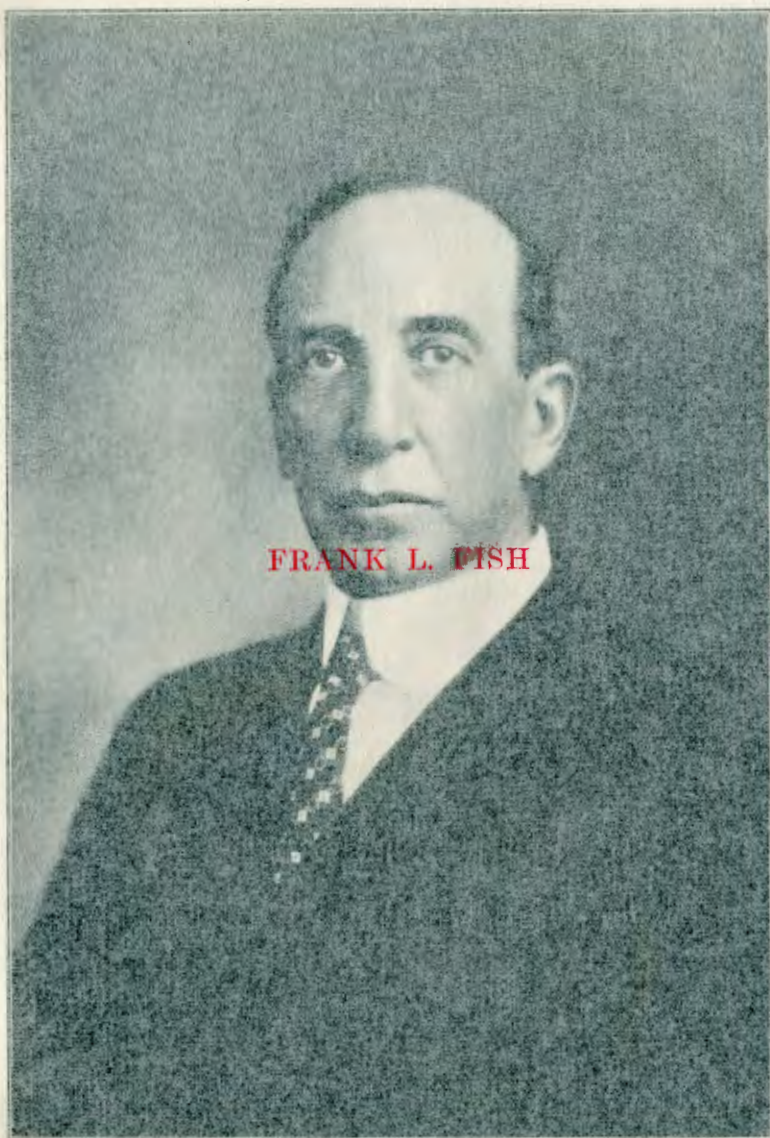


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**William Czar Bradley**

**1782-1867**

by

**Justice Frank L. Fish,**

of the

**Vermont Supreme Court.**

Address delivered before the

**Vermont Historical Society**

at

**Windsor, Vt., July 7, 1927.**



## WILLIAM CZAR BRADLEY

The Westminster massacre occurred March 13, 1775. It resulted in the end of colonial rule and the sway of the King in Vermont. In December, 1778, the first Vermont court was held at Bennington. This court was organized under the constitutional authority which had its inception here 150 years ago. In May, 1779, the second session of the court was held at Westminster. It was held in the court house built under the authority of the King in 1772 and moistened by the blood of William French and Daniel Houghton, the first martyrs of the Revolution. The Judges were Moses Robinson, Chief, and John Fassett, Jr., and Thomas Chandler Jr. Esquires. It was a jury session and 36 respondents were in jail awaiting trial. They were among the foremost citizens of the county of Cumberland and their plight was due to their having taken sides with New York. Their offence was that they had taken by force from William McWain, an officer of Vermont, two cows which he had seized and offered to sell as the property of one Clay and another Williams, in default of their refusing to serve in the State militia. It was a jury session and the purpose of the State was to try speedily, and without failure to convict, the accused. The latter were in less haste and they petitioned the court for time in which to prepare their defence and procure counsel from away. The petition was denied, but the result of it was the appearance as their counsel of Stephen Row Bradley. Already at the same term Mr. Bradley had been admitted to practice in the courts of Vermont and with him came Noah Smith. These were the first men to take the oath of attorneys in the new State and they here stood arrayed against each other in the first trial. Noah Smith was State's Attorney and Mr. Bradley counsel for the res-



