


## THADDEUS STEVENS

HADDEUS STEVENS, American statesman, was born at Danville, Vt., April 4, 1792, and died at Washington, D. C., Aug. 11, 1868. Having graduated from Dartmouth College, he removed to Gettysburg, Pa., in 1814, where he studied law and was admitted to the Bar. In the presidential campaign of 1828, he opposed Jackson's candidature, and was for some years a member of the State legislature of Pennsylvania, and in 1836 a member of the State Constitutional Convention. Having removed to Lancaster, Pa., in 1842, he was elected to Congress as a Whig in 1848, and reelected in 1850. While in the House of Representatives he opposed, in 1850, the compromise measures advocated by Henry Clay, especially the Fugitive Slave Law. Returning for a time to the practice of his profession, he was, however, once more elected to Congress, and served continuously in the House as a radical Republican until his death. During the last nine years of his life he wielded great influence in the House, and toward the end gained such distinction as to be virtual dictator in Congress. He was the principal champion of the reconstruction methods which were ultimately applied in the seceding States, and was the chief organizer and manager of the impeachment of President Johnson, in 1868, which he zealously proposed.

### AGAINST WEBSTER AND NORTHERN COMPROMISERS

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, JUNE 10, 1850

DANTE, by actual observation, makes hell consist of nine circles, the punishments of each increasing in intensity over the preceding. Those doomed to the first circle are much less afflicted than those in the ninth, where are tortured Lucifer and Judas Iscariot—and I trust, in the next edition, will be added, the traitors to liberty. But notwithstanding this difference in degree, all, from the first circle to the ninth, inclusive, is hell—cruel,

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desolate, abhorred, horrible hell! If I might venture to make a suggestion, I would advise these reverend perverters of Scripture to devote their subtlety to what they have probably more interest in—to ascertaining and demonstrating (perhaps an accompanying map might be useful) the exact spot and location where the most comfort might be enjoyed—the coolest corner in the lake that burns with fire and brimstone!

But not only by honorable gentlemen in this House, and right honorable gentlemen in the other, but throughout the country, the friends of liberty are reproached as “transcendentalists and fanatics.” Sir, I do not understand the terms in such connection. There can be no fanatics in the cause of genuine liberty. Fanaticism is excessive zeal. There may be, and have been, fanatics in false religion; in the bloody religion of the heathen. There are fanatics in superstition. But there can be no fanatics, however warm their zeal, in true religion, even although you sell your goods, and bestow your money on the poor, and go and follow your Master. There may be, and every hour shows around me, fanatics in the cause of false liberty—that infamous liberty which justifies human bondage; that liberty whose cornerstone is slavery. But there can be no fanaticism, however high the enthusiasm, in the cause of rational, universal liberty—the liberty of the Declaration of Independence.

This is the same censure which the Egyptian tyrant cast upon those old abolitionists, Moses and Aaron, when they “agitated” for freedom, and, in obedience to the command of God, bade him let the people go.

But we are told by these pretended advocates of liberty in both branches of Congress, that those who preach free-

dom here and elsewhere are the slave's worst enemies; that it makes the slave holder increase their burdens and tighten their chains; that more cruel laws are enacted since this agitation began in 1835. Sir, I am not satisfied that this is the fact. I will send to the clerk, and ask him to read a law of Virginia enacted more than fifty years before this agitation began. It is to be found in the sixth volume of "Hening's Statutes at Large of Virginia," published in 1819, "pursuant to an act of the General Assembly of Virginia, passed on the fifth day of February, 1808."

"Sec. xxiv. And that when any slave shall be notoriously guilty of going abroad in the night, or running away and laying out, and cannot be reclaimed from such disorderly courses by common methods of punishment, it shall be lawful for the county court, upon complaint and proof thereof to them made by the owner of such slave, to order and direct such punishment by dismembering, or any other way, not touching life, as the court shall think fit. And if such slave shall die by means of such dismembering, no forfeiture or punishment shall be thereby incurred."

I have had that law read to see if any gentleman can turn me to any more cruel laws passed since the "agitation." I did not read it myself, though found on the pages of Old Virginia's law books, lest it should make the modest gentleman from Virginia [Mr. Millson], and the gentleman from North Carolina [Mr. Stanly], and his gray-headed negro blush!

