

THE WRITINGS AND
SPEECHES
OF
DANIEL WEBSTER

IN EIGHTEEN VOLUMES



VOLUME SEVENTEEN

The Writings and Speeches of
DANIEL WEBSTER
PRIVATE CORRESPONDENCE
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the best place for you to receive your letters, inform me. Did you secure Mr. Gore's debt against Putnam? Have you received your trunk in safety? How do you like "Democracy unveiled?"

Give my respects to Mr. Wood's family, for I fancy you see them occasionally. Tell the family at home that I am well and want to see them very much.

Yours truly,

E. WEBSTER.

MR. WEBSTER TO MR. MERRILL.

Boscawen, N. H., May 14, 1805.

DEAR MERRILL,—When I wrote you last I was in Court street, Boston, and now I am in Court street, Boscawen. March 24. I left the lively capital of New England, not without regret. Whether a good or evil star led me to this little village, I know not. All that I can say about myself at present is, here I am. If you pass this way you will find me just as happy to see you as ever; and happy I should be at such an event at Iceland, or the Cape of Good Hope. Not a sentence which had Merrill's name in it has sounded in my ear this many a day; you, yourself, uttered the last. Not a soul from Hanover have my eyes beheld who could say anything about you. I presume, however, that if I give this a direction to Middlebury, it will hit you. Where will it find you? How employed? My heart feels a sort of vacuum when it cannot fancy the situation of my friends. While you resided at Dartmouth College, I could trace you in your morning vocations and in your evening walks. At sunset I could see you enter the chapel, could hear the bell, and follow you through every scene of business and amusement. How is it at Middlebury? You have there too, I suppose, vocations, and walks, and chapels, and bells. But I know nothing of them; tell me, therefore.

It was a part of our original plan of correspondence, I think, to inform each other of our studies. I have no great feats in that way to recount at present. In Boston, I was not altogether idle, but my reading was mostly appropriate to my profession. Gifford's Juvenal I looked at, and Gibbon's Life and posthumous

works by Sheffield; Moore's Travels in Italy and France; Paley's Natural Theology, and a few others. Natural Theology is an ingenious little thing. Gifford's Juvenal is worth perusing on more accounts than one, though I believe that work is daubed with too much indiscriminate praise. Gifford was certainly a very accomplished scholar, was originally the tenant of an easy seat, with three legs, in vulgar dialect called a shoemaker's bench. But he ran away from his leather apron and his lapstone, and fled to Parnassus. Gibbon's Life is the history of a Deist. He was, as I think, a learned, proud, ingenious, foppish, vain, self-deceived man. If unbelief be a crime, how criminal is he who exercises talents and learning to infuse it into his own heart? Gibbon, from Protestant connections and family, deserted to the faith of the church of Rome, and thence to the faith of Tom Paine.

Our friends, dear Merrill, are every day disappearing. Alas, poor Gilbert! The herds of the valley graze the turf that lies upon thy bosom! But Merrill and Webster will preserve thy memory in the urn of their hearts.

Adieu, my good friend; write me forthwith, I pray you. If this letter is dull and insipid, impute it to dull weather, headache, east wind, or any thing else, so you hold me faultless.

Yours truly,

D. WEBSTER.

DANIEL WEBSTER TO EZEKIEL WEBSTER.

Boscawen, May 16, 1805.

DEAR ZEKE,—This will be handed you by Mr. French; if you have any thing to send to me, he will bring it. I was at Salisbury yesterday. The family are well as usual. Father is desirous you should write to him and you must do so forthwith.

Adieu, D. WEBSTER.

P. S. I greatly need a few small blank books, which Mr Parker prepared for me.