pondents. These had been indicted by the grand jury and the indictments were being attacked by Mr. Bradley. But this does not complete the picture. Outside the court room was Ethan Allen with a hundred Green Mountain Boys. He had come to support the civil with the military arm of the State. All went well for the prosecution on the first day, but on the second the indictments commenced to go to pieces under the blows of Mr. Bradley. Allen was advised of the turn in the State's fortunes and rushed into court. He must have heard something said about Blackstone by the elder Bradley, to have brought out his challenge, "I would have the young gentleman to know that with my logic and reasoning, from the eternal fitness of things, I can upset his Blackstones, his whitestones, his gravestones, and his brimstones." A little later he pays his respects to both these new men of the law thus: "I see, however, that some of them, by the quirks of this artful lawyer, Bradley, are escaping from the punishment they so richly deserve, and I find, also, that this little Noah Smith is far from understanding his business, since he at one moment moves for a prosecution, and in the next wishes to withdraw it. Let me warn your Honor to be on your guard, lest these delinquents should slip through your fingers, and thus escape the rewards so justly due their crimes."

Who was Stephen Row Bradley whose maiden effort at the bar we have just looked upon? He was the father of William C. Bradley, the subject of this address. He was a young man then twenty-five years old. He was born in Connecticut, of good parentage, and his ancestry went back to men who saw service with Cromwell's Ironsides. He was graduated from Yale in 1775 and entered the Revolution as a Captain of Volunteers; was in the fighting about New York; was Quartermaster and Aid on the staff of General Wooster; had taught school, and had studied law

under the instruction of Tapping Reeve, afterwards the founder of the Litchfield Law School. He prepared "Vermont's Appeal to a Candid and Independent World," wherein with great clearness and convincing force he set forth Vermont's claim to independence. Four times he was State's Attorney of Cumberland County. Five times he represented Westminster in the Vermont Legislature, of which he was one time clerk and at another speaker. For a brief period he was a Judge of our Supreme Court. He was a Brigadier General in the Vermont militia. He was a commissioner to settle our controversy with New York. He was a powerful advocate for the ratification of the Federal Constitution and admission of Vermont to the union. Then he became one of our first United States senators, to which high office he was three times re-elected.

Soon after his first appearance in court, he located at Westminster. His home was on the lower street, beneath the elevation on which the court house stood. He married in May, 1780, Merab Atwater, who like himself was a resident of Cheshire, Connecticut. She was a descendant of one of the first settlers of New Haven and was entirely worthy of the companionship which she was invited to share. The young couple kept open house. The Judges and lawyers were their guests during the terms of court. At their home Ethan Allen was married to Mrs. Buchanan, the tory's daughter, and in the office of Mr. Bradley, Jeremiah Mason, the greatest of New England lawyers, fitted for the bar. The last twelve years of his life Mr. Bradley lived in Walpole in the home still owned by members of the family situated on the elevation overlooking the Connecticut in Walpole village. Mr. Bradley built the Bradley tomb standing near the entrance to the Old Cemetery in Westminster. Here his mortal remains were laid at rest while a throng that reached from Walpole to Westminster, a distance of nearly two miles, accompanied



them to their final resting place. Such was the importance of his life and its departure from the world. He had great natural gifts, was an able lawyer, a powerful statesman, a Christian gentleman.

