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A SKETCH

OF THE:

LIFE AND PUBLIC SERVICES

OF



HENRY CLAY.

By "Oliver Oldschool," (N. Sargeant, Esq. of Philadelphia.)

MR. CLAY'S EARLY HISTORY.

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

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

HIS BIRTH-PLACE AND PARENTAGE.

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

It is an evidence of the goodness of his heart, that, in the privacy of the domestic circle, sur-

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

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

HE BECOMES A CLERK IN THE OFFICE OF THE COURT OF CHANCERY.

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

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

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

"The elements

So mix'd in him, that Nature might stand up

And say to all the world, "THIS IS A MAN."

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

"Ah! who can tell how hard it is to climb

The steep where Fame's proud temple shines afar;

* * * * *

Check'd by the scoff of Pride, by Envy's frown,
And Poverty's unconquerable bar!"

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

"In life's low vales remote to pine alone,

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

ATTRACTS THE NOTICE OF CHANCELLOR WYTHE AND GOVERNOR BROOKE—READS LAW.

It was his good fortune to attract the notice and win the friendship of Chancellor Wythe and Governor Brooke, by whose persuasion, at the age of nineteen, he commenced the study of law,

and read chiefly in the office of the latter, then Attorney General of the State, and under the auspices of the former, for whom he acted as private secretary. The friendship of these men of eminent worth and abilities, he retained to the latest day of their lives,—no slight evidence that he possessed a spirit and principles congenial with their own, and that they found in him that which great and good men can admire.

IS LICENSED TO PRACTICE BY THE JUDGES OF THE COURT OF APPEALS.

Young Clay, for we must no longer call him "the orphan boy," was licensed to practice law by the Judges of the Court of Appeals, in Virginia, 1797, when he was but twenty years of age. He had now to select a place to locate himself:

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

REMOVES TO LEXINGTON, KENTUCKY.

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

HE IS CHERISHED AS A SON.

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

HIS EARLY CAREER AT THE BAR.

His career at the bar was brilliant and successful. Possessing an intuitive knowledge of men, and master of the human passions, with a voice, at his bidding sweet as the silver-toned lute, or loud and powerful as the trumpet blast, alternately indulging in wit, irony, pleasantry, pathos, and indignation,—no wonder the heart was in his hands a pipe he could sound from the lowest note to the top of its compass, and that

his influence over juries was unprecedented and irresistible. But we have little to do with Henry Clay, the lawyer and the advocate: it is in a higher sphere of life we must now view him.

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

HE TAKES AN ACTIVE PART IN FAVOR OF THE GRADUAL EMANCIPATION OF SLAVES.

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

HE OPPOSES THE ALIEN AND SEDITION LAWS, AND BECOMES PROMINENT.

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

IS ELECTED TO THE LEGISLATURE.

In 1803, while absent, Mr. Clay was taken up

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

IS ELECTED TO THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES.

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

HE IS AGAIN ELECTED TO THE LEGISLATURE, AND RENDERED IMPORTANT SERVICES TO THE JURISPRUDENCE OF THE STATE.

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

IS A SECOND TIME ELECTED TO THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES.

In 1809, he was again elected to the Senate of the United States for the remainder of Mr. Thruston's time, two years. It was then that he may be properly said to have commenced his brilliant career on that high stage of action upon which he stood conspicuous before the nation, and from which he voluntarily retired on the 31st of March, 1842.

At the time Mr. Clay, for the second time, entered the Senate of the United States, the European powers were prosecuting bloody wars against each other. Jealous of the peaceful condition of the United States, and her growing prosperity, and perhaps piqued that they could not enlist her in their quarrels, the belligerent powers seemed to vie with each other in committing depredations upon her commerce, and in perpetrating the most flagrant violations of our

neutral rights. Each did this, under pretence that we were aiding the other belligerent power by trading with her; but the pretence was as flimsy as their conduct was insolent and unjustifiable.

HIS SPEECH IN FAVOR OF ENCOURAGING AMERICAN MANUFACTURES.

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

OPPOSES THE RE-CHARTER OF THE FIRST U. S. BANK.

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

HE IS ELECTED TO THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES AND SPEAKER OF THAT BODY.

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

ADVOCATES THE WAR WITH ENGLAND.

The Government had exhausted every means, short of a resort to arms, to protect the property of its citizens, and preserve its own rights; but in vain. The only alternative left was a declaration of war, or a shameful submission to injuries heaped upon injuries. Mr. Clay's voice was for war. He felt indignant at the insults and injuries we had received from England, and thundered forth his indignation in tones that reverberated along every hill and through every valley in the United States. "It is asked," said he, "what *new* cause of war have we? In reply, I will ask, what *old* cause of war is avenged? Has Great Britain abstained from impressing our seamen, and depredating upon our property? I have in my hands an account of a recent capture of the ship Hannibal, worth, with the cargo, \$300,000, near our own coast, on a voyage to France. I have no doubt that the late Indian hostilities on the Wabash, were excited by the British. Is not this a cause of war?" Such

appeals, frequently made as they were, roused the spirit of the nation; the fire of patriotism burned intensely in his bosom, and from its strong heat the flame lighted up throughout the wide extent of the land, but more especially west of the Alleghanies, and among our gallant naval tars. The declaration of war, which was made on the 18th June, 1812, found these prepared and burning for the contest, in which, ere long, they won imperishable glory.

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

HE IS APPOINTED ONE OF THE AMERICAN COMMISSIONERS TO NEGOTIATE PEACE.

