



HENRY CABOT LODGE

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**H**ENRY CABOT LODGE, Ph. D., LL. D., American Republican senator, historian, and man of letters, was born at Boston, Mass., May 12, 1850. He graduated at Harvard College in 1871, and at the Law School in 1874. In 1875, he received the degree of Ph. D. for his thesis on the "Land Law of the Anglo-Saxons." He was university lecturer on American History at Harvard from 1876 to 1879, and edited the "North American Review" in 1873-76, and the "International Review" in 1879-81. He served two terms in the Massachusetts legislature in 1880-81, and was a delegate to the Republican national conventions of 1880 and 1884. He was for two years chairman of the Republican State Committee, and in 1886 was elected to Congress. He served through the fiftieth, fifty-first, and fifty-second congresses and was reelected to the fifty-third, but having been called to the United States Senate, Jan. 17, 1893, to succeed Henry L. Dawes, he resigned his seat in the House and in March took his seat in the Senate. During his congressional career Mr. Lodge was a member of several important committees, made several able speeches upon tariff, financial, and election laws, and presented the Force Bill in the fifty-first Congress. His career in the Senate has also been signalized by many able speeches on important measures. He was elected an overseer of Harvard University in 1884, and was awarded the honorary degree of LL. D. by Williams College in 1895. His published works embrace lives of "George Cabot" (1877); "Alexander Hamilton" (1882); "Daniel Webster" (1883); "George Washington" (1889); "A History of Boston" (1891); "Studies in History" (1884); "The Story of the American Revolution" (1889); "Short History of the English Colonies in America" (1881); and "Historical and Political Essays."

### ORATION ON DANIEL WEBSTER

DELIVERED AT THE UNVEILING OF HIS STATUE IN WASHINGTON,  
JANUARY 18, 1900

**S**TATUES and monuments can justify their existence on only two grounds—the nature of the subject they commemorate or as works of art. They ought, of course, to possess both qualifications in the fullest measure. Theoretically, at least, a great art should ever illustrate and should always have a great subject.

But art cannot command at will a fit subject, and it is therefore fortunately true that if the art be great it is its  
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own all-sufficient warrant for existence. That Michael Angelo's unsurpassed figure called "Meditation" should be in theory a portrait statue and bear the name of one of the most worthless of the evil Medicean race is, after all, of slight moment. The immortal art remains to delight and to uplift every one who looks upon it with considerate eyes; and it matters little that all the marvellous figures which the chapel of the Medici enshrines were commanded and carved in order to keep alive the memory of a family steeped in crime and a curse to every people among whom they came.

On the other hand, hard as it often is, we can endure bad art if there be no question that the great man or the shining deed deserves the commemoration of bronze or marble. But when the art is bad and the subject unworthy or ephemeral, then the monument, as was said of Sir John Vanbrugh's palaces, is simply a heavy load to the patient earth and an offence to the eyes of succeeding generations.

In these days the world sins often and grievously in this way, and is much given to the raising of monuments, too frequently upon trifling provocation. Yet the fault lies not in the mere multiplication of monuments. The genius of Greece and of the Renaissance multiplied statues, and very wisely, too, because art then was at once splendid and exuberant. But great sculptors and painters are as few now as they were plentiful in the age of Phidias or of Michael Angelo and Donatello, and we erect statues and monuments with a prodigal hand chiefly because we are very rich, and because mechanical appliances have made easy the molding of metal and the carving of stone.

It behooves us, therefore, not only to choose with care artists who can give us work worthy for posterity to look upon,

but also to avoid recklessness in rearing monuments upon slight grounds. At present there seems no disposition to heed these salutary principles. The cities and towns of Europe and of England swarm with modern statues and monuments, as a rule ugly or commonplace, too often glaring and vulgar, and very frequently erected to the memory and the glory of the illustrious obscure and of the parish hero.

We Americans sin less numerously, I think, in these respects than the Old World, but we follow their practice none the less and with many melancholy results. We should break away from the example of Europe and realize that the erection of an enduring monument in a public place is a very serious matter. We should seek out the best artists and should permit no monuments to deeds or to men who do not deserve them and who will not themselves be monumental in history and before the eyes of posterity.

Here in Washington, especially, we should bear this principle in mind, for this is the city of the nation, and it should have no place for local glories or provincial heroes. Yet even here we have been so careless that while we have given space to one or more statues of estimable persons, the fact of whose existence will be known only by their effigies, we have found as yet no place for a statue of Hamilton, the greatest constructive statesman of our history, or of the great soldier whose genius made the campaign of Vicksburg rival that of Ulm.

