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The Taft Family Gathering.

PROCEEDINGS

AT THE MEETING OF THE

Taft Family.

AT UXBRIDGE, MASS.,

August 12, 1874.

UXBRIDGE:
SPENCER BROTHERS, BOOK AND JOB PRINTERS,
COMPENDIUM OFFICE.

1874.

TAFT FAMILY GATHERING.

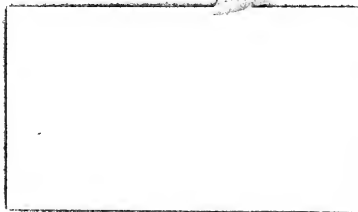
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THE HON. ALPHONSO TAFT, SECRETARY OF WAR.
[PHOTOGRAPHED BY J. LANDY, 208 FOURTH STREET, CINCINNATI.]

PRELIMINARY REMARKS.

Nearly all the "Tafts" in the United States are the descendants of Robert Taft, who settled in the town of Mendon, Mass., in the year 1680. It being desirable that a correct genealogical record of the descendants of this man be obtained, a meeting of gentlemen bearing the name of Taft was held in New York on the 30th day of December last, as requested by the following circular :

To the Members of the Taft Family in the United States :

WHEREAS, There have been collected, to a large extent, the statistics of our family comprising the descendants of our ancestor, Robert Taft, who, with five sons, emigrated about the year 1660, and settled in Mendon, Mass., and it is deemed by us desirable to have the record completed and put in book form, and thinking it can be done more thoroughly by a concert of action. We, the undersigned, hereby request the several families to meet, by their representatives, at the St. Dennis Hotel, No. 799 Broadway, New York City, on the 30th day of December, 1873, at 10 o'clock A. M., to take such measures in the premises as may be deemed advisable. Let there be a general representation.

Cincinnati, Nov. 8th, 1873.

DANIEL TAFT,	}	Vermont.	J. TAFT,	}	Ohio.
A. T. TAFT,			L. TAFT.		
RUSSELL S. TAFT,			WM. TAFT,		
C. I. TAFT,	}	New Hampshire.	H. F. TAFT,	}	California.
H. W. TAFT,			H. C. TAFT,		

In compliance with the above circular, representatives of the family from the States of New York, Ohio, Massachusetts and Vermont, assembled at the St. Dennis Hotel, when it was decided to call a meeting of the family to be held at Uxbridge, Mass., Aug. 12th, 1874, and Daniel W. Taft, of Uxbridge, and Velorous Taft, of Upton, were appointed a committee to take the initiative steps in the matter.

On March 30th, the following circular was issued :

To the Descendants of Robert Taft, who settled in the Town of Mendon about the year 1680:

At a meeting of Gentlemen of the name of Taft, held at the St. Denis Hotel, in the City of New York, Tuesday, the 30th day of December 1873, it was voted to hold a meeting of the Taft Family, in Uxbridge, Mass., on the 12th day of August, 1874; and Daniel W. Taft of Uxbridge and Velorous Taft of Upton, were appointed a Committee to take the preliminary steps to the choosing of a Committee of Arrangements.

The undersigned cordially approve of the proposed meeting of the Taft Family, to be held at Uxbridge, in August, and respectfully request the descendants of Robert Taft, residing in Uxbridge and vicinity, to meet at Taft's Hall, in Uxbridge, on Saturday, the 18th day of April instant, at one and a half o'clock in the afternoon, to choose a Committee of Arrangements, and to take such action as is necessary to make the proposed Family Gathering a success.

DANIEL W. TAFT, of Uxbridge,	VELOROUS TAFT, of Upton,
ROYAL C. TAFT, of Providence,	ORSMUS TAFT, of Uxbridge,
ROBERT TAFT, of Uxbridge,	JACOB TAFT, of Uxbridge,
HENRY G. TAFT, of Uxbridge,	MOSES TAFT, of Uxbridge,
CHAS. A. TAFT, of Uxbridge,	And others.

UXBRIDGE, March 30, 1874,

At the meeting of the 18th of April, a general plan of the meeting was decided upon, and a Committee of Arrangements was appointed to carry the plan into operation. Hon. Judge Taft of Cincinnati was fixed upon by the meeting as the orator of the occasion and Hon. Judge Chapin of Worcester selected to pronounce a poem.

The following circular was published in several papers and sent by mail to all known representatives of the family throughout the country:

UXBRIDGE, MASS., June 30, 1874.

To the Descendants of Robert Taft:

Through the suggestions of individuals and a self-constituted committee, it has been decided to hold a grand gathering of the descendants of Robert Taft, who settled in Mendon about the year 1680. The family has become a very numerous one, and a very large number of those who bear the name in the United States are descendants of this man.

As the town of Uxbridge was originally a part of the town of Mendon from which the family went out, and has excellent facilities of communication, it has been deemed fitting that it be the gathering-place of its members, large numbers of whom still remain upon the original soil.

A large Committee of Arrangements has been appointed, who, at a meeting held for the purpose, fixed upon the 12th day of August, 1874, as

the time of the proposed family re-union. To this meeting you are respectfully and cordially invited; and as it is impossible for the committee to know the names of all the members of the family scattered over the country, you are particularly requested to extend this invitation to all the blood living in your vicinity. It is expected that the meeting will be one of public as well as social interest, and it is believed that it will do much to encourage that laudable pride which rejoices in an excellent ancestry, and that affection which should always flow in the channels of kindred blood. We invite you, therefore, whether you bear the name and blood of the original Robert, or the blood without the name, or are connected with the family by marriage, to come back to the home of your ancestors and join the assembly we propose.

The public exercises of the occasion will consist of a Historical Address by Hon. Alphonso Taft, of Cincinnati, Ohio, with brief addresses by other members of the family, and music prepared for the occasion. Taft's Hall will be open on the morning of the 12th of August next, for the registry of the names of all who wish to attend the exercises. All will be furnished with tickets on registering their names, and no person will be admitted without one.

All who accept this invitation are requested to inform the Secretary of the Committee at an early day,—addressing Charles A. Taft, Sec'y, Uxbridge, Mass.,—that entertainment may be secured for them as far as possible.

D. W. TAFT, CHAIRMAN, Uxbridge, Mass.,
 C. A. TAFT, SECRETARY, Uxbridge, Mass.,
 HENRY CHAPIN, Worcester, Mass.,
 MOSES TAFT, Uxbridge, Mass.,
 VELOURS TAFT, Upton, Mass.,
 CALEB TAFT, Mendon, Mass.,
 ROBERT TAFT, Uxbridge, Mass.,
 PUTNAM W. TAFT, Mendon, Mass.,
 HENRY G. TAFT, Uxbridge, Mass.,
 A. A. TAFT, Milford, Mass.,
 ENOS TAFT, New York,
 E. C. THAYER, Keene, N. H.,
 HENRY G. TAFT, Worcester, Mass.,
 ROYAL C. TAFT, Providence, R. I.,
 JOHN B. TAFT, Boston, Mass.,
 LIEUT. GOV. RUSSELL S. TAFT, Burlington, Vt.,
 HENRY W. TAFT, Pittsfield, Mass.,
 Dr. J. TAFT, Cincinnati, O.,
 MELLE TAFT, Blackstone, Mass.,
 ALONZO TAFT, Williamstown,
 E. C. TAFT, Uxbridge, Mass.,
 PETER M. TAFT, Whitinsville, Mass.,
 J. W. TAFT, Chicago, Ill.,
 E. J. KNOWLTON, Brooklyn, N. Y.,
 G. E. TAFT, Whitinsville, Mass.,
 J. W. TAFT, Providence, R. I.,
 EZRA W. TAFT, Dedham, Mass.,
 S. H. TAFT, Mendon, Mass.,
 DANIEL DAY, Providence, R. I.,
 G. W. TAFT, Uxbridge, Mass.,
 HENRY TAFT, Uxbridge, Mass.,

ROYAL K. TAFT, Gloucester, R. I.,
 GEO. A. SEAGRAVE, Providence, R. I.,
 STEPHEN S. TAFT, Palmer, Mass.,
 JOTHAM TAFT, New England Village, Mass.,
 HIRAM C. TAFT, West Bloomfield, N. Y.,
 JUDGE ALPHONSO TAFT, Cincinnati, Ohio,
 NELSON TAFT, Woonsocket, R. I.,
 ROSCOE C. TAFT, Sheffield, Mass.,
 MOWRY TAFT, Pawtucket, R. I.,
 A. R. TAFT, Charleston, S. C.,
 CALVIN TAFT, Worcester, Mass.,
 C. E. WHITIN, Whitinsville, Mass.,
 REV. CARLTON A. STAPLES, Providence, R. I.,
 REV. L. TAFT, Columbus, O.,
 ROBERT TAFT, New York,
 EZRA W. CHAPIN, Northboro', Mass.,
 GEO. H. CHAPIN, Boston, Mass.,
 DR. CHARLES G. TAFT, Oregon,
 EPHRAIM TAFT, Weld, Me.,
 LEWIS S. TAFT, Uxbridge, Mass.,
 ARTHUR WHEELLOCK, Uxbridge, Mass.,
 COL. HENRY TAFT, Northbridge, Mass.,

Committee of Arrangements.

DANIEL W. TAFT, Uxbridge, Mass.,
 CHAS. A. TAFT, Uxbridge, Mass.,
 MOSES TAFT, Uxbridge, Mass.,
 HENRY G. TAFT, Uxbridge, Mass.,
 E. C. TAFT, Uxbridge, Mass.,
 VELOURS TAFT, Upton, Mass.,
 HENRY CHAPIN, Worcester, Mass.,

Executive Committee.

ROBERT TAFT, Uxbridge, Mass.,
 ROYAL C. TAFT, Providence, R. I.,
 CHAS. E. WHITIN, Whitinsville, Mass.,
 E. J. KNOWLTON, Brooklyn, N. Y.,
 P. W. TAFT, Mendon, Mass.,

Finance Committee.

LEWIS S. TAFT, Uxbridge, Mass.,
 ARTHUR WHEELLOCK, Uxbridge, Mass.,

Registering Committee.

COL. HENRY TAFT, of Whitinsville, Mass.,

Marshal.

In addition to these committees, the Committee appointed

G. E. TAFT, Northbridge, Mass.,
 L. HERBERT TAFT, Uxbridge, Mass.,
 GEO. W. HOBBS, Uxbridge, Mass.,
 EZRA W. CHAPIN, Northboro', Mass.,
 EUGENE A. WHEELLOCK, Putnam, Ct.,
 ORSMUS A. TAFT, Providence, R. I.,

As Marshal's Aids.

JACOB TAFT, Uxbridge, Mass.,
 ROBERT TAFT, Uxbridge, Mass.,
 HENRY G. TAFT, Uxbridge, Mass.,
 CHAS. E. WHITIN, Northbridge, Mass.,
 EDWARD C. THAYER, Keene, N. H.,
 DR. A. W. BENNETT, Uxbridge, Mass.,

On Reception.

The fact was developed in the progress of the investigations incident to the meeting, that quite a number of the descendants of Matthew Taft, who was not a descendant of Robert Taft, resided in Worcester County. This is called the "Irish branch" of the family, but it is the opinion of those who have given the subject the most attention, that the remote ancestors of Robert Taft and Matthew Taft were the same, and that the more immediate ancestors of Matthew Taft emigrated from Scotland to the north part of Ireland and that Matthew emigrated from the north of Ireland to America. Invitations were sent to a number of the descendants of Matthew Taft, and it is pleasant to know that this branch of the family was represented at the gathering at Uxbridge.

The day of the meeting was an exceedingly pleasant one. The First Evangelical Congregational Church, the place of meeting, was filled to repletion. The music of the occasion was given by the choirs of the Orthodox and Unitarian Churches, under the charge of L. A. Seagrave, of Uxbridge.

At the close of the exercises at the Church, a procession was formed under the direction of Col. Henry Taft, of Northbridge, Marshal, and to the music of the American Brass Band, marched to the tent erected on land of Robert Taft, on Capron's Hill, where dinner was prepared by Augustus Marrs, of Worcester, caterer.

THE PUBLIC EXERCISES.

The exercises of the day commenced at 11.30 o'clock, with music by the American Brass Band, of Providence, D. W. Reeves, leader, followed with prayer by Rev. Thos. C. Biscoe of Uxbridge. The following Hymn was then sung by the Choir, to the tune of "ST. MARTIN'S:"

Let children hear the mighty deeds
Which God performed of old,
Which in our younger years we saw,
And which our fathers told.
He bids us make his glories known,
His works of power and grace,
And we'll convey his wonders down
Through every rising race.
Our lips shall tell them to our sons,
And they again to theirs,
That generations yet unborn,
May teach them to their heirs.
Thus shall they learn, in God alone
Their hope securely stands;
That they may ne'er forget his works,
But practice his commands.

ADDRESS OF WELCOME.

BY CHAS. A. TAFT, ESQ., OF UXBRIDGE.

Mr. President, Ladies and Gentlemen:—

Descendants of Robert, who have strayed far and wide,
From the homes where your fathers were wont to abide,
A prolific race, a multitudinous crowd,
Claim kindred to-day, and your claims are allowed.

In behalf of the members of the Executive Committee, and the members of the family who reside in this vicinity, I bid you a

cordial and hearty welcome to the old home, to these green hills, and this fertile valley, where our fathers leveled the forests, and broke the virgin soil, and our mothers shared the hardships and toils of a pioneer life.

This is a meeting of the Taft family,—assembled on our own account, and on our own business. You have come from the North and from the South, from the East and from the West, a great company drawn together by ties of kindred to renew old acquaintance and establish new friendships, to trace the various grades of relationship and learn more of the history of the race. Let us throw aside business,—the cares and perplexities of life, for the hour, at least,—and feel that we are in the midst of friends whose charity for us suffereth long and is kind.

We meet near the place where our ancestors lived, and which is made sacred to us as the repository of their dust. No costly monument marks the spot where they rest. Yet this great gathering of the family shows that they are remembered in the affections and hearts of their posterity.

Could Robert and his five sons be called forth from their silent resting places, and look over this vast assembly, would they not say that the promise of God to the Patriarchs of old had been fulfilled, when he said, “I will make thy seed as the stars of heaven in number, and as the sands of the sea-shore innumerable.”

About five weeks since, I visited, for the first time, the place where our honored ancestor (Robert Taft) built his house. It was located near Taft’s pond, now Mendon pond, on a beautiful and fertile strip of rolling land. There is nothing left to mark the spot. No timber, stones or cellar. The land is smooth and in a good state of cultivation. Should we not erect a respectable monument on those time honored grounds, that our descendants may know where the vine was planted that has spread its branches so far and wide?

What memories rise before us as we look back over the past two hundred years and more! But, of these and the trials and dangers

through which our ancestors and their descendants have passed, it is not for me to speak.

As I study the history of the race, I learn that it is noted for its industry, energy and frugality ; and when the dark clouds of war have hung over the nation, from the conflicts with the Indians down to the late great rebellion, it has taken an active and patriotic part in support of the Government. And now, while corruption and wrong stalk boldly at noonday, may we be found fighting manfully for the right, raise high the banner of education, and keep constantly before us noble and high ideals ; for when the higher life is cherished and honored, the mercenary and sensual motives of action, which invite and shield corruption, lose much of their force and power.

Many of you have seen our noble family tree. Its sturdy trunk bears the name of our ancestor Robert ; its wide-spreading branches, those of his five sons, Thomas, Robert Jr., Daniel, Joseph and Benjamin ; and their smaller ramifications represent the various families down to the present generation. That our tree stands strong and is flourishing, we have abundant evidence before us today. Its roots have struck deep, its branches have spread wide ; and although some, while lingering in the deep shade of its foliage, may have lost sight of the summit, yet there have been many brilliant lights, scattered here and there, that have ever pointed upwards to direct aspiration and encourage hope.

My friends, the parting at the close of the exercises of this day will be the last farewell with many of us. We shall not all meet again in this life. God grant that we may keep an eye to the summit of the tree, and follow the precept and example of the Great Teacher, so that when the end shall come, we may all meet again in the unknown country, a happy, united band.

And now I will close as I commenced, by again extending to you all a cordial welcome, trusting that many pleasant recollections will cluster around this visit to the old home.

HISTORICAL ADDRESS.

BY JUDGE ALPHONSO TAFT, OF CINCINNATI, OHIO.

Kindred and Friends :—

I have obeyed your call, and come from Ohio to address our tribe, in its dear old home. At first I wrote a declination, but other counsels prevailed, and I concluded to accept the invitation. It has proved to me a labor of love, and if I could be assured that you would enjoy the hearing of my address, as much as I have enjoyed the search, preparatory to writing it, I should be satisfied.

Genealogical research is often derided ; but it is fascinating, and when pursued with reason, has a wholesome and beneficial influence. Nor is the value of that influence dependent upon the distinguished, or undistinguished character of our ancestry. It is certainly much more agreeable and satisfactory to find them, at least, respectable. The very desire one feels, as he reads the record, to find evidences of good character in his ancestors, and even of eminence, tends strongly to cherish in him a regard for the good and the eminent, however much he may be disappointed, in looking for it among his own progenitors. But, if he finds a sound basis of character in the beginning, and steady advance in culture afterward, each generation trying to make the condition of the next, better than its own, he will receive a still more wholesome stimulus. No man can *deliberately*, be the first to dishonor the name and blood of his good ancestors. The study of genealogy, therefore, to a reasonable extent, whatever be the character of the retrospect, is salutary ; provided always, that it be not prompted by mere vanity. Weak minds may sometimes feed their self-conceit, on the deeds of their fathers. To be puffed up with self-esteem on ancestral account, is ridiculous. But it is no crime, and no weakness, to appreciate the character and achievements of those who have preceded us, and to emulate their virtues. Nor is it unnatural or unreasonable, that every man should inquire into his own antecedents.

It is from a long distance, I have come, to the home of our family, to talk of its history, character and condition. It may be like the "carrying of coals to New Castle ;" but I bring with me many hallowed associations. My blood was all derived from the Mendon of 1680, with its original ample boundaries. My ancestors, on both sides, came to Mendon, on the re-settlement in 1680 of the town after King Philip's war—Robert Taft, carpenter, Grindal Rawson, minister, Samuel Hayward, yeoman, and Deacon Josiah Chapin.

As we approach the final goal of life, we seem to be drawing nearer to our fathers, and the land that was their home becomes more hallowed. The Scripture says of one who has died, that he was "gathered to his fathers." This expression is entirely in harmony with our sentiments as we approach "that bourne whence no traveler returns." The entire eight miles square of old Mendon is sacred ground to me. I approach it with pleasure, linger among the mementoes of the past which I find here, with delight, and feel myself, at least a cousin to every inhabitant ; and this sweet delusion has grown upon me, as I have become acquainted with those, whose fortune it has been to abide in this, our historic home. My wife too is a descendant of the Torreys, the Davenports and the Holbrooks of Mendon, and our children and our children's children will trace their origin to the same old Mendon of 1680.

All the mementoes of the first dwelling places of the fathers are peculiarly precious to those of their descendants, whose fortune it has been to seek other homes. The places where those fathers lived, and the places where they died, awaken the deepest interest, and their graves afford a real, though melancholy pleasure. The whole family, wherever residing, is interested in the object of this meeting, and as time advances, that interest will increase. The origin and early history of the race is likely to become more reliable and better understood in the future, than it was soon after the death of the first settlers. At first they were busy with pressing duties, subduing the uncultivated earth, guarding against their wily

but cruel Indian foe, and building necessary improvements, all unconscious, that their acts and lives, in less than a hundred years, would be historical. 'Had they known of the pains-taking, with which their posterity, two hundred years after they were dead, would seek evidence of the every day acts and facts familiar to them, they would have left the record more perfect.

