

# JOHN LORD

BEACON LIGHTS OF  
HISTORY, VOLUME 12:  
AMERICAN LEADERS

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**Beacon Lights of History,**  
**Volume 12: American Leaders**

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Beacon Lights of History, Volume 12: American Leaders:*

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# **John Lord**

## **Beacon Lights of History,**

### **Volume 12: American Leaders**

**ANDREW JACKSON**

**1767-1845**

#### **PERSONAL POLITICS**

It is very seldom that a man arises from an obscure and humble position to an exalted pre-eminence, without peculiar fitness for the work on which his fame rests, and which probably no one else could have done so well. He may not be learned, or cultured; he may be even unlettered and rough; he may be stained by vulgar defects and vices which are fatal to all dignity of character; but there must be something about him which calls out the respect and admiration of those with whom he is surrounded, so as to give him a start, and open a way for success in the business or enterprise where his genius lies.

Such a man was Andrew Jackson. Whether as a youth, or as a man pursuing his career of village lawyer in the backwoods of a frontier settlement, he was about the last person of whom one would predict that he should arise to a great position and unbounded national popularity. His birth was plebeian and obscure. His father, of Scotch-Irish descent, lived in a miserable hamlet in North Carolina, near the South Carolina line, without owning a single acre of land,—one of the poorest of the poor whites. The boy Andrew, born shortly after his father's death in 1767, was reared in poverty and almost without education, learning at school only to "read, write, and cipher;" nor did he have any marked desire for knowledge, and never could spell correctly. At the age of thirteen he was driven from his native village by its devastation at the hands of the English soldiers, during the Revolutionary War. His mother, a worthy and most self-reliant woman, was an ardent patriot, and all her boys—Hugh, Robert, and Andrew—enlisted in the local home-guard. The elder two died, Hugh of exposure and Robert of prison small-pox, while Andrew, who had also been captured and sick of the disease, survived this early training in the scenes of war for further usefulness. The mother made her way on foot to Charleston, S.C., to nurse the sick patriots in the prison-ships, and there died of the prison fever, in 1781. The physical endurance and force of character of this mother constituted evidently the chief legacy that Andrew inherited, and it served him well through a long and arduous life.

At fifteen the boy was "a homeless orphan, a sick and sorrowful orphan," working for a saddler in Charleston a few hours of the day, as his health would permit. With returning strength he got possession of a horse; but his army associates had led him into evil ways, and he became indebted to his landlord for board. This he managed to pay only by staking his horse in a game of dice against \$200, which he fortunately won; and this squared him with the world and enabled him to start afresh, on a better way.

Poor and obscure as he was, and imperfectly educated, he aspired to be a lawyer; and at eighteen years of age he became a law-student in the office of Mr. Spruce McCay in Salisbury, North Carolina. Two years later, in 1787, he was admitted to the bar. Not making much headway in Salisbury, he wandered to that part of the State which is now Tennessee, then an almost unbroken wilderness, exposed to Indian massacres and depredations; and finally he located himself at Nashville, where there was a small settlement,—chiefly of adventurers, who led lives of license and idleness.

It seems that Jackson, who was appointed district-attorney, had a considerable practice in his profession of a rough sort, in that frontier region where the slightest legal knowledge was sufficient for success. He was in no sense a student, like Jefferson and Madison in the early part of their careers in Virginia as village lawyers, although he was engaged in as many cases, and had perhaps as large an income as they. But what was he doing

all this while, when he was not in his log-office and in the log-court-room, sixteen feet square? Was he pondering the principles or precedents of law, and storing his mind with the knowledge gained from books? Not at all. He was attending horse-races and cock-fightings and all the sports which marked the Southern people one hundred years ago; and his associates were not the most cultivated and wealthy of them either, but ignorant, rough, drinking, swearing, gambling, fighting rowdies, whose society was repulsive to people of taste, intelligence, and virtue.

The young lawyer became a favorite with these men, and with their wives and sisters and daughters. He could ride a horse better than any of his neighbors; he entered into their quarrels with zeal and devotion; he was bold, rash, and adventurous, ever ready to hunt a hostile Indian, or fight a duel, or defend an innocent man who had suffered injury and injustice. He showed himself capable of the warmest and most devoted friendship as well as the bitterest and most unrelenting hatred. He was quick to join a dangerous enterprise, and ever showing ability to lead it,—the first on the spot to put out a fire; the first to expose himself in a common danger; commanding respect for his honesty, sincerity, and integrity; exciting fear from his fierce wrath when insulted,—a man terribly in earnest; always as courteous and chivalric to women as he was hard and savage to treacherous men. Above all, he was now a man of commanding stature, graceful manners, dignified deportment, and a naturally distinguished air; so that he was looked up to by men and admired by women. What did

those violent, quarrelsome, adventurous settlers on the western confines of American civilization care whether their favorite was learned or ignorant, so long as he was manifestly superior to them in their chosen pursuits and pleasures, was capable of leading them in any enterprise, and sympathized with them in all their ideas and prejudices,—a born democrat, as well as a born leader. His claim upon them, however, was not without its worthy elements. He was perfectly fearless in enforcing the law, laughing at intimidation. He often had to ride hundreds of miles to professional duties on circuit, through forests infested by Indians, and towns cowed by ruffians; and he and his rifle were held in great respect. He was renowned as the foremost Indian fighter in that country, and as a prosecuting attorney whom no danger and no temptation could swerve from his duty. He was feared, trusted, and boundlessly popular.

The people therefore rallied about this man. When in 1796 a convention was called for framing a State constitution, Jackson was one of their influential delegates; and in December of that year he was sent to Congress as their most popular representative. Of course he was totally unfitted for legislative business, in which he never could have made any mark. On his return in 1797, a vacancy occurring in the United States Senate, he was elected senator, on the strength of his popularity as representative. But he remained only a year at Philadelphia, finding his calling dull, and probably conscious that he had no fitness for legislation, while the opportunity for professional and pecuniary success in Tennessee

was very apparent to him.

Next we read of his being made chief-justice of the Superior Court of Tennessee, with no more fitness for administering the law than he had for making it, or interest in it. Mr. Parton tells an anecdote of Jackson at this time which, whether true or not, illustrates his character as well as the rude conditions amid which he made himself felt. He was holding court in a little village in Tennessee, when a great, hulking fellow, armed with a pistol and bowie-knife, paraded before the little court-house, and cursed judge, jury, and all assembled. Jackson ordered the sheriff to arrest him, but that functionary failed to do it, either alone or with a posse. Whereupon Jackson caused the sheriff to summon *him* as posse, adjourned court for ten minutes, walked out and told the fellow to yield or be shot.

In telling why he surrendered to one man, when he had defied a crowd, the ruffian afterwards said: "When he came up I looked him in the eye, and I saw *shoot*. There wasn't *shoot* in nary other eye in the crowd. I said to myself, it is about time to sing small; and so I did."

It was by such bold, fearless conduct that Jackson won admiration,—not by his law, of which he knew but little, and never could have learned much. The law, moreover, was uncongenial to this man of action, and he resigned his judgeship and went for a short time into business,—trading land, selling horses, groceries, and dry-goods,—when he was appointed major-general of militia. This was just what he wanted. He had now found his place

and was equal to it. His habits, enterprises, dangers, and bloody encounters, all alike fitted him for it. Henceforth his duty and his pleasure ran together in the same line. His personal peculiarities had made him popular; this popularity had made him prominent and secured to him offices for which he had no talent, seeing which he dropped them; but when a situation was offered for which he was fitted, he soon gained distinction, and his true career began.

It was as an Indian fighter that he laid the foundation of his fame. His popularity with rough people was succeeded by a series of heroic actions which brought him before the eyes of the nation. There was no sham in these victories. He fairly earned his laurels, and they so wrought on the imagination of the people that he quickly became famous.

But before his military exploits brought him a national reputation he had become notorious in his neighborhood as a duellist. He was always ready to fight when he deemed himself insulted. His numerous duels were very severely commented on when he became a candidate for the presidency, especially in New England. But duelling was a peculiar Southern institution; most Southern people settled their difficulties with pistols. Some of Jackson's duels were desperate and ferocious. He was the best shot in Tennessee, and, it is said, could lodge two successive balls in the same hole. As early as 1795 he fought with a fellow lawyer by the name of Avery. In 1806 he killed in a duel Charles Dickinson, who had spoken disparagingly of his wife, whom

he had lately married, a divorced woman, but to whom he was tenderly attached as long as she lived. Still later he fought with Thomas H. Benton, and received a wound from which he never fully recovered.

Such was the life of Jackson until he was forty-five years of age,—that of a violent, passionate, arbitrary man, beloved as a friend, and feared as an enemy. It was the Creek war and the war with England which developed his extraordinary energies. When the war of 1812 broke out he was major-general of Tennessee militia, and at once offered his services to the government, which were eagerly accepted, and he was authorized to raise a body of volunteers in Tennessee and to report with them at New Orleans. He found no difficulty in collecting about sixteen hundred men, and in January, 1813, took them down the Cumberland, the Ohio, and Mississippi to Natchez, in such flat-bottomed boats as he could collect; another body of mounted men crossed the country five hundred miles to the rendezvous, and went into camp at Natchez, Feb. 15, 1813.

The Southern Department was under the command of General James Wilkinson, with headquarters at New Orleans,—a disagreeable and contentious man, who did not like Jackson. Through his influence the Tennessee detachment, after two months' delay in Natchez, was ordered by the authorities at Washington to be dismissed,—without pay, five hundred miles from home. Jackson promptly decided not to obey the command, but to keep his forces together, provide at his own expense for

their food and transportation, and take them back to Tennessee in good order. He accomplished this, putting sick men on his own three horses, and himself marching on foot with the men, who, enthusiastic over his elastic toughness, dubbed him "Old Hickory,"—a title of affection that is familiar to this day. The government afterwards reimbursed him for his outlay in this matter, but his generosity, self-denial, energy, and masterly force added immensely to his popularity.

Jackson's disobedience of orders attracted but little attention at Washington, in that time of greater events, while his own patriotism and fighting zeal were not abated by his failure to get at the enemy. And very soon his desires were to be granted.

