

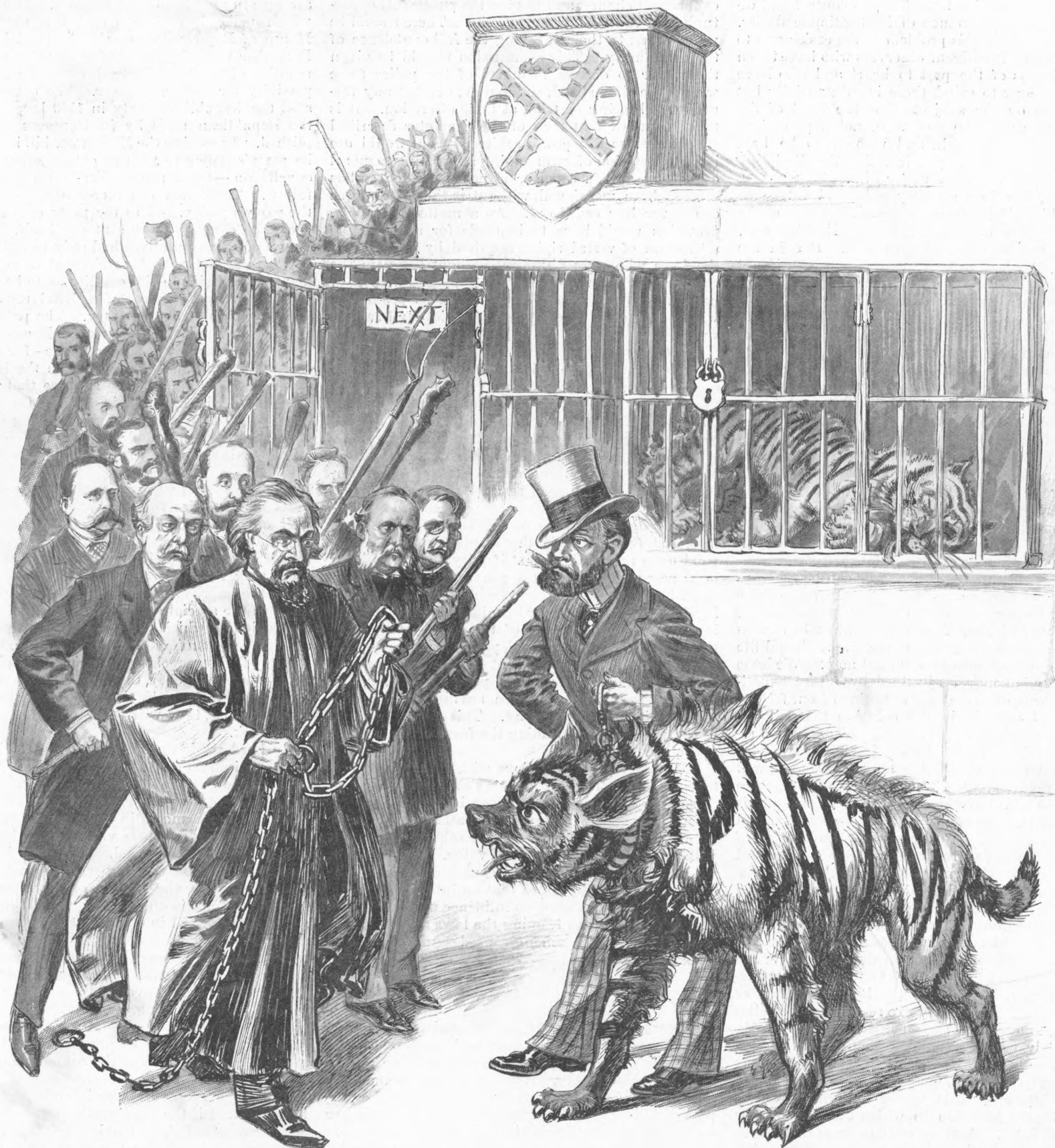
HARPER'S WEEKLY

JOURNAL OF CIVILIZATION

VOL. XXXVIII.—No. 1980.
Copyright, 1894, by HARPER & BROTHERS.
All Rights Reserved.

