

E

340

W4 (54)

copy 2

REMINISCENCES
OF THE
EULOGY OF CHOATE
ON WEBSTER

CHARLES CAVERNO



Class E340

Book W4C.542

Copyright N^o copy 2

COPYRIGHT DEPOSIT.



✓
REMINISCENCES
of the
EULOGY of RUFUS CHOATE
on DANIEL WEBSTER ✓

Delivered at Dartmouth College, July 26, 1853

and
DISCURSIONS
more or less therewith connected

✓ BY

CHARLES CAVERNO, A.M., LL.D.

Dartmouth, 1854

Author of "Divorce," "A Narrow Ax in Biblical
Criticism," "Chalk Lines over Morals," "The
Ten Words," "Theism et Als," etc., etc.



BOSTON
SHERMAN, FRENCH & COMPANY
1914

2340
- 1120522
Copy 1
J

JUN -5 1914

COPYRIGHT, 1914
SHERMAN, FRENCH & COMPANY

©CL.A376190 *yr*
2012

PREFACE A

The title page is perhaps sufficient preface.

The following letters are inserted because they are endorsement of the "Reminiscences and Discursions," by men whose judgment is held in public respect. I am indebted to both these gentlemen for corrections of my manuscript.

CHARLES CAVERNO.

LOMBARD, ILLINOIS.

PREFACE B

85 DEVONSHIRE STREET
BOSTON, October 22, 1913.

Dr. Charles Caverno,
Lombard, Illinois.

My Dear Dr. Caverno: —

I ran across your favor of the 23rd ult. only last evening. We had been away for nearly a month and the house had been closed. I read your reminiscences through without stopping. The paper was extremely interesting to me and not less so I think because it was discursive, as papers of that sort have a right to be. It will, I am sure, interest a great many people as it did me. If you have a clear recollection of the effect of Choate's speaking I think it would be well to expand a little upon that point. You describe Choate's manner, but was there the spell upon the audience that we know he often produced? I have been told that at the time he made the speech he seemed weary. Your paper satisfies me upon one point upon which I was curious, and that is whether he read or spoke the speech. It seems

PREFACE B

to me almost incredible that he should have spoken it with literalness, but he appears to have done that. It would be interesting, however, to have the version of Mr. Raymond if that were printed from his — Raymond's — notes and not compared, as you say it was, with Mr. Choate's manuscript. I want to express again the pleasure which the reading of this paper gave me and the hope that it will be published.

Sincerely yours,
(Signed) S. W. McCALL.

PREFACE C

DOVER, N. H., December 8, 1913.

My Dear Caverno:—

I cannot express to you the height of the pleasure you have given me by sending me this manuscript. I have read it more than once, and that is the reason I have not returned it before. It calls up so many of the joyful hours we have had in life, and the great experiences of which you and I can speak, more, I am sure, than the average among men.

To send it to me was most considerately thoughtful in you. And then you have given such a graphic portrayal of the events of our long pilgrimage, and of this one particularly — which made such a profound impression upon us — and is so much a part of great history.

You have told the story of that day and invested it with an interest that perhaps none but you and I can appreciate. I recall the memorable summer day and the old church — the crowd — the rush — the intense interest — and the great orator as he unfolded before us what has always seemed to me one of the great-

PREFACE C

est literary and oratorical performances in the history of man.

Most graphically have you told the story with just enough of personal incident to make it attractive and life-like.

The story of the oration with its accessories and collateral incidents reproduces to me a memorable experience. I sat down not far from the left-hand center of the aisle close by the "coign of vantage" which you occupied — crowded into a seat in the most favorable place I could get and hold in the rush — and I sat immovable while the melancholy, dark-skinned and curly-headed wizard poured forth those great periods, standing firmly on his feet, and, as you say, making no gesture or movement, but given up apparently to introversion — to the obsession, as it were, of his own memories of the great presence, gone from his and our mortal sight, "till the heavens be no more."

You have happily discriminated and presented the double character of Choate as the "Attorney" and as the "Philosopher and Statesman."

Your calling the oration the crowning prose threnody is happy. It is just that. In fact, it is the most pathetic lament in our language. How much I have been drawn to it, and how it has clung to my memory that has given up al-

PREFACE C

most all things else! There has never been an hour for sixty years past when I couldn't repeat from memory, with absolute accuracy, the first twelve lines from the Munroe edition as you transcribe them — "It would be a strange neglect," etc.— and the close which you also quote, is grand and without parallel.

How much neglected and how little known, how unfamiliar even to scholars, is this great discourse! How it could have escaped fame and comment, as it has, is a mystery — and to the disgrace of culture and the students of literature and eloquence! For it stands at the summit of all such performances.

Burke's "Impeachment of Warren Hastings" is great, but of another sort, and not its equal in literary and other richness.

You refer to Parker. Parker's "Discourse" was great. It was sour while Choate's was sweet. Perhaps I rate it higher than you do — perhaps I also rate Lodge higher — for, in truth, with all my admiring pride for the stupendous intellect, the noble nature, the fervid patriotism, and the vast services of Mr. Webster, I can't get over nor drown out from my memory the terrible indictments of Parker and Whittier, nor the cold but merciless argument of Lodge.

But how true it is that the events of '60 were

PREFACE C

a complete vindication of the fears and the judgment of the great man of '50!

Your introduction of Ogden Hoffman, Seward, Phillips and other episodes is felicitous. I heard Hoffman and all the rest in our old days.

So you see that I had no exception to take to the story of Choate's eulogy, and it is told with so much truth, interest and literary style in your paper that I shall be glad to see it in type. As to the argument — the polemics, shall I say — of your second part, I can speak but little — because I haven't read it with very critical interest, nor have I quite formulated as yet my views of Mr. Webster's place in history — as to his merits *pro* and *con*, and on the whole — and can only say that I have read it just enough to see that it is done with characteristic literary taste, acumen and argumentative force, and of course is a valuable and very conclusive presentation of the claims of Mr. Webster's friends and admirers in the great contention as to him which posterity is now and will hereafter be concerned with.

I have only rather cursorily examined and now very hastily write about this work of yours, but shall hope to place it among my literary treasures before the coming of the shadows.

Yours ever,

(Signed) DANIEL HALL,
Class of 1854, Dartmouth College.

Reminiscences of the Eulogy of Choate on Webster

Thoreau, being asked what he thought of a certain lecture to which he had listened, said it was not interesting — the man had nothing to say about himself. On reflection you may see that Thoreau stated a principle of criticism of deep import and wide range. The personal element gives zest to literature. I have this year read the autobiographies of General Sherman, Nathaniel S. Shaler, Simon Newcomb and Henry M. Stanley. It would be a dull remainder if the personal element were left out from the writings of these men, and only the history and science with which they were connected were set forth. Reminiscences are certainly personal. They must embody the memory of some man. Comment thereon must be doubly personal. The reminiscences I give must be mine — the comment certainly mine. I assert mine in no derogation of the rights of others. At that commencement sixty-one years ago many things occurred which I did not see.

