Oration of George Bancroft in Commemoration of the Life and Services of Andrew Jackson, delivered at the East Front of the Capitol in the City of Washington, June 27, 1845.

The men of the American revolution are no more. The age of creative power has passed away. The last surviving signer of the Declaration of Indepenpence has long since left the earth. Washington lies near his own Potomac, surrounded by his own family and servants. Adams, the colossus of independence, reposes in the remotest grave yard of his native region. Jefferson sleeps on the heights of his own Monticello, whence his eye overlooked his beloved Virginia. Madison, the last survivor of the men who made our constitution, lives only in our hearts. But who shall say that the heroes, in whom the image of God shone most brightly, do not live forever? They were filled with the vast conceptions which called America into being; they lived for those conceptions; and their deeds praise them.

We are met to commemorate the virtues of one who shed his blood for our independence, took part in winning the territory and forming the early institutions of the West, and was imbued with all the great ideas which constitute the moral force of our country. On the spot where he gave his solemn fealty to the people—here, where he pledged himself before the world to freedom, to the constitution and to the laws—we meet to pay our tribute to the memory of the last great name, which gathers round itself all the associations that form the glory of America.

South Carolina gave a birth-place to Andrew Jackson. On its remote frontier, far up on the forest-clad banks of the Catawba, in a region where the settlers were just beginning to cluster, his eye first saw the light. There his infancy sported in the ancient forests, and his mind was nursed to freedom by their influence. He was the youngest son of an Irish emigrant, of Scottish origin, who, two years after the great war of Frederic of Prussia, fled to America for relief from indigence and oppression. His birth was in 1767, at a time when the people of our land were but a body of dependent colonists, scarcely more than two millions in number, scattered along our immense coast, with no army, or navy, or union; and exposed to the attempts of England to control America by the aid of military force. His boyhood grew up in the midst of the contest with Great Britain. The first great political truth that reached his heart, was that all men are free and equal; the first great fact that beamed on his understanding, was his country's independence.

The strife, as it increased, came near the shades of his own upland residence. As a boy of thirteen, he witnessed the scenes of horror that accompany civil war; and when but a year older, with an elder brother, he shouldered his musket, and went forth to strike a blow for his country.

Joyous era for America and for humanity! But for him, the orphan boy, the events were full of agony and grief. His father was no more. His oldest brother fell a victim to the war of the revolution; another, his companion in arms, died of wounds received in their joint captivity; his mother went down to the grave a victim to grief and efforts to rescue her sons; and when peace came, he was alone in the world, with no kindred to cherish him and little inheritance but his own untried powers.

The nation which emancipated itself from British rule organizes itself: the confederation gives way to the constitution: the perfecting of that constiturion—that grand event of the thousand years of modern history—is accomplished; America exists as a people, gains unity as a government, and takes its place as a nation among the powers of the earth.

The next office to be performed by America, is the taking possession of the wilderness. The magnificent western valley cried out to the civilization of popular power, that it must be occupied by cultivated man.

Behold, then, our orphan hero, sternly earnest, consecrated to humanity from childhood by sorrow, having neither father, nor mother, nor sister, nor surviving brother, so young and yet so solitary, and therefore bound the more closely to collective man—behold him elect for his lot to go forth and assist in laying the foundations of society in the great valley of the Mississippi.

At the very time when Washington was pledging his own and future generations to the support of the popular institutions which were to be the light of the human race—at the time when the institutions of the old world were rocking to the centre, and the mighty fabric that had come down from the middle ages was falling in—the adventurous Jackson, in the radiant glory and boundless hope and confident intrepidity of twenty-one, plunged into the wilderness, crossed the great mountain barrier that divides the western waters from the Atlantic, followed the paths of the early hunters and fugitives, and, not content with the nearer neighborhood to his parent State, went still further and further to the west, till he found his home in the most beautiful region of the Cumberland. There, from the first, he was recognised as the great pioneer; under his courage, the coming emigrants were sure to find a shield.

The lovers of adventure began to pour themselves into the territory, whose delicious climate and fertile soil invited the presence of social man. The hunter with his rifle and his axe, attended by his wife and children; the herdsman driving the few cattle that were to multiply as they browsed; the cultivator of the soil—all came to the inviting region. Wherever the bending mountains opened a pass—wherever the buffaloes and beasts of the forests had made a trace, these sons of nature, children of humanity, in the highest sentiment of personal freedom, came to occupy the beautiful wilderness whose prairies blossomed everywhere profusely with wild flowers—whose woods in spring put to shame, by their magnificence, the cultivated gardens of man.

And now that these unlettered fugitives, educated only by the spirit of freedom, destitute of dead letter erudition, but sharing the living ideas of the age, had made their homes in the West—what would follow? Would they degrade themselves to ignorance and infidelity? Would they make the solitudes of the desert excuses for licentiousness? Would the doctrines of freedom lead them to live in unorganized society, destitute of laws and fixed institutions?

At a time when European society was becoming broken in pieces, scattered, disunited, and resolved into its elements, a scene ensued in Tennessee, than which nothing more beautifully grand is recorded in the annals of the race.

These adventurers in the wilderness longed to come together in organized society. The overshadowing genius of their time inspired them with good designs, and filled them with the counsels of wisdom. Dwellers in the forest, freest of the free, bound in the spirit, they came up by their representatives, on foot, on horseback, through the forest, along the streams, by the buffalo traces, by the Indian paths, by the blazed forest avenues, to meet in convention among the mountains of Knoxville, and frame for themselves a constitution. Andrew Jackson was there, the greatest man of them all—modest, bold, determined, demanding nothing for himself, and shrinking from nothing that his heart approved.

