom inscribes the names of her worthiest champions, destined to an immortal renown in her annals, the name of HENRY CLAY will be found with those of WASHINGTON, JEFFERSON and MADISON.

Having been the most efficient leader in directing the legislative action which originated and directed to a prosperous termination the War with Great Britain—a War which the voice of an impartial Posterity must admit to have elevated and strengthened us as a Nation—Mr. Clay was now appropriately selected as one of the Commissioners to arrange a Treaty of Peace.

#### CHAPTER IV.

Meeting of the Ghent Commissioners—Mr. Clay visits Brussels—Anecdote—Mode of transacting Business—Untoward Event—Mr. Clay refuses to surrender to the British the Right to Navigate the Mississippi—His Reasons—Controversy between Messrs. Adams and Russell—Mr. Clay's Letter—Goes to Paris—Is introduced to the Duke of Wellington by Madame de Stael—Heurs of the Battle of New-Orleans—Visits England—Lord Castlereagh and his First Water—Waterloo and Napoleon—Mr. Clay's Reception in England—Declines going to Court—Sir James Mackintosh—Lord Gambier, &c.—Mr. Clay's Return to New-York—Reception—Re-elected to Congress—Vindication of the War—Internal Improvements—His Country, his whole Country.

THE Commissioners met first at Gottingen, but their meetings were afterward transferred to Ghent. The conferences occupied a space of time of about five months. The American Commissioners were in reality negotiating with the whole British Ministry; for, whenever they addressed a Diplomatic note of any importance to the British Commissioners, it was by them transmitted to London, from which place the substance of an answer was returned in the form of instructions. The consequence was, that the American Commissioners, after having delivered a Diplomatic note, had to wait about a week before they received a reply.

In one of these pauses of the negotiation, Mr. Clay made a little excursion to Brussels, and Mr. Goulbourne went there at the same time. The British Commissioners had been in the habit of sending their English newspapers to the American Commissioners, through which the latter often derived the first intelligence of events occurring in America.

The morning after Mr. Clay's arrival in Brussels, upon his coming down to breakfast, his servant, Frederick Cara, whom he had taken with him from the City of Washington, threw some papers upon the breakfast table, and burst into tears. "What's the matter, Frederick?" The British have taken Washington, Sir, and Mr. Goulbourne has sent you those papers, which contain the account." "Is it possible?" exclaimed Mr. Clay. "It is too true, Sir" returned Frederick, whining piteously.

The news was by no means agreeable to Mr. Clay; nor was his concern diminished when he thought of the channel through which it had been conveyed to him, although fully persuaded that Mr. Goulbourne had not been actuated by any uncourteous spirit of exultation. Mr. Clay nevertheless resolved to avail himself of the first favorable opportunity for friendly retaliation; and one fortunately soon occurred. A point in the negotiation, which had been very much

pressed, was pacification with the Indians, which the American Commissioners assured the British would necessarily follow pacification with Great Britain. The former received some recent American newspapers containing an account of the actual conclusion of peace with some of the Indian tribes, but containing also an account of one of the splendid naval victories won on Lake Champlain or Lake Erie. Mr. Clay proposed to the American Commissioners, that these newspapers should be sent to the British, ostensibly for the purpose of showing that peace was made with some of the Indians, but in reality to afford them an opportunity of perusing the account of that victory. With the concurrence of his colleagues, he accordingly addressed an official note to the British Commissioners transmitting the newspapers.

The mode of transacting business among the American Commissioners was, upon the reception of an official note from the other party to deliberate fully upon its contents, and to discuss them at a board. After that, the paper was placed in the hands of one of the Commissioners to prepare an answer. Upon the preparation of that answer, it was carefully examined and considered by the board, every member of which took it to his lodgings to suggest in pencil such alterations as appeared to him proper; and these were again considered and finally adopted or rejected, and the paper handed to the Secretary to be copied and recorded.

In the composition of the official notes sent by the American to the British Commissioners, the pen of Mr. Gallatin was, perhaps, most frequently employed; then that of Mr. Adams; then that of Mr. Clay. Messrs. Bayard and Russell wrote the least.

During the progress of the negotiation and at a very critical period of it, the official dispatches of the American Commissioners, giving a full account of the prospects of the negotiation, and expressing very little hope of its successful termination, having been published by the order of the American Government, came back to the Commissioners at Ghent in the newspapers. They arrived in the evening, just as the American Commissioners were dressed to go to a ball given to the Commissioners by the authorities of Ghent. The unexpected publication of these dispatches excited the surprise and regret of the American Commissioners. Some of them thought that a rupture of the negotiation would be the consequence. Mr. Clay, on account of his open and frank manner, was on terms of more unreserved and free intercourse with the British Commissioners than any of his colleagues, and he resolved that evening to sound the former as to the effect of this publication of the dispatches. He accordingly addressed himself to the three Commissioners severally in succession at the ball, beginning with Lord Gambier, who was the most distinguished for amenity and benevolence of character, and saying: "You perceive, my Lord, that our Government has published our dispatches, and that now the whole world knows what we are doing here." "Yes," replied his Lordship, "I have seen it with infinite surprise, and the proceeding is without example in the civilized world." To which Mr. Clay mildly rejoined: "Why, my Lord, you must recollect that, at the time of the publication of those dispatches, our Government had every reason to suppose, from

the nature of the pretensions and demands, which yours brought forward, that our negotiation would not terminate successfully, and that the publication would not find us here together. I am quite sure, that if our Government had anticipated the present favorable aspect of our deliberations, the publication of the dispatches would not have been ordered. Then, your Lordship must also recollect, that if, as you truly asserted, the publication of dispatches pending a negotiation is not according to the custom of European diplomacy, our Government itself is organized upon principles totally different from those on which European Governments are constituted. With us, the business in which we were here engaged, is the people's business. We are their servants, and they have a right to know how their business is going on. The publication, therefore, was to give the people information of what intimately affected them."

Lord Gambier did not appear to be satisfied with this explanation, although he was silenced by it. Mr. Clay had a similar interview with the two other British Commissioners; and their feelings, in consequence of the publication, were marked by the degree of excitability of their respective characters. But the fears which were entertained by some of the American Commissioners were not realized. The publication was never spoken of in conference, and the negotiation proceeded to a successful issue as if it had not happened.

Between the American Commissioners, in the conduct of the negotiation at Ghent, no serious difficulty arose, except on one point, and that related to the subject of the Fisheries and navigation of the Mississippi. By the third article of the definitive Treaty of peace with Great Britain concluded in September, 1783, certain rights of fishing, and of drying and curing fish within the limits of British jurisdiction, and upon British soil, were secured to the citizens of the United States. And by the eighth article of the same Treaty, it was stipulated that the right to the navigation of the River Mississippi, from its source to the Ocean, should remain for ever free and open to the subjects of Great Britain and the citizens of the United States. The same mutual right of navigation was recognized by Mr. Jay's treaty of 1794.

When the American Commissioners were in consultation as to the project of a treaty to be presented to the consideration of the British Commissioners, it was proposed that an article should be inserted renewing those rights of taking and curing and drying fish, and of the navigation of the Mississippi. To such a proposal, Mr. Clay was decidedly opposed, and Mr. Russell concurred with him. The other three Commissioners were for making the proposal. The argument on that question was long, earnest and ardent. Mr. Clay contended, that the right of catching fish in the open seas and bays, being incontestible, the privilege of taking them and curing and drying them within the exclusive jurisdiction of Great Britain was of little or no importance, especially as it was limited to the time that the British Territory should remain unsettled. With respect to the navigation of the Mississippi, he contended, that at the dates both of the definitive Treaty of peace of 1783, and of Mr. Jay's Treaty of 1794, Spain owned the whole of the right bank of the

Mississippi, in all its extent, and both banks of it from the Mexican Gulf up to the boundary of the United States. That at both those periods, it was supposed that the British Dominions touched on the Upper Mississippi, but it was now known that they did not border at all on that river. That now the whole Mississippi, from its uppermost source to the gulf, was incontestibly within the limits of the United States. He could not, therefore, conceive the propriety of stipulating with Great Britain for a mutual right to the navigation of that river. It was the largest river in the United States; so large as to have acquired the denomination of the Father of rivers. Why select it from among all the rivers of the United States, and subject it to a foreign vassalage? Why do that in respect to the Mississippi which would not be tolerated as respects the North River, the James, or the Potomac? What would Great Britain herself think if a proposal were made that the citizens of the United States and the subjects of Great Britain should have a mutual right to navigate the Thames? To make the proposed concession, was to admit of a British partnership with the United States in the sovereignty of the Mississippi, so far as its navigation was concerned. Then there might be a doubt and a dispute whether the concession did not comprehend the tributaries as well as the principal stream. If the grant of the right to navigate the Mississippi was to be regarded as an equivalent for the concession of the fishing privileges, Mr. Clay denied that there was any affinity between the two subjects. They were as distant in their nature as they were remote from each other in their localities.

On the other side, it was contended that it would occasion regret and dissatisfaction in the United States, if any of the fishing privileges, or other privileges, which had been enjoyed before the breaking out of the War, should not be secured by the treaty of peace. That those fishing privileges were very important and dear to a section of the Union, which had been adverse to the war. That the British right to the navigation of the Mississippi was a merely nominal concession, which would not result in any practical injury to the United States. That foreigners now enjoyed the right to navigate all the rivers up to the ports of entry established upon them, without any prejudice to our interests. That Great Britain had been entitled to this right of navigating the Mississippi from the period of the acquisition of Louisiana to the Declaration of War in 1812, without any mischief or inconvenience to the United States.

To all this, Mr. Clay replied that if we lost the fishing privileges within the exclusive jurisdiction, we gained the total exemption of the Mississippi from this foreign participation with us in the right to its navigation. That the uncertainty as to the extent of privileges which the British right to navigate the Mississippi comprised, far from recommending the concession to him, formed an additional objection to it. That the period of about eight years between the acquisition of Louisiana and the Declaration of War, was too short for us to ascertain by experience what practical use Great Britain was capable of making of that right of navigation, which might be injurious to us. We knew that a great many of the Indian Tribes were situated upon the



sources of the Mississippi. The British right to navigate that river might bring her in direct contact with them, and we had sufficient experience of the pernicious use she might make of those Indians.—He was as anxious as any of his colleagues to secure all the rights of fishing, and curing and drying fish, which had hitherto been enjoyed; but he could not consent to purchase of temporary and uncertain privileges within the British limits, *at the expense of putting a foreign and degrading mark upon the noblest of all our rivers.*

After the argument, which was extended to several sessions of the consultation meetings of the American Commissioners, was exhausted, it appeared that the same three Commissioners were inclined to make the proposal. In that stage of the proceeding, Mr. Clay said, he felt it due to his colleagues to state to them *that he would affix his signature to no Treaty which should make to Great Britain the contemplated concession.* After the announcement of this determination, Mr. Bayard united with Messrs. Clay and Russell, and then formed a majority against tendering the proposal—and it was not made.

But, at a subsequent period of the negotiation, when the British Commissioners made their propositions for a Treaty, one of the propositions was to renew the British right to navigate the Mississippi simply, without including the fishing privileges in question. On examining this proposal, the American Commissioners considered, first, whether they should accept the proposal with or without conditions. All united in agreeing that it ought not to be unconditionally accepted. But the same three Commissioners who had been originally in favor of an article which should include both the Mississippi and the fishing privileges within the British limits, appeared to be now in favor of accepting the British proposal, upon the condition that it should comprehend those fishing privileges. Mr. Clay did not renew the expression of his determination to sign no Treaty which should concede to the British the right to the navigation of the Mississippi, although he remained fixed in that purpose; for he apprehended that a repetition of the expression of his determination might be misconceived by his colleagues.

It was accordingly proposed to the British Commissioners to accept their proposal with the condition just stated. In a subsequent conference between the two commissions, the British declined accepting the proposed conditions, and it was mutually agreed to leave both subjects out of the Treaty. And thus, as Mr. Clay wished from the first, the Mississippi River became liberated from all British pretensions of a right to navigate it from the Ocean to its source.

A controversy having arisen between Messrs. Adams and Russell, about the year 1823, in respect to some points in the negotiations at Ghent, an embittered correspondence took place between those two gentlemen. In the course of it, Mr. Clay thought that Mr. Adams had unintentionally fallen into some errors, which Mr. Clay, in a note addressed to the public, stated he would at some future day correct. About the year 1823 or 1829, Mr. Russell, without the previous consent of Mr. Clay, published a confidential letter addressed by Mr. Clay to him, in which Mr. C. expresses his condem-

nation of Mr. Russell's course in the alteration of some of his letters, which had been charged and proved upon him by Mr. Adams. In that same letter, Mr. Clay gives his explanation of some of the transactions at Ghent, respecting which he thought Mr. Adams was mistaken. The publication of the confidential letter superseded the necessity of making the corrections which Mr. C. had intended. In this letter, Mr. Clay in no instance impugns the motives of Mr. Adams, nor does it contain a line from which an unfriendly state of feeling on the part of the writer toward Mr. Adams could be inferred.

Such was Mr. Clay's pride of country that he had resolved not to go to England until he had heard of the ratification of the Treaty of Ghent. After the termination of the negotiations he went to Paris, and accepted the invitation of Mr. Crawford, our Minister, to take apartments in his hotel. Mr. Clay remained in Paris during upward of two months. On the night of his arrival in that brilliant metropolis, he found at Mr. Crawford's an invitation to a ball given by the American banker, Mr. Hottinguer, on the occasion of the pacification between the United States and Great Britain. There he met for the first time the celebrated Madame de Stael—was introduced to her, and had with her a long and animated conversation.

"Ah!" said she, "Mr. Clay, I have been in England, and have been battling your cause for you there."—"I know it, Madame; we heard of your powerful interposition, and we are grateful and thankful for it."—"They were very much enraged against you," said she: "so much so, that they at one time thought seriously of sending the Duke of Wellington to command their Armies against you!"—"I am very sorry, Madame," replied Mr. Clay, "that they did not send his Grace."—"Why?" asked she, surprised.—"Because, Madame, if he had beaten us, we should only have been in the condition of Europe, without disgrace. But, if we had been so fortunate as to defeat him, we should have greatly added to the renown of our arms."

The next time he met Madame de Stael was at a party at her own house, which was attended by the Marshals of France, the Duke of Wellington, and other distinguished persons. She introduced Mr. Clay to the Duke, and at the same time related the above anecdote. He replied, with promptness and politeness, that if he had been sent on that service, and had been so fortunate as to have been successful over a foe as gallant as the Americans, he would have regarded it as the proudest feather in his cap.

During his stay in Paris, Mr. Clay heard of the issue of the Battle of New-Orleans. Now," said he to his informant, "I can go to England without mortification." But he expressed himself greatly mortified at the inglorious flight *attributed*, in the Dispatches of the American General, to a portion of the Kentucky Militia, which Mr. Clay pronounced must be a mistake.

Having heard of the ratification of the Treaty of Ghent, Mr. Clay left Paris for England in March, 1815, just before the arrival of Bonaparte in the French Capital. He thus missed the opportunity of seeing the Great Corsican. He would have remained in Paris for the purpose, had he supposed the Emperor would arrive so soon. It was about this time that Louis XVIII. left Paris, and took up



his residence in Ghent, near the Hotel which the American Commissioners had recently occupied.

On his arrival in England, before any of the other American Commissioners. Mr. Clay had an interview with Lord Castlereagh, who contracted for him a high esteem, which was frequently manifested during his sojourn in England. Lord C. offered to present him to the Prince Regent. Mr. Clay said he would go through the ceremony, if it were deemed necessary or respectful. Lord Castlereagh said that, having been recognized in his public character by the British Government, it was not necessary, and that he might omit it or not, as he pleased. Mr. Clay's repugnance to the parade of Courts prevented his presentation, and he never saw the Prince. He met, however, with most of the other members of the Royal Family.

A few days after his interview with Lord Castlereagh, the keeper of the house at which Mr. Clay lodged announced a person who wished to speak with him. Mr. Clay directed him to be admitted; and, on his entrance, he perceived an individual, dressed apparently in great splendor, come forward, whom he took to be a Peer of the Realm. He rose and asked his visitor to be seated, but the latter declined, and observed that he was the First Waiter of my Lord Castlereagh! "The First Waiter of my Lord Castlereagh!" exclaimed Mr. Clay, "well, what is your pleasure with me?"—"Why, if your Excellency pleases," said the man, "it is usual for a Foreign Minister, when presented to Lord Castlereagh, to make to his First Waiter a present, or pay him the customary stipend;" at the same time handing to Mr. Clay a long list of names of Foreign Ministers, with the sum which every one had paid affixed to his name.

Mr. Clay, thinking it a vile extortion, took the paper, and, while reading it, thought how he should repel so exceptionable a demand. He returned it to the servant, telling him that, as it was the custom of the country, he presumed it was all right—but that he was not the Minister to England; Mr. Adams was the Minister, and was duly expected from Paris, and, he had no doubt, would do whatever was right. "But," said the servant, very promptly, "if your Excellency pleases, it makes no difference whether the Minister presented be the Resident Minister or a Special Minister, as I understand your Excellency to be;—it is always paid." Mr. Clay, who had come to England to argue with the master, finding himself in danger of being beaten in argument by the man, concluded it was best to conform to the usage, objectionable as he thought it; and, looking over the paper for the smallest sum paid by any other Minister, handed the fellow five guineas and dismissed him.

Mr. Clay was in London when the Battle of Waterloo was fought, and witnessed the illuminations, bonfires and rejoicings to which it gave rise. For a day or two, it was a matter of great uncertainty what had become of Napoleon. During this interval of anxious suspense, Mr. Clay dined at Lord Castlereagh's with the American Ministers, Messrs. Adams and Gallatin, and the British Ministry. Bonaparte's flight and probable place of refuge became the topics of conversation. Among other conjectures, it was suggested that he might have gone to the United States; and Lord Liverpool, ad-

ressing Mr. Clay, asked:—"If he goes there, will he not give you a good deal of trouble?"—"Not the least, my Lord," replied Mr. Clay, with his habitual promptitude—"we shall be very glad to receive him; we would treat him with all hospitality, and very soon make of him a good Democrat."

The reply produced a very hearty peal of laughter from the whole company.

Mr. Clay was received in the British circles, both of the Ministry and the Opposition, with the most friendly consideration. The late Sir James Mackintosh was one of his first acquaintances in London;—and of the lamented Sir Samuel Romilly and his beautiful and accomplished lady, Mr. Clay has been heard to remark, that they presented one of the most beautiful examples of a happy man and wife that he had ever seen. He passed a most agreeable week with his Ghent friend, Lord Gambier, at Iver Grove, near Windsor Castle. Of this pious and excellent nobleman, Mr. Clay has ever retained a lively and friendly recollection. He visited with him Windsor Castle, Frogmore Lodge, the residence of the descendant of William Penn, and saw the wife of George III. and some of the daughters.

In September, 1815, Mr. Clay returned to his own country, arriving in New York, which port he had left in March, 1814. A Public Dinner was given to him and Mr. Gallatin, soon after their disembarkation. Every where, on his route home and to his adopted State, he was received with continual demonstrations of public gratitude and approbation. In Kentucky he was hailed with every token of affection and respect. The Board of Trustees of Lexington waited upon him and presented their thanks for his eminent services in behalf of his country.

On the seventh of October, the citizens of the same town gave him a public dinner. In reply to a toast complimentary to the American negotiators, he made some brief and eloquent remarks concerning the circumstances under which the Treaty had been concluded, and the general condition of the country, both at the commencement and the close of the war. At the same festival, in reply to a toast highly complimentary to himself, he thanked the company for their kind and affectionate attention. His reception, he said, had been more like that of a brother than a common friend or acquaintance, and he was utterly incapable of finding words to express his gratitude. He compared his situation to that of a Swedish gentleman, at a festival in England, given by the Society for the Relief of Foreigners in Distress. A toast having been given, complimentary to his country, it was expected that he should address the company in reply. Not understanding the English language, he was greatly embarrassed, and said to the Chairman: "Sir, I wish you, and this Society, to consider me a *Foreigner in Distress*." "So," said Mr. Clay, evidently much affected, "I wish you to consider me a *friend in distress*."

In anticipation of his return home, Mr. Clay had been unanimously re-elected a Member of Congress from the District he formerly represented. Doubts arising as to the legality of this election, a new one was ordered, and the result was the same.

On the fourth of December, 1815, the Fourteenth Congress met, in its first session. Mr. Clay was again elected Speaker of the House of Representa-

tives, almost unanimously—receiving, upon the first balloting, eighty-seven out of one hundred and twenty-two votes cast—thirteen being the highest number given for any one of the five opposing candidates. He was, at this time, just recovering from a serious indisposition, but accepted the office in a brief and appropriate speech, acknowledging the honor conferred upon him, and pledging his best efforts for the proper discharge of its duties.

Among the important subjects which came up, that of the new Treaty was, of course, among the foremost. John Randolph and the Federalists, after having resisted the War, now took frequent occasion to sneer at the mode of its termination. On the 29th of January, 1816, Mr. Clay addressed the Committee of the House most eloquently in reply to these cavilers.

"I gave a vote," said he, "for the Declaration of War. I exerted all the little influence and talents I could command to make the War. The War was made. It is terminated. And I declare with perfect sincerity, if it had been permitted to me to lift the veil of futurity, and to have foreseen the precise series of events which has occurred, my vote would have been unchanged. We had been insulted, and outraged, and spoliated upon by almost all Europe—by Great Britain, by France, by Spain, Denmark, Naples, and, to cap the climax, by the little contemptible power of Algiers. We had submitted too long and too much. We had become the scorn of foreign powers, and the derision of our own citizens."

It had been objected by the Opposition that no provision had been made in the Treaty in regard to the impressment of our seamen by the British. On this subject, Mr. Clay said—and his argument is as conclusive as it is lofty:—"One of the great causes of the War and of its continuance was the practice of impressment exercised by Great Britain—and if this claim had been admitted by necessary implication or express stipulation, the rights of our seamen would have been abandoned! It is with utter astonishment that I hear it has been contended in this country that, because our right of exemption from the practice had not been expressly secured in the Treaty, it was, therefore, given up! It is impossible that such an argument can be advanced on this floor. No Member, who regarded his reputation, would venture to advance such a doctrine!"

In conclusion, Mr. Clay declared, on this occasion that his policy, in regard to the attitude in which the country should now be placed, was to preserve the present force, naval and military—to provide for the augmentation of the Navy—to fortify the weak and vulnerable points indicated by experience—to construct Military roads and canals—and, in short, "TO COMMERCE THE GREAT WORK OF INTERNAL IMPROVEMENT."

"I would see," he said, "a chain of turnpike roads and canals from Passamaquoddy to New-Orleans; and other similar roads intersecting mountains, to facilitate intercourse between all parts of the country, and to bind and connect us together. I would also EFFECTUALLY PROTECT OUR MANUFACTORIES. I would afford them protection, not so much for the sake of the Manufacturers themselves as for the general interest."

It was in this patriotic spirit, and impelled by this far-sighted, liberal, and truly American policy, that

Mr. Clay resumed his legislative labors in the National Councils. He has lived to carry out those truly great and Statesman-like measures of Protection and Internal Improvement, which even then began to gather shape and power in a mind ever active in the cause of his country. May he live to receive a testimonial of that country's gratitude and admiration in the bestowal upon him of the highest honor in her gift!

## CHAPTER V.

Re-charter of the United States Bank—Mr. Clay's views in 1811, and 1816—Scene in the House with Randolph—The compensation Bill—Canvasses his District—Skirmish with Mr. Puff—The Old Hunter and his Rifle—The Irish Barber—Repeat of the Compensation Bill—South American Independence—Internal Improvements—Mr. Clay's Relations with Mr. Madison—Intention of Madison at one time to appoint him Commander-in-Chief of the Army—Election of James Monroe—Mr. Clay carries his Measures in behalf of the South American States—His Eloquent Appeals—His Efforts Successful—His Speeches Read at the Head of the South American Armies—Letter from Bolivar—and Clay's Reply.

The financial condition of the United States at the close of the War was extremely depressed. The currency was deranged—public credit impaired—and a heavy debt impending. In his message, at the opening of the Session of 1815-16, President Madison stated the condition of public affairs, and indicated the establishment of a National Bank and of a Protective Tariff as the two great measures of relief.

On the eighth of January, 1816, Mr. Calhoun from the committee on that part of the President's Message, relating to the Currency, reported a bill to incorporate the subscribers to a Bank of the United States.

It will be remembered that Mr. Clay in 1811, while a member of the Senate, had opposed the re-chartering of the old Bank. His reasons for now advocating the bill before the House have been fully and freely communicated to the public.

When the application was made to renew the old charter of the Bank of the United States, such an institution did not appear to him to be so necessary to the fulfilment of any of the objects specifically enumerated in the Constitution as to justify Congress in assuming, by construction, power to establish it. It was supported mainly upon the ground that it was indispensable to the treasury operations. But the local institutions in the several States were at that time in prosperous existence, confided in by the community, having confidence in one another, and maintaining an intercourse and connection the most intimate. Many of them were actually employed by the Treasury to aid that department in a part of its fiscal arrangements; and they appeared to him to be fully capable of affording to it all the facility that it ought to desire in all of them. They superseded in his judgment the necessity of a National Institution.

But how stood the case in 1816, when he was called upon again to examine the power of the General Government to incorporate a National Bank? A total change of circumstances was presented. Events of the utmost magnitude had intervened. A suspension of specie payments had taken place. The currency of the country was completely vitiated. The Government issued paper bearing an interest of six per cent, which it pledged the faith of the country to redeem. For this paper, guaranteed by the honor and faith of the Government, there was obtained for ev-



ery one hundred dollars, eighty dollars from those banks which suspended specie payments. The experience of the War therefore showed the necessity of a Bank. The country could not get along without it. Mr. Clay had then changed his opinion on the subject, and he had never attempted to disguise the fact. In his position as Speaker of the House, he might have locked up his opinion in his own breast. But with that candor and fearlessness which have ever distinguished him, he had come forward, as honest men ought to come forward, and expressed his change of opinion, at the time when President Madison and other eminent men changed their course in relation to the Bank.

The Constitution confers on Congress the power to coin Money and to regulate the value of Foreign Coins: and the States are prohibited to coin money, to emit bills of credit, or to make any thing but gold or silver coin a tender in payment of debts. The plain inference was, that the subject of the general currency was intended to be submitted exclusively to the General Government. In point of fact, however, the regulation of the General Currency was in the hands of the State Governments, or, what was the same thing, of the Banks created by them. Their paper had every quality of money, except that of being made a tender, and even this was imparted to it, by some States, in the law by which a creditor must receive it, or submit to a ruinous suspension of the payment of his debt.

It was incumbent upon Congress to recover the control which it had lost over the General Currency. The remedy called for was one of caution and moderation, but of firmness. Whether a remedy, directly acting upon the Banks and their paper thrown into circulation, was in the power of the General Government or not, neither Congress nor the community were prepared for the application of such a remedy.

An indirect remedy of a milder character seemed to be furnished by a National Bank. Going into operation with the powerful aid of the Treasury of the United States, Mr. Clay believed it would be highly instrumental in the renewal of specie payments. Coupled with the other measure adopted by Congress for that object, he believed the remedy effectual. The local Banks must follow the example, which the National Bank would set them, of redeeming their notes by the payment of specie, or their notes would be discredited and put down.

If the Constitution, then, warranted the establishment of a Bank, other considerations, besides those already mentioned, strongly urged it. The want of a general medium was everywhere felt. Exchange varied continually, not only between different parts of the Union, but between different parts of the same City. If the paper of a National Bank were not redeemed in specie, it would be much better than the current paper, since though its value, in comparison with specie, might fluctuate, it would afford an uniform standard.

During this discussion of 1816, on the Bank Charter, a collision arose between Messrs. Clay and Randolph, which produced great sensation for the moment, and which it was apprehended might lead to serious consequences. Although Mr. Clay had changed his own opinion in regard to a Bank, he did not feel authorized to seek, in private inter-

course, to influence that of others, and observed a silence and reserve not usual to him, on the subject. Mr. Randolph commented on this fact, and used language, which might bear an offensive interpretation. When he was done, Mr. Clay rose with perfect coolness, but evidently with a firm determination, and adverting to the offensive language, observed that it required explanation, and that he should forbear saying what it became him to say until he heard the explanation, if any, which the Member from Virginia had to make. He sat down. Mr. Randolph rose and made an explanation. Mr. Clay again rose, and said that the explanation was not satisfactory. Whereupon Mr. R. again got up and disclaimed expressly all intentional offence.

During the transaction of this scene, the most intense anxiety and the most perfect stillness pervaded the House. You might have heard a pin fall in any part of it.

The bill to re-charter the Bank was discussed for several weeks in the House. The vote was taken, on its third reading, on the 14th of March, 1816, when it was passed: 80 Ayes to 71 Nays: and sent to the Senate for concurrence. On the 2d of April, after the bill reported by the Financial Committee had received a full and thorough discussion, it was finally passed in that body by a vote of 22 to 12—two Members only being absent. The amendments of the Senate were speedily adopted by the House, and on the 10th of April the bill became a law, by the signature of the President. The wisdom of the supporters of the measure was soon made manifest in the fact, that the Institution more than realized the most sanguine hopes of its friends. During the period of its existence the United States enjoyed a currency of unexampled purity and uniformity; and the bills of the Bank were as acceptable as silver in every quarter of the Globe. In another part of this memoir will be found an outline of such a Fiscal Institution as Mr. Clay would be in favor of, *whenever a majority of the people of the United States might demand the establishment of a National Bank.*

On the 6th of March, 1816, Col. Richard M. Johnson, from a Committee appointed for the purpose, reported a bill changing the mode of compensation to Members of Congress. The pay of Members at that time was six dollars a day—an amount which, from its inadequacy, threatened to place the legislation of the country in the hands of the wealthy. The new bill gave Members a salary of fifteen hundred dollars a year—to the presiding officer twice that amount. It passed both houses without opposition. Mr. Clay preferred the increase of the daily compensation to the institution of a salary, but the majority were against him, and he acquiesced in their decision.

He never canvassed for a seat in the House of Representatives but on one occasion, and that was after the passage of this unpalatable bill. It produced very great dissatisfaction throughout the United States, and extended to the district which he represented. Mr. Pope, a gentleman of great abilities, was his competitor. They had several skirmishes at popular meetings, with various success; but having agreed upon a general action, they met at Higbie, a central place and convenient of access to the three counties composing the district. A vast

multitude assembled; and the rival candidates occupied in their addresses the greater part of the day.

Instead of confining himself to a defence of the Compensation Bill, which he never heartily approved in the form of an annual salary to Members of Congress, Mr. Clay carried the war into the enemy's country. He attacked Mr. Pope's vote against the Declaration of War with Great Britain, dwelt on the wrongs and injuries which that power had inflicted on the United States, pointed out his inconsistency in opposing the War upon the ground of a want of preparation to prosecute it, and yet having been willing to declare War against both France and Great Britain. Thus he put his competitor on the defensive. The effect of the discussion was powerful and triumphant on the side of Mr. Clay. From that day his success was no longer doubtful, and, accordingly, at the election which shortly after ensued, he was chosen by a majority of six or seven hundred votes.

During the canvass, Mr. Clay encountered an old hunter, who had always before been his warm friend, but was now opposed to his election on account of the Compensation Bill. "Have you a good rifle, my friend?" asked Mr. Clay. "Yes." "Does it ever flash?" "Once only," he replied. "What did you do with it—throw it away?" "No, I picked the flint, tried it again, and brought down the game." "Have I ever flashed but upon the Compensation Bill?" "No." "Will you throw me away?" "No, no!" exclaimed the hunter, with enthusiasm, nearly overpowered by his feelings: "I will pick the flint, and try you again!" He was afterward a warm supporter of Mr. Clay.

This anecdote reminds us of another, which is illustrative of that trait of boldness and self-possession, in the manifestation of which Mr. Clay has never been known to fail during his public career. At the time that he was a candidate for election to the Legislature of Kentucky in 1803, while passing a few weeks at the Olympian Springs, a number of huntsmen, old and young, assembled to hear him make a "stump speech." When he had finished, one of the audience, an ancient Nimrod, who had stood leaning upon his rifle for some time, regarding the young orator with keen attention, commenced a conversation with him.

"Young man," said he, "you want to go to the Legislature, I see?"

"Why, yes," replied Mr. Clay, "since I have consented to be a candidate, I would prefer not to be defeated."

"Are you a good shot?"

"Try me."

"Very well; I would like to see a specimen of your qualifications for the Legislature. Come: we must see you shoot."

"But I have no rifle here."

"No matter: here is old Bess; and she never fails in the hands of a marksman; she has often sent death through a squirrel's head at one hundred yards, and daylight through many a red-skin twice that distance; if you can shoot with any gun, you can shoot with old Bess."

"Well, well: put up your mark, put up your mark," said Mr. Clay.

The target was placed at the distance of about eighty yards, when, with all the coolness and stead-

iness of an experienced marksman, he lifted "old Bess" to his shoulder, fired, and pierced the very centre of the target.

"Oh, a chance shot! a chance shot!" exclaimed several of his political opponents. "He might shoot all day, and not hit the mark again. Let him try it over—let him try it over."

"No; beat that and then I will," retorted Mr. Clay. But as no one seemed disposed to make the attempt, it was considered that he had given satisfactory proof of his superiority as a marksman; and this felicitous accident gained him the vote of every hunter in the assembly. The most remarkable feature in the transaction remains to be told. "I had never," said Mr. Clay, "fired a rifle before, and never have since." It is needless to add that the election resulted in his favor.

An Irish barber, residing in Lexington, had supported Mr. Clay with great zeal at all elections, when he was a candidate, prior to the passage of the Compensation Bill. The fellow's unrestrained passions had frequently involved him in scrapes and difficulties, on which occasions Mr. Clay generally defended him and got him out of them. During the canvass, after the Compensation Bill, the barber was very reserved, took no part in the election, and seemed indifferent to its fate. He was often importuned to state for whom he meant to vote, but declined. At length, a few days before the election, he was addressed by Dr. W—, a gentleman for whom he entertained the highest respect, and pressed to say to whom he meant to give his suffrage. Looking at the inquirer with great earnestness and shrewdness, he said: "I tell you what, doethur, I mane to vote for the man that can put 'but one hand into the Treasury." Mr. Pope had the misfortune to lose, in early life, one of his arms, and here lay the point of the Irishman's reply.

It is due to the memory of Jeremiah Murphy, the barber, to state that he repented of his ingratitude to Mr. Clay, whom he met one day in the streets of Lexington, and, accosting him, burst into tears, and told him that he had wronged him; and that his poor wife had got round him, crying and reproaching him for his conduct, saying: "Do n't you remember, Jerry, when you were in jail, Mr. Clay came to you, and made that beast, William B—, 'the jailor, let you out?"

Having found that the sentiments of his constituents were decidedly opposed to the Compensation Bill, Mr. Clay, at the ensuing session, voted for its repeal. A daily allowance of eight dollars to every Member was substituted for the salary of fifteen hundred dollars.

During the month of February, a bill was introduced, setting apart and pledging as a fund for Internal Improvement the bonus of the United States' share of the dividends of the National Bank. As may be presumed, this measure received the hearty support of Mr. Clay. Without entering at length into a discussion of the subject, he expressed a wish only to say that "He had long thought there were no two subjects which could engage the attention of the National Legislature, more worthy of its deliberate consideration than those of Internal Improvements and Domestic Manufactures." For Constitutional reasons, President Madison withheld



his signature from this bill, much to the surprise of his friends.

During the administration of Mr. Madison, Mr. Clay was, on two separate occasions, offered a seat in his Cabinet, or the Mission to Russia, by that distinguished Chief Magistrate. He declined them both. Mr. Madison appears to have had the highest estimate of his talents and worth. Indeed, so impressed was he with the eminent and versatile abilities of Mr. Clay, that he had selected him, at the commencement of the War, to be *Commander in Chief of the Army*. The nomination was not made, solely because Mr. Clay could not be spared from Congress, where his powerful mind and paramount influence enabled him to render services superior to any that could have been rendered in any other position.

On the fourth of March, 1817, James Monroe took the oath prescribed by the Constitution, and entered upon the duties of the Presidency of the United States. The first session of the Fifteenth Congress commenced the ensuing December. Mr. Clay was again chosen Speaker.

It would be impossible in the brief space we have allotted to ourselves to present even a brief abstract of his remarks upon the many important topics which now claimed the attention of Congress. We must content ourselves with a succinct account of the leading measures with which his name and his fame have become identified.

In his speech on the state of the Union in January, 1816, he had expressed his sympathies in behalf of the South American Colonists, who were then struggling to throw off the yoke of the Mother Country. The Supreme Congress of the Mexican Republic afterwards voted him their thanks "for the disinterested, manly and generous sentiments he expressed on the floor of the House for the welfare of the Infant Republic."

In the debate on the proposition to reduce the Direct Taxation of the Country, he had alluded to the existing peaceful condition of the United States, and had hinted the possibility of hostilities with Spain. He had heard that the Minister of that Nation had demanded the surrender of a portion of our soil—that part of Florida lying west of the Perdido. Without speaking of it as it deserved—of the impudence of such a demand—he alluded to it as indicative of the disposition of the Spanish Government. "Besides," said he, "who can tell with certainty how far it may be proper to aid the people of South America in the establishment of their Independence?" The subject, he avowed, had made a deep impression on his mind; and he was not in favor of exhausting, by direct taxes, the country of those funds which might be needed to vindicate its rights at home, or, if necessary, to aid the cause of Liberty in South America.

These remarks aroused all the spleen of Mr. Randolph. "As for South America," said he, in his reply to Mr. Clay, "I am not going a-tilting for the liberties of her People; they came not to our aid; let us mind our own business, and not tax our People for the liberties of the People of Spanish America." He went on to ridicule the notion that the People of Caracas and Mexico were capable either of enjoying or of understanding liberty—and insinuated that Mr. Clay was influenced by a desire of

conquest. "The honorable gentleman," he said "had been sent on a late occasion to Europe; he had been near the field of Waterloo, and, he feared, had snuffed the carnage and caught the infection." "What!" said he, "increase our Standing Army in time of peace, on the suggestion that we are to go on a crusade to South America?" Mr. Clay intimated that he had advocated no such measure.—"Do I not understand the gentleman?" said Mr. Randolph; "I am sorry I do not; I labor under two great misfortunes—one is that I can never understand the honorable Speaker—the other is that he can never understand me: on such terms, an argument can never be maintained between us, and I shall, therefore, put an end to it." Mr. Clay simply expressed his surprise that he could so have misunderstood his remarks, and deferred the general argument to another occasion.

Soon after, on a proposition to "prevent our citizens from selling vessels of war to a foreign power," Mr. Clay opposed the bill, on account of its evident bearing upon the question of South American Independence; it would every where be understood as a law framed expressly to prevent the offer of the slightest aid to these Republics by our citizens.—"With respect to the nature of their struggle," he said, "I have not now, for the first time, to express my opinion and wishes. I wish them Independence. It is the first step towards improving their condition."

During the summer of 1816, the President had appointed Messrs. Rodney, Graham and Bland, Commissioners to proceed to South America, to ascertain the condition of the country. In March, 1818, the Appropriation Bill being before the House, Mr. Clay objected to the clause appropriating \$30,000 for their compensation, as unconstitutional. He then offered an amendment, appropriating eighteen thousand dollars as the outfit and one year's salary of a Minister, to be deputed from the United States to the Independent Provinces of the River La Plata, in South America. The amendment was lost; but Mr. Clay's speech in support of it was one of his most memorable efforts. Both Congress and the President were opposed to any recognition of the Independence of the South American Colonists. In rising to promulgate views hostile to theirs, Mr. Clay said that, much as he valued those friends, in and out of the House, from whom he differed, he could not hesitate when reduced to the distressing alternative of conforming his judgment to theirs, or pursuing the deliberate and matured dictates of his own mind.

He maintained that an oppressed People were authorized, whenever they could, to rise and break their fetters. This was the great principle of the English Revolution. It was the great principle of our own. Vattel, if authority were wanting, expressly supports this right.

Mr. Clay said he was no propagandist. He would not seek to force upon other nations our principles and our liberty, if they did not want them. He would not disturb the repose even of a detestable despotism. But, if an abused and oppressed People willed their freedom; if they sought to establish it; if, in truth, they had established it, we had a right, as a sovereign power, to notice the fact, and to act as circumstances and our interest required.



The Opposition had argued that the People of Spanish America were too ignorant and superstitious to appreciate and conduct an independent and free system of Government. We believe it is Macaulay, who says of this plea of ignorance as an argument against emancipation, that with just as much propriety might you argue against a person's going into the water until he knew how to swim.—Mr. Clay denied the alleged fact of the ignorance of the Colonists.

With regard to their superstition, he said: "They worshipped the same God with us. Their prayers were offered up in their temples to the same Redeemer, whose intercession we expected to save us. *Nor was there anything in the Catholic religion unfavorable to freedom.* All religions united with government were more or less inimical to liberty. All separated from government were compatible with liberty."

Having shown that the cause of the South American patriots was just, Mr. Clay proceeded to inquire what course of policy it became us to adopt. He maintained that a recognition of their independence was compatible with perfect neutrality and with the most pacific relations toward old Spain. Recognition alone, without aid, was no just cause of war. With aid, it was; not because of the recognition, but because of the aid, as aid, without recognition, was cause of war.

After demonstrating that the United States were bound, on their own principles, to acknowledge the Independence of the United Provinces of the river Plate, he alluded to the improbability that any of the European Monarchies would set the example of recognition. "Are we not bound," he asked, "upon our own principles, to acknowledge this new republic? If WE do not, *who will?*"

The simple words, "*who will?*" are said, by an intelligent observer, who was present, to have been uttered in a tone of such thrilling pathos as to stir the deepest sensibilities of the audience. It is by such apparently simple appeals that Mr. Clay, with the aid of his exquisitely modulated voice, often produces the most powerful and lasting effects.

