

# THE REPUBLICAN.

NEWBERN, N. C. WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 30, 1848.

VOL. 2, NO. 34.

W. B. GULICK.

## ADMINISTRATION OF GEN. CASS IN THE NORTHWEST.

The campaigns of 1812 and 1813, on the western frontiers, had been fought by the combined British and Indian forces and instigated, as the latter were, to them sacred predictions of a native prophet, whom the Indians believed to be in a contest for supremacy, in the event of which the settlements north of the Ohio sought, by an appeal to peace, the administration of General Cass, on the frontiers, was commenced and continued the same general object. It was necessary to hold the Indian tribes that the should hold the high. The battle of the Thames, after two years of sanguinary exertions, brought down the curtain on the contest. It had sealed the career of both the leader and prophet of the fallacy of trusting to the promises of an ally which had wholly abandoned them at the treaty of Ghent. But the Indians do not reason as we men; and besides, they were, to all intents, ignorant at the time of such abandonment. They were killed, but the prophet yet lived, and they hoped the war, which had been waged to the Niagara and St. Lawrence, was destined to result better for their interests in other quarters. General Cass, in assuming the administration of Michigan, and the management of the Indian affairs of the northwest, at that particular juncture, accepted a task which few, in the busy career of life, are equal to perform. It was a task which he had not solicited; although, of the post, it may in truth be said that, unlike that which marked the fall of the Swedish monarch, it was neither a petty fortress nor a barren strand.

Left in the temporary command of a remote military post, the feeble and scattered settlements around it had sought to gather strength and countenance in their position, trodden down as the country had been by the iron foot of war, in memorializing the President for his appointment. It was under these views, strongly pressed, that he accepted the office. But he did not, at once, lay down the sword. It was necessary for a period, not only as the emblem of power, but of justice among the savage tribes, who hovered, in broken but infuriated masses, over the wide domains of forest and lakes which had been committed to his management.

There is a popular error on this subject which all are prone to run into, who measure the duties of General Cass and his administration in that perilous era by the peaceful standard of a later state. It is to dissipate these misapprehensions, and to point out the momentous duties of the time, that the present remarks are commenced. Both the field of public service and the man who was called to act, were extraordinary.

Cass was one of those bold and original men who appear at long intervals among nations. Born with abilities for such scenes, he had been early inducted into the field of dangers and trials in the West. He possessed that quick forecast, that ready decision, and that fruitful resource, which are essential elements of greatness in a leader. With an intuitive knowledge of character, a quick appreciation of right, a strong perception of the interests and policy that sway both white and red men, and an absorbing sense of duty to his country, he grasped the class of duties before him with a master's hand. It was not mere physical boldness that such a station required. The policy to be pursued in governing the multiplied and conflicting tribes, the plots and counterplots to be circumvented, the means and agents to be employed, and a thousand other matters, demanded the initiative to be assumed at the moment on his own judgment of the soundness and propriety of the measures; and under these circumstances, and at such a distance from the seat of central power, the sanction of government was often, if not invariably, in cases of moment, an event which followed the execution of the duty. It was this moral intrepidity—this strong conviction of right—that animated his voice and guided his pen, as his published papers show, in the events of the two preceding campaigns. But if he yet exhibited a martial front, he did not come to task to govern the Indian tribes by force a single moment after their submission. His policy was eminently one of peace. He knew the nature of man well enough to know that persuasion is the great moral lever of success; and he had studied the red race sufficiently to observe that they did not form an exception to the general axiom. He regarded their vices, passions, and caprices as the result of ignorance and the want of education. He pitied the severity of their fate, and sought by his policy to reclaim them, and introduce the arts of peace and civilization into their villages at the earliest practical moment. All his traits and public acts denote this. If he had shown the vigilance of a Wayne in war, he evinced the benevolence of a William Penn in peace.

It is proposed to examine into the character of his services at that gloomy period, and to exhibit some of the leading features of his policy as the administrator of the general government on the frontiers. A glance at the general nature of his civil government may serve to denote the importance of the duties before him.

