Minnie E. Dorman.

Farmington Two Hundred Years Ago

AN

HISTORICAL ADDRESS

DELIVERED AT THE

Annual Meeting

OF

The Village Library Company

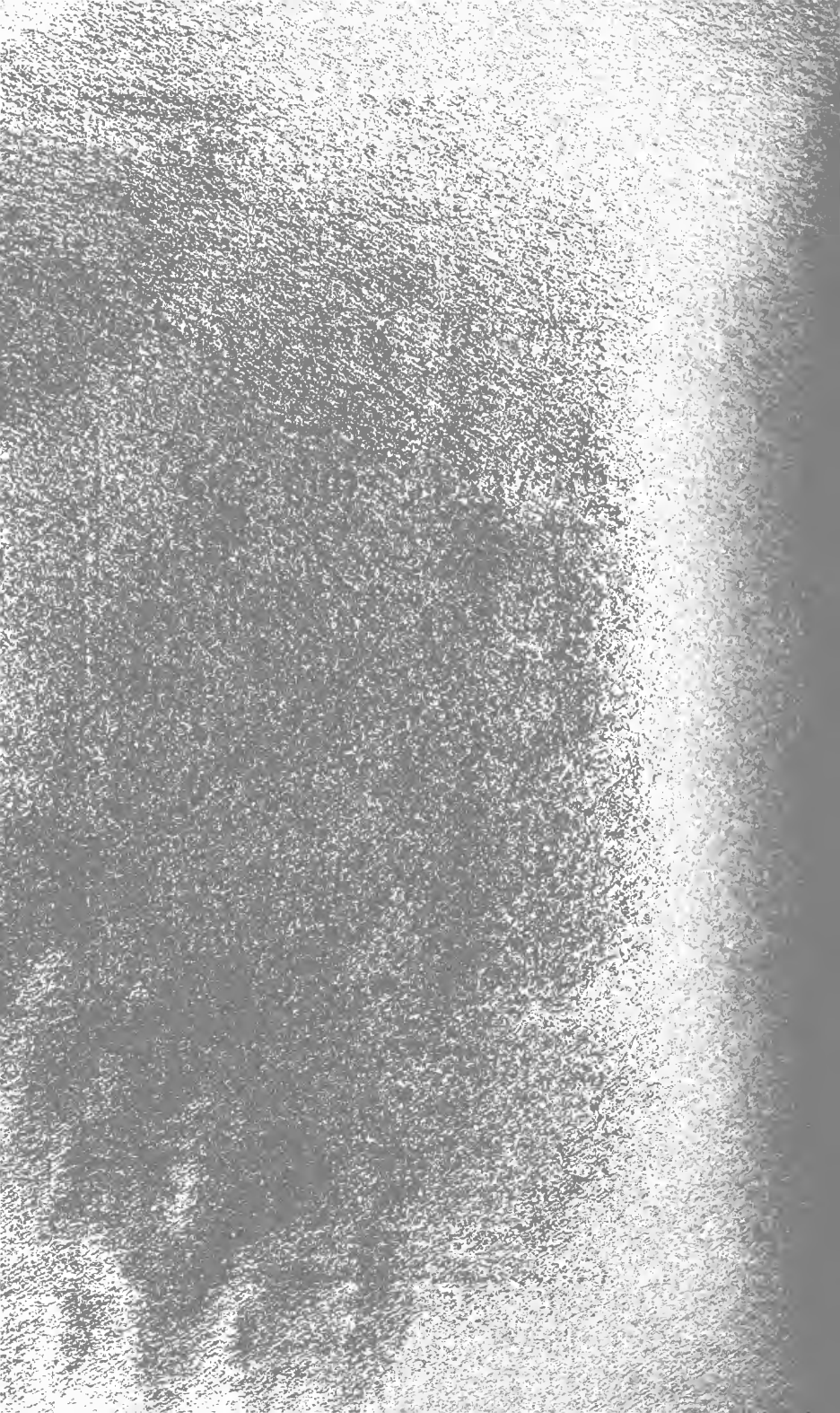
OF

Farmington, Connecticut

September 14, 1904

By JULIUS GAY

Hartford Press:
The Case, Lockwood & Brainard Company
1904



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ADDRESS.