I should not have ventured upon the task which has been assigned to me, but for the researches of my honored father, Peter Rawson Taft, now deceased, the results of which he left in manuscript. Standing upon his shoulders, I had hoped to get a wider prospect, and to see some things that lay beyond his view. But wherever I have gone, he was sure to have been before me. His love of Uxbridge, the home of his birth, and of his youth, gave him the glow of enthusiasm, which genealogical research requires. In his old age, having leisure, he gratified his taste for these inquiries, and such was his success in pursuing them, that I count it a rare good fortune if in any instance, I have gone beyond him. When I came to years of memory, I learned from him, to think of Uxbridge as the land of the blest. In the field and by the fire-side, he would recount to me the happy days of his boyhood in Uxbridge; would tell me of the places and scenes which were vivid in his mind, the three rivers that flowed toward the south, Mumford on the west, the wonderful Great River in the middle, and West River on the east; of the noted farms on the high lands, and on the river banks, always including the old farm of his ancestors on the Great River, in which he felt a regretful interest. On it, he had ploughed and hoed, and harrowed and mowed, without fatigue, and with a boy's enthusiasm. All these hills, valleys, farms and houses he repeopled before my imagination, with neighbors, friends, uncles, cousins, brothers and sisters, associating their names with numerous anecdotes. And when afterwards I visited Uxbridge, and met the people whose names had been made thus familiar to my ear in my boyhood, it was impossible to realize that I was among strangers.

The American branches of our family tree do not flatter our vanity with many brilliant public careers, but they have proved a vigorous and prolific stock, of which we have no occasion to be ashamed. The first of our progenitors in this country was Robert Taft. Of his birth we have no record; that it was humble but respectable, I cannot doubt. He died on the 8th of February, A. D. 1725, at an age, as I think, of not less than eighty-five years. The date of his birth cannot be placed later than 1640. Sarah, his wife, is shown conclusively to have been born about that date. Who she was before the merger of her name in that of her husband by marriage, we know not. Every effort, hitherto, to trace her family beyond herself, has failed. It is to be hoped that some one may be more fortunate, hereafter. Of Robert's antecedents, we have no direct evidence. His first appearance in America, as far as we have been able to trace him, was in connection with his house and lot in Braintree, which we find him owning in 1678. In the year 1679, he made arrangements to move to Mendon, first purchasing a "house lot" in Mendon, and then selling his house and lot in Braintree. The substance of the deed from him and his wife, of his house and lot in Braintree, was (Book 17, page 276, Suffolk Co., town records), "That Robert Taft of Braintree, in the county of Suffolk, carpenter, and Sarah his wife, for and in consideration of eighty pounds, sold and conveyed to Caleb Hobart of the same town, yeoman, a certain parcel of land with a dwelling house, barn, and orchard thereon, then in the possession of the said Robert Taft, being in *Monotoquod*, within the bounds, or limits of Braintree aforesaid, containing by estimation, twenty acres." The deed was signed and sealed by Robert Taft and Sarah Taft, his wife. The date of the deed was Nov. 18, 1679, while the date of the acknowledgement was March 12, A. D. 1679, apparently eight months before the execution. This anomaly however, which presents itself repeatedly in the documents I may refer to, is explained by the law of England, which prior to the year 1752, commenced the legal year, on the 25th day of March.

No record of any kind has been found, showing the source of Robert Taft's title. Nor is this strange, when we consider that so imperfect are the records of those early transactions, that scarcely any title can be traced to its source on the record. There is one deed conveying an adjoining lot, which bounded upon this lot, as "the property of Robert Taft," spelling his name T-a-f-f-e, and that deed was dated October 19, 1678, a little more than a year before the execution of the deed to Caleb Hobart, showing that they held that property, at least, more than one year. Beyond that, we have not, as yet, been able to go.

Two months previous to the execution of the deed by Robert and Sarah to Hobart, he had purchased a "house lot" in Mendon, and received a deed from Col. Wm. Crowne, who, "for and in consideration of £90 of lawful money paid by Savill Simpson of Boston, cord wainer, and Robert Taft of Braintree, housewright, granted unto the said Savill Simpson and Robert Taft and their heirs, in equal halves, all that my forty acre *house lot*, situated, lying and being within the township of Mendham," (that was the English spelling of the name) "in New England, and near unto the pond ; therewith, forty acres of *second division land adjoining thereto*, together with all other lands, swamps, meadows and divisions of lands made or to be made." The deed is very formal, with full covenants. This was an important deed in the history of the Taft family. But how little could any of the parties realize the *long line of events* which were to flow from that single document, solemnized there in Boston, on the 15th of August, 1679. The records show that Col. Crowne had been one of the original settlers of Mendon, and a leader among them, before the Indian war. But he never returned. This house lot had probably been improved before the war.

Mendon was first organized as a town, in 1667. It was far removed from the older settlements, in the forest, and surrounded by Indians. It had gone on successfully till 1675, when the war of King Philip commenced, and all the inhabitants who were not

killed, were driven away, many never to return, and all their houses burned. Their minister, Rev. Joseph Emerson, never returned. After the war in 1680, the re-settlement commenced. And then, our progenitor first appeared in the history of Mendon.

There is a tradition, that he was an adherent of the Commonwealth, a Scotch Puritan, disgusted with the Cavaliers, and that in the troublous times consequent upon the rule of Charles the Second, he sought refuge from civil and religious tyranny, in the forests of New England,—that he had been in the country longer than any extant records show, and had even been in Mendon before the Indian war. All this was possible. He was of age, in 1660, when Charles II. gained control of the British government, and had opportunity to be disgusted, and perhaps terrified, by the misgovernment and tyranny, civil and religious, of that monarch. The agitation in Scotland, between the years 1660 and 1676, was full of annoyance and alarm. All that can be said of the tradition is, that no record has been found showing that Robert Taft was in this country prior to 1678. The distance in time is not so great as to take away all the force of statements handed down from fathers to sons, and so far as this tradition makes Scotland the place from which Robert first came, it is probably correct.

And here, I must be permitted to quote from an interesting letter written by the late Frederick Taft, Esq., of Uxbridge, to his grand-nephew, Henry W. Taft, Esq., of Pittsfield, dated April 10th, 1838. He says, "How long since I cannot tell, three brothers by the name of Taft, left Scotland in troublous times, and came into England. One of them settled in Ireland. One of his descendants came over and settled in Upton, bringing three or four sons. They were formerly called 'the Irish Tafts.' One of the three brothers settled in England, some of whose descendants have settled in South Kingston, Rhode Island. Yet, I never heard of them till lately, when a young man from there worked for me, whose mother was a Taft. The name there was numerous and wealthy.

"The third brother, who was my father's great-grandfather, came

to America and settled, I suppose, in Mendon, in this State. His given name I never learned. His children, and grand-children, and descendants, were very numerous, and some of his descendants are probably settled in almost every State in the Union. My grandfather, Israel Taft, settled in Mendon, and when Upton was incorporated, was set off to Upton."

Mr. Frederick Taft, the writer of this letter, was born in 1759, two years before the death of the first Daniel Taft, and nine years before the death of Benjamin, sons of the first Robert; and Samuel Taft, the father of Frederick, was born in 1731, when all the five sons of the first Robert were in active life. He had failed to learn, or to recollect the name of the founder of our race, on this continent. But the tradition coming down so directly, ought to be valuable as to the nationality of the family. I have made some effort to test the truth of these statements. So far as the temporary settlement of one branch of the family in Ireland, is concerned, we find confirmation in the fact, that in 1728, about fifty years after Robert Taft came to Mendon, Matthew Taft did come from the north part of Ireland, and settled in that part of Hopkinton, which is now in Upton. Some of the descendants of Matthew Taft reside still in Upton; some reside, and have resided for many years, in the State of Vermont, and some have emigrated to, and live in the State of New York. They all have a tradition, that they came from Scotland, and tarried but a few years in Ireland. As to the supposed emigration from England, of the second brother, or his descendants, and their settlement in South Kingston, R. I., it wants confirmation. We have found none bearing the name, whom we could not trace to Robert, except the descendants of Matthew. If those, who settled in South Kingston, were in fact "numerous and wealthy," as Mr. Frederick Taft learned from "the man who worked for him," it is remarkable that they have not been reported to us. It is possible, that, unlike the descendants of Robert, they proved unprolific, so that, though once planted in Rhode Island, the race has run out. We cannot ascribe such a result to the

confined limits or unfertile character of that State, for Robert Taft's descendants have flourished there, as well as elsewhere.

Confirmatory of this general recollection of Mr. Frederick Taft, that the emigration was immediately from England, I will refer to a statement left by the late Bazaleel Taft, Esq., written in 1837.

He says: "My great-grandfather, Daniel Taft, came from England, and settled on the south-east side of Mendon pond. My great-grandfather had four brothers come with him, Thomas, Robert, Joseph and Benjamin. The two former settled nigh him in Mendon, on the easterly margin of Mendon pond."

"Joseph located himself on the estate now occupied by Zadock Taft, within what was then Mendon, now on the Providence road in Uxbridge. Benjamin settled on the estate on which I now reside. My grandfather, Josiah, lived on the farm since owned and improved by my father, Bazaleel Taft, and given by him to my sister Chloe Thayer, and on which she and her family now reside."

In estimating the value of this kind of evidence, we have to consider the intelligence of the men, the subject of the tradition, and their opportunities for knowing whereof they have spoken.

The writer of the last statement differs from the writer of the former, in not going so far back as to Scotland, nor does he appear to know that there was a first Robert, of whose existence Frederick was aware, although he did not know his name. But these two statements are not inconsistent. They both make the immediate emigration to America, *from England*.

Daniel Taft, one of the five original brothers, lived to the age of 84 years, and died in 1761. Esquire Bazaleel the elder, was born in 1750, eleven years before the death of his grandfather Daniel, and eighteen years before the death of Benjamin the brother of Daniel, and he himself lived to be eighty-nine years of age, and died in the year 1839. He was well known by many now living. These two lives of Daniel and Bazaleel, spanned the entire space. It is impossible to doubt, that the first Daniel Taft, who, if he did not come with his father, lived with him in Mendon forty-five years,

knew whence he came. He must have known what his father *said* on the subject, and must have communicated it, not once, but a thousand times, and so it became a tradition. The younger Bazaleel must have heard his father's account of the same. And here I may add my own memory of what the elder Bazaleel, in the summer of 1834, informed me. It was my first visit to Uxbridge. He told me substantially the same thing as is stated in the paper I have now read. He was then 84 years of age. These traditional statements, together with some further considerations arising from the etymological derivation of the name, make it quite clear that we must go to England, or Scotland, to look for the origin of our race.

If we regard the name itself, it leads us to the same conclusion. Mr. Jameson, in his "Etymological Dictionary of the Scottish Language," a work of high authority, gives the word "Taft" as a good Scotch word, meaning "a message, or dwelling and ground for household uses." "This term," he further remarks, "seems radically the same with the English 'Toft.'" I know of no other language, in which the name has significance. With the broad pronunciation of the Scotch, there is not much difference in sound, between the Scotch "Taft" and the English "Toft." Though evidently from the same root, the meaning is slightly different in England, and in Scotland. In England, according to Webster, one definition is—"a grove of trees," and another is, "a place where a message has stood, but is decayed, probably from the root of Tuft;" and Webster gives its derivation in the Danish language, as from "tofte, or tomt," to which also Jameson traces "taft," in the Scottish dialect.

It has been, sometimes thought, that the name was Irish, because there is a well known and distinguished family in Ireland, of the name Taaffe, or Taffe, or Taff, or Taaf, in all which forms, the name is spelled, though always pronounced in the same manner, and as one syllable. It has been supposed, that the change from Taaffe to Taft was so slight, that the names may well be regarded

as the same, and this is true. At one time, I thought there was great force in the argument to show, that our race sprung from Ireland, and was Irish. There are very few English names which have not in the last two hundred years, undergone greater modifications than this would be. But it is to be considered, that the name is as liable to be changed from Taft to Taff, as from Taff to Taft.

The question after all, is, Where does the name belong—where is its home? and whence did our family come? I am not disposed to controvert the hypothesis, that the names are the same. But whence did Robert Taft bring it to America?

This is a point on which I might enlarge, if it were profitable to use your time to-day, in that way.

Abbe Mac Geoghehan, in his history of Ireland, which was written in French, and which is regarded as good authority, and generally accurate, says, (page 274.)

"The Taffes of Ireland are *originally from England*, their first appearance in Ireland was at the end of the 13th century." Members of this family reached great honor and power. Mr. Lodge in his book on the British Peerage and Baronetage, says, that, "King James I. gave Wm. Taaffe much; also Queen Elizabeth gave him preferment"—that, "Sir John Taafe, his son, was knighted in his father's lifetime, and the King in 1628, having received commendation of his virtues and abilities, and that he was a principal gentleman of *an ancient family of England*, and well affected to his Majesty's interest, was pleased to advance him to the dignity of Baron of Ballymore and Viscount Taffe of Corren, by Patent, bearing date at Dublin, Aug. 1, 1628, and July 14th he took his seat in the House of Peers."

One of the feats of arms for which Capt. Wm. Taffe received preferment from Elizabeth, was the taking of Blarney Castle; and from the account of that transaction given in history, it would seem to have been taken as much by *blarney*, as by military prowess. But it was an important service to the crown of England, and Queen Elizabeth and King James so regarded, and rewarded it.

I refer to these authorities, not to claim anything more than plebeian blood, by identifying ourselves with the nobility of Ireland, but to show that the historical result is the same, whether our ancestors came directly from England, Scotland or Ireland; and that the change in the spelling may as well have been from "Taft to Taaffe," when the family now in Ireland left England, as from "Taaffe" to "Taft," when our ancestors settled in Mendon, and when Matthew settled in Upton.

Some future genealogical explorer will travel in England, Scotland and Ireland, and search the records there, to prove where this name belongs, and to identify if possible the place from which Robert Taft came to this country, and whether or not, Sarah came with him.

But, yielding to the tradition among the descendants of both Robert, and Matthew, such weight as we cannot well deny, we must conclude, that though these families may all be of the same original stock, the emigration of the family now in Ireland, from England or Scotland, was several centuries earlier than that of Robert Taft, who came directly to this country, from the original home of the race.

On the 29th of July following the purchase from Crowne, a partition was made between Savil Simpson and Robert Taft, by deed, in which Robert Taft is described as "late of Braintree, now of Mendham, carpenter." This deed gives to Simpson a certain field belonging to the said land, commonly called "Pondfield;" and it gives to Robert Taft the field known as the "Fortfield," and says that both of said fields, viz: "Pondfield and Fortfield are parted, the one from the other, by the highway as it now lies." Now it happens that these two fields, the "Pondfield," and the "Fortfield," are still divided by the same road "lying," as it did then. There was very early, some structure on the Fortfield, which was called, and perhaps used as a fort. There are now on the high part of the tract, large rocks which appear to have belonged to something of the kind. But this name, and this fort antedate King Philip's war.

The records of the proceedings of the settlers before the war, distinguish these two fields in the same way, in assigning them to Col. Wm. Crowne. It is satisfactory to be able to find the field, on which the fortunes of the Taft family were begun; that on which the first house was raised, and that on which the second was erected. It adds to our satisfaction, to find the descendants of Robert Taft still cultivating his lands, and dwelling there. It is seldom true in this country, that the descendants of one man hold, for two hundred years, the first homestead. Mr. Alanson Taft, in the sixth generation from the first Robert, owns and resides upon the homestead, the original Fortfield, a site as beautiful now as it was then, himself descended from the first Thomas, and his wife descended from Robert, junior.

If any one supposes that the purchase of a forty acre "house lot" was the purchase of but forty, or eighty acres of land, he has an inadequate idea of the transaction. The project of founding a settlement was formed as early as 1662, and about forty men concerted together for the purpose. Part of them were from Weymouth, and part from Braintree. Their records began several years before they had a legal organization as a town. These forty men each had a forty acre house lot with all the rights, which under their organization appertained to such ownership. It appears really to have been an ownership of one-fortieth of all the lands in the town, to be divided out as they should want them to improve or to sell, and this right amounted to more or less, as the owner was more or less careful to draw and locate lands at every division. It would seem that the proprietors did not all of them draw and locate their share of the lands divided. The more lands they had, the more taxes to support the minister and to build the meeting house, and the more work on the highways, they would have to pay. Robert Taft and his sons after him, were prompt to draw, and locate their share of every division. The prime house lot was nominally forty acres. But it had meadow lands attached to it, and it had what was called the "great lot," which was generally located

in some other place, and was much larger. The prime idea would seem to have been, that every proprietor should have all the land he needed, as incident to his house, or house lot; and then, that there should be divisions from time to time of the unappropriated lands as they should determine. Care was taken that none should be let into proprietorship, who were not approved by the community. The lot which each dwelt upon was sometimes called his doubling lot, or the lot located on the "prime division." It was the lot that showed his proper share in future divisions. The order in which they should choose lands for locations, was determined by lot, so that, as the resolutions of the town expressed it, "it should be by Divine Providence disposed to them, for all the right they are legally seized of."

As Robert Taft was a housewright, the building of his house was promptly done. Its site on the "Fortfield" was most eligible, and is well known. It rose gently from the pond, standing at a graceful, and yet convenient distance. It was all the more beautiful as a water-view, because it was the only handsome site in town commanding a water-view at all. The land itself was excellent, and of such a commodious grade as to be profitably cultivated. It is easy to imagine Robert and Sarah in their old age, after having labored incessantly to clear and cultivate their house lot, sitting in their front door, and admiring the beautiful sheet of water spread out before them, and felicitating themselves on having the only site in Mendon combining all the desirable qualities found in this. They might have gone further and congratulated themselves on the fact that, by encompassing this beautiful lake, by their lands and their houses, they had identified it with the history of their lives in Mendon, and made it a family monument, as imperishable as any shaft of stone. "It bore no inscription from which the future antiquarian should wipe the dust," but it was so identified with that pioneer father and those pioneer sons, that it needed none, to tell their descendants of the hardships they had endured, to found a family in the forests of Mendon.

Our first progenitor in this country, was a plain, unlettered man. He was a carpenter, a self-made man. The indications are that he followed the business in early life, efficiently ; for when he came to Mendon, being about forty years old, he brought the means to buy land. Though described as a joiner, he had five sons, and was in a new country of farms. He comprehended the situation. There was a demand for farmers, not joiners. Every man in that primitive age and country was his own joiner. Robert reared his sons to be farmers, and became a farmer himself. He understood the main strength of a farmer. It was *land*. He had a farm even in Braintree, however short his stay there. He secured land in Mendon before moving his family, and after his settlement in Mendon, he pursued the same policy on a larger scale. It appears from the proprietor's book, at Mendon, that Robert Taft after settling in Mendon, laid out, and located, and purchased numerous and large tracts of land, lands in his own name, and lands in the names of all his sons. It would be tedious to enumerate his appropriations, and his purchases. They were in all parts of the town, but more extensively in the south and west. The father and the sons had the same appetite for land, and by its gratification, they secured themselves and their descendants against any occasion for emigrating, for a long time to come. The first generation accumulated, so far as we can learn, and wasted little or nothing. They built houses, and cleared and cultivated their lands. The young men, as soon as they arrived at the proper time of life, married discreet and industrious young women, and the forests of Mendon and Uxbridge blossomed as the rose. If they desired to live in good old Uxbridge or Mendon, they had permanent homes on which to live. If our tribe emigrated less than other families, for a time, this is accounted for by the foresight and energy of the fathers, rather than by the want of those qualities in their sons.

So extensive were the possessions of Robert Taft and his sons, that from Mendon Pond which they encompassed, and which then, and for many years afterward, was known as Taft's pond, and is

still so designated on the county map, they stretched away to the State line on the south, and across all the three rivers, and several miles beyond, toward the west. It is said that his purchases west of the Blackstone covered an area of two and a half miles square, nor is this at all incredible, if we regard the proprietor's book, and if there is room for laying out so much land on that side of the river, without encroaching upon the town of Douglas.

