

GEORGE F. HOAR.

BY EDWARD E. HALE.

THE PRESIDENT of the Society has asked me to prepare a paper for our records, on what I will call the literary life of Senator Hoar. By this the President and I both mean, some notice, however brief, of his literary and historical interests. Of these he never lost sight even in the darkest gloom of the great political questions of half a century. He says himself in a sentence which is pathetic, "Down to the time when I was admitted to the bar, and, indeed for a year later, my dream and highest ambition were to spend my life as what is called an office lawyer, making deeds, and giving advice in small transactions. I supposed I was absolutely without capacity for public speaking."

So little does a man know himself. So little does a young man forecast his own future. I can remember those days. And I know how sincere this statement of his is. He really thought that he could not speak extemporaneously, and yet I lived to hear him make some of the most quick retorts which were ever listened to in either house of Congress.

He says, "I expected never to be married; perhaps to earn twelve or fifteen hundred dollars a year, which would enable me to have a room of my own in some quiet house and to collect rare books which could be had without much cost."

It was at that early period that I first knew him and from that early period till he died, I may say that we were near friends. I have a certain right, therefore, to speak of the underlying tastes and principles which asserted

themselves in the fifty-five years of life which followed on his entrance at the bar. I remember hearing someone laugh at the advice which he gives to young men who would prepare for public life. Some one had asked what was the best training for a public speaker, and quite unconsciously Mr. Hoar replied that if a young man wanted to be a public speaker he would do well to read the Greek orators in the original language. There is something a little droll in the thought of such advice as given to what the public calls a "rail splitter" or a "bobbin boy." But he said it perfectly unconsciously. I suppose he was thinking of his own young life and he knew very well that what Mr. Adams calls the Greek fetish is a fetish very easily conciliated. I remember him the first winter he was in Worcester, as preferring to read Plato in the original to going into the pleasant evening society of the town, so that it was with some little difficulty that we youngsters made him take his part in social entertainments. Almost to the day of his death he maintained such early studies, which were, indeed, no longer studies.

By the kindness of Mr. Rockwood Hoar, I have here his unpublished translation of Thucydides. When of late years you called upon him of a sudden at his own home, you were as apt as not to find him standing at his desk and advancing that translation by a few lines, or revising it. Indeed, he revered the masters in whatever line of literature or life. You never met him but he surprised you by some apt quotation, perhaps from somebody you had never heard of, and it seems to me fair to say that the wide range of such reading is to be remembered at once as cause and effect in that sunny cheerfulness, confidence, and courage which everyone has noted who has attempted to give any analysis or discussion of his character.

As I have spoken of the translation of Thucydides, I ought to say that I do not believe he had any thought of publishing it. He did not mean to throw discredit in any

way upon the translations which existed. But rather, he meant, if I may use the phrase, to bind himself to the determination that he would once more read Thucydides and would read him carefully. I do not know,—I wish someone would tell us, who first called Thucydides's history "the hand book of statesmen." Within intelligible limits, I think, perhaps, Mr. Hoar would have accepted that phrase. In making one more version into English of the great historian, however, he was working to please himself, without any care or thought as to whether his work was or was not a better literary work than Jowett's or Dale's, or any other translator's. I like to say this because there was not in him the least of that eagerness to have everything published which is one of the superficial absurdities of our time.

With such tastes and habits he was glad to accept the invitations which he received right and left to address the literary societies of the colleges. A collection of such addresses, many of them elaborate in their detail, would in itself make a very interesting volume of the history of the higher education. I have an address at Amherst on the "Place of the College Graduate in American Life," with the date of 1879. In an address before the Law Class of the Howard University he spoke on "The Opportunity of the Colored Leader." At the anniversary of the Yale Law School he spoke on the "Function of the American Lawyer in the Founding of States."

His addresses at Plymouth on Forefather's Day, his Eulogy on Garfield, delivered in this city, his address on the Two Hundredth Anniversary of Worcester, his address at the dedication of the Public Library in Lincoln, Massachusetts, his address on Robert Burns, his address on Emerson, are to be spoken of as studies of permanent value. When in 1888 the state of Ohio celebrated its own centennial, Mr. Hoar was very properly requested by the authorities in Ohio to deliver the oration as representing the State

of Massachusetts, whose colony under Manasseh Cutler founded the City of Marietta. I had the pleasure of hearing that address. To this moment it is a great historical monument of a great occasion.