To-day no such doubts or criticisms need haunt or perplex us. We can thank the artist who has conceived, and most unreservedly can we thank the generous and public-spirited citizen of New Hampshire who has given the statue which we unveil this morning. If anyone among our statesmen has a title to a statue in Washington it is Daniel Webster, for this



is the national capital, and no man was ever more national in his conceptions and his achievements than he.

Born and bred in New Hampshire, which first elected him to the House, he long represented Massachusetts, the State of his adoption, in the Congress of the United States, and thus two historic Commonwealths cherish his memory. But much as he loved them both, his public service was given to the nation, and so given that no man doubts his title to a statue here in this city. Why is there neither doubt nor question as to Webster's right to this great and lasting honor half a century after his death?

If we cannot answer this question so plainly that he who runs may read, then we unveil our own ignorance when we unveil his statue and leave the act without excuse. I shall try, briefly, to put the answer to this essential question into words. We all feel in our hearts and minds the reply that should be made. It has fallen to me to give expression to that feeling.

What, then, are the real reasons for the great place which Webster fills in our history? I do not propose to answer this question by reviewing the history of his time or by retelling his biography. Both history and biography contain the answer, yet neither is the answer. They are indeed much more, for they carry with them, of necessity, everything concerning the man, his strength and his weakness, his virtues and his defects, all the criticism, all the differences of opinion which such a career was sure to arouse and which such an influence upon his country and upon its thought, upon his own time and upon the future, was equally sure to generate.

There is a place for all this, but not here to-day. We do not raise a monument to Webster upon debatable grounds, and thus make it the silent champion of one side of a dead

controversy. We do not set up his statue because he changed his early opinions upon the tariff, because he remained in Tyler's cabinet after that President's quarrel with the Whigs, or because he made upon the 7th of March a speech about which men have differed always and probably always will differ. Still less do we place here his graven image in memory of his failings or his shortcomings. History, with her cool hands, will put all these things into her scales and mete out her measure with calm, unflinching eyes. But this is history's task, not ours, and we raise this statue on other grounds.

" Not ours to gauge the more or less,  
The will's defect, the blood's excess,  
The earthy humors that oppress  
The radiant mind.  
His greatness, not his littleness,  
Concerns mankind."

To his greatness, then, we rear this monument. In what does that greatness, acknowledged by all, unquestioned and undenied by any one, consist? Is it in the fact that he held high office? He was a brilliant member of Congress; for nineteen years a great senator; twice Secretary of State. But "the peerage solicited him, not he the peerage."

Tenure of office is nothing, no matter how high the place. A name recorded in the list of holders of high office is little better than one writ in water if the office-holding be all. We do not raise this statue to the member of Congress, to the senator of the United States, or to the Secretary of State, but to Daniel Webster.

That which concerns us is what he did with these great places which were given to him; for to him, as to all others, they were mere opportunities. What did he do with these large opportunities? Still more, what did he do with the splendid faculties which nature gave him? In the answer



lies the greatness which lifts him out of the ranks and warrants statues to his memory.

First, then, of those qualities which he inherited from the strong New England stock that gave him birth, and which Nature, the fairy who stands by every cradle, poured out upon him. How generous, how lavish she was to that "infant crying in the night; that infant crying for the light" in the rough frontier village of New Hampshire a hundred and eighteen years ago. She gave him the strong, untainted blood of a vigorous race—the English Puritans—who in the New World had been for five generations fighting the hard battle of existence against the wilderness and the savage.

His father was a high type of this class, a farmer and a frontiersman, a pioneer and Indian fighter, then a soldier of the Revolution. On guard the night of Arnold's treason, Washington in that dark hour declared that Captain Webster was a man who could be trusted; simple words, but an order of merit higher and more precious than any glowing ribbon or shining star. So fathered and so descended, the child was endowed with physical attributes at once rare and inestimable.

When developed into manhood he was of commanding stature and seemed always even larger and taller than he really was. Strong, massive, and handsome, he stood before his fellow men looking upon them with wonderful eyes, if we may judge from all that those who saw him tell us. "Dull anthracite furnaces under overhanging brows, waiting only to be blown," says Carlyle, and those deep-set, glowing eyes pursue us still in all that we read of Webster, just as they seemed to haunt everyone who looked upon them in life.

When in a burst of passion or of solemn eloquence he fixed his eyes upon his hearers, each man in a vast audience felt

that the burning glance rested upon him alone and that there was no escape.

Above the eyes were the high, broad brow and the great leonine head; below them the massive jaw and the firm mouth "accurately closed." All was in keeping.

