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FIFTH MEETING

OF

THE DANFORTH FAMILY

IN

AMERICA.

HELD IN BOSTON, SEPTEMBER 1, 1886.



BOSTON :

GEORGE E. LITTLEFIELD, 67, CORNHILL.

1886.





*George W. Moore, Esq.,  
with Miss Mary C. Beardsley*

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NUMBER  
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## FIFTH MEETING OF THE DANFORTH FAMILY.

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AGREEABLY to notice which had been widely circulated, the fifth meeting of the Danforth Family convened in the Meionaon, Boston, on Wednesday, September 1, 1886, the number present being over two hundred.

In the absence of the president, Hon. Peter S. Danforth, the meeting was called to order by the secretary, Charles C. Danforth of Concord, N.H., and William S. Danforth of Plymouth, Mass., was unanimously chosen to preside.

On taking the chair, Mr. Danforth expressed thanks for the distinction conferred, and, in a few well-chosen remarks, congratulated the company on the agreeable circumstances in which they met to renew old friendships and to form new ones; unitedly to revive the memories of our revered ancestry, and to hand down its traditions and its high principles to those who are to follow us.

Rev. Horace M. Danforth of Oswego offered a suitable and impressive prayer.

In behalf of the committee, Mr. John J. May welcomed to Boston and to the meeting the guests who, by their presence, were showing their interest in the family traditions. Though not bearing the family name, he had long been closely connected therewith; and, having of late been collating the family records, he had been charged with the duty of issuing the notices of this meeting. Of many whose names were in our record he had been unable to learn the present address, and thus, doubtless, there were some whom the notice had not reached. But

more than a thousand notices had been sent, and as these specially requested the recipient to impart the information to others, it is hoped and believed that the number is but small of those who have not been duly advised.

To these good friends, who have laid aside other duties and other pleasures to promote the pleasant duties of this occasion, we tender our thanks and a cordial welcome to the old Puritanic city. And, as many have come from a distance, it seems appropriate to direct their attention to some of the objects of especial interest. Beside the many places of public resort and amusement of which the daily prints give sufficient information, should be especially noticed the large and valuable exhibits in the Museum of Fine Arts, in the halls of the Natural History Society and of the Bostonian Society, all of which are open, at times gratuitously, to visitors. The two large buildings of the Institute of Technology, the public school buildings, many of them large, and especially those of the Latin and the English High Schools, which may challenge comparison with any similar structures anywhere; the Boston Public Library, whose large halls are already so filled as to require the larger structure soon to be provided; and the many other libraries, — the Athenæum, the Historical, the Congregational, the Theological, the Historic, Genealogical, to any of which access is easily got by such as need their use; (passing the Music Hall, once the pride of Boston, but now stripped of its great organ and surrendered to beer and tobacco) old Faneuil Hall, with the adjacent markets; and, farther north, old Christ Church, with its peal of bells and its legend of the lanterns that signalled Paul Revere to his midnight ride; near to this, old Copp's Hill burying-ground; and, near to the hall in which we are met, the old "Granary" burying-ground and the King's Chapel burying-ground beside the venerable building, itself a fine specimen of the old-style English church. In each of these cemeteries are laid members of the old families with which ours was closely allied, while opposite to the last-named is a place which will be remembered hereafter as the spot where Morton patiently wrought to develop and give to the world the greatest boon which science

has ever bestowed upon suffering humanity, — the control of pain by etherization.<sup>1</sup>

In the "Granary" burying-ground, beside many other distinguished persons, lie the parents of Benjamin Franklin, and also that ancient author whose works, it has been said, have been more often cited than any other in our language, Shakespeare alone excepted, — namely, Mother Goose.

But of all the buildings in Boston, the one perhaps of most interest to us is the Old State House, the seat of the old provincial government, in whose council chamber, recently restored to its ancient dignity, our Thomas Danforth, through a long series of years, discharged his important official duties.

Then the suburbs of Boston, their natural picturesque beauty heightened by two and a half centuries of culture, are extolled by visitors from abroad; and of these, Cambridge, the first home of the family, and Bunker Hill and Roxbury and Dorchester, the scenes of brave service by some of our progenitors, deserve our special notice.

To these and the many other attractions of our ancient and favored city, the assembled friends are cordially welcomed.

The following poem was then read by Mr. Samuel May, Jr., of Boston.

<sup>1</sup> In connection with this interesting subject, the committee announce that they have secured the unsold copies of a volume entitled "Trials of a Public Benefactor," which they will send by mail, postage paid, at the reduced price of one dollar; and one-half of the proceeds will be given to the fund for erecting memorial tablets to Nicholas Danforth and his three sons. They solicit orders for the book.

## POEM,

READ AT THE DANFORTH GATHERING, SEPTEMBER 1, 1886,  
BY SAMUEL MAY, JR.

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### INTRODUCTION.

WHEN on your branches such fair fruit I see,  
Ripened with culture, sweet as poesy,  
Whose juices might a thirst for verse requite,  
And satisfy a learned appetite,  
I marvel at your caterer's choice of me,  
An unripe greening, grafted on the tree!

The varied ills that flesh is subject to  
Came from an apple which in Eden grew;  
Where, — 'twas a portion of the tempter's plan, —  
"Holding, as 'twere, the mirror up to" man,  
To show his own satanic form therein,  
And claim us all as of his kith and kin.

Now, if ancestral secrets I rehearse,  
Tracing descent from the primeval curse,  
Your closet-skeletons might stalk abroad,  
And I would prove an apple of discord!  
If to 'this chord I should attune my lay,  
I'd strike DIS-CHORD with fingers of DIS-MAY!

Daughters and sons of Nicholas the first!  
For facts of genealogy athirst,  
Look in the mirror I hold up to view,  
And read what history hath writ for you!  
If in your genesis there is no trick,  
You're doubly then descended from Old Nick!

A conscientious genealogist  
States nought but facts, and nothing should be missed;  
But I'll be brief, and rapidly pass o'er

Your yacht-trip down the bay with Captain Noah ;  
 Your childish grievances which did occur  
 When you were playmates of Methuselah ;  
 The garden-parties, which your sweethearts planned,  
 Where David played the harp in Gideon's band ;  
 The colds you caught there (mumps, sore throats, such ills)  
 And — patients of old Job — you tried his pills ;  
 The wrestling-match you saw 'twixt Cain and Abel ;  
 Your "summer school of languages" at Babel !

In the great volume which contains these facts, —  
 Which holds a record of your sires' acts, —  
 I found your Christian names, a motley throng,  
 But for your surname I had hunted long,  
 Till my persistent searching brought to view  
 This ancient legend, which I'll read to you.

---

#### BY THE NAME OF DANFORTH.

THE time is fixed six centuries before  
 The Star of Bethlehem through midnight shone ;  
 Nebuchadnezzar waged imperial war ;  
 Belshazzar held high court in Babylon ;  
 Tyre and Phœnicia had been crushed by them,  
 And in her ashes lay Jerusalem.

A noble youth appeared upon the scene,  
 And came before the presence of the king ;  
 Himself of royal birth and gentle mien,  
 His simplest wish might summon anything.  
 But he refused their revelries to greet,  
 Condemned their orgies and declined their meat.

He prophesied a kingdom they should see  
 Surpassing all the kingdoms of mankind,  
 Which should confound their gross iniquity,  
 And into dust their graven idols grind ;

Before whose majesty no power could dwell,—  
The great Jehovah, God of Israel!

Then went this royal mandate through the land:—

He who would worship not the gods of stone,  
Which were made sacred by the king's command,  
Into the den of lions should be thrown!  
There, midst ferocious beasts with hunger grim,  
To call his chosen God to rescue him!

