

**THE CLAY CODE: OR, TEXT-BOOK OF  
ELOQUENCE, A COLLECTION OF  
AXIOMS, APOTHEGMS, SENTIMENTS,  
AND REMARKABLE PASSAGES ON  
LIBERTY, GOVERNMENT, POLITICAL  
MORALITY AND NATIONAL HONOR**

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The Clay Code: Or, Text-Book of Eloquence, a Collection of Axioms, Apothegms, Sentiments, and Remarkable Passages on Liberty, Government, Political Morality and National Honor by Henry Clay

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**HENRY CLAY**

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LIBERTY, GOVERNMENT, POLITICAL MORALITY  
AND  
NATIONAL HONOR:  
GATHERED FROM THE PUBLIC SPEECHES OF  
HENRY CLAY.

EDITED BY G. VANDENHOFF,  
PROFESSOR OF RHETORIC.

I know that virtue to be in you, BRETH,  
As well as I do know your outward favor.  
Well, *Honor* is the subject of my story.  
Shaks.

Disce parer virtutem ex me, verumque laborem.  
Virg.

NEW YORK:  
C. SHEPARD, 191 BROADWAY.

12  
1844.

## EDITOR'S PREFACE.

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THE great characteristic of Henry Clay, as presented in his public speeches, and the one that must most strongly recommend his ORATORY to the hearts of his countrymen, is his pure, thorough NATIONALITY. This spirit breathes in every page—pervades every sentence—glows in every line. We cannot fail to admire his vigor and independence of mind, his enlarged and statesmanlike views of policy and government, his energy, intensity of purpose, and unflinching advocacy of what he conceives to be *the right*—backed by the closest reasoning, a happy power of illustration, and the keenest satire; but, most of all, we are struck with his Nationality—his AMERICANISM.

He is, indeed, heart and hand, might and main, body and soul, American. He loves, he ADORES the land of his birth: he is proud of her extent, her resources, her natural wealth: he believes her Constitution to be as near perfection as any human institution can be; and he is most jealous of any interference with it, at home, or from abroad. Above all, he abhors, he loathes the very idea of *foreign influence, foreign example, foreign interference.*

Hence, his continual and emphatic inculcation on his fellow countrymen of the necessity and advantage of *reliance on themselves*, and on their own talents, energy, and industry; not only for their political liberty and independence, but (by their cultivation of, and advances in the industrious arts) for a *total independence on other nations* for a plentiful supply of the necessaries, comforts and luxuries of life.

Nor is his Nationality a cold and abstract and selfish feeling: it is an elevated and lofty PATRIOTISM; acutely and exquisitely sensitive and alive to the glory and happiness and honor of his own land; not dead to the well-being of others. He loves his own country passionately: he thinks her **BEST, GREATEST, BEST**: but he has a throb of sympathy for struggling freedom, wherever and by whomsoever held in bondage. His motto is—“*Civil and religious liberty all over the world!*” He regards his own favoured land as the great Cradle of Liberty—the nurse of freedom. America, he deems the Polar Star of Independence, to which the down-trodden of every nation must turn with anxious eye for light and guidance and hope, amid the dark clouds of tyranny and oppression. He desires that *all should be free*; that all should be (in that, his *Catholic\** sense of the word) **AMERICAN!**

He sends the glad tidings of encouragement and sym-

\* *Katholikos*

pathy to SPANISH AMERICA, in her resistance to a hateful despotism ; and the stirring sound of his voice is heard animating awakened GREECE in her glorious efforts to burst her chains, and wafting to her shores what shall be to her, like an echo from Marathon or Thermopyle—a message of hope and a prophetic assurance of deliverance !

