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THE MEMORIES OF SEVENTY YEARS.

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JOHN M. L. BABCOCK.

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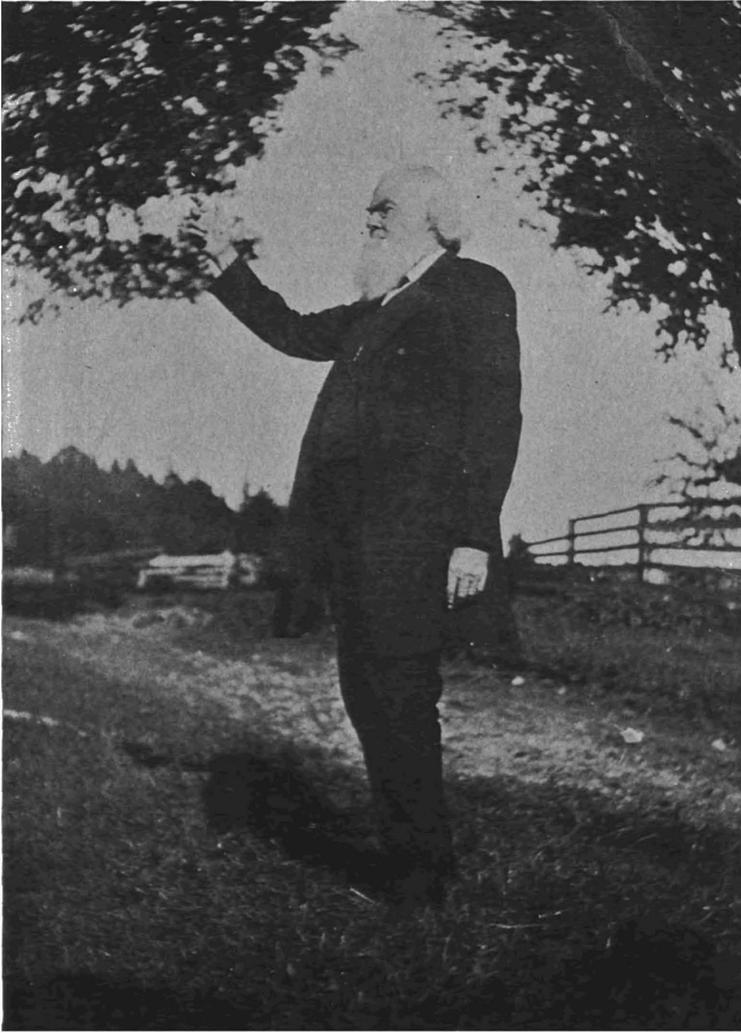
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Young as ever  
J. M. L. Babcock

# AUTOBIOGRAPHY

OF

John Martin Luther Babcock  
"

TOGETHER WITH A

Discourse delivered at the Funeral, and Addresses  
given at the Memorial Service.

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Published for the Family.

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[This MS. was begun July 19, 1893.]

## THE MEMORIES OF SEVENTY YEARS.

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In writing the pages which I now begin, I must dispense entirely with the aid of the imagination, and draw entirely from the stores of memory.

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### CHAPTER I.

#### CHILDHOOD AND YOUTH.

IN the town of Andover, County of Oxford, State of Maine, I first drew breath, on the 22d of September, 1822. (I state this fact, not from memory, but on the testimony of others,—of my parents.)

In 1825, my father, with mother and my brothers and sisters, removed to Boston. In this family I was the youngest but one. I was then three years old. In a life of threescore and ten, few things are more interesting than the first awakening to self-conscious existence,—than the very first actual remembrance. This event happened to me on this journey.

The removal to Boston was effected in this way: we were conveyed in wagons from Andover to Portland, a distance of about seventy-five miles. Then we were shipped on board a "coaster,"—a small schooner which made stated trips to Boston.

Now comes my first memory. I distinctly remember being taken in the arms of some one, (I know not whom,) and carried across a plank on board the schooner. I distinctly remember looking down at the narrow strip of water between the wharf and

the vessel's side. I have never known the time that I did not recall this circumstance as vividly "as if it were but yesterday."

Here I might indulge in a little philosophy respecting the nature of the event which first imprints itself on a child's memory. But I am writing recollections, without indulging in generalizations.

The only incident of the voyage to Boston which I could ever recall, was that of standing in what is called the "companion-way," near the head of the steps, and seeing the waves roll up above the sides of the vessel.

Of our first days in Boston I remember nothing distinctly. I have a dim impression that one day the children were all in sadness when it was announced that the honey brought from Maine was all gone.

We were living at the "West End." I had not been more than a year in Boston, as I think, before I began to go to a primary school in Garden street. This was the beginning of any interest I ever found in life. At first I took no delight in going to school. I found nothing in the schoolroom to compensate, for six hours a day, for the loss of the comforts of home. The teacher happened to be a woman, as it always seemed to be, of an unhappy temperament. She was always gloomy and austere in manner, and severe in her treatment of the children.

After about a year, as I now make it out, this teacher was succeeded by another, who was her opposite in almost all respects. That sweet and smiling face, that gentle and tender manner, make a picture on "memory's wall" that can never be effaced. She had soon won all hearts. From the day that Miss Fowle took charge of that school a new life was quickened within me. I felt an ambition to learn to which I had before been a stranger. I found my chief joy in "going to school." And the entire atmosphere of the schoolroom was changed. There was no more corporal punishment; no tearful faces or angry eyes made our hearts heavy with gloom. I have never seen happier days. How we all loved that teacher! Every morning her desk was bright with the scholars' offerings of fruit and flowers. "Coppers" were

not plenty with me in those days. (This was the name commonly given to the large copper cents—almost as large as a silver half-dollar—then in circulation.) Whenever I had a cent I could properly call my own, I cannot describe the joy with which I bought an apple, to place in Miss Fowle's hand as I entered school. The sweet smile with which she received it awakened a delight which did not subside for the entire day.

During the entire period in which I enjoyed Miss Fowle's tuition, I recall but one unhappy day,—one day that caused me bitter remorse. The school was held in the front end of a long building. In the rear end the teacher lived with her aged mother. One day Miss Fowle was compelled to be absent, and her place was taken by a young woman we had never seen. That day it seemed that all the worst tempers of the scholars broke loose. I cannot account for it. No doubt many children, subdued by Miss Fowle's charming spirit, had practised a great deal of self-repression, and the change of that particular morning seemed to them to remove all restraint; they therefore gave a loose rein to their mischievous impulses. I was as bad as any of them. The spirit of mischief possessed me. I was all day in a state, not of malicious, but of wild excitement. Confusion reigned, and the poor young woman did not know what to do. Towards the close of the day the aged mother came in, and began to talk to us. She told us how we had hurt the feelings of the young lady who had kindly taken her daughter's place for a day, when she was forced to be out of town. Soon we began to be sorry, and feel that we had made fools of ourselves; and the day closed in some kind of order. The mother held me, after the others had left, for a special talking to. She told me how grieved she was at my conduct; and how surprised, too, because her daughter had always said that I was the best-behaved boy in school. After making me feel as miserable as possible she let me go, to pass a night of wretchedness and pain. The next morning Miss Fowle talked to us (she had such a pretty way of making speeches to the scholars, and frequently used this gift) till she brought us all to tears. Then

order was restored, and all things took their former course. She never alluded afterwards to that unhappy day.

The first special desire of which I am now conscious, was to learn to read,—that is, readily, as my mother could read. How distinctly I remember saying to myself, “If I could only read, I would read all the time.” I cannot tell how it happened, but in this pursuit I soon developed an inordinate taste for the art of spelling. I did not confine myself to the spelling-book. When at home I was always looking in books to study how the big words were spelled. On my way to and from school I would look intently at all the signs on the stores to see how the names of men and things were spelled. I made myself distinguished in school for accuracy in this art. Methods of teaching have changed since that day; but, by the custom then followed, I stood up twice a day to spell, in a class of about twenty scholars; and if a pupil spelt a word that one above him in the class had missed, he at once took a place so much nearer to the head. The school authorities had provided a silver medal to be given to the pupil who stood at the head, and, suspended by a ribbon from the neck, to be worn openly in and out of the school. Miss Fowle made the rule that if a scholar obtained this medal, and no other went above him in spelling, it might be held for a week. At the end of a week he was to give it to the scholar next to him, and take his place at the foot of the class, to give others a fair chance.

I remember one day in particular, when I had held possession of this coveted medal for a week, I gave it up to the boy standing next to me, and went cheerfully to the foot of the class.

Then ensued the scene that lives in memory like a turning point in life.

Not more than half a dozen words had been given out when the boy at the foot had, at several long leaps, reached the head again.

The teacher appeared to be disappointed at the result; and asked the successful boy to give up the medal which he had hung about his neck once more, and go again to the foot,—telling him, however, that the medal was his, and he should wear it at the conclusion of the lesson.

This time his ascent was more strongly contested ; but before the lesson was finished, he found himself at the head for the second time.

Miss Fowle looked deeply grieved,—I suppose at the dullness of the class. She gave the boys a few words of reproof,—but in her own gentle and tender way. Her manner of reproof tended to awaken emulation, not to rouse a sulky temper. She then directed the lucky boy to go to the foot once more.

When the end of the lesson was reached he was about half way to the head again. He had passed ten boys.

This was one experience in the life of a boy in his sixth year. Some educators may think that the teacher's course was a mistake,—that it injured the boy by flattering his vanity, and could only be a discouragement to the others in the class. On this point no opinion is here given. But in one way it was a help to the boy,—it gave him courage and confidence, and thereby developed his powers. One of his weaknesses was a sort of self-distrust.

I was eight years old when I was told that my primary school course was finished, and I must henceforth attend a grammar school. I was directed to report, on a certain day, at the grammar school in Hawkins street. I went. But I had hardly entered when I felt myself in a "less happier" world. I was in a much larger room, and could not see the face of one I knew. I had left the associates with whom I was familiarly acquainted, and with all of whom I was on the most friendly terms, to go among strangers, in a room where all seemed cold, gloomy and forbidding. I felt that all my triumphs in the primary school went for naught, and I must begin my education all over again under the most discouraging conditions. I sat there for two hours before any one took any notice of me, and looked about in vain for one sympathizing glance. How I longed to be back again in the genial atmosphere of Miss Fowle's school ! How it would have warmed my heart just then to have met one kind look in those sweet and gentle eyes !

At length I was called before the master,—a grave and pitiless man. He asked me a number of questions, and then gave me a

large book, and told me to read. This could not have been a school text-book, and was in a style and on a subject utterly incomprehensible to me. Besides, it was printed in a smaller type than I had ever been used to, and solid at that. I had thought that I could read pretty well; but as I stumbled over the long and unintelligible words before me my confidence in my reading ability received a terrible shock. Everything had been so easy for me in the primary school, and everything, I felt, was to be so hard here.

The master wrote and handed me a list of text-books, and dismissed me with the direction to bring those books with me when I next came to school. I went back to my seat, to wait till school was dismissed, feeling that I should never have sympathy or help from that man. And I never did. Oh, Miss Fowle, why was I ever taken from you!

Nothing was done at home that day, nor the next, nor the next, towards supplying me with the required text-books. At length, in answer to my questions, my mother tearfully told me that my father could not then spare the money to buy them, but she hoped he could before a great while. But the books were never purchased.

Oh, stupid blunder and blind folly! for the state to lavish thousands on fine schoolhouses, pay large salaries to teachers, and then turn a boy into the streets because too stingy to provide for the petty cost of a few text-books! But that folly has been repented of, and that blunder remedied.

Henceforth no schoolroom was to welcome me to the founts of learning. I was turned adrift at eight years of age to pass the days of boyhood as I might. But I had the shelter of a home which, however poverty-stricken, was sanctified by the ministry of a loving mother. And I may say here, once for all, that, passing much of my time in the streets, through the protecting care of home I yet grew up entirely free from the vices into which too many boys are betrayed by the temptations of city life.

The next few years of my life are to a great extent a blank, and do not present many incidents that I can easily recall. Over this period I must briefly pass.

For one thing, I well remember when I was taken with the measles. My father was a journeyman carpenter. At this time the agitation for a ten-hours' limit had not begun, and an eight-hour day was not dreamed of. My father's workday was from sunrise to sunset, he coming home to breakfast and dinner; so I saw him but little. It was my habit to go down the street at the noon hour to meet him on his way home. One very warm day my step was feeble and my strength failed utterly. I thought it was the heat that caused my weakness, and sat down on the curbstone to wait for my father. I was nearly unconscious when he came, and he took me in his arms and carried me home. I was put to bed, and before night the doctor came, and said "measles."

I was ambitious to do something towards my own support. I got a place in a grocery, kept by a burly, conceited, and overbearing Englishman. One forenoon when there was nothing to do in the store I took up a newspaper, for in those days I wanted to read whenever I could get a chance. The old fellow came along and snatched the paper from my hand, saying: "Look here, lad, that won't do. When you grow up and have a store of your own, you can take a paper and a cigar, and enjoy yourself; but you can't read here."

It was the tone, perhaps, more than the words, that wounded me, and I didn't stay there much longer.

In those days the planing of boards was all done by hand,—a planing machine not having been invented. My father took the job of planing all the floor-boards to be used in a house soon to be built,—a nice job, seeing that the boards must all be dressed to an exactly equal thickness. I asked him if I could not help at this. He said I might try my hand at "roughing" them. "Roughing" boards consisted in taking off the rough surface with a coarse plane, before the board was finally smoothed by a finer one. I worked at this for three weeks,—being then in my tenth year. I became so exceedingly sore and lame in my arms and chest that, though I had heroically resolved not to give up, I was compelled sorrowfully to confess that the work was too much for my strength.

After this I went into a harness-making shop, thinking I would learn that trade ; but, though I cannot now remember just what the difficulty was that I found with it, I gave it up after three or four months.

I then passed some time in a provision store. Here I was obliged to sit every day to chop sausage-meat, a very tiresome process ; and this, with the hardship of carrying out heavy orders, was too much for my strength, and I was compelled once more to resign. To explain these failures I may say that I was always a very weakly boy, and had not the strength of other boys of my age. Perhaps a very rapid physical growth might partly account for this.

After this I had another situation in a grocery. One of my duties here was to "attend bar." In those days every grocery had its little bar, at which alcoholic liquors were dispensed. I cannot remember that at that time there were any "saloons" in the city,—any places where liquors were exclusively kept and sold. Such "goods" were to be obtained at hotels, drug stores or groceries. Young boy as I was, it was part of my business to stand behind the bar, and hand out the decanters of such liquors as were called for. There were two periods during the day when business was lively at the bar ; at other times the calls for liquor were quite infrequent. It is to be remembered that I am speaking of days when there had been no temperance agitation and reform. Something had indeed been written on the subject, and some vigorous protests against excessive drinking had been printed ; but the general drinking habits of the people had as yet remained unchanged. One of these habits was to go to the bar regularly at eleven o'clock in the forenoon and at four o'clock in the afternoon, and take a drink. In this store I saw but very little drinking in the evening ; though in that part of the day there was quite a trade in liquor to be taken and consumed at home.