To the happy union of this man and this woman, who was the first to share the joys and sorrows of life with the elder Bradley, was born March 23, 1782, William Czar Bradley, whom I have been asked to sketch. It is often asked where the middle name of Czar had its origin. His father was a great admirer of Peter the Great of Russia and wanted to name his son after him and the name of Czar was a compromise between his father and mother. That the obsession on the part of his father was a powerful and enduring one is evidenced by his naming a daughter, born twelve years after the birth of William, to a second marriage, Stella Czarina Bradley.

It was not my fortune to have lived early enough to have seen and known William C. Bradley, but it was given to me to have lived in an atmosphere that was charged with the impressive personality of the great wit, lawyer and scholar. Then, too, I have looked since early boyhood upon his noble countenance, his large frame, his steady poise as revealed in his portrait which hangs on the north wall of the Newfane court room. This painting is the work of Tenney of Hanover and was the gift of the Windham County Bar and the officers of the court. Mr. Bradley had made an eloquent argument of such length and force that at its completion he sank exhausted into his chair. It seemed to his friends, who witnessed his fatigue, that he would not long be with them. A subscription paper was at once circulated and the necessary funds pledged for the portrait. The work of the artist was done in the parlor of Mr. Bradley at Westminster. The painting represents him as standing beside his table with books and manuscript thereon and steadying himself on a chair

with his left hand. The background of wall and draperies is lighted by an expanse of sky beyond a hill in the distance. The effect is most pleasing and effective. In the court room this masterpiece of art has hung for more than three quarters of a century, and here Mr. Bradley, in portraiture, looks across at his father, who occupies another wall, in portrait, of the same room.

It was a privilege of mine to have known many men who knew Mr. Bradley, one of whom studied law with him, others who had heard him in public speech, and more who had personally known the charm of his conversation. From these witnesses I seem to feel the depth of his learning, the power of his memory, the magic of his eloquence, the sparkle of his wit, the charm of his conversation; while his deep bass voice seems to speak in measured cadence from his vast fund of interesting knowledge.

When Mr. Bradley first saw the light of day the treaty of peace with Great Britain, following the Revolution, had not been signed. His father was an officer in the American army. Ethan Allen was a frequent visitor at his father's home and it is said gave him his first suit of clothes, curiously enough fashioned after the British uniforms. He was a brilliant, precocious, serious lad writing poetry and reading the Bible when very young. At nine years of age he had read the Bible through seven times, and at twelve he published his first poem, entitled "The Rights of Youth, composed, revised and submitted to the candid reader by William C. Bradley." This was his *Thanatopsis*. I have been unable to find this publication, but what I call his *Flood of Years*, written at eighty-five, in mid-summer, "when only the Muse visited him," is preserved.

"Alas! now I am deaf and old,  
Lame, blind and imbecile;  
I do not think the Muse cajoled,



Can ever seek my domicile  
Even though she bear no malice.

“But she may let me come at whiles  
Up to her garden gay,  
Rejoiced to see where Fancy smiles,  
Cropping the flowers, and—as I stray,  
Hold forth a spring to Alice.”

Until of age Mr. Bradley was troubled with ear-ache, and many a time his grandfather Atwood would go down cellar and cut off a little piece of rind of salt pork to insert in his ear, which was the old-fashioned remedy, and once the doctor put a crescent of blistering plaster behind his ear, which relieved him as soon as it began to draw, but brought on a roaring and buzzing in that organ which never ceased. His hearing was so defective that he did not try cases in court except at Newfane, where he was so beloved by the members of the bar that they were ears for him.

Like the younger Pitt, whom he resembled in precocity, Mr. Bradley pursued his early studies under the guidance of a clergyman. This was Parson Olcott of Charlestown, New Hampshire. From Washington his father urged the boy to follow his studies with diligence and attention and not to divert his mind from the close study of the dead languages. That his father's letters were faithfully followed is evident, for he was fitted for college when he was thirteen and had entered Yale. In his freshman year he was expelled and sent home to an angry father who put him to the most disagreeable tasks of the farm. The offence charged by the college was that he had placed a donkey in the pulpit of the college chapel. This Mr. Bradley always stoutly denied, but confessed that he had done other things not charged against him and not known that were worse.

