





Class F69  
Book B6



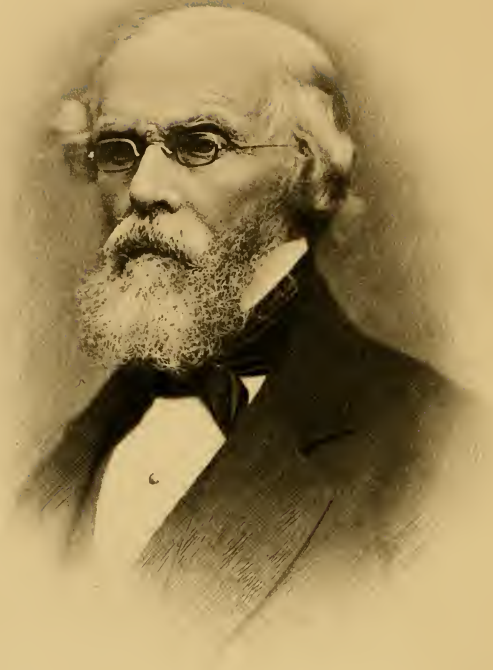












*F. W. Bird*  
"

# FRANCIS WILLIAM BIRD

*A BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH*



BOSTON  
PRIVATELY PRINTED  
1897

F69  
.B6

Norwood Press  
J. S. Cushing & Co. — Berwick & Smith  
Norwood Mass. U.S.A.

65636  
105-



TO OUR CHILDREN

We Dedicate this Book

TRUSTING THAT THEY MAY ACQUIRE FROM THIS BRIEF  
SKETCH OF OUR FATHER'S LIFE AND CHARACTER AN  
INCREASED SENSE OF THEIR RESPONSIBILITY TO  
THE COMMUNITY, AS WELL AS A GREATER  
REGARD FOR HONESTY AND CONSCIENTIOUS  
INDEPENDENCE OF ACTION,  
QUALITIES SO PRONOUNCED  
IN THEIR GRANDFATHER'S CHARACTER





# FRANCIS WILLIAM BIRD:

## A BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH.



### I.

WELL worthy of study and admiration is the life of a man who, in spite of obstacles and discouragements, attains success; who, though never abounding in robust health, lives with unimpaired faculties and capacity for enjoyment beyond the Biblical term of four-score years; who, outgrowing the narrow limits of a prescribed creed, comes into the sweet serenity of a liberal Faith; who has taken an intimate part in many national crises, been the trusted friend and counsellor of the most distinguished statesmen of his day, and won the hearty respect of opponents with whom it was his fortune to cross swords in strenuous strife.

Such a man was FRANCIS WILLIAM BIRD.

He has many claims on remembrance. As a manufacturer, his reputation for sterling honesty was unimpeached; he had the good will of his associates, the love and veneration of his em-

ployés, to whom he stood in a peculiarly gracious and winning relationship. As a politician — using the word in its best significance — he preserved a sturdy independence which invariably led him to prefer the paramount interests of the whole country to the ephemeral considerations of section or party. He stood on a height of mental and moral sincerity, which enabled him to see through and look beyond the mists obscuring many of the questions of the day; and though he was often blamed for the attitude he took, time usually proved that he was right. As a man he was generous, public-spirited, optimistic. Though abstemious, he was fond of good cheer; sometimes brusque in his manners, he was cordial and friendly. He was one of the unique characters of his day, an individuality of striking force. It was a genuine tribute to his usefulness that he was affectionately called “The Sage of Walpole.”

During his long life he many times received assurances from notable men, of the regard in which he was held.

In the early days of the war (January, 1862), Governor John A. Andrew wrote him: “You are as good and true a friend, patriot, and man, as there is in the world.”

Eight years later, Henry Wilson (October, 1870) wrote from Natick, pouring out his heart's bitterness over the unfriendly criticism that had been

directed against one of his associates. He began :—

“You have been my friend for many years. We have not always agreed. You have sometimes sharply criticised words and acts of mine, but I have loved you none the less.”

In 1872, Senator Anthony of Rhode Island wrote him :—

“I know you too well, my ancient and much-valued friend, to doubt that in politics as in everything else, you are actuated by unselfish and high-minded motives ;” and four years later he exclaimed : “Good luck go with you wherever you go ; for be you Republican or Democrat, you are always right in all, and I am always faithfully yours.”

The same year a gentleman named his son Francis Bird, and in communicating the interesting fact, said :—

“As we have not great riches to bestow upon the youngster, we will give him what is better, a good name,” and he added : “In all sincerity I can wish nothing better for the young man, than that he shall never bring any discredit upon his name.”

In May, 1879, Governor John D. Long sent him a friendly letter, in which he said :—

“My respect for you, which has grown with acquaintance, and which I share with all your fellow-members, is so great, that I value your

praise and am ambitious to be worthy of it. Of how little worth are all these political honors and activities, if they carry not with them what is worth more than all the rest, the personal esteem and confidence of our associates. Most sincerely do I hope that you will enjoy better health, and be enabled for many years to render to the State the services which your long experience and your abilities enable you to render."

George M. Stearns of Springfield congratulated him on his "iron will, undoubting convictions, and unhesitating action," and in another letter remonstrated with him because he somewhere called life fleeting: "Such as you are immortal. You are always on the right side, and there too with magnificent courage."

In 1890, on the occasion of his eighty-first birthday, Mr. S. B. Noyes of Canton wrote him: "You blessed my youth, my manhood, my age, with your counsels and your example."

These are only a few from many similar testimonies, bearing the names of judges, governors, senators, and men in every station in life. They render only the more intense the feeling of regret that he did not himself find the time and meet the inclination to write his reminiscences of the public men and public affairs of Massachusetts. He was often urged to do so. In 1881, the Honorable Emory P. Aldrich wrote him: —

"Your acquaintance with men and affairs has

been large, and I know of no one now living in this State so competent as yourself to write such a book. Why will you not undertake the work? Our people, that is, the intelligent portion of them, have a very fair knowledge of the outside of the house of our politics and general civilization, but you can reveal to them an interior view which would be of great value to them."

Such an autobiography would have been an invaluable contribution to the history of Massachusetts and the nation, but unfortunately he whom Charles Francis Adams happily called "the last surviving grenadier of the Anti-slavery Old Guard" left no account of his "life-work of honor and self-sacrifice," no recollections of the exciting dramatic epoch in which he bore so prominent a part. Surviving his distinguished associates, his life might easily shade into the penumbra of legend.

## II.

ANCESTRY counts so much in the estimate of any character that it is a great advantage when one who tells the story of a life is able to trace the various threads that come down from the past and commingle. In the case of Mr. Bird, not a little of his personality is explained by the fact of his descent from that sturdy Scotch-Irish race which has done so much for this land. Physical vigor, bluff independence, capacity for practical affairs, serious views of life, deep religiousness, were frequently found in combination in the men and women of this admirable stock. It bore transplantation well, and, whether in Pennsylvania or in Massachusetts, flourished and filled the farms with a noble yeomanry.

Three generations would not suffice to eradicate these qualities. Francis William was of the fourth, though he cared very little for the trickeries of pedigree and used often to refer slightingly to others' claims of patrician descent. Nevertheless his ancestry was as good as any man could desire. His great-grandmother was a Hawthorne, of the same family as that of Nathaniel Hawthorne. His father, George Bird, was born in the village



of Union, Maine, but was early left an orphan and was placed in the care of his maternal grandparents. As he was dissatisfied with their provision for his education, he ran away and came to Massachusetts. He spent some time in Needham, where he learned the trade of paper-making, and married Martha C. Newell of that place,—a woman of remarkable intellectual gifts and very earnest piety. Her father, Josiah Newell, and her grandfather were closely identified with the religious and local affairs of Needham. Her father was a Revolutionary soldier and served the town for many years as selectman, and held various other town offices.

George Bird was a man of uncommon strength of character, like his wife deeply religious, fearless of public opinion whenever public opinion crossed his idea of duty, which he was determined to fulfil at any cost. At the same time he was gentle by nature and remarkable for his good humor. He was warmly beloved by his eight children and was universally respected by all who knew him. Soon after his marriage he removed to Milton, where he became the superintendent of the paper mill built by Daniel Henchman, — then the leading paper mill in this country. About 1807 he moved to Dedham. He was prosperous in his business affairs and accumulated a considerable property, so that he felt justified in retiring. When he was quite aged, — he lived to be an octo-

genarian,—he lost nearly the whole of his fortune. Then it was that he showed an independence which was truly affecting. Much to the distress of his family, he insisted on going into the mill as a day laborer rather than receive the least assistance from his children, though they were able and most anxious to do for him.

Francis William was born on the twenty-second of October, 1809. He was a bright, capable, and decidedly original child, and gave such promise that his father determined to send him to college. With this end in view he was placed in Day's Academy, an excellent preparatory school situated at Wrentham, some eight or ten miles from his home. The Rev. Horace Dean Walker, who was there between 1825 and 1829, writes entertainingly of the old Wrentham academy in his unpublished *Reminiscences*. "I was very young and very small," he says, "but so long connected with the school that my class associations were with those much older than myself. I remember among them the Honorable Frank Bird, Dr. Peter Parker, the Honorable Milton Fisher, the Rev. Eli Thurston, and many others distinguished in different walks in life. The discipline of the school was exceedingly strict and the tuition thorough, but I remember that in those days little or no attention was paid to the pronunciation of Latin. Corporal punishment was never resorted to, but other devices were as effectual, such as holding a nail very



firmly in the floor. A split quill sometimes did duty on the nose. Staying after school was the worst punishment, but the lesson *had* to be mastered.

“We all attended church, and the old meeting-house, with its high square pews, the top rail supported by a row of turned pilasters some six inches long, will never be forgotten. We youngsters could look through these pilasters and so keep the run of things, and it was more interesting to turn them with the idle hands for which Satan finds mischief because they would sometimes squeak a little. I have a distinct remembrance of Dr. Emmons, his cocked hat, breeches, and silver knee and shoe buckles, and I can hear now the nasal singing with which he read the hymns. The sermons were beyond me. What grand times we four or six boarders had at Colonel Hawes’s! The Honorable Frank Bird was one of them, — a most timid and bashful youth, ready to blush like a girl, but he wonderfully outgrew all that. In his eventful public life, as he has been prominent in one party and then in its opposite, I have more than once thought of the time when a new frock coat came to him from the tailor’s (coats were rare and great events in those days), and he soon found that the long rather stiff nap ran down, as it ought, on one sleeve, and up, as it should not, on the other. This made it necessary to brush one sleeve down and the other up. . . . In after

years he told me this good pun, told him by Dr. S. G. Howe, whom he found once with his feet swathed in flannels and extended on a chair. Calling the next day, and finding him in the same position, he said: 'Howe, what is the matter?' 'I have got the gout,' said Howe. 'You have got the gout,—such a temperance man as you!' 'Yes,' said the great philanthropist. 'Yes, Bird, my ancestors drank wine, and I must foot the bills.' . . . One great occurrence was a series of plays occupying the entire day at the close of the 'quarter' of the Academy. They were both tragic and comic, and were given in the old meeting-house, which for the time was transformed into a theatre. The two rows of windows were darkened by blankets and 'comforters' borrowed for the occasion, so that the full scenic effect of stage lights and scenery might be secured. . . . In this same town, Potter, the ventriloquist and 'conjurer,' as he was called, who to-day would be invited to perform, as Heller and the like are, before our schools, was prosecuted by the leading men."

Young Bird found a congenial home in the family of George Hawes. Mrs. Hawes was particularly kind to him; in later years he often spoke of her with great tenderness, as of a second mother. The master of the school, Isaac Perkins, afterwards married one of his sisters. One of his schoolmates at Wrentham was Lewis Bullard, who, on the occasion of his seventieth birthday, wrote him a

letter which contains another interesting reminiscence of those early days.

“We have known each other from earliest childhood,” he wrote, “when your father’s square pew was opposite to my father’s square pew in Dr. Bates’s ‘Meeting-House.’ What years have passed since you slammed down your seat after prayer and I got my head through the palings of the pew, — and how little we knew that these only prefigured our future: that you would become iconoclast, and that I should always be getting my head into inextricable places. But I knew you better at Wrentham, where we were supposed to study together. It was there that I first learned your marked characteristics, — in your heated debates with J. H. Billings and others, — *your* tenacity, *his* obstinacy, and the final determinations. And when we were all smoking our pipes *before* breakfast, how did the good preceptor admonish us *thus*: —

“‘Boys, it is a *bad* habit to smoke *before breakfast!*’ — Was smoking ever so delicious as when we all marched down to the Academy, headed by our teacher, with our postprandial pipes! After that our lives diverged. You went to college, and acquired the *radicals* of *education*; for I hold that all we can get from the schools is the fundamental ability to *learn*. In you the roots have shown a marvellous outgrowth from what I thought an insignificant planting. I thought you a bright

boy and a poor scholar, who would never make a President."

The same friend, speaking of Mr. Bird's honesty, which he had seen exemplified in many trying situations, said: "Do not pride yourself on your honesty; you have had nothing to do with it. It was born into both of us from our mothers. I remember your mother, and the picture of the expressions of her face are more strongly defined on my memory than can be made by modern Photography. . . . I knew that you had this principle of Honesty in all your doings, whether domestic, political, or financial, which would lead you to do whatever you considered the Right. You have been flattered and abused and cajoled and calumniated all your life, and by your own confessions have had great weaknesses and made many mistakes and committed many follies, but I have always said, 'Frank Bird is honest,' but did not add, 'because he cannot help it: he was made so.'"

Wrentham was on the road to Providence; the stage coach from Boston passed through East Walpole, and so, although the Birds were Congregationalists and Brown University was under the control of the Baptist denomination, it was natural enough that this institution was chosen for Francis. He was entered in 1827.

The greatest advantage of a small college is in the personal attention which students receive from the superior officers. The influence exerted by

some of the early presidents of New England colleges cannot be estimated. Francis Wayland, D.D., was at the head of Brown University. "How old Wayland impressed me!" wrote one of the Rhode Island Hazards. "I haven't got over it to this day and shall not till my latest hour. I know he was narrow in his religious beliefs, and perhaps bigoted, but there was a stern ruggedness of character, a Cromwellian earnestness which comported well with his commanding presence."

Moral Philosophy was his specialty, but he was also the author of a popular book on Political Economy. Francis W. Bird shared in the general feeling of reverence which Dr. Wayland was so well fitted to inspire.

During his college course he wrote much for the *Brunonian*. He was very popular with both professors and students, and went a great deal into society. "He was so original, so much interested in people, so sympathetic, true, and generous, that he was peculiarly beloved by all who were near him and made a marked impression upon all," writes the grand-niece of one of the professors connected with Brown while Mr. Bird was a student there. Among his classmates and acquaintances were Henry B. Anthony, who afterwards became United States senator from Rhode Island, Lafayette S. Foster, who became senator from Connecticut and acting Vice-President, and several others who afterwards attained eminence. He



always kept up his interest in Brown, and from the time that he left college until his death he never more than three or four times missed being present on commencement day.

During his course his health was seriously impaired by dyspepsia; his eyes failed to such an extent that it became doubtful if he would be able to carry out his original intention of studying for the Bar. After his graduation, and while he was still undecided what direction he should turn for his life work, he determined to teach school. President Wayland, to whom he applied for a letter of recommendation, cheerfully granted him the use of his name and offered to be of any possible service to him. He ended his letter with a piece of characteristic advice:—

“Spare no effort to teach well, and you will be abundantly rewarded. Especially, my dear sir, let me advise you to seek wisdom from above to direct you in the commencement and throughout the prosecution of your enterprise, that you may teach your pupils not only for this life but for that which is to come.”

He taught school first at Northboro, where by firm and even discipline, though without the use of corporal punishment, he succeeded in governing a roomful of obstreperous youths who had turned their previous master out of doors. He next kept a private school in the old Masonic Hall of his native town of Dedham; but here he suddenly

lost his health, which he had supposed to be perfect, though he declared that he could remember feelings "which ought to have been regarded as premonitions of approaching retribution."

"In 1832," he says in an article contributed to *Graham's Magazine*, "the retribution came suddenly and fearfully."

He dismissed his school Friday night with the expectation of beginning again on Monday morning. But three sleepless nights so reduced his strength that he was unable to continue. The doctors prescribed "good beefsteak, generous wine, and sparkling cider," but when this régime gave no relief they advised him to take a journey, continuing the same system of diet. The plan was not a success. He gives a rather grim account of his return:—

"By riding in the easiest carriage, I made out to drag along until within thirty miles of home, when the outraged system refused to go another step. After taking two meals of water gruel, I succeeded in getting halfway home, and then, after being treated by my kind friends to a good beefsteak dinner (according to the direction of their family physician), atoning for it by another prostration of strength and a sleepless night, taking a dose of medicine, receiving from the physician a parting injunction to stick to the beefsteak, and paying him my last dollar for his physic and advice, I reached home worn out and dispirited."

But Mr. Bird's will was indomitable. If school-teaching was perhaps a too sedentary pursuit, there were other openings for a young man of active temperament. In April, 1833, his health being somewhat restored, he hired a mill of his brother, Josiah N. Bird, and began business for himself: it agreed with him. During his college course he had become acquainted with Miss Rebecca Hill Cooke of Providence. Their friendship resulted in an engagement, and the wedding took place in January, 1834. According to the statement of Mr. Edward L. Pierce, "after the marriage rites the bridal party, in one-horse chaises, drove to the new home in East Walpole."

Here at East Walpole was his home for life. His house was situated on rising ground amid a beautiful grove of trees, cleared in front to give a most delightful view up the placid waters of the Neponset River, there widened like a pond by the dam which gave the motive power for his mill. A delightful spot for a home; within easy reach of the scene of his labors; accessible to his operatives, with whom he ever stood in relations of friendly, almost patriarchal, oversight.

Following the advice of Dr. Wayland, he engaged in active religious work. He had been for some time a member of the Congregational Church at South Dedham, now known as Norwood. It is said that the first Sunday after his marriage to Miss Cooke, he surprised the congregation by tak-



ing to his own pew the colored servant who had accompanied his bride from Providence. It was in perfect accordance with his character that he should have politely ushered the servant into the pew before he and his wife entered. It was undoubtedly largely through the influence of Mr. Bird that a few years later the voters of that village, who had been sturdy Whigs, almost without exception joined the newly organized Free-soil party.

Mr. Bird became superintendent of the South Dedham church, the minister of which was the brother of Professor Edwards A. Park of the Andover Theological Seminary. Mr. Park afterwards became Mr. Bird's brother-in-law.

In February, 1835, Mr. Bird's wife died, leaving a little daughter, who survived only a few months. This was a heavy blow to a man of a nature so deeply affectionate. But he found relief in constant occupation, especially in helping the poor and unfortunate. He took the charge of a mission school at Fort Hill, a district of Boston at that time sunk from its former high estate and since then converted by the march of improvements into a dignified region of trade. He used frequently to walk back and forth from East Walpole, a distance of sixteen miles each way.

Mr. Bird was still troubled with dyspepsia, and in the fall after his wife's death was scarcely

able to attend to his business. Though he had been a member of a so-called Temperance Society, he had felt it right to indulge in the lighter beverages, such as wine, beer, and cider. He was also fond of coffee, but by the advice of Dr. Jackson of Boston he now abandoned animal food, adopted the use of coarse bread, and kept up a course of active exercise. He found great benefit from riding horseback and from warm bathing.

In January, 1837, the famous Sylvester Graham, whose regimen was beginning to attract many followers, gave a course of lectures in Dedham, and Mr. Bird, partly through curiosity and partly through the advice of friends, was induced to attend. He was somewhat prejudiced against Graham's theories, but nevertheless immediately adopted many of his recommendations. In an article which he contributed to *Graham's Monthly* in October, 1837, he gives an interesting account of his mode of life at that time.

"My diet consists," he says, "of plainly cooked vegetable food, of which I am never at a loss for a variety, and of different fruits in their season. I use no condiment, except a very little salt, and very little molasses and milk; of all, I find the less the better. I take but two meals in a day: breakfast at six and dinner at two; never a luncheon. I relinquished my supper as an experiment, to see if I could not sleep better, and it succeeded

so well that I have not touched supper for nearly two years. . . . My only drink is cold water, as pure as I can get it. I never drink at meal-times unless [I am] very thirsty, which very rarely happens. I sometimes take no drink for thirty-six or forty-eight hours, although I formerly used to drink from three to six quarts of some liquid every day in hot weather. In regard to exercise: I rise between four and four-thirty o'clock, and take an hour's vigorous exercise before breakfast, and during the day take not less than four hours, and often twelve or fourteen, in cutting wood, mowing, hoeing, and fast walking, taking care never to exercise violently immediately before or after eating."

Mr. Bird never resumed the eating of meat as a regular part of his diet. Throughout the remainder of his long life he was to a large extent a vegetarian, and although he partook of soups and fish, yet it was his habit to be extremely abstemious; it is said that in his later years he ate scarcely a pound of meat in a twelvemonth. This is certainly a remarkable record for a man whose fortune it was to preside frequently at public dinners, and who was remarkably fond of good cheer.

The panic of 1837 was disastrous to many business enterprises in Boston and the vicinity of Boston; Mr. Bird's had been prospering, and he was enabled to weather the crisis of this financial storm. He succeeded in raising the money needed

to meet all his liabilities. His courage and foresight were greatly praised, and his success was regarded as a remarkable achievement. The following year he purchased the plant of the Neponset Paper Company, next above his own mill. Shortly after he formed a partnership with his father, brother, and brother-in-law, but in 1842 an unexpected obligation obliged the firm to go into bankruptcy. Though legally he might have taken advantage of his suspension and escaped full payment of his liabilities, he regarded his debts as a sacred obligation, and in order to pay them in full, principal and interest, he went so far as to sell all the family silver, which had come by inheritance into his possession, as well as the books in his library. By such sacrifices do honorable men gain more than they lose; for high repute is worth more than family plate, and credit is better than classics bound in costly calf.

Mr. Bird enjoyed the mechanical more than the mercantile part of his calling. He was proficient in the experimental details of paper manufacturing. It was his delight to try the result of mixing various fibres. He was eminently skilful in this direction, and his business prosperity is said to have arisen largely from his capacity in this practical direction. He had no liking for "trade"; bartering, the buying and selling of goods, was repugnant to him. It is probable that by native mental endowment he would have won eminent

success in the profession of the law, which he would have chosen had it not been for his failure in health.

As Mr. Bird began to be known as a manufacturer whose wares commanded and retained customers, so also he began to attract attention on account of his public views and public spirit. Horace Mann was then a resident of Dedham, and was engaging in his noble crusade in favor of a broader and more comprehensive scheme of education; his views specially appealed to Mr. Bird. He took a decided stand in regard to moral reforms and was actively interested in town affairs. He was constantly planning for the improvement of the people of the village that had sprung up in the vicinity of his mill.

