

ant introduction to the sick lady. The medicine seemed to afford her relief, and as she was too ill to go upon deck and had no acquaintance on board except the captain, I used to relieve the tedium of the voyage by occasional conversation with her below. She had been long detained by sickness at St. John's, and through physicians and servants and nurses had become familiar with the private history of the people.

Seeing Pulaski's readiness in guessing the future of the young lady who left us at Halifax, I suggested to him that we might afford some amusement by gathering up materials and at some convenient time telling the fortunes of the passengers. My lady friend supplied most of

the incidents, while the count, whose tact and memory almost as wonderful as witchcraft, picked up the rest. Our performance succeeded so much beyond our expectations, and was complicated with so many personal exposures, that we really dared not confess the deception, and were compelled to leave our victims to go down to their graves in the delusion into which we had so wantonly led them. The count had no compunctions whatever, but for myself I must own that I found in the affair a new illustration

"How mirth can into folly glide,
And folly into sin,"

and have resorted to this confession as my only possible atonement.

Henry F. French.

TIMOTHY PICKERING.

TIMOTHY PICKERING held a high place among the federalists, — no slight honor in a party which in a long list of distinguished men could count the names of Washington, Hamilton, Marshall, and the elder Adams. As a public man and party leader he has strong claims upon the attention of posterity, yet hitherto his life and character have been but partially known and understood. In the presence of four ample volumes devoted to his biography, such a statement may seem strange; but if proof be needed of its correctness recent publications afford conclusive evidence. Mr. Octavius Pickering, the author of the first volume of his father's biography, died before he could complete the work he had so well begun. The unfinished task was then intrusted to the late Mr. Upham, and the three volumes written by him cover the most important events of Colonel Pickering's career. From a well-meant but wholly mistaken view of the nature and obligations of history, Mr. Upham has softened the personal and political

controversies in which Colonel Pickering was engaged, until they seem to be little more than mere speculative differences of opinion, and, not content with this historical peace-making, has gone even further, and passed over in silence the separatist movements in New England from 1804 to 1815. To write Colonel Pickering's biography in this way may have been good-natured, but it was singularly unjust to both reader and subject. Such treatment effaced the most interesting portion of Pickering's career, and omitted the very events in which his strongest qualities, of both mind and character, were most strikingly displayed. A perusal of Mr. Upham's volumes left the reader in that dissatisfied frame of mind which invariably arises from a consciousness that all has not been told. The material for the whole story fortunately existed, but it was hidden from the public eye among the Pickering MSS. in the possession of the Massachusetts Historical Society; and when a biography has been badly or insufficiently executed,

there is but little chance that it will ever be rewritten, or at least within any reasonable time. We can only hope to supply defects of this sort indirectly from other publications, as in the present case.¹ These additional letters fill the gaps in the biography, and we are now in a position to understand correctly and to appreciate justly the character and career of this distinguished party leader.

Timothy Pickering was a true descendant of the Puritans. He was a fit representative in the eighteenth century of the race which colonized New England in the seventeenth. His ancestors were numbered among those men who had wrung a livelihood from the rocky soil of Massachusetts and the wild seas of the North Atlantic. Surrounded by hardships, in conflict with man and nature, combating earth, air, and the savage with the same grim determination, crushing out domestic dissension with relentless severity, and stubbornly resisting foreign interference, the Puritans in America founded and built up a strong, well-ordered state. Here was worked out to the end the Puritan theory of government; here, and only here, Puritan Englishmen, for a century and a half, kept their race unmixed and their blood pure. The passage of years, the advance of civilization, modified and softened the character of the New England people, but their most marked qualities, moral and mental, remained unchanged.

In every way Timothy Pickering truly represented the race from which he sprang. His family was one of those which formed the strength of the New England population in 1776, and which, taking the tide of revolution at its flood, was borne on to power and place. Limited means, frugality, honesty, industry, order, were the essential facts in Pickering's surroundings during childhood; but narrow fortune could not deprive him of education, dear to the New Englander beyond any other endowment, and he passed with credit through

Harvard College. Returning from Cambridge to Salem, he soon displayed within the confined limits of a New England town the same qualities which he afterwards manifested on the broad field of national politics. Hardly released from college, he plunged at once into party strife, became an ardent whig, and assailed with all the zeal of a young reformer the defective militia system of the colony. Controversy soon followed. An article in the newspaper was wrongly attributed to him, and caused a sharp attack. Far from contenting himself with disclaiming the authorship thus thrust upon him, Pickering accepted the challenge and dashed into the fight. This served as a beginning. Soon after he engaged in a conflict about church matters, and after a brief interval in still another, produced by opposing medical theories. In this last affair Pickering assailed the obnoxious principles with both tongue and pen. He wrote a series of sharp, incisive articles, signing himself "A Lover of Truth," denounced the offending practitioner as a quack, and was threatened with a duel and with personal violence.

The day of Lexington which roused New England to arms saw Pickering hastening at the head of his regiment to the scene of action. He arrived too late to take part in the fighting, but in season to be present at a council of officers, and urge, though wholly unsupported, an immediate attack on the "Castle," the strongest position held by the British. The following year he recruited his regiment, and led it through Rhode Island and Connecticut to join Washington in New York. Scarcely had he returned from this campaign when Washington, whose quick eye had noted his executive capacity, offered him the position of adjutant-general. After some hesitation Pickering accepted this important post, and despite his misgivings rendered efficient service. The next step was to the place of quartermaster-general. The ablest officer in the American army had pronounced it a physical impossibility to carry on the duties of this position, and had relinquished it in disgust. This had

¹ *Documents relating to New England Federalism.* Edited by PROF. HENRY ADAMS. Boston: Little, Brown & Co. 1877.