I have asked the Society to print as a matter of public convenience the titles of the 193 speeches and addresses which are contained in the sixteen volumes in his own library, a list which has been furnished us by the kindness of his son.

Of his papers read before this Society, the memory is fresh in the minds of all of us. He loved the Society and never forgot its work or its interests; and the broad national views which his life in Washington enabled him to take of the whole country gave him an opportunity to serve us in a thousand ways which were not open to other men.

Every such word of his in education or in history, is an original study and he is sure to go to the foundations. One of the representatives of Massachusetts in speaking of him before the House of Representatives cites the modest phrase of Mr. Webster, who says that the only genius he was aware of was a genius for hard work, and he applies that phrase to Mr. Hoar. It is a happy statement and it ought to be added that Mr. Hoar's literary work always seems to be spontaneous, or to be amusement or play. In general, the same remark would apply to it all which I have made of his Thucydides. In truth, he loved what we call study, and though no man was more social or welcomed a visitor more cordially, yet from one end of the year to another he would have been happy if he were alone with his books.

We remember here how often he gave dignity, and even solemnity, to our proceedings by his careful references to the work of the English divines. Our friend, Dr. Merri- man, at our last meeting reminded us in the careful study which he made of Jeremy Taylor, of one of Mr. Hoar's suggestions. There is a very pathetic anecdote of a sacred

pilgrimage which he and Mrs. Hoar made to the parsonage of the poet Herbert. And if I have a right to say it, I will say, that no man among us had a more careful knowledge of the Puritan leaders in the seventeenth century, or of the really devout scholars in the Church of England in the next century. In the very last interview I had with him, he recalled some verses of Dr. Watts which are omitted in most of our hymn books. This might have happened with a superficial reader, but when with his own care he repeated the words, you could not but remember that from Milton to Montgomery he was familiar with all the sacred poets of English literature.

One instance out of a hundred will serve to illustrate the course of his life. In the year 1882, with his life in Washington full of the public duties of a hundred acquaintances which pressed upon a leading member of Congress, his attention was arrested by Mr. Dwight's report of Stevens's index on the Franklin Papers. I happen to speak of this detail because I was in Washington at the moment when that report was brought before the Library Committee. Mr. Hoar acquainted himself with every detail of the curious history of those papers and explained them before the joint Library Committee of which he was a member. He compelled the attention of leading members to the subject, he followed it from day to day,—I might say, from hour to hour; and eventually secured the grant which was necessary for the purchase of the papers, which now make a possession so valuable to the Library of Congress. I have a thousand times had occasion to use those papers, and I never do so without thinking of the man who could stop in what are called larger interests to see that such a detail was attended to.

No one visits the ancient University of William and Mary at Williamsburg without observing the reverence and affection with which the gentlemen there speak of his friendship to their college. In the Civil War the Peninsula of Vir-

ginia, as John Smith calls it, was almost of course the scene of the most critical military operation. Rightly or wrongly, I do not pretend to know, the army of the North destroyed the principal building of the University. It was natural that after the return of peace, the friends of William and Mary College should think that they had a rightful claim on the government different from that of most of the sufferers by the rough hand of war. Who should present that claim before the country? The Philistines of whatever type would not have thought that this young anti-slavery member from Massachusetts, whose public life had begun and continued because he hated the institution of slavery, whose own father and sister had been turned out of Charleston by the authorities by a genteel mob in that city, that he should have been the person to be the champion of William and Mary College, and should compel, so to speak, the government to restore to it the property which it had destroyed. But Mr. Hoar undertook that special service in face of the difficulties which seemed insoluble. Separate claims for separate losses in a struggle for four years were looked upon rightly with dissatisfaction, not to say intolerance. All the same he meant that this claim should be listened to and if I may use our vernacular, he "put it through." It was because it was just,— it must be acceded to.

When in this city, we heard the distinguished senator from Virginia, Mr. Daniel, pronounce his admirable eulogy upon his long-time comrade in the Senate, we had a good opportunity to see how great is the worth of manhood in public life. A great leader of men said to me in 1904 in the Senate Chamber, that I should find very little politics in the Senate. He meant that man with man, the Senators of the country are linked together by ties much closer and more dear than those which are made by the mere mechanics of superficial politics.

