# DANIEL WEBSTER;

A

## Rhymed Eulogy.

BY

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# Dedication.

Him greatest now, most reverently I name,
And beckon back from his proud height of Fame,
E'en him, of Blackstone revelator free,
With word of Wisdom, heart all Poetry,
To pause a moment in the valley deep,
While I my humble Lyre presumptuous sweep,
To loftiest theme — yet one his mastery showed
So rapturing, that 'twas the theme most loved,
Most worthy of him; — thus his honored ear,
I wake in audience to my numbers here,
Unworthy of it, though perchance they seem, —
The tribute finds excuse e'en doubly in the theme.

# DANIEL WEBSTER.

The gurgling streamlet by the mountain winds,
Beneath the rose the violet shelter finds;
Or where o'er Alps the cloud's dim curtains play
When morn doth robe herself to wed the day;
The tiny bird swift darts with timid wings,
And to majestic Jura boldly clings.
And who shall say that Jura is less fair,
That the light-plumèd thrush doth shadow there;
Or, that the rose is less the queen of flowers,
Because the violet nestles in its bowers;
Or, the bold mountain towering to the sky
Is less a miracle for streamlets by,
Washing its regal foot, and wiping too
With many a verdure gift the scattered dew?
Or does the sun shine less when sinking down
The stars presumptuous come to set his crown?
So, is the mighty even less in might,
Because his shadow fills the weak one's sight?
The Heaven-inspired with wisdom less divine,
That feeble ones bend thick around his shrine?

In short, was he we 've named e'en less a god
Because a humble Lyre leans on his sod?
Or his bold brow the less like that of Jove,
In that the wreath it wore pale fingers wove?
Or, is the shout of Fame less welcome heard,
Because an unskilled minstrel's strings have stirred
To its loud echo, gathering through the land
Volume and strength till the round globe it spanned? —
Then come, my timid muse, and dauntless deign
To link with theme august thy feeble strain;
Spread thy short wings, thou shalt not harm the light,
Though like the moth emerging from the night,
To fan the upward streaming flame they try,
Thou shalt but scorch thyself and stricken lie,
Or else — still insect-like — more quickly die.

Name thy exalted subject, take thy shell
And breathe upon it to thine inner thought,
Though few the listeners gathered to its spell,
Its feeble notes with potency are fraught;
There is the psychological that brings
To the rude peasant's banquet, chiefs and kings.

Give out the programme, to the green-room go,
And they of noblest birth shall grace the show;
While thou behind the curtain mov'st the scene,
Gemmed fingers flash the frescoed walls between.

As oft the theme as the performer's power,
That wins indulgence for the stinted hour;
Lost is the humble minstrel in the strain,
That strikes the heart and echoes back again.

Thus then to solemn pause the prelude dies,
The minstrel panting stands with downcast eyes,
And trembling half-assured with heart in pain,
She dares not yet attempt the mighty strain;
Now with sublimer thought her theme inspires,
She conquers all and strikes the thrilling wires.

* * * * * * *

Stand by, Columbia, thy kingly son
Hath grown adult and takes the father's throne,
Thy glory pales and falls to an eclipse
As lingers his proud name upon our lips;
Thou dost no more bequeath to him a fame,
For thine the richer heritage — his name;
Country and clime are naught, and men grow less
Where WEBSTER's shadow trails the wilderness.

Would we go back not many a lustrum yet, —
(That solemn hour nor would we e'er forget,)
When he we've named, whose orb so like the sun
In setting when his glorious day was done;

That all around grew gorgeous to the sight
And then closed in to all a leaden night;
When he — great presence — woke to fame and earth,
(For these were but the synonyms of birth,)
Then let us leave the thought, too faint and brief,
The written page resign and turn the leaf.

* * * * * * *

Amid the shelving crags of yonder height,
The Eagle spread her eyrie to the light;
Yet in a lowly cottage at its base,
Uncharactered by circumstance or place,
The Eaglet cradled lay with eye like Mars,
Whose yet unpointed shafts should sweep the stars;
And when full-fledged a shadow crossed the sky,
As an embattled host its strength to try,
Had travelled the wide realm of ether through
And left its broad perspective on the blue,
Set with the blazonry that sparkled there
In *or* and *argent*, and forever fair.

All hallowed art thou, Kearsage, evermore,
That thy dim shadow spread his cradle o'er;
And thou, Mount Washington, whose snow-capped head
Had well-nigh nodded to his mighty tread;

Sacred as that green summit where were bound
The wreaths with which the infant Jove was crowned,
Art yonder thou, while time shall give thee place,
And ocean cast his billows at thy base.
Where'er this shadow passed, men gathered in their
might
To hail its glory and to drink its light;
On every star-crowned summit in its pause
The crowd fell back, and Freedom to her cause
Gathered new armies, while it led the path,
And from the shadowed host stood forth at length the
Gath.

