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MEMORIAL

OF

HON. TOPPAN ROBIE.

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## HISTORICAL SKETCH,

BY HON. J. A. WATERMAN.

Hon. Toppan Robie was born in Candia, N. H., Jan. 27, 1782, and died at his residence in Gorham, Jan. 14, 1871. The immediate cause of his death was inflammation of the bladder and kidneys, brought on by a slight cold.

Mr. Robie was the fourth child of Edward and Sarah (Smith) Robie. His grandfather was Samuel, son of Ichabod, son of John Robie, who came to this country from some part of Great Britain and settled in the town of Atkinson, N. H., about the year 1660. Mr. Robie's mother was the daughter of John Smith and Sarah Toppan, of Hampton, N. H. Hence, through his maternal grandmother came his somewhat peculiar christian name. His parents removed from Chester, N. H., to Candia in 1780. and when he was about four years old they returned to Chester, where they lived the remainder of their days. His father died at the age of 92, his mother at 89. He had three brothers and two sisters, of whom he was the sole survivor. His early opportunities for acquiring even a common school education were limited. When eight or nine years old he went to live with his grandmother Smith—then Webster, by her second marriage; being a great favorite with her, partly no doubt on account of his christian name. He remained the greater part of the time until he was fourteen with her and her son Edmund Webster, who was perhaps the most active and influential merchant in the town. He attended the town school when there was one, and was occasionally sent by his uncle to a private school, where he was taught only reading, writing and arithmetic.

But it was during these years that his future course was shaped. Being a favorite in the family and familiar with

his uncle he spent a great deal of time in his store, where his natural inclination to mercantile pursuits was developed and fostered. At the age of fourteen he went to Haverhill, Mass., and was there employed in a store by Capt. Cotton B. Brooks, afterwards a successful merchant of Portland, where he died in 1834.

In March, 1799, when 17 years of age he came to Gorham, a friend in Haverhill having procured a situation for him as clerk in the store of the late John Horton. He remained with Mr. Horton but a few months, and then went into the employ of the late Dan'l Cressey, who was at that time the principal trader in Gorham, and with whom he continued until September, 1802, when, before he was twenty-one years of age, in company with the late Sewall Lancaster, he commenced business for himself. During these years of clerkship his compensation was from \$50 to \$216 per year and board. Yet from this, by strict economy and careful husbanding of his earnings, he had laid by a very respectable amount, which he had as his own to use in commencing business.

But the habits which he had acquired, his aptness and competency for business, his fidelity to his employers, and above all the value which he had established for his *word*, formed a capital worth far more through life than an inherited fortune could have been. Mr. Cressey had perfect confidence in him, trusted his business with him to a very considerable extent, and often sent him, young as he was, to Boston to make his stated purchases for him. This, at a time when the purchase money of thousands of dollars was carried on the person, and the journey was made on horseback, the goods to be purchased a general assortment, for a great variety of customers, requiring no ordinary skill and judgment in selection, and shrewdness in buying, was an exceedingly delicate and responsible commission; yet it was executed by young Robie in a manner which not only gave satisfaction to his employer, but established an acquaintance and standing among merchants in Boston, which were of great advantage to him when he commenced business in his own name.

In 1804 he took his brother, Thomas S. Robie, then a lad of thirteen, into his store, where he was employed in various capacities, from that of shop boy to the position of chief clerk until 1815, when the two brothers went into partnership as retail merchants, and for more than twenty years carried on business under the name of T. & T. S. Robie, in the store now occupied by their worthy successors, Messrs. Ridlon & Card. Never were two persons better fitted to conduct business together than these two brothers. Capt. Robie frequently declared, "never did two brothers get along more cordially and pleasantly than we did from beginning to end." Their business was very extensive and very profitable; and the name of this firm was known all through the back country, and even as far as New Hampshire and Vermont, as the synonym of activity, energy and fair dealing.

Mr. Thomas Robie, better known as Deacon Robie, was a man of eminent piety, a pure-minded consistent christian. He died in October 1838, beloved and lamented by the whole community.