We shall not attempt to present a summary of this magnificent address. "No abstract," says one who heard it, "can furnish an adequate idea of a speech, which, as an example of argumentative oratory, may be safely tried by the test of the most approved models of any age or country. Rich in all the learning connected with the subject; methodized in an order which kept that subject constantly before the hearer, and enabled the meanest capacity to follow the speaker without effort, through a long series of topics, principal and subsidiary; at once breathing sentiments of generous philanthropy and teaching lessons of wisdom; presenting a variety of illustrations which strengthened the doctrines that they embellished; and uttering prophecies, on which, though rejected by the infidelity of the day, time has stamped the seal of truth: this speech will descend to the latest posterity and remain embalmed in the praises of mankind, long after the tumults of military ambition and the plots of political profligacy have passed into oblivion."

After repeated efforts and repeated failures to carry his generous measures in behalf of South American Liberty, Mr. Clay, on the tenth of February

1821, submitted for consideration a resolution declaring that the House of Representatives participated with the people of the United States, in the deep interest which they felt for the success of the Spanish Provinces of South America, which were struggling to establish their liberty and independence; and that it would give its constitutional support to the President of the United States, whenever he might deem it expedient to recognize the sovereignty and independence of those Provinces.

On this resolution, a debate of nearly four hours ensued, in which Mr. Clay sustained the principal part. Only twelve Members voted against the first clause of it; and on the second, the votes were eighty-seven for, and sixty-eight against it. The question was then taken on the resolution as a whole, and carried in the affirmative; and Mr. Clay immediately moved that a Committee of two Members should be appointed, to present it to President Monroe. Although such a course was not very usual, a Committee was accordingly ordered, and Mr. Clay was appointed its Chairman. It was a great triumph. He had been long and ardently engaged in the cause, and, during a greater part of the time, opposed by the whole weight of Mr. Monroe's administration. And when he was appointed Chairman of the Committee, to present the resolution, Mr. Monroe's friends regarded it as a personal insult, and Mr. Nelson, of Virginia, one of the warmest of them, retired from the Capitol, after the adjournment of the House, denouncing the act in the loudest tones of his remarkable voice, on his way down the Pennsylvania Avenue, as an unprecedented indignity to the Chief Magistrate.

On the 8th day of March, 1822, the President sent a Message to the House of Representatives, recommending the recognition of South American Independence. The recommendation was referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations, which, on the 19th of the same month, reported in favor of the recommendation, and of an appropriation to carry it into effect. The vote of recognition was finally passed on the 23th, with but a single dissenting voice.

Such is a brief sketch of Mr. Clay's magnanimous efforts in behalf of South American Independence. His zeal in the cause was unalloyed by one selfish impulse or one personal aim. He could hope to gain no political capital by his course. He appealed to no sectional interest; sustained no party policy; labored for no wealthy client; secured the influence of no man, or set of men, in his championship of a remote, unfriended and powerless people. Congress and the President were vehemently opposed to his proposition. But in the face of discomfort, he persevered till he succeeded in making converts of his opponents, and in effecting the triumph of his measure. Almost single-handed, he sustained it through discouragement and hostility, till it was crowned with success.

The effect of his spirit-stirring appeals in cheering the patriots of South America, was most gratifying and decided. His memorable plea of March, 1818, was, as one of his most embittered adversaries has told us, read at the head of the South American Armies, to exalt their enthusiasm in battle, and quicken the consummation of their triumphs.

The following letter from Bolivar, with Mr. Clay's reply, belongs to this period of his history:

BOGOTA, 21st November, 1827.

"SIR: I cannot omit availing myself of the opportunity offered me by the departure of Col. Watts, Chargé d'Affaires of the United States, of taking the liberty of addressing your Excellency. This desire has long been entertained by me for the purpose of expressing my admiration of your Excellency's brilliant talents and ardent love of liberty. All America, Columbia, and myself owe your Excellency our purest gratitude for the incomparable services you have rendered to us, by sustaining our course with a sublime enthusiasm. Accept, therefore, this sincere and cordial testimony, which I hasten to offer to your excellency, and to the Government of the United States, who have so greatly contributed to the emancipation of your Southern brethren.

"I have the honor to offer to your Excellency my distinguished consideration.

"Your Excellency's obedient servant,  
"BOLIVAR."

The following is a characteristic extract from Mr. Clay's Reply:

"WASHINGTON, 27th October, 1828.

"SIR: It is very gratifying to me to be assured directly by your Excellency, that the course which the Government of the United States took on this memorable occasion, and my humble efforts, have excited the gratitude and commanded the approbation of your Excellency. I am persuaded that I do not misinterpret the feelings of the people of the United States, as I certainly express my own, in saying, that the interest which was inspired in this country by the arduous struggles of South America, *arose principally from the hope, that, along with its Independence, would be established Free Institutions, insuring all the blessings of Civil Liberty. To the accomplishment of that object we still anxiously look.* We are aware that great difficulties oppose it, among which, not the least, is that which arises out of the existence of a large military force, raised for the purpose of resisting the power of Spain. Standing armies, organized with the most patriotic intentions, are dangerous instruments.—They devour the substance, debase the morals, and too often destroy the liberties of the people, nothing can be more perilous or unwise than to retain them after the necessity has ceased, which led to their formation, especially if their numbers are disproportionate to the revenues of the State.

"But, notwithstanding all these difficulties, we had fondly cherished, and still indulge the hope, that South America would add a new triumph to the cause of Human Liberty; and, that Providence would bless her, as He had her Northern sister, with the genius of some great and virtuous man, to conduct her securely through all her trials. We had even flattered ourselves, that we beheld that genius in your excellency. But I should be unworthy of the consideration with which your Excellency honors me, and deviate from the frankness which I have ever endeavored to practice, if I did not, on this occasion, state, that ambitious designs have been attributed by your enemies to your Excellency which have created in my mind great solicitude. They have cited late events in Colombia as proofs of these designs. But slow in the withdrawal of confidence, which I have once given, I have been most unwilling to credit the unfavorable accounts which have from time to time reached me. I cannot allow myself to believe, that your Excellency will abandon the bright and glorious path which lies plainly before you, for the bloody road passing over the liberties of the human race, on which the vulgar crowds of tyrants and military despots have so often trodden. I will not doubt, that your Excellency will, in due time, render a satisfactory explanation to Colombia and the world, of the parts of your public conduct which have excited any distrust; and that, preferring the true

glory of our immortal Washington to the ignoble fame of the destroyers of Liberty, you have formed the patriotic resolution of ultimately placing the freedom of Colombia upon a firm and sure foundation. That your efforts to that end may be crowned with complete success, I most fervently pray.

"I request that your Excellency will accept assurances of my sincere wishes for your happiness and prosperity.  
H. CLAY."

The disinterestedness of Mr. Clay's motives, in his course toward the South American Republics, was forcibly displayed in his frank and open appeal to Bolivar. Had his object been to acquire influence and popularity among the people of those countries, he would hardly have addressed such plain reproaches and unpalatable truths to a Chief who was all powerful with them at the time. But in a cause where the freedom of any portion of mankind was implicated, Mr. Clay was never known to hesitate, to reckon his own interests, or to weigh the consequences to himself from an avowal of his own opinions. On all subjects, indeed, he is far above disguise; and though he may sometimes incur the charge of indiscretion by his uncalculating candor and fearless transparency of sentiment, the trait is one which claims for him our affection and confidence. Independent in his opinions as in his actions, no suggestion of self-interest could ever interpose an obstacle to the bold and magnanimous utterance of the former, or to the conscientious discharge of the latter.

## CHAPTER VI.

*Internal Improvement—Mr. Monroe's Constitutional Objections—Mr. Clay replies to them—Congress adopts his Principles—The Cumberland Road—Anecdote—Menture—Discussion of General Jackson's conduct in the Seminole Campaign—Mr. Clay's Opinions of that Chief in 1819—A Prophetic Glimpse—Mr. Adams and General Jackson—The Father of the American System—Bill to regulate Duties, &c.—Mr. Clay's Speech in behalf of the Protective Policy—His Great Speech of 1824—Passage of the Tariff Bill—Results of his Policy—Value of the Country—His unremitting Exertions—Randolph's Sarcastic Anecdote.*

WE have seen that from an early period Mr. Clay was an advocate of the doctrine of Internal Improvement. His Speech in Congress in 1806 had been in vindication of the policy authorizing the erection of a bridge across the Potomac River. In the passages we have quoted from his Speech of January, 1816, he declared himself in favor not only of a system of Internal Improvement, but of Protection to our Manufactures.

It will be remembered that the bill appropriating for purposes of Internal Improvement the bonus which was to be paid by the Bank of the United States to the General Government, after having been passed by Congress, had been returned by President Madison without his signature, in consequence of Constitutional objections to the bill. Mr. Clay had been much surprised at this act; for Mr. Madison, in one of his Messages, had said:—"I particularly invite again the attention of Congress to the expediency of exercising their existing powers, and, where necessary, of resorting to the prescribed mode of enlarging them, in order to effectuate a comprehensive system of Roads and Canals, such as will have the effect of drawing more closely together every part of our Country, by promoting intercourse and improvements, and



'by increasing the share of every part in the common stock of national prosperity.'

Mr. Monroe, in anticipation of the action of Congress, had expressed an opinion in his Message opposed to the right of Congress to establish a system of International Improvement. Mr. Jefferson's authority was also cited to show that, under the Constitution, Roads and Canals could not be constructed by the General Government without the consent of the State or States through which they were to pass. Thus three successive Presidents had opposed the proposition.

Against this weight of precedent, Mr. Clay undertook to persuade Congress of their power under the Constitution to appropriate money for the construction of Military Roads, Post Roads and Canals. A Resolution, embodying a clause to this effect, came before the House in March, 1818; and he lent to it his unremitting advocacy.

In regard to the Constitutionality of the proposed measure, he contended that the power to *construct Post Roads* is expressly granted in the power to *ESTABLISH Post Roads*. With respect to Military Roads, the concession that they might be made when called for by the emergency, was admitting that the Constitution conveyed the power. "And 'we may safely appeal,'" said Mr. Clay, "to the judgment of the candid and enlightened to decide 'between the wisdom of those two constructions, 'of which one requires you to wait for the exercise 'of your power until the arrival of an emergency 'which may not allow you to exert it; and the 'other, without denying you the power, if you can 'exercise it during the emergency, claims the right 'of providing beforehand against the emergency.'

Mr. Clay's motion, recognizing in Congress the Constitutional power to make appropriations for Internal Improvements, was finally carried by a vote of 90 to 75. The victory was a most signal one, obtained, as it was, over the transmitted prejudices of two previous Administrations, and the active opposition of the one in power.

From that period to his final retirement from the Senate he was the ever-vigilant and persevering advocate of Internal Improvements. He was the father of the System, and has ever been its most efficient upholder. On the 16th of January, 1821, he addressed the House upon a bill authorizing the President to effect certain surveys and estimates of Roads and Canals.

The opponents of the system, including President Monroe, had claimed that, in respect to post-roads, the General Government had no other authority than to use such as had been previously established by the States. They asserted that to repair such roads was not within the Constitutional power of Government. Mr. Monroe gave his direct sanction to this doctrine, maintaining that the States were at full liberty to alter, and of course to shut up, post-roads at pleasure.

"Is it possible," asked Mr. Clay, "that this construction of the Constitution can be correct—a construction which allows a law of the United States, enacted for the good of the whole, to be obstructed or defeated in its operation by a County Court in any one of the twenty-four Sovereignities?"

To Mr. Clay's strenuous and persevering exertions

for the continuance of the great Cumberland Road across the Alleghenies, the records of Congress will bear ample and constantly recurring testimony. He himself has said:—"We have had to beg, entreat, supplicate you, session after session, to grant the necessary appropriations to complete the Road. I have myself toiled until my powers have been exhausted and prostrated, to prevail on you to make the grant." His courageous efforts were at length rewarded; and to him we are indebted for the most magnificent road in the United States.

At a dinner given to him a few years since by the mechanics of Wheeling, Mr. Clay spoke warmly, and with something like a parental feeling, of this Road—expressing a wish that it might be retained, improved and extended by the Nation. He illustrated its importance by observing that, before it was made, he and his family had expended a whole day of toilsome and fatiguing travel to pass the distance of about nine miles, from Uniontown to Freeman's, on the summit of Laurel Hill; adding that eighty miles over that and other mountains were now made in one day by the public stage. He said that the Road was the only comfortable pass across the mountains, and that he would not consent to give it up to the keeping of the States through which it happened to run. The People of nine States might thus be interfered with in their communication with the rest of the Union.

The country has not been wholly unmindful of Mr. Clay's pre-eminent services in behalf of this beneficent measure. On the Cumberland Road stands a Monument of stone, surmounted by the Genius of Liberty, and bearing as an inscription the name of "HENRY CLAY."

During the second session of the Fifteenth Congress, in January, 1819, the subject of Gen. Andrew Jackson's conduct in his celebrated Florida campaign came up for discussion. That Chieftain, after subjecting the vanquished Indians to conditions the most cruel and impracticable, had hung two prisoners of war, Arbuthnot and Ambrister, and concluded his series of outrages by lawlessly seizing the Spanish posts of St. Marks and Pensacola.

Committees of the Senate and of the House made reports reprobatory of his conduct; and resolutions were presented, containing four propositions. The first asserted the disapprobation of the House of the proceedings in the trial and execution of Arbuthnot and Ambrister. The second contemplated the passage of a law to prevent the execution hereafter of any captive taken by the Army, without the approbation of the President. The third proposition was expressive of the disapproval of the forcible seizure of the Spanish posts, as contrary to orders, and in violation of the Constitution. The fourth proposition was that a law should pass to prohibit the march of the Army of the United States, or any corps of it, into any foreign territory, without the previous authorization of Congress, except it were in fresh pursuit of a defeated enemy.

We will not attempt an abstract of Mr. Clay's eloquent and argumentative Speech\* in support of these propositions. Far less disposed are we to re-

\* See the "Life and Speeches of Henry Clay. Two vols. 8vo. With Engravings. New-York: Greeley & McElrath, Tribune Buildings." These two capacious volumes are afforded at One Dollar—a miracle of cheapness.



peat the discreditable history of the wrongs and usurpations perpetrated by Gen. Jackson. It may be proper to state, however, that Mr. Clay, grateful for the public services of the General, treated him with a forbearance and kindness which rendered the sincerity of his animadversions the more obvious.—“With respect to the purity of his intentions,” said Mr. Clay, “I am disposed to allow it in the most extensive degree. Of his *acts* it is my duty to speak with the freedom which belongs to my station.”

The Speaker then proceeded to expose, in a most forcible point of view, the dangerous and arbitrary character of those acts, and the Constitutional violations of which Gen. Jackson had been guilty.—There are many passages in this speech which, when we regard them in connection with the subsequent Presidential usurpations of the same Military Chief, seem truly like prophetic glimpses. Take, for example, the concluding paragraph :

“Gentlemen may hear down all opposition; they may even vote the General the public thanks; they may carry him triumphantly through this House. But, if they do, in my humble judgment *it will be a triumph of the principle of insubordination*—a triumph of the Military over the Civil authority—a triumph over the powers of this House—a triumph over the Constitution of the land. And I pray most devoutly to Heaven that it may not prove, in its ultimate effects, a triumph over the liberties of the People.”

Even at that distant day, Mr. Clay saw in the conduct of General Jackson the indications of that impetuous will—of that spirit of insubordination—which, dangerous as they were in a Military Commander, were not less pernicious and alarming in a Civil Chief Magistrate. With his keen, instinctive faculty of penetration, he discovered the despotic and impulsive character of the man. Every page of his speech on the Seminole campaign furnishes evidence of this fact.

How, then, when the question was presented to him of deciding between the qualifications of John Quincy Adams and Andrew Jackson for the Presidency of the United States—how could Henry Clay, as a consistent and honorable man, hesitate for a moment in his choice? And yet an amount of obloquy and vituperation, such as never before was heaped upon a public servant, has been lavished on him because of his refusing to vote for General Jackson on that occasion! Had he done so, he would have been false to his past professions and convictions—false to conscience, to patriotism, and the plainest dictates of duty.

The resolutions of censure, being strenuously opposed by Mr. Monroe and his cabinet, were lost in the House by a small majority. The dispassionate judgment of posterity will inevitably accord with the views so eloquently expressed by Mr. Clay in regard to General Jackson's conduct in Florida.

We come now to one of the most important epochs in Mr. Clay's public history. In the opinion of a large portion of the people of the United States, it is to his long-continued, arduous and triumphant efforts in the cause of Protection to American Industry and skill, that he will be indebted for his highest and most enduring fame. We have seen that as far back as 1810, he laid the foundation-stone of that great and beneficent American System, of which he was the originator and the architect.

To specify and describe all his labors in the establishment and advancement of his noble policy, from that time to the period of his retirement from the Senate, would alone fill more space than we can give to his whole life. The journals of Congress and the political newspapers of the country for the last thirty years will be found to be occupied to no inconsiderable extent with the record of his efforts and arguments and untiring appeals. We can present but a very imperfect outline of his glorious though peaceful achievements in the cause of human industry, labor and prosperity.

On the twelfth of March, 1816, Mr. Lowndes, of South Carolina, from the Committee of Ways and Means, introduced before the House a bill “to Regulate the Duties on Imports and Tonnage, &c.” The bill was avowedly favorable to a Tariff of Protection; and, strange as the record may seem, one of its most ardent supporters was John C. Calhoun. The whole question was debated with reference to the Protective policy. It was thoroughly discussed in Committee of the Whole; and, through the exertions of Mr. Clay, a higher duty was adopted for the important article of woolens. The amendment, however, was unfortunately lost in the House; but the bill, such as it was, was passed.

In the spring of 1820, the subject of a Tariff again came before Congress; and Mr. Clay made a most interesting and impressive speech in favor of Protective Duties. “I frankly own,” said he on this occasion, “that I feel great solicitude for the success of this bill. 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 recognized and adopted.* We have indeed great difficulties to contend with; old habits—colonial usages—the enormous profits of a foreign trade, prosecuted under favorable circumstances, which no longer continue. I will not despair. The cause, I verily believe, is the cause of the country. It may be postponed; it may be frustrated for the moment, but it finally must prevail.” And it *was* postponed; it *was* frustrated for the moment; but it finally *did* prevail.

The Tariff was remodelled by the House, but their bill was rejected by the Senate.

In 1823, the health of Mr. Clay was very poor—so much so, that his life was despaired of both by his friends and himself. He had attended the Olympian Springs in Kentucky, in the summer, had been placed under a strict regimen and subjected to a long course of medicine. In spite of all remedies he felt a gradual decline, and looked forward to a speedy dissolution. In November he was to start for Washington, and fully anticipated that, after reaching that city, if he reached it at all, he should be obliged to hasten to the South as a last resort. He procured a small travelling carriage and a saddle-horse—threw aside all the prescriptions of the physician, and commenced his journey. Daily he walked on foot, drove in his carriage and rode on horseback. He arrived at Washington quite well, was elected Speaker, and went through more labor than he ever

performed in the same Session, excepting, perhaps, the Extra Session of 1811.

The condition of the country in 1824 was far from prosperous. The amount of our exports had diminished to an alarming degree, while our imports of foreign goods had greatly increased. The country was thus drained of its Currency; and its Commerce was crippled. Nor was there any home-market for the staple productions of our soil. Both cotton-planters and wool growers shared in the general prostration; and even the Farmer had to sell his produce at a loss, or keep it on hand till it was ruined. Labor could with difficulty find employment; and its wages were hardly sufficient to supply the bare necessities of life. Money could only be procured at enormous sacrifices. Distress and Bankruptcy pervaded every class of the community.

In January, 1824, a Tariff Bill was reported by the Committee on Manufactures of the House; and in March following, Mr. Clay made his great and ever memorable Speech in the House, in support of American Industry. Many of our readers will vividly remember the deplorable state of the country at that time. It is impressively portrayed in his exordium on this occasion.

The CAUSE of the wide-spread distress, which existed, he maintained was to be found in the fact that, during almost the whole existence of this Government, we had shaped our industry, our navigation and our commerce in reference to an extraordinary market in Europe, and to foreign markets, which no longer existed; in the fact that we had depended too much upon foreign sources of supply, and excited too little the native.

On this occasion, Mr. Webster, whose views upon the subject afterwards underwent an entire change, opposed the bill with the whole powerful weight of his talents and legal profundity. Mr. Clay took up one by one the objections of the opposition, laboriously examined and confuted them. For specimens of pure and strongly-linked argument, the annals of Congress exhibit no speech superior to that of March, 1824. In amplitude and variety of facts, in force and earnestness of language, and cogency of appeal to the reason and patriotism of Congress and the people, it has been rarely equalled. It would have been surprising indeed, if, notwithstanding the strongly arrayed opposition, such a speech had failed in overcoming it. Experience has amply proved the validity and justice of its arguments. Its prophecies have been all fulfilled.

The Tariff Bill finally passed the House, the 16th of April, 1824, by a vote of 107 to 102. It soon afterwards became a law.

We will leave it to Mr. Clay himself to describe the results of his policy, eight years after it had been adopted as the policy of the country. After recalling the gloomy picture he had presented in 1824, he said: "I have now to perform the more pleasing task of exhibiting an imperfect sketch of the existing state—of the unparalleled prosperity of the country. On a general survey, we behold cultivation extending, the arts flourishing, the face of the country improved, our people fully and profitably employed, and the public countenance exhibiting tranquility, contentment and happiness. And, if we descend into particulars we have the agreeable con-

temptation of a people out of debt; land rising slowly in value, but in a secure and salutary degree; a ready though not extravagant market for all the surplus productions of our industry; innumerable flocks and herds browsing and gamboling on ten thousand hills and plains, covered with rich and verdant grasses; our cities expanded, and whole villages springing up, as it were, by enchantment; our exports and imports increased and increasing, our tonnage, foreign and coastwise, swelling and fully occupied; the rivers of our interior animated by the thunder and lightning of countless steamboats; the currency sound and abundant; the public debt of two wars nearly redeemed; and, to crown all, the public Treasury overflowing, embarrassing Congress, not to find subjects of taxation, but to select the objects which shall be relieved from the impost. If the term of seven years were to be selected of the greatest prosperity which this people have enjoyed since the establishment of their present Constitution, it would be exactly that period of seven years which immediately followed the passage of the Tariff of 1824."

Such were the consequences of the benign legislation introduced and carried into operation by Henry Clay. And though the reverse of the picture was soon presented to us, through the violent Executive measures of General Jackson, inflating and then prostrating the Currency, and the course afterward pursued, we have the satisfaction of knowing that Mr. Clay has never wavered in his course; and that, had his warnings been regarded and his counsels taken, a far different state of things would, in all probability, have existed.

The unanimous voice of the Country has accorded to Mr. Clay the merit of having been the father of the system, which has been justly called the American System. To his personal history belong the testimonials of the various State Legislatures and Conventions, and of the innumerable public meetings, in all parts of the country, which awarded him the praise, and tendered him the grateful acknowledgements of the community. To his individual exertions, the manufacturing industry of the United States is indebted to a degree which it is now difficult to realize. By the magic power of his eloquence, the country was raised from a state of prostration and distress; cities were called into existence, and the wilderness was truly made to blossom like the rose.

Mr. Clay's zealous and laborious efforts in behalf of the Tariff can only be appreciated by a reference to the Journal of the House of that period. It seems as if he had been called upon to battle for every item of the bill, inch by inch. The whole power of a large and able opposition was arrayed against him; and every weapon that argument, rhetoric and ridicule could supply was employed. John Randolph was, as on former occasions, an active and bitter antagonist. Once or twice he provoked Mr. Clay into replying to his personal taunts. "Sir," said Mr. C., on one occasion, "the gentleman from Virginia was pleased to say that, in one point at least, he coincided with me—in a humble estimate of my grammatical and philological acquirements. I know my deficiencies. I was born to no proud patrimonial estate; from my father I inherited only infancy, ignorance, and indigence. I feel my



'defects; but, so far as my situation in early life is concerned, I may, without presumption, say they are more my misfortune than my fault. But, however I deplore my want of ability to furnish to the gentleman a better specimen of powers of verbal criticism, I will venture to say, my regret is not greater than the disappointment of this Committee as to the strength of his argument.'

The following is in a different vein. After the passage of the Tariff Bill, on the 16th of April, 1824, when the House had adjourned and the Speaker was stepping down from his seat, a gentleman who had voted with the majority, said to him, "we have done pretty well to-day."—"Yes," returned Mr. Clay, "we made a good stand, considering we lost both our Feet"—alluding to Mr. Foot of Connecticut, and Mr. Foote of New-York, who both voted against the bill, though it was thought, some time before, that they would give it their support.

## CHAPTER VII.

The Missouri Question—Mr. Clay resigns the Speakership—The Union in Danger—He resumes his seat in Congress—Unparalleled Excitement—His compromise of the Question—Pacification of Parties—Character of his Efforts—Proposition of John Randolph and some of the Southern Members—Interview with Randolph—Anecdotes—Randolph and Shelby—Mr. Clay's Retirement from Congress—Berngement of his Private Affairs—Return to the House—Again chosen Speaker—Jeu D'esprit—Mr. Clay's Address—Independence of Greece—His Speech—Labors during the Session of 1824—Reception of Lafayette in the House—Welcomed by Mr. Clay—Lafayette's Reply—Lafayette's wish to see Mr. Clay President—Anecdote—Mr. Clay and Mr. Monroe.

DURING the Session of 1820-'21, the "distracting question," as it was termed, of admitting Missouri into the Union, which had been the subject of many angry and tedious debates, was discussed in both branches of Congress. The controverted point was, whether she should be admitted as a Slave State.

Slavery had been expressly excluded from Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois, by acts of Congress, on their admission into the Union. But that restriction was, by virtue of an ordinance of the former Congress, under the Confederation, prohibiting the introduction of slavery into the Northwest Territory, out of which these States were formed. Missouri was part of the Louisiana Territory, purchased of France in 1803. And in various parts of that extensive Territory, slavery then existed, and had long been established.

Louisiana had been admitted into the Union without any restriction of the kind proposed for Missouri. The States of Kentucky, Tennessee, Mississippi and Alabama had also been admitted as separate States previous to this period; and, as they were taken from States in which Slavery existed, they had been made subject to no such restriction. It was contended that, on the same principle, Missouri should also be received, without requiring, as a condition of admission, the exclusion of Slavery. And it was also insisted that it would be interfering with the independent character of a State to enforce any such restriction, which was manifestly a subject of regulation by the State authority.

On the contrary, it was urged that in the old States the subject was expressly settled by the Constitution, and Congress could not justly interfere in those States; but that it was otherwise with new States received into the Union; in which case Congress had the right to impose such restrictions and

conditions as it might choose; that it was evidently the intention of the old Congress not to extend Slavery, having prohibited its introduction or existence in new States to be formed out of the Northwest Territory; and that Slavery was so great an evil, and so abhorrent to the principles of a free Government, that it should be abolished or prohibited wherever it could be Constitutionally effected.

The discussion went on from month to month, and from session to session, increasing in fierceness, and diverging farther and farther from the prospect of an amicable settlement. Among the prominent advocates for excluding Slavery from Missouri were Rufus King from New-York, Otis of Massachusetts, Dana of Connecticut, Sergeant and Hemphill of Pennsylvania. Of those opposed to Restriction, were Holmes of Massachusetts, Vandyke and McLane of Delaware, Pinckney of Maryland, Randolph and Barbour of Virginia, Lowndes of South Carolina, Clay and Johnson of Kentucky.

A bill for the admission of Missouri had been defeated during the Session of 1818-19; and the inflammatory subject had, during the vacation of Congress, given rise to incessant contention. The Press entered warmly into the controversy. The most violent pamphlets were published on both sides. Public meetings thundered forth their Resolutions; and the Union seemed to be fearfully shaken to its centre. It may be imagined, then, with what interest the next Session of Congress was looked to by the People.

Many eloquent Speeches were made in the House upon the question. Mr. Clay spoke, at one time, nearly four hours against the Restriction; but there remains no published sketch of his remarks. The vote in the House of Representatives was several times given for excluding Slavery; but the Senate disagreed, and would not yield to the House.

In 1820, the People of the Territory of Missouri proceeded to ordain and establish a Constitution of Government for the contemplated State. Among other provisions, it was ordained in the twenty-sixth section of the Third Article, that it should be the duty of the General Assembly, "as soon as might be, to pass such laws as were necessary to prevent free Negroes and Mulattoes from coming to and settling in the State, under any pretext whatever." Under this Constitution a State Government was organized and went into operation.

This clause, for the exclusion of free Negroes and Mulattoes, fanned into fresh life the flame of excitement, which had been partially allayed. The whole country was now thrown into commotion upon the question of admitting Missouri.

In the autumn of 1820, Mr. Clay, who had experienced heavy pecuniary losses by endorsing for a friend, resolved to retire from Congress, and, in the practice of the law, devote himself to the reparation of his private affairs. Accordingly, at the meeting of Congress, the 13th of November, 1820, the Clerk having announced that a quorum was present, said that he had received a letter from the Hon. Henry Clay, which, with the leave of the House, he read as follows:

"LEXINGTON, (Ky.) October 28, 1820.

"SIR: I will thank you to communicate to the House of Representatives, that, owing to imperious circumstances, I shall not be able to attend upon it



until after the Christmas holidays: and to respectfully ask it to allow me to resign the office of its Speaker, which I have the honor to hold, and to consider this as the act of my resignation. I beg the House also to permit me to reiterate the expression of my sincere acknowledgments and unaffected gratitude for the distinguished consideration which it has uniformly manifested for me. I have the honor to be, &c.

H. CLAY.  
 "THOS. DOUGHERTY, Esq., Clerk H. of R."

In view of the agitating question before Congress, Mr. Clay consented, however, to retain his seat as a member of the House till his term of service expired, although no longer its presiding officer. Early in the session the Missouri question came up. Those who now opposed its admission contended, that free citizens and mulattoes were citizens of the States of their residence; that as such, they had a right, under the Constitution, to remove to Missouri, or any other State of the Union, and there enjoy all the privileges and immunities of other citizens of the United States emigrating to the same place; and, therefore, that the clause in the Constitution of Missouri, quoted above, was repugnant to that of the United States, and she ought not to be received into the Union.

On the other hand, it was maintained that the African race, whether bond or free, were not parties to our Political Institutions; that, therefore, free Negroes and Mulattoes were not citizens, within the meaning of the Constitution of the United States; and that even if the Constitution of Missouri were repugnant to that of the United States, the latter was paramount, and would overrule the conflicting provision of the former, without the interference of Congress.

Such was the perilous and portentous question which now threatened a disruption of the Union.—In some shape or other it was presented almost daily and hourly to Congress; and became, at length, a perfect incubus upon legislation. In this state of things, Mr. Clay arrived in Washington, and took his seat in the House on the sixteenth of January, 1821. On the second of February, he submitted a motion to refer a Resolution of the Senate on the Missouri Question to a Committee of Thirteen—a number suggested by that of the original States of the Union. The motion was agreed to, and the following gentlemen were appointed a Committee accordingly:

Messrs. Clay of Ky., Eustis of Mass., Smith of Md., Sergeant of Pa., Lowndes of S. C., Ford of N. Y., Campbell of Ohio, Archer of Va., Hackley of N. Y., S. Moore of Pa., Cobb of Ga., Tomlinson of Ct., Butler of N. H.

On the tenth of the same month, Mr. Clay made a report, concluding with an amendment to the Senate's resolution, by which amendment Missouri was admitted upon the following fundamental condition:

"It is provided that the said State shall never pass any law preventing any description of persons from coming to and settling in the said State, who now are or hereafter may become citizens of any of the States of this Union; and provided also, that the Legislature of the said State, by a solemn public act, shall declare the assent of the said State to the said fundamental condition, and shall transmit to the President of the United States, on or before the fourth Monday in November next, an authentic copy of the said Act; upon the receipt whereof, the President, by proclamation, shall announce the fact; whereupon, and without any further proceedings on the part

of Congress, the admission of the said State into the Union shall be considered as complete: And provided, further, that nothing herein contained shall be construed to take from the State of Missouri, when admitted into the Union, the exercise of any right or power which can now be constitutionally exercised by any of the original States."

In defence of his report, Mr. Clay said that, although those favorable to the admission of Missouri could not succeed entirely in their particular views, yet he was of opinion that they had, as regarded the Report of the Committee, nothing to complain of.—At the same time, the Report was calculated to obviate the objections of those who had opposed the admission of Missouri on the ground of the objection to her Constitution which had been avowed. Thus consulting the opinions of both sides of the House, in that spirit of compromise which is occasionally necessary to the existence of all societies, he hoped it would receive the countenance of the House; and he earnestly invoked the spirit of harmony and kindred feeling to preside over the deliberations of the House on the subject.

The question being taken in Committee of the Whole on the amendment proposed by Mr. Clay, it was decided *in the negative* by a vote of 73 to 64.—This decision was afterward overruled in the House. On the question, however, of the third reading of the Resolution, it was rejected, by a vote of 83 to 80, in consequence of the defection of Mr. Randolph of Virginia, who dreaded the increase of popularity which would accrue to Mr. Clay by the success of his proposition. A reconsideration was moved and carried the next day, and the question of the third reading was again brought before the House. Another protracted and bitter debate followed, and was concluded by a speech of an hour's duration from Mr. Clay, who is represented by the cotemporary journals as having "reasoned, remonstrated and entreated that the House would settle the question."

On the fourteenth of February, the two Houses of Congress met in the hall of the House of Representatives, to perform the ceremony of counting the votes for President and Vice President of the United States. A scene of great confusion occurred when the votes of the Electors for Missouri were announced by the President of the Senate, and handed to the Tellers. The Members of the Senate withdrew, and a violent discussion sprang up. By the exertions of Mr. Clay, order was at length restored, and, on his motion, a Message was sent to the Senate that the House was ready to proceed to the completion of the business of counting the votes.

The Senate again came in. The votes of Missouri were read, and the result of all the votes having been read, it was announced by the President of the Senate, that the total number of votes for James Monroe as President of the United States, was 231, and, if the votes of Missouri were not counted was 228; that, in either event, James Monroe had a majority of the whole number of votes given. James Monroe was accordingly re-elected President for four years, commencing on the ensuing fourth of March.

While the proclamation was being made, two Members of the House claimed the floor to inquire whether the votes of Missouri were or were not counted. Another scene of confusion hereupon ensued, and the House were finally obliged to adjourn in order to put an end to it.

The rejection of Mr. Clay's report seemed to shut out all prospect of an amicable compromise. He was not disheartened, however. He never despaired of the Republic. On the twenty-second of February, he submitted the following resolution:

"Resolved, That a Committee be appointed, on the part of this House, jointly with such Committee as may be appointed on the part of the Senate, to consider and report to the Senate and to the House, respectively whether it be expedient or not to make provision for the admission of Missouri into the Union on the same footing as the original States, and for the due execution of the laws of the United States within Missouri; and if not, whether any other, and what provision, adapted to her actual condition, ought to be made by law."

This resolution was adopted in the House by a vote of 103 to 55. The Senate acceded to it by a large majority.

The Joint Committees of the two Houses met on the twenty-fifth of February, 1821; and a plan of accommodation, proposed by Mr. Clay, was adopted, unanimously on the part of the Committee of the Senate, and nearly so by that of the House. The next day he reported to the House from the Committee a resolution, which was the same in effect as that which we have already quoted as having been reported by the former Committee of thirteen Members. A short discussion ensued, which was checked by a call for the Previous Question. The resolution was then adopted by a vote of eighty-seven to eighty-one. The Senate concurred, and the momentous question, which for three Sessions had agitated Congress, was, at length through the labors and influence of Henry Clay, peaceably settled.

The achievement of this vital compromise must have been one of the most gratifying triumphs of his political career. By his personal influence and abilities, he had saved the Republic. He deservedly won on this occasion the appropriate title of "the Great Pacifier;" for to his individual exertions do we owe it, that we were saved from the prospect of a dissolution of the Union. His efforts in and out of Congress were unceasing in accomplishing his object. He made direct personal appeals to those whom he could not influence in public debate, and left no means untried for bringing Congress to that harmonious state, which was essential to the safety of the country.

While the Missouri question was pending, and the excitement of the contending parties was running to a great and alarming height, Mr. Randolph, and perhaps some other gentlemen of the South, conceived the project of the whole Delegation from the Slaveholding States, in a body, abandoning the House, and leaving its business to be carried on, if at all, by the Representatives from the other States. At that time, one of those conditions of non-intercourse, which we have described existed between him and Mr. Clay; but notwithstanding that, one night when the House was in session by candle-light, Mr. Clay being out of the Chair, Mr. Randolph approached him in the most courteous manner and said: "Mr. Speaker, I wish you would leave the Chair. I will follow you to Kentucky or any where else in the world."

Mr. Clay replied: "That is a very serious proposition, Mr. Randolph; we have not time now to discuss it; but if you will come into the Speaker's

room to-morrow morning, before the House assembles, we will consider it together."

He accordingly attended there with punctuality. They remained in earnest conversation about an hour, Mr. Clay contending that it was wisest to compromise the question, if it could be done without any sacrifice of principle, and Mr. Randolph insisting that the Slave States had the right on their side that matters must come to an extremity; and that there could be no more suitable occasion to bring them to that issue. They maintained their respective opinions firmly but amicably, without coming to any agreement.

When they were about separating, Mr. Clay observed to Mr. Randolph, that he would take that opportunity of saying to him, that he (Mr. Randolph) had used exceptionable language sometimes when the Speaker was in the Chair and had no opportunity of replying; and that he was often provoked thereat. "Well, Mr. Speaker," said Randolph, "I think you sometimes neglect me; you won't listen to me when I am addressing the chair, but turn your head away, and ask for a pinch of snuff."

Mr. Clay rejoined: "You are mistaken. I am listening when I may not seem to be; and I can repeat as much of any one of your late speeches as you yourself can, good as I know your memory to be."

"Well," replied Mr. Randolph, "perhaps I am mistaken; and suppose we shake hands and be good friends hereafter."

"Agreed!" said Mr. Clay.

They shook hands accordingly; and never spoke with each other during the residue of the Session. It was about the period of Commodore Decatur's death. That event greatly excited Mr. Randolph; and Mr. Clay was informed by two different gentlemen (the late Governor Edwards and Gen. C. F. Mercer) about the same time, without concert, and shortly after the interview described above, that they knew that Mr. Randolph desired a duel, and with him (Mr. Clay.) He thanked them for the communication; which was made from friendly motives. It naturally put him upon his guard, and on first meeting Mr. R., thinking that he saw something unfriendly in his deportment, they passed each other without speaking.

Shortly before the interview above-mentioned, Mr. Randolph came to Mr. Clay with an insulting letter containing a threat to horsewhip him (Mr. R.) and asked what he should do with it—should he communicate it to the House as a breach of privilege? "How came the writer to address such a letter to you?" asked Mr. Clay. "Why, sir," said he. "I was in the vestibule of the House the other day, and he brought up a man and introduced him to me. I asked him, what right he had to introduce that man to me, and told him that the man had just as much right to introduce *him* to me. And he said he thought it was an act of great impertinence. It was for that cause he has written me this threatening letter." Mr. Clay asked him if he thought the man's mind was perfectly sound. "Why," replied Randolph, "I have some doubts about that." "If that be the case," said Mr. Clay, "would you not better avoid troubling the House about the affair? And I will give orders to the officers of the House to keep an eye on the man, and if he should attempt to do



anything improper to arrest him." Mr. Randolph said, it was perhaps the best course; and nothing more was heard of the matter.

On one occasion during the agitation of this same Missouri question, Mr. Randolph told Mr. Clay, that he had resolved, by the advice of Chief Justice Marshall, to abstain from the use of those powerful instruments of irony, sarcasm and invective, which he used with such cutting effect, and to confine himself to the employment of pure argument, whenever he spoke. He attempted it. He failed. His speech possessed no attraction—commanded no attention. He was mortified, and resumed his ancient style; and listening and admiring audiences returned to him.

When the House sat in what has been called the old Capitol (the brick building at the North-East corner of the Capitol-square,) Mr. Randolph one day came in collision with an able colleague from Virginia, Mr. Sheffey, in argument, in the course of which Mr. Sheffey had indulged in some playful remark. Mr. R. replied, and concluded by offering him some advice, which he said, he hoped would be kindly received: and that was, that logic being his (Mr. Sheffey's) forte, he ought to confine himself to it, and never attempt wit, for which he possessed no talent. Mr. Sheffey rejoined, answered the argument of Mr. Randolph, thanked him for his advice, but said he did not like to be in debt, and by way of acquitting himself of it, he begged leave to offer some advice in return. Nature, he said, had been bountiful to Mr. R. in bestowing on him extraordinary wit, but had denied him any powers of argument. Mr. S. would advise him, therefore, to confine himself to the regions of wit, and never attempt to soar in those of logic. Mr. R. immediately followed and haudsomey remarked, that he took back what he had said of his colleague; for he had shown himself to be a man of wit as well as of logic.

It was a pleasant and enlivening incident, and the whole House and both parties appeared to enjoy the joke. But Mr. Randolph returned to the House the next day, and renewed the attack with great bitterness. The parties had various and long passes at each other. Mr. R. was repeatedly called to order by Mr. Clay, and finally stopped. It was on that occasion, that Mr. Sheffey being called to order, Mr. Clay said that he would be out of order in replying, as he was, to any other Member but Mr. Randolph.