In 1811, before the war with England was declared, a general confederation of Indians had been made under the influence of the celebrated Tecumseh, a chief of the Shawanoc tribe. He was a man of magnificent figure, stately and noble as a Greek warrior, and withal eloquent. With his twin brother, the Prophet, Tecumseh travelled from the Great Lakes in the North to the Gulf of Mexico, inducing tribe after tribe to unite against the rapacious and advancing whites. But he did not accomplish much until the war with England broke out in 1812, when he saw a possibility of realizing his grand idea; and by the summer of 1813 he had the Creek nation, including a number of tribes, organized for war. How far he was aided by English intrigues is not fully known, but he doubtless received encouragement from English agents. From the British and the Spaniards, the Indians received

arms and ammunition.

The first attack of these Indians was on August 13, 1813, at Fort Mims, in Alabama, where there were nearly two hundred American troops, and where five hundred people were collected for safety. The Indians, chiefly Creeks, were led by Red Eagle, who utterly annihilated the defenders of the fort under Major Beasley, and scalped the women and children. When reports of this unexpected and atrocious massacre reached Tennessee the whole population was aroused to vengeance, and General Jackson, his arm still in a sling from his duel with Benton, set out to punish the savage foes. But he was impeded by lack of provisions, and quarrels among his subordinates, and general insubordination. In surmounting his difficulties he showed extraordinary tact and energy. His measures were most vigorous. He did not hesitate to shoot, whether legally or illegally, those who were insubordinate, thus restoring military discipline, the first and last necessity in war. Soldiers soon learn to appreciate the worth of such decision, and follow such a leader with determination almost equal to his own. Jackson's troops did splendid marching and fighting.

So rapid and relentless were his movements against the enemy that the campaign lasted but seven months, and the Indians were nearly all killed or dispersed. I need not enumerate his engagements, which were regarded as brilliant. His early dangers and adventures, and his acquaintance with Indian warfare ever since he could handle a rifle, now stood him in good stead.

On the 21st of April, 1814, the militia under his command returned home victorious, and Jackson for his heroism and ability was made a major-general in the regular army, he then being forty-seven years of age. It was in this war that we first hear of the famous frontiersman Davy Crockett, and of Sam Houston, afterwards so unique a figure in the war for Texan independence. In this war, too, General Harrison gained his success at Tippecanoe, which was never forgotten; but his military genius was far inferior to that of Jackson. It is probable that had Jackson been sent to the North by the Secretary of War, he would have driven the British troops out of Canada. There is no question about his military ability, although his reputation was sullied by high-handed and arbitrary measures. What he saw fit to do, he did, without scruples or regard to consequences. In war everything is tested by success; and in view of that, if sufficiently brilliant, everything else is forgotten.

The successful and rapid conquest of the Creeks opened the way for Jackson's Southern campaign against the English. As major-general he was sent to conclude a treaty with the Indians, which he soon arranged, and was then put in command of the Southern Division of the army, with headquarters at Mobile. The English made the neutral Spanish territory of Florida a basis of operations along the shores of the Gulf of Mexico, thus putting in peril both Mobile and New Orleans. They virtually possessed Pensacola, the Spanish force being too feeble to hold it, and made it the rendezvous of their fleets. The Spanish authorities made

a show, indeed, of friendship with the United States, but the English flag floated over the forts of the city, and the governor was in sympathy with England. Such was the state of affairs when Jackson arrived at Mobile at the head of parts of three regiments of regulars, with a thousand miles of coast to defend, and without a fort adequately armed or garrisoned. He applied to the Secretary of War for permission to take Pensacola; but the government hesitated to attack a friendly power without further knowledge of their unfriendly acts, and the delayed response, ordering caution and waiting, did not reach him. Thrown upon his own resources, asking for orders and getting none, he was obliged to act without instructions, in face of vastly superior forces. And for this he can scarcely be blamed, since his situation demanded vigorous and rapid measures, before they could be indorsed by the Secretary of War. Pensacola, at the end of a beautiful bay, ten miles from the sea, with a fine harbor, was defended by Fort Barrancas, six miles from the town. Before it lay eight English men-of-war at anchor, the source of military supplies for the fort, on which floated the flags of both England and Spain. The fleet was in command of Captain Lord Percy, whose flagship was the "Hermes," while Colonel Nichols commanded the troops. This latter boastful and imprudent officer was foolish enough to issue a proclamation to the inhabitants of Louisiana and Kentucky to take up arms against their country. A body of Indians were also drilled in the service of the British, so far as Indians can be drilled to regular warfare.

As soon as the true intentions of the English were known to General Jackson, who had made up his mind to take possession of Pensacola, he wrote to the Spanish governor,—a pompous, inefficient old grandee,—and demanded the surrender of certain hostile Creek chieftains, who had taken refuge in the town.

The demand was haughtily rejected. Jackson waited until three thousand Tennessee militia, for whom he had urgently sent, arrived at Mobile, under the command of General Coffee, one of his efficient coadjutors in the Creek War, and Colonel Butler, and then promptly and successfully stormed Pensacola, driving out the British, who blew up Fort Barrancas and escaped to their ships. After which he retired to Mobile to defend that important town against the British forces, who threatened an attack.

The city of Mobile could be defended by fortifications on Mobile Point, thirty miles distant, at the mouth of the bay, since opposite it was a narrow channel through which alone vessels of any considerable size could enter the bay. At this point was Fort Bowyer, in a state of dilapidation, mounting but a few pieces of cannon. Into this fort Jackson at once threw a garrison of one hundred and sixty regular infantry under Major Lawrence, a most gallant officer. These troops were of course unacquainted with the use of artillery, but they put the fort in the best condition they could, and on the 12th of September the enemy appeared, the fleet under Captain Percy, and a body of marines and Indians under Colonel Nichols. Jackson, then at Mobile, apprised of the appearance of the British, hastily reinforced the fort, about to

be attacked by a large force confident of success. On the 15th of September the attack began; the English battered down the ramparts of the fortifications, and anchored their ships within gun-shot of the fort; but so gallant was the defence that the ships were disabled, and the enemy retreated, with a loss of about one hundred men. This victory saved Mobile; and more, it gave confidence to the small army on whom the defence of the coast of the Gulf of Mexico depended.

Jackson forthwith issued his bulletins or proclamations in a truly Napoleonic style to the inhabitants of Louisiana, to rally to the defence of New Orleans, which he saw would probably be the next object of attack on the part of the British. On the 2d of December he personally reached that city and made preparations for the expected assault, and, ably assisted by Edward Livingston, the most prominent lawyer of the city, enlisted for the defence the French creoles, the American residents, and a few Spaniards.

New Orleans was a prize which the English coveted, and to possess it that government had willingly expended a million of pounds sterling. The city not only controlled the commerce of the Mississippi, but in it were stored one hundred and fifty thousand bales of cotton, and eight hundred and ten thousand hogsheads of sugar, all of which the English government expected to seize. It contained at that time about twenty thousand people,—less than half of whom were whites, and these chiefly French creoles,—besides a floating population of sailors and traders.

New Orleans is built on a bend in the Mississippi, in the

shape of a horse-shoe, about one hundred miles from where by a sinuous southeasterly course the river empties into the Gulf of Mexico. At the city the river was about a mile wide, with a current of four miles an hour, and back of the town was a swamp, draining to the north into Lake Ponchartrain, and to the east into Lake Borgne, which opens out into the Gulf east of the city. It was difficult for sailing-vessels at that time to ascend the river one hundred miles against the current, if forts and batteries were erected on its banks; and a sort of back entrance was afforded to the city for small vessels through lakes and lagoons at a comparatively short distance. On one of these lakes, Lake Borgne, a flotilla of light gunboats was placed for defence, under the command of Lieutenant Jones, but on December 14th an overpowering force of small British vessels dispersed the American squadron, and on the twenty-second about fifteen hundred regulars, the picked men of the British army, fresh from European victories under Wellington, contrived to find their way unperceived through the swamps and lagoons to the belt of plantations between the river and the swamps, about nine miles below New Orleans.

When the news arrived of the loss of the gunboats, which made the enemy the masters of Lake Borgne, a panic spread over the city, for the forces of the enemy were greatly exaggerated. But Jackson was equal to the emergency, though having but just arrived. He coolly adopted the most vigorous measures, and restored confidence. Times of confusion, difficulty, and danger

were always his best opportunities. He proclaimed martial law; he sent in all directions for reinforcements; he called upon the people to organize for defence; he released and enlisted the convicts, and accepted the proffered services of Jean Lafitte, the ex-"pirate"—or, rather, smuggler—of the Gulf, with two companies of his ex-buccaneers; he appealed to "the noble-hearted, generous, free men of color" to enlist, and the whole town was instantly transformed into a military camp. Within a fortnight he had five thousand men, one-fifth regulars and the rest militia. General Jackson's address to his soldiers was spirited but inflated, encouraging and boastful, with a great patriotic ring, and, of course effective. The population of the city was united in resolving to make a sturdy defence.

Had the British marched as soon as they landed, they probably would have taken the city, in the existing consternation. But they waited for larger forces from their ships, which carried six thousand troops, and in their turn exaggerated the number of the defenders, which at the first were only about two thousand badly frightened men. The delay was a godsend to the Americans, who now learned the strength of the enemy.

On the 23d—as always, eager to be at his enemy, and moving with his characteristic energy—Jackson sent a small force down to make a night attack on the British camp; also a schooner, heavily armed with cannon, to co-operate from the river. It was a wild and inconsequent fight; but it checked the advance of the British, who now were still more impressed with the need of

reinforcements; it aroused the confidence and fighting spirit of the Americans, and it enabled Jackson to take up a defensive line behind an old canal, extending across the plain from river to swamp, and gave him time to fortify it. At once he raised a formidable barricade of mud and timber, and strengthened it with cotton-bales from the neighboring plantations. The cotton, however, proved rather a nuisance than a help, as it took fire under the attack, and smoked, annoying the men. The "fortifications of cotton-bales" were only a romance of the war.

