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**A Home of the Olden Time.**







A HOME OF THE OLDEN TIME.

BY

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## A HOME OF THE OLDEN TIME.

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As Americans, we look with admiration and some degree of envy on substantial structures of other days that delight us abroad. We have indeed very few of our own. We know something of our progenitors. Tradition tells us of their character and household virtues. Smybert and Blackburn, Copley and Stuart reveal to us their personal appearance. History often records their public services. The institutions they planted, their works of utility need no other monument. But we should have been better pleased had they also left us more frequent memorials of their daily life. If their means and social condition admitted of no costly abodes, many such as they had have perished, which might well have been preserved. A few remain, others are still remembered of which some account should be transmitted to coming generations. Some of these in their pristine condition were models of elegance and taste, and would compare favorably in comfort and convenience with any of modern contrivance.

It is a great and laudable achievement to erect a stately edifice or even a dwelling of more moderate pretensions, complete in detail and arrangement, faultless as a work of art yet precisely adapted to its use. Where the organ of construction has liberal development, to conjure up out of airy nothings or dim visions of the past, pleasant abodes such as Le Sage created for his hero, castles such as Spain has been ever famed for, affords diversion from graver thought. In the seemingly endless watches of the night, on weary pilgrimages or when the brain is quickened into fever, such indulgence soothes and tranquillizes beyond poppy or chloroform. It is an inexpensive pastime, modifications of plan entail no ruinous consequences,

nor is it necessary to pull down in order to rebuild. But should attempt be made to transform our dream into substantial realities, what was fair enough to dwell upon reduced to possession proves extremely inconvenient. Great praise is justly due to the skill, that, without servile imitation, designs what is at the same time original and artistic, yet meets every want of the actual occupant.

Visitors at Abbotsford may grieve over the load of embarrassment under which dear old Sir Walter bore up for years so bravely, that he might live like baron bold of the border, midst tower and battlement, wide spread fields and woods. Yet they cannot but be forcibly impressed with the exquisite beauty of the structure; the good sense that planned the distribution of its apartments. Happier perhaps if his romance in stone and mortar had been transmitted through a long line of iron clad progenitors, and reached him unencumbered and with modern improvements. Had this been however the case, he would not have realized the enjoyment of its erection, or reared a far more enduring monument than Walpole's at Strawberry, to give pleasure ages hence to his admirers. As time grows the lichen on its wall, will come and pass beneath its roof many a sadder proof that all is vanity; and doubtless with vicissitudes, heir looms of our lot, a reasonable share of substantial happiness be experienced by its various inmates.

In that old world beyond the sea, admirable relics of antiquity, such as Ingelheim, where Charlemagne a thousand years ago first opened his eyes upon the world, Cluny, where seven hundred later the father of Mary Queen of Scots was married, Rheinstein and Stolzenfelz, Chillon and Dijon, Guy's Cliff and Haddon are precious mementoes of by-gone days. What we have here in New-England of any pretension to age, dates back at the farthest but two centuries and a third. The venerable brick mansion of Cradock, first governor under the charter, on a grant of thirty-five hundred acres in Medford, which parliamentary duties in troubled times prevented his ever coming over to enjoy, is a fine specimen of eld. Near Portsmouth is another of the same period, material and description, which has come down to us in excellent preservation, and which has been uninterruptedly occupied by the same name and blood, eight generations of whom have been born within its walls. Nor is this last a solitary instance. The Woodman House in Durham, Fairbanks in Dedham, Curtis in what was Roxbury, now Boston, have passed from parent to child in the same families as long.

Others exist or have recently existed, of which nearly the same may be stated, while numberless more somewhat modernized, and which have changed owners in other ways than by inheritance, still stand replete with valuable suggestion as to the mode of life of our ancestors.

It is not pretended that the dwelling proposed to be recalled to the mind of many who cannot have quite forgotten its exquisite proportions possessed any very especial claim to notice from historical or romantic associations. It was simply a delightful home such as abounded about Boston, and elsewhere in New-England, a century ago, and yet presenting as fair a picture as could then be found of domestic elegance and comfort. The mansion itself, the second and probably destined to be the last ever upon the spot, was erected early in the last century, and was subsequently occupied but by two or three different proprietors, when it passed in 1800 into possession of the family who now own the estate. It was occupied by them as their abode down to the middle of this century, surviving the venerable church which with plain front and noble interior stood opposite and which gave place forty years ago to the present Trinity. The beautiful thoroughfare on which it stood long richly merited its name from its multitudinous and over-spreading branches and the vernal splendors that decked its gardens.

It is worthy of note that the property, which was the site of this handsome edifice, has been neither enlarged nor diminished from the earliest days of the settlement. Its several bounds are the same now as when entered on the Book of Possessions.<sup>1</sup> It is not every one who has heard of that ancient volume. To compare small things with great, its resemblance in character to Domesday must have often occurred to conveyancers. Sixteen years after the conquest of the mother land, King William had that inquest made of English tenures, and about as long after the Puritan Fathers settled in Boston the ownership of estates was similarly defined and guarded. Bounds and measurements of grants, made under the pressure of other cares and which had become matter of dispute, were ascertained by survey or by each owner bringing in the limits of his claim, and duly recorded. This record is the fountain head from which are derived the titles of property now occupied by a quarter of a million of people, and worth several hundred millions of dollars.

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<sup>1</sup> As these returns were made by order of the general court, similar volumes are found in one or two of the earlier settlements.