After the death of his brother Mr. Robie continued in trade a few years, and then withdrew from active participation in mercantile pursuits. His property gradually accumulating during these fifty years of close attention to business, had now become large, and needed his more immediate personal care, so that the past twenty years have been less active and stirring ones than he had before enjoyed since he first left his New Hampshire home to seek his fortune. And yet there have been no idle or unoccupied years among them. His industrious habits clung to him to the last, and he always found some employment for mind or body, or both. He owned a good many acres of land near the village of Gorham, which he has carefully cultivated, certainly with great personal enjoyment if not profit, working much with his own hands and always exercising a watchful supervision over his farming operations. Since he was eighty years old he has cleared and prepared for tillage some ten acres of wood and pasture land. In the summer

months when the early—six o'clock—morning train from Gorham to Portland passed his newly purchased land we have often seen the venerable old man at work there, hatchet in hand, endeavoring, by cutting and burning, to exterminate the juniper bushes growing there, intruders to which he seemed to have special dislike, as symbolical of uselessness, waste and neglect.

Mr. Robie has always been regarded with great respect by the citizens of the town in which he lived so long and among whom he had acquired his reputation as well as his wealth. He has held almost every municipal office which he would accept. He was six years a representative of the town at the General Court of Massachusetts. In 1820-21 he was representative in the Legislature of Maine, and in 1837 a member of Gov. Kent's Executive Council. In 1809 he united with the Congregational Church in Gorham, and continued his connection therewith and his interest in the church and parish as long as he lived. For many years he was treasurer both of the parish and of their ministerial fund. This fund was an object of peculiar interest, and almost personal attachment to him; and under his careful management of it, as well as by his numerous contributions to it, it has trebled in amount since it first came to his hands. He was also one of the Trustees of Gorham Academy for more than fifty years—for many years their treasurer—and contributed often to aid the institution. The past year he generously subscribed above \$5000 towards the \$20,000 cash fund which our citizens offered the Congregationalists of Maine as an inducement for the location of their proposed Classical School at Gorham. He filled at different times during his long and useful life numerous other positions of honor and trust, and always discharged the duties attaching thereto with marked ability and strict fidelity.

During the war of 1812 he was Captain of a company of militia, and when, in 1814, it was supposed that Portland was in danger of invasion, and among other troops Gen. Irish's brigade was ordered there, Capt. Robie marched "to



the front," at the head of his company. The company enrolled 63 men; of this number John Cressey, Darius Libby, Philip Larrabee and Elisha Irish, all of Gorham, are the only survivors.

Capt. Robie was married three times. In 1804 to Miss Lydia Brown, daughter of Benj. Brown of Chester, N. H., and a sister of the late Rev. Francis Brown, D. D., the distinguished President of Dartmouth College, from 1815 to 1820. Mrs. Robie died in Feb. 1811, having borne him two children, Harriet, who married Oliver Lincoln of Boston, and died in 1832, and Francis Brown Robie, now living at Gorham. He was again married in September, 1811, to Miss Sarah Thaxter Lincoln, daughter of Capt. John Lincoln, originally from Hingham, Mass., but then residing in Gorham. By her he had three children, Charles, George and Frederick. George died in 1856. Charles and Frederick survive and both reside in Gorham. This marriage relation continued about seventeen years, when it was sundered by the death of his wife in 1828. In November, 1828, he married Mrs. Eliza Cross, widow of Capt. William Cross, of Portland, and daughter of Wm. Stevens, also of Portland. By her he had no children.— She died Nov. 2, 1865, at the age of 83.

Having in the acquisition of his own large estate devoted the closest attention to his business and exercised strict economy and prudent care in small matters, searching for saving grains, rather than looking after and expecting to find nuggets or bars of gold, he retained these habits through life. He had no sympathy for or patience with anything which appeared to him like idleness, waste or extravagance. Though not by nature a generous man, certainly not impulsively so, he dispensed very liberal sums in public and private benefactions, as in the instance already alluded to of his contribution to the Ministerial Fund and in aid of the Academy, in his gifts to the town of the soldier's monument and a town clock, and a donation made by him on his 80th birth-day of \$5,000 to the Congregational Church and Parish of Chester.

In politics, commencing as a Federalist, he was afterwards an ardent Whig, and in latter years an equally earnest Republican. Though always active and outspoken in the support of his political principles, he made but few enemies and rarely did any permanent bitterness of feeling result from such a course. On the contrary, he was generally very popular and held in great respect among all parties and classes.