Mr. Bayly of Virginia—That law is repealed, or not now in force.

Mr. Stevens—Then I am glad that the agitation has produced some amelioration of your laws, although I still find it on your statute book.

But suppose it were true that the masters had become more severe; has it not been so with tyrants in every age? The nearer the oppressed is to freedom, and the more hopeful his struggles, the tighter the master rivets his chains. Moses and Aaron urged the emancipation of the enslaved Jews. Their master hardened his heart. Those fanatical abolitionists, guided by Heaven, agitated anew. Pharaoh increased the burden of the slaves. He required the same quantity of brick from them without straw, as when the straw had been found them. They were seen dispersed and wandering to gather stubble to make out their task. They failed, and were beaten with stripes. Moses was their worst enemy, according to these philanthropic gentlemen. Did the Lord think so, and command him to desist, lest he should injure them? No; he directed him to agitate again, and demand the abolition of slavery from the king himself. That great slaveholder still hardened his heart, and refused. The Lord visited him with successive plagues—lice, frogs, locusts, thick darkness—until, as the agitation grew higher, and the chains were tighter drawn, he smote the firstborn of every house in Egypt; nor did the slaveholder relax the grasp on his victims, until there was wailing throughout the whole land, over one dead in every family, from the king that sat on the throne to the captive in the dungeon. So I fear it will be in this land of wicked slavery. You have already among you what is equivalent to the lice and the locusts, that wither up every green thing where the foot of slavery treads. Beware of the final plague. And you, in the midst of slavery, who are willing to do justice to the people, take care that your works testify to the purity of your intentions, even at some cost. Take care that your

door-posts are sprinkled with the blood of sacrifice, that when the destroying angel goes forth, as go forth he will, he may pass you by.

Aside from the principle of Eternal Right, I will never consent to the admission of another slave State into the Union (unless bound to do so by some constitutional compact, and I know of none such), on account of the injustice of slave representation. By the Constitution, not only the States now in the Union, but all that may hereafter be admitted, are entitled to have their slaves represented in Congress, five slaves being counted equal to three white freemen. This is unjust to the free States, unless you allow them a representation in the compound ratio of persons and property. There are twenty-five gentlemen on this floor who are virtually the representatives of slaves alone, having not one free constituent. This is an outrage on every representative principle, which supposes that representatives have constituents, whose will they are bound to obey and whose interest they protect. . . .

I shall not now particularly refer to the features of the most extraordinary conspiracy against liberty in the Senate, called the Compromise Bill. If it should survive its puerperal fever, we shall have another opportunity of knocking the monster in the head. I pass over what is familiarly known as the "ten-million-bribe," which was evidently inserted for no other purpose than to create public opinion on 'change, and carry the bill.

But it is proposed to propitiate Virginia by giving her two hundred million dollars out of the public treasury, the proceeds of the public lands. If this sum were to be given for the purpose of purchasing the freedom of her slaves, large as it is, it should have my hearty support. It is, I

think, at least fifty millions more than would pay for them all at a fair market price. But it is designed for no purpose of emancipation. The cool-headed, cool-hearted, philosophic author had no such "transcendental" object. It is to be specifically appropriated to exile her free people of color, and transport them from the land of their birth to the land of the stranger! Sir, this is a proposition not "fit to be made."

Mr. Averett of Virginia here asked: Did not New England sell slaves?

Mr. Stevens—Yes, she sold, she imported slaves; she was very wicked; she has long since repented. Go ye and do likewise.

It is my purpose nowhere in these remarks to make personal reproaches; I entertain no ill-will toward any human being, nor any brute, that I know of, not even the skunk across the way, to which I referred. Least of all would I reproach the South. I honor her courage and fidelity. Even in a bad, a wicked cause, she shows a united front. All her sons are faithful to the cause of human bondage, because it is their cause. But the North—the poor, timid, mercenary, drivelling North—has no such united defenders of her cause, although it is the cause of human liberty. None of the bright lights of the nation shine upon her section. Even her own great men have turned her accusers. She is the victim of low ambition—an ambition which prefers self to country, personal aggrandizement to the high cause of human liberty. She is offered up a sacrifice to propitiate Southern tyranny—to conciliate Southern treason.

