

**A DISCOURSE IN
COMMEMORATION OF THE LIFE
AND SERVICES OF DANIEL WEBSTER,
DELIVERED BEFORE THE CITIZENS OF
PROVIDENCE, NOVEMBER 23, 1852**

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A Discourse in Commemoration of the Life and Services of Daniel Webster, delivered before the citizens of providence, November 23, 1852 by John Whipple

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JOHN WHIPPLE

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NOVEMBER 23, 1852.

BY JOHN WHIPPLE, LL. D.

PROVIDENCE:
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1852.

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PRELIMINARY PROCEEDINGS.

Pursuant to notice previously published, a numerous and highly respectable meeting of the citizens of Providence was held at Mechanics Hall, on Thursday November 4th. Hon. JOHN PITMAN of the United States District Court was called to the Chair, and AMOS D. SMITH, Esq. was appointed Secretary. After some brief and impressive remarks by the Chairman, the following Resolutions were offered by the Rev. Dr. CASWELL, upon which the meeting was addressed by Hon. ALBERT C. GREENE, THOMAS F. CARPENTER, Esq. Rev. DR. HALL, President WAYLAND, and Hon. A. C. BARSTOW, Mayor of the city.

Resolved, That the death of Daniel Webster, which occurred on the morning of the 24th of October last, at his residence in Marshfield, Mass., is an event which awakens the unaffected sorrow and merits the gravest consideration of the American people.

Resolved, That while we bow with submission to the dispensation of Divine Providence, which removed him from this life in the full possession of his great powers and while discharging with honor to his country many of the most important administrative duties of the government, it becomes us to cherish his memory as a part of our truest national glory and to do what we can to transmit to those who come after us, our high appreciation of his long and varied and preeminent public services.

Resolved, That as a scholar and writer, thoroughly master of the English tongue, and inculcating in the immortal productions of his pen, sentiments of the loftiest patriotism, the purest Christian morality and the reverence of all things sacred; as an orator endowed with the rarest powers of forensic and parliamentary eloquence, always directed to worthy ends; as a jurist and statesman of far-reaching and consummate ability; and more than all, as the great expounder and defender of the Constitution of these United States, by which our dearest rights and privileges are made secure, and social harmony established throughout our wide domain, he justly claims of every American citizen the most profound respect and admiration.

Resolved, That a Committee of eight be appointed by this meeting to make arrangements for the early delivery of a public discourse commemorative of the life and services of Daniel Webster.

JOHN WHIPPLE, Esq.

DEAR SIR:—The undersigned embrace the earliest opportunity to present to you their sincere thanks for the eloquent and very appropriate discourse pronounced by you this day, in commemoration of the character and services of DANIEL WEBSTER.

Believing that it will be read with interest, and that its circulation will conduce to the public good, they respectfully request on behalf of their fellow citizens as well as themselves, a copy for publication.

ALEXIS CASWELL,
JOHN PITMAN,
AMOS D. SMITH,
ALBERT C. GREENE,
THO'S. F. CARPENTER,
MOSES B. IVES,
WILLIAM W. HOPPIN,
G. W. HALLET.

} Committee
of
Arrangements.

Providence, Nov. 23, 1852.

PROVIDENCE, NOVEMBER 23, 1852.

Gentlemen:—I return you my sincere thanks for the flattering estimate you have expressed of the discourse I had the honor of delivering to-day in commemoration of the character and services of DANIEL WEBSTER, and in accordance with your wishes, I submit it to your disposal.

Most respectfully, yours,

JOHN WHIPPLE.

Messrs.

ALEXIS CASWELL,
JOHN PITMAN,
AMOS D. SMITH,
A. C. GREENE,
THO'S. F. CARPENTER,
MOSES B. IVES,
WM. W. HOPPIN,
G. W. HALLET.

} Committee
of
Arrangements.

DISCOURSE.

MY FRIENDS AND FELLOW CITIZENS :

It is good for us that we are here. It is *of* good and *for* good, that we come up to this temple of religious worship to mingle our spirit with the spirit of him, whose loss we so deeply deplore ; of him whose whole life exhibited in an eminent degree the two grand principles of human action, which above all other principles elevate and ennoble our nature ; the worship of the God whom he adored, and the service of the country he loved. These were as prominent elements of his life, as earth and air and ocean, are prominent elements of the globe we inhabit.

Reason and a deep consciousness of future responsibility were not bestowed upon us without an object. It is true that for some wise purpose beyond our power to comprehend, God has bestowed upon man every degree of physical power ; from the broad and compact frame of the giant, down almost to the helpless weakness of the infant ; every measure of intellectual light and strength, from the effulgent mind of Bacon, down to the almost total darkness of the idiot. But he has bestowed upon all a deep and abiding sense of responsibility somewhere and somehow, which we can no more escape from than from the shadows of our bodies in the sunlight of heaven. There they cast themselves upon the earth we

inhabit, and follow us as conscience follows our spirit, until the darkness of the tomb envelopes us. The body will decay and its shadow be no more. But the spirit is not of earth, and earth cannot destroy it. Hence the universal consciousness among all nations, ancient and modern, of a state of future responsibility.

Mr. Webster died as he had lived, calm, dignified and self-possessed. Like the Roman senator he folded his robes around him and met the king of terrors with the dignity of a man, and the humility of a Christian.

The most prominent events in the life of this great man are already before the public. Reminiscences from the pen of Mr. March, and at a later period his biography by Mr. Edward Everett, have done full and ample justice to their subject. His speeches and other great efforts in the cause of human freedom and the advancement of human civilization, are also published. All who feel an interest in the characters and services of the great statesmen of modern days, have probably read his works, and are familiar with the prominent features of his character. In the short period usually allowed to occasions like the present, it will be impossible for me to present to you the whole of Daniel Webster. I can only furnish specimens here and there of his great mind and his great deeds. One or two outpourings from *Ætna* or *Vesuvius* will give some idea of the fires within their capacious bosoms.

Mr. Webster, it seems was born on the 18th of January, 1782, three months after young Hamilton and his three intrepid followers were the first to scale the walls of Yorktown. He first saw the light of heaven reflected from the snow drifts of a cold and mountain country. He was born on the very outside of civilization, on the

borders of a forest nearly two hundred miles in extent, inhabited by ferocious savages. He was the second son of Ebenezer Webster and Abigail Eastman, a second wife. "Ebenezer, the father," says the biographer, "is still recollected in Kingston and Salisbury. His personal appearance was striking. He was erect, of athletic stature, six feet high, broad and full in the chest. Long service in the war had given him a military air and carriage. He belonged to the intrepid border race which lined the whole frontier of the Anglo-American colonies, by turns farmers, huntsmen, and soldiers, and passing their lives in one long struggle with the hardships of an infant settlement, on the skirts of a primeval forest."

"Ebenezer Webster enlisted early in life as a common soldier in one of those formidable companies of Rangers which rendered such important services under Sir Jeffrey Amherst and Wolfe, in the Seven Years War. He followed the former distinguished leader in the invasion of Canada, attracted the attention and gained the good will of his superior officers, by his brave and faithful conduct, and rose to the rank of a captain before the end of the war."

After the peace of 1763, Captain Webster and other retired officers and soldiers obtained a grant from the principal grantee of the town of Salisbury. Captain Webster received his allotment in its northerly portion. He cut his way deeper into the wilderness than others, and made the path he could not find. At this time his nearest civilized neighbors on the northwest, were at Montreal.

It is further stated in the touching biographical sketch that the mother of Daniel Webster, "like the mothers of so many men of eminence, was a woman of more than