Throngs looked and lingered for the words he spake,
And Discord sought her venomed tongue to slake;
Nations stood awed while the bold Spartan read
With withering power the parchments they had spread,
To wrest the right or yet to cover wrong,
Or turn the fraud to a beguiling song;
And proud Columbia, when her crisis came,
Caught inspiration from his tongue of flame,
While threatening storms were laid as by his word,
And thunders hushed the startled ear had heard.

'T was thus amid her honored senate hall,
When this famed land seemed bound as in deep thrall,

And all her stars grew dim, and dark eclipse
Bathed the great nation's heart and paled the lips,
That he stood forth, and dared e'en thus to stand
To sweep the darkness from his cherished land;
To charm the passions that tumultuous stirred,
And leash the strife that clamored to be heard,
In north and south, in east and west the same,
Their fame to guard, though his should turn to shame.

Then was it that the splendor of his power
Shone with such charm in that illustrious hour,
That Falsehood manned herself to strike the blow,
She ne'er on her invulnerable foe,
To hoary hairs had dared e'en once to aim,
(State bribery her bold and base acclaim!)
To brand his furrowed brow and stain his name.

E'en favorite Bards lent their sublimest skill
Till, like a curfew-knell from hill to hill,
Went forth their strains of wail — 'to prayer to prayer,
The glory has departed,' — poisoning air
With the rhymed libel set in melody,
That charmed e'en Justice, till she cast away
The ancient balance from her steady hand,
And reeled inebriated through the land!
Thus yonder Hall, on proudest pilgrim sod
Long consecrate — where Freedom earliest trod,

Begraced and honored by his figure now
From Artist's pencil shed, where pilgrims bow
To his majestic image in deep awe,
As ne'er before, and as none else could draw, —
Refused him audience as to one of crime,
Shaming its birthright through all coming time!
But virtuous men indignant saw the hate,
And well with secret scorn the church and state
Doubly repaid, while one undaunted strung
Her unskilled lyre, and thus untutored sung: —

'Thou mighty man of mighty men, our bulwark and our sign,
Our beacon light, towering on high, where rolls the surging brine,
Whose wisdom was our country's hope, her strength alone thy might,
Who rested on thy stalwart arm the cause of truth and right, —
What hath come up between thy soul and those who proudly bent
To honor thee, and with their shouts the glorious ether rent?
Why trembles on their poisoned breath, the banner of our fame?
Why do they link with discord thine and Freedom's hallowed name?

'They call thee "Ichabod" in scorn, and set upon thy track,
To bark and howl, with heavenward head, their lean and hungry pack,
And follow thee with accents foul, whose evil echoes thrill,
Through mountain paths and far-off vales, and forest openings fill;
And while New England's pulse and thine beat evermore as one,
They taunt thee with vile compromise — her lost and recreant son!
Hast thou grown feeble or corrupt on some Delilah's knee,
That thus they wrest thy words and seek with withes to fetter thee? —
Joining the base Philistine horde, who vainly hope at length
To blind thy sight and hamper thee, and rob thee of thy strength!

'Thy glory gone? — so hath the sun's, when shoots its zenith ray
At summer-tide, while round its blaze light silvery cloudlets play;
Or when through fiercest heat and glow, from June's soft solstice whirled,

To proud repose on Norland's heights, the wonder of the world!
Thou recreant to the North?—the star that ever bides its place,
The magnet star—the polar orb—hath that a Southern face?
The landsman's mark—the helmsman's guide, o'er arctic summits high,
Hath that gone down to Capricorn—and left the Northern sky?
'Tis false!—they slander thee!—for when thy noble soul doth speak,
Thy Solon words and eloquence betray the mighty Greek;
Thy patriot heart throbs to the wave amid thy granite hills,
As leaps the ocean to the shore, whose mountain, gushing fills.

'Ho! let them shout, "The Philistines!" upon thy Samson strength,
Thou 'lt rend their cords and bear away their Gaza gates at length;
Yea, bring their temple to the earth—deep burying in its fall,
Dagon and all their kindred gods in one eternal thrall!

Safe on thy country's loftiest height I see thee firmly stand,
Forbearance on thy lip and brow and justice in thy hand;
Her stars and stripes sweep over thee, as erst they proudly swept
O'er her old heroes, musket-girt, on Bunker's hill who slept;
Who sought not strife, but bravely left amid the loosened sward
Their panting cattle in the yoke, at danger's threatening word.

'E'en they who took the Spartan oath, breathed from the Delphic shrine,
His name who gave it, cursed, nor strange that thus they syllable thine!
But thou — the favorite of the Gods and of the Pythia's smile,
Shalt pass unharmed, as swerving ne'er in weakness or in wile:
Twin of the Eagle in his flight — far-seeing and sublime,
His shadow, as our emblem bird, shall shield thy head through time!'