No one could see him and not be impressed. The English navy with his "There goes a king," Sydney Smith, who compared Webster to "a walking cathedral," and the great Scotchman, harsh in judgment and grudging of praise, who set him down as a "Parliamentary Hercules," all alike felt the subduing force of that personal presence.

Look upon some of the daguerreotypes taken of him in his old age, when the end was near. I think the face is one of the most extraordinary, in its dark power and tragic sadness, of all the heads which any form of human portraiture has preserved. So imposing was he that when he rose to speak, even on the most unimportant occasions, he looked, as Parton says, like "Jupiter in a yellow waistcoat," and even if he uttered nothing but commonplaces, or if he merely sat still, such was his "might and majesty" that all who listened felt that every phrase was charged with deep and solemn meaning, and all who gazed at him were awed and impressed. Add to all this a voice of great compass, with deep organ tones, and we have an assemblage of physical gifts concentrated in this one man which would have sufficed to have made even common abilities seem splendid.

But the abilities were far from common. The intellect within answered to the outward vesture. Very early does it appear when we hear of "Webster's boy" lifted upon a stone wall to read or recite to the teamsters stopping to water their horses near the Webster farm. They were a rough, hardy set, but there was something in the child with the



great dark eyes that held them and made them listen. And the father, gallant and quite pathetic soul, with a dumb and very manifest love of higher things, resolved that this boy should have all the advantages which had been denied to himself.

Like the Scottish peasants, who toiled and moiled and pinched and saved that their boy might go to the university to cultivate learning on a little oatmeal, so with many silent sacrifices Ebenezer Webster sent his son to school and college and gave him every opportunity the little State afforded. The boy was not slow to make the most of all that was thus opened to him. The dormant talents grew and burgeoned in the congenial soil. Love of books made him their reader and master. Rare powers of memory and of acquisition showed themselves; a strong imagination led him to the great makers of verse, and natural taste took him to the masters of style, both in English and Latin.

When he passed out of college his capacity for work brought him hardly earned pittance as a school teacher, and then carried him through the toilsome, early stages of the law.

As he advanced, the eager delight of acquisition was succeeded, as is ever the case, by the passionate desire for expression, and soon the signs come of the power of analysis, of the instinct of lucid statement at once so clear and so forcible as to amount to demonstration. We see before us as we study those early years the promise of the great master of words to whom a whole nation was one day to listen.

And with all these gifts, physical and mental, possibly, but not necessarily, the outcome of them all, we see that Webster had that indefinable quality which for lack of a better name we call "charm." He exercised a fascination upon men and

women alike, upon old and young, upon all who came in contact with him. When as a boy he returned from the country fair, his mother said to him, "Daniel, what did you do with your quarter?"

"Spent it."

"Ezekiel, what did you do with yours?"

"Lent it to Daniel."

As with the elder brother then, so it was through life. Webster strode along the pathway of his great career in solemn state, and there were always people about him ready to lend to him and to give to him; not money, merely, but love and loyalty and service, ungrudging and unreasoning, without either question or hope of reward. A wonderful power this, as impalpable as the tints of the rainbow, and yet as certain as the sun which paints the colors on the clouds and makes all mankind look toward them for the bow of hope and promise.

So he went on and up from the college, the schoolhouse, and the country jury, until he stood at the head of the American bar before the supreme court of the nation. On and up he went, from the early, florid orations of youth until he became the first orator of his time, without superior or rival. He frightened and disappointed his father by refusing the safe harbor of a clerk of court, and strode onward and upward until he stood at the head of the Senate and directed from the State Department the foreign policy of his country. Up and on from the farmhouse and the schoolhouse, from the stone wall whence he read to the rude audience of teamsters, to the times when thousands hung upon his words, when he created public opinion and shaped the political thought of his nation.

What a triumphant progress it was, and of it all what now



remains to make men say fifty years after his death that he merits not only a statue but lasting remembrance? Is it to be found in his success as a great advocate and lawyer, the acknowledged head of his profession? There is nothing which demands or calls forth greater intellectual powers or larger mental resources than the highest success at the bar, and yet no reputation is more evanescent. The decisions of judges remain and become part of the law of the land, lasting monuments of the learning and the thought which brought them forth. But the arguments which enlightened courts, which swayed juries, upon which public attention was fixed in admiration, fade almost in the hour, while the brilliant lawyer who uttered them soon becomes a tradition and a memory.

We must look beyond his triumphs at the bar to find the Webster of history. Beyond his work as a lawmaker, also, for, although he had a lion's share in the legislation of his time, it is not as a constructive statesman that he lives for us to-day. In the first rank as a lawmaker and as a lawyer, something very great must remain behind if we can readily and justly set aside such claims as these and say the highest remembrance rests on other grounds.

