

of the United States—the forcing-house of its fanaticism, and the favored seats of its scholarship. Thus it was that D'Arcy McGee, the youth hungry and thirsty for knowledge and fame, found himself a resident of the New England States capital, with access to the best public libraries on this side of the Atlantic, and within reach of the best public lecturers on literary and scientific subjects. For at that day Emerson, Giles, (the county and countryman of the subject of our sketch,) Whipple, Chapin, and Brownson, lived in that city or in its vicinity. It was moreover the residence of Channing, Bancroft, Eastburn, Prescott, Ticknor, Longfellow, Lowell, Holmes, and others, whose influence should have purified the moral atmosphere, and have made Boston to others, what we suppose it must have been to them, an appreciative and congenial home. It is not difficult to imagine, from what we know and can observe of his mature manhood, that D'Arcy McGee, the impulsive Irish lad overflowing with exuberant good nature and untiring industry, with his full heart and active brain, soon found his way into meetings where learned men delivered lectures, or among the booksellers, whose shops such celebrities frequented. Neither is it a matter for surprise that he early attracted the notice of several of their number. Opportunities of speaking publicly are by no means uncommon in the United States, and we should imagine that Boston contained a great many nurseries, under different names, where the alphabet of the art could be acquired. Whether the scholar progresses beyond his letters depends very much on the furnishing of his mind. The nerve and knack may be got by practice, but the prime condition,—having something to say,—must spring from exact thought, and severe study. We have every reason to believe that the subject of our sketch, even in his early youth, observed that condition; but we have no means of knowing where or in what way he acquired the fluent habit of graceful and polished oratory. For since he was enthroned on his mother's tea-table, and declared to listening friends that his name was "Norval," we have been unable to discover any intermediate audience between his select one at Carlingford, and his scientific one at Boston. Strange as it may seem, it is we believe, no less true than strange, that during his sojourn at Boston, between the years 1842 and 1845, when between the ages of seventeen and twenty, he had actually made his mark as a public speaker. Nor