no effect upon Pickering. He took the place, nothing daunted, and carried it through to the end. Entire success was impossible, but to execute in any way the duties of a quartermaster required energy, vigor, and administrative powers of a high and enduring kind. Here, then, Pickering remained, battling with inefficiency and disorder, with Congress, and with annoyances of every sort, until the close of the war. Peace found him richer in reputation, but as poor as ever in material wealth, and with a growing family to be provided for. A mercantile arrangement having turned out unprofitably, Pickering resolved to follow his natural inclination and take to the wild farming life of the frontier. Space forbids that we should trace out the Wyoming controversies, which are well depicted by Mr. Upham. This struggle among the borderers forms one of the dark chapters in the little-known history of the confederation. But the dangers and turbulence of Wyoming, sufficient in themselves to deter most men from even entering that region, seem to have been a prevailing reason with Pickering in the selection of his future home. To his combative and vigorous nature, filled with the love of order and the spirit of command, this scene of disturbance offered powerful attractions. Perhaps, half unconsciously, his main motives were a longing for the struggle and a belief that he could ride this frontier whirlwind and control the storm. It is certain that to his fearless courage and persistence the peace which finally settled down upon the beautiful and distracted valley was largely due. Throughout every difficulty Pickering sought with stern justice to coerce the insurgents, and at the same time to wrest from the state government the rights which they had withheld from the settlers.

After having supported the cause of the constitution in Pennsylvania, he was called from the wild scenes of Wyoming to the postmaster-generalship of the United States, which proved only a stepping-stone to higher things. On the dissolution of Washington's first cabinet, Pickering was offered and accepted

the secretaryship of war. He was a singular contrast to his predecessor, General Knox, the "handsome book-seller" of earlier days, who was still a fine-looking man, and not a little fond of parade. Knox had not only been a good secretary, but had shone with great lustre in the society of the capital, where he had dazzled the eyes of all beholders by his fine appearance and free style of living. To this rather splendid personage succeeded Pickering, and as he stands at the threshold of his career on the stage of national politics he is a hardly less striking figure than the retiring secretary, although in a very different way. Tall and rather gaunt, large in frame, strong of limb, and possessing a hardy constitution, Pickering was both a powerful and imposing looking man. The brush of Stuart has preserved to us his lineaments, and in them the genius of the artist has fitly represented the mental characteristics of their possessor. An eminently Roman face of a type not uncommon in New England looks out from the canvas. Decision, incisiveness, uncompromising vigor of character, strength, narrowness, and rigidity of mind, are the suggestions of the portrait. A marked simplicity pervades the whole figure. "The lank locks guiltless of pomatum," and the baldness undisguised by wig or powder, to which the colonel refers with pride and John Adams with sarcasm, are conspicuous. So, too, is soberness of dress, the effect of which was heightened in the original by the spectacles that near-sightedness rendered necessary. Stern republican simplicity seems to be the character to which Stuart's subject aspired. But the picture does not tell the whole story. Beneath this quiet exterior were hidden a reckless courage, an ardent ambition, and an unconquerable will.

Once seated in the cabinet, Pickering threw himself with his accustomed zeal into the contests by which the administration was surrounded. The famous struggle over the Jay treaty had just begun, and on this matter, as on most others, Pickering was free from doubt or questioning. He supported the treaty

and advised its signature, coupled with a strong remonstrance against the British provision order. In the discovery of Randolph's infidelity Pickering played a leading part, and to him fell the duty of disclosing to Washington the conduct of his friend and prime minister.

The fall of Randolph threw upon Pickering the temporary charge of both the state and war departments, and never were his untiring energy, persistence, and capacity for work so strongly shown. Unable to fill the secretaryship of state, Washington at last conferred it permanently upon Pickering, and made McHenry secretary of war. Pickering accepted this new position with unfeigned reluctance. Neither experience nor habit of mind fitted him for the place, but he would not desert Washington, and his invincible determination soon overcame every obstacle. He could not practice sufficiently the moderation required by the position, but he rapidly familiarized himself with foreign affairs, and his state papers are able and vigorous. He proved a far better secretary than Randolph, and if the style of his dispatches was inferior in polish to those of Jefferson, and his arguments were less ingenious, he surpassed the great Virginian in directness and strength.

The ratification of the Jay treaty was the signal for fresh difficulties with France. There is no evidence that Pickering entered the cabinet with any violent prejudices against the "great nation" or in favor of England. But as his knowledge of our foreign relations increased, as he perceived the uses which the opposition made of their affection for France, his feelings deepened and his hostility grew apace. In France he beheld the embodiment of the two principles hateful to him above all others, — anarchy and tyranny. He believed the French Revolution to be little less than a crusade against religion, property, organized society, and the ordered liberty which he prized more than life itself; while in the foe of France he saw a kindred people, a strongly governed state, and the sturdy, temperate freedom in whose principles he had been nur-

tured. Hatred of France rapidly extended to her American sympathizers, and strengthened his already firm conviction of the abandoned wickedness of his political opponents. For the gratification of these feelings there was ample opportunity given by the conduct of the French minister, and Pickering grappled with Adet in a manner most startling to a gentleman accustomed to the delicate manipulation of Edmund Randolph.

In the midst of our complications with France John Adams succeeded to the presidency, and retained Pickering as his secretary of state. If the outlook abroad was threatening, it was still more so at home, in regard to the party then dominant. The official head of the federalists had ceased to be their real leader. The mastering influence of Washington no longer held the diverse elements in check, or compelled all to yield to his wise guidance. John Adams was the official chief, and meant to be the real one as well. Hamilton was the actual head of the party, and had no notion of abdicating his controlling position. But there was a third leader, in the person of Timothy Pickering, whose importance during these eventful years has never been justly appreciated. The admirers of Hamilton see in Pickering nothing but an obedient disciple. The supporters of Adams regard him as the tool and mouth-piece of Hamilton. If we accept Mr. Upham's authority as conclusive, Pickering appears as little more than a conscientious performer of his official duties who had the misfortune to differ slightly with his chief. All these conceptions are alike erroneous. It is true that Hamilton alone, almost, among men received the utmost admiration and respect of which Pickering was capable. It is also true that Pickering sought Hamilton's advice, and that their views generally coincided. But Pickering was not the obedient disciple nor the willing tool of any man; still less was he the simple secretary absorbed in the duties of his office. He had his own opinions and his own policy, and he sought to carry them out as seemed best in his own eyes. He was, too, an active poli-

tician, and headed the attack on Adams long before Hamilton took the field. He had not the slightest hesitation in opposing Hamilton, he acted constantly without his guidance, he sought in his own way to control the course of the administration, and more than any other man he precipitated the conflict which resulted in the downfall of Adams and the ruin of the federalist party. The merest outline of the contentions in the cabinet is sufficient to prove this.

