

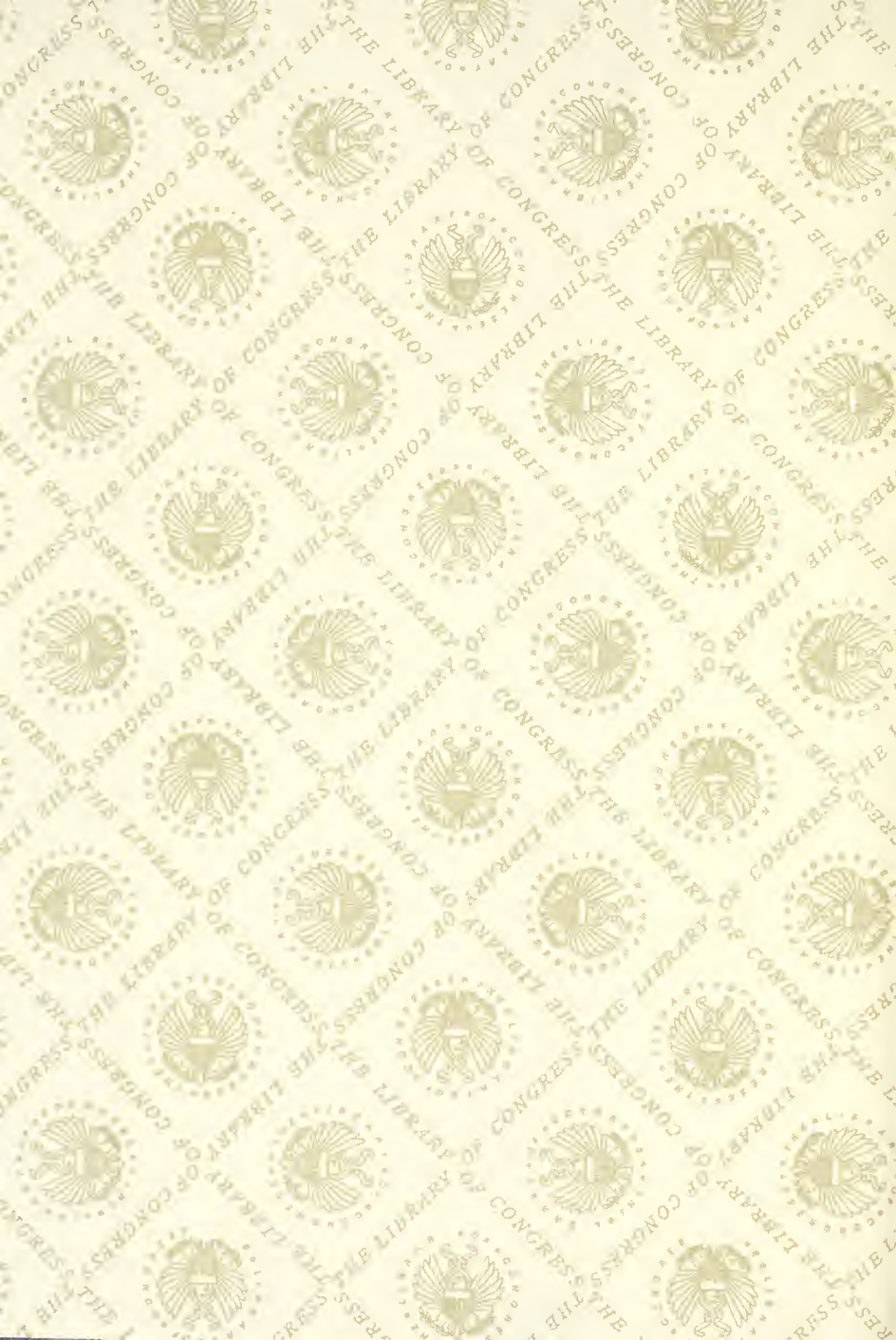
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EULOGY

ON

THE LIFE AND SERVICES

OF

HENRY CLAY,

DELIVERED IN

THE HALL OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,

October 11, 1852,



BY

ALEXANDER K. M'CLUNG, ESQ.

PUBLISHED BY ORDER OF THE LEGISLATURE.

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CORRESPONDENCE.

JACKSON, OCTOBER 12TH, 1852.

COL ALEX. K. McCLUNG:—

Dear Sir: In common with the immense audience in attendance, we listened last night with great pleasure to your eulogy, upon the life and character of Henry Clay. Appreciating your address, as a just and eloquent criticism upon the life and character of the great deceased, we met to request a copy for publication. In this, however, we find ourselves forestalled, by a resolution of the House of Representatives, passed this morning.

We presume it would be gratifying to you that we should defer to the most complimentary, and unusual legislative action in this matter, and beg leave to subscribe ourselves,

Very truly and respectfully, your ob't serv'ts.,

A. BURWELL,
W. R. MILES,
D. R. LEMMAN,
T. J. WHARTON,
B. YANDELL,
J. D. ELLIOT.

Committee.

