EULOGY

ON THE

LIFE AND SERVICES OF HENRY CLAY,

By Hon. JOHN J CRITTENDEN.

DELIVERED AT LOUISVILLE, KENTUCKY, SEPT. 29, 1852.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN: I am very sensible of the difficulty and magnitude of the task which I have undertaken. I am to address you in commemoration of the public services of HENRY CLAY, and in celebration of his obsequies. His death filled his whole country with mourning, and the loss of no citizen, save the Father of his Country, has ever produced such manifestations of the grief and homage of the public heart. His history has indeed been read "in a nation's eyes." A nation's tears proclaim, with their silent eloquence, its sense of the national loss. Kentucky has more than a common share in this national bereavement. To her it is a domestic grief—to her belongs the sad privilege of being the chief mourner. He was her favorite son, her pride, and her glory. She mourns for him as a mother. But let her not mourn as those who have no hope of consolation. She can find the richest and the noblest solace in the memory of her son, and of his great and good actions; and his fame will come back, like a comforter from his grave, to wipe away her tears. Even while she weeps for him her tears shall be mingled with the proud feelings of triumph which his name will inspire; and Old Kentucky, from the depths of her affectionate and heroic heart, shall exclaim, like the Duke of Ormond, when informed that his brave son had fallen in battle, "I would not exchange my dead son for any living son in Christendom."

From these same abundant sources we may hope that the widowed partner of his life, who now sits in sadness at Ashland, will derive some pleasing consolation. I presume not to offer any words of comfort of my own. Her grief is too sacred to permit me to use that privilege.

You, Sons and Daughters of Kentucky, have assembled here to commemorate his life and death. How can I address you suitably on such a theme? I feel the oppressive consciousness that I cannot do it in terms adequate to the subject, or to your excited feelings. I am no Orator, nor have I come here to attempt any idle or vainglorious display of words; I come as a plain Kentuckian, who, sympathizing in all your feelings, presents you with this address, as his poor offering, to be laid upon that altar which you are here erecting to the memory of HENRY CLAY. Let it not be judged according to its own value, but according to the spirit in which it is offered.

It would be no difficult task to address you on this occasion in the extravagant and rhetorical language that is usual in funeral orations. But my subject deserves a different treatment. The monumental name of HENRY CLAY rises above all mere personal favor and flattery; it rejects them, and challenges the scrutiny and the judgment of the world. The noble uses to which his name should be applied is to teach his country, by his example, lessons of public virtue and political wisdom; to teach patriots and statesmen how to act, how to live, and how to die. I can but glance at a subject that spreads out in such bright and boundless expanse before me.

HENRY CLAY lived in a most eventful period, and the history of his life for forty years has been literally that of his country. He was so identified with the Government for more than two-thirds of its existence, that during that time hardly any act, which has redounded to its honor, its prosperity, its present rank among the nations of the earth, can be spoken of without calling to mind involuntarily the lineaments of his noble person. It would be difficult to determine whether in peace or in war: in the field of legislation or of diplomacy; in the springtide of his life, or in its golden ebb, he won the highest honor. It can be no disparagement to any one of his contemporaries to say, that, in all the points of practical statesmanship, he encountered no superior in any of the employments which his constituents or his country conferred upon him.

For the reason that he had been so much and so constantly in the public eye, an elaborate review of his life will not be expected of me. All that I shall attempt will be to sketch a few leading traits, which may serve to give those who have had fewer opportunities of observation than I had, something like a just idea of his public character and services. If, in doing this, I speak more at large of the earlier than of the later period of his life, it is because, in regard to the former, though of vast consequence, intervening years have thrown them somewhat in the back ground.

Passing by, therefore, the prior service of Mr. Clay in the Senate for brief periods in 1806 and '10–'11, I come at once to his Speakership in the House of Representatives, and his consequent agency in the war of 1812.

To that war our country is indebted for much of the security, freedom, prosperity, and reputation which it now enjoys. It has been truly said by one of the living actors in that perilous era, [Hon. Mr. RUSH,] *that the very act of going to war* was heroic. By the supremacy of the naval power of England, the fleets of all Europe had been swept from the seas; the banner of the United States alone floated in solitary fearlessness. England seemed to encircle the earth with her navies, and to be the undisputed mistress of the ocean. We went out upon the deep with a sling in our hands. When, in all time, were such fearful odds seen as we had against us?

The events of the war with England, so memorable, and even wonderful, are too familiar to all to require any particular recital on this occasion. Of that war—of its causes and consequences—of its disasters, its bloody battles, and its glorious victories by land and sea, history, and our own official records, have given a faithful narrative. A just national pride has engraven that narrative upon our hearts. But even in the fiercest conflicts of that war there was nothing more truly heroic than the declaration of it by Congress.

Of that declaration—of the incidents, personal influences, and anxious deliberations, which preceded and led to it—the history is not so well or generally known. The more it is known, the more it will appear how important was the part that Mr. Clay acted, and how much we are indebted to him for all the glorious and beneficial issues of the declaration of that war, which has not inappropriately been called the *Second War of Independence*.