The satraps, who were guardians of the law,  
Against this youth its violation sought;  
And, compassing his house, they straightway bore  
Unto the king this marvellous report,—  
Upon his knees he had been found by them,  
His windows open toward Jerusalem!

Then was the sentence passed upon the youth;  
And Daniel, in the den where lions roared,  
Firm in his faith, unshaken in its truth,  
Knelt down and prayed deliverance of the Lord;  
And the Almighty knew the prophet's worth,  
And sent an angel-host to lead DAN-FORTH!

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This legend old a moral doth exhale:—  
RIGHT OVER MIGHT triumphant must prevail.  
Note how our history doth repeat the tale.

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Unto the times when Charles the First was king  
(Who claimed a right divine to govern wrong,  
Though false in word and false in everything)  
The days and facts whereof I sing, belong;  
When parliamentary power was set at naught,  
And the Star-chamber was the monarch's court;  
When yeomanry 'gainst tax and tithe rebelled,  
And Hampden was the hero of the hour;



When Cavaliers with kingly favors swelled,  
And Roundheads taught the Cavaliers their power ;  
When Cromwell and his Ironsides were nigh, —  
Who “trusted God and kept their powder dry”!

Religious forms and rites this despot made,  
And sent this edict forth, with royal threat, —  
Their sovereign liege from them who disobeyed  
Would force obedience with the bayonet!  
And, if the blast of war would not persuade,  
He'd summon to his work the scaffold's aid.

The yeomen, goaded by tyrannic sway,  
Vowed to no popish creed they'd bend the knee ;  
Could they not worship in their chosen way,  
They'd build their house of God beyond the sea ;  
Where savage tribes and beasts were nought to them,  
For Heaven would guard their new Jerusalem.

So they embarked, leaving their all behind, —  
Save godliness, — to seek another world.  
A guardian power subdued the waves and wind,  
Till, safe at anchorage, their sails were furled.  
That faith which Daniel knew — it came to pass —  
Brought DAN-FORTH then — our own Saint Nicholas!

Thus was transplanted our ancestral tree ;  
In yonder field its sturdy form took root,  
Then from its noble trunk came branches three,  
And from their life grew vigorous stem and shoot,  
Under whose sheltering leaves, from year to year,  
Buds swelled and burst in bloom ; — the fruit is here!

This 'is the story of the parent tree,  
Hardy through grace, robust through sacrifice.  
Do you seek knowledge of the branches three?  
Does not this harvest of their fruit suffice?

Surely on thorns grapes ne'er are found, I wot, —  
And figs from thistles never can be got!

The eldest branch was trained toward the law,  
To bloom in fields of literary fame;  
From Harvard's hands triumphal bays he wore,  
She saw his genius, and adorned his name;  
And Fortune, smiling with propitious fate,  
Gave him the rudder of the Ship of State.

The second branch spread over churchyard ground,  
Sheltering alike the ignorant and wise;  
And Faith's bright tendrils gently twined around,  
Like Jacob's ladder leading toward the skies;  
Towering with graceful strength it seemed to say,  
"To fairer realms than these I point the way."

The youngest stretched a leafy guardianship  
O'er trackless wastes of Massachusetts' soil,  
Where Freedom's loyal votaries might equip  
Homes for posterity by honest toil —  
Foreshadowing thriving cities on her grounds,  
Fixing our Commonwealth by metes and bounds.

Country, Religion, Homes! need there be more  
To bless man's lot? what further can there be?  
Now that Religion's free from shore to shore,  
Now that our Country spreads from sea to sea, —  
We read the legacy in History's glass,  
Bequeathed to us by our Saint Nicholas!

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The gracious motto, "SICUT PATRIBUS  
SIT DEUS NOBIS," crowns our City's Arms  
(As God was with our fathers, so with us  
May he preside, to shield us from all harms).  
With you, dear friends, a Guardian by day,  
A Sentinel by night, may He abide always.

## ADDRESS,

READ BY REV. HENRY A. HAZEN, AUTHOR OF THE HISTORY OF  
BILLERICA.<sup>1</sup>

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JOSIAH QUINCY well said, "Of all the affections of man those which connect him with ancestry are among the most natural and generous. They enlarge the sphere of his interests, multiply his motives to virtue, and give intensity to his sense of duty to generations to come, by the perception of obligation to those which are past." To those who have assembled in so considerable numbers to renew old friendships and to form new ones on the well recognized basis of interest in a common ancestry, it seems needless to urge the wisdom of studying family history, and of seeking thereby to perpetuate the memory of the worthies who have occupied by turns the stage of human action and duty before our day. But while we enjoy the study, we may, and should, recognize our obligation to those who have set the example, have promoted in us and others the fondness for the study of family history and local history, and have done so much to facilitate the pleasant work by gathering the means, and by offering the use thereof freely to the public.

The New England Historic, Genealogical Society — an active and efficient pioneer in the work — was founded in 1845, and from humble beginning has rapidly increased its membership and its means of usefulness. The building bought and fitted

<sup>1</sup> This address, prepared at short notice, is necessarily a compilation from many sources, the author's own words being often adopted. The authorities most resorted to are Palfrey's History of New England, Paige's History of Cambridge, Hazen's History of Billerica, and Drake's Town of Roxbury. As it has not been practicable in every instance to designate the source of the several statements, it is hoped that this acknowledgment will be deemed sufficient.

up for its occupation in 1870 was then thought of ample size for its wants for many years. But already the need of wider accommodations is felt.

In the list of presidents of this society are the names of two gentlemen of our kindred, Col. Almon Danforth Hodges, long a respected merchant, first in Providence and then in Boston, where also he was for many years the president of the Washington National Bank; and Hon. William Whiting, a leading member of the Boston bar, a gentleman to whom the country owes recognition of honorable and valuable service. Soon after the beginning of the late war he wrote and printed a volume on "The War Powers of the President, and the legislative powers of Congress in relation to rebellion, treason, and slavery."

President Lincoln found valuable assistance in the discharge of his arduous duties from that book. He summoned Mr. Whiting to Washington, and invited him to act as Solicitor to the War Department. In that position his services were of great value to Secretary Stanton, to the President, and to the country. To that work he devoted his time and energies, and at the end refused to receive a single dollar of compensation, although in accepting the office he had sacrificed a very large income derived from professional work. The very statement of the facts commands our tribute of gratitude and respect. His fellow-citizens elected Mr. Whiting a member of Congress, but he died before the time arrived for assuming the official duties.

Both these gentlemen took great interest in genealogic study, and both printed volumes of their own family history.

Should any here present so desire, they are cordially invited to visit the building of the New England Historic, Genealogical Society, in Somerset Street, where in the upper hall may be seen the portraits of both of these gentlemen in the congenial company of other ex-presidents thereof, including our beloved and honored war-governor, John A. Andrew, and the present president, Hon. Marshall P. Wilder, whose useful labors in the field of agriculture and horticulture have made his name familiar on both sides the Atlantic and throughout our country to the Pacific coast.

Thus the study of one's own family genealogy leads continually to the wider fields of general history.

Returning to the family narrative, we should remember that for the first movement which united us in this Association we are indebted to the late Joseph Danforth of Tyngsboro' and to his family, two of whom are members of the Committee of Arrangements of the present meeting. They sent abroad the invitations which assembled the first meeting in Lowell, in 1879. This was followed by a second, in 1880, and a third, in 1881, both in Lowell. At this third meeting an interesting address was made by Rev. Edward Danforth Curtis, now resident in Michigan, who was expected also to address us on this occasion — another who had engaged to do so suddenly failing us. But at the last Mr. Curtis also has been obliged to recede from the appointment. At that third meeting in Lowell, also, we listened to the feeble voice of a slender, invalid lady, who read a few pages from a full record, which through many years she had been studiously compiling. That voice, though physically weak, spoke with the force which comes of clear thought, generous enthusiasm, and a great, loving heart. Mrs. Danforth Raymond was a lady of rare mind, of large attainments, and of a most generous spirit; and when she died in March last, the community in which she had lived, her family, and this society experienced an irreparable loss.