On that record this estate is recognized as the garden of Gamaliel Wayte. Whether Gamaliel dwelt there is not mentioned, but he had in 1642 another lot on the south side of Mill street where he probably resided. His son John had a house upon the land when he sold it sixty years later, in 1694, to John Leavensworth. The father lived till his eighty-seventh year, and is mentioned by Judge Sewall in his diary as having had, not long before his death, several new teeth. He may, like the humpbacked Richard, have been born with some of those then renewed, for what alone is known of his history indicates that he was earlier by no means a negative character. He had come over with Edward Hutchinson, in all probability as his farmer, since he is described on the records as a planter. He joined the church in 1633, but participating in the antinomian heresies of Mrs. Hutchinson, placing his faith and hope in grace and not in works, he was amongst those who threatening violence were in 1637 disarmed by the authorities. If he died Dec. 9, 1685, as recorded, he must have been born in 1598. Two of his sons are mentioned by Farmer, as cited *ante*, vol. xxiv., p. 103: Samuel born in 1661, and John who inherited and sold the Summer-street estate. John is supposed to be the same who was settled in Malden, and sent thence from 1666 to 1684 to the general court, the latter year being speaker. He also served as juror in Boston, at the trials for witchcraft in 1680. Richard, probably a brother of Gamaliel, as he died 1678, aged 82, held the office of marshal, and both Richard and Return were members of the now Ancient and Honorable Artillery Company.

It should not be forgotten that the land is described in the Book of Possessions, as Wayte's garden. From the superior excellence of its fruits there long prevailed an impression, of course unfounded, that it had belonged to one of the Huguenots, who came here when driven from France, and who were famous for their taste and skill in horticulture. This very spring, 1870, has blossomed within its limits a tall and at the time still thrifty pear tree, which by antiquaries in horticulture may well have been deemed coeval with Gamaliel himself, as ancient as that of Governor Stuyvesant in New-Amsterdam.

John Leavensworth, to whom John Wayte conveyed the property, is not mentioned by Savage, nor is his name in the index of our probate records. He did not hold it long, but mortgaged it the same year to Simeon Stoddard, a wealthy merchant, whose father Anthony married, for his first

wife, the sister of Sir George Downing. Simeon, born in 1651, entered thrice into the bonds of wedlock: first with Mary in 1676, again with the widow of Col. Samuel Shrimpton in 1709, and in 1715 with Mehitabel Minot, who had previously married Thomas Cooper and Peter Sergeant. At what time he foreclosed the mortgage is not known, nor does it appear that he himself ever occupied the estate for his own abode. He died Oct. 18, 1730, having three years before sold it to Leonard Vassall.

The name of Vassall is honorably connected with the Massachusetts colony from its earliest period. William and Samuel, sons of the gallant John, an alderman of London, who, in 1588, at his own expense, fitted out and commanded two ships of war with which he joined the royal navy to oppose the Spanish Armada, were among the original patentees in 1628. William came over with Winthrop in 1630, settled in Scituate in 1634, but provoked by the persecution of the Episcopalians returned to England in 1646, and died in Barbadoes in 1655. He left daughters married in this country, and a son, Capt. John Vassall, who sold his estate in Scituate in 1661, and removed as is supposed also to England.

Samuel never came over. He was a merchant of London, alderman, and in 1640-41 a member of parliament. The handsome monument in King's Chapel, Boston, erected to his memory by Florentius, of Jamaica, his great-grandson, recites his public services. His son John purchased large tracts of land in Jamaica and settled there, having married Ann, the daughter of John Lewis, Esq., an English resident of Genoa. They had two sons. William, the eldest, was father of Florentius, and through his son Richard, grandfather of Elizabeth, who married Sir Godfrey Webster, and in 1797 Henry Richard Fox, third Lord Holland, and died in London Nov. 17, 1845. She is described as possessed of remarkable talents, brilliant, witty and endowed with many personal graces. Holland House while she presided there maintained its celebrity, as the favorite haunt of British authors and statesmen, and many from other countries and especially from America were among its frequent and valued guests. It is now yielding to the resistless growth of the great metropolis, and the excellent Lord Hollands have come to an end. But their generous hospitality in its spacious halls has been too often subject of comment to be speedily forgotten.

✕ Leonard Vassall, born in Jamaica in 1678, married there, Ruth Gale, born in 1785, and by her had seventeen children. His second wife was Mrs.

Phebe Gross, daughter of Samuel Penhallow, by Mary daughter of President John Cutt, of Portsmouth, New-Hampshire, by whom he had one daughter, Anna, born in 1635, married to John Borland, of Boston. The other children who survived him were four sons—Lewis, John, William and Henry, all of whom but the youngest graduated at Harvard College respectively in 1728, 1732, and 1733; and four daughters.

His property mainly consisted of several large plantations in Jamaica, which are enumerated in his will. He was perhaps induced to take up his abode in New-England from the connection of his progenitors with its settlement. It may have been, and it seems more likely, that he was influenced to do so by the wish to secure to his children the advantages of education—his sense of their value being distinctly exhibited in his will in providing for that of his youngest child.

Leonard proceeded without delay to improve his purchase and erected the dwelling which proved so enduring. No evidence exists that it was at any subsequent time materially altered, and it is therefore described as recently existing. This will leave the imagination of the reader full sway to conjecture any intermediate changes which probability may suggest to him.

Along the line of Summer street stood a fence about seventy feet in length and ten in height, finished in panel work for a short space from the ground, the upper portion consisting of top rail and slats about an inch square, sufficiently apart to admit of an unobstructed view. In this was a large double gate, wide enough for carriages at the southerly end, and a smaller one near the house for foot passengers. The house extended along the north side of the plot with a main front of more than one hundred feet, with nine windows and two doors in a line below and eleven windows above. It was of handsome elevation, with Lutheran windows in the roof, which was of the gambrel form, thus presenting at the end towards the street three stories. Between the house and the fence was space enough for a large chestnut tree overhanging the street. On the ground floor the windows opened on that side into a spacious drawing room, lighted also by two others towards the court. All the apartments were lofty, unusually so for the period, which may be explained by the fact that Mr. Vassall had long dwelt in a warmer climate than that of New-England.

