

***FRANK PRESTON  
STEARNS***

AT THOU ART MINDFUL OF

***CAMBRIDGE  
SKETCHES***

**Frank Preston Stearns**

# **Cambridge Sketches**

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# **PREFACE**

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It has never been my practice to introduce myself to distinguished persons, or to attempt in any way to attract their attention, and I now regret that I did not embrace some opportunities which occurred to me in early life for doing so; but at the time I knew the men whom I have described in the present volume I had no expectation that I should ever write about them. My acquaintance with them, however, has served to give me a more elevated idea of human nature than I otherwise might have acquired in the ordinary course of mundane affairs, and it is with the hope of transmitting this impression to my readers that I publish the present account. Some of them have a world-wide celebrity, and others who were distinguished in their own time seem likely now to be forgotten; but they all deserve well of the republic of humanity and of the age in which they lived.

**THE EVERGREENS, JANUARY 4, 1905.**

**THE CLOSE OF THE WAR**

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# THE CLOSE OF THE WAR

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Never before hast thou shone  
So beautifully upon the Thebans;  
O, eye of golden day:

—*Antigone of Sophocles.*

One bright morning in April, 1865, Hawthorne's son and the writer were coming forth together from the further doorway of Stoughton Hall at Harvard College, when, as the last reverberations of the prayer-bell were sounding, a classmate called to us across the yard: "General Lee has surrendered!" There was a busy hum of voices where the three converging lines of students met in front of Appleton Chapel, and when we entered the building there was President Hill seated in the recess between the two pulpits, and old Doctor Peabody at his desk, with his face beaming like that of a saint in an old religious painting. His prayer was exceptionally fervid and serious. He asked a blessing on the American people; on all those who had suffered from the war; on the government of the United States; and on our defeated enemies. When the short service had ended, Doctor Hill came forward and said: "It is not fitting that any college tasks or exercises should take place until another sun has arisen after this glorious morning. Let us all celebrate this fortunate event."

On leaving the chapel we found that Flavius Josephus Cook, afterwards Rev. Joseph Cook of the Monday Lectureship, had collected the members of the Christian Brethren about him, and they were all singing a hymn of thanksgiving in a very vigorous manner.

There were some, however, who recollected on their way to breakfast the sad procession that had passed through the college-yard six months before,—the military funeral of James Russell Lowell's nephews, killed in General Sheridan's victory at Cedar Run. There were no recent graduates of Harvard more universally beloved than Charles and James Lowell; and none of whom better things were expected. To Lowell himself, who had no other children, except a daughter, they were almost like his own sons, and the ode he wrote on this occasion touches a depth of pathos not to be met with elsewhere in his poetry. There was not at that time another family in Cambridge or Boston which contained two such bright intellects, two such fine characters. It did not seem right that they should both have left their mother, who was bereaved already by a faithless husband, to fight the battles of their country, however much they were needed for this. Even in the most despotic period of European history the only son of a widow was exempt from conscription. Then to lose them both in a single day! Mrs. Lowell became the saint of Quincy Street, and none were so hardened or self-absorbed as not to do her reverence.

But now the terrible past was eclipsed by the joy and pride of victory. The great heroic struggle was over; young men could look forward to the practice of peaceable

professions, and old men had no longer to think of the exhausting drain upon their resources. Fond mothers could now count upon the survival of their sons, and young wives no longer feared to become widows in a night. Everywhere there was joy and exhilaration. To many it was the happiest day they had ever known.

President Hill was seen holding a long and earnest conversation with Agassiz on the path towards his house. The professors threw aside their contemplated work. Every man went to drink a glass of wine with his best friend, and to discuss the fortunes of the republic. The ball-players set off for the Delta, where Memorial Hall now stands, to organize a full match game; the billiard experts started a tournament on Mr. Lyon's new tables; and the rowing men set off for a three-hours' pull down Boston harbor. Others collected in groups and discussed the future of their country with the natural precocity of youthful minds. "Here," said a Boston cousin of the two young Lowells, to a pink-faced, sandy-haired ball-player, "you are opposed to capital punishment; do you think Jeff. Davis ought to be hung?" "Just at present," replied the latter, "I am more in favor of suspending Jeff. Davis than of suspending the law,"—an opinion that was greeted with laughter and applause. The general sentiment of the crowd was in favor of permitting General Lee to retire in peace to private life; but in regard to the president of the Southern Confederacy the feeling was more vindictive.

