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DISCOURSE IN COMMEMORATION OF THE LIVES AND SERVICES OF JOHN ADAMS AND THOMAS JEFFERSON, DELIVERED IN FANEUIL HALL, BOSTON, ON THE 2D OF AUGUST, 1826.

BY DANIEL WEBSTER.



# ALBERT F. BLAISDELL.

UTHOR OF "OUTLINES FOR THE STUDY OF ENGLISH CLASSICS," MEMORY QUOTA TATIONS, "SHAKESPEARE SPEAKER," ANNOTATED EDITIONS OF "CHRISTMAS CAROL," "SKETCH BOOK," ETC., ETC.

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are placed in the Appendix, to be used at the discretion of the teacher.

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Teachers and School Officers, who are dissatisfied with the Arithmetics they have in use, are invited to confer with the publishers.

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## LIFE OF DANIEL WEBSTER.

Daniel Webster, one of the greatest orators and statesmen that this country ever produced, was born in the town of Salisbury (now known as Franklin), New Hampshire, on the 18th of January, 1782. His father, Ebenezer Webster, was a distinguished soldier and officer in the Revolutionary War. After the war, he moved with his large family into what was then the savage wilds of New Hampshire. He was a man of little booklearning, but with his strong mind and vigorous frame he became a sort of intellectual leader in his neighborhood. He was appointed a "side-judge" for the county, a place of considerable influence in those days. His great aim was to educate his children to the utmost of his limited ability. Captain Webster married Abigail Eastman for a second wife. She was a woman of more than ordinary intellect, and possessed a force of character which was felt throughout the humble circle in which she moved. She was ambitious for her two sons, Ezekiel and Daniel, that they should excel. The distinction attained by both, and especially by Daniel, may well be traced in part to her early promptings and judicious guidance. In the last year of the Revolutionary War, in the humble house which his father had built in the woods on the outskirts of civilization, Daniel Webster was born. During his childhood, he was sickly and delicate, and gave no promise of the robust and vigorous frame which he had in his manhood. It may well be supposed that his early opportunities for education were very scanty. Because he was frail and delicate, Daniel's parents took great pains to send him to the winter schools, oftentimes three miles away from home. As an older half-brother said, "Dan was sent to school that he might get to know as much as the other boys." It is probable that the best part of his early education was derived from the judicious and experienced father, and the resolute, affectionate and ambitious mother. In those days books were very scarce and Daniel eagerly read every book he could find. He was fond of poetry and at the age of twelve could repeat from memory the greater part of Watts' "Psalms and Hymns." In his "Autobiography" he says: "I remember that my father brought home from some of the lower towns Pope's Essay on Man, published in a sort of pamphlet. I took it, and very soon could repeat it from beginning to end. We had so few books, that to read them once or twice was nothing. We thought they were all to be got by heart." At the age of fourteen, he was sent to Phillips Academy, in Exeter, N. H., but remained only nine months on account of the poverty of

the family. The future orator found his greatest trouble at Exeter in declaiming. "Many a piece," says Webster "did I commit to memory, and recite and rehearse, in my own room, over and over again; yet when the day came, when the school collected to hear declamations, when my name was called, and I saw all eyes turned to my seat, I could not raise myself from it. When the occasion was over, I went home and wept bitter tears of mortification." He now studied with The familiar story of how young Webster "worked his way" through college and the self-denial and rigid economy he exercised is told in his "Autobiography." After graduation, hard pushed for money while studying law, how he took charge of an academy at Fryeburg, Maine, for one dollar a day. He paid his board by copying deeds and sent his spare money to help his brother Ezekiel through Dartmouth. Webster was admitted to the bar in 1805, began practice in Boscawen, and afterwards in Portsmouth. He took a high rank in his profession at once, and, in 1812, was elected a member of Congress. In 1816, he declined a re-election and removed to Boston. In the next seven years he worked long and hard in his profession and soon established his reputation as one of the ablest lawyers of the land. In 1822 he was again sent to Congress and in 1828 he was chosen a Senator. He remained in the Senate for twelve was a State by President Harrison. In 1845 he returned to the Senate, and remained until 1850, when he became Secretary of State under President Fillmore. He resigned his office early in 1852 on account of his health and retired to his home by the seaside at Marshfield, Mass., where he died October 24 of the same year.

Daniel Webster is universally acknowledged to be the foremost of constitutional lawyers and of parliamentary debaters, and without a peer in the highest realms of classic and patriotic oratory. Many of his orations, as the famous Bunker Hill Monument orations, the eulogy upon Adams and Jefferson, the speech upon the trial of the murderers of Capt. Joseph White, the "Reply to Hayne," and others are universally accepted as classics in modern oratory. Physically, Webster was a magnificent specimen of a man. Such a form, such a face, such a presence, are rarely given to any man. Webster's manner had a wonderful impressiveness that intimacy never wore off. His gracious bearing and gentle courtesy made him the delight of every person he ever met. His oratory was in perfect keeping with the man, gracious, logical, majestic, and often sublime. He was by nature free, generous and lavish in his manner of living. As a result his own private finances were often much embarrassed. His wealthy admirers often tided him over his financial straits. Hampered as he was financially, he never sullied his great fame or enriched himself or others by political jobberv.

### DANIEL WEBSTER, 1782-1852.

"Who does not rank him as a great American author? Against the maxim of Mr. Fox his speeches read well, and yet were good speeches —great speeches in delivery. So critically do they keep the right side of the line which parts eloquence from rhetoric, and so far do they rise above the penury of mere debate, that the general reason of the country has enshrined them at once, and forever, among our classics."—Rujus Choate's Eulogy on Webster.

"Read his works, and feel what a blessing civil and religious liberty is. Read them and feel what a blessing it is to live under a free government. Read them; and if, which food forbid, the obligations of the Constitution of your country hang loosely on you, rivet them with his thoughts. His giant efforts are embalmed in our school books, enshrined with the speeches of Burke, Sheridan, and Chatham, to animate and inspire the youth of our country."

"He has poured the measureless wealth of his own intellect into all the schools and colleges of the land. There is scarcely a child in the country, twelve years old, whose mind has not been enriched by his speeches and orations. His speeches are destined to do more to promote the great objects of education, to form correct habits of thinking and speaking, and to put the rising American race in possession of a chastened, eloquent, powerful, literature, than any other instrumentality of the nineteenth century."—Rev. Hubbard Winslow.

"HIS speech had strength, force and dignity; his composition was clear, rational, strengthened by a powerful imagination—in his great rotations 'the lightning of passion running along the iron links of argument.' The one lesson which they teach to the youth of America is self-respect, a manly consciousness of power, expressed simply and directly—to look for the substantial qualities of the thing, and utter them distinctly as they are felt intensely. This was the sum of theart which Webster used in his orations."—E. A. Duyckinck.

"Webster's style is remarkable for clearness of statement. It is singularly emphatic. It is impressive rather than brilliant, and occasionally rises to absolute grandeur. It is evidently formed on the higher English models; and the reader conjectures his love of Milton from the noble simplicity of his language. Independent of their logical and rhetorical merit, these orations are invaluable from the nationality of their tone and spirit. They awaken patriotic reflection and sentiment, and are better adapted to warn, to enlighten, and to cheer the consciousness of the citizen, than any American works, of a didactic kind, yet produced."—H. T. Tuckerman.

"HE was probably the grandest looking man of his time. Wherever he went, men turned to gaze at him; and he could not enter a room without having every eye fastened upon him. His face was very striking, both in form and color. The eyebrow, the eye, and the dark and deep socket in which it glowed, were full of power. His smile was beaming, warming, fascinating; lighting up his whole face like a suden sunrise. His voice was rich, deep, and strong, filling the largest space without effort, and when under excitement, rising and swelling into a volence of sound, like the roar of a tempest."—George S. Hilliard.

### REFERENCES.

THE ablest and most complete life of Daniel Webster is that written by George T. Curtis. It is full of most interesting material. The most scholarly article on Webster is the eulogy delivered by George S. Hilliard. For a compact and interesting life, read Lodge's Webster in the "American Statesmen Series." A valuable and suggestive essay has been written by E. P. Whipple and serves as an introduction to his "Webster's Great Speeches." The last mentioned work is the best and most complete of the various compliations of Webster's works. Harvey's Reminiscences of Webster and March's Reminiscences in Congress are interesting works for general reading. Teft's Webster and his Master-pieces, Banvard's The American Statesman and Harsha's Orators and Statesman contain much popular and interesting matter.

### WHAT TO READ OF WEBSTER.

THE student who wishes to become familiar with the works of Webster should secure a copy of Whipple's Great Speeches and Orations of Webster and mark with pencil the best passages in several speeches. The "Bunker Hill Monument Orations" are well adapted to elementary study. Extracts from the argument on the "Murder of Capt. Joseph White," especially the famous preliminary remarks, are of absorbing interest. The Plymouth oration, on the "First Settlement of New England," has been called a series of eloquent fragments. The thoughts are fine, and are expressed in simple and beautiful words. The celebrated eulogy upon "Adams and Jefferson," the speeches on the "Character of Washington," the "Landing at Plymouth," and the "Addition to the Capitol," should form a part of the education of every American school-boy. Next read Mr. Webster's remarks on the death of Judge Story and of Jeremiah Mason, and finally the speech on laying the corner-stone for the addition to the Capitol in 1831. Of Webster's speeches in the United States Senate, the student should become familiar with portions of the "Reply to Hayne." It is one of those grand speeches which are landmarks in the history of eloquence. The speech as a whole has all the qualities which made Mr. Webster a great orator. He said that his whole life had been a preparation for the reply to Hayne. After selections from these orations and speeches have been studied, over and over again, the student will be well prepared to continue his studies in Webster with the strictly parliamentary speeches and discussions which have become a part of the intellectual life of the country.

