

SOUTHERN CITIZEN.

WHAT DO WE LIVE FOR, BUT TO IMPROVE OURSELVES AND BE USEFUL TO ONE ANOTHER?

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From the Southern Literary Messenger.

SKETCHES OF THE 25TH CONGRESS.

The 25th Congress of the U. States at last closed its labors and existence. The good or evil it has done, I shall not speak. But of some of those who meddled, it may not be uninteresting to give a few brief sketches, for the benefit of such of your readers as may not have enjoyed the pleasure of witnessing parliamentary efforts. I begin with

R. A. MENIFEE.

This gentleman was a representative from Kentucky, and first took his seat in Congress at the extra session of 1837. During the session he made his debut on the floor of the House, on the Sub-treasury bill. It was a masterly effort and established his reputation as a parliamentary orator. It satisfied both parties of the superiority of his mind, and the rank he was likely to hold in the body to which he belonged. His effort was as unexpected as it was surprising. Mr. Menifee does not appear to be more than thirty years of age; in person he is tall, lean and muscular. He has a high forehead, but which comes over his head, which is finely moulded, though he is far from being handsome; his face is narrow and long, his mouth is unusually wide, his eyes are full of expression. The distinguishing features of his mind are accuracy, strength, clearness and fertility. He marshals his arguments with much skill and enforces them with great subtlety and power. He has not the imagination or fertility of Prentiss, of whom he speaks presently; but he has more power and strength of analysis. His reasoning is logical, but not dry, his topics are selected and his arguments arranged with great perspicuity and skill. There is great vigor in his style—his figures are unusually strong and appropriate but sometimes too low. His eloquence though not rapid, is easy, his accent extremely bitter and mordant, and his declamation often rises to splendor. I never saw a person of his age so calm and so collected, when addressing such a body, as he appears to be. He stands self-poised and unmoved by the gaze of the House, and generally fixes his keen and sparkling eyes on the member he is answering, without addressing himself to the speaker. In the famous philippic he delivered a few weeks before the close of the last session, on a resolution introduced by Mr. Prentiss, to expel from the House a member, who had published an offensive article in the Globe, he kept his eyes so steadily fixed on his victim, and called out his denunciations with such a ringing and terrible effect, that, after writing for some time in apparent agony, and unable any longer to endure the torture to which he was subjected, he started once or twice to call Mr. Menifee to order, because he was looking at

him instead of the speaker. Mr. Menifee's manner is always earnest and impressive. He seldom or never indulges in the humorous, and is more of a philosopher than the wit. As an orator he is not at all artificial—he neither studies his attitudes nor his actions; both appear to be natural and appropriate.—His voice sways melody of intonation, and descends from the higher to the lower tones too rapidly for effect; while his cadences are sometimes lost in indistinctness. Mr. Menifee's talents are such as to beget the belief, that he will attain to distinction in life, should he devote himself exclusively to it; and become as eminent and useful a statesman, as he is now distinguished as a public speaker.

S. S. PRENTISS.

This gentleman made his first appearance at the bar of the House, during the extra session of the 25th Congress, in support of his right to his seat in that body as a representative from Mississippi. On that occasion he spoke three days, with a force of reasoning, a rapidity and beauty of elocution, and a splendor of declamation that astonished all who had the pleasure of hearing him. Mr. Prentiss is small in stature, and has a lameness in one of his legs, which compels him to resort to the use of a staff, on which he rests his deformed limb when he moves—he is, however, said to possess uncommon strength of body, and to have great vigor of muscle. His head is large and out of proportion to the rest of his frame—his features are good, and his countenance though not what would be called handsome, is not ugly. He is said to be a native of Maine, and commenced life, like most of our distinguished men, in poverty. He taught school, while young, in Mississippi, to which he had repaired to seek his fortune; afterwards studied law, and soon became eminent at the bar, where he acquired both reputation and wealth. He appears to be about thirty years of age. Mr. Prentiss has all the elements of the orator in him; his mind possesses great fertility and expansiveness, it is logical, imaginative, sarcastic and humorous.—The faculties of judgment, imagination, memory and taste, are equally prominent, and always exercised when he speaks. After a laborious train of reasoning, in which he shows his strength as a logician, his hearers are astonished at some apt and felicitous illustration, drawn from history, poetry, philosophy, or romance, which he calls up by the power of memory, and apparently without an effort of the will. His early reading seems to have been confined to the classics, and a man of inspiration with which he is perfectly familiar, and from which most of his illustrations are taken, which are always happy and striking. He has the facility, moreover, of gliding rapidly from grave to gay, from the impassioned to the humorous, and from the declamatory to the coolest and most philosophical reasoning. His imagination furnishes him with the strongest arguments, his judgment with the most logical application and most lucid arrangement of them, and his memory with a great variety of incidents and facts, which he has treasured up in the course of his reading and observation, which he can call up with singular felicity, and apply with great effect. Mr. Prentiss possesses genius as well as talent, his thoughts are poetical and often beautiful, but always under the control of good taste. His reading seems to have been more among the imaginative than the philosophical lights of the world; and he has read more for amusement than for the acquisition of knowledge. His mind is more excursive than profound—it delights more in the romance than the realities of life, and takes greater pleasure in reposing in the Italian bowers with Homer, than in communing with the Groves of Academus with Plato.—His diction is sometimes very splendid, and his elocution singularly fluent, rolling along without hesitation and almost without a pause. His touches of humor and wit are excellent, and his sarcasm exceedingly pungent—sometimes putting the House in roars of laughter, and at others exciting to an almost irreplaceable burst of indignation. His voice is, however, defective, and his cadences are not always harmonious or pleasing to the ear, and his action to uniform for