The public grounds of the war were the injustice, injury, and insults inflicted on the United States by the Government of Great Britain, then engaged in a war of maratime edicts with France, of which the commerce of the United States was the victim; our merchant ships being captured by British cruisers on every sea, and confiscated by her courts, in utter contempt of the rights of this nation as an independent Power. Added to this, and more offensive than even those outrages, was the arrogation, by the same Power, of a right to search American vessels, for the purpose of impressing seamen from vessels sailing under the American flag. These aggressions upon our national rights constituted, undoubtedly, justifiable cause of war. With equal justice on our part, and on the same grounds, (impressment of seamen excepted,) we should have been warranted in declaring war against France also; but common sense (not to speak of policy) forbade our engaging with two nations at once, and dictated the selection, as an adversary, of the one that had power, which the other had not, to carry its arbitrary edicts into full effect. The war was really, on our part, a war for national existence.

When Congress assembled in November, 1811, the crisis was upon us. But, as may be readily imagined, it could be no easy matter to nerve the heart of Congress, all unprepared for the dread encounter, to take the step, which there could be no retracing, of a declaration of war.

Nor could that task, in all probability, ever have been accomplished, but for the concurrence, purely accidental, of two circumstances: the one, the presence of Henry Clay in the chair of the popular branch of the National Legislature; and the other, that of James Monroe, as Secretary of State, in the Executive Administration of the Government.

Mr. Monroe had returned but a year or two before from a course of public service abroad, in which, as Minister Plenipotentiary, he had represented the United States at the several courts, in succession, of France, Spain, and Great Britain. From the last of these missions he had come home thoroughly disgusted with the contemptuous manner in which the rights of the United States were treated by the belligerent Powers, and especially by England. This treatment, which even extended to the personal intercourse between their Ministers and the representatives of this country, he considered as indicative of a settled determination on their parts—presuming upon the supposed incapacity of this Government for war—to *reduce to system* a course of conduct calculated to debase and prostrate us in the eyes of the world. Reasoning thus, he had brought his mind to a serious and firm conviction that the rights of the United States, as a nation, would never be respected by the Powers of the Old World until this Government summoned up resolution to resent such usage, not by arguments and protests merely, but by an appeal to arms. Full of this sentiment, Mr. Monroe was called, upon a casual vacancy, when it was least expected by himself or the country, to the head of the Department of State. That sentiment, and the feelings which we have thus accounted for, Mr. Monroe soon communicated to his associates in the Cabinet, and, in some degree, it might well be supposed, to the great statesman then at the head of the Government.

The tone of President Madison's first message to Congress, (November 5, 1811,) a few months only after Mr. Monroe's accession to the Cabinet, can leave hardly a doubt in any mind of such having been the case. That message was throughout of the gravest cast, reciting the aggressions and aggravations of Great Britain, as demanding resistance, and urging upon Congress the duty of putting the country "into an armor and an attitude demanded by the crisis and corresponding with the national spirit and expectations."

It was precisely at this point of time that Mr. Clay, having resigned his seat in the Senate, appeared on the floor of the House of Representatives, and was chosen, almost by acclamation, Speaker of that body. From that moment he exercised an influence, in a great degree personal, which materially affected, if it did not control, the judgment of the House. Among the very first acts which devolved upon him by virtue of his office was the appointment of the committees raised upon the President's message. Upon the select committee of nine members to which was referred "so much of the message as relates to our foreign relations," he appointed a large proportion from among the fast friends of the Administration, nearly all of them being new members, and younger than himself, though he was not then more than thirty-five years of age. It is impossible, at this day, to call to mind the names of which this committee was composed, (Porter, Calhoun, and Grundy being the first named among them,) without coming to the conclusion that the committee was constituted with a view to the event predetermined in the mind of the Speaker. There can be no question that when, quitting the Senate, Mr. CLAY entered the Representative body, he had become satisfied that, by the continued encroachments of Great Britain on our national rights, the choice of the country was narrowed down to war or submission. Between these there could be no hesitation in such a mind as that of Mr. Clay which to choose. In this emergency he acted for his country as he would, in a like case, have acted for himself. Desiring and cultivating the good will of all, he never shrank from any personal responsibility, nor cowered before any danger. More than a year before his accession to the House of Representatives he had, in a debate in the Senate, taken occasion to say that "he most sincerely desired peace and amity with England; that he even preferred an adjustment of all differences with her to one with any other nation; but, if she persisted in a denial of justice to us, he trusted and hoped that all hearts would unite in a bold and vigorous vindication of our rights." It was in this brave spirit, animated to increased fervency by intervening aggressions from the same quarter, that Mr. CLAY entered into the House of Representatives.

Early in the second month of the session, availing himself of the right then freely used by the Speaker, to engage in discussions while the House was in Committee of the Whole, he dashed into the debates upon the measures of military and naval preparation recommended by the President, and reported upon favorably by the committee. He avowed, without reserve, that the object of this preparation was *war*, and *war with Great Britain*.