On the 25th arrived Sir Edward Pakenham, brother-in-law of Wellington and an able soldier, to take command, and on the 28th the British attacked the extemporized but strong breastworks, confident of success. But the sharpshooters from the backwoods of Tennessee under Carroll, and from Kentucky under Coffee, who fought with every advantage, protected by their mud defences, were equally confident. The slaughter of the British troops, utterly unprotected though brave and gallant, was terrible, and they were repulsed. Preparations were now made for a still more vigorous, systematic, and general assault, and a force was sent across the river to menace the city from that side.

On the 8th of January the decisive battle was fought which extinguished forever all dreams of the conquest of America, on the part of the British. General Pakenham, who commanded the advancing columns in person, was killed, and their authorities state their loss to have been two thousand killed, wounded, and missing. The American loss was eight killed and thirteen

wounded. It was a rash presumption for the British to attack a fortified entrenchment ten feet high in some places, and ten feet thick, with detached redoubts to flank it and three thousand men behind it. The conflict was not strictly a battle,—not like an encounter in the open field, where the raw troops under Jackson, most of them militia, would have stood no chance with the veterans whom Wellington had led to victory and glory.

Jackson's brilliant defence at New Orleans was admirably planned and energetically executed. It had no effect on the war, for the treaty of peace, although not yet heard of, had been signed weeks before; but it enabled America to close the conflict with a splendid success, which offset the disasters and mistakes of the Northern campaigns. Naturally, it was magnified into a great military exploit, and raised the fame of Jackson to such a height, all over the country, that nothing could ever afterwards weaken his popularity, no matter what he did, lawful or unlawful. He was a victor over the Indians and over the English, and all his arbitrary acts were condoned by an admiring people who had but few military heroes to boast of.

His successes had a bad effect on Jackson himself. He came to feel that he had a right to ride over precedents and law when it seemed to him expedient. He set up his will against constituted authorities, and everybody who did not endorse his measures he regarded as a personal enemy, to be crushed if possible. It was never said of him that he was unpatriotic in his intentions, only that he was wilful, vindictive, and ignorant.

From the 8th of January, 1815, to the day of his death he was the most popular man that this country ever saw,—excepting, perhaps, Washington and Lincoln,—the central figure in American politics, with prodigious influence even after he had finally retired from public life. Immediately after the defence of New Orleans the legislatures of different States, and Congress itself, passed grateful resolutions for his military services, and the nation heaped all the honor on the hero that was in its power to give,—medals, swords, and rewards, and Congress remitted a fine which had been imposed by Judge Hall, in New Orleans, for contempt of court. Jackson's severity in executing six militiamen for mutiny was approved generally as a wholesome exercise of military discipline, and all his acts were glorified. Wherever he went there was a round of festivities. He began to be talked about, as soon as the war was closed, as a candidate for the presidency, although when the idea was first proposed to him he repelled it with genuine indignation.

Scarcely had the British troops been withdrawn from the Gulf of Mexico to fight more successfully at Waterloo, when Jackson was called to put an end to the Seminole war in Florida, which Spanish territory he occupied on the ground of self-defence. The Indians—Seminoles and Creeks—with many runaway negroes, had been pillaging the border of Georgia. Jackson drove them off, seized the Spanish fort on Appalachee Bay, and again took possession of Pensacola on the plea that the Spanish officials were aiding the Indians. It required all the skill of the government

at Washington to defend his despotic acts, for he was as complete an autocrat in his limited sphere as Caesar or Napoleon. The only limits he regarded were the limits to his power. But in whatever he did, he had a firm conviction that he was right. Even John Quincy Adams justified his acts in Florida, when his enemies were loud in their complaints of his needless executions, especially of two British traders, Arbuthnot and Ambruter, whom he had court-martialled and shot as abettors of the Indians. He had invaded the territory of a neutral power and driven off its representatives; but everything was condoned. And when, shortly after, Florida became United States territory by purchase from Spain, he was made its first governor,—a new field for him, but an appointment which President Monroe felt it necessary to make.

In April, 1821, having resigned his commission in the army, Jackson left Nashville with his family to take up his residence in Pensacola, enchanted with its climate and fruits and flowers, its refreshing sea-breezes, and its beautiful situation, in spite of hot weather. As governor of Florida he was invested with extraordinary powers. Indeed, there was scarcely any limit to them, except that he had no power to levy and collect taxes, and seize the property of the mixed races who dwelt in the land of oranges and flowers. It would appear that, aside from arbitrary acts, he did all he could for the good of the territory, under the influence of his wife, a Christian woman, whom he indulged in all things, especially in shutting up grog-shops, putting a stop to play-going, and securing an outward respect for the Sabbath. His

term of office, however, was brief, and as his health was poor, for he was never vigorous, in November of the same year he gladly returned to Nashville, and about this time built his well-known residence, the "Hermitage." As a farmer he was unusually successful, making agriculture lucrative even with slave-labor.

Jackson had now become a prominent candidate for the presidency, and as a part of the political plan, he was, in 1823, made senator from Tennessee in Congress, where he served parts of two terms, without, however, distinguishing himself as a legislator. He made but few speeches, and these were short, but cast his vote on occasions of importance, voting against a reduction of duty on iron and woollen and cotton goods, against imprisonment for debt, and favoring some internal improvements. In 1824 he wrote a letter advocating a "careful tariff," so far as it should afford revenues for the national defence, and to pay off the national debt, and "give a proper distribution of our labor;" but a tariff to enrich capitalists at the expense of the laboring classes, he always abhorred.

The administration of James Monroe, in two full terms, from 1817 to 1825, had not been marked by any great events or popular movements of especial historical interest. It was "the era of good feeling." The times were placid, and party animosities had nearly subsided. The opening of the slavery discussions resulted in the Missouri Compromise of 1820, and the irritations of that great topic were allayed for the time. Like all his predecessors after Washington, Monroe had been successively a

diplomatist and Secretary of State, and the presidency seemed to fall to him as a matter of course. He was a most respectable man, although not of commanding abilities, and discharged his duties creditably in the absence of exciting questions. The only event of his administration which had a marked influence on the destinies of the United States was the announcement that the future colonization of the country by any European State would not be permitted. This is called the "Monroe doctrine," and had the warm support of Webster and other leading statesmen. It not only proclaimed the idea of complete American independence of all foreign powers, but opposed all interference of European States in American affairs. The ultimate influence of the application of this doctrine cannot be exaggerated in importance, whether it originated with the President or not. Monroe was educated for the bar, but was neither a good speaker nor a ready writer. Nor was he a man of extensive culture or attainments. The one great idea attributed to him was: "America for the Americans." He was succeeded, however, by a man of fine attainments and large experience, who had passed through the great offices of State with distinguished credit.

In February, 1824, Jackson was almost unanimously nominated for the presidency by the Democratic party, through the convention in Harrisburg, and John C. Calhoun was nominated for the vice-presidency. Jackson's main rivals in the election which followed were John Quincy Adams and Henry Clay, both of whom had rendered great civil services, and were

better fitted for the post. But Jackson was the most popular, and he obtained ninety-nine electoral votes, Adams eighty-four, and Clay thirty-seven. No one having a majority, the election was thrown into the House of Representatives. Clay, who never liked nor trusted Jackson, threw his influence in favor of Adams, and Adams was elected by the vote of thirteen States. Jackson and his friends always maintained that he was cheated out of the election,—that Adams and Clay made a bargain between themselves,—which seemed to be confirmed by the fact that Clay was made Secretary of State in Adams's cabinet; although this was a natural enough sequence of Clay's throwing his political strength to make Adams president. Jackson returned, wrathful and disappointed, to his farm, but amid boisterous demonstrations of respect wherever he went. If he had not cared much about the presidency before, he was now determined to achieve it, and to crush his opponents, whom he promptly regarded as enemies.

John Quincy Adams entered upon office in 1825, free from "personal obligations" and "partisan entanglements," but with an unfriendly Congress. This, however, was not of much consequence, since no great subjects were before Congress for discussion. It was a period of great tranquillity, fitted for the development of the peaceful arts, and of internal improvements in the land, rather than of genius in the presidential chair. Not one public event of great importance occurred, although many commercial treaties were signed, and

some internal improvements were made. Mr. Adams lived in friendly relations with his cabinet, composed of able men, and he was generally respected for the simplicity of his life, and the conscientious discharge of his routine duties. He was industrious and painstaking, rising early in the morning and retiring early in the evening. He was not popular, being cold and austere in manner, but he had a lofty self-respect, disdaining to conciliate foes or reward friends,—a New England Puritan of the severest type, sternly incorruptible, learned without genius, eloquent without rhetoric, experienced without wisdom, religious without orthodoxy, and liberal-minded with strong prejudices.

Perhaps the most marked thing in the political history of that administration was the strife for the next presidency, and the beginning of that angry and bitter conflict between politicians which had no cessation until the Civil War. The sessions of Congress were occupied in the manufacture of political capital; for a cloud had arisen in the political heavens, portending storms and animosities, and the discussion of important subjects of national scope, such as had not agitated the country before,—pertaining to finances, to tariffs, to constitutional limitations, to retrenchments, and innovations. There arose new political parties, or rather a great movement, extending to every town and hamlet, to give a new impetus to the Democratic sway. The leaders in this movement were the great antagonists of Clay and Webster,—a new class of politicians, like Benton, Amos Kendall, Martin Van Buren, Duff Green, W.B. Lewis, and others. A new

era of "politics" was inaugurated, with all the then novel but now customary machinery of local clubs, partisan "campaign newspapers," and the organized use of pledges and promises of appointments to office to reward "workers." This system had been efficiently perfected in New York State under Mr. Van Buren and other leaders, but now it was brought into Federal politics, and the whole country was stirred into a fever heat of party strife.

