

**FIRST RIPE FRUIT
GATHERED: A
PASTORAL SKETCH
OF A YOUNG LAWYER**

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First Ripe Fruit Gathered: a pastoral sketch of a young lawyer by J. W. Chickering

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J. W. CHICKERING

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YOUNG LAWYER.

By John White Snickering

8 PORTLAND: C
SANBORN & CARTER.
1859.

DEDICATION.

To the Young Men's Christian Association, of Portland :

DEAR SIRS AND BRETHREN,—

To whom, more fitly than to yourselves, can I inscribe this sketch, mostly from his own pen, of one of the Christian young men of Portland ?

He sustained that character only a short time ; but he sustained it well.

May you, through grace, do still better ; and, by the will of Providence, labor longer for the Master.

And, when all the ripe fruits are gathered, may we be in the garner.

Yours in our One Lord,

J. W. CHICKERING.

PORTLAND, April, 1859.

FIRST RIPE FRUIT GATHERED.

THERE was, in High street church as elsewhere, during most of the year 1858, a season of spiritual refreshing.

Those that were already planted in the house of the Lord, flourished with fresh verdure in the courts of our God. They brought forth fruit, even in old age. And many new plants of righteousness adorned the garden of the Beloved, who came, with the "north wind

and the south," to refresh its foliage and enjoy its pleasant fruits.

Among the earliest harbingers of that spiritual spring-time, — cotemporaneous with the natural Spring, — was the clear and joyful conversion to Christ, of Mr. ENOCH LINCOLN CUMMINGS.

Joyful to himself; for seldom is the joy of faith better exemplified. Joyful to the churches; whose members, already awaking to new fervor of desire, received this, as a new encouragement to prayer. Joyful to the angels; who, rejoicing over any repenting sinner, doubtless have special satisfaction, in special proofs of divine power and grace, and in the consecration of special agencies for good.

Now that our joy is so soon partly turned to sorrow, and his joy perfected with the angels', it seems fitting to review his brief career as a Christian. If its beginning and end were remarkable, hardly less so was its steady, upward, useful course. And while no one should wait for its precise counterpart in his own case, yet all Christians, and all others, may learn something from the lesson which the Master taught him.

The query : "Is Saul also among the prophets?" may have occurred to some, when the voice of this young and worldly lawyer was first heard in childlike prayer and earnest exhortation. If so, it was not on account of any hostility or

settled disbelief he had ever shown towards the Gospel.

He had received early parental and other instruction in the great truths of the Bible. His parents were members of the Baptist church in Paris, Maine. After the death of his father, Col. Simeon Cummings, a mother's instructions and prayers, though not then appreciated, continued to follow her son, till she had the joy of seeing him a child of God; and the mingled joy and sorrow of witnessing his early translation to his Father's house above.

He had enjoyed every opportunity for classical and professional education, graduating at Harvard University in 1845,

and completing his law studies with Messrs. Willis & Fessenden. His professional standing and prospects, and his new position in the community as a Christian, are thus appropriately alluded to, by a writer in one of the daily papers:

“Had his life been spared, and an opportunity been given for the fullest development of his powers, he would have attained a high rank in his profession, to which his habits of industry and studious perseverance were steadily but surely leading him.

“But dear as is the professional tie which bound him to his associates in life, there is a closer and more enduring fellowship, to which our departed brother was