The administration of General Cass, as governor of Michigan, and superintendent of Indian affairs in the northwest, embraces a period of eighteen years, extending from 1813 to 1831. It has been seen, that at the age of thirty, sinking every consideration of rank and place, and intent alone on the honor and safety of his country, and the protection of the frontiers—menaced as they then were, at the same moment, by an Indian and a British foe—he threw himself fearlessly into the contest. Mounting his horse on the banks of the Muskegon, and seizing his rifle, at the first sound of alarm, he rushed to the field, with singleness of purpose, as a Marion and a Putnam had done in 1776. His address to the patriotic corps, who, on this occasion, elected

him as their leader, is couched "in thoughts that breathe and words that burn." It cannot be quoted at length in these sketches, but its principles, like those of his exposure of the errors of the campaign, a short time after, may be emphatically alluded to, in considering him in the new position he was now to occupy as the executive officer of a new Territory, and the eloquence of both these papers, as preserved in the journals of the day, is commended to the young, that their hearts, like his, may be early imbued with the love of country. They reveal three strong points: duty, honor, and faithfulness to the constitution—points of political rally which were thrown out hastily, in the storm of excitement that convulsed the period, but which, nevertheless, well marked the fixed and patriotic character of the man, and have formed the unvarying principles of his onward course. Placed in every subsequent situation, at home and abroad, his watchwords have been, DUTY, HONOR, and FAITHFULNESS TO THE PRINCIPLES OF THE CONSTITUTION. Those sentiments, it has been observed, animated him in his first brisk conflict with the enemy on the banks of the *Canard* or *Taronste*, and again during the ever memorable and trying scenes which both immediately preceded and followed the disgraceful surrender of *Hull at Detroit*! No attempts of the friends of the late General *Hull* in later days to wipe out the disgrace of that surrender, or disinter his reputation from the tomb, and to relieve it by casting shades upon that of a *faithless witness*, is at all likely to lessen the force of the historic odium which rests upon his name in consequence of that most humiliating transaction.

It is important to bear this thrilling era in mind, and to remember the high and prominent part borne in it by Colonel Cass, in branding it in its true colors, at the capital of his country, and thus preparing the minds of the people and the government for making a new and vigorous effort for regaining the possession of the country which *Hull* had lost. "When the forces landed in Canada," observes the indignant officer, in his report to the Secretary of War, on the 10th of September, 1812, "they landed with an ardent zeal, and stimulated with the hope of conquest—Had an immediate attack been made upon Malden, it would doubtless have fallen an easy victory. The ammunition was placed in the wagons, the cannon were embarked on board the floating batteries, and every requisite article was prepared. The spirit and zeal, the ardor and animation displayed by the officers and men, on learning the near accomplishment of their wishes, were a sure and sacred pledge, that in the hour of trial they would not be found wanting in duty to their country and themselves. But a change of measures, in opposition to the wishes and opinion of all the officers, was adopted by General *Hull*—The plan of attacking Malden was abandoned, and, instead of facing offensively, he broke up our camp and re-crossed the river in the night, without even the shadow of the enemy to injure us."

Such were the views with which this young officer regarded the retrograde movement from Canada, and such were the burning feelings of disgrace with which, *eight days after that ill-starred initiative movement*, he returned from the wild passes of the Huron, and the ambuscaded woods of *Maguaguon*, to behold the flag of his country needlessly, hopelessly, and disgracefully surrendered to the enemy. Neither the relative force of that enemy, nor the necessities of the times, demanded, or in the least justified the measure. "But," he exclaims indignantly, "had we been totally destitute of provisions, our duty and our interest was to fight. The enemy invited us to meet him in the field. By defeating him, the whole country would have been open to us, and the object of our expedition gloriously and successfully obtained. If we had been defeated, we had nothing to do but to retreat to the fort, and make the best defence which circumstances and our situation rendered practicable. But *basely* to surrender without firing a gun—*basely* to submit without raising a bayonet—*disgracefully* to pass in review before an enemy, inferior in quality, as well as the number of his forces, were circumstances which excited feelings of indignation more easily felt than described. To see the whole of our men, *flushed* with the hope of victory, eagerly awaiting the approaching contest; to see them afterwards dispirited, *hop-less*, and *desponding*, at least 500 shedding tears because they were not allowed to meet their country's foe and to fight their country's battles, excited sensations which no American has ever before had cause to feel, and which I trust in God will never again be felt, while one man remains to defend the standard of the Union."