JACKSON, OCTOBER 13TH, 1852.

COL. A. K. McCLUNG:—

Dear Sir: The undersigned, who have been appointed a joint select committee under a resolution of the Senate and House of Representatives, of the Legislature of the State of Mississippi, to solicit from you, for publication, a copy of the eulogy, delivered by yourself, in the Hall of the House of Representatives, on the evening of the 11th inst., on the life and servi-

ces of the illustrious statesman, Henry Clay,—in the discharge of the pleasing duty devolved upon us, respectfully solicit a copy of your address.

With the assurance of the high appreciation of ourselves, and of the bodies we represent, of your very powerful and eloquent address,

We are, respectfully,

D. W. ADAMS,
SIMEON OLIVER,
GEO. S. GOLLADAY,
MORGAN McAFEE,
P. S. CATCHING.

Committee on part of Senate.

HOWELL HINDS,
P. B. STARKE,
J. H. R. TAYLOR,
THOS J. CATCHINGS,
C. DEAVOURS.

Committee of House of Representatives.

JACKSON, OCTOBER 13TH, 1852.

GENTLEMEN: I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of yesterday, requesting a copy of the speech I delivered on Monday last, upon the life and character of Henry Clay. I send to you at once the copy requested. I return to yourselves, gentlemen, and to the body of the Legislature whom you represent, my grateful thanks for the most unusual compliment conveyed by their action, and for the flattering terms in which that action is expressed.

I have the honor to be, gentlemen, your ob't serv't.

ALEX. K. McCLUNG.

Messrs. Howell Hinds, P. B. Starke, Jas. H. R. Taylor, Thos. J. Catchings, and C. Deavours. *Committee of the House of Representatives.*

Messrs. D. W. Adams, Simeon Oliver, Geo. S. Golladay, Morgan McAfee, and P. S. Catching. *Committee on part of Senate.*

ORATION.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN:

We have met to commemorate the life and services of HENRY CLAY. After a long life,—after a long, useful and illustrious career,—he has passed away. The fiery and aspiring spirit, whose earthly life was one long storm, has at length sunk to rest. Neither praise nor censure can now reach him. When his haughty soul passed away from the earth, and the grave closed over his dust, it also entombed in its dark and narrow chamber the bitterness of detraction, and the tiger ferocity of party spirit, with which he had so long wrestled. Death has hallowed his name and burnished his services bright in the memory of his countrymen. We have met to express, in the manner which the custom of our country has established, our appreciation of those services and our sense of his glory. We have met, not as partisans or friends,—political or personal,—of the illustrious dead, but as Americans, desirous to do honor to a great American.

In attempting to discharge the duty which has been imposed upon me, I shall avoid the indiscriminate eulogy which is the proverbial blemish of obituaries and funeral discourses, and shall essay, however feebly, to present Mr. Clay as he was, or, at least, as he seemed to me. Great beings,—grand human creatures,—scattered sparsely throughout time, should be painted with truth. An indiscriminate deluge of praise drowns mediocrity and greatness in the same grave, where none can distinguish between them. When the greatest of all Englishmen, Oliver Cromwell, sat to the painter, Lely, for his portrait, whose pencil was addicted to flattery, he said: "Paint me as I am; leave not out one wrinkle, scar or blemish, at your peril." He wished to go to the world as he was; and greatness is wise in wishing it.

No man the world ever saw was equally great in every quality of intellect and in every walk of action. All men are unequal; and it is tasteful, as well as just, to plant the praise where it is true, rather than to drown all individuality and all character in one foaming chaos of eulogy.

Henry Clay was most emphatically a peculiar and strongly marked character; incomparably more peculiar than any of those who were popularly considered his mental equals. Impetuous as a torrent, yet patient to gain his ends; overbearing and trampling, yet winning and soothing; haughty and fierce, yet kind and gentle; dauntlessly brave in all kinds of courage, yet eminently prudent and conservative in all his policy,—all these moral attributes, antithetical as they seem, would shine out under different phases of his conduct.