#### WEBSTER AS A MASTER OF ENGLISH STYLE.

Webster ranks high among the prose writers of the country as a master of English style. Like his oratory, his composition is plain, natural, easy, strong, dignified, and sometimes very lofty. His diction is entirely English. His words are the commonest in the language. They are those that we use in our own homes, and when talking with every-day friends. He had a powerful historic imagination, and could describe with great vividness, brevity, and force what had happened in the past or might happen in the dim future. As a rule, his sentences are short, pointed, and easily understood. Mr. Webster was a severe critic of his own style, sparing neither time or pains in revising and correcting his written orations. Aside from their profound thought and glowing patriotism, his great speeches can be read and studied to-day for their style alone, with the deepest interest, instruction, and pleasure. The young man who is training himself to think and speak on his feet should study Webster if he would attain to a perfect clearness of statement, joined to the highest skill in argument. He who would become a skilled debater and is ambitious "to learn the science of logical defence" should study the productions of this great master of eloquence until they become part and parcel of his own intellectual capital.

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### ADAMS AND JEFFERSON.

A Discourse in Commemoration of the Lives and Services of John Adams and Thomas Jefferson, Delivered in Faneuil Hall, Boston, on the 2d of August, 1826,

#### INTRODUCTORY NOTE.

On the 4th of July, 1826, John Adams, at Quincy, and Thomas Jefferson, at Monticello, died within a few hours of each other, each conscious of the day that was his last on earth. This extraordinary coincidence, which, it has been well said, is unparalleled in history, produced a most profound impression throughout the country. Commemorative services were everywhere held. In Boston the municipal authorities requested Mr. Webster to pronounce a public discourse on the lives and services of these great leaders of the Revolution. In compliance with this request, the eulogy which is so well known, and the text of which is given in the succeeding pages, was delivered August 2, 1826. The weather was fine, and the crowd to hear the great orator was immense. It was the first time that Faneuil Hall had been draped in mourning. Settees had been placed over the whole area of the hall and the large platform was occupied by many of the most distinguished men in New England. The doors were closed when the procession entered, and every part of the hall and galleries was filled. This was a mistake, for the crowd on the outside became so noisy and riotous that Mr. Webster ordered that the doors should be opened. After the first rush everything was quiet, and the order during the rest of the performance was perfect.

Mr. Webster spoke in an orator's gown and wore small clothes. He was in the perfection of his manly beauty and strength; his form filled out to its finest proportions, and his bearing, as he stood before the vast multitude, was that of absolute dignity and power. His manuscript lay on a small table near him, but he was not once seen to refer to it. His manner of speaking was deliberate and commanding. "When he came to the passage," says one of the audience, "on eloquence, and to the words, 'It is action, noble, sublime, godlike action,' he stamped his foot repeatedly on the stage, his form seemed to dilate, and he stood, as that whole audience saw and felt, the personification of what he so perfectly described. I never heard him when his manner was so grand and appropriate."

This address, which, in its peculiar strain, as a funeral oration, has never been surpassed in the annals of English oratory. Portions of it

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have been committed to memory by two generations of American youth: it is read and admired wherever the English language is

A few passages here and there in the text have been omitted from lack of space. The exact wording has not been changed.

- 1. This is an unaccustomed spectacle. For the first time, fellow-citizens, badges of mourning shroud the columns and overhang the arches of this hall, These walls, which were consecrated, so long ago, to the cause of American liberty, which witnessed her infant struggles, and rung with the shouts of her earliest victories, proclaim, now, that distinguished friends and champions of that great cause have fallen. It is right that it should be thus. The tears which flow, and the honors that are paid, when the founders of the republic die, give hope that the republic itself may be immortal. It is fit that, by public assembly and solemn observance, by anthem and by eulogy, we commemorate the services of national benefactors, extol their virtues, and render thanks to God for eminent blessings, early given and long continued, through their agency, to our favored country.
- 2. Adams and Jefferson are no more; and we are assembled, fellow-citizens, the aged, the middle-aged, and the young, by the spontaneous impulse of all, under the authority of the municipal government, with the presence of the Chief Magistrate of the Commonwealth, and others of its official representatives, the University,2 and the learned societies, to bear our part in those manifestations of respect and gratitude which pervade the whole land. Adams and

<sup>1.</sup> This hall.—Faneuil Hall, "the cradle of liberty," was for the first time on this occasion draped in mourning. This famous building, named after Peter Faneuil, was built and given by him to the town of Boston in 1740. It was formerly used as a place in which to hold town meetings, but in more recent years has been used for popular meetings of all kinds, more especially held in commemoration of some great event. Many great orators, local and national, have spoken from its venerable and inspiring platform.

2. University.—Harvard University, as is well known, is located in Cambridge, a few miles from Boston. Its history is inseparably linked with that of Boston.

Jefferson are no more. On our fiftieth anniversary, the great day of national jubilee, in the very hour of public rejoicing, in the midst of echoing and re-echoing voices of thanksgiving, while their own names were on all tongues, they took their flight together to the world of spirits.

- 3. If it be true that no one can safely be pronounced happy while he lives, if that event which terminates life can alone crown its honors and its glory, what felicity is here! The great epic of their lives; how happily concluded! Poetry itself has hardly terminated illustrious lives, and finished the career of earthly renown, by such a consummation. If we had the power, we could not wish to reverse this dispensation of the Divine Providence. The great objects of life were accomplished; the drama was ready to be closed. It has closed; our patriots have fallen; but so fallen, at such age, with such coincidence, on such a day, that we can not rationally lament that that end has come, which we knew could not be long deferred.
- 4. Neither of these great men, fellow-citizens, could have died, at any time, without leaving an immense void in our American society. They have been so intimately, and for so long a time, blended with the history of the country, and especially so united, in our thoughts and recollections, with the events of the Revolution, that the death of either would have touched the chords of public sympathy. We should have felt that one great link, connecting us with former times, was broken; that we had lost something more, as it were, of the presence of the Revolution itself, and of the act of Independence, and were driven on, by another great remove from the days of our country's early distinction, to meet posterity, and to mix with the future. Like the mariner,3 whom the currents of the ocean and the winds carry along, till he sees the stars which have directed his course and lighted his pathless way descend, one by one, beneath the rising horizon, we should have felt that the stream of time had borne us onward till another great luminary, whose

<sup>3.</sup> Like the mariner.—Webster loved dearly all that was grand in nature. His similes drawn from nature are especially worthy of study.

light had cheered us and whose guidance we had followed, had sunk away from our sight.

- 5. But the concurrence of their death on the anniversary of Independence has naturally awakened stronger emotions. Both had been Presidents, both had lived to great age, both were early patriots, and both were distinguished and ever honored by their immediate agency in the act of Independence. It can not but seem striking and extraordinary, that these two should live to see the fiftieth year from the date of that act; that they should complete that year; and that then, on the day which had fast linked for ever their own fame with their country's glory, the heavens should open to receive them both at once. As their lives themselves were the gifts of Providence, who is not willing to recognize in their happy termination, as well as in their long continuance, proofs that our country and its benefactors are objects of His care?
- 6. Adams and Jefferson, I have said, are no more. human beings, indeed, they are no more. They are no more, as in 1776, bold and fearless advocates of Independence: no more, as at subsequent periods, the head of the government; no more, as we have recently seen them, aged and venerable objects of admiration and regard. They are no more. They are dead. But how little is there of the great and good which can die! To their country they yet live, and live for . ever. They live in all that perpetuates the remembrance of men on earth; in the recorded proofs of their own great actions, in the offspring of their intellect, in the deep-engraved lines of public gratitude, and in the respect and homage of mankind. They live in their example; and they live, emphatically, and will live, in the influence which their lives and efforts, their principles and opinions, now exercise, and will continue to exercise, on the affairs of men,

<sup>4. &</sup>quot;For days and weeks afterwards, the wonderful event was the only topic of conversation. Every one seemed to see the hand of God in every one of these singular coincidences. The pulpit made free use of the grand event in enforcing the doctrine of a special Providence Patriots spoke of it as a lesson to the country in respect to Union,"—Tefft's Webster and His Masterpieces.

not only in their own country, but throughout the civilized world. A superior and commanding human intellect, a truly great man, when Heaven youchsafes so rare a gift, is not a temporary flame, burning brightly for a while, and then giving place to returning darkness. It is rather a spark of fervent heat, as well as radiant light, with power to enkindle the common mass of human mind: so that when it glimmers in its own decay, and finally goes out in death, no night follows, but it leaves the world all light, all on fire, from the potent contact of its own spirit. Bacon 5 died; but the human understanding, roused by the touch of his miraculous wand to a perception of the true philosophy and the just mode of inquiring after truth, has kept on its course successfully and gloriously. Newton 6 died; yet the courses of the spheres are still known, and they yet move on by the laws which he discovered, and in the orbits which he saw, and described for them, in the infinity of space.

7. No two men now live, fellow-citizens, perhaps it may be doubted whether any two men have ever lived in one age, who, more than those we now commemorate, have impressed on mankind their own sentiments in regard to politics and government, infused their own opinions more deeply into the opinions of others, or given a more lasting direction to the current of human thought. Their work doth not perish • with them. The tree which they assisted to plant will flourish, although they water it and protect it no longer; for it has struck its roots deep, it has sent them to the very center; no storm, not of force to burst the orb, can overturn it; its branches spread wide; they stretch their protecting arms broader and broader, and its top is destined to reach the heavens. We are not deceived. There is no delusion here. No age will come in which the American Revolution will

<sup>5.</sup> Bacon.—Francis Bacon, the eminent philosopher and jurist, was born in London in 1561, and died in 1626. A very thorough and interesting summary of his life and works may be read in Macaulay's essay.

6. Newton.—Sir Isaae Newton (1642–1727) the most illustrious philosopher of modern times, whose glory rests mainly upon his purely scientific restly and the second second

<sup>7.</sup> Note the beauty of this figure of rhetoric. The boundless ocean, the sturdy oak, the glowing subset, the mountain storm, were favorite subjects from which Webster took his figures of speech,

appear less than it is, one of the greatest events in human history. No age will come in which it shall cease to be seen and felt, on either Continent, that a mighty step, a great advance, not only in American affairs, but in human affairs, was made on the 4th of July, 1776. And no age will come, we trust, so ignorant or so unjust as not to see and acknowledge the efficient agency of those we now honor in producing that momentous event.

