

**A FAMILIAR EPISTLE TO
ROBERT J. WALKER, FROM
AN OLD ACQUAINTANCE**

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A Familiar Epistle to Robert J. Walker, from an old acquaintance by George McHenry

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GEORGE MCHENRY

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A FAMILIAR EPISTLE

TO

ROBERT J. WALKER.

A FAMILIAR EPISTLE

TO

James
ROBERT J. WALKER,

FORMERLY OF PENNSYLVANIA, LATER OF MISSISSIPPI, MORE
RECENTLY OF WASHINGTON, AND LAST HEARD OF
IN MR. COXWELL'S BALLOON.

FROM

AN OLD ACQUAINTANCE... *See letter.*

TO WHICH IS PREFIXED A BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH.

—*“Ridentem dicere verum
Quid vetat?”*—HORACE.



FIFTH THOUSAND.

LONDON:
SAUNDERS, OTLEY, AND CO.,
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1863.

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"The avowed object of this party is the immediate abolition of Slavery. For this they traverse sea and land, for this they hold conventions in the capital of England, and there they brood over schemes of abolition in association with British Societies. There they join in denunciations of their countrymen, until their hearts are filled with treason, and they return home Americans in name but Englishmen in feelings and principles. Let us all then feel and know, whether we live North or South, that *this party, if not vanquished, must overthrow the Government and dissolve the Union.*"—Extract from Letter of Hon. R. J. WALKER, Jan. 8th, 1844, in favour of Annexation of Texas.

"If my voice could reach even the Black Republican party, I would say, Re-assemble your convention, re-nominate your candidates if you please, elect them if you can, take all the spoils, *but tear down your African platform ere you endorse it at the polls, and give to the South a perfect justification for withdrawing from the Union.*"—ROBERT J. WALKER in 1856.

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH
OF
ROBERT J. WALKER.

It is a trite remark that "the world never knows its greatest men." The word "Walker," being familiar to London ears only as a cant term employed by vulgar little boys to express incredulity, it may be proper to preface the reply to some letters lately addressed by a person of that name to the British public, by a slight sketch of his past history.

Robert J. Walker was once a man of mark in America, and has held some, if not all, of the titles which, with Republican simplicity, he affixes to his name. He is about as old as the century. Born and educated in Pennsylvania, after a futile attempt to obtain public office and position in his native State, he migrated to Mississippi, then almost a wilderness, with but 55,000 inhabitants. Here the shrewd and plausible young Yankee pushed himself rapidly forward to fortune and place, till at last the highest honour the State could confer was given him, in 1836. He was then made one of her senators in Congress, in which post he remained until 1845, thus filling that position at the

very period of the act of Repudiation by his two States, (native and adopted), and before his successor in the Senate, Jefferson Davis, had entered public life. Mr. Walker was then, and for twenty years afterwards, a most "ultra-Southern" man in his sentiments, or at least in his speeches; including the most violent advocacy of State rights and Slavery. In fact, like most men of Northern birth domiciled in the South, he out-heroded Herod in his violent affection for Southern doctrines and interests; and on this account, when the Southern administration of Mr. Polk came into power, a seat in his Cabinet was accorded to Mr. Walker.

On the 3rd March, 1845, he left the Senate, and took the post of Secretary of the Treasury—not "Minister of Finance," as he terms himself; for that office does not exist in the United States, and its duties are performed by the Chairman of the Finance Committee of the House of Representatives, not by the Secretary of the Treasury. He supported warmly the measures and principles of the Southern party while in the Senate and during his term of office, and here ends the most respectable part of his career. He never returned to Mississippi; but after 1845 lived chiefly in Washington and New York, professing to practise law in the Supreme Court, but really occupied in various speculations; his ideas, unlike his stature, being on the largest scale.

Jefferson Davis succeeded him in the Senate, and

years after, when he had been almost forgotten as a public man, Robert J. Walker made a brief reappearance in public life, through the friendly suggestion of the man he now defames. President Pierce, in 1856, first nominated him "Commissioner to China," a title he now assumes, but on the duties of which he never entered, as he resigned his commission immediately. Mr. Buchanan, desirous of being useful to him (it is said at Mr. Davis's suggestion), appointed him Governor of the Territory of Kansas. This office Mr. Walker held only one year, Mr. Buchanan having been compelled to withdraw him in consequence of his abandonment of the policy and principles of the Administration, and his management of that territory, then in a state of revolution. On his first arrival there, Mr. Walker's despatches denounced as "a band of disorganisers and revolutionists" the very men and the very party whom he afterwards joined; and from that hour he has been the sworn foe of the friends, political associates, and principles of his whole previous life: for Robert J. Walker was the first to insist on the recognition of Texas as a Slave State, and for the benefit of the Slave States, a "shrieker" then, not for "Union," but for "strict State Rights;" a denouncer of Abolitionists and Englishmen, whom he placed in the same category; himself a slave-owner and an able defender of that "institution"—in fact, the very reverse, in practice and in profession, of all he now presumes to preach to the people of England.

We must pay the tribute of involuntary respect to the courage of the ruthless Danton, though we shudder at his crimes; but we have only contemptuous pity for "Joseph Surface," fine as his "sentiments" may be; and it cannot be doubted that the British public will reiterate the honest execration of Sir Peter Teazle to the present Joseph—

"D—N YOUR SENTIMENTS!"

HIS POLITICAL RECORD.

From a most valuable work, recently published by George M^cHenry, of Pennsylvania, on the Cotton Trade, and collateral topics,* we extract the following items regarding the political antecedents of Mr. Walker:—

HIS POLITICAL CAREER.

Mr. Walker, in the whole course of his career in Mississippi, in Congress, and indeed up to the year 1858, was a strong State Rights man, with extreme Southern sentiments. He began as early as 1826 to "agitate" the annexation of Texas, repudiating the Treaty of 1819 with Spain, and with persevering energy accomplished his wishes. It was not, however, until March 3, 1836, that Texas "seceded" from the Mexican Union. This act was followed by the Battle

* The Cotton Trade: Its Bearing upon the Prosperity of Great Britain and the American Republics, &c. &c. By George M^cHenry. London: Saunders, Otley, & Co. 1863.