Much thought can spring from that occasion of which I am not master. There still live many who can add to or correct what I may say. To such I give advice — write your memories and reflections and make use of them when you have opportunity, as I have frequently done in the past half century. Then you will do something of interest and value at least to yourself.

I am writing of Rufus Choate. I heard him on two occasions, and I heard a different man each time. About which one of them do you expect to hear? Rufus Choate was an attorney. Rufus Choate was philosopher and statesman.

I will tell you first about the Rufus Choate of whom I do *not* write. Pardon a little detour. In the spring of 1856, with my certificate of admission to the bar of the State of New York in my pocket, I turned my face homeward to New Hampshire that I might see my father and mother once more before obeying the command of Horace Greeley or somebody — “Go West.” In Boston I called on a college classmate, William A. Herrick, who had himself just been admitted to the bar in Massachusetts. He said: “Your visit is timely, for Choate is at work in court today.” I was set

sharp for such exercise. In Albany I had seen John K. Porter and Lyman Tremaine at their best in the courts. I had heard John Van Buren and Charles O'Connor spar with each other before the Court of Appeals, Hiram Denio presiding. I heard, in the fall of 1855, William H. Seward in the rotunda of the Capitol at Albany make the speech in which he dismissed the Whig and Democrat parties and espoused the then forming Republican party. A little incident occurred which relieved the sobriety, almost solemnity, of Mr. Seward's speech. He had said, after discussing the history and principles of the Whig party: "Let the Whig party pass." After treatment of the Democratic party, in like manner he said: "Let the Democratic party pass." No sooner were the words spoken than a man who was seated on the steps beneath Mr. Seward's feet jumped up and cried out: "Well, then, let *me* pass, begorra," and made his way rapidly down the steps and through the assemblage. But the brogue and the "begorra," and the rapid exit were such apt comment on Mr. Seward's "Let the Democratic party pass," that Mr. Seward had to bow himself in laughter with the whole crowd.

CHOATE THE ATTORNEY

For the moment I speak of Mr. Choate at the bar, who is not Choate of the Eulogy. The Choate of the bar has filled the horizon of popular conception so that it is necessary to dismiss him with some absoluteness in order that the Choate of the eulogy may come to the front. Southey gives good description of Choate the attorney:

“ How does the water come down at Lodore?
 Here it comes sparkling
 And there it lies darkling,
 Here smoking and frothing
 Its tumult and wrath in

 Now turning and twisting
 Around and around
 In endless rebound.”

Other literature gives:

“ The restless seething sea.”
 “ The sea wrought and was tempestuous.”

The last sentence Mr. Choate quoted, in a speech delivered in Boston, as descriptive of the national condition in March, 1850. If you read the Bible you can find the quotation in place. Such quotations suggest the action of Mr. Choate in practice in court. There he

worked—worked all through and all over. His mind was alive and his whole body was alert to express his mind. He sprang to his feet with the quickness of sight. The long curls of coal black hair rolled on his head, his arms flew round and round like the spokes of my mother's spinning wheel to my childhood's eye. You were sure his toes worked in his boots with the nervous energy that came down to them from the old prehensile prime. He walked about in the clear space in the bar—now bending forward, half prone; now straightening up till you feared he might lose balance and fall backward: now he was addressing the court and now parleying with the opposing attorney. (By the way Ambrose A. Ranney, Dartmouth, 1844, was the opponent. Mr. Choate was Dartmouth, 1819. Ranney was afterward for several terms M. C. from a Boston District.) Mr. Choate has often been called a great actor. If you mean by the word anything savoring of histrionic mime, there could be no greater misrepresentation. His action was all his own, originated by himself, spontaneous to the occasion. That was the way in which he filled the demand of the law expression "Work, labor and services done and performed." He put into use all the dynamics of his entire being. He lived in such

action at the bar. Pardon one or two further digressions.

OGDEN HOFFMAN

Ogden Hoffman of New York City spoke before the United Literary Societies in the forenoon of the day of the eulogy in the afternoon. To me, a New Hampshire farm boy, it seemed strange that the faculty should bring a lawyer and politician from New York to divide the honors of the day with Mr. Choate. Were not Joel Parker and Salmon P. Chase still on the horizon of life's activities, and a long line of Dartmouth graduates in "the higher walks of life," and were there not literati of high rank distributed up and down New England? Why a New York Dutchman poaching on our manor? But I was old enough to learn even then that the faculty of Dartmouth might know what it was about.

Here I wish to say that I think the faculty of the college from the beginning have been wise enough to teach and guide their students. We pride ourselves on our graduate roll. But there were directing forces behind that roll that gave it much of its possibilities. The faculty of Dartmouth has not been in the lime light of publicity. But as Mr. Webster said of the affection of graduates for the college:

“There are those”—and they are many—
“who love” and honor their teachers.

PROFESSOR ROSWELL SHURTLEFF

An incident connected with the action of the college when the death of Mr. Webster was made public impressed me at the time and still is clear in memory. I have never seen it in print. It deserves preservation and forward passing. At the first meeting of the college in the chapel in Dartmouth Hall after the announcement of Mr. Webster's death, the faculty were seated on the platform. Among them came Mr. Webster's tutor—Roswell Shurtleff. This was the first and only time I ever saw him in the chapel. He was “an old man, well stricken in years” and had long been emeritus. More than half a century had passed upon him since he taught Daniel Webster, but he carried his six feet of stature with upright military precision. It was a cool morning and he wore a long cloak which, loose upon his shoulders, gave emphasis to his brawny frame as he stood up before the students. In his brief speech was this remark: “Young gentlemen, if there was any one thing that distinguished the career of Daniel Webster in this college it was this—he minded his own business.” I am not certain but that is the best synthesis

that can be put over the total life of Daniel Webster. The serious, earnest attitude to the duties before him that marked the youth abode with him till his work was done.

But to return to Mr. Hoffman — my recollection is that his address was a plea for the humanities. He was a man “ ruddy and of a fair countenance,” agreeable in demeanor and pleasing in speech. The occasion was such that he could not well help alluding to Mr. Webster. But Mr. Choate sat on the platform and must be recognized. Mr. Hoffman did it in this way: coupling the names Webster and Choate together, he simply said, “ *Fortemque Gyan, fortemque Cloanthem.*” Therein was featly executed not only the greatest compliment ever paid Mr. Choate but the greatest that could be paid him. Think that out and it will take you over the immense range of the history and psychology of each man.

Look up Ogden Hoffman. He was a graduate of Columbia; was commissioned midshipman in the war of 1812; was taken prisoner with Decatur when “ The President ” was captured and sent to Bermuda. Afterward he fought against the Barbary pirates. When that affair was finished he resigned from the navy to begin a legal career. Decatur remon-

strated; wrote and asked: "Why do you abandon an honorable profession for the law?" Mr. Hoffman became eminent in legal practice and frequently held a tight rein in hand over that rather ungovernable steed, New York politics. During all his career he kept alive his scholarship. That was the reason he had the forenoon of the day of the eulogy.