Duty, honor, and faithfulness to the constitution, alike spur the act. It was with these sentiments that he returned to that frontier in 1813, at the head of a brigade, along with the banded chivalry of Kentucky and Ohio. He pursued the enemy to the banks of the Thames, where the opinion of superiority in the American troops, which he had expressed the year before on the nefarious surrender of *Hull*, were nobly vindicated and displayed in the entire rout of the British army, and its deceived and bewildered Indian allies. And it was with a like exaltation of the sentiments of duty and fidelity to his country, that he assumed the civil and military government of the territory of Michigan.

We have now reached a new basis for his fame. It was here, indeed, as the active and indomitable representative of the President, that he developed talents as a civilian, lawyer, and a diplomatist, a careful administrative officer, and statesman, which have laid the firmest foundation for his reputation. For it must be confessed, in surveying the pages of history, that while military skill is essential to raise the drooping spirits of nations, and takes strong hold of the sympathies of men, mere military skill—mere physical courage, with the coolness to contrive and execute the plan of a battle or a campaign, *without civil talents*, and an entire devotion to, and understanding of, the laws and constitution of a country, is the most dangerous talent which has ever been cherished by na-

tion. Little do we apprehend the dazzle of such misnamed heroic, but really tyrannic traits in this Union; but it is the policy of a wise people, who love the maxims of peace, law, and justice, to guard every avenue against the approach of unchastened footsteps to the temple of freedom. There has been but one Washington in the world, and but one Burr in America. But the genius of the latter is a rise of history; and when we see large and respected masses of men selected for their wisdom and pre-eminent professions for a conservative tone of government casting their carefully cherished principles away, and uniting in wild huzzas for mere military renown it behooves the people to reflect, and seek for the old landmarks of liberty which have guided our fathers through the storm and the battle. It is the oak leaf of democracy that crowned their heads.

Cass was eminently the man for the position in which the sagacity of Mr. Adams had now placed him. The governorship of Michigan, in 1813, was no idle post; no sinecure. The iron footsteps of war had fallen heavily and with a crushing weight upon it. War still raged within it, and around it, and the executive had, during all that year, surrounded as he was by a savage foe, and through the whole of 1814, and the winter of 1815, up to June, to wield both the sword and the pen. There was as much decision, care, and wisdom required to use the one as the other. And when peace came, and the inhabitants began to flee back from forts and stockades to their ancient fields and settlements, these had to the eye of the beholder more the aspect of some dilapidated, overrun, and war-wasted district, along the Belgian borders of the Rhine or Scheldt, in the days of Philip II, than a *bona fide* American territory.

The first effort of Governor Cass's policy was to reconstruct the dilapidated government, and lay the foundation of social order: to secure the peace of the frontier with the Indian tribes—to protect the existing settlements, and provide for enlarging them by treaties—and to connect the feeble and exposed districts by roads and bridges which a team could pass—converting mere trails into wagon roads, and to extend these from the ancient valleys, where alone the French population was located, to interior points of the peninsula. For it was a singular trait, and one which bespoke the little enterprise of the old inhabitants, or else their attachment to *inter-valley lands*, that they lived entirely on the mere skirts of the territory along the main rivers, and had not penetrated, for any purpose of agriculture, into the interior. It was not till about 1818-19, that the present attractive oaklands—one of the *widest tracts of the best wheat-growing districts in America*—was explored; and such was the low estimate in which the interior of Michigan generally was held, that the lands were absolutely reported by commissioners sent out to view them, as unfit to be given in bountiful lands to the soldiers of the late war. These commissioners had, indeed, never penetrated through the wet and heavy forest extending but *twelve miles back from Detroit*! I well remember the feelings of exultation and triumph which, in 1819, attended the return of the first exploring parties which had penetrated to the present site of the town of Pontiac and the banks of the Sciawassa—then a perfect *terra incognita*, though the former was within thirty miles of Detroit!