But there is one other real estate transaction of Robert Taft, which has excited my curiosity, and which I cannot afford to omit. In Book 30, page 165, of Suffolk county records, is recorded a deed dated March 10, 1713, by Paul Dudley, William Mumford and six others, conveying to Robert Taft, one-tenth part of a tract of land eight miles square, reciting that his excellency Joseph Dudley, Governor, agreeably to an order passed by the council and assembly at Boston, in 1703, had granted to the grantors, a certain tract of waste land purchased of the Indian native proprietors, situated in the Nipmuck country, between the towns of Mendon, Worcester, New Oxford, Sherbourne, and Marlboro, of eight miles square, wherein is included a tract of four miles square, called *Hassanamisco*, owned by the Indians, they to have and to hold the land by the name of the town of *Sutton*, and that Robert Taft of Mendon, was equally interested with William Mumford and others, who constituted the company to whom the grant was made, and was one of the first purchasers of said tract of land from the Indians, although not mentioned in said grant, and the said Paul Dudley and company above named, "for and in consideration of the undoubted right of the said Robert Taft in the premises," convey one full tenth part of said tract of land, to be known as the town of Sutton, subject among other conditions, to that of "*paying to the Queen one-fifth of the gold and silver that should be found.*" The negotiation for the purchase of this tract of land had been made with *John Wampus*, the Indian sachem; and the negotiations had been had as early as 1681-3, not long after the settlement of Mendon; and after the purchase had been negotiated with the Indians, a much

more tedious negotiation had to be made with the colonial government, to have their purchase recognized. There were many who disputed the title of *John Wampus* and his tribe. There are sundry strong petitions on file in Boston, both for and against the recognition of the purchase. Robert Taft's name did not appear among the purchasers ; but this deed settles the question, that he was a part-owner, and undoubtedly bore an important part in the original negotiations with *John Wampus* for the land. I can find no other ground for the complaint which was made against him, for irregular trading with the Indians.

The purchase of Sutton, is mentioned by Rev. Peter Whitney in his history of the County of Worcester, published in 1793. On page 89, he says : "The tract of land (Sutton), was originally purchased by a number of gentlemen of Sachem John Wampus and his company, Indians, who claimed it. Wampus first reserved four miles square for his countrymen, the Indians, which they called Hassanamisco. This is now Grafton." Robert Taft was at least one of the principal purchasers of this large and valuable township of land ; a township which, at the time Mr. Whitney wrote, (1793), had more inhabitants than Worcester itself. Robert's dealing with the Indians undoubtedly had significance. But there is no evidence that the Indians ever complained of any injustice, or that any injustice or harm was done by him to anybody, however his negotiating with them, might have excited the jealous apprehensions of some of his neighbors, at a time when the bitter memories of the Indian war, were still rankling in their minds. But the government finally recognized the validity and propriety of the purchase, and ratified the title. His interest in the town of Sutton, he afterward disposed of to different parties.

The first general town meeting held in Mendon was on January 3d, A. D. 1680, when the town chose their selectmen, and Robert Taft was one of them. This was his first appearance in Mendon.

On the fourth day of the second month, the town held another meeting, and chose Robert Taft as one of a committee, to take care

that the building of the minister's house be carried on and finished at or before the 25th of December next.

The first list of names assessed for the minister's support that is shown by the records, was in 1685. Robert Taft is among them, and pays a good rate. A committee was appointed to build a meeting house, and raise the money. He was on that committee. From time to time he was elected as one of the Selectmen, and was frequently placed on important committees. From time to time, by vote of the town, he, with Deacon Josiah Chapin, was placed on a committee "to instruct the Selectmen." The town relied on his judgment in practical matters. In 1698 he was on a committee, with Captain Chapin, "to view the *streams* of the town, and select a place for a corn mill." The land he and his sons had laid out and purchased, lay on both sides of the Blackstone, and extended westwardly. They had found out that the best lands they had, were on the west side of that river, and they were busily engaged in improving them. They projected a bridge. It was a public matter, but it was more important to them, than to all the rest of the town. The town was not ready to vote money, but it did vote, "that Mr. Taft and his sons should be freed from working at the highways, in case they build a bridge over the Great River to their land on the west side of said river, until other men's work come to be proportionable to theirs in working upon the highways." This was in 1709. The bridge was built, and was probably the first bridge ever built over that river. The site is still known, though abandoned as a site for a bridge, the river having cut another channel and made the western landing of the bridge on an island. The road which they excavated to the old bridge is plainly visible, though overgrown with shrubbery and trees. But, for many years it was the crossing for the public, as well as for the Tafts, and though known as "the bridge the Tafts built," the public had no other. In a few years the town began to feel the absence of the Tafts in the repairing of highways, and I suspect that, if the truth was known, the town had become sick of its bargain.

In 1721 the town voted, "to choose three men to discuss with Mr. Taft and his sons, with reference to their falling in with the town to work at highways, and to make report to the town on what *terms* they will *fall in*, at the next meeting." The next meeting was called to consider and resolve what to do with respect to repairing the Great River Bridge, and about the Tafts "falling in" with the town, to work at the highways. The town met and proposed to the Tafts an arbitration, which was declined, whereupon the town "voted that Mr. Taft and his sons, that had been freed by the town from working at the highways on the account of building the above said bridge, do henceforth work at the highways equally with the rest of the inhabitants of the town, and that the surveyors warn them to work at the highways as other men, and on their refusal, to prosecute them for their neglect, and that the town will stand by them in their prosecution." We hear no more of the question. The Tafts, probably, were good natured about it, and "fell in," not caring to press farther the operation of their remarkable contract with the town. They could well afford to do so, such was their monopoly of the good lands on the west side of the river.

No alienation or disaffection resulted from this harmless controversy. "The bridge the Tafts built," continued to be *the* bridge over the Great River," and the only one, for twenty years; and then in 1729, the Tafts built the second bridge, a short distance below the first. This also was done in concert with the town. But, instead of voting to free them from highway taxes, "till other men's work come to be proportionable," the town of Uxbridge voted to contribute sixty pounds toward the expense, the Tafts agreeing to build, and keep the bridge in good repair for seven years. This was undoubtedly a better bargain for the town, than the former. But the bridging of the "Great River," still remained a family affair of the Tafts.

There can be no doubt of the weight and usefulness of the first Robert in the affairs of the town, as well as of his discretion in the conduct of his own affairs.

In 1693, his son Thomas appears upon the tax list. In 1695, Robert junior was taxed. In 1699, Daniel was taxed and the Taft family paid more taxes than any other. In 1703, Joseph was taxed. In 1713, a drawing was had for the sixth division of lots, and Robert, Thomas, Robert, junior, Daniel, Joseph and Benjamin all appeared on the roll. Benjamin does not appear on the list of those taxed to support the minister, at all, in Mendon. That circumstance is explained by the fact that he was reported as a Quaker, and the Quakers were exempt from military duty, and from supporting any ministers but their own. Not many years after these boys began to pay taxes, they began respectively to take a share in town affairs; and the father, yielding his place to them, gradually receded from the public eye, till February 9th, 1725, when he departed this life.

The records of that early time were imperfect. We have no record of their births or marriages, and are fortunate if we find when they died. It was a rare circumstance, if any of those hard working men, who were founding the fortunes of their country, as well as their own, *recorded* anything relating to the past, and their *verbal* communications were lost in their graves.

In my recent search in the archives of Suffolk county, I found the original will of the first Robert Taft, in an enclosure with several other interesting documents. The will was dilapidated, and in several pieces. But after collecting the pieces, and restoring them to their places, there was no difficulty in reading it.

Directly under the signatures of the testator and the witnesses, was written the probate of the will as made by Sarah, the widow, on the 4th of March, 1725, authenticated by the Judge of Probate, though not transcribed upon the record. The will was written in a good plain hand, and in the same enclosure was the inventory of his estate, evidently written in the same hand. Among the items of the inventory, were: "*In primis*, his purse £75, 15s," and the other items were such as to give some idea of the simple and yet comfortable manner of life of this aged couple, who had long since

given each of their sons ample farms by deeds of gift, and in fact distributed among them the larger part of their estate. The appraised items amount, as I add them, to £251, 7s, leaving out "the bible and other books," the valuations of which are torn off and lost. It is to be remembered that *shillings* then, were more valuable than *pounds* are now. The most interesting document contained in the inclosure however, was a petition of the widow, Sarah Taft, to the Judge of Probate, dated Feb. 20, 1725, asking to be excused from personal attendance to prove the will :

"Whereas by the last will and testament of my beloved husband, your poor petitioner is made sole executrix thereof, and I being advanced through Divine Providence unto the age of eighty and five years, so that I am rendered incapable of taking so great a journey upon me as to appear personally before your Honor, the distance being near forty miles ; that your Honor would be pleased to excuse your aged petitioner's non-appearance, and that the will may be proved ; and that your Honor would permit and allow of my oldest son, Thomas Taft, being co-administrator with me, to assist, that I may the better be enabled to act and transact, is the prayer and humble request of your petitioner." (Signed) "SARAH TAFT."

Sarah also appeared before Josiah Chapin, Esq., on the 17th of Februrary, 1725, and made a formal acknowledgment of this petition as her voluntary act. This is the first authentic evidence we have had of the age of these our first progenitors, and that Sarah, to whom the testator by his will gave all his property, was alive, and caused the will to be proved. When I saw the will, I had not seen the handwriting of any of the sons. But having since seen many original documents written by Daniel, as well as other of the sons, I am satisfied that the will and the inventory were in the handwriting of his son Daniel.

In November of the same year, the record shows that Thomas applied for letters of administration, and the court made an entry reciting the fact, that the said Sarah Taft having deceased, the court appointed Thomas, the oldest son, sole administrator. The

administration bond of Thomas, with his son, Eleazer Taft, and Jacob Aldrich as his sureties, is with the will, duly executed. Both Robert and Sarah, therefore, died in 1725.

The recorded deeds of gift to his sons in consideration of his love and affection, bespeak a father, who was not the last to appreciate the prudence and enterprise of his own sons. These dispositions of his property were worthy of a patriarch. He trusted his sons, and they were all worthy of his confidence. By these generous and timely gifts, in which Sarah shared, for she had joined her husband in executing the deeds, he had shown the strength of his love for his sons. By his will, he showed the undoubting confidence he placed in his faithful Sarah. "*In primis*, to my beloved wife, Sarah, whom I likewise constitute my sole executrix, if she shall survive me, I give all and singular my real and personal estate, together with my moveables, viz : My lands, houses and chattels, and other effects by me possessed, to be by her freely possessed and enjoyed." He then gave a small money legacy to the oldest daughter of each son, beginning with Sarah the oldest daughter of Thomas, adding to each, eight shillings "to purchase for her a bible." Thus, he remembered each son in his oldest daughter, who was made the representative of each of these large families, to receive this token of grand parental affection. He then added, "To his granddaughter, Rebecca Taft, by reason of her living and dwelling with him," the same provision as for the oldest daughters. This was on her own account. Rebecca was the youngest daughter of Robert, Jr., and then about nineteen years of age. She had lived with her grand-parents and ministered to their comfort and society. It was a token of his gratitude, not a reward for services. He had rewarded everybody, and had already given a full share of his estate to her father. But it was the yearning of the old man's heart to have Rebecca understand, that her filial attentions and her youthful society had been remembered. In the exuberance of her young life, she had not forgotten the loneliness of age, and had contributed, as none but a daughter or a grand-daughter can do, to make honored, but solitary old age, cheerful and happy.

He and Sarah had endured the hardships of frontier life, and acquired an estate, respectable for the times. It is manifest that Sarah cannot be left out in our estimate of this family. If it has had any success, or made any impression on the world, Sarah is entitled to a full share of the credit. There are indications that she had a better education than her husband. Nor is it to be forgotten that Robert and Sarah endowed their children *with sound and vigorous constitutions*. They gave the race a good start, and Sarah was a full partner in the concern. She survived her husband. She buried him. In the great struggle among families for possessions, and for ascendancy, a race with a strong physical constitution is formidable.

From all the evidence we have, the following may be taken as a statement of the dates of the births, marriages and deaths of the five sons, sufficiently accurate for practical purposes :

	Born.	Married.	Died.	Aged.
Thomas,	1671	1692	1755	84
Robert, Jr.,	1674	1694	1748 Apr. 29.	74
Daniel,	1677	1704	1761 Aug. 24.	84
Joseph,	1680	1708	1747 Jun. 18.	67
Benjamin,	1684	1707	1766	84

Each of these five sons had large families and many descendants, sufficient for a distinct and luxuriant family tree. The further discussion, therefore, of the descendants of the first Robert and Sarah Taft, divides itself into five heads- The families of these five sons were as follows, viz :—

I. Thomas Taft had eleven children.

1. Joseph, born May 26, 1693.
2. Sarah, born March 29, 1695.
3. Eleazer, born April 5, 1697.
4. Hannah, born April 17, 1699.
5. Rebecca, born March 15, 1701.
6. Deborah, born Nov. 14, 1702.
7. Rachel, born Oct. 1, 1704.
8. Martha, born June 15, 1708.
9. Isaac, born July 15, 1710.
10. Susannah, }
11. Thomas, } born March 15, 1713.

II. Robert, Junior, had eleven children.

1. Elizabeth, born Jan. 18, 1695-6.
2. Robert, born Dec. 24, 1697. —
3. Israel, born April 26, 1699. —
4. Mary, born Dec. 21, 1700.
5. Elizabeth, born June 18, 1704.
6. Alice, born June 27, 1707.
7. Eunice, born Feb. 20, 1708-9.
8. John, born Dec. 18, 1710.
9. Jemima, born April 1, 1713.
10. Gideon, born Oct. 4, 1715.
11. Rebecca, born March 15, 1701.

III. Daniel Taft had eight children.

1. Daniel, born Aug. 4, 1704.
2. Abigail, born Sept. 24, 1707.
3. Josiah, born April 2, 1709.
4. Lydia, born April 13, 1713.
5. Daniel, born April 29, 1715.
6. Ephraim, born May 25, 1718.
7. Japhet, born March 3, 1721-2.
8. Caleb, born 1724.

IV. Joseph, the fourth son, had nine children.

1. Lucy, born Sept. 22, 1709.
2. Moses, born Jan. 30, 1713.
3. Peter, born 1715.
4. Sarah, born March 2, 1719.
5. Joseph, born April 19, 1722.
6. Elizabeth, born Oct. 30, 1724.
7. Aaron, born April 12, 1727.
8. Margaret, born Feb. 9, 1729.
9. Ebenezer, born Aug. 8, 1732.

V. Benjamin, the fifth son, had six children.

1. Samuel, born July 11, 1708.
2. Stephen, born April 16, 1710.
3. Mijamin, born April 25, 1712.
4. Tabareh, born June 11, 1714.
5. Silas.
6. Paul.

There is no doubt as to where Robert and Sarah resided. But there is a conflict of opinions on the question, where the sons resided. I have at length, relieved my mind of the perplexity arising from the different localities with which they have been respectively identified, by the hypothesis, that being large farmers, they not only had "house lots," where their dwellings were, but that they car-

ried on large farms, away from the house lots. We may remember that the plan of the settlement of Mendon was, that each proprietor should have a "house lot," on which to place his dwelling, and a "great lot," wherever he might choose it. It is certain that when Thomas, and Robert, Jr., and Daniel were respectively married, the father gave each of them a part of the "Fortfield," and each of them built and occupied a house, on his part of the original "house lot." Thomas had the south part, Daniel was next, Robert, Jr., had his house lot next to his father. His lot was forty-eight rods in front upon the road. In a deed to Robert, Jr., dated 1713, of a small piece of land on the opposite side of the road, his father describes it as being "right over against the mansion house of the said Robert Taft, Jr." And in a deed to Daniel in 1706, of his part of the house lot, he says of it: "Lying above that part of the house lot, whereon our beloved son Robert is settled by our appointment," and in the same deed, he denominates the other divisions of lands as his "out lands." My conclusion from all the record evidence, is that the three older brothers all had their residences on the "house lot," or "Fortfield," while their father lived. But as farming was their business, and they had the boys to do it, Thomas carried on a large farm at "Little-pond," which was a mile or two south of his "mansion." Robert carried on the farm generally known as the Mowry farm, which is on the north-west of the large pond, but bordering upon it; and Daniel owned, and carried on the farm now owned and occupied by M Samuel H. Taft, bordering on the south-west part of the pond, and including the outlet which drains the surplus from the pond, called Meadow brook, on which he erected, and ran a grist mill. These were large farms, the clearing, improving and cultivation of which occupied most of their active lives, and kept their boys vigorously employed. Thomas and Robert had each four sons, and Daniel had five, all enterprising farmers. They undoubtedly erected houses and barns on these large farms, and during a portion of the year, may have resided there.

But their homes were with their families in their "mansions," on the "house lot." This was the state of things, till the father's death. Robert, Jr., conveyed his homestead near the pond to Captain Robert, his son, by deed dated 1726, the next year after his father's death, and removed to Uxbridge where he resided, on the east side of the Blackstone, near the Uxbridge woolen mill, having lands on both sides of the river. Thomas and Daniel appear to have continued to reside in their "mansion houses" on the "house lot." It is probable that, in that early day, when apprehension of danger from the Indians, and from the wild beasts of the forest, haunted the minds of the settlers, and when the town could afford but one school, considerations of mutual protection and convenience, as well as of society, influenced the older sons to locate their homesteads in the immediate neighborhood of their father. But Daniel, not long after the death of Lydia, his wife, which happened in 1758, moved to the house of his son Daniel, with whom he made his home, on what is known as the "Southwick" farm, in Mendon, where he died soon after, [1761]. Joseph and Benjamin the two youngest sons, undoubtedly settled on the west side of the Blackstone not far from the meeting house, Joseph owning and residing upon the farm now owned and occupied by his great grand-son, Zadock A. Taft, Esq.; and Benjamin settled on the farm now owned and occupied by Mrs. Bazaleel Taft. Here were their "mansion houses," while they too, owned and improved "out lands," in the southwest part of the town.

I.—THOMAS.

Thomas, the oldest son, married Deborah Genery of Dedham, as we learn from a deed of a tract of land situated in Dedham, dated 1724, in which he describes it, as "a part of the estate that fell to my wife from our honored father Isaac Genery, lately deceased, of Dedham." Thomas was a farmer, with eleven children. Like his father, he was elected to places of trust in the town affairs, and shared the confidence of the local public.

These local honors, conferred among persons intimately acquainted with each other, as are the inhabitants of such a town, have not the charm of political honors gained from the State, or from larger divisions of the country ; but they are a better test of the estimate in which a man is held, by those who know him best. Thomas came forward so early, that many have supposed he was the father of his brothers, or at least, that he was the brother of his father. But he was only his father's oldest son, perhaps two or three years older than his brother Robert, Jr. Thomas had that part of the original "house-lot" of his father, on which are still remaining the rocks, that, according to tradition, were once part of a defence, giving to the whole tract, the name of the "Fort-field." He died in 1755, at about the age of eighty-five. Tradition says that he was remembered as a venerable old man, tall and hoary headed, with a face of benignant expression.

Thomas and Deborah followed the example of Robert and Sarah, in early settling lands upon their children. They gave their children better opportunities for education, than had been practicable, when they themselves were young. The result was developed in the next generation.

Captain Eleazer, his second son, who had been a captain, in the French and Indian war, had a pair of twin boys, and named them Moses and Aaron. Moses, he sent to Harvard University. Moses was probably the second student ever sent to college, from Mendon. A son of Grindal Rawson, the minister, was sent a few years before. On the 25th day of May, 1750, while Moses was a senior the town of Mendon voted "to choose the Rev. Joseph Dorr's son Joseph, and Captain Eleazer Taft's son Moses, to keep school *by spells*, as they could agree with them."

Moses taught the school "by spells," but was not hindered from graduating at Harvard in 1751, and immediately commenced his studies for the ministry with the Rev. Joseph Dorr of Mendon, the minister. He studied to some purpose ; for he pleased the Rev. Mr. Dorr, and the Rev. Mr. Dorr's daughter, Miss Mary. Miss

Mary's mother was the daughter of Rev. Grindal Rawson, and granddaughter of Rev. John Wilson, names of some distinction. This alliance united the blood of the Wilsons, the Rawsons, the Dorrs and the Tafts. Moses was settled over the church in East Randolph, Massachusetts, where he preached thirty-nine years till he died, November 12, 1791; a pious and an able minister, whose usefulness lived long after his death.

He had four sons and five daughters. The love of learning which had taken root in the parents and grandparents, budded and blossomed in the children. All the four sons *graduated* in Harvard College, and for aught we know, the daughters would have taken the same course, if Harvard had been open to them.

Moses, the oldest son, who graduated in 1774, studied medicine, and settled as a physician in Sudbury, Mass.

Eleazer, who served, and was a Lieutenant in the Revolutionary army, nevertheless graduated in the class of 1783, at the age of 28, studied theology, spent his life usefully in the ministry, and died at Exeter, N. H., in 1834, leaving a large and respectable family.