NEW YORK, SATURDAY, DECEMBER 1, 1894.

TEN CENTS A COPY.
FOUR DOLLARS A YEAR.



W.A. Rogers.

MORE WORK FOR VICTORIOUS REFORM.
ANOTHER BOSS COME TO TOWN.

Hosted by Google

THE LATE ROBERT C. WINTHROP.

IN the late Robert C. Winthrop the best blood and the best culture of Massachusetts met. On one side his ancestors were Pierre Baudouin, the Huguenot refugee, and his grandson, James Bowdoin, the energetic Governor of Massachusetts. On the other there was a long line of distinguished ancestors, beginning with the noble John Winthrop, father and son, Governors respectively of Massachusetts and Connecticut, and branching out into men of note in every succeeding generation. Born in Boston in 1809, he grew to manhood surrounded by the highest and most fruitful culture which America has known—that which gave us Holmes, Sumner, Phillips, Motley, and many others. He was graduated from Harvard at the age of nineteen, standing third in a class of fifty-three members, and having obtained special distinction as an orator and a Latin scholar. He studied law in Webster's office, and in 1831 was admitted to the bar.

I.

Henry Clay was then the idol of the young Whigs, and Winthrop's first public speech was made in 1833 to welcome him to Boston. In 1834 he was elected to the Massachusetts House of Representatives, where he served until 1840, the last three years as Speaker. Then he became a member of Congress. In 1834 prejudice was running high against Catholicism; a Catholic convent in Charlestown "was besieged by a mob, sacked, pillaged, and burned." Winthrop showed the breadth of his Puritanism by devoting his first speech in the Legislature to an eloquent argument in favor of indemnification by the State.

Great conservatism characterized Winthrop's ten years' service in the House of Representatives. He never felt a pulsation of Massachusetts zeal or voiced its radical impulses. He was a man of peace, the most rigid of Whigs, and the first to offer a resolution in Congress in favor of international arbitration by a commission of civilians. He spoke with severe reason against South Carolina's practice of seizing free colored seamen from the North; and against the attempt of the South to suppress the right of petition he strongly protested, and foretold its failure. When the vulgar jingoism of the young Democrats touching the Oregon boundary was rife, Winthrop took a prominent and sober position against it, saying, "I spurn the notion that patriotism can only be manifested by plunging a nation into war, or that the love of one's country can only be measured by one's hatred of any other." He was little less than superstitious in his devotion to the protective tariff; he was opposed to lowering it, although "there is more money in the Treasury of the nation . . . than its unscrupulous and corrupt extravagance will suffer it to squander."

As soon as this conservatism came in contact with the question of slavery, Winthrop was subjected to a double fire. The questions connected with the extension of slavery in the Southwest were uppermost during this decade. Against the project to annex Texas he argued with great vigor; annexation by joint resolution, he said, would be "in violation of the Constitution, the laws, and rights of the States." But after annexation had been accomplished, and the shameless war against Mexico had begun, he accepted the event, as partisans are bound to, and voted for the Mexican war bill despite its false preamble. For this vote many of his constituents never forgave him. All efforts to explain it away were unavailing. The "Conscience" Whig of the North had been born, and the apologizing Whig soon found himself without a constituency in Massachusetts. But before this came about, Winthrop's easy superiority over the other members of the House, his eloquence, his dignity in debate, and, most of all, his impartiality and knowledge of parliamentary law, led to his selection as Speaker in 1847. In the next Congress the "Conscience" Whigs, after a contest of three weeks, prevented his re-election.

In 1850, when Webster left the Senate to become Secretary of State, Winthrop was appointed to fill the vacancy. Excepting Edward Everett, Massachusetts had no citizen more cultured than Winthrop. But she had now grown weary of too much polished talk of "peace," "union," and "mutual obligations" while the South dictated legislation and controlled the administration. And when, in 1851, Winthrop sought to be returned to the Senate, the Free-soilers and the Democrats combined against him and elected Charles Sumner as an independent.

Sumner was a man of vast learning and of impetuous courage, and both were already directed against slavery. Where Sumner was supported, Winthrop's politics could not be popular. This, Winthrop was one of the first to appreciate, and after being defeated as Whig candidate for the Governorship, he permanently retired from political life, and resolved to devote his remaining years to literary and charitable pursuits.