During the interval of his retirement from Congress in 1822, Mr. Clay was delegated, in conjunction with Mr. Bibb, to attend the Virginia Legislature, for the adjustment of certain land claims in Kentucky. Their mission led to the appointment of the Hon. B. W. Leigh on the part of Virginia; and Mr. Clay was subsequently appointed to conduct the negotiation with him on the part of Kentucky. They concluded at Ashland a convention, which, though it was ratified by the Legislature of Kentucky and the House of Delegates of Virginia, was finally rejected in the Senate of the latter State.

By an absence of nearly three years from Congress, Mr. Clay was enabled through his professional labors, to retrieve his private affairs; and in the summer of 1823, at the earnest and repeated solicitations of his fellow-citizens, he accepted a re nomination, and was again chosen, without opposition, to represent his District in the lower House at Washington.

The first Session of the Eighteenth Congress opened the first Monday in December, 1823. At the first ballot for Speaker in the House of Representatives, Mr. Clay was elected. Mr. Barbour of Virginia, the late Speaker, had forty-two votes—Mr. Clay had one hundred and thirty nine. The following neat *jeu d'esprit* appeared in the National Intelligencer shortly after the election:

"As near the Potomac's broad stream, 't' other day,  
Fair LIBERTY strolled in solicitous mood,  
Deep pondering the future—unloosening her way—  
She met goddess NATURE, beside a green wood.  
Good mother! she cried, 'deign to help me at need!  
I must make for my guardians a Speaker to-day;  
The first in the world I would give them.'—'Indeed!  
When I made the first Speaker, I made him of CLAY!' "

On taking the Speaker's chair, Mr. Clay made a brief and appropriate address, in which he returned his acknowledgments for the honor conferred. The duties of a Speaker are happily enumerated in his remarks on this occasion.

On the fifth of December, Mr. Webster, of Massachusetts, submitted a resolution providing by law for defraying the expense incident to the appointment of an agent or commissioner to Greece, whenever the President should deem it expedient to make such appointment. He supported this proposition in a most able speech on the nineteenth of the ensuing January. Mr. Clay stood side by side with him in defence of the measure. Notwithstanding the advocacy of these gigantic champions, however, it failed in the House.

Mr. Clay's speech on the subject, though brief, was full of fire and point. "Are we," he exclaimed, "so humbled, so low, so debased, that we dare not express our sympathy for suffering Greece, that we dare not articulate our detestation of the brutal excesses of which she has been the bleeding victim, lest we might offend some one or more of their imperial and royal majesties?"

"If the great body of Christendom can look on calmly and coolly, while all this is perpetrated on a Christian people, in its own immediate vicinity, in its very presence, let us at least evince that one of its remote extremities is susceptible of sensibility to Christian wrongs, and capable of sympathy for Christian sufferings; and that in this remote quarter of the world, there are hearts not yet closed against compassion for human woes—that can pour out their indignant feelings at the oppression of a people endeared to us by every ancient recollection and every modern tie. Sir, the committee has been attempted to be alarmed by the dangers to our commerce in the Mediterranean; and a wretched invoice of figs and opium has been spread before us to repress our sensibilities and eradicate our humanity. Ah! sir, what shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul? or what shall it avail a nation to save the whole of a miserable trade and lose its liberties?"

Although Mr. Clay failed at the moment in procuring the recognition of Greece, he afterwards when Secretary of State accomplished his object. The United States was the first Independent Power, by whom she was recognized.

Mr. Clay's labors during the Session of 1824, would alone have been sufficient to make his name memorable, to the latest posterity, in the annals of the country. The Session is signalized by the passage of the Tariff bill and of his measure in behalf of South American Independence. In reference to the former, it should not be forgotten, that it was through his vigilant and persevering efforts, that the



SUGAR DUTY was saved. By an examination of the proceedings of Congress, it will be seen that the fate of this important duty hung upon his individual exertions, and that to them its final preservation was due. It was not to the protection of the industry of any one section of the country that he looked merely. The South and the North have been always regarded by him with an equally liberal affection.

On the fifteenth of August, 1824, General La Fayette, the Nation's Guest, arrived at New-York in the *Cadmus*, from Havre, accompanied by his son, George Washington La Fayette. The following tenth of December he was introduced to the National House of Representatives by a Select Committee appointed for the purpose. Mr. Clay, as Speaker, received him with an address, so pertinent and elegant in its character, that we cannot resist the temptation of quoting it entire :

"GENERAL: The House of Representatives of the United States, impelled alike by its own feelings and by those of the whole American people, could not have assigned to me a more gratifying duty than that of presenting to you our cordial congratulations upon the occasion of your recent arrival in the United States, in compliance with the wishes of Congress, and to assure you of the very high satisfaction which your presence affords us on this early theatre of your glory and renown. Although but few of the members who compose this body shared with you in the War of our Revolution, all have, from impartial history, or from faithful tradition, a knowledge of the perils, the sufferings, and the sacrifices which you voluntarily encountered, and the signal services, in America and in Europe, which you performed for an infant, a distant, and an alien people; and all feel and own the very great extent of the obligations under which you have placed our country. But the relations in which you have ever stood to the United States, interesting and important as they have been, do not constitute the only motive of the respect and admiration which the House of Representatives entertain for you. Your consistency of character, your uniform devotion to regulated liberty, in all the vicissitudes of a long and arduous life, also command its admiration. During all the recent convulsions of Europe, amidst, as after the dispersion of, every political storm, the people of the United States have beheld you, true to your old principles, firm and erect, cheering and animating, with your well-known voice, the votaries of liberty, its faithful and fearless champion, ready to shed the last drop of that blood which here you so freely and nobly spilt in the same holy cause.

"The vain wish has been sometimes indulged, that Providence would allow the patriot, after death, to return to his country, and to contemplate the intermediate changes which had taken place—to view the forests felled, the cities built, the mountains levelled, the canals cut, the highways constructed, the progress of the arts, the advancement of learning, and the increase of population. General, your present visit to the United States is a realization of the consoling object of that wish. You are in the midst of posterity. Every where, you must have been struck with the great changes, physical and moral, which have occurred since you left us. Even this very city, bearing a venerated name, alike endeared to you and to us, has since emerged from the forest which then covered its site. In one respect you find us unaltered, and that is in the sentiment of continued devotion to liberty, and of ardent affection and profound gratitude to your departed friend, the father of his country, and to you, and to your illustrious associates in the field and in the cabinet, for the multiplied blessings which surround us, and for the very privilege of addressing you, which I now ex-

ercise. This sentiment, now fondly cherished by more than ten millions of people will be transmitted, with unabated vigor, down the tide of time, through the countless millions who are destined to inhabit this continent, to the latest posterity."

Lafayette was deeply affected by this address, uttered, as it was, in the Speaker's clear, musical and genial tones; and the hero of two hemispheres replied to it in a manner, that betokened much emotion. He maintained to the last a strong attachment for Mr. Clay; and when the miserable party hacks, who originated the cry of 'bargain and corruption,' at the period of John Quincy Adams's election to the Presidency, were actively circulating their base and baseless charges against Mr. Clay, the voice of Lafayette was heard, high above the clamor, in vindication of the unsullied integrity and honor of his friend.

An anecdote, illustrative of the high opinion entertained of him by Lafayette, appeared recently in the Commonwealth newspaper, published at Frankfort, (Ky.) An officer of the United States Navy, being in Paris in 1832, was entertained by Lafayette at his country-seat. During the three days, which the officer passed with his venerable host at Lagrange, the affairs of the United States and the characters of our distinguished public men formed prominent topics of discussion. The name of HENRY CLAY could not, of course, be omitted in such a conversation; and the General was delighted to find that his guest was not only a political admirer, but a personal friend and acquaintance of the great American Statesman. On the morning of his departure from Lagrange, the naval officer was introduced by George Washington Lafayette, son of the General, into the study of his father, where, by the light of candles, he was employing his pen. Pressing his guest in vain to remain longer, the General said: "Before you leave me, I want to show you our 'friend;' and leading the way to another room, he exhibited a portrait of Mr. Clay. "Sir," said Lafayette, "THAT IS THE MAN WHOM I HOPE 'TO SEE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES.'" The incident produced a lasting impression on the mind of the officer. "The bosom-companion of Washington, his comrade in arms in the glorious Revolution, feeling the deepest interest in the welfare of the United States, and well acquainted with their policy, their institutions and their great men, Lafayette, with the wisdom of the 'Father of his Country, pointed out the man fit and worthy to stand at the head of our Government. But his sainted spirit will look down in '45 and rejoice in the consummation of his hopes, which Heaven, impatient to claim one of its first-born, denied him while in the flesh."

We have seen that Mr. Clay was at variance with President Monroe upon the subject of Internal Improvements, as well as in regard to the mode of recognizing the independence of the South American patriots. Notwithstanding these differences of opinion, the personal relations of the speaker and the chief magistrate were friendly. Mr. Clay was offered a seat in the cabinet, and a *carte blanche* of all the foreign missions. Had place been his ambition and his object, he might have attained it without any sacrifice at independence—without any loss of position as the acknowledged head of the great republican party. He saw, however, that he could be

more useful to his country in Congress. Measures of vital importance were to be carried. The Tariff was to be adjusted—the Missouri business to be settled—the constitutionality of Internal Improvements was to be admitted—South American independence was to be acknowledged—how could he conscientiously quit a post, where he wielded an influence more potent than the President's, while such momentous questions remained open? These being disposed of, he would be at liberty to pursue any course which his inclinations might indicate, or which the public interests might sanction.

## CHAPTER VIII.

The Presidential Question—Nomination of Mr. Clay—His qualifications set forth—General Harrison in favor of Henry Clay—Slanders in the House—Kremer's Letter—Monstrous nature of the charges against Mr. C.—His course in regard to them—Appointment of a Committee of Examination—Complete Refutation of the Calumny—Mr. Clay's Address to his Constituents—Election of John Quincy Adams by the House—Exasperation of Gen. Jackson's Friends—Mr. Clay's independence of spirit—Motives of his preference—Gen. Lafayette substantiates his Assertions—Mr. Clay appointed Secretary of State—Views of this act—Slander temporary, Justice inevitable—His character as Speaker—Anecdotes, &c.

As Mr. Monroe's second Presidential term drew to a close, the question of the next Presidency began to be busily agitated. Four prominent candidates were presented by their friends for the suffrages of the People: being John Quincy Adams of Massachusetts, Andrew Jackson of Tennessee, Henry Clay of Kentucky, and William H. Crawford of Georgia.

In November, 1822, Mr. Clay had been nominated as a suitable successor to James Monroe, at a meeting of the Members of the Legislature of Kentucky. The nomination soon after met with a response from similar meetings in Louisiana, Missouri and Ohio; and, as the period of the election approached, he was hailed by large bodies of his fellow citizens in all parts of the country as their favorite candidate.

The campaign of 1824 was one of the most warmly contested in our annals. Some of the more unscrupulous of the friends of the various candidates resorted to manœuvres unworthy of their cause to advance their ends. Just as the election was commencing, a report was industriously circulated in different quarters of the country that Mr. Clay had withdrawn from the Presidential contest. In consequence of this report, General William H. Harrison, and other of Mr. Clay's friends in Ohio, published a declaration, in which it was asserted that he (Mr. Clay) "would not be withdrawn from the contest 'but by the fiat of his Maker.'" Our late lamented Chief Magistrate was at that time, and ever after, his devoted political, as well as personal friend; and he has often been heard to declare his preference for him over all other candidates.

Early in the campaign it was discovered that there would be no election of President by the People. By the Constitution, the House of Representatives would, therefore, be called upon to choose from the three highest candidates. In December, 1824, soon after the meeting of Congress, it was known that the three highest candidates were Jackson, Adams and Crawford, and that Mr. Clay and his friends would have it in their power, when the question came before the House, of turning the balance in favor of any one of the three.

Mr. Clay's position was now an extremely important one. Several weeks were to intervene before the election; and, in the mean time, the partisans of the three candidates looked with intense anxiety to the Speaker's course. His preferences were distinctly known to his personal friends, for he had expressed them in his letters and his conversations; but it would have been indelicate and superfluous for him to have electioneered in behalf of any one of the rival candidates—to have given occasion for intrigues and coalitions by deciding the question in advance.

While all parties were in this state of suspense, a gross and unprincipled attempt was made to browbeat Mr. Clay, and drive him from what was rightly supposed to be his position of preference for Mr. Adams. A letter, the authorship of which was afterward avowed by George Kremer, a member of the House from Pennsylvania, appeared in a Philadelphia newspaper called the 'Columbian Observer,' charging Mr. Clay and his friends with the most flagitious intentions—in short, with the design of selling their vote to the highest bidder.

Monstrous as were these intimations, they were calculated to carry some weight with the ignorant and unreflecting. By such persons, it would not be taken into consideration that Mr. Clay had already declined offices of the highest grade under Madison and Monroe—that, if either Jackson or Crawford had been elected through his agency, the first office in the gift of either would indubitably have been offered to him—that, in accepting office under Mr. Adams, it was universally understood at Washington he was conferring rather than receiving a favor—that he might not inaptly have been accused of acting an ungenerous part, if, after bringing the Adams Administration into power, he had refused it the countenance so essential to its success—that he would have neglected the solicitations of all who acted with him from the West had he refused the Secretaryship—and, in short, that in order to justify his vote it was incumbent on him to submit to the united voice of the friends of the new Administration, and bring to it as much of his Western strength as he could lend.

The 'Columbian Observer,' in which the precious epistle we have alluded to appeared, was a print sustained by Mr. Eaton, the friend, biographer, and colleague in the Senate of General Jackson. The position of the writer of the letter, as a member of Congress, gave it a consequence which, utterly contemptible as it is, it would not otherwise, in any degree, have possessed. Mr. Clay deemed it incumbent upon him to notice it; and he published a Card in the National Intelligencer, pronouncing the author of the letter, whoever he might be, "a base and infamous calumniator." This was answered by a Card from Mr. George Kremer, in which the writer said he held himself ready to prove, to the satisfaction of unprejudiced minds, enough to satisfy them of the accuracy of the statements in the letter, so far as Mr. Clay was concerned.

The calumny having been thus fathered, Mr. Clay rose in his place in the House, and demanded an investigation into the affair.

A Committee was accordingly appointed by ballot on the 5th of February, 1835. It was composed of some of the leading members of the House, not



one of whom was Mr. Clay's political friend. Although Mr. Kremer had declared to the House and to the public his willingness to bring forward his proofs, and his readiness to abide the issue of the inquiry, his fears, or other counsels than his own, prevailed upon him to resort finally to a miserable subterfuge. The Committee reported that Mr. Kremer declined appearing before them, alleging that he could not do so without appearing either as an accuser or a witness, both of which he protested against!"

And yet this same Mr. Kremer, a day or two before, when the subject of appointing an Investigating Committee came up, had risen in his seat in the House and said:—"If, upon an investigation being instituted, it should appear that he had not sufficient reasons to justify the statements he had made, he trusted he should receive the marked reprobation which had been suggested by the Speaker. Let it fall where it might, Mr. K. said, he was willing to meet the inquiry, and abide the result."

But it is not on Mr. Kremer alone that our indignation should be expended for this miserable attempt to bolster up a profligate calumny just long enough for it to operate on the approaching Election. He was merely a tool in the hands of deeper knaves. A thick-headed, illiterate, foolish, good-natured man, he was ready, in his blind attachment to Gen. Jackson, to do any servile deed that might propitiate his idol. He seems to have inwardly repented of the act as soon as it had been committed. He frequently declared his determination to offer an explanation and apology to Mr. Clay; and had gone so far as to draw up a paper for this purpose, which was submitted to the latter. But Mr. Clay replied that the affair had passed from his control into that of the House;—and the rogues, who had taken Mr. Kremer into their keeping, were careful not to allow him to repeat his offer of an apology subsequently when the House chose to let the matter drop.

In 1827-8, Mr. Clay, in an Address to his constituents, gave a full and interesting history of this affair, together with the sequel, at which we shall glance in our next Chapter, and in which General Jackson figured conspicuously.

On the 9th of February, 1825, in the presence of both Houses of Congress, Mr. Tazewell, from the Committee of Tellers, reported the votes of the different States for President and Vice President of the United States. The aggregate was as follows: John Quincy Adams had eighty-four votes; William H. Crawford, forty-one; Andrew Jackson, ninety-nine; and Henry Clay, thirty-seven,—the

latter having been deprived, by party intrigue and chicanery, of the votes of New-York and Louisiana—which would have carried him into the House, where he would undoubtedly have been elected President, over all other candidates.

The President of the Senate rose, and declared that no person had received a majority of the votes given for President of the United States;—that Andrew Jackson, John Q. Adams and William H. Crawford were the three persons who had received the highest number of votes, and that the remaining duties in the choice of a President now devolved on the House of Representatives. He further declared, that John C. Calhoun, of South Carolina, having received one hundred and eighty-two votes, was duly elected Vice President of the United States, to serve for four years from the ensuing fourth day of March. The members of the Senate then retired.

The Constitution provides, that "from the persons having the highest numbers, not exceeding three, on the list voted for as President, the House of Representatives shall choose immediately, by ballot, a President."

The friends of General Jackson now, as a matter of course, eagerly advanced the doctrine that a plurality of votes for any one candidate should be considered as decisive of the will of the People, and should influence the members of the House in their votes. As if a mere plurality, forsooth, ought to swallow up a majority! A more dangerous doctrine, and one more directly opposed to the spirit of the Constitution, could not well be imagined. It cannot be called Democratic, for it does not admit the prevalence of the will of the majority in the Election. It was, in fact, a dogma engendered for the occasion by the friends of the candidate, who happened to come into the House with a plurality of votes.

Mr. Clay was not to be dragooned into the admission of any such principle. He resolved to be guided by what was plainly the letter and spirit of the Constitution, and to give his vote to that man, whom he believed to be the most competent to preside over the destinies of the Republic. By a personal visit to Mr. Crawford he had satisfied himself that that gentleman was too broken down in health to discharge with fitting energy the duties of the Chief Magistracy. His option lay, therefore, between Messrs. Adams and Jackson.

We have seen what were Mr. Clay's views of the character of General Jackson as far back as 1819, when the Seminole question was before the House. Was it possible that he should regard those traits, which, in the soldier, had led to conduct, at war with the Constitution, as qualifications in the President? General Jackson was, furthermore, under-  
by Mr. Young. To heal this division and give the united strength of the Party to a Crawford, the nomination of Clay was tendered to Mr. Young. He accepted the nomination and from that time he and his friends abandoned Mr. C. and gave their support to Mr. Crawford.

But for this arrangement, it is certain that Mr. Clay would have received Electoral Votes enough, from the State of New-York, to have carried him into the House with General Jackson and Mr. Adams.

Mr. Clay had still many friends in the Senate and Assembly, who united in supporting a Ticket consisting of twenty-five Adams men and eleven Crawford men. Of these, however, it was understood that some preferred Mr. Clay, and would cast their votes for him, in the event that by so doing he could be brought into the House. But before the vote of the Electoral College was given, the news of the loss of Louisiana was received, which was thought to put an end to the contingency, and the Election fell to Mr. Clay voted, some for Mr. Crawford, and some for Mr. Adams.

\* The vote for Mr. Clay in the primary College stood:—Ohio, 16; Kentucky, 14; New-York, 4; Missouri, 3. By some party chicanery or coalition intrigue, he was defeated out of Electoral votes in New-York and Louisiana which would have been more than sufficient to have rendered him one of the three candidates returned to the House. It is, perhaps, unnecessary to revive the recollection of those frauds upon the People, by which their favorite champion was excluded from a position, from which he would unquestionably have been elevated to the Presidency. It will be seen that Missouri gave her entire Vote to Mr. Clay in 1824, at which time THOMAS H. BEXTON took the lead in his support, as the candidate most favorable to Federal Encroachments and the Protection of American Industry. The Party calling themselves Bucktails, in New-York, were divided between Crawford and Clay, the former having the majority. The Opposition Party (Whittoms) were divided between Adams and Clay; although by far the larger party preferred Adams. But on a division Clay had more strength than either of the others and, on a fair expression of opinion, would have commanded one-half the Electors.

The Crawford portion of the Bucktail Party was headed by Mr. Van Buren,—the portion which favored Mr. Clay was led



stood to be hostile to those great systems of Internal Improvement and protection to home manufactures, which Mr. Clay had spent the best part of his public life in establishing. At least, the General's views were vacillating and undecided on these points. Could Mr. Clay be called upon to sacrifice those important interests on the shrine of merely sectional partiality—for the sake of having a Western rather than an Eastern man to preside over the Union?

No! Henry Clay was not to be influenced by such narrow and unworthy considerations. He has himself said: "Had I voted for General Jackson in opposition to the well known opinions which I entertained of him, one-tenth part of the ingenuity and zeal which have been employed to excite prejudices against me, would have held me up to universal contempt; and, what would have been worse, I should have felt that I really deserved it." According to the testimony of his friend, Gen. Call, Gen. Jackson himself never expected that he would receive the vote of Mr. Clay.

With Mr. Adams, Mr. Clay had always been on amicable if not on intimate terms. At Ghent, they had differed on a question of public policy, but they both had too much liberality of soul to make their dissimilarity of opinion a cause of personal displeasure and variance. The Speaker saw in Mr. Adams, a statesman highly gifted, profoundly learned, and long and greatly experienced in public affairs at home and abroad.

How could he in conscience hesitate when the choice lay between two such men? He did not hesitate. He had never hesitated. Long before he left Kentucky, according to the testimony of the Hon. John J. Crittenden, six of the Kentucky delegation in Congress, and some hundreds of respectable citizens, Mr. Clay declared that he could not imagine the contingency in which he would vote for General Jackson. A still more important witness, in the person of the great and good LAFAYETTE, came forward to testify in Mr. Clay's behalf, as the following extract from his letter to Mr. Clay will show:

"My remembrance concurs with your own on this point: that in the latter end of December either before or after my visit to Annapolis, you being out of the presidential candidature, and after having expressed my above-mentioned motives of forbearance, &c., by way of confidential exception, allowed myself to put a simple, unqualified question, respecting your electioneering guess, and your intended vote. Your answer was, that in your opinion, the actual state of health of Mr. Crawford had limited the contest to a choice between Mr. Adams and General Jackson; that a claim founded on military achievements did not meet your preference, AND THAT YOU HAD CONCLUDED TO VOTE FOR MR. ADAMS."

Notwithstanding the flagitious attempt to influence his vote, Mr. Clay unhesitatingly gave it for Mr. Adams, and decided the election in his favor. He went further. When, after he was seated in the Presidential Chair, Mr. Adams offered him the Secretaryship of State, he had the moral courage to accept it in defiance of the storm of calumny, exasperation and malignant opposition, which he knew that act would bring down upon him.

This was a critical period in Mr. Clay's public life—a bold, intrepid and magnanimous movement. We know that he now thinks it was a mistaken one. In his speech of the 9th of June, 1842, at Lexington, he says: "My error in accepting the office arose

out of my underrating the power of detraction and the force of ignorance, and abiding with too sure a confidence in the conscious integrity and uprightness of my own motives. Of that ignorance, I had a remarkable and laughable example on an occasion which I will relate. I was travelling, in 1823, through, I believe it was, Spotsylvania in Virginia, on my return to Washington, in company with some young friends. We halted at night at a tavern, kept by an aged gentleman, who, I quickly perceived, from the disorder and confusion which reigned, had not the happiness to have a wife. After a hurried and bad supper, the old gentleman sat down by me, and without hearing my name, but understanding that I was from Kentucky, remarked that he had four sons in that State, and that he was very sorry they were divided in politics, two being for Adams and two for Jackson; he wished they were all for Jackson. Why? I asked him. Because, he said, that fellow Clay, and Adams, had cheated Jackson out of the Presidency. Have you ever seen any evidence, my old friend, said I, of that? No, he replied none, and he wanted to see none. But, I observed, looking him directly and steadily in the face, suppose Mr. Clay were to come here and assure you, upon his honor, that it was all a vile calumny, and not a word of truth in it, would you believe him? No, replied the old gentleman promptly and emphatically. I said to him, in conclusion, will you be good enough to show me to bed, and bade him good night. The next morning, having in the interval learnt my name, he came to me full of apologies, but I at once put him at his ease by assuring him that I did not feel in the slightest degree hurt or offended with him."

With deference, we must express our dissent from Mr. Clay in regarding his acceptance of office under Mr. Adams as an "error." It may have been, so far as his personal interests were concerned, erroneous, and impolitic; but, in reference to his public duties, it was right; it was honest; it was courageous. Both Madison and Monroe had offered him the highest offices in their gift; but the country was at those times in such a state, that he thought he could make himself more useful in Congress; and he refused them. None but the ignorant and base-minded could credit the monstrous assertion, that he had made the promise of the Secretaryship the condition of giving his vote for Mr. Adams.

Mr. Clay may have been temporarily injured by the wretched slander; and it will be seen, as we advance in his biography, that after it had been dropped by Kremer, it was revived by General Jackson. But we do not believe that there is at this time a single person of moderate intelligence in the country, who attaches the least credit to the story, thoroughly exploded as it has been by the most abundant and triumphant testimony.

It is, therefore, because we have faith in the ultimate prevalence of truth, that we do not think Mr. Clay was in error, when he so far defied his traducers as to accept the very office which they had previously accused him of bargaining for. The clouds which for the moment hide Truth from our sight only make her shine the brighter when they are dissipated. In the words of Spenser:

"It often falls in course of common life,  
That Right long time is overcome of Wrong,  
Thro' avarice, or power, or guile, or strife;  
But Justice, though her doom she do prolong,  
Yet at the last she will her own cause right;

Mr. Clay may still abide, "with a sure confidence, in the conscious integrity and uprightness of his own motives." Slander has done her worst. Never before, in the history of our government, was a public man so bitterly assailed by every weapon and engine that unprincipled detraction and malignant party hostility could invent. For years, the opposition, in the face of the most decided and complete refutations of the calumny—and notwithstanding the original inventors had themselves confessed its falsity—continued to thrust it before the public, until, at length, they could find none so mean and ignorant to credit it. The natural reaction has taken place; and every honest heart now visits with indignation any attempt to resuscitate the crushed and obscene lie. Mr. Clay's reputation has come forth whiter and purer from the ordeal. The "most fine gold" is all the more bright because of those who would have dimmed its lustre. The stream of time is fast bearing down to oblivion the frail and unfounded falsehoods of his enemies; but the pillars of his renown, based as they are upon inestimable public services, remain unshaken and unimpaired.

Mr. Clay entered upon the duties of his new post in March, 1825. In him the House of Representatives lost the ablest and most efficient speaker that had ever graced the chair. The best proof of his popularity may be found in the eloquent fact, that from the time of his first entry into the House in 1811 to 1825, with the exception of two years when he was voluntarily absent, he was chosen to preside over their deliberations almost without opposition. The period of his Speakership will always be regarded as an epoch in the history of our Federal Legislature. Perhaps the most remarkable characteristic of his Presidency over the House, was his perfect—his unimpeachable impartiality. Both foes and friends bore testimony to this trait without a dissenting voice. Strong as were his party feelings, they never could induce him, even in the very tempest and whirlwind of debate, to treat an opponent with unfairness or undue neglect. His decisions were always prompt, yet never so hasty as to be reversed by the House. Notwithstanding the many momentous and agitating questions which were discussed while he occupied the chair, he was never known to lose his self-possession, or to fail in preserving the dignity of his position.

During the long period of his service (some twelve or thirteen years) in the chair, such was the confidence reposed in his impartiality and the rectitude of his judgment, that appeals were rarely taken from his decision—during the last years of his incumbency, scarcely one.

It was under Mr. Clay's administration of the duties of the chair, that the present use of the previous question in terminating debate was established. In England it is employed to put by or postpone a subject which it is deemed improper to debate; and then, when the House of Commons do not choose to hear an unacceptable debater, he is silenced by being shuffled or coughed down. Certainly it is more orderly, and less invidious, for the

House itself to determine when a subject shall be put to the question and all debate upon it stopped. And every deliberative body ought necessarily to possess the power of deciding when it will express its judgment or opinion upon any proposition before it, and, consequently, when debate shall close.

It has been seen, that Mr. Clay's presiding in the chair did not prevent his taking an active and leading part in all the great measures that came before the House in committee of the whole. His spirits were always buoyant, and his manner in debate generally animated, and sometimes vehement. But he never carried from the floor to the chair the excited feelings arising in debate. There he was still composed, dignified, authoritative, but perfectly impartial. His administration of its duties commanded the undivided praise of all parties.

Uniformly cheerful when on the floor, he sometimes indulged in repartee. The late General Alexander Smyth of Virginia, a man of ability and research, was an excessively tedious speaker, worrying the House and prolonging his speeches by numerous quotations. On one of these occasions, when he had been more than ordinarily tiresome, while hunting up an authority, he observed to Mr. Clay, who was sitting near him, "you, sir, speak for the present generation; but I speak for posterity."—"Yes," said Mr. Clay, "and you seem resolved to speak until the arrival of your audience!"

The late Governor Lincoln of Maine was a gentleman of fine feelings, eloquent, but declamatory. On one occasion, when addressing the House of Representatives, of which he was a member, on the Revolutionary Pension Bill, in answer to an argument that it would be a serious charge upon the Treasury of long continuance, as many of the officers and soldiers would live a great while, he burst out into the patriotic exclamation, "Soldiers of the Revolution, live for ever!" Mr. Clay followed him, inculcating moderation, and concluded by turning to Mr. Lincoln, with an arch smile, and observing, "I hope my worthy friend will not insist upon the very great duration of these pensions, which he has suggested. Will he not consent, by way of a compromise, to a term of 999 years instead of eternity?"

## CHAPTER IX.

Account of Mr. Clay's Intercourse with General Jackson—Review of Carter's Letter—General Jackson the Accuser of Mr. Clay—Mr. Buchanan—Faint Refutation of the Slender—Mr. Adams's Testimony—Repented more strongly in 1842—Opposition to Mr. Adams's Administration—Its Character—John Randolph's Assaults—His Duel with Mr. Clay—Last interview with Mr. Clay in 1823—Impaired state of Mr. Clay's Health—Qualifications for the Secretaryship—The Panama Instructions—Objects proposed in the Panama Congress—Mr. Clay's Letter to Mr. Middleton—His Negotiations while Secretary of State—Treaties—His views toward the new Administration—His Administration—Documents from his pen—Policy of Mr. Adams's Administration—Condition of the Opposition—Their Consistency—The Colonel Bill—Mr. Van Buren—Modes of Attack—Federalism and Democracy—Jacksonism and Federalism Identified—Presidential Election of 1828—Choice of Andrew Jackson—Economy under Adams, Jackson, and Van Buren—Mr. Clay's views toward the new Administration—He leaves Washington—Gross attempt to injure his private credit—His Letter to R. Wickliffe, Esq.

MR. CLAY has himself given to the public a history of his intercourse with General Jackson. It may be found in his speech of 1836 in the Senate on the Sub-Treasury Scheme.

"My acquaintance," he says, "with that extra-



ordinary man commenced in this city, in the Fall of 1815 or 1816. It was short, but highly respectful and mutually cordial. I beheld in him the gallant and successful General, who, by the glorious victory of New-Orleans, had honorably closed the second War of our Independence, and I paid him the homage due for that eminent service. A few years after, it became my painful duty to inadvertently, in the House of Representatives, with the independence which belongs to the Representative character, upon some of his proceedings in the conduct of the Seminole War, which I thought illegal and contrary to the Constitution and the law of Nations. A non-intercourse between us ensued, which continued until the Fall of 1824, when, he being a member of the Senate, an accommodation between us was sought to be brought about by the principal part of the delegation from his own State. For that purpose, we were invited to dine with them at Claxton's boarding-house on Capitol Hill, where my venerable friend from Tennessee (Mr. White) and his colleague on the Spanish Commission, were both present. I retired early from dinner, and was followed to the door by General Jackson and the present Minister of the United States at the Court of Madrid (Mr. Eaton.) They pressed me earnestly to take a seat with them in their carriage. My faithful servant and friend, Charles, was standing at the door waiting for me with my own. I yielded to their urgent politeness, directed Charles to follow with my carriage, and they sat me down by my own door. We afterward frequently met, with mutual respect and cordiality: dined several times together, and reciprocated the hospitality of our respective quarters. This friendly intercourse continued until the election, in the House of Representatives, of a President of the United States, came on in February, 1825. I gave the vote which, in the contingency that happened, I told my colleague, (Mr. Crittenden,) who sits before me, prior to my departure from Kentucky, in November, 1824, and told others, that I should give. All intercourse ceased between General Jackson and myself. We have never since, except once accidentally, exchanged salutations, nor met, except on occasions when we were performing the last offices toward deceased members of Congress, or other officers of Government. Immediately after my vote, a rancorous war was commenced against me, and all the barking dogs let loose upon me. I shall not trace it during its ten years' bitter continuance. But I thank my God that I stand here, firm and erect, unbent, unbroken, unsubdued, unawed, and ready to denounce the mischievous measures of this Administration, and ready to denounce this, its legitimate offspring, the most pernicious of all."

Directly after the adjournment of the 19th Congress, a letter, dated March 8, 1825, appeared in the newspapers, purporting to relate a conversation of the writer with General Jackson, in which the latter said that Mr. Clay's friends in Congress proposed to his friends (Gen. J.'s) that if they would promise for him, that Mr. Adams should not be continued as Secretary of State, Mr. Clay and his friends would at once elect General Jackson President; and that he (Gen. Jackson) indignantly rejected the proposition. Mr. Carter Beverly, the author of this letter, wrote to Gen. Jackson, soon after its appearance, for a confirmation of its statements.

General Jackson replied, in a letter dated June 5, 1827—*more than two years after the charge was first made*;—but just in season to operate upon approaching elections; and, in his reply, directly charged the friends of Mr. Clay with having proposed to him, (Jackson,) through a *distinguished Member of Congress*, to vote for him, in case he would declare that

Mr. Adams should not be continued as Secretary of State; and insinuated that this proposition was made by authority of Mr. Clay; and to strengthen that insinuation, asserted that immediately after the rejection of the proposition, Mr. Clay came out openly for Mr. Adams.

To this proposition, according to his own account, General Jackson returned for answer, that before he would reach the Presidential Chair by such means of bargain and corruption, "he would see the earth open, and swallow both Mr. Clay and his friends and himself with them!"—a reply, which was no doubt literally true inasmuch as "such means" could never have been used to elevate the Hero of New-Orleans to the Presidency.

General Jackson gave up the name of Mr. Buchanan of Pennsylvania as "the distinguished Member of Congress," to whom he had alluded in his letter to Mr. Beverly. Mr. Buchanan being thus involved in the controversy, although a personal and political friend of General Jackson, made a statement which entirely exculpated Mr. Clay and his friends from all participation in the alleged proposition. He stated, that in the month of December, a rumor was in circulation at Washington, that Gen. Jackson intended, if elected, to keep Mr. Adams in as Secretary of State. Believing that such a belief would cool his friends and inspire his opponents with confidence, and being a supporter of General Jackson himself, he thought that the General ought to contradict the report. He accordingly called on him, and made known his views; to which General Jackson replied, that though he thought well of Mr. Adams, he had never said or intimated, that he would or would not, appoint him Secretary of State. Mr. Buchanan then asked permission to repeat this answer to any person he thought proper, which was granted, and here the conversation ended. And out of such flimsy materials had General Jackson constructed his rancorous charge against Mr. Clay!

Mr. Buchanan further stated, that he called on General Jackson solely as *his friend*, and upon his own responsibility, and not as an agent for Mr. Clay, or any other person; that he had never been a friend of Mr. Clay during the Presidential contest; and that he had not the most distant idea that Gen. Jackson believed, or suspected that he came on behalf of Mr. Clay, or of his friends, until the publication of the letter, making that accusation.

Notwithstanding all grounds for the charge were thus annihilated by the testimony of the "distinguished Member of Congress"—himself a warm partizan of General Jackson—the asinine cry of bargain and corruption was still kept up by the opponents of the Administration; and the most audacious assertions were substituted for proofs.

At length, although not the slightest shadow of anything resembling evidence had been produced in support of the calumny, a body of testimony perfectly overwhelming was produced against it. A Circular Letter was addressed to the Western Members (for they alone were accused of being implicated in the alleged transaction) who voted for Mr. Adams in the election by Congress in 1825, requesting to know whether there was any foundation for the charge in the letter of General Jackson.

They all (with the exception of Mr. Cook, who was dead) utterly disclaimed the knowledge of any



proposition made by Mr. Clay, or his friends, to General Jackson, or to any other person; and also explicitly disclaimed any negotiation with respect to their votes on that occasion. On the contrary, the members from Ohio stated that they had determined upon voting for Mr. Adams *previous to their being informed of Mr. Clay's intention*, and without having ascertained his views.

The members from Kentucky, who voted with Mr. Clay, expressed their ignorance of conditions of any sort having been offered by his friends to any person, on compliance with which their vote was to depend.

The members from Louisiana and Missouri, coincided in these declarations, and they all professed their belief in the falsehood of the charges against Mr. Clay, on account of his conduct on that occasion.

In addition to this testimony, letters were produced from well known individuals, satisfactorily establishing the fact that Mr. Clay, previous to his leaving his residence in Kentucky for Washington, in the Fall of 1824, repeatedly made declarations of his preference for Mr. Adams over General Jackson, through the months of October, November, December and January following, until he executed that intention on the 9th of February, 1825, in the House of Representatives. We have already quoted from General Lafayette's letter to Mr. Clay a passage confirming this ample testimony.

Such a mass of evidence effectually crushed the accusation respecting a bargain, and convinced the public, that in voting for Mr. Adams, Mr. Clay and his friends conscientiously discharged their duty; and that they could not have voted otherwise without palpable inconsistency.

When, on the occasion of his speech of June, 1842, at Lexington, Mr. Clay alluded to this calumny, of which we have given a brief history, somebody cried out, that Mr. Carter Beverly, who had been made the organ of announcing it, had recently borne testimony to its being unfounded. Mr. Clay said it was true that he had voluntarily borne such testimony. But, with great earnestness and emphasis, Mr. Clay said, *I want no testimony; here—here—HERE—* (repeatedly touching his heart, amid tremendous cheers)—*here is the best of all witnesses of my innocence.*

Soon after the close of his administration, Mr. Adams, in reply to an address from a committee of gentlemen in New Jersey, spoke in the following terms of Mr. Clay:

"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 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 his duties. Prejudice and passion have charged him with obtaining that office by bargain and corruption. *Before you, my fellow-citizens, in the presence of our country and 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.

"As to my motives for tendering to him the Department of State when I did, let that man who questions them come forward. Let him look around among Statesmen and Legislators of this Nation and of that day. Let him then select and name the man whom, by his pre-eminent talents, by his splendid services, by his ardent patriotism, by his all-embracing public spirit, by his fervid eloquence in behalf of the rights and liberties of mankind, by his long experience in the affairs of the Union, foreign and domestic, a President of the United States, intent only upon the honor and welfare of his country, ought to have preferred to HENRY CLAY. Let him name the man, and then judge you, my fellow-citizens, of my motives."

During his visit to the West in the fall of 1843, Mr. Adams confirmed this denial in the strongest terms, which it is possible for the human tongue to employ.

"I thank you, sir," said he, in his speech at Maysville, (Ky.) "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 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."

In his address at Covington, (Ky.) Mr. Adams said, in allusion to the hospitalities, which he had met with: "Not only have I received invitations from public bodies and cities, but also from individuals, among the first of whom was that great man, your own citizen, who, during a very large portion of my public life, and in various public capacities, and in several instances in matters relating to your interests, has been my associate and friend, and the recollection of whom, brings me to the acknowledgment, before this whole assembly, that in all the various capacities in which I have known him to act, whether as associate, as assistant, or acting independently of me, in his own individual character and capacity, I have ever found him not only one of the ablest men with whom I have ever co-operated, but also of the most amiable and worthy."

We have but imperfectly sketched the history of the flagitious measures which were adopted to blast

\* Mr. Adams, of whom it may be said, "age cannot dim, nor custom stale his infinite variety," still retains his exact estimate of Mr. Clay's talent and patriotism, and is his recent supporter for the Presidency. A correspondent of the Newark Daily Advertiser says:

"I have frequently observed Ladies' albums circulating through the House and Senate Chamber, with the view of collecting the autographs of the Members. One this morning, belonging to a young lady of —, attracted considerable attention. Upon examination, I found it contained a page of well written poetry, dated 23d July, 1842, as the tremendous hand-writing of John Q. Adams. This piece was descriptive of the wild chase at present spread over our political affairs, and anticipated coming events which would bring order out of disorder. The closing verse was as follows:

Say, for whose brow this laurel crown?  
For whom this web of life is spinning?  
Turn this, thy Allum, upside down,  
And take the end for the beginning."

"The manner of this was somewhat mystical, but by turning to the back of the book, and inverting it, on its last page a piece was found with the signature of H. CLAY!"

the political reputation of Mr. Clay and break down the Administration, of which he was the main ornament and support. To the future historian we leave the task of commenting, in adequate terms of reprobation, upon the conduct of those unprincipled men who originated the slander, and continued to circulate it long after it had been proved to be utterly ungrounded. That it answered the purpose for which it was intended; that it was the most efficient instrument employed to trammel and defeat Mr. Adams's Administration there can now be little doubt. The recklessness and audacity with which it was persisted in *until it had served its end*,—the conduct of Mr. Kremer, as he vacillated between his good impulses and the party ties by which he was fettered,—and subsequent developments, still fresh in the remembrance of many of our readers, showed that the promulgation of the calumny was the result of a regularly planned conspiracy.

