Edward Everett.

1821.

From Gilbert Stuart's unfinished sketch-
the only portrait in Mr Dowse's Library.

EULOGY

ON

THOMAS DOWSE.

BY HON. EDWARD EVERETT.

Mr. President and Gentlemen of the Massachusetts Historical Society, —

We are assembled this evening to pay a long-deferred debt of duty and gratitude to the memory of our greatest benefactor. At the time of the ever-memorable announcement of the donation of his library on the 5th of August, 1856, we expressed our thankfulness in becoming resolutions of acknowledgment. When, a few months afterwards, he was taken from us, we followed him to his last resting-place with unaffected demonstrations of sorrow and respect. When his magnificent library was, after his decease, transferred to the possession of the Society, and opened for consultation and use, we took an appropriate public notice of the interesting and important occasion; and we have now come together to unite in one more demonstration of respect, and one more act of grateful acknowledgment. We have come to gather up the recollections of the diligent, modest, unambitious, but in many respects important and memo-

rable, life; to trace the strongly marked traits of a character, which, in an humble sphere of action, wrought out so much solid good, and appropriated to itself so much of the refinement and culture of the more favored pursuits; to do justice to those pure tastes, refined sympathies, and high aspirations, which, beneath the burden of uncongenial circumstances, seemed hardly to do justice to themselves; in a word, to characterize a representative man, unconsciously such on his own part, and during his life inadequately recognized by his contemporaries.

The events of Mr. Dowse's life were few and simple, of no great interest in themselves, and important only as furnishing the basis and cohesion of that quiet action, by which he carried on the even and beautiful tenor of his existence. He was born in the lower walks of society; one might almost say, the lowest of those removed from actual dependence and penury. He enjoyed scarcely the humblest advantages of education; and was placed in no position to give promise of future eminence, had he been designed and endowed by Providence for an eminent career. He was not favorably situated in early life to engage in any of the pursuits by which men attract notice and earn reputation: but he early entered on a course of manual labor not well adapted to stimulate the mental powers; a career which might be successful, but which in scarce any possible event could lead to distinction. Hugh Miller, a stone-mason in the old red-sandstone quarries of Cromarty, George Stephenson in the depths of the coal mines at Black Callerton, may seem to be placed on the lowest round of the ladder of

advancement; but it was one which led by regular, though at first arduous, ascent to the heights of fame. The young leather-dresser's apprentice could, however successful, scarcely grow up to be any thing but a respectable master-workman. His humble industry, pursued under the livelong disadvantage of a serious bodily infirmity, was crowned with success. The diligence, energy, and intelligence with which he carried on his laborious calling, resulted in the accumulation of a handsome property; of which, from an early period, he began to employ a liberal share, not in the ordinary luxuries of building, equipage, and domestic establishment, but in the gratification of a taste for books, for art, and for Nature in her simpler beauties, and genial, home-bred relations. As his fortune continued to grow, instead of struggling to rise in social position or increased importance in the eyes of the community, he availed himself of his ample means only to redeem added hours from manual labor, in order to devote them to reading. Late in life, he rose, not to the places which a vulgar ambition covets but cannot fill, but from his work-bench to his study-table. The shop-windows were still open beneath his library, though the work was carried on by others in his employ. The decently carved lamb still stood upon its lofty pillar before his door, symbolizing his quiet nature, while it advertised his humble trade, for years after the growing infirmities of age had obliged him to leave hard work to younger hands. Advancing years stole upon him, and still found him occupied with an instructive book; turning a costly volume of engravings, of the beauty of which he had a keen perception;

contemplating with never-cloyed zest the valuable collection of copies in water-colors of the ancient masters, the acquisition of which formed what may be called the fortunate accident of his life; strolling among his flower-beds, listening to the hum of his bees, whom he would not allow to be robbed of their honey; superintending the planting of his shrubbery, and pruning his trees. Under still-increasing infirmities, he reaches, he passes, the accepted term of human life; and the sobered thoughts which suit its decline take more exclusive possession of his mind. He begins to make frequent visits to Mount Auburn, in preparation for that visit on which we bore him company, from which there is no return. Humble mechanic, owing all the solace of his lonely existence to the success with which he had been able to ennoble manual labor by intellectual culture, he thinks it no presumption, toward the close of his life, and when no selfish motive of attracting worldly applause could by possibility be ascribed to the act, to raise at Mount Auburn a simple and solid shaft in honor of his brother-mechanic, — the immortal printer; he digs his own sepulchre at the foot of the monument thus piously erected to the memory of Franklin; bestows his precious library, the fruit of all his labors, the scene of most of his enjoyments, the concentrated essence, so to say, of his existence, on the Massachusetts Historical Society; at their request, yields his placid and venerable features for the first time to the pencil of the artist; and sinks to rest.

Such was our benefactor, whose biography I have substantially exhausted in this prelusive sketch. He

was the seventh of the eight children of Eleazer and Mehitable Dowse; and was born at Charlestown, in Massachusetts, on the 28th of December, 1772. His father was a leather-dresser, and owned a wooden house and a large lot of land nearly opposite to the spot where the church of our respected associate, the Rev. Dr. Ellis, now stands. I do not suppose that it would elevate Thomas Dowse in the estimation of any judicious person to be able to say of him, that he belonged to what is called a distinguished family; on the contrary, it would rob him of much of his merit as a self-made man to trace his fondness for books, and his aptitude for intellectual and artistic culture, either to hereditary tastes or patrimonial advantages of education. Still, however, I have never known a person whose self-reliance was of so austere a cast, that he did not take pleasure, when it was in his power to do so, in tracing his descent from an honored line. It may, therefore, be proper to state, that, though the parents of Mr. Dowse occupied an untitled position at a time when titles were a trifle less shadowy than at the present day, one of his family, Jonathan Dowse, is mentioned in a land-conveyance in Middlesex County, in 1732, with the title of "Honorable." Honorable Jonathans are more plentiful now than then; and I suppose, that, in the first third of the eighteenth century, that designation was confined to members of the Executive Council, or persons in high judicial station, and entitled the individual decorated with it to the decent adornments of a scarlet cloak, white wig, and three-cornered hat. In what capacity Jonathan Dowse was complimented with this distinguished title, — distin-

guished at that time; now rather conferring distinction on the principle that Cassius and Brutus were distinguished at the funeral of Junia, — I am uninformed.

