

prejudices, no, but by the avowal of this atrocious conspiracy against the liberties of Ireland they have subdued every petty and subordinate distinction. They have united every rank and description of men by the pressure of this grand and momentous subject, and I tell them that they will see every honest and independent man in Ireland rally round her constitution and merge every other consideration in his opposition to this ungenerous and odious measure.

For my own part I will resist it to the last gasp of my existence and with the last drop of my blood, and when I feel the hour of my dissolution approaching I will, like the father of Hannibal, take my children to the altar and swear them to eternal hostility against the invaders of their country's freedom.

Sir, I shall not detain you by pursuing this question through the topics which it so abundantly offers. I should be proud to think my name might be handed down to posterity in the same roll with these disinterested patriots who have successfully resisted the enemies of their country—successfully I trust it will be—in all events I have my “exceeding great reward”—I shall bear in my heart the consciousness of having done my duty, and in the hour of death I shall not be haunted by the reflection of having basely sold or meanly abandoned the liberties of my native land. Can every man who gives his vote on the other side, this night lay his hand upon his heart and make the same declaration? I hope so—it will be well for his own peace—the indignation and abhorrence of his countrymen will not accompany him through life, and the curses of his children will not follow him to his grave.

WILLIAM PINKNEY



WILLIAM PINKNEY, an American lawyer, diplomatist, and statesman, was born at Annapolis, Md., March 17, 1764, and died at Washington, D. C., Feb. 25, 1822. His father was English by birth and remained loyal to his country in the American Revolution. The son, on the other hand, early sided with the opposite party. At the close of the American war he began the study of law at Baltimore, Md., in 1783, and three years later was admitted to the Bar. He was appointed a delegate to the Maryland convention that ratified the Federal Constitution, and having established himself in his profession in Harford Co., Md., represented that county in the State legislature, 1788-95, and for three years further was a member of the Maryland executive council. His acquaintance with admiralty law proved of value during the twelve years, 1796-1808, when he was United States commissioner in England. After a period of service as attorney-general of Maryland he was once more sent to England to act as minister extraordinary with Monroe, and remained there as minister resident, 1807-11. In the last-named year he was recalled, at his own request, by President Madison, and entered the senate of his native State, becoming at the close of 1811 Attorney-General of the United States. He favored the second war with England, and while serving in the American army as a volunteer was wounded at the battle of Bladensburg. In 1816, Pinkney was appointed by President Monroe United States minister to Russia and special envoy to Naples, remaining abroad for two years. On his return to America, and while in the Senate of the United States from 1820-22 he took a prominent part in the discussion on the admission of Missouri into the Union. Pinkney was a lawyer of much ability, a skillful diplomatist, and a useful member of the United States Senate.

SPEECH FOR THE RELIEF OF THE OPPRESSED SLAVES

[This speech was delivered in the Assembly of Maryland at their session in 1788, when the report of a committee of the House, favorable to a petition for the relief of the oppressed slaves, was under consideration.]

MR. SPEAKER,—Before I proceed to deliver my sentiments on the subject-matter of the report under consideration, I must entreat the members of this House to hear me with patience, and not to condemn what I may happen to advance in support of the opinion I have formed, until they shall have heard me out. I am conscious, sir, that upon this occasion I have long-established principles to combat and deep-rooted prejudices to defeat; that I have

fears and apprehensions to silence, which the acts of former legislatures have sanctioned, and that (what is equivalent to a host of difficulties) the popular impressions are against me.

But if I am honored with the same indulgent attention which the House has been pleased to afford me on past subjects of deliberation I do not despair of surmounting all these obstacles in the common cause of justice, humanity, and policy. The report appears to me to have two objects in view: to annihilate the existing restraints on the voluntary emancipation of slaves, and to relieve a particular offspring from the punishment, heretofore inflicted on them, for the mere transgression of their parents. To the whole report, separately and collectively, my hearty assent, my cordial assistance, shall be given.

It was the policy of this country, sir, from an early period of colonization, down to the Revolution, to encourage an importation of slaves for purposes which (if conjecture may be indulged) had been far better answered without their assistance. That this inhuman policy was a disgrace to the colony, a dishonor to the legislature, and a scandal to human nature, we need not, at this enlightened period, labor to prove.

The generous mind, that has adequate ideas of the inherent rights of mankind and knows the value of them, must feel its indignation rise against the shameful traffic that introduces slavery into a country, which seems to have been designed by Providence as an asylum for those whom the arm of power had persecuted and not as a nursery for wretches stripped of every privilege which Heaven intended for its rational creatures, and reduced to a level with — nay, become themselves — the mere goods and chattels of their masters.

Sir, by the eternal principles of natural justice, no master

in the State has a right to hold his slave in bondage for a single hour; but the law of the land, which (however oppressive and unjust, however inconsistent with the great groundwork of the late Revolution and our present frame of government) we cannot in prudence or from a regard to individual rights abolish, has authorized a slavery as bad or perhaps worse than the most absolute, unconditional servitude that ever England knew in the early ages of its empire, under the tyrannical policy of the Danes, the feudal tenures of the Saxons, or the pure villanage of the Normans.

