

THE HOMILETIC REVIEW.

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REVIEW SECTION.

I.—CRITICISMS ON SOME OF THE ABLEST REPRESENTATIVE PREACHERS OF THE DAY.

BY AN EMINENT PROFESSOR OF HOMILETICS.

NO. VI.—REV. R. S. STORRS, D.D., LL.D.

“THE prince of living pulpit rhetoricians,” would be a true, but it would be a very inadequate, and it might be a very misleading, characterization of the subject of the present paper. Dr. Storrs is easily that, but he is alike more, and other, and better than that. He rises upon occasion from the rhetorician to the orator; and even when he is least the orator and most the rhetorician, he is always so sterling in thought, and so lofty in moral or religious purpose, that to think of him as only, or as chiefly, a rhetorician, would be to make a capital, a vital, mistake in critical appreciation of his quality. He is a great sincere and serious soul, in whom—by a mere chance perhaps of early determining choice on his own part—the genius of the orator was destined to be somewhat overborne by the culture of the rhetorician. It is bold pure conjecture to hazard, but I can easily conceive how, if the youthful Storrs who was a student-at-law of Rufus Choate had taken his life-long bent in style of thought and expression from a Dorian master like Webster, instead of a Corinthian master like Choate, he might have issued a quite different speaker from that stately, that magnificent, pulpit orator who is our national joy and pride in the actual Dr. Storrs of to-day, bearing so strongly and so lightly the burden of his well-nigh seventy useful and honorable years.

Do you say, ‘But warmth of temperament was wanting to this otherwise prodigally gifted nature, and that deficiency was from the first in itself enough to have made him, and hopelessly to keep him, the style of orator that he is, capable indeed of shining like the sun, but incapable of warming as the sun warms?’

A natural judgment, but probably fallacious. A mask of oratoric manner, early put on and twenty years unceasingly worn by a public