I need not detain this audience with a lengthened biographical sketch of Mr. Clay. The leading historical incidents of his life are universally known. He was born in Virginia, certainly not later than 1775, most probably a year or two earlier. His parentage was extremely humble. At the age of twenty, twenty-one or twenty-two, he emigrated to Lexington, Kentucky, where he undertook to pursue the great American road to eminence,—the bar. For this career, it would have seemed at that time, that his advantages were small, indeed. Young, poor and unconnected, with scarcely ordinary attainments of education, he entered the lists with numerous and able competitors. Yet, Henry Clay, destitute, as he was, of all adventitious advantages, was not destined to struggle upward along the weary and laborious path through which mediocrity toils to rank. The cedar imbedded in barren rocks, upon the mountain side, with scarcely soil to feed its roots, will tower above the tallest of the forest; for it is its nature so to do. So this great Genius at once shot up like a shaft. He rose to high rank at the bar. In 1799 he was elected to the Kentucky legislature; in 1806 to the U. S. Senate; in 1811 to the House of Representatives; and there began his national career. Since that time, Mr. Clay has filled a large space in the public eye. His career has been checkered, stormy, and tempestuous. Now the object of universal praise; now attacked with very general censure; now culminating upon the crest of fortune's wave; then dashed upon the rocks and overwhelmed with roar and clamor. It was his fate at periods of his career to drain to the bottom that measure of relentless hate with which mean souls resent the imperial pride of haughty genius. It was

his fate to feel that constant success is the only shield which greatness and glory can rear against the poison of envy and slander's venomous sting.

He who ascends to mountain's tops, shall find
 The loftiest peaks most wrapt in clouds and snow.
 He who surpasses or subdues mankind,
 Must look down on the hate of those below,
 Though high above the sun of glory glow,
 And far beneath are earth and ocean spread,
 Around him are icy rocks, and loudly blow
 Contending tempests on his naked head,
 Thus to reward the toils which to those summits led.

That strong mind was tried by every extremity of fortune, and if sometimes inflated by success, yet borne up by the all deathless thirst for renown, the grand incentive to all great toils or glorious deeds, he was never depressed by defeat. He faced his enemies, he faced fortune, and he faced defeat, with the same dauntless heart, and the same unquailing brow, in youth and in age, regardless when or how they came, or what the peril might be. Yet when most overborne with calumny; when hatred raged fiercest against his person; and he was most stained with slander,—even at that time, to enemies as to friends, he was an object of admiring respect. When lashed into fury by disappointment, defeat and opposition, and the stormy passions of his tempestuous soul raged like a whirlwind, his bitterest opponents would gaze curiously upon him with a strange mixture of hatred, fear and admiration.

There are many phases in which it is necessary to regard Mr. Clay, to reach a correct estimate of his character; and to accomplish their delineation without a degree of jumbling confusion, is a work of some difficulty. As an orator, he was brilliant and grand. None of his contemporaries could so stir men's blood. None approached him in his mastery over the heart and the imagination of his hearers. Of all the gifts with which nature decks her favorites, not the greatest or grandest certainly, but the most brilliant, the most fascinating, and for the moment the most powerful, is exalted eloquence. Before its fleeting and brief glare, the steady light of wisdom, logic or philosophy pales, as the stars fade before the meteor. With this choice and glorious gift nature had endowed Mr. Clay beyond all men of the age. Like all natural orators, he was very unequal; sometimes sinking to commonplace mediocrity, then again, when the occasion

roused his genius, he would soar aloft in towering majesty. He had little or none of the tinsel of Rhetoric, or the wordy finery which always lies within the reach of the Rhetorician's art. Strong passions, quick sensibility, lofty sentiment, powerful reason, were the foundation of his oratory, as they are of all true eloquence. Passion, feeling, reason, wit, poured forth from his lips in a torrent so strong and inexhaustible, as to whirl away his hearers for the time in despite of their opinions. Nor should it be forgotten, slight and unimportant as physical qualities may appear in our estimate of the mighty dead, that his were eminently fitted for the orator. A tall, slender, erect person, changing under the excitement of speech its loose flaccidity of muscle into the most vigorous and nerved energy; an eye small, indeed, but deep and bonily set, and flaming with expression; and last and most important of all, a voice deep, powerful, mellow and rich, beyond expression,—rich is a feeble phrase to express its round, articulate fullness, rolling up with the sublime swell of the organ,—all these together formed wonderful aids to eloquence. And his great and numerous triumphs attest their power. He had the true mesmeric stroke of the orator,—the power to infuse his feelings into his hearers; to make them think as he thought, and feel as he felt. No one can form any adequate conception of the power of his eloquence, who has not heard Mr. Clay when his blood was up, and the tide of inspiration rolling full upon him. His words indeed might be written down; but the flame of mind which sent them forth red hot and blazing from its mint, could not be conveyed by letters. As well attempt to paint the lightning. The crooked, angular line may be traced; but the glare, and the flame and the roar and the terror, and the electric flash, are gone. Stormy, vehement and tempestuous as were his passions and his oratory, there was still underneath them all, a cool stream of reason, running through the bottom of his brain, which always pointed him to his object, and held him to his course. No orator, so passionate, ever committed fewer imprudencies. No passions so stormy ever left their possessor so watchful of his objects. Reason held the helm while passion blew the gale.

