

## A Minister's Tribute.



IT was my good fortune to know Augustus Berry as a student in Amherst College. He was a Junior there when I was a Freshman. For a whole year we occupied adjoining rooms in the same private dwelling-house near the college. We were intimate friends during the two years of our college acquaintance, and kept in close touch with each other during the almost fifty years which followed till his death. The members of his college class I also knew very well. There was no one of the forty men that, besides himself, composed the class, who, in the qualities of upright and downright manhood, surpassed Augustus Berry. There was no one who had the ability to comprehend a difficult subject, look at it on all its sides, see through it and develop it with more practical good sense than he. In the recitation room, in the debating club, on the

college rostrum, as well as in private conversation, he used words not to darken counsel but to give light. He had an inquiring and acquisitive mind. He was also a born teacher. He had the two scholarly gifts of seeing truth himself and of enabling others to partake of the treasures of his own mind. He also had the two scholarly virtues of patience and faithfulness.

In speaking of Mr. Berry as a scholar, I would say first that he knew how to think. Thinking is the prime element in scholarship. It is the *sine qua non* of it. Mr. Berry did not retail others' views and opinions, did not take knowledge at second hand, but he had views of his own, ideas which he had thought out and wrought out in the workshop of his own mind, and which were apt to be very near the truth. That characterized him in college, and all through his life. And that is one reason why he never as a minister grew old. His sermons the last year of his life were as new and fresh in their thought, expression and illustration as they were the first year he became your pastor. He gave you his own thought on a subject every time. He was a man climbing a high mountain, and turning back

have not been recorded in books. No one could run a mill, a store, or banking house and make it profitable if he had no knowledge except what he got from books on the subject. Mill-owners' heads carry the latest inventions in mill running; doctors' heads carry the newest discoveries in medicine; scholars' heads carry the freshest gems of science and knowledge.

This shows how important it is for the real scholar to be with wise men and learn to listen. Daniel Webster had this gift admirably cultivated. He knew how to meet a man of extensive knowledge in any department, and after an hour's conversation with him be as wise as he. He would act as a sponge on him, absorb all the man knew. Mark Hopkins was another such man. He was not an extensive reader of books, but he knew how to get and appropriate all that was good in any man he met. He associated with the best men and kept himself educated in that way. Shakespeare was never seen reading a book, but he knew how to read men and women, and make himself the possessor of their treasures of wit and wisdom.

Rev. Mr. Berry had this gift of listening. He

Good soul to whom he might speak. He never read  
 book, not even a funny one as Josh Billings,  
 merely for the enjoyment or pleasure it might bring  
 to himself, but his great heart took in others' inter-  
 ests and welfare, and his chief motive was to get  
 treasures which would make other lives richer and  
 enable other feet to stand more firmly. Give a man  
 the best books, and a grand purpose to propel him  
 the use of them, and he must be a scholar. He  
 realized the meaning of Paul's injunction to Tim-  
 othy when he bade him be "a workman that needeth  
 not to be ashamed." Augustus Berry was such a  
 workman. His people were not ashamed of him  
 when he preached his able sermons to them on the  
 Sabbath. The young men and women in this town  
 who have grown up under his wise and healthful  
 training are not ashamed to say that they had him  
 for their preacher and teacher.

Augustus Berry knew also how to listen. That  
 is a prominent mark of genuine scholarship. We do  
 not grow wise by talking; but by reading, or think-  
 ing, or listening. One may, however, be a great reader  
 and yet not have up-to-date knowledge. The latest dis-  
 coveries of truth, the newest finds of knowledge.

every Sabbath and telling those following him what he saw. Every year of his life he made progress up the mountain of religious truth and religious experience, and every year he had new things to tell, for he had new views and new discoveries to report.

His mind was both analytic and synthetic. He would take a subject to pieces, examine all its parts separately, and then put the parts together in his own way. He did not do things by impulse. It was not emotion that governed him, but sound, solid sense. He could give a reason for his faith, and a reason for his conduct, be it in the church or in the halls of the town, or commonwealth, or nation.

He knew how to think, and that is the taproot of wisdom. It made him independent, original, fresh and progressive.

He also knew how to read books. Mr. Berry had a large and well selected library. It numbers about twelve hundred volumes. They are largely biblical commentaries, general dictionaries, encyclopedias, and other standard books. He owned and read biography and history, and was fond of the poems of Holmes and Whittier, and relished for mirth and wit Brete Harte and Josh Billings. He spared no

pains or cost to keep himself in the front rank of scholarship. I have many times been to Boston with him to attend the ministers' meeting Monday mornings, but I do not recall an instance when he did not bring home one or more good sized volumes to put into his library and furnish food for his mind. He kept up with the foremost religious, scientific and political thoughts of the day, and gave his people the benefit of his researches and acquisitions in his Sabbath sermons, and in week-day evening lectures and classes for the young.

Books were very precious to him, and he knew how to use them. He digested his books, rather than allowed them to digest him. He put an interrogation point after every sentence. He put a book under the microscope of his logic, and found the strong and weak points in it. He reckoned the value of a book, not by its pages or chapters, but by its thoughts and arguments, its demonstrations and illustrations of truth.

He always had a purpose in reading a book. He was searching after truth, trying to find what would make him a wiser, better and stronger man.