

RUFUS CHOATE.

Some may refer it to the incentives of ambition, of self-respect, of pride, taste or temperament, and such incentives may enter largely into the question. But in this instance beneficent influences acting upon a delicate, docile, susceptible, emotional nature, had been at work in advance of the schools. The boy went into those schools with his mind stored with good examples. The family training had given a proper bias to the affections; lessons from the Bible, from Watts' hymns and psalms, from the church service, from the poets and from history, had inspired a love of the true and beautiful, and he had read enough of biography, of travels, to impress him with the dignity of earnest efforts, self-sacrifice and heroism. The case is not thus stated too strongly. What should be said of the strength and maturity of one who, as Professor Brown tells us, had devoured the "Pilgrim's Progress" before he was six years old, had nearly exhausted the village library before he had reached his tenth year; whose taste and delicate sense of the use of words were such that when nine years of age he could point out an inappropriate word in a discourse? The preacher, after citing Paul, had added, "Even James says, etc." The young critic thought that the word *even*, as thus used, implied some disparagement of the Apostle James. But, without extending these statements, it is apparent that young Choate went out into the world with large moral and intellectual preparation. He carried the devotion, the genial spirit of his home life into the schools. The light of the early love never faded from his brow. He was thus prepared to exercise the manly patience given to his riper studies. The methods observed, as he sought to store his mind with lessons of the ancient and modern prudence, with such examples, maxims, images, analogies, such conceptions of principles as should enlarge his range of thought, enrich and vivify his language, chasten his style and make his public ministrations more efficient and acceptable, deserve the attention of students.

Mr. Choate knew the need and use of study; he also knew the limitations which were to be respected. A conservative spirit held him in restraint, repressed longings to slake his thirst at fountains placed beyond his reach. With firmness

and prudence he refused to follow a friend into the labyrinths of German mysticism or to explore the extended domains which Swedenborg had made his own. This economy was becoming in him, not simply because he did not wish to be "shocked, waked, or stunned" out of settled convictions, but because the duties before him, with the related studies, would consume his time and strength. Whatever his estimate of his own powers might have been, he knew that the Universal Genius, so called, was as fabulous as the Scandinavian Troll or as the Schamir, the worm that ate stone, and which, according to a Jewish superstition, had been used in preparing the stones for Solomon's Temple. So he put by studies that seemed too remote from his purpose, as ostentatious or improvident. He never lost his balance by reaching out too far, or, like one of old, walked into the water while gazing at the stars.

Mr. Choate's study of the cases in which he was to appear as counsel was exhaustive. Each case was tested and tortured until every conceivable shade of strength and of weakness was revealed. His son-in-law, Mr. Bell, has described the method, and Judge Fancher's statement of the preliminary examinations of the case in which Mr. Choate was associated with him, is of a like character. He studied the cases, pen in hand. The facts and qualifying circumstances, with the decisions and principles applicable, were noted in a little book. A like book was kept by Erskine. Mr. Espinasse says that Erskine brought his arguments into court in a little book, and even after long experience as a barrister, used to read and cite cases from it. On one occasion his opponent affected to ridicule that method, and, with a sneer, said he wished Erskine would lend him his little book. Lord Mansfield said "it would do you no harm, Mr. Baldwin, to take a leaf out of that book, as you seem to want it." Mr. Erskine may have been in the habit of citing cases from his memorandum books to a greater extent than Mr. Choate. He thus used his book in debate when he claimed that the trial of Warren Hastings had ended with the dissolution of Parliament. Edmund Burke, not able to control his temper when excited by opposition of any kind in reference to that trial, had a