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BIOGRAPHY

SKETCH OF THE LIFE AND PUBLIC SERVICES OF HENRY CLAY.

[CONTINUED.]

Upon the adjournment of Congress, on the 4th of July, 1839, Mr. Clay returned to Kentucky, and he remained, in a masterly speech delivered at a complimentary dinner given to him by the citizens of Woodford, in a clear and eloquent manner, the whole policy of the then existing administration, and declared his wish to retire from public life. The wishes of his friends, however, that he should resume his legislative duties, and the large majority which, in the Legislature of his adopted State, he was elected to the Senate, induced him to return; and he accordingly took his seat at the ensuing session of Congress. The administration of Gen. Jackson was just drawing to a close. No candid and considerate man could contrast the two conditions of the country—that in which he found it and that in which he left it—without acknowledging the sad change that had come over every interest, blighting the fairest hopes of every patriot, and casting the whole country into a deep shade of despondency and suffering. In 1829 the currency was safe and equitable; our credit, at home and abroad, stood upon a level with that of other nations; industry and economy were secure avenues to wealth and happiness; the produce of the farmer commanded a fair price in every market; the goods of the manufacturer and the wares of the mechanic found ready sales, and gave employment to thousands of industrious laborers in every department of business; and in this great prosperity, every man, and in the best sense of the word, "prosperous and happy."

The Bank had been destroyed. The Sub-Treasury scheme, as it was called, was, of course, the great topic of discussion at this extra session. Mr. Clay took the lead in an opposition to its doctrines, more able, and urged with more determined effort, than any other measure which for a long time had come before Congress. Besides the tyrannical control of the funds of the Government, which this obnoxious bill proposed to vest in the hands of the President, it contained also other no less odious and dangerous features; one of these was a provision that all duties, and other Government dues, should be paid in gold and silver—thus at once creating one currency for the use of the Government, and leaving one, acknowledged by that very act to be worse, for the people. The speech of Mr. Clay in opposition to the bill, was one of the ablest he had ever made. But the bill passed in the Senate by a vote of 25 to 20, and was sent to the House.

Here it was fated to encounter a still sterner ordeal. The defection of a small but able and determined body from the Van Buren party, who leagued themselves together under the name of Conservatives, and based their opposition expressly upon the ground of hostility to the Sub-Treasury Scheme, and the growing disapproval of its principles by the people, operated upon the House of Representatives with a force which all the power of Executive blandishment, the influence of Executive patronage, and the strength of the Calhoun Coalition could not withstand, and on the 14th of October the bill was laid on the table by a vote of 120 to 107. Sooner than this, and without the transaction of another business, save the rejection, by the Van Buren majority, of a resolution introduced by Mr. Clay, and simply declaring that it would be expedient to charter a National Bank whenever the wishes of a majority of the people, to that effect, should be indicated, the adoption instead of one, by Mr. Wright, declaring that it was inexpedient to establish such a Bank, the Congress convened in its session was adjourned.

At the regular session of 1839 the Sub-Treasury scheme was again brought before Congress in the Message of the President. Mr. Clay opposed it again with a long and powerful argument, denouncing it as a desperate attempt, on the part of the Executive to establish a Government Bank, which would throw into the hands of the Executive a complete control of the funds of the nation, which would thus increase, to a tremendous and fearfully dangerous extent, the power of that office. He also declared himself decidedly in favor of a National Bank, and gave a clear outline of the principles upon which he would have it based. His scheme proposed a strict and close limitation of its powers, an exclusion of all foreign influence, a careful regard for the interests and accommodation of

the whole people, and suitable checks upon the power of such an institution to expand or contract the circulating medium of the country. As to the constitutionality of such a Bank, Mr. Clay avowed his acquiescence in the decisions of Washington, Madison, Marshall, and the Supreme Court of the United States. The Sub-Treasury scheme was finally passed and became a law, "in spite of lamentations in Congress, or elsewhere," in the emphatic words of one of its warmest friends.

The question of abolition and the reception of abolition petitions at this time exciting great attention throughout the country, Mr. Clay, with the bold frankness which marked his whole career, made a most able statement and vindication of his views upon this important topic. They were eminently satisfactory to all sound and reflecting men, and embraced the strictest adherence to constitutional objections, and the most earnest regard for popular rights. In the summer of 1839 he made a journey to the north—going into Canada as far as Quebec, and returning by way of New York. His tour was a continued triumphal procession: he was met at every town by the most ardent gratulations, and was received at every principal place by public demonstrations of the highest and most enthusiastic regard.