In a political storm, therefore, Jackson was elected, and commenced his memorable reign in 1829,—John Quincy Adams retiring to his farm in disgust and wrath. The new president was carried into office on an avalanche of Democratic voters, receiving two hundred and sixty-one electoral votes, while Adams had only eighty-three, notwithstanding his long public services and his acknowledged worth. This was too great a disappointment for the retiring statesman to bear complacently, or even philosophically. He gave vent to his irritated feelings in unbecoming language, exaggerating the ignorance of Jackson and his general unfitness for the high office,—in this, however, betraying an estimate of the incoming President which was common among educated and conservative men. I well remember at college the contempt which the president and all the professors had for the Western warrior. It was generally believed by literary men that "Old Hickory" could scarcely write his name.

But the speeches of Jackson were always to the point, if

not studied and elaborate, while his messages were certainly respectable, though rather too long. It is generally supposed that he furnished the rough drafts to his few intimate friends, who recast and polished them, while some think that William Lewis, Amos Kendall, and others wrote the whole of them, as well as all his public papers. In reading the early letters of Jackson, however, it is clear that they are anything but illiterate, whatever mistakes in spelling and grammatical errors there may be. His ideas were distinct, his sentiments unmistakable; and although he was fond of a kind of spread-eagle eloquence, his views on public questions were generally just and vigorously expressed. A Tennessee general, brought up with horse-jockeys, gamblers, and cock-fighters, and who never had even a fair common-school education, could not be expected to be very accomplished in the arts of composition, whatever talents and good sense he naturally may have had. Certain it is that Jackson's mind was clear and his convictions were strong upon the national policy to be pursued by him; and if he opposed banks and tariffs it was because he believed that their influence was hostile to the true interests of the country. He doubtless well understood the issues of great public questions; only, his view of them was contrary to the views of moneyed men and bankers and the educated classes of his day generally. It is to be remarked, however, that the views he took on questions of political economy are now endorsed by many able college professors and some American manufacturers who are leading public opinion in opposition to tariffs for protection and

in the direction of free trade.

The first thing for Jackson to do after his inauguration was to select his cabinet. It was not a strong one. He wanted clerks, not advisers. He was all-sufficient to himself. He rarely held a cabinet meeting. In a very short time this cabinet was dissolved by a scandal. General Eaton, Secretary of War, had married the daughter of a tavern-keeper, who was remarkable for her wit and social brilliancy. The aristocratic wives of the cabinet ministers would not associate with her, and the President took the side of the neglected woman, in accordance with his chivalric nature. His error was in attempting to force his cabinet to accord to her a social position,—a matter which naturally belonged to women to settle. So bitter was the quarrel, and so persistent was the President in attempting to produce harmony in his cabinet on a mere social question that the ministers resigned rather than fight so obstinate and irascible a man as Jackson in a matter which was outside his proper sphere of action.

The new cabinet was both more able and more subservient. Edward Livingston of Louisiana, who wrote most of Jackson's documents when he commanded in New Orleans, was made Secretary of State, Louis McLane of Delaware, Secretary of the Treasury; Lewis Cass, governor for nineteen years of Michigan, Secretary of War; Levi Woodbury of New Hampshire, Secretary of the Navy; Roger B. Taney of Maryland, Attorney-General,—all distinguished for abilities. But even these able men were seldom summoned to a cabinet meeting. The confidential advisers of the

President were Amos Kendall, afterwards Postmaster-General; Duff Green, a Democratic editor; Isaac Hill, a violent partisan, who edited a paper in Concord, New Hampshire, and was made second auditor of the treasury; and William B. Lewis, an old friend of the general in Tennessee,—all able men, but unscrupulous politicians, who enjoyed power rather than the display of it. These advisers became known in the party contests of the time as the president's "Kitchen Cabinet."

Jackson had not been long inaugurated before the influence of the "Kitchen Cabinet" was seen and felt; for it was probably through the influence of these men that the President brought about a marked change in the policy of the government; and it is this change which made Jackson's administration so memorable. It was the intrusion of personality, instead of public policy, into the management of party politics. Madison did not depart from the general policy of Jefferson, nor did Monroe. "The Virginia dynasty" kept up the traditions of the government as originally constituted. But Jackson cut loose from all traditions and precedents, especially in the matter of assuming responsibilities, and attempted to carry on the government independently of Congress in many important respects. It is the duty of the President to execute the laws as he finds them, until repealed or altered by the national Legislature; but it was the disposition of Jackson to disregard those laws which he disapproved,—an encroachment hard to be distinguished from usurpation. And this is the most serious charge against him as President; not

his ignorance, but his despotic temper, and his self-conceit in supposing himself wiser than the collected wisdom and experience of the representatives of the nation,—a notion which neither Washington nor Jefferson nor Madison ever entertained.

Again, Jackson's system of appointments to office—the removal of men already satisfactorily doing the work of the government, in order to make places for his personal and political supporters—was a great innovation, against all the experience of governments, whether despotic or constitutional. It led to the reign of demagogues, and gave rewards, not to those who deserved promotion from their able and conscientious discharge of duty in public trusts, but to those who most unscrupulously and zealously advocated or advanced the interests of the party in power. It led to perpetual rotations in office without reasonable cause, and made the election of party chiefs of more importance than the support of right principles. The imperfect civil service reforms which have been secured during the last few years with so much difficulty show the political mischief for which Jackson is responsible, and which has disgraced every succeeding administration,—an evil so gigantic that no president has been strong enough to overcome it; not only injurious to the welfare of the nation by depriving it of the services of experienced men, but inflicting an onerous load on the President himself which he finds it impossible to shake off,—the great obstacle to the proper discharge of his own public duties, and the bar to all private enjoyment. What is more perplexing and irritating

to an incoming president than the persistent and unreasonable demands of office-seekers, nine out of ten of whom are doomed to disappointment, and who consequently become enemies rather than friends of the administration?

This "spoils system" which Jackson inaugurated has proved fatal to all dignity of office, and all honesty in elections. It has divested politics of all attraction to superior men, and put government largely into the hands of the most venal and unblushing of demagogues. It has proved as great and fatal a mistake as has the establishment of universal suffrage which Jefferson encouraged,—a mistake at least in the great cities of the country,—an evil which can never be remedied except by revolution. Doubtless it was a generous impulse on the part of Jackson to reward his friends with the spoils of office, as it was a logical sequence of the doctrine of political equality to give every man a vote, whether virtuous or wicked, intelligent or ignorant. Until Jackson was intrusted with the reins of government, no president of the United States, however inclined to reward political friends, dared to establish such a principle as rotation in office or removal without sufficient cause. Not one there was who would not have shrunk from such a dangerous precedent, a policy certain to produce an inferior class of public servants, and take away from political life all that is lofty and ennobling, except in positions entirely independent of presidential control, such as the national legislature.

The Senate, especially during Jackson's administration, was

composed of remarkably gifted men, the most distinguished of whom opposed and detested the measures and policy he pursued, with such unbending obstinacy that he was filled with bitterness and wrath. This feeling was especially manifested towards Clay, Webster, and Calhoun, the great lights of the Senate Chamber,—although Jackson's party had the majority of both Houses much of the time, and thus, while often hindered, he was in the end unchecked in his innovations and hostilities. But these three giants he had to fight during most of his presidential career, which kept him in a state of perpetual irritation. Their opposition was to him a bitter pill. They were beyond his power, as independent as he. Until then, in his military and gubernatorial capacity, his will had been supreme. He had no opponents whom he could not crush. He was accustomed to rule despotically. As president he could be defied and restrained by Congress. His measures had to be of the nature of recommendation, except in the power of veto which he did not hesitate to use unsparingly; but the Senate could refuse to ratify his appointments, and often did refuse, which drove him beyond the verge of swearing. Again, in the great questions which came up for discussion, especially those in the domain of political economy, there would be honest differences of opinion; for political economy has settled very little, and is not, therefore, strictly a science, any more than medicine is. It is a system of theories based on imperfect inductions. There can be no science except what is based on *indisputable* facts, or accepted principles. There are

no incontrovertible doctrines pertaining to tariffs or financial operations, which are modified by circumstances.

The three great things which most signally marked the administration of Jackson were the debates on the tariffs, the quarrel with the United States Bank, and the Nullification theories of Calhoun. It would seem that Jackson, when inaugurated, was in favor of a moderate tariff to aid military operations and to raise the necessary revenue for federal expenses, but was opposed to high protective duties. Even in 1831 he waived many of his scruples as to internal improvements in deference to public opinion, and signed the bills which made appropriations for the improvement of harbors and rivers, for the continuation of the Cumberland road, for the encouragement of the culture of the vine and olive, and for granting an extended copyright to authors. It was only during his second term that his hostility to tariffs became a passion,—not from any well-defined views of political economy, for which he had no adequate intellectual training, but because "protection" was unpopular in the southwestern States, and because he instinctively felt that it favored monopolists at the expense of the people. What he hated most intensely were capitalists and moneyed institutions; like Jefferson, he feared their influence on elections. As he was probably conscious of his inability to grasp the complex questions of political economy, he was not bitter in his opposition to tariffs, except on political grounds. Hence, generally speaking, he left Congress to discuss that theme. We shall have occasion to

look into it in the lecture on Henry Clay, and here only mention the great debates of Jackson's time on the subject,—a subject on which Congress has been debating for fifty years, and will probably be debating for fifty years to come, since the whole matter depends practically on changing circumstances, whatever may be the abstract theories of doctrinaires.

While Jackson, then, on the whole, left tariffs to Congress, he was not so discreet in matters of finance. His war with the United States Bank was an important episode in his life, and the chief cause of the enmity with which the moneyed and conservative classes pursued him to the end of his days. Had he let the Bank alone he would have been freed from most of the vexations and turmoils which marked his administration. He would have left a brighter name. He would not have given occasion for those assaults which met him on every hand, and which history justifies. He might even have been forgiven for his spoils system and unprecedented removals from office. In attacking the Bank he laid a profane touch upon a sacred ark and handled untempered mortar. He stopped the balance-wheel which regulated the finances of the country, and introduced no end of commercial disorders, ending in dire disasters. Like the tariff, finances were a question with which he was not competent to deal. His fault was something more than the veto on the recharter of the Bank by Congress, which he had a constitutional right to make; it was a vindictive assault on an important institution before its charter had expired, even in his

first message to Congress. In this warfare we see unscrupulous violence,—prompted, not alone by his firm hostility to everything which looked like a monopoly and a moneyed power, but by the influence of advisers who hated everything like inequality of position, especially when not usable for their own purposes. They stimulated his jealousy and resentments. They played on his passions and prejudices. They flattered him as if he were the monarch of the universe, incapable of a wrong judgment.