The drawing room communicated with the hall, from which ascended to the third floor a broad staircase, adorned to the top with rails and balusters



of richly wrought and highly polished mahogany. This material according to tradition was taken from the estate of Mr. Vassall in Jamaica. At the landing was a large square window, and there stood the family clock, that last in use in the house still counting the centuries and likely to for many to come. Beneath this landing was a spacious well-lighted store-room for china and the garniture of the table on festal occasions, whence proceeded long lines of sweetmeats and preserves—such as the great-grandmothers of New-England delighted in, and among them in the days of the Vassalls doubtless whatever the tropics could produce. Beyond this hall, which opened by a door of hospitable dimensions under a portico and balcony into the front court, was the family parlor, or keeping room, thirty feet or more in length, with three windows in front on the court, two in recesses on either side of the fire-place looking towards the north. When Mr. Salisbury, the proprietor of the adjoining estate on that side, erected a stable so as to darken these windows, mirrors were substituted in their place. In the middle of the court yard, opposite the centre window to the south, stood a large English walnut, bearing excellent fruit.

It is probable that these principal apartments were finished originally in arras, tapestry, or wainscoat, as was usual in the best houses of the day. Possibly the panels were of pine, red cedar, or even mahogany, as one room in a house built a little earlier by Leonard Vassall, now owned and occupied by the Hon. Charles Francis Adams in Quincy, was so constructed. But this is only matter of conjecture. In later days, as fashions changed, the walls were plastered and covered with the customary wall papers.

With their many windows opening towards the south, these rooms were especially bright and sunny. Prior to 1807 the grounds adjacent down the street were in gardens, or occupied by buildings of little elevation. They had been conveyed in 1680 to the First Church, and were improved by them for a parsonage. Here dwelt several of the eminent men who successively occupied its pulpit. When the Church was removed from where later were built what have been known as Joy's Buildings on Washington street, its new edifice was placed on the rear of this lot on Chauncy Place, so called, from one of its most distinguished pastors. On the Summer street front at the same time was erected a block of four-story brick buildings. Ample spaces were still left for light and air, and the northerly end of the block was draped to the chimney tops with woodbine, which in autumn

exchanged its summer verdure for more brilliant tints. These new edifices, impairing but little the cheerfulness of the mansion or its court yard, protected both alike from the winter winds and public observation.

Beyond the keeping room was a capacious entry, out of which mounted a second staircase sufficiently commodious, but less richly decorated than that in the principal hall. The kitchens, still farther along, were two in number. The first was lighted from the court by two windows, with a door opening between them. It had one of the old fashioned chimneys of vast dimensions, with a smoke-jack revolved by complicated machinery, high up within its mysterious recesses. In the corner formed by the projecting chimney was a room or lavatory, then used by younger members of the family, who slept for health's sake in cold rooms, where the water froze in winter, and who completed this part of their toilet below. Under its window was the horse tub, where the horses were led to drink. The second kitchen of the same size, used as a laundry, receded a little from the front line of the building. It contained, among other meritorious arrangements, one large tub in which was worked a dumb betty by one of the men, serving about the same purpose in kneading the clothes as that modern contrivance the patent washer.

In continuation of these kitchens towards the north line of the estate, was a small court surrounded by offices of different descriptions, and in front of them was a sitting room, or retreat, for the master of the house, with its ample grate and a large window looking into the garden, serving the purpose of an office or library. It projected a few feet from the general line of the front of the house, and about twenty feet away was the wall of the stable. In this, on the side toward the house, was a long fruit room with shelves for pears to ripen, a work or lathe room, and a staircase to a small apartment on the level of the hay-loft looking into the garden.

The sleeping rooms occupied two floors of the mansion, the front one on the upper story being peculiarly cheerful, commanding extended views over the neighboring gardens. The house abounded in closets, garrets and cellars, and was a paradise for good house-keepers.

From the front gate the vista extended about three hundred feet along the court paved with white and blue cobble stones, in fanciful patterns, along beds edged with box of roses, seringa, honey-suckle and snow-drops, between the stables and garden room, to an octagon summer-house at the farther end of the garden. The court-yard, nearly fifty feet by a hundred,

which one of our poets well called baronial, was flanked on the side opposite the house, by a series of six arcades, for the most part filled in with panel work to correspond with the façade of the stable, which was a model of good proportion and decoration. When the house, stable and sheds, as well as the fences, were all painted of a light straw color, in two tints, with flowers and vines, clustering everywhere around and about the buildings, it presented a whole of extreme delicacy and beauty.

The probate records afford an insight into the plenishing of both house and stable in the days of the Vassalls and its subsequent occupants. Horses and carriages, plate, pictures and books abounded; nor does the family cow escape notice, which, driven daily up Winter street to the Common, when the season served, returned at night with distended udders, not of less flavor from the charming scenes and grassy slopes of her pasture.

Mr. Vassall had his summer residence at Braintree now Quincy. Many other men of fortune passed a portion of the warmer months out of town. Boston was, however, not so densely peopled, but that there were spaces all about him for orchard and for garden. The broad area covered by magnificent palaces of trade on either side of what is now Franklin street, has been known since the Revolution as Barrel's pasture. Close by to the south and west was the mansion of John Rowe, with enclosures extending towards Essex street. The gardens to the north, which belonged to Edmund Quincy, and purchased on that account by Mr. Salisbury, whose wife was Edmund's granddaughter, were as extensive as his own. Many who were well able to possess and enjoy country villas, preferred the town, or contented themselves with expeditions into the interior, or along shore, of a few weeks at a time, in their own carriages. It was consequently customary to surround the dwelling, where space permitted, with gardens and pleasure grounds, and though the land attached to the house of the Vassalls was not large, the most was made of it. Whoever has realized what can be accomplished in limited areas, as for example in the college gardens in England's Cambridge, or in some of our smaller cities, will easily believe that taste and wealth may have produced marvellous results in its cultivation and embellishment.