At the fourth meeting of this society, in Boston, in October, 1882, the Hon. Charles Pinckney Danforth, who had been from the beginning its efficient president, declined a re-election.

At that meeting the work of compiling the family history was assigned to a committee. A great deal has been done (largely with the aid of the excellent lady just mentioned), and a large amount of valuable and interesting material has been gathered, — enough to form a volume, — but many gaps in the continuous record remain to be filled. Many who have been applied to for needful details have kindly complied and thereby rendered valuable assistance; but, also, many have failed to respond. Some are perhaps deterred by diffidence; some, because of other cares and duties; and some, it is sad to think,

through indifference to the matter. To us it seems a positive duty to do what we reasonably can to save from oblivion the meritorious acts of honorable ancestors. And since the records of such are very interesting to us, we ought to be willing to supply contemporaneous history, which will be equally interesting to those who come after us.

It was expected that our fifth meeting would be held in Syracuse, two years ago. There would have been a special propriety in our meeting in 1884, because then was completed the 250th year since Nicholas Danforth came from Old England to the New. But unable to accomplish that, we may felicitate ourselves on our assembling at a time when Harvard College is about to observe the 250th anniversary of its founding. In initiating and establishing that now venerable institution of learning, our great ancestor took an active part; and in its support and management his three sons — the oldest especially — participated largely.

Some remarks on this subject will come in due chronologic order.

It seems appropriate to this occasion to recite briefly what we have learned of the early life and of the home of Nicholas Danforth in England.

A friend of ours, temporarily residing in England, visited in our behalf, in the autumn of 1882, the old town of Framlingham. It is about 90 miles north-east of London, and only about 12 miles from the shore of the North Sea. It has now only about 3,000 inhabitants, but was once a place of great importance. The chief features of the old town now are the great church and the extensive ruins of a once magnificent castle. The church was founded about the year 1400. It is built of black flint. Its length is 125 feet. The chancel is 68 feet wide; its height, 37 feet; and that of the nave, 44 feet. It has a massive tower 100 feet high. The whole effect is very grand. Within are some very interesting monuments. It has a clock which — curiously enough — had no dial, but a set of chimes for sounding the hours and quarter-hours, and a peal of eight mellow-toned bells.

The old castle had walls 8 feet thick and 44 feet high, with 13 square towers rising 14 feet higher. Its inner court is more than an acre in extent, and is now occupied by an almshouse and a workhouse, both built of material taken from the old walls. The venerable structure has a long and interesting history. Some photographic pictures have been lent to us, which give some idea of the appearance of the church and castle. The castle was surrounded by three moats or ditches, and had a park attached whose circuit was three miles.

But in the days of Nicholas Danforth the castle had long been dismantled, and its neighborhood was occupied by a rural and pastoral people, preferring the arts of peace, yet ready to resist any infringement of their rights.

Such was the birthplace and home of Nicholas Danforth. Here at about thirty years of age he married; here were born to him seven children, of whom one, his daughter Mary, died early; and here his wife, too, died, five years before he left the old home for the new.

What was his position in society? In what estimation was he held by his townsmen?

Cotton Mather, in his book called "Magnalia," remarks that "he was a Gentleman of such Estate and Repute that it cost him a considerable sum to escape Knighthood . . . and of such Esteem in the Church that he procured that famous Lectureship at Framlingham where he had a fine Mannour."

The statement is a greatly exaggerated one, and has helped to give currency to expectations for which there is no foundation. Some have fancied that there is a large amount of wealth in England awaiting the claims of the descendants of Nicholas Danforth. Investigation shows such an idea to be entirely unfounded.

It is true that King James, who "like all the Stuarts suffered from a chronic lack of money," resorted to many arbitrary devices to get it: he sold peerages, created baronetcies, and finally compelled all persons who had an income of £40 or more, derived from land, to accept knighthood or pay a fine. Charles I. continued these exactions, and quite probably

Nicholas Danforth may have been marked as one of many victims. Whether he paid the fine, or escaped it by leaving England, we have no means of deciding. But it does not prove him to be wealthy. It was levied on an income of £40, or \$200, that sum then being equivalent to \$400 or \$500 now. Moreover, when he fled the kingdom, bringing six young children to be provided for in their new home, he unquestionably converted into ready money all his property that he could dispose of; and all that he left behind was forfeited, and would certainly be seized to gratify the impecunious king's need of money and the persecuting bishop's venomous hatred of non-conformists.

We learn by his father's will, and sundry conveyances, that he owned two cottages and several acres of land. He was in comfortable circumstances. Like many of his suffering countrymen he protested against the bigotry and the oppression of the rulers, both spiritual and temporal, who were striving to bring the church, which at best was but half reformed, back to subserviency to Rome. He joined with others in evading their stringent edicts, and was, with many others, instrumental in establishing a "lectureship" in Framlingham, as was done in many other places. The method is thus explained by Thomas Carlyle: "Many parts of the country," he writes, "were thought by the Puritans to be insufficiently supplied with able and pious preachers, and a plan was devised in 1624 for raising, by subscription, a fund for supporting good ministers in destitute places. . . . The originator of this scheme was Dr. Preston, a man of influence. Many London merchants, almost all of whom were Puritans, took it up, and gradually others throughout England. Considerable funds were subscribed for this object. . . . Accordingly we find lecturers in various places . . . often in market-places on market days; often on Sunday afternoons, supplementing the regular priest; or as "running lecturers," now here, now there, over a certain district. In a few years they had so increased that Archbishop Laud took them seriously in hand and hunted most of them out."

The reverend Thomas Shepard began his ministry thus as a



lecturer, and being stopped by Laud, or his minions, in one place after another, was finally forbidden to preach at all, under heavy penalties, whereupon he complied with the solicitations of friends to come to America. One of these friends was Nicholas Danforth, who could sympathize very feelingly with the worthy minister, because of the similarity of their hard fortunes in the mother-country. Thomas Shepard became minister of the church in New Towne, now Cambridge, and the beautiful "Shepard Memorial Church" there fitly commemorates his valuable service and the love and respect of his contemporaries and their descendants.

But Nicholas Danforth, though not of the gentry nor very wealthy, was — what is quite as much to the purpose — a trusted and respected citizen. Of this we have many proofs. By his fellow-citizens he was elected, year after year, as one of the trustees of the town lands and property. We have copies of sundry leases of these lands, bearing his signature, the peculiar terms whereof, and the quaint forms and expressions therein, are interesting because of their novelty and strangeness to us.

In these and other documents he is styled "yeoman." With us this term may have a vague meaning; not so then and there.

Mr. Alison in his "History of Europe" explains it. He says: "The conquest of England by the Normans bore with greatest severity on the Saxon proprietors of the soil. . . . The native Britons, who had long before been subjugated by the Romans, were serfs. But the descendants of the free Anglo-Saxon and Danish settlers, who had acquired independent habits from the enjoyment of centuries of liberty, though now robbed of their lands and prevented from rising into higher stations, yet formed a sturdy and powerful body, which neither perished in the obscurity of ignoble bondage, nor was cast down in the contests of feudal power. It was from this class that the yeomanry of England took their rise."

In Dr. Rees's *Encyclopædia* the definition of yeomanry is "the first or highest degree among the plebeians of England; next in order to the gentry; freeholders who have land of their own."

