

Gassendi (Fig. 16), in which the dark part on our right is still the body of the moon, on which the sun has not yet risen. Its nearly level rays stretch elsewhere over the surface, that is, in places of a strangely smooth texture, contrasting with the ruggedness of the ordinary soil, which is here gathered into low plaits, that, with the texture we have spoken of, look

“Like marrowy crapes of China silk,
Or wrinkled skin on scalded milk,”

as they lie, soft and almost beautiful, in the growing light.

Where its first beams are kindling, the sum-

mits cast their shadows illimitably over the darkening plains away on the right, until they melt away into the night — a night which is not utterly black, for even here a subdued radiance comes from the earth-shine of our own world in the sky.

Let us leave here the desolation about us, happy that we can come back at will to that world, our own familiar dwelling, where the meadows are still green and the birds still sing, and where, better yet, still dwells our own kind — surely the world, of all we have found in our wanderings, which we should ourselves have chosen to be our home.

[END OF THE PRESENT SERIES.]

S. P. Langley.

REMINISCENCES OF DANIEL WEBSTER.*

My acquaintance with Mr. Webster might almost be regarded as a family inheritance rather than a personal acquisition. It grew out of connections reaching as far back as the middle of the last century. Both my grandfathers, Japhet Allen and Jeremiah Gilman, were with Ebenezer Webster, the father of Daniel, in the revolutionary war, and Colonel David Gilman, my grandfather's brother, was with him in the old French and Indian wars under Washington and Amherst. My grandmother on my mother's side was a distant relative of the mother of Mr. Webster, and a native of her region; and her brother resided in the town of Boscawen during his life, and for many years was familiarly acquainted with all the Webster family. To enlarge this family association: my grandmother on my father's side was born on part of the Webster estate at Marshfield; and the old cellar of the house of her ancestors was well preserved during Mr. Webster's life: and many of her family are interred in the Pilgrim burying-ground, where the Webster tomb is situated. Both my father

and Mr. Webster were born the same year, and while the latter taught at Fryeburg Mr. Allen presided over a district school in the country near by. They were companions on many a fishing and rambling excursion round Mount Chocorua and the tributaries of the Saco. Tradition has it that they both received instruction in Latin from the same preceptor, Rev. Samuel Hidden, of Tamworth, N. H. Thus I may fairly be said to have imbibed my love and admiration and knowledge of the great statesman with my mother's milk. My first sight of him was in a crowded courtroom of a country village in New Hampshire. It was more than half a century ago; and, though I was hardly ten years of age, I well remember how overawed I was at the introduction. My next acquaintance with his name was when he was engaged in the Salem Murder case as counsel for the Government against Knapp *et al.* But it was not until I came to Boston, a youth of seventeen summers, and was casually presented to him again, that I realized the greatness and felt the influence

* The portrait of Webster, printed as a frontispiece, is from a daguerreotype made by Mr. F. de B. Richards, of Philadelphia. Mr. Richards, now a painter, was formerly a daguerreotypist, and went, under the guidance of Dr. McClellan (father of the general), to get Webster to pose for the likeness. Mr. Richards is confident that this was in 1849, though we can find no record of a public speech made by Webster in Philadelphia in that year. Mr. Richards says that Webster had spoken with his hat on, and they wished to preserve a memento of the speech; but when they found Webster he was pacing the floor in furious anger, frowning like Jupiter Tonans, because some unfeeling creditor had ventured to dun him for a debt. Dr. McClellan whispered to Richards not to touch the picture question. Meantime, Webster's friends were raising money among the Whigs with which to satisfy the debt. At ten minutes before two the doctor and the daguerreotypist returned, to find the lion tame and happy. But there was to be a reception that afternoon, and Webster turned and growled, “McClellan, if that picture is to be taken, it must be at two o'clock.” Dr. McClellan thereupon whispered to Richards to run and have all things ready. Mr. Richards remembers hearing Webster's angry grumbling when he reached the top of the third flight at finding he must mount one more. When he entered the gallery Richards said: “Stand just as you are, Mr. Webster; we wish to take you first with your hat on.” “Your first will be your last,” roared the statesman. But when the artist announced that the sitting was ended in about four seconds, he said: “What, all done?” “Yes.” “Why, in Boston they will set your — eyes out!” and he sat for two or three other pictures. The hat shown in the picture, or a similar one, is preserved in the “Historical” rooms in Philadelphia. — Ed.