At a very early period Hamilton foresaw the necessity of a special mission to France, and urged its adoption by Washington. Pickering, aided by Wolcott, opposed it steadfastly, and kept it off during the closing weeks of Washington's administration, and it was only when Adams threw his weight into the same scale with Hamilton that Pickering gave way. Even then he and Wolcott were strong enough to prevent any further advances to Madison, who had been the central figure in Hamilton's scheme. After the dispatch of the first envoys all went well for a time. The course of France, the insults of Talleyrand, and the publication of the X. Y. Z. letters roused a cry of rage throughout the land. Adams took the lead in his message, the country rallied enthusiastically to his support, Pickering gave free rein in his report to his hatred of the French, and all the federalist chiefs came forward to aid the president. But this ardent union carried the seeds of destruction, and the vigorous measures so unanimously urged by the federalists were themselves the cause of divisions. The unlooked-for danger came from the appointments in the provisional army. In this matter Pickering looked to Hamilton as the proper person for command, and on the nomination of Washington lost no time in urging Hamilton's claim for the second place. A contest, in which Pickering took the lead, ensued as to the relative rank of the major-generals. In this his first struggle with Adams he had every advantage, while his opponent put himself wholly in the wrong. Jealous of Hamilton's influence, disliking Washington's selection of him for the

second place, Adams, in his eagerness to escape from what he considered one intrigue, fell a victim to another. He listened too readily to the representations of a little knot of federalists, like himself unfriendly to Hamilton, and on perfectly untenable grounds determined to give the first place to Knox. Hamilton was ready to yield precedence in deference to the wishes of Washington, but he would not give way to those of Adams. As soon as the president's views became known, Pickering, as well as Wolcott and McHenry, made every effort to change them. Pickering roused his friends in New England to exert their influence with the president against the proposed change, and Adams, sensible of the pressure, hardened himself to resistance. But Pickering had still one card left, and he played it unhesitatingly. An appeal was made to Washington, whose wishes no man cared to dispute, and which, expressed in unmistakable terms, forced the president to give way. The victory at this stage remained with the cabinet; and in the mean time another of less moment had been achieved by Pickering, unaided and alone. The president very unwisely nominated his son-in-law, Colonel Smith, for the responsible position of adjutant-general. Unable to prevent this nomination, which he deemed a most unfit one, Pickering posted down to the senate chamber, to urge upon his friends there the necessity of its rejection. The precaution was superfluous, as Smith was thrown out by a large majority; but the incident was not lost upon the president, who attributed this defeat, as he did everything of a hostile nature, to Hamilton, who had nothing to do with it, and at the same time was much inflamed against Pickering. Another difference soon arose, and still further estranged the president and his first secretary. Elbridge Gerry was warmly attached to Mr. Adams, and sincerely admired him. It is not in human nature to feel otherwise than kindly to those who cherish such feelings toward us. Their very existence is a subtle flattery and a demand upon our gratitude to which we cannot but yield, even if the giver be a dog or a

horse. John Adams was no exception to this universal rule, and he not only reciprocated Gerry's affection, but he seems also to have been convinced that Gerry was a man of great and varied talents. Pickering, on the contrary, in common with all the leading federalists, believed Gerry to be a man of slender ability and feeble character. This belief was confirmed by Gerry's conduct in Paris, and dislike was fostered by the share which he was supposed to have taken in behalf of Knox in the matter of the army appointments. Pickering wrote to George Cabot, "He [the president] will be convinced of Gerry's disgraceful pusillanimity, weakness, duplicity, and, I think, treachery." Of course the president was convinced of nothing of the sort, and although his confidence in his favorite was so far shaken that he permitted a moderate censure of his conduct in the first official reports, it rapidly revived as the quarrel with his cabinet progressed. From the same cause Pickering's dislike of Gerry increased in an equal proportion. If Adams and Pickering could have been content with the reproof already administered, and not sought the one to defend and the other to reprobate the unlucky envoy, all might have gone well. But neither was of this mind. Pickering, in the interests of what he deemed truth and sound policy, was bent on further censures, while Adams, irritated at what he thought unnecessary severity, proposed to put Gerry on the same footing as Marshall and Pinckney. The president considered the secretary to be influenced only by personal malice against both himself and his friend; the secretary saw in the president's course merely an insane affection for an unworthy man whom he desired to screen at the expense of his wiser and more virtuous colleagues. So Pickering drafted reports bristling with the severest reflections on Gerry, which the president either modified or struck out, and each was filled with intense indignation against the other.

At last the quarrel came to a head, and the strife which had long been smoldering now broke out unrestrained. The

president took the decisive step by appointing a new minister to France without previous consultation with his cabinet. For good and sufficient reasons Mr. Adams was convinced that there was still opportunity for an honorable treaty with France, and there was therefore no doubt that he ought, for the sake of the best interests of his country, to make peace. He erred profoundly in not consulting his cabinet, even though he was assured of their united opposition, and in attaining a great end he gave a fatal blow to his party by his mistaken methods. To Pickering and all the war federalists the whole business appeared simply criminal. They saw in it nothing but dishonor to their country and ruin to their party. So completely blinded were they to the true state of the case that they entirely failed to perceive that, if they were united, peace as well as war might be their salvation. Yet they felt themselves to be helpless, and the utmost they could effect was to send three commissioners instead of one. With this tameness Pickering was dissatisfied. Could he have had his way, he would have brought in the senate to control the president and reject the nominations on the ground that negotiation was inexpedient. But now, as in the near future, Pickering found no one ready to proceed to the extremities for which he was himself prepared. The federalists could not abandon the constitutional principle which they had themselves laid down as to the independence of the executive. But though fettered in action, Pickering gave vent to fierce denunciations of the president's course in letters to his friends in Massachusetts. These denunciations soon got abroad. The president, or some of his immediate circle, retorted with the cry of "British faction." The quarrel soon got beyond the possibility of disguise; the federalist nomination had been made, the New York elections had occurred, party safety no longer seemed to demand an appearance of harmony, and Adams turned Pickering out of the cabinet, the latter — with characteristic stubbornness — having refused to resign. The case is suffi-