Nor died e'en yet the strain, though highest seat
They who had feigned to love, and at his feet
Cast braided garlands when the crowd stood near,
Denied him now, as cravens bound by fear
And jealous bribe; ingrate and blind
To years of sacrifice in heart and mind,
To life grown old in service, strength decayed, —
His country's honor all the wealth he made.

Man, foolish man, not yet hast thou believed? —
All honor given is honor but received;
If greatness — goodness — thy prostrations guide,
Thou'rt nobler bending than erect in pride;
Who kneels him down before the Infinite,
And worships there in fulness of his sight,
With glowing heart by that eternal shrine
Of holiest attributes, Justice divine,
And Love, and Mercy, though beyond this sphere,
There were reward nor retribution e'er,
Proclaims an answering voice within his soul,
And makes Love, Mercy, Truth, his Life's control.

Thus greatest, lowest knelt his palm to press,
Nor felt the doubled limb obsequiousness;
While they who loftiest stood beside his path,
Wore Folly's cap, and deemed themselves the Gath;

And as it gathered o'er their purblind eyes,
Declared his shadow darkened all the skies.
And were they not astray, (though hateful thought
Gave definition to the phrase they wrought;)
For it was true, as we e'erwhile have seen,
That so majestic was it, it could screen
Our whole broad land from Discord's threatening jar,
And 'neath its ample space fold every star.

But Justice came at length and Victory,
Prophetic as reflective to the eye;
Yet how prophetic had our hearts perceived
Hot tears of anguish had our shouts relieved;
Dirges for pæans had borne down the breeze,
And prayer chased homage from the bended knees!

Midsummer grew the day, and bosoms glowed
With warmth that not the Sirius had bestowed,
And morning rode up, on her fairest wings,
And trumpets brayed as to the tread of kings,
While multitudes gained audience all along
The distant road hid by a gorgeous throng,
Where in its midst he rode before the day,
With white uncovered head, and wreath of bay, —
He, the embodied Wisdom of the land,
The Webster of our strength, along the strand.

Barges and skiffs came hastening up the sea,
And thickened human hearts along the quay,
And wires of network hung above the sod,
Charged with the fire of heaven thrilled as he trod;
And thou, proud Athens, on Columbia's breast,
Gav'st forth thy million shouts, from east and west
In million voices gathered; pealing note
From brazen tongues and cannon's thundering throat,
Reverberated far o'er hill and plain,
And sent their joyous echoes o'er the main.

Proud was that day for thee, blest hallowed shade!
Thy mighty farewell in thy laurels made;
Melting e'en hearts that had grown cold as stone,
And winning back false bosoms to thine own!
And thou, New England, prouder still for thee,
Upon thy Granite seat high o'er the sea,
Clasping in love ere he should sink to rest,
Thy noblest son close to thy throbbing breast;
Scene that the sun might well stand still to view,
So like to Heaven's the welcome large and true.
Triumphal was the march, gay streamers hung
On every side, and banners wide were flung
To the saluting breeze that soft lays bore,
On fleet glad wings to Britain's distant shore;
Notes of laudation to the Pride of men;
Welcomed by raptured zephyrs back again;

Young children brought rich chaplets dewy wet,
Bearing this welcome with their odors set: —

"Bring leafy bays to bind a mighty brow,
The vanquished hero doth the conqueror come;
Glad voices float the joyous breezes now
And welcome the returning chieftain home.

"Defeat is not for him, along whose path
Bend down in reverent awe the hearts of men;
Columbia in her meed of glories hath
No gift for him! — and loud we shout — AMEN.

"She hath no offering proud enough to yield,
No place so high — he would not stoop to fill;
Her mightiest chief — triumphant in the field,
And when retreating, more triumphant still!

"Hail to thy hoary locks! Lycurgus, hail!
Thy every separate hair grows black again,
And every laurel greener hue doth veil,
As thus retiring from the battle-plain.

"The tramp of steeds — it breaks upon the wind, —
The "Welcome" gathers from the distant hills;
And children bring the garlands matrons bind,
While proudest homage every bosom fills!

'The valleys send their echoes on the route,
  And spiciest odors from the forests come;
New England, with one long convulsive shout,
  In fond embrace takes her loved champion home.

'Our pilot star — no setting shall he know;
  E'en when the cloud of death shall dim his eye,
Through the wide earth each magnet point shall show
  Behind it all — his place amid the sky!'

Yet with the gorgeous setting of the day,
Passed not its glorious memory away;
And when the morrow rose — alas! alas! —
No morrow came, that long night did not pass,
With lingering echoes of the proudest day,
That ever o'er New England had its sway;
No morrow came for him — who had achieved
All greatness for her, and with many-leaved
Triumphal crown had set her forehead height, —
For him? — look upward — it was hers the night!
And night, which, when upon the third watch out
Gathered the dawn, the angels took the shout,
And left us with the wail and ritual spread,
And prayer and anthem evermore to read!