Hostility to the money-power, however, is older than the public life of Jackson. It existed among the American democracy as early as the time of Alexander Hamilton. When he founded the first Bank of the United States he met with great opposition from the followers of Jefferson, who were jealous of the power it was supposed to wield in politics. When in 1810 the question came up of renewing the charter of the first United States Bank, the Democratic-Republicans were bitter in their opposition; and so effective was the outcry that the bank went into liquidation, its place being taken by local banks. These issued notes so extravagantly that the currency of the country, as stated by Professor Sumner, was depreciated twenty-five per cent. So great was the universal financial distress which followed the unsound system of banking operations that in 1816 a new bank was chartered, on the principles which Hamilton had laid down.

This Bank was to run for twenty years, and its capital was thirty-five millions of dollars, seven of which were taken by the United States; many of its stockholders were widows, charitable

institutions, and people of small means. Its directors were chosen by the stockholders with the exception of five appointed by the President of the United States and confirmed by the Senate. The public money was deposited in this Bank; it could be removed by the Secretary of the Treasury, but by him only on giving his reasons to Congress. The Bank was located in Philadelphia, then the money-centre of the country, but it had twenty-five branches in different cities, from Portsmouth, N.H., to New Orleans. The main institution could issue notes, not under five dollars, but the branches could not. Langdon Cleves, of South Carolina, was the first president, succeeded in 1823 by Nicholas Biddle, of Philadelphia,—a man of society, of culture, and of leisure,—a young man of thirty-seven, who could talk and write, perhaps, better than he could manage a great business.

The affairs of the Bank went on smoothly for ten or twelve years, and the financial condition of the country was never better than when controlled by this great central institution. Nicholas Biddle of course was magnified into a great financier of uncommon genius,—the first business man in the whole country, a great financial autocrat, the idol of Philadelphia. But he was hated by Democratic politicians as a man who was intrusted with too much power, which might be perverted to political purposes, and which they asserted was used to help his aristocratic friends in difficulty. Moreover, they looked with envy on the many positions its offices afforded, which, as it was a "government institution," they thought should be controlled by the governing

party.

Among Biddle's especial enemies were the members of the "Kitchen Cabinet," who with sycophantic adroitness used Jackson as a tool.

Isaac Hill, of New Hampshire, was one of the most envenomed of these politicians, who hated not only Biddle but those who adhered to the old Federalist party, and rich men generally. He had sufficient plausibility and influence to enlist Levi Woodbury, Senator from New Hampshire, to forward his schemes.

In consequence, Woodbury, on June 27, 1829, wrote to Ingham, Secretary of the Treasury, making complaints against the president of the branch bank in Portsmouth for roughness of manner, partiality in loans, and severity in collections. The accused official was no less a man than Jeremiah Mason, probably the greatest lawyer in New England, if not of the whole country, the peer as well as the friend of Webster. Ingham sent Woodbury's letter to Biddle, intimating that it was political partiality that was complained of. Then ensued a correspondence between Biddle and Ingham,—the former defending Mason and claiming complete independence for the Bank as to its management, so long as it could not be shown to be involved in political movements; and the latter accusing, threatening to remove deposits, attempting to take away the pension agency from the Portsmouth branch, *et cetera*. It was a stormy summer for the Bank.

Thus things stood until November, when a letter appeared in the New York "Courier and Inquirer," stating that President Jackson, in his forthcoming first annual message to Congress, would come out strongly against the Bank itself. And sure enough, the President, in his message, astonished the whole country by a paragraph attacking the Bank, and opposing its recharter. The part of the message about the Bank was referred to both Houses of Congress. The committees reported in favor of the Bank, as nothing could be said against its management. Again, in the message of the President in 1830, he attacked the Bank, and Benton, one of the chief supporters of Jackson in spite of their early duel, declared in the Senate that the charter of the Bank ought not to be renewed. Here the matter dropped for a while, as Jackson and his friends were engrossed in electioneering schemes for the next presidential contest, and the troubles of the cabinet on account of the Eaton scandal had to be attended to. As already noted, they ended in its dissolution, followed by a new and stronger cabinet, in which Ingham was succeeded as Secretary of the Treasury by Louis McLane.

It was not till 1832,—the great session of Jackson's administrations,—that the contest was taken up again. The Bank aimed to have its charter renewed, although that would not expire for five years yet; and as the Senate was partly hostile to the President, it seemed a propitious time for the effort. Jackson, on the other hand, fearing that the Bank would succeed in getting its charter renewed with a friendly Congress, redoubled his energies

to defeat it. The more hostile the President showed himself, the more eager were the friends of the Bank for immediate action. It was, with them, now or never. If the matter were delayed, and Jackson were re-elected, it would be impossible to secure a renewal of the charter, while it was hoped that Jackson would not dare to veto the charter on the eve of a presidential election, and thus lose, perhaps, the vote of the great State of Pennsylvania. So it was resolved by the friends of the Bank to press the measure.

Five months were consumed in the discussion of this important matter, in which the leading members of the Senate, except Benton, supported the Bank. The bill to renew the charter passed the Senate on the 11th of June, by a vote of twenty-eight to twenty, and the House on the 3d of July by a majority of thirty-three. It was immediately vetoed by the President, on the ground that the Bank was an odious monopoly, with nearly a third of its stock held by foreigners, and not only odious, but dangerous as a money-power to bribe Congress and influence elections. The message accompanying the veto was able, and was supposed to be written by Edward Livingston or Amos Kendall. Biddle remained calm and confident. Like Clay, he never dreamed that Jackson would dare to persist in a hostility against the enlightened public sentiment of the country. But Jackson was the idol of the Democracy, who would support all his measures and condone all his faults, and the Democracy ruled,—as it always will rule, except in great public dangers, when power naturally falls into the hands of men of genius, honesty, and experience, almost independently

of their political associations.

The veto aroused a thunder of debate, Webster and Clay leading the assault upon it, and Benton, with other Jacksonians, defending it. The attempt to pass the re-charter bill over the veto failed of the necessary two-thirds majority, and the President was triumphant.

Jackson had no idea of yielding his opinions or his will to anybody, least of all to his political enemies. The war with the Bank must go on; but its charter had three or four years still to run. All he could do legally was to cripple it by removing the deposits. His animosity, inflamed by the denunciations of Benton, Kendall, Blair, Hill, and others, became ungovernable.

McLane was now succeeded in the Treasury department by Mr. Duane of Philadelphia, the firmest and most incorruptible of men, for whom the President felt the greatest respect, but whom he expected to bend to his purposes as he had Ingham. Only the Secretary of the Treasury could remove the deposits, and this Mr. Duane unexpectedly but persistently refused to do. Jackson brought to bear upon him all his powers of persuasion and friendship; Duane still stood firm. Then the President resorted to threats, all to no purpose; at length Duane was dismissed from his office, and Roger B. Taney became Secretary of the Treasury, 23d of September, 1833. Three days afterwards, Taney directed collectors to deposit the public money in certain banks which he designated. It seems singular that the man who two years later was appointed Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, and

who discharged the duties of that office so ably and uprightly, should so readily have complied with the President's desire; but this must be accounted for by the facts that in regard to the Bank Taney's views were in harmony with those of Jackson, and that the removal of the deposits, however arbitrary, was not unconstitutional.

The removal of more than nine millions from the Bank within the period of nine months caused it necessarily to curtail its discounts, and a financial panic was the result, which again led to acrimonious debates in Congress, in which Clay took the lead. His opposition exasperated the President in the highest degree. Calhoun equalled Clay in the vehemence of his denunciation, for his hatred of Jackson was greater than his hostility to moneyed corporations. Webster was less irritating, but equally strong in his disapproval. Jackson, in his message of December, 1833, reiterated his charge against the Bank as "a permanent electioneering engine," attempting "to control public opinion through the distresses of some, and the fears of others." The Senate passed resolutions denouncing the high-handed measures of the government, which, however, were afterwards expunged when the Senate had become Democratic. One of the most eloquent passages that Clay ever uttered was his famous apostrophe to Vice President Van Buren when presiding over the Senate, in reference to the financial distress which existed throughout the country, and which, of course, he traced to the removal of the deposits. Deputations of great respectability

poured in upon the President from every quarter to induce him to change his policy,—all of which he summarily and rudely dismissed. All that these deputations could get out of him was, "Go to Nicholas Biddle; he has all the money." In 1834, during the second term of Jackson's office, there were committees sent to investigate the affairs of the Bank, who were very cavalierly treated by Biddle, so that their mission failed, amid much derision. He was not dethroned from his financial power until the United States Bank of Pennsylvania—the style under which the United States Bank accepted a State charter in 1836, when its original national charter expired—succumbed to the general crash in 1837.

It is now generally admitted that Jackson's war on the Bank was violent and reckless, although it would be difficult to point out wherein his hostility exceeded constitutional limits. The consequences were most disastrous to the immediate interests of the country, but probably not to its ultimate interests. The substitution of "pet banks" for government deposits led to a great inflation of paper money, followed by a general mania for speculation. When the bubble burst these banks were unable to redeem their notes in gold and silver, and suspended their payments. Then the stringency of the money market equalled the previous inflation. In consequence there were innumerable failures and everything fell in value,—lands, houses, and goods. Such was the general depression and scarcity of money that in many States it was difficult to raise money even to pay necessary

taxes. I have somewhere read that in one of the Western States the sheriffs sold at auction a good four-horse wagon for five dollars and fifty cents, two horses for four dollars, and two cows for two dollars. The Western farmers were driven to despair. Such was the general depression that President Van Buren was compelled in 1837 to call an extra session of Congress; nor were the difficulties removed until the celebrated Bankrupt Law was passed in 1840, chiefly through the efforts of Daniel Webster, which virtually wiped out all debts of those who chose to avail themselves of the privilege. What a contrast was the financial state of the country at that time, to what it was when Jackson entered upon his administration!

