

## EULOGY.\*

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WE are in the midst of extraordinary events. British-American Civilization and Spanish-American Society have come into collision, each in its fullest maturity. The armies of the North have penetrated the chapparels at Palo Alto and Resaca de la Palma—passed the fortresses of Monterey, and rolled back upon the heart of Mexico the unavailing tide of strong resistance from the mountain-side of Buena Vista. Martial colonists are encamped on the coasts of California, while San Juan d'Ulloa has fallen, and the invaders have swept the gorge of Cerro Gordo—carried Perote and Puebla, and planted the banner of burning stars and ever-multiplying stripes on the towers of the city of the Aztecs.

The thirtieth Congress assembles in this conjuncture, and the debates are solemn, earnest, and bewildering. Interest, passion, conscience, freedom, and humanity, all have their advocates. Shall new loans and levies be granted to prosecute still farther a war so glorious? or shall it be abandoned? Shall we be

\* Delivered before the Legislature of New York, by Wm. H. Seward.

content with the humiliation of the foe? or shall we complete his subjugation? Would that severity be magnanimous, or even just? Nay, is the war itself just? Who provoked, and by what unpardonable offence, this disastrous strife between two eminent Republics, so scandalous to Democratic Institutions? Where shall we trace anew the ever-advancing line of our empire? Shall it be drawn on the shore of the Rio Grande, or on the summit of the Sierra Madre? or shall Mexican Independence be extinguished, and our eagle close his adventurous pinions only when he looks off upon the waves that separate us from the Indies? Does Freedom own and accept our profuse oblations of blood, or does she reject the sacrifice? Will these conquests extend her domain, or will they be usurped by ever-grasping slavery? What effect will this new-born ambition have upon ourselves? Will it leave us the virtue to continue the career of social progress? How shall we govern the conquered people? Shall we incorporate their mingled races with ourselves, or rule them with the despotism of proconsular power? Can we preserve these remote and hostile possessions in any way, without forfeiting our own blood-bought heritage of freedom?

Steam and lightning, which have become docile messengers, make the American people listeners to this high debate, and anxiety, and interest, intense and universal, absorb them all. Suddenly the council is dissolved. Silence is in the capitol, and sorrow has

thrown its pall over the land. What new event is this? Has some Cromwell closed the legislative chambers? or has some Cæsar, returning from his distant conquests, passed the Rubicon, seized the purple, and fallen in the Senate beneath the swords of self-appointed executioners of his country's vengeance? No! nothing of all this. What means, then, this abrupt and fearful silence? What unlooked for calamity has quelled the debates of the Senate and calmed the excitement of the people? An old man, whose tongue once indeed was eloquent, but now through age had well nigh lost its cunning, has fallen into the swoon of death. He was not an actor in the drama of conquest—nor had his feeble voice yet mingled in the lofty argument—

"A grey-haired sire, whose eye intent  
Was on the visioned future bent."

And now he has dreamed out at last the troubled dream of life. Sighs of unavailing grief ascend to Heaven. Panegyric, fluent in long-stifled praise, performs its office. The army and the navy pay conventional honors, with the pomp of national woe, and then the hearse moves onward. It rests appropriately, on its way, in the hall where independence was proclaimed, and again under the dome where freedom was born. At length the tomb of JOHN ADAMS opens to receive a son, who also, born a subject of a king, had stood as a representative of his emancipated country, before prin-

cialties and powers, and had won by merit, and worn without reproach, the honors of the Republic.

From that scene, so impressive in itself, and impressive because it never before happened, and can never happen again, we have come up to this place surrounded with the decent drapery of public mourning, on a day set apart by authority, to recite the history of the citizen, who, in the ripeness of age, and fulness of honors, has thus descended to his rest. It is fit to do so, because it is by such exercises that nations regenerate their early virtues and renew their constitutions. All nations must perpetually renovate their virtues and their constitutions, or perish. Never was there more need to renovate ours than now, when we seem to be passing from the safe old policy of peace and moderation into a career of conquest and martial renown. Never was the duty of preserving our free institutions in all their purity, more obvious than it is now, when they have become beacons to mankind in what seems to be a general dissolution of their ancient social systems.