It was laid out in four large square beds edged with box. That nearest the garden room was devoted to grapes of various descriptions on trellises. In other parts of the garden were currants and raspberries, peaches and cher-

ries, and a great variety of pears then famous, but which are now, from some change of climate fatal to this sensitive fruit, almost unknown. The St. Michael, St. Germain, Vergoulese and Brown Beurre, were all there in abundance, and one who has often partaken of them bears witness that no later variety has ever surpassed them in delicacy of flavor. He mentions an instrument in use in his day in the garden for picking the ripe pears from the tree without disturbing the rest. To the end of a long pole was attached a small net or pouch, into which the pear was dropped, after a knife at the rim of the pouch, sufficiently guarded not to damage the fruit, had severed the stem. He mentions also a mode adopted to cure the neighboring boys of depredations, which was to send a basket of the fruit to their parents. Peaches too abounded, clingstones and rareripes of the choicest sorts, a fruit which then came to greater perfection than at present. Plans have been preserved of the garden, with most of the fruit trees marked in their positions, forty-four being enumerated within its comparatively limited area.

Will our readers pardon this minute description. It is a type of many a pleasant abode of those happy days when a *rus in urbe* was still a possibility. It is no creation of fancy, but once existed, and realizing its completeness as it proceeded fresh from the hands of its architect, and knowing of whom its family consisted, it is easy to believe that whatever human life permits of happiness was there experienced. Education and refinement, all that affluence could yield for healthy and instructive occupation, whatever well regulated minds, good dispositions and natural gaiety could contribute to social and domestic enjoyment, was there to be found. Three sons in college and one at school, in the hey-day of youth, went and came. As many young ladies, tenderly reared, who, we have reason to believe, possessed not merely accomplishment, but solid acquirements, made, no doubt, the best of companionship for each other and the guests of the house. What is known of their subsequent career, of the religious sentiments of their parents, leads irresistibly to the conclusion that with the retreat at Braintree, recollections of tropical existence to soften the rigors of a New-England winter, abundant wealth and disposition to enjoy the blessings of Providence without asceticism or Puritan reserve, it was the happiest of homes.

In 1737 Leonard Vassall died, leaving in his will his plantations among his sons, giving each of his daughters when of age or married a thousand

pounds and a negro attendant fifteen years old, the money to be one fourth less in case of marriage without consent of their mother and guardian. He made ample provision for his widow while she continued a member of the English Church, and gives her certain books in which he had inscribed her name. He leaves John his riding horse, sword, watch and personal effects, and makes his devise to William conditional that he make oath never to risk more than twenty shillings at any game at one sitting. He directs the Summer-street estate to be sold, and its proceeds and that of other property to be invested for the benefit of his younger daughter. Like his great uncle William, who came over with Winthrop, he seems to have been much attached to the Episcopal Church. He was early connected with Christ Church on Salem street, and was one of its wardens in 1727. He interested himself actively in the foundation of Trinity Church, which was erected about 1730, on Summer street, opposite his own dwelling. He received from William Speakman, later senior warden, a conveyance, in 1728, of the land on which the church was erected, entering the same year into an obligation to reconvey the same to the building committee upon payment of the purchase money and interest. The committee, Mr. Speakman and himself, in consideration of their services, were allowed to build tombs under the church free of charge.

The sons emulated the father as builders of elegant mansions. Lewis, who lived in Quincy, died Sept. 15, 1743, having married Dorothy Macqueen, of Boston. His son Lewis, who graduated at Harvard College in 1760, died abroad before 1785. Col. John, the second son, lived in Cambridge. He first purchased the pleasant and spacious abode now occupied by our honored octogenarian, Mr. Batchelder, and which in 1720 belonged to the Belchers. It is sometimes said that he built that house, but this is not so received by its present proprietor. He certainly did erect one of our most magnificent residences, that on the other side of the road, afterwards Gen. Washington's head-quarters during the siege of Boston, and subsequently owned by Andrew Craigie, Joseph L. Worcester, and now by our distinguished poet, Mr. Longfellow. He married Elizabeth, daughter of Lient. Governor Spencer Phips, in 1734, and afterwards Lucy Barran, and died Nov. 27, 1747. His son John, H. C. 1757, married Elizabeth Oliver, and died at Clifton in England, 1797, having had two daughters, Elizabeth and Mary, and five sons—John, Col. Spencer Thomas, killed at Monte Video in 1807,

Thomas Oliver, Robert Oliver and Leonard. The first John had three daughters—Ruth, who married Edward Davis, from whom descends William Hayden, formerly city auditor of Boston; Elizabeth, who married Thomas Oliver, last Lt. Governor of Massachusetts under the crown; and Lucy, by the second wife, who married John Levicount, of Antigua, in 1768.

William, the third son, resided at one period in the house opposite Cambridge common, afterwards occupied by Dr. Waterhouse. The limits of the estate extended to that of John. He was sheriff of Middlesex. In the year 1760, he erected the superb mansion in Boston, afterwards Mr. Gardiner Greene's, taken down in 1835. He married Ann Davis, by whom he had eleven children, and after her death in 1760, Margaret Hubbard. At the outbreak of hostilities with the mother country, he went with his family to England, where some of his descendants are honored and affluent.

Henry married, in 1741, Penelope Royall, of Medford. His brother conveyed to him the Batchelder house in Cambridge, having built the Longfellow mansion for himself. He had one daughter, Elizabeth, who married Dr. Charles Russell in 1775, a refugee, and died in Antigua in 1780. Col. Henry Vassall died in Cambridge, March 17, 1769.