Ladies and Gentlemen of the Village Library Company of Farmington :

Two hundred years ago, that is, on the 14th day of September, 1704, this town had existed sixty-four years. Its polity, whether civil, ecclesiastical, or social, had become firmly settled. Its inhabitants were loyal subjects of good Queen Anne, voted every year for Major-General Fitz-John Winthrop for governor, and for John Hooker, Esq., and the "Worshipful Captain John Hart" for deputies, stood stoutly to their own opinions in matters ecclesiastical, and lived the lives of prosperous farmers.

Geographically considered, the town was a rectangle fifteen miles long from north to south, and eleven broad from east to west, the Round Hill being the starting point for measurements. With the exception of the main street and a locality next to Simsbury known as Hart's Farm the whole region was the lawful hunting ground of the Tunxis Indians and the home of wild beasts. Wolves were numerous, as were also animals of the wild cat variety, magnified of record into lions and panthers. The reward for their destruction, along with crows, blackbirds, and other objectionable animals, was a fruitful source of revenue to the adventurous youths of the village. Scattered here and there were lands known as "Soldier Lots," given those who had served against the Pequot, together with many broad acres granted the minister, and lesser holdings bestowed upon those who had deserved well of their fellows. The owners were allowed to locate their grants anywhere outside of the village subject to the approval

of a committee, provided they did not trespass on highways or previous grants. These grants, known as "pitches," were much in the way when the surveying out of rectangular lots began in 1721, and made an oldtime map much resemble the so-called crazy quilt. A fence or a combination of fence and ditch ran from Nod on the east side of the river south to the Eighty Acre meadow, and another along the north bank of the river west to Crane Hall. The three principal openings through this fence were closed by the North and South Meadow gates and by the Eighty Acre bars. Every spring the Proprietors of Common Fields voted when the meadows should be cleared of all sorts of cattle, and every fall when they could again be used for pasturage. Woe to the sluggard who left his corn and beans unharvested a day too long! Before knocking off the fetters by which they had been restrained, and turning neat cattle, sheep, and swine into the meadows, each owner marked the ears of his animals for future identification. Their private forms of mutilation, by the crop, the half-penny, the slit, and the swallow tail, were duly recorded by the town clerk and were the inviolable property of each owner. Thomas Gridley used "a half-penny on ye upper side of ye left ear"; Thomas Judd, Sen., "a half-penny on ye under side of ye left ear"; John Cowles "a crop cut upon the left ear and a half-penny cut on each side of ye right ear"; and so on down the list.

Before introducing to you the ancient denizens of the village, let us consider a moment the streets which their daily steps brought into existence and along which their houses arose. The main street ran much as now. Starting from near Cronk Swamp, named from the Indian Coxcronnock, on the south, the first considerable branch we find ran westward through the South Meadow gate where now runs the road to the railroad station. A little to the north a road ran eastward between the present holdings of Messrs. Vorce and Porter to the old mill. Just before reaching the meeting-

house the Little Back Lane, so called, ran south and also to the mill. A few rods further on we reach the mill lane, which ran westward to the new mill on the river and along the present north line of the Deming property. Next we come upon the "Road up the Mountain," now leading to New Britain. Arriving at the north end of the main street we find one branch turning sharply to the east towards Hartford and one westward to the North Meadow gate. A noble, broad highway gave an uninterrupted prospect from Mrs. Barney's west to the river. The town had not then allowed Deacon Richards to encumber it with his shop, nor had the subsequent owners sought to fortify their possession with a building of brick too huge, in their estimation, ever to be removed. Just before reaching the river, a path along the river bank, often impassable by reason of floods, conducted northward to Nod. If any desire on this 14th day of September, 1704, to cross the river, and their business in the wilderness beyond, or perchance with far-off Albany, admits of delay, it may be well to know that in February, 1705, the town will vote to "be at the charge of providing and keeping in repair a canoe with ropes convenient for passing and repassing over the river at the landing-place." The subsequent history of this river crossing is beyond the scope of this paper, but I can hardly forbear stating that in December, 1722, the town "granted to Samuel Thomson, son of John, for the charge he hath been at in recovering the canoe that was driven down to Simsbury, five shillings." In 1728 a vote was passed to "sell the boat, that at present lies useless." The subsequent history of sundry bridges and of the war between the high bridge and the low bridge parties, with the frequent "I told you so" of the high bridge men, are interesting. As for the highways to the west of the canoe place, the town in 1736 took down the testimony of "John Steele, aged about 89 years, and of William Lewis, aged about 82 years," concerning the roads they remembered as running in their boyhood from the North