We are not told just what obstructions Danforth had to overcome in escaping from England, but we know that many, like Shepard, were greatly hindered. But he made good his escape, and with three daughters and three sons, whose ages varied from six to sixteen, he crossed the ocean and established himself at "New Towne." With him in the "Griffin," of London, a ship of 300 tons' burden, came 200 passengers, including his brother-in-law, Rev. Zechariah Symmes, afterward minister of Charlestown; Rev. John Lothrop, who became minister of Scituate; and Mrs. Ann Hutchinson, whose misdirected zeal created, soon, no small stir among the churches.

By the same ship came the tyrannical order of the Privy Council for the surrender and return of the charter held by the Massachusetts Bay Company—an order which the brave and shrewd colonists were little disposed to obey, and which they devised many ways to evade. Its effect would be to rob them of their lands, with all the improvements made by their own labor, and to make them homeless or dependent for shelter on the caprice of the agents of the crown.

With characteristic energy Danforth came speedily to the front. An original member of the church gathered by "the faithful and famous Shepard"; admitted freeman in February, 1635-36; he was selectman from 1635 to 1637; and a deputy to the General Court in 1636, and until his death in 1638. In 1637 he was one of the twelve appointed "to take order for a College at New Towne."

The genial and learned annalist, Mr. William Thaddeus Harris, in an article in the *New England Historic, Genealogical Journal*, calls him "the progenitor of a family in New England, whose successive representatives have been more than ordinarily distinguished in their day and generation, and whose name, honorable alike in church and state, the ornament and the oracle of each of the learned professions, has been worthily perpetuated even to our own day."

A small morsel of "taffy," for which we, assembled on this occasion as a "Mutual Admiration Society," must be duly grateful!

Nicholas Danforth died in April, 1638, only three and a half years after his arrival. But that time had been actively and usefully filled.

When the father thus laid down his work, it was not to be abandoned or neglected. We can well understand that both by precept and example he had taught watchfulness and energy to his children. Certain it is that they possessed these qualities.

It is interesting to picture to ourselves the condition and the feelings of the group of brothers and sisters thus left orphans, strangers in a strange land.

Of course the care of the household devolved largely upon Elizabeth, then in her twentieth year, and her sister Anna, two years younger. But the death of their mother, in England, nine years before, had long ago made needful their services in the family; and doubtless their training had developed their talents. And though in a strange land, they were not among strangers or unserviceable friends. In eighteen months Elizabeth married Andrew Belcher of Sudbury, who soon removed to Cambridge, where he was licensed to "keepe a house of publique entertainment." This was the famous "Blue Anchor Tavern," at the corner of what are now called Brighton and Mount Auburn Streets. The license and the holding were continued after his decease in 1673 by his widow, and later by his son Andrew. The late Dr. William Newell, of the First Church in Cambridge, in a historical discourse in 1848, says of Andrew Belcher, that "nothing remains to designate his last resting-place but a foot-stone bearing the initials A. B. by the side of his wife Elizabeth."

Five years later her sister Anna married Matthew Bridge. He was son of that leading citizen, John Bridge, fast friend, both in England and America, of Rev. Thomas Shepard. His ideal figure in bronze has lately been set up in the public square of Cambridge, by his descendant, Gen. Samuel James Bridge, who gave also to the University the beautiful bronze statue of John Harvard, and whom we are glad to have with us to-day.

The delay in Anna's marriage until her twenty-fourth year — a late date in those times, when good wives were in quick

demand — was doubtless caused by her devotedness to keeping up the old homestead for the benefit of her brothers. But her married life was extended to fifty-six years, and, surviving her husband, she reached the eighty-fifth year of her age. Her brother Thomas married in the same year as herself; and her younger sister, Lydia, having, a year earlier and in her nineteenth year, married William Beaman of Saybrook, Conn., had gone thither, and that was thenceforward her home. There she died at the age of sixty-two. Her name appears as grantee of lands bought from Joshua, the son of Uncas, an Indian sachem.

The youngest of the family, Jonathan, was now sixteen years old. A vigorous, active youth, soon to be pioneer of new settlements and the surveyor of farms, of townships, and of more extended tracts, far and near, he was doubtless well able to take care of himself.

His brother Samuel, two years older, who had been by his mother in his childhood dedicated to the Church, had been consigned early to the special training of the good minister, and was now pursuing his studies in the college.

The three daughters, changing their name in marriage, furnish comparatively little for the annalist of this family. But a very brief tracing of the lines of descent shows alliances with some of the most influential families of the times, including some names renowned in history.

Among these are the Belchers, one of whom was a wealthy and liberal merchant of Boston, who held many public offices, and whose reputation was not impaired by the fact that, once at least, one of his ships brought from Africa a cargo of slaves, which found ready sale in the good old Puritanical town.

The Belchers were staunch loyalists, and held many offices under the crown. One was royal governor, first of Massachusetts, and afterward of New Jersey, whence on his death his body was brought in great state to Cambridge, and laid in the old cemetery.

Another, in the next generation, was lieutenant-governor and chief-justice of Nova Scotia. On him devolved the painful duty of making the decree which expelled from their homes

those unhappy people whose story is told in Longfellow's "Evangeline." And it was a descendant of these, Sir Edward Belcher, vice-admiral in the British navy, who was sent in 1852 commanding the expedition in search of Sir John Franklin.

A descendant of our Elizabeth was Sampson Salter Blowers, who was associated with John Adams and Josiah Quincy as counsel for the British soldiers indicted for murder in the "Boston Massacre." He was afterward chief-justice of Nova Scotia, and attained the great age of one hundred years and seven months.

Again, the Remingtons, who held high positions and from whom are descended the Ellerys (one a signer of the Declaration of Independence); the Danas, Richard H., senior, the poet, and Richard H., junior, the author of "Two Years before the Mast," and the brave advocate of the captured fugitive slaves; and the Channings, renowned doctors of divinity and of medicine, of whom it was wittily said that "one preached and the other practised."

The Olivers were near of kin. One of them was lieutenant-governor, and by his loyalty so incurred the popular displeasure that his effigy was one day hanged on "Liberty tree," while, soon after, the house of his kinsman, Governor Hutchinson, was attacked by the mob and burned, with its elegant furniture and valuable library.

Of another, Hon. Peter Oliver, a very interesting paper, read before the Historic, Genealogical Society, has lately been published in their periodical publication. He was an able man, wealthy and generous, and he ably promoted the iron manufacture in the colony. He was made chief-justice of the supreme court. Because he refused to make some concessions to the popular demands he was impeached, his estates confiscated, and he went to England to abide and to die, as did also his son, a very able physician.

But time would fail us to barely enumerate the men and women thus connected by family ties, whose names are remembered with gratitude and honor.

Among such are the Greens, renowned as printers through

several generations. The eldest printed Eliot's Indian Bible for Harvard College, and in their work they were associated with Judge Samuel Danforth in Cambridge, Mather Byles in Boston, and in Philadelphia with Benjamin Franklin.

Other such names are the Bradstreets, Lyndes, Byfields, Russells, Fitches, Garfields, from whom descended our martyr president.

Thomas Danforth, oldest son of Nicholas, was no common man. That he possessed the respect of his contemporaries is shown by the many offices to which he was called. That he was a man of energy, of decision, of sound judgment, and of tact, is proved by the success with which those trusts were fulfilled.

In 1643, at twenty-one years of age, he was admitted freeman, which implies that he was a church member. In 1650, he was treasurer of Harvard College, which office he held nineteen years, and during much of that time the chief direction of its affairs fell on him; and the historian of the college pays high tribute to his fidelity and good judgment, acknowledging also a valuable gift in his will of lands in Framingham, where at one time he held several thousand acres. For two terms he was a deputy (representative) to the General Court, and in 1659 was chosen one of the assistants (councillors) of the Executive, to which office he was annually elected for twenty years. Then in 1679, and until the dissolution of the colonial government in 1686, he was deputy-governor, associated with the venerable Bradstreet. In 1684 he lacked only sixty-one votes of being chosen governor—which office he ought to have held, and surely would have had, were it not that the worthy Bradstreet, though superannuated, still clung to the honors of office; or else that, cautious and conservative as he was, he was timidly afraid to resign the authority to the progressive Danforth. But though Danforth was only deputy in name, he really exerted the influence belonging to the higher position. During the same period of seven years, he held the responsible and difficult position of President of Maine, which had recently become a province subordinate to Massachusetts. Thither he went in

March, 1780, invested with full powers, and proclaimed his authority to the assembled freeholders at York, exhibited his commission, and established his government.