AFTERNOON

For three hours I stood on the sill and against the south casing of the second window from the north, on the west side of the college church. How I came in that window those who know the customary march of a procession from Dartmouth Hall across the common to the church can easily guess. The students led the procession and formed the usual open order from the church door back as far as the classes extended and then the President and dignitaries and graduates filed in between the open ranks. As Juniors our class was well up toward the church. I remember looking down the clear space way across the street and seeing the oncoming of the stalwart form of Salmon P. Chase and farther down the bare head and the shoulders, high over all, of Long John Wentworth. Everything went well with the first part of the ingoing procession. But in a few

moments the student guard was crumpled on itself by the surging outside crowd, and then came suddenly a free-for-all struggle to get into the church. I was carried along in spite of myself. Inside I saw the middle aisle was already crowded full. I worked my way to the west aisle and along that to the wall pews fronting the platform. I stepped on a seat of the first pew not covered by the platform and thence, putting a foot on its railing sprang to the window sill.

AN EPISODE

An incident with which I was connected shows how every attempt was made to secure a chance to hear Mr. Choate. A man fixed a plank against the adjacent vestry building and placed one end on the sill of the window in which several of us students, with locked arms, stood. Somehow he got on the plank and lay there prone looking between our legs. Then he touched my leg and said, "Give me your hand and I can get up and stand on my plank and look between your heads." We were twelve or fifteen feet above the ground so I answered rather gruffly, "Stay where you are. You will pull us all out of the window." A few moments after, he touched me again and then said, "Young man, I want to hear Rufus

Choate as much as you do." That was a centre shot and I worked my hand down and by it he pulled himself up and heard as he wished. Some years afterward I was making a visit in a Vermont town where a young lady in whom I had acquired considerable interest was residing with an elder brother. In the course of conversation with this brother I mentioned the fact that I had heard the eulogy on Webster by Mr. Choate. He said by grand luck he did. He told how he fixed against an adjoining building a plank, one end of which rested on a window in the church, and how by making friends with a student who stood in the window he got pulled up on his feet and heard the whole eulogy. He said the young man was cross at first, but afterward became civil. Which anecdote teaches this useful lesson — be civil to everybody under all circumstances. You do not know who may be your brother-in-law.

THE EULOGY

I could not have been more fortunately placed than on that window sill. The whole platform and everything in the church was open before me.

When Mr. Choate rose to speak he was at full length in view, and so remained till he

ceased speaking. His distance from me was only half way across the church.

Now dismiss the idea that you have before you Rufus Choate the attorney. He was here to fill one of the world's historic occasions and he met it in the majesty of calm. All the forces of his being were converted to the expression of thought in speech. He was "*vox et prae-terea nihil.*" If he made a gesture during the three hours, I do not remember it. That is not to say he was a statue, motionless. He stepped from side to side or slightly back and forth to relieve muscular strain, and once turned back to his table to pick up a paper he wished to read. This paper was the letter of Professor Chauncey Goodrich of Yale, descriptive of Mr. Webster as he made the argument in the Dartmouth College case before the U. S. Supreme Court, which argument Professor Goodrich heard. He used no notes, though they lay on a table behind him. The eulogy was extempore in delivery. That he followed very closely what he had already written is doubtless true, but there was no evidence of recitation in his speech. He had evidently thought out just what he wanted to say, as he wanted to say it, and he read from a mental photograph which failed him not. Its content was brought out by the light of the occasion.

It is written that Jesus, being asked: "Who art thou?" answered: "I am in essence (at bottom) what I am saying." Mr. Choate seemed to realize that description of personality. He did not embody, rather he enspirited, thought and speech. There was nothing about him to distract attention from what he said. His appeal was to the ear and to that "inward eye" which apprehends and interprets. This accounts for the fact that one could remember so well what he said. How true he was to what he had thought and written I have two sources of verification. When Mr. Choate issued his authorized printed edition (Munroe, Boston) I bought and read it. I did not find any essential new matter or variation in expression from what I heard on my "coign of vantage" on the window sill.

My classmate, Benjamin Ames Kimball, of Concord, New Hampshire, reminds me that Henry J. Raymond came up from New York in a special to report the oration for the *New York Times*. He advised me to look over a file of the *Times* for that report. But it so happens that I read that report in the *Times* in its issue the first week after the delivery of the eulogy. My brother took the *Times*, and I read the eulogy to him and my father as we lay, on the noons of haying days, under the old

elm down which the lightning ran when I was a babe in my mother's arms, but which now I think is not o'ertopped by any elm in Strafford County. From this reading under the old elm I caught nothing new, or variant from what I had heard. The *Times* files can be consulted by the curious and compared with the Munroe version authorized by Mr. Choate.

HENRY J. RAYMOND,
AND "THE BOYS OF '54"—GODDING, EATON AND
HASKELL

In the early morning of the day after the eulogy a crowd of us — students — gathered about the hotel to see the celebrities who were going away on the early train. Henry J. Raymond came out, satchel in hand, to walk down to the station. The report ran among us (I do not know its reliability) that Mr. Raymond had sat up all night to compare his notes with Mr. Choate's manuscript. Much good would his labor have done him if he had had to read the manuscript himself, for Choate's handwriting was an illegible scrawl even to his own signature. But the story ran that Mr. Choate's clerk read the manuscript for the comparison. We joined Mr. Raymond and walked down the hill in the middle of the road.

The road was the sidewalk in those days. I

remember that in the early morning after the night of the great St. Johnsbury horn-blow in 1851 the Rev. Dr. Richards and I walked together up the middle of the road. Our pathway off the bridge was unobstructed—the long gate having been carried away by the students who preceded us. I may add that I did not blow a horn on that expedition. Upper class dignity and a fear of the pump prohibited that exercise to Freshmen.

The guard of honor for Mr. Raymond down the hill was mainly Eaton, Godding and Haskell, all of my class. The rest of us, no account fellows, tumbled along before and behind as we listed. Godding was for many years Superintendent of the U. S. Asylum for the Insane in Washington. Eaton was the first Commissioner of the Freedman's Bureau, and also became Commissioner of the U. S. Bureau of Education, which last office he held for fifteen years. Haskell was on General Gibbon's staff on the field of Gettysburg, and wrote each night an account of the events of the day. This record ex-President Charles W. Eliot says is not only the best account of that battle, but the best account of any battle ever written by any man.

The eulogy is the *supreme threne* of English speech. Threnody is the expression of sorrow

in poetic form. The supreme threnody in our language is Tennyson's "In Memoriam." It sprang out of contemplation induced by the death of Arthur Hallam. Mr. Choate spoke in prose, but the threnic tone pervades the whole eulogy. It was the utterance of a "soul with sorrow laden." It expressed the very tenderness of the sense of bereavement. A few sentences from the beginning and the end of the eulogy will clearly portray this characteristic.

Did you ever hear Wendell Phillips pronounce the word "serene"? Simply with the voice he surrounded you with a whole atmosphere of tranquillity.

"Strongly he bore you along on swelling and limitless billows."