We can now consider it fortunate that no such retaliatory measures were taken by the government. Much better that Jefferson Davis, and his confederates in the secession



movement, should have lived to witness every day the consequences of that gigantic blunder. The fact that they adopted a name for their newly-organized nation which did not differ essentially from the one which they had discarded; that their form of government, with its constitution and laws, differed so slightly from those of the United States, is sufficient to indicate that their separation was not to be permanent, and that it only required the abolition of slavery to bring the Southern States back to their former position in the Union. If men and nations did what was for their true interests, this would be a different world.

\* \* \* \* \*

At that time the college proper consisted of three recitation buildings, and four or five dormitories, besides Appleton Chapel, and little old Holden Chapel of the seventeenth century, which still remains the best architecture on the grounds. The buildings were mostly old, plain, and homely, and the rooms of the students simply furnished. In every class there were twelve or fifteen dandies, who dressed in somewhat above the height of the fashion, but they served to make the place more picturesque and were not so likely to be mischievous as some of the rougher country boys. It was a time of plain, sensible living. To hire a man to make fires in winter, and black the boots, was considered a great luxury. A majority of the students blacked their own boots, although they found this very disagreeable. The college pump was a venerable institution, a leveller of all distinctions; and many a pleasant conversation took place about its wooden trough. No student thought of owning an equipage, and a Russell or a

Longworth would as soon have hired a sedan chair as a horse and buggy, when he might have gone on foot. Good pedestrianism was the pride of the Harvard student; and an honest, wholesome pride it was. There was also some good running. Both Julian Hawthorne and Thomas W. Ward ran to Concord, a distance of sixteen miles, without stopping, I believe, by the way. William Blaikie, the stroke of the University crew, walked to New York during the Thanksgiving recess—six days in all.

The undergraduates had not yet become acquainted with tennis, the most delightful of light exercises, and foot-ball had not yet been regulated according to the rules of Rugby and Harrow. The last of the pernicious foot-ball fights between Sophomores and Freshmen took place in September, 1863, and commenced in quite a sanguinary manner. A Sophomore named Wright knocked over Ellis, the captain of the Freshman side, without reason or provocation, and was himself immediately laid prostrate by a red-headed Scotch boy named Roderick Dhu Coe, who seemed to have come to college for the purpose, for he soon afterwards disappeared and was never seen there again. With the help of Coe and a few similar spirits, the Freshmen won the game. It was the first of President Hill's reforms to abolish this brutal and unseemly custom.

The New York game of base-ball, which has since assumed such mammoth proportions, was first introduced in our colleges by Wright and Flagg, of the Class of '66; and the first game, which the Cambridge ladies attended, was played on the Delta in May of that year with the Trimountain Club of Boston. Flagg was the finest catcher in New England

at that time; and, although he was never chosen captain, he was the most skillful manager of the game. It was he who invented the double-play which can sometimes be accomplished by muffing a fly-catch between the bases. He caught without mask or gloves and was several times wounded by the ball.