Believing it to be his duty as a good citizen, as well as being always ready to sustain his principles by his ballot, he has never since his majority failed to attend the State and municipal elections, or to cast his vote openly and fearlessly for the persons of his choice.

While very pleasing in his person and address, always sufficiently dignified, but affable and agreeable, he possessed an unusual degree of firmness and persistency. When he had deliberately decided upon a course of action—and he seldom acted rashly—he rarely abandoned it, but pursued it to the end, and took the consequences courageously, when they came.

Thus endowed, with all these careful and prudent ways, and unusually successful in all his purposes of life, it is not strange that the most implicit confidence was placed in him by so many of his fellow citizens, nor that he was for more than half a century their counsellor and friend, and their model of prudence and sagacity, as well of integrity and fair dealing in all their business relations. While they believed that “his word was as good as his bond,” it was his pride to show that all this confidence had not been misplaced.

Descended from a hardy stock and possessing a sound and healthy mind, as well as a strong and vigorous body never injured by any excesses, he was permitted to reach a very advanced age, with mental and bodily powers unusually bright and active to the last.

What an eventful period in our history a life thus prolonged covers !

He lived during the administration of each of our Presi-

dents, and under the constitution in all its phases and amendments. In fact, this period embraces the whole history of our government and the country since the close of the revolutionary war.

How few of those who thus connect us with the past survive.

Our friend was grateful that time had dealt so gently with him, and that a kind Father had spared him from so many of the ills and afflictions incident to such advanced age; and in this feeling his surviving relatives and friends have every reason to share.

His loss will be deeply and extensively felt, not only in the immediate community in which he has dwelt so long, but throughout the town, and by a large class of business friends and acquaintances elsewhere.

He goes to his grave full of years and honors, and it is believed without an enemy in the world. "He rests from his labors and his works do follow him."

## BURIAL SERVICE.

The weeping skies of Monday, Jan. 16, seemed in sympathy with the sadness which rested on the village of Gorham. The stores were closed, the Seminary Exercises suspended, as was business generally. The body was laid in a beautiful rosewood casket, studded with silver nails. On the silver plate was the simple inscription :

TOPPAN ROBIE,  
DIED JANUARY 14, 1871,  
Aged 89 years 11 months.

The features were perfectly natural, and had the appearance of sleep. At three o'clock the services at the late residence, under charge of Mr. J. C. Card, began by the singing, by the young ladies of the Seminary, led by their music teacher, Miss Charlotte A. Ginn, the following hymn, written by request for the occasion, by Prof. E. P. Thwing. The plaintive melody of Playel's Hymn was well adapted to the expression of the sentiment of the lyric, and during the singing of the second stanzas, Miss E. M. Chadbourne and Miss K. D. Smith slowly advanced to the casket and reverently laid upon it a beautiful garland and cross of flowers, the gift of the Seminary :

Golden grain from harvest ripe,  
Angel reapers garner in ;  
Joy above, but grief below,  
Where the reapers' steps have been.

We around the aged form,  
Gather here with filial love,  
Memory's garland now we bring,  
Token of his crown above.

Farewell! Father, Patron, Friend!

We no more thy face shall see,  
Yet thy name enshrined in love  
In our hearts shall ever be!

May thy lips to others now  
Be a bright example here,  
That upon their brows in death  
Gratitude may drop her tear!

Appropriate selections of scripture were read by Rev. C. C. Parker, D. D., who then spoke as follows :

An unwonted sense of loneliness is on our hearts, and on all this community. A father in our Israel—a father in our whole community—has fallen. We are gathered to the burial of one, who for more than seventy years has been identified with this place; who for years was its leading business man; for years its most trusted public servant, in all the departments of public trust. All the high interests of the town—those of the church and parish with which he was connected and of which he was by far the senior member, the interests of learning, as connected with the Academy and Seminary, were dear to him. For their promotion he gave with a munificent hand.

From a lad of seventeen to the hoary age of almost four-score and ten years, he has lived among us. Here, with singular sagacity, energy and success he did his work in the days of his vigor, managing and moulding the affairs of the place. Here he spent his quiet serene old age. Here, surrounded by his children, and children's children and countless friends, he has passed away.