The history of JOHN QUINCY ADAMS is one that opens no new truth in the philosophy of virtue; for there is no undiscovered truth in that philosophy. But it is a history that sheds marvellous confirmation on maxims which all mankind know, and yet are prone to undervalue and forget. The exalted character before us was formed by the combination of virtue, courage, assiduity, and modesty, under favorable con-

ditions, with native talent and genius, and illustrates the truth, that in morals as in nature, simplicity is the chief element of the sublime.

John Quincy Adams was fortunate in his lineage; in the period, and in the place of his nativity; in all the circumstances of education; in the age and country in which he lived; in the incidents, as well as the occasions of his public service; and in the period and manner of his death. He was a descendant from one of the Puritan planters of Massachusetts, and a son of the most intrepid actor in the Revolution of Independence. Quincy, the place of his birth, is a plain, bounded on the west by towering granite hills, and swept without defence by every wind from the ocean. Its soil in ancient times was as sterile as its climate is always rigorous.

Born on the eleventh day of July, 1767, in the hour of the agitation of rebellion, and reared within sight and sound of gathering war, the earliest political ideas he received were such as John Adams then uttered—"We must fight." "Sink or swim—live or die—survive or perish with my country, is my unalterable determination." A mother fervently pious, and eminent in intellectual gifts, directed with more than maternal assiduity and solicitude the education of him who was to render her own name immortal. Never quite divorced from home, yet twice, and for long periods in his youth, a visitor in Europe, he enjoyed always the parental discipline of one of the founders of the Amer-

ican State, and often the daily conversation of Franklin and Jefferson; and combined travel in France, Spain, England, Holland, Denmark, Sweden, and Russia, and even diplomatic experience, with the instructions of the schools of Paris, of the University at Leyden, and of Harvard University at Cambridge; and all these influences fell upon him at a period when his country, then opening the way to human liberty through trials of fire, fixed the attention of mankind.

The establishment of the Republic of the United States of America, is the most important secular event in the history of the human race. It did not disentangle the confused theory of the origin of Government, but cut through the bonds of power existing by prescription, at a blow; and thus directly and immediately affected the opinions and the actions of men in every part of the civilized world. It animated them everywhere to seek freedom from despotic power and aristocratic restraint. Whenever and wherever they have since moved, either by peaceful agitation or by physical force, to meliorate systems of government, whether in France at the close of the last century, or afterward on the second subversion of the elder branch of the Bourbons, or in the recent overthrow of the constitutional king, or in Ireland, or in England, or in Italy, or in Greece, or in South America, whether they succeeded or failed, there, in the tumult or in the strife, was the spirit of the American Revolution. "It gave an example of a great people, not merely emancipating

themselves, but governing themselves, without either a monarch to control, or an aristocracy to restrain them; and it demonstrated, for the first time in the history of the world, contrary to the predictions and theories of speculative philosophy, that a great nation, when duly prepared, is capable of self-government by purely republican institutions."

But the establishment of the American Republic was too great an achievement to be made all at once. It was a drama of five grand acts, each of which filled a considerable period, and called upon the stage actors of peculiar powers and distinguished virtues. Those acts were, colonization, preparation, revolution, organization, consolidation.

Two of these acts were closed before John Quincy Adams was born. The third, the revolution, the shortest of them all, dazzles the contemplation by the rapidity and the martial character of its incidents. The fourth, the organization of the Government, by the splendors of genius elicited, and the felicity of the new form of government presented, satisfies the superficial inquirer that, when the Constitution had been adopted, nothing remained to perfect the great achievement. But other nations have had successful revolutions, and have set up free constitutions, and have yet sunk again under reinvigorated despotism. The CONSOLIDATION of the American Republic—the crowning act—occupied forty years, reaching from 1789 to 1829. During that period, John Quincy Adams participated

continually in public affairs, and ultimately became the principal actor.

The new Government was purely an experiment. In opposition to the fixed habits of mankind, it established suffrage practically universal, and representation so perfect that not one Legislative House only, but both Houses; not legislative officers only, but all officers, executive, ministerial, and even judicial, were directly or indirectly elected by the people. The longest term of the senatorial trust was but six years, and the shortest only two, and even the tenure of the executive power was only four years. This Government, betraying so much popular jealousy, was invested with only special and limited sovereignty. The conduct of merely municipal affairs was distributed within the States, among Governments even more popular than the federal structure, and without whose ever-renewed support that structure must fall.