But the great "rush" of the day was at eleven and four o'clock, and for about half an hour at each period I was in a great whirl of hurry and excitement. The most difficult part of my task was,

at first, to make change. The fractional currency then in circulation consisted of quarters (twenty-five cents); ninepences (twelve and a half cents); fourpence half-pennies (six and a quarter cents); coppers (one cent pieces); and some half dollars, and now and then a "pistareen" (twenty cents). This change in the store was mixed promiscuously in the money "till,"—a box about fourteen inches square; and there was an inevitable delay in picking out the right pieces from the mass in the till. This was specially provoking when several men were waiting at once for their change. I soon conceived a plan for simplifying the process. Just before the rush of business, each day, I separated the coins in the money drawer, putting the quarters, ninepences, fourpences, and coppers each in a separate corner, and the other pieces in the center. I found I could then make change much more rapidly. Of course the money would be all mixed again in the course of a few hours, and I had to make the separation twice a day.

I was so unsophisticated then that it never came into my head that when I was arranging the coins the proprietor might think I was dishonestly tampering with his money; and one day I saw him watching me when I was occupied with the till; but he never said a word to me on the subject. I have often wondered since why he did not.

It seems that in this method I invented I was only anticipating the wisdom of later years. Whenever of late years I have noticed that in all the stores the money till is divided into separate compartments, and each denomination of coin has a division by itself, I sometimes find the thought coming into my head that a poor boy in Boston hit upon that idea, and put it in practice in a crude way, nearly fifty years before.

I must say here that I went through the task of "bartender" with discontent and disgust. Though I never saw a man come into the store in an intoxicated condition, yet among the men who came regularly to that bar I saw several who had evidently been in the habit of taking the poison to excess; and, inexperienced though I was, I could not help thinking that they were on the road

to certain ruin. I never felt the slightest temptation to resort to the intoxicating cup, in those days, for I saw only danger in the practice; but I wanted to get away from the scenes I witnessed day after day. I do not remember that I felt personally guilty in ministering to the vices of the others, though it might be expected that conscientious scruples would be only natural; but the occupation was so disagreeable that I wanted to be out of it. It so outraged my tastes that I desired to find something more congenial, and after awhile I was able to make my escape.

I had now tried half a dozen things in the effort to find something in the way of a vocation that would fit a young boy's abilities; and I was dissatisfied with them all. A year or more now passed, distinguished by no incident that is worth recalling. But before I had completed my thirteenth year I was fortunate enough to find an opening that quickened my undeveloped resources, and gave a new current to my life.

I cannot now remember how it came about; but in the autumn of 1835 I found myself in the office of a lawyer in the capacity of office boy. The name of this lawyer was Henry H. Fuller, and this name is to be held in grateful and loving remembrance. This life was as the beginning of days to me. Mr. Fuller soon evinced an uncommon interest in my welfare. He noticed that I had a tendency to take up and read anything that lay in my way when I had a few leisure moments. I had, moreover, shown a disposition to scribble with a pen whenever I thought I might properly do so. He kindly took occasion to commend my taste for literary pursuits. Before long he provided me with a small table in his private office for my own use. On this he placed stationery and pens, and told me I might sit there and read and write when I was not otherwise employed. He had observed that my chirography was in need of most decided improvement.

Mr. Fuller's office was at No. 6 State street. Quite near to it was what was then known as "Joy's Building," a structure on Washington street, standing in front of what is now Young's Hotel. In this building a kind-hearted old gentleman (whose name I regret

that I cannot at this moment recall), had a room upstairs, in which he taught penmanship. To this writing-master I went for one hour each day to take private lessons in the art of penmanship, and all at Mr. Fuller's expense. Could anything be more generous? My teacher's style was an old-fashioned, plain round hand. I have often felt thankful that I was not forced to cultivate the manner of the modern so-called "business college," in which pen flourishes and elaborate ornamentation are so ingeniously contrived as to make the writing they adorn all but illegible. I have never been able to write a "beautiful hand;" but it has always been my desire and my effort to make my characters distinct and plain. I have often been complimented on the clear and legible manuscript I produce; if I have deserved this, the credit belongs to my gratefully-remembered writing-master.

It was while I was in Mr. Fuller's office that I first read American history with any thoroughness. Of course I found it highly exciting, and it awakened all my boyish enthusiasm. In the warm glow of thought and feeling which the subject had kindled, I wrote, entirely for my own amusement, and to give vent to my emotions, a regular historical Fourth-of-July oration. It will be understood that my duties in the office were so light that I had a considerable time at my disposal, and could therefore gratify any literary impulse. Mr. Fuller left me entirely free to follow my own tastes and desires in reading and writing, without interposing any direction or dictation of his own; and this I have always regarded as a distinct benefit to me. It threw me on myself and forced me to do my own thinking. It was the beginning of the formation of that habit of mind by which I have chosen to work out my own conceptions, without trusting to the authority of others. It is, I imagine, in consequence of this independence of thought that, on questions of current and vital interest, I have seldom gone with the majority. As I have never been in the schools, I cannot speak positively of the extent of their influence in forming a boy's mind; but, from what I have observed in life, I have an impression that

too many boys, in the course of a "liberal education," receive a mental bias, or imbibe prejudices, from which they never recover.

But Mr. Fuller exerted no such pernicious influence on me. It was indeed his custom to notice, in the most kindly way, what I was doing in the hours in which I was left to myself; and when my Fourth-of-July oration was finished he surprised me by saying that I must come to his house some evening and deliver it. The evening was afterwards fixed, and I went. Besides Mr. and Mrs. Fuller, a number of their friends had been invited, and my audience numbered about twenty. They were seated about the parlor, and a table with lights was placed at one side, before which I was to stand. I looked around the room, lost in wonder at the splendor before me, and at the grand and noble appearance of the company. You may imagine the feelings of an obscure and poverty-stricken boy, entirely unused to such a scene, when he was told, in the kindest tone, that the audience were all ready to hear. I took my place; I began to read. At first my voice was hardly audible; but I was very soon absorbed and wrapped in my subject, and went through, full of feeling, and scarcely conscious that any one was present to listen. At the close I was overwhelmed with compliments and congratulations, enough to turn a boy's head. It may be supposed that all this was too stimulating to childish vanity; but I went home that evening happy as I could be; feeling, I am sure, not vain of my achievement, but grateful to my benefactor, and ambitious to be worthy of the kindness and generosity that had quickened my intellectual aspirations.

I did not remain in Mr. Fuller's office more than two years. A desire that began to form when I was first conscious of the delights of mental improvement, and which grew till it had become a passion, now dominated my thoughts. It was to become a printer. I finally mustered courage to tell Mr. Fuller how I felt. He listened to me kindly and sympathetically, as he always did. He asked me if I was sure I had rather be a printer than to stay with him and grow up to be a lawyer, and I frankly told him I did not want to be a lawyer. As a matter of fact the few law books I had taken

up and read did not interest me at all. He then said that though he should be very sorry to have me leave him, yet, if I had taken a strong fancy to any pursuit, he thought it was better for me to follow it.

Thus we parted. But as long as I remained in the city he never ceased to be my friend, and afterwards gave me many proofs of his generous and kindly regard. I was away from Boston when he died.

## CHAPTER II.

### APPRENTICESHIP.

In my desire to become a printer, I first went into an office which was then becoming famous, and employing a large number of workmen. But I stayed here only a few months. I was put at the least skillful labors of a printing office. At first I thought I had made a mistake. I was constantly employed, as indeed I expected to be; but the loss of the opportunity for reading and study which I had enjoyed at Mr. Fuller's was keenly felt, and the prospect was indeed very gloomy. But I was fired with the ambition to handle the types. I cared little for such employment as sweeping floors and filling in sheets for the dry press; my fancy was enamored with the vision of the paradise I should be in when I should be combining the little bits of lead into the characters that gave such a delight and glory to the printed page. As I saw no prospect that the gates of this paradise would be opened for my entrance for a long time to come, I withdrew from that establishment.

While I was in this office, however, one incident happened which I must relate. One forenoon the master sent me to his house to do some work there.

This was at one of those gloomy periods known as "hard times." The terrific panic of 1837 had paralyzed the country, and business was nearly at a standstill. My father had been thrown out of employment, and the family were in the depths of poverty and destitution. On the morning of the day I remember so well, there was nothing in the house for breakfast. My mother advised me not to go to work till after I had something to eat, as she thought that by noon a little supply might be provided. But as I could not, for very shame, give the true reason for such absence from the office, I could not reasonably explain it; and I felt that in such case

my reputation would be tarnished. So I determined to put a bold face on the situation; and, taking a little warm drink which my mother gave me, I resolutely went to my work. In about two hours, as related, I was told to go to the house of my employer.

Here I found that some furniture was to be removed from one room to another, and some other arranging to be done. I set about my task with undoubting courage; but, as the forenoon advanced, I found myself growing weak and faint,—the heavy lifting was fast taking away the little strength I had. At last I had to sit down midway with the article I was carrying, and I fell into a seat, too feeble to move. The lady of the house, who was directing my labors, asked, with evident sympathy, if I was ill. I told her I was suffering with headache, which was true. She kindly asked if she could do anything for me. Then I forced myself to say that I thought a little luncheon would help me.

At this she was manifestly surprised; but said she would be glad to give me a lunch, only she knew by experience that eating always made a headache worse.

That lady was kind, and gentleness and generosity shone in her sweet face; yet she let me suffer only because she thought she knew better than I did what was best for me. Good people, ministering to the destitute, have since then made a thousand worse mistakes. A human being may know accurately where the shoe pinches, but may have good reason for not saying anything to dishonor the shoe. Of course I might have told the good lady just what my trouble was; but I could not disparage my home.

Often, since, when sitting down to a substantial meal, I have thought of this incident of my boyhood, and have smiled, as I smile now, at the absurdity of the circumstance.

I had rested but a short time, when my usual hour for dinner arrived; and I staggered to my home to find a frugal meal provided for me. After this I went directly to the office; but I was not sent to that house again.

It was not many weeks afterwards that I quitted this place.

My next venture was in a job office connected with a daily news-

paper, where only one man was employed, and he was absent from the room a considerable portion of the time, so that I was left at such times to be my own "boss." Here I was soon permitted, in technical language, "to go to the case." In a very brief space I had taught myself how to "set type." The dream of my youth was so far realized; and I will not describe the joy I felt when I found that I could form bits of type into words. I stood at the fountain of universal knowledge. From that hour I have found an undying charm in the types; and to this hour I can never look upon them without emotion.

In a few months I came to see that this was not the place to learn the "trade" in all its branches. The situation was very easy; there was nothing to overtask my strength. But I wanted to be where I could learn more. So I left it; but I left with a grateful feeling that the spot had become dear to me, because I had here become initiated into what then seemed to me the greatest of mysteries.

I next spent nearly a year in another office of wider facilities; and here I had my first glimpse of financial prosperity. During the ensuing winter, by the kindness of my "boss," I was permitted to do overwork,—sometimes even doing "jobs" on my own account. At the end of the winter, after providing myself with some few extra comforts in the way of clothing, and indulging in some frugal fancies, I found myself in possession of fifty dollars, for which I had no pressing use. I presume a Vanderbilt or an Astor does not feel richer than I did then. I loaned this amount to a friend, and that was the last I ever saw of it.

I cannot now remember why I became dissatisfied with this place. The master was kind, I might say indulgent; but he had an irascible temper, and I was then perhaps too quick to resent any real or fancied offense to my self-respect. But, for some reason unknown, I was dissatisfied, and I resigned my situation. It may be idle vanity; but it pleases me now to recall that from the three offices where I had thus far sought to master "the Art preservative of all arts," I had never been discharged. I had quitted of my own accord.

At my next place I found my rest. This was in the office of Isaac R. Butts, at the corner of Washington and School streets. Here I was put to all parts of the "mystery,"—book composition, job composition, and press-work; that is, setting types for books, setting types for jobs, and striking off the impressions on the press, I had a chance to learn more than printers' apprentices are taught nowadays. The growth of the business has wrought great changes. If a boy now goes into a "Press" (what was once a printing-office has now become a "press," with the prefix of some sounding title), he is taught book composition, or job composition,—seldom both,—or he learns press-work. In the days of my apprenticeship, the presses were nearly all worked by hand. Some few crude machines (they would be called crude to-day) had been introduced into some newspaper offices; but they were nearly or quite unknown in book and job offices. The wonderful inventions of later years, the intricate machines that now rapidly turn out the sheets, have made it the custom to put press-work into a separate department; and a pressman's duty is now one of the high arts. It is for this reason that a boy cannot now learn all parts of a printer's work.

But I was permitted, in Mr. Butts's office, to gain, let me say at least, a moderate degree of skill in all three departments. And I may also say that if a boy had mastered the rudimentary principles of press-work (the same on all presses) on a hand-press, he could adapt himself to the requirements of a modern machine much more readily than a "raw" hand could be expected to do.

An apprentice never had a better "master" than Isaac R. Butts. Patient with a boy's mistakes, he always respected his individuality, and left him entirely free to develop his own tastes, in a trade with success in which taste and art are so essential. Forty years after I had finished my apprenticeship, Mr. Butts died at the advanced age of eighty-four; and when I joined with a large circle of his friends to do honor to his memory at his funeral, it was with a pleasing recollection of happy days in his employ, and a grateful sense of my obligations to him in the days of my youth.

It was soon after I entered Mr. Butts's office that I became a

member of an institution that proved to be an important aid in my education. This was the "Mechanic Apprentices' Library Association," a society of those engaged in learning any mechanical trade; and all were minors, no one being allowed to remain a member after he had completed his twenty-first year. In this institution an apprentice found the rarest opportunities for mental discipline and development. In the first place there was a library of nearly three thousand books. The single advantage of this library can hardly be appreciated by a studious youth of to-day. To a poor boy in those days books were very difficult of access. There were a few small circulating libraries; but the impecunious youth could not often spare the small fees which he must pay to read them. I can well remember when books I longed for were beyond my reach. The magnificent public library of Boston, where any boy, however poverty-stricken, may satisfy his thirst for knowledge, was not then dreamed of. But in 1820, a man of large mind and splendid public spirit—let the name of William Wood be held in everlasting remembrance—conceived the scheme of giving to all the boys of Boston the means of enriching their minds by means of books. And so, in 1838, I found this fountain flowing for my intellectual refreshment.

Besides the use of our library, we had our special literary exercises. On certain evenings, set apart for this purpose, we expressed our thoughts in written essays, discussed questions in verbal debate, or practised oratory without a master. It was here that I made my first essays in extemporaneous speaking—very bungling and unskillful efforts they were—and began to form my style in composition. I studied no rules of rhetoric, and had the aid of no scientific direction whatever. Whatever may be thought of my style of writing, it is altogether the fruit of my own cultivation, without help from any outside source,—save only of such friendly criticism as the boys kindly gave each other. I have often been complimented on the "clearness and beauty" with which I express my thoughts and convictions; and, though I allow my vanity to accept these commendations as the voice of partial

friendship only, I merely refer to my style as one example of what a boy may accomplish who (1) has something he wants to say, and (2) is ambitious to say it with clearness and force.

In our verbal debates, we generally selected our subjects from our reading. These were often of a historical nature,—such as raking over the characters of Julius Cæsar and Napoleon. These and other worthies, had they been living to listen to the assaults or praises of these mechanic apprentices, must have been in doubt whether to consider themselves the enemies or friends of mankind.