We are sad that we shall see him no more in our streets, our places of business, our houses of worship; sad that we shall be welcomed no more to this, for so many years, his home; that he will greet us no more with his genial smile, and his pleasant words, or instruct us with his words of wisdom and experience.

But while sad and lonely, we rejoice that the silver cord was loosened and the golden bowl broken so late and in so much mercy; and especially that the Christian hope, cher-

ished for more than threescore years, did not desert him, but was strong and sure to the end; that he went like a shock of corn in his season, ripe for the garner of God.

The Choir, led by Dea. Joseph Redlon, sang to the tune of Naomi the hymn beginning:

O God, our help in ages past.

Prayer was then offered by Rev. Dr. Parker, after which the hymn beginning,

We've no abiding city here.

was sung to the tune of Wells. The body was then borne to the Cemetery, followed by the children and grand children of the deceased and a large concourse of friends and citizens of the town. Twelve of the leading citizens acted as pallbearers as follows: Hon. John A. Waterman, Daniel C. Emery, Esq., Joseph Ridlon, Esq., Stephen Hinkley, Esq., Gen. Edward T. Smith, Col. Humphrey Cousens, William Burton, Esq., Marshall Irish, Esq., Samuel R. Clemments, Esq., Charles Paine, Esq., and John Card, Esq.,—the church bell sounding his dirge.



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Gorham, January 23d, 1871.

REV. C. C. PARKER, D. D.

Dear Sir:

The undersigned having listened with great interest to your discourse yesterday afternoon, relative to the life and character of the late Hon. Toppan Robie, and believing that it would be read with equal interest by many of our townsmen, and others who did not have the privilege of hearing it, respectfully request a copy of the same for publication.

With much esteem, your ob't serv'ts,

JOHN A. WATERMAN,	R. G. HARDING,
J. B. WEBB,	DANIEL C. EMERY,
STEPHEN HINKLEY,	MARSHALL IRISH,
THAD'S P. IRISH,	R. A. FOGG,
JOSEPH RIDLON,	SAMUEL F. BACON,
GEO. B. EMERY,	JOHN C. CARD.

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 Gorham, January 24th, 1871.

GENTLEMEN:

Your note requesting for publication the discourse relative to the life of the Hon. Toppan Robie, has been received.

Such was the character of Mr. Robie, and such his relations to this community, that I am not at liberty to decline your request. Inadequate and imperfect as it is, the discourse is at your disposal.

Very truly yours,

C. C. PARKER.

Hon. J. A. Waterman, D. C. Emery, Esq., Dea. M. Irish and others.



## MEMORIAL DISCOURSE,

BY REV. C. C. PARKER, D. D.

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ZECH. 1st, 5th.—“*Your fathers, where are they?*”

The prophet puts this question to rebuke the arrogance of Israel, by reminding them of their common mortality. Many of the fathers had lived long and accomplished much, but where are they? All gone. They and the prophets are all asleep with the dead.

Put this question here—put it in any community, Your fathers where are they? and what shall the answer be? Gone, all gone! Herodotus tells us that as Xerxes reviewed on the plains of Doriscus the army of nearly five millions, with which he had just invaded Greece, he wept at the thought that in one hundred years not one of all that vast throng moving before him, would be in the land of the living. Had the haughty, but for the moment subdued monarch seen all the future of that army he would have found abundant occasion for weeping. Before one of the hundred years was gone, Thermopylæ and Salamis and Plataea with the pestilence and famine had swept from the earth nearly all that mighty host, and the king himself was fleeing, an almost solitary fugitive, back to Babylon, the capital of his kingdom, which so recently he had left in such pomp and glory, and where in a few years he himself was slain by the captain of his own guards.