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

RETURN TO THE UNITED STATES: IS RECEIVED WITH DISTINCTION: AND AGAIN ELECTED TO THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, AND SPEAKER.

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

HIS COURSE UPON GREAT PUBLIC MEASURES—THE TARIFF—NATIONAL BANK, &c.

During this period of his public services, questions of great moment came before Congress, and agitated the nation. The war had left the country burdened with a heavy debt; the currency was deranged, and in a sad condition.—The bills of non specie paying banks, and the small bills issued by irresponsible corporations and individuals, constituted the whole circulating medium south and west of New England. The manufactures which had sprung up during the war, were now to be protected or suffered to fall under European competition, capital, and skill. The payment of the public debt was to be provided for; the currency restored; confidence in the national faith re-established; and, in short, order was to be brought out of the chaos, and prosperity out of the utmost depression. The two great and leading measures to bring about this were the establishment of a National Bank, and the passage of such a Tariff bill as should answer the two fold purpose of raising revenue and giving protection to our infant, but rapidly growing manufactures. Both these measures were sustained with all the energy and resources of his genius; and both were accomplished. He had opposed the re-charter of the United States Bank in 1811; his prejudices had been enlisted against it, the party to which he belonged opposed it as a party measure, and he deemed it unnecessary. But time and experience had convinced him of the necessity of such an institution, and his magnanimity would not permit him to adhere to an error of judgment merely through pride of opinion or apparent consistency, as if he were not consistent who frankly acknowledges his error, and does all in his power to retrieve it.

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

HE ADVOCATES THE RECOGNITION OF THE INDEPENDENCE OF THE SOUTH AMERICAN REPUBLICS.

Among the most honorable and praiseworthy acts of Mr. Clay's life, and which exhibits him in the high and enviable character of the friend of liberty and the rights of man, is the part he took in urging the Government of the U. States to recognise the independence of the Republics of South America: which had thrown off the yoke of Spain, and maintained their independence with such gallant bravery. His various speeches in behalf of these Republics, and in support of the policy proposed, were among the most eloquent and spirit-stirring he ever delivered: every sentence was replete with the burning sentiments of patriotism, and that generous enthusiasm which the struggles of an oppressed people, determined to shake off the yoke of ty-

ranny, and resolved to be free, cannot fail to inspire every lover of civil liberty. So inspiring was the eloquence of Mr. Clay, in advocating the recognition of South American Independence, that his speeches were translated into Spanish, read at the head of patriot armies, and drew some years after a letter from Bolivar, expressing his admiration for his brilliant talents and ardent love of liberty. "All America, Columbia, and myself," said Bolivar, "owe your excellency our purest gratitude for the incomparable services you have rendered to us, by sustaining our course with a sublime enthusiasm."

HIS COURSE IN REFERENCE TO INTERNAL IMPROVEMENTS.

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

THE MISSOURI QUESTION.

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

DISCUSSION OF THE TARIFF IN 1819-20.

The Tariff of 1816 not giving adequate protection to our infant manufactures to enable them to maintain themselves against the competition of Europe, a new bill was brought forward in the House in 1819-20, which was supported by all the strength of Mr. Clay's great powers, and upon which he delivered a speech replete with principles of the soundest political philosophy, and sentiments of the most ardent patriotism. A single sentence embodies the great maxim of his whole public course in reference to this vastly important subject. "Mr. Chairman," said he, "I frankly own I feel great solicitude for the success of this bill. (The Tariff bill then under consideration in committee of the whole.) THE ENTIRE INDEPENDENCE OF MY COUNTRY OF ALL FOREIGN STATES, AS IT RESPECTS A SUPPLY OF OUR ESSENTIAL WANTS, HAS

EVER BEEN WITH ME A FAVORITE OBJECT. The war of our Revolution effected our political emancipation. The last war contributed greatly towards accomplishing our commercial freedom. But our complete independence will only be consummated after the policy of this bill shall be recognized and adopted."—The bill passed the House of Representatives, but failed in the Senate.

THE TARIFF ACT OF 1824.

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

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

MR. CLAY'S ADVOCACY OF THE CLAIMS OF GREECE.

It was at this period that Greece, having thrown off the shackles of Turkish slavery, was maintaining a noble, but apparently a hopeless, struggle for freedom and independence. No one then old enough to take an interest in the affairs of the world, can forget with what warm-hearted sympathy the Americans viewed this contest, nor what ardent prayers went up to the God of battles to nerve the arm of the Christian against the Moslem host, and to crown the efforts of Greece, ancient, classic, Christian Greece, with victory. No one can forget with what generous zeal even our fair country-women undertook the benevolent and philanthropic labor of collecting food and clothing for the starving and naked Greeks, driven from their smouldering homes by their ruthless enemies, and compelled to flee to the mountains and live in caves, and upon roots and berries. The tale of the barbarities committed upon the women and children harrowed every bosom, and drew tears from every eye; while the heroic deeds of a Marco Bozzaris, and his companions in arms, fired the American soul with unbounded admiration.

It was during the session of 1823-4, that Mr.