As a debater, it would not be just to say that Mr. Clay held the same rank; at least it may be said with justice, that in all the walks of debate he was not equally eminent. He was able everywhere; and it is but gentle criticism to say, that in some trains of thought he did not shine forth with the power

and lustre which marked his eloquence. It appears to me, after a critical study of his speeches, that he discussed facts with as much power as any of his greatest rivals. It appears to me also, that he fell beneath some of them in the discussion of principles. One of the greatest of his compeers taunted him once in the Senate with an inability to analyze abstruse subjects. The taunt was made stronger, probably, by anger, than truth or candor would warrant; yet it seems to me to have been partially just. No one who studies Mr. Clay's arguments upon points of political economy, can avoid perceiving how rarely he analyzes the principle involved. We see a vast array of facts, many keen and thoughtful remarks about the results of the measure, but an analysis of its principle is scarcely ever attempted. He doubtless understood the protective tariff system better than he did any other subject in the range of political economy; and no one can read his speeches upon that question without being struck with this feature. It is still more marked whenever he discusses the subject of finance. A philosophic discussion of a principle, independent of the practical condition of things, is never to be found in his speeches; and in this he presented a most pointed contrast to his great rival, who so short a time preceded him to the grave. It may be said that this was the result of imperfect education, and the barely hasty study which a busy, stirring life enabled him to bestow upon abstruse subjects; but the better opinion seems to be that he was eminently a practical man, and the bent of his genius called him away from the metaphysics of politics. Mr. Clay was undoubtedly a far greater man, than the Scotch economist, Adam Smith; yet it is not probable that any extent of education, or any amount of labor, or any length of study, would have enabled him to write Adam Smith's book. Yet was he a very great debater, also. None of his compeers arrayed facts more skillfully,—none urged them with so much power. He had not the compact, clean cut, sententious brevity, which marked some of those the public ranked as his equals; on the contrary, without being diffuse, he abounded in episodes; he introduced much matter bearing upon his point, certainly, but bearing upon it indirectly,—not unfrequently, also, introducing matter which did not much help on the question in hand. He abounded in the argumentum ad hominem, in personal appeal, in sarcasm, with much of personal allusion and circumstantial explanation, often carrying him away from his sub-

ject for some time, to which however, he always returned at precisely the point where he had left it.

It is difficult, among the great masters of oratory and debate, to select one whom he closely resembled. It is not probable that he had ever studied any of them closely; and even had he done so, the originality of his genius and the intense pride of his haughty temper would have prevented him from stooping to select a model. If he resembled any of them, he did not know it, and he would have cared as little to abolish the points of resemblance as to make them. To Demosthenes, to whom he has been often compared, he bore a likeness in his passion, his intensity, and in his occasional want of logic; but he was utterly unlike him in other respects. He had none of his terseness, his nakedness and the straight forward, unhalting directness with which he dashed on to his end. To Cicero he bore no resemblance whatever. Among the eminent English speakers it would be almost as difficult to trace with him a parallel, in any considerable degree exact or close. The profound philosophy of Burke, with his gorgeous, lurid and golden language, rolling on with the pomp and power of an army blazing with banners, he in no degree approached. Sheridan's bright and pungent style, glittering with antithesis and point, was equally unlike him. I am inclined to think that of all the speakers I have read, though with less of logic and wit, and more of passion, he most resembled Charles Fox. The same rigid adherence actually to his point, even when seeming to be away from it; the same abundance and exuberance of matter; the same gladiatorial struggle to strike down his opponent, though the victory might slightly affect the question involved; the same felicitous blending of passion and logic, with sparkles of sarcasm and personality spangling the whole,—all produced strong points of resemblance, not to be traced with any other orator.

To all these eminent merits as a speaker, was united a profound knowledge of men, of their motives and of their weaknesses. Though it may be that in the early part of his life, he had learned but little from books, yet amid the frank, bold and reckless pioneers which formed Kentucky's early population, where the man stood forth in all the originality and nakedness of his nature, and amid the stormy scenes of the hustings in which he was early plunged, he had gained that quick insight into the human heart, which in practical life goes farther to attain success than reams of

reading. He knew men thoroughly, and not only knew how, but possessed the magnetic power to bend them to his purposes.

There is probably no position in life which requires such a combination of rare and high qualities as that of a great popular leader. He must be bold and prudent, prompt and patient, stern and conciliating, captivating, commanding, farseeing, and above all, brave to perfection. The first man in the nation, the first in power, undoubtedly, whatever may be his place, is the leader of the administration, be he in Congress or the Cabinet, President, or private. The leader of the opposition can hardly be called the second man in rank or power, but if his party be strong and struggling, his position is one of great strength, and enables him, though out of the government, to strongly affect it in the direction of the affairs of the nation. One of these attitudes, Mr. Clay held throughout the greater part and all the latter portion of his life.