The daughters of Leonard Vassall who grew up, were—Ruth, whose husband was Dr. Benjamin Stedman; Elizabeth, who married John Miller, of Milton; Mary, wife of Jonathan Prescott; and Susanna, wife of George Ruggles. It would be out of place to enter more at large into the various ramifications of a family so widely distributed. The natural desire to know of whom consisted a race, which left such admirable monuments of their existence in the pleasant dwellings they erected, has already been met by Mr. Harris, *New-England Historical & Genealogical Register*, vol. xvii., page 56, and also on a more comprehensive scale in his separate publication. Numerous descendants of Leonard Vassall by female lines remain among us distinguished by ancestral traits. But the name has for the most part perished, unless where perpetuated in the line of sable dependents who had assumed that of their masters, as was customary in days when one man could be bondsman to another.

An anecdote is related of one of these, called Tonie Vassall, who, when Washington in 1775 took possession of the Longfellow mansion, was found swinging on the gate. Learning that Tonie belonged to the place, the General, to set his mind at rest for his future, told him to go into the house and

they would tell him what to do and give him something to eat. Feeling the value of his freedom, Tonie inquired what would be the wages, at which Washington expressed surprise at his being so unreasonable at such a time as to expect to be paid. Tonie lived to a great age, and when on one occasion he was asked what he remembered of Washington, said he was no gentleman, he wanted boy to work without wage. Darby, a son of Tonie, had been promised that he should be buried in the tomb of the Vassalls under Christ Church, and one in whose employment he was a long time as coachman, and whose wife's uncle had married Henry Vassall's daughter, procured for him this coveted privilege.

Thomas Hubbard was the next possessor of the property, and for nearly forty years to his death in 1773, made it his abode. Of his parentage, whether descended from the historian, we have not been able to discover, but Mr. Quincy in his history of Harvard College, Vol. ii. p. 158, says "that he was born in Boston in 1702, and that his early life being marked by diligence and fidelity, he had scarcely passed the threshold of manhood before he was placed by his fellow citizens in stations of trust and confidence. He became a member of the house of representatives, held for many years the speaker's chair, and finally was raised to a seat in the council of the province, which he resigned a short time before his death. Few men have passed through life with a higher reputation for integrity, usefulness and fidelity in all the relations of public and private life. He increased the funds of the college by his judicious and assiduous management, and to the office of treasurer united the character of benefactor. He contributed one hundred pounds, lawful money, to supply the loss occasioned by the destruction of Harvard Hall, made donations towards replacing the philosophical apparatus, and bequeathed to it at his death an additional legacy of three hundred pounds, lawful money, the income to be disposed of according to their discretion for the advancement of learning."

Mr. Hubbard also, in his will, gave the college all his books which his widow should not wish to retain, requesting Dr. Andrew Eliot and Dr. Samuel Cooper to select the best, most curious and suitable, and place them in the alcove in the library, over which his name was inscribed. He had been treasurer of the college for twenty-one years, in which office he was succeeded by John Hancock. By inquiry and examination of the public records many additional particulars might no doubt be collected to his credit.

He was deacon of the Old South, and in his will bequeaths two hundred pounds to its fund for the poor. He was also commissioner for the Marshpee Indians. In 1755 he was associated by the general court with Hutchinson in charge of the correspondence of William Bolla, Massachusetts agent in London, who communicates a project started in parliament for governing the colonies in the same manner as Ireland. He was evidently a puritan of the strictest sect, fond of study, and a patron of learning, not so dead to the world as to allow himself discomfort in struggling with what he considered its temptations. If not so rich as his predecessor in the property, he left a good estate, inventoried at about four thousand pounds, to his widow, his daughter Mrs. Fayerweather, and his grandchildren Mary Boardman and Hubbard Townshend. His horses and carriages are valued at one hundred pounds, his plate at two hundred and forty, and he appears to have possessed more than seventy pictures, from the valuation not apparently of any great value. His portrait, by Copley, was presented to the college by his descendant, Mrs. Appleton. Plate seems to have abounded in the house. Leonard Vassall leaves one of his daughters a silver tankard, pair of candlesticks and snuffers, and a two-eared candle cup, to make her share of her grandmother's plate equal to the rest of her sisters and cousins.

Upon the decease of Thomas Hubbard in 1773, and of his widow within a twelvemonth after, the estate, valued at one thousand pounds, passed through George Ruggles, son-in-law of Leonard Vassall, to Frederick W. Geyer. Susanna, the wife of Mr. Geyer, was daughter of Duncan, son of Timothy Ingraham, who married Sarah Cowell. Mr. Geyer, taking sides with the crown, left Boston after its evacuation by the British, and in 1778 was exiled and his property sequestered. The Summer-street mansion, confiscated as an absentee estate, after the peace was, in 1787 and 1791, reconveyed to him by Perez Morton, solicitor and later attorney general, the general court having in the interval restored him to citizenship.

The house, in the days of Mr. Geyer, was famed for its social gaieties and elegant entertainments. Tradition tells us of the brilliant gatherings of wit and fashion around its sumptuous board, Mrs. Geyer being noted for the courtesy and grace with which she presided and put every one at ease. There could have been few pleasanter banqueting rooms in Boston. The family consisted of three sons, only one of whom, Frederick, who married Rebecca Frazier, left descendants; and five daughters. Mary Ann became



in 1792 the wife of Andrew Belcher, son of Jonathan, who was governor of Massachusetts and New-Jersey for twenty-seven years, and father of Sir Edward, who has in recent times gained distinction and a baronetcy by his scientific and other services in the British navy. Charlotte married Joseph Marryatt, father of the novelist, and Catherine II., Nathaniel Tucker of Bellows Falls. Susan died single in 1802, and Nancy W., Feb. 13, 1794, married Rufus G. Amory. When this last event took place, Prince Edward, afterwards Duke of Kent, father of Queen Victoria, was in Boston, on his way to Halifax, and was a guest at the wedding.