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

"But, sir, it is not for Greece alone that I desire to see this measure adopted. It will give her but little support, and that purely of a moral kind. It is principally for America, for the credit and character of our common country, for our own unsullied name, that I hope to see this pass. What appearance, Mr. Chairman, on the page of history would a record like this exhibit? 'In the month of January, in the year of our Lord and Saviour 1824, while all European Christendom beheld, with cold and unfeeling indifference, the unexampled wrongs and inexpressible misery of Christian Greece, a proposition was made in the Congress of the United States, almost the sole, the last, the greatest depository of human hope and human freedom, the representatives of a gallant nation, containing a million of freemen ready to fly to arms, while the people of that nation were spontaneously expressing its deep-toned feeling, and the whole continent, by one simultaneous emotion, was rising, and solemnly and anxiously supplicating and invoking high Heaven to spare and succour Greece, and to invigorate her arms, in her glorious cause; while temples and senate houses were alike resounding with one burst of generous and holy sympathy;—In this year of our Lord and Saviour,—that Saviour of Greece

and of us,—a proposition was offered in the American Congress to send a messenger to Greece, to inquire into her state and condition, with a kind expression of our good wishes and our sympathies—and it was rejected!' Go home, if you can; go home, if you *dare*, to your constituents, and tell them that you voted it down: meet, if you can, the appealing countenances of those who sent you here, and tell them that you shrank from the declaration of your own sentiments—that you cannot tell how, but that some unknown dread, some indescribable apprehension, some indefinable danger, drove you from your purpose—that the spectres of scimitars, and crowns, and crescents gleamed before you, and alarmed you; and that you suppressed all the noble feelings prompted by religion, by liberty, by national independence, and by humanity. I cannot bring myself to believe that such will be the feeling of a majority of this committee. But, for myself, though every friend of the cause should desert it, and I be left to stand alone with the gentleman from Massachusetts, I will give this resolution the poor sanction of my unqualified approbation."

Here spoke the high-souled patriot, the apostle of Liberty, the friend of man: and his cheering voice rang along the shores of Salamis, through the pass of Thermopylæ, over the plains of Marathon, and reverberated from the walls of the ruined Parthenon: inspired a million of bosoms with hope, and nerved a million of arms with fresh energy. The names of CLAY and WEBSTER were pronounced with grateful accents by the lips of weeping beauty, and by the tongues of the brave as their hands struck for freedom. And they are still held in lively recollection by the freed inhabitants of that cradle of liberty, literature, science, and the arts.

THE "BARGAIN AND CORRUPTION" SLANDER.

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

The old federal party having already disbanded and dispersed, party organization no longer existed, and as all the candidates were prominent Republicans, and had been leaders of that party in its most trying days, they had to depend solely upon personal popularity, and the estimation in which the people held their public services, their experience, judgment, and capacity to discharge the duties of the station to which they aspired. The canvass was carried on generally without bitterness or acrimony, except, perhaps, between the friends of Mr. Crawford and Mr. Calhoun, between whom a personal rivalry and hostility had long existed, though they were both, as well as Mr. Adams, members of Mr. Monroe's cabinet. Some hostility was also apparent between the friends of Mr. Crawford and Gen. Jackson; the former not looking upon the General as a

sound Republican, and pronouncing his election, in advance, as "a curse upon the country."—According to the constitution, if one person does not receive a majority of the whole electoral votes, and two or more are voted for, the House of Representatives is required to elect a President from one of the three persons having the highest number of electoral votes. It was very probable that no one of the candidates would receive a majority of the electoral votes, and that the election would be carried to the House of Representatives of which Mr. Clay was a member; in which case, if not one of the three highest returned, the duty would devolve on him to give his vote to one or the other of his rivals. This anticipated contingency occurred. Occupying a high position, and being known to possess great influence with his friends, especially the Kentucky and Ohio delegations, he was treated with distinguished consideration by the friends of the various candidates, and seemed, in his own language, addressed to a friend at the time, to be "enjoying, whilst alive, the posthumous honor usually awarded to the venerated dead." But this was only the fattening of the ox for the slaughter. Mr. Clay preserved a strict reserve as to the vote he should give, which of itself was the cause of newspaper conjectures and criticism.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Here, then, for the first time, was an assertion of the fact that there was an *attempt* at least, on the part of Mr. Clay or his friends, at "bargain and corruption," made by a responsible and known person,—such an assertion as Mr. Clay could notice: and he immediately came out with "a direct, unqualified and indignant denial. He stated that he neither made nor authorized, nor knew of any proposition whatever to either of the three candidates who were returned to the House of Representatives at the last Presidential election, or to the friends of either of them, for

the purpose of influencing the result of the election, or for any other purpose. And all allegations, intimations, and innuendos, that his vote on that occasion was offered to be given, in consideration of any stipulation or understanding, express or implied, direct or indirect, written or verbal, that he was, or that any other person was not to be appointed Secretary of State, or that he was, in any other manner, to be personally benefitted, was devoid of all truth, and destitute of any foundation whatever." And he demanded the name of the member of Congress alluded to by Gen. Jackson in his letter to Carter Beverly.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The letter of recantation from Mr. Beverly to Mr. Clay, is dated VIRGINIA, MIDDLESEX COUNTY, URBANA, FEBRUARY 8, 1842. He says:

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

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

"This letter is intended to show you that the long lapse of time, and the many growing circumstances of the country and government, have long convinced me that the very greatest injustice was done you in the charge made. I had, too, an opportunity lately, of reading over very calmly and dispassionately a file of newspapers containing the whole affair; and carefully dilated upon it.—Mr. Buchanan, who was represented to be your accuser, exhibited no proof whatever against you: and he even denied having ever made the charge upon you. I have discharged my mind in addressing myself so fully to you, and can only add, if a publication of this letter

can render you any essential service, (though I do not deserve it,) you have full liberty from me to let the public see it.

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

Signed, "CARTER BEVERLY."