It is not just to attribute all the commercial disasters which followed the winding up of the old United States Bank to General Jackson, and to the financial schemes of Van Buren. It was the spirit of speculation, fostered by the inflation of paper money by irresponsible banks when the great balance-wheel was stopped, which was the direct cause. The indirect causes of commercial disaster, however, may be attributed to Jackson's war on the Bank. The long fight in Congress to secure a recharter of the Bank, though unsuccessful, was dignified and statesmanlike; but the ungoverned passions displayed by the removal of deposits resulted in nothing, and could have resulted in nothing of advantage to any theory of the Bank's management; and it would be difficult to say who were most to blame for the foolish and undignified crimination and recrimination which

followed,—the President, or the hostile Senate. It was, at any rate, a fight in which Jackson won, but which, from the animosities it kindled, brought down his gray hairs in sorrow to the grave. It gave him a doubtful place in the history of the nation.

If Jackson's hostility to the United States Bank was inexpedient and violent, and resulted in financial disasters, his vigorous efforts to put down Nullification were patriotic, and called forth the approval and gratitude of the nation. This was a real service of immense value, and it is probable that no other public man then on the stage could have done this important work so well. Like all Jackson's measures, it was summary and decided.

Nullification grew out of the tariffs which Congress had imposed. The South wanted no protective duties at all; indeed, it wanted absolute free trade, so that planters might obtain the articles which they needed at the smallest possible cost, and sell as much cotton and tobacco as they could with the least delay and embarrassment. Professor Sumner argues that Southern industries either supported the Federal government, or paid tribute to the Northern manufacturers, and that consequently the grievances of the Southern States were natural and just,—that their interests were sacrificed to national interests, as the New England interests had been sacrificed to the national interests at the time of the Embargo. Undoubtedly, the South had cause of complaint, and we cannot wonder at its irritation and opposition to the taxes imposed on all for the protection of American

manufactures. On the other hand, it was a grave question whether the interests of the nation at large should be sacrificed to build up the interests of the South,—to say nothing of the great moral issues which underlie all material questions. In other words, in matters of national importance, which should rule? Should the majority yield to the minority, or the minority to the majority? In accordance with the democratic principles on which this government is founded, there is only one reply to the question: The majority must rule. This is the basal stone of all constitutional government, whose disruption would produce revolution and anarchy. It is a bitter and humiliating necessity which compels the intellect, the wealth, the rank, and the fashion of England to yield to the small majority in the House of Commons, in the matter of Irish Home Rule, but an Irishman's vote is as good as that of the son of an English peer. The rule of the majority is the price of political liberty, for which enlightened nations are willing to pay.

Henry Clay deserves great praise and glory for his persistent efforts at conciliation,—not only in matters pertaining to the tariff, but in the question of slavery to harmonize conflicting interests. But Calhoun—the greatest man whom the South has produced—would listen to no concessions, foreseeing that the slightest would endanger the institution with which the interests and pride of the Southern States were identified. At this crisis the country needed a man at the helm whose will was known to be inflexible.

In the session of 1830, on a question concerning the sales

of public (U.S.) lands in the several States, arose the great debate between Colonel R.Y. Hayne, of South Carolina, and Daniel Webster on the limitations of Federal power; and Hayne's declaration of the right of a State to nullify a Federal law that was prejudicial to its interests gained him great applause throughout the South. John C. Calhoun, United States Senator from South Carolina, was at the head of the extreme State Sovereignty party, and at a banquet celebrating the birthday of Jefferson, January 13, 1830, he proffered the toast "The Union: next to Liberty, the most dear; may we all remember that it can only be preserved by respecting the rights of the States, and distributing equally the benefit and burden of the Union." Jackson, as President, and practical chief of the Democracy, was of course present at this political banquet. His profound patriotism and keen political instinct scented danger, and with his usual impulse to go well forward to meet an enemy, he gave, "The Federal Union: it must be preserved." This simple declaration was worth more than all the wordy messages and proclamations he ever issued; it not only served notice upon the seceders of his time that they had a great principle to deal with, but it echoed after him, and was the call to which the nation victoriously rallied in its supreme struggle with treason, thirty years later.

Notwithstanding the evident stand taken by the President, the Calhoun party continued their opposition on State lines to the Federal authority. And when Congress passed the tariff of July, 1832, the South Carolina legislature in the autumn called

a convention, which pronounced that Act and the Tariff Act of 1828 unconstitutional,—"null and void, and no law;" called on the State legislature to pass laws to prevent the execution of the Federal revenue acts; and declared that any attempt at coercion on the part of the Federal authorities would be regarded as absolving South Carolina and all its people from all further obligation to retain their union with the other States, and that they should then forthwith proceed to organize a separate government, as a sovereign and independent State.

If such a man as Buchanan had then been in the presidential chair there probably would have been a Southern Confederacy; and in 1832 it might have been successful. But Jackson was a man of different mould. Democrat and Southern sympathizer as he was, he instantly took the most vigorous measures to suppress such a thing in the bud, before there was time to concert measures of disunion among the other Southern States. He sent General Scott to Charleston, with a body of troops stationed not far away. He ordered two war-vessels to the harbor of the misguided and rebellious city. On December 4 in his annual message he called the attention of Congress to the opposition to the revenue laws and intimated that he should enforce them. On December 11 he issued a proclamation to the inhabitants of South Carolina, written by Livingston, moderate in tone, in which it was set forth that the power of one State to annul a law of the United States was incompatible with the existence of the Union, and inconsistent with the spirit of the constitution. Governor Hayne

issued a counter-proclamation, while Calhoun resigned the vice-presidency in order to represent South Carolina on the floor of the Senate. In January the President sent another message to Congress asking for authority to suppress rebellion.

Congress rallied around the Executive and a bill was passed providing for the enforcement of the collection of the customs at Charleston, and arming the President with extraordinary powers to see that the dangers were averted. Most of the States passed resolutions against Nullification, and there was general approval of the vigorous measures to be enforced if necessary. The Nullifiers, unprepared to resist the whole military power of the country, yielded, but with ill grace, to the threatened force. Henry Clay in February introduced a compromise tariff, and on the 27th of that month it was completed, together with an Enforcement Act. On March 3 it became a law, and on March 11 the South Carolina Nullifiers held an adjourned meeting of their convention and nullified their previous nullification. The triumph of Jackson was complete, and his popularity reached its apex.

It is not to be supposed that the collection of duties in Southern parts was the only cause of Nullification. The deeper cause was not at first avowed. It was the question of slavery, which is too large a topic to be discussed in this connection. It will be treated more fully in a subsequent lecture.

An important event took place during the administration of Jackson, which demands our notice, although it can in no way be traced to his influence; and this was the Anti-Masonic

movement, ending in the formation of a new political party.

The beginning of this party was obscure enough. One Morgan in Western New York was abducted and murdered for revealing the alleged secrets of Freemasonry. These were in reality of small importance, but Morgan had mortally offended a great secret society of which he was a member, by bringing it into public contempt. His punishment was greater than his crime, which had been not against morality, but against a powerful body of men who never did any harm, but rather much good in the way of charities. The outrage aroused public indignation,—that a man should be murdered for making innocent revelations of mere ceremonies and pretensions of small moment; and as the Masons would make no apologies, and no efforts to bring the offenders to justice, it was inferred by the credulous public that Masons were not fit to be entrusted with political office. The outrage was seized upon by cunning politicians to make political capital. Jackson was a Mason. Hence the new party of Anti-Masons made war against him. As they had been his supporters, the Democratic party of the State of New York was divided.

The leading Democratic leaders had endeavored to suppress this schism; but it daily increased, founded on popular ignorance and prejudice, until it became formidable. In 1830, four years after the murder, the Anti-Masons had held conventions and framed a political platform of principles, the chief of which was hostility to all secret societies. The party, against all reason, rapidly spread through New York, Pennsylvania, and New

England,—its stronghold being among the farmers of Vermont. Ambitious politicians soon perceived that a union with this party would favor their interests, and men of high position became its leaders. In 1831 the party was strong enough to assemble a convention in Baltimore to nominate candidates for the presidency, and William Wirt, the great Maryland lawyer, was nominated, not with any hope of election, but with the view of dividing the ranks of the Democratic party, and of strengthening the opposition headed by Clay,—the National Republican party, which in the next campaign absorbed all the old Federalist remnants, and became the Whig party.

All opposition to Jackson, however, was to no purpose. He was elected for his second term, beginning in 1833. The Anti-Masonic movement subsided as rapidly as it was created, having no well-defined principles to stand upon. It has already passed into oblivion.

I have now presented the principal subjects which made the administrations of Jackson memorable. There are others of minor importance which could be mentioned, like the removal of the Indians to remote hunting-grounds in the West, the West India trade, the successful settlement of the Spoliation Claims against France, which threatened to involve the country in war,—prevented by the arbitration of England; similar settlements with Denmark, Spain, and Naples; treaties of commerce with Russia and Turkey; and other matters in which Jackson's decided character appeared to advantage. But it is not my purpose to write

a complete history of Jackson or of his administrations. Those who want fuller information should read Parton's long biography, in which almost every subject under the sun is alluded to, and yet which, in spite of its inartistic and unclassical execution, is the best thesaurus I know of for Jacksonian materials. More recent histories are dissertations in disguise, on disputed points.

Here, then, I bring this lecture to a close with a brief allusion to those things which made up the character of a very remarkable man, who did both good and evil in his public career. His private life is unusually interesting, by no means a model for others to imitate, yet showing great energy, a wonderful power of will, and undoubted honesty of purpose. His faults were those which may be traced to an imperfect education, excessive prejudices, a violent temper, and the incense of flatterers,—which turned his head and of which he was inordinately fond. We fail to see in him the modesty which marked Washington and most of the succeeding presidents. As a young man he fought duels without sufficient provocation. He put himself in his military career above the law, and in his presidential career above precedents and customs, which subjected him to grave animadversion. As a general he hanged two respectable foreigners as spies, without sufficient evidence. He inflicted unnecessary cruelties in order to maintain military discipline,—wholesome, doubtless, but such as less arbitrary commanders would have hesitated to do. He invaded the territory of a neutral state on the plea of self-defence. In his conversation he used expletives not considered in good

taste, and which might be called swearing, without meaning any irreverence to the Deity, although in later life he seldom used any other oath than "By the Eternal!"