grace. Had he the inclination, he would be an admirable debater, but he prefers his own ease to the exertion which eminence as a debater requires. He is, however, more of an orator than a debater. His mind is too rich, affluent, and imaginative for the latter; and he likes to exert his intellectual energies, only when it can be done with effect, and when a sense of duty or the love of fame impels him to the effort. It is to be regretted, that he should find the great political arena of Congress so little suited to his taste, or so hostile to his interests, as to induce him to withdraw from the councils of the nation, and to return again to a profession from which he derives more wealth, if not so much fame, as from the career of legislation which he has just abandoned, and in which he is so well fitted to excel.

I shall conclude these hasty sketches with that of

OGDEN HOFFMAN.

This gentleman, like Mr. Menifee, made his first appearance in Congress at the extra session of 1837, as a representative of the city of New York. His reputation as an advocate had preceded him, and he soon had an opportunity of displaying his talents in a new sphere and a wider field than any to which he had before been accustomed. Every one who heard him on that occasion, was not only delighted, but astonished at the power of his eloquence, and the splendor of his declamation. It was in the finest style of parliamentary oratory, and had not been surpassed for many years in the House. Mr. Hoffman's mind is imaginative and elegant, and his memory appears to be rich in the lore of history, upon the treasures of which he draws with great success, and from which he borrows his finest illustrations. His style is courteous, polished, unimpeachable, and sometimes beautiful.—His reasoning is never dry, his arguments never tedious. Imagination casts over the workings of his mind a perpetual charm, and strews with the richest flowers, the path his judgment may select. The ear is delighted, and the fancy pleased, while the reason is satisfied. He is a man of genius; his temperament is ardent and his mind poetical.—The creations of his fancy, as he rolls along, are often gorgeous and beautiful; he uses no vulgarisms, no low allusions; no trite or common-place illustrations; and his thoughts and images, if not always original, are presented in such a form, and surrounded with such grandeur, as to possess the charm of originality. In the highest and most difficult range of eloquence, and in the most delicate and refined, he is equally successful. There is something in the mellowness of his voice, in the nobility of his imagination, and in the nature of his feelings, that must give him great power, while addressing himself to the sympathies and passions of his hearers, and which must render him on such occasions, almost omnipotent before a jury. His style is rich in rhetorical ornament—perhaps too much so, for classical simplicity; and he employs the "dazzling force of argument," with great effect. In person Mr. Hoffman is about the middle size, and his body well proportioned. His complexion is fair, and ruddy, his eyes blue and indicative of genius, and when he smiles, his countenance looks sunny and assumes the most pleasing expression. His voice is soft and musical, and his intonations are well modulated though sometimes monotonous. His evidences fall upon the ear with the softness of music, and the tones are pleasing even when the meaning is lost. His attitudes and gesticulation are graceful and appropriate, and his elocution unstudied, impressive and fascinating. His style and manner are more parliamentary than forensic; but notwithstanding his acknowledged talents, I fear his habits are too indolent to enable him to retain, though he has reached a high rank as debater, in a body organized like the House of Representatives. He but seldom addresses the House, but when he does, he is always listened to with pleasure; and if he does not always convince, he never fails to please. G. W.

Washington City, 1836.

Arrangements have been made to convey the mail from New York to N. Orleans in nine days.

From the Christian Advocate and Journal.

WARNING VOICE.

"Oh! my country!" said the dying Pitt. And what virtuous, reflecting person, who beholds the present actual state of things, but must be ready to adopt the exclamation, and cry, "Oh, my country!" Among the most alarming signs of the times is that reckless and supreme devotion to party which throws moral principle in the back ground, and cries out, "The party, right or wrong!" Let this proceed onward a few years more, and what will be the result? Will not "the foundations be destroyed?" Can a good and truly free government be any longer sustained? To me it appears impossible. Let moral principle lose its controlling influence over the public mind, and force must supply its place, or anarchy ensue.—Do not mobs, (whatever be the occasion, or object, pretended or real,) which have so often occurred within a few years past, indicate an advance toward this state of things? It is time the nation was aroused to a sense of its danger from this source; its vital interests are at stake; and the real foe is but too much concealed from public view. And the horrors of wild anarchy, or the iron rod of despotism, I fear, awaits us, unless a decided stand is made against this threatening evil. Zealous partisans in their warmth may cry out, "all is lost, unless our party prevail!" But, alas! it matters little which party is in the ascendant, if truth and righteousness are discarded and trodden under foot.

