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HIGHLAND MESSENGER.

ASHEVILLE:

Friday, March 17, 1843.

"Then came there unto him all his brethren and all his sisters and all they that had been of his acquaintance before, and they besought him and comforted him over all the evil that the Lord had brought upon him: every man also gave him a piece of money and every one an ear-ring of gold."

Reader, you will find these words in the 11th verse of the 42d chapter of the Book of Job, and as you were probably hindered from going to church last Sabbath, we will call your attention to them by a few remarks.

We shall not trouble you with apologies in our introduction, nor hem and haw and consume half an hour in complaining of our weakness and ignorance, and telling what we will say and what we will not say, nor yet shall we be so particular as to divide "our subject" into first, second, third and fourth divisions, and then "conclude the whole as we shall have light and liberty," but attempt to teach you a moral lesson from this scrap in the history of good old Job.—It commences by informing us that "then came there unto him all his brethren and all his sisters and all they that had been of his acquaintance before," &c. Then they came. When? Was it when the news of his great losses and sore afflictions first reached them—the time that he most needed their assistance and sympathies? No, verily. It was not until his captivity had been turned, and the Lord had given him "twice as much as he had before!" In his poverty and affliction, they were very clear of going to him and bestowing their presents. Perhaps they thought it would not be "respectable" to be seen at the house and administering to the wants of a poor man, or forsooth, they might have feared being called on to pay some of Job's debts now that he was "broke up," or that he would want to borrow money. How much is this like the world was, and is, and is likely to be! Let the news be good abroad that a man has failed—is broken up—and let him appear in a well-worn coat and hat, with coarse shoes and hardened hands, and though he may then be an honest and every way a better and worthier man than he was before, his brothers and sisters (if they happen to have more money than brains) scarce know him at all, and those who "had been of his acquaintance before" take particular pains not to meet him in the street or speak to him in company, lest they should lower their dignity by associating with people who were not considered respectable. But let the same man but regain his fortune, and these are the first whose sympathies overflow in his behalf—the first to offer him their condolence—to eat bread at his house—to comfort him over the evil which had befallen him, and to give or lend him money or jewels! Yes, it is the way of the world—to make presents to those who need them least—to lend to the rich and comfort a man when his distresses are past and prosperity returned. Where is the use of such attentions then? you inquire. Aye, that is what we should like to know ourselves; but we have studied the ways of the world for a quarter of a century past, and are as ignorant of the wherefore of this matter to-day as we were at first—but, we suppose inasmuch as it is fashionable in all refined society, we must allow it to pass without further investigation. If those who practise it cannot plead justice, consistency or propriety, they can certainly plead precedent of a very ancient date—Job's brethren and sisters and old acquaintances did it, and so may they!—Who indeed among the refined classes can be expected to pay any attention to a poor man? He may be what an English poet calls the noblest work of God—"an honest man"—he may be a Christian, with an earnest of a heavenly inheritance in his heart—he may bear the moral image of his Divine Redeemer—he be blameless in his conduct and conversation—have great moral influence, and be of much real worth to those around him—but what does this avail him in the estimation of the refined, while he is poor? No more than did the riches and preferments of Haman while he saw

Mordecai the Jew sitting at the king's gate and refusing to bow down when he passed. But on the other hand, if he be rich—though as stupid as any animal that ever wore a pair of long ears, or his wealth acquired by means that might darken the brow and put to shame even Lucifer himself—he will have friends to "eat bread in his house," to condole him for losses from which he has recovered—make liberal offers of services not needed, and bestow presents in hope of something in return.

Job's friends were assiduous in their attentions after they found he had "twice as much as before." And now let us say one word to those who by their fellow-worms are deemed rich: Listen and mark it well. The attentions which are shown you and your sons and daughters are owing oftentimes more to the fact that you are considered wealthy than because of yourselves. Scores of those who now compliment your judgment, taste or beauty—who flatter and play the sycophant around you, in reality think you stupid, vulgar and ugly, as perhaps you are; and were you poor, they would not notice you in the streets. Job had three friends who came to him in his affliction, and by their bitter tears proved how keenly they felt for his condition.—And now, reader, remember, while in prosperity it is almost impossible to tell who is really and truly your friend; but wait until adversity throws her dark and forbidding clouds around you, and then watch who speaks kindly—mark who it is that weeps with you, and if they have nothing else to give, freely bestow their soothing words and affectionate tears, and remember them—they are friends indeed—friends worth having—such as will not soon forsake you. He who gives you a tear when he has nothing else, gives you all he can, and were it in his power he would give you much more. Reader, with a most hearty wish that you may never want for a true friend, we conclude our sermon. So mote it be.

