

noticed—and it has not been noticed, I regret to say—might be put upon the pages of our debates and find its way to posterity to the injury of that eminent, and as I say, that pure man.

The gentleman from Howard (Mr. Sands) in a very solemn manner, has not only stated a fact which I think very much impeached the character of Mr. Clay, inasmuch as he is presented as an object not of estimation by those who knew him, but as a man capable of being directly bribed, and that by a pecuniary consideration, and therefore in an attitude of the utmost meanness of character. After stating facts which cannot but convey this impression, the gentleman from Howard has adverted to a written manuscript, in which those who chose to make the inquiry would find proof that the circumstances stated were all consistent with the facts of the case.

I deemed it my duty to make this inquiry. As I have remarked, Mr. Clay was my personal friend. I have been associated with him in political life. I have known him under circumstances I think quite as much calculated to try his integrity as those depicted in the narrative of the gentleman from Howard. But I have never yet seen that black spot in his character which would be disclosed by the estimate formed of him by those who attempted to bribe him.

The manuscript, which doubtless every gentleman like myself supposed to be some record entitled from its source to the highest consideration, and was a well-prepared account of the transaction by some person intimate with the whole history of the case at the time it occurred—the manuscript is the composition of the gentleman from Howard himself. It is a paper on which he has transcribed what he recollects of a conversation, just as he has detailed recollections of the fact to the house, and how the manuscript can challenge higher claim to credit at the hands of those who read it, or hear of it, than the statement delivered before the house, according to the very letter of that manuscript, I cannot understand. The gentleman makes his statement on the floor of this house, exactly in conformity to his written statement. And then, by way of leaving no doubt about his accuracy of recollection, he says with solemn emphasis he has a manuscript to support his statement.

Now, this manuscript, the work of the gentleman's own hand, professes to be, as the gentleman stated upon this floor, a history of a conversation held with Mr. Clay by a young gentleman, at whose house Mr. Clay, while making a visit to Mr. Carroll of Carrollton, was taken and entertained for a few hours. The young gentleman, ambitious for the honor of entertaining Mr. Clay—and a very laudable ambition—while Mr. Clay was en route from Washington to the house of Mr. Carroll, took Mr. Clay to his house, and en-

tained him there for a few hours, until Mr. Carroll called for him and took him to his point of destination. And Mr. Clay, who never came into a portion of the country he had not visited before without being received by crowds—Mr. Clay, in the course of this visit of a few hours, unbosomed himself to this young gentleman in relation to one of the most important political events of the country, involving not only a serious attack upon his own reputation, but making utterly infamous the political character of men who had before stood high in the estimation of the people; he disclosed to this young gentleman this whole scene of iniquity in a conversation occurring in these few hours at his house—particulars which were not known to the most intimate bosom-friend of Mr. Clay. He had friends by the thousands, as warm and as ardent as those of any man who ever lived; even Andrew Jackson not excepted. And yet not one word has ever been heard from any one of those thousands of friends with whom Mr. Clay spent days and nights in the most intimate relations, upon the most important and interesting questions in our political history, in periods of the most intense anxiety as to the fate of his country, and upon this very question.

I have no more to say, I only want these facts to go upon the record in juxtaposition with the gentleman's statement. I am willing that every human being who shall read these two statements shall judge whether Mr. Clay is to be arraigned in the estimation of posterity by any transactions such as these.

Mr. SANDS. Will the gentleman from Kent (Mr. Chambers) allow me a moment?

Mr. CHAMBERS. Certainly.

Mr. SANDS. As a matter of personal explanation, I want to set this whole matter on the record as it is. The other day I stated facts which had come to my knowledge as coming from Mr. Clay, in a certain way, and which facts I said were contained in a manuscript then in my desk. After the adjournment of the House, while at a hotel in this city, the gentleman from Kent (Mr. Chambers) said he would like to see that paper. I came to this Hall, got the paper, carried it to the gentleman's room and submitted it to the gentleman's perusal, telling how that statement came to be made, and when that manuscript was written by myself. I told him the manuscript had been written at the time that Senator Hicks took his seat in the United States Senate, under the appointment of Governor Bradford. I told the gentleman that the Senator asked me to reduce the statement to writing and forward it to him at Washington. And I suppose the color of the paper and everything about it showed that it had been written at that time—I made the statement simply as one made to me by a gentleman of the very highest credit and veracity—not a young gentleman as the gen-