We refer those who would satisfy themselves of this fact, as well as of the sufficiency of the proofs by which this 'measureless lie' was overwhelmed, to the proceedings in the House of Representatives, instituted at Mr. Clay's instance in February, 1825;—to the subsequent letter of Carter Beverley, detailing a conversation at General Jackson's;—to Mr. Clay's Letter to the Public, challenging his enemy to produce his testimony;—to Gen. Jackson's surrender of the name of Mr. Buchanan as the "distinguished Member of Congress" upon whose authority the charge of corruption was reiterated against Mr. Clay;—to Mr. Buchanan's complete and decided disclaiming of any intention on his part of ever giving countenance to the charge;—to Mr. Clay's pamphlets, published in 1827-8, embodying a mass of testimony disproving the charge;—to Mr. Buchanan's statements on the floor of the House of Representatives and the Senate, avowing his disbelief of the charge;—and finally to Carter Beverley's letter, published in 1841, repudiating the calumny as destitute of the slightest foundation in truth, and making such atonement as he could for having given currency to it in his letter of 1825.\*

A review of these transactions cannot fail to arouse popular indignation, on account of the persecutions to which Mr. Clay was subjected in consequence of the calumny, and to react its authors and propagators. That the most satisfactory evidence of the reality of such a reaction will be given in the Presidential Election of 1844, we do not entertain the shadow of a lingering doubt.

Rarely has an Administration been subjected to an opposition so unrelenting, so vindictive and so determined as that which assailed the Presidency of John Quincy Adams. The motives of that opposition appear to have been purely selfish and mercenary; for the policy of Mr. Adams resembled that of his predecessor, whose Secretary of State he had been, and it was little calculated to call down a virulent hostility. In his views of the powers of the General Government he was more liberal than Mr. Monroe. He was friendly to the American System of Internal Improvement and Protection, which had been so ably vindicated by Mr. Clay; and all his

measures were conceived in a truly generous, republican and patriotic spirit.

A great clamor was most unjustly raised about the expenses of his Administration. At this day the iniquity of this charge is so apparent as to render it unworthy a serious confutation. It becomes indeed laughable when placed side by side with the list of Presidential expenditures under Mr. Van Buren. In the distribution of his official patronage Mr. Adams appears to have been actuated by the purest and most honorable motives. Not a single removal from office on political grounds was made by his authority; and in no one instance does he seem to have been impelled by considerations of self-interest or with a view to ultimate personal advantage.

The circumstances under which he came into office, however, were a continual source of uneasiness to the friends of Jackson and Crawford; and his Administration, able and honorable to the country as it was, was constantly assailed. John Randolph, who had now a seat in the Senate, was especially bitter and personal in his denunciations. The eccentricities of that extraordinary man induced many persons to believe that he was partially deranged in his intellect. His long, desultory and immethodical harangues were a serious impediment to legislative business, while his selfish taunts and reckless assaults upon individuals were so frequent, that he seemed at length to have arrived at the conclusion that he enjoyed superior immunities in debate—that he was, in fact, "a chartered libertine." In one of the numerous discussions upon the Panama Mission, he took occasion to animadvert in the most offensive manner upon the conduct of Mr. Clay, and denounced the harmony existing between the Secretary of State and the President as a "coalition of Bliffl and Black George;" a combination of "the Puritan with the Black-leg."

When called upon by Mr. Clay to explain or retract these expressions, he refused. A hostile meeting consequently ensued between them on the 8th of April, 1826. After two ineffectual fires it resulted in the reconciliation of the parties—John Randolph having given additional evidence, by his conduct and appearance on the occasion, that his eccentricity, if it did not border on insanity, was separated from it by a very slight partition.

The last interview between Mr. Clay and Mr. Randolph was on the 2d or 3d of March, 1833, a few weeks before Mr. R.'s death, when he was on his way to Philadelphia, where he died. He came to the Senate Chamber, unable to stand or walk without assistance. The Senate was in session by candle-light, and Mr. Clay had risen to make some observations on the Compromise Act. "Help me up," said Mr. Randolph, sitting in a chair, and addressing his half-brother, Mr. B. Tucker; "*I have come here to hear that voice.*" As soon as Mr. Clay had concluded his remarks, he went to Mr. Randolph, and they cordially shook hands and exchanged salutations.

The health of Mr. Clay during the whole period of his residence at Washington, as Secretary of State, was exceedingly unfavorable—so much so, that at one time he had fully determined to resign the office. He was persuaded, however, to remain; and, notwithstanding the depressing influence upon mental and physical exertion of bodily infirmity

\* All these documents may be found in Niles's Register. We regret that our limits will not permit us to expose, in its full deformity, the whole of this nefarious plot against Mr. Clay. That man must presume greatly upon the ignorance of the Public, however, who would at this day venture to revive the extinct lie.



ty, he discharged the complicate and laborious duties of the Secretaryship with a fidelity and efficiency that have never been surpassed. In the records of his labors, in his instructions to Ministers, and his numerous letters upon subjects of foreign and domestic concern, the archives of the State Department contain a lasting monument to his transcendent abilities as a statesman and his indefatigability as a public officer.

One of the ablest state papers in the diplomatic annals of the United States is the letter of instructions of Mr. Clay to the Delegation to Panama. The story of this Mission may be briefly told. A Congress was proposed to be held at Panama or Tacubaya, to be composed of Delegates from the Republics of Mexico, Colombia and Central America, to deliberate on subjects of importance to all, and in which the welfare and interest of all might be involved. The threatening aspect of the Holy Alliance towards the free Governments of the new world had induced the late President, Monroe, to declare that the United States would not view with indifference any interference on their part in the contest between Spain and her former Colonies; and the Governments of the new Republics were naturally led to suppose that our own was friendly to the objects proposed in the contemplated Congress. In the Spring of 1825, invitations were given on the part of Colombia, Mexico and Central America to the United States to send Commissioners to Panama.

In reply to this proposition, coming from the Ministers of those powers at Washington, Mr. Clay said, that before such a Congress met, it appeared to him expedient to adjust, as preliminary matters, the precise objects to which the attention of the Congress would be directed, and the substance and the form of the powers of the Ministers representing the several Republics. This suggestion called forth answers, which were not considered as sufficiently precise; but still to manifest the sensibility of the United States to what concerned the welfare of America, and to the friendly feelings of the Spanish American States, the President determined to accept their invitations, and to send Ministers with the consent of the Senate.

In March, 1829, a call having been made in the Senate for copies of the instructions given to our Ministers at Panama, Mr. Adams transmitted them; and they were soon afterwards published, notwithstanding a rancorous attempt on the part of the opposition to prevent their appearance; so creditable were they to the Administration that was going out of power, and to Mr. Clay, their author; and so completely did they refute the slanders, which had been propagated in connection with the Mission. Few state papers in the archives of the Government will compare, in point of ability, with this letter of instructions of Mr. Clay. It was, perhaps, the most elaborate paper prepared by him whilst in the Department of State. The liberal principles of commerce and navigation, which it proposed; the securities for neutral and maritime rights, which it sought; the whole system of international and American policy, which it aimed to establish; and the preparatory measures, which it recommended, for *uniting the two Oceans by a Canal*, constitute i

one of the boldest, most original, comprehensive and statesman-like documents on record.

Another masterly paper from the pen of Mr. Clay is his letter of May, 1825, to our Minister at St. Petersburg, Mr. Middleton, instructing him to engage the Russian Government to contribute its best exertions toward terminating the contest then existing between Spain and her Colonies. The appeal was not in vain. Through Mr. Clay's exertions, the policy of recognizing the Independence of Greece, and sending a Minister to that country, was also at length acquiesced in; and the effect of that recognition—the first she had experienced—in rousing the spirit of the struggling nation, is a matter of history.

The number of Treaties negotiated by Mr. Clay at the Seat of the General Government is greater than that of all which had ever been previously concluded there from the first adoption of the Constitution. His Diplomatic experience—his attractive manners—his facile and unceremonious mode of transacting business, rendered him a favorite with the Foreign Ministers at Washington, and enabled him to procure from them terms the most advantageous to the Country. During his incumbency as Secretary, he concluded and signed Treaties with Colombia, Central America, Denmark, Prussia and the Hanseatic Republic; and effected a negotiation with Russia for the settlement of the claims of American citizens. He also concluded a Treaty with Austria, but did not remain in office to see it signed.

His letters to Mr. Gallatin, our Minister at London, in relation to the trade between the United States and the British Colonies, are documents of extraordinary interest and value, which ably advocate a durable and obligatory arrangement by Treaty in preference to other modes of settlement. His letters to the same functionary, on the Navigation of the St. Lawrence, and to our Chargé at London, relative to the North-Eastern Boundary, exhibit much research, and a sagacious, enlightened and truly American spirit. Never was the Diplomacy of the Country so efficiently and creditably conducted as when under the charge of Henry Clay.

It has been justly said that no policy could be more thoroughly anti-European, and more completely American, than that of Mr. Adams's Administration. He would exclude all farther European colonization from the American Continent; all interference of European Monarchs, especially those of the mis-called Holy Alliance, in American politics; he would render his own country, essentially, independent of European work-shops, by fostering American Arts, Manufactures and Science, and would strengthen her power, by rendering her force more available through the instrumentality of Internal Improvements. To these objects his efforts were directed.

Mr. Clay had long been the acknowledged head of the Democratic Party; the most vigorous, eloquent and consistent champion of their principles, and we may add, that such he has ever continued. In giving his vote for Mr. Adams, he believed—and events justified his belief—that he would secure to the Country an Administration attached to the same leading policy that had characterized the Administrations of Madison and Monroe, with this additional



advantage: that it would be decidedly friendly to those great measures of Protection and Internal Improvement, of which he had been the early and persevering advocate. But the elements of opposition, which had remained inactive during the eight years of Mr. Monroe's Presidency, began to form and combine against his successor almost before he was 'warm in his chair.' The character of these elements was somewhat heterogeneous; and the partisan managers were long puzzled to find some principles of cohesion in their opposition. The policy of Mr. Adams upon all important questions coincided with that of the majority, and was sanctioned by the example of his great Democratic predecessors. At the commencement of his term of office, he had declared his intention to follow that example in the general outlines. He made it a rule to remove no man from office except for official misconduct, and to regard, in the selection of candidates for vacancies, only their moral and intellectual qualifications. He thus voluntarily relinquished the support which he might have derived from Executive patronage, and placed the success of his Administration simply upon the merit of its principles and its measures. What possible ground of opposition, therefore, could be discovered or invented? "No matter: his Administration must be put down;" for an army of aspirants and office-seekers were in the field. In the words of one of the most distinguished of General Jackson's supporters, the Administration must be put down, "though as pure as the angels at the right hand of God."

Such being the tone of feeling among the Opposition, it is not a matter of surprise that the weapons employed against Mr. Adams and his friends were of a character directly the opposite of 'angelic.' In the first place, a gross and utterly unfounded charge of corruption was brought against the President and the Secretary of State. We have seen how utterly exploded, by the most positive and overwhelming testimony, that miserable slander has been. Charges of extravagance were then made against the Government; and a paltry bill for crockery and furniture for the White House was magnified into an accusation against the plain, frugal and unassuming Mr. Adams of an intention to ape the extravagance and splendor of European Potentates. The ordinary and established expenditures of the Government were examined with new and unexampled rigor, for the purpose of producing the belief that they originated with the Administration; and an assertion on his part of the President's Constitutional right to appoint, in the vacation of Congress, Diplomatic Agents to transact the Foreign business of the Country was construed into an usurpation of a new and unconstitutional power.

It having been discovered that the Secretary of State had, in some ten or dozen cases, transferred the employment of publishing the Laws from one Printing Establishment to another, a great clamor was raised about an attempt to corrupt the Press. The Secretary was charged with selecting the papers for political and personal objects; and a Resolution was offered, in the House of Representatives, requiring him to communicate the changes which had been made, and his reasons therefor. But, on its being discovered that the House had no jurisdiction of the case, the inquiry

was dropped. By way of showing the consistency of the Opposition, at the very time the detachment in the House were arraigning Mr. Clay for changing the publication of the Laws from one newspaper to another, their brethren in the Senate, under the guidance of Mr. Van Buren, were engaged in the attempt to deprive the National Intelligencer of the Printing of that body!

Shortly before the termination of the Second Session of the Nineteenth Congress, Mr. Floyd of Virginia announced to the public that the 'combinations' for effecting the elevation of General Jackson were nearly complete. During the Session, symptoms of the coalition began to appear; and on several questions an organized opposition was made manifest. Of these, we need only enumerate the Bankrupt Act, the bills for the gradual improvement of the Navy, authorizing Dry Docks and a Naval School, the appropriations for Surveys and Internal Improvement, the Controversy between Georgia and the General Government respecting the Creek Treaty, the bills to augment the Duty on imported Woollens, and closing the Ports of the United States against British vessels from the Colonies, after a limited period.

With regard to the Colonial Bill, the conduct of the succeeding Administration upon the subject of the West India Trade may make a brief outline of facts not inappropriate in this place. At the first session of the Nineteenth Congress, a bill was introduced into the Senate to accept, as far as practicable, the terms proposed by the British Acts of 1825, regulating the intercourse of Foreign Powers with her West India Islands. Owing to the long and interminable debates for political effect in that body at that session, the bill was not passed, and in the vacation the British Government interdicted the trade. The next session, measures of retaliation were proposed, but no definite steps were taken until the close of the session; and by a disagreement between the two Houses, the bill was lost, and the Executive was compelled to close our ports abruptly without any conditions. The manner in which Mr. Van Buren afterwards, when Secretary of State, availed himself of this fact, to disparage the administration of Mr. Adams before the British Ministry and Nation, is well known; and the mendicant appeals which, in his instructions to our Minister at the Court of St. James, he directed to be made to the English negotiators, remain a stigma on the diplomacy of the United States. The West India Trade was a fair and proper subject of convention between the two countries, to be settled on the basis of mutual rights and reciprocal interests. The honor of our country forbade any other course. If England would not deign to treat on this subject, it was not for us to coax her haughty Ministers into concession by legislative enactments. Such was the elevated and patriotic view of the subject taken by Mr. Clay. Directly opposite were the view afterwards taken, and the course adopted, by Mr. Van Buren.

As Mr. Adams's administration drew to a close, it began to be apparent that it was not destined to a second term. The strongest appeals were made to the sectional feelings of the Western States in behalf of the candidate of the Opposition; and these appeals were but too successful. In the various sections of the Union, opposite reasons were urged

with effect against the Administration. New-York and Pennsylvania were operated upon by an assertion, industriously circulated, that General Jackson was the candidate of the Democracy of the country, and this impression contributed to create a strong party in the States of Maine and New-Hampshire. Nothing could be more untrue than the assertion. Many of the leaders of the old Federal party were the most ardent personal opponents of Mr. Adams, and became the most effective enemies of his Administration. These men might afterwards be heard claiming to be the orthodox Democratic party, and denouncing Henry Clay—the early opponent of the Alien and Sedition Laws—the friend and supporter of Jefferson's administration—the main pillar of Madison's—and the most active originator and advocate of the Last War—as a *Federalist!*

The truth is that it has fused with the principles of Federalism as with its men. In the time of Mr. Monroe there was a general blending of parties. A new and distinct formation, on grounds at first purely personal, was made during the administration of Gen. Jackson. As soon as there was a division on principles, the worst part of the old Federalists—some of the most bitter and envenomed—the black cockade gentry, who had passed their younger years in writing pasquinades on Mr. Jefferson's breeches, and had been in the habit of thanking Heaven that they had “no Democratic blood in their veins”—went over to Gen. Jackson, and carried with them a spirit of ultraism, ay, and of ultra-Federalism, which was developed in the Protest, and Proclamation, and many of the leading measures of his Administration. The more moderate, prudent and patriotic joined with the Democratic party, and formed the great *Whig* party of the country. The *ultras* of the old parties coalesced, and the combination was naturally *Tory.*”

Upon the assembling of the Twentieth Congress, it was ascertained, by the election of the Speaker, that a majority of the House was opposed to the Administration; and this victory was soon followed by such an accession from those who were *uncommitted* in the Senate as to give a majority to the same party in that body. Thenceforward the Administration was not allowed, of course, a fair trial; and every question was discussed with a view to political effect.

\* In one of the skirmishes between Mr. Clay and Mr. Calhoun, during the Sub-Treasury discussion, Mr. Clay took up, among other topics, this question of Federalism. Mr. Calhoun had alluded to the friends of his opponent as members of the Federal party. “Sir,” said Mr. Clay, “I am ready to go into an examination with the honorable Senator at any time, and then we shall see if there are not more members of that same old Federal party amongst these when the Senator has so recently joined than on our side of the house. The plain truth is, that it is the old Federal party with whom he is now acting. For all the former good will difference which distinguished that party, and were the subjects of contention between them and the Republicans, have ceased, from hope of time and change of circumstances, with the exception of one, and that is the maintenance and increase of Executive power. This was a leading policy of the Federal party. A strong, powerful and energetic Executive was its favorite tenet.” “I can tell the gentleman that he will find the true old Democratic party, who were for resisting the encroachments of power, and limiting Executive patronage, on this side of the Senate, and not with his new allies, the Jackson-Van Buren Democratic party, whose leading principle is to sustain the Executive, and deny all power to the Legislature: and which does not hold a solitary principle in common with the Republican party of 1788.”

At length, in the autumn of 1823, the Presidential Election took place, and resulted in the choice of Andrew Jackson, by one hundred and twenty-eight votes in the primary Electoral Colleges, given by sixteen States, including Virginia and Georgia, which, in the previous Election, had cast their votes for Mr. Crawford. Mr. Adams was supported by the six New-England States; by New-Jersey, which had previously voted against him; by Delaware, and sixteen votes from New-York, and six from Maryland. Mr. Calhoun obtained the same vote for Vice President that Gen. Jackson did for President, except seven votes in Georgia, which were thrown away upon William Smith of South Carolina. Mr. Rush received the whole vote of the Administration party for Vice President.

Thus ended the administration of John Quincy Adams, during which our domestic and foreign affairs were never more ably and prosperously conducted. The foreign policy of the Government had only in view the maintenance of the dignity of the National character, the extension of our Commercial Relations, and the successful prosecution of the claims of American citizens upon Foreign Governments.

The Domestic policy was no less liberal, active and decided; and never was there a more groundless political libel than that which impeached the integrity and economy of that Administration. As the charge of extravagance was the argument most vehemently urged against Mr. Adams's Administration, it may be well in this place to glance at its plausibility. The aggregate expenditures of the several Administrations from 1789 to 1833, exclusive of the Public Debt, and payments under Treaty stipulations, including the expenses and arrearages of the last War with Great Britain, were:

Washington's Administration,	8 yrs.	\$15,890,698	55
John Adams's	“ 4	21,348,356	19
Jefferson's	“ 8	41,140,768	83
Madison's	“ 8	144,674,944	86
Monroe's	“ 8	99,363,549	64
J. Q. Adams's	“ 4	47,725,721	26
Jackson's	“ 8	144,579,847	72
Total	.....	\$516,695,867	10

From this statement it appears that the reforming, retrenching, economical, *Democratic* Administration of General Jackson, that expressed such a holy horror at Mr. Adams's extravagance, cost the country as much as the Administration of Mr. Madison, including the outlays of an expensive War with Great Britain. Mr. Van Buren retrenched in the same ratio with his predecessor. The first year of his Administration cost the People \$33,554,341—*about three times the average annual expenditure of Mr. Adams!* During the remainder of his term the public expenses were in a like proportion. What measure of condemnation should be bestowed upon the political hypocrites whose promised reforms and retrenchments resulted in such gross profligacy and neglect of the public interests!

In March, 1829, General Jackson entered upon the discharge of his official duties as President. On the 14th of the same month, Mr. Clay left Washington for his residence in Kentucky. Before quitting that city, some of the principal residents, as a parting tribute of respect, gave him a Public Dinner. In his speech on the occasion, he briefly reviewed the events, in which he had been an actor, during



the preceding four years. He alluded to the serious charge against him, which had been brought by General Jackson, who, after summoning his friend and *only* witness (Mr. Buchanan) to establish it, and hearing that witness promptly and unequivocally deny all knowledge whatever of any transaction that could throw the slightest shade upon the character of the accused, maintained a stubborn and persevering silence upon the subject, instead of magnanimously acknowledging his error and atoning for the gross injustice of which he had been guilty. "But," said Mr. Clay, "my relations to that citizen, by a recent event, are now changed. He is 'the Chief Magistrate of my Country, invested with large and extensive powers, the administration of which may conduce to its prosperity, or occasion its adversity. Patriotism enjoins, as a duty, that while he is in that exalted station, he should be treated with decorum, and his official acts be judged of in a spirit of candor.'"

Such was the patriotic spirit with which Mr. Clay regarded the elevation of General Jackson, and in which he was prepared to judge of the acts of the new Administration.

The political enemies of Mr. Clay were not, however, content with misrepresenting his public course. They lifted, with a rude and ruffianly hand, the veil from his private affairs, and attempted to destroy his private credit by charging him with bankruptcy. The consequence was the publication of a letter from Mr. Clay to Robert Wickliffe, Esq. dated May 24, 1823, in which the falsehoods of his assailants were fully confuted. He admitted that he had incurred a heavy responsibility, about ten years before, as endorser for his friends, to which cause his temporary retirement from public life and the renewal of his professional labors were to be attributed. The mortgages upon his Estate did not amount to ten thousand dollars, and before the expiration of the year he hoped there would not remain one-fifth of that sum.

"I have hitherto," says Mr. Clay, in this letter, "met all my engagements by the simplest of processes, that of living within my income, punctually paying interest when I could not pay principal, and carefully preserving my credit. I am not free, absolutely, from debt. I am not rich. I never coveted riches. But my estate would, even now, be estimated at not much less than one hundred thousand dollars. Whatever it may be worth, it is a gratification for me to know that it is the produce of my own honest labor—no part of it being hereditary, except one slave, who would oblige me very much if he would accept his freedom. It is sufficient, after paying all my debts, to leave my family above want, if I should be separated from them. It is a matter also of consolation to me to know, that this wanton exposure of my private affairs can do me no pecuniary prejudice. My few creditors will not allow their confidence in me to be shaken by it. It has indeed led to one incident, which was at the same time a source of pleasure and of pain. A friend lately called on me at the instance of other friends, and informed me, that they were apprehensive that my private affairs were embarrassed, and that I allowed their embarrassment to prey upon my mind. He came, therefore, with their authority to tell me, that they would contribute any sum that I might want to relieve me. The emotions which such a proposition excited can be conceived only by honorable men. I felt most happy to be able to undeceive them, and to decline their benevolent proposition."

## CHAPTER X.

Mr. Clay's Return to Kentucky—Triumphant Reception—Public Dinners—Speeches—Mr. Clay and the Colonization Society—His Speech on Slavery—Abolition Petitions—Visit to New-Orleans—Natchez—Complimentary Reception by the Louisiana House of Representatives—Visit to Ohio—Days with the Mechanics at Columbus—His Election to the U. S. Senate in 1824—Nomination to the Presidency—The Tariff—Defence of the American System—Mr. Clay's estimate of the Irish character—Reduction of Duties—Letter of T. H. Benton.

THERE are few men, who can bear defeat more gracefully, or with more unaffected good humor, than Mr. Clay. Relieved from his official toils as Secretary of State, his health rapidly improved, and his fine spirits expanded unchecked. On his journey from the seat of Government, previous to his arrival at Uniontown in Pennsylvania, the roads being extremely bad, he sent his private vehicles ahead and took the stage-coach. Finding it disagreeable within, however, he removed to an outside seat next the driver, and, in that situation, entered Uniontown. The good people of the place expressed a great deal of surprise at seeing the ex-Secretary in that *lofty*, and yet *humble* position. "Gentlemen," replied Mr. Clay, "although I am with the *outs*, yet I can assure you that the *ins* behind me have much the worst of it."

On his way to Kentucky, Mr. Clay received continual testimonials of the attachment and esteem of the people. He was invited to innumerable public dinners, but was able to appear only at a few. At Frederick in Maryland, he made an admirable speech at one of these complimentary festivals on the eighteenth of March, 1829. On the thirty-first of the same month he dined with the mechanics at Wheeling, whom he addressed principally in relation to the American System—Manufactures and Internal Improvements. He reached his home at Ashland, with his family, the sixth of April, having been met at some distance from Lexington by a large number of friends, by whom he was most affectionately received.

On the 16th of May, a great public dinner was given to him at Fowler's Garden by his fellow-townsmen. Three thousand sat down at the table; and Mr. Clay spoke for the space of one hour and thirty-five minutes; the following appropriate toast having been previously given: "Our distinguished guest, friend and neighbor, HENRY CLAY—with increased proofs of his worth, we delight to renew the assurance of our confidence in his patriotism, talents and incorruptibility—may health and happiness attend him in retirement, and a grateful nation do justice to his virtues."

Mr. Clay's speech on this occasion is one of the choicest specimens of his eloquence, being pervaded by some of the finest characteristics of his style, although there is, of course, an absence of those impassioned appeals, which would have been out of place. The exordium is full of pathos and beauty. He had been separated for four years from his friends and neighbors. After devoting the best energies of his prime to the service of his country, he had been grossly traduced and injured, and his most conspicuous traducer had been elevated to the Presidency. He had returned home once more; and now saw before him, gathered together to do him honor, to renew their assurances of attachment and confidence, sires with whom, for more than thirty years, he had interchanged friendly offices—their sons, grown up



during his absence in the public councils, accompanying them—and all prompted by ardent attachment, surrounding and saluting him as if he belonged to their own household.

After alluding in the happiest manner to some of these circumstances, Mr. Clay reviewed briefly the course of the past Administration—referred to the clamor which had been raised against Mr. Adams for *proscription*—when the fact was, that not a solitary officer of the Government, from Maine to Louisiana, was dismissed on account of his political opinions, during the whole of Mr. Adams's Administration—contrasted this course with that which President Jackson commenced so soon after his installation—and eloquently pointed out the evil consequences of the introduction of a tenure of public office, which depended upon personal attachment to the Chief Magistrate.

In concluding his remarks, Mr. Clay touchingly expressed his gratitude to his fellow-citizens of Kentucky, who had "constantly poured upon him a bold and unabated stream of innumerable favors." The closing sentences of the speech are in the genuine language of the heart which cannot be counterfeited, and which none can so eloquently employ as Henry Clay. "When," said he, "I felt as if I should sink beneath the storm of abuse and detraction, which was violently raging around me, I have found myself upheld and sustained by your encouraging voice and your approving smiles. I have doubtless committed many faults and indiscretions, over which you have thrown the broad mantle of your charity. But I can say, and in the presence of my God and of this assembled multitude I will say, that I have honestly and faithfully served my country; that I have never wronged it; and that, however unprepared I lament that I am to appear in the Divine Presence on other accounts, I invoke the stern Justice of his judgment on my public conduct, without the smallest apprehension of his displeasure."

During the Summer and Autumn of 1829 Mr. Clay visited several parts of the State of his adoption and everywhere he was hailed as a friend and public benefactor. On the 17th of December he addressed the Kentucky Colonization Society at Frankfort in a speech, in which he eloquently vindicated the policy and character of that benevolent institution. He had been an early and constant advocate of the system of Colonization. In his speech before the American Colonization Society, delivered the 20th of January, 1827, in the Hall of the House of Representatives at Washington, we find the following impressive passage:

"It is now a little upwards of ten years since a religious, amiable and benevolent resident of this city Mr. Caldwell first conceived the idea of planting a Colony, from the United States, of free people of color, on the Western shores of Africa. He is no more, and the noblest eulogy which could be pronounced on him would be to inscribe upon his tomb, the merited epitaph—'Here lies the projector of the American Colonization Society.' Amongst others, to whom he communicated the project, was the person who now has the honor of addressing you. My first impressions, like those of all who have not fully investigated the subject, were against it. They yielded to his earnest persuasions and my own re-

flections, and I finally agreed with him that the experiment was worthy of a fair trial."

After presenting in a clear and forcible light the project of the Society for the gradual extinction of Slavery, Mr. Clay remarked in regard to it: "All, or any one, of the States which tolerate Slavery 'may adopt and execute it, by co-operation or separate exertion. If I could be instrumental in eradicating this deepest stain upon the character of our country, and removing all cause of reproach on account of it by foreign nations—*If I could only be instrumental in ridding of this foul blot that revered State that gave me birth, or that not less beloved state which kindly adopted me as her son, I would not exchange the proud satisfaction which I should enjoy for the honor of all the triumphs ever decreed to the most successful conqueror.*"

To the system of colonization, we believe, Mr. Clay yet looks as a means for diminishing the proportion of the black population to the white in the Slave States until emancipation would be compatible with the security and interests of the latter.

In January, 1830, Mr. Clay made a visit to one of his married daughters at New-Orleans. Although appearing there as a private citizen, he found it impossible to escape those attentions, which the public gratitude suggested. He was daily visited by crowds of persons, including Members of the Legislature and Judges of the different Courts. The ship-masters, who were in port, waited in a body upon him as the champion of *Free Trade and Sailors' Rights*. Declining an invitation to a public dinner, he left New-Orleans for Natchez, on his way home, the 9th of March. As the boat, in which he had embarked, quitted the pier, the scene was of the most animated description. The Levee and the tops of the steamboats, a great number of which were in port, exhibited a crowded and almost unbroken mass of spectators, collected to see him and do him honor. The shouting multitude, the elevation of flags, and the roar of cannons, which burst from the crowd of surrounding vessels, as the boat moved off, presented altogether one of the most imposing spectacles that could be imagined. It was a grand civic ovation, as honorable to the subject of it as any triumph which ever greeted a military conqueror.

At Natchez, persons from all parts of Mississippi were waiting to meet him. The press of the crowd into the steamboat containing the illustrious visitor was so great as to excite alarm; and the mass collected on the wharf was so dense that much time and exertion were required to make way through it. Soon after his arrival he accepted a pressing invitation to a public dinner. A vast concourse assembled on the occasion. His speech is described as unusually felicitous. He was several times obliged to stop speaking for some minutes—while the enthusiasm of his hearers exhausted itself in repeated rounds of applause. In the course of his remarks, having occasion to allude to the battle of New-Orleans, he paid a generous tribute to Gen. Jackson. Henry Clay never was the man to detract from the merits of even his most unrelenting opponents.

On the twenty-seventh of March, Mr. Clay reached Lexington, having declined numerous invitations to public dinners on his route. He had stopped on his way unpremeditatedly at Donaldsonville, (the

new Seat of Government of Louisiana,) to see the public buildings, and pay his respects to some of his old friends and acquaintances. Unexpectedly entering the hall of the House of Representatives, he was immediately recognized, and the whole body, including the Speaker and Members of all parties, simultaneously rose to receive him:

In the summer of 1830, having business in the Circuit and District Courts of Ohio, he visited Columbus, where he was cordially welcomed by the Mechanics, at whose Celebration the following appropriate Toast was given:

"Our inestimable guest, HENRY CLAY. An efficient laborer in support of the Industry of the Country. Farmers and Mechanics know how to appreciate his services."

His entry into Cincinnati was quite imposing.—All classes assembled to welcome his approach. He here dined with the Mechanics, and his Speech upon the occasion is an eloquent vindication of the American System, and a just rebuke of the odious doctrine of Nullification, which was then beginning to be preached in South Carolina and Georgia.

In the autumn of 1831, Mr. Clay was elected to the Senate of the United States by the Legislature of Kentucky, by the following vote:—In the Senate, Henry Clay, 18; Richard M. Johnson, 19; Warden Pope, 1. In the House of Delegates, Clay, 55; Johnson, 45.—At the first session of the Twenty-second Congress, he presented his credentials, and took his seat once more in a body where, twenty-five years before, he had made his influence felt and his talents respected.

Contemporaneous with his re-appearance in the Senate, was the meeting of the National Republican Convention, which assembled at Baltimore on the twelfth of December, 1831, and unanimously nominated HENRY CLAY to the office of President of the United States, and JOHN SERGEANT to that of Vice President.

The subject of the Tariff began to be vehemently agitated in Congress early in the session of 1831-32. The discontent of the South was assuming an alarming aspect; and the system of Protection, which Mr. Clay had labored so long and incessantly to establish, was threatened with material qualifications, if not a complete overthrow. In that conciliatory spirit, which he had manifested on many critical occasions, he now approached this exciting topic. On the ninth of January, 1832, he introduced a Resolution providing that the existing Duties upon articles imported from foreign countries, and not coming into competition with similar articles made or produced within the United States, ought to be forthwith abolished, except the Duties upon Wines and Silks, and that they ought to be reduced; and that the Committee on Finance be instructed to report a bill accordingly. This Resolution he sustained in an admirable Speech of about two hours' duration, in which he spoke warmly in favor of the maintenance of the Protective Policy and that of Internal Improvement.

Mr. Hayne followed in reply; and on the second of February, the subject being still under discussion before the Senate, Mr. Clay commenced his ever-memorable Speech in defence of the American System against the British Colonial System. It was continued on the next day, and finally completed on

the sixth of the same month. Such a chain of irrefragable argument as it presents, interlinked with facts the most cogent and appropriate, has rarely been forged by human ingenuity. It will be referred to by future statesmen as their political textbook, when the Protective Policy is called in question.

After an impressive exordium, he alluded to the distress of the country after the War. The period of greatest distress was seven years previous to the year 1824: the period of greatest prosperity the seven years following that act. He then gave a picture of the flourishing condition of the country. He maintained that all the predictions of the enemies of the Tariff in 1824 had been falsified by experience—that all the benefits which he had anticipated had been realized. He alluded to all the interests now protected—all Mechanic Arts—Navigation—Agriculture—and Manufactures. He argued that the Tariff began in 1792, which established the great principle of Protection. It was the second act of the First Congress—sanctioned by the Father of his Country, and most of the eminent Statesmen of that day. Mr. Clay then traced the history of the subject down to 1816; commented on the Tariff of that year, its object, extent and policy; then the Tariff of 1824; the amendment of the system in 1828—the *Bill of which year was framed on principles directly adverse to the declared wishes of the friends of the policy of Protection*, although the error then perpetrated was corrected by subsequent legislation.

After a graphic description of the beneficial effects of the policy, which they were now called upon to subvert, Mr. Clay asked what was the substitute proposed by those whose design was the immediate or gradual destruction of the American System? The reply is as appropriate to the enemies of the System now as it was ten years ago. "*Free Trade!—Free Trade!* The call for Free Trade is as unavailing as the cry of a spoiled child, in his nurse's arms, for the moon or the stars that glitter in the firmament of heaven. It never has existed. It never will exist. Trade implies at least two parties. To be free, it should be fair, equal and reciprocal. But if we throw our ports wide open to the admission of foreign productions, free of all duty, what ports, of any other foreign nations, shall we find open to the free admission of our surplus produce? We may break down all barriers to Free Trade, on our part, but they will not be complete until Foreign Powers shall have removed theirs. There would be freedom on one side, and restrictions, prohibitions and exclusions on the other. The bolts and the bars and the chains of all other nations will remain undisturbed." \* \* \* "Gentlemen deceive themselves. It is not Free Trade that they are recommending to our acceptance. It is, in effect, the British Colonial System that we are invited to adopt; and, if their policy prevail, it will lead, substantially, to the re-colonization of these States, under the commercial dominion of Great Britain."

\* "Fair Trade and Sailors' Rights," was the Toast given by the late Mr. Gilmer, the day of the fatal accident on board the Princeton. The substitution of a single word illuminates the whole subject. A "Fair Trade" is what Mr. Clay has always aimed to secure for his country.



In the course of his Speech, Mr. Clay had occasion to introduce the following remarks upon the Irish character. They show his high appreciation of the worth of an important class of our adopted fellow citizens :

"Of all foreigners, none amalgamate themselves so quickly with our people as the natives of the Emerald Isle. In some of the visions which have passed through my imagination, I have supposed that Ireland was, originally, part and parcel of this Continent, and that, by some extraordinary convulsion of nature, it was torn from America, and, drifting across the ocean, was placed in the unfortunate vicinity of Great Britain. The same open-heartedness; the same generous hospitality; the same careless and uncalculating indifference about human life, characterize the inhabitants of both countries. Kentucky has been sometimes called the Ireland of America. And I have no doubt that, if the current of emigration were reversed, and set from America upon the shores of Europe, instead of bearing from Europe to America, every American emigrant to Ireland would there find, as every Irish emigrant here finds, a hearty welcome and a happy home!"

On the 13th of March Mr. Dickerson, from the Committee on Manufactures, reported, in conformity with Mr. Clay's resolution, a bill for repealing the duties upon certain specified articles of import. The bill was opposed at the threshold because it did not embrace the whole subject of the Tariff; because it made no reduction of duties upon *protected* articles. An animated debate ensued, and the bill was laid upon the table. After undergoing numerous modifications in both Houses, it was finally passed by Congress in July, 1832. By this new law, the principles for which Mr. Clay and the rest of the friends of Domestic Industry had contended, were preserved. The Revenue was greatly reduced, but the Protective System remained unimpaired. Of Mr. Clay's efforts in the establishment of that System no one has more impressively spoken than Thomas Hart Benton, Senator in Congress from Missouri, who, in a Circular signed by him and first published in the 'Missouri Intelligencer,' October 22, 1834, gives utterance to these just and eloquent sentiments :

"The principles which would govern Mr. Clay's Administration, if elected, are well known to the Nation. They have been displayed upon the floor of Congress for the last seventeen years. They constitute a System of AMERICAN POLICY, based on the Agriculture and Manufactures of his own country—upon Interior as well as Foreign Commerce—upon Internal as well as Sea-Bound Improvement—upon the independence of the New World, and close Commercial alliances with Mexico and South America. If it is said that others would pursue the same system; we answer, that the founder of a System is the natural executor of his own work; that the most efficient protector of American Iron, Lead, Hemp, Wool and Cotton would be the triumphant champion of the New Tariff; the safest friend to Interior Commerce would be the Statesman who has proclaimed the Mississippi to be the Sea of the West; the most zealous promoter of Internal Improvements would be the President, who has triumphed over the President who opposed the construction of National Roads and Canals; the most successful applicant for Treaties with Mexico and South America would be the eloquent advocate of their own Independence.

"THOMAS HART BENTON."

## CHAPTER XI.

Reception of the Amended Tariff at the South—Progress of Nullification—Re-election of General Jackson—Proclamation—The Protective System in danger—The Enforcement Bill—Perilous state of Affairs—Henry Clay comes forward with his Plan for a Compromise—Origin of that Measure—Particulars in regard to it—Mr. Clayton of Delaware—Anecdote—Tending Motives of Mr. Clay—Statement of Hon. H. A. S. Beecher—Passage of the Compromise Bill—Public Gratitude—Characteristics of Mr. Clay's Public Career—His Visit to New-England—Triumphal Reception—Honors paid to him on his route.

THE amended Tariff was received with little favor by the South. Nullification grew daily bolder in its denunciations and menaces; and the Union seemed to be greatly in danger. On the 24th of November, 1832, the South Carolina Convention passed their ordinance, declaring the Revenue Laws of the United States null and void; and soon afterward the Legislature of the State met, ratified the proceedings of the Convention, and passed laws for the organization of the Militia and the purchase of munition and ordnance.

In the midst of these troubles, the Presidential Contest took place, and resulted in the re-election of General Jackson over the opposing candidates, Henry Clay, John Floyd of Virginia, and William Wirt.

On the 10th of December, 1832, soon after the meeting of Congress, President Jackson issued his Proclamation, announcing his determination to enforce the Revenue Laws, and exhorting the citizens of South Carolina to pause in their disorganizing career. This remonstrance produced little effect. It was followed, on the 20th of the same month, by a counter Proclamation from Governor Hayne, warning the citizens of South Carolina against the attempt of the President to seduce them from their allegiance, and exhorting them, in disregard of his threats, to be prepared to sustain the State against the arbitrary measures of the Federal Executive.

The Protective System was at this moment in imminent hazard of being destroyed. General Jackson's Administration was always inimical to that policy, originated and principally supported as it had been by a hated rival. The Tariff became the great question of the session. It was referred to the Committee of Ways and Means, where it was remodelled; and on the 27th of December, a bill was reported, which was understood to embody the views of the Administration. It proposed a diminution of the duties on all the protected articles, to take effect immediately, and a further diminution on the 2d of March, 1834. The subject was discussed from the 8th to the 16th of January, 1833, when a message was received from the President, communicating the South Carolina ordinance and nullifying laws, together with his own views as to what should be done under the existing state of affairs. On the twenty-first of the same month, the Judiciary Committee of the Senate reported a bill to enforce the collection of the revenue, where any obstructions were offered to the officers employed in that duty.

The aspect of affairs was now alarming in the extreme. The administration party in the House had shown itself utterly incapable of devising a tariff likely to be accepted by a majority of that body. The session was rapidly drawing to a close. South Carolina had deferred the period of its collision with the General Government in the hope that some mea-



sure of adjustment would be adopted by Congress. This hope seemed to be daily growing fainter. Should the enforcing bill not be carried into effect against the Nullifiers, the Tariff was still menaced by the Federal administration, avowedly hostile to the protective system.

At this juncture, Henry Clay, deeply impressed with the importance of the crisis, stepped forward to reconcile conflicting interests, and to avert the direful consequences which would result from the farther delay of an adjustment. On the eleventh of February he introduced his celebrated COMPROMISE BILL, providing for a gradual reduction of duties until 1842, when 20 per cent. at a home valuation should be the rate, "until otherwise regulated by law."

Mr. Clay introduced this bill with some pertinent and impressive remarks, in which he deplored the distracted and portentous condition of the country, and appealed strongly to the patriotism and good sense of Congress to apply a remedy. The bill underwent a long and vehement discussion. None could deny the purity and loftiness of the motives which had led to its presentation; but it was vehemently opposed by many. Mr. Smith, of Maryland, opposed it, because "it contained nothing but protection from beginning to end." Mr. Forsyth exulted over the admission, which had been made by Mr. Clay, that "the Tariff was in danger." "It is," said Mr. F., "at its last gasp—no hellebore can cure it." The Southern members opposed the bill mainly because it provided for a home valuation.