The doctrine that the present pressure in the monetary affairs of our country was primarily caused by the distribution of thirty-seven millions of dollars among the States respectively, is now preached by a portion of the Democratic papers of the country! That is, the present hard times were caused by too much good money in the Treasuries of the States! Well, what next, gentlemen!

FEARFUL AND FATAL EPIDEMIC.

There is at this time, and has been for some months past, a most fearful epidemic raging in some parts of Missouri, called there "the black tongue," from the fact that the disease is mostly characterised by a swelling and blackness of the tongue, which usually proves fatal in a few hours. Sometimes, however, the inflammation seats itself in the joints, the ancles, knees, or hips, the side of the head or face, and sometimes in one eye, which swells, turns red, and a few hours before death, like the tongue, turns black. A gentleman writing from Point Pleasant, Now Madrid co., under date of Feb. 4th, to the editor of the St. Louis Republican, says that the epidemic had then been in that neighborhood four weeks and was spreading fearfully. In eight miles round him sixty-nine persons had died in that four weeks, and the disease increased! A large portion of the victims in that neighborhood, were persons in the prime of life! The writer adds, that "no thing can surpass the gloom and affliction" with which the country was overspread.—The disease seemed to baffle the skill of the ablest physicians of that country.

In hearing and reflecting upon such afflictive occurrences as these, we are naturally led to ask ourselves, why is it so? What is the cause? From whence does it arise? And in seeking for an answer we too often go every way but the right one. That such epidemics are aggravated by local causes, we have no sort of doubt—but that they are usually produced this way we do not believe, the jeers and scoffs of fools and infidels to the contrary notwithstanding.—We believe that such are usually most awful visitations from the hand of an All-Wise God, for wise and holy purposes, known only to himself, and that it becomes men, every where, to ponder well such things, and solemnly remember that he has commanded men every where to repent, "because he hath appointed a day in the which he will judge the world in righteousness."

We are authorized to announce T. L. CLINGMAN, Esq., as a candidate to represent this District in the next Congress.

LIFE OF HENRY CLAY. (CONCLUDED.)

Another subject deeply agitated the public mind at this time, and was acted on at the same session by Congress: this was the recharter of the United States Bank. Gen. Jackson had brought the subject to the view of the national Legislature, and thus to the nation itself, in his first annual message in December, 1823; subsequently in 1830, and again in 1831. Mr. Mc Lane, the Secretary of the Treasury, recommended the recharter of the bank, and stated his reasons at large at the commencement of the session of 1831-32. Mr. Dallas, then a member of the Senate, brought forward the bill to recharter the bank, and it was passed by very decided majorities in both Houses of Congress: it was, however, vetoed by Gen. Jackson, for a variety of reasons assigned by him in his memorable veto message. On this message Mr. Clay addressed the Senate, and commented with freedom, but with dignity and force, upon the novel doctrines advanced by the President, and especially upon that which declares every public officer who takes an oath to support the Constitution, is at liberty to support it as he understands it; and that the President, in this respect, is independent of the Supreme Court, the tribunal established for the purpose of deciding upon, and settling constitutional questions: a doctrine fraught, as he declared, with universal nullification, destructive of all subordination, authority and fixedness, and subversive of government.

In this speech he looked forward with the eye of a sagacious statesman, and spoke the words of a prophet. He said, speaking of certain contingencies, "Depression in the value of all property, sheriff's sales and sacrifices—bankruptcy must necessarily ensue; and, with them, relief laws, paper-money, a prostration of the courts of justice, evils from which we have just emerged, must again, with all their train of afflictions, revisit our country." Have not these evils followed in the train of those measures which began the work of destruction by crushing the great balance-wheel of the currency? Already we have "depression in the value of all property, sheriff's sales, sacrifices, bankruptcies," and "relief laws!"

At the same session of Congress Mr. Clay first brought forward his great measure of distributing the proceeds of the sales of the public lands among the States, which has since found so much favour with the people of the United States, and become a cardinal principle of the Whig party, and one of vital importance to the country. Mr. Clay had been placed on the committee of manufactures; to this committee the subject of the Public Lands was referred by the Senate, a majority of whom were his political opponents, notwithstanding there was a standing committee on the public lands, appointed under long established rules! For what purpose a subject so incongruous as the public lands to those expected to occupy the minds of this committee, was referred to it, it is impossible to conjecture, unless it was intended thereby to embarrass Mr. Clay, and involve him in difficulty with one portion of the country, or another. The reference of this subject to that committee was the more extraordinary, inasmuch as there was not a single member from the new States upon it, and but one, Mr. Clay, from the western States. In noticing this novel procedure in his speech, made upon the occasion of his bringing forward his bill to distribute, for a limited time, the proceeds of the public domain, he remarks:—