Meadow gate to the south side of Round Hill, to Crane Hall and to divers other places, all which information is open to the perusal of the curious. The branch known first as the road to Hartford, and then, as it entered the forest, simply as the Hartford Path, crossed Poke Brook as now, and, climbing Bird's Hill, passed localities whose obsolete names were once household words. The traveler soon reached the Rock Chair, corruptly known as the Devil's Rocking Chair, on his left, and a few rods beyond came to the Mile Tree, near the present remains of the stone-crusher, and opposite the Mile Swamp or Round Swamp, of bad repute as engulfing stray animals in its treacherous depths. Then, leaving Prattling Pond on his left and the Wolf-Pit path on his right, his course lay along the Old Road to Hartford, the favorite route sixty years ago. A branch, known of record as the "Road to Durty Hole," ran north from Poke Brook to connect with "Clatter Valley Road," and a highway running south, recently named by the wisdom of our borough fathers High Street, and laid out in 1673, was long known as Back Lane.

Three buildings of public utility were ranged along these streets: the meeting-house, the schoolhouse, and the mill. The meeting-house, the first of three houses for public worship, was built before 1672, and after frequent repairs was fast failing to meet the needs of the worshipers. There were doors on the east and south. Negroes were required to "sit upon the bench that is at the north end of the meeting-house below." Liberty to build private pews was granted, one in 1697 "over the short girt at the easterly end of the gallery"; one the next year "at the south end of the meeting-house at the left as they go in at the door"; one in 1702 over the south door "to continue until the town find it obstructive in their building a gallery"; and one in 1707 over the east door. With these as the only hints I can give, a lively imagination can easily reconstruct the building after the manner of archæologists.

A mill was built by John Bronson on what was long known as Mill Brook, until our more sentimental age named the locality Diamond Glen. It was sold to Deacon Stephen Hart before 1650, and there is reason to believe he erected a grist mill in addition to the well-known sawmill before 1673, for on the 16th of February, 1673, he paid Deacon Bull for sharpening his mill bills. Of course they may have been for use at his mill on the river, which was built some time before 1701.

On the 27th of December, 1687, the town "voted that they would have a town house to keep school in built this year, of eighteen foot square besides the chimney space, with a suitable height for that service." Votes about finishing the school-house were passed in 1689, 1690, and 1691. Let our present committee take courage.

A fourth building, the inn, with its swinging sign, offering entertainment for man and beast, may have existed. Colonial law ordered each town to provide one sufficient inhabitant to keep an ordinary for the occasional entertainment of strangers in a comfortable manner, and Joseph Root, at the south end of the village, was appointed by the town to attend to this duty. The inn, however, was for the stranger, not for the townsman. Anything like hotel or club life was frowned upon. Every resident was expected to be a member of some family. In 1692 the town "by vote gave to Joseph Scott a liberty to dwell alone provided he do faithfully improve his time and behave himself peaceably towards his neighbors and their creatures and constantly attend the public worship of God, and that he do give an account how he spends his time unto the townsmen when it shall be demanded by them of him."