But his signal abilities and commanding presence forbade his complete retirement from politics. His voice was heard in almost every political campaign during the two successive decades. Winthrop was born a Whig and a conservative, and never changed. He was no more an admirer of slavery than was Wendell Phillips; but in one case the dislike showed itself only in aimless objection and deprecation, while in the other it became a smiting sword of fire. Some of the calmest Abolitionists sought to win him over to their cause, for his kind heart and deep moral nature were known to all; but it was all in vain. To him their heroic methods seemed to be merely so much madness. Even when Sumner was struck down he remained silent. While a single plank of the old Whig ship remained he clung to it with the sincerest affection, never dreaming that in both the Northern and the Southern radicalism there was the plainest logic. As late as September, 1860, he declared his opinions "unchanged and, I think, unchangeable," and when Slavery and Freedom were already warring with uncontrollable passion, he called, like a voice in the wilderness, for "national harmony." He deprecated war at almost any cost, and favored the forlorn and colorless Crittenden compromise; but after the firing upon Fort Sumter he no longer hesitated. His speech in October, 1861, on the presentation of a flag to the Twenty-second Regiment of Massachusetts Volunteers, was one of the most fervent and eloquent of his whole life. Still he had no heart for war, nor could he forgive the Republicans for refusing to compromise, and for continuing for freedom a struggle which was begun to defend the Union. Consequently he gave his full support to McClellan, and subsequently to Andrew Johnson.

II.

Robert C. Winthrop, the Whig statesman, belonged to the ante bellum period, and his dignified conservatism has been dwelt upon not only because it was one of the chief traits of his character, but also because it was typical of many of the most sincere men of that time. His political ideas

were in the main neither original nor especially wise, and in expounding them he showed no extraordinary ability. He was too cultured and too cold to be a great debater. However, as a statesman he inspires us with respect on account of his learning and the grand purity and serenity of his life; but it is only as an orator, scholar, and quiet philanthropist that he fills us with great admiration; for these were the occupations most congenial to his nature.

He was a member of the Massachusetts Historical Society for over half a century, and its president for thirty years. At almost every monthly meeting, year after year, and decade after decade, he interested all who could hear or read his eloquent tributes to the memory of famous men in almost every branch of learning, from Shakespeare to Agassiz; he spoke with equal charm on historical manuscripts, on art, literature, European travel, historical churches and landmarks, libraries, and on the portraits of Hampden and Lafayette. A large part of the best years of his life was devoted to historical work and to enriching the treasures of his society. His *Life and Letters of John Winthrop* is in two volumes, and all his other literary work is contained in the four large volumes of *Addresses and Speeches*.

His deep aesthetic and religious nature caused him to devote much of his time to questions of art, charity, the dissemination of Biblical knowledge, and to popular education. For nearly a quarter of a century before his death he was an active member of the Board of Trustees of the great Peabody fund for Southern education.

It is, however, as orator that Winthrop's fame will be most lasting. The extent of the fame of the orator is quite as much dependent upon the occasion of the eloquence as upon its quality. Webster's oratory, above all other in America, will be famous longest not only because its scope extended from the tenderest pathos to the grandest logic, but quite as much because it was displayed on a vast number of important occasions, commemorative of the lives of statesmen or critical in the history of his country. Phillips can never be forgotten because it was his unerring and poison-pointed shafts that won many of the earliest and most decisive battles for abolition. Sumner's intense but deliberate oratory will always be a part of our political history, because it was the truest exponent of the struggle for freedom waged in the United States Congress. Edward Everett, probably the most classic and finished of our orators, sought calm educational occasions rather than political contests, and his great fame did not long survive him, though many of his patriotic addresses are of the highest order. Robert C. Winthrop was essentially a commemorative orator, and few, if any, Americans have had such grand opportunities for eloquence of this nature. As far back as 1839 he made a long address on "The Pilgrim Fathers" in New York city. His last elaborate oration was prepared (its delivery in person was prevented by temporary illness) for the occasion of the completion of the Washington Monument, in February, 1885. During these forty-six years he was the orator of the day on very many similar occasions, such as the laying of the corner-stone of the Washington Monument, 1848; the unveiling of a statue to Franklin in Boston, 1856; the two-hundred-and-fiftieth anniversary of the landing of the Pilgrims, 1870; the Boston Centennial of July 4, 1876; the unveiling of a statue to Colonel Prescott on Bunker Hill, 1881; and the Yorktown Centennial, 1881.