But it needs not war, nor pestilence, nor famine to carry the generations of men from the earth in an exceedingly brief period. The truth that so impressed itself upon the mind of the Persian King, is a truth still. The law of human life has not been changed. One hundred years ago, those who were literally the fathers of this town—who came when the red man was here—when the bear and the wolf, the deer and the moose, the beaver and the otter had their haunts on our hills and by our streams,—who cleared the forests from our farms, opened the virgin soil to the sun and changed the wilderness into fruitful fields. One hundred years ago these fathers, Phinney, and McLellan, and Irish and Alden and Cressey and Files and many of their associates were here and still actively engaged in the business of life. But where are they now? For years every one of them has been sleeping with the dead. Not only the fathers of that day, but all these here from the hoariest age down to the child in its mother's arms—all are gone. We read their names on the records of the town and the records of the church and on the time-worn stones of the grave-yard—the story of what they said and what they did, is current among us—the houses they built, the farms they subdued, are pointed out, but not one of them is in the land of the living. Many of them lived to extreme old age, but at last, one by one, the great reaper gathered them in.—Many of them did a most important work, founding the institutions and forming the society of the town, but for years they have been resting in their graves—their work all done.

We come down to the beginning of the present century. Where are the men then busy on your farms and in your stores and shops? Within the bounds of the town, only one Mr. Robert Estes, now in his 94th year, survives, who had then reached his majority. With this exception not one of all that then filled your house of worship, from Sabbath to

Sabbath, or were seen in your streets from day to day, not one then the head of a household, or in any wise connected with the affairs of the town, remains. A few then in their childhood, remain to tell us what these men did, concerned as they were in building this house of worship, in founding the Academy on yonder hill and in giving a new impulse to the business and a higher tone to the character of the town, but to the question, "Your fathers where are they?" having these in mind the answer is, "Gone, all gone." We say this with an emphasis now, that we could never say it before. The last of these fathers we have just laid to his rest in the grave. In the death of Hon. Toppan Robie, the last link that bound us as a community, to the distant past of the town and by which we joined hands with the first settlers is broken.

This community has followed to the grave many a citizen, eminent for qualities of mind and heart, eminent for services to the church and town. I need but mention Phinney and McLellan, the settlers—Lombard and Thatcher the first ministers, Judges Gorham and Longfellow, and more recently Gen. Irish, Judge Pierce, Dr. Waterman, Mr. Hinkley. You will recall a long list of eminent names intimately connected with the highest interests of the town for whom at their death the whole community mourned as for a father fallen. But never, I think, in all the history of the town, has one passed away who had been so intimately and for so long a period connected with all the interests of the town, whose name was so well known, or whose influence was so controlling in places of business, in municipal affairs, in the advancement of learning and in all the financial concerns of the church and parish as has passed away in the death of Mr. Toppan Robie, or for whom the community mourned with a more unfeigned and general sorrow.

The history of such a man as Mr. Robie is full of interest—its lessons are a valuable heritage to the community.

Let us study this history and ponder these lessons. I shall attempt no formal biographical sketch, that has been already done by most competent hands.

Mr. Robie came to this town in 1799, at the age of 17 years to serve as clerk in the store of Mr. Daniel Cressey. Born amid the hills of New Hampshire, he came with no inheritance save a sound and vigorous constitution and those qualities of mind and heart which so characterized his life. He came a lad, penniless and a stranger. He dies at the advanced age of nearly four score and ten, having amassed by far the largest fortune ever accumulated in town—having had more to do with all its varied affairs and leaving the stamp of his character more deeply impressed than any that had gone before him and the citizens of the town are his mourners.

What was the secret of all this? The answer is found in his sterling sense, his spotless integrity, his unwaived and systematic industry and attention to business, coupled with personal habits of great moderation and frugality.

When he was clerk the interests of his employer were his interests. He needed no admonitions to do his duty. By his readiness, judgment and tact he quickly made himself a necessity to his employer commanding his confidence and good will. Mr. Cressey, with whom he served the longest period here, used to say of him, that he was the best boy he ever knew. Such was his esteem of him, both for judgment and integrity, that in a short time he entrusted to him, to a large extent, his business, both in the general management of the store and in the more difficult and delicate task of making the varied purchases in Portland and Boston, necessary for such an establishment.