Towards the close of the debate, a personal difficulty arose between Mr. Poindexter, of Mississippi, and Mr. Webster. The former, in the course of his reply to a very powerful attack from Mr. Webster upon the Compromise Bill of Mr. Clay, made reference to the course of Mr. W., during the war of 1812. Mr. Webster declaimed all explanation, and Mr. Poindexter immediately declared that he "felt the most perfect contempt for the Senator from Massachusetts." Mr. Clay interfered, with his usual generosity, and in a few remarks, complimentary alike to both Senators, effected a mutually satisfactory explanation.

Mr. Clay had conceived the idea of the Compromise in Philadelphia in December, 1832, when he was passing a few weeks with his brother-in-law, the late James Brown, Esq. who had fixed his residence in that city, after his mission to France. The reflection of Gen. Jackson to the Presidency had been made known the month before, and Mr. Clay had commenced his journey from Ashland to Washington not in the best spirits but resolved to do his duty. Jackson's power was then at its zenith. He had vetoed the charter of the Bank of the United States. He was triumphantly re-elected. His power seemed resistless. Nevertheless, Mr. Clay was resolved to fight on, and to fight to the last.

He believed the President insincere in his professions of attachment to the Protective policy; that, under the delusive name of a judicious Tariff, he concealed the most deadly and determined hostility to the Protection of American Industry. Mr. Clay saw the partisans of "free trade" supporting Gen. Jackson, with the greatest zeal; and knew that some of them counted upon subverting the whole system through the power and influence of that arbitrary

chief magistrate. He saw many of the members of Congress from States known to be friendly to the preservation of that policy, yet willing to go secretly, if not openly, as far as they dared go in asserting the overthrow of that policy.

In the mean time Nullification had assumed a threatening aspect. The supporters of that heresy had gone so far that, if no change in the Tariff took place, they must fight or be forever disgraced. Mr. Clay thought that if a Civil War were once begun it might extend itself to all the Southern States, which, although they did not approve of Nullification, would probably not be willing to stand by and see South Carolina crushed for extreme zeal in a cause, which was common to them all.

Such were the circumstances, under which, during the leisure Mr. Clay enjoyed with his friend, Mr. Brown, in Philadelphia, he directed his mind to the consideration of some healing scheme for the existing public troubles.

The terms of the Compromise Act substantially as it passed, were the result of Mr. Clay's reflections at that time. He communicated them to his friend, the lamented Senator Johnston, from Louisiana, who concurred with him heartily. A Committee of Manufacturers, consisting of Messrs. Bovie, Dupont, Richards and others, waited on Mr. Clay in Philadelphia, to consult with him on the impending dangers to the Protective policy. To them he broached his scheme, and they approved it. He mentioned it to Mr. Webster in Philadelphia, but that distinguished Senator did not agree with him. On reaching Washington, Mr. Clay communicated it to many practical Manufacturers; to Hezekiah Niles, Mr. Simmons of the Senate, from Rhode Island, and others. They agreed with him; and every practical Manufacturer of that day with whom he conversed (except Mr. Ellicott, of Maryland,) assented to the project. Most of their friends in Congress, especially in the Senate, followed their example. The chief opposition, it was thought, was to be traced to Mr. Webster and gentlemen who had a great deference for the opinion of the Massachusetts Senator.

Mr. Clay's own convictions being thus strengthened by the opinions of practical men, he resolved to proceed. He had no interviews with Southern Members on the subject of the contemplated proposal, until he had prepared and was about to submit the bill; at which time, he had one or two interviews with Mr. Calhoun, at Mr. Clay's lodgings. But through his friend, Governor Letcher of Kentucky, who was intimate with Mr. McDuffie and other Southern gentlemen, Mr. Clay ascertained their views. He found one highly favorable state of feeling—that they were so indignant with General Jackson for his Proclamation, and his determination to put down the Nullifiers by force if necessary, that they greatly preferred the difficulty should be settled rather by Mr. Clay than by the Administration.

Mr. J. M. Clayton of Delaware entered with great zeal into the views of Mr. Clay, and seconded his exertions with untiring, able, constant and strenuous endeavors. Often he would say to him, looking at Mr. Calhoun and other members from South Carolina, "Well, Clay, these are clever fellows, and it won't do to let old Jackson hang in— We must

save them if possible." Mr. Clayton belonged to a *mess* of seven or eight Senators, every one of whom was interested in the preservation of the protective policy. Without their votes, it was impossible that the Compromise should pass. They, through Mr. Clayton, insisted upon the home valuation, as a *sine qua non*, from which they would never depart. Mr. Clay told them that he would not give it up; and the Compromise Bill never could have passed without that feature of it.

The Southern Senators had declared that they would be content with whatever would satisfy the South Carolina Senators. Mr. Calhoun had manifested strong objections to the home valuation. Mr. Clay told him that he must concur in it, or the measure would be defeated. Mr. Calhoun appeared very reluctant to do so; and Mr. Clay went to the Senate on the day when the Bill was to be decided, uncertain as to what its fate would be. When the bill was taken up, Mr. Calhoun rose in his place and agreed to the home valuation, evidently, however, with reluctance.

Two great leading motives operated with Mr. Clay in bringing forward and supporting his measure of Compromise. The first was, that he believed the whole protective policy to be in the most imminent peril from the influence of Gen. Jackson and the dominion of his party. He believed that it could not possibly survive that session of Congress or the next, which would open with a vast increase of that influence and power. He had seen the gradual but insidious efforts to undermine the policy, sometimes openly avowed, frequently craftily concealed. He had seen that a bill was actually introduced by Mr. Verplanck, and then pending in the House of Representatives, which would have utterly subverted the whole policy. He knew, or believed, that there was a majority in the House, willing, although afraid to pass the bill. Witnessing the progress of that party, he did not doubt, that at the next session at least, they would acquire strength and courage sufficient to pass the bill. He could not contemplate the ruin, distress and destruction, which would ensue from its passage, without feelings of horror. He believed that the Compromise would avert these disasters, and secure adequate protection until the 30th June, 1842. And he hoped, that in the mean time the public mind would become enlightened, and reconciled to a policy, which he had ever believed essential to the national prosperity. *But for the partial experiments, which were made upon the currency of the country, leading to the utmost disorder in the exchanges, and the business of society, it is yet the belief of Mr. Clay and his friends, that the measure of Protection secured by the Compromise Act up to the 31st December, 1841, would have enabled our Manufacturers to have flourished and prospered.*

Another leading motive with Mr. Clay, in proposing the Compromise, was *to restore harmony, and preserve the Union from danger; to arrest a civil war, which, beginning with South Carolina, he feared might spread throughout all the Southern States.*

It may be added, that a third and powerful motive, which he felt intensely, although he did not always avow it, was *an invincible repugnance to placing under the command of General Jackson*

*such a vast military power as might be necessary to enforce the laws and put down any resistance to them in South Carolina, and which might extend he knew not where.* He could not think, without the most serious apprehensions, of entrusting a man of his vehement passions with such an immense power. He could not think without feelings of indescribable dread, of the effusion of blood, the danger to the Union, and the danger to the liberties of all of us, which might arise from the application of such a force in the hands of a man already too powerful, and flushed with recent victory.

It may be further added, that Mr. Clay thought he perceived, *with some a desire to push matters to extremity.* He thought he beheld a disposition to see South Carolina and the South punished. Indeed the sentiment was more than once expressed to him: "Let them put down the Tariff—let them bring ruin, 'embarrassment and distress on the country—the country will rise with renewed vigor. We shall have the policy, which we wish to prevail, firmly 'and inviolably fixed.'" He thought even that he perceived a willingness that the effect produced by the memorable Hartford Convention at the North, should be neutralized by the effect, which might arise out of putting down by force the nullification of South-Carolina. He could not sympathize in these feelings and sentiments. He was for peace, for harmony, for union, and for the preservation too of the Protective System. He no more believed then than now, that Government was instituted to make great and perilous experiments upon the happiness of a free people—still less experiments of blood and civil war.

After the introduction of the bill of Compromise and its reference to the Committee, predictions of the failure of the measure were confidently put forth. Even in the committee-room it was asserted, that there was no chance for its passage; and Members rose from their places with the intention of leaving the room, without agreeing upon any report. Mr. Clay said to them, with decision and firmness: "Gentlemen, this bill has been referred to us, and it is our duty to report it, in some form or other, to the Senate—and it *shall* be reported." Some slight amendments were agreed upon, and the bill *was* reported. Its subsequent fate is known.

In bringing about the adoption of the measure, Messrs. Clayton and Letcher are entitled to the most liberal praise, as the efficient coadjutors of its author.

The private history of the Compromise Act remains yet to be written. Should it ever be given to the world, it will throw new lustre upon the patriotic and self-sacrificing character of Mr. Clay. It will exhibit in a still stronger light his disinterestedness—his devotion to country—his elevation above all selfish impulses and personal ends—his magnanimity, and his generous intrepidity of spirit.

The Compromise Bill passed the House February 26th, 1833, by a vote of 120 to 84. It passed the Senate the ensuing first of March by a vote of 29 to 16—Mr. Webster voting against it. Mr. Clay was now once more hailed as the preserver of the Republic—as the great Pacificator. The dark, portentous cloud, big with civil discord and disunion, which had been hanging over the country, rolled away and was scattered. The South and the North were reconciled; and confidence and prosperity were restored. **Is not**



such a civic triumph worth all the pæns ever shouted in the ears of a military conqueror? It placed Mr. Clay in a commanding and elevated position—and drew upon him the eyes of the whole Nation as a liberal, sound and true-hearted statesman, in whose hands the interests of all sections would be safe.

The act was characteristic of his whole public career. The only horizon which bounds his political vision is the horizon of his country. There is nothing small, narrow, sectional in his views, interests or hopes. North, South, East and West—they are all equally dear to him. Kentucky—noble Kentucky—where he is cherished and honored as such a Statesman and Patriot ought to be cherished and honored by such a gallant and generous constituency—he regards with the attachment and devotion, with which no generous nature can fail to be inspired for the soil where his first honors were won, the early theatre of his fame and its fruition—the home of his hopes and his heart. But he looks abroad from the State of his adoption, and down from the pinnacle of his elevation—and there lie Massachusetts, and New-York, and the Old Dominion, proud of the blended honors of their Lexington, Saratoga and Yorktown, radiant with the common glories of their Adamses, Hamiltons and Washingtons—and he feels that in these glories and honors—in those traditions and records of achievements—in the fame of those illustrious men, he has himself an equal inheritance with any of their children. The influence of this noble, national spirit pervades the whole of Mr. Clay's public career, and is stamped upon all those great measures by which, in moments of exigency and darkness, he has revived the desponding hopes and retrieved the sinking fortunes of the Union.\*

In the autumn of 1833, Mr. Clay, accompanied by his lady, fulfilled a design which he had long contemplated, of visiting the Eastern cities. His journey was one continued ovation. Arriving at Baltimore early in October, he was waited upon by thousands of citizens, who came to pay their tribute of gratitude and respect. At Philadelphia he was received at the Chesnut-street wharf by an immense concourse of people with enthusiastic huzzas, and conducted to the U. S. Hotel by his friend John Sergeant. Arriving at New-York he was escorted to his lodgings by a large procession of gentlemen on horseback; and all parties seemed to unite in their testimonials of welcome. A special meeting of the Board of Aldermen was held, and the Governor's room in the City Hall appropriated to his use, where he was visited by a constant succession of citizens. At Newport and Providence he was greeted with every possible demonstration of welcome and admira-

tion; and on reaching Boston he was met and conducted to the Tremont House by a very numerous cavalcade.

At all these cities, and many others on his route, he received pressing invitations to public dinners; but being accompanied by his family, he had, on leaving Kentucky, prescribed to himself the rule, to which he rigidly adhered, of declining all such invitations. By all classes in New England, and particularly by the manufacturing population, Mr. Clay was received as a friend and benefactor. The cordiality of his welcome showed that his motives in originating the Compromise Act had been duly appreciated by those who were most deeply interested in the preservation of the American System. He visited many of the manufacturing towns, and on all occasions met with a reception which indicated how strongly the affections of the People were enlisted in his favor. At Faneuil Hall and on Bunker Hill, he received Addresses from Committees, to which he replied in his usual felicitous manner. While at Boston, a pair of elegant silver pitchers, weighing one hundred and fifty ounces, were presented to him by the young men. A great crowd was present; and Mr. Clay, though taken by surprise, spoke for about half an hour in a manner to enchant his hearers. The following apposite Toast was offered by one of the young men on the occasion: "Our Guest and Gift—our Friend and Pitcher!"

While at Salem, Mr. Clay attended a lecture at the Lyceum, when the audience, numbering about twelve hundred persons, spontaneously rose, and loudly greeted him on his entrance. On the fourth of November, he left Boston with his family on his return journey. He took the route through Massachusetts to Albany, passing through Worcester, Hartford, Springfield, Northampton, Pittsfield, &c. and being every where hailed by a grateful People with every demonstration of heartfelt attachment and reverence.

At Troy and Albany, the manifestations of popular attachment were not less marked than in Massachusetts. In both places the People rose up as one man to do him honor; and at both places he made replies to the addresses presented to him, which are excellent specimens of his familiar style of eloquence. The multitudes of citizens who met, followed and waited upon him at every point, in rapid succession, indicated how large a space he occupied in the public heart. As he said in one of the numerous speeches which he was called upon to make, during his tour, "he had been taken into custody, 'made captive of, but placed withal in such delightful bondage, that he could find no strength and no desire to break away from it."

The popular enthusiasm did not seem to have abated as he returned through those cities which he had but recently visited. On his way to Washington, he was met at New-York, Newark, Trenton, Philadelphia, Wilmington and Baltimore, by delegations of citizens, whose attentions rendered his progress one of triumphal interest. He reached the Seat of Government in season to be present at the opening of Congress.

\* The following passage is an extract from a speech delivered by John Tyler in the Virginia House of Delegates, in 1833, in favor of the Distribution of the Proceeds of the Public Lands, as recommended by the Kentucky Statesman:

"In my deliberate opinion, there was but one man, who could have arrested the then course of things, (the tendency of Nullification to dissolve the Union,) and that man was HENRY CLAY. It rarely happens, Mr. Speaker, to the most gifted, and talented, and patriotic, to record their names up on the page of history, in characters worthy and enduring. But, sir, if I have assessed his course from civil war—if I have preserved the Constitution and Union from hazard and total wreck, constitutes any ground for an immortal and undying name among men, then I do believe, that he has won for himself that high renown. I speak what I do know, for I was an actor in the scenes of that perilous period. When he rose in that Senate Chamber, and held in his hand the Olive Branch of Peace, I who had not known what envy was before, envied him. I would fain see him my fellow-countryman, and still prouder that the *Slashes of Hanover*, within the limits of my old District, gave him birth."



## CHAPTER XII.

The Public Lands—Anecdote—Mr. Clay's Report—Its provisions—Passage of the Land Bill—It is vetoed by Gen. Jackson—Right of the Old States to a share in the Public Domain—Mr. Clay's efforts—Adjustment of the question—Mr. Van Buren's Nomination as Minister to England—Opposed by Mr. Clay.

MR. CLAY'S course in regard to the Public Lands presents a striking illustration of his patriotic disinterestedness and self-sacrificing devotion to the cause of justice. The characteristic traits which he displayed upon this question remind us of an anecdote of him, related a few years since by that eminent Statesman and high-minded Whig, William C. Preston, in a speech at Philadelphia. "On one occasion," said Mr. P. "he did me the honor to send 'for and consult with me. It was in reference to a 'step' he was about to take, and which will, perhaps, come to your minds without more direct allusions. After stating what he proposed, I suggested 'whether there would not be danger in it—whether 'such a course would not injure his own prospects, 'as well as those of the Whig party in general?—'His reply was—'I did not send for you to ask what 'might be the effects of the proposed movement on 'my prospects, but whether it is right. I WOULD 'RATHER BE RIGHT, THAN BE PRESIDENT.'"

On the twenty-second of March, 1832, Mr. Bibb, of Kentucky, moved an inquiry into the expediency of reducing the price of the Public Lands. Mr. Robinson, of Illinois, moved a further inquiry into the expediency of transferring the Public Territory to the States within which it lies, upon reasonable terms. With the view of embarrassing Mr. Clay, these topics were inappropriately referred by the Administration party to the Committee on Manufactures, of which he was a member. It was supposed by his enemies that he would make a "bid for the Presidency," by favoring the interested States at the expense of justice and sound policy. But he did not stop to calculate the consequences to himself. He did not attempt to evade or defer the question. He met it promptly. He expressed his opinions firmly and boldly; and those opinions, thus expressed, wise, equitable, conclusive, were immediately seized upon for the purpose of breaking him down in the New States. The design had been to embarrass him by holding out the alternative of baffling the cupidity of a portion of the People of the West, or shocking the sense of justice and invading the rights of the Old States—to injuriously affect his popularity either with the New or the Old States, or with both. But when was Henry Clay known to shrink from the responsibility of an avowal of opinion upon a question of public moment? In about three weeks after the matter was referred to the Committee, he presented to Congress a most luminous, able and conclusive Report, and in the End appended to it arranged the details of a wise and desirable plan, which no subsequent legislation was able to improve.

Mr. Clay regarded the National Domain in the light of a "common fund," to be managed and disposed of for the "common benefit of all the States." This property, he thought, should be prudently and providently administered; that it should not be

wantonly sacrificed at inadequate prices, and that it should not be unjustly abandoned, in violation of the trust under which it was held, to a favored section of the country. These principles were the basis of his Bill, which provided—

I. That after the thirty-first day of December, 1832, twelve and a half per cent. of the nett proceeds of the Public Lands, sold within their limits, should be paid to Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Alabama, Missouri and Mississippi, over and above what these States were severally entitled to by the compacts of their admission into the Union; to be applied to Internal Improvements and purposes of Education within those States, under the direction of their Legislatures—independently of the provisions for the construction and maintenance of the Cumberland Road.

II. After this deduction, the nett proceeds were to be distributed among the (then) twenty-four States, according to their respective Federal Representative population; to be applied to such objects of Internal Improvement, Education, or Colonization, as might be designated by their respective Legislatures, or the reimbursement of any previous debt contracted for Internal Improvements.

III. The act to continue in force for five years, except in the event of a war with any foreign power; and additional provisions to be made for any new State that might be meanwhile admitted to the Union.

IV. The minimum price of the public lands not to be increased; and not less than \$10,000 per annum to be applied to complete the public surveys.

V. Land offices to be discontinued in districts where for two successive years the proceeds of sales should be insufficient to pay the salaries of the officers employed.

VI. That certain designated quantities of land should be granted to six of the new States, not to be sold at a less price than the minimum price of lands sold by the United States, to be applied to Internal Improvements.

Such were the simple and just provisions of the Land Bill of Mr. Clay. To the new States they were abundantly liberal, without violating the terms of the original cession by the old States; for the money laid out in the new States for Internal Improvements subject to the use of the United States, may be justly regarded as for the "common benefit" of the Union.

The introduction of the report and bill created no little surprise and excitement in the Senate. It was hardly expected of a candidate for the Presidency, that he should have so promptly and peremptorily rejected the opportunity, thus temptingly presented, of bidding for the votes of the new States by holding out the prospect at least of agrandizement. But on this subject, as on all others, Mr. Clay took the broad national ground. He looked at the question as a statesman, not as a politician. He suffered no individual inducements to influence his opinions or his policy. His paramount sense of duty; his habitual sense of the sacredness of compacts; his superiority to local, sectional, and personal considerations, were never more conspicuously and more honorably manifested than on this occasion.

The Land Bill was made the special order for the 20th of June, when it was taken up by Mr. Clay,

\* His Speech on Slavery, and the reception of Abolition petitions.

and advocated with his usual eloquence and ability. Mr. Benton replied. His policy was to reduce the price of a portion of the Public Lands, and to surrender the residue to the States in which they lie. It would have given to the State of Missouri 25,000,000 of acres, or about 160 acres to every individual in the State, black and white; while the State of New-York, by whose blood and treasure, in part, this great Domain was acquired, would have been cut off without an acre! Various motions were made in the Senate for the postponement and amendment of Mr. Clay's bill. The policy of reducing the price was urged with great pertinacity by the friends of the Administration; but the objections of the report to this policy were justly regarded as unanswerable and insurmountable; and, on the third of July, the bill, essentially in the same form as reported, received its final passage in the Senate by a vote of 20 yeas to 18 nays. The late period of the session at which it was sent to the House, and the conflict of opinion in that body in respect to some of its provisions, enabled the Administration to effect its postponement to the first Monday of the following December, by a vote of 91 yeas to 88 nays.

This, of course, was equivalent to its rejection. But such were the wisdom and obvious equity of its provisions, and so highly did it commend itself to the good sense of the people, that the Administration party was compelled to yield to the uncontrollable force of public opinion. At the next session, therefore, of Congress, the bill was again taken up, and passed the Senate by a vote of 24 to 20, and the popular branch by a vote of 96 to 40. It was sent to the President for his approval.

Notwithstanding the unprecedented favor which it had found among the immediate Representatives of the people, it was "trampled," as Mr. Benton subsequently boasted, under the "big foot of President Jackson." The dissolution of Congress, before the expiration of the constitutional term for which he was authorized to retain the bill, enabled that self-willed and despotic Chief Magistrate to defeat the obvious will of the people. If it had been returned to Congress at the session of its passage it would have become a law by a two-thirds vote. It was therefore withheld, and, at the next session, on the 5th of December, 1833, was sent back with the veto of the President; and the veto, as we have every reason to believe, sprang from the personal hostility of General Jackson toward the author of the Land Bill, and an apprehension that it would augment the popularity of a rival, whom he feared and hated.

The principles of the Veto Message accorded with those which had been already promulgated by Mr. Benton. General Jackson declared himself in favor of reducing the price of a portion of the Public Lands and of surrendering the residue to the States in which they lie; and withdrawing the machinery of our land system. He objected to Mr. Clay's plan of giving an extra 12½ per cent. of the proceeds of the sales within their own limits to the new States, as an "indirect and undisguised violation of the pledge given by Congress to the States before a single cession was made; abrogating the condition on which some of the States came into the Union; and setting at nought the terms of cession spread upon the face of every grant under which the title of that

portion of the Public Lands are held by the Federal Government." Such were the shocking violations of principle and compact, involved in the limited and equitable grant to the new States, contemplated by the bill of Mr. Clay; and yet we were gravely told by General Jackson, in the same breath, that to sell the lands for a nominal price—to withdraw the land machinery of the Government altogether—to abandon the lands—to surrender the lands—to give them to the States in which they lie—"impaired no principle and violated no compact." It was a gross violation of compact—it was a flagrant outrage upon principle, to surrender a *part*—but the outrage was repaired, and the compact kept inviolate by an abandonment of the *whole*! Such was the reasoning of the Veto Message!

General Jackson had been obliged to change his grounds on this question, in order to thwart the views of Mr. Clay. In his Annual Message of December 4, 1832, he had recommended a measure fundamentally similar. But the measure now presented to him, though it had passed Congress by triumphant majorities, had been suggested, although not voluntarily, by an individual who shared no part in his councils or his affections—by one, whom he had ungenerously injured, and whom he therefore disliked. He preferred the gratification of his malevolence to the preservation of his consistency. The consequence was his arbitrary retention of the bill, by an irregular and unprecedented proceeding, and his subsequent veto.

The right of the old States to the Public Domain is the right of conquest and of compact. Those lands were won by the blood and treasure of the thirteen Provinces. Their title deeds were signed, sealed and delivered on the plains of Yorktown. When the clouds of the Revolution had rolled away, and the discordant elements of the Confederation were taking the shape and system of our present glorious Constitution—the sages and soldiers of liberty assembled for the establishment of a more perfect union. To realize this grand end of their labors, they recommended to the thirteen States to make a common cession of their Territories to the Federal Government; that they might be administered for their common benefit, and stand as a pledge for the redemption of the Public Debt. Patriotic Virginia, following the wise councils of her Washingtons, Henrys and Jeffersons, surrendered without a murmur her boundless domain—now the seat of numerous new States, and still stretching thousands of leagues into the unsurveyed and uninhabited wilderness. Her sister States, though they had less to surrender, surrendered all that they possessed; and in return for this liberal and patriotic abandonment of local advantages for the common good, the Congress of the United States pledged itself by the most solemn compact to administer this vast Domain for the common benefit of its original proprietors, and of such new States as should thereafter be admitted to the Union.

The 2d of May, 1834, Mr. Clay made a report from the Committee on Public Lands, in relation to the President's return of the Land Bill. In this paper he exposes with great ability the inconclusiveness of the President's reasons. For some ten years, Mr. Clay was the vigilant, laborious, and finally successful opponent of the monstrous project of the admin-



istration for squandering the Public Domain and robbing the old States. To his unremitting exertions we shall have been indebted for the successive defeats of the advocates of the plunder system, and for the final adjustment of the question according to his own equitable propositions. By this adjustment, all sections of the country are treated with rigid impartiality. The interest of no one State is sacrificed to that of the others. The West, the North, the South and the East, all fare alike. A more wise and provident system could not have been devised. It will stand as a perpetual monument of the enlarged patriotism, unerring sagacity, and uncompromising justice of its author.

The question of confirming Mr. Van Buren's nomination as Minister to England, came before the Senate during the Session of 1831-2. The conduct of that gentleman while Secretary of State, in his instructions to Mr. McLane, had excited general displeasure. Not content with exerting his ingenuity to put his own country in the wrong and the British Government in the right, Mr. Van Buren had endeavored to attach to Mr. Adams's administration the discredit of bringing forward unfounded "pretensions," and by himself disclaiming those pretensions, to propitiate the favor of the British King. Upon the subject of the Colonial Trade, he said: "*To set up the acts of the late Administration, as the cause of a forfeiture of privileges which would otherwise be extended to the people of the United States, would, under existing circumstances, be unjust in itself, and could not fail to excite their deepest SENSIBILITY.*"

The parasitical, anti-American spirit displayed throughout these celebrated instructions, constituted a sufficient ground for the rejection of Mr. Van Buren's nomination. Mr. Clay's personal relations toward that individual had always been of a friendly character, but he did not allow them to influence his sense of public justice. He addressed the Senate emphatically against the nomination, declaring that his main objection arose out of the instructions; the offensive passages in which he quoted.

"On our side," said he, "according to Mr. Van Buren, all was wrong; on the British side, all was right. We brought forward nothing but *claims and pretensions*; the British Government asserted on the other hand a clear and incontestible *right*. We erred in too tenaciously and too long insisting upon our *pretensions*, and not yielding at once to their *just demands*. And Mr. McLane was commanded to avail himself of all the circumstances in his power to *mitigate our offence*, and to dissuade the British Government from allowing their feelings justly incurred by the past conduct of the party driven from power, to have an adverse influence toward the American party now in power. Sir, was this becoming language from one independent nation to another? Was it proper in the mouth of an American minister? Was it in conformity with the high, unsullied, and dignified character of our previous diplomacy? Was it not, on the contrary, the language of an humble vassal to a proud and haughty lord? Was it not prostrating and degrading the American Eagle before the British Lion?"

The nomination of Mr. Van Buren was rejected in the Senate by the casting vote of the Vice President, Mr. Calhoun. It has been said that this act was a blunder in policy on the part of the Opposition in the Senate—that it made a political martyr of a wily and intriguing antagonist, and commended

him to the sympathy and vindictory favor of his party. All this may be true; but it does not affect the principle of the measure. Mr. Clay did not lack the sagacity to foresee its probable consequences; but, where the honor of his country was concerned, expediency was with him always an inferior consideration.

## CHAPTER XIII.

The Currency Question—Gen. Jackson's "humble efforts" to Improve our Condition—Recharter of the U. S. Bank, and the President's Veto—Mr. Clay's Speech upon the subject—Character of the Veto Power—Removal of the Deposits—Secretaries Danne and Taney—Mr. Clay's relations toward the Bank—His Resolutions in regard to the Removal of the Deposits—His Speech—Anecdote—Passage of Mr. Clay's Resolutions—The Protest—Its Doctrines—Eloquent Debates in the Senate—Mr. Leigh—Interesting Incident—The Protest Excluded from the Journal—Unrepeated exertions of Mr. Clay—Public Distress—Memorials—Futile Comparison—The Panic Session—Anecdote—Mr. Clay's Departure for Kentucky—Serious Accident.

FOR the last twelve years the country has been kept in a fever of perpetual excitement, or in a state of alternate paralysis and convulsion, by the agitation of the Currency question. General Jackson found us in 1829 in a condition of general prosperity. The Government was administered with Republican economy. The Legislature, the Judiciary and the Executive, every one wielding its constitutional powers, moved on harmoniously in their respective spheres; and the result was a system that secured the happiness of the people and challenged the admiration of the civilized world. Commerce, agriculture, manufactures and the mechanic arts flourished; lending mutual aid, and enjoying a common prosperity, fostered by the Government and diffusing blessings among the community. The banking system was sound throughout the States. Our currency was uniform in value, and the local banks were compelled to restrict their issues to their ability of redemption in specie. There was no wild speculation. Industrious enterprise was the only source of fortune. Labor was amply employed, abundantly compensated, and safe in the enjoyment of its wages. The habits of the people were simple and democratic. Our foreign credit was without a stain, and the whole machinery of Government, trade and currency, had been brought to a state approaching the utmost limit to be attained by human ingenuity and human wisdom.

In 1830, Gen. Jackson commenced his "humble efforts" for improving our condition. He advised, in his message of that year, the establishment of a Treasury Bank, with the view, among other things, of "strengthening the States," by leaving in their hands "the means of furnishing the local paper currency through their own banks." This was his original plan, and in this message we hear nothing of a better currency, or the substitution of the precious metals for bank paper. In the following year he again brought the subject before Congress, and left it to the "investigation of an enlightened people and their representatives." The investigation took place; and Congress passed a bill for the recharter of the United States Bank. This bill was peremptorily *refoed* by General Jackson, who condemned it as premature, and modestly remarked in regard to a Bank, "Had the Executive been called upon to furnish the project of such an institution, the duty would have been cheerfully performed."



Mr. Clay was one of the foremost in denouncing the extraordinary doctrines of this Veto Message. On the 12th of July, 1832, he addressed the Senate upon the subject. We have already given an exposition of his views upon the question of a Bank. They are too well known to the Country to require reiteration in this place. They have been frankly avowed on all fitting occasions. Touching the Veto power, that monarchical feature in our Constitution, his opinions were such as might have been expected from the leader of the Democratic Party of 1815. He considered it irreconcilable with the genius of a Representative Government; and cited the Constitution of Kentucky, by which, if after the rejection of a bill by the Governor, it shall be passed by a majority of all the members elected to both Houses, it becomes a law notwithstanding the Governor's objection.

The abuses to which this power has been subjected under the Administrations of Jackson and Tyler, call loudly for an amendment of the Federal Constitution. The veto of a single magistrate on a bill passed by a numerous body of popular Representatives, immediately expressing the opinion of all classes of the community, and all sections of the country, indicates obviously an enormous prerogative. It must so strike every one who has ever reasoned on Government. When the People of Paris called upon Mirabeau to save them from the grant of such a power, telling him that, if granted, all was lost, they spoke a sentiment that is as universal as the sense and spirit of Liberty. When we reflect that no King of England has dared to exercise this power since the year 1692, we cannot but feel that there must have been good reason in the jealousy of the People, and in the apprehension of the Crown. Mr. Burke, in his celebrated letter to the Sheriff of Bristol, observes, in reference to the exercise of this power by the King, that it is "wisely forborne. Its repose may be the preservation of its existence, and its existence may be the means of saving the Constitution itself, on an occasion worthy of bringing it forth." So high a power was it considered by Mr. Jefferson, that he was at one time decidedly in favor of associating the Judiciary with the Executive in its exercise.

It is in this light that the Veto power should be considered—as a most serious and sacred one, to be exercised only on emergencies worthy to call it forth. On all questions of mere opinion, mere expediency, the Representatives of the People are the best, as they are the legitimate judges.

The monstrous doctrine had been advanced by General Jackson, in his Veto Message, that every public officer may interpret the Constitution as he pleases. On this point Mr. Clay said, with great cogency:—"I conceive, with great deference, that the President has mistaken the purport of the oath to support the Constitution of the United States. No one swears to support it as he understands it, but to support it simply as it is in truth. All men are bound to obey the laws, of which the Constitution is the supreme; but must they obey them as they are, or as they understand them? If the obligation of obedience is limited and controlled by the measure of information; in other words, if the party is bound to obey the Constitution only as he understands it, what would be the conse-

quence? There would be general disorder and confusion throughout every branch of Administration, from the highest to the lowest officers—universal Nullification."

During the Session of 1832-3, General Jackson declared that the Public Deposits were not safe in the vaults of the United States Bank, and called upon Congress to look into the subject and to augment what he then considered the "limited powers" of the Secretary of the Treasury over the Public Money. Congress made the desired investigation, and the House of Representatives, by a vote of 109 to 46, declared the Deposits to be perfectly safe. Resolved on gratifying his feelings of personal animosity toward the friends of the Bank, General Jackson did not allow this explicit declaration on the part of the immediate Agents of the People to shake his despotic purpose. During the Autumn of 1833, he resolved upon that most arbitrary of arbitrary measures, the removal of the Deposits. The Cabinet Council, to whom he originally proposed this measure, are said to have disapproved of it in the most decided terms. Mr. McLane, the Secretary of the Treasury, refused to lend to it his assistance. He was accordingly translated to the office of Secretary of State, made vacant by the appointment of Mr. Livingston to the French Mission; and William J. Duane of Philadelphia took his place at the Head of the Treasury Department. Mr. Duane, however, did not turn out to be the pliable tool which the President had expected to find him. On the 20th of September, 1833, it was authoritatively announced to the public that the Deposits would be removed. The next day Mr. Duane made known to the President his resolution, neither voluntarily to withdraw from his post nor to be made the instrument of illegally removing the Public Treasures. The consequence was, the rude dismissal of the independent Secretary from office on the 23d of September. Mr. Taney, who had sustained the views of the President, was made his successor; and the People's Money was removed from the Depository where the law had placed it, and scattered among irresponsible State Institutions under the control of greedy partisans.

The Congressional Session of 1833-4, was one of extraordinary interest, in consequence of the discussion of this high-handed measure.

In his Message to Congress, the President said: "Since the adjournment of Congress, the Secretary of the Treasury has directed the Money of the United States to be deposited in certain State Banks designated by him; and he will immediately lay before you his reasons for this direction. I concur with him entirely in the view he has taken of the subject; and, some months before the removal, I urged upon the Department the propriety of taking the step." The 'reasons' adduced by Mr. Taney for lending his aid to the seizure of the Public Money, were such as might have been expected from an adroit lawyer. However satisfactory they might have been to General Jackson and his party, they were utterly insufficient to justify the act in the eyes of dispassionate and clear-minded men. Mr. Taney undertook to sustain his position by a precedent which he assumed to find in a letter addressed by Mr. Crawford, when Secretary of the

Treasury, to the President of the Mechanics' Bank of New-York. On the 19th of December, Mr. Clay introduced Resolutions into the Senate calling upon Mr. Taney for a copy of the letter, an extract from which he had cited in his Report.

In his remarks upon the occasion of presenting these Resolutions, Mr. Clay made some observations in regard to his own personal relations toward the Bank. An individual high in office had allowed himself to assert that a dishonorable connection had subsisted between him (Mr. C.) and that Institution. Mr. Clay said that when the Charter, then existing, was granted, he voted for it; and, having done so, he did not feel himself at liberty to subscribe, and he did not subscribe for a single share in the Stock of the Bank, although he confidently anticipated a great rise in its value. A few years afterward, during the Presidency of Mr. Jones, it was thought by some of his friends at Philadelphia, expedient to make him (Mr. C.) a Director of the Bank of the United States; and he was made a Director, without any consultation with him. For that purpose, five shares were purchased for him by a friend, for which he (Mr. C.) afterward paid. When he ceased to be a Director, a short time subsequently, he disposed of those shares; since which time he has never been proprietor of a single share.

When Mr. Cheves was appointed President of the Bank, its affairs in the States of Kentucky and Ohio were in great disorder; and Mr. Clay's professional services were engaged during several years for the Bank in those States. He brought a vast number of suits, and transacted a great amount of professional business for the Bank. Among other suits, was one for the recovery of \$100,000, seized under the authority of a law of Ohio, which he carried through the Inferior and Supreme Courts. He was paid by the Bank the usual compensation for these services and no more. No professional fees were ever more honestly and fairly earned. For upwards of eight years past, however, he had not been the counsel for the Bank. He did not owe the Bank, or any of its Branches, a solitary cent. Some twelve or fifteen years before, owing to the failure of a friend, a large amount of debt had been thrown upon Mr. Clay, as his endorser; and it was principally due to the Bank of the United States. Mr. Clay commenced a system of rigid economy—established for himself a *sinking fund*—worked hard, and paid off the debt without receiving from the Bank the slightest favor.

The resolutions of Mr. Clay, calling upon the Secretary of the Treasury for a copy of the letter, said to have been written by Mr. Crawford, passed the Senate; and on the 13th of December, a communication was received from Mr. Taney, the character of which was evasive and unsatisfactory. The Senate had asked for documents, and he gave them arguments. In reference to Mr. Crawford's opinions, Mr. Clay said, that although there was plausibility in the construction, which the Secretary had given to them, yet he, (Mr. Clay) would undertake to show that the opinions ascribed to Mr. Crawford in reference to the Bank Charter, were never asserted by him.

On the 26th of December, 1833, Mr. Clay laid the following resolutions before the Senate:

1. *Resolved*, That, by dismissing the late Sec-

retary of the Treasury, because he would not, contrary to his sense of his own duty, remove the money of the United States in deposit with the Bank of the United States and Branches, in conformity with the President's opinion; and by appointing his successor to effect such removal, which has been done, the President has assumed the exercise of a power over the Treasury of the United States, not granted by the Constitution and Laws, and dangerous to the liberties of the people.

2. *Resolved*, That the reasons assigned by the Secretary of the Treasury, for the removal of the money of the United States from the United States Bank and its Branches, communicated to Congress on the 3d day of December, 1833, are unsatisfactory and insufficient."

Mr. Clay's speech in support of the resolutions was delivered partly on the 26th and partly on the 30th of December; and it is one of the most masterly efforts of eloquence ever heard within the walls of the Capitol. In force and amplitude of argument, variety and appropriateness of illustration, and energy of diction, it is equalled by few oratorical productions in the English language. During its delivery, the Lower House was almost deserted; and the galleries of the Senate Chamber were filled by a mutely attentive audience, whose enthusiasm occasionally broke forth in unparliamentary bursts of applause—a demonstration, which is rarely elicited except when the feelings are aroused to an extraordinary degree.

In his exordium, Mr. Clay briefly glanced at some of the principal usurpations and abuses of the Administration:

"We are," said he, "in the midst of a revolution, hitherto bloodless, but rapidly tending towards a total change of the pure Republican character of the Government, and to the concentration of all power in the hands of one man. The powers of Congress are paralyzed, except when exerted in conformity with his will, by a frequent and extraordinary exercise of the Executive Veto, not anticipated by the founders of the Constitution, and not practised by any of the predecessors of the present Chief Magistrate. And, to cramp them still more, a new expedient is springing into use, of withholding altogether bills which have received the sanction of both Houses of Congress, thereby cutting off all opportunity of passing them, even if, after their return, the members should be unanimous in their favor. The Constitutional participation of the Senate in the appointing power is virtually abolished by the constant use of the power of removal from office, without any known cause, and by the appointment of the same individual to the same office, after his rejection by the Senate. How often have we, Senators, felt that the check of the Senate, instead of being, as the Constitution intended, a salutary control, was an idle ceremony?"

"The Judiciary has not been exempted from the prevailing rage for innovation. Decisions of the tribunals deliberately pronounced have been contemptuously disregarded, and the sanctity of numerous Treaties openly violated. Our Indian relations, coeval with the existence of the Government, and recognized and established by numerous laws and treaties, have been subverted; the rights of the helpless and unfortunate aborigines trampled in the dust, and they brought under subjection to unknown laws, in which they have no voice, promulgated in an unknown language. The most extensive and most valuable Public Domain, that ever fell to the lot of one Nation, is threatened with a total sacrifice. The general currency of the country—the life-blood of all its business—is in the most imminent danger of universal disorder and confusion. The power of Internal Improve-



ment lies crushed beneath the Veto. The system of Protection of American Industry was snatched from impending destruction at the last session; but we are now coolly told by the Secretary of the Treasury, without a blush, 'that it is understood to be *conceded on all hands*, that a Tariff for Protection merely is to be finally abandoned.' By the 3d of March, 1837, if the progress of innovation continue, there will be scarcely a vestige remaining of the Government and its policy, as it existed prior to the 3d of March, 1829."

In the paper read to his Cabinet on the 18th of September, 1833, and afterwards published in the newspapers, but which he refused to communicate to the Senate, when called upon by them so to do, President Jackson is made to employ terms of blandishment toward his new Secretary of the Treasury, as if to gild the shackles of dictation imposed by Executive power in regard to the removal of the deposits. He says, he trusts that the Secretary will see in his remarks, "only the frank and respectful declarations of the opinions which the President has formed on a measure of great National interest, deeply affecting the character and usefulness of his Administration, and not a spirit of dictation, which the President would be as careful to avoid, as ready to resist."