It seems that back of the stern conduct of the father, William found a cloud of silver lining—a copy of a letter to the faculty from his sire telling them that it was wrong to expel his son, a mere boy, who should have been only disciplined. The College, too, as if to make amends, in 1817, conferred on him the honorary degree of Master of Arts.

At the age of seventeen young Bradley delivered the Fourth of July Oration at Westminster. This was a serious address, stately in statement, forceful in argument and eloquent in patriotic appeal. It was so remarkable that the people of Westminster had it printed in pamphlet. This is now so rare that not even the State Library has a copy, but I have been favored with a copy in typewriting with the original ode which followed it, by Henry A. Willard 2nd, of Washington, D. C., a great, great grandson of Mr. Bradley. This I am going to leave for the records of this Society.

Mr. Bradley began the study of the law with Judge Simeon Strong of Amherst, Massachusetts, and when his tutor was elevated to the bench of the Supreme Judicial Court of that state he transferred to the office of Mr. Ashmun of Blandford, in the same state, and afterwards completed his studies in the office of his father at Westminster.

In June, 1802, at the age of twenty, he was admitted to the bar, but was refused practice in the Supreme Court on account of his extreme youth. The Legislature later appointed him State's Attorney of Windham County and this secured him admission to the higher court. His father had been re-elected to the Senate in 1801, and “all the household—the family—the keys to the wine cellar, the law office and all other business” was intrusted to William. He was directed to conduct the office as well as he could, and to be careful to lay by the silver and keep the bank notes in circulation and to lend to good men for short periods.



In December, 1802, Mr. Bradley married Sarah Richards, daughter of Mark and Ann Ruggles Dorr Richards, of Westminster. Mr. Richards had come some years before from Boston. This was an ideal union, which lasted nearly sixty-four years. Miss Richards had met General Washington in her father's home in Boston. She was small and gentle, refined and cultivated, domestic and cheerful. Mr. Bradley always sought and deferred to her advice. She so ordered the affairs of the home that there was neither waste nor want. They were blessed, in his own language, "with happy and affectionate children, including all our descendants." The children consisted of Emily Penelope Bradley, an adopted daughter, who married Nathaniel Dorr of Brattleboro; Jonathan Dorr Bradley, a remarkable man and a very accomplished lawyer who practiced at Brattleboro; and Merab Ann Bradley, who married Judge Daniel Kellogg of the Vermont Supreme Court.

Mr. Bradley opened a law office in a small building standing on the grounds of his home at the corner of School and Lower Street in Westminster village. This was the only law office he ever had during his practice of fifty-five years. Here came his many clients to learn from his lips the law; here, too, came the lawyers to be instructed by a great master in questions beyond their understanding; and here came his law students to profit from his wisdom and magnetic personality. Among his books in the office was one of great personal interest to Mr. Bradley. It was a little volume which belonged successively to Thomas Jefferson, his father and himself, and in which the autographs of all three appear on the same page. When he added his own name he remarked in the hearing of one of his students, "There is a regular taper from first to last." This did well for his modesty but not as well for the truth. He was an abler lawyer and a greater man than his father,

and not second to Jefferson in scholarship and knowledge of the law.

He applied himself with great vigor to the mastery of legal principles, following his preliminary work as a student, and became proficient in the whole science of the law. The law was unsettled. The early settlers had brought with them the common law of England and certain rights derived from the English Constitution which had been expressed in charters, statutes, and concessions from the crown. It would have been more accurate to have said that the early settlers thought that they had the rights enumerated. With the independence of the colonies had come the written state constitutions and the statutes. These were to be construed and the common law as it applied to our local situation and circumstances was to be put in force. The common law was to be gathered from early English reports, Blackstones Commentaries and a few other English works. There was no treatise on pleading, but one on the subject of evidence. There were but a few cases that had been reported in Massachusetts, none in New York, none in New Hampshire, none in Vermont except the few in Chipman's report published in 1793, and none by the United States Supreme Court except those reported in the first three volumes of Dallas. Such was the situation when Mr. Bradley commenced the practice of the law at Westminster. From his father's library he had the Civil Law, the Year Books, Bracton, and such English reports as were to be had. These he studied and applied and became one of the foremost lawyers of that time, as he would have been of this or any other time. His practice was at once extensive. His cases largely involved titles to land and the fees were not large. He never aimed at wealth, but was frugal and economical, and at the same time generous and hospitable. He sought usefulness rather than riches and his estate was always small.