Let us retrace the steps of time and take a look at the old Delta on a bright June evening, when the shadows of the elms are lengthening across the grass. There are from fifty to a hundred students, and perhaps three or four professors, watching the Harvard nine practise in preparation for its match with the formidable Lowell nine of Boston. Who is that slender youth at second base,—with the long nose and good-humored twinkle in his eye,—who never allows a ball to pass by him? Will he ever become the Dean of the Harvard Law School? And that tall, olive-complexioned fellow in the outfield, six feet two in his ball-shoes,—who would suppose that he is destined to go to Congress and serve his country as Minister to Spain! There is another dark-eyed youth leaning against the fence and watching the ball as it passes to and fro. Is he destined to become Governor of Massachusetts? And that sturdy-looking first-baseman,—will he enter the ministry and preach sermons in Appleton Chapel? These young men all live quiet, sensible lives, and trouble themselves little concerning class honors and secret societies. If they have a characteristic in common it is that they always keep their mental balance and never go to extremes; but neither they nor others have any suspicion of their several destinies. Could they return and fill their former places on the ground, how strangely

they would feel! But the ground itself is gone; their youth is gone, and the honors that have come to them seem less important than the welfare of their families and kindred.

Misdemeanors, great and small, on the part of the students were more common formerly than they have been in recent years, for the good reason that the chances of detection were very much less. Some of the practical jokes were of a much too serious character. The college Bible was abstracted from the Chapel and sent to Yale; the communion wine was stolen; a paper bombshell was exploded behind a curtain in the Greek recitation-room; and Professor Pierce discovered one morning that all his blackboards had been painted white. All the copies of Cooke's Chemical Physics suddenly disappeared one afternoon, and next morning the best scholars in the Junior Class were obliged to say, "Not prepared."

A society called the Med. Fac. was chiefly responsible for these performances; but so secret was it in its membership and proceedings that neither the college faculty nor the great majority of the students really knew whether there was such a society in existence or not. A judge of the United States Circuit Court, who had belonged to it in his time, was not aware that his own son was a member of it.

Some of the members of this society turned out well, and others badly; but generally an inclination for such high pranks shows a levity of nature that bodes ill for the future. A college class is a wonderful study in human nature, from the time it enters until its members have arrived at forty or fifty years of age. There was one young man at Harvard in those days who was so evidently marked out by destiny for

a great public career that when he was elected to Congress in 1876 his classmates were only surprised because it seemed so natural that this should happen. Another was of so depraved a character that it seemed as if he was intended to illustrate the bad boy in a Sunday-school book. He was so untrustworthy that very soon no one was willing to associate with him. He stole from his father, and, after graduating, went to prison for forgery and finally was killed by a tornado. There was still another, a great fat fellow, who always seemed to be half asleep, and was very shortly run over and killed by a locomotive. Yet if we could know the whole truth in regard to these persons it might be difficult to decide how much of their good and evil fortune was owing to themselves and how much to hereditary tendencies and early influences. The sad fact remains that it is much easier to spoil a bright boy than to educate a dull one.

The undergraduates were too much absorbed in their own small affairs to pay much attention to politics, even in those exciting times. For the most part there was no discrimination against either the Trojans or Tyrians; but abolitionists were not quite so well liked as others, especially after the close of the war; and it was noticed that the sons of pro-slavery families commonly seemed to have lacked the good moral training (and the respect for industry) which is youth's surest protection against the pitfalls of life. The larger proportion of suspended students belonged to this class.

During the war period Cambridge social life was regulated by a coterie of ten or twelve young ladies who had grown up together and who were generally known as

the "Spree,"—not because they were given to romping, for none kept more strictly within the bounds of a decorous propriety, but because they were accustomed to go off together in the summer to the White Mountains or to some other rustic resort, where they were supposed to have a perfectly splendid time; and this they probably did, for it requires cultivation and refinement of feeling to appreciate nature as well as art. They decided what students and other young ladies should be invited to the assemblies in Lyceum Hall, and they arranged their own private entertainments over the heads of their fathers and mothers; and it should be added that they exercised their authority with a very good grace. They had their friends and admirers among the collegians, but no young man of good manners and pleasing address, and above all who was a good dancer, needed to beg for an invitation. The good dancers, however, were in a decided minority, and many who considered themselves so in their own habitats found themselves much below the standard in Cambridge.