In the troublous times which preceded the subversion of the charter, Mr. Danforth stood forward as the unflinching advocate of the rights of the people. His zeal was rewarded by exclusion from office during the brief administration of Dudley and the subsequent usurpation by the despotic Andros. But when the people, impatient of restraint, and emboldened by the news of the revolution, were ready to rebel, Thomas Danforth seized the opportunity, wrote and sent a despatch to Governor Andros, who had retreated to his fort on Fort Hill, saying that he could no longer restrain the people, and demanding surrender. The frightened governor, like Davy Crockett's coon, came down at once, and was, by Danforth and his associates, marched down King Street to Long Wharf, and sent thence to the Castle in the harbor—a prisoner; and Danforth and his colleagues were escorted up King Street to the Old State House, at its head, and there resumed the official functions from which they had been arbitrarily expelled.

During more than thirty years, Mr. Danforth was recorder of Middlesex County, and during a part of the time its treasurer; from 1662 to 1679 he was commissioner from Massachusetts to the New England Confederacy, which negotiated treaties with the Indians, and from 1690 to 1692 was lieutenant-governor of New Hampshire.

In 1692 he was chosen one of the associate judges of the Superior Court, in which office he continued until his death. It has been erroneously stated that he promoted the trials for witchcraft, which formed for a brief period a dark passage in the history of New England. The truth is that he was not a member of the special court which met at Salem, and which convicted nineteen hapless victims who were put to death. He was afterward one of the judges at a regular session where several were tried for witchcraft, and three were condemned. These, however, were afterward released, and it is denied that Danforth agreed with his colleagues to convict. They had

been members of the special court at Salem, and had a character for consistency herein to maintain, as he had not. And it is certain that he exerted an influence in producing the change in public feeling which forever terminated the unhappy delusion.

His wife was Mary, daughter of Henry Withington of Dorchester, by whom he had twelve children. But his sons all died in his lifetime, leaving no issue, and his posterity survives in the female branches only.

Samuel, the second son of Nicholas, was, from his childhood, dedicated to the ministry, and seems to have taken kindly to his destiny. On the death of his father, being then in his twelfth year, he was placed in the care of the Rev. Mr. Shepard, who faithfully discharged his trust. Duly fitted for college, he completed the course and graduated in 1643, being a member of the second class which received the honors of that youthful institution. "His early piety," we are told, "answered the pious education bestowed upon him." He served as tutor in the college about five years, pursuing meantime his studies in divinity, and in 1650 was ordained colleague to John Eliot, the revered pastor of the First Church in Roxbury, whose labors for the red men occupied much of his time, and procured for him the title of "Apostle to the Indians."

Here for twenty-four years, and until his death in November, 1674, he labored assiduously in his sacred calling. His dwelling was near the "Greyhound Tavern." He exerted his influence to have such persons only keep houses of entertainment as would "keep good order and manners in them," and when from his study window "he saw any town-dwellers trifling there, he would go over and chide them away." Mr. Drake, in his history of Roxbury, quaintly adds, "what with the venerable Apostle Eliot on one side, and the godly Danforth upon the other, the tavern roisterers would seem to have been under a pretty thorough surveillance."

Danforth's sermons were usually enriched with forty or fifty passages of Scripture. Cotton Mather says "he was very affectionate in his manner of preaching, and seldom left the



pulpit without tears." He gave much attention to astronomical study. He published a series of almanacs, and a particular account of the comet of 1664. His wife was daughter of "the famous Mr. Wilson, the first pastor of the Old Church in Boston," and by her he had twelve children.

In the church record, under date of Nov. 19, 1674, Eliot writes, "Our reverend pastor, Mr. Samuel Danforth, sweetly rested from his labors"; and he closes an elaborate testimony of his faithfulness with these words, "My brother Danforth made the most glorious end that I ever saw."

His funeral "was attended with a great confluence," and his remains were laid in Governor Dudley's tomb.

Of the youngest son, Jonathan, the record is shorter, but it is a condensed narrative of active usefulness. He was one of the first settlers of Billerica, being then in the twenty-fifth year of his age. In the concise words of the historian of the town, "in view of his long life and many and varied services, he might be recognized as the father of the town. His skill as a surveyor gave him employment far and wide. For forty years he probably surveyed every land-grant in Billerica." His descriptions fill 200 pages, in his own "very clear and handsome handwriting, in the volume of land-grants. In locating grants and making surveys, as settlement went on north and west, he was constantly employed," "many of his 'plots' are preserved in the State Archives," and his surveys extended into the State of New Hampshire.

He was town clerk during twenty-one years, and the competent authority before quoted writes, "He gave character to the system which remained substantially unchanged for 200 years. Few records made to-day are as clear and easy to read as are those of Danforth."

"He was the life-long and trusted friend of his pastor, Mr. Whiting, who survived him only five months."

He was selectman, representative, and captain of the militia company.

In 1675 his house was made one of the garrison houses to which, in case of an attack by the Indians, the people should

fly for shelter, and for the defence of which a detail of soldiers was made. In the Rev. Mr. Hazen's admirable History of Billerica is a picture of the old "garrison house," the mansion of Jonathan Danforth; situated on a slight elevation, it commanded a prospect northward for a long distance. The house was destroyed in 1880 to make room for a modern structure. Our friend Dr. Isaac N. Danforth of Chicago secured pieces of the huge oaken floor timbers, and has caused to be made from them some pieces of furniture, valuable heirlooms for his children; and the antique chair which our president occupies to-day is made from the same venerated material.

By his first wife, Elizabeth Poulter, he had eleven children, of whom six were sons. But only two of these, Jonathan and Samuel, left issue.

Thus it is seen that all the descendants of Nicholas who bear the family name trace their lineage from either Samuel, the minister of Roxbury, or Jonathan, the pioneer of Billerica. The descendants of Jonathan are by far the more numerous.

The records of later years show that the spirit of enterprise and of faithful service has been perpetuated from father to son, and that daughters, wives, and mothers have inherited and renewed, through successive generations, that fidelity to the all-important duties of home and neighborhood, of church and school, whereby alone the foundations of society can be securely laid in good morals and sound principles.

Evidence abounds in town records and in rolls of military service that members of this family have borne their share in the duties of citizenship; but we have constant cause for regret that family records are not more frequent and more full in supplying details. Hereby is seen the importance of gathering and perpetuating the narrative of past and passing events; and the request for such details is renewed and urged by the committee on genealogy. They would gladly have personal memoirs of every adult member of the family, not generally for publication, but for selection at their discretion.

It unfortunately happens that of two or three of the very important groups, the genealogists have as yet been unable to

make close connection with the parent stock, while yet confident that such connection exists, and they are hopeful of success in their search for the proof thereof.

There are in New England some families bearing the name, who are descended, not from our Nicholas, but from William Danforth, who crossed the ocean about 1670 and settled at Newbury, Massachusetts.

The compilers of our genealogy preserve the record of such of these families as come to their knowledge, because it often is needful to study this record in order to decide to which line belong the new accessions to their roll; and because, also, it is not improbable that hereafter the connection in England of the two families may be ascertained.

In studying thus the lives of our departed worthies, some of whom have borne an important part in the history of the country, one sees with regret that no suitable memorial exists of any one of them all.