Personally, Jackson's habits were irreproachable. In regard to the pleasures of the table he was temperate, almost abstemious. He was always religiously inclined and joined the Church before he died,—perhaps, however, out of loyalty to his wife, whom he adored, rather than from theological convictions. But whatever he deemed his duty, he made every sacrifice to perform. Although fond of power, he was easily accessible, and he was frank and genial among his intimate friends. With great ideas of personal dignity, he was unconventional in all his habits, and detested useless ceremonies and the etiquette of courts. He put a great value on personal friendships, and never broke them except under necessity. For his enemies he cherished a vindictive wrath, as unforgiving as Nemesis.

In the White House Jackson was remarkably hospitable, and he returned to his beloved Hermitage poorer than when he left it. He cared little for money, although an excellent manager of his farm. He was high-minded and just in the discharge of debts, and, although arbitrary, he was indulgent to his servants.

He loved frankness in his dealings with advisers, although he was easily imposed upon. While he leaned on the counsels of his "Kitchen Cabinet" he rarely summoned a council of constitutional advisers. He parted with one of the ablest and best of his cabinet who acted from a sense of duty in a matter where

he was plainly right. Toward Nicholas Biddle and Henry Clay he cherished the most inexorable animosity for crossing his path.

When we remember his lack of political knowledge, his "spoils system," his indifference to internal improvements, his war on the United States Bank, and his arbitrary conduct in general, we feel that Jackson's elevation to the presidency was a mistake and a national misfortune, however popular he was with the masses. Yet he was in accord with his generation.

It is singular that this man did nothing to attract national notice until he was forty-five years of age. The fortune of war placed him on a throne, where he reigned as a dictator, so far as his powers would allow. Happily, in his eventful administration he was impeded by hostile and cynical senators; but this wholesale restraint embittered his life. His great personal popularity continued to the end of his life in 1845, but his influence is felt to this day, both for good and for evil. His patriotism and his prejudices, his sturdy friendships and his relentless hatreds, his fearless discharge of duty and his obstinacy of self-will, his splendid public services and the vast public ills he inaugurated, will ever make this picturesque old hero a puzzle to moralists. His life was turbulent, and he was glad, when the time came, to lay down his burden and prepare himself for that dread Tribunal before which all mortals will be finally summoned,—the one tribunal in which he believed, and the only one which he was prompt to acknowledge.

## AUTHORITIES

The works written on Jackson are very numerous. Probably the best is the biography written by Parton, defective as it is. Professor W.E. Sumner's work, in the series of "American Statesmen," is full of interesting and important facts, especially in the matters of tariff and finance. See also Benton's Thirty Years in the United States Senate; Cobbett's Life of Jackson; Curtis's Life of Webster; Colton's Life and Times of Henry Clay, as well as Carl Schurz on the same subject; Von Holst, Life of Calhoun; Memoir of John Quincy Adams; Tyler's Life of Taney; Sargent's Public Men; the Speeches of Webster, Clay, and Calhoun.

# HENRY CLAY

1777-1852

## COMPROMISE LEGISLATION

All the presidents of the United States, with the exception of three or four, must yield in influence to Henry Clay, so far as concerns directing the policy, and shaping the institutions of this country. Only two other American statesmen—Hamilton and Webster—can be compared to him in genius, power, and services. These two great characters will be found treated elsewhere.

In regard to what is called "birth," Clay was not a patrician, like Washington, nor had he so humble an origin as Andrew Jackson or Abraham Lincoln. Like most other great men, he was the architect of of his own fortunes, doomed to drudgeries in the early part of his career, and climbing into notice by energy and force of character.

He was born, 1777, in a little Virginian hamlet called the "Slashes," in Hanover County, the son of a Baptist minister, who preached to poor people, and who died when Henry was four years old, leaving six other children and a widow, with very

scanty means of support. The little country school taught him "the rudiments," and his small earnings as plough-boy and mill-boy meantime helped his mother. The mother was marked by sterling traits of character, and married for her second husband a Captain Watkins, of Richmond. This worthy man treated his step-son kindly, and put him into a retail store at the age of fourteen, no better educated than most country lads,—too poor to go to college, but with aspirations, which all bright and ambitious boys are apt to have, especially if they have no fitness for selling the common things of life, and are fond of reading. Henry's step-father, having an influential friend, secured for the disgusted and discontented youth a position in the office of the Clerk of the High Court of Chancery, of which the eminent jurist, George Wythe, was chancellor. The judge and the young copyist thus naturally became acquainted, and acquaintance ripened into friendship, for the youth was bright and useful, and made an excellent amanuensis to the learned old lawyer, in whose office both Thomas Jefferson and John Marshall had been students of law.

After serving four years, Clay resolved to become a lawyer, entered the office of the Attorney-General of the State, and one year after was admitted to the bar, having in all probability acquired much legal knowledge from the communicative Chancellor, whom everybody loved and honored,—one of the earliest in Virginia to emancipate his slaves, and provide for their support. The young fellow's reading, also, had been guided by

his learned friend, in the direction of history, English grammar, and the beginnings of law.

The young lawyer, with his pleasing manners, quick intelligence, and real kindness of heart soon became a favorite in Richmond society. He was neither handsome, nor elegant, nor aristocratic, but he had personal geniality, wit, brilliancy in conversation, irreproachable morals, and was prominent in the debating society,—a school where young men learn the art of public speaking, like Gladstone at Oxford. It is thought probable that Clay's native oratorical ability, which he assiduously cultivated,—the gift which, as Schurz says, "enabled him to make little tell for much, and to outshine men of vastly greater learning,"—misled him as to the necessity for systematic and thorough study. Lack of thoroughness and of solid information was his especial weakness through life, in spite of the charm and power of his personal oratory.

It is always up-hill work for a young lawyer to succeed in a fashionable city, where there is more intellect than business, and when he himself has neither family, nor money, nor mercantile friends. So Henry Clay, at twenty-one, turned his eyes to the West,—the land of promise, which was especially attractive to impecunious lawyers, needy farmers, spendthrift gentlemen, merchants without capital, and vigorous men of enterprise,—where everybody trusts and is trusted, and where talents and character are of more value than money. He had not much legal knowledge, nor did he need much in the frontier settlements on

the Ohio and its valleys; the people generally were rough and illiterate, and attached more importance to common-sense and industry than to legal technicalities and the subtle distinctions of Coke and Blackstone. If an advocate could grasp a principle which appealed to consciousness, and enforce it with native eloquence, he was more likely to succeed than one versed in learned precedents without energy or plausible utterances.

The locality which Clay selected was Lexington in Kentucky,—then a small village in the midst of beautiful groves without underbrush, where the soil was of virgin richness, and the landscape painted with almost perpetual verdure; one of the most attractive spots by nature on the face of the earth,—a great contrast to the flat prairies of Illinois, or the tangled forests of Michigan, or the alluvial deposits of the Mississippi. It was a paradise of hills and vales, easily converted into lawns and gardens, such as the primitive settlers of New England would have looked upon with blended envy and astonishment.

Lexington in 1797, the year that Clay settled in it as a lawyer, was called "the intellectual centre of the Far West," as the Ohio valley was then regarded. In reality it was a border-post, the inhabitants of which were devoted to horse-racing, hunting, and whiskey-drinking, with a sprinkling of educated people, among whom the young lawyer soon distinguished himself,—a born orator, logical as well as rhetorical.

Clay's law practice at first was chiefly directed to the defence of criminals, and it is said that no murderer whom he defended

was ever hanged; but he soon was equally successful in civil cases, gradually acquiring a lucrative practice, without taking a high rank as a jurist. He was never a close student, being too much absorbed in politics, society, and pleasure, except on rare occasions, for which he "crammed." His reading was desultory, and his favorite works were political speeches, many of which he committed to memory and then declaimed, to the delight of all who heard him. His progress at the bar must have been remarkably rapid, since within two years he could afford to purchase six hundred acres of land, near Lexington, and take unto himself a wife,—domestic, thrifty, painstaking, who attended to all the details of the farm, which he called "Ashland." As he grew in wealth, his popularity also increased, until in all Kentucky no one was so generally beloved as he. Yet he would not now be called opulent, and he never became rich, since his hospitalities were disproportionate to his means, and his living was more like that of a Virginia country gentleman than of a hard-working lawyer.

At this time Clay was tall, erect, commanding, with long arms, small hands, a large mouth, blue, electrical eyes, high forehead, a sanguine temperament, excitable, easy in his manners, self-possessed, courteous, deferential, with a voice penetrating and musical, with great command of language, and so earnest that he impressed everybody with his blended sincerity and kindness of heart.

The true field for such a man was politics, which Clay

loved, so that his duties and pleasures went hand in hand,—an essential thing for great success. His first efforts were in connection with a constitutional convention in Kentucky, when he earnestly advocated a system of gradual emancipation of slaves,—unpopular as that idea was among his fellow-citizens. It did not seem, however, to hurt his political prospects, for in 1803 he was solicited to become a member of the State legislature, and was easily elected, being a member of the Democratic-Republican party as led by Jefferson. He made his mark at once as an orator, and so brilliant and rapid was his legislative career that he was elected in 1806 to the United States Senate to fill the unexpired term, of John Adair,—being only twenty-nine years old, the youngest man that ever sat in that body of legislators. All that could then be said of him was that he made a good impression in the debates and on the committees, and was a man of great promise, a favorite in society, attending all parties of pleasure, and never at home in the evening. On his return to Kentucky he was again elected as a member of the lower House in the State legislature, and chosen Speaker,—an excellent training for the larger place he was to fill. In the winter of 1809-10 he was a second time sent to the United States Senate, for two years, to fill the unexpired term of Buckner Thurston, where he made speeches in favor of encouraging American manufacturing industries, not to the extent of exportation,—which he thought should be confined to surplus farm-produce,—but enough to supply the people with clothing and to make them independent

of foreign countries for many things unnecessarily imported. He also made himself felt on many other important topics, and was recognized as a rising man.