Mrs. James Russell Lowell was one of the lady patronesses of the assemblies, and her husband sometimes came to them for an hour or so before escorting her home. He watched the performance with a poet's eye for whatever is graceful and charming, but sometimes also with a humorous smile playing upon his face. There were some very good dancers among the ladies who skimmed the floor almost like swallows; but the finest waltzer in Cambridge or Boston was Theodore Colburn, who had graduated ten years previously, and with the advantage of a youthful figure, had kept up the pastime ever since. The present writer has

never seen anywhere another man who could waltz with such consummate ease and unconscious grace. Lowell's eyes followed him continually; but it is also said that Colburn would willingly dispense with the talent for better success in his profession. Next to him comes the tall ball-player, already referred to, and it is delightful to see the skill with which he adapts his unusual height to the most *petite* damsel on the floor. Here the "Spree" is omnipotent, but it does not like Class Day, for then Boston and its suburbs pour forth their torrent of beauty and fashion, and Cambridge for the time being is left somewhat in the shade.

Henry James in his "International Episode" speaks as if New York dancers were the best in the world, and they are certainly more light-footed than English men and women; but a New York lady, with whom Mr. James is well acquainted, says that Bostonians and Austrians are the finest dancers. The true Bostonian cultivates a sober reserve in his waltzing which, if not too serious, adds to the grace of his movement. Yet, when the german is over, we remember the warning of the wealthy Corinthian who refused his daughter to the son of Tisander on the ground that he was too much of a dancer and acrobat.

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From 1840 to 1860 Harvard University practically stagnated. The world about it progressed, but the college remained unchanged. Its presidents were excellent men, but they had lived too long under the academic shade. They lacked practical experience in the great world. There were few lectures in the college course, and the recitations were a mere routine. The text-books on philosophical subjects

were narrow and prejudiced. Modern languages were sadly neglected; and the tradition that a French instructor once entertained his class by telling them his dreams, if not true, was at least characteristic. The sons of wealthy Bostonians were accustomed to brag that they had gone through college without doing any real studying. To the college faculty politics only meant the success of Webster and the great Whig party. The anti-slavery agitation was considered inconvenient and therefore prejudicial. During the struggle for free institutions in Kansas, the president of Harvard College undertook to debate the question in a public meeting, but he displayed such lamentable ignorance that he was soon obliged to retire in confusion.

The war for the Union, however, waked up the slumbering university, as it did all other institutions and persons. Rev. Thomas Hill was chosen president in 1861, and was the first anti-slavery president of the college since Josiah Quincy; and this of itself indicated that he was in accord with the times,—had not set his face obstinately against them. He was not so practical a man as President Quincy, but he was one of the best scholars in America. His administration has not been looked upon as a success, but he served to break the ice and to open the way for future navigation. He accepted the position with definite ideas of reform; but he lacked skill in the adaptation of means to ends. He was determined to show no favoritism to wealth and social position, and he went perhaps too far in the opposite direction. One day when the workmen were digging the cellar of Gray's Hall, President Hill threw off his coat, seized a shovel, and used it vigorously for half an hour



or more. This was intended as an example to teach the students the dignity of labor; but they did not understand it so. At the faculty meetings he carried informality of manner to an excess. He depended too much on personal influence, which, as George Washington said formerly, "cannot become government." He wrote letters to the Sophomores exhorting them not to haze the Freshmen, and, as a consequence, the Freshmen were hazed more severely than ever. Then he suspended the Sophomores in a wholesale manner, many of them for slight offences. However, he stopped the foot- ball fights, and made the examinations much more strict than they had been previously. He endeavored to inculcate the true spirit of scholarship among the students,—not to study for rank but from a genuine love of the subject. The opposition that his reforms excited made him unpopular, and Freshmen came to college so prejudiced against him that all his kindness and good will were wasted upon them.