You will wander far in the eulogy, over the whole range of the greatness of Mr. Webster, but you will never be so remote as to be out of touch with this feeling of sorrow. Take the paragraph at the beginning:

"It would be a strange neglect of a beautiful and approved custom of the schools of learning and of one of the most pious and appropriate of the offices of literature if the college in which the intellectual life of Daniel Webster began, and to which his name imparts charm and illustration, should give no formal expres-

sion to her grief in the common sorrow; if she should not draw near, of the most sad in the procession of the bereaved, to the tomb at the sea; nor find in all her classic shades one affectionate and grateful leaf to set in the garland with which they have bound the brow of her child, the mightiest departed."

Now turn to the closing paragraph:

"But it is time that this eulogy was spoken. My heart goes back into the coffin there with him, and I would pause. I went — it is a day or two since — *alone* — to see again the home which he so dearly loved, the chamber where he died, the grave in which they laid him — all habited as when

“ ‘ His look drew audience still as night
Or summer’s noontide air,’ ”

till the heavens be no more. Throughout that spacious and calm scene all things to the eye showed at first unchanged."

(I omit here an enumeration of particulars in which Mr. Webster was interested — from the broad acres and what grew or grazed thereon, to the books in the library.)

"Yet a moment more and all the scene took on the aspect of one great monument inscribed with his name and sacred to his memory. And such shall it be in all the future of America! The sensation of desolateness and loneliness and darkness, with which you see it now, will pass away; the sharp grief of love and friendship

will become soothed; men will repair thither as they are wont to commemorate the great days of history; the same glance shall take in and the same emotions shall greet and bless the harbor of the Pilgrims and the tomb of Webster."

And so the great eulogy ended. In its delivery no one had been bound by magic of rhetoric or captivated by charm of manner

"As of woven paces and of waving hands."

He spake right on, and all his judgments were as passionless as equations of numbers. They expressed what to him was and is and is to be regarded as right in the great realm over which he looked.

The tone of sorrow evident in the first and last paragraphs is an underlying strain throughout the whole eulogy. There was not a gleam of humor from beginning to end of the eulogy. There was not a smile on the face of the speaker and not one on the face of a hearer for the three hours. All that time the speaker was attent to his theme and the auditory attent to the speaker. The impression that presides in my memory now, over all others, after the lapse of sixty years and one, is that of the "solemn, dutiful earnestness of the man."

Did you mark that word "alone" in the account of the visit to Marshfield a few days

before the eulogy was delivered? I noticed it particularly when it was pronounced on the platform. It was spoken distinctly — by itself: “I went — it was a day or two since — *alone.*” It was a whole threne in itself.

Did I have special, personal reason for my notice of the word? As the years have gone by I think more and more that I did. I was, during my Junior year, sub-librarian of the College Library. That library was little used by the students. They worked by the society libraries. The College Library was open but one hour each week to the students. It was in fact museum rather than library.

One day in April, before the eulogy in July, to a rap at my door, 4 Reed Hall, I said, “Come.” Professors Brown and Sanborn came in. Behind them was a third man. One of the professors said to me: “This is Rufus Choate. We want you to take him into the College Library and assist him as he may need. We have recitations for the next hour and we shall leave him in your charge.” That was the first occasion on which I saw Mr. Choate.

I conducted him to the Library and asked him what I could do for him. He said he wanted writing materials. I readily placed them on the table in the south end of the room which occupied the whole east side of Reed Hall.

Then he said: "I shall not need you. I will take the key and bring it to your room when I have finished here." He accompanied me to the door and locked it after me. At the close of the hour he brought the key to my room, one floor above. I saw him go across the common to Professor Sanborn's house. That is all, I think, any one knows of that hour of Rufus Choate *alone* in the College Library in April, 1853.

I learned from Professors Brown and Sanborn these facts in regard to that visit of Mr. Choate to Hanover. He was going to Montreal on business and notified the professors that he would stop over half a day with them. His visit was to be entirely private. Some of the students who knew him happened to see him and there was quite a little breeze among them over his presence in the town. But he went away in the afternoon as quietly as he came in the morning.

I have thought, as the years have gone, that taking that time between trains for the call at Hanover, and securing the quiet hour in the College Library might have the same psychic interpretation which he himself has given to the visit "alone" at Marshfield a few days before the delivery of the eulogy. Out of that lone visit to Marshfield came by his own testi-

mony that beautiful, masterful, sorrowful evolution which constitutes the final tribute to Mr. Webster.

May not the few hours between trains in Hanover and especially the hour *alone* in the library have been utilized in reflection out of which sprang the thought and feeling inwoven in the opening pages of the eulogy? Think how much the college meant to himself. He had taken the full course of study and then delayed a year as tutor in the college. Then think how much, with this experience, he must have thought the college meant to Daniel Webster, with his memory of student life supplemented by the labor and care and affection shown in the conduct of the great legal case in which he preserved the college on the original foundation, and on which it has since continued its powerful, happy and blessed influence.

May it not be — must it not be — that that hour *alone* in the library finds explanation in the beginning of the eulogy as the visit *alone* to the home and tomb at Marshfield finds expression in its close?

THE RANK OF THE EULOGY

It must be rated as one of the greatest intellectual efforts of man. Consider the immense range of the subjects discussed and the

perfect mastery of language in extempore delivery.

For instance, turn to the fortieth page (Munroe Edition) and you begin a sentence which does not end till you reach the middle of the forty-fifth. But that single sentence contains an enumeration of the particulars and of the character of the public life and services of Daniel Webster from 1813, when he entered Congress from New Hampshire, to his death in 1852. Is there another such sentence covering matter of such historic import in the English tongue? If you want a brief life of Daniel Webster turn to that sentence. At the time of its delivery I soon perceived that we were "on a wide, wide sea," and wondered whether he could make port without a wreck of grammar and connection. But turn to the end of the forty-fifth page and you will see that he did.

The oration masses the actions and events of forty years of the nation's history and elaborates the influence of Mr. Webster therein. If you want a comprehensive life of Daniel Webster, public and private, you will find it in the eulogy. There is none other so valuable. There is not much probability that another of such merit can be constructed in the same space.

Think of all that wealth being packed into

one hundred printed pages! Edward Everett has said there is nothing greater in the English tongue. My classmate, Daniel Hall of Dover, New Hampshire, writes me to the same effect. I value his judgment as highly as I would that of any other man who knows the content of English speech. He led our class in all studies *longo intervallo*. He has made a special study of English oratory during the sixty years since he graduated. He is President of the New Hampshire Historical Society, and delivered the address at the dedication of the Society's new building in 1911. He heard the eulogy, and his keen, wise judgment is to me conclusive of its rank.

Yet I fear that even scholars, or those who ought to be such, are allowing the dust of the generations to settle on the covers of this — perhaps greatest of English orations — and failing to keep in touch with its mastery in literature, government and history.