Courts of law and of record were established, new counties erected, surveys of the public lands set on foot, and other facilities created in the territory for inviting and sustaining an emigrant population. For several years after the war, there was indeed but a slow increase of population, the tide of emigration setting strong towards the attractive valleys of the Ohio, the Wabash, and other more southerly latitudes. There was still a prejudice in the public mind against Michigan and the upper lake region generally, as a farming country, which had its origin in the unfavorable report above mentioned, as sanctioned by official authority, which it required time and the acquisition and diffusion of correct geographical information to correct. Governor Cass did not allow this fact to escape him, but determined to encourage and set on foot efforts, in various ways, to explore the country, and spread abroad the results in the journals and other popular forms. Those who are curious in this matter, will find full evidence of this policy in an examination of the files of the early newspapers and journals of the frontier—a means of intelligence which is, indeed, almost the only early resource of a frontier population, and generally supplies the great want of books in the wild and new settlements for many years. He was of the number of those men, however, who believe that it is not enough to recommend to others eligible modes for the encouragement and progress of society; but who are ever ready to give testimony of sincerity in their plans, by becoming efficient actors themselves.

Fortunately for the progress of knowledge, his duties as superintendent of Indian affairs—a department of his administration in which he arose to eminence, and acquired great influence with the Indian tribes—called for research in the names, numbers, and location of these tribes, in the remote part of his jurisdiction; and he was thus placed in a position to make the exploration and investigation of the topography, and resources, and the native population concurrently.

In 1819 he originated the plan of an expedition through the series of upper lakes, by way of the head of Lake Superior, to the extreme upper Mississippi with the view of tracing this river to its source. In this expedition, the plan of which received the sanction of the government, he was furnished with a competent engineer and topographer, with a military escort, a mineralogist and geologist, and several other observers and assistants, by which means the original objects were secured, and the government placed in the possession of a valuable body of information for the guidance of its military and interior administration. The open season of 1820 was devoted to this expedition, which reached the high and remote point on the sources of the Mississippi, which has been since denominated by geographers, *CASS LAKE*. The pub-

lication of the narrative of this tour, which had attracted public attention, brought the region into notice, caused the fertility and advantages of Michigan and northern Illinois and Wisconsin to be properly appreciated, and drew the attention of many persons, for the first time, to the bold and energetic individual to whose life and character these sketches are devoted. During this expedition, treaties were formed with the *Ojibwas* at *Arbre Croche*, with the *Chippewas* at *Sault Ste. Marie*, and with the *Chippewas* at the falls of *St. Anthony*. About five thousand miles of lake and river coast were traversed and sketched by this expedition. Gov. Cass had conferred with a very large number of Indian bands, who had only known the government of the United States by rumor. He had explored the channels of the Mississippi by its windings, falls, and rapids, nearly five hundred miles above the point where *Pike* encamped, and terminated his exploration by water in 1806. It had brought him into personal acquaintance with all the leading chiefs of these expanded regions, and it is from this time that the Department of War dates the permanent establishment of its authority and laws among the leading tribes of the west and northwest.

Governor Cass had, indeed, in a peculiar manner, drawn upon himself the eyes of the large body of Indians upon that frontier. These Indians occupied the country extending to the 49th parallel of latitude, which separates the United States from Upper Canada and the Hudson's Bay Territory, quite to the Rocky Mountains. He stood upon that wide frontier, not only as having charge of the United States tribes, but as the shield and protector of the northwestern States and Territories, against the aggressions and incursions of the fierce and warlike tribes and bands, who located on the British side of the boundaries—fixed as those tribes have been, from the earliest times, in hostility to the United States, and urged on and excited, as they were, to continue this hostility, after the peace of 1814. This hostility, as is known, was kept up by foreign emissaries and traders, chiefly of the numerous and influential class of the *boisbrules*.

To comprehend the true character of his administration of Indian affairs, it may be proper to advert, for a moment, to the great extent of the line of frontier committed to him, and the number of the tribes who were either placed under his jurisdiction, or whose power and influence on the tribes south of the lines it was necessary to watch and counteract. No estimate, indeed, can be formed of the difficulties and importance of his public services without reference to this branch of information. For, not only did the native tribes look to him as the personification of the American government on this boundary, but the government itself had, in effect, and from the very necessities of the case, intrusted to him its FOREIGN INTERIOR POLICY on these frontiers.