The time was now approaching for another Presidential election. For twelve years the Whigs had been out of power, and in that time the country had been dragged down, by misrule, from the summit of prosperity to the depths of degradation and misery—the lowest, as it then appeared, that could possibly exist; subsequent events, however, to which we shall soon refer, have proved that even to this there was also a "lower deep." The extremity of suffering, however, and the darkest hopelessness seemed to brood over the land. The most sagacious politicians had the firmest conviction that a great majority of the people of the Union were opposed to the principles of the party in power. But the fabric of Executive patronage and influence had grown to such colossal dimensions, and had become so rooted in the nation, that its overthrow seemed a work of despair. The eyes of the whole nation were turned upon Mr. Clay as the fittest man to place at the helm of State, and there was every where the most undoubted confidence that if once he could be placed in that station, prosperity and happiness would be speedily restored. But there was likewise an impression, vague and formless, but general and influential, that he could not be elected by the people. Twice he had been a candidate, and twice had failed. At the last election Gen. Harrison had been the candidate, and no strong opposition had been raised against him, though the popularity of Jacksonism and the power of official patronage and party discipline had secured his defeat. The approaching election was one of the very highest moment; for it seemed evident, that if the Whig policy failed of success then, it could never hope for it again. It was a matter, therefore, of the very last importance to select a candidate who, while he was clearly identified with the great principles of the Whig party, should be able to unite all opposing or dissenting portions of that great party, and secure an election by the people.

For the purpose of selecting a candidate, therefore, a National Convention of delegates was chosen to meet at Harrisburg, in Pennsylvania, for consultation. The members were chosen not merely to represent the wishes of their constituents, as they partially and vaguely understood them, but to consult, to canvass the probabilities of success, and to determine upon the nomination it was expedient, upon all these considerations to make. Never was a body of more patriotic, of clearer headed, or more earnest men assembled together. The convention lost its party complexion in the fervor of their feelings in behalf of their country, and the solemnity and manifest depth of conviction which marked all their deliberations seem at once to identify the principles of the Whigs with the true policy of the nation and the fundamental grounds of our republican institutions. The deliberations of the convention resulted in the nomination of Gen. Harrison. The announcement carried disappointment into the hearts of the Whigs throughout the Union; but the developments of the first succeeding month swept away all feelings of this nature, and infused into the great mass of the Whigs an enthusiasm never equalled in the history of the nation, since the first formation of the Government. A National Convention was called, to meet at Baltimore, to respond to the nomination of General Harrison and John Tyler, as candidates for President and Vice President of the United States. It was answered by the assembling of more than 30,000 Whigs from every part of the Union; and its proceedings were characterized by a zeal and high-souled determination to succeed never witnessed before on any similar occasion. A pulsation of hope and energy sent through all the land. Hope sprang to every heart: a burning zeal, worthy the noblest and holiest cause that ever engaged the active exertion of any people, flamed forth in every section of the country. Conventions succeeded conventions, each more

numerous and more zealous than the last. Every question of public policy was discussed by the living speaker before the people, the direct inevitable tendency of the doctrines of the ruling party was pointed out as with a sunbeam; and every noble impulse, which finds a home in the heart of man, was aroused to life by the most thrilling and controlling eloquence. The popular enthusiasm took every form, and made itself manifest by processions, banners, music, mottoes, significant devices, and in all the various modes under which, in every age and nation, it has at some great crisis proclaimed its existence and wrought out its high determinations. The greatest intellects of the nation mingled in the heat of the contest. Senators and Representatives went directly to the people with their appeal. At the election in 1840 that appeal was triumphantly answered, and General Harrison was elected President and John Tyler Vice President, by an overwhelming majority. Thus were the leading principles of the Whigs adopted by the people of the United States, who thereby declared their wish to have them established as the law of the land. The leading measures proposed by the Whigs throughout the contest were briefly these: they proposed to restrict and limit the power of the veto, which had been so ruthlessly employed by Gen. Jackson to the destruction of great measures of public policy: to provide for the ineligibility of the President for a second term—believing, as they were warranted in believing by sad experience, that when this was not the case, the official conduct of the Executive would be shaped with a direct view to a reelection: to restrict the patronage of the Executive, and to regulate its distribution: to retrench expenditures, reform abuses, and introduce a more strict accountability into every public office; to establish a uniform currency, on a stable foundation, by a national institution, such as the wisdom of Congress might devise, guarded as much as possible against abuse, and limited by all expedient restrictions: to distribute the proceeds of the public lands among the several States of the Union to which of right they belonged: to establish a protective tariff on the basis of the Compromise, and by the exercise of that further legislation expressly contemplated by that law: and to administer the Government in all its branches upon the same principles of purity, integrity, and liberal policy which so strongly marked the early days of the republic. These principles had been deliberately adopted by the people of the United States. They were the principles of the advocacy of which the whole life of Henry Clay had been devoted, and in him they had found their constant and eloquent champion. Their execution was now committed to other hands—but to hands believed to be no less safe than his. The President elect was known to be a man of pure heart and the most devoted patriotism; and John Tyler, the chosen Vice President, had made the most earnest and sincere protestations of entire agreement upon all these points with the great Whig party by whom he was elected. He had given to the American people what they considered a sure pledge of his entire devotion to Whig principles by his strenuous and persevering advocacy of the nomination of Mr. Clay, of whose patriotism and devotion to these great principles no Whig ever entertained for one moment the slightest suspicion; and both came into office with the fairest prospects of redeeming their pledge, and restoring prosperity to the American people.