The soft rays of October's sun knelt down
  To kiss, as on her coronation day,

The earth, and loop his tiara round her tresses brown,
  And on her breast the regal jewels lay;
Until her purple robes trailed on the sward,
And on her fingers flashed the signet of her Lord!

The golden sheaves stood clustering on the plain,
And through the silent wood pattered like rain
Upon the crispéd leaves, the dropping mast,
Then nestled down secure from winter's blast,
In that voluptuous bed, the embryo hour
Slumbering to wait, then bourgeon into power.

But Death, more solemn reaper, envious came
To bind his harvest, and his giant frame
Grew more august, as in the vantage strife
Of mightiest with the mighty, armored rife,
Yet reeled he 'neath his load, and dropped it down
As 't were one mighty shock, his garner's crown!
And there the burthen lay, our grief to mock,
While ocean wailed and sorrowed to the rock
That hid it from his view, and dashed his spray
As showers of tears through all the solemn day;
There symbolling men's hearts, surging to flow
In drops as free from out their hidden woe!
E'en nature in her lovely Autumn wept,
Or seemed to weep, and holiest vigil kept,

For blade and blossom drooped around the grange,
Where lay the master in a slumber strange,
His full majestic form all proudly dressed,
As when Columbia leaned upon his breast!
And hoary forests trembled as with grief,
And cast their tear-drops in the falling leaf
Upon the marble brow, bared to their sight
From that sad solemn morn till desolate night!
And melancholy airs their dirges played
To hearts more desolate beneath their shade;
And when stout yeomen lifted on the bier
To give its weight to the departing year,
They found one furrow turned they could not close
For very weakness; and their strong hearts rose
And flooded down rough cheeks, unwonted too,
To mirror thus the evening in its dew.

Dim distant cities hushed their labor thought,
While strange solemnity amid them wrought;
Men with low utterance lingered on the mart,
As some great sorrow pressed upon the heart;
While full and fast boomed forth the minute gun,
And banners half-mast high drooped in the sun,
And sobbing bells pealed out the mournful tale,
And poet lyres were muffled to the wail,

'Lo! they droop upon the azure,
  Banners decked with sable hue;
Pall-like sweep they, and each eyelid
  Droppeth with a briny dew.

'Yonder by the gathering waters
  Of the ocean's surging wave,
He, our nation's pride and glory,
  Maketh even now his grave!

'Words we have not in our anguish,
  Woe hath sealed the lips of men;
And a mighty pageant moveth,
  Silent, where the blast hath been!

'Where his voice of wisdom echoed,
  Breaketh forth a bitter wail;
And the lightning-wingéd courier
  Beareth far the mournful tale!

'Morrow, after morrow bringeth —
  As the great illustrious sleeps,
Deeper anguish, deeper sorrow,
  And bereaved, Columbia weeps.

'Manhood, and the head all hoary,
  Bend beneath the chariot flame;

Smitten, mid its parting radiance
  Call they on the prophet's name.

'Woe, my country! woe betide thee!
  They shall call for aye in vain;
For alas! his falling mantle
  Who shall gather up again!

'Fold around thy bleeding bosom
  The pale sackcloth, and be still;
Shroud the shrine! no more forever
  Speaketh there the Oracle.

'Let us pause — to-day fall tear-drops
  Such as ne'er Columbia shed;
Softly whisper; — they are heaping
  Dust upon her mightiest dead!'

And when that night closed in, nor moon nor star
Had lighted up men's hearts near or afar,
Had not upon that doubly hallowed morn,
When he from out the nation's heart was torn,
A vision broke all glorious to the sight,
Flashing around with ever unquenched light,
Enshrining words sublime as prophets give,
That wondrous meaning shadowed — 'I STILL LIVE!'

Yet sable badges hung round hearth and hall,
And joy seemed smothered by that mighty pall,
That shadows still, as a becoming veil,
Our whole Columbia with long vigils pale,
And casts its ebon shade o'er every zone,
Till distant nations make the grief their own;
The lowliest cottage in the farthest West,
Or doth upon New England's summit rest,
Hath there among its household gods enshrined
The precious emblem of his godlike mind;
Or doth proud treasured, on its wainscot low,
In artist lines his brow majestic show;
E'en childhood awed shall ever lisp his name,
While we the priceless guerdon give to Fame.

Thy last words, Honored Shade, that angels wrung,
More than the wisdom that erst charmed thy tongue,
In thy sublimest hour, from thy great heart
Shall to thy memory solemn grace impart;
And ages yet to come the trust shall give
To during marble—'WEBSTER,' 'STILL I LIVE.'