Mr. Clay very happily illustrates the hypocrisy of this deferential language. "Sir, it reminds me of an historical anecdote related of one of the most remarkable characters which our species has ever produced. While Oliver Cromwell was contending for the mastery of Great Britain or Ireland, (I do not now remember which,) he besieged a certain Catholic town. The place made a stout resistance; but at length the town being likely to be taken, the poor Catholics proposed terms of capitulation, stipulating therein for the toleration of their religion. The paper containing the terms was brought to Oliver, who, putting on his spectacles to read it, cried out: 'Oh, granted, granted! certainly! He, however, added—'but if one of them shall dare be found attending Mass, he shall be hanged!'—(under which section is not mentioned—whether under a *second, or any other section, of any particular law*, we are not told.")

After proving what is now notorious to the whole country, that the Removal of the Deposits was the act of General Jackson and of him alone, and that the Secretary of the Treasury was merely the *cat's-paw* in the accomplishment of the seizure, Mr. Clay proceeded to show that it was in violation of the Constitution and laws of the United States. His argument on this point is faithful and conclusive.

We regret that our limited space prevents us from quoting freely from this interesting speech. It contains a succinct history of all the financial exploits of General Jackson and his subservient Secretary up to the period of its delivery; and is as valuable for its documentary facts as it is interesting for the vigor and animation of its style, and the impregnability of its arguments.

The resolution declaring the insufficiency of the reasons assigned by the Secretary of the Treasury for the Removal of the Deposits, having been referred to the Committee on Finance, at the head of which was Mr. Webster, was reported with a recommendation that it be adopted. The question upon the resolution was not taken till the 23th of March,

when it was passed by the Senate, 23 to 13. At the instance of some of his friends, Mr. Clay then modified his other resolution, so as to read us follows:

"Resolved, That the President, in the late Executive proceedings in relation to the Public Revenue, has assumed upon himself authority and power not conferred by the Constitution and Laws, but in derogation of both."

The resolution was adopted by the following vote:

YEAS—Messrs. Bibb, Black, Calloun, Clay, Clayton, Ewing, Frelinghuysen, Kent, Knight, Leigh, Mangum, Nuddain, Poindexter, Porter, Prentiss, Preston, Robbins, Silsbee, Smith, Southard, Sprague, Swift, Tomlinson, Tyler, Waggaman, Webster—26.

NAYS—Messrs. Benton, Brown, Forsyth, Grundy, Hendricks, Hill, Kane, King of Alabama, King of Georgia, Linn, McKean, Moore, Morris, Robinson, Shepley, Tallmadge, Tipton, White, Wilkins, Wright—20.

The passage of Mr. Clay's resolution drew forth from the President the celebrated Protest, which was communicated to the Senate the 17th of April, 1833. This document was of a most novel and unprecedented character, and gave rise to debates, which will always be memorable in our legislative annals. The assumptions of the President were truly of a kind to excite alarm among the friends of our Republican system. In this extraordinary paper he maintains, that he is responsible for the acts of every Executive officer, and that *all* the powers given by law are vested in him as the head and fountain of all. He alludes to the Secretary of the Treasury as *his* Secretary, and says that Congress cannot take from the Executive the control of the Public Money. His doctrine is, that the President should, under his oath of office, sustain the Constitution *as he understands it*; not as the Judiciary may expound, or Congress declare it. From these principles, he infers that all subordinate officers are merely the executors of his supreme will, and that he has the right to discharge them whenever he may please.

These monstrous and despotic assumptions, transcending as they do the prerogatives claimed by most of the monarchs of Europe, afforded a theme for eloquent discussion, which was not neglected by the opposition, who then constituted the majority in the Senate. Mr. Poindexter, of Mississippi protested against the reception of such a paper from the President; and moved that it be not received. Mr. Sprague, of Maine, exposed its fallacies, and denounced its doctrines in spirited and indignant terms. The Senators from New-Jersey, Messrs. Frelinghuysen and Southard, expressed their astonishment and indignation in strong and decided language. Mr. Benton, "solitary and alone," stood forth as the champion of the President and the Protest.

The next day (April 18th) the consideration of Mr. Poindexter's motion was resumed; and Mr. Leigh, of Virginia, addressed the Senate for about two hours in a speech of rare ability. Toward its conclusion an unusual incident occurred. Mr. King, of Alabama, had claimed for the President the merit of adjusting the Tariff question. He might, with quite as much truth, have claimed for him the merit of writing the Declaration of Independence. Mr. Leigh, in reply to this assumption, spoke as follows:

"Sir, I cannot but remember, that during the anxious winter of 1832-3, when South Carolina, under a deep sense of injustice and oppression, (whether



well or ill founded, it is immaterial now to inquire.) was exerting her utmost efforts (no matter now whether wisely or not) to bring about a relaxation of the system—when all men were trembling under the apprehension of Civil War—*trembling from the conviction, that if such a contest should arise, let it terminate how it might, it would put our present institutions in jeopardy, and end either in Consolidation or Disunion—for, I am persuaded, that the first drop of blood which shall be shed in a civil strife between the Federal Government and any State, will flow from an unmedicable wound, that none may hope ever to see healed*—I cannot but remember that the President, though wielding such vast power and influence, never contributed the least aid to bring about the compromise that saved us from the evils which all men, I believe, and I certainly, so much dreaded. The men are not present to whom we are chiefly indebted for that compromise; and I am glad they are absent, since it enables me to speak of their conduct as I feel, without restraint from a sense of delicacy—I raise my humble voice in gratitude for that service to Henry Clay of the Senate, and Robert P. Letcher of the House of Representatives—”

Here Mr. Leigh was interrupted by loud and prolonged plaudits in the gallery. The Vice President suspended the discussion, and ordered the galleries to be cleared. While the Sergeant-at-Arms was in the act of fulfilling this order, the applause was repeated. Mr. Benton moved that the persons applauding should be taken into custody; but before the motion could be considered, the galleries were vacated and order was restored.

On the 21st of April, another message was received from the President, being a sort of codicil to the Protest, in which he undertook to explain certain passages, which he feared had been misapprehended. Mr. Poindexter withdrew his original motion, and substituted four resolutions, in which it was embodied. These resolutions were modified by Mr. Clay, and an amendment suggested by Mr. Calhoun was adopted. Messrs. Clayton, Webster, Preston, Ewing, Mangum, and others, addressed the Senate eloquently on various occasions upon the subject of the Protest; and, on the 30th of April, Mr. Clay, the resolution of Mr. Poindexter still pending, made his well-known speech. Although the subject seemed to have been exhausted by the accomplished speakers who had preceded him, it was at once re-invested with the charms of novelty in his hands. The speech contains the most complete and faithful picture of Jacksonism ever presented to the country.

The Resolutions of Mr. Poindexter passed the Senate, by a vote of 27 to 16, on the seventh of May. They exclude the Protest from the Journals, and declare that the President of the United States has no right to send a Protest to the Senate against any of its proceedings.

On the twenty-eighth of May, 1834, Mr. Clay introduced two joint Resolutions, reasserting what had been already declared by Resolutions of the Senate, that the reasons assigned by the Secretary of the Treasury to Congress, for the Removal of the Public Deposits, were insufficient and unsatisfactory; and providing that, from and after the first day of July ensuing, all Deposits which might accrue from the Public Revenue, subsequent to that period, should be placed in the Bank of the United States and its Branches, pursuant to the 16th section of the Act to Incorporate the Subscribers to the United States Bank.

In presenting these Resolutions, Mr. Clay remarked that, whatever might be their fate at the other end of the Capitol or in another building, that consideration ought to have no influence on the course of the Senate. The Resolutions were adopted and sent to the House, where they were laid upon the table, and, as was anticipated, never acted upon.

The labors of Mr. Clay during the celebrated session of 1833-4, appear to have been arduous and incessant. On every important question that came before the Senate, he spoke, showing himself the ever-vigilant and active opponent of Executive usurpation. Immediately after the withdrawal of the Public Money from the United States Bank, and before the “Pet Banks,” to which the treasure had been transferred, had created an unhealthy plethora in the Currency by their consequent expansions, the distress among the People began to manifest itself in numerous memorials to Congress, protesting against the President’s financial experiments, and calling for relief. Many of these memorials were communicated to the Senate through Mr. Clay, and he generally accompanied their presentation with a brief but pertinent speech. His remarks on presenting a memorial from Kentucky, on the twenty-sixth of February, 1834—and from Troy, the fourteenth of April—are eloquent expositions of the financial condition of the country at those periods. In his speech of the fifth of February, on a motion to print additional copies of the Report of the Committee on Finance, to whom had been referred the Report of the Secretary of the Treasury in regard to the Removal of the Deposits, we find the following just and forcible image:

“The idea of uniting thirty or forty local Banks for the establishment and security of an equal Currency could never be realized. As well might the crew of a national vessel be put on board thirty or forty bark canoes, tied together by a grape-vine, and sent out upon the troubled ocean, while the billows were rising mountain-high, and the tempest was exhausting its rage on the loaming element, in the hope that they might weather the storm, and reach their distant destination in safety. The People would be contented with so such fleet of bark canoes, with Admiral Fancy in their command. They would be heard again calling out for Old Ironsides, which had never failed them in the hour of trial, whether amidst the ocean’s storm, or in the hour of battle.”

This session, generally known as the “Panic Session,” was one of the most remarkable that have ever occurred in the progress of our Government. Never was there collected in the Senate a greater amount of eminent ability. For weeks together the Whigs poured forth a torrent of eloquent denunciations, in every form, against that high-handed measure, the Removal of the Deposits. This was most generally done on the occasion of presenting petitions or memorials from the People against it. Go into the Senate Chamber any morning during this interesting period, and you would find some Whig on his feet, expatiating on the pernicious consequences of that most disastrous proceeding. It was then that they predicted the evil effects of it, since so fatally and exactly realized.

Mr. Clay was among the most active and eloquent of these distinguished champions of the People. No one exhibited so great a variety of weapons of attack upon the Administration, or so consummate a skill

in the use of them. Early in March, 1834, a Committee from Philadelphia arrived in Washington with a memorial from a large body of Mechanics, depicting the state of prostration and distress produced among all the laboring classes, by the high-handed and pernicious measures of the Administration. In presenting this memorial, Mr. Clay took occasion to deviate somewhat from the beaten track of debate. He made a direct appeal to the Vice President, Mr. Van Buren, charging him with the delivery of a message to the Executive. After glancing at the gloomy condition of the country, he remarked that it was in the power of the Chief Magistrate to adopt a measure which, in twenty-four hours, would afford an efficacious and substantial remedy, and reestablish confidence; and those who, in that Chamber, supported the Administration, could not render a better service than to repair to the Executive Mansion, and, placing before the Chief Magistrate the naked and undisguised truth, prevail upon him to retrace his steps and abandon his fatal experiment.

"No one, Sir," continued Mr. Clay, turning to the Vice President, "can perform that duty with more propriety than yourself. You can, if you will, induce him to change his course. To you, then, Sir, in no unfriendly spirit, but with feelings softened and subdued by the deep distress which pervades every class of our countrymen, I make the appeal. By your official and personal relations with the President, you maintain with him an intercourse which I neither enjoy nor covet. Go to him and tell him without exaggeration, but in the language of truth and sincerity, the actual condition of his bleeding Country. Tell him it is nearly ruined and undone by the measures which he has been induced to put in operation. Tell him that his experiment is operating on the Nation like the philosopher's experiment upon a convulsed animal in an exhausted receiver; and that it must expire in agony if he does not pause, give it fresh and sound circulation, and suffer the energies of the People to be revived and restored. Tell him that in a single city more than sixty bankruptcies, involving a loss of more than fifteen millions of dollars, have occurred. Depict to him, if you can find language for the task, the heart-rending wretchedness of thousands of the Working Classes. Tell him how much more true glory is to be won by retracing false steps than by blindly rushing on until the country is overwhelmed in bankruptcy and ruin. Entreat him to pause."

In this strain Mr. Clay proceeded for nearly twenty minutes. Nothing could be more eloquent, touching and unanswerable than the appeal, although, of course, it failed of effect. "Well, Mr. Van Buren, did you deliver the message I charged you with?" asked Mr. Clay, as he met the Vice President in the Senate Chamber the next morning before the day's session had commenced.

The reply of Mr. Van Buren is not recorded. That gentleman, however, was never celebrated for his powers of repartee. During the period of his Vice Presidency, Mr. Clay dined with him on one occasion in company with the Judges of the United States Court, the Heads of Departments, and others. Conversation at dinner glanced at the fact that Tory Ministers, both in England and in France, were more disposed than Whig Ministers to do justice to the

United States, and deal liberally with them in all international negotiations. All the parties present agreed as to the fact; and turning suddenly to Mr. Van Buren, Mr. Clay said:—"If you will permit me, I will propose a toast." "With great pleasure," returned the Vice President. "I propose," said Mr. Clay, "*Tory Ministers in England and France, and a Whig Ministry in the United States.*" The toast was drunk with great cordiality by the company, Mr. Van Buren affecting to laugh, but blushing at the same time up to the eyes, and evidently nonplussed for a retort.

The message addressed by Mr. Clay to the Vice President recalls to mind another, which he requested the late Mr. Grundy to deliver to President Jackson. It was the last of February, 1833, when the Land Bill was pending. "Tell General Jackson," said Mr. Clay, "that if he will sign that bill I will pledge myself to retire from Congress and never enter public life again." Mr. Grundy, who was an amiable and remarkably good-natured person, said: "No, I can't deliver that message; for we may have use for you hereafter." This was, it will be remembered, at the session when the Compromise passed.

The First Session of the Twenty-Third Congress terminated the 30th of June, 1834, and Mr. Clay, after his prolonged and laborious exertions in behalf of the Constitution and the Laws, set out immediately on his journey home. As the stage-coach, in which he was proceeding from Charlestown toward Winchester in Virginia, was descending a hill, it was overturned, and a worthy young gentleman, Mr. Humrickhouse, son of the Contractor, was instantly killed by being crushed by the vehicle. He was seated by the side of the driver. Mr. Clay was slightly injured. The accident happened in consequence of a defect in the breast-chain, which gave way. On his arrival at Winchester, Mr. Clay was invited to a Public Dinner, which he declined, as well on account of his desire to reach home, as because of this melancholy accident, which disqualified him for immediate enjoyment at the festive board.

#### CHAPTER XIV.

Our Claims on France—Hostile tone of General Jackson's Message of 1824—Recommends Reprisals—Mr. Clay's Report on the subject—His mission—Unanimous adoption of his Resolution—Effect of the Message—Speech on presenting the Cherokee Memorial—Executive Patronage—The Cumberland Road.

THE most important question which came before Congress at its Second Session, in 1824-5, was that of our Relations with France. The claims of our citizens upon that Government for aggressions upon our Commerce between the years 1800 and 1817 had been repeatedly admitted; but no decided steps toward a settlement had been taken until the 4th of July, 1831, when a Treaty was ratified, by which it was agreed, on the part of the French, that the sum of twenty-five millions of francs should be paid to the United States as an indemnity. By the terms of the Treaty, the first instalment was to be paid at the expiration of one year after the exchange of the ratifications.

The French Government having failed in the performance of this stipulation—the draft of the United States for the first instalment having been dishonored by the Minister of Finance—President Jackson, in



his Message of December, 1834, to Congress, recommended that, in case provision should not be made for the payment of the debt at the approaching Session of the French Chambers, a law should be passed authorizing reprisals upon French property. This was a step not to be precipitately taken; and, to insure its patriotic, dispassionate and statesman-like consideration, the Senate placed Mr. Clay at the head of the Committee on Foreign Relations, to which Committee that part of the President's Message relating to our affairs with France was referred.

On the 6th of January, 1835, Mr. Clay made his celebrated Report to the Senate. It was read by him from his seat, its reading occupying an hour and a half; the Senate Chamber being thronged during its delivery by Members of the House, and the galleries filled to overflowing. The ability displayed in this extraordinary document, the firmness and moderation of its tone, the perspicuous arrangement of facts which it presents, the lucidity and strength of its style, and the inevitable weight of its conclusions called forth the admiration and concurrence of all parties. It would seem to have been, under Providence, the means of averting a war with France. In the preparation of it, Mr. Clay had a difficult and delicate task to perform; and it was accomplished with great ingenuity and success. Not a word that could lower the national tone and spirit was indulged in. He eloquently maintained that the right lay on our side, but admitted that the French King had not been so far in the wrong that all hopes of the execution of the Treaty were extinct, nor did he consider that hostile measures were yet justifiable. This temperate, judicious, firm and statesman-like language, while it removed all cause of offence on the part of the French, imparted new renown to our own Diplomacy. While it was all that the most chivalrous champions of their Country's honor could ask, it breathed a spirit which called forth the full approbation of the friends of peace.

As soon as Mr. Clay had finished the reading of his Report, a discussion arose in the Senate as to the number which should be printed. Mr. Poindexter moved the printing of twenty thousand extra copies. Mr. Clay thought that number too large, and suggested five thousand. Mr. Calhoun said he should vote for the largest number proposed. He had heard the report read with the greatest pleasure. It contained the whole grounds which ought to be laid before the people. Of all calamities that could befall the country, he most deplored a French War at that time. Under these considerations he should vote for twenty thousand copies.

Mr. Ewing and Mr. Porter would vote for the largest number, and the latter would have preferred thirty or forty thousand.

Mr. Preston said he was strongly impressed by the views taken by the Committee, and considered them sufficient to satisfy the people that we could honorably and justly avoid war with France. Concurring in the sentiments of the Committee, and entertaining a profound respect for the wisdom exhibited in the Report, he was anxious that the document should be spread through the country as widely as possible.

The Senate finally ordered twenty thousand copies of this admirable report to be printed, and it was

soon scattered to the remotest corners of the Union. Its effect in reviving the confidence and allaying the fears of our mercantile community must be fresh in the remembrance of many. The rates of Insurance were at once diminished, and Commerce spread her white wings to the gale, and swept the ocean once more unchecked by the liabilities of a hostile encounter. The depression in business produced by the President's belligerent recommendation was at once removed.

The Report showed conclusively that the President's recommendation in regard to reprisals was premature, and unauthorized by the circumstances of the case; and that there had been a constant manifestation on the part of the Executive branch of the French Government of a disposition to carry the Treaty of indemnification into effect. The Committee expressed their agreement with the President, that the fulfilment of the Treaty should be insisted upon at all hazards; but they considered that a rash and precipitate course on our part should be sedulously avoided. They would not anticipate the possibility of a final breach by France of her solemn engagements. They limited themselves to a consideration of the posture of things as they then existed. At the same time, they observed that it could not be doubted that the United States were abundantly able to sustain themselves in any vicissitudes to which they might be exposed. The patriotism of the people had been, hitherto, equal to all emergencies, and if their courage and constancy, when they were young and comparatively weak, bore them safely through all past struggles, the hope might be confidently entertained now, when their numbers, their strength and their resources were greatly increased, that they would, whenever the occasion might arise, triumphantly maintain the honor, the rights and the interests of their country. The Committee concluded by recommending to the Senate the adoption of the following resolution:

"Resolved, That it is inexpedient at this time to pass any law vesting in the President authority for making reprisals upon French property, in the contingency of provision not being made for paying to the United States the indemnity stipulated by the Treaty of 1831, during the present session of the French Chambers."

On the 14th of January, Mr. Clay, pursuant to previous notice, called for the consideration of the Report of the Committee on Foreign Relations, and its accompanying Resolution. It being expected that he would address the Senate, a large audience was in attendance, and, as soon as he was up, the other House was without a quorum. The question being upon agreeing to the resolution as reported, he spoke for nearly an hour, and his remarks were in the same moderate, magnanimous and truly American strain, which characterized his Report.

Mr. King, of Georgia, one of the Administration Members of the Committee on Foreign Relations, after bearing the strongest testimony to the candid and temperate character of Mr. Clay's Report, moved to give the Resolution such a modification as, without changing its substance, would obtain for it a unanimous vote. Mr. Clay accepted in part Mr. King's amendment, and also one that was offered by Mr. Webster; and the following resolution was at length UNANIMOUSLY PASSED by the Senate.

"Resolved, That it is inexpedient at present to



adopt any legislative measure in regard to the state of affairs between the United States and France.”

The unanimous passage of this resolution, was a result as gratifying as it was unexpected; and its effect upon the French Chambers, in neutralizing the harsh language of the President, and hastening the execution of the Treaty was most auspicious. The praises of Congress and of the country, were liberally awarded to Mr. Clay for his judicious and conclusive Report in behalf of a pacific course.

The effect of the President's Message recommending reprisals and conveying an imputation upon the good faith of Louis Phillippe, was such as might have been anticipated. The French King was justly offended. The French Minister was at once recalled from Washington, and a *Chargé des Affaires* substituted. Passports were tendered to our Minister at Paris. In consequence of these developments, Mr. Clay, on the last day of the Session, made another and a briefer Report from the Committee on Foreign Relations, in which the committee expressed the opinion, that the Senate ought to adhere to the Resolution, adopted the 14th of January, to await the result of another appeal to the French Chambers; and, in the mean time, to intimate no ulterior purpose, but to hold itself in reserve for whatever exigencies might arise. The Senate concurred in the advice of the Committee, who were then discharged from the further consideration of the subject.

On the 4th of February, 1835, Mr. Clay made a brilliant and impressive speech in the Senate upon the subject of a memorial, which he presented from certain Indians of the Cherokee tribe. The memorial set forth in eloquent and becoming terms the condition of the tribe, their grievances and their wants. It seemed, that of the remnant of this people then in Georgia, one portion were desirous of being aided to remove beyond the Mississippi, and the other wished to remain where they were, and to be removed from the rigid restrictions which the State of Georgia had imposed upon them. In his remarks, Mr. Clay eloquently alluded to the solemn treaties by which the possession of their lands had been secured to these Indians by our Government. The faith of the United States had been pledged that they should continue unmolested in the enjoyment of their hunting-grounds. In defiance of these sacred stipulations, Georgia had claimed jurisdiction over the tribe—had parceled out their lands and disposed of them by lottery—degraded the Cherokees to the condition of serfs—denied them all the privileges of freedom, and rendered their condition infinitely worse than that of the African Slave. It was the interest as well as the pride of the master to provide for the health and comfort of his slave; but what human being was there to care for these unfortunate Indians?

As Mr. Clay warmed in his remarks, and dwelt, more in sorrow than in anger, upon the wrongs and outrages perpetrated in Georgia upon the unoffending aborigines within her borders, many of his hearers were affected to tears, and he himself was obviously deeply moved. The occasion was rendered still more interesting by the presence of a Cherokee Chief and a female of the tribe, who seemed to listen to the orator with a painfully eager attention. In conclusion, Mr. Clay submitted a resolution directing the Committee on the Judiciary to inquire into

the expediency of making farther provision by law to enable Indian Tribes, to whom lands had been secured by treaty, to defend and maintain their rights to such lands in the Courts of the United States; also, a resolution directing the Committee on Indian Affairs to inquire into the expediency of setting apart a district of country, west of the Mississippi, for such of the Cherokee Nation as were disposed to emigrate, and for securing in perpetuity their peaceful enjoyment thereof to themselves and their descendants.

The oppressed Aboriginal Tribes have always found in Mr. Clay a friend and a champion. Although coming from a State which, in consequence of the numerous Indian massacres of which it has been the theatre, has received the appellation of “the dark and bloody ground,” he has never suffered any unphilosophical prejudice against the unfortunate Red Men to blind his sense of justice or check the promptings of humanity. He has constantly been among the most active vindicators of their cause—the most efficient advocates of a liberal policy towards them.

To General Jackson's administration we are indebted for the system which makes the offices of the Federal Government the rewards of political partisanship, and proscribes all incumbents who may entertain opinions at variance with those of the Executive. The Government of the United States disposes of an annual patronage of nearly forty millions of dollars. By the corrupt use of this immense fund, the Jackson dynasty sustained and perpetuated itself in spite of the People. Here was the secret of its strength. Commit what violence, outrage what principle, assail what interests he might, President Jackson threw himself back upon his patronage and found protection. The patronage of the Press, the patronage of the Post Office, the patronage of the Custom House, with its salaries, commissions and fees—the patronage of the Land Office, with its opportunities of successful speculation—these formed the stronghold and citadel of corrupt power.

On the eighteenth of February, 1835, Mr. Clay addressed the Senate in support of the bill for the Abatement of Executive Patronage. His speech contains a striking exposition of the evils resulting from the selfish and despotic exercise, on the part of the Chief Magistrate, of the appointing and removing power; and is pervaded by that truly democratic spirit which has characterized all the public acts of the author.

A bill making an appropriation for the Cumberland Road was discussed in the Senate early in February. Mr. Clay spoke in favor of the appropriation, but adversely to the policy of surrendering the Road to the States through which it runs.

## CHAPTER XV.

Settlement of our French Affairs—Mr. Clay's Land Bill—His Speech—Passage of the Bill in the Senate—Abolition Petitions—Mr. Clay vindicates the Right of Petition—The Deposit Banks—Prediction—Independence of Texas—Various questions—Return to Kentucky—Re-elected Senator in 1836—State of the Country in 1829 and 1836—A contrast—Administration majority in the Senate—Mr. Calhoun's Land Bill—Opposition of Mr. Clay—Terror—His two Compromises—The Specie Circular—Its Rescission—Benton's Expunging Resolution—Miscellaneous.

OUR affairs with France occupied a considerable portion of President Jackson's Message to the Twenty-Fourth Congress at its first session. Mr. Clay was again placed at the head of the Committee on Foreign Relations; and on the eleventh of January, 1836, he introduced a resolution to the Senate, calling upon the President for information with regard to our affairs with France, and for the communication of certain overtures made by the French Government. An additional resolution was presented by him two or three weeks afterward, calling for the communication of the exposé which accompanied the French Bill of Indemnity of the 27th of April, 1835; and also, copies of certain notes which passed between the Duc de Broglie and our Chargé, Mr. Barton; together with those addressed by our Minister, Mr. Livingston, to the French Minister of Foreign Affairs, or to the Secretary of State of the United States. These resolutions were adopted, with amendments.

On the eighth of February, 1836, a Message from the President was received, announcing that the Government of Great Britain had offered its mediation for the adjustment of the dispute between the United States and France. The Message was referred to the Committee on Foreign Affairs; and on the twenty-second of February, a correspondence between the Secretary of State and Mr. Bankhead, on the subject of British mediation, was submitted. This gave occasion for some remarks from Mr. Clay, who said that he could not withhold the expression of his congratulation to the Senate, for the agency it had in producing the happy termination of our difficulties with France. If the Senate had not, by its unanimous vote of last September, declared that it was inexpedient to adopt any legislative action upon the subject of our relations with France; if it had yielded to the recommendations of the Executive in ordering reprisals against that power, it could not be doubted but that war would have existed at that moment in its most serious state.

Mr. Clay renewed his exertions in behalf of his Land Bill during this session. On the fourteenth of April, it was taken up in the Senate as the special order, and discussed nearly every day for a period of two weeks, during which he was frequently called upon to defend and explain its provisions. His speech of April 26th is remarkable for the vigor of its arguments and the force of its appeals. Of this effort, the National Intelligencer said: "We thought, 'after hearing the able and comprehensive arguments of Messrs. Ewing, Southard and White, in favor of this beneficent measure, that the subject was exhausted, that, at any rate, but little new could be urged in its defence. Mr. Clay, however, in one of the most luminous and forcible arguments which we have ever heard him deliver, placed the subject in new lights, and gave to it new

'claims to favor. The whole train of his reasoning appeared to us a series of demonstrations.'

The Land Bill, essentially the same as that vetoed by General Jackson, passed the Senate the fourth of May, 1836, by a vote of twenty-five to twenty; and was sent to the House. But the influence of the Executive was too potent here yet to admit of the passage of a measure which, though approved by the majority, was opposed by the President because of its having originated with Mr. Clay.

The question of the right of petition came before the Senate early in the session. On the 11th of January, Mr. Buchanan presented a memorial from a religious Society of Friends in Pennsylvania, requesting Congress to abolish Slavery and the Slave Trade in the District of Columbia. He moved that the Memorial should be read, and the prayer of the Memorialists be rejected. Mr. Calhoun demanded that the question should be first taken whether the petition be received or not; and a debate, which was prolonged at various intervals till the 9th of March sprang up on this preliminary question. Before the question was taken, Mr. Clay briefly explained his views. On the subject of the right of Congress to abolish Slavery in the District, he was inclined to think, and candor required the avowal, that the *right did exist*; though he should take a future opportunity of expressing his views in opposition to the expediency of the exercise of that power. He expressed his disapprobation of the motion to receive and immediately reject, made by the Senator from Pennsylvania (Mr. Buchanan.) He thought that the right of petition required of the servants of the people to examine, deliberate and decide, either to grant or refuse the prayer of a petition, giving the reasons for such decision; and that such was the best mode of putting an end to the agitation of the public on the subject.

The question "shall the petition be received?" being taken, was decided in the affirmative—yeas, 36; nays, 10.

Mr. Clay then offered an amendment to Mr. Buchanan's motion to reject, in which amendment the principal reason why the prayer of the Memorialists could not be granted are succinctly given. The amendment not meeting the views of some of his Southern friends was subsequently withdrawn by Mr. Clay, who maintained, however, that he could not assent that Congress had no Constitutional power to legislate on the prayer of the petition. The subject was at length laid on the table by a vote of twenty-four to twenty; but the friends of the *sacred, unqualified right of petition* should not forget that Mr. Clay has ever upheld their cause with his best energies and his warmest zeal.

A report from the Secretary of the Treasury, showing the condition of the Deposit Banks, came before the Senate for consideration the 17th of March, 1836. Mr. Clay forcibly depicted on this occasion the total insecurity of the vast public treasure in the keeping of these Banks. What was then prophecy became history soon afterwards. "Suppose," said he, "a great deficiency of southern crops, or any other crisis creating a necessity for the exportation of specie to Europe, instead of the ordinary shipments. These Banks would be compelled to call in their issues. This would compel other Banks to call in, in like manner, and a panic and general want of



'confidence would exist. Then what would become of the public money?' It is unnecessary to point to the fulfilment of these predictions. Soon after the deposits were removed to the Pet Banks, they became the basis of vast land speculations, into which all who could obtain a share of the Government money, plunged at once heels over head; Postmasters, Custom-House officers, Navy Agents, Pet Bank Directors, Cashiers and Presidents, District Attorneys, Government Printers, Secretaries of State, Postmasters General, Attorneys General, President's Secretaries, and all the innumerable stipendiaries of the Administration. It was this wild speculation, fostered and conducted by the facilities of the Deposit Banks, that filled the Treasury with unavailable funds. The experiment terminated, as Mr. Clay prophesied it would terminate, in universal bankruptcy.

On the 8th of June, Mr. Clay, from the Committee on Foreign Relations, introduced a report with a resolution, for recognizing the Independence of Texas whenever satisfactory information should be received, that it had a civil Government in successful operation. Mr. Preston expressed a hope that the Executive was by that time in possession of such information; as would enable the Senate to adopt stronger measures than that recommended by the Committee; and he submitted a resolution calling on the President for such information. Mr. Clay wished that the resolution might be taken up and acted on; as he would be extremely glad to receive information that would authorize stronger measures in favor of Texas. The report of the Committee was concurred in; and Mr. Preston's resolution adopted. The result of the call upon the President and of the discussions that ensued, was the unanimous adoption, by the Senate, on the first of July, of the resolution reported by Mr. Clay, with an amendment by Mr. Preston adding a clause expressing the satisfaction of the Senate, at the President's having taken measures for obtaining accurate information as to the civil, military and political condition of Texas. Similar resolutions passed the House the 4th of July.

Mr. Clay spoke on a variety of questions, in addition to those we have alluded to, during the session of 1834-5; on the motion to admit the Senators from Michigan on the floor, and the recognition of that clause in the Constitution of Michigan, which he conceived to give to aliens the right to vote; on the resolution of Mr. Calhoun to inquire into the expediency of such a reduction of duties as would not affect the Manufacturing interest; on the Fortification Bill, &c. Congress adjourned the fourth of July, 1836.

On his return to Kentucky a dinner was given to Mr. Clay by his fellow-citizens of Woodford County. During his absence from home, he had experienced heavy afflictions in the death of a beloved daughter and of his only sister. On rising to speak, he was so overcome by the recollection of these losses, added to an allusion which had been made to the remains of his mother being buried in Woodford, that he was obliged to resume his seat. He soon rallied, however, and addressed the company for about two hours in an animated and powerful strain. He reviewed the recent acts of the Administration—their constant tampering with the currency—the Treas-

ury Order, directing that all payments for lands should be made in specie—the injustice practised towards the Indian tribes—and the disgracefully protracted Seminole War. In conclusion, Mr. Clay alluded to his intended retirement from the Senate of the United States—an intention, which, at that time, he fondly cherished.

So fixed was his wish to withdraw from public life, that he had, at one period, in 1836, made up his mind to resign. It is certain, that he looked forward with confidence to declining a reelection; and he expressed a hope at the Woodford dinner, that the State would turn its attention to some other citizen.

In the autumn of 1836, Mr. Clay narrowly escaped a violent death. He was riding on horseback in one of his fields, surveying his cattle, when a furious bull, maddened from some cause or other, rushed towards him, and plunging his horns with tremendous force into the horse on which Mr. Clay was seated, killed the poor animal on the spot. The distinguished rider was thrown to the distance of several feet from his horse, and, though somewhat hurt by the fall, escaped without material injury.

We have already given an exposition of Mr. Clay's views in behalf of Colonization. In 1836, he was unanimously elected President of the American Colonization Society in the room of the illustrious Ex-President Madison, deceased. He accepted the appointment.

During the winter of 1836, Mr. Clay was reelected a Senator from Kentucky for six years from the ensuing fourth of March. The vote stood: for Henry Clay 76; for James Guthrie, the Administration candidate, 54. Eight members were absent, four of whom, it is said, would have voted for Mr. Clay.

The state of the Republic, toward the termination of General Jackson's second Presidential term, is yet vividly in the recollection of all our citizens. He had found the country, in 1829, in a condition of unexampled prosperity. The Government was administered with economy strictly republican. Congress was the dominant power in the land. Commerce, Manufactures, Agriculture, flourished. The Banking System was in a state of remarkable soundness. There was no disposition to multiply local Banks. There was neither temptation nor ability for these Banks to expand their issues. The failure of a Bank was an occurrence as unusual as an earthquake. Labor was sure of employment, and sure of its reward. There were few brokers, usurers and money-lenders by profession. There were no speculators by profession. There were no immense operations in fancy stocks and land schemes. There was but one way of growing rich—hard labor—assiduous industry—early rising—late retiring—and anxious, devoted and persevering attention to business. Our habits, as a people, were simple and democratic. Our FOREIGN CREDIT WAS WITHOUT A STAIN. The debts which we contracted abroad were such as we could pay—and paid they were with scrupulous and honorable punctuality. OUR CURRENCY WAS, WITHOUT EXCEPTION, THE MOST PERFECT ON THE FACE OF THE GLOBE. No man ever lost a cent by it. It was abundant, safe, and well accredited in every part of the world. All pecuniary operations of Trade and Commerce were conducted with the most wonderful facility and regularity.



Gold and silver were in free circulation, and there was at all times an abundant supply of the smaller coins. Millions on millions of exchanges were negotiated in every quarter of the country, and at an average rate of one-half or one per cent.—a charge merely nominal in comparison with the subsequent rates. The whole machinery of Society, Government, Trade and Currency was in a state as nearly approaching perfection as human wisdom and ingenuity could compass.

Such was the condition of the Republic in 1829. Then the destroyer came—and all was blasted. For eight years he managed the affairs of the country in his own way; and HIS WILL WAS THE LAW OF THE LAND.

During those eight years, what a change came over our affairs! The whole machinery of Currency, Trade and Government was deranged. The land was flooded with three or four hundred millions of irredeemable paper. The smaller coins disappeared. Specie payments were universally suspended; and gold and silver were no more a currency than amethysts and diamonds. In trade, every thing ran into speculation. Banks sprang up like mushrooms on every side. Any two men who could write their names so as to sign and endorse a piece of paper, were enabled to procure 'facilities,' which generally turned out to be facilities for their own destruction. Brokers, usurers, money-lenders, speculators multiplied till their name was Legion. Every thing was unnaturally distended, until, at length, trade came to a dead stand. No one wanted to buy, and every body was afraid to sell. There was an utter stagnation, paralysis, extinction, of business. Thousands on thousands declared themselves individually bankrupt. As a nation, we were notoriously and miserably bankrupt—and we had hardly foreign credit enough to make it either safe or decent for any American to cross the Atlantic.

In Government, a revolution no less pernicious was accomplished. Congress became a mere stepping-stone to lucrative appointments, and the session was merely a convenient *refunion* of its Members for the better arrangement of their land speculations, and the more convenient distribution of the Government Deposits among the most accommodating Banks. The heart of our Government was rotten to its core—and, like our Currency and our Trade, it presented but a miserable contrast to the condition of 1829. And all these revolutions were brought about by the uncontrolled ascendancy of Jacksonism, and by no other agency under heaven!

Notwithstanding these deplorable issues, the end was not yet. The Jackson dynasty was to be perpetuated still another term in the hands of him who was proud to follow in the footsteps of his "illustrious predecessor." The Presidential Election of 1836 terminated in the choice of Martin Van Buren. But we are anticipating matters. We have yet the short Session of Congress of 1836-7 to review, before we take leave of the "Hero of New-Orleans."

The Administration had now a majority in the Senate. That noble phalanx of Whigs, who had so undauntedly withstood the usurpations of the Executive, could now only operate as a minority. One of the first acts of Mr. Clay was to reintroduce his Land Bill. On the 19th of December, in pur-

suance of previous notice, he presented it with modifications suited to the changes in Public Affairs. It was read twice and referred to the Committee on Public Lands,—at the head of which was Mr. Walker of Mississippi, who, on the 3d of January, gave notice that he was instructed by the Committee to move for the *indefinite postponement* of the bill, when it should come up for consideration. Some days afterward, Mr. Walker introduced his bill to limit the sales of the Public Lands, except to actual settlers, and in limited quantities; and on the 9th of February, 1837, Mr. Calhoun's extraordinary bill, nominally *selling*, but in reality *giving* to the new States *all the Public Domain*, came before the Senate.

Mr. Clay took ground at once against this scheme. He said that four or five years before, contrary to his earnest desire, this subject of the Public Lands was forced upon him, and he had, with great labor, devised a plan fraught with equity to all the States. It received the votes of a majority of both Houses, and was rejected by the President. He had always considered the Public Domain a sacred trust for the country and for posterity. He was opposed to any measure giving away this property for the benefit of speculators; and he was therefore opposed to this bill, as well as to the other (Mr. Walker's) before the Senate. He had hitherto labored in vain—but he should continue to oppose all these schemes for robbing the old States of their rightful possessions. He besought the Senate to abstain from these appeals to the cupidity of the new States from party inducements; and he appealed to the Senator from South Carolina whether, if he offered them higher and better boons than the party in power, he did not risk the imputation of being actuated by such inducements.

Fortunately for the country, the rash project of Mr. Calhoun did not reach the maturity of a third reading.

On the 25th of February, the bill from the Committee on Finance to alter and amend the several acts imposing duties on imposts being before the Senate, Mr. Clay spoke against the measure at some length. His principal objection arose from what he conceived to be the interference of some of the provisions of the bill with the Compromise Act of 1833. In the course of his remarks, he gave an interesting account of his own connection with that important measure.

He then went on to draw a striking parallel between the Compromise Act of 1833 as to the Protective System, and that other Compromise Act which settled the much agitated Missouri Question, and by which the latitude of 36 degrees 30 minutes was established as the extreme boundary for the existence of Slavery in that State. Had not Congress a right to repeal that law? But what would those Southern gentlemen, who now so strenuously urged a violation of our implied faith in regard to the act of '33, say if a measure like that should be attempted?

Mr. Clay concluded with a motion to re-commit the bill for the reduction of duties to the Committee on Finance, with instructions to strike out all those articles comprised in the bill, which then paid a duty of 20 per cent, and upwards, embraced in the Compromise Act. The motion was lost—25 Nays to 24

Yeas; and the bill was the same day passed by a vote of 27 to 18.

Early in the Session, Mr. Ewing had introduced a Joint Resolution rescinding the Treasury order by which all payments for Public Lands were to be made in specie. On the 11th of January, Mr. Clay addressed the Senate in a speech replete with argument and facts in support of the Resolution, and in opposition to an amendment, which had been offered by Mr. Rives. The Resolution was referred to the Committee on Public Lands, who instructed their Chairman to lay it on the table when it should come up. On the 18th of January, a bill rescinding the Specie Circular was reported by Mr. Walker. It subsequently passed the Senate, with some slight amendments, by a vote of 41 to 5; and received the sanction of the other House; but notwithstanding this fact, and the additional well-known fact, that the order had been originally promulgated in defiance of the opinion of Congress and the wishes of the people, the bill, "instead of being returned to the House in which it originated, according to the requirement of the Constitution, was sent to one of the pigeon-holes of the Department of State, to be filed away with an opinion of a convenient Attorney-General, always ready to prepare one in support of Executive enforcement."

Mr. Van Buren manifested the same contempt for the will of the people, expressed by Congress, as had been shown by his "illustrious predecessor," and refused to interfere until the Specie Circular repealed itself in the catastrophe of an universal suspension.