If it were possible to penetrate to the remote and occult sources of temperament and character as developed in after-life, some sensible effect would no doubt be traceable to the influence of stirring, anxious, and disastrous times upon the tenderest years of infancy. Vague but abiding impressions are probably made upon the imagination long before the reasoning faculties begin to act; and, if the influence is one which pervades the whole community, the effect will be seen in the character of the age. It is, I suppose, in this way that we are to explain the appearance of vigorous, high-toned, and resolute generations of men in critical and decisive periods, when great interests are at stake, and mighty energies are in action. The year 1772, in which Thomas Dowse was born, was one of the most important of the momentous years that preceded the Revolution. The mind of the entire community was in a state of intense excitement, fermenting toward the crisis. The domestic circle of his father's house was darkened by the death, in that one year, of three children. The public crisis at length came on; and his parents fled from the flames of their humble dwelling in Charlestown on the ever-memorable 17th of June, 1775: he, a child of two and a half years of age, too young, of course, for a distinct remembrance of the event in after-times; old enough to have retained dark and solemn though indistinct impressions of the anxious haste, the energetic trepidation, the sorrowful parting, the bitter and the tender emotions,

which must pervade a quiet home, surrendered all at once to the worst horrors of war. The nurses in Normandy still awe their restless children by the ominous chant of Malbrook, — a name of terror throughout the cottages of France a century and a half ago, of which the force is not yet expended. Dr. Samuel Johnson, at the same age with Mr. Dowse when his parents fled from Charlestown, was taken to London to be touched for the king's evil by Queen Anne, and retained through life "a sort of solemn recollection of a lady in diamonds, with a long black hood," — a spectral image which no doubt fed his constitutional melancholy. There was a shade of severity in Mr. Dowse's manner which may have had its origin in the impressions produced upon the child's mind by the sorrowful and indignant *hegira* from the flaming streets of Charlestown; kept alive, as those impressions would necessarily be, by the more distinct recollections of the members of his family older than himself.

The family, fleeing from the ashes of their humble dwelling, retreated first for a short time to Holliston, and then to Sherborn, in Middlesex County, where it had been originally established; and here Thomas grew up till he became of age. It was far from being a time of prosperity. The burden of the Revolution, and of the unsettled times that succeeded it, fell heavy upon the land. Eleazer Dowse recommenced the business of a leather-dresser at Sherborn; but it was much if it yielded a frugal support to his family. One incident only, as far as I am aware, has been remembered of the childhood of Thomas; and it was one of two accidents, as they are

called, the one disastrous, the other fortunate, which exercised an important influence over his tastes and occupations. The misfortune took place when he was six years old. It was a fall from an apple-tree, succeeded by a rheumatic fever, which ended in an incurable lameness, with frequently recurring periods of acute suffering throughout his life. Judging him from his appearance at the meridian of his days, when, notwithstanding his lameness, he stood full six feet in height, — I think rather more, — with a frame by nature evidently of an athletic cast; retaining even to the last, as we see in Wight's excellent portrait, distinct traces of a countenance once symmetrical and comely, — it is not difficult to suppose, that as the thoughtful child compared himself with his nimble comrades in boyhood, or as he grew in years with his strenuous companions in later life, something of the bitterness of feeling which clouded Byron's spirit may have stolen over him, and given a sombre tinge to his habitual meditations. At all events, as I knew him, he was a taciturn, lonely, self-reliant man, drawing solitary enjoyment from the deep cold wells of reading and thought.

It is probable, that during the first confinement, caused by the painful accident, and the fever which followed it, in his case, as in that of Scott and so many other intelligent children under similar circumstances, the weary and languishing hours were soothed by the assiduities of mother, sister, and friends reading to him such books — then few and precious — as would amuse the tedium of the sick-chamber, and that his taste for reading began in this way. He had some schooling; but the town-

school in Sherborn, eighty years ago, could have been of very little account. His lameness was the most earnest and successful teacher. The feeble and aching limbs, which prevented his engaging in out-door sports, led him to seek occupation and amusement in books. In one of the few conversations which I ever had with him on this subject, — for, uncommunicative in all things, he was especially so in whatever concerned himself, — he said, that, from his very earliest recollection, he was fond of books, and devoted every shilling that came into his possession to their purchase. When, in after-life, he became acquainted with the writings and history of Sir Walter Scott, he felt himself drawn by sympathy toward him as a fellow-sufferer. "Lameness," he used to say to a young friend, "drove us both to books, — him to making them, and me to reading them." This sympathy led him to procure a bust of Scott, the only one which adorned his library.

But though books, from his childhood, formed the solace of his life, they could not furnish his support. The ample funds, which now exist for the education of meritorious but needy young men, had not then been provided by public and private liberality. The circumstances of his family were not such as to put a college education within his reach. At the proper age, the poor lame boy must begin to learn a trade; and that of a leather-dresser was naturally selected. He had probably begun to work under his father, in the shop and on the farm, as soon as he was able to labor. His taste for reading, as we have seen, was developed still earlier. As he grew up, all his leisure time was devoted to it; and, before

he was eighteen years of age, he had read all the books which he could procure in Sherborn.

He continued to work with his father till he attained his majority; at which time a strong desire possessed him to see the famous places abroad, of which he had learned something from books. To gratify this desire, he gladly accepted the offer of one of his father's friends and neighbors, the captain of a vessel about to sail from Norfolk, in Virginia, to London. He was to get to Norfolk before the vessel sailed, at his own expense. Too poor to accompany the captain by land, he engaged a passage in a coasting vessel bound from Boston to Norfolk. A long-continued east-wind detained the coaster in port, till it was too late to reach Norfolk before the vessel sailed for London. Thomas lost that chance of seeing Europe; and another never offered itself. It was a critical period in his life. The money which he had brought from Sherborn ran low at a boarding-house while the cruel east-wind prevailed; and he was not willing to return, a disappointed adventurer, to his father's door. Seeking employment in the business in which he was brought up, he engaged in the service of Mr. Wait, a wool-puller and leather-dresser at Roxbury, as a journeyman, at twelve dollars a month. He remained in this situation for ten years; and the highest wages he ever received was twenty-five dollars a month.