ciently simple, yet Mr. Upham has dwelt upon the friendship between the president and his first minister until Pickering's expulsion becomes almost inexplicable. In reality, the only wonder is that they did not come to blows long before. There can be no doubt that if Adams had forced Pickering out at the first indication of a settled opposition, and of one which he could not control, he would have acted wisely. As it was, the cabinet engaged in desperate warfare with the president, each faction found its supporters, and the whole party was torn to pieces. Pickering was not in the least dejected by his overthrow, for depression at defeat was at all times unknown to his strong nature. He merely fell back and renewed the conflict with increased vigor. His first idea at this moment was the political destruction of the president, whom he now believed to have gone over to the democrats. He felt sure that party safety could not be secured except by the overthrow of Adams and the election of Pinckney, but he did not see that this plan, wise perhaps in the beginning, had been rendered impossible by the action of the party in their nomination. Further attacks could only make a bad matter worse. But Pickering never balanced advantages, and he now addressed a series of letters to all the leading federalists on the subject of his dismissal, portraying the president's conduct in language which is remarkable for its unrestrained and vigorous invective, while the writer's peculiar attention to the most minute facts and exact details is nowhere so strikingly shown. These letters were in fact elaborate and picturesque indictments of the president, varying somewhat to suit the prejudices of the recipient. The opening sentence of the letter to Pinckney, Pickering's candidate for the presidency, is perhaps the most concise expression of the writer's emotions at this time:—

“Indignation and disgust, — these are and long have been my feelings towards Mr. Adams: disgust at his intolerable vanity; indignation for the disgrace and mischief which his conduct has brought on the cause of federalism and the coun-

try. When I say ‘long have been,’ I mean for near two years past, when I began to know him. In ascribing to Mr. Adams ‘upright views,’ I refer to public measures in general. If you were to scan his actions minutely, you would find them influenced by selfishness, ambition, and revenge; that his heart is cankered with envy, and deficient in sincerity; that he is blind, stone blind, to his own faults and failings, and incapable of discerning the vices and defects of all his family connections. Hence his insatiable desire to provide in public offices for himself and them, and his injurious treatment of those who have opposed his wishes. Of this number I have the honor to be one.”

In one of these letters, written with no other objects than to vindicate himself and save the party from the leadership of Adams, Pickering says, “You know that I have not the talent to lead a party, while you will allow me such a share of common sense as must guard me against the miserable ambition and folly of attempting it.” His humility, he says further, would have alone prevented him from trying to control the administration of government, and the charge that he did make such an effort was the offspring of jealousy which he pitied and despised. Pickering was not a man who ever disguised his feelings, and his denial of a wish to lead a party or control the government was undoubtedly a matter of conscientious belief. His state of mind is a curious example of the Puritan habit of absorption in a cause. So firmly did Pickering believe that he was right that he conceived there could be no honest difference of opinion, and he was thoroughly convinced that all he had done was solely in behalf of abstract truth, where neither personal interests nor opinions entered. To him the conflict did not appear as a conflict between opposing views, for both of which there was something to be said. Victory to him was not party victory, but a triumph of the principles of immutable justice. Defeat was not party defeat, but an overthrow of the powers of light by the powers of darkness. To

him the maxim that there are two sides to every question seemed an insult to the understanding. There was right and wrong, and the eternal battle between them; there could be nothing else. His mental attitude was that of the Puritan of the seventeenth century, who regarded everything he did as done for the service of God, in which no mere personal feelings or individual interests had part. But the Puritan who seemed to himself only the poor instrument of a higher will stood before the world as a stern fanatic, a bold soldier, a wise statesman and man of action. So Pickering, satisfied in his inmost soul that he was but the servant of truth, the defender of right, who was too wise to aspire to party leadership and too humble to seek control of the government, appeared to his fellow-men an ambitious and capable politician, an uncompromising partisan, an unflinching friend, and a relentless foe. From him Adams met the most determined resistance, and his attacks had deeply injured the party long before Hamilton, in his famous pamphlet, dealt the final blow at union and mutual confidence.

The dissolution of the cabinet was but the prelude to the downfall of the federalists, and once more Pickering found himself deprived of public office and almost destitute of private property. In his own words, "Though ashamed to beg he was able and willing to dig." So he again turned his face toward the unsettled lands of the West, and with cheerful courage prepared to return to the wilderness. The delicate generosity of his personal and political friends saved him from this fate, and he came back to Massachusetts, destined never more to leave his native State. He was soon called, however, from his farm to represent Massachusetts in the senate of the United States.

When Colonel Pickering reëntered public life, he found the political world something very different from what it had been in the days when as secretary of state he had helped to shape the policy of the nation. The federalists in the senate were so few in number as hardly to deserve the name of a minority. They

were conspicuous for ability and determined purpose, but they were politically helpless. The Louisiana purchase had just been consummated. Jefferson's stealthy removals from office looked like the political proscription so unhappily familiar to this generation, the dominant party was growing rapidly even in New England, and the constitutional amendment in regard to the manner of casting the electoral vote seemed calculated to insure the democratic tenure of power. Worst of all, the courts, — the last federalist strongholds, the only remaining bulwarks of good government, — were, as Pickering believed, menaced with destruction. There can be no doubt that the more violent democrats aimed at a complete subversion of the judiciary, and here, certainly, the federalists had good reason for alarm. Yet there seemed no prospect of successful resistance to measures fraught with such dreadful consequences.