Joseph, who also graduated with his older brother Eleazer, in the class of 1783, settled as a physician in Weston, Mass.

Phineas, the youngest, who graduated in 1789, and studied for the ministry, was a young man of fine promise, and was called to settle in Ashby, Mass., but died before his ordination.

The names of the daughters are so soon disguised under those of their husbands, that the genealogists find it difficult, if not impossible to trace them. Though the sons are carefully placed upon the right branch of the tree, the daughters may be altogether missing. But I determined that these five daughters of Moses should not be forgotten. Upon careful inquiry, I find that they all married well, became intelligent wives and mothers, and left large and respectable families, and that they can no better be spared from the race, than their "graduated" brothers. Time does not permit me to follow their destinies into the five different families with

which they became connected. But they have been represented in all the professions, and in the Legislature of Massachusetts, as well as in all honorable trades and callings.

It is pleasant to find, among the descendants of Thomas Taft, so good and valuable a man as the late Rev. George Taft, *D. D.*, of Pawtucket, whose ministry was honorable, long continued, and useful. He was a graduate of Brown University, in the class of 1815. His death occurred within the last four or five years. Doctor John G. Metcalf, of Mendon, who knew him well, says of him in a recent correspondence: "The Rev. Doctor George Taft was one of the best men I ever knew."

Like the Rev. Moses Taft, he spent his life, a long one, in one church. His parishioners sought no change. No higher commendation could be asked, or given, of the talents, or character of these men. In taking an account of our jewels, these cannot be omitted.

We learn from the interesting address of the Rev. Carlton A. Staples, "upon the history of the church of Mendon," that it is recorded, that, in 1772, "Thomas Taft was suspended from communion in special ordinances, for *repeatedly refusing to hear*, and casting contempt upon the church, particularly upon the pastor of said church, till he should make manifest repentance and reformation." This was not the first Thomas; he was dead. It could have been none other than the fourth son of the first Thomas, who was born March 15, 1713, and was at that time, of the obstinate age of fifty-nine, when he refused to hear the Rev. Mr. Willard, and was suspended from "communion in special ordinances." The same pastor had trouble with other members, and was himself charged "with false recording and lying," on which he was tried, and finally acquitted, but soon after dismissed.

Who was right, and who wrong, is not now of the slightest importance, and was probably of no importance then. The minister had to be sustained. It brought out, however, the characteristic of the race, not to submit tamely to arbitrary rule, even in the church.

The Hon. Judge Chapin, whom we are proud to count among the Tafts, has the felicity of also being a Chapin, and has the honor of having given an admirable address on the occasion of a grand gathering of that family, at Springfield. I observe that in treating the history of that family, he made a point of the great number of deacons, that had sprung from Deacon Samuel Chapin, their first American progenitor. It was a strong point, and I fear we cannot compete successfully in that department. Our ancestor was a carpenter. We can boast of many good carpenters, and many ingenious mechanics, of many manufacturers whose fabrics contribute largely to the wealth and independence of the country, and of a great many good farmers whose farms are their own; and it is not without pride that I am able to declare, that the farm of the first Robert Taft, is now owned, and cultivated by a descendant, and what is still more remarkable, that the farm has not been out of the family since it came into it, in 1679.

Our family have not embarked much upon National politics, except that they have shared in the battles of the country, when National Independence was to be won, and also when the Union was at stake. But brilliant political careers have not been characteristic of the Tafts, in the past. [Here the speaker, observing Governor Taft in the audience, paused, and said, "I beg pardon of my friend Governor Taft, of Vermont, who is a descendant of Thomas, for making this remark. But exceptions only prove a general rule."] It is not safe to say what may yet be in store for them. "There is a tide in the affairs of men," and so of families.

We find good ministers, physicians, lawyers, engineers, scholars, merchants, bankers, men who know how to get rich, and men who dare to be poor; and if I should yield to the Chapins in the number of deacons, I could not venture to yield anything even to them, on the score of business enterprise, industry, intelligence, integrity and good morals.

The immense families we find among their descendants, bespeak their good habits. I called, the other day, upon a venerable lady

who had borne fifteen children, and lived to see fourteen of them marry and settle in life ; and her husband was the late Arnold Taft, a worthy descendant of the first Thomas.

Whether the descendants of Thomas, or those of Robert, Jr., are more numerous, it is impossible to say with any certainty. To enumerate them would be like attempting to enumerate the children of Israel, and would require a visit to every State in the Union, and to Canada, and probably to other countries.

II.—ROBERT, JUNIOR.

In about two, or at most three years after Thomas was settled and paid taxes, Robert, Junior, was also settled and came upon the tax list. After the separate organization of Uxbridge, Robert, Junior, and both the Josephs, and Benjamin disappear from the subsequent records of Mendon, and appear upon those of Uxbridge.

At the first March meeting of Uxbridge, (1727), Robert Taft, no longer junior, his father being dead, was chosen first selectman. He continued to figure in the town affairs, having undoubted weight and influence for a few years, when he gave up that kind of ambition to his son Captain John, and retired to that *otium cum dignitate*, which becomes old age. He died April 29, 1748.

His oldest son, who remained in Mendon, had large transactions in real estate, and was a man of spirit and enterprise. He was popular, and held every office of trust and honor the town had to give, from fence viewer and tything-man, to selectman and representative in "the Great and General Court." He came upon the stage after Captain Josiah Chapin had passed off, and after his uncle Daniel had become absorbed in the important duties which, at that time, weighed down a colonial justice of the peace. Capt. Robert was elected representative many times. From 1740, he was chosen not less than five or six times in succession. He lived and died in Mendon. He and his cousin, Captain Eleazer Taft, were contemporaries, and each had a lively turn of mind, which, after Uxbridge was cut off, seemed to be needed to keep the old town awake ; and



if they ever went a little too fast, their uncle Daniel was always ready to check, as well as to sustain them. Meantime, Captain John, who was also animating and popular, competed with his cousin Josiah, in Uxbridge, for the public favor, and both received a large share of it. The descendants of Robert, Junior, are very strong in this region, and are numerous elsewhere. They have laid hold of every kind of business, and made it thrive. They are generally men and women of robust constitutions and good intellects. They have had some enormous families. The competition in that particular, between the tribe of Thomas, and that of Robert, has been fearful. Thomas, and Robert, Jr., led off with eleven each.

Israel Taft, of Upton, a son of Robert, Jr., had nineteen children, and Samuel, one of his sons, had twenty-two, of whom fourteen grew up, and were married. And I am informed by Governor Taft, of Vermont, that Gideon Taft, of that State, another and a late descendant of Robert, Jr., was the father of thirty children, of whom twenty still survive. But I have not the statistics of the family. Samuel, owned and carried on a farm and a tavern in Uxbridge, on the old turnpike road from Boston to Hartford. It was at his house, that Washington, on his way from Boston to New York, soon after his first election to the Presidency, stopped and was entertained, and so much was he pleased with the family, that he wrote Mr. Taft the following letter :

"HARTFORD, Nov. 8, 1789.

"SIR :—Being informed that you have given my name to one of your sons, and called another after Mrs. Washington's family," [Dandridge,] "and being moreover very much pleased with the modest and innocent looks of your two daughters, Patty, and Polly, I do for these reasons send each of these girls a piece of chintz ; and to Patty, who bears the name of Mrs. Washington, and who waited more upon us than Polly did, I send five guineas, with which she may buy herself any little ornaments she may want, or she may dispose of them in any other manner more agreeable to herself. As I do not give these things with a view to have it talked of, or even to its being known, the less there is said about the matter the better you will please me ; but, that I may be sure

the chintz and money have got safe to hand, let Patty, who I dare say is equal to it, write me a line informing me thereof, directed to the President of the United States, at New York.' I wish you and your family well, and am your humble servant."

"GEORGE WASHINGTON."

Not many girls could boast of such a message as that, from the first President of the United States. Though he was President, Washington who was childless, admired, if he did not envy Samuel Taft, with his numerous family of vigorous and handsome children. It was not many years, before both Patty, and Polly, were married, and had their children around them. The son who bore the name of the President, settled in Cincinnati, where he repeated the compliment, by calling one of his sons, George Washington; and where another son, bearing the name of his grandfather Samuel, still resides, and prospers. The old homestead of Samuel Taft in Uxbridge, where Washington was entertained and lodged, with "the brave old oak" standing as a witness, in the front yard, remains to the present day in the family, sacredly preserved, to commemorate that father of many children, as well as, "the father of his country." I have referred to, and quoted from a letter of the late Esquire Frederick Taft, of Uxbridge, a man of great worth and force of character. He served three years in the army of the Revolution. He was a son of Samuel, and one of the twenty-two.

Lyman Taft, of Montague, also one of that family, was a man of fine physical structure, with a good head, and a comprehensive mind. He built a dam across the Connecticut river, and other public works. He bought lands extensively in the State of Vermont, and made money. He sent two sons to college. The oldest, Horace, graduated at Dartmouth in 1806; John Adams, the other, graduated in 1825, at Yale,—a man of fine promise, but died early. Horace was a respectable lawyer, and settled in Suderland, Massachusetts; and though now dead, has left a good representative, in his son, Henry W. Taft, Esquire, of Pittsfield.¹

The late Orray Taft, of Providence, whose business operations were extensive, and whose character commanded universal respect

and the late Archibald Taft, of Berkshire County, whose name and character were an ornament and a treasure in the community where he lived, and died, both descended from the second Robert. The venerable Orsmus Taft, whose old age is made happy by the prosperity of his sons in the business to which he devoted his early energies, Moses, Robert, Jacob, and many others who are still living, and who have been honorably, and usefully, and successfully, connected with the great manufacturing interests of this vicinity, are descendants of the second Robert. Enos N. Taft, Esq., who represents us at the New York bar, the Hon. Henry Chapin, who represents us at the bar and on the bench, of Worcester County, and Hon. Velorous Taft, who for many years has held the responsible position of Commissioner of Worcester County, are descendants of the second Robert. The Rev. Carlton A. Staples, of Providence, and the Rev. Lovett Taft, of Ohio, are also descendants of the second Robert.

The descendants of the second Robert, like those of all the other brothers, have done their share at cultivating the earth. Agriculture, which is the destiny of nine-tenths of the human race in civilized countries, was not neglected by Robert, the carpenter, nor Robert, Jr., nor yet by Captain Robert, and it has been characteristic of the family, not to be above their business. Farming has ever been held in honor by them. But when the West ran away with the profits of farming, they used their wits, invented, and improved machinery, turned out abundant fabrics of cotton, woolen, wood and iron, and made more money than if the West had not attempted to monopolize the honorable profession of farming. In all this, the descendants have borne a leading part. In this connection, as I pass over the mass of enterprising, and worthy business men, who have sprung from the second Robert,—bankers, merchants, mechanics, manufacturers, in all of which departments, they were strong,—I regret that it is out of my power to do justice to the individuals who make up that mass. When we consider the part to which the name has become associated with the manu-

factures of this vicinity, and how much more widely the blood has extended than the name, we may conclude that the great factories of this section of the Blackstone Valley, are almost a family concern.

As the descendants of Benjamin, many years ago, founded, and gave their name to a town in Vermont, so the descendants of the second Robert have more recently, established a manufacturing town in Connecticut, which is known as Taftville, and has prospered by the enterprise of the founders.

III.—DANIEL.

Four years after Robert, came Daniel upon the tax list, and assumed the responsibilities of a man. His first marriage was probably in the year 1702 or 3. His first wife's Christian name was Hannah. Her surname we have not found. She died on the 8th of August, 1704, leaving an infant son, Daniel, who soon died also. On the 5th of December, 1706, he was married to Lydia Chapin, daughter of Captain Josiah Chapin. Of Daniel's second marriage we have a record: and his tombstone stands in the old cemetery in Mendon, informing us that he died on the 24th of August, 1761, aged 84 years. This record fixes his birth in or about the year 1677, a date earlier than his removal to Mendon, and one year before that deed was drawn in Braintree, which bounded the premises by the property occupied by Robert Taft. If Robert Taft had owned that house and lot more than one year at that time, then Daniel was born at Braintree. More than any other man, he succeeded to the solid position of Captain Josiah Chapin, after his decease, and shared it while he lived. The strength of his position among the people is manifest, from the number and variety of trusts placed upon him by the public. He was the legal adviser of his father and his brothers, and also of his neighbors. When anything critical was pending, the town seemed to feel relief, on entrusting it to him. If bills of credit were issued by the Colonial government, to be loaned to the towns, Daniel was inevitably the trustee

for its distribution in loans to the people. He was often and for many years in succession, Treasurer of the town. He became familiar with parliamentary rules, and was for many years chosen moderator of town meetings. The men of Mendon were critical, and rather precise in their mode of doing public business, and Daniel's authority did not always pass unchallenged. They were especially precise in limiting the proceedings of each town meeting to the objects specially enumerated in the call as published. In February, 1722, a town meeting had been warned and held, and Daniel was chosen moderator. Who the town clerk was does not appear, but he made the record read as follows: "After the business thereof was finished, that was inserted in the warrant, the aforesaid moderator, Daniel Taft, assumed unto himself, the power to appoint and warn a township meeting, which is contrary to law, nothing being inserted in the warrant for calling a meeting for that purpose, and took a vote thereon by the holding up of hands." And the town, afterward resolved, that what was done at the meeting so called, was of "none effect."

Daniel was not satisfied to lie under such an imputation. The Tafts rallied at the next March meeting. Daniel was made moderator, selectman and trustee, and both the Josephs were chosen to office, and at a subsequent meeting of the town, it was voted that the entry by the clerk of the former meeting, was false and defamatory, and that it be expunged. I do not find that Daniel's rulings were ever questioned again. In 1730, Daniel was delegated to negotiate for the creation of the new county of Worcester. Up to that time, Mendon and Uxbridge had been in the county of Suffolk. The next year, 1731, the county of Worcester was created.

In 1732, by a deed, the consideration of which was, "*the love and affection which I bear the town of Uxbridge,*" he gave to the town, the site of the old burying ground, minutely describing it. He was chosen representative of Mendon to the General Court, in 1728. How many times he was sent to the General Court, I am unable to

say. He was a Justice of the Peace under the Colonial government, for many years. His appointment having been made before the death of Josiah Chapin, and continuing, I think, to the end of his long life. A Justice of the Peace, in England, and under the Colonial government is, and always has been an important office. The appointment imports a man of dignity, and weight of character, and usually a man of an estate. To Josiah, his oldest son, he conveyed by deed of gift the farm on the west side of the Blackstone, afterwards held by Esquire Bazaleel, Josiah's son, and more recently by Mrs. Joseph Thayer, and which is still owned by the family. This fine farm was given by Daniel to Josiah in 1732. This is another instance of the fidelity with which these ancient farms have been kept and cherished in the family. Daniel's descendants had considerable political prominence. Captain Josiah, his son, resided in Uxbridge, and was honored and trusted as his father had been, and was, in Mendon. His son Caleb he sent to Harvard University where he died, and the father when called to his son's death-bed, was himself attacked by the disease and died on his way home, at the age of forty-seven, leaving unfinished a promising career.

In giving an account of the descendants of Daniel Taft, the names of Bazaleel, senior and junior, and of George Spring Taft, the son of the younger Bazaleel, cannot be omitted. I avail myself of a notice published in the Worcester *Palladium*, on the occasion of the death of the grandson, George S. Taft. "Hon. Bazaleel Taft, senior, was born in 1750, and died in 1839, in the 89th year of his age. For many years he had been one of the leading men in the south part of Worcester County, and the tokens of the confidence of his fellow-citizens, while they imposed upon him the burdens of life, strengthened him for their faithful fulfillment. He was two years a member of the State senate; two years a member of the executive council, and some years a member of the house of representatives from Uxbridge. He was a strong and decided Federalist, and never swerved from his political faith. Firm, com-

fact, honest, dignified and able, he went through life fulfilling his various duties with rare fidelity and conscientiousness, and leaving to his family and to all who knew him, a character which is always referred to with reverent pride and pleasure. He became a large land holder in his native town, and the old homestead is yet in the hands of his descendants. The stately elms which shelter the home of the patriarch, built of timber hewn by his own hands, and firm as the hills around, are emblematic of the man whose memory is embalmed in the hearts of his friends and kindred." Nor can I pass from this notice of Bazaleel, senior, without a reference to his Revolutionary history, which I have received from my friend, the Hon. Henry Chapin, as given in an address delivered by him some ten or eleven years since to the citizens of Uxbridge.

"In the Revolutionary war, Bazaleel Taft, senior, went with a company collected in his neighborhood to Rhode Island in the capacity of orderly sergeant. Having made his first report, he happened to be within hearing, when the commanding officer read his report, and as he finished it, exclaimed, 'Who wrote that report?' Mr. Taft, supposing that possibly he had been guilty of some breach of military rules, and that he might be arrested—slipped out to attend to some matters, but he had not been absent long before he was summoned by an inferior officer to come before the commander. Said the commander, 'Is your name Bazaleel Taft?' 'It is, sir.' 'Did you make that report?' 'I did make it. I was not very familiar with military matters, but I did it as well as I could.' Instead of a reprimand, he was electrified by the announcement, 'Mr. Taft, I wish to have you act in the capacity of Adjutant of these troops. You may enter at once upon the duties, and you shall have a horse as soon as one can be furnished by the government.'"

Bazaleel Taft, senior, was grandson of the first Daniel Taft, and must have been eleven years of age in 1761, when his grandfather Daniel Taft died. His first wife was Abigail Taft, by whom he had one child, a daughter, whose name was Eunice. Eunice be-

came the wife of Dea. Phineas Chapin, and the mother of Mrs. Paul Whittin, of Whittinsville,—a lady who is remembered with veneration and affection by all her descendants. His second wife was Sarah Richardson.

His only son who lived to majority, was Bazaleel Taft, Junior. Of him, too, I am able to give a brief account, taken from the same article in the *Worcester Palladium*. "Hon. Bazaleel Taft, Jr., was born in 1780, and died in 1846, in the 66th year of his age. He was a gentleman of polished manners, excellent culture and high standing in his profession. He graduated at Cambridge in the year 1804, and after being admitted to the bar, established himself as a lawyer in his native town. He always resided in Uxbridge, and enjoyed largely the confidence of his fellow-citizens. He was twice elected a member of the State senate, twice a member of the executive council, and for a number of years a representative to the Massachusetts legislature. He was very active in the establishment of the State Lunatic Hospital at Worcester, and always referred with much pleasure to the part which he had taken in its origin and success. He was the second president of Blackstone Bank, and held the office at the time of his death. He was a man of genial humor, rare hospitality, enlightened public spirit, and unbended integrity. His name and character are held in grateful remembrance by those who knew him best, and his children and his children's children still cherish them as a priceless legacy."

George Spring Taft, the third of this line, was a graduate of Brown University; a gentleman and a man of scholarly attainments. He succeeded to his father's profession of the law. His career, which was promising, was cut short at the age of 33, by death.

Chloe, the youngest daughter of the elder Bazaleel, became the wife of Joseph Thayer, Esq., now deceased, a well known lawyer of Uxbridge, and was the mother both of the former, and of the present wife of Judge Henry Chapin, who has thus a double interest in the Taft family, by blood, and by marriage.

Hopestill Taft, daughter of the second Daniel, was married in 1766 to David Bullard, and her descendants are numerous, and not undistinguished, residing in central New York. General Edward F. Bullard formerly of Troy, but now of Saratoga, New York, and a prominent member of the New York bar, is one of her descendants.

IV.—JOSEPH.

Just four years after Daniel began to pay the minister's tax, Joseph's name appears, in 1703. He is the first of the five brothers who bore a military title. He was sometimes called Joseph, senior, sometimes lieutenant or captain, to distinguish him from his nephew Joseph Taft, the oldest son of the first Thomas, born in 1693, and thirteen years younger than his uncle Joseph, who heads the fourth division of the race. Joseph then, was born in 1680, married in 1708, and died July 18, 1747, in the 68th year of his age. The name of his wife was Elizabeth Emerson, the grand-daughter of the first minister of Mendon, and they had nine children.

