


SENATOR BLAIR

ENRY WILLIAM BLAIR, an American Republican politician, lawyer, temperance advocate, and social reformer, was born at Campton, N. H., Dec. 6, 1834, and received his education at the neighboring Plymouth Academy. At seventeen he began to teach, and in 1859 was admitted to the Bar, becoming prosecuting attorney of Grafton County in his native State in 1860. He entered the army the next year, but resigned in 1863, with the rank of lieutenant-colonel, on account of severe wounds received at the siege of Port Hudson. In 1866, he was elected to the lower house of the State legislature, and in 1867 and 1868 to the State senate. He was a representative from New Hampshire in Congress 1875-79, sat in the United States Senate 1879-91, and served another term in the House of Representatives 1893-95. In 1891, he was appointed United States minister to China, but the Chinese government declined to receive him on account of his opposition to Chinese immigration. He was the originator of the Blair Common School Bill, which was three times passed by the Senate, but each time defeated in the House. He was likewise the author of the bills establishing the United States Labor Department, of educational and temperance constitutional amendments, and of the Sunday Rest Bill. In 1888, he published "The Temperance Movement; or, the Conflict of Man with Alcohol."

ON FREE SCHOOLS

DELIVERED IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, JULY 29, 1876

I AM one of those who have no faith, no hope in the future of this country only so long and so far as the people are both intelligent and upright; nor is it possible to preserve the honesty and simple virtues of republicanism without the means of early mental discipline are provided for all; and if necessary their use must be made compulsory by the successive generations during the tender and impressible years of childhood and youth. Honesty and sincerity are consistent with the most dangerous prejudices and the most cruel and nefarious purposes in public and private life.

No man is fit to be a sovereign—as sovereigns we all are in
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theory—unless he has the power to think continuously and to reason consecutively, and is able to acquire and has acquired the common knowledge which surrounds him pertaining to economic and political affairs. If his powers are disciplined and he knows the facts, he will reason from correct premises, and his moral sense or conscience will obey the dictates of reason. And thus a sound morality must and will exist as the offspring and inseparable consequences and companion of intelligence and disciplined mental powers.

This is primary truth so universally conceded that I shall be accused of wasting time in its statement. Yet I believe that wise statesmanship often recurs to general principles, and that there is no better reading for a legislator, and for the people themselves, who are the primary lawgivers of the land, than the eloquent and elevated sentiments of the fathers as they are embodied in the grand though simple bills of rights and earlier constitutions and declarations which have come down to us from the resplendent luminaries who live eternal in the horizon of our history.

Our system of government is based upon the necessary position that knowledge is power. Government itself is only another name for power; it is the supreme power in the State. That power which controls nations must be either brute power or intelligent power. We are compelled to choose between these forms, or rather principles of control. We have learned, through the sad records of six thousand years of almost universal tyranny and misery, that no free government is long perpetuated unless its force is distributed among all individuals, or unless their essential rights are preserved and protected in constitutions or customs which constitute iron restrictions upon the encroachments of the executive power of the State.

We have learned that the tyranny of a mob or of an ignorant multitude is far worse than all the possible excesses of a single despot. We are thus driven to the absolute necessity of making the controlling element of our government universal intelligence and morality which results from it, or of ultimately yielding up our system of universal suffrage—that is, the distribution of sovereignty to all—and the adoption of the despotic theory of government. I do not mean that there is not more or less of freedom and security to the rights of men in forms of government where the ballot is either unknown or is rarely exercised by the people.

Arbitrary power is oftentimes partially dethroned and placed in subjection to some great, broad limitation, in accordance with which alone will the people consent that the reigning power exist at all. Such was the grand achievement which wrenched the great charter from the unwilling hands of King John at Runnymede, and other similar victories of popular over regal authority which are embodied and are perpetually active in the constitution of England and other limited monarchies of the world. But what I mean is this, that our system, being based upon the universal distribution of the sovereignty among all the individual men of the nation, and that power, once distributed, necessarily remaining so until revolution collects it again and vests sovereignty in an aristocracy or in a single despot, each man must be qualified by disciplined reason, virtue, and knowledge for the correct exercise of the power which is vested in him, or he is unfit to possess it; and it must logically follow either that he and such as he must surrender it, or that by the gradual spread of ignorance and incompetency to govern, universal sovereignty will surrender to the control of the few who do possess that knowledge, which, directed for selfish and despotic ends,

enables them to triumph and riot in the enslavement and miseries of mankind.