He was devoted to the law for the sake of its philosophy and justice. He was too big to stir up litigation, too just to be vindictive, and yet was within the reach of the poorest client. He was courteous and respectful to the court, faithful to his client, and magnanimous to his adversary. In the examination of witnesses he was fair and brief. His arguments to the jury were earnest, witty, eloquent, effective. He was not abusive. His wit was ever in play and was sure to create a laugh. Once a clergyman marvelled at his eloquence and asked him why it was that the lawyer was so much more eloquent than the minister. "It is because we are so much nearer the judgment," said Mr. Bradley. In the Supreme Court he confined himself to cool reasoning and made no effort at eloquence. He thought that the judges should be moved by reason and not through an emotional appeal. In addressing this Court he always stood at a respectful distance and expounded the law of his case without gesture, which he thought was in very bad taste in the Supreme Court. He had no specialties, was as good a lawyer in one department as in another, was a master of pleading (as you would expect to find), and an excellent draftsman. Such was Mr. Bradley as a lawyer practising his chosen profession.

He was not without political honors. From 1804 to 1811 he was State's Attorney of Windham County. He represented Westminster in the General Assembly in 1806 and 1807. He was a member of the Governor's Council in 1812. He was a member of the 13th Congress, from 1813 to 1815, the first native and youngest member ever elected from Vermont. He was likewise a member of the 18th and 19th Congresses, from 1823 to 1827, the member from Westminster again to the General Assembly in 1852; a Presidential elector in 1856 and a member of the Constitutional Convention in 1857.

The most important service of Mr. Bradley's life was that rendered as agent of the United States under the Treaty of Ghent to establish the boundary between Maine and Canada. This employment occupied five years and in his work he went through the wild region of the northeast frontier in person and laid down the true line, which, rejected by Great Britain and disputed over with an acrimony that well nigh ended in war, he had the satisfaction of seeing adopted in the Ashburton Treaty. His arguments are of record in this employment and of them Henry Clay, in writing to Albert Gallatin, says: "Mr. Bradley's arguments have also great merit, and embrace or allude to almost all that can be said."

If the services of Mr. Bradley as the agent of his country under the Treaty of Ghent were the most important of his life, it looks from this distance of time as though this service resulted in the greatest mistake of his life. It will be recalled that Cornelius P. Van Ness was one of the commissioners before whom Mr. Bradley appeared when he urged the claims of this country for the line which he marked out and which later was adopted. In the relationship between the two great Vermonters, which this employment brought about and continued for a period of five years, it is quite easy to see how an attachment and sympathy would naturally arise between them. Mr. Bradley was elected to Congress for the last time in 1825. Governor Van Ness was a candidate for the United States Senate, an office to which he had for some time aspired with an honorable ambition and for which he had qualifications that admirably fitted him for the place. Mr. Bradley had been elected as an Adams man. It was supposed that the election of Governor Van Ness would not be seriously opposed, but Senator Seymour, who had served one term in the upper house, concluded to become a candidate again, and the liveliest campaign that Vermont ever knew, followed. It



resulted in the re-election of Senator Seymour and the breaking of both Governor Van Ness and Mr. Bradley with their party. It was claimed that there had been a breach of faith on the part of President Adams, whose hand in the Vermont election had been felt in favor of Senator Seymour (so at least it was believed.) Both Governor Van Ness and Mr. Bradley transferred their allegiance to General Jackson and the latter remained with the democratic party for a period of about thirty years. He was five times its candidate for Governor and frequently its candidate for Congress and the United States Senate, but then, as now, that party was in the minority in Vermont and he was always defeated at the polls or in the legislature. It is unthinkable now that a representative of one party should transfer his allegiance to the opposing party while he was holding the important office of Congressman. It was undoubtedly a great shock to the friends of Mr. Bradley that he should have taken such a course one hundred years ago, but his honesty and sincerity should not be called in question in the act which resulted in such loss to his political interests and ambition.