To Pickering, Louisiana meant only an indefinite extension of slave-holding territory, and the consequent political extinction of New England. Offices had become in his eyes nothing but a means of corruption, contrived, like the constitutional amendment, to give permanency to the rule of Jefferson. The judiciary, that last protection of life, property, and order, seemed to be crumbling beneath the blows of its assailant. From this torrent of evils there was apparently no escape. But while Pickering fully believed ruin to be approaching, he was not for an instant cast down. His courage rose with the emergency. In the rights of States there was still one weapon for an oppressed minority. To these Pickering and some of his associates turned as the last but certain remedy. They regarded secession as the final expedient, but nevertheless as a perfectly natural one; and this, it must be remembered, was then the universal belief. The Union was new, was an experiment; the state governments were old and well tried. The only question was whether the experiment had permanently failed. If this question was answered in the affirmative, then secession became not only

a right but a duty. To Pickering the case was clear: the Union was a failure. His party, his State, and his principles were about to be effaced, and there was no assurance that liberty, property, and even life itself would not soon be sacrificed in deference to the wishes of the rabble. A few of his own sentences bring his opinions vividly before us, and show us the man, full of courage and determination, a leader among those who stood ready to tread the dangerous pathway of disunion. To Cabot he says: "Mr. Jefferson's plan of destruction has been gradually advancing. If at once he had removed from office all the federalists, and given to the people such substitutes as we generally see, even his followers (I mean the mass) would have been shocked. He is still making progress in the same course; and he has the credit of being the real source of all the innovations which threaten the subversion of the constitution, and the prostration of every barrier erected by it for the protection of the *best*, and therefore to him the most obnoxious, part of the community. His instruments manifest tempers so malignant, so inexorable, as convince observing federalists that the mild manners and habits of our countrymen are the only security against their extreme vengeance. How long we shall enjoy even this security, God only knows. And must we with folded hands wait the result, or timely think of other protection? This is a delicate subject. The principles of our Revolution point to the remedy, — a separation. . . . The people of the East cannot reconcile their habits, views, and interests with those of the South and West. The latter are beginning to rule with a rod of iron. The independence of the judges is now directly assailed, and the majority are either so blind or so well trained that it will most undoubtedly be destroyed. New judges, of characters and tempers suited to the object, will be the selected ministers of vengeance. I am not willing to be sacrificed by such popular tyrants. My life is not worth much; but if it must be offered up, let it rather be in the hope of obtaining a more stable government,

under which my children, at least, may enjoy freedom with security."

Pickering saw in Jefferson a fit leader for a party which sought to establish the supremacy of the rabble. He writes to Rufus King: "The cowardly wretch at their head, while, like a Parisian revolutionary monster, prating about humanity, would feel an infernal pleasure in the utter destruction of his opponents. We have too long witnessed his general turpitude, his cruel removals of faithful officers, and the substitution of corruption and looseness for integrity and worth."

In the same strain he wrote to Theodore Lyman: "Under such a man, and with the means he possesses and can command, corruption will continue to make rapid progress, all power will be thrown into the hands of his party in all the States, and the federalists will curse the day which detached them from the milder government of the mother country.

"Such is the fate which awaits us, and we shall live to see it; yes, the next presidential term will not elapse before what is now anticipated will be verified. One or two Marats or Robespierres in each branch of the legislature, with half a dozen hardened wretches ready to cooperate, a greater number of half-moderates, another portion of gaping expectants of office, another of the ignorant and undiscerning, with the many timid characters, will constitute a large majority, up to any measure which the revenge, the malice, the ambition, or rapacity of the leaders shall propose. It will be enough, to render every such measure popular, to declare its object to be to crush aristocracy and monarchy, and to secure liberty and republicanism.

"And are our good citizens so devoted to their private pursuits that they will not allow themselves time to look up and see the gathering cloud? Will nothing rouse them but its thunder, or strike their eyes save the lightning bursting from its bosom?"

But Pickering and his associates in Congress utterly failed to catch the drift of public sentiment. The mists

which hung over the Potomac then as now very often prevented politicians from beholding the country at large, or at best presented an image wholly distorted and false to its original. The people of the United States were gratified by the Louisiana purchase, and the other dangers, so enormous in the eyes of the federalist senators, did not impress the popular imagination. But the advocates of secession were soon undeceived. If they lacked the unerring instinct, the keen perception of the popular feeling which had enabled Jefferson, in 1799, successfully to formulate and publish the doctrine of nullification, others possessed it, in a degree at least. When they applied for support and assistance to their party allies at home, some told them that separation was undesirable and unjustifiable, while others, admitting its probability in the future, dissuaded any movement in the present. All alike refused aid or encouragement, and the death of Hamilton destroyed even the prospect of discussing the project.

Thus ended the federalist scheme to dissolve the Union in 1804. The reëlection of Jefferson followed hard upon it, and the next year, marked by signs of decay in the old parties, was the most gloomy period of Pickering's career. He seemed to be threatened with a general desertion, and though he would have gone on unflinchingly in his opposition to Jefferson even if he had been the only opponent of the administration in the country, the idea filled him with sadness. When William Plumer, of New Hampshire, left the fast-thinning ranks of the federalists, Pickering's bitterness knew no bounds. He says he is not surprised; that he has long thought Plumer entitled to no confidence; that Plumer is fitted by religion and moral principles to be Jefferson's helper, and has been known to say that he considered "John Randolph an honest man." Worst of all, Plumer had censured a democrat for telling too freely his party secrets. "This single sentiment," says the old Lover of Truth, "is enough by itself to seal a man's damnation." But the days of the

federalists were not yet over. The death struggle between France and England again involved the interests of the whole civilized world. The timorous policy of Jefferson, built upon unsound theories and dictated by what was supposed to be the popular wish, gave a great opening to the federalists. They failed to grasp their opportunity and rise to national success, but they united New England against the administration. Into the bitter contest caused by the Embargo Pickering flung himself, heart and soul. An old belief, laid aside for a time, once more took possession of his mind. Jefferson was the tool of France; France was the universal spoiler and tyrant, England the defender of liberty and society. The duty of every right-thinking and God-fearing man was plain. He must side with England and resist to the death Napoleon Bonaparte and his minion Thomas Jefferson. But Pickering did not abandon the creed of 1804. He still clung to the text of the federalist preacher, which was often in his own mouth: "Come out therefore from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you and be a father to you: ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Almighty." The uncleanness of the democrats, always extreme, was now increased tenfold by their affection for France and their hostility to England. Their restrictive measures were tyranny. "How are the powers," asked Pickering of Christopher Gore, "reserved to the States respectively, or to the people, to be maintained, but by the respective States judging for themselves, and putting their negative on the usurpations of the general government?" The same spirit breathes in the famous Embargo letter addressed by Pickering to Governor Sullivan, and read by men of all parties throughout the land, and by the leaders in Europe as well. The governor was no match for the champion who had assailed him, but there were others more equal to the contest. John Quincy Adams took up the gauntlet which Pickering had thrown down, and replied to his letter with unsparing vigor. But noth-