In 1843 he was married to Miss Abby Frances Newell, a daughter of Mr. Joseph R. Newell of Boston. She also had been engaged in the Fort Hill mission work, and he had there learned to know and esteem her. It proved to be in every respect a fortunate marriage. Mrs. Bird was a woman of sweet disposition, sympathetic nature, and beautiful character. She had rare common sense and excellent business judgment. She made her home happy, presiding over it with an affable dignity which was the admiration of guests. "I go nowhere with the same feeling that I have at your table," wrote a gentleman fifty years later. "There I feel at home . . . there is freedom . . .

there is good fellowship." For more than a half-century she was the light of his household. He always spoke of her as a model mother to their six children, using her gentle tact and serene wisdom in the formation of their character.



### III.

IN 1846 an act passed the Legislature chartering the Walpole Railway Company and granting it authority to build a new railway between the terminus of the Dedham branch of the Boston and Providence line and Walpole. Applications for no less than two other independent routes from the Blackstone valley to Boston were made, but were granted leave to withdraw. Mr. Bird was intensely interested in the choice of this route, for he felt that the upper towns of Norfolk County should be connected with the shire town and with Boston. With characteristic vigor, he proceeded to awaken the interest of the public, and particularly of his townspeople. He was tireless in presenting the advantages which he foresaw would result to the town. On this subject he wrote and printed for distribution a pamphlet advocating this side of the question, and protesting against various independent lines to New York. It was the first of a long series of pamphlets treating of practical subjects whereby throughout his life he strove to influence public opinion.

Hitherto he had been more or less active in

town affairs, but apparently without thought of taking office. His business of paper-making had absorbed his energies to the exclusion of political ambition. He was now to be introduced to the public life of the State. He had belonged to the great Whig party, and he was nominated as the Whig candidate to represent Walpole in the Legislature. The expectation that he would do valiant service in behalf of the railway through the town largely contributed to his election; nor did he disappoint his constituents. After a long and often heated debate, in which he took a prominent part, the Walpole line at last triumphed and was granted the charter. It was at first called the Norfolk County Railroad; it authorized the construction of a line from Walpole to Blackstone and provided for the union of this road with the Walpole branch. Some of its bitterest opponents were from that county. As the Boston, Hartford, and Erie, and later as the New York and New England Railroad, it had a checkered and generally disastrous history.

Many years later (in January, 1884) Mr. Bird contributed to the *Boston Post* some interesting reminiscences of the enterprise, and conclusively showed that the main cause of its unfortunate history was the perversion of its original purpose as a local road. "A road from Dedham to Blackstone, possibly extended to Southbridge," he wrote, "well managed for the development of its local interests, would, in my opinion, have paid



fair profits from its first opening until this day. The dream of a great air line ruined it." By its directness, when at last the organized opposition of rival roads was finally overcome, Mr. Bird's far-seeing judgment in regard to its necessity was fully justified. In this, as in many other matters, he was far in advance of his time.

Yet it was about fifty years before he himself obtained the great advantages which the proximity of a station to his own establishment would have brought. He lived to see this realized.

With the formation of the Free-soil party in 1848 began Mr. Bird's interest in national politics. He had been a Whig mainly from tradition, but he had never hesitated to be independent. He felt that the Whig position in regard to the great moral questions was to be preferred to that adopted by the Democrats; most of his business associates were Whigs; he felt that the Whig view concerning the currency was the one to be preferred. But the question of slavery was beginning to take precedence of all others. Mr. Bird organized the Free-soil movement in his own vicinity and went as a delegate to the first State convention, and later to the famous national convention at Buffalo. He became known as an indomitable leader. Though he was not especially fluent as an orator and had none of the tricks of the stump speaker, and perhaps scorned to win the ephemeral popularity by interspersing his

arguments with more or less irrelevant anecdotes, yet he was a convincing speaker, and was able by his wide reading and excellent memory to marshal facts of history and the highest principles of political economy on his side. He frequently added piquancy to his climaxes by a cleverly introduced quotation from some of the classic English poets.

The Honorable George H. Monroe, who was one of Mr. Bird's warm friends for almost fifty years, related the story of the Free-soil debates at South Dedham. The meetings were held in a schoolhouse, and Mr. Bird challenged any Whig from Dedham to meet him in debate there. Mr. Monroe says in a letter:—

“I, being then a very young man who had never voted, had the temerity of youth and enthusiasm, and went up as a Whig to accept the challenge. I have never forgotten the kindness and courtesy with which he met me as a stripling opponent, especially as they were in marked contrast to the manner of another Free-soil leader, Edward L. Keyes, whom I had to encounter in debate at the same time. It was a signal proof of Mr. Bird's broad and tolerant nature that he admitted me at once into his friendship as the result of this discussion. We differed widely in politics, not only then but for several years thereafter, and I have little doubt that I often tired his patience by the exuberance of my youthful whiggery, and yet he

never ceased to be considerate and forbearing, and I learned to admire and love him before I had any sympathy with him in his political views."

Few men ever surpassed Mr. Bird in capacity for a solid argument. It is said that he was hardly ever worsted in an encounter carried on by means of the pen. Mr. Keyes, a brilliant man, a master of finished style and capable of pouring out a torrent of fiery invective, was often associated with Mr. Bird in these Free-soil debates. A man who took the opposite side declared that he went with something like fear to the encounter with Keyes but gave comparatively little thought to Mr. Bird. He went away saying that he would rather meet a dozen Keyes than one Bird.

At the beginning of his political career Mr. Bird is remembered as being tall, spare if not gaunt in form. He stooped a little as he walked, but no one could doubt that he was fully six feet in stature. His hair was dark but already beginning to turn gray. His eyes were kindly; he wore heavy gold-bowed spectacles for near-sightedness, but never, even to the day of his death, using glasses when he read.

He was a man of superior culture, of more than the average means, and yet he was affable to strangers, and any thought of presumption because of such superiority apparently never entered his mind. He was one of the most truly democratic of

men, his simplicity of habit, of behavior, of life, being an example worthy of commendation in these more degenerate days. Like all men of strong character, he had strongly pronounced views on many questions, and he never hesitated to express them. Thus in regard to the tariff, his strong sense of justice led him to feel that, as he himself effectively quoted from Pollock's *Course of Time*, protection

“With one hand puts  
A penny in the urn of poverty,  
And with the other takes a shilling out.”

And he used to tell with great gusto how, in 1846, the paper-makers sent a committee to Washington to look after the interests of the craft in the tariff measures then pending and to effect legislation in the interests of the New England paper-makers (to use his favorite term, for he exceedingly disliked the word *manufacturer*), and how after their return he received notice from Mr. Otis Daniell that his share of the assessment was such and such an amount. He paid his contribution, but at the same time declared that it was solely from a feeling of comradeship—because the other paper-makers had done so.

“There, Mr. Daniell,” said he, “that is the last dollar I will ever pay to influence the legislation of Congress to take money out of other people's pockets and put it into mine. If I can't get a living by paper-making without special favors

from government which legalizes stealing from my customers, I will do something else.”

He had learned under Dr. Wayland that a high protective tariff was injurious to the best interests of the people, and not long before his death he wrote in the *Boston Post*:—

“If I have studied political economy to any good purpose for the last sixty years, a government has the right to tax the people only to the amount necessary for the economical administration of its affairs. For this purpose the best method is by a direct tax upon property.” But he was clear-sighted enough to recognize that this state of things would not come about until what he called the “politico-economical millennium,” and so he argued that the tariff should be “as low as possible and laid upon luxuries, and specially without the slightest attempt to help or hurt any industrial interests or any enterprise of capital.”

His strong sense of justice, which had at first inclined him to accept the narrow tenets of Calvinistic theology, likewise caused him to reconsider his views on religion. Its more sectarian form began to appeal to him less and less. He was, as ever, interested in philanthropic work and practical morals, and his sympathies were enlisted especially in the great movement of anti-slavery. But he, like Garrison, Phillips, and many others, was indignant at the attitude of the Church in regard to this burning question. Unfortunately



there was a large number of so-called Orthodox clergymen who, accepting literally the Bible as the Word of God, believed that slavery was a divine institution.

The Rev. Nehemiah Adams was the type of such conservatism. He had visited the South, and seeing slavery in its most favorable and alluring aspect, returned to the North, and there he wrote his famous book entitled *The South-side View of Slavery*. All true abolitionists protested against the insidious arguments and false views of that fallacious book. One time when Mr. Bird was attending service in his own church, the minister announced a religious convention at which the Rev. Dr. Adams was to be one of the speakers. Mr. Bird instantly rose in his pew and, addressing the clergyman, asked:—

“Do I understand that the Dr. Adams mentioned in this notice is the author of the *South-side View of Slavery*?”

“No,” was the reply. “The doctor who is to address the convention is the Rev. William Adams, of New York.”

“Then I am satisfied,” exclaimed Mr. Bird.

There can be no doubt what his action would have been had his first surmise been correct. The incident shows how deeply he felt on the subject and how unconventional was often his manner of expression. Theodore Parker was winning the respect of high-thinking men for his fidelity to

the cause of anti-slavery and by his eloquent sermons delivered on the Music Hall platform, and Mr. Bird was naturally drawn to him for this reason. He was less and less frequently seen at the Congregationalist Church, of which he was a member, and at last wholly ceased his attendance there. But his wife and daughters still continued to be present at the services, and his name was never withdrawn from its membership, though he repeatedly requested that it should be — even to within a few weeks of his death.

#### IV.

BY the close of the presidential campaign of 1848, which resulted in the election of General Zachary Taylor, Mr. Bird had become a power in Massachusetts politics. He had labored earnestly, indefatigably, in behalf of the Free-soil party, and had, as it were, involuntarily made himself the centre in the work of organization. He was originator of the political club, which through good fellowship united men of congenial tastes and high abilities, promoted friendly discussion and wholesome criticism of important measures, and exercised a beneficent influence over the thought of the time. It had been Mr. Bird's habit at the State conventions at Worcester to keep open rooms, so that there might be some general resort for those who were in sympathy with his views. "There," as Mr. Pierce said, "platforms were conceived and the fortunes of candidates determined."

There was published in Boston at this time, in the interests of this party, a paper called *The Daily Whig*. Among its frequent contributors were Charles Francis Adams, Stephen C. Phillips



of Salem, John G. Palfrey, and Mr. Bird. It was in the editorial rooms of this paper that the party leaders at first met for conference on important questions, and it was at this time that the informal dinners were first inaugurated.

It became Mr. Bird's habit to be regularly in Boston on Saturday afternoons, and in order that his friends from out of town might have an additional attraction he had the foresight to provide a meeting-place and a dinner. They were first held at the Cornhill Coffee House.

He himself gives an interesting account of the formation of the Saturday Club, or, as it was generally called, the Bird Club. Wendell Phillips, in one of his reckless attempts to make a point at the expense of accuracy, called Mr. Bird the "one great commander-in-chief of the lobby force." "He and his club," said Phillips, "are the great lobbying nucleus of Massachusetts. They meet at a grog shop just off Washington Street every Saturday at two o'clock."

Mr. Bird, in a dignified, calm, and admirable rejoinder, published in the *Boston Journal*, gives an interesting account of the Saturday Club and its formation:—

"I know not why it was called the Bird Club. The name was not given to it, and is never used by gentlemen who attend its meetings. The only precedence Mr. Bird is entitled to grows out of the fact (alas!) that, with one exception, he is the

oldest of the regular attendants. . . . It is strictly a private party of gentlemen, with which neither Mr. Phillips nor the public have any more right to concern themselves than with a private dinner-party in any dining-room in Boston.

“As to its origin, it dates back to an obscure and fabulous antiquity. In those times which tried men’s souls, when a little handful of Free-soilers grappled with the giant Whig party of Massachusetts, a half-dozen, more or less, of the faithful found themselves round the same table on Saturday afternoons. It was a venial offence; for, Heaven knows, our legs were never under genteel mahogany in Boston. I think John A. Andrew, James W. Stone, Henry L. Pierce, William S. Robinson, and myself were nearly or quite all the original members. Gradually the numbers increased, and, emerging from the narrow quarters of No. 30 School Street, where a luncheon was served from a neighboring eating-house, we attained the dignity of a room at Young’s, and afterwards at Parker’s. Then came the Know-Nothing deluge, whose subsidence left in our quiet retreat considerable driftwood. Some practices obtained which were distasteful to a portion of our friends and we parted by a natural cleavage, we migrating to Young’s Hotel.

“The club, if it be such, has no president, no officers, no rules of organization, no conditions of membership, no nothing to hold it together but

similar political and social affinities, and a common need and love of good-fellowship. The latch-string is always out, and any *gentleman* is welcome. John A. Andrew, George L. Stearns, Seth Webb, Jr., and James W. Stone were of our number. To-day, among the habitual attendants are Mr. Sumner, General Wilson, Governor Claflin, General Butler, the brace of Drs. Howe, J. S. M. Williams, Mr. Jewell, Robinson, Slack, the two Pierces, Gooch, Dr. Loring, Elizur Wright, General Burt, and many other equally pronounced radical Republicans. Among the less frequent attendants are Mr. Dawes, Mr. Oakes Ames, Judge Richardson, Judge Chapin, Mr. J. D. Baldwin, Adin Thayer, etc., etc. Prominent Republicans from abroad, when in Boston on Saturday, usually find the way to this 'grog shop,' — Governor Hawley, Governor Jewell, Governor Anthony, and others whose names I will not stop to recall. Such are the men who, as Mr. Phillips charges, meet weekly to 'manipulate' Massachusetts and make arrangements to 'lobby respectably.' Mr. Phillips does not believe that such men meet for any such disreputable purpose. He does not know and has no reason to suspect that any man ever came there for an unworthy object; and he knows, too, that he has often recommended gentlemen who desired aid or counsel for a laudable public object to visit this 'grog shop.' . . . I challenge any man to state truth-

fully that any arrangements in regard to political nominations or legislative measures were ever proposed or considered at one of these meetings. Of course public acts and public men are freely canvassed; but the only uniform characteristic of the proceedings is unsparing criticism. Woe to the public man who, the first time after any questionable public act, exposes himself to the lashes of men who are nothing if not critical. I ought perhaps to add that this faithful criticism never yet has disturbed the harmony of this association. It is simply impossible that such gentlemen, with such idiosyncrasies, could ever form combinations for the base purposes imputed to them by Mr. Phillips."

The freedom of the club was readily granted to any friend of a regular attendant. Though it was a centre for the Free-soil politicians of the fifties, and anti-slavery men were particularly welcome, it is said that William Lloyd Garrison and Wendell Phillips never took part in them. The late George L. Stearns, whose efforts in behalf of the great cause will never be forgotten, testified before the Senate committee appointed to investigate John Brown's invasion of Virginia, that he had once seen that grim old hero at the Bird Club, whither he, though not yet a member, went to meet him; but whether Brown dined with the club or went in after dinner he was not able to tell.

Mr. Bird took the head of the table and acted as master of ceremonies. Indeed, there is a legend to the effect that in the old days, when they met in an "upper room over the grocery store on School Street," he used to bring the joint over in his own hands from George Young's kitchen, not trusting the mainstay of the banquet to the care of servants, and that he himself made the coffee! There was usually no formal speech-making. The conversation was sometimes desultory, but often of a character in which all present participated, speaking in turn. The price of the dinners when they were organized at first in this loose, unconventional manner was a dollar for each person present. After the war had increased the cost of everything, it was increased to two dollars. Wine was never regularly served. In Mr. Bird's later days, as his friends grew older and fewer by reason of death and political divergencies, the dinners were held once a month instead of weekly.



## V.

MOST of Mr. Bird's life-long friendships were formed during these early days of the anti-slavery movement. To call up the memory of those great names, and adequately to show Mr. Bird's dealings with them, when they united together in their splendid efforts of patriotism and unselfishness, would be to write no small part of the history of the past fifty years. Charles Francis Adams lived in Quincy, not so far from East Walpole as to prevent pleasant personal intercourse. The dignity of his character and his lofty ideals of statesmanship caused him to be regarded as a leader, and Mr. Bird looked up to him in his younger days, and always regarded him with peculiar veneration. When Mr. Adams was elected as representative to Congress from the Walpole district, Mr. Bird was enthusiastic in his support and had high expectations of his usefulness, but he was deeply disappointed that Mr. Adams favored the compromise movements that were set on foot in the winter of 1860-61. Considerable correspondence on this subject passed between them, but nothing but the most friendly

spirit was displayed on either side. At Dedham lived Mr. Edward L. Keyes, the editor of an able newspaper, a brilliant man, finished in speech and fiery in invective. Mr. Bird was intimately associated with him for many years. Mr. Edward L. Pierce and Mr. Henry L. Pierce, the two sons of an anti-slavery Democrat, lived in a neighboring town and were his life-long friends. With Henry Wilson, the shoemaker of Nonantum, whose natural abilities brought him, in spite of his lack of early education, to high office and the deepest respect of his country, Mr. Bird was in active coöperation for several years, until they began to differ in their opinions concerning the "Know-Nothing" or Native American movement, but their mutual friendliness was never really impaired.

The Honorable William Claflin, who was governor of Massachusetts from 1869 to 1872, was one of his warm personal friends and associates. The great war governor, John A. Andrew, stood in the closest political and friendly relationship to him. In fact, as will be seen later, it was largely through Mr. Bird's instrumentality that Andrew was nominated and elected to the gubernatorial chair, and through his incumbency he was a member of the Council. A brief extract from one of Governor Andrew's letters to him will perhaps best attest the intimacy which united them:—

“COUNCIL CHAMBER, BOSTON,  
“January 30, 1861.

“MY DEAR BIRD, —

“I want to suggest that, whenever you see or foresee the arising of a question touching which we have decided opinions, I wish you would, in the freest and fullest manner, give me the aid of your advice; but also to suggest, that it weakens me to criticise afterwards in respect to things as to which I have not had the aid of previous advice. I do nothing at any time but under the keenest sense of responsibility and with the earnest desire to do good and serve the best interest and the highest idea of justice and truth, but am always liable to grave error, and need the kindest sympathy and support of friends — of whom I count you as one of the best.”

Samuel Bowles, who wielded such wide influence through the columns of the *Springfield Republican*, was among his friends, though he did not hesitate to display the amenities of journalistic criticism or spare the rod when he felt compelled to differ. Thus in a letter accompanying a case of excellent Moselle, which he sent him in June, 1869, Mr. Bowles wrote: —

“It did not cost me anything except a great deal of self-denial, for the thing is scarce; so please take it with my personal regards, but I beg of you not to allow yourself to suppose that it carries the slightest approval of your legislative career during the year of our Lord 1869.”

Again he wrote him in 1871, at the time of the apparent break up of the Republican organization,



when the best elements of that party, joined by the best elements of the old Democracy, revolted against Grantism: "Anyhow, let you and I take things quietly and contentedly. Nurse your health, renew your strength, and be still the object of wide friendship and wider admiration."

And then nine years later, in reply to some friendly protest arising from his having perhaps disregarded the warning, "If you get into print and give digs, you must take 'em in return," Mr. Bowles said: "So you think the *Republican* abuses you. Well, that's funny, after all the lovely things we have thought and said about you, to go no farther back. We do mourn for you sometimes, I admit; and sometimes we even scold you perhaps, but it is ever like the Lord's chastening of those whom He loveth most."

His association with Carl Schurz began in the fifties, but a warm and sympathetic friendship arose between them. Years later Mr. Schurz wrote him: "It is nearly thirty years since I first met you, and we have great memories in common, — memories of a grand cause, for which we worked and struggled together with a common devotion; memories of dear friends, to whom we were attached with a common affection; memories of mutual regard, confidence, and friendship lasting many years under changed circumstances."

Close also was his friendship with George L. Stearns, that most noble and generous-hearted,

modest gentleman, who gave of his wealth for every worthy cause, the friend of John Brown and freedom, the legitimate author of the first two colored regiments ever raised in Massachusetts.

Charles Sumner was the great lode-star of his political firmament. The magnificent courage, the unimpeachable integrity, the glorious unselfish patriotism, the leonine nobility of the man, appealed to all his own best qualities, and throughout Sumner's career Mr. Bird was truly loyal to him. It was on the morning of September 24, 1846, the day following the Whig convention in Faneuil Hall, that Mr. Bird first met Sumner at his law office. "From that time forth," says Mr. Sumner's biographer, Edward L. Pierce, "he was in close personal and political relations with Sumner, always alert to guard the latter's position as a public man against open or secret attempts to weaken it."

Nothing is more remarkable in the correspondence of Mr. Bird and these distinguished friends than the grave seriousness of their communications: they might have been Roman senators in consultation. Sumner was the most serious of all. He had no patience with what he considered Lincoln's flippant treatment of desperate crises. But on the occasion of one of Mr. Bird's "great evenings" at East Walpole, when friends and neighbors came to congratulate him on the beginning of a new year, Mr. Sumner unbent enough to make

one of the few recorded puns; he wrote a friend that he was glad to read of the great evening at East Walpole when "our *Bird* of Freedom had such a pleasant roost!"<sup>1</sup>

There were many others of note with whom Mr. Bird was closely associated, so that when he reached old age he might well have exclaimed, in the words of the sweet-tongued Nestor:—

ἤδη, γὰρ ποτ' ἐγὼ καὶ ἀρείοσιν, ἧέ περ ὑμῖν  
 ἀνδράσιν ὠμίλησα, καὶ οὐποτέ μ' οἷγ' ἀθέριζον  
 οὐ γάρ πω τοίους ἴδον ἀνέρας οὐδὲ ἴδωμαι  
 οἶον Πειρίθοόν τε, Δρύαντά τε, ποιμένα λαῶν, etc.<sup>1</sup>

—*Il.* I. 260, etc.

<sup>1</sup> As translated by Thoreau, who also was a prophet of anti-slavery: "But you are younger than I. For time was when I conversed with greater men than you. For not at any time have I seen such men nor shall see them, as Perithoos and Dryas—and . . . Probably Washington, sole 'Shepherd of the People.'"

## VI.

MR. BIRD had a good deal of the Warwick in his make-up. He enjoyed manipulating the secret wires that moved the puppets of politics. But in his motives he was actuated by the highest ideals of patriotism. Party management, which so easily degenerates into demagogism, was with him a measure of public utility. It is considered that his first step in this career of miniature king-making was taken in the year 1852, when the coalition between the Republicans and Democrats of Massachusetts was formed in order to overthrow the Whig ascendancy in the State government. Many of the Free-soilers, particularly Charles Francis Adams and John G. Palfrey, were thoroughly averse to the coalition; but Mr. Bird, far from seeing in it any dereliction from principle, foresaw that it would result in putting into office many of his own party, who, without such union, would be left without any position of influence. The chief political end to be gained by it seemed to him of transcendent importance; it would for the first time give the Free-soil party a representation in the United States Senate.