When in company with Mr. Lancaster, he entered upon business for himself, the capital he had was the few hundred dollars, by strict economy and frugality already

accumulated, together with his acquaintance with the business and with community, and what was better than either, his reputation for energy, sagacity and trust worthiness. With these for his foundation and while yet too young to cast a vote at the polls, he entered upon a career of business, in a department where competition is the sharpest, and where wrecks and failures are most numerous; but by a clear comprehension of his business, and a careful husbandry of his means, fulfilling to the letter every promise to customer or creditor—always keeping abreast of the demand in community with his supplies; never getting far ahead of it, he gradually enlarged his transactions, until from a business of a few thousands, it became a business of many thousands; until from a local store of a country village, his place of business became the centre of traffic for a vast region. With his brother Thomas S. Robie, first as his trusted and confidential clerk, and then from 1815, for more than twenty years, as his partner, he competed largely and successfully with the merchants of Portland for the extension trade, not only of neighboring towns in this State, but also for that of all Northern N. H. and North Eastern Vt., a region then known as the “Coos Country,” whose natural market before the building of rail roads, was Portland. For those distant and desirable customers, his business became largely wholesale business, both in the purchase of their produce, and in the sale of goods with which they reloaded their teams. Coming as they often did, especially in Winter, in companies of from twenty to sixty or more teams, the traffic with them became most important and lucrative, but demanding for the right handling of it all the best qualities of the successful merchant. With an eye that missed nothing, and with an energy and enterprise that never slumbered, Mr. Robie managed this business, and made it the source of large and constantly increasing income. His name became a synonym for mercantile

honor and enterprise through all the region whence this traffic came.

The business life of Mr. Robie was purely that of the merchant. He entered into no speculations; on those troubled, uncertain waters, he launched not a craft, unfurled not a sail. But all business germane to that of a merchant, and which he could make subsidiary to that, he established and prosecuted with energy, often employing in the various departments of business, a large number of men. As a merchant, he took possession of the whole field at his command, and cultivated it to the utmost. He filled the measure of his opportunity. His story from a well nigh penniless, friendless boy, as he entered this village seventy-two years ago next March, up to the head of his large establishment, and the possession of his great wealth, is exceedingly interesting, with not a little of romance in it. It is the story over again of the Budgetts, the Astors, the Lawrencees, the Peabodys, and the vast majority of successful merchants and business men, the world over, sagacity, energy, integrity, enterprise, a clear open eye, a brave heart, a diligent hand, always against all odds winning the day.

Had Mr. Robie been led in early life, to establish himself in a large city, and enter the wider field that would have been open to him then, there is little doubt he would have rivalled the most successful, and been numbered among the merchant princes of the country. There was in him every element of success in all mercantile and commercial matters.

The value of such a merchant in a community, cannot easily be estimated. The merchant's calling is a most important one in all the economy of civilized life, bringing as it does to our doors, the products and fabrics of almost all the earth, and taking in exchange the surplus of our own products, thus giving currency to all the business of life. The merchant is eminently a public servant, without whom

civilized life would not be possible. In all ages he has been a most important factor in the grand product of human welfare, both by promoting intercourse and interchange among men and nations, enabling each to enjoy the products of all, and also by the general elevation of the race. And that merchant who with wise forecast, tireless industry and unsullied honesty, successfully conducts his business; at whose counter the little child or servant girl, as surely as the banker, gets her money's worth, is above all price in community; and the qualities of mind and heart necessary to large success in this calling, are among the highest and best that pertain to man. All these qualities Mr. Robie possessed in an eminent degree. As a business man he was the centre of great influence and power in the community. Had he been simply a business man, nothing but a merchant, with his clear well defined purposes, his intelligence, enterprise, and fair dealings, he would have been in a high degree a public benefactor.

But eminent as were his qualities as a merchant,—extensive and engrossing as were his business operations, demanding constant thought and circumspection, Mr. Robie limited not himself to these. The scale of his mind was quite too large to be thus circumscribed. From the first he took a deep and active interest in all public concerns of the town. Capable and faithful in his own affairs, public trusts were soon committed to his hands. With the same fidelity and tact that he managed his private business he took care of these trusts. The result was that for years, and that while he was conducting his extensive mercantile business, he was largely engaged in public matters at home and abroad. For years he represented the town first in the general court of Mass., and then when this State was organized in the Legislature of Maine, being one of the last representatives in the former and the first in the latter. During the administration of

Gov. Kent, he was a member of the Executive Council. He was repeatedly appointed by the court a commissioner for the location of county and other public roads. In the war of 1812, though a staunch Federalist, he commanded the company raised by the town for the defence of Portland, from which he derived the title of Captain, which subsequently he always bore. He had great aptitude for public as well as private business and had he fully entered that field, there is little doubt he would have attained high distinction. Certainly what he did, he did well. No trust committed to his hands suffered. In dealing with public interests, he might and doubtless did, sagaciously promote his private interests, but never to the detriment of the public. What the public had a right to expect and claim the public got. None of its revenues slipped through his fingers or stuck to his palms.