We are told that she has not done her duty in restoring fugitive slaves, and that more stringent laws must be passed

to secure that object. A distinguished Senator from Kentucky [Mr. Clay] says it is the duty, not only of officers in the free States, but of all the people who happen to be present, to give active aid to the slaveowner to run down, arrest, and restore the man who is fleeing from slavery. An equally distinguished Senator from Massachusetts [Mr. Webster] unites with him in denouncing the aggressions of the North in this particular; and they both declare their determination to vote for the bill, with its amendments, now on file, and which has become a part of the "Compromise."

It may be well to look a little at the law as it now stands on the subject, and then at the one which has enlisted such powerful support. By the Constitution alone, without any legislation, the slaveholder may go into a free State, take with him such force as he pleases, and take his slave and carry him back. If the fact of his slavery be disputed, either by the alleged slave or any one for him, the claimant may issue his writ de homine repligiando, and unless the defendant give ample bail for his forthcoming on the final issue, and for the payment of all costs and damages (which include the value of his services in the meantime), the plaintiff may take him into his possession, and retain him until final trial by a court and jury. Is not this sufficient? It is all the right which he would have if he claimed property in a horse or other property which he might allege had strayed over the line. Why should he have any greater right when he claims property in man? Is a man of so much less value than a horse, that he should be deprived of the ordinary protection of the law? Sir, in my judgment, the remedy ought to be left where the Constitution places it, without any legislation. The odious law of 1793 ought to be repealed.

By that law, the slaveholder may not only seize his slave and drag him back, but he may command the aid of all the officers of the United States Court; take his alleged slave before the judge, and after summary examination, without trial by jury, may obtain a certificate of property; which, for the purpose of removal, is conclusive of his slavery, takes away the writ of Habeas Corpus, and the right of trial by jury, and sends the victim to hopeless bondage. If an inhabitant of a free State sees a wretched fugitive, who he learns is fleeing from bondage, and gives him a meal of victuals to keep him from starving, and allows him to sleep in his outhouse, although his master is not in pursuit of him, he is liable to the penalty of five hundred dollars. A judge in Pennsylvania lately held that a worthy citizen of Indiana County incurred such penalty by giving a cup of water and a crust of bread to a famishing man whom he knew to be fleeing from bondage. A slave family escaped from Maryland, went into Cumberland County, Pennsylvania, and obtained the reluctant consent of a worthy farmer to sleep in his hayloft. Their owner did not pursue them for a week afterward. It was held by a State court that the farmer was liable for the full value of the slaves, besides the five hundred dollars penalty, and a jury returned a verdict for two thousand dollars and costs. Such are some of the provisions of the law of 1793 now in force, which these great expounders of constitutional freedom hold to be too mild! And more stringent laws are to be passed to punish Northern men who have hearts! . . .

The distinguished Senator from Kentucky [Mr. Clay] wishes further to make it the duty of all bystanders to aid in the capture of fugitives; to join the chase and run down the prey. This is asking more than my constituents will

ever grant. They will strictly abide by the Constitution. The slaveholder may pursue his slave among them with his own foreign myrmidons, unmolested, except by their frowning scorn. But no law that tyranny can pass will ever induce them to join the hue and cry after the trembling wretch who has escaped from unjust bondage. Their fair land, made by nature and their own honest toil as fertile and as lovely as the vale of Tempe, shall never become the hunting-ground on which the bloodhounds of slavery shall course their prey, and command them to join the hunt.

Sir, this tribunal would be more odious than the Star Chamber—these officers more hateful than the Familiars of the Inquisition.

Can the free North stand this? Can New England stand it? Can Massachusetts stand it? If she can, she has but one step further to take in degradation, and that is to deliver her own sons in chains to Southern masters! What would the bold Barons of Runnymede have said to such defenders of liberty? What would the advocates of English freedom, at any time, have said to those who would strike down the writ of Habeas Corpus and the right of trial by jury, those vital principles of Magna Charta and the Bill of Rights? They would have driven them forth as enemies in disguise.