Of the style and age of the private houses standing in 1704 extremely little is known. It is not impossible to trace back the ownership of any house lot to the first settler, but which of its successive owners built any particular house or

when it was built can rarely be told. The definite ages boldly assigned of late to several old houses admit neither of proof or disproof. The best description of the form of the earlier houses which I have seen occurs in the appraisal of the estate of Samuel Gridley in 1712 and can be found in my paper on the "Early Industries of Farmington." On either side of a central hall were the parlor and kitchen, and back of all the leanto. In front was a porch with a chamber over it. The porch with two stories was peculiar to the early house. That of Rev. Thomas Hooker in Hartford had one, and the room above was his study. A house with a porch projecting five feet was built for the first minister of Springfield and a house "with a porch convenient for a study" for the second minister. On the east side of High Street not long ago stood three houses of the same style of architecture. The middle one now remaining, commonly known as the Whitman house, has been considerably altered in form by recent additions. The overhanging upper story with the conspicuous pendants below were the characteristic features of the three houses. They have often been described. The northern of the three houses, pulled down in 1880, stood on land conveyed by John Clark to his son Matthew, April 8, 1702, "with the new end of a house upon it." It is hard to see how the age of the Clark house can be carried back beyond that of the new house of 1702. Houses of so peculiar construction usually mark the fashion of some limited period. As for the age of the so-called Whitman house, John Stanley, Sen., sold to his son Thomas on the 23d of May, 1700, the land on which the house now stands together with "my house that I now dwell in and do reserve the new end of the said house and leanto adjoining to it." This is not absolute proof that the house began to be built in 1700, but this, for other reasons, seems to me likely. The southern of these peculiarly constructed houses, with pendants and projecting upper stories, stood on the four-acre wood lot of Robert Porter and his descendants, at the north-

east corner of High Street and the road to New Britain, which lot passed from Thomas to William Porter in 1711 with no mention of any house thereon. The house, whenever built, faced south, and was for many years the tavern of Captain Joseph Porter. I have his tavern sign, which bears a picture of a house on one side and on the reverse that of a goddess armed with helmet, spear, and shield, in apparel better befitting the heat of summer than the blasts of winter. She was doubtless the first goddess to bear on her shield the three grapevines of Connecticut.

A peculiarity of early New England houses, wooden chimneys lined with clay, is suggested in a vote of the town passed in 1656 "that every householder shall provide a sufficient ladder standing at his house side, reaching to the ridge of his house or within two feet, by his chimney." Certain town officers, known as "chimney viewers," were to examine the chimneys and ladders once in six weeks in winter and once a quarter in summer. Almost precisely the same vote was passed in Hartford in 1640. Wooden chimneys and thatched roofs, familiar to the settlers in the old English villages whence they came, made necessary these safeguards against fire. Brick chimneys were found in the houses of the wealthy, but wooden chimneys lined with clay, known as "catted chimneys," were common. In Hartford in 1640 "it is ordered that Jo Gening shall sweep all the chimneys and have 6^{d} for brick and 3^{d} for clay." Salem in 1638 signs an agreement for the building of a meeting-house with "one catted chimney 4 feet in height above the top of the building, the back whereof is to be of brick or stone." In Cambridge, whence our ancestors came to Hartford, it was ordered in 1631 "that no man shall build his chimney with wood, or cover his house with thatch." This town elected chimney viewers annually until 1712.

A list of all the householders of 1704 from Bird's Hill on the north down to Eighty Acre on the south, with the sites of their houses, would doubtless be about as interesting read-

ing as the pages of a modern city directory. Let us make a few selections. On the 31st of March, 1704, on news of the Indian atrocities at Deerfield a month previous, the town voted to have seven houses fortified, those of Thomas Orton, William Lewis, Howkins Hart, James Wadsworth, Lieut. John Hart, John Wadsworth, and Ensign Samuel Wadsworth, in which were to be lodged the town stock of powder, lead, bullets, flints, and half-pikes. The Orton house stood on the Frederick Andrus corner opposite the present house of Mrs. Barney, and it is an interesting question, not easily answered, whether the old house whose fast disappearing clapboards disclose a red brick lining be not the old fortified house. Early New England houses with timber frames filled in with brick were not uncommon. The William Lewis house stood on the site of the Elm Tree Inn, and tradition claims that some of its ancient beams form a part of the modern structure. The Howkins Hart house stood on the site of my own house. That of James Wadsworth on that of the late Miss Sadie Gruman; that of Lieut. John Hart on or near that of the present post-office; that of John Wadsworth a little south of the house of Judge Deming; and that of Ensign Samuel Wadsworth at the top of the hill on the right as you look down towards the old mill brook where for many years lived Deacon Sidney Wadsworth. They were all on Main Street. There had been some attempts at fortification before this. After the destruction of Schenectady by the French and Indians in 1690, and six days after the massacre at Salmon Falls in New Hampshire, the town had appointed a committee about fortifying houses, but no result therefrom is recorded. In 1674 Deacon Bull markes a charge for "a gist [joist] to y^{e} fortt gatte off y^{e} church." In 1675 for "a gist to the eyrons off y^{e} fortt gatte," and in 1676 a "sixpence to y^{e} eyron off y^{e} fortt gatte." Illustrations of ancient New England meeting-houses sometimes represent the house surrounded with a palisade with a formidable gate. Some such affair may have been our fort at the meeting-house.