of his overpowering personality as a man. He was then in the zenith of his glory, and, overcome as I was by his majestic greatness, I kept aloof from him for more than a dozen years. When I subsequently met him and made myself known as the son of his friend and his father's friend, his great heart warmed to me, and from that time forward I enjoyed an intimacy with him that ended only with his death. In our frequent interviews the memories of the past would come surging back upon his mind. The old farm, with its rugged pastures, "the crystal hills gray and cloud-topped," the old saw-mill, the deer-paths, the trout-streams, and the range of the bear, the wolf, and the fox, all suggested to his mind visions of boyish associations and frolics that quieted and soothed and refreshed him in his leisure moments. His father, of whom he always spoke so affectionately, was twice married; and he commemorated his second marriage by building a one-story frame house hard by where the old log-cabin stood. Daniel was born in this house, which in after time he used to say was nearer the North star than any other in New England. That house still exists, and has been made part of a newer and more substantial edifice. Near the house is a well, and by the side of this well stands an elm-tree, which the present owner, Judge Nesmith, points to with pride, and says was planted by Webster's father in 1768. For sixty years, at regular visits, Daniel Webster sat beneath its spreading branches in the summer-time, and looked his cattle in the face. This farm, near the subsequent homestead at Franklin, has few fertile spots; the granite rocks, visible in every direction, give an air of barrenness to the scene. I could not help thinking, as I stood upon the spot last fall where he first saw the light of day, with some of his neighbors and kinsmen, that those wild, bleak hills among which he was cradled and the rough pastures in which he grew had left their impress upon his soul. His school-time was much interrupted; and from his own lips I learned that Webster's struggle for an education was continued from his early childhood to his thirtieth year. Every step in advance was contested by obstacles which he met with a lion heart, and with a lion's courage overthrew. His books were few at this time. There were a copy of Watts's hymns, a cheap pamphlet copy of Pope's "Essay on Man," and the Bible, from which he first learned to read, together with an occasional almanac. He used to say that at the age of fourteen he could recite by heart the whole of the "Essay on Man." He entered Dartmouth College in 1797, but was desperately poor. A friend sent him a recipe while at college for greasing his

boots. He wrote back and thanked him very politely. "But," said he, "my boots need other doctoring, for they not only admit water, but even peas and gravel-stones."

Professor Shurtleff, his classmate, says that Webster was remarkable for three things when at Dartmouth: steady habits of life, close application to study, and last, but not least, ability to mind his own business. He left Dartmouth in 1801. Tradition says, with what truth I do not know, that he took no part in the graduating exercises, but he received a diploma. When the exercises were over, he invited some of his classmates to accompany him to the college green, and there, in their presence, he tore up his sheepskin and threw it away, saying, "My industry may make me a great man, but this miserable parchment cannot." Mounting his horse, he rode home.

About this time, or soon after, he came to Boston to seek his fortune and get a chance to study law. Theodore Parker describes him as coming with no letters of introduction, raw, awkward, and shabby in his dress, his rough trousers ceasing a long distance above his feet. He was turned away from several offices before he found a place. But Mr. Gore, afterward Governor of Massachusetts, a man of large reputation, and, I should judge, a man of keen insight and much tenderness of heart, took in the unprotected youth who came, as he said, to work, not to play. He was admitted to the bar in 1805, and settled down to the practice of law at Boscawen. In 1807 Mr. Webster gave up this office to his brother Ezekiel, who had just been admitted to the bar, and moved to Portsmouth, where he lived for nine years wanting one month. In 1808 he married Miss Grace Fletcher. In an old paper, the Portsmouth "Oracle," of June 11, 1808, you can read the account as follows: "Married, in Salisbury, Daniel Webster, Esquire, of this town, to Miss Grace Fletcher." All this is more or less a matter of history; but his first love-letter, now before me and without date, may never yet have been published. Lovers in these days, it appears, were in the habit of sitting up late, or rather early; and his manner of letting his lady know at what time he would leave her is, to say the least, novel. It reads as follows:

"MY COUSIN: I intend to set out for home from your house at three o'clock.—D. W.