His farm was on both sides of the Blackstone, though his residence, and most of his "outlands" were west of the river. It was through the lands of Joseph, Robert and Benjamin, that the town of Mendon in 1711, by vote, ordered the selectmen, "to lay out a four rod highway, from the highway that leads to John Cooke's farm, unto 'the bridge the Tafts built,' over the Great River, and from said bridge unto the town's common on the west side of said river." This road as laid by the committee, commenced upon the east side of West River, crossing both rivers, but crossing the Blackstone on "the Bridge the Tafts built," just below the mouth of the Mumford.

Joseph bore his part in the general management of town affairs, both in Mendon and in Uxbridge. He seems to have been a man of an independent turn of mind. An illustration of that characteristic appears from the proceedings of the town of Mendon of May 17, 1721, before Uxbridge was cut off. The government had con-

cluded to try the experiment of emitting bills of credit, to be loaned out among the people by the towns, the towns of course being responsible to the provincial government, for the money to redeem them. The people were generally pleased with the idea, and on the 17th of May, 1721, the town "voted to receive our town's part of £50,000 of bills of credit to be emitted by act of the General Court, and dispensed through the province." But Joseph resisted the project, and entered a protest, signed by Joseph Taft, senior, Benjamin Taft, and Joseph Taft, junior. The plan however, went into operation. But such was the general result as applied in the provinces, that seventy years afterward, when American Independence had been achieved, and a convention was called to form a constitution, they put into the first article of that constitution, the prohibition, "*No State shall emit bills of credit.*"

At the next Town meeting of Mendon, it was voted, that, "to secure the town from loss by letting out the town's share of the bills of credit, a committee be appointed to add instructions." Joseph Taft was chosen chairman of that committee. He reported promptly the restrictions he deemed necessary, and whether the town escaped without loss, I have not learned.

As I have stated already, when Uxbridge was taken from Mendon, the Tafts were divided, leaving Thomas, Daniel, Capt. Robert, Capt. Eleazer and others in Mendon, and carrying away Robert, junior, Capt. Joseph, Benjamin, Capt. Josiah, Capt. John and others, who came rapidly upon the stage.

Notwithstanding this division, they seemed to be stronger in each town, than they were before in Mendon. The first thing that awakened special attention, after the election of officers in Uxbridge, was the building of a church. It was voted, "to set the meeting-house on the south side of Drabbletail brook," but finding that this would not be convenient, that vote was recalled, and it was voted to set the meeting-house, within the fence of Deacon Ebenezer Reed's pasture, which I understand, included the site of the church now owned and occupied by the Unitarian Society.

Captain Joseph was on the committee to see about building the meeting-house. But it was by the vote of the people in town meeting assembled, and not by an order of the committee, that "fifteen gallons of good rum were provided for the raising of the meeting-house," which was but half the quantity that had been required to raise the meeting-house in Mendon.

I am satisfied, that Captain Joseph was strictly sober, and not inclined to the habitual use of rum or other intoxicating drinks. He was regarded as reliable in financial matters, and in matters of account. He was put on the committee to receive and invest the quota of bills of credit in Uxbridge, as he had been in Mendon. He also was made chairman of a committee to call Solomon Wood the treasurer, to an account.

In 1732, the selectmen stood as follows : Cornet John Farnum ; Lieut. Joseph Taft ; Dea. Eb'r Read ; Capt. Jos. White ; Corpl. Jos. Taft. Robert Taft, surveyor of highways. It was generally about in that proportion ; and the proportion grew greater rather than less as time passed on ; for there came upon the stage, beside those I have mentioned, Stephen, and Samuel, and John, and James, and Josiah, and Benjamin, and Peter, and Gideon, and Mijamin, and Moses, and Aaron, and Gershom, and Ephraim, and Caleb, and Reuben, and Abner, and Nahum, and Seth, and Paul, and Silas, and Jacob, and Noah, all of whom shared honorably in the government of this town of Uxbridge. These names recur so continuously on the record, as to become *monotonous*.

The descendants of Joseph are widely scattered. They are outnumbered in Uxbridge, by the descendants of the second Robert. But the homestead of Captain Joseph, the monumental farm, which he was the first to clear and improve, and where he spent his whole active life, and where he died, is held firmly by his great grandson, Zadock A. Taft, Esq., to whom the descendants of Joseph from abroad, owe many thanks for preserving it.

The sons of Capt. Joseph were Moses, Peter, Joseph and Aaron. They each received from their father a good farm by deed of gift.

They were industrious, prosperous farmers, and good citizens. The Hon. George W. Taft, the representative of Uxbridge in the last legislature of Massachusetts, is a descendant of Moses, and owns and occupies the farm which Moses received from his father, the first Joseph, by deed of May 11, 1744. The descendants of Moses were p osperous, and many of them remained in Massachusetts.

Peter also received from Joseph a farm lying about one mile west of that of Moses. Peter was a captain, and is described as a large, good looking man, with a magnanimous disposition. He married Elizabeth Cheney. They had four sons, Henry, Gershom, Aaron and Peter.

Henry moved to Barre, Vermont, where his descendants are numerous. Denison Taft, Esq., of Montpelier, is a worthy descendant of Henry. Also, Richard Taft, of Franconia, New Hampshire, proprietor of the Profile House in that place, whose enterprise and ability have been crowned with distinguished success and wealth.

Deacon Gershom resided in Uxbridge. He was a prosperous farmer, and universally respected. Doctor Jonathan Taft, the distinguished Professor of Dental Surgery, of Cincinnati,—to whom also we are indebted for the publication of the *Family Tree*, is a descendant of Uncle Gershom.

He was one of our deacons. But he was not a non-resistant. His name is on the rolls of the colonial troops, who served in the French and Indian war, and it is not to be doubted, that he fought, as well as he prayed. After his death, his house was taken down and brought some two miles to the neighborhood of Uxbridge Centre, and put up again, where it now stands conspicuous, gable end to the street, large enough for a meeting house. He held fast to Uxbridge, but his descendants mostly emigrated to Vermont and elsewhere. One venerable descendant of Uncle Gershom still lives among the scenes of his childhood. I refer to Mr. Chandler Taft.

Aaron Taft, the next younger brother of Gershom, fitted for, and

entered Princeton College, of New Jersey. The exigencies of the family called him home before he had finished his college course, but not before he had established a good reputation as a scholar. He married Rhoda Rawson, of Uxbridge, in 1769, a descendant of Grindal Rawson. They had a family of eleven children, of whom nine grew up to maturity. After residing thirty years in Uxbridge, a large part of which time he was town clerk, having lost his property by indorsements for his friends, he moved with all his family to Vermont in 1799, and disappears forever from the home of his birth. He was a man of great intelligence and integrity. His affairs improved in the "New State," but a majority of his descendants have "gone West, and grown up with the country."

Peter Rawson Taft, his oldest son, died in 1867. I avail myself of a brief notice of his life and character, published in the Cincinnati *Gazette* on that occasion :

"Peter Rawson Taft was born on the 14th of April, 1785, in Uxbridge, Mass. At fourteen years of age he with his father's family, removed to the then new State of Vermont, and settled in the town of Townsend, Windham County. There he labored on his father's farm the greater portion of the time, improving however, the advantages of such schools and academies as were accessible.

"Though a farmer, he was studious, and always fond of reading. As soon as of sufficient age, he was employed to teach the public school of Townsend, in the winter season. This employment continued for several winters. He also made himself a skillful surveyor, and was extensively employed in that capacity.

"At the age of twenty-five, he married Sylvia Howard of the same place," [a descendant of Samuel Hayward and Capt. Josiah Chapin, of Mendon,] "who has also deceased within the last year. They lived together fifty-six years. They had but one child, Alphonso Taft, now one of the Judges of our Superior Court, with whom they have resided for the last twenty-five years.

"But the active life of the deceased was mainly spent in Ver-

mont. Though not educated for the bar, his reading included the law. He was early appointed to the office of Justice of the Peace. Without aspiring to high office, he was much in public life. He was chosen continually to the most important offices of the town; was also one of the commissioners of the county. By annual elections and reelections, he was many times a representative in the Vermont Legislature. He was admitted to the bar, and his opinion in legal matters was valued.

"Four years, he was Judge of the Probate Court of Windham County, by election of the Legislature, after which, he was elected a Judge of the County Court, and held that office four years to the universal acceptance of the people and the bar. He was regarded as a just, humane, and wise man.

"Books have been a great resource in his old age. His historical knowledge was extensive and accurate; and his familiarity with the Bible was remarkable. He has left to his friends and relatives who survive him and who knew him best, a sweet and precious memory. He died on New Year's day, aged eighty-two."

But it is impossible to trace in this discourse, the varied destinies of the descendants of Joseph, distributed as they are through many States. Joseph has been represented in the legislatures of Massachusetts, of Vermont, of Michigan, of Iowa, and of Ohio, while his home in Uxbridge is still held by his name and blood.

V.—BENJAMIN.

The youngest son of Robert and Sarah, was called *Benjamin*. Benjamin married Sarah Thomas, March 22, 1707. Benjamin's descendants have probably left the original hive in a larger proportion than the descendants of either of the other brothers, unless there should be an exception in the case of Joseph. Benjamin was undoubtedly born after Robert and Sarah moved to Mendon. Though younger than Joseph, he was married a year or two earlier. He was a purchaser of lands; owned a large quantity in different parts of the town, and in Douglas. But his largest possessions were

in the south-western part of Uxbridge, in the vicinity of Shockalog pond and brook. He followed the policy of his father and brothers, in settling on his children farms as soon as they were married and needed homes of their own, thus distributing a large part of his possessions, before his death. But after his death, he had more than twelve hundred acres of land to go to his heirs. He, like his brothers, was elected to town offices. But he seems to have been one who was absorbed in his family, and in home industry. We are not so well advised as to the number of his descendants, as we are as to the descendants of the older brothers. It is hoped that this gathering will bring out many who may not have been generally known to the family. So far as I have been able to learn, the character of the descendants of Benjamin have been of the sterling kind ; not pretentious, nor ambitious politically, but uniformly sober, industrious, upright, enterprising in business, and generally thrifty.

Stephen, a son of Seth, who was the son of Stephen, the second son of Benjamin, emigrated to Vermont about the year 1790, and was the first to build a dam across the Queechee River, in or near Woodstock, and established there a scythe factory. In 1792, his brother Daniel came up, then a boy of sixteen, and began to learn the trade of scythe making. In 1804, Daniel, then twenty-six years of age, and Seth, another brother, bought out Stephen and carried on the business till 1811, when the shop was destroyed by fire, and Seth lost his life by an injury received at the fire. Daniel rebuilt the shop and enlarged the business far beyond the conceptions of his brother Stephen who commenced it. It has been a very important manufactory of agricultural cutlery. The family has greatly increased. Daniel was a man of solid character, which commanded universal confidence. He was honored by his fellow-citizens with places of public trust, and was sent to the State Legislature, as the representative of Woodstock. The works established by the Tafts created a prosperous town which is known as Taftsville. It is a post town of considerable importance. This was

transplanting the same kind of enterprise to Vermont, to make available the water power of the Queechee River, which has since subjected the water power of the Blackstone, Mumford and West rivers to use, in old Uxbridge. There was an originality and steady perseverance in these descendants of Benjamin, which deserved the signal success, they have won. They have carried the name to Vermont and made it honorable, and they cannot be forgotten when the family meets in its ancient home, to review its history.

It is impossible to linger on all the meritorious characters which have been produced in the family of Benjamin. But I must be permitted to refer to the Hon. Levi B. Taft, of Michigan, who holds a high position on the bench of that State. Before his election to that position, he had been a lawyer of long and high standing. The exacting duties of his office prevent his sharing with us the pleasures of this occasion. Judge Levi B. Taft graduated at Dartmouth College in 1843, and after a short experience in teaching, commenced the study, and in due time the practice of the law. His career has been successful and honorable.

The number of college graduates descended from the first Robert Taft, is something more than forty. If I am not mistaken in my estimate of the character and condition of the race, at the present time, there is an increasing tendency to intellectual pursuits.

I ought perhaps to add that the family has furnished the General Court of Massachusetts many representatives. Among them were,

OF MENDON—Daniel Taft, son of the first Robert ; Capt. Robert Taft, son of the second Robert ; and Thomas Taft, the fourth in the line of Thomases.

How many others of the name or blood in Mendon have served the State as legislators, I know not.

OF UXBRIDGE—Bazaleel Taft, senior, and Bazaleel Taft, junior, descendants of the first Daniel. Moses Taft and Jacob Taft, descendants of the second Robert. Charles A. Taft, a descendant of

the first Thomas. Chandler Taft, descendant of Joseph; and George W. Taft, descendant of both Robert and Joseph.

OF NORTH BRIDGEWATER—Henry French, a descendant of Thomas.

The family has also furnished representatives for the legislatures of other States. But my knowledge of their names is limited. Among them have been :

IN VERMONT—Peter Rawson Taft, a descendant of Joseph. Daniel Taft and Paschal Taft, descendants of Benjamin, and Russell S. Taft, a descendant of Thomas.

IN MICHIGAN—George W. Lovell, Enos Taft Lovell, Fayette Lovell, descendants of Joseph.

IN IOWA—George W. Lovell, a descendant of Joseph.

IN OHIO—Charles Phelps Taft, of Cincinnati, a descendant of Joseph.

I have thus, my friends, briefly sketched the history of our family, and its five original branches. Of the living generation, I have not attempted to say much. Time would not permit. This one day out of two hundred years, belongs mainly to our ancestors. They have been presented imperfectly, but so I hope, as to be appreciated by the willing minds of their descendants. And where are these our progenitors to-day, when we are endeavoring to bring them back to memory? If spiritual existence is not a myth, and the immortal life for which we hope, a dream, *they are our most interested spectators*. Having rested from their earthly labors, they can now look down upon each generation of their descendants, with eyes undimmed by age or sorrow, and with affection untouched by corporeal infirmities. Can any one of their descendants, afford to ignore even the humblest of his ancestors, on whom his very existence has depended, and by whom his present condition has been in part shaped? Is it due respect to them, to limit our inquiries to the first, or the second generation, forgetting their predecessors, who were as indispensable to our being, as those we call by the endearing appellation of father? In less than a cen-

ture we shall all have finished our course on earth, and ourselves be observing the successive generations of our own descendants. Shall we be satisfied to be coldly remembered by the first, or the second generation only? Or shall we not yearn to be remembered, if not by the descendants of others, at least, by those in whose veins our own blood continues to circulate?

The address was listened to with deep interest throughout. At its close, the band gave another selection, which was followed by a song, written by Rev. Carleton A. Staples, of Providence, and sung to the tune of "Auld Lang Syne," as follows :

Two hundred years have come and gone,
 Since on the Mendon hills
 A vine was planted by the Pond,
 Whose fruit the land now fills.
 We gather from our peaceful homes,
 A great and happy throng,
 To bless the spot whereon it grew,
 And lift our grateful song.

Our fathers here hewed down the woods
 And broke the virgin soil;
 Our mothers spun the flax and wool,
 And cheered them in their toil.
 The children here together played
 And learned their lessons well,
 While oft in pleasant paths they strayed,
 The tale of love to tell.

Their homes were poor, their lot was hard:
 In toil and pain and tears,
 They lived and died to serve their God,
 And bless the coming years.
 Green be their graves among the hills,
 Sweet be their rest on high;
 While by these rocks and fields and rills,
 Their names shall never die.

We greet each other here to-day,
 As friends and brothers all;
 With earnest hearts these kinsmen say,
 "The Tafts shall never fall."

Old Robert's stock is strong and sound,
And while the water's run,
This vine shall spread its roots around,
And bud and blossom on!

And when at length these earthly scenes
Have vanished from our eyes,
When all that now are gathered here,
Have passed beyond the skies,—
In that bright home where lov'd ones wait,
And many mansions be,
Our Father grant that we may dwell
One happy family.

The exercises in the church closed with the benediction, by Rev.
Lovett Taft.

SERVICES IN THE TENT.

The family assembled around the tables in the tent, at twenty minutes past two o'clock, and were called to order by the President, Daniel W. Taft, of Uxbridge. Blessing was invoked by Rev. T. C. Biscoe, of Uxbridge.

Hon. Henry Chapin, of Worcester, having been invited by the Committee of Arrangements to write a poem for the occasion, was introduced by the President, as follows :

In canny Scotland, home of Robert Burns,
To whose sweet songs the weary peasant turns
To rest him for awhile,
Each warlike clan, to song and music wed,
Its own old minstrel to the manor bred,
Beguiles with harp and rhyme.

In Yankee land, in our poetic times,
Another minstrel sings his tuneful rhymes
In measures sweet and soft;
And here to-day, brimful of musal fire,
Our minstrel Chapin, tunes the trembling lyre
To praise the name of Taft.

JUDGE CHAPIN'S POEM.

In early days, old people say,
A stranger in this town
When going up the road one day,
Met some one coming down.
"Good morning, Mr. Taft!" said he;
The fellow only laughed,
And said, "Just how, explain to me,
You know my name is Taft."
The stranger said, "I've only met
A dozen since I came,
And all but one who've spoken yet,
Have answered to the name;

So judging from a fact like this,
 I candidly confess
 I thought I could not hit amiss.
 And ventured on a guess."
 We guess no more. This swelling tide
 Of kinsmen, old and young,
 Proclaims that we all hail with pride,
The Taft from whom we sprung;
 Albeit now, some other claim
 May elsewhere rule our will,
 This day, whatever be our name,
 We're his descendants still.
 Why gathers here this festive throng,
 So happy and so gay?
 Why press the surging crowds along,
 On this warm summer day?
 Why greet us now the grave and stern,
 These eyes which shine like pearls?
 Why welcome us, where'er we turn,
 These grown up boys and girls?

The Puritans of former days
 Sailed o'er the stormy sea,
 To scatter on their busy ways
 The seeds which were to be
 The germis from which a race should spring,
 So manly, true and brave,
 Their names through all the world should ring,
 And rule on every wave.
 Avoiding much the lighter joys,
 While grappling with their sins,
 They loved a troop of boys and girls,
 And gloried in the twins;
 And whether they could read or write,
 Stout hearted men like these
 Were full of theologic fight,
 And revelled in decrees.
 On mountain tops of thought they trod,
 And heard the thunders roar
 Beneath them, while they talked with God,
 And worshipped him the more;
 They came into the wilderness,
 Where tempted day by day,
 They met the devil face to face,
 And drove the fiend away.
 They smote the Quakers hip and thigh,
 They bade the Baptists go;

Episcopacy, low or high,
 They didn't care to know;
 They'd seen enough of other creeds,
 To make them prize their own;
 They felt it met their soul's best needs,
 To go it all alone.
 Yet, spite of all the narrowness,
 Which marked the early deeds,
 The loving elements which grace
 The men of different creeds,
 Have led the children to forget
 The battle fields of yore,
 And those who once as foemen met,
 Now meet as friends once more.

Among a stern and gallant band,
 Our greatest grandsire came;
 Upon his record here we stand,
 We love to speak his name,
 From valley, hill and plain are we
 All gathered like a flood,
 Drawn by the fond affinity
 Which thrills a kindred blood.
 We fancy now the face and form
 The sturdy veteran bore;
 Alike in sunshine and in storm,
 The simple mien he wore;
 For calmness sat upon his brow,
 His heart was free from craft,
 No Puritan who broke his vow,
 Went by the name of Taft.
 Among these hills, with hardy toil,
 He worked his upward way,
 And helped to make the answering soil
 More fruitful every day;
 He left to us a heritage,
 We fondly call our own,
 An honest life on every page,
 Where'er that life is known.

He revered the Holy Book,
 And when the children came,
 The father uniformly took
 For each a Bible name;
 Proclaiming not his creed or sect,
 This simple fact we bring,
 'Tis always easy to detect
 The puritanic ring.

His home was near the Nipmuck Lake,
 Where black bass now abound;
 He never heard of one clam bake,
 In all the country round:
 He had to keep a sharp look out,
 With Indians hovering near,
 When wolf and bear and catamount
 Were often travelling here.
 The boys were trained to honest work,
 The girls were learned to spin,
 Each was ashamed to be a shirk,
 Out of the house or in;
 If they were living here and now,
 I wonder what they'd think,
 When hired servants milk the cow,
 And lead the horse to drink?
 When bonnets only touch the head,
 Held fast the Lord knows where,
 And the old fashioned feather bed,
 Is now a thing so rare;
 When girls can hardly keep their breath,
 Without a screen or fan,
 And boys are frightened half to death
 At the mere sight of tan;
 When "*scance circles*" oft are found
 With music in the air,
 And old guitars go floating round,
 Saluting every chair:
 When those were hanged as witches once,
 Who made no such display,
 As many a man not deemed a dunce,
 May witness any day;
 When comets fly, and no alarm
 Disturbs the busy mind,
 And in the shop or on the farm,
 We leave them all behind;
 And though the earth doth overcast
 With shade the sun or moon,
 Each dark eclipse is quickly past,
 And light is shining soon!