In 1803, Mr. Dowse, now thirty-one years of age, was enabled, with the assistance of Mr. Wait, to set up in business for himself. In that year he established himself in Cambridgeport; which was beginning sensibly to prosper under the influence of the building of West-

Boston, or, as it is now called, Hancock Bridge. Those who recollect the Port as it was at the beginning of the century will be able to appreciate the forecast which led Mr. Dowse to select it as an advantageous place of business. Few portions of the environs of Boston were, at that time, less attractive. It was near the great centres of interest, literary, commercial, and historical; but it was not of them. In the early settlement of the country, Governor Winthrop's party, as is well known, made its first permanent landing at Charlestown. The communication westward by land, from the spot where they stationed themselves for the summer of 1630, was over Charlestown Neck, and by the old Charlestown road, which now leads to Cambridge Common, and is called Kirkland Street. Along the line of this road there had probably been an Indian trail, which left Cambridgeport quite to the south. Water communication by boats was, in the absence of roads, much resorted to along the coast and up the river. It was, no doubt, the principal mode of conveyance from Charlestown and Boston to Watertown, which began to be settled earlier than Cambridge. The shores of Charles River for a considerable part of the way, along what is now Cambridgeport, were low and wet, and afforded no conveniences for landing. A great part of the territory was a sunken marsh or an almost impenetrable swamp, interspersed with a few tracts of upland, nearly, and some wholly, insulated. This condition of things did not materially change for a century and a half. Lieutenant-Governor Phipps purchased as a farm the entire territory of what is now East Cambridge, in the early

part of the eighteenth century. The Inman and Soden Farms were cultivated about the same time; and these were the only considerable improvements, east of Dana Hill, before the building of West-Boston Bridge.

That event took place in 1793. Till then, the chief value of the lands in Cambridgeport arose from the salt hay procured from them. The situation was altogether uninviting. There were no highways or bridges across the marshes. "It was," says Dr. Holmes, "a sort of insulated tract, detached from every other." It was called "the Neck;" and few persons went into it in the course of the year, except for the purpose of cutting and bringing off the salt hay, and for what is ironically, I suppose, called "sport;" that is, wading all day up to your middle through oozy creeks and tangled bushes, beneath a burning sun, and under clouds of mosquitos, gnats, and green-headed flies, with a heavy fowling-piece on your shoulder, and an affectionate but muddy dog at your heels, in the hope of bringing home a sheldrake and half a dozen yellow-legs, at nightfall, as the trophy of the day's success. There were but four houses east of Judge Dana's before the bridge was built, and a repulsive loneliness reigned around them. The remains of an Indian wigwam, of rather equivocal reputation, existed, within my recollection, in the depths of a gloomy thicket; and there were portions of this forlorn territory, if the popular superstition could be credited, not in the exclusive occupation of the denizens of this world.

With the building of the bridge, and the opening of the causeway to it, — of which, however, the construction was very imperfect, — the improvement of the Port began.

In 1801, a considerable part of the Inman Farm was sold in small parcels; and a rapid increase of building and population now took place. Young men of enterprise began to resort to Cambridgeport from the interior of the Commonwealth. Mr. Dowse followed in 1803. He established himself near the Universalist church, in partnership with Mr. Aaron Gay; his old master Wait furnishing the capital, and receiving half the profits. This arrangement lasted but about a year, when the partnership was dissolved. Mr. Dowse remained in the pursuit of his business for about ten years longer, on the spot where he had first established himself, and with such success that he felt warranted, in 1814, in erecting the ample premises at the corner of Main and Prospect Streets. These he continued to occupy as a wool-puller and leather-dresser, with a succession of partners, to the close of his life; retiring, however, from the actual pursuit of his business at about the age of seventy-four.

Industrious, punctual, energetic, intelligent, and upright, he prospered in his calling. The wool-trade was profitable: the sheep-skins manufactured by him, and chiefly in request with the book-binders and glovers, acquired the reputation of superior finish and durability, and consequently enjoyed a preference in the market. His gains were therefore steady, and they were frugally husbanded. But, though simple in his tastes and moderate in his expenditure, he was far from parsimonious. His house, his domestic establishment, and his garden, were on a scale of convenience and comfort — one might almost say luxury of a Doric cast — seldom witnessed on the part of those who

live by manual labor. A moderate fortune was invested by him — unproductively, except as it produced rational and healthful enjoyment — in his buildings and grounds; and a constantly increasing portion of his income was laid out in books. His days were devoted to hard work, and to the conveyance of its products to market in Boston; but the early morning and the evening hours were employed in reading. He never stinted himself in the purchase of books; and the sums of money, hardly earned by daily labor, and withdrawn from accumulation to be expended in this way, amounted of themselves, in the course of his life, to what would have been an independent fortune. The cost of his library, as presented to our Society, is supposed to have been not less than forty thousand dollars. If interest is taken into the account, it must have been twice that sum. I mention these facts, not as wishing to bring the value of books in the hands of an intelligent reader down to a pecuniary standard, but for the opposite purpose of showing how little this was done by Mr. Dowse. It may be difficult to find another instance of an individual, especially one physically infirm, who confined himself beyond the age of threescore years and ten to a laborious mechanical trade, and invested in buildings, grounds, and books, a sum of money amply sufficient to have supported him without manual labor.

About the year 1821 happened the second of the two accidental occurrences of his life — the one adverse, the other prosperous — to which I have alluded: I refer to the acquisition of a valuable collection of copies, in water-colors, of paintings by the great masters. Mr. Dowse

had early formed a taste, not merely for reading, but for beautiful typography and binding, in which the publications of the American press were at that time sadly deficient. Nor were the shelves of our booksellers then, as now, supplied by importation with ample stocks of the choicest productions of the foreign press. To gratify his taste in the beauty of his editions, Mr. Dowse was accustomed to import his books directly from London. About the year 1820, his agent there sent him the prospectus of a lottery for the disposal of the copies of a magnificent series of engravings of the ancient masters, and of the water-color copies which had been made of the originals in order to this publication. The lottery was arranged on the principle, that, according as the first-drawn number was even or odd, all the even or all the odd numbers should receive a set of engravings as a prize; while the water-color copies were divided, and formed the two highest additional prizes. This probably was an artifice of the managers of the lottery to induce every one, disposed to adventure in it, to buy at least two tickets. Mr. Dowse and a neighbor in Cambridgeport united in the purchase of three, dividing them between the even and the odd numbers. It was not convenient to the neighbor to retain his interest in the purchase of the tickets, and Mr. Dowse took the three to himself.