His most ardent prayers at the shrine of his tutelary goddess, LIBERTY, are for his own country, his own altars, his own home ! But after that, he pours forth an ardent aspiration for UNIVERSAL FREEDOM ; and the strain of his fervent and impassioned eloquence comprehends, in the circle of an enlarged benevolence, the inhabitants of every, the nearest and most distant lands ; or (as he himself expresses it) “ *The liberty and happiness of the whole human family.*”

On these occasions his eloquence is sublime. Frequent extracts in the following pages will illustrate these characteristics :—his NATIONALITY, and his sympathy with popular rights, and hatred of oppression.

The publicly expressed maxims and opinions of a distinguished Orator and Statesman are great lessons to a people. The higher the intellect, the more exalted the character, the more widely spread the fame of the man—the greater the authority of the maxims he promulgates, and the opinions he maintains. They are public property ;



they belong to the nation; they form a portion of her wealth, worthy to be stored in her intellectual treasury, and to be preserved and transmitted for the guidance and benefit of posterity.

In this point of view the speeches of Henry Clay are very remarkable. On nearly every subject connected with government and its branches—political economy and public policy, they exhibit just and enlarged views.

The people of ancient Greece and Rome carefully treasured up, and taught their children, the just and noble sentiments of humanity and justice promulgated by their dramatic poets, Euripides and Terence. It was a wise and an easy mode of educating the young mind. Such a sentiment as that of Terence

*HOMO SUM; HOMANI NIHIL A ME ALIENUM PUTO*

dwells upon the memory; and makes more impression on the heart, as a lesson of humanity and philanthropy, than a long-winded homily from the lips of the gravest teacher.

In the same manner, the maxims of the statesman, pithily and happily expressed, and gracefully illustrated, do more in the political education of a people, than a thousand lectures on political economy. Some of those which will be found in the following collection might be printed in letters of gold, that "all who run may read,"

till they become "familiar as household words." Take one:—

NATIONS, LIKE MEN, FAIL IN NOTHING WHICH THEY BOLDLY ATTEMPT, WHEN SUSTAINED BY VIRTUOUS PURPOSE, AND DETERMINED RESOLUTION.

What a noble, what a cheering lesson! How encouraging to the hopes and energies of a young people! Such pithy lessons (and many will be met with in the following pages, equally worthy to be recorded)—such lessons are the best books of education for a free people. Every one understands them; they are easily learnt; they can never be forgotten; their truth is eternal; they are

"Not for an age, but for all time."

Such were my feelings on perusing the speeches of Henry Clay: such were the feelings with which I prepared the following TEXT BOOK; which I now, with great respect and deference, offer to the American public.

Most unfeignedly I assure the reader, that its object is by no means a *party one*; nor is it intended as a tribute to *party feeling*. With these I have neither a right, nor a wish to interfere; nor can the editing of this collection (I trust) be justly considered as an attempt, or evidence of a desire to do so. ELOQUENCE is of no *one land*; she is indigenous to every soil and every clime; she belongs to no one country, she owns no party, no clique. Like the sun, she sheds her light on all. Her language is universal; she

speaks a tongue to which every heart responds. Nor can there be a monopoly by a nation, or a party, or a man, of the principles of justice, wisdom, truth and honor: they, also, are universal—unchanging, eternal: and their advocates—whether American, English, French—Conservative or Liberal—of the *côté droite* or the *côté gauche*—Tory, Whig or Democrat—is a general benefactor, and (as such) is entitled to the gratitude of mankind.

I originally made extracts from the speeches of Henry Clay, for my own individual purpose, in the preparation of a rhetorical work. I now edit this collection, not as a tribute to PARTY, (with which I have no concern) but as an offering (which will not, I trust, be deemed unwelcome) to the PUBLIC, to THE WORLD: and, at the same time, (I may be permitted to add) as a feeble testimony of my admiration of one unknown to me, except as an enlightened Statesman, an eloquent Orator, and a great man!

I conclude with a sentiment which I have somewhere met in (I think) a French author: "I bring you a *bouquet* of exquisite flowers; I have merely furnished the riband that binds them together."

*New York, August, 1844.*