This was a period, of course, when many opinions on various subjects were formed ; but they were formed individually and independently, without the intervention of external authority. This is one advantage which a student enjoys when he studies with only himself for a master. How many in the world are to-day cherishing false maxims of political economy, utterly erroneous views on finance, and preposterous absurdities on social and economic science,—only because some professor in a college laid down such doctrines as being the only correct outcome of scholastic research, and these absurdities have been adopted by students when they were too careless or too thoughtless to investigate and examine them on their own account, and they have been too busy or too indolent since to ask themselves if they had not better be reconsidered. Better results—other things being equal—are likely to be achieved by those who study by themselves and think for themselves. This does not mean that a youth can expect to work out his opinions on all subjects by his own sole thought-power ; for he must avail himself of the results of past research. Opinions are as variable as the aspects of the sky and as multitudinous as the sands of the seashore ; but it is the student's business to examine all sides of a question, and then decide for himself, without recourse to a teacher who has a pet theory to establish, what is right. As his sphere of knowledge is enlarged, and his mind gains clearer insight, he will often find that his opinions must be changed,—that is, if he preserves his habit of independent thought. I remember one incident in my own reading. When

I first read Macaulay's History of England, I accepted his view of a certain passage in the history of that country. Some years afterwards the great work of Buckle appeared; and when, in reading it, I came to the page where he very briefly reviewed the same passage of history, I found that in a few trenchant sentences he had entirely overthrown the theory that Macaulay had elaborated through many pages; and I had to adopt Buckle's as the truer view. There was no dispute as to the substantial facts,—it was only the false coloring which Macaulay gave to the facts which had previously misled me.

It has been objected that the self-taught man loses the advantage which the student in the halls of learning enjoys, in that close contact and conflict with other minds that enables him to form a just estimate of his own powers and acquirements. But, whatever force there may be in this objection, it does not hold against the student who educated himself in the halls of the Mechanic Apprentices' Library Association. Here, at least, there was abundant opportunity to measure his own with other minds, to perceive where he failed, and to learn where he must strengthen his defences. As I now recall the memories of my four years' membership in that institution, and think of the mental force and moral power of those—many of whom are now dead—with whom I mingled and with whom I contended in that class, I think it is a fortunate boy whose resources are stimulated and sharpened by friction with such minds.

Another study in which we became quite proficient in the M. A. L. A. was in the knowledge of parliamentary practice. We had "Jefferson's Manual" for our text-book,—the only work then extant on that subject, and the leading principles of which are followed in "Cushing's Manual." In our business meetings, which were quite frequent, we made a close and keen application of the rules Jefferson laid down; and it often required clear analysis and nice discrimination to determine the right course of procedure. The boys who came out of the M. A. L. A. have generally been distinguished for uncommon knowledge of parliamentary rules, and been capable of presiding in deliberative meetings,—positions

where even highly educated men have often found themselves hopelessly snarled up. I have heard of men who have, for instance, distinguished themselves in a ward caucus in Boston, for their sharp parliamentary practice; and when it has been asked how they were able to outwit more capable fellow-citizens by their ingenious motions and points of order, the answer has been that they were once members of the Mechanic Apprentices' Library Association.

We had one splendid annual festival, on the 22d of February,—the anniversary of the founding of the institution, as well as that of the birth of Washington. On this occasion we had a public meeting, usually in some large hall, at which one of the members gave an oration, and another a poem. Some of the finest productions in literature have at these anniversaries been given to the public by mechanic apprentice boys under twenty-one years of age. I had the honor of giving one of their poems. Very poor stuff it is, as I now read it; but I felt infinitely interested in it then, and the hard labor of composing it was certainly a good step taken in the work of mental improvement.

The pleasant associations formed in that institution have borne fruit in succeeding years. And among my many friends—and in old age our kind and faithful friends are to us the inestimable wine of life—I count as of the best those to whom I am bound by the fraternal ties which the associations and the fellowship of the M. A. L. A. were the first to create. And so strong are these ties, and so sweet the memories they foster, that the past members of that institution are now accustomed to meet in annual reunions, on the much-loved anniversary, to recall the old times around the social board.

I have now brought the memories of my life down to the period of my twenty-first year. Some things, I have no doubt, I have forgotten; but it was a childhood and youth distinguished by no startling incidents,—nor can I now persuade myself of any that can have much interest. I have shown what opportunities of education I enjoyed; and if I did not have the advantages of the schools, I was not left altogether without the means of intellectual discipline and culture.

## CHAPTER III.

### YOUNG MANHOOD.

I have at length completed my twenty-first year. I start now on a career of "responsible existence," as it is called (as though I had till now been destitute of responsibility). I start with a small stock of ambition, some earnest desires, and much high hope. Would the world smile more kindly on the man than the boy?

The first thing to note is that I got married. On the 29th of November, 1843,—two months after I became "of age,"—I was wedded to Martha Day Ayer, of Plaistow, New Hampshire. We lived in Boston, and I continued in the employ of Mr. Butts as a journeyman. It may be thought that the spirit of enterprise was not strong within me when I betook myself to this tame and quiet life. I do not deny it. I am not writing a defence of my life, but simply recounting its main incidents from memory. I *had* come to manhood with a high purpose to make the most of my life. But there had already been a brief and painful episode, which had most effectually dampened my ardor. I think of it now, after all these years, only with a chill sense of distress. I had struck out boldly, blindly, and foolishly in a newspaper venture. It was a short and sharp campaign. In a single month the battle ended, and I was plunged into the horrors of defeat. The failure was partly due to the mismanagement and dishonesty of a partner; but this fact does not relieve the smart.

I felt that I had overestimated my abilities, that I was not capable of exerting any perceptible influence on the age in which I lived, and must content myself henceforth with a humble and obscure life. In this state of feeling I married.

There followed nothing in my life to speak of till the 25th of May, 1845, when my firstborn, Martha Anna, came into being.

But this event, instead of rousing my ambition, had only the effect of making me more contented with my style of life.

I may quote Shakespeare as not unfitly glancing at my feeling.

“ I swear 'tis better to be lowly born,  
And range with humble livers in content,  
Than to be perked up in a glistening grief,  
And wear a golden sorrow.”

Of course I do not speak of my joys in my wife and baby. Such passions are too sacred to be revealed on the written page.

But these joys were of short duration. My wife never fully recovered from her confinement, and the ravages of quick consumption soon put an end to life. In eight short months I saw her consigned to a silent grave.

If I had been disappointed and humiliated at my first defeat, I was completely broken down now. My life dragged its dreary way along for the next three years without hope and without ambition. While my mind was a prey to despondency, my health gave way; and I became too weak to stand at the “case” and set types. At length I consulted a physician, and enjoyed, for the first and last time, the delights of the beautiful medical or surgical operation called, in common phrase, “cupping.” He told me that I was afflicted with heart disease, but was not sure whether it was functional or organic. He said I must leave the city. The best thing I could do was to take a long voyage at sea; the next best was to go and live in the country. The first was beyond my means, besides being not to my taste. So I took to the second. I went to reside with my wife’s family in Plaistow.

As time passed, some slumbering fires within me began to rekindle. I felt ashamed of my useless life. This living without a purpose was a shabby thing.

Finally, on the 5th of April, 1849, I married Miriam C. Tewksbury, of Wilmot, New Hampshire, and went to begin life anew in that town.

And now began what I may term my “religious experience.” I can justify to myself every important step I took in this phase of my existence; but I am not sure that I can make its reason

ableness just as clear to the minds of others. At all events I shall not make the attempt. I am now writing neither an apology nor a justification. I simply tell things just as I remember them.

After quitting my attendance at church and Sunday school, in both of which I had been constant up to about my thirteenth year, out of regard to the wishes of my parents, I became thoroughly indifferent to all religious observances and questions. I did not take enough interest in these things to become an "infidel," or, as it is termed now, a freethinker. I might have come out an "infidel" youth of a pronounced type if I had given any thought to the subject. I am glad now that I did not; for I feel more firm and secure in the conceptions in which I rest at this day, from the fact that I have sincerely been in every mental attitude which could enable me to examine religious ideas and observances from every possible standpoint, internal or external.

I began this narrative with the intention of merely stating facts. I find already that I have yielded to an irresistible temptation to put in occasional bits of philosophy. But I am not philosophizing now. In giving a few brief hints of my states of mind at different periods I am merely dealing with facts.

My indifference to religion during my youth in Boston was due to an impression that the church, in its outward garb, was hollow and insincere. This may be said to be the view of only a thoughtless boy. Be it so; it was my distinct and strong impression then.

In the early autumn of my first year's residence in Wilmot there came that religious demonstration called a "revival," and I was seized with a startling interest in the movement. The preachers were mostly men of little education; they came in the love of Christ to declare to the people their *idees*; they and the brethren set at defiance the rules of the English language,—yet there was the unction of deep conviction and sincere earnestness in their speaking which was entirely new to me. I began to feel that there might be something in religion after all. Those fashionable city churches, I said, have doubtless departed from the true faith; but these simple and illiterate country folk have sought the pearl

of grace at the true fountain, and have preserved their integrity of soul. I surrendered myself to these uncommon influences, and, before I knew where I was drifting, found myself floating on the full tide of emotion. I was soon pronounced soundly converted; and at the time I thought I was. It was true I did not experience all the emotions and exercises which others said they felt, and which were laid down as the signs of regeneration. I felt in my soul that something was lacking in my "experience;" I said so; but the experts told me I was all right, and I must throw away all my doubts. So I allowed it to be said that I was born again.

Notwithstanding my partial renewal of mental fire, and the effects of my recent marriage, I had not fully recovered the full elasticity of hope and vigor when this flood of "revival" struck me. My mind was still to some extent "sicklied o'er with the pale cast" of despondency; and this melancholy tendency contributed to the eagerness with which I "sought the Lord." But in spite of the mistake I made in calling myself "converted" (though it cost me many mental pangs to outgrow my error), I must admit that my experience at this time did me substantial good. Out of it was born a higher purpose of life. I do not believe that this was the effect of any "spiritual" influence of an external nature operating on my heart; it was because this mental excitement had led me to a deeper thoughtfulness and severer self-examination. I had been too much under the domination of a selfish ambition,—the vain desire to build myself up. But from this period of my life I have positively given up all thought of personal supremacy; and have never sought for position or leadership. To care nothing for my personal fortunes, and to labor to help and save others was the decision and purpose now blossoming into full and vigorous life in my nature. It is true I was not fully conscious of this at the immediate period now in review; but it all came out strong and distinct when, a few months later, I seriously considered anew what my course in life should henceforth be.

## CHAPTER IV.

### MINISTRY.

The "revival" in which I was "converted" was a sort of union affair, as it is termed; that is, Freewill Baptists, Trinitarian Congregationalists and Methodists were engaged in it. It was intimated to me that I should be warmly welcomed to church-membership in either of these sects. I elected to join the Freewill Baptists, on two grounds. First, this denomination had at an early day in the abolition movement taken an anti-slavery position, and borne testimony against "the sum of all villainies." Such was its voice as a denomination, though a large portion of its church-members in New Hampshire at least, still remained firm in their pro-slavery prejudices. I did not, it is true, know this at the time; but I presume if I had I should have chosen that sect all the same, because it was the only religious body (besides the Quakers) that had at that day the decency to protest against putting women on the auction-block. Second; though I then knew very little about theology, I did know that there was such a thing as Calvinism; and in the fervor of my newborn zeal I loathed the monstrous dogma that God had doomed a "certain but indefinite number" of the human race (so says the creed) to an eternal hell,—and made, too, that characteristic and godlike decree before the "foundation of the world." Now the Freewill Baptists were Arminian in their theology,—had rejected the "predestination" and "election" nonsense, and proclaimed that "salvation was free." I was therefore inclined to this sect by the force of my natural tastes and impulses.

For some months after this my thoughts puzzled and struggled over the personal problem whether I should continue to cultivate the soil (a noble and honest occupation in itself), or whether I

should attempt to do something else. I had not yet recovered from the shock of my first defeat, and still sorely distrusted my own abilities. At the same time I had an intense yearning for some form of intellectual life, and feared that my brain would stagnate, as it evidently had in the case of most of my neighbors, in the simple but wearing toils of a farmer's existence.

In this state of doubt and perplexity, it happened, the next summer, that an opening was accidentally offered to me, and, with not more than an hour's notice, I mounted the pulpit, and gave my first sermon,—an entirely extemporaneous effort, without any previous preparation whatever. Of course I went through, and talked the usual length of time without stumbling. But the performance did not settle my doubts. I still could not bring myself to believe that I was made for a preacher.

In this state of uncertainty I passed several months of the succeeding winter in Boston. I set types in Mr. Butts' office for the family subsistence, and used my evenings to renew some former associations, and to reawaken, if I could, my mental energies.

I returned to Wilmot in early spring, to meet the sorrow of laying away in the grave the dear form of the lovely babe, the first that was born to me in my second marriage,—little Mary Louisa, aged fifteen months. Her mother sleeps beside her now.

On the question that had been engaging my thoughts for months, my mind not many weeks after this came to a decision. I could not settle down to a farmer's life; what, then, should I do? I had a definite purpose,—I was bent on making myself of some use to the world. What calling or occupation could offer better opportunities than that of the Ministry? Here was a profession that, by its very nature, could have no connection with selfishness or pride. It could take no counsel of policy or expediency. It is devoted to the noblest objects, and must be controlled and guided by the highest moral considerations. It could listen to nothing but the voice of absolute Truth,—care for nothing but the eternal Right. A person of moderate abilities might do some service to his race in such a work as this. The die was cast,—I would be a minister.

The next question was,—Must I prepare myself by a course of study in some theological school? How did I learn to set types? I learned without a master,—by my own unaided practice. The way to learn to set types is, clearly, to set types. Then the way to learn to preach is—to preach. Of course, if there were technical or scientific secrets to be learned, it would be necessary to go where they were revealed or taught. But how much science must a man be master of before he could learn to say what he thinks. I am now twenty-eight years of age,—I will waste no time in the schools. I will make the needs, the prejudices, the passions of my fellow-men my school; if I cannot learn how to preach in such a school, I could not from a professor of divinity. So I began.

I gave sermons here and there, for awhile, as I had opportunity,—sometimes holding forth in a schoolhouse, and sometimes taking the place of a minister who was ill.

The Freewill Baptist churches were arranged in groups of neighboring bodies, perhaps twenty churches in a group. These associations were called Quarterly Meetings, and met in religious convocation four times a year. At one of these, in January, 1852, I was formally licensed to preach the gospel. For the next two years I preached in Wilmot. This period of my life is rather barren of interest or incident.

There was one episode that I will recount, because it will tend to show how I had my eyes opened to the actual state of religious character and quality in the people among whom my lot was now cast, and how some of the fond illusions with which I set out were too suddenly dissolved.

Early in the spring I wished to purchase a cow. I had no skill in judging of an animal's qualities by external examination, an art in which some old farmers are exceedingly expert. So I went to one of my deacons, a man who, for that locality, dealt largely in cattle, and stated my want. At this time I had full confidence in his Christian integrity. I had indeed heard some hints that he was not trustworthy in his business transactions; but he was so loud in his professions, and so zealous in prayer-meeting,

that in my simplicity I had dismissed these innuendoes as unworthy of belief. So when he told me that he had just the cow I wanted, that he would sell me below her value, I fully believed him. It is true it was some slight shock to my confidence when he went on to expatiate on the very excellent qualities of his cow; but, putting the matter on the very lowest ground, I reflected that no man would, for the sake of a few dollars, gravely damage his reputation among his neighbors by a dishonest transaction. I paid him his price, which was as high as a first-class animal would command. As it turned out, it was the meanest and most nearly worthless of any domestic animal ever reared. But I said nothing; I only thought that I might profit by the lesson in the future. Some others, who could not help knowing the facts, made some talk about it, much to the deacon's discredit. But I took my punishment like a little man.