The convention came together on the eleventh day of January, 1796, and finished its work on the sixth day of February. How had the wisdom of the Old World vainly tasked itself to frame constitutions, that should, at least, be the subject of experiment; the men of Tennessee, in less than twenty-five days, perfected a fabric, which, in its essential forms, was to last forever. They came together, full of faith and reverence, of love to humanity, of confidence in truth. In the simplicity of wisdom, they framed their constitution, acting under higher influences than they were conscious of—

> They wrought in sad sincerity,
> Themselves from God they could not free;
> They builded better than they knew;
> The conscious stones to beauty grew.

In the instrument which they framed, they embodied their faith in God, and in the immortal nature of man. They gave the right of suffrage to every freeman; they vindicated the sanctity of reason, by giving freedom of speech and of the press; they reverenced the voice of God, as it speaks in the soul of man, by asserting the indefeasible right of man to worship the Infinite according to his conscience; they established the freedom and equality of elections; and they demanded from every future legislator, a solemn oath "never to consent to any act or thing whatever that shall have even a tendency to lessen the rights of the people."

These majestic lawgivers, wiser than the Solons, and Lycurguses, and Numas of the Old World—these prophetic founders of a State, who embodied in their constitution the sublimest truths of humanity, acted without reference to human praises.

They keep no special record of their doings; they took no pains to vaunt their deeds; and when their work was done, knew not that they had finished one of the sublimest acts ever performed among men. They left no record, as to whose agency was conspicuous, whose eloquence swayed, whose generous will predominated: nor should we know, but for tradition, confirmed by what followed among themselves.

The men of Tennessee were now a people; and they were to send forth a man to stand for them in the Congress of the United States—that avenue to glory—that home of eloquence—the citadel of popular power; and with one consent, they united in selecting the foremost man among their law-givers—Andrew Jackson.

The love of the people of Tennessee followed him to the American Congress; and he had served but a single term when the State of Tennessee made him one of the representatives of the American Senate, where he sat under the auspices of Jefferson.

Thus, when he was scarcely more than thirty, he had guided the settlement of the wilderness; swayed the deliberation of a people in establishing its fundamental laws, acted as the representative of that people, and again as the representative of his organized State, disciplined to a knowledge of the people and the power of the States; the associate of republican statesmen, the friend and companion of Jefferson.

The men who framed the constitution of the United States, many of them, did not know the innate life and self-preserving energy of their work. They feared that freedom could not endure, and they planned a strong government for its protection.

During his short career in Congress, Jackson showed his quiet, deep-seated, innate, intuitive faith in human freedom, and in the institutions of freedom. He was ever, by his voice and opinions, found among those who had confidence in humanity; and in the great division of minds, this child of the woodlands, this representative of forest life in the west, was found modestly and firmly on the side of freedom. It did not occur to him to doubt the right of man to the free development of his powers; it did not occur to him to place a guardianship over the people; it did not occur to him to seek to give durability to popular institutions, by giving to government a strength independent of popular will.

From the first, he was attached to the fundamental doctrines of popular power, and of the policy that favor it; and though his reverence for Washington surpassed his reverence for any human being, he voted against the address of the House of Representatives to Washington on his retirement, because its language appeared to sanction the final policy which he believed hostile to republican freedom.

During his period of service in the Senate, Jackson was elected major general by the brigadiers and field officers of the militia of Tennessee. Resigning his place in the Senate, he was made judge of the Supreme Court in law and equity; such was the confidence in his integrity of purpose, his clearness of judgment, and his vigor of will to deal justly among the turbulent who crowded into the new settlements of Tennessee.

Thus in the short period of nine years, Andrew Jackson was signalized by as many evidences of public esteem as could fall to the lot of man. The pioneer of the wilderness, the defender of its stations, he was their law-giver, the sole representative of the State in the Senate, the highest in military command, the highest in judicial office. He seemed to be recognized as the first in love of liberty, the first in the science of legislation, in judgment, and integrity.

Fond of private life, he would have resigned the judicial office, but the whole country demanded his service. "Nature," they cried, "never designed that your powers of thought and independence of mind should be lost in retirement." But after a few years, relieving himself from the cares of the bench, he gave himself to the activity and the independent life of a husbandman. He carried into retirement the fame of natural intelligence, and was cherished as a "prompt, frank, and ardent soul." His vigor of character constituted him first among all with whom he associated. A private man as he was, his name was familiarly spoken round every hearth-stone in Tennessee. Men loved to discuss his qualities. All discerned his power; and when the vehemence and impetuosity of his nature were observed upon, there were not wanting those who saw, beneath the blazing fires of his genius, the solidity of his judgment.

His hospitable roof sheltered the emigrant and the pioneer; and, as they made their way to their new homes, they filled the mountain sides and the valleys with his praise.

Connecting himself, for a season, with a man of business, Jackson soon discerned the misconduct of his associate. It marked his character, that he insisted, himself, on paying every obligation that had been contracted; and rather than endure the vassalage of debt, he instantly parted with the rich domain which his early enterprise had acquired—with his own mansion—with the fields which he himself had first tamed to the ploughshare—with the forest whose trees were as familiar to him as his friends—and chose rather to dwell, for a time, in a rude log-cabin, in the pride of independence and integrity.

On all great occasions, Jackson's influence was deferred to. When Jefferson had acquired for the country the whole of Louisiana, and there seemed some hesitancy, on the part of Spain, to acknowledge our possession, the services of Jackson were solicited by the national administration, and were not called into full exercise, only from the peaceful termination of the incidents that occasioned the summons.

In the long series of aggressions on the freedom of the seas, and the rights of the American flag, Jackson was on the side of his country, and the new maritime code of republicanism. In his inland home, where the roar of the breakers was never heard, and the mariner was never seen, he resented the continued aggression on our commerce and on our sailors.