ing could stay Pickering at this moment, — perhaps the happiest of his life. In the thick of a desperate contest, in a hopeless minority, with the eyes of the nation fixed on him, the unquestioned leader of his party in public life, the acknowledged defender of principles which he felt to be sacred, Pickering displayed all the strongest qualities of his powerful nature, and although we may deem them misapplied we cannot withhold our admiration from their possessor. Again Pickering was destined to disappointment. He had the popular feeling in New England on his side this time, but the party leaders, much as they delighted in his fighting qualities, were not prepared for his extreme measure. They would not abandon the opportunity of national success afforded in the Embargo by any plans for disunion. Pickering, too, had his eye on the nation as well as on the State, but the coalition with Northern democrats which he aimed at broke down, and the federalists failed at every point. They forced the repeal of the Embargo, and embittered by defeat the last hours of Jefferson's public life; but that was all.

The next election deprived Pickering of his seat in the senate, but he was in the house of representatives shortly after the outbreak of the war with England. He believed the time had again come for a decided movement, yet the Eastern States still hung back. The progress of the war, however, brought angry quarrels between New England and the general government. They refused to assist each other, and 1814 found the Eastern coasts exposed to devastation, and the Eastern people worn and impoverished by the sufferings of war. At last came the call for the Hartford convention. Pickering, who had unceasingly urged strong measures on the Massachusetts legislature, felt that the decisive moment was at hand, and he sent elaborate letters to his correspondents, pointing out the proper course to be pursued by the convention. He saw that a general dissolution was setting in, and he had no doubt that the British expedition to New Orleans would

result in the severance of the Western States, an event which he believed to be for the best interests of the country. Decisive action by New England at such a moment might result, not in a Northern confederacy, but in a union of the "good old thirteen States," dominated and controlled by New England principles. The Hartford convention met and did its work, not at all in Pickering's spirit, but quite to his satisfaction, for he felt that it was an irrevocable step, and the beginning of a movement which subsequent events would determine.

But even while Pickering was speculating about the future and dreaming of the downfall of the backwoods democracy, news came of the Treaty of Ghent, and then, with scarcely a breathing space, of the battle of New Orleans. All was over. The bitter struggle of the past fifteen years was at an end, and a new political era had begun. It must have been to Pickering a cruel disappointment. The hope of coercing the South, of building up anew the power of New England, was destroyed, and whatever personal ambition he may then have had was blasted. He saw it all at a glance, but we can only conjecture the bitterness of his feelings, for he gave no sign. However much he may have repined, no one knew of it. Useless lamentation was not in his nature, and he had, besides, the consolation of seeing all the federalist methods of government adopted by the new war democracy. We must not, therefore, overrate his disappointment, for, ardently as Pickering had worked for a separation, he did not regard it as a good in itself, but merely as a means to an end, as the last resort to rectify bad government and establish the reign of the best political principles. In other words, he desired the supremacy of New England, and he believed that by separation he could coerce the other States into submission to New England principles, or else that a Northern confederacy would be formed in which New England would be master. The establishment of the methods in government which he cherished, and the downfall of Napoleon whom he abhorred,

were sources of great and enduring satisfaction. He did not grieve for the unattainable, nor despair because the government was that of a pure democracy. He refused a reelection to Congress, withdrew to his Essex farm, and, laying aside his weapons, relapsed into a cheerful contentment and the enjoyment of his favorite pursuit of agriculture.

Yet he could not wholly abstain from politics. When, in after years, the old controversies were in any way revived, his spirits rose, and the attraction of the battle was irresistible. The most conspicuous instance of this sort was occasioned by the publication of the "Cunningham correspondence." These letters were given to the public through a most infamous breach of confidence, in order to serve party malice and raise the feeling in Massachusetts against John Quincy Adams, then a candidate for the presidency. William Cunningham had insinuated himself into the friendship of John Adams, and had succeeded in drawing from him a series of letters covering many years and relating chiefly to the agitated period of the last federalist administration. These were the papers which Cunningham's son now gave to the world, and they answered his purpose to the extent of angering the surviving federalists, of awakening old and bitter memories, and of bringing Pickering once more into the field of political controversy. In these letters, John Adams, trusting in the seal of secrecy which he had imposed, had poured forth, with his customary impetuosity, all his hatred of his federalist opponents. He not merely attacked his old enemies, but he made charges of all sorts against them, — some, no doubt, well founded, but others, too, which had no support except worn-out and exaggerated scandal. These assaults carried Pickering back a quarter of a century, and he promptly took down his armor and prepared to fight his battles over again with the same unquenchable vigor, the same *gaudium certaminis*, as in 1799. John Adams's rather vague accusations and loosely worded version of past events, though natural enough in an intimate and strict-

ly private correspondence, were poor material for public warfare. They offered no resistance to Pickering's carefully planned attack. Fortified with documents, and with all his usual attention to details, Pickering reviewed, or rather tore to pieces, the Cunningham letters. His powers of invective were still undiminished, and the sharp, incisive language in which he assailed Mr. Adams shows no abatement in his warlike strength, and no flickering in the fierce flame of party hostility. His pamphlet would have been remarkable for any man, but as the work of one verging upon eighty it is a marvelous production. The bodily and mental fibre which made Pickering capable of such an effort must have been tough indeed. But Pickering's resentments were interwoven with his most deeply-rooted principles, were part of his very being, and could cease only with life itself. Shortly before his death he was invited by Mr. Thorndike, of Beverly, to dine with him in company with John Quincy Adams, at that time president of the United States. Pickering's hostility was never of the kind which leads men to shun meeting their opponents. His consistent theory was that in attacking a man's character and principles he was not actuated by any personal feelings, and he would have deemed it in some sort cowardly to manifest any objection to sitting at the same table with an adversary. In this particular instance he regarded Mr. Adams as an apostate, and there exists among his papers a vigorous definition of the crime of apostacy, clearly intended to cover Mr. Adams's case. Pickering, however, did not desire his host to imagine that because he consented to dine with the president he had on any point changed his views as to the character of that eminent person. Silence in such a case seemed, therefore, to savor of deception, and he accordingly addressed to Mr. Thorndike the following note:—

SALEM, September 19, 1827.