In these debates he showed his familiarity with all the weapons of popular oratory. In a tempest of eloquence, in which he wielded alternately argument, persuasion, remonstrance, ridicule, and reproach, he swept before him all opposition to the high resolve to which he exhorted Congress. To the argument (for example) against preparing for a war with England, founded upon the idea of her being engaged, in her conflict with France, in fighting the battles of the world, he replied that such a purpose would be best achieved by a scrupulous observance of the rights of others, and by respecting that public law which she professed to vindicate. "*Then*," said he, "she would command the sympathies of the 'world. But what are *we* required to do by those who 'would engage our feelings and wishes in her behalf? '*To bear the actual cuffs of her arrogance*, that we may escape a chimerical French subjugation. We are called 'upon to submit to debasement, dishonor, and disgrace; 'to bow the neck to royal insolence, as a course of preparation for manly resistance to Gallic invasion! What 'nation, what individual, was ever taught *in the schools 'of ignominious submission* these patriotic lessons of freedom and independence!" And to the argument that this Government was unfit for any war but a war against invasion—so signally since disproved by actual events—he exclaimed, with characteristic vehemence, "What! is it 'not equivalent to invasion, if the mouth of our harbors 'and outlets are blocked up, and we are denied egress 'from our own waters? Or, when the burglar is at our 'door, shall we bravely sally forth and repel his fellonious 'entrance, or meanly skulk within the cells of the castle? ' * * * What! shall it be said that *our* amor patriæ 'is located at these desks; that we *pusillanimously cling 'to our seats here*, rather than boldly vindicate the most 'inestimable rights of our country?"

Whilst in debate upon other occasions, at nearly the same time, he showed how well he could *reason* upon a question which demanded argument rather than declamation. To his able support of the proposition of Mr. CHEVES to add to our then small but gallant navy ten frigates, may be ascribed the success, though by a lean majority, of that proposition. Replying to the objection urged with zeal by certain members, that navies were dangerous to liberty, he argued that the source of this alarm was *in themselves*. "Gentlemen fear," said he, "that if we provide a marine, it will 'produce collision with foreign nations, plunge us into 'war, and ultimately overturn the constitution of the 'country. Sir, if you wish to avoid foreign collision, 'you had better abandon the ocean, surrender all your 'commerce, give up all your prosperity. It is the thing 'protected, not the instrument of protection, that involves you in war. Commerce engenders collision, collision war, and war, the argument supposes, leads to 'despotism. Would the counsels of that statesman be 'deemed wise, who would recommend that the nation 'should be unarmed; that the art of war, the martial 'spirit and martial exercises, should be prohibited; who 'should declare, in a word, that the great body of the 'people should be taught that national happiness was to 'be found in perpetual peace alone?"

While Mr. CLAY, in the Capitol, was, with his trumpet tongue, rousing Congress to prepare for war, Mr. MONROE, the Secretary of State, gave his powerful co-operation, and lent the Nestor-like sanction of his age and experience to the bold measures of his young and more ardent compatriot. It was chiefly through their fearless influence that Congress was gradually warmed up to a war spirit, and to the adoption of some preparatory measures. But no actual declaration of war had yet been proposed. There was a strong opposition in Congress, and the President, Mr. MADISON, hesitated to recommend it, only because he doubted whether Congress was yet sufficiently determined and resolved to maintain such a declaration, and to maintain it to all the extremities of war.

The influence and counsel of Mr. CLAY again prevailed. He waited upon the President, at the head of a deputation of Members of Congress, and assured him of the readiness of a majority of Congress to vote the war if recommended by him. Upon this the President immediately recommended it by his message to Congress of the first Monday of June, 1812. A bill declaring war with Great Britain soon followed in Congress, and, after a discussion in secret session for a few days, became a law. Then began the war.

When the doors of the House of Representatives were opened, the debates which had taken place in secret session were spoken of and repeated, and it appeared, as must have been expected by all, that Mr. Clay had been the great defender and champion of the declaration of war.

Mr. CLAY continued in the House of Representatives for some time after the commencement of the war, and having assisted in doing all that could be done for it in the way of legislation, was withdrawn from his position in Congress to share in the deliberations of the great Conference of American and British Commissioners held at Ghent. His part in that Convention was such as might have been expected from his course in Congress, high-toned and high-spirited, despairing of nothing.

I need not add, but for form, that, acting in this spirit, Mr. Clay and his patriotic and able associates succeeded beyond all the hopes at that time entertained at home in making a treaty, which, in putting a stop to the war, if it did not accomplish every thing contended for, saved and secured at all points the honor of the United States.

Thus began and ended the war of 1812. On our part it was just and necessary, and, in its results, eminently beneficial and honorable.

The benefits of it have extended to all the world; for in vindicating our own maritime rights we established the freedom of the seas to all nations, and since then no one of them has arrogated or exercised any supremacy upon that ocean, given by the Almighty as the common and equal inheritance of all.