It did, however, have the effect of convincing me that the education of this people in the principles of Christian morality had been sadly neglected, and impressed me with the necessity and importance of giving these Christians more "practical" sermons. And in this way my attention was turned to this line of instruction.

Many months afterwards, when I had seen more evidences of the moral obtuseness of this people, I remember that I prepared myself with a "strong" sermon on the urgency of the requirement that Christians should be truthful and honest in their daily lives, if they would not bring dishonor on the gospel they professed. Now I most solemnly affirm that in this sermon I did not have the deacon in my mind. I was not disposed to put a personal grievance into a discourse; and, besides, some more recent circumstances had driven the thought of the deacon's cheat out of my mind. I could not help noticing, however, that the deacon was very uneasy during the service; and, as soon as it was over, one of his sons went out of the church, and said, in the hearing of many, "There! he said everything he could say without saying 'cow' right out." This revealed to me how much this family had suffered in their feelings about the "cow trade," and it was encouraging

to know that they were not insensible to the lash. There is some hope of a man's moral renovation as long as a good degree of sensibility remains. I had got the best end of the "trade" after all.

In the course of two years I had made some advancement in the art of preaching, and now felt some confidence I might justly attempt to be useful in a larger field.

In January, 1854, I was at a session of the Quarterly Meeting, held at Wilmot, formally ordained to the work of the ministry, and now became a full-fledged clergyman.

I soon received a "call" to Strafford, Vermont, and, after preaching there for one Sunday, I accepted the invitation, and removed to that town with my family. Here I passed two pleasant years; but nothing occurred worthy of special record. The anti-slavery sentiment was much more vigorous and wide-spread in Vermont than it was in New Hampshire. In my church or audience there was none of that besotted prejudice in favor of slavery that I had found in Wilmot; and there was no necessity for those anti-slavery sermons that had been a source of irritation to some of my hearers in my first ministry. In the elections of the autumn of that year the victory for anti-slavery was practically won in Vermont.

It was here that I sought to prepare myself for future usefulness by making an experiment. My parish was extended over a large territory; and, according to the custom of those days, I appointed meetings, on the evening of week-days, for the benefit of the aged or infirm in the outlying districts, who could not come four or five miles to church very often on Sunday. Hitherto I had not been able to preach without considerable preparation. But, to be fitted for emergencies, I wanted to be able to preach off-hand. So I adopted the plan of going out to these evening meetings, and giving a "preach" without the slightest preparation. I wanted to get the ability and habit of "thinking on my feet." If I have ever had any facility in purely extemporaneous speaking, it is due to such efforts as these, more than to any natural gift. In my original power of speech I was not fluent.

There is, indeed, such a thing as extemporaneous speech, the main part of which has been thoroughly thought out beforehand. What I desired was to be able to think as I went along.

Besides the fact that I was one year in Strafford elected to have charge of the public schools, there is nothing in particular to set down in my life there. There was no "religious revival" in the town while I remained there.

My next ministry was in the town of Farmington, in New Hampshire, where I removed in the summer of 1856. A village had been built up here by a thriving shoe industry, and a small Freewill Baptist church had been organized. I not only had a "call" to go there, but had been urged by the brethren who managed affairs at the headquarters of the denomination in Dover to accept it. The substance of this advice was, that the village was growing, and, by the hard work of an earnest and able man a flourishing church might be built up there.

The first point was to get a church built there, for the Freewill Baptists had no fit place of worship. An old and decayed meeting-house, built in the old times before a village was thought of, was all that the church had to meet in; and as this gloomy house was three-fourths of a mile away from the village it was impossible to gather an audience within its walls on Sunday,—an audience large enough to give any hope of the future.

One of our leading ministers had been my immediate predecessor. He had devoted his ministry of two years to the special object of building a new meeting-house in the village; and had given up the work in despair.

I went there under these conditions. I soon saw that for some months at least a new meeting-house was not to be thought of, much less openly advocated. In fact some members of the church "encouraged" me from the first by saying that the Freewill doctrine had no chance in that community, and a new house of worship could never be built there. I thought I would consider the matter for myself, and said nothing.

But what forced the postponement of any meeting-house enter-

prise was the fact that the entire community was terribly stirred up and excited over politics. We were in the midst of the Fremont campaign of 1856.

I have witnessed and passed through fifteen presidential elections, and the campaign of 1856 surpasses any of them, or all of them, for its purely moral effectiveness and grandeur. The campaign of 1840 was fully as glowing in its excitement; but it was a merely thoughtless craze, and nobody knew what the hullabalo was all about.

“ Will go for Old Tip, therefore,  
Without a why or wherefore ”

was a quite accurate description of the spirit of that canvass. The election of 1860, when Lincoln was elected, was very quiet and inanimate indeed, for the contest had been practically decided four years earlier, and it was seen to be a foregone conclusion from the beginning of the canvass.

But in 1856 the political conditions were entirely unlike any which distinguished a campaign before or since,—at least in my remembrance.

The anti-slavery sentiment that had been slowly gaining in force and volume as a political movement since 1840 now appeared in the field with a strength and vigor that threatened or promised to sweep the country. The outrages which the “ border ruffians,” the tools of the slave power, were inflicting on the free settlers of Kansas, and the horrible atrocities of midnight raids on the homes of peaceable emigrants, borne on every Western breeze, aroused the pity and indignation of the North. When these emigrants at length arose to oppose the invader, and John Brown’s war-cry at Ossawatimie was heard throughout the land, the excitement blazed with intensity of heat. But the impulse which set the multitudes in political array was a purely moral impulse. No question of dollars and cents entered into the conflict; no man’s pocket was appealed to. It was only the claims of Right against Wrong, of Freedom against Slavery.

It was into the whirl of such a political tempest that I was cast in the summer of 1856 in Farmington. Of course the people had

no ear for the abstract dogmas of religion. Everything was interpreted with reference to the political situation. If the preacher happened casually to say that no man should be the "slave of his passions," the phrase was caught up and discussed as to its bearing on the affairs of "bleeding Kansas." In my constitutional caution I delayed making a public avowal of my convictions till I could gain some insight into the state of the public mind, and the nature of the prevailing sentiment. I wanted to know just where and how to strike. I never felt more deeply impressed with the importance of making a right use of my abilities and my opportunities. So I preached calmly the general doctrines of religion, as if unconscious of the storm raging around me. I contented myself with the increase in the number of my small audience, from Sunday to Sunday,—an increase which usually marks a new preacher's advent, and which it depends on his own abilities to hold. So matters went on for weeks.

At the beginning of October I felt I must no longer delay. It was time I should fire a shot. My preaching was having no visible effect. I could not content myself to be

" Dropping buckets into empty wells,  
And growing old in drawing nothing up."

But I had been treasuring up such a volume of "wrath against the day of wrath" that I was impelled to say more than I then thought I could properly say as a part of a religious service. So one Sunday I quietly gave notice that on the following Thursday evening I would state my views on the political situation.

I went down to the old meeting-house on that evening in a mental state the very calmness of which surprised me. I found about twice the number of my usual audience, but the general aspect was very quiet. I began by stating the general grounds on which chattel slavery was shown to be a monstrous wrong, and the giant sin of permitting it to exist anywhere, as well as the absurd disgrace of continuing the iniquitous system in a land formally dedicated, as ours was, to liberty. All this I might properly have declared in a sermon on Sunday. But then I went on to apply the

principles I had laid down to the existing position of political parties. The Democratic party, which had for forty years stood as the abject tool of the Slave power, had in the present campaign taken a position in defence of slavery. It was true they had attempted to mask their batteries; but in spite of all attempted disguises, the fact was evident that the success of that party would be regarded, South and North, as a triumph of slavery, and a blow at the hope of freedom. In the conflict then raging in Kansas, the Democrats were manifestly aiding the effort to fasten the evil of slavery on those virgin prairies, and if the election went in their favor that infamous effort might possibly succeed. The Republican party, with its watchwords of "Free Soil, Free Men, and Fremont," were in political array against slavery, and their triumph would at least check its extension. Their platform, I said, it is true, does not come up to my ideal. They said, "No extension of slavery;" but my platform was, "No slavery anywhere." However, as the party that was looking towards liberty, and proposed to strike at least a partial blow for freedom, it was immeasurably to be preferred to the other party. And I said it was inconceivable to me how a faithful Christian could support a party that had raised the black flag of slavery.

I spoke one hour and thirty minutes, and the meeting closed quietly. I went home that night with the impression that my effort had not caused the sensation, or produced the effect, that I anticipated. But I sank to sleep with the comfortable consciousness that I had done what was right, and the consequences might take care of themselves.

The next forenoon five gentlemen came to my house. They were prominent citizens as well as leading Republicans. They came to say that they had just learned that I had given a masterly lecture the previous evening; that they were sorry they had not heard it, but the fact was they had not known it was to be given. (The fact was, I suspect, that my denomination was so small and so despised in that community that it was not recognized as an appreciable force. They did not see that any good could come

out of the "Nazareth" of a Freewill church; and so my notice had been treated as of no account.) Now, from what had been told of the lecture, the whole village was anxious to hear it; and would I do them the favor to repeat it, on any evening I might name, at the large hall in the village which was used as the Republican headquarters. I told them, politely, that I could not do that, because I had spoken as a minister and not as a politician; and, speaking in my own church I was free to say just what I thought; that if I should speak under Republican auspices I might say some things they would not indorse, and I did not wish that the party should be responsible for my utterances. The committee attempted to controvert both of my positions; they argued and persuaded at some length; but I did not yield. I told them, finally, that if they desired it I would repeat my speech, on any evening they might choose, in my own church. After demurring to the place, on the ground that it was a pity to take the people a mile away from their homes when a much better place could be had at their own doors, they finally thanked me for my willingness to repeat it anywhere, and an evening of the next week was fixed upon. The next morning posters were up everywhere, announcing the meeting.

Now I began to see that my first meeting had not fallen flat. A new brand was thrown into the political flame, and the excitement seethed with added fury. What were we coming to if ministers must go into politics like that! Why, the very foundations of religion would be destroyed. In such an excitement passions seize men of which they are afterwards ashamed. So violent may men become under such conditions that there were even hints of personal violence to myself,—though this I did not hear of till afterwards. But it was supposed that there was so much danger, that a large number of Republicans went early to the church, and surrounded the pulpit, to protect me from assault.

I went to the meeting as calmly as I went to the first, without anticipating what I saw. I have never known a church or hall to be more densely packed. Every inch of sitting or standing room

was fully occupied, and the crowd surged up the pulpit stairs, so it was with some inconvenience that I gained my place. Besides this, every window was open, and crowds were standing at them, and there were hundreds who could not get so near.

I began my speech, and went through with the general line of remark that I had used on the first evening; then I prepared to close. When this was perceived, the cry went up all over the house, "Go on! go on!" I was now thoroughly warmed up. All the pent-up thought that had been gathering force for weeks was now let loose, and facts and illustrations found utterance as fast as I could speak them. And I was not permitted to stop till I had talked for more than three hours.

Those who never make speeches do not know how much help the extemporaneous orator receives from the enthusiasm of an aroused and largely sympathetic audience. It seemed to be that evening as if some invisible power were near me, suggesting thoughts and inspiring me with irresistible force. I had similar experiences on other occasions afterwards. I do not believe that such an *afflatus* is caused by any occult or spiritual influence. It is simply the effect of that sympathy, that magnetism (for want of another name), with which one mind acts or reacts on another, and is only a revelation of that "touch of Nature" that "makes the whole world kin."

Such is the account of my first political speech.

It is amusing after all these years to think of the ferment into which that village was thrown by this speech. It was the one topic of discussion in the shops and the stores. It is one of the superstitions that a clergyman is to be treated at least with outward respect. It had always previously been accorded to me. But for a few days even this seemed to be forgotten. Men in their rage did not hesitate to say to me, "As soon as election is over, you will be driven from this town." "Why not before?" I responded. Of course I was not indifferent to this sort of talk. About half of my usual audience on Sunday were Democrats. But, through all the nervous strain and excited feeling to which I

was subjected, I was at peace with myself; and quite happy in all the turmoil, in the consciousness that I was not an entirely useless stick in the world.

But, the battle once begun, I had to keep it up for the few weeks that intervened before election. Every Sunday my sermons flamed with abolition. A very prominent and able Democrat was brought to Farmington to speak, who made a direct attack on me as a "black-coated villain." He referred to the efforts of the Democratic party early in the century to establish religious toleration in New Hampshire, and claimed that the Freewill Baptists were therefore under great obligations to that party, and that it was ingratitude in them to turn against their best friends. I had to reply to him; and among other things, call to mind the fact that the Freewill Baptist Book Establishment at Dover had been year after year denied an act of incorporation by the Democratic legislature of New Hampshire because the "Morning Star," the denominational organ, was an "abolition sheet." People thought his own guns were turned upon him.

One incident will show the bitterness of feeling that now possessed the more violent partisans. One evening I had an appointment to preach in a neighboring town. Of course I was seen to ride out of the village in the afternoon. On my return the next morning, I was met at the entrance of the village by a friend who told me that a report was buzzing about the shops that I had refused to shelter an escaping slave,—with the comment that it was now to be seen what all my abolition zeal amounted to. (This was my friend's report, not his own opinion.)

I hurried home. It turned out that rather late the evening before my wife was called to the door by a knock, and saw a colored man standing there, who asked if he could be kept for the night, as he was running away from slavery. She was alone in the house, with three little children, and another expected very soon, and did not think she ought to have a stranger, black or white, stay all night. So she directed him to the house of a brother in the church, near by, who was a good anti-slavery man,—and the

stranger went away. I went, on hearing this, to the house of this brother, and was told that no colored man had applied for shelter there. Before that day was over the whole story was out. One who was in the scheme, having his tongue loosened by liquor in the evening, revealed the conspiracy. Some fellows "of the baser sort" had conceived a plan to bring discredit on my anti-slavery professions. They persuaded one of the number to allow his face and hands to be blacked, and to claim admission to my house as one fleeing from bondage. It was known that I was not to be at home, to discover their deceit; and they rightly conjectured that admission would be refused. It was a stupid plan, and could hardly have succeeded, even if all the conspirators had remained silent. The affair did not injure me; and the other side had to confess that it did them no good.

The election came and passed. Fremont was not elected. But the seed sown in this campaign had taken such deep root that an anti-slavery triumph would be certain in the next conflict of the opposing forces. The work that elected Lincoln in 1860 was really done in 1856.

I allowed six or eight weeks to pass after this, that the excitement might subside, and the people regain their usual sane condition. Then I began to prepare to build a meeting-house.