"There goes the greatest man in this country," said a fashionable Boston youth, one day in the spring of 1866. It was Louis Agassiz returning from a call on President Hill. Such a statement shows that the speaker belonged to a class of people called Tories, in 1776, and who might properly be called so still. As a matter of fact, Agassiz had long since passed the meridian of his reputation, and his sun was now not far from setting. He had returned from his expedition to South America with a valuable collection of fishes and other scientific materials; but his theory of glaciers; which he went there to substantiate, had not been proven. Darwin's "Origin of Species" had already swept his

nicely- constructed plans of original types into the fire of futile speculation. Yet Agassiz was a great man in his way, and his importance was universally recognized. He had given a vigorous and much-needed impetus to the study of geology in America, and as a compendium of all the different branches of natural history there was nobody like him. In his lifelong single-minded devotion to science he had few equals and no superiors. He cared not for money except so far as it helped the advancement of his studies. For many years Madam Agassiz taught a select school for young ladies (to which Emerson, among others, sent his daughters), in order to provide funds for her husband to carry on his work. It is to be feared that the Commonwealth of Massachusetts was rather stingy to him. Edward Everett once made an eloquent address in his behalf to the legislature, but it had no effect. Louis Napoleon's munificent offers could not induce him to return to Paris, for he believed that more important work was to be done in the new world,— which, by the way, he considered the oldest portion of the globe.

In height and figure Agassiz was so much like Doctor Hill that when the two were together this was very noticeable. They were both broad-shouldered, deep-chested men, and of about the same height, with large, well-rounded heads; but Agassiz had an elastic French step, whereas Doctor Hill walked with something of a shuffle. One might even imagine Agassiz dancing a waltz. Lowell said of him that he was "emphatically a man, and that wherever he went he made a friend." His broad forehead seemed to smile upon you while he was talking, and from his simple-hearted and genial

manners you felt that he would be a friend whenever you wanted one. He was the busiest and at the same time one of the most accessible persons in the university.

On one occasion, happening to meet a number of students at the corner of University Building, one of them was bold enough to say to him: "Prof. Agassiz, would you be so good as to explain to us the difference between the stone of this building and that of Boylston Hall? We know that they are both granite, but they do not look alike." Agassiz was delighted, and entertained them with a brief lecture on primeval rocks and the crust of the earth's surface. He told them that Boylston Hall was made of syenite; that most of the stone called granite in New England was syenite, and if they wanted to see genuine granite they should go to the tops of the White Mountains. Then looking at his watch he said: "Ah, I see I am late! Good day, my friends; and I hope we shall all meet again." So off he went, leaving each of his hearers with the embryonic germ of a scientific interest in his mind.

Longfellow tells in his diary how Agassiz came to him when his health broke down and wept. "I cannot work any longer," he said; and when he could not work he was miserable. The trouble that afflicted him was congestion of the base of the brain, a disorder that is not caused so frequently by overwork as by mental emotion. His cure by Dr. Edward H. Clarke, by the use of bromides and the application of ice, was considered a remarkable one at the time; but five years later the disorder returned again and cost him his life.

He believed that the Laurentian Mountains, north of the St. Lawrence River, was the first land which showed itself above the waste of waters with which the earth was originally surmounted.

Perhaps the most picturesque figure on the college grounds was the old Greek professor, Evangelinus Apostolides Sophocles; a genuine importation from Athens, whom the more imaginative sort of people liked to believe was descended from the Greek poet Sophocles of the Periclean age. He was much too honest himself to give countenance to this rumor, and if you inquired of him concerning it, he would say that he should like very well to believe it, and it was not impossible, although there were no surnames in ancient Greece before the time of Constantine; he had not found any evidence in favor of it. He was a short, thick-set man with a large head and white Medusa-like hair; but such an eye as his was never seen in an Anglo-Saxon face. It reminded you at once of Byron's Corsair, and suggested contingencies such as find no place in quiet, law-abiding New England,—the possibility of sudden and terrible concentration. His clothing had been long since out of fashion, and he always wore a faded cloth cap, such as no student would dare to put on. He lived like a hermit in No. 3 Holworthy, where he prepared his own meals rather than encounter strange faces at a boarding-house table. Once he invited the president of the college to supper; and the president went, not without some misgivings as to what his entertainment might be. He found, however, a simple but well-served repast, including a French roll and a cup of black coffee with the grounds in it. The coffee loosened

Sophocles's usually reticent tongue, and after that, as the president himself expressed it, they had a delightful conversation. Everybody respected Sophocles in spite of his eccentric mode of life, and the Freshmen were as much afraid of him as if he had been the Minotaur of Crete.