Both in training and in temperament Winthrop was well suited to efforts of this character. Unfortunately his nature was cold, and consequently he was rarely able to submerge both himself and his hearers in his theme—forget them and remember it. Winthrop's ideas were always judicious; his style was stately and often highly rhetorical. Pathos and humor were almost unknown to it. Where Webster would have made a grand poetical figure, or Phillips have sparkled with wit or stung with an epigram, Winthrop quoted from the ancient classics.

Winthrop's manner, like his diction, was cold, dignified, very graceful, and classical. His presence was most pleasing—an elegant physique, a fine head, a face beaming with purity and intelligence.

FREDERIC BANCROFT.

MR. PETERS ON THANKSGIVING.

ANOTHER year has passed us by, Thanksgiving' day has come,
An' while I'm sad o'er many things, I'm thankful over some.
It sorter broke me up to hear his Roily Highness' yacht
Had took the *Vigilant* an' beat her easier 'n not;

But then it sort o' eased my mind to think that, after all,
We hadn't changed our record much—we've allers had the call

At chasin' Britishers around when there was suthin' up
A great sight more important than a pewter mug or cup.

I wasn't overcome with pride, along about July,
When foreign-made Americans, out there in Illiny,
Got kickin' up a nasty row, a-tryin' for to show
That rule o' mob was just the thing, and law would have to go;

But then again that had its side that sort o' made me glad,
When Grover upped an' spanked 'em like he would a sassy lad.

It took a riot just like that to show the folks that jeer
That we kin handle mobs because we've got a gov'ment here.

An' then, ye know, o' course, that I'm a rock-ribbed Democrat,
An' like the rest I'm askin', sorter dazed, "where we are at?"

It ain't much cause for thankfulness to git oneself knocked out,
Unless ye look inside an' see what brought the thing about.

An' when I do that thing I'm glad and thankful, for I see
We Democrats have thrashed ourselves, and won a victory.
We've taken up the leaders that were bad, each single scamp,
And drummed 'em, yes, we've drummed 'em, we have drummed 'em out o' camp.

And while, o' course, we're nervous an' a-trembly in our knees,
We'll soon get o'er the wobbles an' be chipper as you please,
And we'd ought all to be thankful that we got into this fix,
Since it leaves us with no traitors to our cause for '96.

JOHN KENDRICK BANGS.

THE LATE JAMES MCCOSH, D.D., LL.D.,
EX-PRESIDENT OF PRINCETON COLLEGE.

DR. JAMES MCCOSH, ex-President of Princeton College, who died at Princeton, New Jersey, on Friday, November 16th, was one of the most striking figures in academic and literary circles. A man of fine physique, of superb presence and impressive personality, he left his imprint on all he touched. He was one of the few men of his time with reference to whom it is safe to say that he was a great man. Critics may discuss his philosophical views, question the permanence of his academic policy, or find fault with this or that element of his large and consistent attitude to all public questions, but the man himself will remain a vital influence, strong, aggressive, pervading, so long as the men he moulded and the college he developed continue as influential factors in American life. It is difficult for one who was a student of his, and after his student days in frequent and close relation with Dr. McCosh, to speak of him without enthusiasm. He was not a man who courted approval or conciliated opposition. His personality was far too aggressive for that. He was rather one who compelled admiration by the freedom and outspoken vigor with which he gave expression to himself without the affectation of a diffidence which he did not feel or the desire to trim between two opinions.

Such a nature must always command the cordial support of some and invite the dissent of others according as it is estimated as self-reliant or egotistic, and Dr. McCosh did not escape the criticism nor miss the confidence of men. But the attitude in which he stood to the students, his fearless and affectionate policy towards them, the breadth and success of his plans for the college, and the serene simplicity of his private life made the balance in favor of those who reposed in him the highest confidence overwhelming.