He himself would not have hesitated to call this "a deal for the distribution of office." It was regarded as worthy of note that while Adams and Palfrey opposed the coalition, and Sumner and Dana yielded reluctantly, the poet Whittier joined heart and soul with Mr. Bird in supporting it.

The coalition proved to be successful. At one time it looked as if the Democrats were not going to fulfil their part of the agreement. George S. Boutwell, the Democratic governor, was elected, but the promise that Charles Sumner should be chosen as United States senator was not fulfilled. Mr. Bird was greatly annoyed at the delay.

"We have fulfilled our part of the agreement," said he, "now *demand* that they, as men of honor, shall keep their promises."

The candidate for the shorter term of senator was Robert Rantoul, Jr., a Democrat. Some of the Free-soilers proposed that his election should be delayed until Sumner was elected. But Mr. Bird urged that, on the contrary, since the term was for only a few weeks, this should be done as quickly as possible. His advice was followed; the Democrats finally made their promise good, and Sumner took the place in the Senate which he filled so long and so ably.

Mr. Bird himself became a member of the Executive Council, and soon showed his independence by casting his official vote in favor of the confirmation of Caleb Cushing as judge of the Supreme

Court of Massachusetts, although Mr. Cushing had been one of the bitterest opponents of the coalition. He declared that Cushing would make a good judge, and that it would spike his gun as a Hunker Democrat. His judgment as to Cushing's able career on the Bench was entirely justified, but the advantage gained by "spiking his guns" proved to be only transitory. The coalition forces won a second victory over the Whigs in 1853, after one of the most exciting elections ever held in Massachusetts. The election of Franklin Pierce the following March put an end to the coalition. It lasted only until the time of the constitutional convention, to which it contributed a large majority of the members. Mr. Bird represented the town of Walpole and was sanguine that great things would be accomplished.

Unfortunately, the American, or, as it was popularly known, the Know-Nothing, organization, had by this time risen into extraordinary power in Massachusetts. Many of the former Free-soilers, seeing the end of the coalition and despairing of any success as a separate party, determined to join this new organization and use it as a means of carrying out their laudable ends. They were all the more influenced to take this desperate and ill-advised step from the fact that their attempt to engineer the adoption of a new State constitution, which should give them greater advantages in voting, had signally failed.



Mr. Bird vehemently protested against such action. He felt that a distinctively anti-slavery party was as greatly needed in the land as it ever had been. He loved the Free-soil party too sincerely to see it die in such an ignominious manner, and he was entirely without sympathy with the narrow and proscriptive tone of the Know-Nothing party. The more dignified and conscientious Republican leaders were fully in sympathy with him in this respect, but a sort of tidal wave in Massachusetts carried into that quagmire of politics all the Free-soilers, with the exception of three or four thousand voters. Henry Wilson, who had been apparently stranded by the popular defection from the coalition schemes, was made United States senator by means of this new affiliation, but he afterwards admitted to Mr. Bird that it was a blot on the fair record of his political life. Mr. Bird never fully recovered his respect for him, though Wilson continued true to his anti-slavery ideas and took an early opportunity to leave his Know-Nothing associates and engage in the formation of the Republican party. Neither did Mr. Bird recover from his distrust of his former associates, who had so chagrined and disgusted him by joining the Know-Nothing movement.

The formation of the Republican party in 1856 seemed to him to satisfy the requirements of his ideal, and he emerged from temporary retirement in order to enter with enthusiasm into the cam-



paign in behalf of General Frémont, but his usual independence was shown by his refusal to vote for Henry J. Gardner, although the Republican convention had endorsed the nomination. Then again, when in 1857 N. P. Banks, a former votary of the Know-Nothing faction, became the Republican candidate for governor, Mr. Bird "bolted"; with a few "indomitables" supporting him, he held a convention in Boston, which nominated Dr. Swan of Easton as a rival candidate. The protest was of no avail; Dr. Swan received only a few thousand votes at the polls.

He was not discouraged by this failure; but while he stood aloof from active participation in politics, rightly considering that the principles that had animated the Know-Nothing leaders were quite too much in the ascendant at the State House, he was all the time on the watch, ready to seize the first opportunity to institute a change for the better. He had already cast about to find a suitable leader to inaugurate the new and better era.

John A. Andrew had been one of Mr. Bird's early Free-soil associates, and in full sympathy with him in opposing the Know-Nothing compromise. Some of his earnest speeches in the Massachusetts House of Representatives, where he took the highest grounds regarding perfect liberty of person, had attracted the attention of the whole State. Mr. Bird and those who still continued to meet with him at the Saturday Club fixed on

Andrew as the proper man to succeed Governor Banks and to inaugurate a more satisfactory régime at the State House. The Banks section of the Republican party, supposing itself firmly entrenched in the possession of the vantage-ground, had of course its own man ready to take Banks's place so soon as he should retire.

During the summer of 1859 Mr. Bird, together with William S. Robinson, Henry L. Pierce, and Judge Adin Thayer, were spending their vacation at Manomet, near Plymouth. The unexpected news reached them that Governor Banks had received an important appointment at the West, and had suddenly announced his intention of declining to be a candidate for reëlection.

"We must instantly go home and organize a movement to nominate Andrew," was the unanimous utterance. They were too shrewd not to recognize the fortuitous opportunity; too energetic not to make the most of it. A vigorous campaign was instantly instituted. Letters were sent forth in all directions; trusty emissaries were despatched to work up the proper feelings; they themselves were indefatigable in their efforts to set every possible agency in motion. The result was that within a week they had called together a convention that nominated Andrew. There was some opposition to Andrew throughout the State, owing to his identification with the radical section of his party, but he was triumphantly elected. Mr. Bird

became a member of his Council, and from that time forth for ten years, with only one brief period of intermission, was a power in the political affairs of the State.

Mr. Bird himself related this incident, in a letter to the *Springfield Republican*.

“Through the summer of '59,” he said, “it was understood that Governor Banks desired renomination. Our earnest anti-Know-Nothing Republicans persistently urged Mr. Andrew to allow them to take his name into the convention as a candidate against Governor Banks. For six years I had ‘taken to the woods,’ but at last I was induced to appeal to Mr. Andrew to accede to the wishes of his friends. He replied that it was the general expectation that Mr. Banks was to be renominated; that the introduction of his own name would disturb the harmony of the party, and under no circumstances would he consent to it, so long as Governor Banks was in the field.

“And here let me recur to a ‘pleasing reminiscence.’ The scene was Colonel Hatch’s tent on the camp-meeting ground at Martha’s Vineyard. The colonel’s Methodism did not prohibit a proper degree of conviviality; and while we were having a jolly time, the news came that Governor Banks, having received an appointment on a Western railroad, had declined being a candidate for governor. Our caps, but for the roof of the tent, would have gone up to the stars, and Henry L.

Pierce (now congressman) was particularly extravagant in demonstrations of delight. 'Now, Frank,' said Henry, 'we must go home and go to work for Andrew.' 'There is nothing to be done,' said I; 'Andrew will be nominated on the first ballot by a two-thirds vote.' Had we known, then, what afterward transpired, that Governor Banks's purpose to decline had been known to his friends for some weeks, and that pipe-laying had been going on all over the State to secure delegates in favor of Mr. Dawes, we should have been less jubilant over Mr. Andrew's prospects. It was, indeed, a formidable combination against us. All the congressmen were for Mr. Dawes. A portion of the delegates had then been elected, and the convention was to be held so soon that Andrew's friends could make no special effort in his behalf. But if ever a spontaneous selection of a candidate was made, it was this by the people of Massachusetts of John A. Andrew. They remembered the little curly-headed 'chap,' whose magnificent burst of eloquence in reply to Caleb Cushing's denunciation of the removal of Judge Loring electrified the House and touched the popular heart from Barnstable to Berkshire; and it was this uprising of the people that gave to Massachusetts and the country our great war governor.

"I remember well, and I love to remember, the gathering at Worcester on the night before the convention. About midnight, I sought the Hon-

orable J. Z. Goodrich and said to him: 'Mr. G., the nomination for governor is settled. Andrew will be the candidate. Our friends would like to put your name as lieutenant on the ticket with him.' Mr. Goodrich thought not, he having aspirations for the first place himself. In the small hours of the morning, he came to my room and said that, having consulted his friends, he had concluded to accept the second place if offered to him. 'But,' he added, 'I wish it understood that this will not prevent my being candidate for governor hereafter.' 'Of course,' I replied; 'nobody here can control the future.' The next day Andrew and Goodrich were nominated."

An epoch of tremendous significance had now dawned on our beloved country. Fortunate, indeed, for its well-being that the guidance of the Ship of State had been placed in hands so able and so well fitted to steer it through the stormy times that were to follow. It has been truly said that Andrew and his associates devoted all their energies for the advantage of the public weal. It may be fair here to quote a brief passage from a letter which Governor Andrew wrote a year or two later to Mr. Bird. It admirably shows the spirit which animated the man: —

"MY DEAR BIRD,—

"You are as good and true a friend, patriot, and man as there is in the world; and *I* think that other people, knowing you are sensitive, and not caring much



for other people's feelings, and having private ends, griefs, or views not consistent with the simplicity of truth, self-denial, and patriotism, are very willing to say and suggest things which they know will wound your good heart.

“As to myself, much as injustice tries me, I nevertheless am trained in mind somewhat to respect and to meet it. Of one thing I know certain; *i.e.* I have been and am and mean to be, with every power of mind, heart, and soul, devoted, in my poor way, to the most tremendous and momentous cause history has yet seen. If others are jealous, I must bear it. I fear God, and hope I do not too much fear *men*. And before His awful judgment in my absolute cleanness and sincerity of purpose, sinner though I am, I am glad to believe all these things must appear. Following nothing but my convictions unceasingly and untiringly (and I think unselfishly), never doing anything for myself, nor for my own ulterior promotion or protection, combining with no one on earth, but casting everything and every care on the Providence which governs all, I keep my mind free, my heart light, and hope and faith undimmed.

“Ever and gratefully yours,

“JOHN A. ANDREW.”

This noble letter, which stands on the highest level of serene and patriotic utterances, makes it evident why Governor Andrew was a governor exactly to Mr. Bird's mind. It is undoubtedly true that politics at this time in Massachusetts were at almost an ideal state of purity. The Republican party was in control, and the men who

influenced and guided it met weekly about Mr. Bird's table. The political boss, shaping legislation for selfish ends, had no place in councils so lofty and dignified. Mr. Bird may have differed with the great war governor on minor points, but never except with mutual respect. With the general course of the administration Mr. Bird was in the most cordial sympathy, and the vigorous anti-slavery policy developed in the course of the following years was directly in line with his inmost feelings.

He earnestly resented the attempts which were from time to time made to injure Andrew with the people. It was charged that the governor was in sympathy with John Brown in his raid into Virginia; but, while both Mr. Andrew and Mr. Bird were in accord with Brown's devotion to the great cause of liberty, and undoubtedly admired his moral fearlessness, there is no proof that either of them aided, abetted, or indeed knew of the Harper's Ferry expedition. Much as they might appreciate his certainly unselfish efforts for the liberation of the downtrodden, they would not have countenanced open defiance of law.



## VII.

AT the Republican convention of 1859 Mr. Bird was at first a supporter of William H. Seward as candidate for the Presidency, but when Abraham Lincoln was finally chosen, he entered heart and soul into the campaign. Indeed, he found himself quite out of sympathy with Mr. Seward's course, not only during the following winter, but also and especially in his action as Secretary of State. In frequent contributions to the press he severely criticised Mr. Seward, taking the ground that a fatal mistake was made in hiding from the knowledge of foreign powers the fact that anti-slavery was at the bottom of the internecine contest.

For the present generation, educated to take the course of history for granted, it is very hard to realize how slow the North was in waking to a realization of the magnitude of the war, and the absolute necessity that the South should be conquered. In his clear foresight and his readiness to anticipate, Governor Andrew displayed some of the qualities of the prophet, but in this respect Mr. Bird stood on the same lofty altitude. But Mr. Bird was impulsive, and perhaps over-anxious

to accelerate the slowly swelling current. He was extremely anxious that Governor Andrew should throw the weight of his dignity and his official position into the scale when, in December, 1861, Governor Boutwell was to make an address in favor of emancipation. Some people had found fault with Andrew on the ground of his non-action in the matter of slavery discussion, and Mr. Bird thought that if he would preside at this meeting, it would silence their cavils. But Andrew, who in spite of his willingness to accept advice had nevertheless a mind of his own, declined to "increase his personal consequence at the cost of the cause which he humbly served"; and he wrote Mr. Bird a long letter of eleven folio pages defending his independence in this regard. It contained some memorable sentences.

"Working unweariedly," he wrote, "in the interests of our most liberal ideas, through all the channels of access both to the President and the Head of the Army . . . I am and always have been sure that patience, prudence, and patriotic devotedness to the country's cause will lead us to one only issue at last in the disposition [dispersion?] of slavery." He then went on to outline a course of action: to keep the country united in the war and prevent the formation of peace parties; to make the Administration feel strong as to money, popular support, and individual coöperation; to keep many of the most influential men of

the country advancing all the time on that paramount issue; to win victories rather than to discuss what might be done and what ought to be done; to bring the slaves themselves into the field as soon as possible; and, finally, to bring the Northern mind to a comprehension of the necessity of a genuine conquest. "The extreme slowness of the North to take up arms," he said, "is not to be forgotten. They bore every threat and indignity, every danger, even to the Union, and every exhibition of rebellious purpose, but you will remember how from land's end to land's end I was reviled last winter for a little war preparation, and how nothing but an attack on Sumter and the threatened march on Washington and violent rebellion in Maryland even aroused government or people to their arms."

He then went on to show how the people were beginning to understand, twenty times better than they did six months before, that it was not merely a war to restore the Union: "In the stern necessity of the logic of war, they will reach the point of grappling with SLAVERY and turning the guns of that fortress against the power of slavery itself."

"We 'black Republicans,' " he goes on to say, "can retard the cause, but we can do little to hasten it save by swelling the current as it moves"; and he adds, with fine eloquence: "With this feeling and these views I have sought, by throw-

ing myself unreservedly into the cause in the immediate interest of patriotic duty, to contribute my humble mite at once to Patriotism, to Democratic Government, and to human Liberty. So have the Republicans as a body. Nor is there a doubt of the wisdom of the policy they have pursued."

The wise leader is never too far in advance; otherwise, he loses his influence. Step by step he moves forward, with his eye fixed on the goal, which his followers are as yet unable to see. That aphorism is proved by the recently discovered unpublished speech of Lincoln, who clearly recognized that slavery would ultimately be abolished from the domain of this fair land. But most of the leading anti-slavery men of the North, or at least of Massachusetts, felt a degree of impatience with Lincoln, because he delayed so long decreeing the emancipation of the slaves. Mr. Bird wrote a series of articles on this subject for the *Norfolk County Journal* of Roxbury, under the caption, "Let My People Go." In these he earnestly urged emancipation. They served an admirable purpose in helping to educate the people to appreciate the necessity of this drastic measure. As soon as the people were educated, — and the growth of opinion was rapid in those days, — then the government felt itself strong enough to take the needful step. As Sumner and Andrew and Mr. Bird and others succeeded in impressing their

views, the tone of legislation began to take that welcome wholesomeness that betokens vigorous growth. As early as 1862 the Massachusetts Legislature passed a series of resolutions advocating immediate emancipation. Mr. Bird expressed his desire of presenting a copy of the resolutions to President Lincoln, and Governor Andrew was glad to accept his services; but some little delay ensued, and the following letter of explanation, in Andrew's quaint and hasty handwriting, was despatched to East Walpole:—

“MY DEAR BIRD, —

“A copy of the Resolves on the Abolition of Slavery was sent by mail to the President, with a considerable number of similar documents directed to our members of Congress. It is usual to send by mail also, even when we send by special messenger. But in this instance I did not intend it should go by mail, without previously mentioning it to you; and it would not have gone, had not my illness, detaining me so much at home within a few days, prevented my attending so much as usual to the details of my work. However, I suppose it is of no consequence. For, whenever you can leave, I desire the duplicate to go by your hand, with an autograph letter, expressive of my own views and feelings, to the President; which is reserved for your convenience, — I have awaited your motion, — since it is a labor of love on your part, not to be hurried by me to your discomfort or inconvenience.

“I am yours faithfully,

“JOHN A. ANDREW.”



The Honorable Peleg W. Chandler, who was a member of the Legislature at that time, and one of the most conservative of Republicans, gives in his brief life of Andrew an account of what took place when Mr. Bird presented the resolutions to the Chief Magistrate:—

“Arrived in Washington, the messenger, by appointment, met the President at eleven o’clock the next morning to present this Resolve of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. The Chief Magistrate of the nation sat in an armchair, while the emissary of Massachusetts presented the document with a little speech. The President took the document, slowly unrolled it, and remarked in a quaint way,—

“‘Well, it isn’t long enough to scare a fellow.’”

“It is not remarkable that the Massachusetts official said as he left the room,—

“‘That is certainly an extraordinary person to be President of the United States.’”

Mr. Bird was not at all a stickler for formalities in either public or private life, but such a free and easy treatment of the great seal of the State affected him somewhat in the same manner as Sumner was affected when, during the darkest crisis of the war, Lincoln suddenly asked him to try his favorite game of “putting up backs.”

But if Mr. Bird was shocked by his first impression, he was keen enough to appreciate his native shrewdness. He frequently remarked in later

years, that Lincoln was one of the ablest politicians the country had ever produced. The appreciation of Lincoln as a far-seeing statesman was a matter of slow growth. Nearly all the public men of that day agreed in their lower estimate of the man. It has been said that probably not one fairly estimated Lincoln.

During this same year, 1862, there arose a strong sentiment of opposition to Charles Sumner, and a desperate effort was made to prevent his election for the third term in the United States Senate. The sympathy which had been felt for him after the dastardly assault made upon him by Preston S. Brooks, six years before, was in a measure forgotten. The conservative division of the Republican party severely criticised his action in urging extreme anti-slavery measures in the prosecution of the war; they asserted that he was arrayed in antagonism against the President. In the so-called "People's Party" then organized, were Joseph Parker, Judge Thomas, Dr. Loring, Caleb Cushing, and Judge Devens, as well as many Republicans who thought Sumner too radical.

Mr. Bird, who always had his eyes open to contingencies, conceived the idea of making a *coup d'état* which should completely outflank Mr. Sumner's enemies. The election of the senator would lie in the hands of the new Legislature; therefore elect a Legislature which should reflect the opinion of the radicals!



Mr. Bird, ably seconded by William S. Robinson, whose watchword was, there are only "two forces — God and the Devil," determined to compel the Republican State convention, which met at Worcester on the tenth of September, to endorse Mr. Sumner and declare for his nomination. This was an unprecedented innovation. Richard H. Dana, Linus Child, Joel Parker, and other conservative Republicans fought against it "tooth and nail." But so great was Mr. Bird's personal influence and the power of his arguments, that at last, in spite of all opposition, the motion was carried.

The defeated minority the next day gave expression to their chagrin and disappointment by forming a new convention, at which a schismatic ticket was presented, with the view of "standing by the President!" The seceding Republicans even went so far as to oppose the reelection of Andrew, on the ground that he, as well as Sumner, was identified with the anti-slavery section of the party. The schism was a complete failure; Andrew and Sumner were both triumphantly re-elected, and the popular expression of sympathy with their views was quickly ratified and gratified by President Lincoln, in whose behalf the opposition was ostensibly organized, signing the Emancipation Proclamation, on the twenty-second of the month, and thus publicly ranging himself, as he had all the time been at heart, on the side

of "God and the right." In their disappointment, the seceders coalesced with the Democrats, and nominated General Devens as governor, and a whole list of congressmen; but not even this combination was strong enough to defeat the regular ticket. Governor Andrew was reëlected by a majority of 25,000; Charles Francis Adams, who had been nominated for senator, withdrew in favor of Sumner, who then received nearly all the votes in the Legislature. Mr. Bird was the leader of this movement in behalf of Sumner, and his success was all the more pronounced because the daily press of Boston gave him only lukewarm support. Most of the Republican papers were, indeed, edited in the interests of the conservative wing, though they did not go so far as to join the bolters of 1862.

It was evident that something needed to be done. *All was quiet on the Potomac.* "One hundred thousand unnamed demi-gods were silent in the swamps of Virginia," writes one of Mr. Bird's friends who was in the thick of the times. "Every house in the land had its skeleton; yet nothing was gained. The people were tired. The splendid enthusiasm which marked their uprising for the defence of the Republic had been chilled by depressing political influences, and large bounties failed to fill up the ranks. England, France, stood ready to acknowledge 'the Confederacy.' What was to be done? Plainly, something, and that speedily. Educate the public mind up to a de-

mand for negro troops! No newspaper was ready to take the risks of such an enterprise.

“In a speech before the Republican State convention at Worcester, October 1, 1862, entitled ‘Union and Peace: how shall they be restored?’ Charles Sumner eloquently advocated the Executive use of the war power in the enlistment of negroes as troops, and the right of emancipation. ‘It is not necessary,’ said he, ‘to carry the war into Africa. It will be enough if we carry Africa into the war, in any form, any quantity, any way. The moment this is done, Rebellion will begin to yield, and the Union will be secure forever.’

“This speech was pronounced ‘intolerable’ by the Boston newspapers, only garbled passages, with unjust interpretation, appearing in any of them.”

It was felt that there was a need for a newspaper that should fairly represent the opinions of Sumner, Andrew, Bird, and others of their pronounced and advanced standing. This thought came home with especial force to Mr. George L. Stearns. While he was considering the possibility of undertaking such an enterprise as starting a newspaper to champion the cause of colored troops, it happened that the Rev. Moncure D. Conway was visiting him at Medford, and warmly sympathized with the undertaking. It was he who suggested the name, *The Commonwealth*, and he was placed in the editorial chair, and continued to conduct

the paper till his departure for England in the spring of 1863. It was first issued on the sixth of September, 1862, from 22 Bromfield Street. An index hand on the first page pointed to these words: "We publish this week 20,000 copies of *The Commonwealth*. Next week we shall print 50,000, perhaps 100,000, copies." It was sent free to people all over the country. Its first issue contained the whole of Mr. Sumner's Worcester convention speech, and it is interesting to record that this was the first date of any such recognition of the great senator in his native city of Boston. A month later came President Lincoln's preliminary proclamation.