His first information of the fortunate result came from the Custom House in Boston, in the shape of a heavy demand for duties upon the boxes, which contained fifty-two paintings in water-colors, in their frames; a set of the colored engravings executed from them, and a set of the same engravings not colored; all of which he had

drawn as the second and third prizes in the lottery. The entire amount of duties, freight, and other charges, was about a thousand dollars. Whether this was a greater sum than it was convenient to Mr. Dowse to advance for what he must have regarded at that time as a mere luxury, or whether his taste for this branch of art remained to be developed, I have been informed that he hesitated at first about retaining the collection, and consulted one or two friends on the expediency of doing so. Their counsel — seconded, no doubt, by his own inclination — determined him, at any rate, to proceed with caution. The collection was placed on exhibition at Doggett's rooms, in Market Street, for the gratification of the public. It attracted great attention on the part of all persons of taste, and of the artists then residing in Boston, and especially of Allston and Stuart. Mr. Dowse himself, perceiving the value of the collection, abandoned all thoughts of parting with the treasure thus thrown into his hands; fitted up two rooms in the rear of his library for their reception; and there they remained, one of the great ornaments of his establishment, an object of curiosity and interest to strangers visiting this region, and of delightful contemplation to those who enjoyed the privilege of Mr. Dowse's friendship, to the end of his days.

This event I take to have decided his course for the residue of his life. His hesitation, whether or not he would dispossess himself of the treasures of art which had fallen to his lot, seems to show, if the anecdote is authentic, that hitherto he had not entirely made up his mind to devote his time and his means wholly to the

gratification of intellectual and artistic tastes. It is probable that the inspection of the paintings at the exhibition, and the study of the engravings at home, opened within him the hitherto hidden fountains of feeling and perception for high art. It may seem extravagant to ascribe such an effect to a collection of copies: but although there is an incommunicable beauty in the original canvas of a great master, yet a faithful engraving, and still more a spirited copy, are to the intelligent observer no mean substitute; for even the original canvas is, so to say, but a lifeless thing, into which the taste of the observer, in sympathy with the artist, is to infuse vitality and meaning. It is the medium through which the suggestive ideas of the creative mind are reflected to the perceptive mind, — painter and spectator dividing the work of enjoyment and admiration. Surveyed by the untaught eye, scanned by the unsympathizing gaze, Raphael's Madonna at Dresden, and Titian's Cornaro Family, stand upon a level with the memorable painting of the Primrose Family, which was executed by the industrious artist in four days. The sublime and beautiful images, created by genius in the soul of the artist, are projected on the canvas, — perhaps inadequately projected, even by the most gifted master, — in order to call up corresponding images in the mind of the beholder. There is no doubt that the gifted painter or sculptor, like the gifted poet, feels and conceives higher and brighter things than he can possibly express in words, in form, or colors; while the observer and the reader of congenial spirit find a significance in the page, the statue, or the canvas, far above the literal expression. As he muses on the poem,

the statue, the painting, the fire burns within him. The electric circuit between his mind and that of the poet, the sculptor, the painter, is completed; and, lo! the airy imaginings of the artist crystallize into substantial realities. The dead letter of Homer and Dante and Milton begins to cry in melting articulate tones; the stony lips of heroes and sages, moulded by Phidias and Praxiteles, shake off the dust of two thousand years, and move and talk to the beholder; and the transfigured canvas of Raphael blazes with the unutterable glories which irradiated the Son of God, when, as he prayed, the fashion of his face was altered, and his raiment was white and glistering. According to the acuteness of his natural perceptions, the extent of his artistic culture, and his own sympathy with original genius, the observer will find on the canvas mere mechanical execution, the lowest stage of art; imitative resemblance of nature, the point where ordinary criticism stops; embodied thought and character, in which the reign of genius begins; rapt ideality, the third heaven of the artistic creation. Keen is the eye, profound the study, exquisite the taste, rare the congeniality, of creative power, which can comprehend at once all the elements of artistic beauty and life, and melt them into a harmonious whole, in which sense and intellect and feeling, the eye, the mind, and the soul, enter for an equal part.

Mr. Dowse's eye was true, though hitherto little exercised; his taste was naturally pure and simple; and, in matters of art, he had at least nothing to unlearn. The collection, of which he had become the fortunate possessor, consisted indeed of copies in water-colors; but

they were copies of choice originals, executed by skilful hands. They were truthful representatives of some of the most celebrated works of the greatest masters of what has been called the lost art of painting; works of which, at that time, neither copies nor engravings had often reached this country. The collection consisted altogether of fifty-two paintings, of which four were copies of Raphael; three each of Titian, Guercino, Claude Lorraine, Rembrandt, and Rubens; two each of Giotto, Domenichino, Guido, Annibale Caracci, and Andrea del Sarto; and one each of Cimabue, Ghirlandaio, Coreggio, Giulio Romano, Parmegiano, Bordone, Garofolo, Schidone, Cortona, Sebastian del Piombo, Salvator Rosa, Murillo, Giorgione, the two Poussins, Paul Potter, Teniers, jun., Ostade, Gherard Dow, Berghem, Van de Werf, Wouvermans; and one fine water-piece, of the Dutch school, not named, — nearly all the greatest names in all the classic schools of art, and an adequate specimen of their peculiar styles; and this, too, before the sparkling paradoxes and fearless dogmatism of Ruskin had cast a shade of doubt on their accepted merit.

Thus he became possessed of a collection of paintings, — copies, indeed, but copies of originals that never cross the Atlantic; a collection which was declared by Allston to embody in the aggregate richer and more instructive treasures of art than could have been found at that time in the whole United States. This acquisition no doubt exercised, as I have already stated, a considerable influence upon his feelings and purposes, and confirmed him in his resolution to devote his time and his means to the gratification of his taste and the improvement of his mind.