Yet such is the case, and the first, but the lesser, of these other grounds is his power of speech. Eminent as a legislator, still more distinguished as a lawyer, Webster was supreme as an orator. I had occasion some years ago to make a very careful study of Webster's speeches and orations. I read with them, and in strict comparison, all that was best in Greek, Latin, French, and English oratory, and all that is best and finest—I do not say all that is fine and good—is to be found in those four languages. Webster stood the comparison without need of deduction or apology. I do not

think that I am influenced by national feeling, for my object was to exclude the historical as well as the personal valuation, and to reach a real estimate.

When all was done, it seemed to me that Webster was unequalled. I am sure that he is unsurpassed as an orator. There was no need for him to put pebbles in his mouth to cure stammering, or to rehearse his speeches on the seashore in conflict with the noise of the wave. He had from the hand of nature all the graces of person and presence, of voice and delivery, which the most exacting critic could demand, and these natural gifts were trained, enhanced, and perfected by years of practice in the Senate, the court room, and before the people.

In what he said he always had distinction—rarest of qualities—and he had also the great manner, just as Milton has it in verse. To lucid statement, to that simplicity in discussion which modern times demand for practical questions, to nervous force, he added, at his best, wealth of imagery, richness of diction, humor, and pathos, all combined with the power of soaring on easy wing to the loftiest flights of eloquence. Above all he had that highest quality, the "*σπουδαιότητα*" or high and excellent seriousness which Aristotle sets down as one of the supreme virtues of poetry, and without which neither oratory nor poetry can attain to supremacy.

Charles Fox was the author of the famous aphorism that "no good speech ever read well." This is the declaration in epigrammatic form that the speech which is prepared like an essay and read or recited, which, in other words, is literature before it is oratory, is not thoroughly good, and of the soundness of the doctrine there can be, I think, no doubt. But this proposition is not without its dangers.



Charles Fox lived up to his own principle. He was, in my opinion, the greatest of English orators at the moment of speech, but he is little read and seldom quoted now. What he said has faded from the minds of men despite its enchanting, its enormous effect at the moment.

On the other hand, the speech which is literature before it is spoken is ineffective or only partially effective at the moment, and if it is read afterwards, however much we may enjoy the essay, we never mistake it for the genuine eloquence of the spoken word. Macaulay is an example of this latter class, as Fox is of the former. Macaulay's speeches are essays, eloquent and rhetorical, but still essays, literature, and not speeches. He was listened to with interest and delight, but he was not a great parliamentary debater or speaker.

The highest oratory, therefore, must combine in exact balance the living force and freshness of the spoken word with the literary qualities which alone ensure endurance. The best examples of this perfection are to be found in the world of imagination, in the two speeches of Brutus and Mark Antony in the play of Julius Cæsar. They are speeches and nothing else—one cool, stately, reasonable; the other a passionate, revolutionary appeal, hot from the heart and pouring from the lips with unpremeditated art, and yet they both have the literary quality, absolutely supreme in this instance, because Shakespeare wrote them.

It is not the preparation or even the writing out beforehand, therefore, which makes a speech into an essay, for these things can both be done without detracting from the spontaneity, without dulling the sound of the voice which the wholly great speech must have, even on the printed page. The speech loses when the literary quality becomes

predominant, and absolute success as high as it is rare comes only from the nice balance of the two essential ingredients.

You find this balance, this combination, in Demosthenes and Isocrates, although I venture to think that those two great masters lean, if at all, too much to the literary side. In Cicero, although in matter and manner the best judges would rank him below the Greek masters, the combination is quite perfect. One of his most famous speeches, it is said, was never delivered at all, and none the less it is a speech and nothing else, instinct with life and yet with the impalpable literary feeling all through it, the perfect production of a very beautiful and subtle art.

Among English orators Burke undoubtedly comes nearest to the union of the two qualities, and while the words of Fox and Pitt are unread and unquoted, except by students, Burke's gorgeous sentences are recited and repeated by successive generations. Yet there is no doubt that Burke erred on the literary side, and we find the proof of it in the fact that he often spoke to empty benches, and that Goldsmith could say of him:

"Too deep for his hearers, still went on refining,  
And thought of convincing while they thought of dining."

Burke was a literary man as well as an orator and a statesman. Webster was not a literary man at all. He never wrote books or essays, although, in Dr. Johnson's phrase, he had literature and loved it. He was an orator, pure and simple; his speeches, good, bad, or indifferent, are speeches—never essays or anything but speeches—and yet upon all alike is the literary touch. In all is the fine literary quality, always felt, never seen, ever present, never obtrusive. He had the combination of Shakespeare's Brutus or Antony, of