But, Mr. Speaker, because a respect for the peace and safety of the community, and the already injured rights of individuals, forbids a compulsory liberation of these unfortunate creatures, shall we unnecessarily refine upon this gloomy system of bondage and prevent the owner of a slave from manumitting him at the only probable period when the warm feelings of benevolence and the gentle workings of commiseration dispose him to the generous deed?

Sir, the natural character of Maryland is sufficiently sullied and dishonored by barely tolerating slavery; but when it is found that your laws give every possible encouragement to its continuance to the latest generations, and are ingenious to prevent even its slow and gradual decline, how is the dye of the imputation deepened? It may even be thought that our late glorious struggle for liberty did not originate in principle, but took its rise from popular caprice, the rage of faction, or the intemperance of party.

Let it be remembered, Mr. Speaker, that even in the days of feudal barbarity, when the minds of men were unexpanded by that liberality of sentiment which springs from civilization and refinement, such was the antipathy in England against private bondage that, so far from being studious to stop the

progress of emancipation, the courts of law (aided by legislative connivance) were inventive to liberate by construction. If, for example, a man brought an action against his villain, it was presumed that he designed to manumit him; and although perhaps this presumption was, in ninety-nine instances out of a hundred, contrary to the fact, yet upon this ground alone were bondmen adjudged to be free.

Sir, I sincerely wish it were in my power to impart my feelings upon this subject to those who hear me; they would then acknowledge that while the owner was protected in the property of his slave he might, at the same time, be allowed to relinquish that property to the unhappy subject whenever he should be so inclined. They would then feel that denying this privilege was repugnant to every principle of humanity—an everlasting stigma on our government—an act of unequalled barbarity, without a color of policy or a pretext of necessity to justify it.

Sir, let gentlemen put it home to themselves, that after Providence has crowned our exertions in the cause of general freedom with success, and led us on to independence through a myriad of dangers and in defiance of obstacles crowding thick upon each other, we should not so soon forget the principles upon which we fled to arms and lose all sense of that interposition of Heaven by which alone we could have been saved from the grasp of arbitrary power. We may talk of liberty in our public councils and fancy that we feel reverence for her dictates. We may declaim, with all the vehemence of animated rhetoric, against oppression, and flatter ourselves that we detest the ugly monster, but so long as we continue to cherish the poisonous weed of partial slavery among us the world will doubt our sincerity. In the name of Heaven, with what face can we call ourselves the friends

of equal freedom and the inherent rights of our species when we wantonly pass laws inimical to each; when we reject every opportunity of destroying, by silent, imperceptible degrees, the horrid fabric of individual bondage, reared by the mercenary hands of those from whom the sacred flame of liberty received no devotion?

Sir, it is pitiable to reflect to what wild inconsistencies, to what opposite extremes we are hurried by the frailty of our nature. Long have I been convinced that no generous sentiment of which the human heart is capable, no elevated passion of the soul that dignifies mankind, can obtain a uniform and perfect dominion: to-day we may be aroused as one man, by a wonderful and unaccountable sympathy, against the lawless invader of the rights of his fellow creatures: to-morrow we may be guilty of the same oppression which we reprobated and resisted in another.

Is it, Mr. Speaker; because the complexion of these devoted victims is not quite so delicate as ours; is it because their untutored minds (humbled and debased by the hereditary yoke) appear less active and capricious than our own; or is it because we have been so habituated to their situation as to become callous to the horrors of it that we are determined, whether politic or not, to keep them, till time shall be no more, on a level with the brutes. For "nothing," says Montesquieu, "so much assimilates a man to a brute as living among freemen, himself a slave." Call not Maryland a land of liberty; do not pretend that she has chosen this country as an asylum, that here she has erected her temple and consecrated her shrine, when here, also, her unhallowed enemy holds his hellish pandemonium and our rulers offer sacrifice at his polluted altar. The lily and the bramble may grow in social proximity, but liberty and slavery delight in separation.

Sir, let us figure to ourselves, for a moment, one of these unhappy victims, more informed than the rest, pleading, at the bar of this House, the cause of himself and his fellow sufferers; what would be the language of this orator of nature? Thus my imagination tells me he would address us:

"We belong, by the policy of the country, to our masters, and submit to our rigorous destiny; we do not ask you to divest them of their property because we are conscious you have not the power; we do not entreat you to compel an emancipation of us or our posterity, because justice to your fellow citizens forbids it; we only supplicate you not to arrest the gentle arm of humanity when it may be stretched forth in our behalf; nor to wage hostilities against that moral or religious conviction which may at any time incline our masters to give freedom to us or our unoffending offspring; not to interpose legislative obstacles to the course of voluntary manumission.