It is unnecessary to add any thing further in refutation of this foul and unfounded charge of "bargain and corruption." The great mass of the American people are lovers of justice, and when convinced that injustice has been done, have that generosity of spirit and kind feeling which prompts them to repair injury. Prejudice will doubtless, however, induce some to close their eyes against the light of truth, and their hearts against conviction. Into the minds of such, though truth shone with the brightness of the sun at noon day, its rays could not penetrate—all would be darkness. Still, however, it may not be useless, and is but justice to Mr. Clay, to add the testimony—the solemn asseveration, of one individual more. If Mr. Clay was guilty of the charge alleged, he could not have been the only guilty person; if there was a 'bargain' there must have been another party to it, and that party, Mr. Adams, by whom Mr. Clay was appointed Secretary of State, which office he held during the four years of Mr. Adams' administration.

A committee appointed by citizens of New Jersey, having addressed Mr. Adams on his retirement from office! he transmitted to them a reply, from which the following is annexed:

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

At a late barbaque given to Mr. Clay by his friends and neighbors at Lexington, on his retirement from the Senate and return home, alluding in his speech to the foul calumny that had been raised and put forth against him, some one in the crowd cried out that CARTER BEVERLY, who had been the organ of announcing it, had recently borne testimony of its being unfounded. Mr. Clay said it was true that he had voluntarily bore such testimony. "But," with great earn-

estness and emphasis, Mr. Clay said, "I want no testimony: here—here—HERE," repeatedly touching his heart, amidst tremendous cheers.—"here is the best witness of my innocence." The effect was electric, and every soul present was touched.

HE RETIRES TO PRIVATE LIFE, AND IS, FOR THE THIRD TIME, ELECTED TO THE U. S. SENATE.

At the close of Mr. Adams' administration, on the 3d day of March, 1828, Mr. Clay retired to his own quiet Ashland, to cultivate his farm, and the enjoyments of private life. From these, however, he was, in 1831, drawn by the Legislature of his own State, which elected him for the third time to the Senate of the United States. With his public course since he entered the Senate, where he continued nearly eleven years, and with the various measures originated and adopted by him, the public are probably more familiar than with his public acts previous. It is the fortune of few men to fill so large a space in the public eye, or to accomplish so much for his country's welfare, during a whole life, as Mr. Clay has during this period of his senatorial service. The acknowledged leader of the party to which he belonged, its chief measures have originated with him, and all of them had his able co-operation and support. Having been, however, the greater portion of this time in a minority in the Senate, and the whole of the time up to the 4th of March, 1841, in a minority in Congress, neither he nor the party to which he belonged could carry any measure through to a final law. In the winter of 1832, the 'Tariff' question came up and was discussed: on which occasion Mr. Clay delivered a speech in defence of the American System, in which the policy of protection was most ably and clearly expounded, maintained, and defended.

A BILL TO RE-CHARTER THE UNITED STATES BANK.

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

IT IS VETOED BY GEN. JACKSON—MR. CLAY'S SPEECH ON THE OCCASION.

The bill was vetoed by Gen. Jackson, for a variety of reasons assigned by him in his memorable veto message. On this message Mr. Clay addressed the Senate, and commented with freedom, but with dignity and force, upon the novel doctrines advanced by the President, and especially upon that which declares every public officer who takes an oath to support the Constitu-

tion, is at liberty to support it as he understands it; and that the President, in this respect, is independent of the Supreme Court, the tribunal established for the purpose of deciding upon, and settling constitutional questions; a doctrine fraught, as he declared, with universal nullification, destructive of all subordination, authority, and fixedness, and subversive of government.

In this speech he looked forward with the eye of a sagacious statesman, and spoke the words of a prophet. He said, speaking of certain contingencies, "Depression in the value of all property, sheriff's sales and sacrifices—bankruptcy must necessarily ensue, and, with them, relief laws, paper-money, a prostration of the court of justice, evils from which we have just emerged, must again, with all their train of afflictions revisit our country." Have not these evils followed in the train of those measures which began the work of destruction by crushing the great balance-wheel of the currency? Already we have "depression in the value of all property, sheriff's sales, sacrifices, bankruptcies," and "relief laws!"

THE LAND DISTRIBUTION.

At the same session of Congress Mr. Clay first brought forward his great measure of distributing the proceeds of the sale of the public lands among the States, which has since found so much favor with the people of the United States, and become a cardinal principle of the Whig party, and one of vital importance to the country. Mr. Clay had been placed on the committee of manufactures; to this committee the subject of the Public Lands was referred by the Senate, a majority of whom were his political opponents, notwithstanding there was a standing committee on the public lands, appointed under long established rules! For what purpose a subject so incongruous as the public lands to those expected to occupy the minds of this committee, was referred to it, it is impossible to conjecture, unless it was intended thereby to embarrass Mr. Clay, and involve him in difficulty with one portion of the country, or another. The reference of this subject to that committee was the more extraordinary, inasmuch as there was not a single member from the new States upon it, and but one, Mr. Clay, from the western States. In noticing this novel procedure in his speech, made upon the occasion of his bringing forward his bill to distribute, for a limited time, the proceeds of the public domain, he remarks:—

"We had earnestly protested against the reference, and insisted upon its impropriety, but we were overruled by the majority, including a majority of Senators from the new States. I will not attempt an explanation of the feelings exhibited in my mind on that occasion. Whatever may have been the intentions of honorable Senators, I could not be insensible to the embarrassment in which the committee of manufactures was placed, and especially myself. Although any other member of that committee would have rendered himself, with appropriate researches and proper time, more competent than I was to understand the subject of the public lands, it was known that, from my local position, I alone was supposed to have any partic-

ular knowledge of them. Whatever emanated from that committee was likely, therefore, to be ascribed to me.—If the committee should propose a measure of great liberality towards the new States, the old States might complain. If the measure should seem to lean towards the old States, the new might be dissatisfied. And, if it inclined to neither class of States, but recommended a plan according to which there would be distributed impartial justice among all the States, it was far from certain that any would be pleased."