Of his personal history at this period of his life there is little else to record. There is a tradition, that, at the age of fifty, he contemplated marriage. This intention, if ever cherished, was soon abandoned; and his latter like his earlier days were passed in the somewhat ungenial solitude which appears to have suited his temperament. He seems to have been wholly free from the unhappy restless desire "to better his condition," as it is called, which, in a few exceptional cases, leads to brilliant fortune, condemns the majority of men to a life of feverish and generally unsuccessful change, and tempts not a few to their ruin. Giving his hours of labor to his trade, and those of relaxation to his books, his pictures, and his garden, he lived on to a serene, contented, unaspiring, and venerable age; exhibiting a beautiful example of the triumph of a calm and resolute spirit over what are usually regarded as the most adverse outward circumstances.

A supposed invincible necessity of our natures has, in our modern society, almost separated the mechanical from the intellectual pursuits. A life of manual labor and business cares has usually been found (less perhaps in our country than in most others) to be inconsistent with the cultivation of a taste for literature and art. It is generally taken for granted, that, for this purpose, means and leisure are required, not within the reach of those who live by the labor of the hands. Hence society, speaking in general terms, is divided into two classes, — one engrossed with manual labor or business cares, and suffering for want of a due culture of the mental powers; the other employed in pursuits that task the intellect,

without calling into play the wonderful faculties of our material frames. The result in too many cases gives us labor without refinement, and learning without physical development. Such was evidently not the design of our nature. Curiously, wondrously compounded of soul and body, it was meant to admit the harmonious and sympathetic development of the material and intellectual principle: rather let me say, its attainable highest excellence can exist only when such development takes place. It is quite evident, that, as far as that object is attainable, labor should be ennobled and adorned by the cultivation of intellectual tastes and the enjoyment of intellectual pleasures; while those whose leading pursuits are of a literary or scientific character ought to inure themselves to exercises, occupations, and sports which strengthen the frame, brace the muscles, quicken the senses, and call into action the latent powers of our physical nature.

It has ever appeared to me that Mr. Dowse's life and career were replete with instruction in this respect; in which, indeed, he is entitled to be regarded as a representative man. Few persons, as we have seen, above the dead level of absolute penury, start in life with such slender advantages of position and outfit. He inherits no fortune, he enjoys no advantages of education. From the age of six years, he labors under a serious physical infirmity. The occupation he has chosen furnishes no facilities for the cultivation of the mind over most other mechanical trades; and, till he has advanced to the age of fifty, nothing that can be called a piece of "good luck" occurs to give an impulse to his feelings. But, under these certainly not propitious circumstances, he forms a

taste for books and for art such as is usually displayed only by persons of prosperous fortune; and he provides himself, by the labor of his hands, with ampler means for gratifying those tastes than are often employed by the affluent and the liberal. If his example proves the important and salutary truth, that there is no incompatibility between manual labor and intellectual culture, the rarity of the example shows with equal plainness how firm was the purpose, how resolute the will, which enabled him to overcome the difficulties of such a course. We can fancy the unspoken reflections that may sometimes have passed through his mind as he leaned over his work-bench. We can imagine, that in his hours of solitary labor, and at the commencement of his career, he sometimes said to himself, "These halting limbs and this enfeebled frame shall not gain the mastery. If I cannot move with vigor in the active and busy world, much more shall these hard-working hands provide me the means of mental improvement. Poverty is my inheritance: I know from the cradle the taste of her bitter but wholesome cup; but I will earn for myself the advantages which fortune sometimes in vain showers on her favorites. A resolute purpose shall be my patrimony; a frugal life, my great revenue. Mean may be the occupation, hard and steady the toil; but they shall not break nor bend my spirit. It has not been given me to pass the happy days of emulous youth in the abodes of learning, or to sit at the feet of the masters of science and literature; but, if Providence has denied me that privilege which most I should have coveted, it has granted me a love of letters not always brought from

academic halls. The wise of every country and age shall teach me from the shelves of my library; the gray dawn and the midnight lamp shall bear witness to my diligence; at the feet of the great masters I will educate myself."

How effectually he did this, may be seen by a hasty glance at his library. A short time before his death, he caused a few copies of a catalogue of it to be printed for private distribution. It is contained in an octavo volume of two hundred and fourteen pages. The number of works entered in the catalogue is two thousand and eight, and the estimated number of volumes is not less than five thousand; all decently, many elegantly, a few magnificently, bound. They are, for the most part, of choice editions, where a choice of editions exists. A fair proportion of them are specimens of beautiful typography; a few of them works of bibliographical luxury and splendor. It is an English library. Mr. Dowse was not acquainted with the ancient or foreign languages; and as it was formed not for ostentation, but use, it contained but a few volumes not in the English tongue. In running over the catalogue cursorily for this purpose, I find nothing in the Greek language, and but a single work in Latin, and that not an ancient author, — a volume of De Bry's collection of voyages; and nothing in any foreign languages but the works of the three great masters of sacred oratory in French, — Bossuet, Bourdaloue, Massillon; in all, seventy-two volumes. These, with the addition of the voyage of Father Marquette, who, first of civilized men, descended the Mississippi, from its junction with the Wisconsin to the Arkansas, were the

only books in a foreign language contained in Mr. Dowse's library, — the last being a present.

But, though he confined his library almost exclusively to the English language, it was enriched with the best translations of nearly all the classical writers of Greece and of Rome, as well as of several of the standard authors of the principal modern tongues. Thus his shelves contained translations of Homer, Hesiod, the minor lyric and elegiac poets, Pindar, Theocritus, Æschylus, Sophocles, Euripides and Aristophanes, Plato and Aristotle, Philostratus, Epictetus, Marcus Antoninus, Demosthenes, Herodotus, Thucydides, Xenophon, Arrian, Diodorus Siculus, Dionysius of Halicarnassus, Polybius, Plutarch, Pausanias, Dio Chrysostom, Longinus, Aristænetus, Anacreon, Lucian, Porphyry, and the Emperor Julian. From the Latin he had translations of Lucretius, Virgil, Ovid, Horace, Catullus, Tibullus, Lucan, Claudian, Juvenal, Persius, Plautus, Terence, Cæsar, Sallust, Livius, Tacitus, Suetonius, Justin, Cicero, Quintilian, Seneca, Pliny the Younger, and Apuleius. Among German writers he had translations of the principal works of Klopstock, Wieland, Goethe, Schiller, of Norden, Niebuhr, father and son, Johannes von Müller, Heeren, Otto Müller, Raumer, Ranke, Mendelssohn, Kant, the two Schlegels, Menzel, Heinrich Heine, and Weber. From the Italian language he had translations of Dante, Petrarch, Boccaccio, Ariosto, Tasso, Guarini, Marco Polo, Machiavelli, the Memorials of Columbus, Guicciardini, Clavigero, Botta, Lanzi, and Metastasio. Of French authors he had translations of the old Fabliaux, De Comines, Froissart, Monstrelet, Rabelais, Montaigne, Pascal, De Retz, De