He led the administration party under Mr. Madison's presidency, throughout the trying scenes of the war, and upon him fell the brunt of that fierce congressional struggle. When the cowardice of some commanders, and the incapacity of all of them in the commencement of the war, had brought about a series of shameful disasters, which made every American blush for his country, Henry Clay stood forth in advance of all, to encourage, to console, and to rouse his countrymen to renewed efforts. Defeats, disasters, blunders and shame hung heavy upon the party in power and disheartened its followers, while the eloquent chiefs of the opposition poured forth a tempest of invective denunciation and ridicule against the feeble and futile efforts, in which the honor of the nation was sullied, and its strength lost. But the fiercer roared the storm, the sterner and higher pealed forth his trumpet voice to rally his broken forces, and marshal them anew for the struggle. To Henry Clay, far in front of all others, that administration owed its support through the trying scenes of that bitter contest.

He afterwards led the opposition through the terms of Jackson, Van Buren and Tyler. The unexampled dexterity, skill, patience, firmness and hardihood, with which, in despite of repeated defeats, he still maintained the war, must excite unmixed admiration in all who may study his career.

Courage is a high quality. Courage, perfect, multiform, and unquenchable, one of the highest and rarest. Of all moral qualities, it is the most essential to a great popular leader, most especially the leader of an opposition; and with that glorious gift nature had endowed Mr. Clay to extremity. There was no political responsibility which he ever avoided to take; there was no personal peril which he ever shunned to dare; there was no raw in the opposing party which he ever failed to strike. His heart never failed him in any extremity. He met every crisis promptly and at once, and in this he bore a remarkable contrast to almost every other politician of the age; none of his contemporaries approached him, in this bold, unhesitating promptness, but the man of his destiny, his great rival, Jackson, with whom, in so many other points, so close a parallel might be traced. In democracies, where the will of the people must be the ultimate law of the land, an uncertainty as to their decision is apt to induce politicians to wait and watch for indications of the probable result. The timid timeserver will fear to move; he will fear to take ground upon any question until some gleams of light break out from the mass of the people, to show him the probable path to safety. Fears, misgivings, uncertainty as to his personal interest, keep him silent and still, while the masses stumble onward to their decision without the light of a leader. But no faint-hearted doubts ever clouded his bright eye, when bold Harry Clay was in the field. Like the white plume of Murat, amid the smoke and the roar and the turmoil of battle, his lofty crest was ever glittering in the van for the rally of his host. He waited for no indications of popularity, for he received his inspirations from his own clear head and dauntless heart. His convictions were so strong, his self-confidence so unbounded, his will so indomitable, his genius so grand and lofty, that he seemed to bear, stamped upon his brow, nature's patent to command. He moved among his partisans with an imperial, never doubting, overpowering air of authority, which few were able to resist. He tolerated no insubordination. Opposition seemed to him to be rebellion, and obey or quit the camp, death or tribute, was his motto. And he rarely failed to force obedience. Though the powerful rally which was made against him among his associates in 1840 and '48, when fortune furnished the weapon to strike, exposed how much of secret dislike his despotic will had banded against him, yet

it was generally beaten down to submission. His ablest and haughtiest comrades would, in general, sullenly obey. "Willing to wound, but yet afraid to strike." When in 1832, he wheeled short upon his footsteps with his compromise bill upon the tariff, he carried with him the great bulk of his partisans in Congress, and the whole of them in the country, though directly committed to the support of that measure. In 1825, he carried with him his friends from Ohio, Missouri and Kentucky, for Mr. Adams, against Gen. Jackson, though with that vote, political destruction loomed up darkly in their front. Nor was it necessary that the question should lie in his path to make him meet it. He spoke out bold and free on all points in front or around him, far or near. In 1825, he was Secretary of State, and not necessarily involved in the ephemeral domestic politics of his State. Kentucky was boiling like a mighty caldron upon the subject of her relief laws. True to his nature, Mr. Clay spoke out clear and strong in behalf of justice and sound policy against the current of an overpowering majority. Under the same circumstances he took the same responsibility two years afterwards, upon the question of the old and new courts. This unhesitating and honest audacity necessarily entailed upon him many temporary disasters, but he always came up again fresh and strong. Like the fabled wrestler of antiquity, he rose from his mother earth stronger in his rebound than before his fall. Overwhelmed with calumny, he encountered a defeat in 1828, which would have broken the heart and blighted the fame of any other popular leader in the nation. Even Kentucky, the last covert of the hunted stag, was beaten from his grasp; yet he still made head, banded his broken forces, and four years afterwards again met his destiny in the same man. He encountered a defeat terrible and overwhelming, yet he stood under it erect and lofty as a tower. He had now left the retirement, from whence as a general he had marshalled his array, and had come down into the arena of the halls of Congress to strike, as well as order. And in the tremendous struggles of those stormy sessions, the battle of the giants, most gloriously did he lead the assault. It is inspiring to see how manfully he upheld the day. The repeated disasters which had crushed the hope and cowed the spirit of his partisans, broke vainly upon his haughty front. Defiance, stern and high, blazed in every feature, and war to the knife in every word. It was a brave

sight to see how gallantly he would dash into the melee, deal his crashing blows right and left among Van Buren, Benton, Forsyth and Wright; trample the wretched curs of party into the dust beneath his feet, and strike with all his strength full at the towering crest of Jackson.

