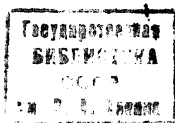


PERSONAL MEMORIALS
OF
DANIEL WEBSTER,
INCLUDING
A SKETCH OF HIS PUBLIC LIFE
AND
THE PARTICULARS OF HIS DEATH.



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PUBLISHERS' PREFACE.

A LARGE proportion of the interesting memorials of DANIEL WEBSTER contained in this volume are now first given to the public. Anything that illustrates the life and character of our greatest Statesman, now no longer in bodily presence among us, is valuable to his countrymen. In a man's private and social relations, we see many of the springs of action that give him power when he goes forth into the world, and moreover, when presented to view, explain what often seems dark and doubtful. In the case of Mr. WEBSTER, to meet him at home and among friends was to acquire a new ability for juster estimates of his character. It was partly with this view that these personal memorials were gathered from the lips of friends, neighbors, and older inhabitants in the immediate vicinity of Marshfield. They were gathered while he yet lived, and now, in giving them to the public, we append, as a fitting close, the mournful particulars of his tranquil passage from mere natural life to the higher and truer life of a disembodied spirit.

PERSONAL MEMORIALS OF DANIEL WEBSTER.

The ancestors of DANIEL WEBSTER came originally from Scotland, and his father, grandfather, and great-grandfather, were named Ebenezer, and were descendants of Thomas Webster, who was one of the very earliest settlers of New Hampshire. His father was a person of large and stalwart form, of swarthy complexion, and remarkable features. He was born and spent his youth on a farm; served as a ranger in the famous company of Major Robert Rogers, and as a captain, under General John Stark, during the revolutionary war; was for several years a member of the legislature of New Hampshire, and died while performing with honor the duties of judge of the court of common pleas. His mother was Abigail Eastman, a lady of Welsh extraction, and of far more than ordinary intellect; she was the second wife of her husband, and the mother of five children—two boys, Daniel and Ezekiel, and three daughters.

Ebenezer Webster, the father of Daniel, was not only a man of superior intellect, but was distinguished for his strong and indomitable will, a characteristic which his distinguished son has rightfully inherited. He was a federalist in politics; and it is related of him, that he was once taken suddenly ill while passing through a village which was noted for its democracy, and that supposing he was about to die, he beseeched his physician to remove him as soon as possible out of the place, giving, as a reason for his great anxiety, that "he was born a federalist, had lived a federalist, and could not die in any but a federalist town."

DANIEL WEBSTER was born on the 18th day of January, 1782, in the town of Salisbury, Merrimac county, then Hillsborough, New Hampshire. The site of the house is two and a half miles from the beautiful Merrimac river, and in the immediate vicinity of that where his father built the first log cabin ever seen in this section of country, and at a time when, between his residence and the borders of Canada, there was not a single human habitation, excepting the Indian's wigwam. The house in question is not now standing; but the engraving which ornaments the title page of this volume,* is from a drawing correctly representing it as it appeared only a few years ago. It was a good specimen of the more elegant

*The plate alluded to does not appear in this pamphlet edition.

farm houses of the day, one story high, heavily timbered, clapboarded, with rather a pointed roof, one chimney in the centre, one front door, with a window on either side, three windows at each end, four rooms on the ground floor, and an addition in the rear for a kitchen. It fronted on the south, a picturesque well-curb and sweep stood near the eastern extremity, and over the whole a mammoth elm tree extended its huge arms, as if to protect the spot from sacrilege. In the rear, on a hill side, was a spacious barn, and a partially wooded pasture; the prospect immediately in front was enlivened by a rude bridge, spanning a lovely little stream, and bounded by a lofty hill, upon which is still standing the church where Mr. WEBSTER was baptized; while in a southwesterly direction was presented a full view of the noble mountain, called *Kearsage*, which holds the same rank among its brother hills, that Mr. WEBSTER is acknowledged to hold among men. The house was the centre of a tract of 160 acres of land, which still belongs to the Webster family. Though the birthplace itself has disappeared, the waters of the well are still as pure and sparkling, and the leaves of the elm as luxuriant, as when they quenched the thirst and delighted the eyes of the infant statesman nearly seventy years ago, and in their perennial nature are emblematic of the great name with which they are associated.

An appropriate appendage to the view of Mr. Webster's birthplace is the following extract from one of his speeches, delivered at Saratoga, in 1840:

"It did not happen to me to be born in a log cabin; but my elder brothers and sisters were born in a log cabin raised amid the snow drifts of New Hampshire, at a period so early as that, when the smoke first rose from its rude chimney, and curled over the frozen hills, there was no similar evidence of a white man's habitation between it and the settlements on the rivers of Canada. Its remains still exist. I make to it an annual visit. I carry my children to it, to teach them the hardships endured by the generations which have gone before them. I love to dwell on the tender recollections, the kindred ties, the early affections, and the touching narratives and incidents which mingle with all I know of this primitive family abode. I weep to think that none of those who inhabited it are now living; and if ever I am ashamed of it, or if I ever fail in affectionate veneration for *him* who reared it, and defended it against savage violence and destruction, cherished all the domestic virtues beneath its roof, and, through the fire and blood of a seven years' revolutionary war, shrunk from no danger, no toil, no sacrifice, to serve his country, and to raise his children to a better condition than his own, may my name, and the name of my posterity, be blotted forever from the memory of mankind!"

Mr. WEBSTER was taught the letters of the alphabet by his mother,