Born in Carskeoch, Ayrshire, April 1, 1811, he was a typical Scotsman. The son of a well-to-do farmer, he was well taught as a boy, and at the age of thirteen sent to Glasgow to the university to study with a view to the ministry. In 1829 he removed to Edinburgh, where he pursued his studies for five years more, and fell under the dominant influence of Dr. Chalmers, of whom he always spoke with peculiar love and reverence. At the close of this period the "Stoic Philosophy" was given out as a subject for a prize essay, and he purposed competing for it, but was prevented by a protracted illness. He decided, however, to send in his partly finished essay, merely as an evidence of the work he had done. The examiners were much struck by this fragment, recommended him to university notice, and laid for him the first stone in his philosophical career. He turned to the ministry with zeal in 1834, was ordained as pastor at Arbroath in 1835, and transferred to Brechin in 1839—a large and influential field. He gave up his post and went out with the loyal and devoted men who led the Free-Church movement in 1843, and struggled in missionary fields for a number of years. In the intervals of pastoral work he had carried on his philosophical studies, and in 1850 published *The Method of the Divine Government*, which won prompt recognition, and led to his appointment to the chair of Logic and Metaphysics in the Queen's College, Belfast. His appointment called forth some Irish criticism on the ground of his nationality, and gave occasion for Thackeray's ballad "The Last Irish Grievance," in which he ridicules the opposition. He remained at Belfast sixteen years, during which he made a great impression as a teacher, and won an assured position as a metaphysician, especially by his work on *The Intuitions of the Mind*, published in 1860. He left Belfast in 1868 to become President of Princeton College, and it is as President of Princeton that he will be longest remembered.

I made my first visit to Princeton in the fall of 1868, just at the time of Dr. McCosh's arrival. Though only a boy, the impression made on my mind by the campus and the buildings has remained distinct after more than five-and-twenty years. The narrow front, the irregular grounds, the plain and unpretentious buildings—few, and, except for the old-world dignity of "Nassau Hall," almost mean in their hardness of line—all produced a far different effect from that to be seen twenty years later, when the campus had spread itself on every hand, when buildings of architectural beauty had sprung up, and a general impression of roominess and warmth had found its way into the once cramped and cold precincts of the college. The physical aspect was typical of the spiritual change. The college had 17 professors in 1868, and 41 in 1888; it had 264 students in 1868, and 603 in 1888; the curriculum was hard and narrow in 1868, and in 1888 it had expanded with a frank acceptance of the newer phases of modern science, but with a conservative grasp upon the duty of the college as a teaching institution; indeed, the growth of the college was more clearly to be seen in a comparison of the catalogues of 1868 and 1888 than of the grounds and buildings in those years. This work was not solely due to one man. He had noble support in the faculty and the board of trustees, and beyond them in the noble men and women who gave the means to carry out the plans that were formulated. But he was the head, he was the organizer, he was the foreseeing eye, the shaping hand, the wide sympathies that included growth in philosophy, science, and art in one general plan with a larger physical training and a loyal adherence to the sturdy, unsectarian, evangelical Christianity which is synonymous with the name of Princeton.

In 1888, after much urgency on his part, the trustees accepted his resignation, and he retired to pass his remaining years in the autumn twilight of a beloved and venerated age. He retained a professorship, which soon became nominal, under the splendid administration of his able successor, and continued to produce, even so late as 1892, an occasional philosophical paper. But from the time of his retirement from the presidency his friends have watched with solicitude the growing feebleness in his step, the increasing stoop in the broad shoulders, and the good gray head ever bending lower and lower as he walked. At last, from no disease, worn out with the uses of life, the strong frame yielded to the waste of time and toil. There is no room in so brief a sketch as this to catalogue his works or to enumerate the honors that came to him from many sources. He received the degree of LL.D. from the University of Aberdeen in 1850, and from Harvard and Washington-Jefferson in 1868; that of S.T.D. from Brown in 1868; and that of Litt.D. from Belfast. He served on many committees civil and ecclesiastical, was often a member of important bodies both in this country and Europe, and in everything was indefatigable. When the end came it was but the close of a life spent to the last drop in faithful service.

ETHELBERT D. WARFIELD.