

ruin as absolute as that which overtook Napoleon at Waterloo, and for the same reason—the want of a reserve.

A striking anecdote is told of our American general, Sheridan. Returning to his army, on one occasion, after an absence of a few days, he found that it was being driven back before the vigorous advance of the Confederates under General Early. "Sir," said the general whom he had left in command, "we are beaten." And rallying the soldiers by the impulse of his own confidence, he turned the tide of battle, and converted a defeat into a victory. Sheridan had a reserve of moral and intellectual force in which his leader was deficient. At the appearance of disaster the one was demoralized, the other roused and strengthened; the former had spent all his means, the latter had scarcely drawn upon his.

We borrow an illustration from the life of Daniel Webster. In 1830, a debate had arisen in the United States Senate on the disposition of the public lands. At the outset it was not considered an attractive or an exciting subject, and for some days the debate was exceedingly dull. The vast "reserve power" of one man was destined, however, to lift it into historical importance. A speech of a Mr. Hayne, to which Webster, the great orator, was called upon to reply, had been distinguished by much ability, and constituted a very sharp attack upon New England and Mr. Webster, its representative. But Mr. Hayne, says Dr. Thomas, did not understand this matter of reserved power. "He had seen Mr. Webster's van and corps of battle, but had not heard the firm and measured tread behind. It was a decisive moment in Mr. Webster's career. He had no time to impress new forces, scarcely time to burnish his armor. All eyes were turned to him. Some of his best friends were depressed and anxious. He was calm as a summer's morning—calm, his friends thought, even to indifference. But his calmness was the repose of conscious power." He had carefully measured his strength, and was in full possession of himself and his means. He knew the composition of his "army of the reserve." With the eye of a great general he surveyed the whole field of battle at a glance. He had the prescience

of logic, and could see the end from the beginning.

The very exordium of his reply had in it the promise, nay, the assurance of victory. "Men saw the sun of Austerlitz, and felt that the Imperial Guard was moving on to the conflict. He came out of the conflict with the immortal name of the Defender of the Constitution." Of this speech, and the mode of its delivery, a competent authority said, "It has been my fortune to hear some of the ablest speeches of the greatest living orators on both sides of the water, but I confess I never heard of anything which so completely realized my conception of what Demosthenes was when he delivered the Oration for the Crown." Mr. Webster's biographer adds, that "taking into view the circumstances under which the speech was delivered, and especially the brief time for preparation, the importance of the subject, the breadth of its views, the strength and clearness of its reasoning, the force and beauty of its style, its keen wit, its repressed but subduing passion, its lofty strains of eloquence, its effect upon its audience, and the larger audience of a grateful and admiring country, history has no nobler example of reserved power brought at once and effectively into action." There is a certain amount of exaggeration in this description, but it does not invalidate the appositeness of the illustration. Unquestionably Daniel Webster had a large amount of reserved power, as all consummate orators must have, or they would fall easy victims to their opponents. It is in the reply that true oratorical excellence is manifested; and a successful reply is impossible unless the speaker can draw upon an accumulation of force. The victory is yours when you can impress your adversary with the conviction that you are not putting forth more than half your strength.

To acquire and retain this reserve of power is not easy. It is that part of a man's education which depends most upon himself, nay, for which he must trust to himself alone. Deep, earnest, patient study is indispensable; continuous study, kept up from day to day and proceeding from one subject to another; methodical study, enforcing an exact systemization of our thoughts as of our time. When