I first examined the brief records of the society, and made inquiries of the brethren, to get an intelligent understanding of all the facts, and to find out, if I could, why nothing had been accomplished. I soon saw, as I thought, one cause of the failure hitherto. As usual in such cases, a committee of five had been chosen to devise measures for building a meeting-house. And, as usually happens, too, the committee could hardly agree on what was best to be done. So, after months of tedious discussion without making any real progress, the effort languished, and was finally dropped. After considerable thought, I conceived a scheme of a different character, and formulated the details both in my mind and on paper.

When I began to act, I put forth all my powers of promptness

and vigor. After the iron had been put into the furnace, it would not do to let it cool. I first went with a subscription-book, as rapidly as I could, among all the brethren, and all who were friendly to our cause, and asked them to put down the sums they would give, on condition that the amount of their subscriptions should be returned to them in the ownership of pews. I was highly encouraged at their apparent generosity. I had secured pledges to the amount of nearly \$2,000, and the church by my estimate was to cost \$3,000. Then I called a meeting of the society.

After reporting the amount I had raised, I submitted certain provisions in writing, as the basis of action. To shun the rocks on which former efforts had foundered, my paper provided—

1. That the society would build a meeting-house.
2. That a building agent be chosen, with *full power* to raise the necessary funds yet needed, and to proceed to build the house with all possible dispatch.
3. That five trustees be chosen, whose duty it should be to see that the building agent did not exceed his power.

These provisions were adopted, without much discussion, and with entire unanimity.

[I have now no hesitation in saying that the art I used in writing these provisions was unworthy of an honest man, or even a minister. It is certain that the members were deceived by it, of which some of them afterwards gave good evidence. They would not knowingly have given dictatorial power to any one man; and they supposed that five trustees would be able to keep all things straight. They *did not* see at the time that the agent could not possibly exceed *full power*. It is no doubt true that the church could not then have been built without that provision; for such were the mental and moral characteristics of the men in that little body, that any three or five of them would have failed to agree, as they had already done, in any decisive line of action. But this does not justify my “diplomacy.” It is better for the human race that even a good object should fail for a time than that it should

succeed by any form of indirection or deceit. It is true that this provision proved to be the salvation of that society. But this makes the matter no better. A dishonest man, clothed with such exclusive authority, might have swamped the church by saddling it with a heavy debt for a costly building, or ruined it by embezzling the funds. The end does not justify the means.]

When the articles were adopted, the first question was on the choice of a business or building agent. Now I had no thought or intention of taking that position. I had no knowledge of building, nor experience in details. Besides the doubt I had as to my ability in business would have driven the thought away if it had occurred to me. There were two or three carpenters in the society, and I supposed that the choice would naturally have fallen on one of them. But to my surprise they all declined the honor. The truth was, they had none of them much if any faith that the enterprise would succeed, and they did not wish to be identified with failure.

In this state of the case, they began to declare, one after another, that I was the only man to be chosen the building agent. All that had so far been done had been done by me, and there was no one else so well qualified to carry it through. Well, after a long talk, I saw clearly that if I did not take up the burden the whole thing must fail, and I consented. It brought upon me the most wearing, irritating, and thankless labor of my life.

I at once went to work with all the pushing energy I could command. One of the members had a saw-mill and lumber. In getting his subscription he had offered to supply all the timber for the frame; and, with the understanding that he should do this, he had put against his name a sum sufficient, as he thought, to cover the estimated cost. After securing the site, I went to hurry him up. It was still winter, an unfit time to begin building operations. But I got him to promise that the timber for the frame should be on the ground at a certain time.

Some of the members advised me to let the whole job by contract. I took counsel of my instincts. I told them that a con-

tractor would probably either make or lose money ; I did not want any man to lose a cent of money by us, and we could not afford to let one grow rich out of us,—so I should build by the day.

I happily selected the right kind of a man to put in the stone foundation and underpinning. He did his work well, and at a reasonable cost.

I took one of the carpenters with me, and went away ten miles to another saw-mill, and bought a pile of pine boards, some of it clear and some knotty, that I hoped would be enough of such material as we would need.

I made a bargain for a large quantity of nails, of sizes, at a uniform price of \$3.75 a hundred pounds ; a price then very low, but since then the cost of this material has been much reduced.

Meantime, and before spring opened, I was unremitting in my efforts to fill up my subscription. I had already exhausted all chance of raising money among my church-members and their friends ; and I must now try what could be done among outsiders. Here my success exceeded my expectations. I found more readiness to help me than I had counted upon. Two things aided me. Some men had an ambition to see the village built up ; and they contributed in the belief that a new church would add materially to the appearance of the village, as well as to the value of their property. “Make to yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness.” The second cause of success was of a more personal nature. Some of the villagers had already begun to look upon the projected meeting-house, as not so much the work of a church society, as my own individual enterprise. It appeared that I had secured the sympathy of the Republicans, in the previous campaign, to such an extent that they were disposed to help me in the work to which I was so warmly devoted. As my well-wishers they urged others to come to my assistance when they had not the means to contribute themselves. An active canvass was, to my surprise, spontaneously going on in my favor. So from Republicans I received valuable contributions. I even, then, ventured to ask Democrats for subscriptions ; and here, if I did not meet with

much success, I received no angry rebuff. One leading and wealthy Democrat did, indeed, give me a small subscription; and surprised me, as he did so, by saying, "I have told our folks that I had more respect for you than I had for our minister; for in the campaign you hit us as hard as you could, and tried to plaster it over."

I am inclined here to pause, to note a reflection: It is safer as well as in other ways better to do what you think is right, than to be guided by the suggestions of expediency. Some of my brethren, who professed to be opposed to slavery themselves, said to me in the heat of the battle that I was ruining all chances of building a meeting-house by exasperating the pro-slavery people, and advised that I should at once tone myself down. This advice had no other effect than to make me more outspoken. At the same time, young as I was, I was not sure that I was not putting it out of my own power ever to achieve the ultimate purpose I had at heart; but I did not permit this fear to cause me to waver in my obedience to my convictions. But as it turned out, my course was, with one side, a great help to the meeting-house project; and, with the other, it secured a good measure of personal respect.

The timber for the frame of the house was delivered on the ground promptly according to promise. The brother, a carpenter, who had prepared the schedule of the timber, came to me one morning, and startled me by saying that he had hastily looked over the timber, and thought that it was not fit to put into a frame. I went with him to the spot, and he pointed out to me some large sticks, designed for heavy beams, that were "waxy-edged" and otherwise unfit; and he said the only thing to do was to condemn the whole lot, make the man who furnished it take it back, and get a new frame at a good mill. And this was said in apparent unconsciousness that such a procedure might ruin the whole enterprise, by involving me in a quarrel with the brother who had furnished the timber as his contribution; by causing great delay and greatly increased cost; and by the nameless injury of paralyzing the faith of all who were interested in the work. And this was the man I was at one time ignorant enough to believe would make

a good building agent ; and who was by this time sorry that he had not taken the post when it was offered to him. What an escape for us that he did not foresee that the project would go forward.

Of course such senseless talk did not affect me for a moment. But I engaged him, at wages, to take the schedule and overhaul the timber ; to check off every defective stick, so that I might know if any of it would answer the purpose, and report as soon as possible.

About two hours after dinner he came to say that if six new sticks for beams were procured, those sticks whose places they would take might be used in place of some shorter ones in the schedule, and a good frame might be made. I was overjoyed at his report. I at once drove to the mill, ten miles away, where I had bought the pile of pine boards, and laid down a memorandum of the six beams I wanted, and asked if they could be sawed and delivered in Farmington before the next Saturday. I was told it could be done, and it was done. And \$60 were added outright to the cost of the building.

I had an idea, when I began the work, that it would be wise for each department to get if I could some man specially adapted to the work to be done. A carpenter may be a very good workman in finishing a building, who would be almost worthless in framing it. I was again exceedingly lucky in hunting up the man who was one of the greatest geniuses in the way of framing a building ever known. He lived twelve miles distant, on his own farm. He did nothing in the trade except framing ; and was in great request for this work. I drove to his house, and was happily able to engage him, at wages which would now seem fabulously low. It was agreed that he should begin the next Monday,—the very next Monday after the day on which I had been sagely advised to condemn the timber. In how many ways should I have been involved in difficulties if I had followed that advice !

The framing was begun at the appointed time, rapidly pushed to completion. The entire men force of the village, almost, came to the raising ; and it was pronounced the best frame ever put up

in town. The master framer had not made a single mistake; every measurement had been accurate, and every tenant fitted the right mortise. I must add that he had framed it without plans. I was determined to avoid, if I could, the expense of an architect. I gave to this superior man all the dimensions I had decided upon, and described to him the general character of the structure as I had designed it; with this scanty data he went on and put up the substantial skeleton. He finished his work, and took with him my respect and admiration when he left.

I had a carpenter already engaged to superintend the work of boarding and finishing, and the construction proceeded without delay. I gave my own time entirely to the building. I was at all times about it, except when away procuring material. I put my hand to everything I could do. I "split" nearly all the boards used into their necessary dimensions. I did this work, in advance of its being called for, on all the boards required for pew construction. As soon as any outside finish had been completed, I applied a coat of "priming,"—this being a more economical method than keeping a painter on hand for that purpose, as he could be employed only a few hours in a day.

When the shingles were to be put on, I was lucky again in finding the man specially fitted for such work. He did it well, and with great rapidity. I have since seen three regular carpenters lay a less number of shingles in a day than were faithfully put on in the same length of time by that one man.

I never worked harder, except at a period later in life, than I did that summer. I gave my whole time and thought during the week to the building. When Saturday night came, after I had paid off the workmen, and written up my accounts, it was usually twelve o'clock; and I sank to slumber a thoroughly exhausted man. I arose on Sunday morning entirely listless and inert, with no preparation whatever for preaching. At the appointed hour I went, with tired step, nearly a mile to the old shell where we then held our meetings, and mumbled over some form of words, in the place of preaching, and let it go at that. It must have been from

habit or from sympathy that people came to my meeting that summer. For, as I now remember it, a more lifeless and disjointed style of talk was never sounded from the pulpit. The fact was that I had set my heart on the completion of that meeting-house; my whole soul was bound up in it,—and I could think of nothing else. I am now inclined to think that in all that time the thought that the purpose of the gospel was to save souls never occurred to me, only, finish the church, if the heavens fall!

Early in September, of that eventful year, the panic of 1857 struck the country, and “dried up realms to deserts.” In a few weeks the meeting-house would have been finished; but now it seemed that my enterprise would be paralyzed. For the convenience of the subscribers, I had been collecting their subscriptions in installments; but, in the conditions brought on by the panic, many could not pay me a farthing. But I would not despair. I went to the churches of like faith in neighboring towns, and begged for the Farmington meeting-house. I raised money out of town, in small sums, on my personal credit. I pressed through all difficulties, and saw the end at length.

The edifice was dedicated early in October,—all paid for, but I was without a penny. At the final casting up of the items of cost, the sum total amounted to \$2.50 less than the estimated cost, \$3,000. I have no disposition to boast of this achievement. I had trouble enough and annoyance enough as I labored in it to take the conceit all out of me. But it is worth putting down that a church edifice was built, by one entirely inexperienced in such an undertaking, and built by days' work, within the amount it was estimated to cost.

It is proper to say, that among the people of the town, more, perhaps, than by the few members of the church and society for whom it was built, it was recognized as a work to be placed to my personal credit. I could hardly go out on the street without meeting a man who would say, “Well, Elder, you've done what no other man could.” This was repeated till I was tired of hearing it. Of course I appreciated the kindness of feeling which prompted the

expression ; but I knew it was overdrawn. Any man, with the same devotion to the object, and the same determination in prosecuting it, could have accomplished as much.

I easily accounted for the lukewarmness of gratitude among my own "peculiar" people, and it did not disappoint me. Early in the progress of the work, serious disaffection began to manifest itself. Some, when they saw that success was probable, felt mortified that they did not have charge of the work. And when they attempted to interfere with my methods, they were disgusted to find that the articles adopted by the society gave me full authority. In this respect, as already indicated, I do not hold myself entirely blameless. But they had only themselves to thank that one of themselves was not chosen building agent. I certainly used all my powers of persuasion to get some member of the society to accept the trust.

But I do not care to discuss the details of any disagreements that arose. It would only be dabbling in the baser caprices of human nature. Thirty-six years have passed since then ; and whatever feelings might then have disturbed me have long since subsided and disappeared. I will only add that one night I had a serious debate with myself. There had been developments that day which convinced me that those for whose benefit I was undertaking a work of great hardship would be constantly throwing obstacles in my way ; that where I had a right to expect co-operation I should find only opposition ; that I bitterly felt that I had better drop the whole thing, and quietly go away. I walked the floor far into the night while wrestling with this question. At last I thought that the work I proposed to do might be a benefit to a future generation of Christians, however those then on the stage might see fit to act. I do not think that such hopefulness would inspire me now. But then it proved decisive, and I accepted my fate. I imagine that the real truth was, that where it was "brave to combat" I could not "learn to fly."

I must not omit to say that three or four of the church-members were faithful to me throughout, and gave me manful help.

As was to be expected, when we began our meetings in the new building the audience largely increased. I now gave attention to sermonizing. But I soon found I could not come up to my own conceptions. No complaint on this score was heard for months ; but I was painfully conscious of my own shortcomings. The fact was, that after the terrible strain that had taxed my nervous energy for six months, there came the inevitable reaction, and my powers would not rally. I suppose my personal manner during the week revealed my mental condition ; for an old and retired physician, meeting me one day, told me I was not looking well, and advised me to take opium as a tonic. Of course I did not do that. But I had considerable of "that tired feeling" all through the winter. I am scarcely conscious of more mental feebleness now in my old age than I was at that time.

The next spring I exchanged pulpits with another minister, and at his request, who was then seeking another settlement. He was a man not of any special depth of thought, but he had a polished and charming manner, and made an immense impression. Then those who had been nursing their disaffection towards me since the agitated times of the building, broke out into a loud outcry that he was the man whom the Lord designed to fill that pulpit. I presume that if I had made a fight, with the moral support of the public of that village, I could have beaten them. But though I would confront any opposition in defence of my convictions, I had no taste for a personal contest, and abandoned the field.

I revisited Farmington three years ago, and found the church apparently prosperous, and the church edifice much enlarged. I estimated that they had spent in improvements three times as much as the original cost. So, for good or evil, my work did not fail.

Invited to speak in the church, I said such things as to how men should try to live, whether Christians or not, that the minister was shocked, and had to attempt a reply. Personally, I was cordially and kindly received, and enjoyed my visit.

## CHAPTER V.

### MINISTRY—CONTINUED.

When I closed my work at Farmington, in the spring of 1858, I was offered a pulpit at Effingham, New Hampshire. It was a small and secluded place, and the meeting was supported jointly by orthodox and Freewill people. I chose to accept this place because of my jaded mental condition, and the work would be light. I could preach there easily, and at the same time have some chance to rest, and some hope to recuperate. There is nothing to be said of my ministry there. The people were easily satisfied; and, more wonderful still, there was no fighting between the two sects who were joined in one meeting.

I preached one sermon there which was so much admired that it was put in print,—the first of my sermons to have the honor of being embalmed in type. It had for a text, “And the common people heard him gladly.” I look it over now, and find it a very poor production. If I should make a sermon now it would not be at all like that.

There was one trifling circumstance that occurred at Effingham, that had some slight bearing on the question that had already begun to trouble me, “Does preaching do any good?” I would give a sermon that people would praise, but I could not perceive that it had any effect on life or character. It did not seem that it was expected to quicken kindlier feeling or awaken nobler purpose. If it only increased the audience and built up the church, that was enough.