DEAR SIR, — I intended to visit Wenham to-day with my wife, and on our

return to call to see you and Mrs. Thordike; but the rain preventing, I am by this note to acknowledge the receipt of your invitation to dinner next Wednesday, "to meet President Adams." On the supposition that I should need some *preparation* for the meeting, this notice was kindly intended; but I needed none. Whenever I should meet Mr. Adams I should be civil; certainly so when meeting as guests at the hospitable table of a friend. But knowing, as I do, his whole political career,—the slanderer of AMES and CABOT, and an apostate from the federal principles which I have always held in common with those eminent citizens and other unchanging patriots,—it is impossible for me to *respect* him. It was his *apostacy* which gained him the high object of his selfish ambition, the presidency of the United States.

I accept with pleasure your invitation to dinner. Very respectfully,

T. PICKERING.

HON. ISRAEL THORNDIKE, *Beverly.*

Shortly after this meeting came the presidential election. The extinction of the federalists had made it possible for Pickering to regard the existing parties with some degree of indifference, and though it must have cost the old man an effort to support a candidate put forward by the legitimate political successors of Jefferson, yet personal feelings prevailed. Andrew Jackson had been always an open enemy, but his opponent was John Quincy Adams, the renegade federalist and the son of John Adams. Pickering could not resist the temptation. For the last time he entered the field of politics to oppose Adams and advocate the election of Jackson. His vigorous articles showed little relaxation of the old energy of purpose and the old strength of conviction. But this was the final effort. Before Jackson was inaugurated, before Adams had returned to private life to answer once more, if he had so desired, his ancient and unforgiving foe, Pickering died. The last sounds that reached his ear from the battle-field of politics announced the defeat

of his enemy, and the grave closed over him before that enemy could retaliate. The last blow had been struck, the last word said, in the long strife of twenty-five years, by the strong old warrior, whose spirit nearly ninety years had failed to tame.

We have tried to outline briefly this remarkable career, dwelling chiefly on those events which have the deepest personal and historical significance, and which his biographer saw fit to pass over in silence. Apart, however, from its purely historic value, the story of Colonel Pickering's life reveals a character fruitful in interest to every student of human nature. The predominant qualities were strong, direct, and simple, yet we are occasionally met by contradictions so glaring that they upset every calculation and seem to paralyze analysis. The character of Timothy Pickering cannot be thoroughly appreciated without a constant recurrence to the marked and peculiar qualities, mental and moral, of the Puritan race from which he sprang and of which he was a type. The Puritan who took arms against Charles I. was a man absorbed in the great thought of religion. All other objects were to be attained merely as means to the one great end,—the establishment of the kingdom of Christ by his chosen people. This religious fervor slowly abated, but the principle of utter devotion to a great cause was too deeply branded in their nature to be soon effaced. This quality has been conspicuous among the descendants of the Puritans; it has led to their greatest glories, and in like manner it has been the source of some of their most grievous errors. In it can be found the key to the characters of some of the most remarkable men in our history. This, as well as other less unusual traits of the Puritan character, was possessed in a marked degree by Colonel Pickering.

He was a man of the most reckless courage, physical as well as moral, and there was nothing which so strongly moved his contempt as wavering or hesitation. It was this which caused his strong distrust of Harrison Gray Otis, "whose capital defect was timidity."

Hardly less remarkable was his confidence in himself, his principles, and his beliefs. The idea that he might be in the wrong never finds the slightest acknowledgment in his letters or speeches. On one or two occasions he was not without misgivings as to his ability to perform some trying duty, or fill some high office, but no shadow of doubt ever fell upon him as to his opinions when they had once been formed. When he had settled in his own mind what was right, he pursued it undeviatingly and without the slightest trace of hesitation. Mr. Upham says that Pickering was not prejudiced. A more extraordinary estimate of character it would be difficult to find. Pickering's prejudices, and his unswerving adherence to them at all times and seasons, were one great secret of his success. And this is merely the statement of a general truth. The majority of successful men are the men of intense prejudices and intense convictions. They may not be of so high a type as the broad and liberal-minded men, but they attain the greatest measure of immediate and practical success. They appeal most strongly to the sympathies and passions of their fellow-men; for to the mass of humanity liberality is apt to look like indifferentism, and independence like unreliable eccentricity. Utter and whole-souled belief in themselves and their cause was the grandest feature in the character of the Puritans. Yet this belief is but prejudice in its highest form, and of strong prejudices in all forms Pickering was an exponent. This assured confidence in his own principles and motives explains also the somewhat strange nature of his personal enmities. When we read his fierce denunciations of the elder Adams, and then find him saying that "he had no resentment toward Mr. Adams," the contradiction seems hopeless, for Pickering never used words to conceal thought. The fact is that his hostility, although directed comprehensively against Mr. Adams's actions, opinions, and character, was not dictated by any small feelings of jealousy, revenge, or personal spite and ill-will. To Pickering everything resolved itself

into the strife between good and evil. As the champion of the former, he felt it to be his duty, as he said to Lowell, "in this wicked world, though he could not restore it to innocence, to strive to prevent its growing worse;" and he had no patience with the good-humored cynicism of his friend George Cabot, when the latter said, "Why can't you and I let the world ruin itself in its own way?" Such speeches sank deep into Pickering's mind, and he never thought of them without sorrow. This unconquerable belief in the justice of one's cause sometimes leads to a subjection of means to ends, a danger from which Pickering did not wholly escape. Confidence in his own rectitude was the prevailing reason for his love of plain statements, amounting at times to an almost brutal frankness. But he felt himself to be the defender not merely of the right in general, but of truth and honesty in particular. On these last qualities he justly prided himself; but here, as in all cases, the strength of his conviction led him to extremes. So wholly did he desire the *fortiter in re* that in public life, at least, he generally sacrificed the *suaviter in modo*.