On the 12th of January, a Resolution, offered by Mr. Benton, to expunge from the journals of the Senate for 1833-4, Mr. Clay's Resolution censuring President Jackson for his unauthorized Removal of the Public Deposits came before the Senate for consideration; and on the 16th Mr. Clay discussed the question at considerable length. His speech was in a strain of mingled sarcasm and indignant invective, which made the subservient majority writhe under its scorching power. Never was a measure placed in a more contemptible light than was the expunging proposal by Mr. Clay. Those who heard him, can never forget the look and tone, varying from an expression of majestic scorn to one of good-humored satire, with which he gave utterance to the following eloquent passages:

"What patriotic purpose is to be accomplished by this expunging Resolution? Can you make that not to be which has been? Can you eradicate from memory and from history the fact that in March, 1834, a majority of the Senate of the United States passed the Resolution which exites your enmity? Is it your vain and wicked object to arrogate to yourself that power of annihilating the past which has been denied to Omnipotence itself? Do you intend to thrust your hands into our hearts and to pluck out the deeply-rooted convictions which are there? Or is it your design merely to stigmatize us? You cannot stigmatize US:

"Ne'er yet did base dishonor blur our name.

"Standing securely upon our conscious rectitude, and bearing aloft the shield of the Constitution of our Country, your puny efforts are impotent, and we defy all your power. Put the majority of 1834 in one scale, and that by which this Expunging Resolution is to be carried in the other, and let Truth and Justice, in Heaven above, and on earth below, and liberty and patriotism, decide the preponderance.

"What patriotic purpose is to be accomplished by this expunging resolution? Is it to appease the wrath and to heal the wounded pride of the Chief Magistrate? If he be really the hero that his friends represent him he must despise all mean condescension, all grovelling sycophancy, all self-degradation, and self-abasement. He would reject, with scorn and contempt as unworthy of his fame, your black scratches, and your baby lines in the fair records of his country."

The Expunging Resolution was passed; but no one will envy the immortality, to which the "knights of the black lines" have been consigned.

Mr. Clay addressed the Senate upon several other important questions during the session of 1836-7.—Among them were that upon the Fortification Bill, which was returned to the Senate after the House had insisted on the clause for a second Distribution of the Surplus Revenue; and the Resolution from the Committee on Foreign Relations, on the subject of our affairs with Mexico.

CHAPTER XVI.

Presidential Campaign of 1836—Mr. Clay declines being a Candidate—Result—Mr. Van Buren's Policy—A Retrospect—Democratic Doctrine—Issue of the "Experiment"—The Extra Session—Mr. Van Buren's Message—The Sub-Treasury Scheme—Indications of a Split in the House—Discussion of the Sub-Treasury Bill—Mr. Clay's Speeches—His Resolution in relation to a Bank—Treasury Notes—Session of 1837-8—Defeat of the Sub-Treasury Measure—Mr. Clay's Review of the Financial Projects of the Administration—Various subjects—His outline of a plan for a National Bank—Mr. Clay's course on the Abolition Question—His visit to New-York in the Summer of 1838—Cordial Reception by the People, of the "Man of the People."

MR. CLAY had uniformly discouraged the attempts of his friends to induce him to become a candidate for the Presidency in the campaign of 1836. He saw the unhappy diversity in the ranks of the Opposition; and he saw, perhaps, the inevitable ability of the Jackson dynasty to perpetuate itself in the elevation of Mr. Van Buren. So potent had the Executive become, through usurpation and the abuse of patronage!

On the eighth of February, that being the day appointed by statute for opening the Electoral Returns for the Presidency and Vice Presidency of the United States, the result was proclaimed in the presence of both Houses of Congress. The following was ascertained to be the state of the vote:

For President.	Vice President.
Van Buren.....	170 Johnson.....
Harrison.....	73 Granger.....
White.....	26 Tyler.....
Webster.....	14 Smith.....
Mangum.....	11
	294

It was then declared that it appeared that Martin Van Buren had been duly elected President of the United States, for four years from the 4th of March, 1837; and that no person had a majority of all the votes for the Vice Presidency, and that Mr. Johnson and Mr. Granger had the largest number of votes of all the candidates. Mr. Johnson was afterward duly chosen.

It had been hoped by many that under Mr. Van Buren a less destructive policy would be adopted than that which had signalized the reign of the "Hero of New-Orleans." For the last eight years the country had been governed by Executive edicts. Congress had always been disposed to do right, but it had been thwarted by a domineering and usurping Executive. The will of the People, constitutionally



avowed, had been constantly defeated by the impetuous and impetuous objections of *one* fallible and passionate old man.

Congress passed Mr. Clay's Land Bill; but the Executive destroyed it.

Congress said that the Deposits were safe in the Bank of the United States; the Executive removed them.

Congress refused to issue a Specie Circular; it was issued by the Executive.

Congress rescinded the Specie Circular; and the Executive defeated that rescision.

Now the doctrine of Thomas Jefferson, as adopted and always acted upon by Henry Clay, is, that **THE WILL OF THE MAJORITY, HONESTLY EXPRESSED, SHALL GIVE LAW.** But Congress had no influence in the Government during the pernicious ascendancy of Jacksonism. It came together to pass appropriation bills, and register the decrees of the Chief Magistrate. The noble majority in the Senate, for a while, prevented much mischief, but they could originate and prosecute no settled policy, in consequence of the Administration majority in the other branch. We lived literally under Executive Legislation. Where the President could not veto, he could do some act of violence, and compel Congress either to leave the country without law or to adapt its legislation to the existing exigencies. Thus he could not prevail on Congress to remove the Deposits—but when they were removed, to “furnish an instrument of power to himself and of plunder to his partisans”—Congress was compelled either to leave them without law, or to pass laws for the regulation of new depositions.

The hopes that had been entertained of a reform under Mr. Van Buren proved fallacious; but his attempt to march in the “seven-leagued boots” of his predecessor speedily resulted in a ridiculous failure. He was tripped up at the very start.

The disastrous condition in which the country was left by the “hero of New-Orleans,” whose “humble efforts” to improve the Currency had resulted in the universal prostration of business, and a suspension of specie payments, called upon his successor in the Presidential chair for some immediate measure of relief. On the 15th of May, 1837, Mr. Van Buren issued his Proclamation ordering an extraordinary session of Congress, to commence the first Monday in September. In accordance with that Proclamation, both Houses of Congress met at the Capitol on the day appointed; and the Message recommending the **SUB-TREASURY SYSTEM** for the deposit, transfer and disbursement of the Public Revenue, was transmitted by the President. The consequence was an instantaneous loss of his majority in the House of Representatives.

In the election of Speaker, at the commencement of the Extra Session, 224 members voted, making 113 necessary to a choice. Mr. Polk received 116 votes, and was elected. Then came the Sub-Treasury Message, and the vote on the election of Printer indicated a sudden disaffection in the ranks, and a general breaking up of the Administration party. On the twelfth and final balloting, Thomas Allen, the Editor of the Madisonian, was elected over the Van Buren candidates, Blair and Rives. A decided majority of the House had been elected as friends of Mr. Van Buren; but so alarming seemed his

Sub-Treasury plan, which was in other words, a scheme for placing the Public Purse under the control of the President, that he was defeated in the very first party vote after the election of Speaker.

The leading topic of the session was of course the new Sub-Treasury project; and it was discussed in the Senate with great ability on both sides. By this bill, the Treasury of the United States the Treasurers of the Mint and its Branches, Collectors, Receivers, Postmasters, and other office-holders, were commissioned to receive in specie and keep, subject to the draft of the proper Department, all public moneys coming into their hands, instead of depositing them, as heretofore, in Banks. Among the earliest and most prominent advocates of this measure was Mr. Calhoun, who suddenly found himself one of the leaders of a party, which for the last five or six years he had been denouncing as the most corrupt that had ever cursed a country.

The bill was taken up in the Senate the 20th September; and on the 25th, Mr. Clay spoke in opposition to this audacious and Anti-Republican scheme. In this admirable speech he went at length into an examination of the causes that had led to the existing disastrous state of public affairs. To the financial experiments of General Jackson, he traced back unerringly the consequent inflation of the currency—the wild speculations, which had risen to their height when they began to be checked by the preparations of the Local Banks, necessary to meet the Deposit Law of June, 1836—the final suspension of specie payments—and all the disorders in the Currency, Commerce and general business of the country, that ensued. He then gave his objections to the scheme before the Senate. It proposed one Currency for the Government and another for the people. As well might it be attempted to make the Government breathe a different air, be lit and warmed by a different sun from the People! A hard-money Government and a paper-money People! A Government, an official corps—the servants of the People—glittering in gold, and the People themselves, their masters, buried in ruin, and surrounded by rags! By the proposed substitution of an exclusive metallic Currency for the mixed medium, all property would be reduced in value to one-third of its present nominal amount; and every debtor would in effect have to pay three times as much as he had contracted for. Then there was the insecurity of the system—the liability to favoritism in the fiscal negotiations—the fearful increase of Executive patronage—the absolute and complete union of the Purse and the Sword in the hands of the President! All these objections were most powerfully elucidated and enforced by Mr. Clay.

He then proceeded to declare what he believed to be the only efficient measure for restoring a sound and uniform Currency, which was a United States Bank, established under such restrictions, as the lights of recent experience might suggest. “But,” said Mr. Clay, “if a National Bank be established, its stability and its utility will depend upon the general conviction which is felt of its necessity. *And until such a conviction is deeply impressed upon the People, and clearly manifested by them, it would, in my judgment, be unwise even to propose a Bank.*”

On the 4th of October the Sub-Treasury Bill, af-



ter undergoing various amendments, was read a third time and passed by the Senate by a vote of 25 to 20. It was taken up in the House on the 10th of October, and, on the 14th, laid on the table by a vote of 120 to 107.

The defeat of this measure in the teeth of the Executive recommendation, in spite of Executive blandishment and terrors—the triumph of the majority without doors over the majority within, and of both over patronage and power—revived the dying hopes of the patriot and infused new life into our Constitution. The sceptre of misrule had crumbled. The dynasty, which for nearly nine years had misruled the country, received on that occasion its immedicable wound.

A resolution reported by Mr. Wright from the Committee on Finance, in relation to the petitions for a National Bank, was called up in the Senate the 26th of September. The resolution declared that the prayer of the memorialists ought not to be granted. In his remarks upon this subject, Mr. Clay alluded to the case in which Mr. Randolph moved in the House of Representatives a similar negative resolution—"That it is inexpedient to declare war against Great Britain." Mr. Clay said, that if Mr. W. persisted in his resolution, he should move to strike out all after the word *Resolved*, and substitute: "that it will be expedient to establish a Bank of the United States whenever it shall be manifest that a clear majority of the People of the United States desire such an Institution." The motion was subsequently made and lost; and Mr. Wright's resolution was adopted. The party then in power seem to have had but little reverence for the wishes of a "clear majority of the people of the United States."

The Extra Session lasted six weeks—Congress adjourning on the morning of the 16th of October. The measure, on which the hopes and fate of the Administration were staked, had been defeated.

The Sub-Treasury project came again before the Twenty-Fifth Congress, at their Second Session. The 19th of February, 1838, Mr. Clay once more addressed the Senate in opposition to the measure. This Speech is one of the longest and ablest ever delivered by him. At the commencement he stated certain propositions, which he would proceed to demonstrate. He contended—

1st. That it was the deliberate purpose and fixed design of the late Administration to establish a Government—a Treasury Bank—to be administered and controlled by the Executive Department.

2d. That, with that view, and to that end, it was its aim and intention to overthrow the whole Banking System, as existing in the United States when the Administration came into power, beginning with the Bank of the United States, and ending with the State Banks.

3d. That the attack was first confined, from considerations of policy, to the Bank of the United States; but that, after its overthrow was accomplished, it was then directed, and had since been continued, against the State Banks.

4th. That the present Administration, by its acknowledgements, emanating from the highest and most authentic source, had succeeded to the principles, plans and policy of the preceding Administration, and stood solemnly pledged to complete and perfect them. And,

5th. That the bill under consideration was intended to execute the pledge, by establishing, upon the ruins

of the late Bank of the United States, and the State Banks, a Government Bank, to be managed and controlled by the Treasury Department, acting under the commands of the President of the United States.

The manner in which Mr. Clay proceeded to sustain these charges against the Administration was extremely impressive. That he made out his case satisfactorily to the People, subsequent events fully demonstrated.

Mr. Clay appears to have addressed the Senate on every question of moment that claimed its attention during the Session of 1837-8; on the reception of petitions for the Abolition of Slavery in the District of Columbia—the bill to restrain the issuing of small notes in the District—the disturbances on the Northern frontier, and the attack on the Caroline, an act which he denounced in the most unmeasured terms—the bill to grant pre-emption rights to settlers on the Public Lands—the bill to establish the Oregon Territory—in favor of the bill to prohibit the giving or accepting a challenge to fight a duel in the District of Columbia—against the bill providing for the graduation and reduction of the price of the Public Lands—and on many other subjects of hardly inferior interest.

A Joint Resolution, offered by him on the 30th of April, providing for the reception of the notes of sound Banks in the collection of the Revenue, was adopted by the Senate, with some amendments, the 29th of May. It was in effect a repeal of the Specie Circular.

In the course of the Session Mr. Clay took occasion, in presenting a petition for the establishment of a United States Bank, to make known his own views in regard to such an institution. Some of the conditions and restrictions, under which it seemed to him suitable to establish such a Bank, were briefly given in the following sketch:

1. The capital not to be extravagantly large, but, at the same time, amply sufficient to enable it to perform the needful financial duties for the Government; to supply a general currency of uniform value throughout the Union; and to facilitate, as high as practicable, the equalization of Domestic Exchange. He supposed that about fifty millions would answer all those purposes. The Stock might be divided between the General Government, the States, according to their federal population, and individual subscribers; the portion assigned to the latter to be distributed at auction or by private subscription.

2. The Corporation to receive such an organization as to blend, in fair proportions, public and private control, and combining public and private interests; and, in order to exclude the possibility of the exercise of any foreign influence, non-resident foreigners to be prohibited not only from any share in the administration of the Corporation, but from holding, directly or indirectly, any portion of its stock. The Bank would thus be in its origin, and continue throughout its whole existence, a genuine American Institution.

3. An adequate portion of the capital to be set apart in productive stocks, and placed in permanent security, beyond the reach of the corporation (with the exception of the accruing profits on those stocks) sufficient to pay promptly, in any contingency, the amount of all such paper, under whatever form, that the Bank shall put forth as a part of the general circulation. The bill or note holders, in other words, the mass of the community, ought to be protected against the possibility of the failure or the suspension of the Bank. The supply of the circulating medium of a country is that faculty of a

Bank, the property or the exercise of which may be most controverted. The dealings with a Bank of those who obtain discounts, or make deposits, are voluntary and mutually advantageous; and they are comparatively few in number. But the reception of what is issued and used as a part of the circulating medium of the country, is scarcely a voluntary act; and thousands take it who have no other concern whatever with the Bank. The *many* ought to be guarded and secured by the care of the legislative authority; the vigilance of the *few* will secure themselves against loss.

4. Perfect publicity as to the state of the Bank at all times, including, besides the usual heads of information, the names of every debtor to the Bank, whether as drawer, endorser or surety, periodically exhibited, and open to public inspection; or, if that should be found inconvenient, the right to be secured to any citizen to ascertain at the Bank the nature and extent of the responsibility of any of its customers. There is no necessity to to throw any veil of secrecy around the ordinary transactions of a Bank. Publicity will increase responsibility, repress favoritism, insure the negotiation of good paper, and, when individual insolvency unfortunately occurs, will deprive the Bank of undue advantages now enjoyed by Banks practically in the distribution of the effects of the insolvent.

5. A limitation of the dividends so as not to authorize more than — per cent to be struck. This will check undue expansions in the medium, and restrain improper extension of business in the administration of the Bank.

6. A prospective reduction in the rate of interest, so as to restrict the Bank to six per cent simply, or, if practicable, to only five per cent. The reduction may be effected by forbearing to exact any bonus, or, when the profits are likely to exceed the prescribed limit of the dividends, by requiring the rates of interest shall be so lowered as that they shall not pass that limit.

7. A restriction upon the premium demanded upon post notes and checks used for remittances, so that the maximum should not be more than, say one and a half per cent between any two of the remotest points in the Union. Although it may not be practicable to regulate Foreign Exchange, depending as it does upon commercial causes not within the control of any one government, it is otherwise with regard to Domestic Exchange.

8. Every practicable provision against the exercise of improper influence, on the part of the Executive, upon the Bank, and, on the part of the Bank, upon the elections of the country. The people entertain a just jealousy against the danger of any interference of a Bank with the elections of a country, and every precaution ought to be taken strictly to guard against it.

This was a brief outline of such a Bank as Mr. Clay thought would, if established, conduce greatly to the prosperity of the country. Its wise and provident restrictions would seem to preclude all those popular objections which generally apply to banks. With regard to the constitutionality of a National Bank, Mr. Clay said, that forty years of acquiescence by the people—the maintenance of the power by Washington, the Father of his Country; by Madison, the Father of the Constitution; and by Marshall, the Father of the Judiciary, ought to be precedents sufficient in its favor.

The Abolition question was agitated in the Senate during the last Session of the 25th Congress. Mr. Clay had been urged by many of his friends to refrain from speaking on the subject. It was represented to him as impolitic, superfluous, and likely to interfere with his Presidential prospects. Such arguments could have no weight with him.

His whole course upon this perilous question has been that of the honest, upright, practical and consistent statesman, the true philanthropist, the sagacious and devoted patriot. When Mr. Calhoun introduced, in the Session of 1835-6, his bill to give Postmasters and their Deputies a power of inspection and *espionage* over the Mails—the bill which was passed to its third reading by the casting vote of Martin Van Buren—it met with the prompt and decided condemnation of Mr. Clay. No man has more vigilantly watched the sacred Right of Petition than Mr. Clay. He has condemned on all occasions the refusal of the Senate to receive petitions. His speech of February, 1839, yields to the Abolitionists all that they have a right to demand, and is at the same time so liberal in its doctrines as to disarm the ultraism of Southern hostility. Mr. Calhoun himself was compelled to admit his acquiescence in the soundness of its doctrines and the security which their adoption would promise to the Union. The enemies of Mr. Clay denounced this movement on the Abolition question as an effort to achieve popularity. They reasoned from the inevitable result, to an unworthy incitement. To impute unworthy motives to Mr. Clay because of such a result was to impeach the purity of all public action, and to confine the statesman, who would preserve his political reputation, to the advocacy of unwise and unpopular measures. Popularity *did* follow the promulgation of such sentiments as are contained in the speech of Mr. Clay—the popularity which all good men desire—the popularity of which all great men may be proud—the popularity based upon gratitude for distinguished service, admiration for commanding eloquence, and the eternal sympathies of the PEOPLE with the PATRIOT.

In the summer of 1839, Mr. Clay visited Buffalo, and passing into Canada, made an excursion to Montreal and Quebec. Returning, he visited the city of New-York. He had the previous summer been invited, at an enthusiastic meeting of his friends at Masonic Hall, to visit the city, but had then been unable to comply with their invitation. His reception at the period to which we now refer, was one of the most brilliant ever extended to a public man. Early in the afternoon he was landed at the foot of Hammond-street, Greenwich, from the steamboat *James Madison*, attended by a large number of citizens. An immense multitude was assembled to greet his arrival, and, as he stepped on the wharf, the air was rent with acclamations from a myriad of voices. The day was most propitious. At Greenwich, a procession was formed headed by marshals, after whom came a numerous cavalcade. A band of music preceded the open barouche of Mr. Clay, and a vast concourse of citizens followed in carriages. Everything in the city, in the shape of a four-wheeled vehicle was in attendance, and tens of thousands of citizens followed on foot. When the head of the procession reached the Astor House, the rear had not yet formed in line. Through the whole extent from the point of landing, through Hudson street, up Fourteenth-street to Union Place, and down Broadway to the Park, a distance of nearly three miles, it was at one and the same time a dense moving mass of horsemen, carriages, carmen and citizens. Every window on either side of the way was occupied, and acclamations from every house, and



the waving of handkerchiefs, and cordial salutations, greeted the illustrious Statesman as he passed. At Constitution Hall, at Masonic Hall, and at every place of public resort and amusement, flags were displayed, and bands of music were stationed to hail his approach.

As he reached the Park, the tens of thousands who thronged the grounds, the windows and roofs of the surrounding edifices, the adjacent streets, and the large open space at the junction of Chatham-street and Broadway, thundered out the mighty welcome of a grateful people to the gallant, generous, warm-hearted and noble-minded citizen, whose life had been devoted to their service.

The reception was purely a civic one. It was not a *got-up*, official pageant, where the populace exhibit their gratitude by an invitation of the Common Council, and display a certain amount of enthusiasm duly provided for by the resolves and ordinances of the Corporation. It was the voluntary, unbought, unbidden movement of the People, to greet the arrival among them of one, who had ever been openly the MAN OF THE PEOPLE.

## CHAPTER XVII.

The Harrisburg Convention—Mr. Clay the choice of the People—Presidential Contests of 1824 and 1832—Intrigues in the Convention—Means employed to thwart the Nomination of Mr. Clay—Organization of the Convention—Nomination of General Harrison—Acquiescence of the Kentucky Delegation—Mr. Clay's Letter—Remarks of Gov. Barbour, Mr. Leigh, Mr. Livingston—John Tyler, Nominated for the Vice Presidency—Grounds of the Nomination.

As the period of another Presidential Election drew near, that vast portion of the Democracy of the land, opposed to the administration of Mr. Van Buren, began to turn their eyes towards the most able, renowned and consistent of their leaders, Henry Clay, as a fitting candidate for the Chief Magistracy of the United States. The Champion of the People, their interests and their honor, during the Last War—the Preserver of the Union on two momentous occasions, when it was threatened with Dissolution and Civil War—the Founder and vigilant Protector of the American System—the Friend of Internal Improvements—the intelligent Advocate of a Sound, Uniform, Republican Currency, and of a Judicious Tariff—the experienced Statesman, who, at Ghent, and in the Department of State, had displayed the highest order of talents in the service of his country—the active Foe of Executive Usurpation—the chivalrous Defender of the Constitution and the Laws, who, in his public career, had ever manifested his obedience to the principle that the WILL OF THE PEOPLE, faithfully expressed, should give Law—the Vindicator of Human Liberty throughout the World—WHO could present claims so numerous, so powerful, so overwhelming, upon the gratitude, confidence and suffrages of the People of the United States!

The fact of his having been in two instances an unsuccessful candidate for the Presidency, was the only objection worthy of notice, which was brought forward by those who, while they professed to admit his claims, and to accord with him in his political creed, were doubtful of the expediency of his nomination. But what were the facts in regard to those two instances? In the election of 1824, he failed in

being elected by the Primary Colleges, in company with John Quincy Adams, Andrew Jackson, and William H. Crawford. So that the argument in this case would have been as valid against any one of these candidates as it can be against Mr. Clay. He was excluded from being one of the three highest candidates, who were returned to the House on this occasion, by being *unfairly deprived of Electoral Votes in New-York and Louisiana*. It was, moreover, well known that, if the Election were carried to the House, Mr. Clay would, as the natural result of his great popularity, be elected. The friends of all the other candidates, consequently, had a united interest in excluding him.

With regard to the contest of 1832, the reelection of Gen. Jackson at that time could not be construed into an indication of popular feeling towards Mr. Clay. The "Hero of New-Orleans" had, during his first term, just entered upon his novel experiments in the Currency; and a great part of the People were disposed to give them a fair trial, and afford him an opportunity to carry out the policy he had commenced. The patronage of the Executive was directed, to an extent wholly unparalleled, towards the continuance of the sceptre in his hands. Nullification had begun to show its menacing face, and there were many, even among those who were hostile to the general policy of the Administration, and friendly to Mr. Clay, who yet unwisely thought that strenuous measures towards South Carolina would be required, and that the Union would be safest under the direction of a Military Chief Magistrate.

In addition to these circumstances, the party opposed to Gen. Jackson was distracted by Anti-Masonry, which presented an excellent and popular candidate for President in William Wirt.

*These two elections are all in which Mr. Clay has been a candidate for the Presidency, and in neither did he have a fair field. He has been nearly twenty times a candidate for the suffrages of the People, and only on these two occasions defeated. Mr. Van Buren, with a clear field and the whole patronage of the Government in his own hands, failed in the election of 1840.*

How ridiculous, then, to assert that the Presidential contests of 1824 and 1832 afford any test of Mr. Clay's present strength with the People of the United States! Let it be borne in mind, moreover, that since the period of his last candidacy he has rendered the most memorable services to the country; and that he comes before the people endowed with many new claims upon their gratitude and support.

The Democratic Whig Convention for the nomination of a Presidential Candidate, met at Harrisburg, on the 4th of December, 1839. That they represented a constituency, two-thirds of which were in favor of the nomination of Henry Clay, we cannot entertain a doubt. But soon after the assembling of the Convention, intrigues were set on foot by an adroit few for the selection of some other candidate. It was contended by these men that Mr. Clay was deficient in popular strength, and they would soothingly add, that he was too good and great a man ever to be made President.

One word in regard to this argument, which we often hear from the lips of persons *professing* an attachment to Democratic principles. It is a gross libel on the intelligence of the people, and is found



ed in a supercilious distrust of their competency to self-government. Communities may be deluded, and Republics, through error, be ungrateful *for a time*, but so surely as truth prevails, as prevail it must, will they make amends for their injustice. The sentiment of generosity is strong in the breast of a people; and it is never stifled except through misconception or ignorance.

The most successful means employed at Harrisburgh to defeat the nomination of Mr. Clay was to praise him and decry his prospects. Some dozen or more individuals residing chiefly in different parts of the State of New-York, but embracing persons in other States, would write letters to one another, professing to give calculations based upon unerring statistics. The intriguers were thus severally supplied with a bundle of letters full of extravagant eulogiums upon Mr. Clay, and of lamentations that so great and good a man, and one who had rendered such signal services, could not be elected. These letters were pulled out and exhibited from time to time, as was best calculated to advance the end in view, their exhibition being generally preceded by the observation: "You know that Mr. Such-a-one, 'the writer of this letter, is a devoted friend of Mr. Clay; but only read what he thinks and says of his 'Presidential prospects.'"

Attempts were also made to convey an exaggerated impression of the superiority of Gen. Scott's strength over that of Mr. Clay in New-York—a superiority which never existed. Men who had been sent to the Convention, by constituents entertaining an enthusiastic preference for Mr. Clay, became suddenly doubtful as to his strength, and commenced manufacturing public opinion for the advancement of their own selfish ends. These manœuvres were few in number, but in a body like that at Harrisburgh, where a conciliatory and compromising spirit prevailed, they were enabled to exert an all-important influence. The intriguers soon succeeded in detaching many of the honest and sincere friends of Mr. Clay from his support, alarming them by their fabricated public opinion and appealing to their patriotism and their attachment to principles rather than men.

Hardly a doubt seemed to be entertained, on the first meeting of the Convention, that Mr. Clay would be nominated. There were not two opinions expressed on the point, that he *ought* to be President of the United States. The question was one solely of *probability* of election; and this was a question partly of mere opinion and partly of testimony. Such a state of things presented a rare opportunity for intrigue and deception; and a few—a very few—could, it is obvious, by a resort to unprincipled arts and *strained* representations, and by busy, underhand intrigues, mislead the majority and defeat their will. Unhappily for the country, such a *few* were found; and receiving coadjutors, as they soon did, in some honest but duped friends of Mr. Clay, their influence was greatly augmented, and even those who had had the fullest faith in the strength of their favorite candidate began to question whether *expediency* would not require another choice.

In stating these well-known facts, it is far from our intention to intimate that there were not some gentlemen in the Convention who honestly believed that it would be injudicious to nominate Mr. Clay at that time. Unquestionably there were such;

and they may now be found among the warmest and most single-hearted of his supporters. But we must, nevertheless, adhere to the conviction that the will of the People was not faithfully spoken by that Convention; and that the defeat of Mr. Clay's nomination was brought about by a misapprehension of their most earnest wishes and anticipations.

The Convention was organized on the 5th of December by the appointment of Hon. James Barbour as President, with thirteen Vice Presidents and four Secretaries. A Committee was appointed to report upon the nomination of a candidate, and, after a session of nearly two days, during which the intriguers were not idle with their bundles of letters, it reported in favor of William Henry Harrison. The friends of Mr. Clay—those who had adhered to him to the last—disappointed as they were in this unlooked-for result, were too well aware of the generous sentiments of their candidate, not to acquiesce in it cheerfully and with a good grace. At the meeting of the Convention, on the 9th of December, Mr. Banks of Kentucky was the first to rise and announce the hearty concurrence of the Delegation from that State in the nomination indicated by the informal ballot announced by the Committee. Mr. Preston, from the same State, followed in the same strain, and asked that a letter from Mr. Clay, which had for several days been in possession of a Delegate, but which had not been shown, lest it should seem intended to be used to excite sympathy for Mr. Clay, should now be read. Permission being unanimously given, the letter was read by General Leslie Combs of Kentucky.

In this letter Mr. Clay says: "With a just and 'proper sense of the high honor of being voluntarily 'called to the office of President of the United States 'by a great, free and enlightened people, and profoundly grateful to those of my fellow-citizens who 'are desirous to see me placed in that exalted and 'responsible station, I must nevertheless say in entire truth and sincerity, that if the deliberations of 'the Convention shall lead them to the choice of another as the candidate of the opposition, *far from 'feeling any discontent, the nomination will have 'my best wishes and receive my cordial support.'*" He then calls upon his friends from Kentucky, discarding all attachments or partiality for himself, and guided solely by the motive of rescuing our country from the dangers which environed it, to heartily unite in the selection of that citizen, although it should not be Henry Clay, who might appear the most likely by his election to bring about a salutary change in the Administration.

The reading of this letter excited great emotion in the Convention. It was the saying of a patriot of antiquity, that he would rather have it asked by posterity why a monument was *not* erected to him than why it was. A similar spirit would seem to actuate Mr. Clay; for never has he been known to manifest any personal disappointment at the failure or betrayal of his Presidential prospects.

Gov. Barbour, of Virginia, after expressing his concurrence in the will of the Convention, said he had known Mr. Clay for thirty years, and had been intimately associated with him in public and private life, and that a more devoted Patriot or purer Statesman never breathed. In the course of that thirty years he had never heard him utter one sentiment

unworthy this character. There was no place in his heart for one petty or selfish emotion.

Benjamin Watkins Leigh anticipated the concurrence of Virginia in the nomination. He had told it his duty to support his more intimate and endeared friend, Henry Clay, but he acknowledged the worth of Gen. Harrison. He had supported the former to the last from the firmest conviction that no other man was so fitted to the crisis—so transcendantly qualified for the highest office in the gift of the American people as Henry Clay. He never thought that Mr. Clay needed the office, but that the country needed him. That office could confer no dignity or honor on Henry Clay. The measure of his fame was full; and whenever the tomb should close over him it would cover the loftiest intellect and the noblest heart that this age had produced or known.

The venerable Peter R. Livingston, of New-York, an able and ardent supporter of Mr. Clay, said in regard to him—"I envy Kentucky, for when he dies, she will have his ashes!"

A candidate for the Vice-Presidency remained to be nominated by the Convention. He was found in the person of John Tyler, of Virginia. By what unfortunate chance this selection was made, it is unnecessary now to inquire. It must be said in exculpation of those, however, who acquiesced in it, that there was no good reason for doubting Mr. Tyler's political fidelity and attachment to Whig principles. On all the great questions of public policy he was considered as pledged to the support of those measures for which the Whig party had been battling during the last ten years. On the subject of the Public Lands he had, as a Member of the Virginia Legislature, in 1839, declared himself, both in a Report and a Speech, an advocate of the measure of Distribution. In a speech before the U. S. Senate, he had condemned, in unequivocal terms, the abuse of the Veto power. He went to Harrisburg, as he himself has said, *in favor of Henry Clay—he voted for him in his own Delegation up to the seventh and last ballot—and, if his own words are to be believed, he was affected even to tears*, when the nomination was given by the Convention to another. Surely it cannot be said that he might have been in favor of Mr. Clay's nomination to the Presidency, and yet opposed to the most important public measures to which that distinguished Statesman had ever rendered his support.

On the question of a Bank, it was, with reason believed that Mr. Tyler's views were similar to those maintained by the great Whig Party of the country. Whilst a member of the Convention at Harrisburg, he had made to Governor Owen, of North Carolina, Chairman of the Committee, through whom all nominations must find their way to the Convention, the following communication:\*

"That his views on the Bank Question had undergone an entire change; that he believed the establishment of a National Bank to be alike indispensable as a Fiscal Agent of the Government, and to the restoration of the Currency and Exchanges of the country; and he thought that all Constitutional objections ought to yield to the various Executive, Legislative and Judicial decisions of the question."

In addition to all these circumstances, the simple

fact of Mr. Tyler's presence in the Convention—of his silent approval of all those important measures which were regarded as consequent upon the election of a Whig President—was, in the minds of honorable men, equivalent to a pledge that those measures would, in any event, continue to meet his ready and earnest support.

Under the influence of considerations like these, the Convention unanimously nominated John Tyler, of Virginia, for the Vice Presidency; and, having taken this step, adjourned.

A deep disappointment was felt throughout the Whig ranks at the failure of the Convention to nominate Mr. Clay for the Presidency; but the magnanimous sentiments expressed in his letter, read at the Convention, soon began to animate his friends; and they manifested their devotion to principles rather than to men, by rallying vigorously in support of the selected candidates.

With regard to John Tyler, he was very imperfectly known out of Virginia; and if little could be said in his favor, still less could be said to his prejudice. The office of Vice President was generally regarded as one of comparatively slight consequence; and there seemed to be an utter absence of all apprehension of the contingency, by which its importance was so fearfully magnified. Future Conventions will never forget the lesson which Mr. Tyler has given to his countrymen and their posterity.

## CHAPTER XVIII.

Mr. Clay again in Congress—Passage with Mr. Calhoun—Reconciliatory Incident—The Bankrupt Bill, &c.—The Sub-Treasury again—A Government Bank—Mr. Clay visits his native County of Hanover—His Speech—Proposed Reforms—He addresses the Harrison Convention at Nashville—Democracy—Born a Democrat—Reminiscence of a Revolutionary Incident.

MR. CLAY'S efforts in the Democratic Whig cause appear not to have been less ardent, incessant and faithful, during the Congressional Session of 1839-40, than at any previous period of his career. The just expectations of his friends had been thwarted at Harrisburg; but that circumstance did not seem either to affect his spirits, or to damp the ardor of his opposition to that policy which he believed injurious to the best interests of his country. He acquiesced promptly, heartily and nobly in the nomination of General Harrison, and did not manifest, on any occasion, a lurking feeling of disappointment. He took an early occasion in the Senate to reiterate the sentiments expressed in his letter, read at the Convention; and he showed himself prepared to do vigorous battle in behalf of the principles which he and his associates had been struggling, for the last twelve years, to maintain.

In the Senate, on the third of January, 1840, Mr. Southard moved the reconsideration of an order of reference of Mr. Calhoun's Land Bill to the Committee on Public Lands. The proposition gave rise to a passage between Mr. Calhoun and Mr. Clay, in which severe language was employed on both sides. Allusion being made to their respective political careers at the time of the Force Bill and the Compromise Act, Mr. Calhoun said that the gentleman from Kentucky was flat on his back at that time, and was compelled to the Compromise—and that he (Mr. Calhoun) was then his *master*.

\* See the Address of the Delegates from Maryland, in the Harrisburg Convention, to their constituents. These facts will be found eloquently set forth in that able paper.



In reply, Mr. Clay, in the ardor of his feelings, remarked:—"The gentleman has said that I was 'flat on my back—that he was my master on that 'occasion. He my *master!* Sir, I would not own 'him for my slave!'"\*

The principal questions on which he spoke during this session were—on the Abolition of Slavery; on the Bankrupt Bill; the Maine Boundary Line; Mr. Calhoun's Bill to cede the Public Lands to the States in which they lie; the Navy Appropriation Bill; the Independent Treasury Bill; on the Branch Mints; the Expenditures of Government; the Cumberland Road; Repeal of the Salt Tax; and the Bankrupt Bill. His opinions on nearly all these subjects are so well known as to render a recapitulation unnecessary.

Notwithstanding the indications of public hostility, and "in spite of the lamentations" in Congress "and elsewhere," Mr. Van Buren and his friends continued to press their odious Sub-Treasury project, now newly christened under the name of the "Independent Treasury Bill." Against this measure Mr. Clay battled with undiminished vigor and zeal. On the twentieth of January, 1840, he addressed the Senate in one of his most spirited speeches, in opposition to the bill, which he truly designated as a Government Bank in disguise, demonstrating the assertion by proofs the most convincing.

"A Government Bank," said Mr. Clay, "may not suddenly burst upon us, but *there it is*, embodied 'in this bill. Let the reflection of the present Chief Magistrate be secured, and you will soon see the Bank disclosing its genuine character. But, thanks 'be to God! there is a day of reckoning at hand.—'All the signs of the times clearly indicate its approach. And on the fourth day of March, in the 'year of our Lord 1841, I trust that the long account 'of the abuses and corruptions of this Administration, in which this measure will be a conspicuous 'item, will be finally and for ever adjusted."

He introduced, on this occasion, a bill for the Repeal of the Sub-Treasury System, but it was not acted upon until the will of the People was so pre-emptorily spoken that longer resistance to it, on the part of Mr. Van Buren and his friends, was impossible.

During the summer of 1840, Mr. Clay visited his native County of Hanover, and was every where hailed with enthusiasm and reverence. At a public dinner given to him at Taylorsville, June 27th, 1840, he addressed a vast assemblage of his friends in a speech, which may be referred to as a text book of his political faith. It is probably in the hands of too many of our readers to render an abstract of it useful in this place. Although his opinions on all public questions of importance have been always frank-

\* Mr. Clay is not the man to harbor the harsh feelings sometimes engendered in animated debate. After his farewell speech, on resigning his seat in the Senate, as he was about to leave the Chamber, he encountered Mr. Calhoun. They had not spoken to each other for five years; but they now simultaneously extended their hands, and cordially greeted each other, while the tears sprang to their eyes. They had almost spent their lives together in Congress; and during the War, and at various times subsequently had stood shoulder to shoulder, animated by the same patriotic impulses and aspirations. Time had passed over both, and the young men had become old. For a minute or more, they could not speak, so overcome were both with emotion. At length Mr. Clay said, on parting, "Give my best regards to Mrs. Calhoun;" and they bade each other farewell.

and he defines his position in this speech with unusual minuteness and precision. With a view to the fundamental character of the Government itself, and especially of the Executive branch, he maintains, that there should be—either by amendments of the Constitution, when they were necessary, or by remedial legislation, when the object fell within the scope of the powers of Congress—

1st. A provision to render a person ineligible to the office of President of the United States after a service of one term.

2d. That the Veto power should be more precisely defined, and be subjected to further limitations and qualifications.

3d. That the power of dismissal from office should be restricted, and the exercise of it rendered responsible.

4th. That the control over the Treasury of the United States should be confined and confined exclusively to Congress; and all authority of the President over it, by means of dismissing the Secretary of the Treasury, or other persons having the immediate charge of it, be rigorously precluded.

5th. That the appointment of Members of Congress to any office, or any but a few specific offices, during their continuance in office, and for one year thereafter, be prohibited.

Mr. Clay was among the most active of those, who took part in the campaign of 1840, which terminated in the complete triumph of the Whigs. On the 17th of August, 1840, he addressed the Harrison Convention at Nashville, Tennessee, in an interesting and eloquent speech. In allusion to the professions of the Van Buren party to be Democrats *par excellence*, he very happily said—"Of all their usurpations, I know of none more absurd than the usurpation of this name."

"I WAS BORN A DEMOCRAT," said he, subsequently in a speech delivered in Indiana—"rocked in the cradle of the Revolution—and at the darkest period of that ever memorable struggle for Freedom. I recollect, in 1781 or '82, a visit made by Tarleton's troops to the house of my mother, and of their running their swords into the new-made graves of my father and grand-father, thinking they contained hidden treasures. Though then not more than four or five years of age, the circumstance of that visit is vividly remembered, and it will be to the last moment of my life. I was born a Democrat—was raised and nurtured a Republican—and shall die a Republican, in the faith and principles of my fathers."

## CHAPTER XIX

Election of General Harrison—He visits Mr. Clay—Second Session of the Twenty-Sixth Congress—Inauguration and death of General Harrison—The Extra Session—Mr. Clay's Labors—John Tyler's Veto of the Bank Bill—Mr. Clay's eloquent Speech in Reply to Mr. Rives—The Van Buren men in Congress call to congratulate John Tyler on his Veto—Mr. Clay's fanciful description of the Scene—Events succeeding the Veto—More Vetoes—The Tariff—Mr. Clay resigns his seat in the Senate—Impressive Farewell.

THE election of General Harrison to the Presidency in the autumn of 1840, by an immense majority, was hailed by the Whigs as the triumphant consummation of their long and arduous twelve years' struggle against the disorganizing principles and measures which had prevailed during the ascendancy of Jackson and Van Buren. A majority of the People had at length passed their solemn verdict against those measures, and in favor of the legis-



lation for which Mr. Clay and the Whigs in Congress had been so unanimously contending. Before commencing his journey to the Seat of Government, General Harrison visited Mr. Clay, and personally tendered him any office in the President's gift. Mr. Clay respectfully declined all invitations of this kind, and announced his intention of retiring from the Senate as soon as the objects for which he and his friends had been laboring so strenuously, were placed in a train of accomplishment.

The Session of Congress preceding the new President's installation found Mr. Clay at his post, still prompt and active in the service of his country. On the Land Bill—the Repeal of the Sub-Treasury—the Bill to establish a Uniform System of Bankruptcy—the Treasury Note Bill—the Pre-emption and Distribution project—and other important questions, on which his views are familiar to our readers, he addressed the Senate with his accustomed eloquence and energy. In his Speech of the 23d of January, 1841, on the Land Bill, he entered into an able vindication of Whig principles and measures as contrasted with those of the expiring Administration. There being still a Van Buren majority, Mr. Clay's Resolutions, repealing the Sub-Treasury, after affording occasion for some eloquent debates, were laid on the table the 19th of February. Some remarks being made in the Senate by Mr. Cuthbert, toward the close of the Session, of a character prejudicial to Mr. Webster, Mr. Clay eloquently vindicated that distinguished Senator, and bore testimony to his exalted merits.