When the continuance of wrong compelled the nation to resort to arms, Jackson, led by the instinctive knowledge of his own greatness, yet with a modesty that would have honored the most sensitive delicacy of nature, confessed his willingness to be employed on the Canada frontier; and it is a fact, that he aspired to the command to which Winchester was appointed. We may ask, what would have been the result, if the command of the northwestern army had, at the opening of the war been intrusted to a man, who, in action, was ever so fortunate, that his vehement will seemed to have made destiny capitulate to his designs!

The path of duty led him in another direction. On the declaration of war, twenty-five hundred volunteers had risen at his word to follow his standard; but, by countermanding orders from the seat of government, the movement was without effect.

A new and great danger hung over the West. The Indian tribes were to make one last effort to restore it to its solitude, and recover it for savage life. The brave, relentless Shawnees—who, from time immemorial, had strolled from the waters of the Ohio to the rivers of the Alabama—were animated by Tecumseh and his brother the Prophet, who spoke to them as with the voice of a Great Spirit, and roused the Creek nation to desperate massacres. Who has not heard of their terrible deeds, when their ruthless cruelty spared neither sex nor age! when the infant and its mother, the planter and his family, who had fled for refuge to the fortress, the garrison that capitulated—all were slain, and not a vestige of defence was left in the country? The cry of the west demanded Jackson for its defender; and though his arm was then fractured by a ball, and hung in a sling, he placed himself at the head of the volunteers of Tennessee, and resolved to terminate forever the hereditary struggle.

Who can tell the horrors of that campaign? Who can paint rightly the obstacles which Jackson overcame—mountains, the scarcity of untenanted forests, winter, the failure of supplies from the settlements, the insubordination of troops, mutiny, menaces of desertion? Who can measure the wonderful power over men, by which his personal prowess and attractive energy drew them in midwinter from their homes, across the mountains and morasses, and through trackless deserts? Who can describe the personal heroism of Jackson, never sparing himself, beyond any of his men encountering toil and fatigue, sharing every labor of the camp and of the march, foremost in every danger; giving up his horse to the invalid soldier, while he himself waded through the swamps on foot! None equalled him in power of endurance; and the private soldiers, as they found him passing them on the march, exclaimed, "he is as tough as the hickory." "Yes," they cried one to another, "there goes Old Hickory!"

Who can narrate the terrible events of the double battles of Emuckfaw, or the glorious victory of Tohopeka, where the anger of the General against the faltering was more appalling than the whoop and the rifle of the savage? Who can rightly conceive the field of Enotochopco, where the General, as he attempted to draw the sword to cut down a flying colonel who was leading a regiment from the field, broke again the arm which was but newly knit together; and, quietly replacing it in the sling, with his commanding voice arrested the flight of the troops, and himself led them back to victory!

In six short months of vehement action, the most terrible Indian war in our annals was brought to a close; the prophets were silenced; the consecrated region of the Creek nation reduced. Through scenes of blood, the avenging hero sought only the path of peace. Thus Alabama, a part of Mississippi, a part of his own Tennessee, and the highway to the Floridas, were his gifts to the Union. These were his trophies.

Genius as extraordinary as military events can call forth, was summoned into action in this rapid, efficient, and most fortunately conducted war.

Time would fail were I to track our hero down the watercourses of Alabama to the neighborhood of Pensacola. How he longed to plant the eagle of his country on its battlements!

Time would fail, and words be wanting, where I to dwell on the magical influence of his appearance in New Orleans. His presence dissipated gloom and dispelled alarm; at once he changed the aspect of despair into a confidence of security and a hope of acquiring glory. Every man knows the tale of the heroic, sudden, and yet deliberate daring which led him, on the night of the twenty-third of December, to precipitate his little army on his foes, in the thick darkness, before they grew familiar with their encampment, scattering dismay through veteran regiments of England, and defeating them, and arresting their progress by a far inferior force.

Who shall recount the counsels of prudence, the kindling words of eloquence, that gushed from his lips to cheer his soldiers, his skirmishes and battles, till that eventful morning when the day at Bunker's Hill had its fulfilment in the glorious battle of New Orleans, and American independence stood before the world in the majesty of victorious power?

These were great deeds for the nation: for himself he did a greater. Had not Jackson been renowned for the vehement impetuosity of his passions, for his defiance of other's authority, and the unbending vigor of his self-will? Behold the savior of Louisiana, all garlanded with victory, viewing around him the city he had preserved, the maidens and children whom his heroism had protected, stand in the presence of a petty judge, who gratifies his wounded vanity by an abuse of his judicial power. Every breast in the crowded audience heaves with indignation. He, the passionate, the impetuous—he whose power was to be humbled, whose honor questioned, whose laurels tarnished, alone stood sublimely serene; and when the craven judge trembled, and faltered, and dared not proceed, himself, the arraigned one, bade him take courage, and stood by the law even in the moment when the law was made the instrument of insult and wrong on himself—at the moment of his most perfect claim to the highest civic honors.

His country, when it grew to hold many more millions, the generation that then was coming in, has risen up to do homage to the noble heroism of that hour. Woman, whose feeling is always right, did honor from the first to the purity of his heroism. The people of Louisiana, to the latest hour, will cherish his name as their greatest benefactor.

The culture of Jackson's mind had been much promoted by his services and associations in the war. His discipline of himself as the chief in command, his intimate relations with men like Livingston, the wonderful deeds in which he bore a part, all matured his judgment and mellowed his character.

Peace came with its delights; once more the country rushed forward in the development of its powers; once more the art of industry healed the wounds that war had inflicted; and from commerce and agriculture and manufactures, wealth gushed abundantly under the free activity of unrestrained enterprise.

And Jackson returned to his own fields and his own pursuits, to cherish his plantation, to care for his servants, to look after his stud, to enjoy the affection of a most kind and devoted wife, whom he respected with the gentlest deference, and loved with an almost miraculous tenderness.