No gravestone, however humble, is to be found of Nicholas, or of his sons Thomas and Samuel. In the old graveyard at Billerica, careful search enables one to find the gravestones of Jonathan and of his two wives — one on either side; but even these are so inconspicuous that only by careful search are they to be found.

It is worthy of consideration whether this state of things should continue.

In conclusion, the officers of your association and the committee of arrangements of this festival, congratulating their assembled sisters and brothers that now we meet under so pleasant auspices, would express the hope that such re-unions may be repeated, and may tend to develop the kindly regard and mutual respect which more intimate acquaintance with the good, the true, the faithful, the beneficent, is sure to promote and insure.

THE MEETING proceeded to choose officers of the association, to continue in office until the next meeting, and until others are in like manner chosen.

On motion, the President appointed as nominating committee Hon. Charles P. Danforth, Mrs. Lucy N. Coleman, and Hon. Keyes Danforth, who reported the following list of officers, and these were unanimously elected:—

*President:*

HON. KEYES DANFORTH of Williamstown, Mass.

*Vice-Presidents:*

HON. CHARLES DANFORTH of Gardiner, Me.

HON. CHARLES PINCKNEY DANFORTH of Nashua, N.H.

HON. WILLIAM CULLEN DANFORTH of Barnard, Vt.

HON. GEORGE FRANKLIN DANFORTH of Rochester, N.Y.

EDWARD DANFORTH, Esq., of Elmira, N.Y.

REV. JAMES R. DANFORTH of Philadelphia, Pa.

RODERICK F. DANFORTH, Esq., of Washington, D.C.

ALBERT HALLER DANFORTH, Esq., of Chicago, Ill.

ASA HAMILTON DANFORTH, Esq., of Washington, Ill.

ROYAL DANFORTH RICHARDSON, Esq., of Pleasanton, Ind.

JOSIAH DANFORTH, Esq., of Oshkosh, Wis.

JONATHAN F. DANFORTH, Esq., of Reedsburg, Wis.

DR. JOHN DANFORTH WOOD of Yankton, Dak.

EDWIN DANFORTH, Esq., of San Francisco, Cal.

CORAL HERBERT DANFORTH, Esq., of Tacoma, W.T.

*Recording Secretary and Treasurer:*

COL. CHARLES C. DANFORTH of Concord, N.H.

*Corresponding Secretary:*

HON. WILLIAM SEAVER DANFORTH of Plymouth, Mass.

On motion of Rev. Horace M. Danforth, seconded by Edward Danforth, Esq., it was voted that a committee of five be appointed to consider the matter of erecting tablets commemorative of Nicholas Danforth and his three sons, severally, with authority to solicit moneys in behalf of this association, and to use the same, as also any other funds of this association not otherwise appropriated, at their discretion in executing the work designated.

The chair appointed as this committee Gen. Samuel J. Bridge of Boston, William S. Danforth, Esq. of Plymouth, Mrs. Enoch S. Rand of Lowell, Dr. I. N. Danforth of Chicago, and John J. May of Boston.

On motion of Rev. George L. Perin, seconded by Hon. Charles P. Danforth, it was voted that a committee of five be appointed to select or devise a motto for the Danforth coat-of-arms, and to report at our next meeting.

The chair appointed Hon. Charles Danforth of Gardiner, Me., Rev. James R. Danforth of Philadelphia, Miss Effie Danforth of Peru, O., Hon. George F. Danforth of Rochester, N.Y., and John J. May of Boston.

On motion of Mr. May it was voted that these committees have power respectively to fill vacancies and to add to their number.

A partial report of recent necrology was read by Mr. May, but, as this will be embodied in the volume of family history, it is omitted herein.

The company then repaired to the adjoining hall, where a dinner admirably prepared and arranged, and in all respects satisfactory, was served by Mr. Thomas D. Cook, caterer, of No. 23, Avon Place.

Grace having been said by Rev. Mr. Perin, the repast received due attention and approval, after which the President, Hon. Keyes Danforth, calling to order, made a brief address, expressing his gratification in the meeting. He spoke of his oldest brother, the late Charles Danforth of Washington, and of his brother-in-law, the late George H. Browne, Esq., of Providence, both able and honored men. In the office of the last-named he had studied his profession.

He added that an appointment in Providence required his departure, and he had requested Mr. William S. Danforth to resume the chair, and Mr. May to serve as toastmaster.

Mr. May remarked that the spirit of energy and enterprise which sent our forefathers across the sea, to subdue wild lands and wilder men, has in the later days sent their sons across rivers, mountains, and lakes, to found cities and develop the vast resources of the land, — and called on

Dr. Isaac Newton Danforth of Chicago, who gave some very interesting statistics of that great city, its many churches and schools, as well as its great markets for lumber, breadstuffs, cattle and hogs. He contradicted the too common belief that Chicago is not an orderly city, and cited the case of the anarchists now under sentence of death for their crimes. He added "the packers say that they utilize every part of a hog except his *squeal*,—the anarchists will find use for that. Beside the public school, with their eighty-five thousand scholars, we have seven medical schools, graduating doctors enough to keep the entire nation under treatment, and five theological schools, with diverse opinions sufficient to keep the whole world alive and active. But to me who love Boston, and am so complete a Yankee as to have had homes in four of the New England States, the crowning merit of Chicago is that it is a Yankee city."

With the remark that great as Chicago and the Great West are, we are not inclined to overlook our own New England and its traditions, the Rev. James Danforth of Tyngsboro' was called on, who said that New England is safe in her history, and we safe in appealing to it. It is noticeable that the Danforths in successive generations had had representatives in the ministry. It is often said that in the good old times clergymen exercised a much greater influence on the people than now. Doubtless, in a certain way, they did. Their statements may have carried a greater weight of authority then, but in these days the influence of arguments addressed to the reasoning powers, rather than to fear, ought to be and will be more effectual. He was glad that we are coming to give increased attention to family history, and felt sure that increased acquaintance with those who have been respected will exert an elevating influence.

Mr. May remarked that what had been said of the schools of Chicago reminded him that we have with us a Chicago school-teacher, and introduced Miss Juliet Danforth, who said that she had been looking forward to this meeting with great interest, and was realizing her expectations. But we have to go from

home to learn home news, and she had now learned much that she did not before know about Chicago schools. But this she had known, that a large proportion of the principals of those schools were women, and very efficient and successful managers they are. She was one of those who regretted that the daily use of the Bible was discontinued in the schools, but the experiment must be tried; let us hope that no harm come of it. She had always felt herself a very humble member of this great family, but the influence of this occasion would inspire her to renewed effort.

Rev. Mr. Richey of Watertown, N.Y., was next called up. He expressed unfeigned pleasure in meeting so many of the large tribe, with one of whom he had, nearly a half-century ago, become very closely connected. She was Betsey, the daughter of Luther, who was the son of Jonathan, who was the son of Jonathan. For forty-seven years he enjoyed the society of that excellent woman, and had looked forward to attending with her one of these family gatherings, perhaps in Syracuse, perhaps in Boston. But two years ago she was called to join the larger assemblage of those who have gone to their reward, to which in God's own good time may we severally be admitted.

It had afforded him peculiar satisfaction to learn of the succession in the family of those styled reverend, which in his view was not an unmeaning title. He had long wished to come to New England to visit the old home of his wife's progenitors. The experience had been most gratifying, the one drawback being the absence of her who bore the name and who had connected him with it. But the first duty of a Christian is to submit to the behests of his Father in heaven. He concluded with warm expressions of congratulation.