Without further consideration of the ancient fortifications of the village and its public buildings, let us call at a few houses and learn what the people busied themselves about in the intervals of farm labor. If the good people of 1704 desired to build themselves a new house or repair an old one they would probably have engaged the services of Joseph Bird or of his son Samuel, who might have been found on the present site of the house of Mrs. S. E. Barney, or they could call on Deacon Isaac More, nearly opposite where I now live, or upon Lieut. John Steele. The latter might have been found where the house recently of Mrs. Samuel S. Cowles, now of Mr. Lewis C. Root, stands. His tools, as they came to Deacon Bull from time to time for repair, illustrate the rude mechanical appliances of the day, — his broad axe, breast wimbel, augers, gouge, tennant saw, fore plane, creasing plane, and snipebills. He was also the land surveyor of the village. In April, 1673, Deacon Bull mends "his staff to measure land," and in 1676 makes an iron point to said staff. This must have been the "Jacob Staff" which all very old surveyors will remember. The lieutenant was certainly reasonable in his charges. In 1674 Deacon Bull paid him one shilling for running a line. In Hartford they did not submit to any extortion. Every man was his own surveyor. The Rev. William S. Porter, quoting from the ancient records, says: "The town kept a surveyor's chain for the use of the inhabitants, subject to the following regulation: It is ordered that whosoever borrows the town chain shall pay two pence a day for every day they keep the same, and pay for mending it, if it be broken in their use." Another industry soon came into being. When the beer of old England began to give place to cider and New England rum, a very large number of barrels were needed. If the goodman desired two or three dozen for his winter's supply they might be obtained of the two coopers, John Stedman and Samuel Bronson, nearly opposite where Esquire Egbert Cowles afterward lived. Weaving, besides what was done in

a small way in almost every household, occupied the attention of several professional weavers. Samuel Smith lived on the site of the park given to the village by Miss Porter. John Root from Northampton also had his loom somewhere in the village. Other weavers were John North, a little east of the cottage of Mr. Newton Barney on the road to Hartford, John Clark, a little south of Mrs. S. E. Barney's in the northern of the three ancient houses previously mentioned, Deacon Thomas Porter, Jr., near the present site of the house of Judge Deming, and Joseph Bird. Bird and Porter charged sixpence a yard for weaving, and this in a great number of instances was the established rate. Joseph Bird was also a shoemaker. Other shoemakers were Samuel Orvis, on the west side of Main Street a little north of the house of Gustavus Cowles, Daniel Andrews, on the site of the house of Dr. Wheeler, John Newell, on or near the house of the late Elijah L. Lewis, James Gridley, on the south side of the road to Hartford just east of Poke Brook, and Samuel Woodruff, known mostly, after the English fashion, as Samuel Woodruff, cordwainer. As for the price of their products I can only say that Deacon Thomas Bull sold Daniel Andrews on the 12th day of January, 1674, four acres of land for three pairs of shoes, two for himself and one for his son John Bull. You can compute the price of shoes at your leisure.

To use all the products of numerous looms I find but one professional tailor, Thomas Porter, son of the first Robert. He continued the business of his brother John, who had died young. Let not the society ladies of today suppose that they alone have worn tailor-made garments. In 1677 Obadiah Richards made for Elizabeth Clark a waistcoat at a cost of two shillings. Probably her father, John Clark, wove and furnished the cloth. Obadiah gave up his lucrative business and removed to Waterbury, where he died before 1704. Thomas Gridley was the blacksmith of the village, and lived on the southwest corner of the present home lot of Mrs. A.