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

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

At the time Mr. Clay brought forward his proposition to distribute the proceeds of the public lands among *all* the States, after giving the new States ten per cent., various propositions and claims in regard to them had been made of a very extraordinary character, which Mr. Clay took occasion to notice. The first was that of Mr. Benton, to cede the "refuse lands" to the States in which they lay. "Refuse lands," "refuse lands," "refuse lands" was his tone. The next was that of the Governor of Illinois, who asserted the absolute right of that State to all the public lands lying within her limits. Then came the proposition from the Senator of Virginia (Mr. Tazewell.) to cede and surrender to the States in which they lay all the lands belonging to the United States, upon certain indefinite conditions.

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

"The right of the Union to the public lands is incontestable. It ought not to be considered debatable. It never was questioned but by a few, whose monstrous heresy, it was probably supposed would escape animadversion from the

enormity of the absurdity, and the utter impracticability of the success of the claim. The right of the whole is sealed by the blood of the Revolution, founded upon solemn deeds of cession from sovereign States, deliberately executed in the face of the world, or resting upon national treaties concluded with foreign powers, or ample equivalents contributed from the treasury of the people of the United States."

Fortunately for the country, from that time he has taken a deep and lively interest in this great and important subject. The Secretary of the Treasury, even had, in his annual report to Congress, recommended the ceding of the lands to the States in whose limits they lay; and we have seen that others advocated the same measure.—Mr. Clay looked upon this as an unjust disposal of them, being a fraud upon the old States. Nor was this all: the propositions thus to dispose of the public domain, could not but be considered as public bids for the political support of the west and south-west. Undoubtedly he might have come into the market too, and purchased popularity of one portion of the country by surrendering up to it the public lands, and of another portion by the advocacy of a protective Tariff—a measure with which he was, and ever has been, peculiarly identified. But Mr. Clay never yet inquired what measure was *popular*, but what was *right*—declaring on a memorable occasion, when told that a certain course might injure his popularity—that he would rather be *right* than the President of the United States, high as that station was. He viewed, and still views, the public lands as an inheritance of inestimable value.—as an almost exhaustless treasure, and one that ought not to be squandered or given away.

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

"It was a measure suggested by one who shared no part in the President's counsels or affections; and although he had himself, in his annual message, recommended a similar measure, he did not hesitate to change his ground in order to thwart the views of its author." Personal hostility induced him to resort to the novel mode of killing the bill by smothering it in his pocket! Before another session of Congress commenced, the command went forth—the measure was denounced—the faithful were required to surrender their own opinions, and sustain their chief, and lo! it was done.—From that day to the present, those who claim to belong to the *democratic* sheep fold have been required

to eschew the distribution of the proceeds of the public lands among the people of the States, its rightful owners, as a "*federal* measure." Is it possible for a nation to have the benefit of benign measures, when those which are calculated to promote the general good are defeated thro' mere personal pique or prejudice towards the individual with whom they originate, and because their adoption would add a leaf to the chaplet that adorns his brow? A wise people will not inquire *who* originated a measure, but whether the measure itself is likely to prove beneficial or otherwise. And that nation has parted with her own dignity and self-respect, which either adopts or rejects a course of policy simply because it originated with one man, or was opposed by another.

It was undoubtedly the fact that for many years, as Mr. Clay asserted, various pretensions had been put forth concerning the public lands, one of which was, that they belonged of right to the States in whose limits they were situated; another, that they should be ceded to these States by the United States; another, that their price should be graduated down to almost nothing; and all had in view either their actual or virtual surrender by the general government. Mr. Clay saw that if not secured to the old States, their interest in the public domain would soon be gone forever, and the plan of distribution which he brought forward was designed, not only to settle our policy in regard to this immense national interest, but to settle it upon the immutable principles of justice—even-handed justice to all.

But no sooner was there a prospect of this plan being adopted, than the very men who had clamoured for "the LION'S share" of the public domain, who had scheme after scheme for wasting and squandering the lands, and had protested against their being considered as a source of *revenue* by the government, turned around and became equally clamorous against the proceeds of the sales being taken from the treasury, and distributed equally and impartially to the people of all the States! Such is the consistency of mere demagogues! In his speech on the distribution of the proceeds of the public lands, delivered in the Senate, on the 28th January, 1841, Mr. Clay thus notices the contradictory and inconsistent course of his opponents.

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

"It is my intention now to unmask these gentlemen, and to show their real system for the

administration of the public lands embraces no object of revenue, either in the general government or the States; that their purpose is otherwise to dispose of them; that the fever for revenue is an intermittent, which appears only when a bill to distribute the proceeds equally among all the States is pending; and that, as soon as that bill is got rid of, gentlemen relapse into their old projects of throwing away the public lands, and denouncing all objects of revenue from the public lands as unwise, illiberal, and unjust towards the new States. I will make all this good by the most incontrovertible testimony.