The Government thus constituted, so new, so complex and artificial, was to be consolidated, in the midst of difficulties at home, and of dangers abroad. The constitution had been adopted only upon convictions of absolute necessity, and with evanescent dispositions of compromise. By nearly half of the people it was thought too feeble to sustain itself, and secure the rights for which governments are instituted among men. By as many it was thought liable to be converted into an over-shadowing despotism, more formidable and more odious than the monarchy which had been

subverted. These conflicting opinions revealed themselves in like discordance upon every important question of administration, and were made the basis of parties, which soon became jealous and irreconcilable, and ultimately inveterate, and even in some degree disloyal.

These domestic feuds were aggravated by pernicious influences from Europe. In the progress of western civilization, the nations of the earth had become social. The new Republic could not, like the Celestial Empire, or that of Japan, confine itself within its own boundaries, and exist without national intercourse. It had entered the family of nations. But the position it was to assume, and the advantages it was to be allowed to enjoy, were yet to be ascertained and fixed. Its independence, confessed to be only a doubtful experiment at home, was naturally thought ephemeral in Europe. Its example was ominous, and the European Powers willingly believed that, if discountenanced and baffled, America would soon relapse into colonial subjugation. Such prejudices were founded in the fixed habits of society. Not only the thirteen colonies, but the whole American hemisphere, had been governed by European States from the period of its discovery. The very soil belonged to the trans-atlantic monarchs by discovery, or by ecclesiastical gift. Dominion over it attached by divine right to their persons, and drew after it obligations of inalienable allegiance upon those who became the inhabitants of the new world. The

new world was indeed divided between different powers, but the system of government was the same. It was administered for the benefit of the parental State alone. Each power prohibited all foreign trade with its Colonies, and all intercourse between them and other plantations, supplied its Colonies with what they needed from abroad, interdicted their manufactures, and monopolized their trade. The prevalence of this system over the whole continent of America and the adjacent islands prevented all enterprize in the colonies, discouraged all improvement, and retarded their progress to independence.

The American Revolution sundered these bonds only so far as they confined thirteen of the British Colonies, and left the remaining British dominions, and the continent, from Georgia around Cape Horn to the Northern Ocean, under the same thralldom as before. Even the United States had attained only physical independence. The moral influences of the colonial system oppressed them still. Their trade, their laws, their science, their literature, their social connections, their ecclesiastical relations, their manners and their habits, were still colonial; and their thoughts continually clung around the ancient and majestic States of the Eastern Continent.

The American Revolution, so happily concluded here, broke out in France simultaneously with the beginning of Washington's administration. The French nation passed in fifteen years from absolute despotism under

Louis XVI., through all the phases of democracy to a military despotism under Napoleon Bonaparte; and retained, through all these changes, only two characteristics—unceasing ferocity of faction, and increasing violence of aggression against foreign States. The scandal of the French Revolution fell back upon the United States of America, who were regarded as the first disturbers of the ancient social system. The principal European monarchs combined, under the guidance of England, to arrest the presumptuous career of France and extirpate democracy by the sword. Nevertheless, the republican cause, however odious in Europe, was our national cause. The sympathies of a large portion of the American people could not be withdrawn from the French nation, which always claimed, even when marshalled into legions under the Corsican conqueror, to be fighting the battles of freedom; while, on the other side, the citizens who regarded innovation as worse than tyranny, considered England and her allies as engaged in sustaining the cause of order, of government, and of society itself.

The line already drawn between the American people in regard to their organic law, naturally became the dividing line of the popular sympathies in the great European conflict. Thus deeply furrowed, that line became "a great gulf fixed." The Federal party unconsciously became an English party, although it indignantly disowned the epithet; and the Republican party became a French party, although with equal

sincerity it denied the gross impeachment. Each belligerent was thus encouraged to hope for aid from the United States, through the ever-expected triumph of its friends; while both conceived contemptuous opinions of a people who, from too eager interest in a foreign fray, suffered their own national rights to be trampled upon with impunity by the contending States.

Washington set the new machine of government in motion. He formed his cabinet of recognized leaders of the adverse parties. Hamilton and Knox of the Federal party were balanced by Jefferson and Randolph of the adverse party. "Washington took part with neither, but held the balance between them with the scrupulous justice which marked his lofty nature." On the 25th of April, 1793, he announced the neutrality of the United States between the belligerents, and his decision, without winning the respect of either, exasperated both. Each invaded our national rights more flagrantly than before, and excused the injustice by the plea of necessary retaliation against its adversary, and each found willing apologists in a sympathizing faction in our own country.