Sir, the one first indispensable thing is the power to think, and whatever people has that power, and most of it, will be most free. Virtue results from it, because virtue is the child of conscience, and a safe conscience must be instructed by intelligence. The common school, then, is the basis of freedom, and the system is an absolute condition precedent to the spread and perpetuity of republican institutions throughout the country and the world. Ignorance is slavery. No matter what are the existing forms of a government, ignorance will reduce them to the one form of despotism as surely as gravity will bring the stone to the earth and keep it there. Knowledge is liberty, and, no matter what the forms of government, knowledge generally diffused will carry liberty, life, and power to all men, and establish universal freedom so long, and only so long, as the people are universally made capable of its exercise by universal intelligence.

It is a fundamental error to think that freedom is simply the exercise of one's rights. Freedom is the power to exercise them. Freedom is sovereignty. It is not mere happiness; it is the power to command the conditions of happiness. The veriest tyrant might permit his slaves to possess more of the actual material comforts and fruitions of life than could be commanded by the free spirit of an unconquerable people; but it is only a universally intelligent people who can know its rights, and, knowing, dare to maintain them. . . .

The essence of the institution of slavery was ignorance; therefore laws were enacted and enforced and customs established, in conformity with the spirit of the institution.

The education of the black, even when a freedman, was prohibited by law and the infliction of severe pains and some-

times of even savage cruelties. Religious assemblies could be held only under the surveillance of the whites. The great mass of the whites not belonging to the landed aristocracy were coupled with the slaves and were merely a substratum or lower order, almost like the helots of Sparta, upon which the dignity, fortune, and supremacy of the ruling class were supported and perpetuated. Political power was wholly in the hands of three hundred thousand men who owned and controlled the soil and the labor of the South, and from their own ranks, or by the designation of their class, all the incumbents, emoluments, and positions of power were selected and filled. Speech and the press were dumb unless subservient. The confidential intercourse of the mails of the general government was violated under the forms of legal usurpation.

Religion came to the rescue and proved the divinity of the accursed institution; and thus all the elements of aristocratic tyranny, even to chains upon the soul, were combined to preserve and intensify that ignorance without which the fabric of their oppressed power would have fallen in a day. The common school would have peaceably destroyed the institution of slavery in five years at any time since its introduction upon our soil. These false ideas were universally taught, and this policy cherished and enforced, for two generations. There could be but one result. The mental and moral constitution of both races and all conditions was deeply affected. The lower orders felt and believed in their inferiority, while the dominant class, in all sincerity, assumed superiority as an axiom and its exercise as an inalienable right. Conscientiously believing in their divine right to control, as they did control with despotic sway, the whole structure and all the interests of society, how could these kings become suddenly converted into lambs of republicanism by the harsh agency

of war? Their mental and moral constitution could not be thus suddenly and violently reconstructed.

The spirit might be overwhelmed, but no Anglo-Saxon having inherited and tasted the delights of dominion could ever truthfully claim that force had converted him into a genuine republican. It is idle to expect that the old instinct for power can be instantly suppressed by the voluntary effort of the men who were first the slaveholding oligarchy, then the fighting confederacy, and now are the body and brains and leadership of the Democratic party.

The faintest degree of political philosophy will convince any man that this must be true. It is no disparagement, but rather is it honorable to the stamina of our Southern brethren that this is so. No men ever fight with such desperation and resource for the preservation and, when lost, for the recovery, of power as an aristocracy. I think that is a lesson of history. It cannot be, then, in the nature of things, that the leopard has changed his spots any more than the Ethiopian his skin, in consequence of the war.

The school question in the South is comparatively the only question involved in this presidential election. It leaps over all the interests of this generation and grasps the fate of millions yet to be.

There has been no crisis like this in our political affairs since Gettysburg. Never since then has there been a season of more doubt and danger of the loss of the control of the country by the Republican party. Not because the party is corrupt or weak or has failed in its mission; but because of the grinding burdens of the rebellion and the incessant hostility of the Democratic party, both North and South, to peaceable acquiescence in the logical results of the war, and the incessant reiteration of false and defamatory charges of

personal and official corruption everywhere, and especially against upright and patriotic representative men of the Republican party, which Republicans have failed properly to resent, forgetting that in defending the men who are assailed only because they represent our cause we defend the cause itself, together with all the bickerings, jealousies, and unpatriotic rivalries which to some extent have necessarily arisen during sixteen years of tremendous power and responsibility, with some actual malfeasance among the trusted officials of the country, although there never has been so little official corruption and dishonor, or so much of strict integrity and high purpose in the administration of any other government, or of this government, as since the Republican party has controlled it.

These, with other causes, have conspired to create among the people a feeling of unrest and disquiet which may obscure the startling consequences involved. A pestiferous demagoguery, a false pretence to personal and political virtue and capacity, and deafening shouts for "Peace, peace!" at the South, when there is no peace but in the grave; for Tammany and reform, for Hendricks and hard money, for Tilden, resumption, and repeal, ring throughout the country and split the ears of the people. Thus it is hoped to divert public attention from the nature of this contest and to wheedle the American people out of the only guarantee of its liberties—the common school.