"I proceed to the documentary proof. In his annual message of December 4, 1832, President Jackson says:

"As the lands may now be considered as relieved from this pledge, (that is, the expenses of the Revolutionary war,) the object for which they were ceded having been accomplished, it is in the discretion of Congress to dispose of them in such way as best to conduce to the quiet, harmony, and general interests of the American people," &c.—"*It seems to me to be our true policy that the public lands shall cease, as soon as practicable, to be a source of revenue.*"

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

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

"Now, Mr. President," continued Mr. Clay, "bear in mind that this report, made by the Senator from Alabama, embodies the sentiments of his party; the measure of distribution which came from the committee on manufactures, exhibited one system for the administration of the public lands, and that it was referred to the committee on public lands, to enable that committee to make an argumentative report against it, and to present us their system—a counter-antagonist system.

"During the whole progress of the bill thro' the Senate, the party dominant then and now acted in conformity with the doctrines contained in the report of their organ, (Mr. King.) Nevertheless the bill passed both houses of Congress by decisive majorities.

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

"On the whole, I adhere to the opinion expressed by me in my annual message of 1832, that it is our true policy that the public lands shall cease, as soon as practicable, to be a source of revenue, except for the payment of those general charges which grow out of the acquisition of the lands, their survey, and sale. I do not doubt, that it is the real interest of each and all the States in the Union, and particularly of the new States, that the price of these lands shall be reduced and graduated; and that after they have been offered for a certain number of years,

the refuse, remaining unsold, shall be abandoned to the States, and the machinery of our land-system entirely withdrawn.'"

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

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

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

THE COMPROMISE ACT.

It will be seen by the foregoing extracts from Mr. Clay's speech, and the documents referred to by him, that it has been for many years the avowed purpose of those who oppose distribution, and now insist on the lands being considered as a source of revenue, to cede, or otherwise dispose of them to the States in which they lie; and that they have as strenuously maintained that they ought not to be looked to for revenue. Such glaring contradictions and inconsistency need no comment; they speak a language which no one can misunderstand.

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

Mr. Clay, with whom this great measure of conciliation originated, and to whose inodera-

tion, firmness, patriotism, and abilities, its success was due, was, on this occasion, hailed by a very large portion of the country, north, south, and west, as "the great pacificator and saviour of the country."

By some, however, he was charged with abandoning his own system. In reply he said, "It was far from the object of those who support this bill, to abandon or surrender the policy of protecting American industry." * * * "The condition of the country has impressed every public man with the necessity of some modification of the principles of protection, so far as it depends upon high duties." * * * "Sir, I desire to be perfectly understood as to the motives which have prompted me to offer this measure. I repeat, that they are, first to preserve the manufacturing interest, and secondly, to quiet the country. I believe the American system to be in the greatest danger: and I believe it can be placed on a better and safer foundation at this session, than at the next." * * *

"Mr. President, it is not destruction—but preservation of the system at which we aim. If dangers now assail it, *we* have not created them. I have sustained it upon the clearest convictions of its expediency. They are entirely unaltered."

The compromise bill being accepted by the South as "a concession from the stronger to the weaker party," it proved, as its author designed it should, a tranquilizing measure, and secured to the country, and especially to those engaged in manufacturing, a stability of policy for a number of years, far more important to them than heavy duties with uncertainty and fluctuation.—Mr. Clay has been, and is to the present day, much censured for disposing of the tariff question as he did in the compromise bill; but if ever there was a measure that originated in the most anxious desire to do that which, under all circumstances, was best for the country, and if a public man ever acted upon pure and disinterested motives, this was the measure and this the man; and no unprejudiced person who knows those circumstances and the imminent danger there then was of losing the protective system entirely, as well as of plunging the country into a civil war, can, it seems to me, for a single moment, doubt the wisdom of that measure.

REMOVAL OF THE DEPOSITES.

Many questions of the highest importance came up and were discussed at great length, with unrivalled ability, in the Senate, during General Jackson's second term, and Mr. Van Buren's administration. Among these were, the removal of the deposits from the Bank of the United States, and the dismissal of Mr. Duane, upon which occasion Mr. Clay offered a resolution declaring that the President had exercised a power not warranted by the constitution or laws, but in derogation of both. This excited an acrimonious discussion, in which the executive power was freely examined. The resolution was finally adopted by the Senate, and was afterwards, when the administration party became the majority of the Senate, attacked with a violence and acerbity of feeling seldom paralleled in legislative proceedings. Mr. Benton moved a resolution to ex-

amine the offensive record, which was, after some two or three years, adopted, and the disgraceful act of defacing the records of the Senate was performed. On this occasion, Mr. Clay concluded a thrilling speech, with the following indignant and burning language:

"But why should I detain the Senate or needlessly waste my breath in fruitless exertions? The decree has gone forth. It is one of urgency, too. The deed is to be done—that foul deed, like the blood-stained hands of the guilty Macbeth, all ocean's water will never wash out.—Proceed, then, to the noble work which lies before you, and like other skillful executioners, do it quickly. And when you have performed it, go home to the people, and tell them what glorious honors you have achieved for our common country. Tell them that you have extinguished one of the brightest and purest lights that ever burned on the altar of civil liberty. Tell them that you have silenced one of the noblest batteries that ever thundered in defence of the constitution, and have spiked the cannon. Tell them that, henceforth, no matter what daring or outrageous act any President may perform, you have forever hermetically sealed the mouth of the Senate. Tell them that he may fearlessly assume what power he pleases, snatch from its lawful custody the public purse, command a military detachment to enter the halls of the Capitol, overawe Congress, trample down the Constitution, and raze every bulwark of freedom; but that the Senate must stand mute, in silent submission, and not dare to raise its opposing voice. That it must wait until a House of Representatives, humbled and subdued like itself, and a majority of it composed of the partisans of the President, shall prefer articles of impeachment. Tell them, finally, that you have restored the glorious doctrine of passive obedience and non-resistance; and if the people do not pour out their indignation and imprecations, I have yet to learn the character of American freemen."