Taking up the map, it will be seen that the line of frontier committed to him in the autumn of 1813 extended from the lake shores of Ohio through the straits of Detroit, *St. Clair*, and *St. Mary's*, and the connecting links of *Lakes Erie*, *St. Clair*, *Huron* and *Superior*, to the old grand portage west of *Fort William*, on the latter lake; and thence by the series of lakes and portages, through the *Rainy* lakes, to the 49th degree, at the northern extremity of the *Lake of the Woods*. The line thence west had been drawn by the treaty of *Ghent* and dropped at the *Rocky Mountains*. Such a line it was supposed, at that era, and truly so, would not cross the *Mississippi*—a stream which, it has since been found, flows, at first from its origin in *TRASCAS* lake towards the north and east, for a considerable distance. So far, however, as there was a civil or administrative jurisdiction exhibited along that extreme line, it was exercised from the executive chair and superintendency of *DETROIT*. Not less than 1,500 miles of frontier were included between the west cape of *Maumee* bay, being the most easterly point of Michigan, and the 49th parallel, where it crosses the *Red* river of *Lake Winnipeg*, above *Fort Douglas*, in the settlements of *Lord Selkirk*.

It was urged by Governor Cass, before the Secretary of War, immediately after his return from his expedition into that remote region, to push forward a military post to the foot of *Lake Superior*, and to transfer one of the western Indian agencies, where the occasion for it had ceased, namely, from *Vincennes*, on the *Wabash*, to the *Sault Ste. Marie*, of Michigan. He advocated the removal of part of the troops from *Madison Barracks*, at *Sackett's Harbor*, on *Lake Ontario*, to *St. Mary's*, not without strong objections on the part of the Secretary, who at last defended his position of not disturbing that post, on the score of the spacious and fine quarters which had been put up there for their use. "Then," replied General Cass to the Secretary of War, "if this be the only ground for not ordering the removal, it would be far better immediately to clap a torch to the barracks and burn them down." The appeal prevailed, and *St. Mary's* was established, a post three hundred and ninety miles northwest of *Detroit*, and the American flag was permanently hoisted upon the identical spot at that place in 1822, where, about two years before, namely, on the 16th of June, 1820, he had, alone, and naked-handed, walked into an exasperated hostile camp of *Chippewas*, and pulled down the British flag, with expressions of indignation. It was there, in fact, that a British influence had long been exerted. It was the old headquarters of the *British Northwest Company*, who had marshalled the Indians against us in the war. The large body of the kindred and allied tribes, the *Chippewas* and *Ojibwas*, were and are still widely extended along the lake coasts, and forest of that frontier. The great *Chippewa* family extends far into the Canadas and the territory of *Hudson's Bay*. All these multiplied tribes had been led to battle against us in the Campaigns of 1812, 1813, and 1814. Cass had also placed under his superintendency the *Wyandots*, *Senecas*, and *Shawnees* of Ohio; the *Miamias*, *Weas*, and *Piankeshaws*, and the *Delawares* of the *Wabash*; the *Potta-*

*watomies* of *Illinois* and *Indiana*; the *Menomones* and *Winnebagoes* of *Western Michigan*, (now *Wisconsin*) and a part of the *Sicagos*, *Sacs* and *Foxes*, and various *Algonquin* bands at large, who roved and depredated through the lake region and forests of the north. These Indians, from the best estimates, formed, in the aggregate, at the time he took up his official residence at *Detroit*, about 40,000 souls, few of which resorted to any other principal American station.

According to the ordinary mode of reduction, this number of souls would bring into the field an aggregate of *eight thousand warriors*. Such an Indian force, divided in small predatory parties of several hundred each, and scattered along a line of frontier extending fifteen hundred miles, from southeast to northwest, was suited to alarm the country, harassed as the settlements northwest of the Ohio had already been by a painful and murderous war of detachments and ambuscades, of nearly four years continuance, i. e. 1811 to 1815; for this was the Indian period of hostilities.

To add to the dissatisfaction felt by the Indians, on the result of the war, and give point to their ill-motivated hostility, they were pinched by water, by the loss of their trade, and the failure of game amidst forest recesses, which had been trampled down by the marching of the troops. More than all, they were goaded on in their dislikes to the Americans by the emissaries of foreign governments, who still continued their efforts to sway the feelings of the American Indians. *Mallien*, or *Amherstburg*, as the British now called that once noted depot, and *Drummond's Island*, the *Manitoulines*, and *Penetanguishine*, were still the annual resorts of the border tribes, irrespective of the national boundary line. By far the largest portion of these annual visitors to the British depots came from the regions of the *Maumee*, the *St. Joseph*, *Chicago*, *Rock* river, *Prairie du Chien*, and the almost illimitable regions lying northwest of *Michilimackinac*, and south of *Ghent* boundary.