And there he stood, like one of the mightiest forest trees of his own West, vigorous and colossal, sending its summit to the skies, and growing on its native soil in wild and inimitable magnificence, careless of beholders. From all parts of the country he received appeals to his political ambition, and the severe modesty of his well balanced mind turned them all aside. He was happy in his farm, happy in seclusion, happy in his family, happy within himself.

But the passions of the southern Indians were not allayed by the peace with Great Britain; and foreign emissaries were still among them, to inflame and direct their malignity. Jackson was called forth by his country to restrain the cruelty of the treacherous and unsparing Seminoles. It was in the train of the events of this war that he placed the American eagle on St. Mark's and above the ancient tower of St. Augustine. His deeds in that war, of themselves, form a monument to human power, to the celerity of his genius, to the creative fertility of his resources, his intuitive sagacity. As Spain, in his judgment, had committed aggression, he would have emancipated her islands; of the Havana, he caused the reconnoissance to be made, and, with an army of five thousand men, he stood ready to guaranty her redemption from colonial thraldom.

But when peace was restored, and his office was accomplished, his physical strength sunk under the pestilential influence of the climate, and, fast yielding to disease, he was borne in a litter across the swamps of Florida towards his home. It was Jackson's character that he never solicited aid from any one; but he never forgot those who rendered him service in the hour of need. At a time when all around him believed him near his end, his wife hastened to his side, and, by her tenderness and nursing care, her patient assiduity, and the soothing influence of devoted love, withheld him from the grave.

He would have remained quietly at his home in repose, but that he was privately informed, his good name was to be attainted by some intended congressional proceedings; he came, therefore, into the presence of the people's representatives at Washington, only to vindicate his name; and, when that was achieved, he was once more communing with his thoughts among the groves of the Hermitage.

It was not his own ambition which brought him again to the public view. The affection of Tennessee compelled him to resume a seat on the floor of the American Senate, and, after years of the intensest political strife, Andrew Jackson was elected President of the United States.

Far from advancing his own pretensions, he always kept them back, and had for years repressed the solicitations of his friends to become a candidate. He felt sensibly that he was devoid of scientific culture, and little familiar with letters; and he never obtruded his opinions or preferred claims to place. But, whenever his opinion was demanded, he was always ready to pronounce it; and whenever his country invoked his services, he did not shrink even from the station which had been filled by the most cultivated men our nation had produced.

Behold, then, the unlettered man of the West, the nursling of the wilds, the farmer of the Hermitage, little versed in books, unconnected by science with the tradition of the past, raised by the will of the people to the highest pinnacle of honor, to the central post in the civilization of republican freedom, to the station where all the nations of the earth would watch his actions—where his words would vibrate through the civilized world, and his spirit be the moving star to guide the nations. What policy will he pursue? What wisdom will he bring with him from the forest? What rules of duty will he evolve from the oracles of his own mind?

The man of the West came as the inspired prophet of the West: he came as one free from the bonds of hereditary or established custom; he came with no superior but conscience, no oracle but his native judgment; and, true to his origin and his education—true to the conditions and circumstances of his advancement, he valued right more than usage; he reverted from the pressure of established interest to the energy of first principles.

We tread on ashes where the fire is not yet extinguished; yet not to dwell on his career as President, were to leave out of view the grandest illustrations of his magnanimity.

The legislation of the United States had followed the precedents of the legislation of European monarchies; it was the office of Jackson to lift the country out of the European forms of legislation, and to open to it a career resting on American sentiment and American freedom. He would have freedom every where—freedom under the restraints of right; freedom of industry, of commerce, of mind, of universal action; freedom, unshackled by restrictive privileges, unrestrained by the thraldom of monopolies.

The unity of his mind and his consistency were without a parallel. With natural dialects, he developed the political doctrines that suited every emergency, with a precision and a harmony that no theorist could hope to equal. On every subject in politics—I speak but a fact—he was thoroughly and profoundly and immovably radical; and would sit for hours, and in a continued flow of remark make the application of his principles to every interpretation of the constitution.

His expression of himself was so clear, that his influence pervaded not our land only, but all America and all mankind. They say that, in the physical world, the magnetic fluid is so diffused, that its vibrations are discernible simultaneously in every part of the globe. So it is with the element of freedom. And as Jackson developed its doctrines from their source in the mind of humanity, the popular sympathy was moved and agitated throughout the world, till his name grew every where to be the symbol of popular power.

Himself the witness of the ruthlessness of savage life, he planned the removal of the Indian tribes beyond the limits of the organized States; and it is the result of his determined policy that the region east of the Mississippi has been transferred to the exclusive possession of cultivated man.

A pupil of the wilderness, his heart was with the pioneers of American life towards the setting sun. No American statesman has ever embraced within his affections a scheme so liberal for the emigrants as that of Jackson. He longed to secure to them, not pre-emption rights only, but more than pre-emption rights. He longed to invite labor to take possession of the unoccupied fields without money and without price; with no obligation except the perpetual devotion of itself by allegiance to its country. Under the beneficent influence of his opinions the sons of misfortune, the children of adventure, find their way to the uncultivated west. There in some wilderness glade, or in the thick forest of the fertile plain, or where the prairies most sparkle with flowers, they, like the wild bee, which sets them the example of industry, may choose their home, mark the extent of their possessions by driving stakes or blazing trees, shelter their log cabin with boughs and turf, and teach the virgin soil to yield itself to the ploughshare. Theirs shall be the soil, theirs the beautiful farms which they teach to be productive. Come, children of sorrow! you on whom the Old World frowns; crowd fearlessly to the forests; plant your homes in confidence, for the country watches over you; your children grow around you as hostages, and the wilderness at your bidding, surrenders its grandeur of useless luxuriance to the beauty and loveliness of culture. Yet beautiful and lovely as is this scene, it still by far falls short of the ideal which lived in the affections of Jackson. His heart was ever with the pioneer, his policy ever favored the diffusion of independent freeholds throughout the laboring classes of the land.

