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"OUR COUNTRY—MAY IT ALWAYS BE RIGHT—BUT RIGHT OR WRONG OUR COUNTRY."

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T E R M S :

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MR. EVERETT TO THE SPRINGFIELD CONVENTION.

The rhetorical grace which has always been Mr. Everett's chief claim to distinction, says the New York *World*, is certain to secure attention for whatever that accomplished scholar may think fit to write on public topics. The spirit in which his letter to the Springfield Republican Convention is conceived is patriotic; but his purity of intention has not saved him from a good deal of questionable logic. Mr. Everett's particular foible is his extreme susceptibility to applause; a foible which has been pampered by nearly half a century of grateful incense, and which has no tendency to strengthen the independence of judgment and political courage which were never his strong points. In consequence of this infirmity he is rather a plausible advocate of the preconceived views of others than a safe and able guide of public opinion. At the time of the Trent difficulty he came forward with an exposition of international law justifying the seizure; an exposition which was merely a servile reflex of the popular passions of the moment. A public instructor who makes such mistakes must expect to have his subsequent opinions weighed, and to see them accepted or rejected on other grounds than the mere weight of his authority.

According to Mr. Everett, there ought to be no party action in time of war. Party opposition to an administration which happens to be in power when the country is at war, he says, is "an evil of tremendous magnitude," which "really affords aid and comfort to the enemy." If there is any force in this, it is an argument against holding a *jurisdictional election* during the continuance of a war. Not the party in power, nor the men in power, can be dispensed with if there is no opposition; and if the existing administration have an indefensible lease of power during the war the election might as well be dispensed with. A more just and statesmanlike mode of reasoning would be that inasmuch as all power is liable to abuse, and inasmuch as the power, patronage, and influence of the administration are never so great and dangerous as in time of war, it is then that an opposition party is most needed as a check upon abuses. Such an opposition must not be fictitious and unreasonable; it must give to the administration men and money for carrying on the war; but for the proper application of these means, and for the inviolability of the Constitution under circumstances which expose it to the greatest peril, it is consistent with patriotism that the administration should be held to a strict account. And the only efficient way of enforcing responsibility is through an opposition party.

These principles are so elementary, and have so generally accepted, that Mr. Everett should not have disputed them without a distinct refutation of the apparently solid reasons on which they rest.

That Mr. Everett has been misled by complaisance toward the administration to express opinions which his own better judgment would condemn, may, we, think, be convincingly proved. He was a few years ago the eulogist of Daniel Webster, and the editor of his collected works. He has told us that Webster will live and speak in these works when brass and marble have crumbled into dust. As a repository of political truth and practical wisdom applied to the affairs of government, I know not where we shall find their equal." In this incomparable repository of political wisdom, we find a complete and pointed refutation of all the leading portions of Mr. Everett's present letter. Did Mr. Webster adopt any such servile doctrine as that opposition in war time is inconsistent with patriotism? The farthest from it possible. We had two wars in his time; he was an active member of the opposition party during the first, and the leader of the opposition party in the second. He scoffed at the idea that any pretense of military necessity or any imminence of military danger should relax our vigilance in guarding the Constitution. Hear him:

"The honorable member from Ohio, near me, has said, that if the enemy had been on our shores he would not have agreed to this vote. And I say if the propositions were now before us, and the guns of the enemy were pointed against the walls of the Capitol, I would not agree to it.

The people of this country have an interest, a property, an inheritance in this instrument [the Constitution], against the value of which forty capitals do not weigh the twentieth part of a poor scrofula. There can never be any necessity for such proceedings but a forged or false necessity; a mere idle or hollow pretense of necessity.—*Webster's Works*, vol. IV., p. 226.

In his speech on the "ten regiment bill," during the Mexican war, he made no scruple of saying "the war is odious," and he called it an abominated war. In another speech he expressed a hope that an appropriation bill might not pass, a degree of boldness from which he anticipated the charge of giving aid to the enemy. He said:

"And here, I dare say, I shall be called by some a Mexican Whig. The man who can stand up here and say that he hopes that what the administration projects, and the further prosecution of the war with Mexico requires, may not be carried into effect, must be an enemy to his country, or, what gentlemen have considered the same thing, an enemy to the President of the United States, and to his administration and his party. He is a Mexican. Sir, I think very badly of the Mexican character, high and low, but honest; but names do not terrify me.—*Webster's Works*, v., 275."

If Mr. Everett will turn to this volume he will recall to his mind abundant proof that the American whom, next to Washington, he professed most to admire, derided any such idea as the leading one of this letter, that opposition to the war measures of an administration is unpatriotic. Common sense indorses what Mr. Webster then asserted, that an administration may call for more troops than are necessary, and may continue a war longer than is necessary, in the interest of paymasters, contractors, and commissaries; men who handle the public money without facing the foe, one and all of whom, he declared, are true descendants, or if not, true representatives of ancient pistol, who said:

"I shall act so
Unto the camp, and profits will accrue."
We submit to Mr. Everett that there has been no opposition to this administration (except by an insignificant peace party) at all approaching that made by Mr. Webster to the administration charged in conducting the war with Mexico; but no candid man ever doubted Mr. Webster's patriotism. We also call the attention of those canting journalists who hold up the federal party and the Hartford convention as a warning to Democrats, to the fact that the party which was in opposition during the war with Mexico, carried the next presidential election.

Nothing could be more contrary to the whole scope of Mr. Webster's politics than an amount of trust in the executive so great as Mr. Everett now advises. Deprecation of such confidence was one of Mr. Webster's most frequent topics. Out of the abundance before us we can give but a few sentences:

"Mr. President, the contest for ages has been to rescue liberty from the grasp of executive power. Whoever has engaged in her sacred cause, from the days of the downfall of those great aristocrats which had stood between the king and the people down to the day of our own independence, has struggled for the accomplishment of that single object. On the long list of the champions of human freedom there is not one name dimmed by the reproach of advocating the extension of slavery, or the maintenance of a slave power. Representative, when he was in Washington in December, will right the wrong perpetrated, and the desperate fraud to defeat me, and keep me from my seat will be exposed. I am much as for anything else, to thank you for the kind support you gave me in that can-

vasse. I have been defrauded of my seat—that is the word—"stolen" of my seat by the ward in which my honorable and respectable competitor resides—the ward that claims to have a great share of the decency of the Abolitionists, and the most decided aversion to the Slave Power. This is the reason why Mr. Webster, when he was in Washington in December, will right the wrong perpetrated, and the desperate fraud to defeat me, and keep me from my seat will be exposed. I am much as for anything else, to thank you for the kind support you gave me in that can-

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