D. Vorce on the road to the old mill. Deacon Thomas Bull, blacksmith, town clerk, and man of affairs, was now dead, leaving an account book which is a mine of knowledge for the student of the early life of the village. Of professional men the Rev. Samuel Hooker had finished a life of much usefulness, and Dr. Samuel Porter was at least the most accessible physician, living on what is now the vacant lot next south of the post-office. He was son of the famous Dr. Daniel Porter, bonesetter. Thomas Thomson, Jr., the other doctor, lievd on the west side of the Mountain Spring road beyond the house of Mr. Henry C. Rice, in what must have been a quiet neighborhood.

Having now taken a hasty survey of the dwellers here, their streets, houses, and occupations, let us consider what matters of public concern they had most in mind in this year of 1704. First and foremost, they would themselves have placed the attempt to install a worthy successor in the vacant pulpit of the lamented Hooker. In my paper of last year you will find all the particulars of the unfortunate controversy you will probably care for. The attempt to settle by popular vote what scarcely two persons thought alike about and concerning which all felt most keenly was an utter failure. The opinions of these good people about each other, expressed with great vigor in town and church meetings and set down at length in the testimony preserved in the state archives, show human nature much as in later days, only more outspoken.

There was another matter of vital public importance which must have engaged their attention. On the 29th of February, 1704, in the dead of winter, when most men felt secure, Deerfield was burned and the inhabitants either killed or taken captive to Quebec by Indian savages set on by the French governor of Canada. The most familiar account of the disaster is that of the Rev. John Williams in his "Redeemed Captive," but a more circumstantial and exhaustive account may be found in the "History of Deerfield," by the aged and learned Sheldon.

In preparation for similar dangers our citizens had long been drilled in the military exercises of the day, with the rude appliances then known to the art of war. Besides the flint-lock musket of Queen Anne's day, long known as the Queen's Arm, a certain number of the privates were armed with pikes. Pike heads were made by Blacksmith Bull for Goodman Lanckton, John Steele, James Bird, and Sergeant Stanley at three shillings each. The weapon was in use in England until superseded by the bayonet, between 1690 and 1705, in France in 1703. In Markham's "Soldier's Accidence" we are instructed that the pikemen "shall have strong, straight, yet nimble pikes of Ash wood, well headed with steel . . . and the full size or length of every pike shall be fifteen foot besides the head." Another writer of the day speaks of the pikemen "as a bewtiful sight in the battell and a great terrour to the enemies. Such men in the fronte of battailes in ould tymes weare called men at armes." The pikemen were well drilled, according to the manual, to order your pike, to shoulder your pike, to port your pike, to charge your pike, to trail your pike, to recover your pike, and so on, in all twenty-seven orders.

Deacon Bull was the principal armorer of the village. For John North Senior he made a new sword costing seven shillings and sixpence. Other swords he repaired. For Robert Porter he made a halberd at an expense of three shillings. The halberd was the distinguishing arm of the sergeant, and consisted of three parts: the spear to thrust or charge in battle, the hatchet for cutting, and the hook for pulling down fascines. They are still used in the ornamental display of the Swiss Papal Guards. Fortunately our valiant soldiers had no real fighting to do against Indians or Frenchmen with musket, pike, halberd, or sword.

Besides the matter of the halberd, Robert Porter pays the deacon five shillings for "two dayes absente from training." In the next line but one of the old account book we read his

receipt of five shillings for schooling John Bull, son of the deacon, in February, 1676. Three years later he received four shillings more for the similar service. Whether Robert Porter, ancestor of the president of Yale and of the founder of a famous school, himself taught school or some member of his family taught a dame's school, I cannot say. The first known schoolmaster here was the Rev. John James, and the second was Luke Hayes, concerning whom see my paper of 1892. Prominent among the educators of that day born in this village was John Hart, son of Captain Thomas and grandson of Deacon Stephen. He was now, 1704, a tutor at Yale College, and was soon to be the minister of Killingworth. He was the first student who received the Bachelor's degree at Yale.