One afternoon I called on a family in the parish. I found only “the lady of the house” at home. I had been there but a few minutes when she said,—

“Elder, I knew who you were hitting last Sunday.”

Now I did not dream that I was hitting any one in particular. But I asked,—

“Who was I hitting?”

“I don’t know how you found it out,” she rejoined. “But you described exactly the quarrel that Mrs. Jones and me have been carrying on.”

(Now Jones was not the other woman’s name; but I have been careful to give no names in these recollections.)

“I assure you, madam,” I said, “that I never heard the slightest hint of any misunderstanding between you and Mrs. Jones. But now that you have mentioned it, you may tell me about it, if you wish.”

Then she gave me the details, which I have forgotten. She said it had long been a trouble on her mind, and she wished she could “make up.”

Now it had seemed to me that the other woman was the most placable and gentle of the two, and I thought it worth while to try and end the feud. So I gave her some “instructions” as to her duty in the matter, and advised her to make the first advances towards an understanding.

The next afternoon I took occasion to call upon Mrs. Jones. I made some general observations on the happiness of a community where the people lived in sympathy and at peace with each other; and then went on to say that as there seemed to be a general state of good feeling in the neighborhood at the time, it would be delightful, if any were at variance, they should take advantage of the opportunity to compose their differences. Upon which she said,—

“I guess you have been told that Mrs. Brown (name fictitious) and I do not speak to each other.”

I said I was not ignorant of it; but I thought the matter could easily be arranged, and felt sure that if Mrs. Brown came to talk it over, she (Mrs. Jones) would meet her more than half way.

“I have always been ready to do that,” she rejoined, with a pleasant smile.

In less than two weeks I was voluntarily told by each of these women that they had become reconciled, and were the best of friends. So much for accidental preaching.

It was during the time I lived at Effingham that I had my first experience as a revivalist, in a small way. A Freewill minister, in a parish ten miles distant, came to my house early one Monday morning, and asked me to go with him to his home, and help him in a series of meetings he was then holding. Of course I went. On the way he told me he had been laboring hard in his church, to "get up" a revival. There was an evidently serious feeling in his community, and the young people especially seemed inclined to begin a religious life; but there was a girl, not yet eighteen, well educated, and recently returned from school, who had a great influence among her associates. He had talked with her personally, but could seem to make no impression. If she would but make a movement towards Christ, he thought many others, especially those of her own age, would speedily follow. He wished me first to "interview" her. I did so that afternoon. I found she had a very quick, bright mind, with decided rationalistic tendencies. She would take nothing on trust; and the questions she put to me were not easy to answer. I respected and admired her mental attitude, and endeavored in a reasonable way to dispose of all her difficulties. She was ready to become a Christian, if her convictions should lead her in that direction; but she had actually no feeling on the subject. But she would willingly attend the meetings, and indeed give herself up as far as she could to their influences.

We had meetings every day, and I preached for three days before I thought it wise to call for any evidence of religious feeling. On the third evening I made the venture. After the sermon I came down in front of the pulpit and made a spirited exhortation to the unconverted. Then I requested those who desired to become Christians to stand up. This young woman was the first to arise; and her example was followed by some dozen of young people of both sexes. Then I asked if those who had arisen

would come forward to the front pews (which I had purposely kept vacant) and kneel with me while we had a season of prayer. At this instant that young girl, standing in the midst of that crowded audience, and in a sweet voice and with a modest manner, asked, "Will it not be just as well if I should kneel here?"

I was utterly non-plussed. It was a point I had never considered. I had accepted and used the customary machinery of revivals without a thought as to the propriety of any part of it. The occasion was critical; but I could not, with the feelings that then dominated me, confess myself in the wrong. And at that juncture a silent pause would be fatal. I had to talk for five minutes, without saying anything, before I could answer her question. I saw that she shrank from anything that would look like making an exhibition of herself. At length I said something, in the style of such ministration, that in seeking the Savior one must show the world that there was an entire surrender of one's own will, and asked if that satisfied her. Without another word she left her pew, and was followed by the others to the front seats.

Before I left on the following Saturday she made some faint profession of her Christian faith, and was joyfully received by the church as a follower of Jesus. But she did not hold that position long. I heard in a few months that she had "backslidden." The truth was, I suppose, that she had yielded to the persuasions with which she had been plied, and had made every honest effort to "find Jesus." But she had not found him. Yet I am sure she was as capable of high moral purpose and emotion as she was gifted with rare mental qualities. But she could not find a so-called Christian life at all in accordance with her moral tastes.

I have written of this scene, as I have already of other scenes, entirely from the standpoint of my state of sincere feeling at the time. But having outgrown many views I once held, and looking back on this incident only to feel that I then held an entirely irrational position, it has not been so easy to reproduce the feelings that then prompted me.

There is nothing more to be said of my ministry in Effingham.

Yet it just occurs to me to put in an incident of a domestic nature. Not far from our house stood Green Mountain, a rather lofty eminence, thickly covered with forest. Late in October, 1858, two of my girls, —— and ——, were one afternoon found to be missing. I hastily went in search of them, and after considerable inquiry I was told that they had been seen, in company with an older girl, crossing the field in the direction of the mountain. It was almost night. The family to which the other girl belonged had also become anxious, and the alarm was given that children were lost. After some consultation it appeared fearfully certain that the little ones were in the woods on the mountain. A large number of men, provided with lanterns, turned out for the search, taking different directions. I went up the mountain, and after darkness had fallen for perhaps a couple of hours, I saw, in a soft spot of earth, the print of a tiny shoe. But there was no sign of the course they had taken from that point. After wandering anxiously about in the woods for an hour or two more, I heard the church bell ring, and joyfully made my way back, as that was the preconcerted signal that the search was over. It turned out that the elder girl had enticed my little ones to make the ascent of the mountain, as they heard that grown-up people not infrequently did. They had gone up more than half the distance to the summit (as shown by the little footprint), and darkness coming on they became frightened, and turned to retrace their steps; but had taken a direction that brought them to the foot of the mountain more than a mile from where they began the ascent. Here they were happily found by some of the searching party, and brought to their homes to the glad music of the ringing bell. Such was the thrilling adventure of two of my girls, aged six and four years, respectively.

Late in the summer of 1859 I stopped preaching in Effingham. I had regained my strength and vigor, and thought I would strike out for "larger fields and pastures new." I was invited to preach to the Freewill church in West Buxton, temporarily. It turned out that the church had been torn and tormented by a fearful quarrel, arising, it was said, out of a division over the previous pastor.

They wanted to keep the meetings going, but could not take action about settling another pastor till the quarrel was healed. Without knowing anything of the state of things in the church, I consented to supply the pulpit for an indefinite time. Some weeks afterwards a council of ministers was called to sit on the case. I sat in the church, a quiet listener, while for three days the ecclesiastical Dogberrys wrestled and wrangled. At length a peace was patched up; it was said that harmony was restored, and the council departed.

The next Sunday I gave a sermon on church divisions in general, making, however, no direct allusion to West Buxton. In my disgust I did not care who I offended. To my astonishment both sides in the "late unpleasantness" were pleased,—or such as were not (and I afterwards had reason to suspect that there were such) did not think it advisable to find fault. For the most part each party thought that I was hitting the other,—for when did a quarrelsome man fail to find something in a sermon that did not condemn his adversary?

If, as some believe, the good Lord ever did make it a point to guide and bless his saints, he was wise enough never to go near West Buxton. A more "God-forsaken" place (if the term may be understood as I mean it) I never saw.

The business of the village was principally the manufacture of lumber,—mostly sugar-box shooks for the West India market. Two men, both in my society, carried on this business. Both ran stores, and kept their poor workmen always in debt to them for family supplies. The workmen seemed to be content, for they made no audible protest. One, however, more independent than the rest, was heard to say, "I like to work for Slab; for after doing a day's work for him for a dollar and a half, I can go into his store at night and carry home my day's wages in my vest pocket, even if it's Indian meal."

The other lumber "boss," whom I will call "Log," had to hear some bitter words one day. By an accident in one of his saw-mills he had lost the sight of one eye. A man who had worked for him some years previously, returning to the village after this

misfortune, met Log in his store, and was told by him how he had lost an eye. "Ah, Log," said the man, "the Lord is after you. It is an eye now; it will be a leg next." Of course Log did not enjoy the compliment; but I never heard that the prophecy was fulfilled.

At a meeting some weeks after the patched-up peace the church voted to give me a "call." Slab brought me the official notice of it; but, as he handed it to me, he advised me, in as soft and honeyed words as he could use (he was as soft-spoken a man as ever robbed a widow), not to accept it. There was no objection to me personally, he assured me; but there were reasons why it would not be pleasant for me to become their settled pastor. I saw at once that he did not want me there; and as I had no inclination to get into a fight with the old scamp, I wrote a brief declination, and went the next day to my family in Effingham.

In a few days I left to attend a yearly convocation of the Free-willers, and my wife, at the same time, visited her old home in Wilmot. I afterwards rejoined her there, and in two weeks after we returned to Effingham.

On arriving at home I found a letter from West Buxton, which had been waiting for me for some days. It informed me that the church would not accept my refusal, and besought me to reconsider my decision, and become their pastor. Slab personally joined in their request. "So," I thought, "the subjects revolt against their despot. I really sympathize with their rebellion."

So I removed, in an evil hour, to West Buxton,—for the spark of revolt did not kindle into independence. My ministry in West Buxton brought no result. Of course I could not set up the principles of Christian justice and brotherhood without offending the "lords of the manor." Outside of the church some warm hearts responded to my appeals; and I remember with pleasure the expressions of their sympathy and friendship; but they were too few in number to effect any radical social changes. The larger portion of my audience were too much subdued by the conditions in which they were bound to show any signs even of dis-

content. I saw the case was hopeless, and was glad when the expiration of a year gave me an opportunity to escape.

I must, however, put in one incident, because of the amusement it afforded me. There was in West Buxton a young woman who had been exceedingly pious and devout. But before my advent, she had become insane,—I know not for what cause, but it is not improbable that it was as much from excess of religious emotion as from any other influence. She lived with her parents,—she was so gentle in her insanity that she needed little attention, and gave no trouble. Yet, though while in health she had been noted for the modesty and sweetness of her speech and demeanor, in her insanity she was often wild and immodest in her words,—something of such a change as Shakespeare depicts in Ophelia. I went to see her many times; because she interested me as a study, and because sometimes, in the midst of her incoherent talk, she would flash out with a lucid and pointed sentence.

Wherever I preached, I never failed to speak a word for the slave. It had caused some agitation in Wilmot, it had made no disturbance at Strafford, it had, as I have related, raised a tempest at Farmington, and it caused no ripple at Effingham. But one Sunday, when I gave an abolition sermon in West Buxton, two men, rather prominent in the village, arose, about the middle of the sermon, opened and closed their pew doors with a slam, and went out in evident high dudgeon. Of course I took no notice of this, and was allowed to finish quietly what I had to say.

Before the week was out a friend said to me, “I was in to see Susie yesterday, and I must tell you what she said. It was this: ‘We’ve got a damned smart minister; he can cast out devils,—he cast out two last Sunday.’” I thought there was “some method” in that “madness.”

I had ceased to preach in West Buxton, but had not removed elsewhere, when I went to Gardiner, on the Kennebec river, to attend a Quarterly Meeting, as the official representative of the Quarterly Meeting to which I belonged. There was a hot quarrel then raging over the case of a minister who had been charged

with conduct unbecoming a minister or a man, and both Quarterly Meetings had become involved in it. Of course my function was in the business meeting, which was carried on in the vestry of the church, while preaching services were conducted in the auditorium above. I was in the midst of a heated discussion for the space of two days, in which passion was rampant, and in which it was my business to explain or defend the action of my own body in the case,—which I could do, as it met my approval. The business meeting finally adjourned at noon of the third day, which was Thursday.

I was then told by the resident pastor that I must preach that afternoon. I never felt more unlike such an undertaking. I had been submerged in a tide of angry debate till the “spirit of the gospel” in me had been utterly smothered. How, then, was it possible to preach? I must here say, that I then had a certain religious ideal; and when I preached I wanted to have my feelings permeated, and my thoughts absorbed, by that ideal. I was as far from it as possible at this moment. However, I went to dinner, and came back in a better mood.

Without much purpose and without any enthusiasm, I went through with a sermon. This was the last meeting of the regular session, and this was the point of closing. As I finished preaching, I was happy to think that in a few minutes I should be “on the rail,” homeward bound, and flying from a scene where I had heard so much that was discouraging as to the effect of religion on the human heart. What was my surprise, then, to hear the pastor give notice that a meeting would be held in that church in the evening, and that “Brother Babcock would preach.” He had asked no permission of mine to give such a notice, and I confess I felt somewhat provoked; but as, if I went away and left him in the lurch, it might cause some scandal and be an injury to the “cause,” I repressed my resentment and consented to remain,—feeling, however, a little sad when I saw the other brethren hurrying away to their homes, evidently happy to depart.

The pastor afterward explained to me that during the meeting in

the afternoon he had seen signs that the "spirit of the Lord" was coming into their midst, and he thought it was a good time to seek to save sinners; and this must be his excuse for appointing another meeting without first consulting me. I had to pocket both the affront and the implied compliment.

At the close of the meeting that evening, it was announced that services would be held in the afternoon and evening of Friday and Saturday. The next day the pastor told me that at the evening meeting he should request sinners to "rise for prayers." I thought it would be premature; but I said nothing. It was in his church, he had not asked me to take the lead, and the responsibility was his.

To my surprise when, on that evening, after the sermon, which was given with a little more unction, he invited the unconverted to "come to Christ," some six or seven arose. Then he felt sure the revival had begun. "What did I tell you?" he exclaimed; "I knew the Lord was here."

Meetings were held day and evening during the following week, and I had to do all the preaching. Each evening the sinners would come to the "anxious seat" by twos or threes, and the pastor of the church was actually gleeful with encouragement. He was having an easy time; I awakened the unconverted, and all he had to do was to gather in the converts.

When two Sundays had passed, I told the pastor that I must go home. He urged me to stay; but I said that the "work" was well started, and he could carry it on alone. So I left. But I had been at home little more than a week when a man came from Gardiner to my house, and said that I must positively go back there. The ablest ministers in the vicinity had been there to assist the pastor, but, as he expressed it, not one of them "could drive a peg," and not one soul had risen for prayers since I left. I consented to return.

At the first meeting after my return, the "work," as the pastor said, "took a new start." I was in Gardiner eight weeks in all. I preached twice every day, and three times each Sunday. But

the labor was not very hard. The fact was that the church was filled at each meeting with an excited crowd; and it is easy to talk to an audience full of emotional excitement. In such a case, by some indescribable magnetism, he does not know how, the hearers react on the speaker, and fill him with a fountain of words that would never come to him in cold blood. To talk to a cold, dull, and listless audience, when no interest is felt in what the speaker has for a subject, is hard, uphill work, and he cannot lash himself into passion. Addressing an audience clearly hostile to the ideas he advances will stir him with the frenzy of battle. But with hearers in full sympathy with what he wishes to say, and wrought to a deep thrill of emotion, the speaker's words will gush as the waters did in the fable of Moses striking the rock.