To HENRY CLAY, as its chief mover and author, belongs the statesman's portion of the glory of that war; and to the same Henry Clay, as one of the makers and signers of the treaty by which it was terminated, belong the blessings of the peace-maker. His crown is made up of the jewels of peace and of war.

Prompt to take up arms to resent our wrongs and vindicate our national rights, the return of peace was yet gladly hailed by the whole country. And well it might be. Our military character, at the lowest point of degradation when we dared the fight, had been retrieved; the national honor, insulted at all the courts of Europe, had been redeemed; the freedom of the seas secured to our flag and all who sail under it; and, what was most influential in inspiring confidence at home, and assuring respect abroad, was the demonstration, by the result of the late conflict, of the competency of this Government for effective war, as it had before proved itself for all the duties of a season of peace.

The Congress which succeeded the war, to a seat in which Mr. Clay was elected whilst yet abroad, exhibited the features of a national jubilee, in place of the gravity and almost gloom which had settled on the countenance of the same body during the latter part of the war and of the conferences at Ghent. Joy shone on every face. Justly has that period been termed "the era of good feeling." Again placed in the chair of the House of Representatives, and all important questions being then considered as in Committee of the Whole, in which the Speaker descends to the floor of the House, Mr. Clay distinguished himself in the debates upon every question of interest that came up, and was the author, during that and following Congresses, of more important measures than it has been the fortune of any other member, either then or since, to have his name identified with.

It would exceed the proper limits of this discourse to particularize all those measures. I can do no more than refer to a very few of them which have become landmarks in the history of our country.

First in order of these was his origination of the first proposition for a recognition of the independence of the States of South America, then struggling for liberty. This was on the 24th of March, 1818. It was on that day that he first formally presented the proposition to the House of Representatives. But neither the President nor Congress was then prepared for a measure so bold and decisive; and it was rejected by a large majority of the House, though advocated and urged by him with all the vehemence and power of his unsurpassed ability and eloquence. Undaunted by this defeat, he continued to pursue the subject with all the inflexible energy of his character. On the 3d of April, 1820, he renewed his proposition for the recognition of South American independence, and finally succeeded, against strong opposition, not only in passing it through the House of Representatives, but in inducing that body to adopt the emphatic and extraordinary course of sending it to the President by a committee, specially appointed for the purpose. Of that committee Mr. Clay was the chairman, and, at its head, performed the duty assigned them. In the year 1822 Mr. Clay's noble exertions on this great subject were crowned with complete success, by the President's formal recognition of South American independence, with the sanction of Congress.

It requires some little exertion, at this day, to turn our minds back, and contemplate the vast importance of the revolutions then in progress in South America, as the subject was then presented, with all the uncertainties and perils that surrounded it. Those revolutions constituted a great movement in the moral and political world. By their results great interests and great principles, throughout the civilized world, and especially in our own country, might and probably would be materially affected.

Mr. CLAY comprehended the crisis. Its magnitude and its character were suited to his temper, and to his great intellect. He saw before him, throughout the vast continent of South America, the people of its various States, or provinces, struggling to cast off that Spanish oppression and tyranny which for three hundred years had weighed them down, and seeking to reclaim and re-establish their long-lost liberty and independence. He saw them not only struggling, but succeeding; and, with their naked hands, breaking their chains, and driving their oppressors before them. But the conflict was not yet over; Spain still continued to wage formidable and desperate hostilities against her colonies, to reduce them to submission. They were still struggling and bleeding, and the result yet depended on the uncertain issue of war.

What a spectacle was there presented to the contemplation of the world! The prime object of attention and interest there to be seen was *man bravely struggling for liberty*. That was enough for HENRY CLAY. His generous soul overflowed with sympathy. But this was not all; there were graver and higher considerations that belonged to the subject, and these were all felt and appreciated by Mr. Clay.

If South America was resubjugated by Spain, she would, in effect, become European, and relapse into the system of European policy—the system of legitimacy, monarchy, and absolutism; on the other hand, if she succeeded in establishing her independence, the *principle* of free institutions would be established with it, and republics kindred to our own would rise up to protect, extend, and defend the rights and liberties of mankind.

It was not, then, a mere struggle between Spain and her colonies. In its consequences, at least, it went much further, and, in effect, was a contest between the great antagonist *principles* and *systems* of arbitrary European Governments and of free American Governments. Whether the millions of people who inhabited, or were to inhabit, South America, were to become the victims and the instruments of the arbitrary *principle*, or the supporters of the *free principle*, was a question of momentous consequence now and in all time to come.

With these views Mr. CLAY, from sympathy and policy, embraced the cause of South American independence. He proposed no actual intervention in her behalf, but he wished to aid her with all the moral power and encouragement that could be given by a welcome recognition of her by the Government of the United States.

To him belongs the distinguished honor of being *first* among the statesmen of the world to espouse and plead the cause of South America, and to propose and urge the recognition of her independence. And his own country is indebted to him for the honor of being the first nation to offer that recognition.