Commercial and political relations were to be established between the United States and the European Powers in this season of conflict. Ministers were needed who could maintain and vindicate abroad the same impartiality practised by Washington at home. There was one citizen eminently qualified for such a

trust in such a conjuncture. Need I say that citizen was the younger Adams, and that Washington had the sagacity to discover him?

John Quincy Adams successively completed missions at the Hague and at Berlin, in the period intervening between 1794 and 1801, with such advantage and success, that in 1802 he was honored by his native commonwealth with a seat as her representative in the Senate of the United States. The insults offered to our country by the belligerents increased in aggravation as the contest between them became more violent and convulsive. France, in 1804, laid aside even the name and forms of a Republic, and the first consul, dropping the emblems of popular power, placed the long-coveted diadem upon his brow, where its jewels sparkled among the laurels he had won in the conquest of Italy. Washington's administration had passed away, leaving the American people in sullen discontent. John Adams had succeeded, and had atoned by the loss of power for the offence he had given by causing a just but unavailing war to be declared against France. Jefferson was at the head of the Government; he thought the belligerents might be reduced to forbearance by depriving them of our commercial contributions of supplies, and recommended, first an embargo, and then non-intercourse. Britain was an insular and France a continental power. The effects of these measures would therefore be more severe on the former than on the latter, and, unhappily,

they were more severe on our own country than on either of the offenders.

Massachusetts was the chief commercial State in the Union. She saw the ruin of her commerce involved in the policy of Jefferson, and regarded it as an unworthy concession to the usurper of the French throne. In this emergency John Quincy Adams turned his back on Massachusetts, and threw into the uprising scale of the administration, the weight of his talents and of his already eminent fame. Massachusetts instructed the recusant to recant. He refused to obey, and resigned his place. His change of political relations astounded the country, and, with the customary charity of partisan zeal, was attributed to venality. It is now seen by us in the light reflected upon it by the habitual independence, unquestioned purity, and lofty patriotism of his whole life; and thus seen, constitutes only the first marked one of many instances wherein he broke the green withes which party fastened upon him, and maintained the cause of his country, referring the care of his fame to God and to an impartial posterity. Like Decimus Brutus, whom Julius Cæsar saluted among his executioners with the exclamation "*Et tu, Brute!*" John Quincy Adams was not unfaithful, but he could not be obliged where he was not left free.

Jefferson retired in 1809, leaving to his successor, the scholastic and peace-loving Madison, the perilous legacy of perplexed foreign relations, and embittered

domestic feuds. Great Britain now filled the measure of exasperation by insolently searching our vessels on the high seas, and impressing into her marine all whom she chose to suspect of having been born in her allegiance, even though they had renounced it and had assumed the relations of American citizens. War was therefore imminent and inevitable. Russia was then coming forward to a position of commanding influence in Europe, and her youthful Emperor Alexander had won, by his chivalrous bearing, the respect of mankind. John Quincy Adams was wisely sent by the United States, to establish relations of amity with the great power of the North; and while he was thus engaged, the flames of European war, which had been so long averted, involved his own country. War was declared against Great Britain.

It was just. It was necessary. Yet it was a war that dared Great Britain to re-assert her ancient sovereignty. It was a war with a power whose wealth and credit were practically inexhaustible, a power whose navy rode unchecked over all the seas, and whose impregnable garrisons encircled the globe.

Against such a power the war was waged by a nation that had not yet accumulated wealth, nor established credit, nor even opened avenues suitable for transporting munitions of war through its extended territories—that had only the germ of a navy, an inconsiderable army, and not one substantial fortress. Yet such a war, under such circumstances, was de-



nounced as unnecessary and unjust, though for no better reason than because greater contumelies had been endured at the hands of France. Thus a domestic feud, based on the very question of the war itself, enervated the national strength, and encouraged the mighty adversary.