A few years since I met a man who was fairly at the head of the bar in a large western city. He was a graduate of Dartmouth College. We were talking in his office. "Let me show you a treasure," said he. From a drawer in his library he brought to me a copy of my own (Munroe) edition of the "Eulogy of Choate on Webster." He said also: "A lawyer a

few days ago in — (another western city) gave me this." I wondered what the lawyer who gave the present could think of his own act, and I wondered where my friend had been all his life — and a graduate of Dartmouth, too — that he had not his own copy and had not been a student of it.

Is this experience characteristic? If it is it is a sad comment on the failure to appreciate an effort that is at the summit of our literature and not excelled in the record of the eloquence of any nation.

Matthew Hale Carpenter, one of the most brilliant lights of the American bar, advised law students, if they wished to become philosophers in law, to take some learned jurist and follow him through his total work, read every scrap of opinion he ever wrote; thus the student would become master of the mastery of the jurist. A good introduction to a mastery of Mr. Webster would be not only to read but to study Mr. Choate's eulogy. There was no man in the land who knew so well the content and meaning of Mr. Webster's life activities. When a student in Dartmouth College he saw and heard Mr. Webster in the trial of Jackman accused of robbery of the Maine drover — Goodridge. Their professional life was largely synchronous. They were usually antagonists

at the bar and before the courts. Yet they were life long friends. That speaks well for their conduct and the majesty of their moral nature.

David's lament over Jonathan was no more sincere than Choate's sorrow when Webster died. Webster's life and character nowhere finds summary so complete as in this eulogy. Therein Mr. Choate passes his mastery of Mr. Webster over to you. Nay, more; therein the might and wealth, intellectual and moral, of Mr. Choate himself comes to expression. So you have a combination upon the like of which the sun had not before looked. They talk of binaries in astronomy. Instead of the light of one sun the light of two shines together in a single star. You have a binary in Choate's "Eulogy upon Webster." The light and heat and magnetism from both ray in upon you, a unit in effulgence and power.

I cannot comment on the totality of this oration. Study it by topic and by sentence and you will find reward in literary felicity, in conceptions great and true in government and ethics.

If this writing is personal reminiscence, psychologically true to myself, I must say this — those were days of intensity in politics throughout the nation. I stood on the window sill the three hours without sympathy with the

effort of Mr. Choate and in a spirit of alienation from Mr. Webster. How I came in such attitude I will set forth. This will reveal a prominent element in the psychology of the times. If not of "the most straitest sect" of the Abolitionists I had "sat at the feet of their Gamaliels" and had become imbued with their principles. I must say that "The Seventh of March Speech" was *not* viewed by a large element of the people with suspended judgment; judgment ran against it. As I stood in the window, how could I be in sympathy with Mr. Choate? Three-quarters of a year before I heard Mr. Choate I had purchased and read Theodore Parker's "Funeral Oration," delivered immediately after Mr. Webster's death. It is a masterly piece of rhetoric. I was pre-possessed by it. It led a great chorus of condemnation of Mr. Webster. I am not certain but the kakophemy — the curse of Theodore Parker — still has more influence over the mind of a very large section of the American people than the eulogy of Rufus Choate. That this is a grievous wrong to Mr. Webster I think and have thought for many years. But it took time and event to show the unwisdom of Theodore Parker. As I stood in the church window the time and event had not received their unveiling. Let me read a paragraph from Parker. It will

show not only my attitude, but a widely prevalent psychology of the day.

“To accomplish a bad purpose he resorted to mean artifice, to the low tricks of vulgar adventurers in politics. . . . What was the design of all this? It was ‘to save the Union.’ Such was the cry. Was the Union in danger? Here were a few non-resistants at the north who said, ‘We will have no union with slave holders.’ There was a party of seceders at the south who periodically blustered about disunion. Could these men bring the Union into peril? Did Daniel Webster think so? I shall never insult that giant intellect by the thought.”

Now I shall make no comment on that paragraph. Long years ago I wrote in the margin of my copy, “What of 1861?” There it stands. Some of us have lived through ‘61-5. Neither Mr. Choate nor Theodore Parker saw that day and its revelations. Mr. Choate died in ‘59 and Parker in ‘60. We are in position now to determine whose prevision was safest — that of Rufus Choate or that of Theodore Parker: that which came to the front in the lament of the one or the curse of the other. The probable, in view of which Mr. Webster acted and on the ground of which Mr. Choate made defense for him, became the actual before our eyes. We have seen “States discordant, dis-severed, belligerent and drenched with fraternal

blood." "A prudent man foreseeth the evil and hideth himself." Mr. Webster foresaw the evil and put forth mighty effort to hide the nation from it. But many men could not and would not in that day give him credit for "the spirit of prophecy." They could only judge as we have seen Theodore Parker judge that "to accomplish a bad purpose"—to wit his own personal ambition for the presidency—he delivered "The Seventh of March Speech." That suggestion not only had its day when it had its day, but it survived afterward when there was no excuse for it, and it even still reigns dominant in many minds. It is hard for some people to entertain the possibility of the integrity of Mr. Webster in his political action in 1850. They resemble the witness in respect to whose credibility a neighbor testified, "Ordinarily he would not tell the truth, but put him under oath and he could not." They seem to be incapable of telling the truth about Mr. Webster. They cannot think of anything but that he "fell" and that "Ichabod" must be written over him. His name operates on them like a red flag on a bull. No sooner do they hear the name than down goes a horn to gore. It is strange how this attitude survives. In the main address before a state Bar Association but a few years since the speaker dismissed Mr.

Webster as a discredited politician whose epitaph is "Ichabod." And right there comes up an instance of the difficulty that some good men have found to dispossess themselves of a misconception they have once entertained, of a misrepresentation they once have made. There is good evidence that the saintly Whittier felt he had done Mr. Webster injustice in the poem "Ichabod," and that he wrote "The Lost Occasion" to atone for it and rectify himself. But even Mr. Whittier could not divest himself of the gravamen of the charge brought against Mr. Webster in his first poem. To begin with, why call his attempted reparation "The Lost Occasion"? A man does not lose what he never had. Mr. Webster did not lose whatever "occasion" there was for somebody in '61-'5, for he died in '52. Perhaps he saw the "occasion" in 1850. He was accustomed to see "occasions" before they occurred. Primogeniture and undivided entail of real estate were prohibited in France while it was yet a monarchy. Mr. Webster said that would make France a republic. The France of today verifies Mr. Webster's prevision.

"Shaming ambition's paltry prize,
Before thy disillusioned eyes;
Breaking the spell about thee wound,
Like the green withes that Samson bound;

Redeeming in one effort grand,
Thyself and thy imperiled land."

The implications are as bad here as in "Ichabod." Redemption is a doctrine for sinners. I do not know of any one else who has need of it. "Thy imperiled land!" Ah, then the land was imperiled! In 1850 Mr. Webster thought it would come into peril through the passionate partizan feeling then existing.

"Coming events cast their shadows before." The statesman reads the meaning in the shadows. Did not Mr. Webster read that meaning in 1850? There is terrible history to stand as witness that he did. What Mr. Webster might have done in '61-'5 it is idle to speculate.