Sir, I am aware of the temerity of these remarks. I know how little effect they will have, coming from so obscure a quarter, and being opposed by the mighty influences that create public opinion. I was struck with the sound sense of the remark made today by the gentleman from Tennessee [Mr. Gentry]. He said that the "Compromise" Bill was winning favor with the people, most of whom had never

read it, merely because it is advocated by great names in whom they are accustomed to confide.

Late events have convinced me that it were better in republican, representative governments, where the people are to judge and decide on every measure, if there were no great, overshadowing names, to give factitious force to their views, and lead the public mind captive. If the people were to put faith in no man's argument, they would examine every question for themselves, and decide according to their intrinsic merit. The errors of the small do but little harm; those of the great are fatal. Had Lucifer been but a common angel, instead of the Chief of the morning stars, he had not taken with him to perdition the third of the heavenly hosts, and spread disunion and discord in celestial, and sin and misery in earthly, places.

Sir, so long as man is vain and fallible, so long as great men have like passions with others, and, as in republics, are surrounded with stronger temptations, it were better for themselves if their fame acquired no inordinate height, until the grave had precluded error. The errors of obscure men die with them, and cast no shame on their posterity. How different with the Great!

How much better had it been for Lord Bacon, that greatest of human intellects, had he never, during his life, acquired glory, and risen to high honors in the State, than to be degraded from them by the judgment of his peers. How much better for him and his, had he lived and died unknown, than to be branded through all future time as the

"Wisest, brightest, meanest of mankind."

So now, in this crisis of the fate of liberty, if any of the renowned men of this nation should betray her cause, it,

were better that they had been unknown to fame. It need not be hoped that the brightness of their past glory will dazzle the eyes of posterity, or illumine the pages of impartial history. A few of its rays may still linger on a fading sky; but they will soon be whelmed in the blackness of darkness. For, unless progressive civilization, and the increasing love of freedom throughout the Christian and civilized world, are fallacious, the Sun of Liberty, of universal Liberty, is already above the horizon, and fast coursing to his meridian splendor, when no advocate of slavery, no apologist of slavery, can look upon his face and live.

## GEORGE MIFFLIN DALLAS



GEORGE MIFFLIN DALLAS, an American statesman, son of A. J. Dallas, Secretary of the Treasury in Madison's Cabinet, was born at Philadelphia, Pa., July 10, 1792, and died there Dec. 31, 1864. He was educated at Princeton College, studied law under his father, and after his admission to the Bar was for a year private secretary to Gallatin during his mission to Russia. Dallas took a lively interest in political affairs, supporting Jackson for the Presidency in 1824 and again in 1828, and after Jackson's inauguration in 1829 was appointed Attorney-General for Philadelphia. He was United States Senator from Pennsylvania during the years 1831-33, Attorney-General of his State in 1833-35, and Minister to Russia from 1837 to 1839. In 1844, he was elected Vice-President of the United States in Tyler's régime, and as such, on the occasion of the senatorial tie in 1846 on the tariff question, gave the casting vote for a low tariff. From 1856 to 1861 Mr. Dallas was Minister to Great Britain, but retired to private life on his return to America, in May, 1861. His speeches were printed singly, and his series of "Letters from London" appeared in 1869. His "Diary while United States Minister to Russia, 1837-39, and to England, 1856-61," appeared in 1892. While Minister to England, he displayed much tact in the conduct of the Central American question.

### EULOGY ON ANDREW JACKSON

DELIVERED AT PHILADELPHIA, JUNE 26, 1845

FELLOW CITIZENS AND FRIENDS,—The sorrows of a nation on the loss of a great and good man are alike confirmed and assuaged by recurring to the virtues and services which endeared him. While funeral solemnities such as are now in progress attest the pervading regrets of communities, and swelling tears betray the anguish of individual friendship; while the muffled drum, the shrouded ensign, and the silent march of mingled processions of citizens and soldiery address their impressive force to the hearts of all, it is well to seek solace in remembrances which must brighten forever the annals of our country, and which add more to the list of names whose mere utterance exalts the pride and strengthens the foundations of patriotism.

At the epoch when, in September, 1774, the delegates of