It would be a sin against the occasion, were I to omit to commemorate the deep devotedness of Jackson to the cause and to the rights of labor. It was for the welfare of the laboring classes that he defied all the storms of political hostility. He longed to secure to labor the fruits of its own industry; and he unceasingly opposed every system which tended to lessen their reward, or which exposed them to be defrauded of their dues. The laborers may bend over his grave with affectionate sorrow; for never, in the tide of time, did a statesman exist more heartily resolved to protect them in their rights, and to advance their happiness. For their benefit, he opposed partial legislation; for their benefit, he resisted all artificial methods of controlling labor, and subjecting it to capital. It was for their benefit that he loved freedom in all its forms—freedom of the individual in personal independence, freedom of the States as separate sovereignties. He never would listen to counsels which tended to the centralization of power. The true American system presupposes the diffusion of freedom—organized life in all the parts of the American body politic, as there is organized life in every part of the human system. Jackson was deaf to every counsel which sought to subject general labor to a central will. His vindication of the just principles of the constitution derived its sublimity from his deep conviction that this strict construction is required by the lasting welfare of the great laboring classes of the United States.

To this end, Jackson revived the tribunical power of the veto, and exerted it against the decisive action of both branches of Congress, against the votes, the wishes, the entreaties of personal and political friends. "Show me," was his reply to them, "show me an express clause in the constitution authorizing Congress to take the business of State Legislatures out of their hands." "You will ruin us all," cried a firm partisan friend, "you will ruin your party and your own prospects." "Providence," answered Jackson, "will take care of me;" and he persevered.

In proceeding to discharge the debt of the United States—a measure thoroughly American—Jackson followed the example of his predecessors; but he followed it with the full consciousness that he was rescuing the country from the artificial system of finance which had prevailed throughout the world; and with him it formed a part of a system by which American legislation was to separate itself more and more effectually from European precedents, and develope itself more and more, according to the vital principles of our political existence.

The discharge of the debt brought with it, of necessity, a great reduction of the public burdens, and brought, of necessity, into view, the question, how far America should follow, of choice, the old restrictive system of high duties, under which Europe had oppressed America; or how far she should rely on her own freedom and enterprise and power, defying the competition, and seeking the markets, and receiving the products of the world.

The mind of Jackson on this subject reasoned clearly, and without passion. In the abuses of the system of revenue by excessive imposts, he saw evils which the public mind would remedy; and, inclining with the whole might of his energetic nature to the side of revenue duties, he made his earnest but tranquil appeal to the judgment of the people.

The portions of country that suffered most severely from a system of legislation, which, in its extreme character as it then existed, is now universally acknowledged to have been unequal and unjust, were less tranquil; and rallying on the doctrines of freedom, which made our government a limited one, they saw in the oppressive acts an assumption of power which was nugatory, because it was exercised, as they held, without authority from the people.

The contest that ensued was the most momentous in our annals. The greatest minds of America engaged in the discussion. Eloquence never achieved sublimer triumphs in the American Senate than on those occasions. The country became deeply divided; and the antagonist elements were arrayed against each other under forms of clashing authority menacing civil war; the freedom of the several States was invoked against the power of the United States; and under the organization of a State convention, the reserved rights of the people were summoned to display their energy, and balance the authority and neutralize the legislation of the central government. The States were agitated with prolonged excitement; the friends of freedom throughout the world looked on with divided sympathies, praying that the union of the States might be perpetual, and also that the commerce of the world might be free.

Fortunately for the country, and fortunately for mankind, Andrew Jackson was at the helm of State, the representative of the principles that were to allay excitement, and to restore the hopes of peace and freedom. By nature, by impulse, by education, by conviction, a friend to personal freedom—by education, political sympathies, and the fixed habit of his mind, a friend to the rights of the States—unwilling that the liberty of the States should be trampled under foot—unwilling that the constitution should lose its vigor or be impaired, he rallied for the constitution: and in its name be published to the world, "THE UNION: IT MUST BE PRESERVED." The words were a spell to hush evil passion, and to remove oppression. Under his guiding influence, the favored interests, which had struggled to perpetuate unjust legislation, yielded to the voice of moderation and reform; and every mind that had for a moment contemplated a rupture of the States, discarded it forever. The whole influence of the past was invoked in favor of the constitution; from the council chambers of the fathers, who moulded our institutions—from the hall where American independence was declared, the clear, loud cry was uttered—"the Union: it must be preserved." From every battle field of the revolution—from Lexington and Bunker Hill—from Saratoga and Yorktown—from the fields of Eutaw—from the cane-brakes that sheltered the men of Marion—the repeated, long prolonged echoes came up—"the Union: it must be preserved." From every valley in our land—from every cabin on the pleasant mountain sides—from the ships at our wharves—from the tents of the hunter in our westernmost prairies—from the living minds of living millions of American freemen—from the thickly coming glories of futurity—the shout went up like the sound of many waters, "the Union: it must be preserved." The friends of the protective system, and they who had denounced the protective system—the statesmen of the North, that had wounded the constitution in their love of centralism—the statesmen of the South, whose minds had carried to its extreme the theory of State rights—all conspired together; all breathed prayers for the perpetuity of the Union. Under the prudent firmness of Jackson—under the mixture of justice and general regard for all interests, the greatest danger to our institutions was turned aside, and mankind was encouraged to believe that our Union, like our freedom, is imperishable.

The moral of the great events of those days is this: that the people can discern right, and will make their way to a knowledge of right; that the whole human mind, and therefore with it the mind of the nation, has a continuous, ever improving existence; that the appeal from the unjust legislation of to-day must be made quietly, earnestly, perseveringly, to the more enlightened collective reason of to-morrow; that submission is due to the popular will, in the confidence that the people, when in error, will amend their doings; that in a popular government injustice is neither to be established by force, nor to be resisted by force; in a word, that the Union, which was constituted by consent, must be preserved by love.