It was the effort to break up these visits of fealty to a foreign power, where they were supplied with arms and ammunition, and to teach them their true interests and duties, both to themselves and the United States, that constituted one of the peculiar and arduous branches of administrative duty that marked the superintendency of *Gen. Cass*. It was not till the treaty of *Ghent* that both the Indians and British dwellers along these lines were in fact taught that the old *Franklinean* boundary of 1783 was not to be altered; that they could not drive the Americans back to the lines of the Ohio or the Illinois—a thing the Indians confidently predicted—and that the American flag and the American laws were to bear sway in the northwest as well as east, close up to the line separating the two countries. But even this was a species of information which was not told the tribes promptly, or, if told at all by the reckless and depraved class of interpreters at the British posts, told in such a manner as to destroy its proper effect upon the deluded tribes. This furnished the best, and, indeed, only rational excuse for such acts of hostility as were met by *General Cass*, and put down at *St. Mary's* in 1820, and on the *Fox* and *Wisconsin* in 1827, and for the ruthless and sanguinary outbreak of the *Sacs* and *Foxes* under *Blackhawk*, in 1832, which immediately followed the withdrawal of this vigilant officer from that frontier. It was in the local alarms and disturbances which these visits to *Malden* produced, that the first symptoms of this *Blackhawk* war arose, and the militia of Michigan and Illinois were promptly ordered under arms to quell it. But the plot had not been watched and nipped in the bud, and its effects could not be arrested till the entire army of the Union was put in motion.

The supplying of arms to our Indians, in a time of peace, constituted so extraordinary a feature in these political pilgrimages of the Indians to the British depots, that the fact was notorious to all the frontiers. It was early brought to the notice of the Secretary of War, and is pointedly alluded to in a recent debate in the Senate.

"I am not disposed (said *Gen. Cass*) in the discussion arising from the *Yucatan* overture to reject the lessons of history, because the truths they teach may be harsh and unpalatable. I know that arms have been furnished to Indians within the United States by the agents of the British government, and by the directions of that government; and I may thence draw the legitimate conclusion that such an act is within its code of political ethics, and may be done when called for by political considerations. The measure to which I refer took place when the distinguished senator from South Carolina [*Mr. Calhoun*] presided over the Department of War, and connected his name so permanently and so brilliantly with the history of its administration. He came to it, sir, when it was languid, exhausted by the exertions of a terrible war, and when it was comparatively without order or energy; and he left it in a high state of organization, prompt in its administration, economical in its expenditures, and with a prevailing spirit controlling all its branches. I can wish his successors no more fortunate termination of their labors than that which should retire from them with a reputation equal to his. Reports of the distribution of arms by the British authorities to the Indians in the United States were repeatedly made to him, and the matter became the subject of formal diplomatic representations to the British government. I think the senator from South Carolina must have a general recollection of the affair. (Here *Mr. Calhoun* gave a sign of assent.)

"For many years the various Indian tribes as far as the *Mississippi*, and some of them west of that river, were annually invited to *Fort Malden*, at the mouth of the *Detroit* river, where large supplies of arms, of ammunition, and clothing, and of other articles of taste or comfort, agreeably to their habits, were distributed to them. I speak of years of peace. If I went back to years of war, I could tell another tale—a tale of human flesh—of American flesh—sold in the market like butchers' meat in the shambles. But I for-

bear. When, however, peace returned, and found large bodies of warlike savages filling that portion of our country, it found also, that their attachments to England were kept alive by the subsidies given to them. Our whole frontier was held in a state of greater or less alarm; and all the outbreaks which took place among them could be traced to the ascendancy acquired over them by this system, and to the purpose to which it was directed. They came to the great English storehouse as regularly as the ox that knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib; and they were fed from that crib, and many deeds of destruction were the consequence. After some remonstrances of our government, the depot was changed, and was established at *Drummond's Island* in *Lake Huron*, then almost without the sphere of our occupation. When, however, the Indians receded, and *Drummond's Island* passed under our jurisdiction, another change was made, and perhaps more changes since that time; for, owing to other occupations, I have lost sight of the subject for some years."—*Speech of Hon. Lewis Cass, of Michigan, on the proposed occupation of Yucatan, delivered in the Senate of the United States May 10, 1848.*