"Miss Grace Fletcher, Present."

One day he assisted her in disentangling a skein of silk, and, taking up a piece of tape, he said:

"Grace, cannot you help me to tie a knot that will never untie."

She blushing replied:

"I don't know, Daniel, but am willing to try."

The knot was tied, and, though eighty years have since sped by, it lies before me to-day, time-colored, it is true, but nevertheless still untied. I have a note in my possession dated March, 1805, addressed to Miss Grace Fletcher.

"MISS FLETCHER: Monday morning five o'clock I expect to go out on the stage for Amherst. If it should consist with your convenience to ride to Dunstable on that day, I should be happy to be charged with the duty of attending you. It will probably be in my way to be in Cambridge Sunday eve, and I can furnish you a passage into town.

"D. WEBSTER."

Another note in an envelope marked by Miss Fletcher "Precious Documents" reads as follows:

"DEAR GRACE: I was fortunate enough to be at home Sunday morning at five o'clock, after a solitary ride. . . . Early in the week after next I hope to be with you.

"Yours entirely, D. W."

At this period of his life, at least, Mr. Webster was very methodical, and his receipts and expenditures were kept with great care. A mottled-covered pass-book, begun in August, 1824, before me now, shows his receipts during the rest of that year to have been \$4235, and for the first whole year \$7285; for the next year they were, including his \$1800 from Congress, \$13,238.33; so that, even at this early date, his practice was large and lucrative.

At the age of thirty he was elected to Congress for the first time, and he took his seat in November, 1813. In 1816 he came to Boston, from Portsmouth, to practice law. In 1820 he was a leading spirit in the Massachusetts State Convention for the revision of the Constitution—provoking the jealousy, but distancing the rivalry, of young men Boston born and Cambridge bred. In 1822 Webster was sent to Congress from Boston, and five years later he took his seat in the Senate as a Senator from Massachusetts. His celebrated speech in answer to Colonel Hayne of South Carolina, upon the Constitution, gave him a world-wide reputation as a lawyer and statesman, and forever after he was considered among the highest authorities in the interpretation of that instrument. Subsequently, in 1841, he left the Senate and became Secretary of State in the Harrison administration, and remained under President Tyler. He was returned to the Senate in 1845, and again in 1850, but soon became Secretary of State under President Fillmore, which office he retained until his death. He was eight years a Representative, nineteen years a Senator, and five years Secretary of State, making in all thirty-two years of public

life. Such is the summary of his career before the world.

Prior to the forties, except through the associations before referred to, I knew Mr. Webster only as the great world knew him, and I can add but little to what is already of public record regarding his public life. In the early days of the Long Island Railroad I traveled with him and Mrs. Webster from New York to Boston, which offered me the best opportunity for a prolonged conversation that up to that time I had ever enjoyed. I could, of course, say but little in answer to his views of our national prosperity. He then had the best comprehension of the coming growth and wealth of the Western States that I had ever heard expressed. His son Fletcher and a number of families of New England and New York distinction were early pioneers in the settlement of a township in Illinois, but subsequently moved back to their homes in the East after much suffering in the backwoods. I remember hearing Fletcher describe some of these scenes as early as the Harrison campaign of 1840. But Mr. Webster was not discouraged, and, as in the conversation on the before-mentioned trip across Long Island, he always described vividly the great resources of the West, and its probable influence on the future of New England. He was ever disposed to think that the growing West would be a permanent help to New England.

He had already seen the commerce of his district dwindle away—the wharves and docks from Boston to Portland grass-green from want of use, and the prospect of a like stampede at an early date along the coast to New York. He saw the necessity his native New England was under to sustain her manufactures, and hence he early set to work to lend a helping hand. Three causes he espoused with unflinching fidelity, and stood by them until death. Internal improvements, finance, and protection to American industries—these were the three questions he deemed most intimately associated with national progress. His conversations ever partook of these national considerations.