It rarely falls to the happy lot of a statesman to receive such unanimous applause from the heart of a nation. Duty to the dead demands that, on this occasion, the course of measures should not pass unnoticed, in the progress of which, his vigor of character most clearly appeared, and his conflict with opposing parties was most violent and protracted.

From his home in Tennessee, Jackson came to the presidency resolved to lift American legislation out of the forms of English legislation, and to place our laws on the currency in harmony with the principles of our government. He came to the presidency of the United States resolved to deliver the government from the Bank of the United States, and to restore the regulation of exchanges to the rightful depository of that power—the commerce of the country. He had designed to declare his views on this subject in his inaugural address, but was persuaded to relinquish that purpose, on the ground that it belonged rather to a legislative message. When the period for addressing Congress drew near, it was still urged, that to attack the bank would forfeit his popularity and secure his future defeat. "It is not," he answered, "it is not for myself that I care." It was urged that haste was unnecessary, as the bank had still six unexpended years of chartered existence. "I may die," he replied, "before another Congress comes together, and I could not rest quietly in my grave, if I failed to do what I hold so essential to the liberty of my country." And his first annual message announced to the country that the bank was neither constitutional nor expedient. In this he was in advance of the friends about him, in advance of Congress, and in advance of his party. This is no time for the analysis of measures, or the discussion of questions of political economy: on the present occasion, we have to contemplate the character of the man.

Never, from the first moment of his administration to the last, was there a calm in the strife of parties on the subject of the currency, and never, during the whole period did he recede or falter. Always in advance of his party always having near him friends who cowered before the hardihood of his courage, he himself, throughout all the contest, was unmoved, from the first suggestion of the unconstitutionality of the Bank, to the moment when he himself, first of all, reasoning from the certain tendency of its policy, with singular sagacity predicted to unbelieving friends the coming insolvency of the Institution.

The storm throughout the country rose with unexampled vehemence. His opponents were not satisfied with addressing the public, or Congress, or his cabinet; they threw their whole force personally on him. From all parts men pressed around him, urging him, entreating him to bend. Congress was flexible; many of his personal friends faltered; the impetuous swelling wave rolled on, without one sufficient obstacle till it reached his presence; but as it dashed in its highest fury at his feet, it broke before his firmness. The commanding majesty of his will appalled his opponents and revived his friends. He, himself, had a proud consciousness that his will was indomitable. Standing over the rocks of the Rip Raps, and looking out upon the ocean, "Providence," said he to a friend, "Providence may change my determination; but man no more can do it than he can remove these Rip Raps, which have resisted the rolling ocean from the beginning of time." And though a panic was spreading through the land, and the whole credit system as it then existed was crumbling to pieces and crashing around him, he stood erect like a massive column, which the heaps of falling ruins could not break, nor bend, nor sway from its fixed foundation.

[At this point Mr. Bancroft turned to address the Mayor of the city of Washington; but finding him not present, he proceeded.]

People of the District of Columbia: I should fail of a duty on this occasion, if I did not give utterance to your sentiment of gratitude which followed General Jackson into retirement. Dwelling amongst you, he desired your prosperity. This beautiful city, surrounded by heights the most attractive, watered by a river so magnificent, the home of the gentle and the cultivated, not less than the seat of political power; this city, whose site Washington had selected, was dear to his affections; and if he had won your grateful attachment by adorning it with monuments of useful architecture, by establishing its credit, and relieving its burdens he regretted only that he had not the opportunity to have connected himself still more intimately with your prosperity.

As he prepared to take his final leave of the district, the mass of the population of this city, and the masses that had gathered from around, followed his carriage in crowds. All in silence stood near him, to wish him adieu; and as the cars started, and he displayed his gray hairs, as he lifted his hat in token of farewell, you stood around with heads uncovered, too full of emotion to speak, in solemn silence gazing on him as he departed, never more to be seen in your midst.

Behold the warrior and statesman, his work well done, retired to the Hermitage, to hold converse with his forests, to cultivate his farm, to gather around him hospitably his friends! Who was like HIM? He was stil the load star of the American people. His fervid thoughts, frankly uttered, still spread the flame of patriotism through the American breast; his counsels were still listened to with reverence; and, almost alone among statesmen, he in his retirement was in harmony with every onward movement of his time. His prevailing influences assisted to sway a neighboring nation to desire to share our institutions; his ear heard the footsteps of the coming millions; and his eye discerned in the dim distance the whitening sails that are to enliven the waters of the Pacific with the social sounds of our successful commerce.

Age had whitened his locks, and dimned his eye, and spread aronnd him the infirmities and venerable emblems of many years of toilsome service; but his heart beat as warmly as in his youth, and his courage was as firm as it had ever been in the day of battle. But while his affections were still for his friends and his country, his thoughts were already in a better world. That exalted mind, which in active life had always had unity of perception and will, which in action had never faltered from doubt, and which in council had always reverted to first principles and general laws, now gave itself up to communing with the Infinite. He was a believer; from feeling, from experience, from conviction. Not a shadow of scepticism ever dimmed the lustre of his mind. Proud philosopher! will you smile to know that Andrew Jackson perused reverently his Psalter and Prayer book and Bible! Know that Andrew Jackson had faith in the eternity of truth, in the imperishable power of popular freedom, in the destinies of humanity, in the virtues and capacity of the people, in his country's institutions, in the being and overruling Providence—of a merciful and ever-living God.

The last moment of his life on earth is at hand. It is the Sabbath of the Lord; the brightness and beauty of summer clothe the fields around him: nature is in her glory; but the sublimest spectacle on that day, on earth, was the victory of his unblenching spirit over death itself.