With a view to offsetting this timid conservative influence, and of having an organ wherein might be freely expressed the most radical views in regard to public policy, Mr. Bird and Dr. S. G. Howe decided to continue *The Commonwealth*, which for a whole year had been supported by Mr. Stearns. While its main purpose was to influence public thought by a bold and original presentation of political matters, it also made its mark by enlisting in its service many writers of distinction, many young authors who afterwards achieved a name in literature. Miss Louisa M. Alcott contributed to its columns a series of sketches, which were afterwards collected into one of her best known books. Ralph Waldo Emerson, who was an intimate friend of Mr.

Stearns, wrote for it some of his choicest poems. Alcott and Thoreau, Ellery Channing and D. A. Wasson, J. J. Piatt and William D. Howells, William T. Harris and F. B. Sanborn, were frequently seen in its pages. Dr. Samuel G. Howe took an interest in furthering its success, and Mrs. Julia Ward Howe wrote for it.

Mr. Bird himself constantly discussed the politics of the day in the columns of *The Commonwealth*. His style was clear and incisive. He said things to the point — an excellent model for newspaper writing. Style, as style, was of small consequence to him. He had nothing of the dilettante in his nature. He could say cutting things, but he made little use of wit as a weapon. His acquaintance with the Bible, with Shakespeare and Pope and Scott, stood him in good stead when he wished to fortify his arguments with a touch of elegance. When he had anything to say, he said it in the plain matter-of-fact manner which exactly suited his character and dignity. It thus bore great weight. Only rarely did he indulge in shooting the perilous arrows of wit. When he did, they struck the mark. Thus, during the anti-Grant campaign, he wrote to the *Boston Post* to express his surprise that any Independent could vote for Garfield. "Our Independent friends," he remarks trenchantly, "shouted over the defeat of the Bosses at Chicago; if they have not found out that they shouted before they were out of the



woods, they are very blind. The writer of the Scripture book of Job speaks of the 'folly of the man who strengtheneth himself against the Almighty . . . and runneth upon the thick bosses of His buckler.' They will find what egregious folly they have committed in running on the thick bucklers of the Bosses!"

The Emancipation Proclamation, which was promulgated about the middle of July, 1862, put the crown on the special work which *The Commonwealth* was founded to perform. The \$10,000 or more which Mr. Stearns had spent on it had not been wasted, but after a time he no longer cared to be responsible for it, and it was given as a free gift to Mr. Charles L. Slack, who kept it in a more or less influential channel for many years. Its early founders had some reason to be disappointed at the character which it assumed. It afterwards passed into the hands of the Rev. Edward Everett Hale and associates, who occasionally galvanized it into a spasmodic animation which was not really life. As soon as the borrowed capital was spent, it would decline; and thus for several years it dragged along, or was dragged along, moribund and comatose, till at last it sank under the waves of disaster, leaving behind nothing but its long record and its accumulated debts.



## VIII.

THE close of the war, and the retirement of Governor Andrew from the Executive chair, marked a temporary pause in Mr. Bird's active participation in politics. He was friendly, but not intimate, with the Honorable Alexander H. Bullock, Governor Andrew's successor, but he did not care to continue as a member of the Council; he declared that he should feel sad in the Council chamber without the presence of his trusted chief.<sup>1</sup> His sense of loyalty to

<sup>1</sup> In a letter to the *Springfield Republican*, written in June, 1887, Mr. Bird, after severely criticising the junketings of the millionaire governor, thus referred to the inauguration of Bullock and the retirement of the conscientious Andrew:—

“It is the usage at the State House when a new governor is to be inaugurated, for the old Council to attend the convention of the two branches with him and witness his taking of the oaths. I did not care to witness the induction of Alexander H. Bullock as successor of John A. Andrew, and remained alone with the governor.

“Let others hail the rising sun;  
I bowed to him whose race was run.

His last official act was done.”

Mr. Bird says he tried to persuade him to rest for six months or a year, and recuperate from the effects of such constant strain and overwork. “His answer was: ‘I dare say you are

Andrew caused him to be active in organizing the Andrew Council Association, which comprised all the members who had served in that capacity during the war governor's administration.

Among them was the Honorable Thomas Talbot, afterwards governor of Massachusetts. With him Mr. Bird formed a close friendship, which lasted to the end. This association held its reunions for many years. Its last survivor was the venerable John I. Baker, whose declining days were not sufficiently fraught with infirmities to prevent him from filling the office of mayor of Beverly.

Mr. Bird was zealous to keep the conduct of State legislation on the same high level to which the single-minded Andrew had lifted it, and no indication of deflection from this policy escaped his watchful eye. After Governor Bullock had served his terms of office, several scheming men were announced as possible candidates. Mr. Bird opposed their ambitions, and determined to place the Honorable William Claflin in the State House. Mr. Claflin was a man with whom he was in full sympathy; he had complete confidence in his integrity and political purity. Under Mr. Bird's skilful management a movement was organized right, but I must work for bread and butter for my wife and children.' This he did," continues Mr. Bird, "and died in seventeen months, in the forty-ninth year of his age, a martyr to his services for the grand old Commonwealth he so loved and honored."

for Mr. Claffin's nomination, and through his unwearied energy the campaign was carried to a triumphal issue, greatly to his satisfaction. This was in 1868.

His interest had already been somewhat diverted from national politics to practical economic questions of vital interest to his own State. His great services in behalf of emancipation were of course practical, but they were on an epic and ideal plane of morals. His new campaign was of course moral, but it was on a different order. Great corporations, with large capital and with selfish ambitions, were taking advantage of their political powers to involve the State treasury in vast expenditures. Mr. Bird wrote a series of pamphlets, in which he argued that the Hoosac Tunnel enterprise was a gigantic octopus fastening its tentacles upon the State, and ruthlessly draining it of millions. He spared no time or pains in his efforts to master all the intricacies of this question. He proved that this enterprise, which had begun its operations with the assurance that it would cost only a million or two, had already reached the colossal extravagance of a twenty-million-dollar job. He felt that the limited advantage accruing to a limited section of the State did not justify such a lavish grant of State aid. His arguments convinced many of the mistake made, but the grasp of the corporation was too firmly secured, — "the discipline of free passes

and capital prevailed," — and the Legislature had admitted too much to allow the damage to be undone.

A year or two later he entered into another characteristically energetic contest in behalf of the State treasury. The Hartford and Erie Railway Company was hopelessly bankrupt, and the State was urged by interested parties to attempt its rescue by granting to it additional millions of credit. Against this legislated robbery he also appealed to the people by means of pamphlets and newspaper articles, arraying against it all the arsenal of statistics and facts which he could collect. He even published a newspaper, which appeared day after day at his own expense.

He entered the Legislature chiefly with the end in view of serving the State in behalf of its threatened credit and treasury. When he announced himself a candidate for the State Senate in 1870, he issued the following manifesto or platform, which strongly expressed his actuating principles: —

“I can safely pledge myself to watchfulness in the appropriation of the money of the people, to economy and honesty of expenditure, and purity of legislation. I regard unnecessary taxation as a great crime. My theory of taxation is that it shall be laid only for objects in the benefits of which the people of all parts of the State shall share alike. I have opposed, and shall continue

to oppose, any and all grants to railroad corporations without reasonable security for ultimate reimbursement. It is impossible to distribute such grants equally throughout the State, and I therefore oppose taxing people of Norfolk County millions of dollars for the benefit of a small section of the northwestern part of the State [the Hoosac Tunnel]; and I oppose as earnestly the appropriation of millions for the benefit of the Hartford and Erie ring. All such appropriations, and especially the corrupt means generally applied to carry them, I shall do my best to defeat. Upon the labor question I have to say that I have been all my life a working man, — born, not ‘of five generations of Yankees’ [an expression of Wendell Phillips], but of one or two, — and of working men; and I will go as far as the farthest for any legislation which, in my honest judgment, will improve the condition of the laborer. The difficulty is as to *methods*. I will not follow the vagaries of theorists and demagogues and jockeys; but I have always favored, and shall continue to favor, equal legislative grants to laborers as to capitalists; and I have always said to the special friends of labor in the Legislature, that whenever the laboring men of the State substantially agree upon the laws they wish to have passed in the interests of labor, I should vote for them, — not because I have the confidence they have as to their answering the purpose, but because I think



it desirable the experiment shall have a fair trial. As an employer, I feel that my interests and those of the employés are identical, and I have no fears that any legislation which can help them can possibly hurt me."

The last sentence of his pledge was no idle boast. He himself acted sincerely on those generous principles, and the love and respect which were borne him by his workmen were a sufficient proof of this friendly relationship.

Mr. Bird was elected, and as a member of the Legislature he still bent all his energies to defeating the grant to the Boston, Hartford, and Erie Railway. It was said that he spent most of his time at the State House. The odds at one time appeared to be greatly against him. It was claimed that Governor Claflin was faltering; but Mr. Bird was not discouraged. He used all his powerful resources. The result was that when the bill was finally passed, it was shorn of most of its objectionable features. But Governor Claflin vetoed even this emasculated bill. Probably Governor Claflin never intended to ignore Mr. Bird's personal appeals to him; probably he had his own ideas on the subject and acted independently, though in line with the opponents of the bill; but the friends of the measure attributed to Mr. Bird their defeat. He won an enviable reputation as a practical financier and as a master of the principles of true legislation.



Unfortunately, perhaps, his influence was somewhat impaired in the later years of his service in the Legislature by his identification with the minority party of the State, and even this minority was not always in sympathy with his views, for they, as ever, were marked by his independence. But more and more he had the respect and confidence of the thoughtful men of both parties, and he was admired and venerated among them all as he advanced in years.

As a member of the Legislature, first as a Republican, and then later as a Democrat, he devoted his attention exclusively to State affairs. He was particularly interested in the legislation relating to railways and the public lands, notably the flats around Boston Harbor. He turned his attention to the public charities, and was regarded as singularly efficient in his grasp of such subjects. It has been said of him: —

“He thought much, he reasoned well, and he had an indomitable industry that made his services invaluable. His second period of usefulness was clearly here. He was fully as strong practically as he was morally; in fact, he carried his morals into his practical work, and his complete fearlessness led him to engage in effort from which men who subordinated their convictions to their ambition shrank.”

In 1870 occurred Wendell Phillips's campaign as labor candidate for governor, and his arraign-

ment of the Republican party. In one of his Parker Fraternity lectures he made a most unjust attack on Mr. Bird as the "commander-in-chief of the lobby forces." It was bitterly resented by Mr. Bird's friends, and Mr. Bird himself replied to his charges and innuendoes, and asking, as a contemporary paper expressed it, "in the manliest language that a man can address to one professing the good of the State," that his charges should be substantiated. From this controversy Mr. Bird emerged with flying colors, and Wendell Phillips, in spite of his eloquence, and in spite of his really splendid efforts for the advantage of the working man, was proved to be false, malicious, and contemptible.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> After Phillips's assault on Mr. Bird, Oliver Johnson wrote, October 31, 1870:—

"I cannot help writing to congratulate you upon your triumphal vindication of yourself from the ungenerous and unscrupulous assault of Mr. Phillips. The task must have been an unspeakably painful one, but it was one from which you could not shrink; and you have discharged it as a man. Your words are cuttingly severe, but they are true and therefore justifiable.

"Mr. Phillips's later course is not surprising; for, like some others of his old associates in the anti-slavery cause, I years ago discovered how insolently and tyrannously unscrupulous he was. It was the knowledge of this that made us unwilling, after slavery was fairly abolished, to be longer associated with him in a society which, slavery being dead, no longer had an excuse for its existence. Garrison, Quincy, May, and scores of others had clearly discerned his personal ambition, his readiness in playing the part of a demagogue, and, above all, his reckless disregard of the claims of truth and his willingness to insult and spit upon even the dearest friend who should dare to resist

But Mr. Bird himself was on the verge of separating from the Republican party. He had never hesitated to take issue with men of his own party. He was naturally critical of those who directed public affairs. He had no toleration for what he considered erroneous views, even though they found favor in high places. He was never in favor of high protective duties. The popular dogma, that "to the victors belong the spoils," seemed to him unworthy of any party, and the persistent slaughter of subordinates made by the newly elected officials offended his sense of public duty. He felt that the Republican leaders were particularly relentless in this barbarous diversion. He was a firm believer in Civil Service reform.

The election of General Grant to the Presidency in 1868 had found him acquiescent, though not exactly satisfied; he would have preferred a man more closely identified with the anti-slavery ideas of the Lincoln stripe. But when General Grant and Charles Sumner had their rupture over the proposed acquisition of San Domingo, then Mr. Bird felt that all his forebodings were justified. And as Grant's administration went from bad to worse, and the abuses became notorious, he did not hesitate to express his views. The best men

his will. If ever the truth in regard to his treatment of Garrison, and the considerate patience with which that noble man bore his abuse, gets before the public, it will create the profoundest astonishment and indignation."

among the Republicans were in agreement with him, but very few were willing to follow him in his radical step of entering into organized opposition to the party with which they had been so long identified. But he felt it his duty to oppose the renomination of Grant; he could not forget or forgive the wrong which he felt the President had done Sumner, and he deprecated the influences which the reëlection of Grant would continue. He was a delegate to the Independent Republican convention, which was called at Cincinnati in 1872 to present an opposition candidate. Horace Greeley was the man chosen. Mr. Bird was disappointed, having in mind another candidate; but he at once prepared to act loyally with his new associates.

He returned to Massachusetts, and entered with old-time energy into the arduous work of a campaign which he himself probably recognized was a forlorn hope. He spent his time and money ungrudgingly in the work. He was the chief agent in calling the Worcester convention, which nominated a State ticket in line with the reform principles.

The Democrats met in convention at the same time with the Independent Republicans, and insisted on putting into the field as the united party's candidate for governor none other than Charles Sumner. Sumner was at the time in Europe, and was greatly annoyed at this un-

authorized action. He wrote to Mr. Bird a vigorous protest, absolutely refusing to accept the nomination. Mr. Bird knew perfectly well that such would be the result, and therefore opposed it. Thereupon a committee of the two conventions nominated Mr. Bird himself as their candidate. He accepted it, although he never seriously thought that there was any probability of the office coming to him. He regarded it simply as an act of political duty.<sup>1</sup>

In connection with this campaign there were several curious and interesting readjustments of relationship: Governor N. P. Banks, with whom Mr. Bird had so long been in active antagonism, came over to the Greeley side and presided over the Independent convention. Dr. Samuel G. Howe came out as a personal advocate and defender of General Grant and the San Domingo annexation scheme. Charles G. Davis was the

<sup>1</sup> When he was nominated for governor, George M. Stearns, of Springfield, wrote him, October 19, 1872, rejoicing that an honest, straightforward man like himself was up for office:—

“That you are placed upon the ticket in Sumner’s place is an earnest of no ordinary importance. No matter how remote the probability of an election, it is a fact that will sound in history as a protest of the intelligence and integrity of the age against the venality of the political leading, and the truckling, cowardly subserviency of the people to these wretched pot-house broilers. I never recorded a more satisfactory vote than the one I shall cast for you for governor of Massachusetts. It seems as though God Almighty can’t afford to let you be beaten, but he works in mysterious ways, and with to us apparent huge delays.”



only member of the old Free-soil guard who joined with him in the Greeley movement. His friends, William S. Robinson and Dr. Estes Howe, had no hesitation in expressing their objections to Greeley. Judge Adin Thayer developed a strong Republican partisanship. Some of the most valuable of the letters which passed between Mr. Bird and these former associates are enlivened by the arguments which such political changes induced. Mr. Bird certainly retained their friendship, and even their admiration, though they perhaps failed to sympathize with his action.

Mr. Bird's friends were surprised at the energy which he showed throughout these trying experiences, and at the measure of health which he enjoyed in spite of his arduous labors. But two years later he received a severe shock in the sudden death of his eldest son, Francis William, whom he had trained to be his business partner and to succeed him in the important industry of paper-making. It was a terrible loss to him. Many of his old friends were present at the funeral services, and they expressed such sympathy with him as showed that political differences were, after all, only superficial separations. Indeed, Henry Wilson and Ex-Governor Claflin made an earnest effort to win him back into union with them again, but his sense of public duty was too strong to permit this step.

He wrote a friend at this time: "I never touch



a pen except upon the sternest necessity. Your kind and sympathetic letter at the time of the death of our dear Will was very grateful to us all, — I cannot tell how grateful, but if you will come and see us in Boston, we will try to show you how precious to our stricken hearts were the hearty sympathies of one who knows how dark such a loss leaves one's household. But duties are before us, the neglect of which, especially through grief for our loss, would dishonor the dead." From this time till his death he acted with the Democratic party. In his speech before the Reform Club, where for the first time he used the unfamiliar phrase, "Brethren of the Democratic persuasion," he said in justification: —

"For myself my position is fixed. I am a Democrat of the old school. I inherited genuine Democracy from my honored father. I was a Free-soiler because I was a Democrat. I acted with the Republican party so long as it was faithful to Democratic principles. I left it fourteen years ago, because it had become false to those principles. I can never return to it. You, gentlemen, have left the Republican party and can never return."

But Mr. Bird's Democracy was the Democracy of high ideals and lofty principles. He was absolutely independent, and never hesitated to oppose Democratic action on important occasions, where

he felt that these principles were not upheld. Thus he urged the fitness of General Banks for the position of United States Marshal. He urged the retention of Mr. Endicott as Sheriff of Norfolk County, though he was a Republican; and this he did on the ground that that office should be above all partisan claims. He vigorously resented the Democratic party selecting General Butler as its candidate for governor, though afterwards he voted for him and defended his action. General Butler, who always respected Mr. Bird, keenly felt his refusal of support, and wrote him a friendly personal letter expressing his regret.

In 1876 he had great hopes of better things; he wrote expressing his feeling that there was too much talk about reform: "We must act reform," he said, and he agreed with his friend, William Gaylord, who wrote him: "Tilden at the head of the national ticket and Adams at the head of the State ticket, is acting reform, and the people will believe it." And so when the great conspiracy of 1876 succeeded in ruling out Mr. Tilden, who he felt realized our Massachusetts ideal of a Democratic ruler, he expressed his outraged feelings with great vigor. Said he:—

"If I could reach the entire Democratic party of the country, I would say to them, 'To your tents, O Israel, to your tents!' I would say to every Democrat, 'Never recognize politically, officially, or judicially the President who comes into

power by such manifest frauds. Never accept an office under the incoming administration, from the Cabinet downwards. Never let a Democrat darken the door of the White House. Support the government *de facto* so far as it is necessary to its successful administration, but never, directly or indirectly, admit that it has legal or constitutional right to power.' If I could get the ear of our Southern brethren, I would bid them beware of the Greeks bearing presents and distrust the honeyed promises of the party which for twelve years has heaped upon you every indignation and every outrage, and whose present professions are prompted only by the purpose to divide and conquer. 'Beware,' as John Randolph once said, 'beware of the gilded sting that lurks beneath the gaudy pinions of the butterfly.' "

Mr. Bird's legislative services ended in 1880, but his influence in behalf of purity of politics and a high ideal of statesmanship was still beneficently exerted. His terse and pithy letters to the various papers were always gladly welcomed, but as the infirmities of age crept on him, he found greater difficulty in composition. He was on particularly intimate terms with Mr. George H. Monroe, of the Boston *Herald*, and Colonel William W. Clapp, of the *Journal*. He greatly admired President Cleveland and felt full sympathy with the tariff reform for which he stood. His own ideas on that subject were concisely

stated in a letter to the *Boston Post* in 1883, in which he said:—

“A tariff for revenue only honestly means just what the language means, and is founded upon what I hold to be a truism under our form of government, — that the Congress of the United States has no right to tax the people of these States for one single dollar beyond what is necessary economically and efficiently to carry on the government.”

In this letter he again repeated the story of the subscription to the paper-makers' association in behalf of an enhanced protection tax. And he ended with this bold declaration of independence:—

“If I cannot get a living as a paper-maker without asking Congress to authorize me to steal, I will do something else. Fifty years' experience as a paper-maker has convinced me that our business needs no protection, and fifty years' observation has brought me to the same conclusion in regard to other branches of manufacturing. One of these days intelligent manufacturers will come to this conclusion; whether they do or not, the people will.”

It was a source of peculiar satisfaction to him when his long-time friend, Thomas Talbot, was elected governor of Massachusetts. By a curious reaction he now received the Republican nomination for the House of Representatives. Judge

Adin Thayer, of the Republican State committee, penned an earnest but entirely spontaneous appeal to the party, in which he said: —

“He has rendered us most important and effective aid in the campaign against Butler this fall, and many of the most able articles that have been published have been written by him. His thorough knowledge of State affairs would render him a most efficient aid to Governor Talbot in carrying out his ideas of State reform, and I should regard it as almost a public calamity to lose his valuable aid at the next session of the Legislature.”

The Springfield *Republican*, commenting on Mr. Bird's apparent chameleon changes of political complexion, remarked with wise generosity and fairness: —

“How could such changes occur without costing an honest enthusiast his reputation for either honesty or sagacity? Yet Mr. Bird, though often bitterly hated and visited with social or political ostracism, has never failed to command the respect of Massachusetts. He has been in the leanest of minorities, — with the defeated Free-soilers in the Know-Nothing freshet of 1854, with the ‘straight Republicans’ in their apparently useless protest against Banks in 1857, with the Greeley and Sumner minority of 1872, and with the faithful few who, with Judge Abbott and Reuben Noble, upheld the standard of Jacksonian Democracy in 1878. But from this minority nettle he has again



and again plucked the flower of political success, winning what he most desired, the triumph of his principles, though his candidates might be beaten out of sight."

And the article ended: —

"In practical politics he has known how to unite firmness of purpose with dexterity of combination and facility in meeting each issue as it arises. Nor is his eye dimmed or his natural force abated in this direction by his seventy years or his occasional infirmities. . . . Without Mr. Bird, Massachusetts would be a very different thing. He is the most skilful partisan, and at the same time the most inveterate independent, among our politicians, his aim being always toward good government and the true interest of the people themselves. To this steady aim all his prejudices and caprices have to conform, and he is no more free from such faults than colder and more selfish men are. His crowning quality is social, — his fidelity and generosity in friendship."

Mr. Bird failed of election, but Governor Talbot frequently sought his advice on matters of State policy, and he found himself in hearty sympathy with the measures of economy in State expenditure which made a marked feature of Governor Talbot's administration. He did not agree with him, however, in his policy toward the liquor question. He thought prohibition a mistake, and he objected to license, unless it was open to all. The grant-



ing of favors to any class of individuals was contrary to his democratic spirit. Yet he was alive to the evils that attended the liquor traffic, and he thought legislation on that subject had been a failure. He said in 1869:—

“Read the Statute Books from the day that Captain Standish seized Morton’s ‘strong waters’ to the day when Major Jones seized Pfaff’s lager, and it will be found that legislative ingenuity has been exhausted in expedients to remedy admitted evils; and to-day the diversity of opinion as to the best methods of dealing with the matter is as great as ever.”