At the session of Congress closing the administration of Mr. Van Buren, Mr. Clay repeated his declaration of the principles which, throughout his life, he had endeavored to establish, and again brought before Congress all the great measures to the advocacy of which so much of his efforts had been directed. The President was inaugurated on the 4th of March, 1841, and in his address delivered upon that occasion renewed the hopes of the people that a new era was opening in their political history. In consideration of the pressing necessities of the country, he issued his proclamation convening Congress in extra session.

Congress assembled on the last Monday of May, 1841; but the elected President met them not; the sacred stillness of the tomb was around him; his soul was in the land of the great departed.

John Tyler, his constitutional successor, met the assembled Representatives, and they addressed themselves to the business of the extra session. Mr. Clay was the great leader in the Senate, and to him the nation looked for those measures of relief which her necessities demanded. He was prompt to devise, and bold to urge them. Early in June, he presented his practical and safe plan for the charter of a National Bank, as the initial step in the great work before him. It was passed by both houses of Congress, and sent to the President for his approval. It was expected to become a law, and the country rang with the applause of Henry Clay. John Tyler heard the shout, and it awakened within his bosom jealousies and angry passions, before which the zeal of his country faded away like a thing of nought. He violated the

first and fundamental principle which brought him into power, by vetoing a bill which the Whigs had pledged themselves should become a law. Mr. Clay encountered the veto with a frank and eloquent speech, deprecating the exercise of this most objectionable power, and in the most moving terms, implored the sad prostration of the country, now formed hopes, far overshadowed by its fate. Congress, however, took especial pains to ascertain what sort of a Bank bill the President was willing to sign, and soon presented such a one for his approval. This too was vetoed, and the hopes of the nation sunk. An attempt to pass a Tariff, to which Mr. Clay lent his aid, was attended with the same success, and it became evident that John Tyler, chosen by the Whigs to carry into effect their principles, had deserted their cause and joined himself to their foes.

Still, every thing was done that could be for the welfare of the country, and for the relief of the Government from the abyss of insolvency, in which it had for years been gradually sinking. A Loan Bill, Treasury Note Bill, and Provisional Tariff were passed, to preserve the Treasury from dishonor until full and permanent provision could be made, at the approaching regular session, for the collection of adequate revenue, by a careful and enlightened revision of the Tariff.—A Bankrupt Law was passed for the relief of unfortunate debtors, and to secure the effects of dishonest ones to their creditors; and an act providing for the Distribution of the Proceeds of the Public Lands was passed, but clogged with a condition which now renders it inoperative, in order to escape the Veto of John Tyler. Congress adjourned in September.

The regular session, commencing early in December, found Mr. Clay again at his post, doing all in his power to preserve what had been secured, and to carry on the work of beneficent reform. By his vote the repeal of the Bankrupt Law was defeated. By him, a series of Resolutions, setting forth the general principles on which the Government should be conducted, and the specific reforms which should be effected, in the restriction of Executive power, the retrenchment of expenditures, the adjustment of the Tariff, &c., &c., were introduced and advocated with consummate ability. They were generally adopted by the Senate, some of them without opposition.

arms of death. In this corner of the world there were twenty-six dead Mexicans, other Americans having fought in vain; at that point, it is considered beyond question, that all of them fall by the hand of Tennessee's favorite son! All were now dead. Not a compatriot to raise a monument is required to perpetuate their fame. So long as freedom has an abiding place in America, will their heroic deeds and proud names be held sacred.