8. We are not assembled, therefore, fellow-citizens, as men overwhelmed with calamity by the sudden disruption of the ties of friendship or affection, or as in despair for the republie by the untimely blighting of its hopes. Death has not surprised us by an unseasonable blow. We have, indeed, seen the tomb close, but it has closed only over mature years, over long-protracted public service, over the weakness of age, and over life itself only when the ends of living had been fulfilled. These suns, as they rose slowly and steadily, amidst clouds and storms, in their ascendant, so they have not rushed from their meridian to sink suddenly in the west. Like the mildness, the serenity, the continuing benignity of a summer's day, they have gone down with slow-descending, grateful, long-lingering light; and now that they are beyond the visible margin of the world, good omens cheer us from "the bright track of their fiery car!"

9. There were many points of similarity in the lives and fortunes of these great men. They belonged to the same profession, and had pursued its studies and its practice, for unequal lengths of time indeed, but with diligence and effect. Both were learned and able lawyers. They were natives and inhabitants, respectively, of those two of the Colonies which at the Revolution were the largest and most powerful, and which naturally had a lead in the political affairs of the times. When the Colonies became in some degree united, by the assembling of a general Congress, they were brought to act together in its deliberations, not indeed at the same time, but both at early periods. Each<sup>8</sup> had already

<sup>8.</sup> To understand and appreciate the many points of similarity in the lives and fortunes of Adams and Jefferson, it will, perhaps, be necessary for the student to brush up his knowledge of American history.

manifested his attachment to the cause of the country, as well as his ability to maintain it, by printed addresses, public speeches, extensive correspondence, and whatever other mode could be adopted for the purpose of exposing the encroachments of the British Parliament, and animating the people to a manly resistance. Both were not only decided. but early, friends of Independence. While others yet doubted, they were resolved; where others hesitated, they pressed forward. They were both members of the committee for preparing the Declaration of Independence, and they constituted the sub-committee appointed by the other members to make the draft. They left their seats in Congress. being called to other public employments, at periods not remote from each other, although one of them returned to it afterwards for a short time. Neither of them was of the assembly of great men which formed the present Constitution, and neither was at any time a member of Congress under its provisions. Both have been public ministers abroad, both Vice-Presidents and both Presidents of the United States. These coincidences are now singularly crowned and completed. They have died together; and they died on the anniversary of liberty.

10. When many of us were last in this place, fellow-citizens, it was on the day of that anniversary. We were met to enjoy the festivities belonging to the occasion, and to manifest our grateful homage to our political fathers. We did not, we could not here, forget our venerable neighbor of Quincy. We knew that we were standing, at a time of high and palmy prosperity, where he had stood in the hour of utmost peril; that we saw nothing but liberty and security, where he had met the frown of power; that we were enjoying everything, where he had hazarded everything; and just and sincere plaudits rose to his name, from the crowds which filled this area, and hung over these galleries. He

<sup>9.</sup> Venerable neighbor of Quincy.—This little town, near Boston, is the home of the celebrated Adams family. It will be interesting for the student to ascertain the various places of trust and honor filled by members of this old, rich and talented family.

whose grateful duty it was to speak to us, 10 on that day, of the virtues of our fathers, had, indeed, admonished us that time and years were about to level his venerable frame with the dust. But he bade us hope that "the sound of a Nation's joy, rushing from our cities, ringing from our valleys, echoing from our hills, might yet break the silence of his aged ear: that the rising blessings of grateful millions might yet visit with glad light his decaying vision." Alas! that vision was then closing for ever. Alas! the silence which was then settling on that aged ear was an everlasting silence! For, lo! in the very moment of our festivities, his freed spirit ascended to God who gave it! Human aid and human solace terminate at the grave; or we would gladly have borne him upward, on a nation's outspread hands; we would have accompanied him, and with the blessings of millions and the prayers of millions, commended him to the Divine favor.

11. While still indulging our thoughts, on the coincidence of the death of this venerable man with the anniversary of Independence, we learn that Jefferson, too, has fallen; and that these aged patriots, these illustrious fellow-laborers, have left our world together. May not such events raise the suggestion that they are not undesigned, and that Heaven does so order things, as sometimes to attract strongly the attention and excite the thoughts of men? The occurrence has added new interest to our anniversary, and will be remembered in all time to come.

12. The occasion, fellow-citizens, requires some account of the lives and services of John Adams and Thomas Jefferson. This duty must necessarily be performed with great brevity, and in the discharge of it I shall be obliged to confine myself, principally, to those parts of their history and character which belonged to them as public men.

<sup>10.</sup> Reference is made to Josiah Quincy (1772-1864). He was Mayor of Boston from 1823 to 1828, and President of Harvard College from 1829 to 1845

<sup>11.</sup> For a readable and brief account of the lives and services of those two great men, the subject of this address, read the *Life of John Adams*, by John T. Morse, Jr., and the *Life of Thomas Jefferson*, by the same author, in the "American Statesmen Series."

13. John Adams was born at Quincy, then part of the ancient town of Braintree, on the nineteenth day of October (old style), 1735. He was a descendant of the Puritans, his ancestors having early emigrated from England, and settled in Massachusetts: Discovering in childhood a strong love of reading and of knowledge, together with marks of great strength and activity of mind, proper care was taken by his worthy father to provide for his education. He pursued his youthful studies in Braintree, under Mr. Marsh, a teacher whose fortune it was that Josiah Quincy, Jr., as well as the subjects of these remarks, should receive from him his instruction in the rudiments of classical literature. Having been admitted, in 1751, a member of Harvard College, Mr. Adams was graduated, in course, in 1755; and on the catalogue of that institution, his name, at the time of his death, was second among the living Alumni, being preceded only by that of the venerable Holyoke.12

14. Choosing the law for his profession, he commenced and prosecuted its studies at Worcester, under the direction of Samuel Putnam, a gentleman whom he has himself described as an acute man, an able and learned lawyer, and as being in large professional practice at that time. In 1758 he was admitted to the bar, and entered upon the practice of the law in Braintree. He is understood to have made his first considerable effort, or to have attained his first signal success, at Plymouth, on one of those occasions which furnish the earliest opportunity for distinction to many young men of the profession, a jury trial, and a criminal cause. His business naturally grew with his reputation, and his residence in the vicinity afforded the opportunity, as his growing eminence gave the power, of entering on a larger field of practice in the capital. In 1766 he removed his residence to Boston, still continuing his attendance on the neighboring circuits, and not unfrequently called to remote parts of the Province. In 1770 his professional firmness was brought to

<sup>12.</sup> The venerable Holyoke.—A physician of great reputation, living near Boston, and who died at an advanced age.

a test of some severity, on the application of the British officers and soldiers to undertake their defence, on the trial of the indictments found against them on account of the transactions of the memorable 5th of March. He seems to have thought, on this occasion, that a man can no more abandon the proper duties of his profession, than he can abandon other duties. The event proved, that, as he judged well for his own reputation, so, too, he judged well for the interest and permanent fame of his country. The result of that trial proved, that, notwithstanding the high degree of excitement then existing in consequence of the measures of the British government, a jury of Massachusetts would not deprive the most reckless enemies, even the officers of that standing army quartered among them, which they so perfectly abhorred, of any part of that protection which the law, in its mildest and most indulgent interpretation, affords to persons accused of crimes.

15. Without following Mr. Adams' professional course farther, suffice it to say, that on the first establishment of the judicial tribunals under the authority of the State, in 1776, he received an offer of the high and responsible station of Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Massachusetts. But he was destined for another and a different career. From early life the bent of his mind was toward politics; a propensity which the state of the times, if it did not create, doubtless very much strengthened. Public subjects must have occupied the thoughts and filled up the conversation in the circles in which he then moved; and the interesting questions at that time just arising could not but seize on a mind like his, ardent, sanguine, and patriotic. A letter, fortunately preserved, written by him at Worcester, so early as the 12th of October, 1755, is a proof of very comprehensive views, and uncommon depth of reflection, in a young man not yet quite twenty. In this letter he predicted the transfer of power, and the establishment of a new seat of empire in America; he predicted, also, the increase of population in the Colonies; and anticipated their naval distinction, and foretold that all Europe combined could not subdue them.

All this is said, not on a public occasion or for effect, but in the style of sober and friendly correspondence, as the result of his own thoughts.

- 16. This prognostication so early in his own life, so early in the history of the country, of Independence, of vast increase of numbers, of naval force, of such augmented power as might defy all Europe, is remarkable. It is more remarkable that its author should live to see fulfilled to the letter what could have seemed to others, at the time, but the extravagance of youthful fancy. His earliest political feelings were thus strongly American, and from this ardent attachment to his native soil he never departed.
- 17. While still living at Quincy, and at the age of twentyfour, Mr. Adams was present, in this town, at the argument before the Supreme Court respecting Writs of Assistance, and heard the celebrated and patriotic speech of James Otis. 13 Unquestionably, that was a masterly performance. flighty declamation about liberty, no superficial discussion of popular topics, it was a learned, penetrating, convincing, constitutional argument, expressed in a strain of high and resolute patriotism. He grasped the question then pending between England and her Colonies with the strength of a lion; and if he sometimes sported, it was only because the lion himself is sometimes playful. Its success appears to have been as great as its merits, and its impression was widely felt. Mr. Adams himself seems never to have lost the feeling it produced, and to have entertained constantly the fullest conviction of its important effects. "I do say," he observes, "in the most solemn manner, that Mr. Otis's Oration against Writs of Assistance breathed into this Nation the breath of life."14
  - 18. The citizens of this town conferred on Mr. Adams his

<sup>13.</sup> James Otis. (1725-1783.)—Orator and patriot. A man of powerful genius and of an impetuous and commanding eloquence.
14. Nearly all that was known of this celebrated argument, at the time the present Discourse was delivered, was derived from the collections of John Adams, as preserved in Minot's History of Massachusetts, Vol. II. p. 91. See Life and Works of John Adams, Vol. II. p. 124, and Tudor's Life of James Otis, p. 61.

first political distinction, and clothed him with his first political trust, by electing him one of their representatives, in 1770. Before this time he had become extensively known throughout the Province, as well by the part he had acted in relation to public affairs, as by the exercise of his professional ability. He was among those who took the deepest interest in the controversy with England, and, whether in or out of the Legislature, his time and talents were alike devoted to the cause.

19. The time was now at hand, however, when the affairs of the Colonies urgently demanded united counsels throughout the country. An open rupture with the parent state appeared inevitable, and it was but the dictate of prudence that those who were united by a common interest and a common danger should protect that interest and guard against that danger by united efforts. A general Congress of Delegates from all the Colonies having been proposed and agreed to, the House of Representatives, on the 17th of June, 1774, elected James Bowdoin, Thomas Cushing, Samuel Adams, John Adams, and Robert Treat Paine, delegates from Massachusetts. This appointment was made at Salem, where the General Court had been convened by Governor Gage, in the last hour of the existence of a House of Representatives under the Provincial Charter. While engaged in this important business, the Governor, having been informed of what was passing, sent his secretary with a message dissolving the General Court. The secretary, finding the door locked, directed the messenger to go and inform the Speaker that the secretary was at the door with a message from the Governor. The messenger returned, and informed the secretary that the orders of the House were that the doors should be kept fast; whereupon the secretary soon after read upon the stairs a proclamation dissolving the General Court. Thus terminated, forever, the actual exercise of the political power of England in or over Massachusetts. The four lastnamed delegates accepted their appointments, and took their seats in Congress the first day of its meeting, the 5th of September, 1774, in Philadelphia.

- 20. The proceedings of the first Congress 15 are well known, and have been universally admired. It is in vain that we would look for superior proofs of wisdom, talent, and patriotism. Lord Chatham 16 said, that, for himself, he must declare that he had studied and admired the free states of antiquity, the master states of the world, but that for solidity of reasoning, force of sagacity, and wisdom of conclusion, no body of men could stand in preference to this Congress. It is hardly inferior praise to say, that no production of that great man himself can be pronounced superior to several of the papers published as the proceedings of this most able, most firm, most patriotic assembly. There is, indeed, nothing superior to them in the range of political disquisition. They not only embrace, illustrate, and enforce everything which political philosophy, the love of liberty, and the spirit of free inquiry had antecedently produced, but they add new and striking views of their own, and apply the whole, with irresistible force, in support of the cause which had drawn them together.
- 21. Mr. Adams was a constant attendant on the deliberations of this body, and bore an active part in its important measures. He was of the committee to state the rights of the Colonies, and of that also which reported the Address to the King.
- 22. As it was in the Continental Congress, fellow-citizens, that those whose deaths have given rise to this occasion were first brought together, and called upon to unite their industry and their ability in the service of the country, let us now turn to the other of these distinguished men, and take a brief notice of his life up to the period when he appeared within the walls of Congress.

<sup>15.</sup> First Congress.—Read full details of the first Congress—the men that composed it and what they did.

16. Lord Chatham.—Celebrated orator and statesman. Prime Minister of England during the reign of George III. Chatham opposed with powerful eloquence the oppressive measures adopted by the British government with regard to the American Colonies. This great man's orations are declaimed by each successive generation of school-boys.

- 23. Thomas Jefferson, '' descended from ancestors who had been settled in Virginia for some generations, was born near the spot on which he died, in the county of Albemarle, on the 2d of April (old style), 1743. His youthful studies were pursued in the neighborhood of his father's residence until he was removed to the College of William and Mary, the highest honors of which he in due time received. Having left the College with reputation, he applied himself to the study of the law under the tuition of George Wythe, one of the highest judicial names of which that State can boast. At an early age he was elected a member of the Legislature, in which he had no sooner appeared than he distinguished himself by knowledge, capacity, and promptitude.
- 24. Mr. Jefferson appears to have been imbued with an early love of letters and science, and to have cherished a strong disposition to pursue these objects. To the physical sciences, especially, and to ancient classic literature, he is understood to have had a warm attachment, and never entirely to have lost sight of them in the midst of the busiest occupations. But the times were times for action, rather than for contemplation. The country was to be defended, and to be saved, before it could be enjoyed. Philosophic leisure and literary pursuits, and even the objects of professional attention, were all necessarily postponed to the urgent calls of the public service. The exigency of the country made the same demand on Mr. Jefferson that it made on others who had the ability and the disposition to serve it; and he obeyed the call.
- 25. Entering with all his heart into the cause of liberty, his ability, patriotism, and power with the pen naturally drew upon him a large participation in the most important concerns. Wherever he was, there was found a soul devoted to the cause, power to defend and maintain it, and willingness to incur all its hazards. In 1774 he published a "Summary View of the Rights of British America," a valuable

<sup>17.</sup> Parton's Life of Thomas Jefferson is very interesting reading in connection with Mr. Webster's brief summary.

production among those intended to show the dangers which threatened the liberties of the country, and to encourage the people in their defence. In June, 1775, he was elected a member of the Continental Congress, as successor to Peyton Randolph, who had resigned his place on account of ill health, and took his seat in that body on the twenty-first of the same month.

- 26. And now, fellow-citizens, without pursuing the biography of these illustrious men farther, for the present, let us turn our attention to the most prominent act of their lives, their participation in the Declaration of Independence.
- 27. Preparatory to the introduction of that important measure, a committee, at the head of which was Mr. Adams, had reported a resolution, which Congress adopted on the 10th of May, recommending, in substance, to all the Colonies which had not already established governments suited to the exigencies of their affairs, to adopt such government as would, in the opinion of the representatives of the people, best conduce to the happiness and safety of their constituents in particular, and America in general.
- 28. This significant vote was soon followed by the direct proposition which Richard Henry Lee had the honor to submitto Congress, by resolution, on the seventh day of June. The published journal does not expressly state it, but there is no doubt, I suppose, that this resolution was in the same words, when originally submitted by Mr. Lee, as when finally passed. Having been discussed on Saturday, the 8th, and Monday, the 10th of June, this resolution was on the last-mentioned day postponed for further consideration to the first day of July; and at the same time it was voted, that a committee be appointed to prepare a Declaration to the effect of the resolution. This committee was elected by ballot, on the following day, and consisted of Thomas Jefferson, John Adams, Benjamin Franklin, Roger Sherman, and Robert R. Livingstone. 18

<sup>18.</sup> It will be noticed that this committee appointed to prepare a Declaration was composed of five of the ablest men in the Congress, and in the country for that matter. The preceding life as well as the succeeding career of these five men is an interesting topic for collateral reading.

29. It is usual, when committees are elected by ballot, that their members should be arranged in order, according to the number of votes which each has received. Mr. Jefferson, therefore, had received the highest, and Mr. Adams the next highest number of votes. The difference is said to have been but of a single vote. Mr. Jefferson and Mr. Adams, standing thus at the head of the committee, were requested by the other members to act as a subcommittee to prepare the draft; and Mr. Jefferson drew up the paper. The original draft, as brought by him from his study, and submitted to the other members of the committee, with interlineations in the handwriting of Dr. Franklin, and others in that of Mr. Adams, was in Mr. Jefferson's possession at the time of his death. 19 The merit of this paper is Mr. Jefferson's. Some changes were made in it at the suggestion of other members of the committee, and others by Congress while it was under discussion. But none of them altered the tone, the frame, the arrangement, or the general character of the instrument. As a composition, the Declaration is Mr. Jefferson's. It is the production of his mind, and the high honor of it belongs to him, clearly and absolutely.

30. It has sometimes been said, as if it were a derogation from the merits of this paper, that it contains nothing new; that it only states grounds of proceedings, and presses topics of argument, which had often been stated and pressed before. But it was not the object of the Declaration to produce anything new. It was not to invent reasons for Independence, but to state those which governed the Congress. For great and sufficient causes, it was proposed to declare Independence; and the proper business of the paper to be drawn was to set forth those causes, and justify the authors of the measure, in any event of fortune, to the country and to posterity. The cause of American Independence, moreover, was now to be presented to the world in such a manner, if it might so

<sup>19.</sup> A fac-simile of this ever-memorable state paper, as drafted by Mr. Jefferson, with the interlineations alluded to in the text, is contained in Mr. Jefferson's Writings, Vol. I. p. 146. See, also, in reference to the history of the Declaration, the Life and Works of John Adams, Vol. II. p. 512, et seq.

be, as to engage its sympathy, to command its respect, to attract its admiration; and in an assembly of most able and distinguished men, Thomas Jefferson had the high honor of being the selected advocate of this cause. To say that he performed his great work well, would be doing him injustice. To say that he did excellently well, admirably well, would be inadequate and halting praise. Let us rather say, that he so discharged the duty assigned him, that all Americans may well rejoice that the work of drawing the titledeed of their liberties devolved upon him.

31. With all its merits, there are those who have thought that there was one thing in the Declaration to be regretted; and that is, the asperity and apparent anger with which it speaks of the person of the king; the industrious ability with which it accumulates and charges upon him all the injuries which the Colonies had suffered from the mother country. Possibly some degree of injustice, now or hereafter, at home or abroad, may be done to the character of Mr. Jefferson, if this part of the Declaration be not placed in its proper light. Anger or resentment, certainly much less personal reproach and invective, could not properly find place in a composition of such high dignity, and of such lofty and permanent character.

32. A single reflection on the original ground of dispute between England and the Colonies is sufficient to remove

any unfavorable impression in this respect.

33. The inhabitants of all the Colonies, while Colonies, admitted themselves bound by their allegiance to the king; but they disclaimed altogether the authority of Parliament; holding themselves, in this respect, to resemble the condition of Scotland and Ireland before the respective unions of those kingdoms with England, when they acknowledged allegiance to the same king, but had each its separate legislature. The tie, therefore, which our Revolution was to break did not subsist between us and the British Parliament, or between us and the British government in the aggregate, but directly between us and the king himself. The Colonies had never admitted themselves subject to Parlia-

ment. That was precisely the point of the original controversy. They had uniformly denied that Parliament had authority to make laws for them. There was, therefore, no subjection to Parliament to be thrown off.20 But allegiance to the king did exist, and had been uniformly acknowledged; and down to 1775 the most solemn assurances had been given that it was not intended to break that allegiance, or to throw it off. Therefore, as the direct object and only effect of the Declaration, according to the principles on which the controversy had been maintained on our part, were to sever the tie of allegiance which bound us to the king, it was properly and necessarily founded on acts of the crown itself, as its justifying causes. Parliament is not so much as mentioned in the whole instrument. When odious and oppressive acts are referred to, it is done by charging the king with confederating with others "in pretended acts of legislation;" the object being constantly to hold the king himself directly responsible for those measures which were the grounds of separation. Even the precedent of the English Revolution was not overlooked, and in this case, as well as in that, occasion was found to say that the king had abdicated the government. Consistency with the principles upon which resistance began, and with all the previous state papers issued by Congress, required that the Declaration should be bottomed on the misgovernment of the king; and therefore it was properly framed with that aim and to that end. The king was known, indeed, to have acted, as in other cases, by his ministers, and with his Parliament; but as our ancestors had never admitted themselves subject either

<sup>20.</sup> This question, of the power of Parliament over the Colonies, was discussed, with singular ability, by Governor Hutchinson on the one side, and the House of Representatives of Massachusetts on the other, in 1773. The argument of the House is in the form of an answer to the Governor's Message, and was reported by Samuel Adams, and others. As the power of the Parliament had been acknowledged, so far at least as to affect us by laws of trade, it was not easy to settle the line of distinction. It was thought, however, to be very clear, that the charters of the Colonies had exempted them from the general legislation of the British Parliament. The important assistance rendered by John Adams in the preparation of the answer of the House to the Message of the Governor may be learned from the Life and Works of John Adams, Vol. II, p. 311, et seq.

to ministers or to Parliament, there were no reasons to be given for now refusing obedience to their authority. This clear and obvious necessity of founding the Declaration on the misconduct of the king himself, gives to that instrument its personal application, and its character of direct and pointed accusation.

34. The Declaration having been reported to Congress by the committee, the resolution itself was taken up and debated on the first day of July, and again on the second, on which last day it was agreed to and adopted, in these words:—

"Resolved, That these united Colonies are, and of right ought to be, free and independent States; that they are absolved from all allegiance to the British crown, and that all political connection between them and the state of Great Britain is, and ought to be, totally dissolved."

34. Having thus passed the main resolution, Congress proceeded to consider the reported draught of the Declaration.21 It was discussed on the second, and third, and fourth days of the month, in committee of the whole; and on the last of those days, being reported from that committee, it received the final approbation and sanction of Congress. It was ordered, at the same time, that copies be sent to the several States, and that it be proclaimed at the head of the army. The Declaration thus published did not bear the names of the members, for as yet it had not been signed by them. It was authenticated, like other papers of the Congress, by the signatures of the President and Secretary. On the 19th of July, as appears by the secret journal, Congress "Resolved, That the Declaration, passed on the fourth, be fairly engrosed on parchment, with the title and style of 'The unanimous Declaration of the Thirteen United States of America;' and that the same, when engrossed, be signed by every member of Congress." And on the second day of August following, "the Declaration, being engrossed and compared at the

<sup>21.</sup> The story of how the Declaration of Independence was drawn up, with much incidental personal matter, together with many pen pictures of its signers, was given in the current magazines of 1875 and 1876—the "Centennial" years.

table, was signed by the members." So that it happens, fellow-citizens, that we pay these honors to their memory on the anniversary of that day (2d of August) on which these great men actually signed their names to the Declaration. The Declaration was thus made, that is, it passed and was adopted as an act of Congress, on the fourth of July; it was then signed, and certified by the President and Secretary, like other acts. The Fourth of July, therefore, is the anniversary of the Declaration. But the signatures of the members present were made to it, being then engrossed on parchment, on the second day of August. Absent members afterwards signed, as they came in; and indeed it bears the names of some who were not chosen members of Congress until after the fourth of July. The interest belonging to the subject will be sufficient, I hope, to justify these details.<sup>22</sup>

36. The Congress of the Revolution, fellow-citizens, sat with closed doors, and no report of its debates was ever made. The discussion, therefore, which accompanied this great measure, has never been preserved, except in memory and by tradition. But it is, I believe, doing no injustice to others to say, that the general opinion was, and uniformly has been, that in debate, on the side of Independence, John Adams had no equal. The great author of the Declaration himself has expressed that opinion uniformly and strongly. "John Adams," said he, in the hearing of him who has now the honor to address you, "John Adams was our colossus on the floor. Not graceful, not elegant, not always fluent, in his public addresses, he yet came out with a power both of thought and of expression, which moved us from our seats."

37. For the part which he was here to perform, Mr. Adams doubtless was eminently fitted. He possessed a bold spirit, which disregarded danger, and a sanguine reliance on the goodness of the cause, and the virtues of the people, which

<sup>22.</sup> The official copy of the Declaration, as engrossed and signed by the members of Congress, is framed and preserved in the Hall over the Patent-Office at Washington.

led him to overlook all obstacles. His character, too, had been formed in troubled times. He had been rocked in the early storms of the controversy, and had acquired a decision and a hardihood proportioned to the severity of the discipline which he had undergone.

38. He not only loved the American cause devoutly, but had studied and understood it. It was all familiar to him. He had tried his powers on the questions which it involved. often and in various ways; and had brought to their consideration whatever of argument or illustration the history of his own country, the history of England, or the stores of ancient or of legal learning, could furnish. Every grievance enumerated in the long catalogue of the Declaration had been the subject of his discussion, and the object of his remonstrance and reprobation. From 1760, the Colonies, the rights of the Colonies, the liberties of the Colonies, and the wrongs inflicted on the Colonies, had engaged his constant attention; and it has surprised those who have had the opportunity of witnessing it, with what full remembrance and with what prompt recollection he could refer, in his extreme old age, to every act of Parliament affecting the Colonies, distinguishing and stating their respective titles. sections, and provisions; and to all the Colonial memorials, remonstrances, and petitions, with whatever else belonged to the intimate and exact history of the times from that year to 1775. It was, in his own judgment, between these years that the American people came to a full understanding and thorough knowledge of their rights, and to a fixed resolution of maintaining them; and bearing himself an active part in all important transactions, the controversy with England being then in effect the business of his life, facts, dates, and particulars made an impression which was never effaced. He was prepared, therefore, by education and discipline, as well as by natural talent and natural temperament, for the part which he was now to act.

39. The eloquence of Mr. Adams resembled his general character, and formed, indeed, a part of it. It was bold, manly, and energetic; and such the crisis required. When

public bodies 23 are to be addressed on momentous occasions, when great interests are at stake, and strong passions excited, nothing is valuable in speech farther than as it is connected with high intellectual and moral endowments. Clearness, force, and earnestness are the qualities which produce conviction. True eloquence, indeed, does not consist in speech. It can not be brought from far. Labor and learning may toil for it, but they will toil in vain. Words and phrases may be marshaled in every way, but they can not compass it. It must exist in the man, in the subject, and in the occasion. Affected passion, intense expression, the pomp of declamation, all may aspire to it; they can not reach it. It comes, if it comes at all, like the outbreaking of a fountain from the earth, or the bursting forth of volcanic fires, with spontaneous, original, native force. The graces taught in the schools, the costly ornaments and studied contrivances of speech, shock and disgust men, when their own lives, and the fate of their wives, their children, and their country, hang on the decision of the hour. Then words have lost their power, rhetoric is vain, and all elaborate oratory contemptible. Even genius itself then feels rebuked and subdued, as in the presence of higher qualities. Then patriotism is eloquent; then self-devotion is eloquent. The clear conception, outrunning the deductions of logic, the high purpose, the firm resolve, the dauntless spirit, speaking on the tongue, beaming from the eye, informing every feature, and urging the whole man onward, right onward to his object, this, this is eloquence; or rather, it is something greater and higher than all eloquence,-it is action, noble, sublime, godlike action.

**40.** In July, 1776, the controversy had passed the stage of argument. An appeal had been made to force, and opposing armies were in the field. Congress, then, was to decide whether the tie which had so long bound us to the parent

<sup>23.</sup> When public bodies, etc.—This celebrated passage on eloquence has been a special favorite for declamation and quotation ever since it was first spoken by Mr. Webster. It is worthy of it.

state was to be severed at once, and severed forever. All the Colonies had signified their resolution to abide by this decision, and the people looked for it with the most intense anxiety. And surely, fellow-citizens, never, never were men called to a more important political deliberation. If we contemplate it from the point where they then stood, no question could be more full of interest; if we look at it now, and judge of its importance by its effects, it appears of still greater magnitude.

- 41. Let us, then, bring before us the assembly, which was about to decide a question thus big with the fate of empire. Let us open their doors and look in upon their deliberations. Let us survey the anxious and careworn countenances, let us hear the firm-toned voices, of this band of patriots.
- 42. Hancock presides over the solemn sitting; and one of those not yet prepared to pronounce for absolute Independence is on the floor, and is urging his reasons for dissenting from the Declaration.
- "Let us pause! This step, once taken, can not be retraced. This resolution, once passed, will cut off all hope of reconciliation. If success attend the arms of England, we shall then be no longer Colonies, with charters and with privileges; these will all be forfeited by this act; and we shall be in the condition of other conquered people, at the mercy of the conquerors. For ourselves, we may be ready to run the hazard; but are we ready to carry the country to that length? Is success so probable as to justify it? Where is the military, where the naval power, by which we are to resist the whole strength of the arm of England,-for she will exert that strength to the utmost? Can we rely on the constancy and perseverance of the people? or will they not act as the people of other countries have acted, and, wearied with a long war, submit, in the end, to a worse oppression? While we stand on our old ground, and insist on redress of grievances, we know we are right, and are not answerable for consequences. Nothing, then, can be imputed to us. But if we now change our object, carry our pretensions farther, and set up for absolute Independence, we shall lose the sympathy

of mankind. We shall no longer be defending what we possess, but struggling for something which we never did possess, and which we have solemnly and uniformly disclaimed all intention of pursuing, from the very outset of the troubles. Abandoning thus our old ground, of resistance only to arbitrary acts of oppression, the nations will believe the whole to have been mere pretence, and they will look on us, not as injured, but as ambitious subjects. I shudder before this responsibility. It will be on us, if, relinquishing the ground on which we have stood so long, and stood so safely, we now proclaim Independence, and carry on the war for that object, while these cities burn, these pleasant fields whiten and bleach with the bones of their owners, and these streams run blood. It will be upon us, it will be upon us, if, failing to maintain this unseasonable and ill-judged declaration, a sterner despotism, maintained by military power, shall be established over our posterity, when we ourselves, given up by an exhausted, a harassed, a misled people, shall have expiated our rashness and atoned for our presumption on the scaffold."

It was for Mr. Adams to reply to arguments like these. We know his opinions, and we know his character. He would commence with his accustomed directness and earnestness.

43. "Sink or swim,<sup>24</sup> live or die, survive or perish, I give my hand and my heart to this vote. It is true, indeed, that in the beginning we aimed not at Independence. But there's a Divinity which shapes our ends. The injustice of

<sup>24.</sup> Sink or swim, etc.—This famous imaginary speech of John Adams is probably the best known and most hackneyed passage in any of Webster's orations. The opening lines have even risen to the dignity of a familiar quotation. The general belief at the time was that the passage was an extract from a speech actually delivered by John Adams. It is the best example of the power of Webster's historical imagination. No doubt many people believe even to this day that Mr. Adams really uttered the words the orator puts into his mouth. It put Mr. Webster and the Adams family to some trouble to answer the many curious inquiries. See Curtis' Life of Webster, Vol. II. p. 294. "The speech was written by me." wrote Mr. Webster, in 1846, "in my house, in Boston, the day before the delivery of the discourse in Faneuil Hall; a poor substitute, I am sure, if we could now see the speech actually made by Mr. Adams on that transcendantly importantoccasion."

England has driven us to arms; and, blinded to her own interest for our good, she has obstinately persisted, till Independence is now within our grasp. We have but to reach forth to it, and it is ours. Why, then, should we defer the Declaration? Is any man so weak as now to hope for a reconciliation with England, which shall leave either safety to the country and its liberties, or safety to his own life and his own honor? Are not you, Sir, who sit in that chair,is not he, our venerable colleague near you,—are you not both already the proscribed and predestined objects of punishment and of vengeance?<sup>25</sup> Cut off from all hope of royal clemency, what are you, what can you be, while the power of England remains, but outlaws? If we postpone Independence, do we mean to carry on, or to give up, the war? Do we mean to submit to the measures of Parliament. Boston Port Bill and all? Do we mean to submit, and consent that we ourselves shall be ground to powder, and our country and its rights trodden down in the dust? I know we do not mean to submit. We never shall submit. Do we intend to violate that most solemn obligation ever entered into by men, that plighting, before God, of our sacred honor to Washington, when, putting him forth to incur the dangers of war, as well as the political hazards of the times, we promised to adhere to him, in every extremity, with our fortunes and our lives? I know there is not a man here, who would not rather see a general conflagration sweep over the land, or an earthquake sink it, than one jot or tittle of that plighted faith fall to the ground. For myself, having, twelve months ago, in this place, moved you, that George Washington be appointed commander of the forces raised, or to be raised, for defence of American liberty, may my right hand forget her cunning, and my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth, if I hesitate or waver in the support I give him.

<sup>25.</sup> Reference is made to the fact that Gov. Gage exempted John Hancock and Samuel Adams from the general amnesty and a price was put on their heads.

44. "The war, then, must go on.26 We must fight it through. And if the war must go on, why put off longer the Declaration of Independence? That measure will strengthen us. It will give us character abroad. The nations will then treat with us, which they never can do while we acknowledge ourselves subjects, in arms against our sovereign. Nay, I maintain, that England herself will sooner treat for peace with us on the footing of Independence, than consent, by repealing her acts, to acknowledge that her whole conduct towards us has been a course of injustice and oppression. Her pride will be less wounded by submitting to that course of things which now predestinates our Independence, than by yielding the points in controversy to her rebellious subjects. The former she would regard as the result of fortune; the latter she would feel as her own deep disgrace. Why then, why then, Sir, do we not as soon as possible change this from a civil to a national war? And since we must fight it through, why not put ourselves in a state to enjoy all the benefits of victory, if we gain the victory?

45. "If we fail, it can be no worse for us. But we shall not fail. The cause will raise up armies; the cause will create navies. The people, the people, if we are true to them, will carry us, and will carry themselves, gloriously, through this struggle. I care not how fickle other people have been found. I know the people of these Colonies, and I know that resistance to British aggression is deep and settled in their hearts and can not be eradicated. Every Colony, indeed, has expressed its willingness to follow, if we but take the lead. Sir, the Declaration will inspire the people with increased courage. Instead of a long and bloody war for the restoration of privileges, for redress of grievances, for chartered immunities, held under a British king.

<sup>26.</sup> All of this imaginary speech is worth special study from Mr. Webster's use of homely, terse, and vigorous Saxon words. The simplicity and purity of the style is unsurpassed in modern oratory. It is the one great secret by which Webster reached the minds of men. This simplicity was, of course, the natural result of the clearness and vigor of his thought.

set before them the glorious object of entire Independence, and it will breathe into them anew the breath of life. Read this Declaration at the head of the army; every sword will be drawn from its scabbard, and the solemn vow uttered, to maintain it, or to perish on the bed of honor. Publish it from the pulpit; religion will approve it, and the love of religious liberty will cling round it, resolved to stand with it, or fall with it. Send it to the public halls; proclaim it there; let them hear it who heard the first roar of the enemy's cannon; let them see it who saw their brothers and their sons fall on the field of Bunker Hill, and in the streets of Lexington and Concord, and the very walls will cry out in its support.

46. "Sir, I know the uncertainty of human affairs, but I see, I see clearly, through this day's business. You and I, indeed, may rue it. We may not live to the time when this Declaration shall be made good. We may die; die colonists; die slaves; die, it may be, ignominiously and on the scaffold. Be it so. Be it so. If it be the pleasure of Heaven that my country shall require the poor offering of my life, the victim shall be ready, at the appointed hour of sacrifice, come when that hour may. But while I do live, let me have a country, or at least the hope of a country, and that a

free country.

47. "But whatever may be our fate, be assured, be assured that this Declaration will stand. It may cost treasure, and it may cost blood; but it will stand, and it will richly compensate for both. Through the thick gloom of the present, I see the brightness of the future, as the sun in heaven. We shall make this a glorious, an immortal day. When we are in our graves, our children will honor it. They will celebrate it with thanksgiving, with festivity, with bonfires, and illuminations. On its annual return they will shed tears, copious, gushing tears, not of subjection and slavery, not of agony and distress, but of exultation, of gratitude, and of joy. Sir, before God, I believe the hour is come. My judgment approves this measure, and my whole heart is in it. All that I have, and all that I am, and all that I

hope, in this life, I am now ready here to stake upon it; and I leave off as I began, that live or die, survive or perish, I am for the Declaration. It is my living sentiment, and by the blessing of God it shall be my dying sentiment, Independence now, and INDEPENDENCE FOR EVER."

And so that day shall be honored, illustrious prophet and patriot! so that day shall be honored, and as often as it returns, thy renown shall come along with it, and the glory of thy life, like the day of thy death, shall not fail from the remembrance of men.

48. It would be unjust, fellow-citizens, on this occasion. while we express our veneration for him who is the immediate subject of these remarks, were we to omit a most respectful, affectionate, and grateful mention of those other great men, his colleagues, who stood with him, and with the same spirit, the same devotion, took part in the interesting transaction. Hancock, 27 the proscribed Hancock, exiled from his home by a military governor, cut off by proclamation from the mercy of the crown,-Heaven reserved for him the distinguished honor of putting this great question to the vote, and of writing his own name first, and most conspicuously, on that parchment which spoke defiance to the power of the crown of England. There, too, is the name of that other proscribed patriot, Samuel Adams, a man who hungered and thirsted for the Independence of his country, who thought the Declaration halted and lingered, being himself not only ready, but eager, for it, long before it was proposed; a man of the deepest sagacity, the clearest foresight, and the profoundest judgment in men.

<sup>27.</sup> John Hancock. (1737-1793.)—The distinguished Revolutionary patriot, exempted from pardon with Samuel Adams in Gov. Gage's proclamation, June 12, 1775. The fac-simile of his dashing autograph at the head of the list of the signers of the Declaration of Independence is familiar to every student. Samuel Adams. (1722-1803.)—Foremost of the Revolutionary patriots, one of the earliest and most zealous advocates of the Independence of the Colonies. Elbridge Gerry. (1741-1814.)—A signer of the Declaration of Independence and Vice-President of the United States. Warren.—General Joseph Warren, (1741-1775). Physician and patriot, killed at the battle of Bunker Hill. Robert Treat Paine. (1731-1814.)—Distinguished lawyer and patriot and a signer of the Declaration of Independence. These five patriots were born, lived, and died in Massachusetts.

And there is Gerry, himself among the earliest and the foremost of the patriots, found, when the battle of Lexington summoned them to common counsels, by the side of Warren; a man who lived to serve his country at home and abroad, and to die in the second place in the government. There, too, is the inflexible, the upright, the Spartan character, Robert Treat Paine. He also lived to serve his country through the struggle, and then withdrew from her councils, only that he might give his labors and his life to his native State, in another relation. These names, fellowcitizens, are the treasures of the Commonwealth; and they are treasures which grow brighter by time.

**49.** It is now necessary to resume the narrative, and to finish with great brevity the notice of the lives of those whose virtues and services we have met to commemorate.

Mr. Adams remained in Congress from its first meeting till November, 1777, when he was appointed Minister to France. He proceeded on that service in the February following, embarking in the frigate Boston, from the shore of his native town, at the foot of Mount Wollaston. The year following, he was appointed commissioner to treat of peace with England. Returning to the United States, he was a delegate from Braintree in the Convention for framing the Constitution for this Commonwealth, in 1780.28 At the latter end of the same year, he again went abroad in the diplomatic service of the country, and was employed at various courts, and occupied with various negotiations, until 1788. The particulars of these interesting and important services this occasion does not allow time to relate. In 1782 he concluded our first treaty with Holland. His negotiations with that republic, his efforts to persuade the States-General to recognize our Independence, his incessant and indefatigable exertions to represent the American cause favorably on the Continent, and to counteract the designs of its enemies, open and secret, and his successful undertaking to obtain

 $<sup>\,</sup>$  28. In this Convention he served as chairman of the committee for preparing the draft of a Constitution.

loans on the credit of a Nation yet new and unknown, are among his most arduous, most useful, most honorable services. It was his fortune to bear a part in the negotiation for peace with England, and in something more than six years from the Declaration which he had so strenuously supported, he had the satisfaction of seeing the minister plenipotentiary of the crown subscribe his name to the instrument which declared that his "Britanic Majesty acknowledged the United States to be free, sovereign, and independent." In these important transactions, Mr. Adams's conduct received the marked approbation of Congress and of the country.

50. While abroad, <sup>29</sup> in 1787, he published his "Defence of the American Constitution;" a work of merit and ability, though composed with haste, on the spur of a particular occasion, in the midst of other occupations, and under circumstances not admitting of careful revision. The immediate object of the work was to counteract the weight of opinions advanced by several popular European writers of that day.

51. Returning to the United States in 1788, he found the new government about going into operation, and was himself elected the first Vice-President, a situation which he filled with reputation for eight years, at the expiration of which he was raised to the Presidential chair, as immediate successor to the immortal Washington. In this high station he was succeeded by Mr. Jefferson, after a memorable controversy between their respective friends, in 1801; and from that period his manner of life has been known to all who hear me. He has lived, for five-and-twenty years, with every enjoyment that could render old age happy. Not inattentive to the occurrences of the times, political cares have yet not materially, or for any long time, disturbed his repose. In 1820 he acted as Elector of President and Vice-President, and in the same year we saw him, then at the age of eighty-

<sup>29.</sup> Note.—For a vivid pen picture of the great men and events of the Revolution, read the interesting volume of *Letters*, written by Abigail Adams, the wife of John Adams.

five, a member of the Convention of this Commonwealth called to revise the Constitution. Forty years before, he had been one of those who formed that Constitution: and he had now the pleasure of witnessing that there was little which the people desired to change.30 Possessing all his faculties to the end of his long life, with an unabated love of reading and contemplation, in the center of interesting circles of friendship and affection, he was blessed in his retirement with whatever of repose and felicity the condition of man allows. He had, also, other enjoyments. He saw around him that prosperity and general happiness which had been the object of his public cares and labors. No man ever beheld more clearly, and for a longer time, the great and beneficial effects of the services rendered by himself to his country. That liberty which he so early defended, that Independence of which he was so able an advocate and supporter. he saw, we trust, firmly and securely established. The population of the country thickened around him faster, and extended wider, than his own sanguine predictions had anticipated; and the wealth, respectability, and power of the Nation sprang up to a magnitude which it is quite impossible he could have expected to witness in his day. He lived also to behold those principles of civil freedom which had been developed, established, and practically applied in America, attract attention, command respect, and awaken imitation, in other regions of the globe; and well might. and well did, he exclaim, "Where will the consequences of the American Revolution end?"

52. If anything yet remain to fill this cup of happiness. let it be added, that he lived to see a great and intelligent people bestow the highest honor in their gift where he had bestowed his own kindest parental affections and lodged his fondest hopes. 31 Thus honored in life, thus happy at death.

31. John Quincy Adams, the son of John Adams, was the sixth President of the United States, from 1825 to 1829.

<sup>30.</sup> Upon the organization of this body, 15th November, 1820, John Adams was elected its President: an office which the infirmities of age compelled him to decline.

he saw the JUBILEE, and he died; and with the last prayers which trembled on his lips was the fervent supplication for his country, "Independence for ever!" 32

53. Mr. Jefferson, having been occupied in the years 1778 and 1779 in the important service of revising the laws of Virginia, was elected Governor of that State, as successor to Patrick Henry, and held the situation when the State was invaded by the British arms. In 1781 he published his Notes on Virginia, a work which attracted attention in Europe as well as America, dispelled many misconceptions respecting this Continent, and gave its author a place among men distinguished for science. In November, 1783, he again took his seat in the Continental Congress, but in the May following was appointed Minister Plenipotentiary, to act abroad, in the negotiation of commercial treaties, with Dr. Franklin and Mr. Adams. He proceeded to France, in execution of this mission, embarking at Boston; and that was the only occasion on which he ever visited this place. In 1785 he was appointed Minister to France, the duties of which situation he continued to perform until October, 1789, when he obtained leave to retire, just on the eve of that tremendous revolution which has so much agitated the world in our times. Mr. Jefferson's discharge of his diplomatic duties was marked by great ability, diligence, and patriotism; and while he resided at Paris, in one of the most interesting periods, his character for intelligence, his love of knowledge and of the society of learned men, distinguished him in the highest circles of the French capital. No court in Europe had at that time in Paris a representative commanding or enjoying higher regard, for political knowledge or for general attainments, than the minister of this then infant republic. Immediately on his return to his native country, at the organization of the government under the present Constitution, his talents and experience recommended him to President Washington for the first office in

<sup>32.</sup> For an account of Mr. Webster's last interview with Mr. Adams, see March's  $Reminiscences\ of\ Congress,\ p.\ 62,$ 

his gift. He was placed at the head of the Department of State. In this situation he, also, manifested conspicuous ability. His correspondence with the ministers of other powers residing here, and his instructions to our own diplomatic agents abroad, are among our ablest state papers. A thorough knowledge of the laws and usages of nations, perfect acquaintance with the immediate subject before him, great felicity, and still greater facility in writing, show themselves in whatever effort his official situation called on him to make.

**54.** On the retirement of General Washington from the Presidency, and the election of Mr. Adams to that office in 1797, he was chosen Vice-President. In 1801 he was elected President in opposition to Mr. Adams, and re-elected in 1805, by a vote approaching towards unanimity.

55. From the time of his final retirement from public life, in 1809, Mr. Jefferson lived as became a wise man. Surrounded by affectionate friends, his ardor in the pursuit of knowledge undiminished, with uncommon health and unbroken spirits, he was able to enjoy largely the rational pleasures of life, and to partake in that public prosperity which he had so much contributed to produce. His kindness and hospitality, the charm of his conversation, the ease of his manners, the extent of his acquirements, and, especially, the full store of Revolutionary incidents<sup>33</sup> which he had treasured in his memory, and which he knew when and how to dispense, rendered his abode in a high degree attractive to his admiring countrymen, while his high public and scientific character drew towards him every intelligent and educated traveler from abroad. Both Mr. Adams and Mr. Jefferson had the pleasure of knowing that the respect which they so largely received was not paid to their official stations. They were not men made great by office; but great men, on whom the country for its own benefit had

<sup>33.</sup> Mr. Webster paid a visit to Mr. Jefferson in 1824. Notes of Mr. Jefferson's conversation during this visit, relating graphic incidents and anecdotes of the Revolution, are printed in the Appendix to the first volume of Curtis' *Life of Webster*, page 581. See also same volume page 222,

conferred office. There was that in them which office did not give, and which the relinquishment of office did not, and could not, take away. In their retirement, in the midst of their fellow-citizens, themselves private citizens, they enjoyed as high regard and esteem as when filling the most important places of public trust.

- 56. There remained to Mr. Jefferson yet one other work of patriotism and beneficence, the establishment of a university<sup>34</sup> in his native State. To this object he devoted years of incessant and anxious attention, and by the enlightened liberality of the Legislature of Virginia, and the co-operation of other able and zealous friends, he lived to see it accomplished.
- 57. Thus useful, and thus respected, passed the old age of Thomas Jefferson. But time was on its ever-ceaseless wing, and was now bringing the last hour of this illustrious man. He saw its approach with undisturbed serenity. He counted the moments as they passed, and beheld that his last sands were falling. That day, too, was at hand which he had helped to make immortal. One wish, one hope, if it were not presumptuous, beat in his fainting breast. Could it be so, might it please God, he would desire once more to see the sun, once more to look abroad on the scene around him, on the great day of liberty. Heaven, in its mercy, fulfilled that prayer. He saw that sun, he enjoyed its sacred light, he thanked God for this mercy, and bowed his aged head to the grave.
- 58. The last public labor of Mr. Jefferson naturally suggests the expression of the high praise which is due, both to him and Mr. Adams, for their uniform and zealous attachment to learning, and to the cause of general knowledge. Of the advantages of learning, indeed, and of literary

<sup>34.</sup> Mr. Jefferson himself considered his services in establishing the University of Virginia as among the most important rendered by him to the country. In Mr. Wirt's Eulogy, it is stated that a private memorandum was found among his papers, containing the following inscription to be placed on his monument: "Here was buried Thomas Jefferson, Author of the Declaration of Independence, of the Statutes of Virginia for Religious Freedom, and Father of the University of Virginia."

accomplishments, their own characters were striking recommendations and illustrations. They were scholars, ripe and good scholars; widely acquainted with ancient, as well as modern literature, and not altogether uninstructed in the deeper sciences. Their acquirements, doubtless, were different, and so were the particular objects of their literary pursuits; as their tastes and characters, in these respects, differed like those of other men. Being, also, men of busy lives, with great objects requiring action constantly before them, their attainments in letters did not become showy or obtrusive. Yet I would hazard the opinion, that, if we could now ascertain all the causes which gave them eminence and distinction in the midst of the great men with whom they acted, we should find not among the least their early acquisitions in literature, the resources which it furnished, the promptitude and facility which it communicated, and the wide field it opened for analogy and illustration; giving them thus, on every subject, a larger view and a broader range, as well for discussion as for the government of their own conduct.

59. Literature sometimes disgusts, and pretension to it much oftener disgusts, by appearing to hang loosely on the character, like something foreign or extraneous, not a part, but an ill-adjusted appendage; or by seeming to overload and weigh it down by its unsightly bulk, like the productions of bad taste in architecture, where there is massy and cumbrous ornament without strength or solidity of column. This has exposed learning, and especially classical learning, to reproach. Men have seen that it might exist without mental superiority, without vigor, without good taste, and without utility. But in such cases classical learning has only not inspired natural talent; or, at most, it has but made original feebleness of intellect, and natural bluntness of perception, something more conspicuous. The question, after all, if it be a question, is, whether literature, ancient as well as modern, does not assist a good understanding, improve natural good taste, add polished armor to native strength, and render its possessor, not only more capable of deriving private happiness from contemplation and reflection, but more accomplished also for action in the affairs of life, and especially for public action. Those whose memories we now honor were learned men; but their learning was kept in its proper place, and made subservient to the uses and objects of life. They were scholars, not common nor superficial; but their scholarship was so in keeping with their character, so blended and inwrought, that careless observers, or bad judges, not seeing an ostentatious display of it, might infer that it did not exist; forgetting, or not knowing, that classical learning in men who act in conspicuous public stations, perform duties which exercise the faculty of writing, or address popular, deliberative, or judicial bodies, is often felt where it is little seen, and sometimes felt more effectually because it is not seen at all.

- 60. But the cause of knowledge, in a more enlarged sense, the cause of general knowledge and of popular education, had no warmer friends, nor more powerful advocates, than Mr. Adams and Mr. Jefferson. On this foundation they knew the whole republican system rested; and this great and all-important truth they strove to impress, by all the means in their power, In the early publication already referred to, Mr. Adams expresses the strong and just sentiment, that the education of the poor is more important, even to the rich themselves, than all their own riches. On this great truth, indeed, is founded that unrivaled, that invaluable political and moral institution, our own blessing and the glory of our fathers, the New England system of free schools.
- 61. Mr. Adams and Mr. Jefferson, fellow-citizens, were successively Presidents of the United States. The comparative merits of their respective administration for a long time agitated and divided public opinion. They were rivals, each supported by numerous and powerful portions of the people, for the highest office. This contest, partly the cause and partly the consequence of the long existence of two great political parties in the country, is now part of the history of our government. We may naturally regret that anything

should have occurred to create difference and discord between those who had acted harmoniously and efficiently in the great concerns of the Revolution. But this is not the time, nor this the occasion, for entering into the grounds of that difference, or for attempting to discuss the merits of the questions which it involves. As practical questions, they were canvassed when the measures which they regarded were acted on and adopted; and as belonging to history, the time has not come for their consideration.

62. It is, perhaps, not wonderful, that, when the Constitution of the United States first went into operation, different opinions should be entertained as to the extent of the powers conferred by it. Here was a natural source of diversity of sentiment. It is still less wonderful, that that event, nearly contemporary with our government under the present Constitution, which so entirely shocked all Europe, and disturbed our relations with her leading powers, should be thought, by different men, to have different bearings on our own prosperity; and that the early measures adopted by the government of the United States, in consequence of this new state of things, should be seen in opposite lights. It is for the future historian, when what now remains of prejudice and misconception shall have passed away, to state these different opinions, and pronounce impartial judgment. In the mean time, all good men rejoice, and well may rejoice, that the sharpest differences sprung out of measures which, whether right or wrong, have ceased with the exigencies that gave them birth, and have left no permanent effect, either on the Constitution or on the general prosperity of the country. This remark, I am aware, may be supposed to have its exception in one measure, the alteration of the Constitution as to the mode of choosing President; but it is true in its general application. Thus the course of policy pursued towards France in 1798, on the one hand, and the measures of commercial restriction commenced in 1807, on the other, both subjects of warm and severe opposition, have passed away and left nothing behind them. They were temporary, and, whether wise or unwise,

their consequences were limited to their respective occasions. It is equally clear, at the same time, and it is equally gratifying, that those measures of both administrations which were of durable importance, and which drew after them momentous and long remaining consequences, have received general approbation. Such was the organization, or rather the creation, of the navy, in the administration of Mr. Adams; such the acquisition of Louisiana in that of Mr. Jefferson. The country, it may safely be added, is not likely to be willing either to approve, or to reprobate, indiscriminately, and in the aggregate, all the measures of either, or of any, administration. The dictate of reason and of justice is, that, holding each one his own sentiments on the points of difference, we imitate the great men themselves in the forbearance and moderation which they have cherished, and in the mutual respect and kindness which they have been so much inclined to feel and to reciprocate.

63. No men, fellow-citizens, ever served their country with more entire exemption from every imputation of selfish and mercenary motives, than those to whose memory we are paying these proofs of respect. A suspicion of any disposition to enrich themselves or to profit by their public employments, never rested on either. No sordid motive approached them. The inheritance which they have left to their children is of their character and their fame.

64. Fellow-citizens, I will detain you no longer by this faint and feeble tribute to the memory of the illustrious dead. Even in other hands, adequate justice could not be done to them, within the limits of this occasion. Their highest, their best praise, is your deep conviction of their merits, your affectionate gratitude for their labors and their services. It is not my voice, it is this cessation of ordinary pursuits, this arresting of all attention, these solemn ceremonies, and this crowded house, which speak their eulogy. Their fame, indeed, is safe. That is now treasured up beyond the reach of accident. Although no sculptured marble should rise to their memory, nor engraved stone bear record of their deeds, yet will their remembrance be as lasting as

the land they honored. Marble columns may, indeed, moulder into dust, time may erase all impress from the crumbling stone, but their fame remains; for with American liberty it rose, and with American liberty only can it perish. It was the last swelling peal of yonder choir, "Their bodies are buried in peace, but their name liveth evermore." I catch that solemn song, I echo that lofty strain of funeral triumph, "Their name liveth evermore."

65. And now, fellow-citizens, let us not retire from this occasion without a deep and solemn conviction of the duties which have devolved upon us. This lovely land, this glorious liberty, these benign institutions, the dear purchase of our fathers, are ours; ours to enjoy, ours to preserve, ours to transmit. Generations past and generations to come hold us responsible for this sacred trust. Our fathers, from behind, admonish us, with their anxious paternal voices; posterity calls out to us, from the bosom of the future: the world turns hither its solicitous eyes; all, all conjure us to act wisely, and faithfully, in the relation which we sustain. We can never, indeed, pay the debt which is upon us; but by virtue, by morality, by religion, by the cultivation of every good principle and every good habit, we may hope to enjoy the blessing, through our day, and to leave it unimpaired to our children. Let us feel deeply how much of what we are and of what we possess we owe to this liberty, and to these institutions of government. Nature has, indeed, given us a soil which yields bounteously to the hand of industry, the mighty and fruitful ocean is before us, and the skies over our heads shed health and vigor. But what are lands, and seas, and skies, to civilized man, without society, without knowledge, without morals, without religious culture; and how can these be enjoyed, in all their extent and all their excellence, but under the protection of wise institutions and a free government? Fellow-citizens, there is not one of us, there is not one of us here present, who does not, at this moment, and at every moment, experience, in his own condition, and in the condition of those most near and dear to him, the influence and the benefits of this liberty and these institutions. Let us then acknowledge the blessing, let us feel it deeply and powerfully, let us cherish a strong affection for it, and resolve to maintain and perpetuate it. The blood of our fathers, let it not have been shed in vain; the great hope of posterity, let it not be blasted.

66. The striking attitude, too, in which we stand to the world around us, a topic to which, I fear, I advert too often, and dwell on too long, can not be altogether omitted here. Neither individuals nor nations can perform their part well, until they understand and feel its importance, and comprehend and justly appreciate all the duties belonging to it. It is not to inflate national vanity, nor to swell a light and empty feeling of self-importance, but it is that we may judge justly of our situation, and of our own duties, that I earnestly urge upon you this consideration of our position and our character among the nations of the earth. It can not be denied, but by those who would dispute against the sun, that with America, and in America, a new era commences in human affairs. This era is distinguished by free representative governments, by entire religious liberty, by improved systems of national intercourse, by a newly awakened and an unconquerable spirit of free inquiry, and by a diffusion of knowledge through the community, such as has been before altogether unknown and unheard of. America, America, our country, fellow-citizens, our own dear and native land, is inseparably connected, fast bound up, in fortune and by fate, with these great interests. If they fall, we fall with them; if they stand, it will be because we have maintained them. Let us contemplate, then, this connection, which binds the prosperity of others to our own; and let us manfully discharge all the duties which it imposes. If we cherish the virtues and the principles of our fathers, Heaven will assist us to carry on the work of human liberty and human happiness. Auspicious omens cheer us. Great examples are before us. Our own firmament now shines brightly upon our path. Washington is in the clear, upper sky. These other stars have now joined the American constellation; they circle round their center, and the heavens beam with new light. Beneath this illumination let us walk the course of life, and at its close devoutly commend our beloved country, the common parent of us all, to the Divine Benignity.

## TEST QUESTIONS FOR REVIEW.

1. Who was Daniel Webster?

- 2. Where and when was he born?
  3. What can you say of his father and mother?
  4. Tell something about Webster's boyhood days in the wilds of New Hampshire.

5. What can you tell of his early love for books?6. Illustrate by what he afterwards told of his committing portions of Pope, Addison and other English classic authors to memory.
7. What have you learned of Webster's early school life?
8. Why were his opportunities so very meagre?
9. Tell what you can of his brother Ezekiel.

10. Can you give the often-quoted story of the plea for the life of a woodchuck, made by the two brothers?

11. To what famous school was Daniel sent at an early age?
12. What peculiar timidity did the future orator show at this school?
13. Repeat from memory what he said about it.
14. What other great orators have showed a similar weakness in early

- life?

  15. What college did Webster fit for and attend?

  16. What have you read of his college career?

  17. What local fame did he acquire at college?

- 18. What did he do first after graduation? 19. What did he do with his first savings? 20. Tell something about Ezekiel Webster's untimely death.
- 21. What opinion did Webster always cherish of his brother's talents? 22. What profession did Daniel adopt? 23. Where did he first settle, and with what success?

24. What official position was he offered? 25. Was this a turning point in his career, and why? 26. What can you say of his father's disappointment?

27. Explain how a few years showed that the future orator decided wisely

28. What was his first entrance to a political career? 29. What great fame did he now rapidly gain?

30. Mention the political positions filled by him during his life. 31. What can you say of his fame as a great lawyer, as a great orator,

and as a great statesman? 32. Tell what you can of one or more of his great legal cases.

- 33. Mention the circumstances attending the delivery of three or more of his great orations.

  34. What were some of the most noteworthy things done by him as a
- statesman?

35. Describe Daniel Webster's personal appearance. 36. To what extent did it help his oratory?

- 37. What were some of his most marked personal characteristics? 38. What was the great disappointment of his life?

39. Did it hasten his death?

40. When and where did Daniel Webster die? 41. What can you say of his last days?

- 41. What can you say of his last days:
  42. What were the marked characteristics of his oratory?
  43. How will Webster compare with other great orators of this or any
  45. Explain in some detail. other great country? Explain in some detail.

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