From *Detroit* to the settlements of *Lord Selkirk* on *Red River*, there is seated along the British line a large *beaver* population—a class who, to the forest arts and subtlety of the hunter's life, add, to a greater or less extent, the intelligence, enterprise, and spirit of trade of the European. Many of them, however, who have not had the means of education, are little removed from the Indians themselves, living in temporary cabins, and pursuing the chase. Others fulfil the duties of interpreters at the post or at the factories of trade, or conduct the minor operations of the Indian trade at or near the Indian villages. Few have risen to the management of a department of trade—a term that embraces a local district. All are intimate with the languages, wishes, and wants of the Indians, to whom they are related by the ties of blood, and over whom they exercise a controlling influence. The whole of this class, north of the lines, are under the influence, more or less immediately exerted, of the British fur companies—companies chartered by Parliament, with large and exclusive powers—who exert, in these northern latitudes, no little part of the powers of the kindred monopoly of the *East India Company*. Gain, with these companies, becomes a far more stringent principle of action than love of country. Their agents and servants are stimulated to glean the forests, with a sort of military precision, up to the American lines. Here their outposts are fixed, and every inducement held out for the American Indians to visit them, and dispose of their hunts. At unprotected points the American soil was often, and is still often invaded for the purpose of trade.—Trading clerks, with their entire outfits, have thus been seduced from their duty and carried into the British precincts. American flags have been forcibly taken from chiefs, and replaced by British flags; and there is an instance where a whole village of *Chippewas*, in the bleak angle of country west of the *Grand Portage*, were wholly removed on sleds in the winter season, and thus prevented from hunting for an American trader. These incursions have been frequently carried to the *St. Peter's*, sweeping the game in all the plains north and west of that stream, quite to the banks of the *Missouri*.

The fierce rivalry with which this trade was carried on, has perhaps never been equaled on this continent. The murder of *Mr. Wadin* at *Grand Portage*, in violation of the rights of hospitality, in 1781, and the barbarous assassination of *Owen Keveny*, at the *Dalles*, on *Rainy Lake* river, in 1816, denote the reckless and unchastened spirit which may animate a commercial rivalry in positions remote from the ordinary restraints of law and morality. The very same year that marked the tragedy of the *Dalles*, *Gov. Semple* was shot down on the plains near *Fort Douglas*, on *Red River*. These were the results of internal strife between rival incorporated British companies. Nor were the American traders, who proceeded to those lines under license to trade from *Gov. Cass's* superintendency, exempted from these sanguinary scenes, which were in these cases generally encountered from the Indian gun or tomahawk. In a report made to the War Department by the most remote agent on that frontier, it is shown that 42 American citizens perished on that line from various casualties, in availing themselves of their official permission to trade, within a period of twelve years, terminating with *Gov. Cass's* services in 1831. Of this number, 26 were assassinated.

These latter cases were the subjects of official or judicial inquiry and investigation.—The records of the courts of that territory, and of the agencies of Indian affairs, will show that, in numbers of cases, the murderers were taken, or surrendered to the civil authorities, and in some cases the extreme penalty of the law visited upon the offenders. The rights of citizenship were vindicated, and the laws of the country promptly maintained; and its capacity of yielding protection to the most remote of its native and adopted citizens, fully vindicated. *Gov. Cass* was ever prompt in his attention to the multiplied duties growing out of this branch of the execution of the intercourse laws, carefully investigating complaints, suggesting modes of action to the ministerial officers of the department, and exercising the functions of a vigilant sentinel, mild, yet firm, on the frontiers. Calls of humanity and justice ever found a quick response in his breast.

Few men have, perhaps, ever looked at the problem of the civilization of the North American tribes with a deeper appreciation of both the duties and the difficulties which lie in the way of its solution. None have asked with more absorbing interest than he has, "How are we to afford them any aid?" "How are we to preserve them from decline and extinction?" It was his lot early to be thrown into contact with this lost branch of the race of mankind; and he, at one period,

[CONCLUDED ON FOURTH PAGE.]