When his term had expired in the Senate, he was chosen a member of the House of Representatives at Washington,—a more agreeable field to him than the Senate, as giving him greater scope for his peculiar eloquence. He was promptly elected Speaker, which position, however, did not interfere with his speech-making whenever the House went into Committee of the Whole. It was as Speaker of the House of Representatives that Clay drew upon himself the eyes of the nation; and his truly great congressional career began in 1811, on the eve of the war with Great Britain in Madison's administration.

Clay was now the most influential, and certainly the most popular man in public life, in the whole country, which was very remarkable, considering that he was only thirty-seven years of age. Daniel Webster was then practising law in Portsmouth, N.H., two years before his election to Congress, and John C. Calhoun had not yet entered the Senate, but was chairman of the Committee of Foreign Relations in the House of Representatives, and a warm friend of the Speaker.

The absorbing subject of national interest at that time was the threatened war with England, which Clay did his best to bring about, and Webster to prevent. It was Webster's Fourth-of-July Oration at Portsmouth, in 1812, which led to his election to Congress as a Federalist, in which oration he deprecated war. The

West generally was in favor of it, having not much to lose or to fear from a contest which chiefly affected commerce, and which would jeopardize only New England interests and the safety of maritime towns. Clay, who had from his first appearance at Washington made himself a champion of American interests, American honor, and American ideas generally, represented the popular party, and gave his voice for war, into which the government had drifted under pressure of the outrages inflicted by British cruisers, the impressment of our seamen, and the contempt with which the United States were held and spoken of on all occasions by England,—the latter an element more offensive to none than to the independent and bellicose settlers in Ohio, Kentucky, and Tennessee.

Clay is generally credited with having turned the scales in favor of the war with Great Britain, when the United States comprised less than eight millions of people, when the country had no navy of any account, and a very small army without experienced officers, while Great Britain was mistress of the seas, with an enormous army, and the leader of the allied Powers that withstood Napoleon in Spain and Portugal. To the eyes of the Federalists, the contest was rash, inexpedient, and doubtful in its issues; and their views were justified by the disasters that ensued in Canada, the incompetency of Hull, the successive defeats of American generals with the exception of Jackson, and the final treaty of peace without allusion to the main causes which had led to the war. But the Republicans claimed that the war, if

disastrous on the land, had been glorious on the water; that the national honor had been vindicated; that a navy had been created; that the impressment of American seamen was practically ended forever; and that England had learned to treat the great republic with outward respect as an independent, powerful, and constantly increasing empire.

As the champion of the war, and for the brilliancy and patriotism of his speeches, all appealing to the national heart and to national pride, Clay stood out as the most eminent statesman of his day, with unbounded popularity, especially in Kentucky, where to the last he retained his hold on popular admiration and affection. His speeches on the war are more marked for pungency of satire and bitterness of invective against England than for moral wisdom. They are appeals to passions rather than to reason, of great force in their day, but of not much value to posterity. They are not read and quoted like Webster's masterpieces. They will not compare, except in popular eloquence, with Clay's own subsequent efforts in the Senate, when he had more maturity of knowledge, and more insight into the principles of political economy. But they had great influence at the time, and added to his fame as an orator.

In the summer of 1814 Clay resigned his speakership of the House of Representatives to accept a diplomatic mission as Peace Commissioner to confer with commissioners from Great Britain. He had as associates John Quincy Adams, James A. Bayard, Jonathan Russell, and Albert Gallatin—the ablest

financier in the country after the death of Hamilton. The Commissioners met at Ghent, and spent five tedious months in that dull city. The English commissioners at once took very high ground, and made imperious demands,—that the territory now occupied by the States of Michigan, Illinois, Wisconsin, Indiana, and a part of Ohio should be set apart for the Indians under an English protectorate; that the United States should relinquish the right of keeping armed vessels on the great Lakes; that a part of Maine should be ceded to Great Britain to make a road from Halifax to Quebec, and that all questions relating to the right of search, blockades, and impressment of seamen should remain undiscussed as before the war. At these preposterous demands Clay was especially indignant. In fact, he was opposed to any treaty at all which should not place the United States and Great Britain on an equality, and would not have been grieved if the war had lasted three years longer. Adams and Gallatin had their hands full to keep the Western lion from breaking loose and returning home in disgust, while they desired to get the best treaty they could, rather than no treaty at all. Gradually the British commissioners abated their demands, and gave up all territorial and fishery claims, and on December 14, 1814, concluded the negotiations on the basis of things before the war,—the *status quo ante bellum*. Clay was deeply chagrined. He signed the document with great reluctance, and always spoke of it as "a damned bad treaty," since it made no allusion to the grievance which provoked the war which he had so eloquently advocated.

Gallatin and Clay spent some time in Paris, and most of the ensuing summer in London on further negotiations of details. But Clay had no sooner returned to Lexington than he was re-elected to the national legislature, where he was again chosen Speaker, December 4, 1815, having declined the Russian mission, and the more tempting post of the Secretary of War. He justly felt that his arena was the House of Representatives, which, as well as the Senate, had a Republican majority. It was his mission to make speeches and pull political wires, and not perplex himself with the details of office, which required more executive ability and better business habits than he possessed, and which would seriously interfere with his social life. How could he play cards all night if he was obliged to be at his office at ten o'clock in the morning, day after day, superintending clerks, and doing work which to him was drudgery? Much more pleasant to him was it to preside over stormy debates, appoint important committees, write letters to friends, and occasionally address the House in Committee of the Whole, when his voice would sway the passions of his intelligent listeners; for he had the power "to move to pity, and excite to rage."

Besides all this, there were questions to be discussed and settled by Congress, important to the public, and very interesting to politicians. The war had bequeathed a debt. To provide for its payment, taxes must be imposed. But all taxation is unpopular. The problem was, to make taxes as easy as possible. Should they be direct or indirect? Should they be

imposed for a revenue only, or to stimulate and protect infant manufactures? The country was expanding; should there be national provision for internal improvements,—roads, canals, etc.? There were questions about the currency, about commerce, about the Indians, about education, about foreign relations, about the territories, which demanded the attention of Congress. The most important of these were those connected with revenues and tariffs.

It was this latter question, connected with internal improvements and the sales of public lands, in which Clay was most interested, and which, more than any other, brought out and developed his genius. He is generally quoted as "the father of the protective policy," to develop American manufactures. The genius of Hamilton had been directed to the best way to raise a revenue for a new and impoverished country; that of Clay sought to secure independence of those foreign products which go so far to enrich nations.

Webster, when reproached for his change of views respecting tariffs, is said to have coolly remarked that when he advocated the shipping interest he represented a great commercial city; and when he afterwards advocated tariffs, he spoke as the representative of a manufacturing State,—a sophistical reply which showed that he was more desirous of popularity with his constituents than of being the advocate of abstract truth.

Calhoun advocated the new tariff as a means to advance the cotton interests of the South, and the defence of the country in

time of war. Thus neither of the great political leaders had in view national interests, but only sectional, except Clay, whose policy was more far-reaching. And here began his great career as a statesman. Before this he was rather a politician, greedy of popularity, and desirous to make friends.

The war of 1812 had, by shutting out foreign products, stimulated certain manufactures difficult to import, but necessary for military operations, like cheap clothing for soldiers, blankets, gunpowder, and certain other articles for general use, especially such as are made of iron. When the war closed and the ports opened, the country received a great inflow of British products. Hence the tariff of 1816, the earliest for protection, imposed a tax of about thirty-five per cent on articles for which the home industry was unable to supply the demand, and twenty per cent on coarse fabrics of cotton and wool, distilled spirits, and iron; while those industries which were in small demand were admitted free or paid a mere revenue tax. This tariff, substantially proposed by George M. Dallas, Secretary of the Treasury, was ably supported by Clay. But his mind was not yet fully opened to the magnitude and consequences of this measure,—his chief arguments being based on the safety of the country in time of war. In this movement he joined hands with Calhoun, one of his warmest friends, and one from whose greater logical genius he perhaps drew his conclusions.

At that time party lines were not distinctly drawn. The old Federalists had lost their prestige and power. The Republicans

were in a great majority; even John Quincy Adams and his friends swelled their ranks Jefferson had lost much of his interest in politics, and was cultivating his estates and building up the University of Virginia. Madison was anticipating the pleasures of private life, and Monroe, a plain, noncommittal man, the last of "the Virginia dynasty," thought only of following the footsteps of his illustrious predecessors, and living in peace with all men.

The next important movement in Congress was in reference to the charter of the newly proposed second United States Bank, and in this the great influence of Clay was felt. He was in favor of it, as a necessity, in view of the miserable state of the finances, the suspension of specie payments, and the multiplication of State banks. In the earlier part of his career, in 1811, he had opposed a recharter of Hamilton's National Bank as a dangerous money-corporation, and withal unconstitutional on the ground that the general government had no power to charter companies. All this was in accordance with Western democracy, ever jealous of the money-power, and the theorizing proclivities of Jefferson, who pretended to hate everything which was supported in the old country. But with advancing light and the experience of depreciated currency from the multiplication of State banks, Clay had changed his views, exposing himself to the charge of inconsistency; which, however, he met with engaging candor, claiming rather credit for his ability and willingness to see the change of public needs. He now therefore supported the bill of Calhoun, which created a national bank with a capital of

thirty-five million dollars, substantially such as was proposed by Hamilton. The charter was finally given in April, 1816, to run for twenty years.

Doubtless such a great money-corporation—great for those times—did wield a political influence, and it might have been better if the Bank had been chartered with a smaller capital. It would have created fewer enemies, and might have escaped the future wrath of General Jackson. Webster at first opposed the bill of Calhoun; but when it was afterwards seen that the Bank as created was an advantage to the country, he became one of its strongest supporters. Webster was strongly conservative by nature; but when anything was established, like Lord Thurlow he ceased all opposition, especially if it worked well.

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