His own belief inclined to that system which provided against the sale of bad liquors and should furnish a rigid oversight of the traffic. He himself was not until late in life a total abstainer, but he made a very temperate use of liquors and drank none in his own family.

Mr. Bird had little patience with the dilettante administration of Governor Ames, and wrote in severe criticism of his placing the public trust in subordination to his own private business. But after the election of Governor Russell he began once more to visit the State House, where he always received a reverent welcome. Even after he had passed the age of eighty, he still kept up his interest in public affairs, and was constantly seen in the streets of Boston, — a tall, venerable, slow-moving figure, notable among the indistin-

guishable throng. "Taverner," of the *Boston Post*, thus records meeting him:—

"February 22, 1890.

"I saw 'Frank Bird' (and I hope he will pardon the familiarity of my mention of him) on the street yesterday, and it did me good to observe how hale and hearty he looked. With his great-coat reaching below his knees, his long, thick woollen muffler, and his slouched felt hat, the light color of which gave it a somewhat summerish appearance, he seemed as young as a good many younger men who were passing at the time. The Sage of Walpole has indeed preserved his mental as well as his physical powers remarkably for a man of his years, and I suppose there are few shrewder observers of the signs of the times than he. It is to his credit that he takes such liberal views of political affairs, and that old age, instead of narrowing, has broadened his outlook on men and things."

That was indeed characteristic of Mr. Bird's old age, that instead of looking back fondly to a vanished past of great men and great deeds, he fully recognized that new times brought new duties, and new men to fulfil them. He therefore sympathized with young men; and while himself grew old and infirm, his heart was as ever young.

## IX.

DURING all these years of political activity, of hard work in the acquisition of honest dollars, when, as he himself said, "his life was divided between the paper mill and public and political services," when for no small part of the time the duties in which he was engaged were of a most serious nature, there were, nevertheless, many occasions which marked red-letter days in his recollections.

During the summers he was always in the habit of enjoying a season of recuperation from his arduous labors. Once, when he was compelled to respond to a personal toast, Mr. Bird remarked:—

"To work ten, twelve, or eighteen hours, as I have often been compelled to do in my mill, and then find time to discuss the Hoosac Tunnel or some other matter, has been pretty hard work, but yet I am not sure but that men who have to do it are not on the whole better, and perhaps happier, men. Such has been my life, and with all its drawbacks and failures it has been a very happy life."

His conscience assured him that he had tried to

do his duty. Friendship, honor, and duty were his watchwords, — the “three things worth living for in this world.” And it was surely his duty as well as his pleasure to gather strength for succeeding labors that he visited the mountains and the seashore. In spite of his dyspeptic troubles he was something of an athlete. He was a fine swimmer, and even after he had lost the vigor of his youth, he would rush into the water with intense delight. He had a keen joy in the free and untrammelled life of the woods, and when he had temporarily cut loose from the amenities of civilization, no one ever endured with greater equanimity the hardships of the wilderness than he.

It was during his temporary retirement from political activity in the early fifties that he first made the acquaintance of the Adirondacks, and these splendid regions of mountain and lake appealed to his poetic side very much as they did to Emerson. For many years he made frequent excursions thither, and always with renewed enjoyment and advantage. In 1870 he wrote to his friend, Colonel W. W. Clapp, an enthusiastic letter regarding these periodical resorts to “Mother Nature”: —

“For the last sixteen years I have visited the New York woods once, twice, or three times a year, in every month from June to January. Gradually I have shortened, or given up entirely, my trips to the seashore, the White Mountains, or

Niagara, giving all the time I could spare to these woods, for the sole reason that a week spent in the profound repose of these primeval woods, away from business, from politics, from every excitement, — beyond the telegraph, beyond the mails, — brought more rest, more recuperation, than a month at fashionable watering-places, or other more frequented places of resort. I have shrunk from seeing the section, so precious to me as offering an asylum of such repose, invaded by a crowd; and I have been more than content to make up a party of four or five good fellows (taking a portion of my own family with me in the summer), selecting a time when no other visitors were there, taking possession of the hotel, and, with the wilderness all before us where to choose, getting our selfish fill of sport and rest. . . . I am no sportsman, as Mr. Murray is, and of late years am inclined in the summer to loaf about the hotel, occasionally taking a short trip or two to shoot a deer or two and catch what trout we want, — perhaps spending a night out, perhaps returning the same day. One will take probably as many deer and trout within five or six miles of the hotel, in the same time, as by going farther into the woods. Indeed, I think I never found deer so abundant (and I have tramped and boated a great many hundred miles over the best portions of that wilderness) as we found them last month, within two or three miles of the hotel, involving







a walk of eighty rods to our boat on the lake (Pleasant). But doubtful things are always uncertain. I have gone out in the morning, and returned at night with two or three deer; and I have 'shantied' for ten days, and, without special effort, killed ten or a dozen deer; while at other times I have worked hard for several days without a deer, living on short allowances of the provisions we carried out, with nothing for the poor dogs, when they came covered with ice to the shanty, after races all day long, led by the deer to water eight or ten miles away. . . . In former years we 'packed' all our stuff, — and many a hot and weary day have I tramped with a pack which I would hardly carry a mile now for its weight in gold. And yet we went through it as fresh as larks; and I doubt not Governor Boutwell [then Secretary of the United States Treasury] would gladly exchange a week of his treadmill for the tramp we took to Raquette Lake in 1855, — fifty miles, — with packs which made us stagger in the morning, and seemed heavier than the burden of Atlas before night; and that he would willingly leave the bulls and bears of Wall Street to their Kilkenny fight, if he could renew that few hours' fishing in the Riffs at the South Inlet of Raquette, or at the Eckford Lake, — although the sport was followed by that terrible tramp from Blue Mountain to Indian Lake."

Ex-Governor George S. Boutwell writes of him

in this relation of life, when he was Mr. Bird's companion, also as follows:—

“Mr. Bird enjoyed the society of friends, and he contributed largely to their enjoyment. He had a keen relish for outdoor pleasures and pursuits, and the Adirondack woods were his favorite resort. On one of his trips, in the year 1855, I was of his party, with D. W. Alvord, Henry L. Pierce, and Mr. Hoyt, a civil engineer. We had a fortnight of luxurious abstention from all the cares of civilized life. Although Mr. Bird was never a robust man, he seemed to enjoy the privations of forest life. During this two weeks and more, we slept two nights on the floor of a log house, and for the other nights on the ground, on beds of boughs.”

If one would know what sort of enjoyment men of philosophic mind gather from such recreation, one must read Emerson's Journal *The Adirondacks*, written after spending his summer with “ten scholars” in those glorious abodes!

After the extraordinary efforts made by Mr. Bird in defence of the Massachusetts treasury, he started in the summer of 1870 for his favorite resort. He was accompanied by Mr. Hartshorn, a Walpole friend and neighbor, who stood ready to aid him if in his reduced physical condition he should find the privations of the wilderness too great a tax on him. He had penetrated far beyond the comforts of civilization, and there was

suddenly prostrated by the most serious attack of illness from which he had suffered since his early youth. Heart failure appeared to be imminent. Mr. Hartshorn decided to start immediately for Walpole, though he had grave doubts whether his friend would ever reach home alive. They travelled by easy stages, constantly consulting physicians at the places wherever they stopped to rest. Mr. Bird afterwards related that every one of them declared that he had heart disease and predicted his speedy demise; nowhere did he receive any encouragement that he would ever recover; they would even have deprived him of the hope of ever reaching his home alive.

But Mr. Bird knew himself better than his friends the doctors. "My heart is not affected except indirectly," he insisted; "this trouble is functional, not organic."

This proved to be the correct diagnosis, and it was confirmed by his own physician when he reached home. But he was left in a greatly prostrated state of health, from which it took him a long time to rally. He never again was able to perform his old feats under the sweet-scented boughs of the Adirondack woods.

Few men were ever more frugal than Mr. Bird as regards the pleasures of the table. While he was unselfishly lavish in providing for others, and enjoyed nothing better than to see his friends enjoying a dinner of many courses, his share of

the repast was for the most part a few Graham crackers and a plate of soup,—a deliberate and not a hasty plate of soup. He occasionally partook of a slender glass of champagne, and he was fond of the post-prandial cigar. In fact, he did not renounce smoking till he was eighty,—and then it was only because the necessity was upon him for what he called “heroic treatment.” Few public men were in more demand at dinners. And a whole book might be compiled about the dinners at which he was the presiding figure. It was a favorite habit of his friends to mark the anniversaries of his eventful life.

Thus, in the autumn of 1859, his fiftieth birthday was celebrated by a dinner in Boston. His friends gathered in large numbers; most of the prominent anti-slavery men of the State were present, and John A. Andrew presided and made an affecting speech, in which he dwelt on Mr. Bird’s unselfish devotion to the right and enlarged on the personal qualities that endeared him to his friends. Mr. Bird never forgot that occasion, and twenty years later he publicly recalled it, saying:—

“Governor Andrew, in his remarks on that occasion, said, among other things, ‘There is one thing for which we owe a good deal to Brother Bird, and that is what he has done to promote good-fellowship.’ I said to my excellent friend, Charles Francis Adams, who sat next to me, ‘That is true; I am willing to take the credit for

that. I have done something to get good fellows together and have good times.' I have seen a good many of those good times within the last twenty years; I am afraid I have got about through with them. But the memory will never end."

In 1868 occurred the twenty-fifth anniversary of Mr. Bird's second marriage. It was one of the loveliest of June days when, as a newspaper account happily expressed it, "earth and sky, landscape and water, seemed in harmony with the festive occasion." Between four and five hundred of their friends from among his townspeople, and even from distant parts of the State, came together. The reception hour was fixed at seven o'clock; the stately mansion was garlanded with flowers, Chinese lanterns hung amid the trees and added picturesque gayety, a full band discoursed festive music, fireworks gave a patriotic glamour to the beauty of the evening.

Among the most conspicuous of the sixty or seventy gifts which testified to the love borne the "fortunate pair" was a large black-walnut cabinet containing a service of solid silver, all the pieces of which were appropriately marked with monograms and dates, while on the tea-kettle was engraved:—

FRANCIS WILLIAM BIRD.

FROM A FEW OF HIS FRIENDS.

June 20, 1868.



An address from the pen of William S. Robinson with the names of the donors, headed by William Claflin, was printed on white satin and was read by Colonel Robert K. Potter of Boston. It was worded as follows:—

“DEAR AND HONORED FRIEND, —

“In congratulating you and Mrs. Bird upon the return of this anniversary of your marriage — upon your silver wedding — we cannot let the opportunity pass of expressing to you, personally, and by some substantial token, our warm affection for you, and our profound admiration for those qualities of heart and mind which have made you not only the delight of your intimate friends, but a most useful and, we might almost say, indispensable member of our social and political body.

“Most of us have known you long; all of us long enough to appreciate those strong personal and political virtues which have enabled you to wield, socially and politically, a power in Massachusetts and national politics superior to that held by any man among us who has not been in the exercise of high public functions. You have illustrated the fact that an earnest, indefatigable, independent man, by the power of his will, the vigor of his brain, and the magnetism of his friendship, may influence, to a very large degree, the action of men who, being more ambitious of personal distinction, have attained much higher public station. For twenty years past you have done more than any other man to hold together, to concentrate, to inspire, the reformatory public sentiment of this Commonwealth, and to lead it on to victory. Your counsel has been sought by governors and senators, and seldom disregarded except to their loss; while, to the

humbler members of the party of progress, you have been an invaluable guide, philosopher, and friend. We know perfectly well that, at least up to a very recent period, you have been one of the best-abused men in the community. Your habit of denying theories which were supposed to be well established; of giving hospitality to unpopular doctrines; of exposing prevailing fallacies, and of deriding the omnipresent and innumerable humbugs of the day, has made your name a bugbear to the ignorant. But you have outlived all this. You have beaten down, by sheer force of *character*, all opposition; and now, hard upon sixty years of age, as you are, you are as young as the youngest, and more useful than the most useful man among us.

“We honor you for your public virtues; and for your private qualities we hold you in the warmest affection. Yours has not been ‘a fugitive and cloistered virtue’; nor has radicalism made you an ascetic. Good-fellowship has been in you most admirably joined to steadfastness of purpose and earnestness of principle; and although you have liberally scattered, we rejoice to see everywhere about us, in doors and out, that you have as liberally increased. We rejoice in your worldly prosperity. We congratulate you on all the happy circumstances of your lot, — on the love of wife and children, the loyalty of friends, the respect of all men who know you and whose respect is valuable. And we ask you to accept of this gift as a token of our love, to be kept as a memorial of this occasion, and handed down to your posterity as an heirloom, to tell your children and your children’s children of that high degree of appreciation and love with which ‘Frank Bird’ was held by all who knew him.”

Mr. Bird was greatly affected by such a splendid testimonial. In his remarks he declared that he knew the gentlemen who signed the address were accustomed to mean what they said, but he could not but feel that they had flattered him. "He did not know what he had done more than was the plain and simple duty of every American in the country to do. Such words, too, he felt, were almost painful to him, when he looked back over his life, and saw what its failures and shortcomings had been, and the exceedingly little accomplished, and thought of the ideal of his youth as to what it should be." And he expressed his deep gratitude in the heartiest terms that he could employ.

Mr. Bird was even more affected by testimonials, also in solid silver, from the workmen of his mills and from the villagers. It was remarked at the time that he had always been peculiarly solicitous for the welfare of his employés; if they were compelled by illness to be long absent, their wages were continued; if by reason of dull times other manufacturers reduced the pay, he kept his at the old rate, on the ground that the laboring man had always the hardest time in any financial crisis. After the presentation Mrs. Julia Ward Howe read the following poem:—

## TO MR. AND MRS. FRANCIS W. BIRD.

Silence! says the summoned Muse;  
 Song can never be commanded.  
 Gives not Phœbus as I choose,  
 Frowns, and leaves me empty-handed.

But, within these precincts dear,  
 None will ask a haughty measure;  
 Charity keeps rhythm here,  
 For the cadence of our pleasure.

And the welcome that she gives  
 Shall a hopeful heart inspire;  
 Wake the prophecy that lives  
 In the faint, forgotten lyre.

While I sing the wedded life  
 Of our friends' auspicious mating,  
 Greet the husband and the wife  
 Linked in comforts unabating!

Quarters four the moon doth know;  
 Three to human life are given;  
 One our friends have travelled through  
 In the placid marriage heaven.

Storms they surely must have met,  
 If enduring human fortune;  
 Winds that chide, and floods that wet,  
 Go with couples from their courting.

Each must be in fault sometimes;  
 Plead by turns as saint or sinner;  
 Each acknowledge household crimes,  
 Buttons lost, and waiting dinner.

Still the bow of peace for them  
 Glistens in its sapphire setting;  
 And they keep the pearly gem  
 Of their patience free from fretting.

From their sacred nuptial flame  
 Other flames awake and kindle ;  
 Shadows of portentous frame  
 Show their pattern shall not *dwindle*.

Not with them their lives shall close,  
 Their confided gifts aspire ;  
 Hands shall soothe their last repose,  
 Bearing their high purpose higher.

Silvery birds have silver nests,  
 As a cloud has silver lining ;  
 Silver feathers bring the guests,  
 For their bridal-crest's entwining.

Silver marks the steps of age,  
 Nature to her fulness coming,  
 When upon the forehead's page  
 Thought records her careful summing ;

When the promissory notes  
 Of our youth, all enterprising,  
 Manhood's later market quotes,  
 With compulsive realizing,

He shall tread the civic halls,  
 Heal the troubles of the nation,  
 Carried hence by weightier calls  
 Than the rabble's acclamation.

Sharply shall his mordant beak  
 From our laurels pluck the vermin ;  
 His avenging eye shall seek  
 Stains upon the judge's ermine.

Men shall heed his silent glance,  
 Feel the sentence he is giving,  
 Ere his honest utterance  
 Puts to shame their worthless living.

Rich are these in faith and love,  
 Richer still our prayer would make them ;  
 Keep the ranks in which they move  
 So no dear one shall forsake them.

Keep their years' appointed bound  
 Ever fuller in fruition ;  
 Give the bosom precept sound,  
 Life's accomplished recognition.

Pardon, friends, the paltry range  
 Of the tribute that I bring thee ;  
 'Tis the beggar Muse's change  
 This undowered hand doth fling thee.

Something from me thou didst crave,  
 Something I indeed bestow thee ;  
 What I give is what I have,  
 But it is not what I owe thee !

Mr. Elizur Wright also had his poetical greeting, which he quietly handed to the honored hosts.

TO MR. AND MRS. FRANCIS W. BIRD,

IN COMMEMORATION OF THEIR SILVER WEDDING, THESE  
 LINES — NOT SILVERY — ARE AFFECTIONATELY DEDICATED.

From shore to shore my journey lay,  
 Across a mighty wood ;  
 Wherein the broods of night and day  
 Were in a bitter feud.

They sang of love, the soul of law,  
 The birds that loved the light ;  
 But other birds of bloody claw  
 Croaked hatred in the night.



The way was long, the forest dense ;  
 The strife grew more and more,  
 Till rapine seemed the common sense  
 Of birds from shore to shore.

Bewildered by the stunning fray,  
 The birds of gentle song  
 Confessed their morals giving way  
 Before the ravenous throng.

At last a fearless bird was seen  
 Among the ancient oaks,  
 Whose sweet and righteous voice, I ween,  
 Could not be drowned by croaks.

“ Come lark and bluebird, every throat !  
 Let's not be dumb with fright ;  
 The day is ours ; we'll strike a note  
 To shame the birds of night.”

The shame was much, the rage was more,  
 When, by his daring mood,  
 Their sunlit songs the echoes bore  
 Throughout the leafy wood.

“ *They* dare to sing ! the craven crew !  
 And challenge us to sing !  
 They dare to *sing* ! in concert, too !  
 Another glove we fling !

“ We've borne too long their crazy song  
 That 'right should govern might' ;  
 We'll hush, by arms, the noisy throng  
 Beneath the rule of *night*.

“ Aha ! ” I heard my plucky bird,  
 Full merry at the threat ;  
 The peaceful rallied at his word,  
 The leaves grew red and wet.

The fight was long and very sad,  
But when the thing was done,  
The birds of night were more than glad  
To hide them from the sun.

That Bird in peace and war so true,  
Must needs be doubly blest;  
But till this day I never knew,

[Though it was not the fault of his hospitality, but of my own busy-  
ness and sheepishness,]

The beauty of his nest!

During the course of the evening Mr. Bird invited his wife to go with him to the front stoop, and just then, by prearrangement, there was driven up an elegant family carriage with a pair of handsome horses, which he asked her to accept as "a silver-wedding present from himself."

A bounteous collation was served to all who came, "even the poor and curious who flocked around the doors." Mr. Bird sent to each of the employés of the special train a handsome remembrance, and the occasion was memorable to all who participated in it.

Just ten years later, on the occasion of the Honorable John D. Long retiring from the speakership of the House of Representatives, Colonel John D. Washburn of Worcester, in the course of his speech of "Thanks," took occasion to deliver a eulogy on the Honorable Francis W. Bird, "The Nestor of the House." It was regarded at the time as a piece of "surpassing

beauty of thought and eloquence of diction." It came most unexpectedly to Mr. Bird, who, says a contemporary record, "was so affected that he burst into tears and for the moment was unable to respond, while many eyes were moist over the affecting scene." The same paper, in commenting on the pamphlet which contained Colonel Washburn's eulogy and Mr. Bird's reply, went on to say:—

"Mr. Bird is well known as a man of uncompromising independence, and his course as a legislator has never been trimmed to win the favor of his associates, but he has at all times spoken out fearlessly his sentiments on all topics, without regard to party policy or personal friendship. That his associates so warmly seconded the graceful tribute paid him by Colonel Washburn, was due solely to the respect and admiration that is always accorded to manly independence and thorough honesty."

The following October the anniversary of Mr. Bird's seventieth birthday was celebrated by a great dinner given at the Revere House. Upwards of a hundred of his friends were present, including Governor Talbot, Judge Abbott, Senator Anthony, and "representatives of every type of Massachusetts political thought" for the previous thirty years. As an editorial in one of the daily papers said: "Free-soilers and Abolitionists, Old Whigs and Conscience Whigs, Hunker and War Demo-

crats, Stalwart and Liberal Republicans were all present in the persons of some of their most honored leaders. The whole key-board of the political piano was there, with not a note missing, and all its harmony was poured out in an unbroken strain of friendship for the veteran who had, at one time or another, appeared in almost every part of the changing dance of public affairs." Many letters of regret from absent friends were read, — from Senator Hoar, from Ex-Governor Bullock, White-law Reid, John D. Long.

Estes Howe of Cambridge presided. After various congratulatory speeches, Samuel B. Noyes was called on and sang an original song to the tune of the *Ivy Green*.

## I.

O, some birds are made for beauty and song,  
 And some are made for battle,  
 And some are made for swift flight strong,  
 And some for the scratch and cackle.  
 But our Bird was made with spur and song,  
 To strike and soothe, together —  
 And his plumage, unsmirched in the struggle long,  
 Has lost not a single feather.  
 Bird among birds, thro' life, I ween,  
 Rare and quaint as ever was seen, etc.

## II.

A right true friend is our friend to-night,  
 And a friend well known to fame;  
 Fill up to the brim, for all will delight  
 To honor an honored name.

The tides yet run strong in his friendly heart,  
 And the sun is not yet low;  
 Cheers and the laurel-wreath give ere we part —  
 He never failed friend or foe!  
 Friend among friends thro' life, I ween,  
 As stanch and strong as ever was seen, etc.

## III.

A right stout man, among men, we know,  
 A deft man with sword and shield;  
 Striking and struck with right stubborn blows,  
 Yet ever facing the field.  
 There's shame, O, my brothers, in wars men wage,  
 And pain when the strife is o'er.  
 But his great heart o'er masters the foeman's rage,  
 This day and forever more.  
 Man among men thro' life, I ween,  
 As strong and steady as ever was seen, etc.

## IV.

Then fill to the brim for one toast more.  
 The night gloam deepens for all,  
 Aging we look through the mists to a shore —  
 Winter must follow the Fall.  
 Here's peace to his age and ages of peace,  
 Whatever may break or may part;  
 The lights may grow dim, the laurel song cease,  
 But life lives for aye in the heart.  
 Friendship aging is white, I ween,  
 The sweetest and manliest ever was seen, etc.