In the Salisbury house to the north then resided Madam Amory, daughter of William Coffin, of the Nantucket branch of the family and grandfather of Sir Isaac, a Boston boy, who distinguished himself in the British navy. Her former abode at the corner of Harvard street, erected by Governor Belcher, had been swept away in the great conflagration of 1787; and while two houses in the centre of the north side of Franklin place, afterwards occupied by herself and her eldest son, the father of the well-known Col. Amory of the Fireman's Insurance office, were building, she dwelt for a few years in Summer street. Her family was numerous, and intimate with that of her neighbors. Separated by a high wall from their gardens on Summer street were the grounds fronting on Bedford street of Mr. Rowe, as already mentioned. It was the same John Rowe, who, after the peace, moved the restoration of the codfish, now in the representatives' chamber of the state house on Beacon Hill, and emblem of one important branch of Massachusetts prosperity, to the place it occupied before the war in the apartment used for a similar purpose in the old state house on State street. His nieces, the Inmans, whose home was the large rambling mansion still standing in Cambridge, head-quarters of Gen. Israel Putnam during the siege, were frequent inmates of his family, and when Susan married Capt. John Linzee, commander of the British naval force in our waters in 1775, his relative Lord Hood, the distinguished naval officer, attended the nuptials.

Another generation had grown up, and Mr. Rowe still occupied in winter the same house which stood about on the site of Dr. Robbins's church, and which many well remember in later days as the abode of Judge Prescott, the eminent jurist, and of his son, even more widely known, William H. Prescott the Spanish historian. The wall already mentioned, there being no gate of communication, was provided on either side with ladders or steps,

and the young people of the three families were constantly together. Here officers attached to French fleets and cruisers that visited the port were frequent visitors. Here also on one occasion, according to family legend, in the summer house at the foot of the Geyer garden, the father-in-law of Mr. Prescott first made the acquaintance of his wife the daughter of Captain Linzee. This circumstance is not without interest in its connection with the two swords, one of Col. Prescott, grandfather of the historian, who commanded the American forces at Bunker Hill, the other that of the grandfather of his wife, Captain Linzee, whose squadron flanking the fort took that day an active and important part in the contest.

These two swords long held a conspicuous position in the library of the historian, and after his death were presented by his widow to the Massachusetts Historical Society. They are now crossed over the door of entrance to the Dowse Library in their rooms on Tremont street, with an appropriate inscription. The union that led to this long digression had another claim to be remembered, though not of such historical interest. One of the descendants in the second generation has recently intermarried with the daughter of the present proprietor of the estate.

Those who in former days on their visits to London had the privilege of inspecting the gardens of Mrs. Marryatt, at Wimbledon, then celebrated as among the finest in England for the great variety and beauty of the plants and flowers, may reasonably conjecture that the taste and skill that produced such marvels was nurtured and fostered in her earlier days among the flower beds of Summer street. An American traveller, who had himself been long an inmate of the Summer-street mansion, met, this very summer, one of her descendants in the south of Europe. She told him that Mrs. Marryatt often spoke of being as an infant passed out of the rear window of the house when it was assailed by the liberty boys. As she died in 1855, at the age of eighty-one, the dates would correspond. The lady alluded to, in speaking of the family called it Von Geier, indicating a German origin, geier being the word in that language for vulture or hawk.

One other reminiscence of the place may be worthy of note in a publication largely devoted to family matters, if not allowed to go any farther. Two young American ladies, who had married abroad gentlemen connected with the court of Sweden, not long since met for the first time at a festal entertainment in the palace at Stockholm. Among strangers, na-

tional ties, perhaps their own language, drew them into closer companionship, and the conversation naturally drifting to home subjects they soon discovered that the family of the Geyers and this old home of theirs in Summer street were common and familiar topics to them both. One of them was a Marryatt, and the other, though not descended from the Geyers, had lived all her early days in intimate association with relatives that were.

Another interesting association with this house of the Vassalls, is that it was the birth-place of the late William Foster. The event occurred, it is presumed, as he was over ninety when he died, soon after Mr. Geyer quitted it for England. It may warrant the relation of an incident of his youthful career which ought not to be lost. Sent out by his father, during the reign of terror in France, to Morlaiz, in Brittany, on commercial affairs, he made the acquaintance of his future wife in an humble garb assumed to escape persecutions, to which, at that time, all the wealthier classes of society were exposed. Her father, M. Perron, proprietor of valuable estates in the neighborhood, had fled from the fury of the "red republicans," leaving his daughter in charge of one of his tenants, under whose roof he was encouraged to believe she would escape observation. Mr. Foster, who at once penetrated her disguise, was attracted by her beauty and loveliness of character, and the acquaintance thus accidentally formed ripened into reciprocal regard. When her guardian discovered the interest she betrayed in him, reposing entire trust in the integrity of his character, he revealed to him, in confidence, who she was, imploring him to desist from attentions which if noticed might subject them all to unpleasant consequences. He of course felt bound to acquiesce in the prudence of this counsel. But not long afterwards, her father returning, before the popular agitation had subsided, his chateau was attacked by the republicans. Mr. Foster rendered such efficient service in successfully defending it, that all farther objection to the match was removed, they were married, and Mr. Foster brought his wife to America. They had two daughters, one of whom married and resides in France, and the other is now the widow of the late Henry Tudor. The sister of Mrs. Foster married a brother of the celebrated General Moreau. Long after the death of his wife Mr. Foster erected a handsome stone mansion, beautifully situated on the borders of Spot Pond, in the neighborhood of Boston, which he mentioned to the writer resembled, in material and arrangement, as nearly as prevailing

modes of construction permitted, the chateau of his wife's parents in Brittany.

Three years before his death in 1803, M. Geyer removed to the romantic residence afterwards occupied by his son-in-law Mr. Tucker at Bellows Falls, on Connecticut river, disposing of the Summer-street estate to Mr. Samuel P. Gardner. Mr. Gardner was of the Salem branch of the name, and married a daughter of Judge Lowell. As their near relatives were among the most gifted and eminent of the first half of this present century, the house retained its social attraction and fame for generous hospitality until the progress of improvement compelled an appropriation of the estate to other purposes. Their second son, its present proprietor, erected upon it for the great commercial house of the Hoveys, one large mart for their extensive business, now by recent enlargement covering its whole area.