But I must aver that I never played on the strings of terror. There was no "brimstone" in my sermons. I never called on the Lord to "uncap hell before the sinner, and show him the tortures of the damned." In all my "revival" preaching, in Gardiner or elsewhere, I talked on the most rational lines (as it seemed to me) that the subject admitted of. Whatever "reasonableness" I could imagine there was in a religious life I urged as incitements to attempt it. Yet I do not suppose I was the more successful in my appeals for using this style of talk. The effect would probably have been as great if I had expatiated on "damnation and the dead."

The fact is, that all "revivals" depend on antecedent conditions. The people are nursed in certain notions about religion. (I should now call them superstitions.) Some influences, known or unknown, will operate at certain intervals to produce, in a community or concourse of people assembled together, a state of feeling which any sort of a match can set aflame. At such a moment a voice that pleases the ear or touches the feelings is enough to kindle the flame. The same voice at another time would sound the tocsin in vain to the same concourse.

These religious excitements are intensified by personal emotion. The extent to which mere animal feeling will mingle with

religious emotion is something that used to terrify me. It was this that first led me to see the folly of attempting to make people better by means of such excitements.

In eight weeks at Gardiner the "converts" were counted up as a few over one hundred. Many had been clamoring to be baptized; but the pastor had put them off. At length he had a confidential talk with me. He told me frankly that the converts were saying that they wished me to baptize them; but he thought I could see that if I took them into the water, or any of them, it would injure his influence. He appealed to me if it would not be better that I should go away before any division crept in. I smiled inwardly at his selfish jealousy, but replied that I would leave at once. I may say that it caused me no heartache to do this, for I was not ambitious of meretricious distinctions.

The foregoing autobiography was terminated as it here closes, by Mr. Babcock's death. It was written, as he informed the compiler of the manuscript, solely for the instruction and use of his family, and he had intended to finish it the present year (1894). The discourse and addresses which follow, as will be seen, were delivered on two different occasions.

# DISCOURSE

AT THE

Funeral Services of J. M. L. Babcock,

DELIVERED BY

REV. JAMES KAY APPLEBEE, At Paine Memorial Hall, Boston,

April, 1894.



## THE DISCOURSE.

No man can do a nobler thing, can do a better or a truer service to the humanity of which he forms a part, than to live while on the earth, an honest life. I use the phrase an honest life in the broadest significance. I do not merely mean by it, always making one hundred cents amount to one dollar, and always honorably discharging one's business obligations ; these are most important things to do, they are an essential part of honesty, but they do not compose the essential whole of it ; each man owes it to himself, owes to his entire self, to the humanity about him. He is the completely honest man who dares to be himself, who, when truth comes to him, speaks it boldly out ; who, when a certain line of action commends itself to him, as the line of action which he ought to pursue, follows it, in righteous scorn of all merely personal consequences.

He whose untimely taking away we mourn to-day was just such an honest man. No thought ever came to him which he was afraid to speak out ; no action ever commended itself to him as just, the doing of which he feared. He was true to himself, and therefore false to none. The use of thought he found to be in the speaking of it ; the value of conviction in the carrying of it out. When a new thought came to him, the only question which concerned him was, " Does this new thought commend itself to me as true ? " If it did commend itself to him as true, then he accepted it frankly, and commended it boldly.

He was aptly named Martin Luther, for all his life long he was a reformer, to the minutest fibre of his being. He believed every man was in the world to make the world better, and he consistently and persistently acted up to that belief. It is refreshing to contemplate his life, so filled throughout with noble endeavor, so inspired throughout with noble purpose. He commenced life as a printer and was duly apprenticed to that honorable calling.

He never was afraid of, or ashamed of hard work. Even late in life when no pulpit could be found broad and big enough to hold him, he returned to his old vocation and engaged himself as a compositor. Early in his career he became a member of the Mechanics' Library Association and all his life long was faithful to its membership, officiating as secretary at its reunions, and writing its history.

He commenced his public career as a Freewill Baptist minister, and in towns in New Hampshire and Maine preached strong sermons in defence of the grand old Baptist idea of a free salvation ;

sermons which to hear would have gladdened the heart of that fine old Baptist, John Bunyan, could he have heard them, and I suppose he did, in spirit. At this time the anti-slavery crusade had commenced in America, and our brother Babcock, being an earnest man and a strong believer in the equality of human rights and opportunities, could not keep that subject out of his sermons.

In the latter years of his life he was fond of telling, and his grand old face would light up with a glory, as he told, how, when he introduced the question of slavery in his sermons, grimly pious old Baptists would leave the church indignantly, determined "never to hear that man preach again," but truth was of far more value to our dear friend and brother gone, than the applause of men, and so he went on preaching the truth as he saw it, even though the result might be for him worldly ruin.

There is hardly, I think, any struggle recorded in history, worthy of being compared with the Anti-Slavery crusade in America,—the apostles of that movement, the meanest and the most influential of them, deserves to be held in everlasting honor. Think of what they did, of the dangers they dared, and the heroisms they manifested. Without staff or scrip, and often carrying their lives in their hands, they went forth preaching deliverance to the captives, and the opening of the prison doors to them that were bound, until a vast revolution in thought and in feeling was gloriously achieved, and the American people, in spite of all that their wealth, their fashion, and their religion could do to hold them back, came round to the anti-slavery idea. How was it? Here were millions of human beings held in bondage, husbands with no rights to their wives, fathers and mothers with no rights to their children; here they were, these millions liable to be put up to auction like cattle, and also liable to be knocked down to the highest bidder, like cattle; here, too, were so-called Christian churches, almost all of them so many bulwarks of the slave system, twaddling from their pulpits about Noah's curse on Ham; here was a society rejoicing and hugging itself in its wealth, and thinking and teaching that if once the negro were made free, wealth would be impossible of retention, and chaos would surely come again; here were politicians declaring that the American Constitution meant slavery, and that if slavery, the corner stone of American liberty, were once abolished, the entire foundation of the American governmental framework would disappear. That was the state of things, but whenever a nation comes to such a pass as this, then the nation needs saviours—needs men, like our dead friend and brother; men keen in their sense of appreciation of lofty duty, and bold, despite the dangers of the task in doing that duty; men capable of pointing out to the people how far they have gone astray; men daring enough to defy society, the government, and the church; men brave enough to endure any social ignominy and shame

to which they may be doomed. Life for everybody is made nobler, higher, sweeter, because such men have lived. Our brother's zeal for reform did not cease when the victory over slavery was achieved.

During the civil war he distinguished himself by launching pulpit thunderbolts against the Copperheads. But the time came when the Freewill Baptist creed ceased to satisfy him, and when he identified himself with the Unitarians. He filled Unitarian pulpits at Lancaster, N. H., and Groton, Mass. Still burned with reforming ardor, he early advocated the cause of woman suffrage, and he did not altogether succeed in keeping that important reform out of his Unitarian sermons. He advocated the abolition of all those laws and customs which do anywise impede the free action of woman. He believed that woman was in the world equally with man, to develop her womanly nature, to enjoy her womanly rights, to perform her womanly duty, and that she was as deeply interested as man was deeply interested in the purity of the home, and in the strength and honor of the nation. He believed that woman had as complete a right to use and control the home and the nation for her feminine purposes as man had a right to use and control them for his masculine purposes, and that our domestic life would be purer, would be inspired by a deeper and nobler passion, if the parties to it stood legally and politically on perfectly equal terms; that the life which a man and a woman lived in common would be nobler, richer in affectionateness for the fact that the two human factors making it up, were enabled to live a life, the man for himself, the woman for herself, of breadth and depth of individual meaning, in relation to the great world around them.

There was, then, nothing contracted or narrow in his reform sympathies; he was always on the lookout for something to amend, and always eager to set about the amending work.

He was destined to leave his Unitarianism, and to become a free rover in matters of religion, like the humble bee of which Emerson sings and like Emerson himself—of all the religions of the world—“Seeing only what is fair, sipping only what is sweet.”

I am unable to say what particular shape his religious views assumed at the last, or whether they retained any definite shape at all. Whenever I had the honor of meeting him, we found so much to talk about in discussing social problems, that there seemed to be no time left, in which to talk about anything else. I am sure, however, he would have agreed with me in thinking, that views of religion were but of little worth, unless they prompted to the doing of some little earnest work in the way of improving the condition of men in the world in which we find ourselves living.

I am sure he came to the belief that the best preparation for any other life, must be found in a wise and loving use of this life; that to save men for this world is the surest way of saving them for any

other world to which they may be bound, and this is why he became in the latter years of his life so earnest. As a social reformer he was just as hotly eager to save men from the tyranny of wage-earning slavery, as forty years ago he was hotly eager to save men from the tyranny of chattel slavery. He pursued social reform with quite a religious ardor. Socialism was his religion, the thing for which he had come most to live. Religion was to him a word empty of all noble meaning, only so far as it was opposed to the existence of unjust social equalities, to all social reparations which class interest and class prejudice and class pride tend to create and foster. If there was a divine energy ruling this universe, he saw its manifestations in movements which tend to raise men anywhere in dignity and wealth ; he saw its manifestations in every blow given to slaveries—creedal, commercial, political and social. He mourned the fact that the gulf separating class from class should be so broad and so deep ; that under the baleful influences of the industrial policies men favored, that gulf was getting broader and deeper ; that among the great majority of earth's children there was a dearth of all that which alone can make life rich and sweet ; but he had faith enough to enable him to see the cloud that had arisen on humanity's horizon, which, although no bigger than a man's hand, would eventually spread itself, he believed, over all our social firmament, and then, shivering into gracious raindrops, give new hope and new courage to all the sons and daughters of toil, causing the reproach of poverty to pass away, and rivers of gladness to water all the earth and clothe all climes with beauty.

The manner of his death was very sad,—we who knew him, and knowing him had learned to esteem him and love him, wish, oh ! how we wish it could have been different ; we wish that, tended by friends and blessed by the presence of children, he could have gone slowly down to death and approached the grave “like one who wraps the drapery of his couch around him, and lies down to pleasant dreams ;” but it was not to be. Death touched him with a rude and pitiless hand, yet although we must needs regret that fact, we can hardly regret the death itself ; it came after a long and an honorable life. Death is a great mystery, and we think we could understand something of the mystery of it, if death only came just at that time and just in that way in which our feelings and our reason would approve of its coming. We do know, however, that death itself cannot be a curse, for a sound philosophy unites with a true religion in teaching of the necessity of death, and if death be a necessity then it cannot in any case be an absolutely cruel thing. Death is not punishment, it is fulfillment ; by means of death room is constantly made on this earth of ours for newer generations of men to enter into the glories and delights of this mortal life. If spring buds did not die there would be no autumn fruit of which spring buds are prophetic. It is the

best possible world in which we live, for if there were no death there could be no life; if flowers did not wither, flowers could not bloom. Let us turn, then, from the grave solemnity of this death, to the deeper and graver solemnity of life.

Love ever seeks its truest and its best embrace, not in the death chamber, but in the busy ways of life; in those ways where there are fleshly hearts that can return our own heart's beat; where there are fleshly hands that can give us back grasp for grasp; where there are articulate voices to speak responsively to our greetings. In the one novel which our friend and brother, who is now what we call dead, gave to the world, he makes, on the last page of all, the hero of the story say, "I am not blind to the strength of the abuses I oppose, but in doing what I may to overturn the wrongs which afflict the world, however it may be, I feel an enthusiasm that never fails me. Yes, says the hero's wife, we have had but one purpose to seek justice for the creators of wealth; the night of oppression shall not always shroud the world." The words indicate at once what was the great purpose of the author's own life, and the faith which supported him in his endeavor to achieve the purpose. The last words of the story are, "It is already *The Dawning*." The words suggest to me the question, is there a dawning for the man whom we mourn as dead? I believe there is, and because I believe it I venture to say it, the man, the rugged, honest, stalwart man, is not here in his poor fleshly form. The body was not the man; the body is merely the shell of life. The shell lies broken because the bird has risen into day.

It is one of my firmest beliefs that for each one, whom we mistakenly call dead, there is a place in some spirit home, where personal life will exist under finer conditions, where all incompleteness will be trained into something like completeness, where all of good and tender, of true and noble, will grow forever and for evermore into grander and more radiant life. No spark of truth, no plan of good, no noble passion, will ever go out in any blackness or darkness. For our dead friend and brother "It is already the Dawning." This man whom we now call dead, manifested the supreme excellence of life—that of individuality. He dared to be himself. He scorned to take his opinions at second hand; he spoke his own thoughts and in scorn of all consequences; he did the deeds to which his own thoughts prompted him. No one can do a greater service to humanity than this man did. He was true, and he was honest. It is of just such individual good which he manifested that the aggregate good of humanity is made up. The entire human race is blessed and benefited when one member of it dares be thus good and true. His example teaches us that great truth that we are here to do our own tasks and not any tasks that anybody else may presume to set us; that we are here to live our own lives and not to imitate the life of somebody else; that every life means something, and means

something different to what any other life means; that the great thing is to find out the particular meaning of our own particular life, and then to manifest that meaning to men about us; that we can do no greater wrong to the universe, because we can do no greater wrong to ourselves, than to submit our life to the dictation of another. With heart swelling with gratitude for what he was, and for what he did, we now say to his august shade,

“ Turn to thy rest, true heart and brave,  
Let slander's venom'd tongue  
Seek bitterly to mar thy fame,  
And reason right from wrong.  
Yet o'er thy grave some hearts will own,  
As all true natures can,  
Here weary from life's dusty road  
Doth rest an honest man.”

# ADDRESSES

DELIVERED AT A

Memorial Service to J. M. L. BABCOCK,

— IN —

Investigator Hall, Boston, Sunday, April 22, 1894,

— BY —

W. D. Rockwood, Esq., B. K. Noyes, M. D., and

L. K. Washburn, Esq.



# J. M. L. BABCOCK.

## MEMORIAL SERVICE.

ADDRESS BY W. D. ROCKWOOD.

My friends! We have assembled to-day to speak our meed of praise of our old friend, Mr. John M. L. Babcock, who has so long been identified with the liberal cause, and whose voice has so often sounded within these walls.

What Mr. Ingersoll said of Mr. Seaver, we may say of Mr. Babcock, he was "a pioneer, a torchbearer, a toiler in that great field we call the world."

Mr. Babcock, like Mr. Seaver, has fallen asleep, and though his departure was through smoke and fire, he is now peacefully resting, and we have met to pay our last tribute of respect to his memory.

The seeker after gold did not reject the grains he picked from the filth and dirt of the valleys; so our friend accepted and availed himself of the grains of truth wherever he found them, whether amongst the filth and rubbish of the Bible, or in the books of Darwin, Tyndal, Voltaire, or Paine.

When we remember his intellectual capacity, and his oratorical powers as they must have been in his prime, we can but realize and appreciate the sacrifice he made. His act was noble. Educated for the ministry, with the ability to command a high position in the clerical ranks, he preferred poverty with honesty, to affluence with dishonesty and hypocrisy; his love for humanity forbade his forging chains for bodily or mental enslavement.

He never inquired: is the scheme popular, or fashionable? but always, is it right and true? and when convinced of its justice and truth, however unpopular, he enlisted under its banner and became its firm advocate. He may have had his faults, and who has not? But if he did, they were overshadowed by the good he did.