It was regarded as a remarkable occasion, and, as several of the speakers said, notably Mr. Thompson of Gloucester, such a testimony was "rendered possible only because, through all the

varying phases of Mr. Bird's political life, no matter where his voice and his vote had been found for the moment, his motives were never open to doubt, or his fidelity to the right, as he saw it, questioned." It was questioned at the time whether so many politicians of differing views were ever gathered together harmoniously at one table. It was also remarked as an interesting feature, that among the letters read was one from a man who was the only surviving scholar whom he taught in his early days of pedagogy. He was unable to be present, but he referred with unction to the fervency of Mr. Bird's prayers at the opening of the school sessions.

Five years later, in 1884, Mr. Bird's seventy-fifth birthday was similarly observed by a complimentary dinner, also at the Revere House. Again Dr. Estes Howe took the head of the table. Again the Honorable Samuel B. Noyes sang an original song, composed by Thomas Drew of West Newton, and dedicated to Mr. Bird:—

## SONG.

F. W. B.

1809.

October 22.

1884.

*Auld Lang Syne.*

Near fourscore years have passed and gone,  
 Since, 'mongst the Norfolk hills,  
 A lusty man-child babe was born  
 Near Dedham's famous mills.



The boy grew up, as babies grow,  
 Good grit and strength of lung;  
 He had no fears of high nor low,  
 And cut his eye-teeth young.

*Chorus.*

Now here's good health to "Walpole's sage,"  
 Good health and "troops of friends,"  
 The ruddiest glow of honored age,  
 Long as his life extends.

Early he walked in wisdom's ways,  
 Plucked knowledge from the tree,  
 And when arrived to manhood's days,  
 A sturdy youth was he.  
 He saw, where'er he turned his eyes,  
 The woes and wants of men;  
 And often did his friends surprise  
 With ready speech and pen.

*Chorus.*

To aid the weak, to guide the strong,  
 His mission seemed to be;  
 But, most of all, to right the wrong  
 Of chattel slavery.  
 How wise and well and hard he fought,  
 We old Free-soilers know,  
 Who read that product of his thought—  
 Oh! "Let my people go!"<sup>1</sup>

*Chorus.*

Yet not alone, in conflicts stern,  
 His noble traits appear;  
 To festive boards our thoughts return,  
 Of friendship and good cheer;

<sup>1</sup> This was the title of one of Mr. Bird's war-time pamphlets, urging emancipation as a war measure.

Where men we loved sat side by side,  
With wit and wisdom primed,  
Who erst have crossed swift Jordan's tide,  
And left us here behind.

*Chorus.*

The future none of us can say,  
The past is all secure;  
So pledge we, on this natal day,  
Our friendship shall endure.

On this occasion no wine was served, Mr. Bird having recently embraced the cause of Prohibition, and when he rose to speak, being greeted with cheers, he alluded pleasantly to his conversion to "the cold-water faith"; but his greeting was none the less warm to the curiously variegated assembly which, as the Boston *Herald* expressed it, consisted of "Stalwart Republicans, Independents, supporters of the cold-water ticket, Democrats of ancient standing, and Democrats who had, like Mr. Bird himself, come into the party through the door which Charles Sumner threw wide open, — men of every shade of view, who united in paying affectionate tribute to the personal worth of a good and honored man." The editor of the *Herald* was himself present, and undoubtedly felt the truth of the sentence in the same account which said: —

"No other man in the State could have drawn about him in these days of political asperity such a representative body of men." In a similar spirit the *Journal* remarked: —

“In his long and eventful career, the Honorable F. W. Bird, the Sage of Walpole, has identified himself with many a good and noble part in life’s great drama, and not one of the least of these, either for pleasure or profit, has been the rôle of host. The gracious rites of hospitality have been understood and administered by few as they have by him. He has used them not simply as the corner-stone of good-fellowship, of which he has been one of the most distinguished promoters in his day and generation, but through them he has wrought for higher aims and more far-reaching purposes. It is not an extravagant estimate to make of his genius for organizing friendships, in defiance of those barriers which to many are so formidable as to seem insuperable obstacles, to hazard the opinion that not another man in the State could have called about him such a large company of varying tastes as assembled at the Revere House on Wednesday evening.” The same article spoke of his genius for forming new friendships while embalming the old ones in his memory.

Mr. Frank Sanborn, in his Boston letter to the Springfield *Republican*, commented on the part which he had played as “the original Independent.” “To him,” it said, “parties have always been instruments for the accomplishment of stated purposes in the administration of public interests, and never bound associations demanding fealty at

the expense of personal conviction or the common good."

Such testimony deserves to be accented, for it was perhaps the most valuable lesson of his public life. It speaks, therefore, highly for his integrity, for his everywhere recognized public spirit, that even men of blinded partisan views could not long cherish animosity against him, but were proud to claim him as a friend. When the dust of party conflict settled, it was seen that Mr. Bird was standing firm on the solid rock of principle, and if his party moved away from that vantage-ground, he refused to desert it. It is evident that such methods, though playing havoc with party organizations, are calculated in the long run to lead to a higher state of political morals. Men before Mr. Bird's day deserted their party, but few ever did so with never a reproach following that it was done for personal advantage or to subserve ambition. In Mr. Bird's case it was not infrequently attended with the absolute foreknowledge that such a course was political suicide. And consequently he carried with him wherever he went the respect of his former associates. They did not hesitate to call him "cranky," but they had to acknowledge in the long run that he was a "crank" that turned the right way.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Bird himself, in a vigorous letter to the *Springfield Republican*, dated September 8, 1875, explained the reasons

Three years later the Bird Club celebrated his seventy-eighth birthday by a banquet at the Parker House. This time Mr. Bird himself sent most of the letters of invitation. The club took

of his independent action. It is well worth reproducing in full:—

MR. BIRD RISES TO EXPLAIN.

The Difference between Himself and a Full-blown Democrat.

*To the Editor of the Republican*:—

I clip the following from your "Notes and Comments":—

Puzzling conundrum from the *Boston Journal*: What is the difference between Mr. F. W. Bird and a full-blown Democrat?

This, although it seems to puzzle you, does not puzzle me.

A full-blown Democrat belongs to the Democratic party: I do not. I act with the Democratic party whenever I believe such action best enables me to do my duty; just as we Free-Soilers acted with the Democratic party in 1850, and thus secured the election of Charles Sumner. There was a marked difference between me and full-blown Democrats then, and yet we acted together for common ends. The F. B. D. votes the regular party ticket, whether or no: I don't. The F. B. D. demands for victors the spoils: I don't, unless the victor produces a claimant for the spoils better fitted to perform the duties of the office than the vanquished. In that case—and that case, I agree, generally happens—I subscribe to the doctrine. The F. B. D. swallows all regular nominations, and votes himself, and calls upon all the faithful to vote, for them: I don't. I hold that bolting is always in order. If I were in Ohio, for instance, I should probably not vote for Governor Allen. (By the way, you persist in interpreting my late letter to the *Tribune* as favoring the election of Governor Allen. If you had read the letter,—as I have a right to presume you did not, from the fact that you favored your readers with sundry flippant and unmannerly criticisms upon it, without, by publishing it, giving them an opportunity of judging of the fairness of your criticisms,—if you had read this letter, you would have seen that I expressed no wish for the success of the Democratic

this occasion to present Mr. Bird with a massive silver cup, which bore on one side a dedicatory inscription and on the other the couplet from Pope's *Essay on Man*:—

“A wit's a feather and a chief a rod;  
An honest man's the noblest work of God.”

Earnest words of appreciation and reminiscence followed the presentation speech, and letters were read from Senators Dawes and Schurz and from Ex-Governors Boutwell and Claflin.

On the same day, as he was going from his house to his mill, he was met by a large delegation of his workmen, who presented him with a handsome gold-headed cane as a token of their respect and gratitude. Mr. Bird responded feelingly and thanked them for the “elegant gift, and useful as it is beautiful to one who totters down the hill of life.”

His eightieth birthday he spent quietly at home, having only at the anniversary dinner his immediate family, without the grandchildren at table. Many friends and neighbors and reporters from the Boston papers went to call on him and pay

ticket in Ohio, and used no words which could be tortured into such a meaning.)

However difficult it may be for a Republican organ to see the difference between F. W. B. and F. B. D., the independent journal ought to see and admit that coöperation does not necessarily imply identity.

F. W. BIRD.

EAST WALPOLE, September 8, 1875.



their respects, and he was overwhelmed with letters and telegraphic despatches congratulatory, as well as beautiful floral tributes.

When he reached the age of eighty-three, he announced to his friends that he should no longer attend the club dinners. Years before — as early as 1872 indeed — he, with a few friends, had seceded from the association which met weekly at Young's Hotel and had started a new club at the Parker House. It was smaller than the other, which now began to be called the Massachusetts, but nevertheless had distinguished attendance. Still another club, of more convivial tendencies, — separating out, as a wag said, "by that process which in the reproduction of species is called germination," — took the name of General Banks. Some politicians were welcome at all three. Mr. A. W. Beard made the remark, which was frequently quoted with approval: —

"I go to the Massachusetts Club when I want to be with my party associates, to the Banks Club when I want to have a good time, and to the Bird Club when I want to learn something."

In a letter dated January 24, 1892, Mr. Bird, after giving a brief account of the formation of the original club and the causes which led to his retirement from it, remarked with a tone of pathos that it was painful for him to bid farewell to this assemblage of his friends. But the exigencies of his health demanded it.

## X.

MR. BIRD'S manifold labors in connection with his successful business of paper-making had been greatly lightened by his second son, Charles Sumner Bird, who, after graduating from Harvard, had renounced his intention of taking the study of law and had entered his father's firm. Mr. Bird himself undertook the care of the finances, gradually relinquishing the detail of the business to his son. The prosperity of the business was not materially shattered by the unfortunate destruction of the paper mills by fire on the twenty-second of August, 1880. Not only were four extensive buildings burned to the ground, but also a large amount of new machinery and great quantities of stock were destroyed. The loss was about fifty thousand dollars, partially covered by insurance. New mills, however, were immediately erected. The last few years of Mr. Bird's life were saddened by the invalidism of his wife and of his beloved daughter Mary. Mrs. Bird, though nine years younger than he, had been gradually failing in health. As long as she

was able to bear the journeys, he took her to the mountains or the seashore during the summer months, but at last even this was too much for her. She died on the 29th of November, 1892. Though he was greatly affected by her loss, he found some consolation in the affection of his children. Two of his daughters lived still in his family, and his son was married and settled in the immediate vicinity.

In the summer of 1893 Mr. Bird, while making one of his visits to Boston, had an attack of something like vertigo, from the effects of which he fell heavily on the floor of the bank. He recovered from it sufficiently to write on the ninth of June the following characteristic account of it to a friend:—

“I called at your sanctum a week ago last Saturday, I think, and found it locked, as I have too frequently of late, and you reported to be at home sick. The old story: I have lectured and scolded you about your health, until I find that it does you no more good than other people’s lectures do me. . . .

“On Wednesday, May 31st, I had a malignant attack of Lumbago, they call it. They don’t know what it is, what the cause is, or what the remedy. It came upon me suddenly that morning, but I went to Boston, supposing it was an ordinary strain in the small of the back. I found, after making my deposit at the bank, that it was something more serious; for I fell helpless upon the bank floor. I was perfectly conscious all the while, and, what was remarkable,

perfectly uninjured. I have suffered frightfully since then, most of the time requiring two strong persons to help me move about. I am better perhaps now, and can move with very little help. I called in our doctor here, but I took no medicine. Since then he calls occasionally as a friend, but I won't touch his drugs. Theodore Metcalf recommends to me a doctor by name of Cheever in Boston. Perhaps I may see him when I am well enough to call upon him there, or have him come out here; though I have very little faith in any of them. . . .

"Ever faithfully yours,  
(Signed) "F. W. BIRD."

This above is typewritten. Then the following is his own handwriting, as firm as ever.

"I am driven to the office twice a day, return to spend an hour or so, then go home to bed. Read a little, doze a little, — such is life!"

Mr. Bird was always very fond of reading, whenever he could spare time from his active pursuits. He subscribed for many years to all the English reviews, and invariably read their articles on topics relating to history, political economy, and the science of government. He took less interest in articles on distinctively literary subjects, but he enjoyed a good old-fashioned novel, especially those of Scott. As may have been seen, his mind was well stocked with choice passages from the earlier English poets. One of the

last books which interested him was the biography of Abraham Lincoln, written by Colonel Nicolay and Colonel Hay. He bought it in its unabbreviated form and read it with due deliberation. He often remarked how his own estimate of the great President, like that of most of his associates, had been modified by the effect of historical perspective. He was always glad to pay his tribute of admiration to Lincoln, but he still continued to think that what had struck him first in the man, in spite of his unconventionality, — his shrewdness, — was perhaps his most remarkable trait.

Mr. Bird recovered from the effects of his fall, but he did not venture till some time later to go to Boston. Once during the following winter he felt strong enough to make one more visit to the Bird Club. It proved to be his last. It was noticed that he was quieter than usual, and he left the table to take an earlier train than was his wont. He experienced no ill effects, however; but not long after he met with another bad fall, this time in his mill, and it admonished him that it was his duty to guard against the danger that threatened him. He was somewhat bruised, but not seriously shaken. He spent his eighty-fourth birthday quietly at home. A reporter who was allowed to see him found him in bed, but able to talk, interested especially in the silver agitation, and declaring earnestly against the folly of a bi-metallic standard.



It had been nearly five months since he had visited Boston, but he still hoped to make the journey again. He spent a part of each day in bed, but was driven to his mill, where as ever he took an active part in the work going on.

It was particularly hard for him to part with his daughter Mary, who, as winter approached, felt again compelled to go to her home in the South. Her health had grown weaker, and it was a question whether she would be spared to return to her home again. But when the spring came, she also came. Her strength was greatly reduced, and it was apparent to all that her end was near. She survived only a few weeks. Few men ever had among their children a more congenial companion than she had been during many years. Such a shock was too severe for his enfeebled constitution. He grew feebler and feebler, and passed away on the twenty-third of May, 1894. The funeral services were held on the twenty-sixth, and were attended by large numbers of his friends, his townsmen, and by multitudes of his neighbors at East Walpole, where he had passed so large a part of his long life.

The religious services were conducted by the Rev. W. F. Bickford, the Congregationalist minister of the village chapel. Mr. Bird had expressed the desire that some one among those who had known him intimately should speak on this occasion. Mr. Frank N. Sanborn of Concord, with



whom he had been for many years on terms of warm friendship, was therefore called upon to make an address. Mr. Sanborn spoke feelingly in these words:—

“The friend whom we mourn to-day has gone, as the Scripture says, like a shock of grain, in its full season, to that garner in which is slowly gathered all that we love and revere on earth. Yet in the view of the ages of the past and the future, how short is even this long life of nearly eighty-five years! how brief and fading its record, when we who knew him shall have found that undiscovered land in which he now dwells! Brief must be its record here; but there, as we trust, the deeds and virtues that we remember are held in unfading memory, and are preparing his way in that other life, which is but a continuation of this, only with higher powers and clearer vision. This is our consolation; this, and the hope that we shall rejoin him there, and our other dear ones who have gone before. Some of you have known Mr. Bird longer than I have, and can speak more fully of the events of his honorable career; but it is nearly forty years since I first had the good fortune to meet him, at the rooms of our noble friend, Dr. Howe, and our paths since have run side by side in public and in private life. I found him in that company of political and social reformers of whom so few remain among us. I belonged also in that band, and by his kindness and that of

others soon found a place there. It was not an exclusive circle, but welcomed all who had their faces turned toward the Zion that so few of us then expected to see triumphant in our lifetime. Forty years ago, who could have imagined that our country would so soon cast off the heavy political yoke then resting on the neck of the North — the yoke of slavery and oligarchy? Fortune and a good cause favored us; and within fifteen years from my first meeting with Mr. Bird the victory rested with the reformers, who in 1854 had been so few.

“But few or many, defeated or triumphant, nobody ever saw our friend cast down, or willing to withdraw from the conflict; he had enlisted for the war and was ready, nay, eager, to ‘fight it out on that line,’ no matter how long the campaign lasted. His counsel ever was the same that the English dreamer, Clough, has put in brave practical verse: —

“ Say not the struggle naught availeth,  
 The labor and the wounds are vain, —  
 The enemy faints not, nor faileth,  
 And as things have been, they remain.

“ If hopes were dupes, fears may be liars;  
 It may be in yon smoke concealed,  
 Your comrades chase e’en now the fliers, —  
 And — but for you — possess the field.’

“Sagacious as he proverbially was in all matters political, he was the readiest to lead a forlorn hope

of any politician I ever saw, well knowing that courage to the point of rashness, be it only cool courage, is the most effective political quality. 'This battle is lost,' said the French marshal at Marengo. 'Yes,' replied Napoleon, pulling out his watch, 'but there is time to-day to win another'; and he won it. Our thoughts turn of themselves to this splendid fighting and staying quality in Frank Bird; but it is not as a combatant that he is best remembered, after all. Good-fellowship, as has been said, was the keynote of his character. If it is the aim and final cause of the British constitution, as somebody says, 'to get twelve good men in a jury box,' so it was our friend's chief delight to get a dozen companions around a dinner table, — or, on great occasions, a hundred, — and there spend the hours in friendly chat or contradiction. We have lived long, and known many men, but did we ever see one before who could hold a club together for half a century, without officers, or rules, or a definite purpose, by the mere sweetness and force of his abounding good nature? The Bird Club dies with him; its last meeting was when he last visited Boston, seven months ago, — for none but the hero can bend the bow of Ulysses.

"And there were deeper things than good nature in this fellowship of our friend. Many times have the words of Job, spoken in proud humility, been applied to one good man or another;

but to none have they a closer application than to this man, who never boasted, nor let his left hand know what his right hand was doing:—

“ ‘ When the ear heard me, then it blest me,  
 And when the eye saw me, it gave witness unto me;  
 Because I delivered the poor that cried, —  
 The fatherless, also, that had none to help him :  
 The blessing of him that was ready to perish came upon me,  
 And I caused the widow’s heart to sing for joy;  
 I was a father to the needy,  
 And the cause which I knew not I searched out.’

“ He was a just and merciful man; diligent in business, but never basing his prosperity on the wrong of another. In the contentions of trade and industry he kept his hands clean; none of the violence and fraud with which our ill-governed prosperity has so long been unhappily tainted, can be laid at his door. This ought not to be uncommon praise, — but I fear it is getting to be so.

“ A manly independence, ever respecting the rights of others, was that quality by which Mr. Bird is best known; a traditional Anglo-Saxon trait, which found expression, almost three hundred years ago, in the familiar verses of Sir Henry Wotton, to whom, with due allowance for change of time and station, our friend may be compared:—

“ ‘ How happy is he born and taught,  
 That serveth not another’s will!  
 Whose armor is his honest thought!  
 And simple truth his utmost skill.

- “ ‘ Whose passions not his masters are,  
Whose soul is still prepared for death ;  
Not tied unto the world with care  
Of public fame or private breath ;
- “ ‘ Who hath his life from rumors freed ;  
Whose conscience is his strong retreat :  
Whose state can neither flatterers feed,  
Nor ruin make accusers great ;
- “ ‘ Who God doth late and early pray,  
More of his grace than gifts to lend ;  
And entertains the harmless day  
With a well-chosen book or friend ;
- “ ‘ This man is freed from servile bands  
Of hope to rise, or fear to fall ;  
Lord of himself, if not of lands,  
And having nothing, yet hath all.’ ”

## XI.

MR. BIRD'S memory will not soon pass away. He was of an unusual type, and his work is inextricably mingled with the history of the most important movements of the nineteenth century. He was a self-made man and full of the fearlessness that is characteristic of self-made men. At the same time he was free from the conceit which so often haloes men who have by energy and talent raised themselves to positions of influence, wealth, and power.

A friend of Mr. Bird's makes the following interesting comments on his personal simplicity and freedom from obtrusive vanity: —

“Mr. Bird was a man of the strongest individuality and almost absolute self-reliance. Yet he was as far as possible from being an egotist, as the term is generally accepted. There was not a symptom of conceit of his own powers; he never made the slightest exhibition of anything like personal vanity. Few men have ever lived more entirely free from this quality. His positiveness was in the certainty that his own views were right, — not at all in the feeling that he could



better uphold them than other men. He was ready to accept the lead of other men and to defer to it. He wanted no honor or credit to himself for advocating or enforcing them; he only desired that the truth should prevail. He was almost unique among men of his ability in this respect. He was deferential and considerate, not to his equals or superiors alone, but to everybody about him. He was the most truly democratic of men, as the word is generally understood. He recognized equality only on the basis of intellect and character. Social distinction that grew out of wealth or of claims from family inheritance he did not even understand; it was a mystery to him how any one could claim superiority on such grounds.

“A fault in his nature, it may be admitted, was that he carried his personal independence to an extreme. He was too apt to be unnecessarily defiant here. It grew out of an intolerance of wrong, but he failed to be as considerate of those who had fallen into wrong as he might have been. He was deficient in the capacity to see two sides of questions, especially of those that had a moral bearing. He formed the habits of his life in his youth in discussing anti-slavery issues. His soul was on fire against the wrong of slavery, and he could not realize that others might with equal sincerity agree with him in this feeling, and yet deem it necessary to temporize in treating the evil. He attacked them with a vehemence which

he later evinced against some of those who were of his early anti-slavery associates, and also carried into the discussion of questions where difference of opinion might assert its right to more toleration than was accorded in treating of strictly moral issues. He had influence in calling men to a sense of their duty from this positiveness, but it came to be that his advice at times was more like that of one crying in the wilderness than of an organizer for the right on practical grounds. It is open to question if other more compliant men are not needed in the world, as well as men of the iron stamp of Frank Bird.

“It was meanness in men that most aroused his indignation. He could not tolerate concession to wrong; he despised most of all those who put their selfish aims, with a view to political preferment, uppermost. The trickery of the schemes of the smaller politicians especially aroused his noble scorn. His favorite term for them was that of ‘the jockeys of politics.’ He left the Bird Club originally because he thought some of these had got into it; he found them in the bargains that went on in the Know-Nothing party in its decadent days; he saw them in the later politics of his life, and he held them always in the utmost abhorrence.

“Aside from the antipathy thus and otherwise created, he was a respected man among his political opponents to a greater extent than is always

understood. They all knew that he was honest and sincere, and on many points they held his judgment in high estimation. He had a mind that grasped practical questions with fully the strength that it dealt with moral ones. Mr. Bird was not only one of the leaders in the great moral reform of the anti-slavery contest; his extreme attitude towards questions of State policy may have impaired his influence in legislation, but he did the State rare service in the formation of opinion as to State policy. His ideas were broad, thoughtful, and sound. They were oftener followed than is supposed by many, and it is generally believed by those who have made them a study that it was a mistake that they were not still more adopted. He will be remembered as one of the wisest men on these points that have been at the State House in the generation just passed."