la Rochefoucault, Fénélon, Racine, Lafontaine, Molière, Madame de Sévigné, Boileau, De la Salle, La Hontan, Rapin, Bayle, Rollin, Montesquieu, Bossu, Charlevoix, Voltaire, Rousseau, Grimm, Vertot, the Abbé Raynal, St. Pierre, De Vaillant, Volney, Brissot de Warville, De Chastellux, Marmontel, Barthelemi, Necker, Madame de Staël, Madame Roland, Mirabeau, Chénier, Chateaubriand, La Roche Jacquelein, Baron Humboldt, Sismondi, Guizot, De Tocqueville, Lamartine, and Béranger. In Spanish and Portuguese he had Cervantes, Cortez, Gomara, Bernal Diaz, Las Casas, De Soto, De Solis, Garcilasso de la Vega, Herrera, Mariana, Molina, Quevedo, Ulloa, Cabrera, Alcedo, and Camoens. It is scarcely necessary to add to this, I fear, tedious recital of names, that it was evidently Mr. Dowse's intention, as far as it could be effected through the medium of translations, that his shelves should not only contain the works of the master-minds of every language and age, but also a fair representation of the general literature of the ancient and modern tongues.

But it was, of course, upon his own language that he expended his strength; for here he was able to drink at the fountains. Putting aside purely scientific, professional, and technical treatises, — in which, however, the library is not wholly deficient, — it may be said to contain, with a few exceptions, the works of nearly every standard English and American author, with a copious supply of illustrative and miscellaneous literature, brought down to within a few years of his death, when, under the growing infirmities of age, he ceased to add to his collection. No one department appears to predomi-

nate; and it would be impossible to gather, from the choice of his books, that his taste had even strongly inclined to any one branch of reading beyond all others. He possessed the poets and the dramatists, from the earliest period to the present day (more than three pages and a half of the printed catalogue are devoted to Shakspeare and his commentators); a fine series of the chroniclers; the historians and biographers; the writers and collectors of voyages and travels, among which is the beautiful set of Purchas's Pilgrims, one volume of which was selected as the earnest volume of the donation of his library to the Historical Society; the philosophers, theologians, moralists, essayists; and an ample choice of miscellaneous writers. To enumerate the most important of them would be simply to repeat the prominent names in the literature of the English language. Though not aiming in any great degree at the acquisition of books whose principal value consists in their rarity, Mr. Dowse was not without fondness for bibliographical curiosities. His collection contains a considerable number of curious works seldom found on this side of the Atlantic, and among them a magnificent large paper-copy of Dibdin's bibliographical publications. Though somewhat reserved in speaking of his books, and generally contented with simply calling a friend's attention to a curious volume, he sometimes added, in a low voice, "A rare book."

When the works of authors, falling within his range, had been collected in a uniform edition, he was generally provided with it. There is not much of science, abstract or applied; though that expression may seem ill chosen,

when I add that it contains translations of Newton's "Principia" and Laplace's "System of the World." There is but little of jurisprudence in any department; but Grotius and Vattel, and one of the critical editions of Blackstone, show that neither the public nor municipal law had been wholly overlooked by him. In American books the library is rather deficient. It contains President John Adams's "Defence of the American Constitutions;" but no work on the Constitution of the United States, and but very few having any bearing upon political questions. There are the works of Hamilton, whom Mr. Dowse greatly respected; of Fisher Ames; Jefferson's "Notes on Virginia;" and the little volume entitled the "Political Legacies of Washington:" but with these exceptions, and that of the works of Franklin, whom he held in especial honor, Mr. Dowse's library contains the writings of no one of the Presidents of the United States, nor of any one of our distinguished statesmen. It is well supplied in the department of American history, and in that branch contains some works of great rarity and value. Of congressional documents, I think there is not one on the catalogue!

That it wants many books not less valuable than many which it contains, is no doubt true. Nothing else was possible, in a collection of five thousand volumes. Had it been fifty or five hundred thousand, the case would have been the same. It is to be remembered also, that he formed his library not in a mass, and on the principle of embracing at once all the books belonging to any particular department. He sent for the books which he wanted; for the books which were offered in sale cata-

logues at acceptable prices; for the books which fell in with his line of thought at the time; reserving to future opportunities to supply deficiencies, and make departments more complete. It must be recollected, too, that though his business prospered, and yielded what, under the circumstances of the case, might be deemed an ample income, he never had at command the means for extravagant purchases. Nothing would be more inconsiderate than to compare his library with the great foreign private libraries, — Mr. Grenville's or Lord Spencer's in England, or Mr. Lenox's in this country, on which princely fortunes have been expended; although, if estimated in proportion to his means, his modest collection would not suffer in the contrast. "When I was twenty-eight years of age," Mr. Dowse remarked to Mr. Ticknor, "I never had any means but the wages of a journeyman leather-dresser, at twenty-five dollars per month; I had never paid five dollars for conveyance from one place to another; I never had worn a pair of boots; and I was at that time in the possession of several hundred good books, well bound."