What he did do in 1850 raises an ethical question. On that I desire to turn attention to the treatment given by Mr. Choate. To this day no better defense of Mr. Webster in the forum of ethics has been made. Mr. Choate's greatness nowhere comes out more grandly than in his method in ethics here. Do not neglect to study it. And bear in mind that Mr. Choate could not make the appeal to '61-'5, for he died in the spring of '59. He had, as justification for Mr. Webster, to deal with a probability which did not become actual till

after he himself was dead. By taking and holding this position he showed the courage of a friend and the vision of a statesman. It took both to defend Mr. Webster in 1853.

We have developed in theology the doctrine of salvation by invincible ignorance. It may be somewhat difficult to define rules for the working of the doctrine. It would seem in case of ignorance that the examiner might regard the ignorance as notice to quit and claim release from duty to pass judgment at all. But there is something more difficult to deal with than invincible ignorance. Invincible prejudice is worse.

“ In the lowest deep, a lower deep
Still threatening to devour, opens wide.”

As you look at ignorance, you cannot charge it, in itself, as culpable. But when you look on prejudice you look on mind wilfully closed against knowledge, actual or possible. That attitude is simply morally wrong.

I have no space to itemize, but from beginning to end Mr. Lodge's "Life of Daniel Webster" shows a mind unsympathetic, ungenerous and unfair. The twist sinister is given at every opportunity possible. Time and event seem to have no influence upon him. In prejudice against Mr. Webster he is relentless. Take

this sentence from his address at the unveiling of the Trentanove statue in Washington, January 18, 1900. "This passionate love of his country, this dream of her future inspired his greatest effort, were even the chief cause at the end of his life to make sacrifices of principle." "To make sacrifices of principle" encloses the idea of ethical laches, or it has no meaning. It means to think or do some moral wrong. Such accusation, too, forty years after the War of the Rebellion!

General Sherman said: "War is hell." Did we not have "the gates of Hades" opened wide in '61-'5? We are not yet free from the consequences of that "Hell." It was in view of the possibility of such wickedness and wretchedness that Mr. Webster made the speech for "the Constitution and the Union" in 1850. Can he not be credited with a statesman's prevision? Might there not be moral considerations connected with such foresight? But Mr. Lodge insists upon trying Mr. Webster by the condition of 1850. Is it not "sharp practice" to exclude evidence of justification in view of which Mr. Webster professed to act — evidence open to earth and high heaven?

The subject of conflict of duties is as old as the human race, and is likely to last as long.

Mr. Choate has discussed that matter with supreme ability in the eulogy, both theoretically and practically in regard to the Compromise Measures of 1850. It is the common lot of ethical man to be summoned to make adjustment between not merely two but a crowd of duties. It may be as ethical to choose the less of two impending wrongs, not indeed to approve but to endure, as the better of two optional rights. In 1850 there was a question of the choice of evils. On the one hand was the institution of slavery and on the other the probability of war. There is no question about the wrong of slavery. John Wesley said: "Slavery is the sum of all villainies." Abraham Lincoln said: "There is nothing wrong if slavery is not wrong." But we were bound in a government that recognized slavery and the practical question was — men being what they are, how to deal with slavery without plunging the nation into war. The parable of the tares has application here. By common consent he who spake it had good and comprehensive vision in ethics.

"The servants of the householder came and said unto him: 'Sir, didst thou not sow good seed in thy field; from whence, then, hath it these tares?' He said unto them: 'An enemy hath done this.' The servants said unto him: 'Wilt thou then that we go and gather

them up?' But he said, 'Nay, lest while ye gather up the tares ye root up also the wheat with them.'"

That certainly teaches that we must sometimes bear ills lest by attempt at sudden termination we do irreparable damage to the good. Conditions are to be taken into account. Mr. Lincoln dealt more wisely and effectively with the evil of slavery in 1863 than John Brown in 1859.

Now we can look back over history, and the ethical judgment of most sane, rational people, I think, will be that Mr. Webster was not wrong in his attitude. The single thing that slavery took by the Compromise Measures of 1850 was an amended fugitive slave law. All the other elements of those measures inured to the benefit of liberty. We were entangled in the Constitution of the nation with a provision for the return of fugitive slaves. George Washington signed a law to execute this provision. That law was on the statute book in 1850. To Mr. Webster, under those historical conditions, an amendment to the fugitive slave law was a less evil than disunion and war.

The only question in ethics in the decision of this matter was whether he had the *approval of his own moral judgment*. Other people might have come to different moral conclusion. But that would not put *him* in the wrong, if his

judgment was *his own*. To decide that Mr. Webster was wrong because others did not agree with him is to mount into the judgment seat and assume the prerogatives of the Omniscient God. "Who art thou that judgest another man's servant? — To his own master he standeth or falleth. Yea, he shall be holden up, for God is able to make him stand."

"And only the Master shall praise us,
And only the Master shall blame."

WEBSTER AND LINCOLN

The injustice of men can nowhere be more plainly seen than in the fates and fortunes of Mr. Webster and Mr. Lincoln. Some of us can remember when the common designation of Mr. Lincoln was "Baboon." Yet he is no better now than he was then. Mr. Webster did not invent a fugitive slave law. Mr. Lincoln did. When he was a representative in Congress in the later '40s, he drew up and secured the passage of a fugitive slave law for the District of Columbia. As President and Commander-in-Chief of the Army and Navy, when by the laws of war he was not thereto compelled, he returned more fugitive slaves at the point of the bayonet than had been returned in the whole history of the government, and

prevented slaves from completing their own escape by closing the lines of the army against them. Yet we have by universal consent just voted a two million dollar temple to the name and fame of Mr. Lincoln, while the tomb at Marshfield is neglected and unhonored.

The reply to Hayne, with its refrain, "Liberty and Union, now and forever, one and inseparable," made Appomattox Court House possible as truly as the skill of generals operating under Mr. Lincoln. Certainly Mr. Webster was not behind Mr. Lincoln in devotion to the Union. The main ground why the people do not have the same enthusiastic pride in the one great man as in the other is that Mr. Webster in 1850 supported a fugitive slave law. But remember that nine years after Mr. Webster was in his grave, Mr. Lincoln in his first inaugural address, with all his solemn earnestness, besought the people of the United States to execute in sincerity the fugitive slave law.

Aye, go on with the apotheosis of Abraham Lincoln! It is just. But if you would be just take the ban from Daniel Webster.

Defense of Mr. Webster in 1850 may not include approval of every sentence in "The Seventh of March Speech," nor in subsequent speeches. A note of irritation against those

who criticised him without mercy may be apparent. If not excused, it may be explained. Mr. Whittier never wrote truer lines than these:

“ Not always age is growth of good :
Its years have losses with their gain.
Against some evil youth withstood
Its hands may strive in vain.”