When Mr. Hoar graduated at Cambridge his Commencement part was a review of Daniel Boone's life. The subject

itself showed the direction which his thought and study had already given to his life. And as one reviews the extraordinary range of his public writings, accurate as they are and profound at once, one understands the interest which the whole country took in him. Our associate, Mr. Paine, has made a collection of nearly five thousand memorial publications which have expressed the sorrow of a nation for his death and its gratitude for his life. I am not sure, but I believe, that if we had asked him which enterprise of his long life gave him the most pleasure in recollection,—I do not mean for its intrinsic importance, but for the dramatic associations of the whole event,—he would have said it was the recovery of Bradford's manuscript by the state of Massachusetts from its hiding place in London. When he was talking with the Bishop of London about this precious document, the Bishop said that he had never understood what was the value which belonged to it.

"Why," said Mr. Hoar, "if there were in existence in England a history of King Alfred's reign for thirty years, written by his own hand, it would not be more precious in the eyes of Englishmen than this manuscript is to us."

After this appeal, which quite surprised Dr. Temple, the endless difficulties of English law and custom were all overcome successively; and on an august occasion, the 26th of May, 1897, the General Court of Massachusetts received the precious volume at the hands of Mr. Bayard, the first American Ambassador in London, on his return from his duty there. Governor Walcott received the book to become henceforth the property of the Commonwealth, and Mr. Hoar made one of his most interesting addresses as he followed along its history. The Commonwealth thus owes to him this most precious memorial of its birth, and, as I say, I think he would have said, that no act of his had given him more pleasure than the effort which was crowned that day. Indeed, the history and principles of the founders of

New England and of their successors were woven in with all his life, nor have we ever had a scholar who devoted to them such unremitting interest or who had more reason to be proud of his personal connection with the fathers.

In reviewing Mr. Hoar's life, as a friend of education, of literature, and of history, or in general of scholarship, it is interesting to remember that the first President of Harvard College, whom the college herself had educated, was his ancestor, Leonard Hoar. He had had the advantage of both English and American training, and was loved and honored in the old country which still seemed home to half the colonists. The general Court, in their grant to the College, was accustomed every year to make the grant on condition that Dr. Hoar be the man chosen for the vacant President's place. "A scholar and a Christian, a man of talent and of great moral worth."

I have been told that in his physical aspect Senator Hoar reminded men of the pictures and busts of his distinguished grandfather, Roger Sherman. He had respect, amounting to veneration as well as love, for Sherman, and in one very instructive paper he showed with great pride from the journals of the Constitutional Convention what was the masterly honor of Sherman in leading the way in each of its most critical decisions.

The Senator was by no means a Dry-as-Dust annalist. He comprehended thoroughly the principles and determinations of the fathers; and in all his study and all his work, he showed his determination that those principles should be carried out without fear or hesitation. He studied the history of the past with no idolatry of ancient method or monument, but always looked forward to the future with a determination that the eternal principles of the reign of God should be central in the government of the years which are before us.

I am fortunate in being able to read to you a sonnet which his friend, Dr. Rawnsley, sent me after he received,

in his happy home at Keswick, the tidings of Mr. Hoar's death. I remember that the Senator when he introduced me to Dr. Rawnsley called him the first living poet in England.

At this October meeting of ours in Worcester, for a generation at least, the members of the society will remember the cordial welcome which the Council and every member always received at his happy home. One recalls with gratitude that great principle of history which in early life he announced so well himself. "At bottom the reason men form governments, and the object for which government is to be sustained is that men may live in happy homes." Whoever speaks or writes of the charm, itself indescribable, in this well-balanced life, remembers the cordial and complete sympathy of his wife, and that affectionate, and even ingenious coöperation of her life with his which showed itself whether in the detail of daily ministry or in constant inspiration;—sympathy and coöperation such as women only are able to conceive.

SENATOR HOAR

IN MEMORIAM

You of the spirit fresh with May-flower dew,
 A Pilgrim Father faithful to the end,
 Stout-hearted foe and truest-hearted friend,
 Who never trimmed your sail to winds that blew
 With breath of popular favour, but foreknew
 Storm followed sun, and knowing, did depend
 On One behind all storm high aid to lend,
 And from Heaven's fount alone your wisdom drew:
 Farewell! in these illiterate later days
 We ill can spare the good gray head that wore
 The honour of a nation, Fare thee well.
 When Justice weary of men's warlike ways
 And Freedom gains Love's height, they there shall spell
 Your name in golden letters, Senator Hoar.

H. D. RAWNSLEY.

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