Mr. Robie from the first, took a lively interest in the promotion of higher education in the community, and this interest continued unabated to the end. Though too young and too recently here to be one of the original trustees of the Academy, he was one of its earliest and warmest friends, and soon became one of the most influential members of its Board of Trust, a position which he held until his death, having been for years the senior member. From time to time he gave liberally to the funds of the Academy and Seminary, having taken a most active part in the establishment of the latter. He uniformly attended with interest all public examinations and exhibitions. We shall not soon forget, how with infirm step he climbed Academy Hill bearing the burden of nearly four score and ten years, to attend the closing exercises of the last Academic year, or the appearance of his venerable form, as in the evening, at the public exhibition he sat on the stage in this house.

The generous offer of a cash subscription of \$20,000 made a few months ago by the citizens of this place to



secure the location here, by the Congregationalists of Maine, of their proposed Classical School, was due in a large measure to the interest and zeal in the matter manifested by Mr. Robie. He drew the subscription and headed it with a pledge of \$5,000. He attended all the meetings of citizens and trustees in regard to it, whether by day or night, and at last added largely to his first subscription to secure the \$20,000. When to the liberal offer made by the Trustees of the Seminary and the citizens of Gorham an adverse response was received, no one felt a deeper, sadder disappointment than he. Among the last conversations I had with him, previous to his last sickness, he referred with unabated interest to the subject. His one great desire for years, had been to see the Seminary, and with it, the cause of high and sound learning and liberal culture here, on a sure foundation. Through the proposed Classical School, he hoped this might be attained and he was ready to give largely. The failure was the one peculiar sadness of his last days.

From his earliest manhood Mr. Robie was much interested in the concerns of the parish. Often acting as collector, he was annoyed and disgusted at the petty, paltry ways in which men, otherwise fair and honorable, would avoid payment of parish subscription and assessment. To avoid this vexation, he resolved to have established a Ministerial Fund, the income of which should, in part or entirely, support the preaching of the gospel. The present fund is largely due to his efforts. More than half of it is the result of his donations. If in latter years he has had any pet measure this has been it. For the most of the time after its foundation he was its treasurer, and could not have cared for his own private interests with more watchfulness and concern than he did for the safety and increase of this fund. It ought to be a great blessing to the church and parish, enabling them to do much more liberally for all the general objects of be-

nevolence for which the demands are so urgent. If it shall ever fail to be a blessing, it will sadly disappoint the hopes and purposes of Mr. Robie. Having great confidence in the wisdom of establishing such funds especially in feeble parishes, he celebrated his eightieth birthday by the gift for this purpose of \$5,000 to his ancestral parish in Chester, N. H.

Mr. Robie did little from impulse. He was eminently a man of calculation, purpose, fore-thought. In his dealings he was rigidly just, rather than impulsively generous. Intending to keep his own word—fulfill it to the letter—he expected the same from others and strongly insisted upon it. Such an example in its leading business man, was most healthful on the whole tone of dealing in the community. He was willing to be taxed liberally for the support of the poor, but he was not much in the habit of seeking them out and aiding them with private benefactions. To him to accumulate was easy, and his wants were few and simple. Industry, frugality and temperance in all things, were high virtues in his esteem. He knew that much of the poverty around him was needless, if not criminal, the result of thriftlessness, folly and dissipation and he had little sympathy or patience with it. It is well all are not like Mr. Robie in this respect. As society is, there is a place and demand for sympathetic impulsive generosity. Be the cause of poverty what it may, the poor we always have with us, and somebody must seek and succor them. No duty is plainer. But it is well for the community that all generosity is not impulsive—the offspring of a quick and fickle sympathy—that with some it is cool, systematic, forecasting. In this respect Mr. Robie was much like the late George Peabody, whom he resembled in very many qualities of mind and heart. Such men accumulate that they may endow our schools and colleges—found our asylums and homes for the destitute—and thus diffuse

light and knowledge and with them comfort and gladness perpetually among men.