HIS VIEWS ON THE REMOVAL OF THE INDIANS.

The treatment of the Indians generally, and especially the gross injustice done the Cherokees, in driving them from a country guaranteed to them in perpetuity, by solemn treaties, was another subject that occupied the attention of Congress and the country. Mr. Clay became conspicuous for his advocacy of the rights of this injured people, who had made great advances in the arts of civilized life, and were rapidly abandoning their nomadic habits and becoming an agricultural, a Christian, and a literary people; and his eloquence enlisted the sympathy, and aroused the indignation of the nation. But the decree had gone forth—he whose iron will was the law of the land, had said it, and, regardless of treaties, regardless of justice, regardless of the plighted faith of the nation, they were driven from their farms, their houses, and the graves of their fathers, into the prairies of the West."

THE DEPOSITE SYSTEM.

Mr. Clay and his friends had, as is well known, opposed what they deemed a ruinous financial policy, and high handed measures of Gen. Jackson's administration, and had all along predicted

the evils that must eventually flow from such measures. For some years, under the operation of judicious tariff laws, the treasury had been overflowing; by stimulants applied to the banks by the government, the currency had become inflated; business of all kinds partook of the feverish action of every thing else; speculation abounded every where; property rose with such rapidity that the most visionary dreams of waking men seemed to be but the anticipations of actual realization. But in this mad career of rash speed of a whole nation making haste to be rich, a sudden check was given to this velocity. From encouraging the deposit banks to extend their circulation, the government adopted a measure calculated to create an extraordinary demand for specie, and thus force almost instantaneously, an extensive curtailment of the currency. The result was a universal suspension of specie payments, in May 1837, and the commencement of a most deplorable reverse in the condition of the country. Could it afford the patriot any satisfaction to witness the fulfilment of his own predictions of evil, Mr. Clay and his friends have enjoyed that satisfaction; but neither have the heartlessness to exult in the misfortunes and embarrassments of their country, though foretold by them with prophetic accuracy. None regretted the unhappy condition of the country, brought upon it by obstinate and reckless men, more deeply and sincerely than himself: no one more zealously endeavored to avert approaching and foreseen evils.

This state of the country, the causes and the remedy, were themes his powerful mind easily grasped, and which, during the whole term of Mr. Van Buren's administration, gave it constant exercise. He strove to awaken the public mind to the glaring mismanagement of the affairs of the country by those to whose care they had been entrusted; and he had, at length, the satisfaction to see the people open their eyes to their true condition, and rise up in their might to apply the constitutional remedy—a change of rulers, effected by the ballot-box. If all has not been accomplished by that change which the people had in view, much has been done, and the causes why more has not, are to be found in the lamented death of the late President Harrison, the great instrument elected to carry out the desired reform, and in the weakness, obstinacy, and vanity, overweening and ridiculous ambition of the individual unfortunately selected for the office of Vice President, his abandonment of the principles and opposition to the measures of the party whose support he had sought, whose faith he had hypocritically professed, and by whom he had been trusted.

A CANDIDATE FOR THE PRESIDENCY.

Mr. Clay was nominated and supported by the Whig party, in 1832, as a candidate for the presidential office, in opposition to Gen. Jackson; but the party then in power commanded a majority in almost every State in the Union except Massachusetts and Kentucky. It wielded all the power and patronage of the general government, and stinted not the use of any means within its control, to secure its ascendancy. Add to this the fact that a third candidate was also

run by a portion of those opposed to the high handed measures of the administration, (Mr. WIRT, by the Anti-masons,) and it will scarcely surprise any one that General Jackson was re-elected by a large majority.

URGES THE SUPPORT OF HARRISON.

Mr. Clay declined being a candidate in 1836; but his nomination was pressed with honest zeal by a large portion of the Whig party, in 1840, and confidently expected at the Harrisburg national convention. In this expectation his friends were disappointed. For reasons into which it would be out of place here to enter, the nomination fell upon another distinguished patriot; and to the imperishable honor of Mr. Clay, he not only bowed with respectful submission and acquiescence to the expressed will of the convention, but at once bent all his energies to secure the election of his successful rival, exhibiting a magnanimity and patriotic disinterestedness that challenged the admiration even of his opponents, and called forth the strongest and most untiring exertions of his devoted friends in aid of the good cause of which he had ever been looked to as the gallant and indomitable leader.* A cause thus sustained could not fail of success. The people came forth in their might; the country was moved to its centre: the result could not be doubtful—victory crowned the efforts of those who sought reform. How the country has been deprived of much of the fruits of that great victory, has already been intimated; the causes are too well and too universally known to require repetition.

But though disappointed and betrayed, the Whigs of the United States are by no means

*Immediately after the nomination of Gen. Harrison, by the Harrisburg national convention, I saw Mr. Clay at Washington, and in the course of the conversation I held with him, stated that some of his friends in Philadelphia were extremely dissatisfied with the nomination. He asked if any one had evinced an unwillingness to support the ticket? I replied that a very few had. "I regret that any one should hesitate a moment to support it," he said, "and earnestly hope they will, upon reflection, change that determination. Sir," said he, "we are in the midst of a great struggle—one upon which, perhaps, the fate of the nation depends; for if Mr. Van Buren is re-elected, I firmly believe we shall have nothing left us but the forms of the constitution, and how long we shall be permitted to enjoy even them, God only knows. I beg you on your return to Philadelphia, to see the individuals you mention, and say to them from me, that, were it the last favor I had to ask of them, I beg of them to support the ticket nominated with the same zeal and energy as they would were I the candidate. Why, sir, who is Henry Clay, that they should hesitate on his account? An old man who will soon have passed from the stage of action and be no more; but our PRINCIPLES are eternal and must be sustained, or our republic will soon share the fate of all those that have preceded us, which God forbid."