The habits and customs of the village, so far as they conformed to those of other towns, we have no time to consider. Early New England life in general you will find depicted with great care and vigor in the several books of Mrs. Alice Morse Earle. We have time only for the happenings in our own midst. These, so far as they come to our knowledge from court records, are apt to disclose rather the errors than the virtues of our ancestors, and must not be thought a fair picture of the land of steady habits. Minor trangressions, thus brought to light, the guardians of the village sought to correct, not by fining parties who had not a penny to pay with, or by boarding them in jail at the town's expense. They had a more effectual remedy and a cheaper, the stocks. The offender was ordered "set on a few minutes before the Thursday afternoon lecture began and kept on until a little after the close of the service." Our ancestors were wise in their day and generation, and their Thursday afternoon meetings were well attended. For hardened offenders the time was sometimes changed to training-day, with its ruder gatherings. Thomas ———, the one black sheep of an honorable family, "for his night walking . . . is adjudged to sit in the stocks one hour and a half the next training-day." Three scamps, too large a number to be ac-

commodated in one set of stocks, "for their agreeing to rob Richard Smith of his watermelons and stealing five of them in a boastful manner, bragging of the same, are sentenced to go to prison and there continue during the pleasure of the court." Another man concerned in the watermelon raid was complained of for speaking "reproachfully of the Worshipful Thomas Wells Esq. now at rest," and for a still worse offense is adjudged to suffer imprisonment . . . until the next Lecture at Hartford and to sit in the stocks during the time of the lecture." The lecture sermons were none of the shortest.

Currency, whether gold, silver, or paper, was practically unknown. When a man died and his estate was inventoried, a few shillings were sometimes found hoarded up. Business was done by barter, wheat at four shillings the bushel being the basis. It corresponded to our gold standard. Lower prices were charged with the proviso that payment should be in wheat. Indian corn was two and one-half shillings per bushel, pork three pence the pound, beef 2½, bacon 8, venison 1½, cheese 5, sugar (probably maple) 5, flax 12, wool 18, and candles 9. A whole salmon sold for one shilling. Instead of tallow candles a cheaper substitute was largely used. In 1696 the town voted that no inhabitant should be prohibited from felling pine trees in our sequestered lands for candle wood. The same right was again granted in 1703. The Rev. Francis Higginson, in his "New England's Plantation," written in the year 1629, writes: "Yea our pine-trees that are the most plentiful of all wood, doth allow us plenty of candles which are very useful in a house: and they are such candles as the Indians use, having no other, and they are nothing else but the wood of the pine tree cloven into little slices, something thin, which are so full of the moisture of turpentine and pitch, that they burn as clear as a torch."

And now with this illumination, bright enough doubtless, but smoking like Ætna, when the day's work was done, and the great spinning-wheel was giving out its drowsy hum, what

literature had the good man with which to while away the evening hours, if his taste lay in that direction? For books he had probably something theological by Increase Mather, and perchance some of the earlier works of Cotton Mather. Let us hope all the young ones were safe in bed while the lurid pictures of devils, witches, and ghosts in the "Wonders of the Invisible World" were the theme. You can learn more of this literature in my account of the library of a village blacksmith if you desire. The "New England Primer," another book doubtless on his shelves, has been so much written about of late that you will hardly care to know more of it, and perchance some of the older members of the audience may remember sufficiently their own experience.

Next to the Bible the book most frequently in use was the almanac. In this the good man noted at the proper dates information concerning his crops, his animals, and the vital statistics of his family. Each month was introduced by a couplet in doggerel verse, not altogether uninteresting. Much proverbial wisdom was scattered through it; but the main purpose of the work was to reveal the future. The farmer, from the changes of the moon and the countless maxims of the weather-wise, learned when to sow or reap, or he could find the weather already foretold with the usual precision of "about these days expect rain." He had the choice among four almanacs in the year 1704, two English and two printed in Boston. The English almanacs, of which that of the famous Partridge was the favorite, still printed the astrological diagram of the twelve houses of heaven and the positions of the twelve signs of the zodiac, and of the seven planets, — the melancholy Saturn, the benevolent Jupiter, the quarrelsome Mars, the amorous Venus, etc., deducing therefrom the events of the coming year. Partridge, from the conjunction of Saturn and Jupiter in Aries, says, "I do predict a war"; a very safe prediction so long as Louis XIV. remained on the throne of France. The favorite almanac was that of Clough, published in Boston. Knowing