"We had earnestly protested against the reference, and insisted upon its impropriety; but we were overruled by the majority, including a majority of Senators from the new States. I will not attempt an expression of the feelings excited in my mind on that occasion. Whatever may have been the intentions of honourable Senators, I could not be insensible to the embarrassment in which the committee of manufactures was placed, and especially myself. Although any other members of that committee would have rendered themselves, with appropriate researches and proper time, more competent than I was to understand the subject of the public lands, it was known that, from my local position, I alone was supposed to have any particular knowledge of them. Whatever emanated from that committee was likely, therefore, to be ascribed to me. If the committee should propose a measure of great liberality towards the new States, the old States might complain. If the measure should seem to lean towards the old States, the new might be dissatisfied.—And, if it inclined to neither class of States, but recommended a plan according to which there would be distributed impartial justice among all the States, it was far from certain that any would be pleased."

But the subject being thus thrown upon him by those who sought to involve him in difficulty, he brought to it all the powers of his understanding, and, after a thorough investigation, matured the plan and bill, which he reported to the Senate. The attempt made by a majority of the Senate, composed of his political enemies, to embarrass him, now recoiled upon their own heads. But if the reference, in the first instance, of this subject to the committee on manufactures was unprecedented, the disposition made of Mr. Clay's able report from that committee was still more so.

This was hardly read in the Senate before it was violently denounced, and with-

out being considered by the Senate, was referred to the committee on Public Lands—the very committee to which Mr. Clay had, in the first place, insisted the subject ought to be referred. After some days this committee made a report, and recommended a reduction of the price of the public lands immediately to one dollar per acre, and eventually to fifty cents per acre, and the grant to the new States of fifteen per cent. on the net proceeds of the sales, instead of ten per cent., as proposed by the committee of manufactures, and nothing to the old States.

At the time Mr. Clay brought forward his proposition to distribute the proceeds of the public lands among all the States, after giving the new States ten per cent., various propositions and claims in regard to them had been made of a very extraordinary character, which Mr. Clay took occasion to notice. The first was that of Mr. Benton, to cede the "refuse lands" to the States in which they lay. "Refuse lands," "refuse lands," "refuse lands" was his tone. The next was that of the Governor of Illinois, who asserted the absolute right of that State to all the public lands lying within her limits. Then came the proposition from the Senator of Virginia (Mr. Tazewell,) to cede and surrender to the States in which they lay all the lands belonging to the United States, upon certain indefinite conditions.

He thus exposed the attempts that had been made, and were making, to rob the old States of their interest in the public domain, and he came forward with a measure that meted out justice to all, to the east, and to the west; to the north and to the south; to the old States, and to the new. Speaking of the right of the whole to the public lands, he said:—

"The right of the Union to the public lands is incontestable. It ought not to be considered debatable. It never was questioned but by a few, whose monstrous heresy, it was probably supposed, would escape animadversion from the enormity of the absurdity, and the utter impracticability of the success of the claim. The right of the whole is sealed by the blood of the Revolution, founded upon solemn deeds of cession from sovereign States, deliberately executed in the face of the world, or resting upon national treaties concluded with foreign powers, or ample equivalents contributed from the treasury of the people of the United States."

Fortunately for the country, from that time he has taken a deep and lively interest in this great and important subject. The Secretary of the Treasury, even had, in his annual report to Congress, recommended the ceding of the lands to the States in whose limits they lay; and we have seen that others advocated the same measure. Mr. Clay looked upon this as an unjust disposal of them, being a fraud upon the old States. Nor was this all: the proposition thus to dispose of the public domain, could not but be considered as public bids for the political support of the west and south-west. Undoubtedly he might have come into the market too, and purchased popularity of one portion of the country by surrendering up to it the public lands, and of another portion by the advocacy of a protective tariff—a measure with which he was, and ever has been, peculiarly identified. But Mr. Clay never yet inquired what measure was popular, but what was right—declaring on a memorable occasion, when told that a certain course might injure his popularity—that he would rather be right than the President of the United States, high as that station was. He viewed, and still views, the public lands as an inheritance of inestimable value, as an almost exhausted treasure, and one that ought not to be squandered or given away.

His proposition to distribute the proceeds of the public lands was no sooner reported to the Senate, and made known to the country than it became triumphant. The bill passed the Senate at that session, but was not acted on in the House: it was gaining favour with the country, however, and so great was its popularity, that it passed at the next session by very large majorities, in both branches of Congress. It was then sent to the President, General Jackson, for his signature; but, instead of signing it, or returning it with his reasons for withholding his signature, he pocketed it! Had it been returned, there cannot be a doubt but it would have become a law, by the vote of two-thirds of both Houses; and of this he was fully aware.