The desperate valor displayed at Chippewa and Lundy's Lane, at Fort Erie and Plattsburgh, and the brilliant victories won in contests between single ships of war on the ocean and armed fleets on the lakes, vindicated the military prowess of the United States, but brought us no decisive advantage. A suspension of the conflict in Europe followed Napoleon's disastrous invasion of Russia, and left America alone opposed to her great adversary. Peace was necessary, because the national credit was exhausted—because the fortunes of the war were inclining against us—and because the opposition to it was ripening into disorganizing councils. Adams had prepared the way by securing the mediation of Alexander. Then, in that critical period, associated with Russell, Bayard, the learned and versatile Gallatin, and the eloquent and chivalric Clay, he negotiated with firmness, with assiduity, with patience, and with consummate ability, a definitive treaty of peace—a treaty of peace which, although it omitted the causes of the war already obsolete, saved and established and confirmed in its whole integrity the independence of the Republic—a treaty

of peace that yet endures, and, we willingly hope, may endure forever.

After fulfilling a subsequent mission at the Court of St. James, the pacificator entered the domestic service of the country as Secretary of State in the administration of James Monroe; and at the expiration of that administration became President of the United States. He attained the honors of the Republic at the age of fifty-seven, in the forty-ninth year of independence. He was sixth in the succession, and with him closed the line of Chief Magistrates who had rendered to their country some tribute of their talents in civil or military service in the war of independence.

John Quincy Adams, on entering civil life, had found the Republic unstable. He retired in 1829, leaving it firmly established. It was thus his happy fortune to preside at the completion of that work of consolidation the beginning of which was the end of the labors of Washington.

John Quincy Adams engaged in this great work while yet in private life, in 1793. He showed to his fellow-citizens, in a series of essays, the inability of the French people to maintain free institutions at that time, and the consequent necessity of American neutrality in the European war. These publications aided Washington so much the more because they anticipated his own decision. Adams sustained the same great cause when he strengthened the administration of Jefferson against the preponderating influence of

Great Britain. His diplomatic services in Holland and Russia secured, at a critical period, a favorable consideration in the Courts of those countries, which conduced to the same end; and his brilliant success in restoring peace to the country so sorely pressed, relieved her from her enemies, reassured her, and gave to sceptical Europe conclusive proof that her republican institutions were destined to endure.

The administration of John Quincy Adams blends so intimately with that of Monroe, in which he was chief Minister, that no dividing line can be drawn between them. Adams may be said, without derogation from the fame of Monroe, to have swayed the Government during his presidency; and with equal truth, Monroe may be admitted to have continued his administration through that of his successor.

The consolidation of the Republic required that faction should be extinguished. Monroe began this difficult task cautiously, and pursued it with good effect. John Quincy Adams completed the achievement. The dignity and moderation which marked his acceptance of the highest trust which a free people could confer, beautifully foreshadowed the magnanimity with which it was to be discharged. He confessed himself deeply sensible of the circumstances under which it had been conferred:—

All my predecessors (he said) have been honored with majorities of the electoral voices, in the primary colleges. It has been my fortune to be placed, by the divisions of sentiment prevailing among

our countrymen, on this occasion, in competition, friendly and honorable, with three of my fellow-citizens, all justly enjoying, in eminent degrees, the public favor; and of whose worth, talents and services, no one entertains a higher and more respectful sense than myself. The names of two of them were, in the fulfilment of the provisions of the constitution, presented to the selection of the House of Representatives, in concurrence with my own, names closely associated with the glory of the nation, and one of them farther recommended by a larger majority of the primary electoral suffrages than mine. In this state of things, could my refusal to accept the trust thus delegated to me give an opportunity to the people to form and to express, with a nearer approach to unanimity, the object of their preference, I should not hesitate to decline the acceptance of this eminent charge, and to submit the decision of this momentous question again to their determination.

It argued a noble consciousness of virtue to express, on such an occasion, so ingenuously, the emotions of a generous ambition.

He displayed the same great quality no less when he called to the post of chief Minister, in spite of clamors of corruption, Henry Clay, that one of his late rivals who alone among his countrymen had the talents and generosity which the responsibilities of the period exacted.

John Quincy Adams signalized his accession to the post of dangerous elevation by avowing the sentiments concerning parties by which he was inflexibly governed throughout his administration:—

Of the two great political parties [he said] which have divided the opinions and feelings of our country, the candid and the just will now admit, that both have contributed splendid talents, spotless integrity, ardent patriotism, and disinterested sacrifices, to the formation and administration of the Government, and that both have