his readers well he shrewdly warns the pious against all this astrology, "forasmuch as the practice thereof has not been usual in this country and the lawfulness of it is doubted by many divines . . . but take more heed to that sure word of prophecy as the Apostle Peter says." The rival almanac was the "New England Kalendar," by a Lover of Astronomy. Clough and the unknown compiler of the latter amused themselves with unpleasant criticisms of each other, which the modern critic would strongly suspect were written for advertising purposes by the same pen, as their works were printed from the same type at the same shop. Another English almanac, dealing with astrology, that of Colson, appears in an inventory of a Boston bookseller in 1700.

One other source of information about the outside world had just been given the intelligent readers of the village. On the 17th of April of this year the *Boston News-Letter,* the earliest newspaper published on this continent that had a continuous existence, began its career of seventy-two years. Copies must have reached our village and been passed from hand to hand by all eager for news from lands beyond the sea, and will tell us what the men of 1704 were thinking about and talking of in their wilderness home. The first number tells principally of the French attempts to place the pretender on the English throne, and of the brilliant successes of American over French privateers. The next week we have letters supposed to have been written from all parts of the habitable world, revealing the secret intentions of sundry kings and potentates. A fortnight later we have much royal correspondence about the Spanish succession, the crowding of 400 persons into the dungeons of the Inquisition, and Indian atrocities in Maine. On May 22d comes the news of a violent storm in London, — church spires blown down and London Bridge stopped up with the wreck of vessels. Number 9, on the 12th of June, announces a fast proclaimed by the Queen in reference to the heavy judgment of the Almighty in the ter-

rible and dreadful storm of November 26th; also of the capture of privateers, a frequent event. Number 10 gives a letter dated October 30th from Constantinople, announcing the public entry of the Grand Signior with great solemnity and "with all the ceremonies used on the like occasions," such as the beheading of the eldest son of the late Mufti. At home we have sentence of death passed on seventeen pirates, advertisements for lost goods, including one for the return of Penelope, "a well set, middle sized Madagascar Negro woman," with a flowered damask gown; also the last dying speeches of six pirates and the exhortations and prayers of the ministers at great length. In Number 11 we have several new shocks of an earthquake, and a letter to the Pope from "Adrian Saghed, by the Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, Emperor of Ethiopia, Nubia, Sheba and all the confines of Arabia &c, of Glorious Race, descending from Queen Sheba, humbling his Enemies, and defending such who have recourse to him; The Pillar of the Christian Faith, &c, King of Soldiers and Armies never subdued, Lord in power and words, with unexpressible moderation, Full Moon of his Kingdom, without any Eclipse," etc. He asked for missionaries. On the 10th of July we have more particulars of the ways of the Inquisition and an order of Queen Anne "to the master of our revels and to both companies of Comedians Acting in Drury-Lane and Lincolns-Inn-Field, to take special care that nothing be acted in either of the Theatres contrary to Religion or good manners . . . that no woman be allowed to presume to wear a visard Mask in either of the Theatres." Number 14, July 17th, contains a long and circumstantial account of the destruction of Minas, the land of Longfellow's "Evangeline." On July 31st we have more successes of Yankee privateers and further particulars of the utter wiping out of Minas. On July 24th and 31st we hear more of privateers and of the destruction of Minas. On the 7th of September, 1704, the date of our account, the news of the great event of the year was on its three-months'

journey to Boston, and had not yet reached the happy ears of the villagers. The battle of Blenheim was on the 2d of August, O. S., shattering the power of Louis XIV. and making religious freedom possible. With this account of Farmington in 1704, its men, their homes, occupations, and customs, and of the light from the outside world just breaking upon them, we must bid them a long farewell.