Oh that some artist had the power,
 With magic skill and grace,
 To give us for one passing hour
 The scenery of this place,
 Before the hand of toil had made
 A change in grove and glen,
 Revealing now the forest shade

Which veiled our fathers then,
 The flowing rivers gently ran
 Unheeded to the sea,
 Unruled by the touch of man,
 And bird and fish were free;
 No reservoir among the hills,
 Stored up the treacherous flood,
 To make the little gushing rills
 Like one dark field of cloud.
 The granite hillsides were not then
 All written o'er with lies,
 Whereon a set of vandal men
 Had learned to advertise,
 And pills and plasters, bores and quacks,
 Who flourish so to-day,
 Were quickly set to making tracks,
 Or helped along their way.
 The music was the simplest kind,
 The melody of song.
 Not what the artists call refined.
 But somewhat over strong;
 Not as the lark at Heaven's gate sings,
 Serenely, sweet and clear,
 The harp, with just a thousand strings,
 Gave out its music here.
 Log cabins flourished in the land,
 While carpets were unknown,
 When cloth was mainly wrought by hand,
 And housewives made their own,
 And beans fulfilled their weekly vow
 As skillfully as men,
 Who pay their smooth addresses now,
 Though fellows courted then.

 How rare and curious to the mind,
 The story of an age,
 A century before we find
 A Worcester County stage;
 When saddles were but luxuries,
 With pillions made to fit,
 Whereon some loving *he* and *his*
 So cosily could sit.
 When none by coach, canal or rail,
 In comfort spent the day,
 But travellers through this wooded vale
 So slowly made their way,
 While Blackstone, with whose spreading fame,

This valley now is full,
 Perambulated through the same,
 Transported by a bull.
 The germ of many a classic phrase
 Lies buried long ago,
 Far, far beyond our modern gaze,
 Too deep for us to know;
 But scholars now who know so well
 Of Blackstone's steed bovine,
 Are never troubled here to tell
 The meaning of "Bullgine."

Through busy years the race of Taft,
 Like bees, brought home its store,
 Or like an unadventurous craft,
 Still hugged the nearest shore,
 Till moved by a divine command
 Forbidding them to stay,
 Some scattered widely through the land,
 And bravely made their way.
 Though here the roots are buried deep,
 Though here the trunk is strong,
 Yet far and wide the branches sweep
 And help this swelling throng,
 On which the father of the race
 From his blest home on high,
 May gaze with bright and smiling face
 And a benignant eye.
 They greet us from the Granite Hills
 And from the State of Maine,
 Vermont her loyal quota fills,
 In sunshine and in rain,
 New York, though large, does not forget,
 Nor Rhody, though she's small,
 Connecticut remembers yet,
 Ohio knows us all.
 We gather from the sunny land,
 And from the prairied west,
 This homestead seems as calm and bland
 As Araby the blest,
 And every rock, and vale and hill
 Which we have loved so long,
 Joins with each sweetly singing rill
 In this day's parting song.

SENTIMENTS.

"Though often called to the bench, this family is never required to answer at the bar."

Responded to Hon. Alphonso Taft, of Cincinnati, Ohio :

Mr. President,—Though surprised by this call to respond to the first toast, I thank you for the announcement in that toast, of a fact which cannot be disputed. The Tafts have needed no advocate at the bar of any criminal court in our country. They have wasted none of the time, or money of the public, by offences requiring judicial investigations. But this day is far spent. I have had my share of it. There are many good speakers here present. Allow me to be silent, that their welcome voices may be heard.

"As the Star of Empire westward takes its way, it is gratifying to know that the family name keeps pace with the Western Star."

Responded to by Rev. Lovett Taft, of Columbus, Ohio :

The sentiment to which I am called to respond, "Westward the Star of Empire takes its way," is of somewhat doubtful application to myself. I hail from the capital of Ohio, and there we count that the Star of Empire has gone so far beyond us that we are scarcely westward. Away on beyond the "Father of Waters," its brightness and glory abides.

But, seriously, the occasion that has called us together is one of deepest interest. I count one of the fortunate events of my life that I am permitted to be here to-day, to look into the faces of my kindred, few of whom I have ever seen before. So many! what a privilege! I was rejoiced when I learned that this meeting was in contemplation.

I was anticipating a Western tour for my summer vacation, but when I was authoritatively informed of this meeting, I immediately changed my plan, and said to my wife, "We will go East and be present at the Taft gathering;" and here we are, glad and thankful. To see so many of my name is new to me. Tafts in Ohio, like angel's visits, are "few and far between."

I was born and reared in Ohio, and so my wife; we are natives of the soil. Her parents were the first joined in marriage in the city, after Columbus was located, in 1812.

My calling is that of a Methodist itinerant ; have been a member of the Ohio Annual Conference for 22 years ; have lived in various portions of the State, and bring to you greetings from a few Tafts in the central portions known to myself. Should we not derive some lessons from this occasion? We shall never meet again. This is the first and will be the last time we shall look upon each other as kinsfolk in the flesh.

How easy is the transition from this scene, where one man's descendants are gathered a great host, to that grander scene, where all the descendants of Adam shall be gathered for final approval or condemnation. Now as then, success or failure is individual.

He who has succeeded in the race of life now, or shall succeed, has done or will do so by his personal effort. No royalty of blood, however noble the ancestry, can supercede individual effort. Thus in the things of the spirit.

He who gains the true riches, and honor that comes from God, must himself be a worker together with God. Personal effort is the key of success.

Our Heavenly Father wills our happiness and offers to us the blessings of the life that now is and of that which is to come, upon condition of faithful improvement of opportunities. He has made the way plain to our eyes and possible to our feet, and whosoever will may so run as to obtain.

How happy shall we be in that great gathering of the earthly family, if we are found of the number to whom the Father will say, "Well done, good and faithful servant, thou hast been faithful over a few things. I will make thee ruler over many things. Enter thou into the joys of thy Lord." Life's labor finished, life's great end accomplished, we shall come from the four quarters of the earth and sit down with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, in the kingdom of God, to go no more out forever.

That we, who are related in the flesh and component parts of one great family on earth, may be also kindred in spirit and members of the household of faith, and family of God, heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ, is the devout and earnest wish of your friend and brother.

"In politics and statesmanship, Lieut. Gov. R. S. Taft, of Burlington, Vt., will give us a lesson."

Responded to by Lieut. Gov. Taft :

Mr. President, and (knowing no better term to use) *Cousins*,—It has been said that one of the most important requisites for an after dinner speech is an empty stomach. I think it would be no easy task to convince those that sat at the table where I did, that I am in any condition to speak. I was hungry, for I was a long time coming; for though but a day's journey from here, it has been over a week since I left home. My neighbors bothered me so with questions that I wanted to leave. They noticed by the newspapers that there was to be a great gathering of Tafts in this State, and one pert young man wanted to know if it was going to be at Charlestown.* A week or two since, at Providence, the New England Reformed Men had a meeting, and some suggested that place as the one where I was going; and when the Associated Press put an "R" in the word *Dunkard*, and thus made a national convention of *Drunkards*, they said they knew that was the meeting I was going to. Another young man inquired if we were expecting a large gathering. I told him about a thousand, and he exclaimed, "I declare! what a chance to start a first-class lunatic asylum." Another one inquired where the meeting was to be, and I told him in Mendon, (up in Vermont we call every thing Mendon that ever was Mendon) and he wanted to know why the meeting was held there. I replied, of course, that, it was in that town that our grandfather Robert, the ancestor of us all, settled about the year 1670; he said, "what a fortunate thing it would have been for the United States, if King Philip had happened around Mendon about that year." By this time I thought I had heard enough, and without paying the greatest regard to the truth, I said to him that King Philip was here very often, that he and grandfather Robert were great *cronies*, that they hunted and fished together over all Southern Massachusetts and Rhode Island, and that on the old homestead down here, there was preserved as a precious heir loom in the family, a powder horn that "Phil" gave our grandfather one day when out hunting, as a token of his great respect and esteem for the old gentleman; and that the very spot where Phil pitched his wigwam when he came to visit grandfather, was still in existence on the banks of Taft's Pond, and if they did not believe it, that they could come down here and see the place itself. They said it must be so, and rather than hear any more of their talk, I left them.

And I have come down here, not to talk about politics or states-

*The location of the Mass. State Prison.

manship, but for three things : *First*, for my dinner ; and in that I have succeeded beyond my most sanguine expectations. *Second*, to visit the homes of my ancestors ; and yesterday I went to Mendon, and no true follower of Mahomet ever approached the shrines at Mecca with more reverent and devout feelings, than I drew near the graves of four generations of my ancestors. I felt as though I was walking upon holy ground. I was inclined to take off my shoes, and presume I should have done so, but the blackberry briars by the side of the road caused me to forego what might have been a sad experiment. *Third*, I came to find out whether I was an Irishman or not ; and I suppose the Judge has told us all about that in the part of his address which for want of time he has not given us to-day. I am certain that every one present looks back with pride to our progenitor, to whom, two centuries since, these hills and valleys were familiar ground ; and our pride will not be lessened by those who tell us that when one points back to his ancestors and boasts of his origin that the best part of him is under the ground, nor by Tennyson, who says that "The grand old gardener and his wife smile at the claims of long descent." "Kind hearts are more than coronets and simple faith than Norman blood." Physiological facts assure us that kind hearts and simple faiths can be transmitted as well as the glittering tiara of the prince, or the life blood of a Norman noble.

I know the Koran reads, "Whosoever hath ancestors will derive no advantage from them with God ;" but why may not religious tendencies, and generous impulses, and an upright character *derived from one's ancestors*, be credited to him in the heavenly books of the recording angel ! I therefore glory in the fact that the blood of Robert Taft runs in my veins, and am prouder of it to-day than I think the cavaliers upon the subject are, to trace their pedigree directly back to Capt. Kidd, Benedict Arnold, Judas Iscariot, or the apes of the ingenious Darwin. If they prefer the latter, they are welcome to their family tree.

In my younger days I thought the whole family of Tafts were in my father's house, but one day I met a friend and he said to me, "There is a Taft girl at my house." I told him there were several at mine, "But," said he, "it isn't one of your sisters, she is a girl from abroad." So I went home with him, and to my utter astonishment I found a Taft that I never had seen or heard of before. So I knew there must be others beside my family ; that first stranger one I

ever saw, is here to day. She sits right over there (pointing at her); you might know she belonged to the Thomas branch by her good looks. Ah! I fear I shall have to change that statement for, she is shaking her head at me as much as to say that she doesn't belong to that branch at all, but is a veritable descendant of uncle Daniel. The thought then occurred to me, where did we come from. I knew Taffe, as grandfather Robert's name was sometimes spelt, was an Irish name, and Taafe a Scotch one. I looked on the map, and I found in Persia a city named Taft; and so possibly I thought we might be Persians, and perchance the Doctor (Jonathan of Cincinnati) may trace us back to Darius, or King Cyrus. I noticed that in Austria there was a Count Van Taft; so it may be we are entitled to an Austrian origin. I knew my grandfather came from Mendon, and when I found in Savage's Genealogical Dictionary that Robert Taffe lived in Mendon in 1682, I thought he must have been the "Taft from whom we sprung." But while thus speculating, I met a friend who spoke several languages, whose father, Geo. P. Marsh, the present U.S. minister at Italy, I knew was one of the greatest linguists of modern times, and I asked him from what nation I came. He said, judging by the name, I was a Welshman. This satisfied me for the time, and until I ascertained that his authority in the matter was the melody of Mother Goose, that "Taffe was a Welchman," "Taffe was" something else that it is not necessary for me to repeat. I stated to the young man that "I once heard a lawyer say that your father could lie in seventeen languages, but without any hesitation I affirm that you are an improvement on the old man; you are a chip of the old block." I then gave up speculating and came down to learn what I could on the subject at this meeting.

But a word for the Vermont Tafts. There may be some at this dinner that have an idea that we have no Tafts in Vermont, but it is not so; for when you talk of large families, go up there and you will be astonished at the records in our family bibles. It takes a ream of foolscap occasionally to keep the records of a single family: for instance, there was Gideon Taft, born in Uxbridge, March 2nd, 1776, who went to Huntington, Vermont, in 1798; he literally, like Enoch of old, begat sons and daughters, for he had born unto him thirty children, the eldest, Lydia, on the 16th of October, 1794, when he was eighteen years of age, and the youngest, Ann S., in April, 1848, in his 73d year. As the Dutchman says, "how high is that?"

The Tafts commenced emigrating to Vermont about a century since, nearly as soon as any one did.

"They came to the State when the town was new,
When the lordly pine and the hemlock grew
In the place where the Court House stands;
When the stunted ash and the alder black,
The slender fir and the tamarack
Stood thick on the meadow lands."

There are descendants of all the branches in the State, and of four of them in the place where I reside. I have found them living in every county in our State save Grand Isle, and Essex, the two having the smallest population, and I think that the fact that none of Uncle Robert's or Grandfather Thomas' descendants settled in the two counties sufficiently accounts for the paucity of their population.

But I cannot close without the suggestion of our duty here to-day, of taking some steps to provide a suitable monument to mark the graves and dwelling place of our common parents, Robert and Sarah Taft. All that is required is a little organization, for I am confident that the sums necessary can be raised at once by simply letting the family know what is wanted; and I suggest as a committee the following names which have been handed me:

Hon. Velorous Taft, Upton, Mass.; Mr. Royal C. Taft, Providence, R. I.; Mr. Moses Taft, Uxbridge, Mass.; Hon. Henry Chapin, Worcester, Mass.; Mr. P. W. Taft, Menton, Mass.

And thanking you for your kind attention, I will simply say that when this family have another dinner, "may I be there to see."

NOTE.—I have the names of twenty-five of the children of Gideon, and know some died unnamed, and I think five; but I shall have the question of the exact number decided shortly.

R. S. T.

"Having heard from the bench and expecting soon to hear from the bar, we expect now to hear from the Clerk of the Court, as to the condition of the Taft docket."

Responded to by Hon. Henry W. Taft, of Pittsfield, Mass.:

Mr President,—I am so conscious that there are very many here, far better fitted than I am, to entertain this audience, that I should fail to respond to your invitation, but that I do not wish to appear

destitute of interest in this family gathering, or unwilling to contribute my share to the common fund.

The circumstances of my life make this an occasion of especial interest to me. In my boyhood, my father and grandfather were the only men who bore the name of Taft, in the two contiguous towns which formed my world, while the Smiths, the Gunns, the Roots and Graveses, and Hubbards filled and possessed the land. I remember that I was troubled that there were so few of us, and feared that we belonged to some strange and worn out race, estray, it might be from some foreign fold, alien to the history and character of New England. But when I inquired into the matter, they told me there was no immediate prospect of the extinction of our family name; that my great-grandfather had 22 children; that his father had 18, and that far to the eastward there was a region, how dim and distant it was to my youthful imagination, but glowing with oriental beauty, where dwelt a goodly and numerous offspring of the race from which we sprung, blessed with flocks and herds and an abundance of good things; so numerous indeed were they, that over there in Uxbridge, every man was a Taft, or it was at least the name of his mother or his wife. Yet such has been the fortune of my after life, that up to yesterday, I could count upon my fingers, the names of all the Tafts I had ever seen, and to-day, I feel like one, who, after he has been kept out a great while, has been at last admitted within the family circle, and afforded an opportunity to become acquainted with his kindred. I am glad to meet you all. I knew not that I had among my cousins, so many "fair women and brave men." As I look upon these thousand faces, I feel that I shall bear myself more proudly hereafter, than I have been wont to do, because of my relationship to you.

And now what can I say to you, beyond words of hearty congratulation and affectionate greeting. Isolated as I have been from the great body of our race, I have no anecdotes of family history to relate. I came here to learn and not to teach, and I have been instructed and delighted by the address to which we have listened, and which I am happy to be assured, is to be preserved in an enduring form. I heartily second the suggestions which have been made, that this gathering should result in the erection of a monumental structure, and the compilation of a family history. We are sadly neglectful of those who have gone before us. For about the space of two generations they live in our memories, and we pre-

serve their monuments ; beyond this, for the most part, we are ignorant of their characters and fortunes, often of their very names. This is unphilosophical as it is unfilial. There is abundant reason why we should preserve the memory of those to whom we owe our existence,—who subdued this land that it might be fit for us to dwell in—whose mental, moral and physical characteristics, transmitted to us in obedience to nature's law, contribute so largely, to make us what we are to-day.

I fear after all we have said or may say, of self-gratulation and praise, which the occasion justifies, that in the estimation of the world, we are not a distinguished race. In this presence, I cannot forget the fact that we have worn the judicial ermine with ability and grace, and laid it down unstained ; that we have attained to gubernatorial honors ; that the poetry that is in our nature cannot be smothered under a foreign name ; that the Profile House and Point Shirley exist to testify to our success, when our philanthropy leads us to attempt to satisfy the cravings of the "inner man." That many of us have not been seated in the high places of power, filling the public eye and the public thought, is due, I conceive, rather to a modesty which has restrained self-assertion, and to the accidents of our relations, than to any deficiency of moral or mental fibre.

I can appreciate the honorable pride with which one may look back on a long line of illustrious ancestors. An alliance in blood, with men who have been eminent for their virtues and their talents—exponents and leaders of public opinion, famous in the council and in the field,—is not a light or valueless thing to one who recognizes the increased responsibility of him who comes of an honored historic race, and knows that *his* reputation rests upon his own character alone. If we cannot boast that ours is such a race, all that I have seen or heard on this occasion, confirms me in the belief that we may justly claim a record of character and service, which in this republican land constitute a patent of true nobility.

In a letter written as long ago as 1838, by the late Frederic Taft, Esq., of Uxbridge, then nearly four score, he thus sums up the family characteristics, as the result of his own observation, and the traditions of the past. I give his own quaint language : "The race "of Taft as a name has been remarkable for its habits of industry, "economy, morality and good Citizenship both in Church and State "affairs, as much so as any Name among us. It is very rare that a "Taft has been carried to the Poor-House, or been called before

"authority on criminal actions." I accept this characterization as true, on the word of one whom the oldest among you will remember, I think, as a true Christian gentleman. I trust it may be as true to-day, as it was forty years ago. I ask for no better descent, no higher ancestral honors. If it be true, it shows that our race belongs to that class which has made New England and the nation possible, in all their past history and their probable future ; that material, out of which the massive foundations and solid superstructure of our political and social fabric were builded. It was the patriotic endurance of this class, in and out of New England, which made us an independent nation ; it was the fortitude, the courage, the unyielding devotion of this same class, which carried us through our late conflict, and saved the nation's life. The enlightened loyalty of our people was more to us than the wisdom of our statesmen, or the skill and valor of our commanders. Through the possession and exercise of these "habits of industry, economy and morality," this "good citizenship in church and state," our citizens have subdued the wilderness, founded new empires, and made the American name and American institutions famous throughout the world. And if this republic shall ever perish, if our institutions shall be essentially changed in their character, it will be because of the deterioration of what for want of a better term, may be called the great middle class of our people. So long as this class remains, preserved by sound morals, by habits of industry and frugality from the degradation of poverty and vice—saved also in the good Providence of God, from the perils and temptations of sudden, excessive wealth,—earnest, enlightened, conscientious in the assertion of their rights and the fulfillment of their duties, our future is secure. As a nation, we may have our periods of depression and disaster, but there is no difficulty which we shall not overcome, no peril which we shall not survive. If we are of and from this class, we may be proud of our lineage, proud of the share we have had in our country's fortunes, though our common ancestor had no title to heraldic devices, no claim to gentle blood, and his foreign origin may be obscure or unknown.