It is well all men are not of the one kind or the other. The world needs both. In these as in all his gifts, God has rightly tempered human society. In this respect, judging from the concurrent testimony of the community, Mr. Robie and his brother Dea. Thomas S. Robie, admirably supplimented each other, the latter spontaneously seeking the poor and with prompt, generous, but unobtrusive, often unseen hand sending them relief and with it often some message of christian instruction and comfort.

But while Mr. Robie's benevolence did not naturally, spontaneously take this direction, but found expression rather in such gifts as those to our ministerial fund, and to that of his paternal parish, in donations to the Academy and Seminary, in the erection of the soldier's monument and in putting the clock into the tower of our church, he by no means withheld his hand from private benefactions. Rarely, I apprehend, did he refuse to give more or less to and worthy object seeking aid at his hands.

Mr. Robie and his first wife, Mrs. Lydia Robie, united in full communion with this church June 1, 1809, and came to the Lord's table on the 4th of that month. They had previously during the ministry of Rev. Mr. Noyes, united with the church on what was then known as the "Halfway Covenant." When Mr. Rand was invited to the pastorate of this church, he made it a condition of settlement that this covenant should be abolished, and none admitted to church privileges but on full profession of faith in Christ. Mr. Rand was settled in January, 1809, and Mr. and Mrs. Robie came to the communion in June following. Since the death of Gen. Irish his life-long friend and associate, Mr. Robie, has been the senior member of the church. In the financial and general affairs of the church and parish he took a deep in-

terest, but he seldom, if ever, took part in a social meeting or spoke of his religious feelings and experience. In these respects he was very reticent. And yet whenever, during the few years of my pastorate here, I have alluded to the subject, he has spoken with cheerfulness and confidence of his Christian hope. At my last interview with him, a few hours before he lost his speech and consciousness, after a brief prayer, at his request, he spoke with much freedom of himself, saying with as much emphasis as in his sickness and feebleness he could command, "All my trust is in Christ. I trust not at all to myself or to what I have done—I trust all to Christ." He then asked my views of heaven. Understanding him to refer to recognition of friends, I expressed my confidence that we should meet and know them there. He added, "I have thought of this a great deal lately. It will be so pleasant to meet my father and my mother and the dear companions that have gone before me." But, said he, "I know all will be right. We shall be satisfied." With these among his last thoughts and last words, he soon fell into that sleep which issued finally in the sleep of death.

Thus has passed away the last of the fathers. To the question, Where are they? the answer is, as never before, full and unqualified. "All gone." The link that so long connected us with the remote part of our town is broken. The living volume, from which we had read so many interesting chapters of local history, is closed.

The old age of Mr. Robie was singularly serene. For years his work had been so done, his business matters so arranged, that he was ready for his departure at any moment, and yet he was busy to the last. The mind that had been so active, the hand that had been so diligent in his prime and vigor, were active and diligent still. No rust gathered on the machinery of his being, mental or physical. Whatever asperities, political or ecclesiastical controversies had engendered in the past, were all softened

or obliterated by time and age. He cherished no enmities, he was every man's friend. His look as we saw him from Sabbath to Sabbath in the house of God, his smile and his words of greeting, of counsel and cheer, as we met him in our streets, in our shops and offices, or at his home, where for years he had lived, breathed a perpetual benediction. Thus he was with us, interested in all that interests us, going in and out, like a father, almost to the end. His sun went down full orb'd and in a clear sky.

To me Mr. Robie had been a person of peculiar interest from the first. I saw in him, I thought, one of the finest representatives of the gentlemen of the Old School, intelligent, courteous, dignified in an eminent degree.— Though certainly not a perfect man, he was a model of his kind. His character was singularly symmetrical and complete.

It was a fortunate day for Gorham when the lad Toppan Robie entered and begun his work in our village. Sadness was on all the community the day when in the wintry storm we bore the form of the patriarch, Toppan Robie, a name almost a synonyme with Gorham, to its rest in the grave.

Let us gather up and ponder the lessons of this man's life. As he followed Christ and the right, served God and his generation, let us follow his steps. The longest life soon ends, the most important work is soon done. Happy shall we be, if, when our record is made up, there shall be in it as much the world will care to read, as little it will wish to blot, as there is in that of Toppan Robie.





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