Mr. May remarked that we have heard from the several professions of law, medicine, theology and pedagogy. We remember that to the military profession we have, of late years, been largely indebted, and we remember too that in the days long past this family had contributed some able and brave men to that service. We have with us to-day one who, both in active military service, and subsequently in civil duty in restoring the

institutions of peace and good order, had faithfully met a large responsibility; whereupon

Col. Herman W. Snow of Sheldon, Ill., with characteristic modesty refusing to ascend the platform, expressed thanks for being recognized as one of the family, and could truly say that ever since his induction into it by marriage, he had constantly been more and more pleased with the relation. In proof of this he had traveled more than twelve hundred miles, with wife and son, expressly to be present at this meeting. He had known some men who would travel double that distance to get away from their wives' relatives,—but they were not of the Danforth sort. He added that never, since the day when he was appointed to read the Declaration of Independence to twenty thousand Confederate soldiers, *coralled* with him, had he been so much impressed as by the meeting of to-day.

The toastmaster said: Like us, the city of Boston is disposed to extol its clergy; and this is well, for, in general, the Christian ministry of Boston take a high position for talent and character. But a few years ago, when another minister was needed, they were moved to send all the way to Ohio to get one to come, and bring his Danforth wife, to take charge of the large flock in the fold of the Shawmut Avenue Universalist Church,—the Rev. George Landor Perin. That gentleman, responding, said that he had indeed come hither, taking his family a long way from their home, and the one great regret with them was that they were thus removed so far from the excellent parents and beloved and venerable grandparents, with each of whom his connection had been a delightful experience. Mr. Perin told, with good effect, several amusing stories, and, taking a hint from one of them, said the Danforths had gone forth from New England to take influential positions in other States, so that at the West the name of Danforth was almost equivalent to an official title.

Remarking that we have been dwelling largely on the achievements of past generations and of remote members of the family, and that we ought to remember that we have present one who has done yeoman service for our family's cause,



the toastmaster called on our honored ex-president, Hon. Charles Pinckney Danforth of Nashua, N.H., who responded felicitously, owning that New Hampshire could not compete with Illinois in depth of soil or with Louisiana in mildness of climate; but she raised and sent abroad the men and the women who made those States worth living in, and had trained and sharpened the wits of that genial editor (George W. Kendall of the New Orleans *Picayune*) who fancied that he saw in New Hampshire the grasshopper climbing a mullein stalk and shedding tears at the prospect of starvation. No: New Hampshire was one of the best States in the Union to emigrate from. And it was on the border of New Hampshire, in Tyngsboro', Mass., that the movement began which resulted in these family meetings. The late Joseph Danforth of that place was a model man. He loved the family name and reputation. He was resolved to have a reunion, and when he appealed to the speaker for aid, he quickly dispelled all suggestions of doubt, so that he, the speaker, gladly joined in the work, which was speedily and successfully effected, though, of course, not without a considerable amount of effort and labor.

The company then joined in singing to the tune of "Auld Lang Syne" the following

## ODE,

WRITTEN FOR THE OCCASION BY MR. SAMUEL MAY, JR.

### THE LEGACY OF ST. NICHOLAS.

COME hither, friends, and make amends,  
 Too long you've held aloof;  
 Come, kin and clan, whose race began  
 From one parental roof!  
 Fill up the glass, and gladly pass  
 This toast along the line—

May friendship's bow more radiant grow  
 With beams from auld lang syne.

Our seed with toil, on stubborn soil,  
 Was sown in troublous hour;  
 But sturdy care, New England air  
 Brought forth a comely flower:  
 Though pristine fear is present cheer,  
 And freedom is its lot,  
 The days lang syne, which trained the vine,  
 Should never be forgot.

The years roll by, but as they fly,  
 The present shall intwine,  
 With vigorous clasp, with stable grasp,  
 The future and lang syne:  
 Thus, as they pass, Saint Nicholas  
 May all his kindred know,  
 And from that height, beyond our sight,  
 Will join our ranks below.

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Mr. May said that many letters have come from friends who could not themselves attend the meeting. From these he would like to read some extracts.

Our worthy President, Hon. Peter S. Danforth of Middleburg, N.Y., whose presence to-day, and that of Mrs. Danforth and of his two sons, we had depended upon, writes, under date of Aug. 28, that business of importance unexpectedly required the presence of both himself and Mr. George Lindner Danforth at home on the 1st of September. He adds: "I have long looked forward to this re-union with great pleasure. . . . Four years ago we greatly enjoyed the meeting. . . . I have delayed writing this two or three days, in hopes that in some way I might not be under the necessity of writing it."

And Hon. Elliot Danforth of Bainbridge, N.Y., writes from Albany, where he holds the highly responsible position of Assistant State Treasurer, expressing disappointment that he cannot be with us as he fully intended, but that the absence of the Treasurer makes his presence at the capital absolutely indispensable.

Hon. Charles Danforth, of the Supreme Court of Maine, writing Aug. 22, says: "I have not written earlier because I have had, and still have, some hope that I may be with you on the 1st of September. But whether present or absent in the body, I shall be with you in spirit, and you will have my best wishes for a happy meeting, and my kindest regards for all present."

Mrs. Lucinda Stone of Winooski, Wis., writes in a beautifully distinct handwriting: "I am eighty-eight years old, and cannot expect to come to your meeting. . . . I am pleased to be remembered by the Danforth fraternity, of which I am proud to be a member. May God bless them, and the cause for which they assemble."

Rev. James R. Danforth of Philadelphia writes: "The fact may be familiar to you that a Danforth, minister of Springfield, Mass., in the last century, was the first in our country to organize a home-missionary band. They went South and did successful work. . . . It is the way our New England began, and they have kept it up since, to the benefit of our common country."

He expresses regret that he cannot be present, and kind regards for all.

Hon. George Franklin Danforth of Rochester, of the New York Court of Appeals, writes: "I regret very much that an engagement at Rochester on Thursday will prevent my attendance. . . . You are sure of an interesting occasion. I hope it may be pleasant in every way to kindred meeting, perhaps for the first time, face to face, and, so far as I have seen, pleasant and goodly faces they are."

“My brother Charles, now of Denver, was, during the War of the Rebellion, in the naval service of the United States, and was master’s mate on the *Kearsarge* during her battle with the *Alabama*.”

Mrs. Francis A. Danforth of Norway, Me., who has uniformly shown much interest in the family traditions, writes in behalf of the descendants of the honored Dr. Asa Danforth: “The centennial celebration of our town is close at hand; there is so much of preparation to be done, and so few, comparatively, to do it, that we must stay at home. I hope that the clan will gather in full force, and will have a most enjoyable time. . . . Many good wishes for your success.”

Mr. Joseph L. Danforth of Louisville, Ky., who was present, with his accomplished wife, at our last meeting, writes that business engagements prevent their coming hither now, as they had hoped to do, and he adds, “wishing you all, ‘uncles, aunts, and cousins,’ a jolly good time, and regretting sincerely that we cannot be with you.”

Miss Effie Danforth of Peru, O., writing for herself and her venerable parents, says: “I regret exceedingly that I cannot be with you, but, having just returned from a visit at Chautauqua, I find my mother’s health impaired so that I ought not to leave her. My father, now in his eighty-third year, is vigorous both in body and mind.

“Enjoying the fruits of well-spent and honored lives, and looking forward with courage and hope to the better life to be, they join with me in affectionate greeting to the assembled families.”

Dr. John Danforth Wood of Yankton, Dak., writes: “I shall remember you on the occasion, and hope to be remembered by the kinsfolk. . . . Wishing you all prosperity and peace through the grace of our blessed Redeemer.”

George M. Copeland, Esq., of Clarendon, N.Y., writes: “My father, born in 1789, was the oldest child of Samuel and Eunice

(Danforth) Copeland of Taunton, Mass. . . . My oldest son bears the name Samuel Danforth. . . . I should be glad to join in your memorial gathering, but I cannot. I trust that the meeting, with God's blessing upon it, will be one of interest and profit."

