

not with repulsive suspicion, and until he had tested its soundness by the most rigid investigation, he did not embrace it. He adopted no hypothesis, however imposing, nor was any truth, however true, a truth to him, unless it was intuitively perceived, or ascertained to be so by a process of argument in his own mind. Something in his mental apprehension, equivalent to the exactitude of arithmetical calculation or mathematical certainty, was required to win his confidence and secure his faith in any newly propounded theory. He was too practical in his habit and mode of thinking, to be misled by the speculative pretensions of any new-fledged scheme that claimed his attention. It was carefully 'weighed in the balances' of his mind's sanctuary, and if 'found wanting,' it was straightway rejected.

A mind thus organized, and thus disciplined and habituated to severe thinking, could not fail to become influential in a popular assembly. As a public speaker he had several and great defects and deficiencies. In his manner, there was a disagreeable hesitancy—there was nothing graceful or ornamental; he was never fluent—his voice was low and monotonous—yet whenever he rose to address the legislative body to which he belonged, silence prevailed, and he was generally listened to with deep respect and intense interest. The reason was, there was an impression that he had 'something to say'—something, too, which was worth hearing, and which had a direct, common-sense bearing upon the question in debate. Sometimes after a whole day of frothy and irrelevant discussion, when the merits of the matter to be decided, had thereby been so distorted by exaggeration—so disingenuously discoloured and misrepresented—or so darkened by sophistry, that one half of the house were bewildered and beclouded in doubt, Huntington would rise, and, by throwing the broad daylight of his own mind upon it in a brief address, would make the whole thing too plain to be misunderstood. In this way, he often influenced the decision of the Assembly. When no party views or policy had given a bias to questions of general interest, his avowed opinions had, perhaps, more weight than those of any other member of the House.

It was not, however, as a speaker that his capability and efforts were most valuable; for, in this respect, others around him were vastly his superiors. It was in the unremitting toil of legislative drudgery that he rendered the best service to the public. In the indefatigable labours and severe duties of the committee-room, his herculean powers were most advantageously exerted. While many lazily, ignorantly, and with passive indifference, passed through a Legislative Session, he threw all his active energies and his abundant stores of accumulated information into the business of the country. His services, too, were peculiarly acceptable, because he was perfectly conversant with the public accounts, the condition of the revenue, required statistics, the state and tendency of trade, and whatever else it was necessary to know in the practical duties and hearing of beneficial legislation.