When the slave question came prominently to the front, and the attitude of friendliness toward the institution on the part of the democratic party became apparent, Mr. Bradley withdrew and first joined the free democracy and later the republican party. He was a presidential elector in 1856, and as such carried to Washington the vote of Vermont for John C. Fremont for President. He was then seventy-four years of age. He was again in Washington in 1861, where he had the pleasure of loaning President Lincoln, whom he greatly admired, a pair of slippers. Lincoln had just arrived at Willard's Hotel, after his trip in disguise through Baltimore. His slippers had been overlooked and he was greatly in need of a pair, and Henry Willard, the proprietor of the hotel—the husband of Sarah

Bradley Willard, Mr. Bradley's granddaughter—did not know of any slippers of sufficient size, except those belonging to Mr. Bradley. The slippers were found to fit the foot of the other great man who, after wearing them, returned them with a gracious note of thanks.

Mr. Bradley was a member of the Vermont House in 1852, and of the Constitutional Convention in 1857. The latter was the last public service of his life. Many of the records of his life show that he was a member of the House in 1850, but this is a mistake. The venerable George W. Grandey of Vergennes, was still in practice when I located there in 1890. He told me of being in the House with Mr. Bradley in 1852, and of writing him a note asking him to announce the death of Daniel Webster. This, General Grandey led me to believe, resulted in Mr. Bradley taking the floor at once and making the speech which is regarded as one of the two best forensic efforts of his life. The other was a speech in favor of the erection by the State of a monument to William French. I am unable to find the latter address, but it is described as being replete with patriotic zeal, forceful arguments, and historic facts. The Webster speech I did find almost immediately after my conversation with General Grandey, and I will leave a copy of it with this Society in order that it may be preserved in its records. It is a noble piece of oratory of the style of the Websterian era. The description of its delivery as given by General Grandey led me to look upon it for some years as the impromptu farewell of one great man to another, but I came to doubt at length that it had been fashioned on the instant and delivered without preparation. It was too polished, too well-rounded, and if my eyes and memory are not playing tricks with me, I later saw it in manuscript in the copper-plate hand of its author. Let us hope and trust that among the records of this Society, in the Walton collection, it will yet be found.



I want you to listen to some of the passages of this remarkable speech. They give you a better idea of Mr. Bradley than any poor words of mine. Historically, too, they are of great interest. "Born in the same year", the tribute begins, "and but nine weeks from each other, and living in contiguous States, it was my fortune to become acquainted with Mr. Webster in early life. We both entered together the twelfth Congress, summoned by Mr. Madison to provide for the exigencies of the war with Great Britain. Whatever may be said of their predecessors, no such Congress has ever sat since. It seemed as if each State, except perhaps our own, had collected the elite of its talent and poured it into the Capitol. To say nothing of the giants of the Senate, the House of Representatives was filled with a host of able men, at the head of whom on one side stood Clay, Lowndes, Cheves, Calhoun, Grundy and Forsyth—they are named in the order in which they took rank in the house,—and on the other side were Pickering, Benson, Stockton, Gaston, Grovenor and Hanson. These noble bands have wholly disappeared, except Cheves, who probably owes his surviving to his early withdrawal from the exhausting labors of congressional life, although every way qualified to fill and adorn any station."