Such, very inadequately described, — and how can a library be adequately described, except by reading the catalogue? — was Mr. Dowse's collection of books, of which with such simple but affecting formality he transferred the possession to the Historical Society, through you, sir, its President, on the 30th of July, 1856. Here, as he advanced in years, he passed the greater part of his time; withdrawing more and more from the out-door cares of the world, and the heavier toils and closer confinements of his handicraft. His lameness, which

increased with the advance of age, caused him to have rather a morbid disinclination for company abroad; and he had pursued his taste for books and art without sympathy at home. Hence, though his heart was kindly, it was, except in the circle of his most familiar friends, closed in by an unaffected modesty. He had never coined the rich ore of his really genial nature into that bright currency of affable demonstration, which adds so much to the ease and spirit of social intercourse. Having never formed those domestic relations which call out and train the tenderest of our affections, that portion of his nature remained undeveloped. He had never lived in the sunshine of a loving eye, nor reposed in the soft moonlight of a patient, uncomplaining smile. With a mind full of the richest materials for the exercise of that great characteristic of our common humanity, — the gift of rational speech, — his words, in general society, were ever few. Naturally affectionate, he had but little aptitude for the minor graces of life, by which the affections are nourished. It was not difficult for him to render a great service; nor would it have been easy for him to furnish the social circle with the amusement of a leisure hour. A person who judged of him from his taciturnity in a mixed company would have supposed him wholly destitute of that beautiful talent of conversation, too lightly deemed of, too little cultivated, exhausted by most persons when the state of the weather has been agreed upon, the last wretched phase of party politics canvassed, or the character of some absent friend handsomely pulled to pieces, — this happy gift, the product in about equal degrees of good temper, good spirits, and a ready wit;

which with playful mastery wrests our time and thoughts from the dominion of the grim perplexities of life, extracts real happiness out of the sportive nothings of the hour, lights up the fireside with contagious cheerfulness, sets the table in a harmless roar of sympathetic mirth, casts out for a while the legion demons of care, and charms even rooted sorrows, for the moment, into forgetfulness. They would have judged amiss. There are those in this hall who can testify that he also had his genial hours; and they were not few, nor far between. In a trusted company, on a happy theme, a choice volume, a favorite character, the ice was melted, the waters flowed; and he poured forth his thoughts and feelings, and the fruits of his reading, in a stream of colloquial eloquence which the most gifted might have envied, and to which the best informed might have listened with instruction.

Mingling but little in society, still less did he take part in the larger gatherings of men; scarcely ever attending church, — though the hours of Sunday were given to a graver choice of books, of which his library contained an ample store. To every form of communication with the public by the written or the spoken word he was absolutely a stranger. He never addressed a public meeting; for he never attended a public meeting, except to exercise the right of suffrage. He never wrote a paragraph for the press; never was a candidate, successful or unsuccessful, for office; and never, that I am aware of, took any active part in the political discussions of the day; at least, in the course of nearly forty years' acquaintance with him, it never occurred to me to

hear him express an opinion on any question of party politics.

Of the religious opinions of Mr. Dowse I have no personal knowledge. I have reason to believe, from reliable information, that he cherished a profound traditionary respect for the Christian Revelation; and that, having pursued a course of manly inquiry, he had settled down upon a rational faith in those prominent doctrines which unite the assent of most professing Christians. His library contained, in whole or in part, the works of Lord Herbert of Cherbury, of Hobbes, of Toland, of Chubb, of Tindal, of Mandeville, of Voltaire, and of Rousseau: but it also contained those of the great theologians of the English church,—of Hooker, Jeremy Taylor, Chillingworth, Barrow, Tillotson, Clark, Sherlock, and Horseley; those of the orthodox dissenters, Watts and Doddridge; those of Campbell and Blair; and those of Lindsey, Priestley, and Wakefield. Of American divines, he had the writings of Chauncey; of Freeman, of whom he was a great admirer; and of Buckminster; but not those of Jonathan Edwards, Dwight, or Channing. He admired the Liturgy of the church of England; and it was in presumed conformity with his wishes in this respect, that the solemn and affecting service for the burial of the dead was performed at the door of his tomb, amid the falling leaves of November. He had constantly on his table, during the latter months of his life, a copy of the Liturgy compiled a few years since, by a distinguished layman of this city,* from the liturgies

* Hon. David Sears.

of the leading branches of the Christian church; a truly significant expression of that yearning for union, which is cherished, as I think, by sincere and earnest men throughout Christendom. I am inclined to the opinion, that, without dogmatizing, he leaned to the ancient formularies of belief, as they were received by the liberal clergy of the last quarter of the eighteenth century and the first quarter of the nineteenth; not following opinion to the extremes to which it has more recently been carried. I believe that he felt devoutly, speculated modestly and sparingly, and aimed to give proof of Christian principles by Christian word and deed; covering up the deep things of religion in a thick-woven veil, of which awe of the Infinite was the warp, humility the woof, love the bright tincture; and which was spangled all over with the golden works of justice and mercy. The queen of New England's rivers flows clear and strong through her fertile meadows; the vaporous mists of morning hang over her path: but the golden wealth of autumn loads her banks and attests her presence. In like manner, the stream of practical piety flowed through the heart and conduct of our departed friend; but the fleecy clouds of silent reverence hovered over the current, and a firm and rational faith was principally manifested, not in sectarian professions, but in a chastened temper, a pure conversation, and an upright life.

It would not, I think, be easy to find another instance of a person, possessing equal means of acting upon society, who, from unaffected diffidence, impressed himself less by outward demonstration on the public mind. As his fortune grew, his establishment grew with it, but so

that no sudden expansion arrested the attention of the public. His library swelled to be in some respects the most remarkable in the neighborhood; but no flourish of trumpets proclaimed its existence or its increase. He kept no company, he joined no clubs, belonged to no mutual-admiration societies, talked little, wrote less, published nothing. At length, toward the close of his life, and when no selfish end could be promoted by the unavoidable notoriety of the act, he stepped out of the charmed circle of his diffidence to make a very significant public demonstration of his interior sentiment; not by the methods which most win the gratitude of society, or, what is often mistaken for it, the applause of public bodies; not by donations to public institutions or fashionable charities; but by a most expressive tribute of respect to the honored, the irresponsive dead. Franklin had always been one of his chief favorites among the great men of America. The example of the poor apprentice, of the hard-working journeyman-printer, who rose to the heights of usefulness and fame, had often cheered the humble leather-dresser, as it has thousands of others similarly situated, in the solitary and friendless outset of his own career. The teachings of the philosopher of common sense had found a clear echo in his practical understanding: and so, at the close of his life, he pronounced the eulogy of the great man whom he so highly honored and warmly appreciated; not in the fleeting breath of well-balanced phrases, but in monumental granite. Mr. Dowse's eulogy on Franklin was pronounced in the following inscription, placed upon the side of the obelisk, in which all the prominent points

in the character of the great man to whom it is consecrated are indicated with discrimination, and nothing appropriate to the place is omitted but the name of the venerable and modest admirer, by whom this expensive and abiding tribute of respect was paid: —