Every one who knew Mr. Bird came to appreciate the tenderness of his affections. His heart beat warmly in sympathy for the poor and unfortunate. It was his delight to do kindnesses for people. The fact that a man had been a bitter enemy was no barrier to his generosity. He gave away and lent without expectation of adequate return literally tens of thousands of dollars. Once, indeed, his friend, Samuel B. Noyes of Canton, came to him to pay a small debt that had been outlawed years before. In their interview Mr. Noyes said to Mr. Bird:—

“I remember that in 1837 you lent me ten dollars. Before I paid it, you had failed, and I paid that to your assignee, Nathaniel F. Safford. Afterwards, as I have been told, when you had received from the court a full discharge, you paid all your creditors in full; and I am only now doing what you have done and would do again. The statute of limitations does not remove the moral obligation.”

“Precisely so,” replied Mr. Bird, “but this is the first time in my life—and I have lost more than fifty thousand dollars—that any one ever offered to pay to me a debt that was outlawed.”

Mr. Bird was a spontaneously generous man. The tributes of his friends, neighbors, and employés proved how tenderly he was loved. It was often remarked that “the atmosphere around his residence was redolent of this affection.”

He made no show of the good that he did. As an example of the gratitude that his kindness evoked may be quoted the simple, often ungrammatical, letter of a woman who, through his generosity, was enabled to go away from the scene of her labors, where her strength had been exhausted by over-exertion. It was dated Boffin’s Bower, February 11, 1875.

“KIND FRIEND TO HUMANITY, —

“You were not at home when I left the Commonwealth, so that I could not thank you for your kindness to me. It was the best thing that could have

been done for me. If a thousand dollars were given to me I would not think of using it for that purpose, but I see now that it would have been impossible for me to have gained my health in the place. although I was glad to get back well and happy, It seemed like a soldier getting back to camp, and although I enjoyed myself every moment of my visit it did not spoil me in the least for my work. I shall long remember the kindness of Mrs. Bird and her cordial reception of me with out an introduction the first night of my stay at the hotel. together with Miss Mary who was so kind to me when I was so sick, and the other young ladies of whome I saw but little but that was sufficient to show that they inherite the rere goodness of their parients. I hope your children live to enjoy the love and respect that has been universal accorded to their father by all friends an opponents. I know they will cherish the memories of the hallowed past that have been so vividly impressed on their tender minds in childhood, but they can never know how much their father's wisdom, patriotism, generosity, self sacrificing devotion, unselfish aims, and high above them all his loyalty to friends had to do with shapeing and perfecting the glorious results the Nation is so proud of today."

The same friend of Mr. Bird's who was quoted above also remarks upon the cheerfulness and serenity of his disposition. He says:—

"He suffered much from physical ailments through all his later life, and he met with his full share of personal disappointments, but they never impaired the native sweetness of his disposition.



He retained his interest in everything about him to the last, and he was always disposed to look upon the bright side of what was transpiring. He did not deem the age in which he lived to be degenerate, or hold up the past as superior to the present; on the contrary, he had always the hope and the faith that the world was improving. Eventually, he would say, our politics will be better and purer, and he recognized readily the progress made in moral reform. He had especial affection in his old age for young men. He was a wise counsellor and an encouraging friend to them, and they were greatly attracted to him. When he was tried at times by perversity in special directions, he was prompt to remember that on the whole right was advancing, and to take courage and comfort from the fact."

The Rev. James Freeman Clarke once referred to Mr. Bird as an example of cheerful old age in one of his sermons. He said:—

"I see many young people who are prematurely old; they have exhausted life and its pleasures too soon. They have lived to amuse themselves and enjoy themselves, and the result is that they have neither amusement nor joy. But yesterday I met a friend some months older than myself, who said to me that he was very weak in his body and was losing his energy to work, but, said he, 'The world is very beautiful to me still.' He has been a hard fighter for right against wrong all his days ;



one who has loved truth and justice; one who has had for his friends upright men and generous, as well as our patriots and philanthropists: so, while the outward man perishes, the inward man is renewed day by day, fed by happy recollections and undying hopes."

Such was the life of a noble, manly, fearless, and conscientious man. It offers many valuable lessons. It shows how a man occupied with large private business concerns may yet devote time and energies to public concerns. It shows how a man suffering for many years from ill health may sufficiently master physical infirmities to enable him to accomplish far more than the average man in perfect health is able to do. It shows how a man may so conduct his business as to give him a competency, even a fair fortune, and yet preserve the confidence of his employés. Undoubtedly he might easily by sacrificing some of his finer opportunities have left a large fortune behind him, but he preferred to express his interest in great public questions. To these ends he contributed many thousands of dollars, and not only money but time, which was more than money.

As a friend also he taught a lesson of imponderable value. It was said of him: "When one of his associates had won his regard, he grappled him to his heart with hooks of steel. He was enthusiastic in his love, unselfish in his devotion." Lovely in his home relations, a model of business

honor, individual in all his tastes and characteristics, an upright citizen, an indomitable fighter for the right, he was one of whom it might well be said: —

“He was a good man and a just.”



## APPENDIX.



IT was announced in the course of the exercises at Mr. Bird's funeral that at some future day a meeting would take place in Boston, to give his many distant friends an opportunity to pay by word and letter their tribute to his memory, and to call forth and preserve reminiscences of his life. A special meeting of the Bird Club was therefore held on Saturday, the last day of June, at which many persons were present. The Honorable HENRY L. PIERCE took the chair, and spoke as follows :—

“I was asked to take the chair so long occupied by our much-loved friend whose private virtues and public services we now commemorate, because it was believed that I was the oldest member of the club of which he was the founder and of which he was the inspiration so long as he lived.

“I am sure there is no touch of sadness in our hearts, but rather a feeling of gratitude that his life, which covered so large a part of the present century, was rounded out to completion with all his powers un-

impaired, full of good works and of effective efforts to promote the welfare of his fellow-men.

“Francis W. Bird was a very remarkable man; there was nothing commonplace about him. He had read widely and thought deeply, and his conversation was full of interest and instruction. In all my conversations with him, we never parted without his having said something for me to think of and profit by.

“During the stormy period of our history, from 1845 to 1875, he exerted a great influence upon the persons with whom he came into contact, and especially upon the public men of that time. In the consideration of the great questions which enlisted the attention of the country during that period, he took a leading part, and was, to my thinking, generally on the right side.

“He was warmly attached to his friends, and was the soul of good-fellowship. Nothing delighted him so much as the weekly gathering of this club, in which he called around him many of the choicest spirits of our community. It is more than forty years since he told me that he had set apart Saturday afternoon for social communion with his friends, and that he would not allow any business matters to interfere with the enjoyments of that day.

“Of Mr. Bird’s integrity, and high sense of honor in his business life, it would be impossible to speak too highly. His scrupulous regard for his word, and for his financial obligations, enabled him to command abundant means on the most favorable terms, even in times of business depression. Once, in the course of his long career as a manufacturer, he was driven by the stress of circumstances to seek a settlement under the national bankruptcy laws; but he no sooner received a discharge in that way from his obligations

than he went to work resolutely to pay, and did pay, every creditor in full, principal and interest.

“Mr. Bird was in all respects a progressive man, and did not hesitate to adopt new things when, after examination, they commended themselves to his mind and judgment. He was often far in advance of the opinion of his day, and he never shrank from carrying out any conclusions which he had reached, no matter how much they might depart from prevailing practices.

“Nothing more distinguished him in his life than when at the close he directed that his body should be cremated, as was the ancient custom, because it was more consistent with the health of the community and the proprieties of the occasion than was the prevailing practice. I know how hard it is to overcome tradition and education, but I cannot but believe that in this he was right, and that he set an example worthy to be followed.”

MRS. JULIA WARD HOWE followed, and her words were received with applause :—

“You will only expect to hear from me a few words of affectionate remembrance and appreciation of one so justly dear to all of you, and one who deserved the love and admiration of the community.

“I knew him mostly as the affectionate friend of my husband, a devoted friend of his, and I remember his figure coming in and out of our house quite familiarly, sympathizing very kindly in everything that was happy or unfortunate in our house. In the days that I saw him most we had suffered the loss of one of our children, and I remember the great sympathy



and tenderness that Mr. Bird showed to us on that occasion, and the great comfort he extended to my husband.

“He was a very high-toned man. Through all the intricacies of political life I always felt this fine and unusual quality of the man. He seemed to be a good deal of an old Roman without the affectation with which people put on the classic toga and walk about in it. There was nothing of that in Mr. Bird. You felt that he was a man with whom the public interests stood first. He felt as one with the community. He had it at heart, and never, I believe, lost sight of its greatest interests.

“Mr. Dawes’s letter says that his was not the constructive mind. On the other hand, it was a very critical mind, and he had a very keen sense of any fallacy or falsehood. I felt that very much in the intercourse I had with him. His convictions were surely very strong and were never carelessly arrived at. One felt in him a depth of thought and a depth of character and an originality. I feel quite sure if he had made a million political mistakes, let us say — and perhaps he never made any, I don’t know that he did — at this high level, this high plane of intention and feeling upon which he lived and moved, he did build up something in the community which will not easily be broken down. That is his great legacy.

“When I heard of his death, — and I heard of it with sincere sorrow, — I felt grieved that so valuable a man could be taken from us, and yet I felt at the same time this something which he had built up with his life, and which was not to pass away with his death, and I do not believe that it will.

“I should like to say a word about the sweet romance

of his character. He sometimes talked to me about his early days and of his first marriage, and so on; and I remember that there seemed a great poetry of character in the attachments and predilections of those early times. He was too much of a man of action to brood over anything, and very far from being a sentimentalist, but the value of sentiment he felt and embodied in his life.

“Now the memory of such a man — what he was, what he did, and what he intended — is a grand centre for friends to group themselves around, to keep his memory fresh by taking up the causes that he loved and advocated and fought for, and feeling them dear as he felt them dear, with the same unselfish and sincere devotion.”

After Mrs. Howe had spoken, letters were read from gentlemen with whom Mr. Bird had been associated in public life, giving their estimate, from different political horizons, of his services to Massachusetts and the country. A few of these are pleasant to preserve:—

FROM EX-SENATOR CARL SCHURZ.

“I thank you and our common friends, who invite me to the meeting of the Bird Club to be held next Saturday, most cordially for having thought of me. When I read your letter, I felt as if I had received a greeting from our departed friend himself, and it did my heart good.

“I am sincerely sorry to say that I cannot be with you on the day appointed for the meeting. Duties I

have here will not let me go. I regret this exceedingly, because the memory of Frank Bird is peculiarly dear to me. It was in the spring of 1859, on the occasion of a dinner given in Boston to celebrate the anniversary of Thomas Jefferson's birthday, that I first saw him. He was one of the Massachusetts men intent on delivering the political anti-slavery movement from the entanglement with proscriptive Know-Nothingism. I remember well the cordiality with which he welcomed me, a stranger in your State. Since that period we met from time to time, and occasionally exchanged letters on matters of public interest, and we became fast friends.

"I dare say many of you saw him much more frequently, and sustained with him closer personal relations than I did; but nobody can have been attached to him by a higher appreciation of his qualities. I have never in my life known a more *genuine* man than Frank Bird. Although he possessed strong common sense and a sagacious mind, it would of course be too much to say that he was always right in his views; nobody is. But whether always right or not, there never could be any doubt as to the purity and nobility of the motives which impelled him in forming his opinions, nor as to the sincerity and candor with which he expressed them. His judgments of men and things, as well as the reasons which moved and guided his conduct, were so unwarped by anything like selfishness that this man could be absolutely trusted. And as the *moral* values of public men were always uppermost in his estimation, the influences radiating from him were always most healthy and elevating.

"In Frank Bird was seen the stuff out of which true

patriots are made; and if we could be sure that the republic will always have a plentiful supply of *such* citizens, there would be no reason to fear for its future.

"I repeat, I am very sorry I cannot be with you next Saturday. I wish I could take you all by the hand in memory of our good friend.

"Sincerely yours,

"C. SCHURZ.

"POCANTICO HILLS, WESTCHESTER Co., N.Y.,  
June 27, 1894."

FROM EX-SENATOR H. L. DAWES.

"I should be very glad to join those who will meet on Saturday to speak of their regard and friendship for Mr. Bird, and bear witness to his worth and service to the generations among whom he lived; but I find that I must be deprived of the opportunity. I can only send a few words of tribute to an uninterrupted friendship of many years, surviving constant change in every other relation of life save that of personal attachment and mutual regard. We began to know each other when I first became a member of the Legislature.

"Mr. Bird was then in the full vigor of his early political life as an Independent Whig; and I was not myself in very regular standing with the party, having been elected over its nominee on a local issue to which party obligations were subordinated. We first met in a caucus, in which things were not going to his mind; and I was in some way put up to join him in making trouble. After this I aided him as a sort of lieutenant in an occasional fray. The acquaintance

thus begun ripened into a friendship which none of the divergences and differences of after life have for a moment shaken, — a friendship I have come every year more and more to value.

“We could not, as you know, draw together much of the time in the public service, — and quite as often as otherwise we were found pulling directly apart. But the *man* stood out in him all the time, and somehow, the more the antagonism, the stronger the personal regard. He was a born fighter, and loved nothing so much as a good honest fight with a friend, if only it were for something that would justify hard blows. If the contest were fair, no combatant ever lost favor with him.

“But Mr. Bird will be remembered not alone for the warm personal regard in which he was held by all who enjoyed his friendship, but also for the great public service to which he devoted his life, and in which he accomplished such unmeasured good. His mission was the correction of errors; and he hunted them right and left, regardless of the politics that might be in them, or the individual — official or private — who might harbor them. His was not a constructive mind, and he devoted little time to the new devices of the doctrinaire, content with the government as it is, provided only that it be administered without friction or fraud, and for the attainment of the highest results. This is why he worked himself in and out of so many different political organizations, for none of which did he care anything, beyond the opportunity they afforded him to hit the delinquent and the laggard in official station. He fell upon unfaithfulness wherever and in whatever garb he found it, and gave it no quarter. It mattered not to him



under what banner the wrong was committed, or under what lead it was to be redressed. He carried on a crusade against political sin; he lowered his standard at the behest of no political party, and marched with none that tampered with evil. He would train with no men who kept open account with political iniquity, but squared all accounts with political offenders as he went along. He cared not for professions, but dealt with performances alone. Political integrity was the only password with him, and he demanded it alike of Whig, of Free-soiler, of Coalitionist, of Republican, and of Democrat, with each of whom in turn he acted, and with neither of whom was he content, because each failed to keep clean his ways and clarify the atmosphere he breathed. To judge him by party creeds would be to misjudge him altogether.

“Although a private citizen for many of the last years of his life, he was still a living force to the end. We have a better public service because he has lived among us. The influence he exerted for good will long be felt in the politics of Massachusetts. There is need of many more such men in our political life.

“I am very truly yours,

“H. L. DAWES.”

FROM JUDGE E. ROCKWOOD HOAR OF CONCORD.

“I am very much obliged for the invitation to join in the commemorative services in honor of my valued friend, F. W. Bird, by the club which bears his name, on Saturday next; but am sorry to say that it will not be in my power to accept it.

“We agreed on most important things, and never



quarrelled about any. He was a strong and upright man, a generous man, and a friendly man. He was one of the few men whom I continued to like and respect about the same, even when he attached himself to the Democratic party, his previous opinions on which I had fully concurred in and admired, but to whose defects and shortcomings I suddenly found that he had become totally oblivious.

“The last time I met him (at Governor Boutwell’s golden wedding in Groton), we strolled off together, and had a long talk of a reminiscent character, winding up with a statement of our respective religious opinions; of which he professed to have very little of a definite character, — doing himself, as I then thought and still think, great injustice. His whole life was intended to be the taking of God’s side against the devil, — though, like the rest of us, he seemed to me occasionally to carry on that warfare from an untenable position. But he was always brave and sincere, and I was very fond of him.

“Very sincerely yours,

“E. R. HOAR.

“CONCORD, June 25, 1894.”

#### FROM EX-GOVERNOR RUSSELL.

“It is a great disappointment to me not to be present. I should love to add a few words to the many that will be spoken there, testifying to the sturdy character, great ability, and distinguished public service of our late friend. I say *our* friend, because, of all the older men of my day, none seemed to me more kindly, sympathetic, and helpful to us younger men than did Mr. Bird. I remember with the greatest

pleasure, during my whole official term as Governor, almost every week he would call upon me at the Executive Chamber, and help me with his words of wisdom and sympathy. Massachusetts will always remember the faithful services he rendered her by his ability and sage counsel; and even more by his courage and independence, which feared nothing, and which always stood for what was honorable and right.

“Very truly yours,

“WM. E. RUSSELL.

“BOSTON, June 26, 1894.”

FROM EX-GOVERNOR LONG.

“I find at the last moment that I cannot go to the dinner in memory of Mr. Bird. I have to go out of town, and so lose an opportunity which I had counted on with especial pleasure, of testifying by my presence my respect for his strong heart and mind, his love of liberty, his generous interest in the public welfare, and his services as a typical citizen, representing in his day the fibre of Massachusetts. Like many another, I look back to my start in public life and recall gratefully his helpfulness, his cordial sympathy with me, and the influence he exercised, especially upon young men. Though not present, I beg to join you in recalling his worth and honoring his memory.

“Very truly yours,

“JOHN D. LONG.

“BOSTON, June 30, 1894.”

The Honorable JOHN I. BAKER of Beverly, the oldest gentleman present, and an associate of Mr.

Bird in the Legislature, and in the Executive Council of Governor Andrew, was called upon, and spoke as follows:—

“I met Frank Bird first, when he came to the Legislature in 1847. He and I were in earnest sympathy then as anti-slavery Whigs, if you can conceive of that state of things, Mr. Chairman, and the acquaintance that I then formed with him I kept up to the last. He was to me one of the most interesting characters I ever met. He was positive in his opinions, and had the courage of his convictions. But though positive, he was one of the most tolerant of men. I have seen him differ in opinion from Governor Andrew, and no debating society was ever equal to it; but both men, though they might differ, were ready to tolerate each other if either found himself mistaken.

“I could not resist the temptation to come here, that I might bear my testimony to the worth and value in private virtues and public services of this friend of ours.”

MR. JOHN E. RUSSELL of Leicester added his tribute to Mr. Bird in these words:—

“It is only about ten years ago that I first became acquainted with Mr. Bird. Circumstances brought me forward to the public life of the commonwealth, and then Mr. Bird did me the honor to make my acquaintance. His advice and wise counsel made me greatly his debtor. His interest and sympathy in my affairs commanded my affection, and he revealed to me in the intercourse I had with him that he was a man of genuine patriotic feeling, the highest type

of American citizenship. Mr. Bird was absolutely fearless, and there is the difficulty of making him an example to many young men. There was no man that could sway Mr. Bird; no great personality that could overcome him when he felt that he was right and the other was wrong. There was no party and no faction of a party of which he was afraid. Consequently, he was in absolute independence of their political action.

“Now the average citizen, the average good citizen, constrained by his environment, by the opinions of those about him, leans decidedly to one party or to another, while Mr. Bird was free to act independently of party, regarding them and trying them one after another merely as instruments. In this way Mr. Bird was like some of the most distinguished men in our history. He unconsciously followed the most illustrious examples. Such was the political character of George Washington and of other great men in the history of our republic.

“It was the patriotism of Mr. Bird that made him loving to his fellow-citizen because that citizen was his fellow-countryman. It made him incapable of that rancorous and bitter abuse of political opponents which is the common vice of the mean, of the narrow, and of the selfish. It made him considerate and thoughtful always, whatever their party might do, of those who were intrusted with the solemn duty of government.

“And so, sir, this good man comes to his end and is followed with the love of those who are gathered here to-day and with that of all his fellow-citizens, because he acted through life what is expressed in those words, ‘Whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, do ye also unto them.’”

Three intimate and long-acquainted friends who could not be at the memorial meeting— Judge Davis mistaking the date, and Messrs. E. L. Pierce and G. H. Monroe being in England— afterwards sent these letters, full of reminiscence and regard.

JUDGE DAVIS, who claimed to be “the only living member of the original Bird Club,” after giving a long account of its formation and its peculiarly democratic and unconventional organization, proceeded as follows:—

“What kept this club together?” may be asked. It was the social quality of its head, his devotion to his friends, his intellectual and moral devotion to ideas, and his love of purity and independence in public life. These qualities called forth the respect of other men, and rendered the club an important agent in elevating the standards of political action in our beloved commonwealth.

“It is a noticeable fact that few men who have held office in the cabinet of the Republican party, few governors since Talbot, and no Republican senator have been willing to risk their presence in the Bird Club. A man once elected to high office by a party seems to feel himself under such obligations to that party that he is bound to it forever after by manacles of steel. Some Republican congressmen from Massachusetts have occasionally dined with Mr. Bird, but no one has identified himself with him since President Grant was elected. But other gentlemen who still adhere to that party have not been afraid of compromising their position by dining with their old



friends. Whilst I do not impugn the honor, nor the honesty, of the magnates who have refused us the light of their countenance, such absence has been the cause of sincere regret.

“Mr. Bird was a genuine Democrat to his very marrow. He had a most concise, agile, and conclusive logic, which he exercised without acerbity or show of malice. Indeed, it was often amazing to witness the celerity with which his opponent’s heels were tripped, like one who fell on concealed or slippery ice, thinking he stood on solid ground; or how, in other debates, his disputant was smitten as with a cimeter, upon the premises he himself laid down:—

“ ‘For ’tis the sport to have the enginer  
Hoist with his own petar.’

“Mr. Bird was a generous man, who scarcely let his left hand know what his right hand did; and not alone to public men who needed assistance, not alone to public causes he advocated, but in private charities, sympathizingly, gracefully, ungrudgingly, and without ostentation, he contributed of his well-earned store.

“ ‘His heart and hand both open and both free:  
For what he has he gives, what thinks, he shows;  
Yet gives he not till judgment guide his bounty.’

“He was — what is so much needed under a democratic government — an independent and a fearless man.

“ ‘He would not flatter Neptune for his trident  
Or Jove for his power to thunder.’

Though always a partisan, he looked above party. He despised cunning and corruption in public as in



private act, and never hesitated to denounce a sneak, in whatever party he ensconced himself.

“Mr. Bird came slowly, if at all, to accept the expediency of the expenditure of public money for technical education, for the Agricultural College, for the School of Technology, for great public enterprises, and for special favors to private interests. For this reason he was bitterly opposed to the Massachusetts Hoosac Tunnel enterprise, and to the State loan or credit to the New York and New England Railroad Company. Whether right or wrong in these regards, he was consistent. Though a manufacturer himself, he asked no business favors of the national government, and denied the special and discriminating favor to others which he would not demand for himself.