"It was a measure suggested by one who shared no part in the President's counsels or affections; and although he had himself, in his annual message, recommended a similar measure, he did not hesitate to change his ground in order to thwart the views of its author." Personal hostility induced him to resort to the novel mode of killing the bill by smothering it in his pocket! Before another session of Congress commenced, the command went forth—the measure was denounced—the faithful were required to surrender their own opinions, and sustain their chief, and lo! it was done! From that day forth to the present, those who claim to belong to the democratic sheep-fold have been required to eschew the distribution of the proceeds of the public lands among the people of the States, its rightful owners, as a "federal measure. Is it possible for a nation to have the benefit of benign measures, when those good are defeated through mere personal pique or prejudice towards the individual with whom they originate, and because their adoption

would add a leaf to the chaplet that adorns his brow! A wise people will not inquire who originated a measure, but whether the measure itself is likely to prove beneficial or otherwise. And that nation has parted with her own dignity and self-respect, which either adopts or rejects a course of policy simply because it originated with one man, or was opposed by another.

It was undoubtedly the fact that for many years, as Mr. Clay asserted, various propositions had been put forth concerning the public lands, one of which was, that they belonged of right to the States in whose limits they were situated; another, that they should be ceded to these States by the U. States; another, that their price should be graduated down to almost nothing; and all had in view either their actual or virtual surrender by the general government. Mr. Clay saw that if not secured to the old States, their interest in the public domain would soon be gone forever, and the plan of distribution which he brought forward was designed, not only to settle our policy in regard to this immense national interest, but to settle it upon the immutable principles of justice—even-handed justice to all.

But no sooner was there a prospect of his plan being adopted, than the very men who had clamoured for "the lion's share" of the public domain, who had sanctioned a scheme after scheme for wasting and squandering the lands, and had protested against their being considered as a source of revenue by the government, turned around and became equally clamorous against the proceeds of the sales being taken from the treasury, and distributed equally and impartially to the people of all the States!—Such is the consistency of mere demagogues! In his speech on the distribution of the proceeds of the public lands, delivered in the Senate, on the 28th January, 1841, Mr. Clay thus notices the contradictory and inconsistent course of his opponents:—

"All at once these gentlemen seem to be deeply interested in the revenue derivable from the public lands. Listen to them now, and you would suppose that heretofore they had always been, and hereafter would continue to be, decidedly and warmly in favour of carefully husbanding the public domain, and obtaining from it the greatest practicable amount of revenue, for the exclusive use of the general government.—You would imagine that none of them had ever espoused or sanctioned any scheme for wasting or squandering the public lands; that they regard them as a sacred and inviolable fund, to be preserved for the benefit of posterity, as well as this generation.

"It is my intention now to unmask these gentlemen, and to show their real system for the administration of the public lands embraces no object of revenue, either in the general government or the States; that their purpose is otherwise to dispose of them; that the fever for revenue is an intermittent, which appears only when a bill to distribute the proceeds equally among all the States is pending; and that, as soon as that bill is got rid of, gentlemen relapse into their old projects of throwing away the public lands, and denouncing all objects of revenue from the public lands as unwise, illiberal, and unjust towards the new States. I will make all this good by the most incontrovertible testimony.

"I proceed to the documentary proof. In his annual message of December 4, 1832, President Jackson says:—

"As the lands may now be considered as relieved from this pledge, (that is, the expenses of the Revolutionary war,) the object for which they were ceded having been accomplished, it is in the discretion of Congress to dispose of them in such way as best to conduce to the quiet, harmony, and general interests of the American people, &c. It seems to me to be our true policy that the public lands shall cease, as soon as practicable, to be a source of revenue."

From the report of Mr. King, chairman of the committee on public lands, to whom his (Mr. Clay's) report was referred in 1832, Mr. Clay read the following:

"This committee turn with confidence from the Land Offices to the Custom Houses, and say, here are the true sources of Federal revenue! Give lands to the cultivator! and tell him to keep his money, and lay it out in their cultivation!"

"Now, Mr. President," continued Mr. Clay, "bear in mind that this report, made by the Senator from Alabama, embodies the sentiments of his party; the measure of distribution which came from the committee on manufactures, exhibited one system for the administration of the public lands, and that it was referred to the committee on public lands, to enable that committee to make an argumentative report against it, and to present their system—a counter-antagonist system.