As the Gardners have held the property for seventy years, it would be an omission in a work of this kind not to present a cursory view of their several generations. Our limits forbid the extended details the subject demands, but it is to be hoped their family history will be perpetuated in a form, to render accessible to its numerous descendants and connections all the information they may wish. The name is largely multiplied on both sides the ocean, several distinct branches bearing it in New-England, not known to be connected. That to which belonged the patriot treasurer of the revolution, progenitor of our recent governor, is believed to be from a different stem.

1. Thomas Gardner, the first of the Salem stock, came over in 1624 from Dorsetshire, England, in which neighborhood the name had flourished for more than three centuries, and settled, under the auspices of the Dorchester Company and of the Rev. John White, with thirteen others, at Gloucester, Cape Ann, upon the grant of Lord Sheffield to Robert Cushman and Edward Winslow made in January of that year. Mr. Gardner was overseer of the plantation, John Tylley of the fisheries, Roger Conant being soon after appointed governor. Not realizing the success they anticipated in founding a colony, they removed, in 1626, to Naumkeag, or Salem, which continued the home of Mr. Gardner and his descendants down to this present century. He died in 1635.

2. Thomas, his son, an eminent merchant, was born 1592, and died 1674. He held several town offices, and was member of the general court in

1637. By his wives Margaret Frier and Damaris Shattuck he had: 1. Thomas. 2. George. 3. Richard. 4. John. 5. Samuel. 6. Joseph. 7. Sarah, wife of Benjamin Balch; 8. Miriam, of John Hill; 9. Ruth, in 1638 of John Grafton. From these were many descendants. Joseph commanded the Salem company in King Philip's war, and commended for his courage by its historians, was killed, with eight of his own men and six other captains, in an attack on an Indian fort, in the great battle in the Narraganset swamp, 19 Dec., 1675. His wife was daughter of Emanuel and sister of the celebrated Sir George Downing, after whom Downing street in London was named, and who was one of the earliest graduates of Harvard College. His widow, about 1686, married Governor Bradstreet. It is probable that through this connection the noble house erected by the governor, of which an engraving is to be found in Felt's *Salem*, came into the Gardner family. Richard with three of his children removed to Nantucket, where more were born unto him. His eldest daughter, Sarah, became the wife of Eleazer Folger, brother of Dr. Franklin's mother. Some of his descendants intermarried with the Coffins, Macys, Starbucks and other well-known names of that sea-girt isle, greatly multiplying and continuing prosperous down to our own time. Branches from this line have spread over the country, and descendants of Richard are found in many places. The impression that they derive their origin from some other parent source than Thomas of Cape Ann, is altogether erroneous, and the numerous offshoots from that sturdy stock may embrace many more about the land. Samuel was a merchant, deputy to the general court, and as one of its selectmen, trustee of the Indian deed of the town of Salem, Oct. 11, 1686.

3. George, the second son of the second Thomas, was born before his father came to America, and died 1679. He engaged in business at Hartford, and there accumulated a large estate. His first wife was Elizabeth Orne, by whom he had seven children. 1. Hannah, wife of John Buttolph. 2. Samuel. 3. Mary, wife of Habakkuk Turner. 4. George. 5. Ruth, wife of John Hathorne, one of the Judges in the trials for witchcraft. 6. Ebenezer, who married, in 1681, Sarah Bartholomew, and died in 1685, at the age of twenty-eight, bequeathed a considerable property by his will, as he had no children of his own, among his brothers, sisters and other kinsfolk, from the mention of whom in that instrument much information as to the earlier generations of the name has been derived. 7. Mehitable.

The second wife of Mr. Gardner, was Mrs. Ruth Turner, a name which is suggestive. His daughter Mary had married one of the same family, and this connection probably led to her father's selection in this second marriage.

4. Samuel, born 1648, died 1724; married, 1673, Elizabeth, daughter of John Brown, widow of Joseph Grafton. He was a merchant, and also cultivated a farm. In the Indian wars he commanded a company. His children were: 1. George. 2. Hannah, born 1676, married John Higginson, 1695, by whom she had four children and died 1718. 3. George, born 1679. 4. John, mentioned below.

5. John, born 1681; died before 1724; married Elizabeth, daughter of Dr. Daniel Weld. He commanded the Salem company in the battle, Aug. 29, 1708, at Haverhill, when it was attacked by French and Indians, and slew with his own hands an Indian, some of whose arms and equipments are still in possession of his descendants. For several years he represented Salem in the general court; but his constitution not being very strong he engaged in no active business. His children were: 1. Elizabeth, born, 1705, wife of Jonathan Gardner, who had the title of Commodore. 2. John, of whom hereafter. 3. Ebenezer, born 1708, died young. 3. Daniel, born 1709, died 1766; married Ann Putnam. 4. Hannah, born 1711, wife of Samuel Holton, and mother of Judge Holton, at one time President of Congress. 5. Samuel, born 1712, died 1769, graduate of Harvard, married Esther Orne, by whom he had several children. His second wife was Mrs. Winslow, daughter of Richard Clarke, one of the consignees of the tea destroyed in Boston harbor in 1773, and sister of the wife of Copley the painter. He held many town offices, represented Salem in the general court, and left an estate of one hundred thousand dollars. William Gray, the distinguished merchant and Lt. Governor of Massachusetts, had been two years in his counting-room at the time of his decease. His two sons George and Henry were graduates of Harvard, in the classes respectively of 1762 and 1765. The former left the college about five thousand dollars, the Marine Society for superannuated seamen over seven thousand, and to the poor of Salem nearly fifteen hundred. 6. Lydia. 7. Bethiah, born 1715, died 1773, married Nathaniel Ingersol. Their daughter Mary, by Habakkuk Bowditch, was the mother of the celebrated mathematician Dr. Bowditch. 8. Ruth, married, 1st, Bartholomew Putnam; 2d, Jonathan Goodhue, father by a former wife of Benjamin, in congress from Salem.