“He was a just man. After Horace Greeley was defeated for the Presidency, in 1872, our State Committee of the Liberal Republicans met in the long parlor over the front door of the Parker House, to consult upon the question, What shall we do? or, as Mr. Webster phrased it in Faneuil Hall, during President Tyler’s reign, ‘Where shall I go?’ Mr. Bird at first hesitated; there was for a while little response to the question. Finally one member remarked, ‘I know where I am. I go with the Democratic party. Slavery has been abolished. In the nature of things, the Democratic party is also enfranchised, and can now run in the line of its original principles. It can have no motive to do otherwise. It can be moulded. It can be controlled to good purposes. The Republican party, since the war, has been simply scheming for power; they are like pirates on the ocean, seeking only booty and plunder. It has, since the war, lived by patting the carpet-bagger on the back, by corrup-

tion, and by allying itself with the capital of the country. It has had no other direct policy since the war, and during the war there was hardly a day when any man in Congress could state what law it would pass, or what its policy would be. But we were anti-slavery men before the war. We professed in our political action to be waging no opposition to our Southern fellow-countrymen, but to the aggressions of slavery and the slave power. Now there has been exhibited this year the most remarkable display of character and self-restraint, the greatest moral spectacle ever seen in so few years, after a civil war. Our quondam rebels have nobly come forward at Cincinnati, enthusiastic to nominate Charles Francis Adams; and, failing in that, they procured the nomination of one of their most bitter opponents before the war, who was also a tariff man. The Democratic party also nominated Mr. Greeley. Are not we, of all others, the men to meet them half way? May not our action, in continued union with our Southern friends, perhaps do more than anything else to "close up the bloody chasm"? We were willing to join with them in the chance for victory, and shall it be said that we deserted them after defeat? Shall we not show the magnanimity they have exhibited?

"This, in outline, was the view presented. Mr. Bird at once said, 'That course is just; we are in honor bound to adhere to them.' And I think that every man but one on that committee has voted the national Democratic ticket ever since.

"I well remember also an earlier conference of a sub-committee of the same committee with the Democratic State Committee during the summer of the Greeley campaign, about the nomination of Sumner

for governor. Mr. Bird was a member of our committee. Many of the Democrats had never met him; they had been taught to believe that 'Frank Bird' was something monstrous, 'a mixture of hyena and orang-outang,' but found him a man of like 'organs, dimensions, affections' with themselves, with a keen sense of honor; and they all respected and loved him afterward, and nominated and voted for him for governor, after Mr. Sumner's declination.

"Take him for all in all, 'we ne'er shall see his like again.' May his good spirit pardon me in this humble attempt to contribute a leaf to the laurel wreath that crowns his life!

"PLYMOUTH, July, 1894."

"CHARLES G. DAVIS.

The Honorable GEORGE H. MONROE, in his letter dated Boston, August 4, 1894, after relating the manner of his first acquaintance with Mr. Bird, proceeded to give his impressions of the man in these heartfelt words:—

"I always think of Frank Bird first as a man of generous, tender, and loving heart. He made many political enemies, but I do not think there was one among them who really knew him, who failed to pay him this tribute. He was intolerant of wrong in others, yet I never knew any one who could be quite so easily moved to pity for a wrong-doer. He resented injuries to himself, but he was more keen to resent injuries done to his friends, and especially injuries done to what he regarded as the right. He had two almost distinct personalities. He would denounce unsparingly an individual who he thought was wrong,

and he did not exercise imagination so much as he might have done in conceiving the excuses that could possibly be for such wrong principle or action; but let any one, friend or foe, approach him with a request for a favor, and he melted at once to kindness. I remember in one instance he was especially severe upon an old acquaintance who had committed what perhaps came nearer being an unpardonable sin in his eyes than anything else, by being untrue to Charles Sumner. This man came to him in the midst of it all to ask him to be his bondsman for a public office. No possible wrath — and his in this instance was very great — could for a moment stand in the way of his conferring this favor.

“Mr. Bird realized fully the extent of some unkindnesses from which he suffered. He had tried to glory in them at times. He said more than once, with some egotism perhaps, but more truth, when attacked by the lower class of politicians: —

“ ‘ Yes, I am proud, I must be proud, to see  
Men not afraid of God afraid of me.’ ”

“But it was foreign to his nature to find happiness in disputes with any one. Though often in controversy, at heart his was the gentlest of spirits. He appeared otherwise because he saw the right so clearly, and could not readily conceive that others could be obtuse to it.

“He was not a natural follower of any leader. His was the truly independent temperament. He did not readily conform either in politics or religion, and he had a fine scorn of those who would yield conviction for the sake of conforming. Here was the key to many of his controversies, as well as to the disregard of party ties and party obligations in which much of

his life was passed. He placed sincerity above everything, and he could not tolerate departures from it in himself or in others.

“Mr. Bird was always a great reader, and he had a fine capacity to assimilate what was best in his reading. He was a felicitous as well as a forcible writer, and his quotations from the earlier poets were very apt in this connection. He wrote better than he spoke in his public addresses, but he was a good conversationalist, and one of the most sensible and instructive in his general remarks in conversation of any man I have known.

“He was a true gentleman in the best sense of that word. He had an abhorrence of everything low, coarse, or vulgar. This quality came out at the dinner tables where he presided, around which were frequently gathered men out of sympathy with him in politics. Nothing that was otherwise than refined in thought in itself, and studiously considerate of the feelings of others, ever fell from his lips then, and even his rebukes to others who he thought transcended the bounds of decorum were mild and gentle.

“I have dwelt upon these traits in Mr. Bird’s character, because he said to me in his later years, ‘No man living knows me so well as you do.’ I take peculiar pleasure with this recollection in saying that this was what I knew of him.

“The last time I saw Mr. Bird was the day before I left the country to be absent for several months. I went out then to his home in East Walpole, where he was confined by illness. At the railroad station in that village, in his mills, on the way up to his residence, I encountered those who knew him, and had been brought up as his neighbors and in his service.



It was touching indeed to hear the tributes they paid him. No man was ever more fervently loved by those about his home than was he. I found Mr. Bird stretched upon his bed by a recent attack, in a more severe form, of the illness which had overtaken him. He was cheerful, clear in mind, interested in all about him. He spoke principally of his later life, and especially of his last visit to Boston. I do not think he anticipated that death was so near him, but he had probably felt for many years that he might be called at an early moment. I never at any time heard him express fears of the future. He bade me farewell without any apparent premonition that we should not meet again, and there had so long been an indomitable vitality in that frame which ill health had done much to enfeeble, that I shared fully with him in this feeling. Physically he died out of the world a few weeks later. His memory will never die out of the minds of those who knew him best, until death claims them also.

“BOSTON, October 1, 1894.”

“GEO. H. MONROE.”

In the long and interesting letter of the Honorable EDWARD L. PIERCE, whose acquaintance with Mr. Bird extended over the last half of his life, occurred the following observations:—

“My acquaintance with Mr. Bird began about the year 1850, and my last interview with him was at his home, July 3, 1893, just before I sailed for Europe. One of my earliest recollections of him is a meeting with him at the Readville station as we were taking the train to attend the Commencement at Brown



University, our common *alma mater*. He rarely omitted, till about three years before his death, to attend this anniversary; but the interest which drew him to it seemed to be less in the college itself than in old fellowships, and instead of being a witness of the ceremonies, he kept rather with his college friends, Senator Henry B. Anthony, Professor William Gammell, and Judge Walter Burgess. He discontinued his attendance when he could no longer find there Judge Burgess, the survivor of the other two. His sympathy with these companions was purely friendly, as he was rarely in full political accord with them. Another college friend, whom he held in much regard, was Edward H. Hazard, and in death they were divided by only a few months. When Mr. Bird was present for the last time at Commencement, he was recognized at the dinner as an old and distinguished graduate. His seat was then with the invited guests, on a raised platform, and he was called up for a speech. Until quite late in life he attended the annual reunions of the graduates living in or near Boston. . . .

“Mr. Bird’s friendliness, comprehending men of various tastes and opinions, has been emphasized by others, and I need not repeat what they have so well said. He was never so happy as when such groups were gathered about him. . . .

“The unjust treatment which Sumner received from President Grant’s administration on account of his opposition to the measures for annexing San Domingo broke Mr. Bird’s connection with the Republican party, which he had assisted so much to found and which he has served so faithfully. In September, 1873, Mr. Sumner attended at East Walpole the

wedding of Mr. Bird's eldest daughter. This was two months before the senator left the State for the last time. The last meeting of the two friends was at Washington, within about a week of the senator's death; and one of Sumner's last letters, perhaps the last, written a few hours or moments before he was smitten with his final attack of *angina pectoris*, was addressed to Mr. Bird, who received it when the writer was no more. . . .

"Mr. Bird had always great faith in a direct appeal to the people, in campaign papers as well as in pamphlets. In 1850 he conducted as a coadjutor with two other gentlemen, *The Free-soiler*, which was effective in the contest ending in Sumner's election as senator. In 1870 he conducted *The Tocsin*, which he issued for the purpose of defeating the proposed loan to the Boston, Hartford, and Erie Railroad.

"Mr. Bird was, as Burke said of his son, 'made a public creature.' His interest in public affairs was all through his life most earnest and constant, even to the detriment of his private business. Probably no man in our history has, without official connection or personal interests, ever visited the State House so often, to confer as to some measure which he deemed useful or hurtful. I remember a laborious summer during which he was most of the time in Boston, engaged in investigations and a report concerning the best use to be made of the flats at South Boston. He was not ambitious for high office, but he enjoyed most of all a seat in the Legislature, where he could affect decisively the policy and well-being of the State.

"Our friend suffered during a great part of his life from ill health. He often sat at tables where others enjoyed a luxurious meal while he confined himself to

a simple dish which barely sufficed for sustenance. His vital force, however, enabled him to overcome physical disability. He will be remembered for his originality, freshness, and sincerity, his tender sympathies in sorrow, his loyalty in friendship, and his generous help to the unfortunate. Those whose knowledge of men has been various, find his strong personality vividly stamped on their minds, not as one of a familiar type, but separate and distinct by itself, adding a new experience of human character.

“MILTON, October 7, 1894.”

“EDWARD L. PIERCE.

The Honorable A. W. BEARD, a leading political associate of Mr. Bird for some years, and a member of the club after differences of opinion had led to a separation into the original club and the Massachusetts Club, being called on by Mr. H. L. Pierce to read the letter of Mr. Dawes, spoke afterward as follows:—

“I first made Mr. Bird’s acquaintance about the year 1863, at the Bird Club. For nine years at least I was a regular attendant at the meetings of that club; while during the last four or five years of that time, from 1863 to 1872, I was in close relations to Mr. Bird—close political relations and still closer relation on matters of State affairs in which political lines were not drawn.

“It was my privilege also to serve in the Legislature with Mr. Bird, to know something of his way and methods there, and the directness of his mind. His faculty of seizing a central point, either for or against a measure in debate, was remarkable, and it was effec-

tive. It is true that he was tolerant in opinion, but he was intolerant where he thought there was dishonesty or where he thought public position was used to serve personal ends.

“In Mr. Bird as a public man we have had an example I wish that all men, especially young men who have entered public life or who are thinking of entering it, would profit by and follow. Wherever Mr. Bird saw a man, whether a candidate for office or not, who was seeking to make the position he occupied for the political influence he could exert subservient to a base purpose, or to personal ends, he always went against that course and that man. I have known Mr. Bird to oppose men whom he had every reason to consider personal friends, because he distrusted the motives which governed their actions, and had reason to do so. This example of Mr. Bird enjoins us, both young and old, that we should demand of those whose names are submitted for our suffrages the most absolute honesty and integrity so far as the public good is concerned.

“I am glad to come here and express my respect and love for the memory of Mr. Bird, and I am glad that it was my privilege for so many years to be associated with him, and to retain his friendship and, I hope, his respect so long as he lived.”

JUDGE ROBINSON of Berkshire, an early and warm friend, being incapacitated by illness, from which he has since died, sent these remarks to be read to those present:—

“Frank Bird was a remarkable man, and had a remarkable career. He was a successful paper manu-

facturer all his life, but he was also a public character and a potent influence in our politics for half a century. He had rare qualities of mind and heart. He stood in the front ranks for his sound judgment, sagacious counsel, unflinching tact, and for his keen knowledge of men and affairs. He had also winning social qualities, — kindness, generosity, fidelity, and unquestioned integrity. He loved many men, who loved him in return, and he retained this regard through all the changes of time and fate. But back of all these gifts, and more commanding, was the unflinching courage and dauntless sincerity of the man. He feared no majority, no party, no 'machine,' no 'boss.' He founded the Bird Club, which became one of the powers of the State. Mr. Bird was the magnet that drew together every Saturday the leading men of Massachusetts. He sat at the head of the table, and started the conversations that led to conclusions which shaped the action of conventions and the result of elections. The present generation can hardly appreciate the fierceness of the conflict between the Free-soil leaders and the old Whig party, entrenched in the wealth and culture and the fashion of the State. The traditions, the prestige and pride of the State were on that side. But the Whig party was beaten. Charles Sumner was elected to succeed Webster in the Senate, where he defended the great cause with magnificent eloquence and ability. Frank Bird was his steadfast friend from start to finish, and helped to secure his reëlection, when mistaken friends attempted to retire him from public life. Frank Bird's chief gift and power was a genius for friendship. He had a wide range of affinities, and friends in all parties. He lived for public ends and principles. He



labored for the freedom and welfare of all men; he was the friend of all sincere and brave men and women. With only those exceptions that mark all human endeavor, his life-work was noble, unselfish, fearless, and faithful."

JUDGE WAYLAND of the Yale Law School, eldest son of Mr. Bird's college president, Dr. Wayland of Brown University, sent this letter:—

"I should certainly attend the memorial meeting in honor of Mr. Bird, to which your note, just received, summons me, if other engagements did not forbid. I cannot remember the time when I did not know him. He had been a favorite pupil of my father, President Wayland, who held in high esteem his earnest, manly, straightforward character. His punctual presence at the annual Commencements of Brown University is one of my earliest recollections. When I last met him, some years ago, on Commencement day, he left me to call on his old and intimate college friend (though not a classmate), Honorable H. B. Anthony, long United States senator from Rhode Island, who was then confined to the house with severe illness. Their widely differing views on party questions were already separating them as politicians, but could not chill the warmth of their mutual regard.

"And this illustrates what I suppose to have been a prominent characteristic of Mr. Bird in his intercourse with his fellows. He was tolerant of honest dissent from his own opinions, always expressed with uncompromising frankness, as he was impatient of views apparently embraced from interested motives, or held in a half-hearted or hesitating fashion. He



was absolutely fearless in asserting and defending his sincere convictions, and never concealed his contempt for those who sought shelter behind expediency, or trimmed their sails to the popular breeze.

“All his friends — and I am happy to believe that I was among them — knew him to be a most lovable man, thoroughly unselfish, ever eager to do a kindness to those who trusted him; not blind to their faults, but always kindly in his criticism; unconsciously emphasizing his wise words of friendly counsel by furnishing in his own career a shining example of all that is high-minded and honorable in the conduct of a public man and a private citizen.

“Political office, which he always shunned, could have added nothing to his fame, while it might have robbed him of that unfettered independence which he prized far above all human distinctions. I will only add that I count his personal friendship among the most gratifying incidents of my life.

“Ever sincerely yours,

“NEW HAVEN, June 28, 1894.”

“FRANCIS WAYLAND.

The Honorable WILLARD P. PHILLIPS, son of the old Congressman Stephen C. Phillips of Salem, one of the founders of the Free-soil party, wrote: —

“If I am permitted, I shall go to Boston on Saturday, but I shall hardly be able to say anything. I will try to write you a letter, and shall be very sorry if I can neither attend nor write. I find I knew Bird when he was one of the young men who stood by the three arch-conspirators, Charles Allen, Charles Francis Adams, and my father, Stephen Clarendon

Phillips, in their action against Texas annexation in 1845; and I was with him in the Legislature of 1848, and that goes back, I think, to his earliest political life."

D. W. WILDER of Kansas, one of those who helped make that great region a free State, wrote:—

"At your memorial meeting, 'courage,' 'unselfish,'—those were the leading words, and true; it is strange that no one said, 'leader,' 'politician.' He was one of the best. Here was intellectual force and power. Mr. Bird was an organizer, like my townsman, Adin Thayer. He helped make men of Andrew, Wilson, and Sumner, and helped to guide them afterward. I thought also that he was a witty man."

This mention of JUDGE THAYER of Worcester, whose death preceded that of Mr. Bird by several years, may serve to introduce one of the last letters he wrote to his old comrade (March 12, 1887).

"Certainly we tried, in the stormy days of the Republic, to do our duty,—with perhaps as little self-seeking as any men of our time. Whatever I have done has resulted largely from your friendship and example. You have lived a brave and noble life. Do not fear that any differences of opinion will prevent the world from recognizing it."

Colonel CHARLES R. CODMAN wrote:—

"I am much honored in being asked to attend the memorial meeting in honor of the late Francis W.

Bird, and I much regret that I shall not be able to be present. Although I have not been so intimate with Mr. Bird as have others of his friends, I can yet say that I have never known a man more independent, more liberal, and more sincere. His political action was always the result of well-considered opinions, and where those opinions logically led him he always had the courage and honesty to go. Of no man in public life within my recollection can this be said more emphatically than of him."

The Honorable A. L. PILLSBURY, who was one of Mr. Bird's warm friends and admirers, added his testimony, especially emphasizing the remarkable influence which Mr. Bird had on younger men:—

"I do not feel to-day that we are in a house of mourning, meeting as we do to commemorate a useful and honored life, crowned with serene old age and peaceful death in the midst of family and friends. On such an occasion it is a pleasure to add my testimony to the sterling qualities of Francis W. Bird, and to acknowledge my own obligations to him for his friendship. My acquaintance with Mr. Bird began in 1877, when we met in the House of Representatives, and I can speak of him only as one of his younger friends who knew him in his later years. He was always young in spirit, and encouraged, and I think enjoyed, the acquaintance of young men. In the more distinguished positions which he had previously held I doubt if he ever did more valuable public service than in the popular branch of the Legislature. He was full of information on most of the subjects of legislation, and he had all the qualities that go to

make a good legislator. His independence and courage are familiar, and he never left these qualities behind him in office or as a candidate for office. He loved the truth, insisting upon it as firmly when it was against him as when it was for him. He despised a rascal or a coward from the bottom of his soul. He was a righteous hater of all sorts of shams and humbugs. He had the individuality and strength of character which made him a natural leader of men, which once would have put and kept him in high public office, and which in these times go far to disqualify a man for public office. Our system does not tend to bring the strongest characters to the front, and perhaps it cannot be expected to. It is not and is not designed to be the rule of the strongest, but the rule of the people, and the people's government will be in the long run an average reflection of themselves. I always deeply regretted that Mr. Bird found it necessary to change his political relations after the war period, — though he always said that it was not he but his party that had changed, — as I do not think he was ever fully contented in his new situation. Indeed, I cannot but feel that his later years were tinged with the natural resentment of a strong man who is put aside because he will not 'crook the pregnant hinges of the knee.' If this is true, it only shows that he was human, and he would have been the last man to claim exemption from human infirmity. Like most men of strong convictions, he had strong prejudices, but he was always open to reason and quick and generous to forgive and forget. As he did not depend on public position for his influence, he was not disarmed of it in private life. He was a man of action. When anything needed to be said, he did not wait to hear what others thought,

but spoke out. When anything needed to be done, he did not wait for others to do it, but put his own hand to it. He was full of conviction and of courageous public spirit; and when he spoke he was heard, not because it was public authority that spoke, but because it was a man. He was a natural leader of public opinion, a man whose weight of character and judgment enabled him to give the law to the legislature and the rule of action to the executive, and these men, in office or out of office, are the real rulers of our affairs. It will not become me to say much here of his personal and private relations. His friends know that with all his interest and activity in public affairs, he was devoted to his family and friends. He was a helpful man, privately no less than publicly. He was liberal with his means, and it would not surprise me to know that in the course of his life he gave away as much to public objects or private charity as he kept for himself. A loyal and affectionate friend, an active, public-spirited citizen, a true man in every relation of life, — all this we may say of Mr. Bird with absolute truth, and better than this cannot be said of any man."

SAMUEL BOWLES of Springfield sent a hearty tribute, which met with a warm response: —

"It appears to me," he said in his letter, "that the conspicuous service of his career lay in the example that he gave through his long life, of unselfish devotion to public interests, — town, State, or national. His participation in politics was based upon the highest motives. He did not seek to lead or influence men because he loved power. He did not seek the distinc-



tion and honors of public office for the sake of social recognition or business advantage. But he interested himself in public affairs and spent his time and thoughts and strength in promoting the causes in which he believed, because he hoped that by such interest and effort he could in some measure improve the political and social conditions of the State and country that he loved.

“I am glad to acknowledge that Mr. Bird’s example in this regard has been a constant inspiration and encouragement to me personally as a journalist, and I have no doubt it has been equally so to others of my generation. Happily in Massachusetts it has been by no means singular, but it has certainly been conspicuous.

“Mr. Bird’s winning personality will be treasured in the memory of his friends so long as they live. I think it never shone out more charmingly and graciously than in his relations with men much younger than himself. And the best thing about his peculiar talent for friendship was that it was never exercised with a view to personal advantage, or private pelf, but foremost and always for the public good. Truly do his character and career deserve to be studied and emulated by the young men of Massachusetts, and especially by the young business men.

“Sincerely yours,

“SAML. BOWLES.”

ARCHIBALD H. GRIMKE, once a fugitive slave in South Carolina, now representing the United States as Consul at Santo Domingo, wrote:—

“Could I be present, it would be a mournful satisfaction to testify by my presence the respect and



gratitude the colored people of the United States owe this wise old Roman for noble services in their behalf during that great period of political agitation against slavery, before and during the Rebellion."

The Honorable WILLIAM W. CRAPO wrote from New Bedford thus:—

"Francis W. Bird was the exponent of political integrity; he hated shams, and his independence was genuine. His treatment of public questions and his judgment of public men were never marred by narrowness nor tainted by sycophancy. He was candid, sincere, and sagacious. He did not consider that his duty as a citizen ended with the utterance of criticism and complaints. And by vigorous and organized action he sought to advance the general welfare. Few men in his generation made greater contributions to the elevation and reform of public opinion, and for his service, during a long life, in the cause of good government, we hold him in grateful remembrance."







JAN 3 1905





LIBRARY OF CONGRESS



0 014 076 559 4