The reason for his economy did not become apparent until after his death. When he first came to the university he made friends with a gentleman in Cambridge to whom he was much attached, but who, at the time we write of, had long since been dead. It was to support the daughters of his friend, who would have otherwise been obliged to earn their own living, that he saved his money; and in his will he left them a competency of fifty thousand dollars or more.

On one occasion a Freshman was sent to him to receive a private admonition for writing profane language on a settee; but the Freshman denied the accusation. Sophocles's eyes twinkled. "Did you not," said he, "write the letters d-a-m-n?" "No," said the boy, laughing; "it must have been somebody else." Sophocles laughed and said he would report the case back to the college faculty. A few days later he stopped the youth in the college yard and, merely saying "I have had your private admonition revoked," passed on. Professor Sophocles was right. If the Freshman had tried to deceive him he would not have laughed but looked grave.

The morning in April, 1861, after President Lincoln had issued his call for 75,000 troops, a Harvard Senior mentioned it to Sophocles, who said to him: "What can the government accomplish with 75,000 soldiers? It is going to take half a million of men to suppress this rebellion."

He was a good instructor in his way, but dry and methodical. Professor Goodwin's recitations were much more interesting. Sophocles did not credit the tradition of Homer's wandering about blind and poor to recite his two great epics. He believed that Homer was a prince, or even a king, like the psalmist David, and asserted that this could be proved or at least rendered probable by internal evidence. This much is morally certain, that if Homer became blind it must have been after middle life. To describe ancient battle-scenes so vividly he must have taken part in them; and his knowledge of anatomy is very remarkable. He does not make such mistakes in that line as bringing Desdemona to life after she has been smothered.

How can we do justice to such a great-hearted man as Dr. Andrew P. Peabody? He was not intended by nature for a revolutionary character, and in that sense he was unsuited, like Everett, for the time in which he lived. If he had been chosen president of the university after the resignation of Doctor Hill, as George S. Hillard and other prominent graduates desired, the great broadening and liberalizing of the university, which has taken place since, would have been deferred for the next fifteen years. He had little sympathy with the anti-slavery movement, and was decidedly opposed to the religious liberalism of his time; but Doctor Peabody's interest lay in the salvation of human souls, and in this direction he had no equal. He felt a personal regard in every human being with whom he was acquainted, and this seemed more important to him than abstract schemes for the improvement of the race in general. He was a man of peace and wished all others to be

at peace; the confusion and irritation that accompanies reform was most disagreeable to him. Many a Harvard student who trembled on the brink of an abyss, far from home and left to his own devices, afterwards looked back to Doctor Peabody's helping hand as to the hand of a beneficent providence held out to save him from destruction; and those whom he was unable to save thought of him no less gratefully.

In the autumn of 1864 a strange sort of student joined the Sophomore class. He soon proved that he was one of the best scholars in it; but to judge from his recitations it was long since he had been to school or received any regular instruction. He lived chiefly on bread and milk, and seemed not to have learned how to take exercise. It is feared that he suffered much from loneliness in that busy hive, where everyone has so many small affairs of his own to attend to. Just before the annual examinations he was seized with brain-fever and died. Doctor Peabody conducted the funeral services at the boarding-house of the unfortunate youth, and the plainness of the surroundings heightened the eloquence of his address. His prayer on that occasion was so much above the average character of his religious discourses that it seemed to come from a secret fountain of the man's nature, which could only be drawn upon for great occasions.