The Enterprising and the Spiritless.
BY ROBERT MORRIS, ESQ.
Perhaps it would be difficult to determine whether it is the enterprising, or the spiritless, who are most guarded against the trade of matrimony, the over-enthusiasm of the enterprising—that is to say, the man who sees new bubbles of fortune in change and turn of life, who is contenting with disappointment, in the case of a failure, and indolent character, whose energies cannot be roused by any circumstances, whose faculties seem perfectly benumbed, and who is satisfied to rust on in idleness, the content and scorn in many instances of his friends. We say that the choice between the two would be difficult with many. No so, however, with us. One might as well tied to a dead body as to be connected with a better or worse, in business, or in social life, with an inanimate clod, whose capabilities bounded within the limits of a vegetable circle, who is willing to drag on a existence, without an effort either for the moral or mental improvement of those around who, in short, is satisfied with eating, drinking and perishing, without leaving a single intellectual record behind. "Motion, according to an eloquent modern author, is the soul of our being. The world in which we live is in constant motion: every thing is in its moves; the smallest particles of matter teem with life, and it is the order of nature and will of the Deity, that a man should exercise the glorious powers confided to him, keeping." It is well enough for old age, to have an active and useful life, to seek repose and quiet, and to contemplate in a proper spirit, the inevitable, and rapidly approaching change from time to eternity. And while of whether young or old, should in their movements, remember their dependence upon Divine Providence, and indulge occasionally in suitable meditations as to the mysterious nature, we cannot tolerate, in the young, a healthful, such apathy and indifference to the things of life, such utter absence of spiritual enterprise as indicates too palpably a disposition to grovel through existence without a noble thought, and elevated aspiration, or an active and manly impulse. Far better in our view, the individual of indomitable enterprise, whose energies nothing can repress, and who, although failing to-day and to-morrow, and the next day, or this year and the next, in some bright but unsubstantial undertaking, is not being daunted, determined to try something, and thus to "go ahead" as long as strength and animation last.

It is not in this class are not exactly the men of the mutations of this world. They too often not only do not regard as monotonous, but others, while, to some extent, regarded as monotonous, would be dull, cold and careless; them; while in contrast with the indifferent, the spiritless and the they are much to be preferred. We do hear persons exclaim—"Well, he is the most unlucky person in the world, for the last two years, and although he had one or two offers, the next day, and I am doomed to a life of next. But there is no use of saying so. My luck—however, next day, I am terminated to do so and so." Spirit and the same story is told. A child, by a friend, and the father to call on a certain individual. He is delighted with the prospect, anxious to get something to do in his own account, but he is not to day, and then discovers the rent horror, that it is too late. use, however, it is my luck. I start in business presents itself. He for the moment, looks round, admits the prospect, tolerably fair. But he inquires, then, father, discovers that failure has placed in the same line—that of being can be made, takes time to consider, finds, soon enough, that some one else more enterprise, has appropriated the opportunity as he is about to make up his mind. The old story is repeated—"it is my luck. It is my luck." Yes, my luck, half the world, it is my luck. We can only say, that characters, to shadow the light of the sun, for the darkness and gloom, and the dominion of the night, and the work of the world, is my luck.

MISCELLANEOUS

The Fall of the Alamo, or Last Days of Crockett.

A pamphlet with this title has been issued in St. Louis; it is by John Henry Brown, a gentleman who has resided many years in Lavaca, Texas, and writes from observation and correct information, derived from inquiry on the spot. It gives an account of Fannin's massacre, as well as the battles of Concepcion, Goliad, San Antonio, and in fact the history of the war, we copy a part of the account of the death of Col. David Crockett: Col. Crockett, wounded and closely pursued by a number of the enemy, retreated into the church, felling them as they approached, he stationed himself in a niche, and in the corner determined to face the foe to the last, and sell his life dearly; with his favorite rifle and a superabundance of side arms, he hewed and shot them down with the same awful certainty which was characteristic of his indomitable spirit. His position rendered access to him impossible, except by a direct and exposed approach in front; and after some eight or ten had been laid dead before him, a feeling of awe seemed to seize upon the assailants. One of them, who could speak a little broken English, probably preferring to have the signal honor of capturing so noble a specimen of American valor, to present to his "dread master," said to Crockett, "surrender, senior." A flash of most sovereign scorn darted from the fiery eye of Crockett, and as it pierced that of the enemy he seemed to be transfixed. In a voice of thunder Crockett answered—"Surrender! No! I am an American!" And as he spoke, he sent a ball through the heart of the paralyzed foe. He appeared for a moment like a wounded tiger, strengthened and buoyed by each additional wound; now hewing them down with his well tried sword—next dealing death with his fire arms. His person was literally drenched with his own blood; his strength must yield to its loss. Yet such physical power, wrought to the highest degree of excitement, can perform incredible prodigies.—This was the last concentrated energy of a powerful man, animated by one of the attributes of man—love of liberty. He knew for what his life was to be sacrificed, that devastation and butchery would follow, the footsteps of his heart's desire—that helpless man would be sacrificed to satisfy the insatiable desires of the conqueror; and feeling the holy inspiration of a dying patriot, he fought manfully till the loss of blood and the approach of death stayed his upraised arm; his rifle was broken to pieces, his pistols fell to the floor, and nothing but his hand remained. In the agony of death, with a terrible grasp, he brought his hand upon the head of the nearest assailant, and fell victoriously across his body into the

arms of death. In this corner of the world there were twenty-six dead Mexicans, other Americans having fought in vain; at that point, it is considered beyond question, that all of them fall by the hand of Tennessee's favorite son! All were now dead. Not a compatriot to raise a monument is required to perpetuate their fame. So long as freedom has an abiding place in America, will their heroic deeds and proud names be held sacred.

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