May this gathering, while it enlarges our acquaintance and strengthens the chain which binds us together, strengthen in us also, the earnest purpose to cherish the manly virtues which we believe are the possession of our race, and to fulfill with our best endeavor, all the social, moral and political duties which rest upon

us. To you who have remained in the ancestral home, I desire to tender my grateful acknowledgment for the opportunity you have made for this pleasant and profitable re-union ; for your wise arrangements, your abounding hospitality. I am sure that those of us who are strangers here, if we have ever thought Uxbridge a good place to be born in and to move away from, are certain now, that it is a blessed place to come back to, and will go home with the resolve, if life is spared, to make it the shrine of many a future pilgrimage.

"As no family can be successful without spiritual aid and comfort, this family has joined unto itself an honored son of "Old Mother Mendon," whose counsels, if well followed, will lead us into the right way."

Responded to by Rev. Carlton A. Staples, of Providence:

He claimed to be half Staples and half Taft, and the Staples part of him felt rather small to-day, while the Taft part felt glorious. He pitied anybody who was not a Taft. He had felt some concern as to the birth of Robert, but finally came to the conclusion that he was a self-made man—that he had neither father nor mother. Hunting up family history seemed to him like traveling a western highway—first a carriage road, then a bridle-path, then a squirrel track, and then up a tree. He hoped, however, that in tracing out this family history, none of its members had been found "up a tree."

Dr. R. M. Hatfield, of Philadelphia, was introduced by the President, and delivered the following:

My only right to be with you, and of you, to-day, rests on the fact that I had the good sense or the good fortune to marry one of the best of the Taft family. I took this step more than twenty-five years ago, when I was a young man, and have never repented of it since. I congratulate myself on being in Uxbridge to-day. Gatherings such as this promote the sweet charities of life, and encourage the virtues by which families and communities are built up and established. The orator of the day, to whom we are indebted for the able and interesting address to which we have just listened, told us that it was not "a weakness to appreciate the character and achievements of those who have preceded us, and to emulate their virtues." The appearance of the descendants of Robert Taft who are here assembled—and they are indeed a "multitudinous crowd"—

is such as to encourage the hope that the family has not degenerated. For two hundred years the Tafts have been distinguished by substantial virtues rather than by the eccentricities of genius. Honest and industrious, energetic and frugal, they have secured respectability and usefulness; and no wonder, for these are the qualities that win in the battle of life. I know not how it may be with others, but my appreciation of practical men, the honest hard workers who bring something to pass, grows year by year, as my knowledge of the world and of its needs increases. It is something to be a good dreamer, or an eloquent talker, but it is far better to be a faithful and successful worker. Should I take on airs on account of the good looks of the company I see before me, I should be like the fellow who boasted that "Betsey and he had killed the bear"; but I am proud of my wife's relatives to-day. I do not remember ever to have seen so large a company of well-dressed people together, with so few who have the appearance of being the slaves of fashion. I hardly see a young woman who disfigures herself by the idiotic style of wearing the hair—(*banging* is the technical word that describes it, I think); and of the young men, there are few who have perfected themselves in the art of parting their hair in the middle. Straws show which way the wind blows, and little things are often reliable indications of character. Many of us are surprised at the size of the present gathering, but we need not be; for the Tafts have been a prolific race from the first. And this is to be recognized as an honor to them and a blessing to the world. "Children are a heritage from the Lord. Happy is the man that hath his quiver full of them; they shall not be ashamed, but they shall speak with the enemies in the gate." Few of the signs of the times are more alarming than the statistical facts with regard to the small number of children now found in American families, especially in families that belong to what are known as the upper classes in society. I cannot, of course, go into a discussion of this question at present, and before a promiscuous audience. But let me say one thing in passing, and I would like to say it in the most serious and emphatic manner: The condition of any country is deplorable indeed when its intelligent women depreciate the honors of maternity, and undervalue the duties of domestic life. Whatever other spheres of activity and usefulness a woman may find, there is for her no place like home. The abominable French idea that one or two children may be very well, but that a large family is unde-

sirable, threatens to undermine the foundations of all virtue in our country, and to prove our ruin as a people. Among all the benefactors of our race, there is no one for whom I feel a profounder respect than for the woman who is the mother of a large family of children, all of whom she trains to lives of honor and usefulness. The work is one that requires better qualities of head and heart than would suffice to make a respectable President of the United States. There has been no lack of good old-fashioned families among the Tafts. The five sons of Robert Taft had forty-five children among them, an average of nine for each family. Judge Taft told us this morning of a venerable lady who had borne fifteen children; and of Samuel Taft, of Uxbridge, who had twenty-two children, most of whom lived to mature years, and were married. I thought that was doing pretty well; but now Gov. Taft comes along and reports a family in Vermont of thirty children, the last one of whom was born when the father was seventy-four years of age. But enough on this subject. The Tafts have not been unmindful of the divine command given first to Adam and Eve, and afterwards repeated to Noah and his sons: "Be fruitful and multiply, and replenish the earth." May their descendants prove themselves worthy of such ancestors.

We are reminded to-day of our indebtedness, and the indebtedness of our whole country, to the old Puritan spirit and influence. It is fashionable now in certain quarters to disparage these old Puritans, and to speak in contemptuous terms of their narrowness and bigotry. Undoubtedly they had their faults, but the men who now abuse them are not worthy to unloose the latches of their shoes. They were honest, earnest and stout-hearted men, who lived for a purpose, and left an inheritance to their children's children. They had few books, and little time for the culture that is found in schools; but they "trod the mountain-tops of thought," and grew strong in communion with God. The Bible, the immortal dream of the more than half-inspired tinker of Bradford Jail, with a few standard theological works, constituted their libraries. But they found in these books the seeds of thought, and as they drove their teams afield, felled the forest, and planted and gathered their crops, they discussed questions of

"Fixed fate, free will, fore-knowledge absolute,"

in a manner that would, I am afraid, cause grievous headaches among many of the theological students of our day. "Old fogies"

undoubtedly they were, in the vernacular of young America, and unblessed by many of our modern improvements. They had no daily newspaper, with its disgusting records of vice and crime. These Puritan fathers must have been greatly wanting in the "general intelligence," of which we now hear so much. Every change in society is not an improvement, and it may be questioned whether much of the information that is derived from the daily papers is not a curse, rather than a blessing. The Paul Pry of the press ferret out every scandal in private life, publish and gloat over and magnify it, until it becomes a nuisance in every family. Horse-races and dog-fights are reported with a pains-taking accuracy, that enables all the bar-tenders and stable-boys to keep themselves fully posted with regard to the performances of the most noted blood-horses and bull-dogs in the country. The records of indecent and unnatural crimes are full, and are written with an abandon that makes them a perpetual fountain of pollution. Our forefathers, and our foremothers, too, were fain to get along as best they could without these advantages. And they not only lived in respectability and comfort, but they reared families that have, under God, been the builders of this nation. I have seen something of our country, all the way from the coast where the Pilgrims landed, to the shores of the Pacific. And you may take me, blindfolded, into any town or city between Boston or San Francisco, and I will undertake to tell almost at a glance, when the bandage is removed from my eyes, whether the Puritan element is dominant in the place. The condition of churches and school houses, the appearance of the people and of their homes, tell the story at once. If "glory is to dwell in our land," and our country is to continue united and prosperous, we must hold fast to the Puritan Sabbath, the Puritan Bible, and be true to the God of our fathers. This cannot be done without intelligence and piety in the family, such as are found only where the wives and mothers are intelligent Christians.

Thanking the friends who arranged for this pleasant gathering, I close with the prayer of the Psalmist, "That our sons may be as plants grown up in their youth, and that our daughters may be as corner stones polished after similitude of a palace."

"The educators of our country are entitled to the front rank in the march of progress, and it is with commendable pride that we introduce as one of the best, Professor S. H. Taft, President of Humboldt College, Iowa."

Responded to by Prof. Taft :

Mr. Chairman and Kindred,—It is not difficult to conceive of circumstances where it would be both profitable and pleasant, in responding to the sentiment just read, to speak at length of the high mission and measureless influence of a *true educator* of the youth of our land. But this is not such an occasion, and I accept the sentiment with which my name is so pleasantly associated by the master of ceremonies, as being presented in this connection simply to introduce me to this large family of Tafts, as one among many others whose chief attention is being devoted to the cause of Christian education. Agreeing, therefore, with our distinguished representative, Judge Taft, of Cincinnati, that you would rather hear of our family affairs, to-day, than of other subjects, I will speak as seems to me fitting on this interesting occasion, which is essentially the bi-centennial celebration of the planting of our family tree in the New World. To me it is an occasion of very deep interest. We have been drawn together, not by the bonds of old-time friendships—for we are met for the first time—but by those of relationship. This is not so much a re-union as a *first union* of those of kindred blood, coming from different directions, and some from a great distance, to meet and commune where lived and died our ancestors, many generations ago. While there may be too much account made of birth and blood, and name, there may also be too little account made of these. The ties of consanguinity are of nature's giving, of God's appointment, and were designed not only to yield innocent enjoyment, but also to conduce to healthful social progress and moral growth. There are stages of development (or states of moral debauchery rather) in the history of society, where such a gathering as this might prove a curse instead of a blessing, by being so devoted as to dim the moral and spiritual vision of its members. But not such will be the fruits gathered from this meeting ; for I am sure that we shall each desire to give and receive of our best, in thought and character. Thus doing, we shall part on a higher plain than we met upon, and so shed upon each other's future pathway the light of a virtuous friendship. Not only shall we make acquaintance with each other, but we shall learn of our ancestry, what many of us could not have known by any other means, and perhaps aid our relative of Ohio to round out and perfect his family tree. By many, such knowledge is greatly prized.

In illustration of this, permit me to read from a letter just received from my eldest son, written after learning of this intended meeting. He says : " I have just seen the circular relative to the meeting of the descendants of Robert Taft, to be held on the 12th. I very much hope (in fact I have no doubt) you will be there. It seems to me that if I was a man, and was able, I would not miss being there for a great deal." (I would remark, by the way, that although he speaks of himself as being a boy, he is considerably taller than I am, and has just closed a very successful term of teaching in the upper department of our village school.) He proceeds to say : " I suppose you will there be able to learn more regarding the family tree than you have ever had opportunity to learn before, or may ever have again. You know I have considerable curiosity to find out all I can in that direction, and I hope you will be able to tell me a great deal that I may commit to writing, when you return home."

There are, doubtless, many others, not here to-day, not less interested in this meeting than the one from whose letter I have read.

In reporting to this meeting regarding the Tafts of whom I have knowledge, I have to say that they are industrious, frugal, worthy citizens, and were all loyal to the government during our late Civil war. In religion they are *Protestants of the Protestants*, not only denying the religious authority of the Pope, but also denying the authority of any ecclesiastical body to legislate for the individual, in matters of belief, faith or conscience.

My genealogical report will be very brief, for the reason that my knowledge of the ancestral line is limited. I remember that Nasby once commenced a lecture in Boston, by gravely saying : " Ladies and Gentlemen,—We are all descended from—we are all descended from—grand-parents." Well, I had learned that much, and was quite certain that the line extended much further back. If I had heretofore entertained any doubts on that point, what I see and enjoy to-day would altogether remove them. My grandfather, Nathaniel Taft, settled in Richmond, N. H., in the latter part of the eighteenth century, where he resided until his death. He had a number of children. Among the names they bore were David, Daniel, Nathaniel, Rufus and Stephen, the last named being my father. His mother was grandfather's second wife. My father and his brother David left New Hampshire and settled in Richfield, Otsego County, N. Y., in the early part of this century, whence my

father soon moved a hundred miles further west, into Oswego County, N. Y. Uncle David had a number of sons, two of whom, Ferdinand and Nathaniel, also moved into Oswego County.

My father married a Miss Vienna Harris, whose father, Stephen Harris, lived and died in Richmond, New Hampshire. My parents had seven children, who lived to years of maturity—four girls and three boys—all but one of whom are still living. One of my brothers, Jerome B. Taft, whose name appears in the history of Kansas as one of its earlier settlers, died in the autumn of 1863.

In 1853 I married a Miss Mary A. Burnham, of Madison County, N. Y., and, in the spring of 1863, went West with a colony of over forty persons, and settled upon a tract of land in the Des Moines Valley, which I purchased of the State of Iowa. Here I have since been at work building up a town and establishing an institution of learning. We have had six children, five of whom are still living; namely, four sons and one daughter. My brother who is living, Lorenzo P. Taft, has a family of four daughters and one son, and the brother who died left one son, Wendell Phillips Taft. My four sisters are married, and all have families.

I trust I shall be pardoned, Mr. Chairman, if in this connection I speak of some incidents in my own history, which, under ordinary circumstances, would hardly be admissible, but which the present occasion seems to warrant. We learn from the admirable historic address to which we listened this morning, that our great progenitor, Robert Taft, was an active participant in a colony enterprise, in connection with which he bought and sold much land, built bridges, made roads, and bore other burdens incident to a pioneer life.

It seems that all unbeknown to myself, I have in the order of divine providence been repeating the history of our family in the line of colony work, much the same as was being enacted here two hundred years ago; for as already remarked, I took with me to the distant west a company of friends, bought a large tract of wild land, and entered upon the work of building up society, in the course of which it fell my lot to open up roads, construct bridges, build mills, and dispose of numerous pieces of real estate. The county records show that I have sold over eighty farms and more than three hundred pieces of town property, since commencing this colony enterprise. This work has not been all sunshine and prosperity, but instead, want of means with which to do, losses by floods, severe trial, exposure and sickness, have dimmed the light of many a day.

But at no time have I been bereft of that hope and strength, which comes of an assurance that I was doing the work to which I had been appointed of God. The burden would have been lighter, could I have known, as I now do, that like and severer exposure had been the lot of our great progenitor, whose memory we so sacredly cherish to-day.

The family history which I have given, taken in connection with the numerous descendants of Robert Taft here assembled, who represent a still larger number not here, warrants us in congratulating ourselves that our family does not belong to the number which are running out because of their self-imposed sterility. That this is true of many families, is painfully evident. On this subject an able scholar and careful observer, Dr. Nathan Allen, of Lowell, said in an address delivered in June last, before the Mass. Medical Society: "It is safe, we believe, to state that the average number of children to each marriage has diminished nearly one-half since the present century commenced." And he further adds: "If this decrease is continued another hundred years in the same proportion as in the past, it will, in all probability, remove them [the old New England stock,] from the stage. Their record will exist only in history. Here, in this quiet, gradual decline of population, is one of the gravest problems of this age."

Well, Mr. Chairman, that impeachment does not apply to the Taft family; and I am glad of it. Am I told that little or no credit is due the male line, in which the name descends, since the mothers generally bore other names? I answer that the large number here present bearing other names than Taft, but in whose veins flow the blood of our common ancestor, maintains the reputation of our family for vigor. And then I submit to you, Mr. Chairman, whether it is not creditable to our side of the house that we have been able to select and possess ourselves of such good and noble wives. And now, lest I be misunderstood, I desire to say a word to the husbands present; and I hope those absent, as also husbands *yet to be*, may hear of what I say. Of course I don't want anybody but the *family* to hear, as it is altogether a family matter of which I speak. Among the functions with which God has endowed husband and wife, there is none higher or holier than that of reproduction. By its exercise the earth and the heavens are peopled. Surely a partnership from which is to be derived such priceless dividends, ought to be one of strict fidelity and abiding

peace. And now that the family tree has taken such deep root, and spread so widely its branches, may we not properly in the future give even more thought than in the past, to the quality of the fruit which it shall bear? Husbands ought not to require of their wives to go too frequently down to the gateway of death, whence they bring back our household treasures, but be careful that consenting harmony obtains in all the relations of wedded life. Then and only then can be attained the felicity of which Emerson sings :

"From the pair is nothing hidden :
To the twain is naught forbidden ;
Hand in hand the comrades go,
Every nook of nature through ;
Each for other were they born :
Each the other best adorn."

I will add but a few words more. The growth of our family tree has been hopefully vigorous, and promises well for the future. We need not concern ourselves to settle the question as to whether we originally ascended from the lower forms of animal life, or have descended from a state of angelic perfection ; for if from the former, then have we made noble progress upward ; and if from the latter, the evidences warrant us in believing that we are making our way home again. Let us remember that there is given to mankind a surplus of vital force beyond what is necessary for the performance of the ordinary functions of life, and that the use made of this surplussage determines the destiny of individuals, families and nations. If devoted to self discipline in knowledge and virtue, so as to find expression in noble acts and high aims, then does its possessor walk the pathway of the just, which grows brighter and brighter to the perfect day ; but if devoted to selfish ends and merely animal pleasures, then does it lead down to moral corruption and spiritual death. May it be ours, to come into such harmony with the divine order, and such virtuous relationship with each other, that the spiritual breezes of heaven, as they breathe through the branches of the family tree, may make still sweeter music in the future than in the past, and thus make glad the hearts of men and angels.

I offer in conclusion the following sentiment :

Our Family Tree—Removed from old England, two hundred years ago, and planted at no great distance from Plymouth Rock : May it continue to gather strength and beauty from each succeeding century, and yield such fruits of vigorous, virtuous man and womanhood, that the approbation of the good and the favor of heaven may ever rest upon it, causing it to extend its roots and multiply its branches through all coming time.

Dr. Jonathan Taft, editor of a professional journal in Cincinnati, was called upon to respond to this sentiment, and did so in an eloquent manner, as follows :

Friends and Kindred,—From this day and occasion will arise a growing interest in our ancestry ; we will desire to know more than hitherto of those who have gone before us, those from whom we have received a precious inheritance.

Until within comparatively a recent period, scarcely any attention has been given, so far as I am aware, to the genealogy of the Taft family. The reason for this may not be very clear ; it may be suggested, however, that the motives that have moved other families to this line of investigation, have not been looked upon with favor by our own people, or it may be, that being a quiet, unostentatious and ease-loving people, with a desire to avoid prominence or special notoriety, they have been content to pursue the even tenor of their way, without much thought or knowledge of those who had gone before. For the first active efforts in developing the genealogy of the Taft family, we are indebted to the late Peter R. Taft, of Cincinnati, the venerable father of our orator of this occasion, Judge Alphonso Taft. His attention was directed to this work many years ago ; it is one in which he took much interest. He had a great desire that the work should be perfected as far as possible, and in the work of *this* day we have evidence that his mantle has fallen to a large extent upon his son.

The study of genealogy is exceedingly interesting ; it gives a clear insight into things that would otherwise escape attention. It tends to give a broader and more expansive view of our common humanity. Its pursuits should not, and indeed cannot have for its object the elevation of one family or name above others, nor for the purpose of making invidious comparisons ; nor is it worth the pursuit for mere pecuniary consideration. Occasional instances have occurred in which there was promise and hope in this direction ; the realization from such sources, however, have been so rare that they fail to produce effect upon any intelligent minds. I have never heard a suggestion that there was a possibility of anything of the kind in store for the Taft family or any branch of it.

Nor is genealogy worth the pursuit for the maintenance of some supposed social or class superiority, for upon close inspection it will be found that nature has, upon the whole, not been partial in

the bestowal of her gifts upon mankind. It is impossible for any in this age to establish or maintain special caste, or class, based upon family or upon those who have gone before. In this country hereditary and arbitrary class lines have disappeared, and are fast fading away throughout the world.

But it is interesting and instructive to make a retrospective examination of the generations of our lineage as far in the past as possible, that we may recognize, properly appreciate and improve whatever of distinctive and to us common inheritance we may have received from our ancestors. Hereditary traits, characteristics, and qualities of goodness, are of far more importance and value than those temporary outcroppings of character evolving striking examples of either physical, mental or moral greatness.

As we study the history of an individual, with a view of ascertaining what he was,—his circumstances and surroundings, his resources and his influence, what he accomplished and the elements of success,—so may we study races and families. In our own family not much has been done in a genealogical direction, and less has been done in biographical and historical elaboration. Doubtless much of the latter that would be valuable and interesting, has with the roll of years passed beyond our reach ; but let us hasten to gather and put upon record that which remains, that those of the future may stand in closer proximity to us than it is possible for us to stand with those who have gone before us. For what we are able to gather of a historical nature, together with the inheritance of physical, mental and moral endowments from our ancestors, we should be truly grateful.