Mr. Webster was physically ill from 1850 onward to the end. The process of disintegration of that magnificent material system in and with which he had wrought had set in. It takes force to control force. And the nervous forces were slipping from the old time firm grasp. Near the shore of age a rope in the rigging may slacken in a squall that sang taut to all storms on mid-seas. A rudder old and worn may not respond readily or even accurately to compass call in an exigency, yet the ship may drop anchor in its destined harbor and the main purpose of the voyage be achieved.

I must speak of Mr. Webster's character in morals, and position in religion. I do this not more for the defense of Webster than because in what I write will be revealed the greatness and goodness of Mr. Choate. Recollect, Mr. Webster was his lifelong antagonist at the bar, for they were usually arrayed against each

other,— and then remember that from mind and heart he wrote as follows:

“ From these (Webster’s) conversations of friendship, no man — old or young — went away to remember one word of profaneness; one allusion of indelicacy; one impure thought; one unbelieving suggestion; one doubt cast on the reality of virtue, of patriotism, of enthusiasm, of the progress of man; one doubt cast on righteousness, or temperance, or judgment to come.”

Mark Mr. Choate’s language. That is the utterance of a lifelong observer — himself a moral knight without fear and without reproach. See what ground the language covers in interest and extent of moral principles. That challenge has been before the world for sixty years — has any one couched a lance against it? “ If any man offend not in word the same is a perfect man and able also to bridle the whole body.” . . . “ Doth a fountain send forth at the same place sweet water and bitter? ”

There are writers who have visited banquet halls and scoured streets of disrepute to find testimony that Mr. Webster was not “ able to bridle the whole body.” What they have produced is mere hearsay — the tattle of the slums. Reputable people, from prejudice against Mr. Webster on other grounds, have allowed themselves to give currency to such tattle. Mr.

Lodge can find no better authority for the insinuations of immoralities he allows himself to print than "popular report."

Mr. Webster was surrounded all his life by a great cloud of witnesses — noble men and honorable women. They never uttered a breath against his uprightness in family and social life. When Mr. Webster died, the physician who had watched him for years challenged any one to prove that he had ever used drug or stimulant that for a moment would cloud his mind in the production of state papers.

Mr. Webster stands in moral honor in reputable society. Choose whose testimony you will take. Indifference in attitude is not tolerable. There may be immorality in lending an indolent ear to him who asperses character and not pinning him down to facts. Allow for faults, imperfections, errors and sins such as are common to man in the struggle for existence, in heats and misunderstandings of politics, in adjustment of divers interests, in regulation of passions and forces, yet Mr. Webster stands before you — a lover of integrity and right, in the majesty of moral solemnity, and like "Boston and Lexington and Concord and Bunker Hill, there he will remain forever."

Here I wish to say that the evidence is just as good for the reliability of Peter Harvey's

“Reminiscences” as it is for “The Life” written by Mr. Lodge. If anyone will read Mr. Harvey’s account of the visit of Webster, just a year before he died, to old John Colby of Andover, New Hampshire, and of their talk on religion, of their prayers together; hear Mr. Webster say, “I hope and trust I am a Christian”; see how natural it was to the man — and wishes to regard such account as fictitious, toleration must give him liberty, but the most of us will pity his weakness of mind. In all cases of accusation of immoralities judgment must be rendered for Mr. Webster because of lack of *any* evidence.

INTOXICANTS

In regard to the use of intoxicant drinks, it must be remembered that Mr. Webster came up to active life in a state of society that allowed their use for all public occasions — even church assemblies. The moral rule in the matter was not abstinence but temperance — control. It must be remembered that the wave of the movement for total abstinence did not come to crest till the early forties. Mr. Webster was then sixty years old. The evidence is undeniable and ample that, even under the liberties of the old régime, he always kept control of himself.

The new and the stricter view was not with-

out its influence over him. The testimony of his physician, Dr. Jeffries, cannot be gainsaid. The doctor says that before Mr. Webster's last speech in Faneuil Hall he advised him to take a little stimulant. Mr. Webster's reply was, "I think I shall not. I have found the benefit of temperance." When later in his sickness stimulants were prescribed, he was particular that not a drop more was given him than the exact amount prescribed by the doctor. A physician is a good judge of the effect his patient's habits have had upon him. This is Dr. Jeffries' conclusion: "I confidently express the opinion that his (Mr. Webster's) great intellect was never clouded by stimulants, or that he was unfitted at any time, even for the production of state papers." Thus stands the evidence, and "the gates of the slums shall not prevail against it."

RELIGION

Mr. Lodge, in his customary way of speaking in derogation of Mr. Webster, says that whatever religion he had was only of the ordinary common sort. It is true Mr. Webster was not as demonstrative in religion as John Wesley or Billy Sunday. But very much can be made out of common religion. The common elements in it may have high intrinsic value and

wide range. Common sense is not a trivial matter if it is common. As fine a tribute as you can pay anyone is to say that he has common sense. Mr. Webster's great power intellectually is largely attributable to his common sense, which is only what all men have. It is said that when men heard him speak they reported that he said just what they themselves were thinking. Kipling's lines run:

" Each in his separate star
Shall draw the thing as he sees it
For the God of things as they are."

Common sense is a summary of things as they are. That is why it is valued so highly. Men are satisfied when they feel they have attained something which "the Everlasting hath fixed in his canon" and they feel that what all men assent to must be so fixed. The consent is regarded as verification. In last result science becomes common sense. It is demonstration of what must be universally accepted or it is not science.

The law of gravitation has become a tenet of common sense because it answers a common requisition for explanation of the massing of matter. The Copernican system is satisfactory to common sense. All of the so-called laws of matter and force must ultimately come to

judgment before that tribunal. Yet we are not going to speak in derogation of Copernicus and Newton and the great company of investigators in science because where a principle is once found everybody can understand it or because others could and did find it.

Our confidence in democracy as a system of government rests upon confidence in the common sense of the people — in their common ability to see what is wise and right in the common regulation of action.

Now it may be that the common, ordinary perception in religion is as valuable as elsewhere, that mastery of the knowledge of principles that are or should be applied in life is of as high rank as anything else upon which the mind of man can work. If so, it may be that a man who detects and explains what must become common sense in religion is worthy of esteem as is one who performs similar function in other departments. It may be that Mr. Webster was a prophet in ethics. If not a discoverer, he was an expounder in theology and religion as well as in the treatment of national government or international policy. The detection and application of ethics to condition is the supreme exercise of the mind of man. An order for it is writ in his very nature. There is no rational life without the presence therein

of this call. No better statement of this fundamental religious truth has been made by man than that of Mr. Webster in the conclusion of the argument in the White murder case.

“A sense of duty pursues us ever. It is omnipresent like the Deity. If we take to ourselves the wings of the morning and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, duty performed or duty violated is still with us, for our happiness or our misery. If we say the darkness shall cover us, in the darkness as in the light our obligations are yet with us. We cannot escape their power nor fly from their presence.”

That is exactly the rule in Cain's case, writ away back in the dimness of Hebrew history, and was recognized as common sense in Hebrew religious thought. “If thou doest well shalt thou not be approved, if thou doest not well, sin coucheth at the door.”