Nor was it only in the bold and stern qualities of the party leader that he excelled: he could be winning and gentle too. While there was any hope of winning an opponent to the support of a measure, no man was more conciliating; while his partisans would obey, no man was more kind and gentle; and his high strung nature rendered his courtesy more attractive than the most dexterous flattery of other men. As instances of this skill, I may mention that he twice carried through his land bill against a dead majority in both houses; that he carried through his Missouri compromise, when at first the effort seemed hopeless; and that he won a passage for his bank bills in 1832 and '41, with a minority of supporters in the first instance, and with an uncertain, hesitating, unreliable majority in the last.

He was patient too, and could bide his time. In 1840, intestine commotion first appeared in his party, and he first met formidable and organized resistance to his will. He had for years fought out every campaign, as the leader of the opposition; his tactics had been brilliant, dexterous and admirable. The party in power was broken down, and he thought he saw himself close upon the long delayed fruition of all his hopes. The bright crown of glory which had so long glittered before his eyes, but to elude his grasp, was now within his reach. But another was selected to wear, when he had won it. Another was chosen to reap the harvest, which he had worked and watched, and tended. Then, for the first time, he met, what he felt to be, rebellion in his camp. Then, for the first time, he saw his standard deserted. His own appreciation of the services he had rendered his party, was strong and intense; and under so crushing a blow, a fiery, impetuous man might be expected to commit some imprudence. Doubtless, his heart beat thick with a sense of injustice, and his blood boiled in resentment. Yet he betrayed nothing of it, at least, not in public. The great party leader knew how to bide his time. He bowed gracefully to the decision, threw himself cordially into the movement, and was still the recognized chief of the host which mustered under the banner of another. His was the power behind the throne, greater than the

throne itself. Four years afterwards, he reaped the fruit of his prudence and his patience. He was supported with zeal and unanimity by those, who before had struck him down, and certainly nothing but the mine which was so suddenly sprung beneath his feet, prevented his triumph. After a close and most desperate struggle, he fell again, and apparently for ever. Yet, even after this apparently final blow, another effort was made, which most strikingly illustrates his character, and displayed upon a broad ground his prodigious power over men, and his buoyant, confident, sanguine, unbreakable spirit. When he was struck down in 1844, it seemed that his race was run. His defeats had been so numerous and continued, he had been so long in the public eye, he was so far advanced in years, the rivals of his middle age, Adams, Jackson, Crawford, had all passed away, and he seemed to be of a former generation. The public heart felt that his career was closed. The old make way for the young, and a new race had arisen. Taylor's victories had arrested the public mind, and the veteran statesman of Ashland, was forgotten; yet, he attempted to stem the tide of victory in the very fullness of its power. His control over men was so prodigious, he bestirred himself so vigorously, he struck so hard and true to his mark, that, with most of his close friends directly committed against him, and in spite of the general sense of the public, he scarcely failed to win. None but a spirit as dauntless as his own, would have dared the struggle. None but a power so great, could have made it.

As a statesman, undoubtedly, Mr. Clay was entitled to the very highest rank among all his contemporaries. It has been generally conceded, that his learning was not profound or various. Of science, in its limited sense, he knew but little, and of the lighter and less important branches of study and accomplishment, still less. It is said, that he cared nothing for literature, had never searched deeply into history; and it is remarkable, that though at one time a minister abroad, and for four years as Secretary of State, in constant relations and intercourse with foreign envoys of every nation, he spoke no language but his own. But he knew thoroughly that which it most imported him to know. He was profoundly versed in the theory and practices of our own government, and in a knowledge of the powers of each branch of it. He knew intimately and to the bottom, the connection, political and commercial of America with all

other nations. He knew perfectly the relation which each part of the country bore to the other and he understood profoundly the character, genius and wants of the American people. There was nothing sectional in his policy. His broad and comprehensive genius held in its vision the interest of the whole nation, and his big American heart throbbed for it all. He was intensely American in all his thoughts and all his feelings. To cherish the interest and the glory, and to build up the power of his country and his whole country, was the aim of all his policy and the passion of his life. No candid reader, who may study his career, can deny, that on all great occasions, he was not only purely patriotic, but eminently self-sacrificing. Far brighter examples of this patriotic spirit, will at once occur to all who are familiar with his career; but at this moment, I will only allude to the instances in which he took ground upon Kentucky state politics, which I cited as examples of his unhesitating boldness, when I was discussing his character as a party leader. Like all other true statesmen, his ideas were all relative, not absolute. He was in no degree a man of one idea. He was not wedded peremptorily and at all hazards to any measure, or any principle. He understood the policy of a nation, not as a fixed mathematical theorem, where under all circumstances and at all times, every result but one must be wrong; but as the practical science of fitting measures to the occasion, to necessity, and to the times. The best practical good which could be secured, was his aim, and under some circumstances, he would maintain, what, under a different condition of affairs, he would oppose. Without discussing the philosophical soundness of his political economy, or the correctness of all his measures, it may be stated, with truth, that, in them all, he looked to the integrity and independence, political and commercial, of the nation. The energy of his support of it, gave to him the rank of the champion of the protective tariff policy, though it was established before he came into political life: and his arguments in its favor, principally turn upon the maintenance of the commercial independence of the country. Yet, he was not wedded to it; and when its continuance menaced danger to the country, he himself led the way in pulling it down.