He could and did criticise sharply sometimes those whom he felt had infringed upon his personal rights, and if this was a fault it was more of the head than the heart, for he could forget, for the time, at least, and speak or write the kindest sentiments of praise of one whom he disliked, when he felt it was their due.

I freely testify to his many good qualities, his manly courage in the face of opposition, his daring to speak his thoughts while yet in the pulpit at a time when outspoken radicals were few, and when

religious bigotry was more rampant than to-day, but he could not brook restraint, and when he fully realized the cramped position in which he moved, he stepped out from the pulpit and out into the broad realm of liberalism.

Such men as he who do and dare deserve the praises of humanity—they are humanity's truest friends.

When we go to sleep may it be as truthfully said of all of us, as I now can truthfully say of him, the world is better that he has lived.

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ADDRESS BY B. K. NOYES, M. D.

The limit of human life! What a problem it is! Philosophers have studied to extend it by living long, happily and well. Poets have sought to idealize its phases. Fanatics have prophesied as to its limitations. Religionists have stultified themselves in trying to supplement it by the sophisms of a life after death. Metaphysicians have become demented with mental speculation, introspection, and the annihilation of thought. Spiritualists have become ecstatic with the morbid visions of angels, and the alleged disembodied doubles of the dead. And only scientists have analyzed its conditions, and found the tragic truth—the truth that conditioned matter is life; and that conditioned matter is death.

The great lesson to learn, then, is the right conditioning of life. Let but one condition be faulty and the fatal catastrophe ensues. When their careers are ended, then we miss our friends. How earnestly we would listen, were he himself here to tell the sad tale. Thoughts arise, and we would ask of him a hundred questions. Emotions of pity impel us to the spot where the tragedy happened, yet we could do nothing. We look intently upon that which was but so lately full of life, thought, wit, and helpful influence, and it shocks us with its terrible silence.

We can hardly keep back those thoughts which almost compel us to speak, yet the realization that we should speak to him in vain, and that he cannot reply, only intensifies the thought that the conditions of Nature and life are not only imperative in method, but unrelenting and cruel in kind.

In some way individuals are helpful to others. By deeds and the memory of deeds, by character and the memory of character, by traits and the memory of traits, influence for good goes on down the ages.

An extraordinary man has died. He lives only in our memories. As infidels, we are proud of his career. We point others to it for instruction, for guidance, and for emulation. Time was when he must have said, with Epicurus, "Let us arise in our strength, examine, judge, and be free." Yes, when, as a preacher, he saw (to

use his own words), how "Christianity reduces people to starvation and then throws out the crust of charity," he also saw a dawning for himself. Then how his thoughts and brain must have expanded. Behold the noble spectacle! A man with insight, honesty, and courage. He throws aside theology, creeds, and priestly emoluments. He renounces the holy water of baptism, the inanity of vicarious suffering, and all the puerilities and barbarities of religion, and evolves himself a man. Here was true heroism. "To side with truth is noble, while we share her wretched crust. If her cause bring fame and profit, and 'tis prosperous to be just." A preacher leaves church and religion, leaves friends and companions, leaves society and the public, when reason, knowledge, truth, honesty, and honor command. That, to him, was the only true and manly way. That reveals the man—the brave, honest, honorable, truthful man. That is one great lesson he leaves us. How well it would be if all preachers would follow his example!

Traits of sociability in men are common. Those of the recluse are not so common. Both in our friend were highly developed. He was kind, gentle, and genial. He was cheerful, humorous, and hopeful. His was a healthful personality. He had a wonderful memory, was apt in quotations, and ready in repartee.

His anecdotes and stories were numerous, interesting and amusing. I will relate his last story to me.

"Mamma, dear," said a little girl, "does God know I have two prayers to say, one one night and the other next night?" "Yes, dear, God knows you have two prayers to say, one one night and the other next night." "Mamma, dear, does God know I am going to say to-night 'Now I lay me down to sleep?'" "Yes, dear, God knows you are going to say to-night 'Now I lay me down to sleep.'" "But mamma, I'm not going to say that one; I'm going to say the other one."

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ADDRESS BY L. K. WASHBURN.

We have met together to speak, and hear spoken, kind words and generous words of a friend who is dead. Upon such an occasion as this the buds of speech easily blossom into eulogy. I am to speak of a man whom I have known for nearly twenty years as one man knows another. Should my language seem extravagant, remember that something must be forgiven to friendship.

More or less of sadness surrounds the death of every human being, but in the taking away of our friend every circumstance of sorrow met and mingled. It was night, and he was alone. Without a signal of his coming, death crept to the door of his room. Startled, awakened from his slumber by the approaching danger, he attempted to save himself. He opened his door, only to face the

flames that burned his breath away. He fell into the arms of darkness and of death. The form, robbed of life, has been lovingly given to the grave.

Mr. Babcock was born in the town of Andover, Maine, September 29, 1822. His father's family removed to Boston in the year 1825, where he remained until 1846. When twenty-three years of age he went to Plaistow, New Hampshire, in which place he lived for two years. Up to this time he had been a printer by trade, but when twenty-five he commenced to study for the Baptist ministry. He pursued his studies for three years in Wilmot, New Hampshire, at the expiration of which time he commenced to preach what was called the gospel of salvation. Two years later he was ordained.

It is impossible to tell what gives direction to the mind, but it was the destiny of his nature that made Mr. Babcock a preacher. The pulpit, fifty years ago, was the great moral power of the world. Ministers were then veritable leaders of public opinion. The press at that time had not become the giant it is to-day. A man who felt that he had something to say to his fellow-men gravitated to the church. Mr. Babcock must speak to mankind, and so he stood in the pulpit. But he soon found that the Baptist church was not as kind as the human heart, not as deep as human sympathy, not as high as human aspiration. He began to feel that his faith was larger than the creed of his church, that his thoughts were broader than his religion.

Mr. Babcock entered the ministry when the greatest moral revolution that ever shook the world was going on. The fierce struggle of opinion between liberty and oppression, which ended in a fiercer conflict of arms, could not be witnessed by one like him with indifference. Garrison had conquered prejudice and won respect. This young minister could not be false to his convictions. He trusted his heart above his church. Christianity set itself against the current of abolition, sided with the slaveholder and against the slave. Mr. Babcock knew that color did not make the man—that a white skin did not make a master, nor a black skin a slave. He knew there were men in the church blacker inside than was any African outside. He had but one duty—to preach the truth, and so he dared to say that if God was on the side of slavery then God was wrong and Garrison was right. He stood for what he used to call "natural justice and omnipotent liberty." This made every man his brother.

In the emancipation of the slave freedom became a grander fact in the world. The mind was liberated, creeds as well as chains were broken. The Christian church was not in sympathy with the new order of things; it saw infidelity in emancipation; it knew that the act of man was contrary to the word of God. It still declared the text divine that made man the property of his brother-man.

With the triumph of human freedom the power of the pulpit de-

clined. A new leader was born. The press was on the side of man. Where sermons were heard by hundreds, editorials were read by thousands. The preacher was converted by the editor. The liberty of thought which was denied the pulpit was granted the pen. When Mr. Babcock advocated abolition from his pulpit, his deacons went out of his church. They did not believe that the religion of God meant the liberty of man. Those men were right, but they did not know that their religion was wrong. Could the error and falsehood in religious doctrines have been seen, millions of human lives might have been spared. The work of progress has been to show that the human is holier than the divine.

Mr. Babcock had the martyr's spirit. He loved the right; he loved the truth; and if to do the right, to speak the truth, meant that he must step down from the pulpit, he would obey his conscience. But he did not quit preaching at once. He swapped churches, as it were. He had grown too large, he had become too free, to continue in the Baptist denomination, so he joined the Unitarians. Here he fondly believed was that religious freedom which his mind must have. For a few years he preached in Unitarian pulpits, but his dream of perfect liberty was not realized. He had a little longer chain, he could think a little farther, speak a little bolder, and that was all. But that was not enough for this man who had faith in human nature, who believed that the right would conquer the wrong, and that the bright sun of truth had not fallen from the blue skies of liberty.

The time came to him at last when he said with Tennyson :—

“ There is more faith in honest doubt,  
Believe me, than in *all* the creeds,”

and he left the Christian church. He still had something to say to the world, and he was going to say it.

On July 4, 1876, Mr. Babcock delivered a poem in Groton, Mass., at the celebration of the centennial anniversary of the independence of the United States. The poem is full of inspiring sentiments, which reveal the heart of the author. He follows down the stream of time and renews briefly the victories and defeats of ancient nations, and exclaims :—

“ Vain Art and Force, where Justice, Freedom, fail !  
Out of their mouldering graves to us they call,—  
Grandeur without Humanity must fall !”

He then goes on.

“ And when, from Nature's sacred depths profound,  
Did Manhood rise, erect, with glory crowned ?  
'Twas not when life was wildly but to roam,  
And man, the savage, made the caves his home ;  
'Twas not when one might over millions reign,  
And deal his curse of bondage, woe and pain ;  
'Twas not when men, untouched by Freedom's flame,  
Were tyrants' counters in Ambition's game,—

But when a new sun burst the shades of night,  
 Flooding the hemispheres with golden light,  
 In the redeeming truth that man alone  
 Is sovereign and divine,—not crosier, sword or throne!

'Twas but a word, breathed on this Western shore,—  
 A sound prophetic, and unheard before,—  
 But the winds bore it o'er the Atlantic surge,  
 And human hearts rejoiced to earth's remotest verge.

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'Twas but a word that millions leaped to hear,—  
 'ALL MEN ARE EQUAL!'—but it carried cheer  
 To every heart oppressed by cruel power,  
 And promised for the race a happier hour.  
 A thrill of joy through all the nations ran,—  
 The Age of Matter passed, and dawned the Age of man!"

When Mr. Babcock quit the pulpit he had lost faith in vicarious atonement and in the necessity for it; he had lost faith in all the doctrines of Christianity, but he had found a nobler faith in freedom, justice and humanity. This faith he would put into words and tell it to the world. There was no church that stood upon this creed, no pulpit where this faith could be proclaimed, so he started a paper. On November 5, 1875, the first issue of *The New Age* appeared. This journal was devoted to reforms. It was to advocate freedom, justice and humanity. In an article on "The Unity of Human Interests," in one of the earlier numbers, the editor says:

"We cannot get so high as to escape the obligation or altogether lose the sense of human brotherhood. However loftily we may soar, there will always be something in our circumstances or our experiences to remind us that we yet belong to a race whose conditions we must share as truly as we share its nature. A man may tower so far above his generation in moral goodness as to seem at the first admiring view like an inhabitant of a better world; but the clouds of evil that overshadow him, and the films of infirmity that encircle him, show that he breathes one atmosphere in common with that generation, inhabits with it the same earth, and with it is still human. So vital is the law of human brotherhood! The rain does not fall alike on the just and the unjust, the sun does not shine alike on the evil and the good, to teach me that it is for a few favored and fortunate ones to glide into final glory, leaving the great mass of humanity in anguish; but they do prophesy to me that every moral achievement of an individual soul, every virtue that blooms in an individual life, is a force added to those which shall ultimately harmonize the multitudes of earth's wicked and weary ones, and uplift the human family entire."

This thought, that the interests of men were identical, that men were brothers, was the keynote of all he wrote, of all he said. He felt keenly the wrongs that the poor man suffered, and his great mind protested against the injustice inflicted upon him, and his great

heart yearned for a world where the poor would have justice done them. He knew that those who bore the burdens of the world had the fewest pleasures, the slightest rewards ; that their mighty patience and their mighty toil brought them little more than food and clothes and shelter, and not the best of these. This it was that kindled indignation in his breast, this it was that lit the burning thoughts on the altar of his great devotion, and for years his pen pleaded for better conditions for the workingmen and workingwomen, and his voice was raised in public and private in their behalf. He claimed that the rights of labor should exist with the rights of man, that the same political justice was the source of both declarations, and that a government for man should be for all men, and not for a few. He saw that a general reform must come, not in party, not in sect, but in human thought, in human aspiration. Men must be moved by a nobler ambition than to get rich by making others poor. He would have the happiness of man the motive of society. He saw that the rich and the poor were divided in the North as the black and the white had been divided in the South ; that one existed for the comfort and convenience of the other, and that this condition of things was apparently accepted as right by the state and the church. Seeing this and knowing how honors come and how wealth comes, he sided with the helpless, he spoke for the oppressed, he fought with the under dog. I do not believe that Mr. Babcock ever tried to be popular. He tried to be true. He asked only : Where will my presence do the most good ? where will my voice aid those who are struggling for a larger freedom, for human rights, for justice to man ? He considered benefits to others first and himself last.

Into his paper, *The New Age*, he put all his force of mind, all his enthusiasm of heart. He worked with hand and brain, coined the golden thought and set the leaden type that was to carry it to the world. How hard he toiled, how earnestly he strove to win, only those few who were associated with him, ever knew ! He was happy in his new undertaking, dreaming of success and feeding his vision on a brighter future for his race. But the task was too heavy, and after eighteen months of Herculean labor, the pen, wielded against the "wrongs that need resistance," fell from his powerless hand. The dream was over.

After a long rest strength returned, and the courage, which even failure could not destroy, turned again to face the foe. Mr. Babcock entered the political field, and did royal service for the labor cause in several campaigns. He was at home on the stump. He was a born orator. Equipped with a massive form, a wonderful memory, and gifted with ready speech, he adorned the platform. He possessed the rare power of thinking on his feet, and many of his most thrilling sentiments were impromptu utterances, born of the man's fervor of spirit inspired by the glory of the hour. It might

be said of him that he had the fire of genius lit by the torch of brotherly love. In 1886 he published anonymously a novel, called, "The Dawning." He put his heart into this book. Its hero was himself. His aims, his hopes, his convictions speak from every page. Here is one of many beautiful passages with which the volume abounds :

"There is no knowledge that may not be mastered, no mysteries that cannot be penetrated, no worlds that imagination may not create, no evil that cannot be overcome,—and men who see this will become impatient of the maxims and customs that make life a moral chaos, and scorn the servitude which binds them to every outworn and treacherous tradition. It is something gained when we can look through the degradation of the present hour to the sunny fields that lie beyond."

When he wrote : "The value to me of a dollar consists solely in the fact that another man is destitute of a dollar," he gave a photograph of his moral nature. All who knew him know that money was no friend to him if he could not use it. He could not understand what is called "love of money." A dollar meant so much pleasure to him, so much happiness. He only valued it if it brought something higher. When asked for his services, he never higgled about price. He thought first of the good they would do, and went for whatever was given him. He spent the wealth of life just as he spent money : not grudgingly, but lavishly. He was a good companion, full of cheerfulness, and knew the art of talking. He appreciated humor and possessed it. His conversation was seasoned with the salt of wit. In his hands a story never lost its charm. His mind was loaded with anecdotes, and with good ones. He valued his friendships and his friends. He was honest, sincere, brave, strong, cheerful, and kind. He was not perfect ; no man is, no man has been.

In praising the statue we do not deny the blemishes. When we pick the rose we do not think of the imperfect leaves on the tree. It is the beautiful blossom we admire ; the bush, the thorn, the rude parasite is there, but these are no part of the beautiful wonder on the gracious stem. So in the blossom of life, in the rounded character, we make little account of the failures, of the incidents of living, and see only the man.



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