When the magnitude of the subject and the weighty interest and consequences attached to it are considered, it seems to me that there is no more palmy day in the life of Mr. Clay than that in which, at the head of his committee, he presented to the President the resolution of the House of Representatives in favor of the recognition of South American independence. On that occasion he appears in all the sublimity of his nature, and the statesman, invested with all the sympathies and feelings of humanity, is enlarged and elevated into the character of the friend and guardian of universal liberty.

How far South America may have been aided or influenced in her struggles by the recognition of our Government, or by the noble appeals which Mr. Clay had previously addressed, in her behalf, to Congress and to the world, I cannot say; but it is known that those speeches were read at the head of her armies, and that grateful thanks were returned. It is not too much to suppose that he exercised great influence in her affairs and destinies.

Years after the first of Mr. Clay's noble exertions in the cause of South America, and some time after those exertions had led the Government of the United States to recognise the new States of South America, they were also recognised by the Government of Great Britain, and Mr. CANNING, her Minister, thereupon took occasion to say, in the House of Commons, "there (alluding to South America) I have called a new world into existence!" That was a vain boast. If it can be said of any man, it must be said of Henry Clay that *he* called that "new world into existence."*

Mr. CLAY was the Father of the policy of Internal Improvement by the General Government. The expediency of such legislation had indeed been suggested, in one of his later annual messages to Congress, by President Jefferson, and that suggestion was revived by President Madison in the last of *his* annual messages. The late Bank of the United States having been then just established, a bill passed, in supposed conformity to Mr. Madison's recommendation, for setting aside the annual bonus, to be paid by the Bank, as a fund for the purposes of Internal Improvement. This bill Mr. Madison very unexpectedly, on the last day of the term of his office, returned to the House of Representatives without his signature, assigning the reasons for his withholding it—reasons which related rather to the form than the substance—and recommending an amendment to the Constitution to confer upon Congress the necessary power to carry out that policy. The bill of course fell through for that session. While this bill was on its passage, Mr. Clay had spoken in favor of it, declaring his own decided opinion in favor of the constitutionality and expediency of the measure. Mr. MONROE, immediately succeeding Mr. Madison in the Presidency, introduced into his first annual message a declaration, in advance of any proposition on the subject, of a settled conviction on his mind that Congress *did not* possess the right to enter upon a system of Internal Improvement. But for this declaration, it may be doubted that the subject would have been again agitated so soon after Mr. Madison's veto. The threat of a recurrence to that resort by the new President roused up a spirit of defiance in the popular branch of Congress, and especially in the lion heart of Mr. CLAY; and by his advice and counsel a resolution was introduced declaring that Congress *has power*, under the Constitution, to make appropriations for the construction of military roads, post-roads, and canals. Upon this proposition, in committee of the whole House, Mr. CLAY attacked, with all his powers of argument, wit, and raillery, the interdiction in the message. He considered that the question was now one between the Executive on the one hand, and the representatives of the people on the other, and that it was so understood by the country; that if, by the communication of his opinion to Congress, the President intended to prevent discussion, he had "most wofully failed;" that in having (Mr. Clay had no doubt with the best motives) *volunteered* his opinions upon the subject, he had "inverted the order of legislation by beginning where it should end;" and, after an able and unanswerable argument on the question of the power, concluded by saying: "*If we do 'nothing this session but pass an abstract resolution on the 'subject*, I shall, under all circumstances, consider it a 'triumph for the best interests of the country, of which 'posterity will, if we do not, reap the benefit." And the abstract resolution *did* pass, by a vote of 90 to 75; and *a triumph* it was which Mr. Clay had every right to consider as his own, and all the more grateful to his feelings because he had hardly hoped for it.

Referring to the final success, at a distance of thirty-five years of the *principle* thus established, in the recent passage by Congress of the act for the improvement of certain of the ports and harbors and navigable rivers of the country, let "Posterity" not forget, on this occasion, to what honored name is undoubtedly due the credit of the first legislative assertion of the power.

Mr. Clay was, perhaps, the only man since Washington who could have said, with entire truth, as he did, "*I had rather be right than be President.*" Honor and patriotism were his great and distinguishing traits. The first had its spring and support in his fearless spirit; the second in his peculiar Americanism of sentiment. It was those two principles which ever threw his whole soul into every contest where the public interest was deeply involved, and, above all, into every question which in the least menaced the integrity of the Union. This last was, with him, *the ark of the covenant;* and he was ever as ready to peril his own life in its defence, as he was to pronounce the doom of a traitor on any one who would dare to touch it with hostile hands. It was the ardor of this devotion to his country, and to the sheet-anchor of its liberty and safety, the Union of the States, that rendered him so conspicuous in every conflict that threatened either one or the other with harm. All are familiar with his more recent, indeed his last, great struggle for his country, when the foundation of the Union trembled under the fierce sectional agitation, so happily adjusted and pacified by the wise measures of compromise which he proposed in the Senate, and which were in the end in substance adopted. That brilliant epoch in his history is fresh in the memory of all who hear me, and will never be forgotten by them. An equally glorious success achieved by his patriotism, his resoluteness, and the great power of his oratory, was one which few of this assembly are old enough vividly to remember, but which, in the memory of those who witnessed the effort and the success of that greatest triumph of his master spirit, will ever live the most interesting in the life of the great statesman. I mean the Missouri controversy. Then, indeed, did common courage quail, and hope seem to shrink before the storm that burst upon and threatened to overwhelm the Union.