An incident of this trip illustrated the coolness of Mr. Webster in the midst of danger. All at once, as the cars rushed along at a fearful rate (the conductor feeling desirous to show Mr. Webster the speed that could be kept), there was a terrible concussion, and though the engine was not thrown from the track it soon stopped. It was found that a switch was but partially turned off, and the driving-wheel of the locomotive had carried off one side of the rail near the middle. Great confusion instantly followed the accident, and men as well as women and children were panic-stricken. Mr. Web-

ster coolly arose from his seat and talked to the crowd, which soon became quiet again.

He used to drive in his gig from Boston, and sometimes from Hingham, over the road to Marshfield. On such occasions troops of children would come flocking out and follow after him, so great a fascination did he have for them. And I have seen somewhere how a little child, on entering the room where Webster was seated, and looking up into his great soft eyes, ran instinctively into his arms, as if yearning to get as near as possible to his great tender heart. As an infant he is described as a crying baby who worried his parents considerably. He grew up to boyhood pale, weak, and sickly; as he himself often told me, he was the slimmest in the family. And yet, by doing a boy's work on his father's farm, by indulging a propensity for outdoor sports, by leading a temperate and frugal life, he succeeded in building up a robust constitution. On arriving at manhood he had a physical frame which seemed made to last a hundred years. It was an iron frame, large and stately, with a great mountain of a head upon it. When Thorwaldsen, the Danish sculptor, saw his head in Powers's studio in Rome, he exclaimed: "Ah! a design for Jupiter, I see." He would not believe that it was a living American. Parker describes him as "a man of large mold, a great body, and a great brain. . . . Since Socrates there has seldom been a head so massive, huge. Its cubic capacity surpassed all former measurements of mind. A large man, decorous in dress, dignified in deportment, he walked as if he felt himself a king. Men from the country who knew him not stared at him as he passed through our streets. The coal-heavers and porters of London looked on him as one of the great forces of the globe. They recognized in him a native king." Carlyle called him "a magnificent specimen whom, as a logic fencer or parliamentary Hercules, one would incline to back at sight against all the world." And Sydney Smith said he was "a living lie, because no man on earth could be as great as he looked."

And so, blessed with a sturdy frame and a form of imposing manhood, he stood alone in his massiveness among twenty-five million people. And the moral and mental character he had built up within him — this was the force that made of him the Colossus of manly strength and character he was. I have said he was truthful. He was more than truthful: he was reverent and religious. He was present one day at a dinner-party at the Astor House given by some of his New York friends, and in order to draw him out one of

the company put to him the following question: "Would you please tell us, Mr. Webster, what was the most important thought that ever occupied your mind?" Mr. Webster merely raised his head, and, passing his hand slowly over his forehead, said: "Is there any one here who doesn't know me!" "No, sir," was the reply; "we all know you, and are your friends." "Then," said he, looking over the table, "the most important thought that ever occupied my mind was that of my individual responsibility to God," upon which subject he spoke for twenty minutes.

Webster died at Marshfield, October 24, 1852. When it was known that the final summons had arrived, and that his great spirit had taken its flight, thousands crowded into Marshfield to do honor to his remains. I well remember the funeral, October 29, 1852. It was a beautiful day, and his herds of cattle which he loved so much were quietly grazing on the hills behind the house. Mingled among them were strange animals like the elk and antelope. Water-fowl swarmed in the lake near by, and the avenues were thronged with sorrowing people. The iron casket, open at full length, was placed under a linden tree in front of the mansion, and not on the side under the great elm, as has been so often stated. The body lay clothed as in life with his blue coat and accustomed dress. The pupils of his eyes were a little sunk, but his features wore a smile of peaceful content. The scene has often been described, how they tenderly laid him away in his tomb by the sea.