Then you may go clear across one of the earliest chasms in the separation of the primal race and you will find the same common ethical sense prevailing in the early activities of the Aryan mind. In the laws of *Manu* it is writ as paraphrased by Whittier :

“The soul itself its awful witness is;
Say not in evil doing, ‘No one sees,’
And so offend the Conscious One within,
Whose ear can hear the silences of sin

Ere they find voice, whose eyes unsleeping see
The secret motions of iniquity.

“Nor in thy folly say, ‘I am alone,’
For, seated on thy heart as on a throne,
The Ancient Judge and Witness liveth still
To note thy act and thought, and as thy ill
Or good goes from thee, far beyond thy reach,
The Solemn Doomsman seal is set on each.”

Mr. Webster in the White case seems to have had command of a common ethical possession, to which he could make appeal, that included the whole horizon of man in time and space. We find in common moral sensation

“To health of soul a voice to cheer and please;
To guilt the wrath of the Eumenides.”

Mr. Webster was not amiss in calling the attention of the jury in the White case to this common ethical sense.

A few days before he died Mr. Webster wrote with his own hand: “The gospel of Jesus Christ must be a divine reality.” An ordinary sentence in religion. But look at its immeasurable range in common sense.

“O Lord, thou hast been our dwelling place in all generations. Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to

everlasting thou art God." Mrs. Stowe said that that is the most sublime thought which ever entered the mind of man. Yet it is enclosed in the simple word "divine" used by Mr. Webster. "Reality" is a term in common use and has signification which is very toughly held by all men. You find reality on earth. You can find the same reality in the sun. You can find it in Arcturus. You can find it in

"Every spark that walks alone
Around the utmost verge of heaven"—

so distant that "the eye of man hath not seen nor can see it," of whose existence the ether alone can tell; yet *there* dwells the same reality that you touch on earth.

If a moral being "takes the wings of the morning and dwells" in the sun or in Arcturus or in a star invisible, his "obligations will yet be upon him; he cannot escape their power or fly their presence," and he will everywhere find "the gospel of Jesus Christ a divine reality."

If you wish to shut your eyes to what you can see and to what the ether can tell, you can speak slightingly of Mr. Webster's conceptions and attitude in theology and religion. What is common may be great. What one makes of the common determines his greatness in ethics

and religion as elsewhere. To take an expression from our ancient friend — Paley — “ If a man pitches his foot against a stone ” he concludes to the reality of matter. But his conclusion is equally to the reality of the approval he feels for a right act, and to the reality of the fact that “ sin coucheth at the door ” for an act of wrong. Ethical right and wrong are as real as matter and force.

Oliver Wendell Holmes — a man not blind nor a bigot — wrote of Mr. Webster :

“ In toil he lived ; in peace he died ;
When life’s full cycle was complete,
Put off his robes of power and pride
And laid them at his Master’s feet.”

What more can you ask? What more can you get in religion? That is simply the outcome of its common sense. Mr. Webster was as sincere in his religious testimony in those last few weeks and days as he was in the “ Reply to Hayne.” “ The rapt and parting soul ” met the summons to the great transition in Christian fearlessness and trust. It is discredit to Christians that they have not gloried in that profession as a triumph of faith. It is ignorance unpardonable or cowardice base not to add Mr. Webster’s deathbed testimony to that

of the long roll of the great and noble who have asserted the staying power, the comfort and the satisfaction, of the Christian faith.

Now I return to Mr. Choate and the eulogy. Mr. Choate was a metaphysician. That fact gleams from the pages of this great eulogy. It is related of him that in haunting bookstores if he found a treatise on metaphysics he would say, "Ah, here is meat"; would purchase, and put in the evenings at home in its study. He was right; metaphysics is everywhere, and metaphysics too. The "metas" are out to the front in everything. Mr. Tyndall says imagination is the pioneer in science. Why? Because the ideal is in the grain of things — that you can assume. If you are after a new scientific truth, imagine it, then verify to see if what you imagine will correspond with what is expressed in nature. If it will not, imagine again and try that. When your idea and the idea of nature correspond, you know you have made a discovery — you have found a fact; common sense will recognize it. Wherever there are mathematics, esthetics or ethics there are the "metas" of physics or of psychics. Old philosophy laid down at the base of known nature, earth, air, fire and water. The old philosophy was right — all honor to it. Earth, air, fire and water are here today. But they

give each "metas" beyond themselves piled "Pelion upon Ossa" high. Take water; the first thing chemistry does is to break it up into two elements which are still matter. But the next thing it does is to find mathematics, a metaphysic, in it. Then it finds another metaphysic — to wit, esthetics — attached. The rainbow is neither matter nor mathematics, however much they may be involved in it. But there it is — inherent in the water that bubbles from a spring on the mountain, or tumbles in the waves of the sea, or shines in the vapors of Saturn. The writer of the book of the Revelation says, "And there was a rainbow round about the throne." He has traced esthetics as well as ethics up to the Majesty of Last Resort. He makes Him to say: "I will have beauty, as well as number, righteousness and might." These all are "metas" in their various realms. Accompanying them are others, stretching out into infinity. With them we have to do. Now will you bring us back to the sod and say, "Oh, these things are beyond our grasp. We cannot weigh them on scales, or measure them by feet and inches." Browning says, "A man's reach should exceed his grasp." The ability we have and the invitation to reach out into such realms that cannot be defined in terms of any other, to reach where we cannot and never shall

find end, is one of the muniments of our title to immortality — one of the beauties of the eternity that lies before us.

That Mr. Choate was in various ways versed in exercise in the realm of the “metas” is disclosed in the eulogy — in the appropriateness of the quiet manner of its delivery, in the undisturbed repose of the three hours of speech. No matter what took place about him — though in the last hour it grew dark, lights were brought in, torrents poured from the skies, and the thunder

“ Roared and howled
And cracked and growled
Like noises in a swound ”—

still the tide of eloquence flowed on in confidence and serenity. There is metapsychic in these attitudes, in the threnic tone which pervaded all — a plaintive idealism, yet a reality as much as the rain.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion I call attention to the coincidence of these two great minds in the metaphysics and metapsychics that come to view in ethics. Mr. Webster pressed upon the jury in the White case obedience to the common possession, the sense of moral obligation. In comment

upon that Mr. Choate fills a page of the eulogy. He quotes from Mr. Webster, "A sense of duty pursues us ever; duty performed or duty violated will be with us for our happiness or our misery." Then he makes his own synthesis of the phenomena of duty in these words, "the universality and authoritativeness and eternity of its obligation." Such statement makes ethical religion common. Great is he who can make the most and the best use of it.

I commend this synthesis to ethicists and theologians. They ought to impress it upon "a generation that sits in the market place" intent only "to pipe and to dance," a generation given only to recreation, a generation of whom it may be said as of one of old: "The people sat down to eat and drink and rose up to play."

O theologians and ethicists, call back, call back, to thought, feeling and action inspired by conviction of the "universality, the authoritativeness, the eternity of moral obligation."

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS



0 011 895 023 9