This is not the purpose of the mass of the Democratic party either North or South; for at the South with increasing intelligence there will develop a great white Republican party from that splendid yeomanry which furnished the blood, as the slave power did the policy and disciplined intellect of the war. These people, now so ignorant of their interests and

of their rights, will, if once the common school breaks through the obstacles which supervene between them, become the staunchest friends of both the schools and of the great Northern Republican party which they now so ignorantly defame, being exceeding mad against us and verily believing that they are doing God service; and in these men is the hope of the South. . . .

I live in a smiling valley among my hardy constituents—God bless them—where the barren rocks of New England rise high into the free air of heaven, and the dews are kissed from her highest summits by the earliest light which breaks on America from the morning sun. Here generation after generation our people have fought the climate for seven months, and a despotism of sterility of soil during the remainder of the year. Here, too, they have grown vigorous, intelligent, virtuous, and free.

New Hampshire is, by the census, the best educated State in this Union, and I have the honor, though most unworthily, to represent the most intelligent constituency, as a whole, on the face of the globe. She sent into action two thirds of the troops who fought and won the battle of Bunker Hill. With the co-operation of the brave Green Mountaineers her Stark gave to the country the victory of Bennington. She gave you the greatest orator of time, and a monument to Washington eternal as the universe or his illustrious fame. She buried her scanty resources and her dearest sons in the golgothas of the late war as no other northern State has done. She will not see the last of her debt incurred in its prosecution paid until our grandchildren sleep the sleep that knows no waking. Her rural population is disappearing. The harvest of the war and constant drain of her hardiest sons to the illimitable West has left the summer rose to bloom in beauty

and desolation by thousands of forsaken mountain homes where once clustered the tenderest affections of earth.

And tears will sometimes come in the eyes of the Granite State as she looks forth from her sterility and desolation upon the vast plains and valleys of fertility and of boundless resources which lie stretched from ocean to ocean, and from the snows of Canada almost to the tropic regions of the globe, and reflects upon the blood she has shed and the treasure she has poured out and the pledge of her industry for a century, that she has signed, sealed, and delivered, and will pay to the last dollar, and yet beholds the blindness that would render the last state of the Union worse than the first.

It will never be. The country will not lose the fruits of the war. This election, which involves them all, can never be the means of restoring obsolete ideas and the enslaving policies of the past.

But I feel no hope until the South learns that she must ally herself with the strength and not with the weakness of the North.

Some time we shall understand each other, but not yet. The Republican party must again rescue the country by main strength against the combined South, yoked with the corrupt and subservient Democracy of the North. If we fail, God help America!

CHAS. FRANCIS ADAMS, JR.



CHARLES FRANCIS ADAMS, JR., American politician, lawyer, and man of letters, was born at Boston, Mass., May 27, 1835. He is the son of Charles Francis Adams, United States Minister to England under President Lincoln, grandson of John Quincy Adams, the sixth President of the United States, and great-grandson of John Adams, the second Chief Executive. He graduated from Harvard in 1856, and on leaving college studied law and was admitted to the Bar of Massachusetts in 1857. At the outbreak of the Civil War he enlisted, and at its close had attained the rank of brevet brigadier-general of volunteers. Mr. Adams afterwards resumed the practice of his profession at Boston, making a specialty of railroad law and winning therein high distinction. In 1868, he was a railroad commissioner of Massachusetts, and in 1884 was elected president of the Union Pacific Railroad Company, a position he resigned in 1890. In 1883, Mr. Adams delivered the Phi Beta Kappa oration at Harvard, his subject (which is here appended) being, "The Study of Greek as a College Feticch." The address attracted attention, the speaker contending that the knowledge of Greek should not be a requirement for admission to Harvard. As a result of the agitation Greek was made optional at Harvard two years later. In 1883, Mr. Adams would probably have been nominated for Governor of Massachusetts, but he refused to be a candidate. He was at one time urged by a portion of the press for the office of United States Senator in opposition to Senator Hoar. In 1895, Mr. Adams was president of the Massachusetts Historical Society, and has been identified with a number of other organizations, educational, social, and historical. He has published, besides some general and professional works on railways, "Three Episodes of Massachusetts History," a "Life of Charles Francis Adams," and "Richard Henry Dana, a Biography."

A COLLEGE FETICH¹

PHI BETA KAPPA ADDRESS, DELIVERED IN SANDERS' THEATRE, CAMBRIDGE,
JUNE 28, 1883

I AM here to-day for a purpose. After no little hesitation I accepted the invitation to address your Society, simply because I had something which I much wanted to say; and this seemed to me the best possible place, and this the most appropriate occasion, for saying it. My message, if

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