In a later letter, Mr. Copeland sent the sonnet printed on page 40, which unfortunately arrived too late to be read at the meeting.

Roderick F. Danforth, Esq., of Washington, D.C., giving some details, adds: "My grandfather Foster, born in Newburyport, migrated at an early day to the 'Holland purchase,' and settled at Leroy, N.Y., going thither with wife, seven daughters and two slaves; and all his worldly goods in wagons and carriage. . . . I send kindest greetings to our kinsfolk."

John S. Danforth, writing from Camp Caribou, Parmachenee Lake, Franklin County, Me., writes: "It will be impossible for me to be present at this meeting, greatly as I would like to be. . . . Some time I hope to answer the call, and show to the family a thorough backwoodsman."

Mr. Danforth is proprietor and manager of a favorite resort for the sports of fishing and gunning.

Jonathan F. Danforth, Esq., of Reedsburg, Wis., writes: "It would give me great pleasure to meet with you, to talk and sing of 'Auld Lang Syne,' and to do honor to the memory of our forefathers. . . . So far as I know, the Danforths have been industrious, temperate, moral, intellectual, respected citizens, and not a few of them have held positions of trust and responsibility. I am proud to think that they have contributed a fair share in developing the country and ameliorating the condition of mankind; and that so they have not lived in vain. . . . I hope that your meeting may be both enjoyable and beneficial."

Coral Herbert Danforth, Esq., of Tacoma, Washington Territory, son of the last-named gentleman, writes: "It would give me great pleasure to meet kindred and friends in the gathering

of the descendants of Nicholas Danforth. . . . I came to this place, the terminus of the Northern Pacific Railway, in 1880. . . . While you are gathered in Boston, the ancient city on the Atlantic shores, accept a greeting from the future Boston of the great Northwest, at whose feet roll the surges of the great Pacific."

Edwin Danforth, Esq., of San Francisco, highly esteemed as the "Grand Foreman of the Ancient Order of United Workmen," sends "cordial greeting from myself, my wife, and children to those assembled in your meeting of September 1st. That day will be my fifty-seventh birthday, and greatly would we like to keep it with that goodly company. . . . We hope to join in similar meetings in the future."

Mrs. Helen Maria (Danforth) Horner of Lebanon, Ill., closes a letter giving genealogic items, saying: "I regret exceedingly that I must deny myself the pleasure of being present at the meeting. Accept my best wishes for its success. . . . May the great Giver of all good gifts send blessings upon you all."

Similar good wishes are expressed in letters from

Francis Danforth Curtis, Esq., of Kirby Homestead, Charlton, Saratoga County, N.Y.

Alexander Hamilton Danforth, Esq., of Washington, Ill.

Rev. J. Greenwood Snelling of New York City, and Stamford, Conn.

Dr. William Danforth, Milwaukee, Wis.

Rev. E. Danforth Curtis of Grand Rapids, Mich.

Prof. William Phipps Blake of New Haven, Conn.

Samuel M. Jelley, Esq., of Rising Sun, Ind.

Mr. May asked leave to occupy a few minutes, before the meeting closed, with a subject of interest to the good people of New England generally, and in which we, as a family, have a direct concern.

This community has long suffered reproach because of the excitement which prevailed during a few months in the year 1692, on the subject of witchcraft; and of the trials then held, and of the conviction and execution of a few hapless victims of a now exploded superstition.

Our Thomas Danforth was on the bench, at one session, when some accused persons were tried, and several were adjudged guilty, neither of whom, however, was punished; and censure has rested on his memory as accessory to the persecution of innocent people. The weight of testimony, however, is altogether against such imputation, and it is certain that subsequently his influence helped to dispel the illusion.

But the charge of intolerance and cruelty has been so constantly reiterated, that even among ourselves the feeling is common that herein our worthy ancestors had done something singularly discreditable.

A brief statement of facts may set the matter in a juster light.

Dr. Palfrey, in his History of New England, says: "The people of Massachusetts in the seventeenth century, like all other Christian people at that time, at least with extremely rare individual exceptions, believed in the reality of a hideous crime called witchcraft. They thought they had Scripture for that belief, and they knew they had law for it, explicit and abundant; and with them law and Scripture were two absolute authorities for the regulation of opinion and conduct."

That belief was an inheritance common to all men from the most ignorant to the most learned. It was diligently inculcated by the Roman Catholic Church, and also by the leaders of the Protestant Reformation.

Pope Innocent VIII., in 1484, issued a bill punishing the crime of witchcraft with death. With Luther this belief became intensified, and he declared, "I would have no compassion on these witches — I would burn them all." w

Bishop Jewell, preaching before Queen Elizabeth, said: "May it please your Grace to understand that witches and sorcerers, within these few years, are marvelously increased in your Grace's realm." Later, Lord Bacon, "the greatest, wisest" of his time, pronounced the "three declinations from religion" to be "heresies, idolatry, and witchcraft."

In 1664, Sir Matthew Hale, afterward Lord Chief Justice of England, sentencing two women to be hanged, said that the reality of witchcraft was unquestionable; and in this opinion he was supported by Sir Thomas Browne, who was present at the trial.

The popular commentary on English law, published at the close of the seventeenth century, which was the current law manual in New England, recognized witchcraft as a real crime.

We ask, then, wherein were the people of Massachusetts blamable in that they accepted and acted upon the belief which all the rest of Christendom held and practised; and in that they brought to trial those who were accused, and inflicted the punishment prescribed by law on those who were found guilty and who continued impenitent. For these two features in the case should be noted: first, that none were condemned without a formal trial; and, secondly, all those who pleaded guilty and declared themselves penitent were released; and the fact that many did so confess guilt, of course confirmed the current belief.

Why should these people be expected to be superior to all the rest of the world? A candid reply must be a complete acquittal.

But to continue the review. Long after the time when the reaction occurred in Massachusetts, and the superstition was exploded and denounced here, the belief in witchcraft continued in other lands. Joseph Addison and Dr. Samuel Johnson were firm believers in it, and John Wesley, in 1768, said that "giving up witchcraft is, in effect, giving up the Bible."

In 1773, the Presbytery of Scotland passed a resolution declaring their belief in witchcraft, and deploring the general scepticism in regard to it.



During Cromwell's time, sixty witches were hung in a single year in the one county of Suffolk; and no fewer than three thousand were executed in England during the session of the Long Parliament. (The whole number put to death in the Salem tragedy was nineteen.)

In 1716, a Mrs. Hicks and her daughter were hanged in Huntington, England, and in 1722 a woman was burned in Dornock, Scotland, for witchcraft; and not until fourteen years later still, in 1736, was the English statute against witchcraft repealed, being more than forty years after the excitement in New England had subsided.

In Switzerland, as late as 1780, women were burned for the imputed offence.

Thus it appears that not only is special blame not to be charged to the people of Massachusetts, but to them should be accorded the merit of being in advance of all the rest of Christendom in shaking off the delusion and renouncing its barbarities.

ON THE DANFORTH GATHERING,  
SEPT. 1, 1886.

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Go back to Sire, one-fourth a thousand years;  
Mark where in Cambridge, modest man, he trod,  
Caring for children, worshiping his God.  
The bark that brought him—see, it westward steers!  
Shall the new land for him have hopes or fears?  
Shall he be parent of a numerous race?  
His blood flow wide, and more than Danforths grace?  
From his blest realm he sees, he hears!  
In spirit now he meets our gathered train.  
Are we the children of an honored Sire?  
And doth he live and move in us again?  
And shall his courage e'er in us expire?  
We, on this day, still own his blood's impress,  
And future Danforths shall his memory bless.

G. M. COPELAND.

CLARENDON, N.Y., Aug. 30, 1886.

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