The Second Session of the Twenty-Sixth Congress terminated on the night of the 3d of March—the Van Buren men having refused to pass a Bankrupt Bill and other important measures. The day after the adjournment, General Harrison was inaugurated President of the United States; and, on the 13th of March, he issued his Proclamation for an Extra Session of Congress, to commence on the last Monday in May. Before that period arrived, and precisely a month after his inauguration, the venerable President departed this life; and, by a provision of the Constitution, John Tyler of Virginia, the Vice President, was invested with the authority of President of the United States.

The Extraordinary Session of Congress, convened by the Proclamation of the lamented Harrison, took place at the appointed time, the last Monday in May, 1841. Never was there a body of Representatives who came together with a more patriotic and honorable desire faithfully to execute the will of their constituents, the majority of the People of the United States, than the Whigs, who composed the Twenty-Seventh Congress. Mr. Clay at once took active and decided measures for the prompt dispatch of the public business. The subjects which he proposed to the Senate, as proper exclusively to engage their deliberations during the Extra Session, were:

- 1st. The repeal of the Sub-Treasury Law.
- 2d. The incorporation of a Bank adapted to the wants of the People and the Government.
- 3d. The provision of an adequate Revenue by the imposition of Duties, and including an authority to contract a temporary Loan to cover the Public Debt created by the last Administration.
- 4th. The prospective Distribution of the proceeds of the Public Lands.
- 5th. The passage of necessary Appropriation Bills.

6th. Some modification in the Banking System of the District of Columbia for the benefit of the People of the District.

In the formation of Committees, Mr. Clay was placed at the head of that on Finance; and, on his motion, a Select Committee on the Currency for the consideration of the Bank question was appointed. Of this Committee he was made Chairman. Early in June he presented his admirable Report of a Plan for a National Bank; and, after a thorough discussion, the bill was passed, which, on the 16th of August, called forth a Veto from President Tyler. On the 19th of the same month, Mr. Clay addressed the Senate on the subject of this Veto. His remarks, although apparently made "more in sorrow than in anger," are pervaded by the spirit of unanswerable truth; and, in his rejoinder to Mr. Rives, on the same day, he rises to a height of eloquence never surpassed on the floor of Congress. In the opinion of many of his hearers, it was one of the most brilliant Speeches of his whole Senatorial career. On this occasion he showed, by irresistible proofs, that the question of a Bank was the great issue made before the People at the late Election. "Wherever 'I was,' said he—"in the great Valley of the 'Mississippi—in Kentucky—in Tennessee—in Maryland—in all the circles in which I moved, every 'where, *Bank or No Bank* was the great, the leading, the vital question."

Not long after the Veto, as Mr. Clay, with two or three friends, was passing the Treasury Buildings, along the road leading to the Pennsylvania Avenue, he noticed a procession of gentlemen walking two by two, toward the White House. "In the name of wonder, what have we here?" exclaimed Mr. Clay, while his features lighted up with one of those mischievous smiles, which are so contagious, seen on his countenance. *It was a procession of the Van Buren Members of Congress, going personally to congratulate John Tyler on his Veto!*

The incident was not forgotten by Mr. Clay. The scene was too rich and piquant to pass unnoticed. On the 2d of September, a suitable opportunity presented itself in the Senate for a commentary on the occurrence; and he availed himself of it in a manner, which entirely overcame the gravity of all parties present. He gave an imaginary description of the scene at the White House, and the congratulations lavished upon the President by his new friends. He pictured to the Senate the honorable member from Pennsylvania (Mr. Buchanan) approaching the Throne, and contributing his words of encouragement and praise to those, which had been offered by the rest. The imaginary speech, which he put into the lips of this gentleman on this occasion, was so characteristic, that Mr. Buchanan subsequently complained in the Senate, that it had been gravely attributed to him by several journals as having been actually delivered, and that he could not divest many of his worthy constituents in Pennsylvania of the idea.

The figure of Mr. Benton was one of too much importance not to be introduced by Mr. Clay into this fancy sketch.

"I can tell the gentleman from Kentucky, that I was not at the White House on the occasion to which he alludes," said the Missouri Senator interrupting him.

"Then I will suppose what the gentleman would have said if he *had* been present," continued Mr. Clay, without suffering his imagination to be checked in its flight. And he then represented the wordy and pompous Missourian bowing at the Executive footstool, and tendering his congratulations.

The space to which we have been restricted, will not allow us to present even an imperfect sketch of the whole scene. We can only refer the reader to it as one of the most felicitous of those legitimate presentations of the *ludicrous*, made to illustrate the *true*, which sometimes occur to enliven the barrenness of legislative debate.

The events which succeeded the Veto are too recent in the minds of the People to render a minute enumeration necessary here. They are forcibly summed up in Mr. Adams's excellent Report on the President's Veto of the Revenue Bill. A second Bank Bill, shaped to meet the avowed views of the President, was prepared, passed, and then vetoed. The Cabinet, with the exception of Mr. Webster, resigned; and the great purpose for which the Special Session of Congress had been called was defeated by the will of one man, who owed his influential position to his professed attachment to Whig principles, and his declared preference for Mr. Clay as a candidate for the Presidency.

Mr. Clay was unremitting in his application to the public business during the Extra Session. He spoke on a great variety of questions, and, being at the head of two important Committees, performed a great amount of hard work. Although his principal measure for the public relief was defeated by the unlooked-for defection of John Tyler, he had the satisfaction of aiding in the Repeal of the odious Sub-Treasury System—in the passage of the Bankrupt Law—and in the final triumph of his favorite measure, often baffled but still persevered in, the Distribution of the Sales of the Public Lands. By the provisions of this last law, Distribution was to cease whenever the average rate of Duties on Imports should exceed 20 per cent.

A Revision of the Tariff, rendered necessary by the expiration of the Compromise Act, was also undertaken. This was the most important subject which engaged the attention of the Twenty-Seventh Congress, at its first regular session. To meet the exigency of the occasion, a Provisional Bill, suspending the operation of the Distribution Bill for one month, as well in consequence of a lack of funds in the Treasury, as of a desire on the part of Congress to give more mature consideration to the subject of a Tariff, was passed. But it encountered still another and another Veto from the President.

It has been asserted that Mr. Clay and his friends did not desire an adjustment of the Tariff question, during the Session of 1841-2. Nothing could be more unfounded than this charge. In spite of discomfort and mortification, they persevered in their efforts for the relief of the country, and eventually surrendered the Distribution clause to meet the views of the President; and the Tariff Bill finally became a law, through the patriotic endeavors of the friends of Mr. Clay, notwithstanding the attempt of Mr. Tyler to crush their energies and arouse their opposition.

On the thirty-first of March, 1842, after one of the longest Congressional careers known in our annals,

Mr. Clay resigned his seat in the Senate of the United States. It having been previously understood that he would take occasion, in presenting the credentials of his successor, Mr. Crittenden, to make some laudatory remarks, the Senate Chamber was, at an early hour, crowded to its utmost capacity, by Members of the other House, and by a large assemblage of citizens and ladies. Some of Mr. Clay's best friends had looked forward with apprehension to this event—wearing the aspect, as it did, of a formal and appointed leave-taking. They remembered that there was but one step from the sublime to the ridiculous, and they dreaded lest the truly impressive character of the occasion might be marred, or divested of its dignity, by any farewell words. But Mr. Clay had hardly risen to speak before their apprehensions were lost and forgotten in a deep and absorbing interest in the language that flowed calmly, smoothly and majestically from his lips. He referred to the period of his first entrance into the Senate, in 1806. He paid a merited compliment to the high character of that body, and to the ability of its individual Members; but added that, full of attraction as was a seat in that Chamber, to fill the aspirations of the most ambitious heart, he had long determined to forego it, and to seek repose among the calm pleasures of "home."

It had been his purpose, he said, to terminate his connection with the Senate in November, 1840. Had President Harrison lived, and the measures devised at the Extra Session been fully carried out, he would have then resigned his seat. But the hope that at the Regular Session the measures left undone might be still perfected, induced him to postpone his determination; and events, which arose after the Extra Session, resulting from the failure of those measures which had been proposed at that Session, and which appeared to throw on his political friends a temporary show of defeat, confirmed him in the resolution to attend the present Session also—and, whether in prosperity or adversity, to share the fortune of his friends. But he resolved, at the same time, to retire as soon as he could do so with propriety and decency. Mr. Clay then continued as follows:

"From 1806, the period of my entry on this noble theatre, with short intervals, to the present time, I have been engaged in the public councils, at home and abroad. Of the nature or the value of the services rendered during that long and arduous period of my life, it does not become me to speak; history, if she deigns to notice me, or posterity, if the recollections of my humble actions shall be transmitted to posterity, are the best, the truest, the most impartial judges. When death has closed the scene, their sentence will be pronounced, and to that I appeal and refer myself. My acts and public conduct are a fair subject for the criticism and judgment of my fellow-men; but the private motives by which they have been prompted—they are known only to the great Searcher of the human heart and to myself; and I trust I may be pardoned for repeating a declaration made some thirteen years ago, that, whatever errors—and doubtless they have been many—may be discovered in a review of my public service to the country, I can with unshaken confidence appeal to the Divine Arbitrator for the truth of the declaration, that I have been influenced by no impure purposes, no personal motive—have sought no personal aggrandisement; but that in all my public acts I have had a sole and single eye, and a warm and devoted heart, directed and dedica-



ted to what, in my judgment, I believed to be the true interest of my country."

Mr. Clay then alluded to the fact, that in common with other public men he had not enjoyed an immunity from censure and detraction. But he had not been unsustained. And here the allusion to the persecutions of his assailants led to the mention of Kentucky, the State of his adoption—noble Kentucky—who, when the storm of calumny raged the fiercest, and he seemed to be forsaken by all the rest of the world, threw her broad and impenetrable shield around him, and bearing him up aloft in her courageous arms repelled the poisoned shafts aimed for his destruction. As Mr. Clay uttered the name of Kentucky, his feelings overpowered him—the strong man was bowed with emotion—he passed his fingers before his eyes for a moment—then rallied, and proceeded with his remarks. To the charge of Dictatorship, which was so often in the mouths of his opponents at that time, Mr. Clay replied temperately and happily. We can quote but a fragment of this portion of his Valedictory Address:

"That my nature is warm, my temper ardent, my disposition, especially in relation to the public service, enthusiastic, I am fully ready to own; and those who supposed that I have been assuming the Dictatorship, have only mistaken for arrogance or assumption that fervent ardor and devotion which is natural to my constitution, and which I may have displayed with no little regard to cold, calculating and cautious prudence, in sustaining and zealously supporting important National measures of policy which I have presented and proposed."

The truly generous qualities of Mr. Clay's nature shine forth from every line of the following passage:

"During a long and arduous career of service in the public councils of my country, especially during the last eleven years I have held a seat in the Senate, from the same ardor and enthusiasm of character, I have no doubt, in the heat of debate, and in an honest endeavor to maintain my opinions against adverse opinions equally honestly entertained, as to the best course to be adopted for the public welfare, I may have often inadvertently or unintentionally, in moments of excited debate, made use of language that has been offensive, and susceptible of injurious interpretation toward my brother Senators. If there be any here who retain wounded feelings of injury or dissatisfaction produced on such occasions, I beg to assure them that I now offer the simplest apology for any departure on my part from the established rules of parliamentary decorum and courtesy. On the other hand, I assure the Senators, one and all, without exception and without reserve, that I retire from this Senate Chamber without carrying with me a single feeling of resentment or dissatisfaction towards the Senate or any of its members."

Mr. Clay concluded this memorable address by invoking, in a tone which thrilled through every heart, the blessings of Heaven upon the whole Senate and every member of it. The hushed suspense of intense feeling and attention pervaded the crowded assemblage as he sat down. For nearly half a minute after he had finished no one spoke—no one moved. There was not a dry eye in the Senate Chamber. Men of all parties seemed equally overcome by the pathos and majesty of that farewell.—At length Mr. Preston, of South Carolina, rose and remarked, that what had just taken place was an epoch in their legislative history; and, from the feeling which was evinced, he plainly saw that there

was little disposition to attend to business. He would therefore move that the Senate adjourn.

The motion was unanimously agreed to; but even then the whole audience seemed to remain spell-bound by the effect of those parting tones of Mr. Clay. For several seconds no one stirred. "In all probability we should have remained there to this hour," said an honorable Senator to us recently, in describing the scene, "had not Mr. Clay himself risen, and moved towards the area." And then at length, slowly and reluctantly, the assemblage dispersed.

Shortly after the adjournment, as Mr. Calhoun was crossing the Senate Chamber, he and Mr. Clay encountered. For five years they had been estranged; and the only words which had passed between them had been those harshly spoken in debate. But now, as they thus inadvertently met, the old times came over them. They remembered only their political companionship of twenty years' standing.—The intervening differences, which had chilled their hearts towards each other, were forgotten. The tears sprang to their eyes. They shook each other cordially by the hand—interchanged a "God bless you!" and parted. We have alluded elsewhere briefly to this scene. It was a happy sequel to the leading events of the day.

## CHAPTER XX.

Return to Kentucky—Speech at Lexington—Visits Indiana—Scene with Mr. Mendenhall—Remarks on Slavery—Personal Matters—Slanders Refuted—The Dayton Convention—Visit to the South-West—Triumphal Progress—Return Home—Contemplated Visit to the South-East—Letters on the Tanip—Letter to the Whigs of Fayette County, Va., in regard to John Tyler—Again Visits New-Orleans—Addresses the Whig Convention—Leaves New-Orleans on his way to North-Carolina.

ON his return to Kentucky, after retiring from public life, Mr. Clay was received with all those manifestations of enthusiastic affection which it is possible for a grateful constituency to exhibit. On the 9th of June, 1842, he partook of a public entertainment or Barbecue, given in his honor near Lexington.

The speech which he delivered on this occasion is probably fresh in the recollection of many of our readers. Containing as it does many personal reminiscences of his past career, and a review of those leading questions of policy upon which we have already given his opinions, it is one of the most interesting of his numerous addresses to popular assemblies.

Early in October, 1842, being on a visit to Richmond, in the State of Indiana, the occasion of his meeting a large concourse of his fellow citizens was seized upon by a number of his political opponents to present him with a petition praying him to emancipate his slaves in Kentucky. It was thought that even Henry Clay would be nonplussed and embarrassed by so inopportune and unexpected an appeal. A Mr. Mendenhall was selected to present him with the petition, and expectation was raised to the highest pitch among the few who were in the secret, and who were far from being Mr. Clay's well-wishers, to hear what he would say. Never did he acquit himself more felicitously than on this occasion.



The indignation was great among the assembly when they learned the object with which Mr. Mendenhall had made his way through their midst to the spot where Mr. Clay stood. They regarded it as an insult to him and his friends; and the probability is, that Mr. Mendenhall would have had some palpable proof of their sense of his impertinence, had not Mr. Clay instantly appealed to the assembly in the following terms:

"I hope that Mr. Mendenhall may be treated with the greatest forbearance and respect. I assure my fellow citizens, here collected, that the presentation of the petition has not occasioned the slightest pain, nor excited one solitary disagreeable emotion. If it were to be presented to me, I prefer that it should be done in the face of this vast assemblage. I think I can give it such an answer as becomes me and the subject of which it treats. At all events, I entreat and beseech my fellow citizens for their sake, for my sake, to offer no disrespect, no indignity, no violence, in word or deed, to Mr. Mendenhall."

Then, turning to Mr. Mendenhall: "Allow me to say," said Mr. C., "that I think you have not conformed to the independent character of an American citizen in presenting a *petition to me*. A petition, as the term implies, generally proceeds from an inferior in power or station to a superior; but between us there is entire equality."

Mr. Clay remarked, in continuation, that he desired no concealment of his opinions in regard to the institution of Slavery. He looked upon it as a great evil, and deeply lamented that we had derived it from the Parental Government and from our ancestors. But, without any knowledge of the relation in which he stood to his Slaves, or their individual condition, Mr. Mendenhall and his associates had presented a petition calling upon him forthwith to liberate the whole of them.

"Now let me tell you," said Mr. C. "that some half a dozen of them, from age, decrepitude or infirmity, are wholly unable to gain a livelihood for themselves, and are a heavy charge upon me. Do you think that I should conform to the dictates of humanity by ridding myself of that charge, and sending them forth into the world, with the boon of liberty, to end a wretched existence in starvation?"

In conclusion, Mr. Clay admirably exposed the hypocrisy of the petitioners by the following proposition, in regard to which they have never taken any steps:

"I shall, Mr. Mendenhall, take your petition into respectful and deliberate consideration; but before I come to a final decision, I should like to know what you and your associates are willing to do for the Slaves in my possession, if I should think proper to liberate them. I own about fifty, who are probably worth fifteen thousand dollars. To turn them loose upon society without any means of subsistence or support would be an act of cruelty. Are you willing to raise and secure the payment of fifteen thousand dollars for their benefit, if I should be induced to free them? The security of the payment of that sum would materially lessen the obstacle in the way of their emancipation."

Mr. Clay finished his remarks with some friendly advice to Mr. Mendenhall, which it is probable that individual will never forget. The tables were completely turned upon those who had thought to annoy and embarrass the great Kentuckian. The hearer of the petition and his associates were suffered to sink away unnoticed and unheeded by the crowd.

As the period for a new Presidential election approaches, the enemies of Mr. Clay are circulating the grossest misrepresentations in regard to his conduct as a slave-holder and his opinions upon the subject of the institution of Slavery. A Mr. James Channing Fuller, who according to his own showing, smuggled himself into the kitchen at Ashland and interrogated the slaves, in the absence of Mr. Clay from home, has published a statement in relation to Mr. Clay's domestic affairs, full of the most ridiculous falsehoods. One of the slaves, named Darkey, who seems to have been very communicative in "humbugging" the fellow, on being asked why she had told him such big stories, replied: "Why, the man came sneaking about the house like a fool, and I thought I would make a bigger fool of him."

A Mr. Abel Brown, who was indicted not long since for libel by the Grand Jury of Albany, has also been busy in propagating the vilest slanders in regard to Mr. Clay's connection with the slaveholding interest. We need only stamp them as deliberate and malicious falsehoods, wholly unsubstantiated by the slightest shadow of proof.

The Lexington Intelligencer says:

"Mr. Clay owns about fifty slaves. Several of them, from age and infirmity, are an absolute charge upon him. His allowance of food to them, is a pound of bacon per day for adult men, and in that proportion for women and children—free access to the meal-tub for bread, and plenty of vegetables. Most of them raise fowls. They are well clothed and housed, and the tasks given them are very light, inasmuch, that during the season of breaking hemp, some of the men can earn their dollar per day. Their attachment to Mr. Clay is strong. Charles has travelled with him through the greater part of the United States and both the Canadas. When at the Falls of Niagara, three years ago, Mr. Clay was asked by a friend if he was sure of Charles's fidelity; for that some Abolitionists had been attempting to seduce him from his service. Mr. Clay replied that they were welcome to get him off if they could. He might go if he pleased; he would be only anticipating his freedom a few days. In Canada, Charles was again importuned and teased, until excessively vexed, he turned upon his tormentors and told them that he would not leave his master for both of the Queen's Provinces. Charles's wife, a free woman and her children, all live upon Mr. Clay's place and are chiefly supported by him, without rendering any equivalent."

There has never been any concealment on Mr. Clay's part of his opinions on the subject of Slavery. Through the whole course of this Memoir they will be found scattered, from the period when he first advocated the gradual eradication of Slavery from Kentucky in 1797 to the present moment. In his speech before the Colonization Society in 1827, (see Chapter X. of the present work,) nothing can be more explicit than the language he employs. We refer those who would be enlightened further in regard to his views, to that eloquent address.

On the 29th of September, 1842, Mr. Clay attended the great Whig Convention at Dayton, Ohio, where ONE HUNDRED THOUSAND WHIGS are believed to have been assembled.

"At 3 o'clock," says one of the actors in the scene, "when every street in the city was filled, and there seemed no resting-place for any, the procession was formed. This occupied a long time. When done, the order, 'March!' was given; and

in solid mass, we moved to welcome the great Statesman, Henry Clay, into the city. He was met near the city, and, at half-past 9 o'clock, reached the neighborhood of the National Hotel. Here a beautiful sight was witnessed. One hundred and twenty-five children, as the honest patriot approached, welcomed him with songs! Their sweet voices rang out in merry peals, and the multitude responded to it with the heartiest enthusiasm. After this, Mr. Clay occupied a stand for some time, as the procession passed by, welcoming him to Ohio, and in return receiving his salutations.

When the procession had passed, Mr. Clay retired into the Hotel. Governor Metcalf then appeared at the window, and delivered a Speech—returning the thanks of Kentucky for the warm-hearted reception they had met with, and bidding all who loved the name of American to rally together in defence of American Liberty and American Labor.

Mr. Schenck read Resolutions, prepared by the Committee, nominating Henry Clay and John Davis for the Whig candidates for 1844. At this time Mr. Clay was seen in the crowd, and then, as if there had been one voice only, the shout went forth for the Statesman of the Nation. He answered it; and, in a Speech of two hours, plain, yet eloquent, he spoke, concealing no opinion, disguising no wish, the multitude all the while listening with eager attention and breathless silence. And such a Speech! It was a master-effort of a master-spirit.

Of this tremendous meeting Mr. Clay afterward remarked, that of all the crowds in Europe or elsewhere he never saw one so great. A vast sea of human heads surrounded the platform, covering many acres.

In the month of December, 1842, Mr. Clay, having private business in New-Orleans, where one of his married daughters resides, visited that city, stopping at Natchez and other places on his route. He was every where received by the People with such enthusiastic demonstrations of popular affection as had never before been bestowed upon any American except Washington.

On his return homeward from Louisiana, about the middle of February, 1843, his progress was continually impeded by vast assemblages of the people to meet and welcome him. At Mobile, on the 2d of February, and at Vicksburg, on the 20th of February, an immense concourse of citizens collected to offer the tribute of their gratitude and respect. The Hon. S. S. Prentiss addressed him, on the latter occasion, in that strain of fluent and impassioned eloquence for which that young and gifted orator is distinguished.

At Jackson, the capital of Mississippi, Mr. Clay was met and welcomed by the largest concourse ever assembled in the State. At Memphis, Tennessee, crowds of citizens from the surrounding region assembled to tender him their affectionate respects, to look on and listen to the greatest living champion of their Country's honor and interests. Thus felicitated and welcomed on his route, Mr. Clay, with more than a conqueror's trophies, returned, in fine health and spirits, to Ashland, just as Spring was beginning to fringe with green the old oaks that waved around his homestead.

Early in April he addressed a large body of his fellow citizens in the Court-House yard at Lexington; and, in the course of his remarks, acknowledged, in appropriate language, the attentions which had been paid to him and the honors which had been showered upon him by all parties during his late trip to the South-west.

It having been understood that Mr. Clay would make a tour to the South-east during the autumn of 1843, innumerable letters from Committees in all sections of the country were poured in upon him, requesting him to visit a multitude of places, both on his route and aside from it. The task of replying to these letters must alone have been exceedingly laborious. North Carolina was, we believe, the first to claim from him a visit. In his reply to a Committee of citizens of Raleigh, dated 10th July, 1843, he consents to pay a visit, some time in the course of the next spring to that State, which was "the first to declare the Independence of the Colonies, and will be among the last to abandon the support of the Union."

Several letters from Mr. Clay on the subject of the Tariff appeared, during the Summer of 1843. Nothing could be more explicit and undisguised than the expression of his views. In his reply, dated 13th September, 1843, to a letter from F. S. Bronson, Esq., of Georgia, asking his opinions in regard to the Protective policy of 1832, he writes:

"The sum and substance of what I conceive to be the true policy of the United States, in respect to a Tariff, may be briefly stated. In conformity with the principle announced in the Compromise Act, I think, that whatever revenue is necessary to an economical and honest administration of the General Government, ought to be derived from duties, imposed on Foreign imports. And I believe that, in establishing a Tariff of those duties, such a discrimination ought to be made, as will incidentally afford reasonable protection to our national interests.

"I think there is no danger of a high Tariff being ever established; that of 1833 was eminently deserving that denomination. I was not in Congress when it passed, and did not vote for it; but with its history and with the circumstances which gave birth to it, I am well acquainted. They were highly discreditable to American legislation and I hope, for its honor, will never be again repeated.

"After my return to Congress in 1831, my efforts were directed to the modification and reduction of the rates of duty contained in the act of 1828. The act of 1832 greatly reduced and modified them; and the act of 1833, commonly called the Compromise Act, still further reduced and modified them. The act which passed at the Extra Session of 1841, which I supported, was confined to the free articles. I had resigned my seat in the Senate when the act of 1842 passed. Generally, the duties which it imposes are lower than those in the act of 1832. And, without intending to express any opinion upon every item of this last Tariff, I would say that I think the provisions, in the main, are wise and proper. If there be any excesses or defects in it, (of which I have not the means here of judging,) they ought to be corrected.

"My opinion, that there is no danger hereafter of a high Tariff, is founded on the gratifying fact that our manufactures have now taken a deep root. In their infancy, they needed a greater measure of protection; but, as they grow and advance, they acquire strength and stability, and, consequently, will require less protection. Even now, some branches of them are able to maintain, in distant markets, successful competition with rival foreign manufactures."



By this it will be seen, that Mr. Clay is in favor of sustaining the present Tariff; and that, so far from contemplating higher and higher duties, he believes that the rapid and constant progress of our Manufactures tends ever to diminish instead of increasing the necessity for decidedly protective duties. He never was in favor of a high tariff. In his own language, he believes; "that the Revenue from the General Government should be derived from the Foreign imports to the exclusion of direct taxes, and the proceeds of the sales of Public Lands; and that no more revenue should be levied than is necessary to an economical administration of the Government; but that in levying it such discriminations ought to be made as will afford moderate and reasonable protection to American interests against the rival and prohibitory policy of Foreign Powers."

Notwithstanding these clear and unequivocal declarations, the attempt is frequently made to misrepresent Mr. Clay's views in regard to the Tariff. Surely there is no longer any excuse for ignorance upon this subject among persons claiming to be intelligent.

The Whigs of Fayette County, Virginia, some time in September, 1843, wrote to Mr. Clay requesting him to favor them with a visit on his way to or return from North Carolina. By the following extracts from his reply, it will be seen that he is far from disguising his sentiments in regard to Mr. Tyler:

"The treachery, Gentlemen, of the acting President, to which you allude in terms of just indignation, is mortifying to us as Americans.

"Considering the youth of our Republic, and the virtuous and illustrious men who have filled the office of Chief Magistrate of the Union, it is painful in the extreme to behold such an example of utter abandonment of all the obligations of honor, of duty and of fidelity. But, far from allowing that degrading fact to throw us into a state of apathy and despondency, it ought to stimulate every American freeman to redouble his energies in rescuing his Government from the impure hands into which it has accidentally fallen.

"Against Mr. Tyler no exertion is necessary. He will soon retire with the contempt and amidst the scoffs of all honorable men. Our efforts should be directed against those who first seduced and then profited by him; those who, after having won him to their uses now affect to shrink from the contaminating association; those who after his complete identification with them, and at the moment when he is appropriating to their exclusive advantage the whole patronage of the Government, unjustly upbraid us with the failure of measures, the adoption of which was prevented by his perfidy and their countenance and support of him."

In December, 1843, Mr. Clay's private affairs again required his presence in New-Orleans. He was welcomed on his route to that city by the same testimonials of popular attachment that had signalized his journey of the preceding year; and, during his residence in the great Southern Metropolis, citizens of all parties seemed to unite in doing him honor. Before his departure, the State Convention of the Democratic Whigs of Louisiana, which was holding its session at the time, formed in procession, the 23d February, 1844, and marched to the St. Charles Hotel, where he was staying, to tender their respects. His reply to their enthusiastic congratulations was brief but to the point:

"You call for a speech from me, my fellow-citi-

zens: It is not proper that I should make a speech, and I will not make a speech. But this I may say to you—you are engaged in a good cause, an honest cause, a glorious cause: the principles which you are advocating tend to the advancement of the prosperity of the Republic, and I will tell you that from all quarters—from the farthest corners of Maine to the extremest points of Louisiana, the signs of the times are propitious, and not a speak obscures the horizon. GO ON, THEN! GO AHEAD!"

On the 25th February, Mr. Clay reached Mobile on his way to North Carolina. Although it was the Sabbath, and of course no civic ceremonies denoted the welcome which was swelling in every bosom, yet the wharves were lined with a dense and innumerable throng, eager to catch a glimpse of him as he disembarked. On the next day he was to receive his fellow citizens at the Mansion House. The Advertiser of the 26th says: "Mr. Clay, we are pleased to add, is looking in fine health, and promises to live yet many years, the benefactor and the pride of his country."

On the 5th March, he left Mobile for Montgomery, Columbus, Ga., Macon and other intermediate cities on his route, followed by the best hopes of the people for his health, prosperity and elevation to the Chief Magistracy of the Republic in November next.

## CHAPTER XXI.

Mr. Rives's Letter in favor of Mr. Clay—Review of Mr. Clay's Personal History—His successes at the Bar—Chief Justice Marshall's Opinion of his Talents—Personal Description—His Manners and Mode of Address—Richard M. Johnson's Estimate of Mr. Clay's Abilities—Anecdotes—Conclusion.

ONE of the most cheering evidences of the widespread reaction in the public mind in favor of Mr. Clay may be found in the letter of the Hon. William C. Rives, U. States Senator from Virginia, dated January 1st, 1844, and addressed to Colonel Edmund Fontaine, of Hanover County. In this manly and eloquent letter, Mr. Rives states the grounds of his preference for Mr. Clay over Mr. Van Buren as a candidate for the Presidency in plain and forcible terms. The following passages cannot be made too familiar to the people of the United States:

"Could any thing inflict a deeper wound on the cause of Republican Institutions than such a spectacle of levity and instability on the part of the constituent body as would be exhibited in the restoration of Mr. Van Buren, after the overwhelming condemnation of his Administration pronounced by the almost unanimous electoral voice of the country but three short years ago? Would it not render popular Government a 'by-word and taunt' among the Nations?"

"It is impossible for any reflecting man to contemplate the actual and prospective condition of the country without seeing in it already the germ of new difficulties and troubles, which may, in their approaching development, agitate our glorious Union to its centre. The Oregon and Texas question in our foreign relations; at home, a deficient revenue, with all its ordinary sources pressed up to their farthest productive limit, and some of them, there is reason to apprehend, beyond; the Tariff controversy reopened, with all the conflicting interests and passions which never fail to be awakened by it; and added to these, the rekindled fires of the Abolition excitement—each and all of them are questions which carry in their bosom the fearful elements of civil discord and intestine strife. The worst and most dangerous aspect they present is, that all of



them bring into immediate and opposing array, if not into angry and hostile collision, the sectional interests and feelings of the different geographical divisions of the Confederacy. Whose, at such a moment, is the master-spirit that may have power to still the rising tempest before it sweeps with destructive fury over the face of our yet happy Union? or, should this prove hopeless and impossible, whose the commanding genius to ride the whirlwind and direct the storm? To preside over the destinies of a great Republic, in a crisis of such complicated difficulty and peril, calls for something more than the arts of the mere party politician. It demands the highest moral and intellectual qualities of the statesman—courage, self-possession, elevation of character and elevation of views; a nobleness and generosity of nature that attracts confidence, and can inspire enthusiasm; the spirit of persuasion and the spirit of command combined. Let the annals of the country, in some of the darkest moments which have ever lowered upon its fortunes, be consulted, and they will answer whether HENRY CLAY or MARTIN VAN BUREN is the man for such a crisis."

Of such paramount interest have been the details of Mr. Clay's public career that we have but little room to bestow upon his private and professional history, honorable as it has been to him. We have alluded to his early successes at the bar, but space fails us in the attempt to supply even an imperfect sketch of his numerous triumphant efforts in the sphere of his profession. Owing to the more popular character of his political labors, he has not enjoyed, out of the boundary of the Supreme Court, half the reputation which was his due as a jurist of extensive attainments and profound ability. But we have been assured by Mr. Justice Story, that he was regarded by Chief Justice Marshall as second to no lawyer in the country in these respects. His arguments always evinced great reflection, and often great erudition; and they were of that elevated and liberal character, which excluded every aid of a narrow or *pettifogging* cast. We must content ourselves with a mere reference to this department of Mr. Clay's history; referring the reader to the reports and records of the United States Courts for information in regard to it.

Henry Clay is now (1844) in his sixty-seventh year, and, notwithstanding his varied and arduous labors, tasking his mental and physical powers to an extraordinary degree, and the several periods of dangerous illness, to which he has been subject, he bears in his personal appearance the promise of a vigorous, healthful and protracted old age. In stature he is tall, sinewy, erect and commanding, with finely formed limbs and a frame capable of much endurance. From his features you might at first infer that he was a hardy backwoodsman, who had been accustomed rather to the privations and trials of a frontier life than to the arena of debate and the diplomatic table. But when you meet his full, clear, gray eye, you see in its flashes the conscious power of a well-trained and panoplied intellect as well as the glance of an intrepid soul. Its lustre gives animation to the whole countenance, and its varying expression faithfully interprets the emotions and sentiments of the orator. Much of the charm of his speaking lies in his clear, rotund and indubitably melodious voice, which is of wide compass, and as distinct in its low as in its high tones. The effect of it, when a passion is to be portrayed, or a feeling of pathos aroused, is like that of a rich instrument upon the ear

Nothing could be more felicitous than Mr. Clay's personal manners and mode of address. They impress every one with the conviction that he is a true man—that there is no *sham* about him and his opinions. Frank, affable, natural and communicative—as much at home among European princes and potentates as at a Barbecue with his own constituents—his perfect self-possession and repose of manner spring, not so much from long intercourse with the world as from that rooted democratic instinct, that dignity of character, which looks solely to the inward man, and sees not the stars and garters with which he may be externally decorated.

Among the eminent men who have borne testimony to those qualities, which render Mr. Clay so worthy a candidate for the highest office in the gift of the American people is Col. Richard M. Johnson of Kentucky. We are indebted to the Richmond Whig for the following anecdote:

"On the 30th of September last, Col. Johnson being in Staunton, Virginia, a number of gentlemen paid him the respect of calling to see him. One of the company remarked to him, 'Colonel, when you reach the railroad junction, you will be near the *Shashes of Hanover*.' The honest old warrior's face immediately lit up with an expression of sincerity and pleasure, and he eloquently said: 'I shall be delighted to see that place. Every spot of ground Henry Clay touches he immortalizes. I have been in public life for forty years, and in that time have been associated with all the great men of the country. Leaving out Madison and Gallatin, who were old men when I first stepped upon the theatre of politics, I will place Jefferson first, then Henry Clay. He is a perfect Hercules in all the qualities that can adorn human nature. Some men may excel him in a single quality—for instance, Webster may be a greater logician, or some may be more renowned for deep researches, but take Clay all in all, he has not an equal in the Union, either in the North or South—the East or the West. In moral courage—in physical courage—in oratory—in patriotism, and in every noble quality, he is without a superior. I have been associated with him on Committees in connexion with Calhoun, Lowndes, Cheves, Webster, and other distinguished individuals, but Clay was always the master-spirit. We looked up to him as the Ajax Telamon; and by his counsel we were guided in our deliberations. If the rest of the Committee assembled before him and were in doubt how to proceed, when he made his appearance, all eyes were turned upon him—and we were certain to be right when we followed his opinion. He is a great man, a very great man."

As a writer, Mr. Clay will creditably compare with any of the public men of the day. His style is singularly perspicuous, simple, forcible and correct, evincing a preference for good old Saxon words over those derived from the Latin and Greek languages. In this respect, it is perfectly Addisonian. His instructions to the Ministers sent to the Congress of Panama, his Land Report of 1832, his Report on the differences with France, and numerous documents which emanated from his pen while he was at the head of the Department of State, may be referred to not only as papers evincing masterly statesmanship, but as excellent specimens of "English undefiled."

In his tastes and habits of life, he is remarkably simple and unostentatious. On his fine estate of Ashland, he has for many years devoted his leisure to superintending the breeding and raising of cattle, on an extensive scale, and no man has done better

service to the farming interests of the country. He is an early riser, and methodical and industrious in the disposition of his time.

In early life, Mr. Clay had a fondness for play—not for the sake of the money sported—but for the company and the excitement. He has, on several occasions given up large sums that he had won, and often saved men from ruin. He has never played at public table or at gambling houses. *For upwards of thirty years he has not played at any game of hazard.* We mention these facts because there is much misrepresentation abroad on the subject; and the most grossly exaggerated stories have been made current by his enemies. We have fairly stated the head and front of his offending.

As an instance of that magnanimity which Mr. Clay carries into all the transactions of life, we may quote the following facts from the *Cleveland (Ohio) Herald*, of April, 1843:

"A near relative of Mr. Clay, residing in his vicinity, who has been largely engaged in the purchase and manufacture of hemp, for bagging and bale-ropes, for the New-Orleans market, by the fall in value, and the embarrassments of the times, which have been felt with prodigious force for a year past, in the great South-Western Emporium, was lately compelled to make an assignment of his property to trustees, for the benefit of all his creditors. The whole amount of his liabilities was near \$50,000—about one-half of which was due to Mr. Clay for advances to enable the manufacturer to prosecute his business, so advantageous to the farming interests of Kentucky, with the hope of an improvement in the condition of things, so that a suspension of the work and of the payment might be avoided.

"The sale of the property took place about a fortnight ago, and as usual in such cases attracted several hundred persons, and among them many of the creditors. Mr. Clay then told them in substance that the assignment was for the benefit of all the creditors, himself included—that the amount due him was as large as all the other claims combined—that from the relationship in which he stood to the debtor, it was probable some, and perhaps many of the creditors, had become such under the expectation that, if difficulty occurred, he, Mr. Clay, would protect them—that although there was no ground whatever for asking him to do so, yet, rather than that any man should think he had the slightest reason to complain of him, and in order further that every debt due to others should be paid, he now released all interest under the assignment until every dollar due to others was paid, and then if any thing was left he would take it. The sale was made—the other creditors were all paid, and what little remained was all Mr. Clay got for his \$25,000.

"How different this from the ordinary course, when Mr. Clay, being the confidential creditor, would have been first paid, and in this case the only one paid, and who but Henry Clay could be found, under such circumstances, to reject the whole or at any rate his share of the proceeds?"

But it is with Mr. Clay's public history that we have mainly to deal. The Legislative annals of the Nation are the sources from which it may be derived. There it stands unmy and immutably recorded, through a period of nearly forty years. From those magnificent quarries of the Past, the materials will be drawn for a monument more perennial than marble or brass. Never were the views of a public man upon all questions of public policy more ingeniously and unequivocally expressed—more clearly and broadly defined. On no one point is there an

indication of shuffling—of a disposition to evade or defer the responsibility of uttering an opinion. In contemplating his career, we are often reminded of these lines by the author of *Philip Van Artevelde*:

"All my life long  
I have beheld with most respect the man  
Who knew himself and knew the ways before him,  
And from amongst them chose considerably,  
With a clear foresight, not a blindfold courage  
And, having chosen, with a steadfast mind  
Pursued his purposes."

Such a man is Henry Clay! And in no one public act of his life does he seem to have been actuated by other than pure and patriotic motives. "I WOULD RATHER BE RIGHT THAN BE PRESIDENT." In that expression we have a key to his conduct from the moment he first entered the National Councils; and in that expression we have an earnest of the single-heartedness of purpose with which the affairs of the country will be conducted under his administration. His elevation to the Presidency would be a national blessing—not merely because it would revive confidence and restore outward prosperity, but because its moral effect would be incalculably advantageous to our highest interests as a Free People. It is notorious that, under the dynasties of Jackson and Van Buren, the moral tone of the country has been deplorably lowered; the dastardly doctrine of Repudiation has sprung up, by which sovereign States have endorsed the ethics of the pickpocket and the swindler; and our reputation, at home and abroad, has received stains, which it will take years to efface.

To the Philanthropist, the Patriot, and the Christian, what a relief to turn from this spectacle of dishonor and mal-administration, to the prospect of Henry Clay's election in November next!

And now we approach the termination of our imperfect sketch of his Life and Public Services. The enthusiastic demonstrations in his favor, which are daily and hourly manifesting themselves in every quarter of the Republic, and which point to him as the ONLY candidate of the Democratic Whigs of the Union at the next Presidential Election; the numerous nominations, and the cordial testimonials of State Legislatures, and of primary meetings of the People every where, in his behalf, are matters of present history, which it is the province of the newspapers of the day to note. So overwhelming are they in their amount, that it would be useless for us to attempt in this place to convey an idea of their character and weight. That they are the infallible precursors of the election of Henry Clay to the Presidency of the United States, in the autumn of 1844, we firmly and fully believe. That triumph will be rendered all the more glorious from its contrast with the reverses and disappointments of the sixteen years preceding it, illumined only by that burst of sunshine which visited us in the election of General Harrison, and disappeared at his death.

In this hope, we take a temporary leave of the subject of our biography. What further distinctions and glories may await him, time only can reveal.—But the Past is secure. His name lives in the hearts of his countrymen. His fame is incorporate with the history of the Republic. May they both be blended with the highest honor which a Free People can bestow.



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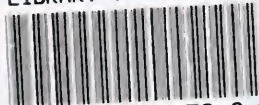
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