In one important particular Pickering differed widely from those political and personal friends with whom he was most closely allied. They were, as a rule, genuine aristocrats in feeling, while Pickering was at bottom a democrat. He had a profound contempt not merely for such trappings as heraldic bearings, but for any distinctions which he conceived to be in the least artificial or based on aught but the qualities and services of the individual man. Yet he was not wanting in caste feeling of another sort. He had all the pride of the Puritan who gloried in belonging to the chosen people of God. Within certain limits Pickering was a democrat, pure and simple, but he looked upon all who stood beyond the pale very much as the Greek regarded the barbarian. This peculiarity is curiously manifested in his religious belief, for while he never for a moment doubted his own security of a blessed immortality, he conceived that but few of

his fellow-men would share in this future felicity. In condoling with a friend upon the loss of a son, he says: "But we do not grieve as those who have no hope. We look forward to a brighter and a happier world, where sorrow shall cease, and where all tears shall be wiped from our eyes. How blest are they who entertain such hopes! How wretched those, like numbers round me here (Washington in 1804), whose views extend not beyond the grave, and whose best refuge is annihilation!" In the same way he exhibits the most intense local pride and the strongest affection for his birth-place: "Not that every part of the Union is alike to me," he says; "my affections still flow in what you will deem their natural order, — toward Salem, Massachusetts, New England, the Union at large." Again he says, "Such events would not have happened in New England. I rejoice that I can call *that* my country. I think myself honored by it." Pickering's theory of society was the ideal New England democracy, where all the chosen race were alike before Heaven and before man, but where virtue and ability received unhesitating deference and maintained an unquestioned leadership.

Pickering's aversion to aristocracy in the ordinary sense of the word, and his hatred of shams and false pretenses, carried him far in devotion to the *nil admirari* principle. "How little virtue," he says, "is there among mankind! How small the number whose actions are not dictated by their interest or passions!" No man was stauncher or truer to his friends, but he never permitted affection to blind him to their faults. With the single exception, perhaps, of John Adams, Pickering was the only federalist who had a moderate estimate of Washington's abilities, and of this opinion he made no secret. He respected Washington's character, and he even felt awed by the grandeur of Washington's personal presence, but he could not understand him, nor could he perceive in their full extent those great qualities of mind and heart before which men of all nations have bowed in reverence. The only man whom he

thoroughly admired was Hamilton. The clear, penetrating intellect, commanding will, unhesitating decision, and indomitable energy of that great man appealed most strongly to Pickering. To Hamilton he yielded an admiration and respect which he withheld from all others, but even here he would never sacrifice his own opinion.

If Pickering was true to his friendships, he was no less faithful to his enmities, performing in both respects what he believed to be his duty. He was always collecting evidence on every point, no matter how trifling, which might aid in the exposure of his opponents to the world in their real characters, and thus benefit the country and illumine dark places for the people with the light of truth. With this view he gathered a vast quantity of material, a small portion of which he used in his political controversies, but which was intended in the main for memoirs of his contemporaries. These memoirs in a rough state are preserved among his manuscripts, and would furnish a most entertaining and valuable book if fully published.

Such are some of the more uncommon traits in this remarkable character. Other attributes, such as his industry, energy, untiring persistence, and capacity of work, are apparent in every page of his biography. In Timothy Pickering the defects as well as the virtues were positive and strongly marked. There was nothing negative, doubtful, or colorless in his composition. The same was true of his mind. His intellect was strong, active, and full of vitality and force, but essentially narrow. Within certain limits his mental vision was wonderfully clear and acute, but outside those limits he saw nothing. He was not *homo unius libri*, for in many fields of human thought he showed an equal capacity and strength. But in all alike he worked within certain well-defined and immutable bounds, beyond which he never passed. He did not belong to that small class of far-sighted statesmen who build for unborn generations and weigh the most remote effects of their actions. Pickering rarely looked into the future

at all, but he saw the present with wonderful distinctness, and dealt with it as he found it, untroubled with misgivings as to what was to come after.

But when all is said, when analysis has done its work and posterity pronounced its unimpassioned verdict, we still come back to the stern conviction, the unchanging will, the unflinching courage of the man with an increased measure of admiration and sympathy.

No doubt Timothy Pickering made many mistakes, and in some instances acted wrongly and unwisely, but throughout his life he was imbued to the full with the spirit of the great Puritan captain, when among the mists of Dunbar he cried out, "Let God arise; let his enemies be scattered." This spirit, with all its shortcomings, is one the world cannot afford to lose, or men of English race forget.

Henry Cabot Lodge.

CLOSING CHORDS.

I.

Death's Eloquence.

WHEN I shall go
 Into the narrow home that leaves
 No room for wringing of the hands and hair,
 And feel the pressing of the walls which bear
 The heavy sod upon my heart that grieves,
 (As the weird earth rolls on),
 Then I shall know
 What is the power of destiny. But still,
 Still while my life, however sad, be mine,
 I war with memory, striving to divine
 Phantom to-morrows, to outrun the past;
 For yet the tears of final, absolute ill
 And ruinous knowledge of my fate I shun.
 Even as the frail, instinctive weed
 Tries, through unending shade, to reach at last
 A shining, mellowing, rapture-giving sun;
 So in the deed of breathing joy's warm breath,
 Fain to succeed,
 I, too, in colorless longings, hope till death.

II.

Peace.

AN angel spoke with me, and lo, he hoarded
 My falling tears to cheer a flower's face!
 For, so it seems, in all the heavenly space
 A wasted grief was never yet recorded.