Then after a reference to Mr. Webster's Reply to Hayne, Mr. Bradley calls attention to the debt that Vermont owed to him for his services in the settlement of the northeast boundary. On this point he said:

"From this time the deceased debater remained in the Senate—an unmatchable athlete—until he was called into the department of State by General Harrison, and this brings me to a transaction more immediately affecting ourselves. When he entered the Cabinet, the northern boundaries of four states, Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont and part of New York, were unsettled and had remained so from the revolution. There had been various attempts

at adjustment and my own feeble service had been required by the government, but I must confess without much hope on my own part, for when President Munroe on his tour visited his predecessor, the venerable John Adams, at Quincy, the aged patriot expressed a belief that the question would not be settled, because he had found it the most difficult to arrange, and the British Ministry more pertinacious on that point than on all others in forming the treaty of 1783. The claim of the United States was strong on the side of Maine and New Hampshire, but terribly weak on that of Vermont and New York, having no better foundation than of a survey, confessedly incorrect, made of a portion of the line previous to the American Revolution. The opposite party was desperately resolved on securing a passage between New Brunswick and Quebec, and the rights of Maine were too clear to be surrendered without her consent. We failed; and the failure was no reproach where Gallatin and Livingston could not succeed. The two nations were on the eve of an outbreak when the English Ministry deputed Lord Ashburton, a highly respectable nobleman, but more conversant with commerce than national law, to confer with the American Secretary, who was fully versed in every branch of the question. No one can doubt the triumphant superiority the latter would have exhibited in the controversy had it been carried on according to the, until then, received maxims of diplomacy; but he laid aside all pride of talent, and consented to meet his adversary in a frank and unreserved manner, and try to arrange the difficulty on the broad principle of mutual benefit. They succeeded and the signature of Daniel Webster gave to Vermont 90 square miles of territory."

The peroration of this remarkable speech shows Mr. Bradley at his best. It is, I fancy, very characteristic of him. It draws upon the Scripture, which was his profound study for fourscore years. He and Webster, though



personal friends, were political opponents, Webster being a whig.

"It is not my purpose," said Mr. Bradley, "to rake open the embers of party spirit, or to utter a word which could disturb the unanimity of our grief. When the prophet was taken to heaven, his deserted companions saw only the chariot of fire and the horsemen of Israel, and on this occasion, I would have eyes for nothing but the glories of Daniel Webster. Less I cannot say in justice to him and to myself. There may be those who, looking to the former opposition, may think that notwithstanding our friendly relations in private life, I have already said too much. To such I answer that old as I am, when my heart becomes too contracted to swell at the manifestations of talent, worth and greatness, may it cease to beat. Were I, being in a state of safety, to look upon the lion roaming in his native haunts, and to behold his firm and regal tread,—the majesty of his countenance, his large, calm eye filled with the expression of conscious power,—how could I withhold my admiration? If he was afterwards seen by me breaking out of bounds, and scattering desolation and misery abroad, should I be inconsistent in declaring my abhorrence? But when the shaft of the Mighty Hunter had laid him low—dead, prostrate before me, and I looked upon his great and noble proportions, and the symmetry of his make, I must feel that he was indeed created Monarch of the forest. So it has never been permitted me to cease admiring and bearing witness to the great things of Daniel Webster; and if it can soothe his mighty spirit to have a political adversary twine the cypress around his tomb, I freely offer myself to bear to his memory a tribute, which I trust will be also in unison with the feelings of the whole House."

Mr. Bradley was in full practice for fifty-five years. He tried his last case at the February Term of the Supreme

Court held at Newfane in 1857. The following March he would be seventy-five. He said that judging by the length of lives of his ancestors he should have ten more years in which to live. These he proposed to devote to reflection and repose. He therefore announced that he should cease to practice the profession from that time forward. Toward the close of the term the members of the bar gave him a farewell supper at which all the members of the bench and nearly all of the bar were present. It was a very notable occasion and one which drew from Mr. Bradley a rich treasure of recollections covering the period of his practice. He said that it was a matter of pride to him to have belonged to the oldest bar in the State and one which contained able members before the Revolution, and to which he was admitted two years before the birth of Isaac F. Redfield, the Chief Justice then present; that he had seen and practiced before a numerous succession of judges, all of whom had treated him with distinguished kindness. He enumerated these, beginning with Chief Justice Woodbridge in the last century and included in his sketches Judges Robinson, Tyler, Chipman, Aldis (both father and son), Skinner, Chase, Prentiss, Hutchinson and Williams. It hardly needs to be said that on such an occasion and in such a company Mr. Bradley was not the only speaker. The judges and lawyers paid their respects to the leader of the bar in many a response to the calls of the toastmaster. The memory of this notable banquet at the Newfane Inn. was still alive in the days of my boyhood in Newfane.