Into the history of what is still familiarly known as the "Missouri question," it is not necessary, if time would allow, that I should enter at any length. The subject of the controversy, as all my hearers know, was the disposition of the House of Representatives, manifested on more than one occasion, and by repeated votes, to require, as a condition of the admission of the Territory of Missouri into the Union as a State, the perpetual prohibition of the introduction of slavery into the Territories of the United States west of the Mississippi. During the conflict to which this proposition gave rise in 1820, the debates were from the beginning earnest, prolonged, and excited. In the earlier stages of them Mr. Clay exerted to the utmost his powers of argument, conciliation, and persuasion, speaking on one occasion, it is stated, for four and a half hours without intermission. A bill finally passed both Houses authorizing the people of the Territory of Missouri to form a constitution of State Government, with the prohibition of slavery *restricted* to the territory lying north of 36° 30′ of north latitude.

This was in the first session of the sixteenth Congress, Mr. Clay still being Speaker of the House. On the approach of the second session of this Congress, Mr. Clay being compelled by his private affairs to remain at home, forwarded his resignation as Speaker, but retained his seat as a member, in view of the pendency of this question. Mr. Taylor, of New York, the zealous advocate of the prohibition of slavery in Missouri and elsewhere in the West, was chosen *Speaker* to succeed Mr. Clay. This fact, of itself, under all the circumstances, was ominous of what was to follow. Alarmed, apparently, at this aspect of things, Mr. Clay resumed his seat in the House on the 16th of January, 1821. The constitution formed by Missouri and transmitted to Congress, under the authority of the act passed in the preceding session, contained a provision (superfluous even for its own object) making it the duty of the General Assembly, as soon as might be, to pass an act to prevent free negroes and mulattoes from coming to or settling in the State of Missouri "upon any pretext whatever." The reception of the constitution with this offensive provision in it was the signal of discord apparently irreconcileable; when, just as it had risen to its height, Mr. Clay, on the 16th of January, 1821, resumed his seat in the House of Representatives. Less than six weeks of the term of Congress then remained. The great hold which he had upon the affections, as well as the respect, of all parties, induced upon his arrival a momentary lull in the tempest. He at once engaged earnestly and solicitously in counsel with all parties in this alarming controversy, and on the 2d of February moved the appointment of a committee of thirteen members to consider the subject. The report of that committee, after four days of conference, in which the feelings of all parties had clearly been consulted, notwithstanding it was most earnestly supported by Mr. Clay in a speech of such power and pathos as to draw tears from many hearers, was rejected by a vote of 83 nays to 80 yeas. No one, not a witness, can conceive the intense excitement which existed at this moment within and without the walls of Congress, aggravated as it was by the arrival of the day for counting the electoral votes for President and Vice President, amongst which was tendered the vote of Missouri as a State, though not yet admitted as such. Her vote was disposed of by being counted hypothetically—that is to say, that *with* the vote of Missouri, the then state of the general vote would be so and so; *without* it, so and so. If her vote, admitted, would have *changed the result*, no one can pretend to say how disastrous the consequences might not have been.

On Mr. Clay alone now rested the hopes of all rational and dispassionate men for a final adjustment of this question; and one week only, with three days of grace, remained of the existence of that Congress. On the 22d of the month, Mr. Clay made a last effort, by moving the appointment of a joint committee of the two Houses, to consider and report whether it was expedient or not to make provision for the admission of Missouri into the Union on the same footing of the original States; and if not, whether any other provision, adapted to her actual condition, ought to be made by law. The motion was agreed to, and a committee of twenty-three members appointed by ballot under it. The report by that committee (a modification of the previously *rejected* report) was ratified by the House, but by the close vote 87 to 81. The Senate concurred, and so this distracting question was at last settled, with an acquiescence in it by all parties, which has never been since disturbed.

I have already spoken of this as the great triumph of Mr. Clay; I might have said, the greatest civil triumph ever achieved by mortal man. It was one towards which the combination of the highest ability and the most commanding eloquence would have labored in vain. There would still have been wanting the ardor, the vehemence, the impetuousness of character of Henry Clay, under the influence of which he sometimes overleaped all barriers, and carried his point literally by storm. One incident of this kind is well remembered in connexion with the Missouri question. It was in an evening sitting, whilst this question was yet in suspense. Mr. Clay had made a motion to allow one or two members to vote who had been absent when their names were called. The Speaker, (Mr. Taylor,) who, to a naturally equable temper amentadded a most provoking calmness of manner when all around him was excitement, blandly stated, for the information of the gentleman, that the motion "was not in order." Mr. Clay then moved to suspend the rule forbidding it, so as to allow him to make the motion; but the Speaker, with imperturbable serenity, informed him that according to the Rules and Orders such a motion, could not be received without the unanimous consent of the House. "*Then*," said Mr. Clay, exerting his voice even beyond its highest wont, "*I move to suspend* ALL *the rules of the House. Away with them!* Is it to be endured that we shall be trammelled in our action by mere forms and technicalities at a moment like this, when the peace, and perhaps the existence, of this UNION is at stake?"

Besides those to which I have alluded, Mr. Clay performed many other signal public services, any one of which would have illustrated the character of any other American statesman. Among these we cannot refrain from mentioning his measures for the protection of American industry and his compromise measures of 1833, by which the country was relieved from the dangers and agitations produced by the doctrine and spirit of "nullification." Indeed his name is identified with all the great measures of government during the long period of his public life.

But the occasion does not permit me to proceed further with the review of his public services. History will record them to his honor.

HENRY CLAY was indebted to no adventitious circumstances for the success and glory of his life. Sprung from an humble stock, he "was fashioned to much honor from his cradle;" and he achieved it by the noble use of the means which God and nature had given him. He was no scholar, and had none of the advantages of collegiate education. But there was a "divinity that stirred within him." He was a man of genius mighty enough to supply all the defects of education. By its keen, penetrating observation, its quick apprehension, its comprehensive and clear conception, he gathered knowledge without the study of books; he could draw it from the fountain-head pure and undefiled. It was unborrowed—the acquisition of his own observation, reflection, and experience, and all his own. It entered into the composition of the man, forming part of his mind, and strengthening and preparing him for all those great scenes of intellectual exertion or controversy in which his life was spent. His armor was always on, and he was ever ready for the battle.

This mighty genius was accompanied, in him, by all the qualities necessary to sustain its action and to make it irresistible. His person was tall and commanding, and his demeanor

"Lofty and sour to them that loved him not;
But to those men that sought him, sweet as summer."

He was direct and honest, ardent and fearless, prompt to form his opinions, always bold in their avowal, and sometimes impetuous, or even rash, in their vindication. In the performance of his duties he feared no responsibility. He scorned all evasion or untruth. No pale thoughts ever troubled his decisive mind. "Be just and fear not!" was the sentiment of his heart and the principle of his action. It regulated his conduct in private and public life; all the ends he aimed at were his country's, his God's, and truth's.

Such was HENRY CLAY, and such were his talents, qualities, and objects. Nothing but success and honor could attend such a character. I have adverted briefly to some portions of his public life. For nearly half a century he was an informing spirit, a brilliant and heroic figure in our political sphere, marshalling our country in the way she ought to go. The "bright track of his fiery car" may be traced through the whole space over which, in his day, his country and its Government have passed in the way to greatness and renown. It will still point the way to further greatness and renown.

The great objects of his public life were to preserve and strengthen the Union; to maintain the Constitution and laws of the United States; to cherish industry; to protect labor; and facilitate, by all proper national improvements, the communication between all the parts of our widely-extended country. This was his American system of policy. With inflexible patriotism he pursued and advocated it to his end. He was every inch an American. His heart, and all that there was of him, were devoted to his country, to its liberty, and its free institutions. He inherited the spirit of the revolution, in the midst of which he was born; and the love of liberty and the pride of freedom were in him principles of action.

A remarkable trait in his character was his inflexibility in defending the public interest against all schemes for its detriment. His exertions were, indeed, so steadily employed and so often successful in protecting the public against the injurious designs of visionary politicians or party demagogues, that he may be almost said to have been, during forty years, the guardian angel of the country. He never would compromise the public interest for any body, or for any personal advantage to himself.

He was the advocate of liberty throughout the world, and his voice of cheering was raised in behalf of every people who struggled for freedom. Greece, awakened from a long sleep of servitude, heard his voice, and was reminded of her own Demosthenes. South America, too, in her struggle for independence, heard his brave words of encouragement, and her fainting heart was animated, and her arm made strong.

HENRY CLAY was the fair representative of the age in which he lived; an age which forms the great and brightest era in the history of man; an age teeming with new discoveries and developments, extending in all directions the limits of human knowledge, exploring the agencies and elements of the physical world, and turning and subjugating them to the use of man; unfolding and establishing practically the great principles of *popular rights* and free governments, and which, nothing doubting, nothing fearing, still advances in majesty, aspiring to and demanding further improvement and further amelioration of the condition of mankind.

With the chivalrous and benignant spirit of this great era Henry Clay was thoroughly imbued. He was indeed moulded by it, and made in its own image. That spirit, be it remembered, was not one of licentiousness, or turbulence, or blind innovation. It was a wise spirit, good and honest as it was resolute and brave; and truth and justice were its companions and guides.

These noble qualities of truth and justice were conspicuous in the whole public life of Mr. Clay. On that solid foundation he stood, erect and fearless; and when the storms of State beat around and threatened to overwhelm him, his exclamation was still heard, "truth is mighty and public justice certain." What a magnificent and heroic figure does HENRY CLAY here present to the world! We can but stand before and look upon it in silent reverence. His appeal was not in vain; the passions of party subsided; truth and justice resumed their sway, and his generous countrymen repaid him, for all the wrong they had done, with gratitude, affection, and admiration in his life, and with tears for his death.

It has been objected to HENRY CLAY that he was ambitious. So he was. But in him ambition was a virtue. It sought only the proper, fair objects of honorable ambition, and it sought these by honorable means only—by so serving the country as to deserve its favors and its honors. If he sought office, it was for the purpose of enabling him, by the power it would give, to serve his country more effectually and pre-eminently; and, if he expected and desired thereby to advance his own fame, who will say that was a fault? Who will say that it was a fault to seek and to desire office for any of the personal gratifications it may afford, so long as those gratifications are made subordinate to the public good?

That Henry Clay's object in desiring office was to serve his country, and that he would have made all other considerations subservient, I have no doubt. I knew him well; I had full opportunity of observing him in his most unguarded moments and conversations, and I can say that I have never known a more unselfish, a more faithful or intrepid representative of the *people*, of the people's rights, and the people's interests than Henry Clay. It was most fortunate for Kentucky to have such a representative, and most fortunate for him to have such a constituent as Kentucky—fortunate for him to have been thrown, in the early and susceptible period of his life, into the primitive society of her bold and free people. As one of her children, I am pleased to think that from that source he derived some of the magnanimity and energy which his after life so signally displayed. I am pleased to think that, mingling with all his great qualities, there was a sort of *Kentuckyism*, (I shall not undertake to define it,) which, though it may not have polished or refined, gave to them additional point and power, and a freer scope of action.

Mr. CLAY was a man of profound judgment and strong will. He never doubted or faltered; all his qualities were positive and peremptory; and to his convictions of public duty he sacrificed every personal consideration.

With but little knowledge of the rules of logic or of rhetoric, he was a great debater and orator. There was no art in his eloquence, no studied contrivances of language. It was the natural outpouring of a great and ardent intellect. In his speeches there were none of the trifles of mere fancy and imagination; all was to the subject in hand, and to the purpose; and they may be regarded as great actions of the mind rather than fine displays of words. I doubt whether the eloquence of Demosthenes or Cicero ever exercised a greater influence over the minds and passions of the people of Athens and of Rome than did Mr. Clay's over the minds and passions of the people of the United States.

You all knew Mr. CLAY: your knowledge and recollection of him will present him more vividly to your minds than any picture I can draw of him. This I will add: he was, in the highest, truest sense of the term, a great man, and we ne'er shall look upon his like again. He has gone to join the mighty dead in another and better world. How little is there of such a man that can die! His fame, the memory of his benefactions, the lessons of his wisdom, all remain with us; over these death has no power.

How few of the great of this world have been so fortunate as he! How few of them have lived to see their labors so rewarded. He lived to see the country that he loved and served advanced to great prosperity and renown, and still advancing. He lived till every prejudice which, at any period of his life, had existed against him, was removed; and until he had become the object of the reverence, gratitude, and love of his whole country. His work seemed then to be completed, and fate could not have selected a happier moment to remove him from the troubles and vicissitudes of this life.

Glorious as his life was, there was nothing that became him like the leaving of it. I saw him frequently during the slow and lingering disease which terminated his life. He was conscious of his approaching end, and prepared to meet it with all the resignation and fortitude of a christian hero. He was all patience, meekness, and gentleness; these shone around him like a mild, celestial light, breaking upon him from another world.

"And, to add greater honors to his age
"Than man could give, he died fearing God."

* See Mr. Rush's letter to Mr. Clay, 1st vol. Colton's Life of Henry Clay.

BRITISH WAR IN SOUTH AFRICA.

People in this country have paid little attention to the progress of the British war in South Africa, yet it is no small matter, judging from the length of time through which it has been protracted, and the little progress made by all the British power in bringing it to a conclusion. The last intelligence from the Cape of Good Hope increases the difficulties of the British Government, by showing them that there is no dependance at all upon the native forces they have engaged, but that the whole burden of the conflict is to fall uopn the European soldiers. The native allies consume rations and fearfully augment the expenses, while the London Times describes them as exhibiting a "repulsive mixture of the spy, the coward, and the assassin." All the intended movements of the troops are made known to the enemy, so that treachery within is added to the embarrassments of meeting an unconquered and subtle adversary. One of Gen. Cathcart's late proclamations announcing an expedition against the Kaffirs was accompanied by a promise to divide the spoils that might be taken among the natives of the frontier districts, a promise of plunder not usual in these days, which proves that bribes are thought necessary to induce the colonists to defend themselves. England has to bear all the cost and furnish all the force, a very poor encouragement for the keeping up of distant colonies.

Three years have now elapsed, and the Kaffir war, like our Seminole war at the end of a similar period, is no nearer to the close than when it commenced. The Kaffirs are not only not conquered, but they have their camps and their settlements within the limits of the British colony, and the British have nothing secure beyond the range of their musketry. The expenses are enormous, and the prospect of a close afar off. Early