As if the very spirit of Ahab's lying prophets were let loose upon us, how do many of our political journals teem with falsehoods and false accusations! How difficult for an honest mind to ascertain truth! Take a warm partisan paper, and the leading characters on that side are almost angels; and those in opposition nearly devils incarnate. Take one equally warm on the other side, and you find them just the reverse. Now where is the truth? If you believe them both in reference to their respective friends, was there ever such a set of excellent men in existence in the country before! But if you credit their assertions in regard to their political foes, and the whole of both parties are at once transformed into (I had like to have said) a host of horrid devils! Surely these things ought not so to be. Again, some have openly declared much to this effect: that their party must be sustained at all events; (and some, too, who have their names on the banners of religion.) And their conduct greatly agrees with this declaration.

But let it be remembered, it matters not what the name, the condition in life, in church, or in state, or what his pretensions and professions, he is an enemy to his country who disregards, sets aside, and acts against the grand principles of sound morality. And he should be known, and treated as such.

Look at France in by-gone days; see the bloody flag of infidelity unfurled in the memorable days of those infidel tyrants, Robespierre and Danton. Then, indeed, was the "reign of terror." Mutual confidence destroyed; blood flowed in torrents, and desolations held their fearful sway! Behold, as in a mirror, to what we are tending by a blind and wicked devotion to party—idolizing party—setting it above truth and moral rectitude, and in so doing as truly guilty of idolatry in the sight of heaven, as if we actually were bowing down to Baal or Moloch! Oh! my country! hear the voice of wisdom: "Righteousness exalteth a nation, but sin is a reproach to any people." Rush not heedless on to ruin. The principles of truth will remain unshaken, though disregarded, slighted, and contemned; and though we, refusing sound wisdom, dash on the rocks of error and sin to our destruction. Let none say I am writing for party; it is not so, unless truth, righteousness, and the welfare of our common country be the party; the opposite in which is error, falsehood, wickedness, and ruin.—And unless you identify yourselves with these, or stand in their behalf, do not imagine I am against you. But I am bound to be decidedly and strongly against these. And permit me to say, you are also. No power can absolve us from the obligation we are under always to oppose these. 'Tis heaven's high

command, and 'tis the way to secure happiness and avoid ruin. Let me say, then, in the spirit of meekness and love, to all, take heed what you do. As Franklin said, in regard to infidel principles, so we say again, "Do not unchain the tiger." Let truth and moral principle have the dominion, and let their opposites be put down. And let us bear in mind, that if truth and righteousness utterly fail among us, the death-knell of our liberty is rung, the horrors of anarchy or despotism will be realized; and the fair fabric of American freedom will be razed to its very foundation.—Let us awake, then, to a knowledge and due apprehension of our danger; and let thorough reform be the watchword till the evil is removed, lest "Ichabod" be inscribed on all our free institutions, and all that remain of them be the melancholy remembrance or knowledge that they once were.

PHILANTHROPOS.

A MOTHER'S LOVE.

Happy is he who knows a mother's love
What is so pure? The patriot expects fame, the friend sympathy and the lover pleasure. Even religion, while she waters her faith with tears, looks forward to the best fruits of her love.—But maternal affection springs from the breast uninvoked by the touch of interest. It haunts the cradle of infantile pain, or hovers near the couch of the faint and forsaken. Its sweetest smiles break through the clouds of misfortune, and its gentlest tones arise amid the sighs of suffering and of sorrow. It is a liquid and lovely flow of feeling which gushes from the fountain head of purity, and courses the heart, through selfish designs and sordid passions, imparting and unstilled.

What is so firm? Time and misfortune, penury and persecution, hatred and infamy, may roll their dark waves successively over it, and still it smiles unchanged, or the more potent allurements of fortune, opulence and pride, power and splendor may woo her—and yet she is unmoved! Mother "loves and loves forever."

What is so faithful? From infancy to age "through good report, and through evil report," the dew of maternal affection are shed upon the soul.—When heart-sicken and abandoned, when branded by shame, followed by scorn, her arms are still open; her breast still kind through every trial that love will follow, cheer us in misfortune, low of pain, and moisten the bed of death.

Happy is he who knows a mother's love.

An Irishman while employed in digging on the canal, was seen looking very earnestly at a bird called a red headed wood-pecker, which was very busily employed in picking the bark from a tree. On being asked what was the matter, he answered: "Och! by the powers, don't ye see that silly crater, he's bote his head against that tree until it's nothing but a gore of good."

MARCH OF MIND.

It is stated in an exchange paper that there is a Postmaster in Arkansas who does not possess the "accomplishment" of being able to read—and "when the mail comes he is under the necessity of measuring it, and sends about three pecks to Little Rock, (the capitol,) two pecks to Batesville, and dwindles down to a gallon when he comes to the out counties."

The following anecdote of Dr. Franklin is not generally known. Being in England in 1775, he was asked by a nobleman what would satisfy the Americans? He answered that it might be accomplished by a few reasons—thus:

- call your forces,
- store Castle William,
- repair the damages done to Boston,
- seal your unconstitutional acts,
- renounce your pretensions to taxes,
- find the duties extorted after this,
- require and
- receive payment for the destroyed tea, with the voluntary grant of the colonies, and then
- rejoice in a happy
- conciliation.