This was spoken with an enthusiasm and an eloquence that caused my blood to tingle and course with great rapidity through my veins. I returned in a few days, and did not omit to convey his message to the persons to whom it was sent, who from that moment entered into the campaign with extraordinary earnestness.

disheartened. The treachery and selfishness of one has only served to exhibit, in bold relief, and with the power of contrast, the generous, self-devoting spirit, and steady adherence to the great principles of republican liberty, of another. Instead of sitting down in despair, they are burnishing up their armour, and girding on their bucklers, for the coming contest. They have but one leader, to whom they are attached as with hooks of steel, for he is "the life, the soul, the embodiment of Whig principles," and the beloved, devoted apostle of liberty.

WITHDRAWS FROM THE SENATE.

Mr. Clay withdrew from the Senate of the United States, and from public life, on the 31st of March, 1842, on which occasion he took leave of his compeers and fellow-members of the Senate, in a speech full of noble sentiment and touching pathos that moistened every eye in the Hall. He retired to his farm at Ashland, to enjoy the sweets of domestic life and rural occupation. In a letter to an intimate friend, of course not intended for the public eye, dated ASHLAND, 12th August, 1842, he says, "I am most agreeably occupied at Ashland. I am practising, in epitome, on my principles of internal improvement and home industry. I have just completed a canal about a quarter of a mile in length. The main object is, with a fall of about five feet, to procure vats to water-rot hemp. I mean to rig the American navy."

He is indeed the Cincinnatus of the age. After devoting thirty-five years of his life to the service of his country, rising to the highest pinnacle of fame as an orator and a statesman; in the midst of a career unrivalled for brilliancy and usefulness, he voluntarily retires to the shades of his own Ashland, there to spend the remainder of his days, not in inactive solitude, but in carrying out, to use his own language, his "principles of internal improvement and home industry." He delights in agriculture, and is one of the most practical, industrious, mathematical, and successful farmers in the whole of our country. From him, too, such men may go away instructed both by precept and example in their own avocation. Few men have done more to improve the agriculture of the rich valley of the west, and the breed of cattle, horses, mules, sheep, and hogs, in that great section of the country, than HENRY CLAY. In this respect he resembled the beloved "Father of his country," the great and the good WASHINGTON, who, while "first in war, first in peace, and first in the hearts of his countrymen," was no less first among the farmers of the land.— "There is a purifying influence in the cultivation of the soil, that seldom fails to reach the heart as it does to invigorate the frame of men, and he who delights to till the ground will find himself not less favored than the fabled Antæus, to whom was given new strength and energy as often as he touched his mother earth.

It has been thought that had Mr. Clay entered the military profession, upon the breaking out of hostilities between this country and Great Britain, in 1812, he would have been one of the

most distinguished generals and warriors of the age. But he preferred the more useful, but to him scarcely less brilliant path of a statesman and legislator. Few can doubt that had his brow been encircled with the laurel wreath, won upon the battle fields of his country, he would long ago have been elected to the highest office in the gift of the people.*

IS NOW AGAIN BEFORE THE PEOPLE.

Since 1824, no public man has been more defamed, vilified, misrepresented, and traduced. The poisoned shafts of malice and detraction have been hurled at him, and his hard earned fame assailed with the bitterest calumnies; but he has still kept his onward way in the path of duty, serving his beloved country with untiring zeal, and confidently waiting for the hour when the light of truth should dispel the black clouds of falsehood that had been heaped upon his name, and his fellow-citizens should be convinced of the injustice they have done him.— That broad, powerful light is now driving before it the mists and clouds of prejudice, and the name of HENRY CLAY already glistens in its rays, and stands forth brighter and more glorious than ever. That he is destined to fill the highest office which a grateful people can bestow upon him, there can scarcely be a doubt; but this reward, so long due and so long delayed, will not confer more honor upon him than upon those who bestow it. The people of the United States owe it to *themselves* to perform this act of justice; justice to him and justice to the country.

In this brief and imperfect outline of the life of Mr. Clay, I have attempted no labored panegyric, for he needs none. His name is interwoven with some of proudest records of American history, and stands forth in Doric strength and simplicity upon many of its brightest pages.— When these shall be blotted out by the hand of oblivion; when the events of the last war with Great Britain shall have been forgotten, and the noble struggles to break the galling bonds of servitude, by the patriots of South America and the heroes of Greece shall no longer be remembered, then will the name of HENRY CLAY cease to raise a thrill of emotion in the American bosom, and the recollection of his high-souled and self-sacrificing patriotism, his eminent and constant devotion to his country, his manly and fervid eloquence, excite no throb of pride in the heart of his countrymen. But till then, that name shall stand emblazoned in letters of gold upon the escutcheon of Fame, the watchword of Liberty, the inspiring signal to millions of freemen who rally under it to sustain our "OUR COUNTRY, OUR UNION, AND OUR CONSTITUTION."

* During the war it was at one time contemplated by Mr. Madison to appoint Mr. Clay commander-in-chief of the American army, and the project was spoken of in the Cabinet; but Mr. Madison's reluctance to Mr. Clay's leaving Congress, (where he was then exercising his high talents and patriotism for the good of the country,) coincided with Mr. Clay's own wishes to remain at his post, and another was therefore appointed.

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