With all his tenderness of feeling Doctor Peabody could be a very vigorous debater. He once carried on a newspaper argument with Rev. Dr. Minor, of Boston, on the temperance question, in which he took the ground that drinking wine and beer did not necessarily lead to intemperance,— which,

rightly considered, indicates a lack of self-control; and he made this point in what his friends, at least, considered a satisfactory and conclusive manner.

It is pleasant to think that such a man should have met with unusual prosperity in his old age—and the person to whom he owed this improvement of his affairs was Nathaniel Thayer, of Boston. Mr. Thayer took charge of Doctor Peabody's property and trebled or quadrupled it in value. Mr. Thayer was very fond of doing such kindnesses to his friends, especially to clergymen. He liked the society of clergymen, and certainly in this he showed excellent judgment. During the last ten years of his life he spent his summers at the Isles of Shoals, and generally with one or more reverend gentlemen in his company. He was besides a most munificent patron of the university. He provided the means for Agassiz to go on his expedition to South America, and in conjunction with Doctor Hill reëstablished commons for the students—a reform, as he once stated, as advantageous to their morals as to their purses. He afterwards built the dormitory which is known by his name. He was so kind-hearted, that he was said to have given up banking because he was not hard-hearted enough for the profession. After his death his family received letters upon letters from persons of whom they had never heard, but who wished to express their gratitude for his generosity.

Prof. Benjamin Pierce, the mathematician, was rather an awe-inspiring figure as he strolled through the college grounds, recognizing few and speaking to none—apparently oblivious to everything except the internal life which he led in the "functions of curves" and "celestial mechanics." He



was a fine-looking man, with his ashen-gray hair and beard, his wide brow and features more than usually regular. When he was observed conversing with President Hill the fine scholars shook their heads wisely as if something remarkable was taking place. The president had said in one of his addresses to the Freshmen that it would require a whole generation to utilize Professor Pierce's discoveries in algebra; and I believe, at last accounts, they have not been utilized yet. He would often be seen in the horse-cars making figures on scraps of paper, which he carried with him for the purpose, oblivious as ever to what was taking place about him. To "have a head like old Benny Pierce" has become a proverb in Boston and Cambridge.

Neither did he lack independence of character. In his later years he not unfrequently attended the meetings of the Radical Club, or Chestnut Street Club, at Mrs. John T. Sargent's, in Boston, a place looked upon with pious horror by good Doctor Peabody, and equally discredited by the young positivists whom President Eliot had introduced in the college faculty. His remarks on such occasions were fresh, original, and very interesting; and once he brought down the house with laughter and applause by explaining the mental process which prevented him from appreciating a joke until after all others had done so. This naive confession made his audience like him.

It is a curious geneological fact that Professor Pierce had a son named after him who would seem to have been born in mirth, to have lived in comedy, and died in a jest. He was a college Yorick who produced roars of laughter in the Dicky and Hasty Pudding clubs. Another son, called affectionately

by the students "Jimmy Mills," was also noted for his wit, and much respected as an admirable instructor.

Doctor Holmes says, in Parson Turell's Legacy:

"Know old Cambridge? Hope you do,—  
Born there? Don't say so! I was too.  
Born in a house with a gambrel-roof,—  
Standing still, if you must have proof.—

\* \* \* \* \*

—Nicest place that ever was seen,—  
Colleges red and Common green,  
Sidewalks brownish with trees between."

This describes Cambridge as it was forty years since. In spite of its timid conservatism and rather donnish society, as Professor Child termed it, it was one of the pleasantest places to live in on this side the Atlantic. It was a community of a refined and elegant industry, in which every one had a definite work to do, and seemed to be exactly fitted to his or her place,—not without some great figures, too, to give it exceptional interest. There was peace and repose under the academic shade, and the obliviousness of its inhabitants to the outside world only rendered this more restful.