6. John, born in 1707, died 1784, in a house which stood on the present site of the Salem Museum. He married Elizabeth Putnam, widow of her cousin William, brother of Gen. Israel Putnam of the revolution, by whom he had 1. John, of whom hereafter. 2. Elizabeth, born 1731, died 1754, unmarried. Mrs. Gardner had two daughters by Mr. Putnam; one, wife of Jonathan Orne, and the other of Jonathan Gardner. By his second wife Elizabeth, widow of Capt. Benjamin Herbert, he had no child, but by his third, Mary Peal, born 1733, died 1826, he had—Mary, wife of 1. Abel Hersey; 2. of William Lemon. He had no exclusive occupation, engaging a little in commerce, and being possessed of a farm and mill between Salem and Marblehead. He commanded a troop of horse, and for some years was sent to the legislature from Salem.

7. John, born 1731, died 1805. His first wife was Mary Gale, of Marblehead, born 1728, died 1755; his second, Elizabeth, sister of Col. Timothy Pickering of the revolution, and Secretary of State in the cabinets of Washington and John Adams. By her he had three children: 1. Elizabeth, born 1759, died 1816; married, 1782, Samuel Blanchard, born 1756, died 1813, surgeon in the army of the revolution. She was the grandmother by her son Francis, born 1784 and who married Mary Ann, daughter of Francis Cabot, widow of N. C. Lee, of the first Mrs. Robert C. Wintthrop. 2. John, born 1760, died 1792, a successful merchant at Charleston, S. C. 3. Samuel P., mentioned below. Early in life Mr. Gardner commanded a vessel to the West Indies, and during the revolution owned several privateers, all successful, but the Black Prince and Hector, in the Penobscot expedition of 1779, by which he was a loser. At the commencement of the war he purchased a farm of two hundred acres at Wenham, and erected upon it a house in which he resided till his death.

8. Samuel P., born 1767, died 1843, graduated at Harvard College 1786, engaged in mercantile business with his brother John, at Charleston, S. C.; removed to Boston 1793, and married 19 Sept., 1797, at Roxbury, Rebecca Russell, born May 17, 1779, fourth daughter of Judge John Lowell, by Rebecca, daughter of James Russell, born 1715, died 1798. He purchased as before stated the Summer-street estate in 1800. His children were: 1. Mrs. John C. Gray. 2. Mrs. Francis C. Lowell. 3. John L. 4. Mrs. Horace Gray. 5. George. 6. Francis L., born 1811, died 1812.

It is not our purpose to enter more at large into the history of the family, in their two last generations and for nearly three quarters of a century proprietors of Gamaliel's garden. Enough has been said to indicate in how many interesting ways they have been connected with the annals of New-England from its earliest settlement. Their several intermarriages with the Ornes, Browns, Welds, Putnams, Wingates, Pickerings, Lowells, Russells, and other names from public service and wide distribution among our existing community familiar as household words, would justify, if the occasion warranted, a much longer relation. We might obtain from it many entertaining and instructive glimpses of social life under the kings, and also in the stirring times that brought about our liberties. But our main subject is the old house in Summer street, and only incidentally the family pedigrees of its various inmates. Its occupation by its last proprietors, not less interesting than any previous period of its history, is too recent for other reference in these present pages than the foregoing brief statement of their progenitors for family use.

Possibly with livelier interest ourselves in the subject than will be shared by all our readers, we have ventured to place before them some account of this ancient mansion. The public, reduced to its component parts, consists of individuals variously connected by ties of consanguinity or friendship, and among them not a few have special associations with this house or its inhabitants. But were its appeal to be rescued from oblivion exclusively antiquarian, little apology seems called for. Every vestige of the past has been explored for knowledge of remote generations of other lands and races, and we certainly should not begrudge an occasional thought to those so much nearer and dearer. Unless we preserve by pencil and pen some notice of their homes, we shall have allowed to perish an element in their existence, which, if secondary, still affords a very realizing sense of their existence.

Surrounded by modern palaces, with all the embellishments the fine arts can create or appliances for comfort the useful have invented, it may seem unreasonable to attach importance to these old abodes. The contrast in some respects is not much to their advantage. When we consider how many indispensable contrivances for daily use are universal, which a century ago no wealth could purchase, we fully appreciate the privilege of having our own lot cast in this nineteenth century. All we know however of other days and generations confirms the faith that content depends little on sur-



roundings. Blessings in common to our progenitors and ourselves surpass immeasurably in their capabilities of producing happiness, whatsoever has been added since by ingenuity or wisdom.

But the claims of these old homes to be held in sacred remembrance is not their beauty of form or excellence of structure, or even the light they shed on modes and processes of days gone by. When in contemplative mood we gaze upon their venerable remains, or as in this instance recall from the dead past their ghostly presence, they seem alive with recollections. If in private life the incidents of a single career narrated without reserve prove often as striking as romance, the history of a dwelling embracing the chances and changes of mortal existence for a host of successive occupants may occasionally possess an interest no less. Due regard must be paid to what even the over sensitive deem unsuitable for publication. But after full allowance for such considerations, enough may be revealed within the most scrupulous limits of decorum to bring before us in living reality admirable men and women of the past, with whom we feel almost as well acquainted as if we had lived with them in daily companionship. This old house of the Vassalls has a record we think our readers will admit too eventful to be lost. There are numerous others in our New-England corner of the earth, not in cities alone, but in country places, about which even more pleasant tales can be told.

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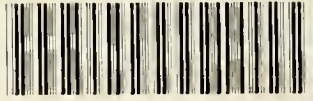








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