"Thus shall you neither violate the rights of your people nor endanger the quiet of the community while you vindicate your public councils from the imputation of cruelty and the stigma of causeless, unprovoked oppression. We have never," would he argue, "rebelled against our masters; we have never thrown your government into a ferment by struggles to regain the independence of our fathers. We have yielded our necks submissive to the yoke, and, without a murmur, acquiesced in the privation of our native rights. We conjure you, then, in the name of the common parent of mankind, reward us not, for this long and patient acquiescence, by shutting up the main avenues to our liberation, by withholding from us the poor privilege of benefiting by the kind indulgence, the generous intentions of our superiors."

What could we answer to arguments like these? Silent

and peremptory, we might reject the application; but no words could justify the deed.

In vain should we resort to apologies grounded on the fallacious suggestions of a cautious and timid policy. I would as soon believe the incoherent tale of a schoolboy who should tell me he had been frightened by a ghost as that the grant of this permission ought in any degree to alarm us. Are we apprehensive that these men will become more dangerous by becoming free? Are we alarmed lest, by being admitted to the enjoyment of civil rights, they will be inspired with a deadly enmity against the rights of others? Strange, unaccountable paradox! How much more rational would it be to argue that the natural enemy of the privileges of freemen is he who is robbed of them himself! In him the foul demon of jealousy converts the sense of his own debasement into a rancorous hatred for the more auspicious fate of others; while from him whom you have raised from the degrading situation of a slave, whom you have restored to that rank in the order of the universe which the malignity of his fortune prevented him from attaining before, from such a man (unless his soul be ten thousand times blacker than his complexion) you may reasonably hope for all the happy effects of the warmest gratitude and love.

Sir, let us not limit our views to the short period of a life in being; let us extend them along the continuous line of endless generations yet to come. How will the millions that now teem in the womb of futurity, and whom your present laws would doom to the curse of perpetual bondage, feel the inspiration of gratitude to those whose sacred love of liberty shall have opened the door to their admission within the pale of freedom! Dishonorable to the species is the idea that they would ever prove injurious to our interests. Released from the shackles of slavery by the justice of government and the

bounty of individuals, the want of fidelity and attachment would be next to impossible.

Sir, when we talk of policy, it would be well for us to reflect whether pride is not at the bottom of it; whether we do not feel our vanity and self-consequence wounded at the idea of a dusky African participating equally with ourselves in the rights of human nature, and rising to a level with us from the lowest point of degradation. Prejudices of this kind, sir, are often so powerful as to persuade us that whatever countervails them is the extremity of folly, and that the peculiar path of wisdom is that which leads to their gratification.

But it is for us to be superior to the influence of such ungenerous motives; it is for us to reflect that whatever the complexion, however ignoble the ancestry or uncultivated the mind, one universal Father gave being to them and us; and, with that being, conferred the inalienable rights of the species. But I have heard it argued that if you permit a master to manumit his slaves by his last will and testament, as soon as they discover he has done so they will destroy him, to prevent a revocation. Never was a weaker defence attempted, to justify the severity of persecution; never did a bigoted inquisition condemn a heretic to torture and to death upon grounds less adequate to justify the horrid sentence. Sir, is it not obvious that the argument applies equally against all devices whatsoever, for any person's benefit? For, if an advantageous bequest is made, even to a white man, has he not the same temptation to cut short the life of his benefactor, to secure and accelerate the enjoyment of the benefit?

As the universality of this argument renders it completely nugatory, so is its cruelty palpable by its being more applicable to other instances, to which it has never been applied at all, than to the case under consideration.

HARRISON GRAY OTIS



HARRISON GRAY OTIS, American senator, jurist, and orator, nephew of James Otis, was born at Boston, Mass., Oct. 8, 1765, and died there, Oct. 28, 1848. He graduated at Harvard with high honors in 1783, studied law, and was admitted to the Bar in 1786. He soon distinguished himself in his profession, his polished manners and his eloquent oratory contributing largely to his success. From 1797 to 1801 he was a prominent Federalist member of Congress. He filled several official posts of importance in his native State, and, returning to Congress in 1817, sat for nearly five years (1817-22) in the Senate. In 1814, he took a conspicuous part in the Hartford Convention, a circumstance which led to his defeat when he became a candidate for the office of first mayor of Boston, though he was chosen mayor in 1829. His most famous speeches were his eulogy upon Hamilton, delivered in 1804, and his argument in the United States Senate on the admission of Missouri to the Union in 1820. His published writings comprise "Letters in Defence of the Hartford Convention," 1824, and "Orations and Addresses."

EULOGY ON ALEXANDER HAMILTON

PRONOUNCED AT THE REQUEST OF THE CITIZENS OF BOSTON,
JULY 26, 1804

WE ARE convened, afflicted fellow citizens, to perform the only duties which our republics acknowledge or fulfil to their illustrious dead: to present to departed excellence an oblation of gratitude and respect, to inscribe its virtues on the urn which contains its ashes, and to consecrate its example by the tears and sympathy of an affectionate people.

Must we, then, realize that Hamilton is no more! Must the sod, not yet cemented on the tomb of Washington, still moist with our tears, be so soon disturbed to admit the beloved companion of Washington, the partner of his dangers, the object of his confidence, the disciple who leaned upon his bosom!