When he first felt the hand of death upon him, "May my enemies," he cried, "find peace; may the liberties of my country endure forever."

When his exhausted system, under the excess of pain, sank for a moment, from debility, "Do not weep," said he to his adopted daughter; "my sufferings are less than those of Christ upon the cross;" for he, too, as a disciple of the cross, could have devoted himself, in sorrow, for mankind. Feeling his end near, he would see all his family once more, and he spake to them, one by one, in words of tenderness and affection. His two little grand children were absent at Sunday school. He asked for them, and as they came he prayed for them, and kissed them; and blessed them. His servants were then admitted: they gathered, some in his room, and some on the outside of the house, clinging to the windows, that they might gaze and hear. And that dying man, thus surrounded, in a gush of fervid eloquence, spoke with inspiration of God, of the Redeemer, of salvation through the atonement, of immortality, of heaven. For he ever thought that pure and undefiled religion was the foundation of private happiness and the bulwark of republican institutions. Having spoken of immortality in perfect consciousness of his own approaching end, he bade them all farewell. "Dear children," such were his final words, "dear children, servants, and friends, I trust to meet you all in heaven, both white and black—all, both white and black." And having borne his testimony to immortality, he bowed his mighty head, and without a groan, the spirit of the greatest man of his age escaped to the bosom of his God.

In life, his career had been like the blaze of the sun in the fierceness of its noon day glory; his death was lovely as the mildest sunset of a summer's evening, when the sun goes down in tranquil beauty without a cloud. To the majestic energy of an indomitable will, he joined a heart capable of the purest and most devoted love, rich in the tenderest affections. On the bloody battle field of Topoeca, he saved an infant that clung to the breast of its dying mother: in the stormiest moment of his Presidency, at the imminent moment of decision, he paused in his way to give good counsel to a poor supplicant that had come up to him for succor. Of the strifes in which he was engaged in his earlier life, not one sprang from himself, but in every case he became involved by standing forth as the champion of the weak, the poor, and the defenceless, to shelter the gentle against oppression, to protect the emigrant against the avarice of the speculator. His generous soul revolted against the barbarous practise of duels, and by no man in the land has so many been prevented.

The sorrows of those that were near to him went deeply into his soul; and at the anguish of the wife whom he loved, the orphans whom he adopted, he would melt into tears, and weep and sob like a child.

No man in private life so possessed the hearts of all around him: no public man of this century ever returned to private life with such an abiding mastery over the affections of the people. No man with truer instincts received American ideas; no man expressed them so completely, or so boldly, or so sincerely. He was as sincere a man as ever lived. He was wholly, always, and altogether sincere and true.

Up to the last he dared do any thing that it was right to do. He united personal courage and moral courage beyond any man of whom history keeps a record. Before the nation, before the world, before coming ages, he stands forth the representative, for his generation of the American mind. And the secret of his greatness is this: by intuitive conception he shared and possessed all the creative ideas of his conntry and his time. He expressed them with dauntless intrepidity; he enforced them with an immoveable will; he executed them with an electric power that attracted and swayed the American people. The nation, in his time, had not one great thought, of which he was not the boldest and clearest expositor.

History does not describe the man that equalled him in firmness of nerve. Not danger, not an army in battle array, not wounds, not wide spread clamor, not age, not the anguish of disease, could impair in the least degree, the vigor of his steadfast mind. The heroes of antiquity would have contemplated with awe the unmatched hardihood of his character; and Napoleon, had he possessed his disinterested will, could never have been vanquished. Jackson never was vanquished. He was always fortunate. He conquered the wilderness; he conquered the savage; he conquered the bravest veterans trained in the battle fields of Europe; he conquered every where in statesmanship; and, when death came to get the mastery over him, he turned that last enemy aside as tranquilly as he had done the feeblest of his adversaries, and escaped from earth in the triumphant consciousness of immortality.

His body has its fit resting place in the great central valley of the Mississippi; his spirit rests upon our whole territory; it hovers over the vales of Oregon, and guards, in advance, the frontier of the Del Norte. The fires of party spirit are quenched at his grave. His faults and frailties have perished. Whatever of good he has done lives, and will live forever.

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The Battle of Aboukir.

Having landed Buonaparte and his army, Brueys lay moored in the form of a crescent, close along shore. His vastly superior force and the strength of the position (protected towards the northward by dangerous shoals, and towards the westward by the castles and batteries,) made him consider that position impregnable. He wrote, on the strength of this conviction, to Paris, to say that Nelson purposely avoided him. Was he undeceived when Hood, in the Zealous, making signal that the enemy was in sight, a cheer of anticipated triumph burst from every ship in the British fleet—that fleet which had swept the seas with bursting sails for six long weeks in search of its formidable foe, and now pressed to the battle as eagerly as if nothing but a rich and easy prize awaited them?

Nelson had long been sailing in battle-order, and he now only lay-to in the offing till the rearward ships should come up. The soundings of that dangerous Bay were unknown to him, but he knew that where there was room for a Frenchman to be at anchor, (to swing,) there must be room for an English ship to lie alongside (on either side) of him, and the closer the better. As his proud and fearless fleet came on, he hailed Hood, to ask his opinion as to whether he thought it would be advisable to commence the attack that night; and, receiving the answer that he longed for, the signal for "close battle" flew from his masthead. The delay thus caused to the Zealous gave Foley the lead, who showed the example of leading *inside* the enemy's line, and anchored by the stern alongside the second ship, thus leaving to Hood the first. The latter exclaimed to my informant, "Thank God, he has generously left to his old friend still to lead the van." Slowly and majestically, as the evening fell, the remainder of the fleet came on beneath a cloud of sail, receiving the fire of the castle and the batteries in portentous silence, only broken by the crash of spars and the boatswain's whistle, as each ship furled her sails calmly—as a sea-bird might fold its wings—and gliding tranquilly onward till she found her destined foe. Then her anchor dropped astern, and her fire burst from her bloody decks with a vehemence that showed how sternly it had been repressed till then.