Time flew onward with resistless tread; the war of the great rebellion was over, the Union had been preserved. The remains of his son, Major Edward Webster, had been brought from the battle-grounds of Mexico; those of his only other son, Colonel Fletcher Webster, from the bloody field of Virginia where he was slain. His grandsons, Daniel and Ashburton, and his granddaughter, Carrie, the last of all the children of Fletcher, had been laid beside him in the family tomb at Marshfield. The widowed wife of the latter occupied the desolate homestead when the centennial year of the birth of the great statesman came round. The nation was aroused to celebrate the event. Thirty years had passed since we laid him in the tomb by the sea, where the Atlantic had constantly sung a mournful requiem over the remains of all that was mortal, when, on another October day, twenty thousand sons and daughters of freedom came down to pay willing tribute to the memory of the dead. He "still lived" in the hearts of his countrymen. The President of the United States was there, with his cabinet, and other officers of the national government, both civil and

military. Judges, senators, representatives in Congress, ministers and consuls of other governments; governors and ex-governors of the New England States; literary men, presidents and fellows of college, and ministers of the gospel,—all came to do his memory reverence. The road to the mansion-house for a mile and a half was lined

upon either side by surviving veterans of the Army of the Republic. As the long procession started, escorted by the Ancient and Honorable Artillery Company, cannon resounded from the hill-top, and a solemn funeral dirge was played by the bands. It was a scene such as Massachusetts never before witnessed.

Stephen M. Allen.

SOME RECOLLECTIONS OF CHARLES O'CONOR.

THE death of Mr. O'Conor has left a large vacancy in the American bar, larger perhaps than was ever created before by the death of any single individual. For a period of nearly half a century he was the professional feature of almost every important litigation in the great commercial center of the nation. Indeed, he conferred importance upon any case in which he was engaged, and the reports of the judicial decisions of the State of New York will bear to remote generations abundant testimony of his extraordinary industry and professional learning and skill. It may be assumed that his profession will furnish a competent biography of one who lent it so much distinction, and whose example commended itself in so many ways to the admiration and imitation of his professional brethren wherever the administration of the law has attained the dignity of a science.

It was my good fortune in early life to experience a very great and most seasonable kindness at the hands of Mr. O'Conor, a kindness which modesty only forbids my referring to more in detail. His life, however, was so full of such benefactions that the suppression of one of them requires no apology. The incident, to which I only venture to allude, established relations which, if not more intimate, were in some respects different from those which are ripened by ordinary professional intercourse, and countenance me in making a permanent record of such recollections of him as seem to possess some public interest, and of which there may be no other witness.

While at the bar I had known Mr. O'Conor about as intimately as it was possible for a young man at the base of the profession to know one who was nearing its summit. We had been on bar committees together; we had both taken a lively interest in the discussions which preceded and followed the Constitutional Convention of 1846, of which he was a member, and, at one time and another, we had interchanged opinions upon most of the contested questions discussed in that body.

We were not in close sympathy with each other on all nor even on many of these questions, while in politics we were separated by an impassable gulf. Though both of us professed to be Democrats, he belonged to the tribe then known in New York as "Hunkers," and I to that then known as "Barnburners." But we were both in earnest; both fancied that we were disinterested and patriotic; and our debates, though they tended to separate us wider and wider on questions of party policy, proved favorable rather than otherwise to the growth of our friendship. This is all I need to say by way of introduction to some reminiscences which death seems to have made it my privilege, some think my duty, to share with the public.

Early in the summer of 1882 I received from Mr. O'Conor an invitation to visit him at his new island home in Nantucket. In the following summer I was invited again. I was fortunately able to accept both invitations, and on each occasion I spent with him several days. As I was old enough to remember him at the bar long before he had reached the primacy of his profession, his conversation, which never flagged during his waking hours either in volume or in interest, was confined mostly to the incidents of his youth and active professional life.

When I first arrived at "The Cliff," about the 1st of July, 1882, his new house was but just finished. The carpenters had left it only the night before, and we were the first guests to whom he had had an opportunity of extending its hospitality. His territory embraced only about two hundred feet square, situated on one of the bluffs overlooking the sea which separates the island from the Massachusetts shore. The ground around his house, or the sand rather, was not graded, and it seemed doubtful if it ever could be, as the wind would displace one day what the shovel had placed the day preceding. It was strewn with boxes, boards, and lumber-rubbish which had survived their usefulness, and were awaiting the proprietor's convenience to be consigned to