"During the whole progress of the bill through the Senate, the party dominant then and now acted in conformity with the doctrines contained in the report of their organ, (Mr. King.) Nevertheless the bill passed both houses of Congress by decisive majorities.

"Hear how President Jackson lays down the law in 1833:

"On the whole, I adhere to the opinion expressed by me in my annual message of 1832, that it is our true policy that the public lands shall cease, as soon as practicable, to be a source of revenue, except for the payment of those general charges which grow out of the acquisition of the lands, their survey, and sale. I do not doubt that it is the real interest of each and

all the States in the Union, and particularly of the new States, that the price of these lands shall be reduced and graduated; and that after they have been offered for a certain number of years, the refuse, remaining unsold, shall be abandoned to the States, and the machinery of our land-system entirely withdrawn."

"It was but the other day we heard the Senator from Arkansas (Mr. Sevier) express some of these sentiments. What were we told by that Senator? 'We will have the public lands. We must have them, and we will TAKE them in a few years.'

[Mr. Sevier said, "So we will."] "Hear him! Hear him! He repeats it. Utters it in the ears of the revenue-pleading Senator, (Mr. Wright,) on my left. And yet he will vote against distribution."

It will be seen by the foregoing extracts from Mr. Clay's speech, and the documents referred to by him, that it has been for many years the avowed purpose of those who oppose distribution, and now insist on the lands being considered as a source of revenue, to cede; or otherwise dispose of them to the States in which they lie; and that they have as strenuously maintained that they ought not to be looked to for revenue. Such glaring contradictions and inconsistency need no comment: they speak a language which no one can misunderstand.

The reiterated attacks upon the protective system by the advocates of the doctrine of free-trade, together with the fact of the extinguishment of the public debt and an overflowing treasury, had, in 1833, greatly operated upon public opinion, and brought about a conviction that protective duties were not so necessary as they had been considered, and were, perhaps, as the south declared them to be, oppressive to them, and unjust in their operation. South Carolina had also undertaken to nullify the revenue laws of the United States, and threatened open resistance and rebellion, should the general government attempt to enforce them. Discontent had been sown among the people of the south, who had been made to believe that they were oppressed, and that their wishes and interests had been disregarded by the national government.—These discontents had been fomented, and the hopes of the southern people encouraged by the course of the Federal Administration, which, at the very moment that it threatened and recommended the use of the power of the whole Union, proclaimed aloud the injustice of the system which it was about to enforce. In the language of Mr. Clay, "these discontents were not limited to those who maintained the extravagant theory of nullification; they were not confined to one State; but were co-extensive with the entire south, and extended even to the northern States." A majority of the party then dominant, since defeated, was then, as now, opposed to the tariff policy. Under all these circumstances Mr. Clay deemed that policy in imminent danger: "it is," said he, "in the hands of the Philistines, who would strangle it," and he flew to its succour. The celebrated compromise bill was introduced, and after much debate, finally passed.

Mr. Clay, with whom this great measure of conciliation originated, and to whose moderation, firmness, patriotism, and abilities, its success was due, was, on this occasion, hailed by a very large portion of the country, north, south, and west, as "the great pacificator and saviour of the country." By some, however, he was charged with abandoning his own system. In reply he said, "It was far from the object of those who support this bill, to abandon or surrender the policy of protecting American industry. The condition of the country has impressed every public man with the necessity of some modification of the principles of protection, so far as it depends upon high duties." "Sir, I desire to be perfectly understood as to the motives which have prompted me to offer this measure. I repeat, that they are, first, to preserve the manufacturing interest, and, secondly, to quiet the country. I believe the American system to be in the greatest danger; and I believe it can be placed on a better and safer foundation at this session, than at the next." "Mr. President, it is not destruction—but preservation of the system at which we aim. If dangers now assail it, we have not created them. I have sustained it upon the clearest convictions of its expediency.—They are unaltered."

The compromise bill being accepted by the south as "a concession from the stronger to the weaker party," it proved, as its author designed it should, a tranquillizing measure, and secured to the country, and especially to those engaged in manufacturing, a stability of policy for a number of years, far more important to them than heavy duties with uncertainty and fluctuation. Mr. Clay has been, and is, to the present day, much censured for disposing of the tariff question as he did in the compromise bill: but if ever there was a measure that originated in the most anxious desire to do that which, under all circumstances, was best for the country, and if a public man ever acted upon pure and disinterested motives, this was the measure and this the man: and no unprejudiced person who knows those circumstances, and the imminent danger there then was of losing the protective system entirely, as well as of plunging the country into a civil war, can, it seems to me, for a single moment, doubt the wisdom of that measure.

Many questions of the highest importance