The leading ships passed between the enemy and the shore, but when the admiral came up he led the remainder of the fleet along the seaward side—thus doubling on the Frenchman's line, and placing it in a defile of fire. The sun went down after Nelson anchored; and his rearward ships were only guided through the darkness and the dangers of that formidable Bay by the Frenchman's fire flashing fierce welcome as each enemy arrived, and hovered along the line, coolly scrutinizing where he could draw most of that fire on himself. The Bellerophon, with gallant recklessness, fastened on the gigantic Orient, and was soon crushed and scorched into a wreck by the terrible artillery of batteries more than double the number of her own. But, before she drifted helplessly to leeward, *she had done her work*—the French admiral's ship was on fire; and, through the roar of battle, a whisper went that for a moment paralyzed every eager heart and hand. During that dread pause the fight was suspended—the very wounded ceased to groan—yet the burning ship continued to fire broadsides from her flaming decks, her gallant crew alone unawed by their approaching fate, and shouting their own requiem. At length—with the concentrated roar of a thousand battles—the explosion came; and the column of flame that shot upward into the very sky for a moment rendered visible the whole surrounding scene,—from the red flags aloft to the reddened decks below—the wide shore, with all its swarthy crowds—and the far-off glittering sea, with the torn and dismantled fleets. Then darkness and silence came again, only broken by the shower of blazing fragments in which that brave ship fell upon the waters. Till that moment Nelson was ignorant how the battle went. He knew that every man was doing his duty, but he knew not how successfully; he had been wounded in the forehead, and found his way unnoticed to the deck in the suspense of the coming explosion. Its light was a fitting lamp for eye like his to read by. He saw his own proud flag still floating everywhere, and at the same moment his crew recognized their wounded chief. The wild cheer with which they welcomed him was drowned in the renewed roar of the artillery, and the fight continued until near dawn.

Morning rose upon an altered scene. The sun had set upon as proud a fleet as ever sailed from the gay shores of France; torn and blackened hulls now only marked the position which they had then occupied; and where their admiral's ship *had* been, the blank sea sparkled in the sunshine. Two ships of the line and two frigates escaped, to be captured soon afterwards; but within the Bay the tri-color was flying on board the Tonnant alone. As the Theseus approached to attack her, attempting to capitulate, she hoisted a flag of truce. "Your battle-flag, or none," was the stern reply, as her enemy rounded to, and the matches glimmered over her line of guns. Slowly and reluctantly—like an expiring hope—that pale flag fluttered down from her lofty spars, and the next that floated there was the banner of Old England.

From the Salem (West Jersey) Standard.

A Scene in Real Life.

When the bard of Avon denominated the world a stage, and the people its actors, he merely spoke with his usual truthfulness. How many little dramas are every day enacted in private life that need no touches of romance—no gas lights and tinsel to give them absorbing interest: but which become obvious from the fact that all are too deeply engaged in the parts of their own play to give heed, or take interest sufficient to note, those of their neighbors. Here and there the more prominent fragments of a piece are observed, but generally so disconnected as to cause but a passing remark. One of these fragments from a life replete with misfortune and poverty has recently been the occasion of some conversation in this town and we give it to our readers as it was told to us:—

A family of Catholic Germans, consisting of the parents and four small children, settled in Salem last year and from disinclination to permit their wants to be made known, existed through the winter in the most abject poverty. About the commencement of Spring the husband sickened and died, and the family thereby became reduced to the last extremity of wretchedness. The grief of the widow at her bereavement was intense, and for a time she refused to be comforted. Alone, in a foreign land, and (with the exception of her helpless children) surrounded by none but strange faces, it seemed as if the last crowning misfortune had filled her cup of misery to the brim. As there is no Catholic Cemetery in this neighborhood, the Friends, with their usual kindness, offered the body of the deceased a resting place in their burying ground. This was gladly accepted, but a new difficulty arose.

The widow, stongly imbued with the principles of the sect to which she had always belonged, would not consent to its interment without the formula of the Catholic burial service. There being no priest of her persuasion at hand, she applied to a worthy citizen to perform the ceremony; but he replied that he could not conscientiously act in the matter. Misconstruing his scruples, she exclaimed with earnestness—"Oh do!—The Pope will absolve you!" He endeavored to prevail upon her to apply to some one else, but without effect. At length he asked, if it was not, under the circumstances, entirely requisite that a priest perform the ceremony, why *she*, being a good Catholic could not act on the occasion? After a few moment's consideration, during which she appeared to be forcibly struck by the suggestion as something that had not before occurred to her, she consented to undertake the sad office.

An eye-witness of the interment and accompanying ceremony speaks of the scene as most affecting. A number of fellow-countrymen of the deceased had collected round the grave, when the widow, with a sense of duty amounting to enthusiasm, and rising above the intense grief which had convulsed her, stood forward, and taking the earth upon a spade proceeded to consecrate it. She then went through with the solemn burial service of the Catholic Church in a manner so impressive as to bring tears from the eyes of many present long unused to the melting mood. The ceremony was concluded by the widow's offering an appropriate and extremely eloquent prayer for the rest of her departed husband; and she turned from the grave for her desolate home and starving children apparently with every spark of hope extinguished in her bosom.

But it is said that the darkest cloud has ever a bright star near it, and she found that her home was to be desolate and her children starving no longer. He who hearkens to the cry of the widow and the fatherless had raised them up friends in the hour of their extremest need. The death of the husband and the peculiar circumstances attending his funeral, directed public attention to the family, when its destitute condition became known and immediate relief afforded.