TO THE MEMORY
OF
BENJAMIN FRANKLIN
THE PRINTER
THE PHILOSOPHER
THE STATESMAN
THE PATRIOT
WHO
BY HIS WISDOM
BLESSED HIS COUNTRY AND HIS AGE
AND
BEQUEATHED TO THE WORLD
AN ILLUSTRIOUS EXAMPLE
OF
INDUSTRY
INTEGRITY
AND
SELF-CULTURE
BORN IN BOSTON MDCCVI
DIED IN PHILADELPHIA MDCCXC

The manner in which Mr. Dowse proceeded in the erection of a monument to Franklin was as remarkable as the act itself. It was eminently characteristic of the man. He raised no committee; levied no contributions on the weary circle of impatient subscribers, who murmur while they give; summoned no crowd to witness the laying of the corner-stone; but, in the solitude

of his library, projected, carried on, completed, and paid for the work. With the exception of the urn in Franklin Place, — a matter of ornament rather than commemoration, — the first monument raised to the immortal printer, philosopher, and statesman, — one of the brightest names of his age, — was erected by the leather-dresser of Cambridgeport. Boston, that gave him birth; Philadelphia, that holds his ashes;* America, that boasts him, with one peerless exception, her greatest son; Europe, that places him on a level with the highest names, — had reared neither column nor statue to Franklin; when within the shades of Mount Auburn, and by the side of his own tomb, a substantial granite obelisk was erected to his memory by Thomas Dowse.

One more duty remained to be performed; and I know nothing more beautifully heroic in private character than the last few weeks of Mr. Dowse's life. For a long course of years, he seems to have contemplated no other destination for his books than that which awaits the majority of libraries at home and abroad, — that of coming to the hammer on the decease of their proprietors. Happily for us, — and, may I not add, happily for him while he yet lived? — happily for his memory, he conceived the noble idea of bestowing it, while he lived, on a public institution. By an act of calm self-possession rarely witnessed so near the falling of the curtain, he called you, sir (Hon. Robert C. Winthrop), with our

* Since this discourse was delivered, I have been reminded that a statue to Franklin was procured at the expense of the distinguished merchant, Mr. WILLIAM BINGHAM, of that city, and is placed in front of the Philadelphia Library, originally founded by Franklin.

worthy associate, Mr. Livermore, to his presence, as the representatives of our Society; and divesting himself in our favor of what had been his most valued property, — the occupation of his time, the ornament of his existence, — in which he had lived his life and breathed his soul, transferred it to the Massachusetts Historical Society.

The disposition of the remainder of his property was equally characterized by generous feeling toward his natural kindred, and an enlightened regard to the public. Twenty-five thousand dollars were distributed by will to his relations, in equal shares, according to their affinity, which in no case was nearer than nephew or niece; forty-five hundred dollars were given in special bequests; and the residuum of his estate — above forty thousand dollars — was confided to his executors, to be by them appropriated to charitable, literary, or scientific uses. I may, without indelicacy, venture to say, that they have, in my judgment, fulfilled the important trust with signal good judgment and discretion. His beautiful collection of water-colors has been appropriately added by them to the gallery of the Boston Athenæum. A conservatory at the Botanic Garden, built, in part, at their expense, will preserve the memory of his own fondness for the beauties of nature. The public clock, procured by them for the street in which he lived, and the chime of bells in the not distant village, toward the expense of which they have liberally contributed, will frequently remind his fellow-citizens of the remarkable man who has left behind him these pleasing mementoes of his liberality. The Asylum for Aged Indigent

Females, and the Massachusetts General Hospital (two of the most meritorious charities in Boston), have received important additions to their funds from the same source. The town of Sherborn, where he passed his youth and learned his trade, will possess, in the Dowse High School, an abiding monument to his memory; while his immediate fellow-citizens and neighbors, in the hopeful institution which bears his name in Cambridgeport, are destined, I doubt not, — they, and their children to a far-distant posterity, — to enjoy the rich fruits of his energy, perseverance, and probity. May the courses of instruction which it will furnish be ever sacred to the cause of virtue and truth; and the love of letters, which cheered the existence of the generous founder, be nourished by the provision which is thus made for their culture!

You, gentlemen of the Historical Society, appreciated the value, you felt the importance, of the gift of his library, and received it as a sacred trust. You have consecrated to it an apartment, I may venture to say, not unworthy a collection so curious in its history, so precious in its contents, — an inner room in your substantial granite building, approached through your own interesting gallery of portraits and extremely important historical library, looking out from its windows on the hallowed ground where the pious fathers of Boston and Massachusetts rest in peace. There, appropriately arranged in convenient and tasteful cabinets at the expense of his executors, and by their liberality, wisely interpreting and carrying out the munificent intentions of the donor, endowed with a fund which will insure

that permanent supervision and care, without which the best library soon falls into decay, it will remain to the end of time, a μνῆμα as well as a κτῆμα εἰς ἀεί, — a noble monument, more durable, more significant, than marble or brass, — to his pure and honored memory. There, with the sacred repose of death beneath the windows, and the living repose of canonized wisdom around the walls, the well-chosen volumes — the solace for a long life of his own lonely, but, through them, not cheerless hours — will attract, amuse, inform, and instruct successive generations. There his benignant countenance — admirably portrayed by the skilful artist, at the request of the Society, in the last weeks of his life — will continue to smile upon the visitor that genial welcome, which, while he lived, ever made the coveted access to his library doubly delightful. There the silent and self-distrusting man, speaking by the lips of all the wise and famous of our language, assembled by his taste and judgment on the shelves, will hold converse with studious and thoughtful readers, as long as the ear drinks in the music of the mighty masters of the English tongue, — as long as the mind shall hunger, with an appetite which grows with indulgence, for the intellectual food which never satisfies and never cloys.