Mr. Bradley had argued two cases in the Supreme Court the day of the banquet and after speaking at some length there was too weary to remain longer than during the responses of the Judges, all of whom spoke. The Court then consisted of Isaac F. Redfield, Chief Judge, and Pierpoint Isham and Milo L. Bennett, Assistants.



Mr. Bradley never went into court again. He sent all his books, except his Vermont Reports, to his son at Brattleboro and closed his law office, as such, never to be opened again. The law remained with him, notwithstanding, still a matter of interest and he would pour it forth at times in conversation most interestingly. He was still interested, too, in the young men of the law and liked to encourage them in their efforts, but his days of practice were at an end.

Early in December, 1859, owing to the feeble health of Mrs. Bradley, the aged couple went to live in the family of the son at Brattleboro, where Mrs. Bradley died August 7, 1866. She was laid at rest in the Bradley tomb. Shortly afterwards the call to be near her moved the companion of her years to go back to the family home, made by loving hands to look exactly as it did "in mama's day". Here Mr. Bradley died March 4, 1867. He had lived exactly nineteen days less than he had assumed ten years before that he should be allowed for reflection and repose, and he died within three days of the time he said during his last sickness, he should pass away. The Bradley tomb holds his sacred dust.

William C. Bradley was a great man. He was self-taught but deeply learned in the wisdom of the world. He was a tireless student, who for much of his life read seven hours daily. The Bible was a great storehouse of inspiration and investigation. He had several versions, which he could read in their original languages. He was profoundly religious. When asked what he thought of Christ he answered in the language of Peter, "Thou art Christ, the Son of the living God." This, he said, was his faith. He wrote, "Let us hope that we shall all come happily together in heaven."

Mr. Bradley was not without his oddities and superstitions. He made no secret of these but talked about them

openly. He would pay out no money on the first day of the week, would kill the first snake he saw in the spring, would see the new moon over his right shoulder, and would leave the house by the door he entered.

The little office still stands beside the road unchanged since the day it was closed seventy years ago. The Bradley home close by is as it was of yore. The wall paper selected by Mr. Bradley is upon the walls. His descendants,—the Willards—to whom he transmitted his love of sentiment, have preserved these landmarks of their great ancestor, and the tomb, too, has not been neglected. I like to think of Mr. Bradley among all these settings. He belonged to the rural life of this country village. Here he was born, here he had his only office and his only home, here he laid him down to die, and here he rests in the tomb. He knew the great world outside. He knew the ways of great cities. He knew great men, and his wits were a match for the best of them. Well might he, like Jeremiah Mason, and Daniel Webster, and Isaac F. Redfield, have gone to the center of wealth and made a fortune in the practice of his profession. But he preferred to remain in Vermont which he loved. He was essentially a lover. He loved his books, the birds and animals, the flowers and the changing season, the old men who began life when he did and little children, and his affection for the members of his own family and their's for him are among the sweet memories that have come down through the years.

Mr. Bradley was fitted to adorn any station in life. But for his deafness he would have graced any court in Europe. He would have honored any bench. He would have been a leader in any legislative hall. It so happened that in the ordering of things not as many of the high places in life were held by him as his great talents merited. But his life was a highly useful one—to the profession which he



honored, to the community in which he lived, to the State which he loved, to the nation which he served.

#### AMBITION.

“And what is its reward? At best a name.  
Praise—when the ear has grown too dull to hear,  
Gold—when the senses it should please are dull;  
Wreaths—when the hair has grown gray they should  
cover;  
Fame—when the heart it should thrill is numb;  
All things but love—when love is all we want,  
And close behind comes death; and ere we know  
That even these unavailing gifts are ours,  
He sends us tripped and naked to the grave.”