The monument to his memory upon the Cumberland road, bears testimony to his efforts in behalf of national works of internal improvement. He was also the author

of some important, and of some great and vital measures. He originated the scheme for the distribution among the States, of the public lands; he was the author of the Missouri compromise, and of the adjustment of the last stormy agitation of the slavery subject. These three measures were his own. They were struck off in the mint of his own mind. The first of these measures must be criticised, both as the movement of a party leader and a statesman, and with regard to the condition of things at the time, to understand its real merit, and to deal justice to its author. Shortly after the revolution, in the magnanimous spirit of that immortal age, the States ceded the lands to the general government, as a security for the payment of the national debt. That debt was nearly satisfied, when Mr. Clay's measure was devised, and the treasury was overflowing with revenue. It was the general sense of all parties, that the land fund should be withdrawn from the current support of the general government; and Congress was overrun with schemes to squander it. Some of the States asserted the monstrous heresy of a title to all, within their limits, by right of their sovereignty. Propositions for grants to States, companies and individuals were rife in each hall, and, probably, by no other movement would it have been possible to rescue and preserve, for the benefit of the Union, that immense fund from squandering dissipation. Considered without reference to the schemes of abandonment, which it was necessary to oppose, the measure does not appear to be founded on philosophical soundness and policy. In the United States, we have two circles of government, with a common constituency. The State and Federal governments are organs of the same people. They have separate and distinct powers, different circles and measures of authority and action, but a common, and the same constituency. Both governments are mere abstractions, while the living, breathing power, is the people and the same people. The same men are citizens of one government and the other. The same people bear the burden, pay the revenue, and enjoy the benefits of them both. Both governments are ideal existences, artificial organs of one common master. Therefore, it does not appear, when abstractly considered, to be sound or philosophical statesmanship, to give to the people, through one organ, a portion of the public revenue, when the same people will be compelled to pay it back again in a different shape to the other. It seems to be shifting a trea-

sure from one pocket to the other, with some loss on the passage.

But considered as a movement to prevent that great fund from being squandered, it was the stroke of a statesman, and as the tactics of a party leader the conception was most dexterous. The country was upon the eve of a presidential election, and the disposition of the land fund was to the candidates a most perilous and embarrassing question. Mr. Clay's opponents in the Senate, constituting a majority, determined to complicate him with the subject, and in spite of the remonstrances and votes of himself and his friends, they referred it to the committee upon Manufactures, of which he was chairman,—the last committee in the House to which the subject was appropriate and germane. This disposal of the subject, unjust as it was, compelled him to take it up. If he favored or opposed any of the numerous grants for various purposes, somewhere in the nation, loss to him would ensue. If he favored the proposition to cede the lands to the new States, he disgusted the old. If he opposed it, he offended the new. But the invention of the old party leader came to his rescue, and as his return blow, he conceived the counterstroke of a distribution among all the States.

On the two other great occasions, when sectional excitement shook the Union to its centre, to which I have referred, he appeared as a mediator. He was the author of the Missouri Compromise, and of the adjustment measures of the stormy session of 1850. The completely relative cast of all his political ideas, the total absence from his character of fanaticism upon any opinion or principle, eminently fitted him for a mediator, and upon all dangerous questions he always acted that part. Whenever conflicting interests or opinions menaced the integrity of the Union, he stood forth as the harbinger and the champion of peace and conciliation. He saw the wretched condition of the miserable little republics of South America, feeble, demoralized and contemptible, at war with each other, trampled upon by every European power, and despised by the world: he was a member of a great nation; he loved his country and his whole country, from North to South, from the big lakes to the gulf, from ocean to ocean, from the sunrise to the sunset, and every feeling of his heart, every thought of his brain, revolted at dismemberment. It is enough to say, in eulogy of those measures, and it should immortalize the great statesman who conceived them, that both the great divis-

ions of the American people have adopted them both, as a part of their political creed.

Doubtless some portion of his influence in the adjustment of those perilous questions arose from the entirely moderate and conservative character of his opinions upon that subject, and from the peculiarity of his position. He was a native and a representative of a Slave State; he had never lived any where else; and while unflinchingly true, at all times and upon all points, to the rights of the Southern States, yet he considered slavery as a great though unavoidable evil. But he was in no degree impassioned and blinded in regard to it. He looked at the subject calmly and without exaggeration; not through the magnifying glass of religious fanaticism or distorted philanthropy, but with the calm eye of a practical statesman. He maintained the policy of gradual emancipation on both occasions that the subject was agitated in Kentucky, openly and vigorously; contending that the great numerical preponderance of the whites over the blacks in that State rendered their gradual emancipation and removal safe and easily attainable. At the same time he always declared that he considered all such schemes to be utterly impracticable in the planting States; and if a citizen of one of them, would oppose them all, because the numbers of the blacks would render their removal impossible, and their continual presence disadvantageous and perilous to the whites. He favored emancipation in Kentucky, while farther South he declared he considered it utterly impracticable. These views he urged and amplified at length, not only in the discussion of the question in his own State, but also in the United States Senate, while discussing the reception of petitions for the abolition of slavery in the District of Columbia. This position might also be referred to, as another illustration of the practical and completely relative character of all his political ideas. Doubtless, as an abstract proposition, considered without reference to its inevitable existence or the perilous consequences of its cessation, he was opposed to slavery; for liberty was the passion of his life. His own country and his own countrymen were the first and the principal object in his thoughts and in his heart; but his broad and extended philanthropy embraced the world. Even the degraded African slave, separated from his own race by a wide and impassable gulf, found in him a well-wisher to his moral and mental elevation, when it could occur safely in a different land and another clime. Where-

ever abroad, freedom found a votary, that votary met in him a champion. When Greece, the classic land of Greece,—the fountain of refinement, the birthplace of eloquence and poetry, and liberty,—when Greece awoke from the long slumber of ages, and beat back the fading Crescent to its native East,—when Macedon at last called to mind the feats of her conquering boy, and the Spartan again struck in for the land which had bred him, in Henry Clay's voice the words of cheering rolled over the blue waters, from the far west, as the greeting of the New World to the Old. When Mexico, and our sister republics of the extreme South, shook off the rotted yoke of the fallen Spaniard, and freedom's face for one brief moment gleamed under the pale light of the Southern Cross, it was he who spoke out again to cheer and to rouse its champions. The regenerated Greek, the dusky Mexican, the Peruvian mountaineer,—all, who would strike one blow for liberty, found in him a friend and an advocate. His words of cheering swept over the plains of Marathon, and came ringing back from the peaks of the Andes. But that voice is now stilled, and his bright eye closed forever. He has gone from our midst, and the wailing of grief which rose from the nation, and the plumage of mourning which shrouded its cities, its halls and its altars, attest his countrymen's sense of their loss. He has gone, and gone in glory. From us rises the dirge: with him floats the pæan of triumph. By a beautiful decree and poetical justice of destiny, it was fated that the last effort of the Union's great champion should be made in behalf of the Union, in its last great extremity. He passed off the stage as became the Great Pacificator. His dying effort was worthy of and appropriate to him. When the fountains of the great deep of the public mind were broken up, and the fierce passions of sectional animosity tore over it, as the storms sweep over the ocean, it was from his voice that the words of soothing came forth, "Peace, be still." It was his last battle, and the gallant veteran fought it out with the power and the fire of his prime. The expiring light of life, though flickering in its last beams, blazed up to the fullness of its meridian lustre. There was no fading away of intellect, or gradual decay of body. Minds like his, and souls so fiery, are cased in frames of steel, and when they fall at last, they fall at once. The Union was not compelled to blush for the decay of the Union's great champion. Age had not crumbled the stately dignity of his form, nor reduced his manly

intellect to the imbecility of a second childhood. He faded away into no feeble twilight; he sunk down to no dim sunset,—but sprang out of life in the bright blaze of meridian fullness. He passed down into the valley of the shadow of death with all his glory unclouded, with all his laurels fresh and green around him. Not a spot obscures the lustre of his crest; not a sprig has been torn from his chaplet, “The dead Douglas has won the field.” His dying ear rung with the applause of his country, and the hosannas of a nation’s gratitude. Death has given to him the empire in the hearts of his countrymen, not fully granted to the living man,—and although it was not decreed that the first honors of the nation should await him, its last blessings will cluster around his name. His memory needs no monument. He wants no mausoleum of stone or marble to imprison his sacred dust. Let him rest amid the tokens of the freedom he so much loved. Let him sleep on, where the whistling of the tameless winds,—the ceaseless roll of the murmuring waters,—the chirping of the wild bird,—and all which speaks of Liberty, may chant his eternal lullaby. Peace be with thy soul, Henry Clay; may the earth lie light upon you, and the undying laurel of glory grow green over thy grave.







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