How changed is it now! The old Holmes house has been long since pulled down to make way for the new Law-School building. Red-gravel paths have been replaced by brick sidewalks; huge buildings rise before the eye; electric cars whiz in every direction; a tall, bristling iron fence surrounds the college yard; and an enormous clock on the tower of Memorial Hall detonates the hours in a manner which is by no means conducive to the sleep of the just and the rest of the weary. The elderly graduate, returning to the dreamland

of his youth, finds that it has actually become a dreamland and still exists only in his imagination.

The university has broadened and extended itself wonderfully under the present management, but the simple classic charm of the olden time is gone forever.

## **FRANCIS J. CHILD**

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Fifty years ago it was the fashion at Harvard, as well as at other colleges, for professors to cultivate an austere dignity of manner for the purpose of preserving order and decorum in the recitation-room; but this frequently resulted in having the opposite effect and served as a temptation to the students to play practical jokes on their instructors. The habitual dryness of the college exercises in Latin, Greek, and mathematics became still more wearisome from the manner in which these were conducted. The youthful mind thirsting for knowledge found the road to it for the most part a dull and dreary pilgrimage.

Professor Francis J. Child would seem to have been the first to break down this barrier and establish more friendly relations with his classes. He was naturally well adapted to this. Perfectly frank and fearless in his dealings with all men, he hated unnecessary conventionality, and at the same time possessed the rare art of preserving his dignity while associating with his subordinates on friendly terms. Always kindly and even sympathetic to the worst scapegraces in the division, he could assert the superiority of his position

with a quickness that often startled those who were inclined to impose on him. He did not call out the names of his class as if they were exceptions to a rule in Latin grammar, but addressed each one of them as if he felt a personal interest in the man; so that they felt encouraged to speak out what they knew and even remembered their lessons so much the better. As a consequence he was universally respected, and there were many who felt an affection for him such as he could never have imagined. His cordial manner was sufficient of itself to make his instruction effective.

Francis J. Child was the first scholar in his class at the Boston Latin School, and afterwards at Harvard. That first scholars do not come to much good in the world is an illusion of the envious. It is true that they sometimes break down their health by too strenuous an effort, but this may happen to an ambitious person in any undertaking. In Professor Child's case, as in many another, it proved the making of his fortune, for which he did not possess any exceptional advantages. Being of an amiable disposition and good address, he was offered a tutorship on graduation, and rose from one position in the university to another until he became the first authority on the English language in America. His whole life was spent at Harvard College, with the exception of a few short expeditions to Europe; and his influence there steadily increased until it became a power that was universally recognized.

He was a short, thick-set man, like Sophocles, but as different as possible in general aspect. Sophocles was always slow and measured, but Professor Child was quick and lively in all his movements; and his face wore an

habitual cheerfulness which plainly showed the sunny spirit within. Most characteristic in his appearance was the short curly yellow hair, so light in color that when it changed with age, his friends scarcely noticed the difference.

During his academic years he created a sensation by declining to join the Hasty Pudding Club. This was looked upon as a piece of inordinate self-conceit; whereas, the true reason for it was that he had little money and preferred to spend it in going to the theatre. He said afterwards, in regard to this, that he was not sorry to have done it, for "the students placed too much importance on such matters."

Through his interest in fine acting, he became one of the best judges of oratory, and it was always interesting to listen to him on that subject. He considered Wendell Phillips the perfection of form and delivery, and sometimes very brilliant, but much too rash in his statements. Everett was also good, but lacked warmth and earnestness. Choate was purely a legal pleader, and outside of the court-room not very effective. He thought Webster one of the greatest of orators, fully equal to Cicero; but they both lacked the poetical element. Sumner's sentences were florid and his delivery rather mechanical, but he made a strong impression owing to the evident purity of his motives. The general public, however, had become suspicious of oratory, so that it was no longer as serviceable as formerly.

"After all," he would say, "the main point for a speaker is to have a good cause. Then, if he is thoroughly in earnest, we enjoy hearing him." He once illustrated his subject by the story of a Union general who tried to rally the fugitives at Pittsburg Landing, and said, waving his sword in the air: