

**RECOLLECTIONS AND  
IMPRESSIONS,  
1822-1890. [NEW  
YORK & LONDON-1891]**

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Recollections and Impressions, 1822-1890. [New York & London-1891] by Octavius Brooks Frothingham

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# RECOLLECTIONS AND IMPRESSIONS

1822-1890

OCTAVIUS BROOKS FROTHINGHAM

AUTHOR OF "BOSTON UNITARIANISM, 1820-1850, A STUDY OF THE LIFE  
AND WORK OF NATHANIEL LANGDON FROTHINGHAM,"  
"THE RELIGION OF HUMANITY," ETC., ETC.

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FOOTNOTES  
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TO THE  
AMERICAN

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UNIVERSITY OF  
CALIFORNIA

## RECOLLECTIONS AND IMPRESSIONS.

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### I.

#### PARENTAGE.

My father was, as I have said elsewhere, a clergyman in Boston, Massachusetts, a Unitarian minister to the First Church, standing in a long line of men, of whom the earliest was severely orthodox, while he abhorred orthodoxy. Yet he was ordained without hesitation, was more than acceptable to the best minds through a service of thirty-five years, and continued more and more unorthodox to the end; so gradually and insensibly did the Puritan tenets disappear one by one until the shadow of them only remained. We are assured that by 1780 nearly all the congregational pulpits were filled by Arminians. In 1815, the year of my father's ordination, they were well domesticated in New England, Calvinism having lost its hold on the minds of thinking people, and none but keen-eyed watchers on the tower seeing what course opinion was taking. How far the tendency towards the moral and practical view of religion as distinct from the speculative view had gone,

is well illustrated in my father's case. He was a man of excellent education, one of the best scholars in a distinguished class at Harvard, an enthusiast for intellectual cultivation, singularly refined in perception, an acute critic, a careful, precise, elegant writer. His tastes were pre-eminently literary. This is said in full view of the fact that he was a learned theologian, a pungent disputant, a zealous student of biblical researches, a faithful pastor.

He was essentially a man of letters. His passion was for the Latin classics. The best edition of Cicero was on his shelves; the finest copy of Horace graced his book-case. His knowledge of the Greek literature and language was fair. He was fond of poetry of a stately and romantic description; was, himself, a poet of a gentle, meditative, spiritual cast, especially eminent as a composer of hymns written for church occasions, the dedication of meeting-houses, the consecration of ministers, many of them of permanent and general value, as both "liberal" and "orthodox" collections attest; while he has done as much as any man in his generation to elevate, purify, and console delicate and serious natures.

His library of about three thousand volumes was exceedingly miscellaneous, illustrating the breadth of his interests and the activity of his mind. There were Bibles of choice editions and in every tongue. There were biblical commentaries, dictionaries, grammars. The Church Fathers were well represented.