In the history of our family I know of very little indeed of a prejudicial character, scarcely anything to cast a stain upon the name. Our ancestors have not transmitted to us a record blurred over with deeds of crime and disgrace ; the record comes to us with as clear a page as that of the best families of our country. How far the present generation will preserve this record clear, remains for us to decide ; may that which is written of us be as free from taint as that which comes from them to us. Physically we have received from them a grand inheritance ; by this I do not mean that we are as the giants of old, nor that we outlive all other people, but observation warrants me in the assertion that our people have a remarkable freedom from many of those disabilities and predispositions that attach in a marked degree to a very large pro-

portion of the human family. Our ancestors doubtless possessed a physical endowment equaled by few and surpassed by none. The record of their longevity and extent of their families bear ample testimony to the truth of this statement. A large number lived from 70 to 90 years, and many families numbered from fifteen to thirty children.

The present generation of our family will exhibit a freedom from taint and hereditary predisposition to diseases, that is very rare indeed. In many families the seeds of disease are transmitted from generation to generation, as a never failing inheritance, producing untold suffering, both physical and mental. And thus it is that many families maintain an existence only by a ceaseless battle with these inherited disabilities; and many families, and even races, have become extinct. We should be happy and grateful that such is not our inheritance. Very rare indeed have been the instances in which undue appetite and passion have held domination over any of our name and kindred. The common vices, the indulgence and practice of which destroy, have not been inherited nor practiced, neither by our ancestors nor by those of the present generation, as they unfortunately have been by many others.

Since we have received so noble and precious an inheritance, let it be transmitted to those who come after us, as pure and untarnished as we have received it; and let our lineage become purer and stronger in its onward course, through the generations to come, till it shall stand disenthralled and redeemed from disease, suffering and premature dissolution, and death come only as that transition by which we shall pass from this life to one of grander and higher activities.

Dr. Taft was followed by Prof. W. O. Perkins, of Boston, who spoke as follows:

Friends, Relatives,—I consider myself most fortunate in having been honored with an invitation to be present and participate in the festivities of this occasion. Although I do not bear the family name, I am proud to say that the blood of Robert Taft runs in my veins. In the countries of the old world, people pride themselves upon their ancestry, and the distance into the past to which they can trace their family name. In some countries the oldest son inherits the property and title, if any, and the family history is kept unbroken in many cases for centuries. When the American colo-

nies were fighting for independence, a young Norman sprout, from France, had the impudence to write a letter to Gen. Washington, wherein he offered himself as a candidate for king in No. America; and the principal argument that he presented in his own favor, was that he could trace his family name farther back than William the Conqueror.

In this country of democratic ideas, instead of worshipping our ancestors as the Chinese are said to do, we are apt to forget from whom we are descended. The excessive activity, both of brain and muscle, the constant removal from the East to the West, the vast amount of territory of which the country is composed, and the almost endless variety of pursuits open to all, conspire to separate families, and in a few years all except the nearest relatives are lost sight of. Many persons do not know who their great-grandfather was, and have either forgotten or never knew their grandfather, and they never seem to have the remotest idea that their relationship extends beyond the limits of their own immediate family, or uncles, aunts and cousins of the first degree.

Now and then a rumor is set afloat by some hungry lawyer or pretended fortune-teller, that an estate of several million pounds sterling is stowed away somewhere in old England ready to be distributed among the Johnson or Brown families in America. Then there is a flood of correspondence from the Johnsons or Browns from all over the country. But the expectation of becoming suddenly rich usually ends in learning something of their ancestry and the whereabouts of many of their numerous namesakes.

Probably there is a large fortune somewhere ready for the Taft family, and as soon as it can be ascertained whether our primogenitor was an Englishman or Welshman, a Scotchman or an Irishman, I shall expect to meet you all in Uxbridge, to receive our share of the inheritance.

In countries like England, where society is made up of strata of caste or class, the children are expected to move in the same class and follow the same occupation as their parents. If a man blacks boots, probably his progenitor of one thousand years ago was a boot black; if his ancestor was a Lord, he retains the same title although a blockhead. But in this country every occupation and profession is open alike to all. The highest honors may fall upon the head of a rail-splitter. A tanner becomes General of the Army and President of the Republic. Although our honored ancestor

was a carpenter and a farmer, I observe before me, among his posterity, those who have become eminent in nearly all the learned professions, in various business pursuits, and who occupy positions of public trust with credit. Sound common sense, integrity of purpose and unflinching perseverance, appear to be prominent traits of the family; and, in view of these characteristics, the tendency to long life and to rear large families, which indicate vigorous constitutions, I am of the opinion that the Taft family is a rising one.

On the Taft side I am of the tribe of Benjamin, the fifth son of Robert — the seventh generation. Seth, grandson of Benjamin, had nine children; viz: Prudence, Rhoda, Naomi, Stephen, Hannah, Benjamin, Seth, Jr., Daniel, and Henry. In 1790, Stephen, with his sister Prudence, went from Mendon to Woodstock, Vt., and settled in the place now called Taftsville. The other brothers and sisters, except Henry, soon followed, married, and settled in the vicinity. I do not propose to give you a history of this branch of the family, or pronounce a eulogy upon any of its members; but I will speak briefly of some of the incidents connected with their settlement in this, then, new country.

Some years ago, in Ohio, I saw a tree of the Taft family. Seth was represented on a short stump from the branch of Stephen, cut short off as though he had died without children. But I assure you that this was by no means the case with Seth or his children, or his children's children. With the fear of God before their eyes, they gave heed to the injunction to go forth and multiply and replenish the earth. The country was new and covered with trees, and if they could do little else at first, they could do as Ethan Allen told the British Admiral the Vermonters did when asked what they could raise. "We build school-houses and raise men, sir." These pioneers were men and women of sterling, upright character, and their influence was felt in the community and upon all with whom they came in contact. Stephen built the first dam across Quechee river, on one side of which he erected a saw-mill, and on the other a shop for the manufacture of scythes and other edged tools. Daniel in due time succeeded to the business, and by his skill and industry made the "Taft scythes and axes" famous. But Judge Taft, in his admirable address, has made so fitting a reference to this part of my subject that little more need be said. Daniel was the representative men of this branch of the family. He had a fine personal appearance, quite tall and rather portly. He was

possessed of a most pleasant and genial disposition, was skillful and industrious in his business, and so honest that his word was as good as a draft on the bank, or the records of the town clerk. Whatever "Uncle Daniel" said was taken for law and gospel. Neither Daniel or his brothers took a very active part in politics, but Daniel was for many years a justice of the peace, and represented his town in the State legislature. Daniel had three sons: Daniel, Jr., Owen, and Paschal P. When the sons arrived at majority, the firm of "D. Taft & Sons" was formed, the business enlarged, and a foundry and machine-shop added. The sons have occupied positions of trust in state and town matters, and continue to do so, except Owen, who died in 1860. Daniel died in 1857, aged 79.

The children of Seth, Jr., removed from the locality, and I have not been able to learn where they are.

The sisters all raised large families, who with their children and children's children are mostly living in the vicinity. My grandmother, Hannah Taft Perkins, lived to see sixty two grandchildren and seven great grandchildren. She died in 1862, at the age of 91 years and 6 months, and the other sisters lived to the ages of 94, 88, and 84. Several of the grandchildren of Hannah have risen to distinction. Mr. Edward Vaughan, a successful lawyer, is American Consul at Coaticook, Canada. Mr. H. S. Perkins, of Chicago, is well known as a musical author. *Mr. J. E. Perkins has won a world-wide reputation as a vocal artist, and occupies a position as primo basso at her Majesty's opera house, London, England. This branch of the family has always been loyal to the principles of liberty and human rights, and when the stars and stripes were struck down at Fort Sumpter many of them threw themselves into the contest, and some of them laid down their lives that the Union might live.

I have heard that our progenitors, in the distant past, were Quakers, but there are no traces of Quakerism now. I think, however, that the most of the descendants of Seth incline towards a liberal belief in religious matters.

I trust that this occasion will furnish another example of the proof of the sentiment: "Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity." Our dwelling together will be of short duration, but truly pleasant; and may we improve the opportunity of forming an acquaintance with our kindred which shall result in friendly intercourse in the future.

*Mr. J. E. Perkins died Feb. 25, 1875, (since this was in type) aged 29 yrs. 11 mos.

"The heaviest Taft of whom we have any record holds the County of Worcester in his mighty grasp. Having been for a dozen years or more the acknowledged head of the County, it is confidently believed that the County is not much ahead of him."

Hon. Velorous Taft, of Upton, responded. He didn't know why he was called upon, unless it was because all who had preceded him were professional men, and some one was wanted to represent the common stock. The Tafts in his town were not speech-makers nor politicians, but there is an office they run to,—that of Overseer of the Poor. They were not talkers, but if there is anything to be done they can do it.

Stephen S. Taft, of Palmer, hoped this occasion might not be an oasis in the desert of time, but that annual gatherings of the family should be held in the good old town of Uxbridge.

Col. H. C. Taft, the worthy Chief Marshal, was called for, but did not respond, probably owing to the duties of his position requiring his presence elsewhere.

Henry G. Taft answered to "The Selectmen of Uxbridge," and said that he was proud to be even at the "tail end" of the present board. He thought the toast master, in calling for him to speak, must have felt as he did when he used to go fishing. He would start out with the determination to catch a large string of big fish, but before he returned he was satisfied to take all the small ones that would bite. Believing this to be the case, he excused himself from making further remarks.

Reuben E. Dodge was the last speaker. He explained the relationship existing between the Taft and Rawson families, and invited all relatives of the latter to attend the re-union to be held in the city of Worcester.

On motion of Hon. Henry Chapin, it was voted that the thanks of the gathering be extended to Judge Alphonso Taft for his valuable address, and that he be requested to furnish a copy for publication. On motion of Hon. Velorous Taft, a vote of thanks was also extended to Judge Chapin for his admirable poem, and a copy requested for publication.

The parting song, written by Judge Chapin, was sung by the select choir and congregation, accompanied by the band :

The summer breezes play
Upon this festal day,
When children come
To greet the father-land,
To clasp each other's hand,
While lovingly they stand
Near the old home.

Home where the fathers dwelt,
Home where the loved ones knelt
At noon and eve;
Like birdlings to their nest,
Thy offspring come to rest,
And on thy loving breast
Rich garlands leave.

Along this beauteous scene,
This valley fair and green,
The river flows,
Beside whose gentle stream,
On many a tender theme,
We sit and fondly dream
In sweet repose.

Our father's home, farewell;
Thy name with us shall dwell
Where'er we roam.
To thee our gifts we bring,
To thee our acarts shall cling,
While oft our lips shall sing:
God bless our home!

At the suggestion of the committee of arrangements, the chairman appointed a meeting in the Unitarian vestry, in the evening, for the purpose of forming a permanent organization. The exercises in the tent then closed with the benediction, pronounced by Rev. Lovett Taft.

Pursuant to the call of the Presidnet, a meeting was held in the evening, at which the following officers were chosen to form a permanent organization :

President—Daniel W. Taft, of Uxbridge, Mass.

First Vice President—Hon. Alphonso Taft, of Cincinnati, Ohio.

Second Vice President—Lieut. Gov. R. S. Taft, of Burlington, Vt.

Secretary—Charles A. Taft, of Uxbridge, Mass.

Treasurer—Hon. Velorous Taft, of Upton, Mass.

The officers were empowered to fill any vacancies which might occur.

APPENDIX.

HISTORY AND GENEALOGY OF THE TAFT FAMILY.

The preparation of a historical account of the Taft family has been in contemplation for several years, but the way has not seemed to be entirely open for the accomplishment of the work previous to the large gathering of the family recently held at Uxbridge, Mass. It seems now a fitting and opportune time to commence active operations in that direction.

I desire to receive as early as possible, all statistics and records of families, historical and biographical sketches, and all matter of interest that should be embodied in such a work.

The design is to make the work as complete as possible. It will be arranged in three departments:—

First,—The early History of the Family.

Second,—A tabular presentation in proper order, of all the branches and families from Robert Taft the first, to the present time.

Third,—Biography, History and Incidents of the present generation, and that immediately preceding.

Now all matter that will come under either of these divisions, is desired, and I trust that all interested will give it immediate attention.

The work will contain from 500 to 700 pages, with some illustrations, consisting of views from the locality of the original homestead, and portraits. There will also accompany the work a Genealogical tree, upon much the same plan as that published for the family twelve years ago. This will be made as perfect as possible; in it the defects of the former will be remedied. The work can be furnished at from \$5.00 to \$10.00 per copy, according to the style of binding, &c.

It is desirable that all who wish the work would make it known to me, or Judge Alphonso Taft of this city, as early as possible, that we may have some criterion as to the extent of the edition to be published. The demand for the work will also modify the price at which the work can be afforded.

Address,

J. TAFT, Cincinnati, Ohio.

Letters were received from Enos N. Taft, Esq., of Brooklyn, N. Y. ; Peter R. Taft and Charles P. Taft, Esqs., of Cincinnati, Ohio ; Judge Levi B. Taft, of Pontiac, Mich. ; and Richard Taft, of the Profile House, N. H.

The following letter was received from Hon. John Taffe, member of Congress :

OMAHA, NEB., August 12, 1874.

HON. HENRY CHAPIN :

Dear Sir,—Your letter of the 29th ult. came to hand during my absence at Washington. I have written Alphonso Taft, at Cincinnati, in answer to his inquiries as to the name, but I am not able to give much light. My ancestors came from Ireland, but I do not know where they first settled. My grandfather was born in Virginia in 1755, and in his early business transactions, I find the name spelled *Tuaffe*. I think the "a" was dropped about the year 1800.

I think the names, *Tuaffe*, *Taffe*, *Taff*, *Tuafc* and *Tuft*, were originally the same, and of Norman origin.

Yourself and committee will please accept my thanks for your kind invitation to the re-union, and I sincerely regret that I was unable to attend.

Very truly,

JOHN TAFFE.

The following letter was received from Jos. R. Dixon, editor and publisher of the Cortland County *Republican*, Homer, N. Y. :

HOMER, N. Y., July 20, 1874.

H. CHAPIN, ESQ. :

Dear Sir,—I have delayed a reply to your favor of the 30th ult. longer, perhaps, than I should have done. I found myself unable at once to say "nay" to the kind invitation which it contained; nor could I readily respond to it in the affirmative. While listening on the one hand to the promptings of my social nature, and on the other to the suggestions of a gnancial policy, I have been "like a man to double business bound," and have neglected either reply. I feel, however, that I ought no longer to delay an answer to your closing inquiry.

I have reluctantly come to the conclusion that it will not be prudent for me to meet with you on the 12th prox. I should dearly love to be present on that occasion, for I have come to believe that the Tafts have been and still are quite a respectable family. My mother, through whom I am connected with it, died when I was seven weeks old. Of course I have no recollection of her. Her oldest sister, Cynthia, (Mrs. N. Butler,) moved into the town where I was brought up, when I was yet a lad. For several years it was the "treat of my life" to visit her cheerful abode. I distinctly remember, with gratitude to God, the impressions made on my youthful mind by her generous, noble and womanly bearing on those occasions. From that time to this, she has been my "beau ideal" of a Christian woman.

With my kindest regards for the orator of the day, and my best wishes for the happiness of all permitted to participate in the meeting, I am

Respectfully yours,

JOS. R. DIXON.

The following extracts are from a letter from Miss M. E. Taylor, Romeo, Michigan :

ROMEO, BRUCE, August 7, 1874.

MR. CHAPIN:

We cannot meet with this blessed conclave, and we do not like to be left out; so pardon us if we present us to you: Our mother, Phebe Taylor; my brother, Adrian Dwight Taylor; myself, Mary Elizabeth Taylor; and Marilla, a child. Our home is under a crown of northern seas, amid birds and beasts and forest trees of Michigan. My mother's maiden name was Phebe Leech; her mother's name was Nabby Taft; one of her grandmothers was a Chapin, and her father's name was Robert Taft, who emigrated to to Bloomfield long decades ago: his ancestor was the great Robert Taft, whose name we revere, and whose memory let us crown in our hearts with an evergreen crown. As little streams must rejoice in flowing from a clear fountain, so let us rejoice and keep the river clear until it meets the sea. * * * * *

"Going home!" There is music in these words, and the going home of our tribe brings a mysterious joy, so deep and intense,—I have tried in vain to account for it. Perchance it recalls the delight of going home from school when we were children, or indeed it may be a symbol to us of the return of the Children of the Dawn home to the Orient.

That our Father may vouchsafe us His benediction is the earnest prayer of a shepherdess.

M. E. TAYLOR.

As a fitting close of the account of a gathering so full of enjoyment and so fruitful in pleasant recollections, it may be proper to insert the following circular issued by the committee for procuring a memorial monument for their common ancestor Robert Taft, and to which it is hoped that a liberal response will be made by all who are bound together by the ties of kindred blood :

TO THE DESCENDANTS OF ROBERT TAFT:

At the meeting of the Taft family, held at Uxbridge, August 12th, 1874, the undersigned were appointed a committee to procure and erect a suitable monument to the memory of our honored ancestor. It is proposed to erect the same upon the farm, in Mendon, where Robert Taft settled. The farm is now owned by one of his descendants, who is ready to convey in trust a suitable tract of land to be appropriated for the monument. The quality and expense of the monument must depend upon the amount contributed, before the work is commenced.

Please to send a contribution for the object, communicate this statement to other members of the family, and ask them to do likewise. The

amount may be forwarded to Hen. Velorous Taft, Upton, Mass., Treasurer of the Taft Association.

VELOROUS TAFT, Upton,
DANIEL W. TAFT, Uxbridge,
ROYAL C. TAFT, Providence,
PUTNAM W. TAFT, Mendon,
HENRY CHAPIN, Worcester.

Nov. 20, 1874.

NAMES OF PERSONS WHO ATTENDED THE TAFT FAMILY GATHERING, AUG. 12, 1874.

Aldrich, Almer H., Mendon, Mass.	Arnold, Alfred, Uxbridge.
Aldrich, Horace S. "	Alexander, Arnold "
Alexander, Jane E., Uxbridge.	Alexander, Walter, Mendon.
Alexander, Curtis "	Adams, Mrs. Geo., Uxbridge.
Alexander, Winfield "	Adams, Charles, Boston.
Aldrich, Hiram A., Providence, R. I.	Albee, Mrs. E., Uxbridge.
Aldrich, Mrs. H. A. "	Albee, L. T. "
Adams, Lizzie T., Winthrop, Mass.	Albee, E. E. "
Aldrich, Hosea, Uxbridge.	Alger, Mrs., Providence.
Aldrich, Watie "	
Bennett, A. W., Uxbridge.	Ball, H. T., Milford, Mass.
Bennett, Mrs. A. W. "	Ball, Mrs. H. T. "
Birdsall, Mrs. Wm., Green Island, N. Y.	Ball, Ella Preston "
Bridges, Calvin, Hopkinton, Mass.	Ball, Laura M. "
Bridges, Mrs. Calvin "	Bicknell, Miss M. A., Worcester.
Boyden, R. M., So. Holyoke, Mass.	Blanchard, M. A., Millville, Mass.
Boyden, W. S., Woonsocket, R. I.	2 daughters.
Capron, Clara D., Hartford, Ct.	Crocker, Geo. A., Uxbridge.
Capron, Annie H., Uxbridge.	Crocker, Mrs. G. A. "
Capron, Laura E. "	Chapin, Hon. Henry, Worcester.
Capron, William C. "	Chapin, Anna F. "
Capron, Laura A. "	Chapin, Ezra W., Northboro.
Childs, W. A., New York.	Crame, E. B., Worcester.
Childs, Mrs. W. A. "	Crame, Mrs. E. B. "
Cargill, C. A., Worcester.	Carter, Geo. S., Mendon, Mass.
Colburn, D. G., Hopkinton, Mass.	Chase, Gardner, Ea. Douglas, Mass.
Colburn, Mrs. D. G. "	Chase, Mrs. S. F. "
Claffin, J. R., Milford, Mass.	Crawford, —, Worcester.
Claffin, Mrs. J. R. "	Childs, F. T., So. Framingham, Mass.
Daniels, John M., Uxbridge.	Daniels, Mrs. Maney, Franklin.
Daniels, Mrs. J. M. "	Davenport, John L., Mendon, Mass.
Davidson, Mrs. G. W., Whitinsville.	Davenport, Samuel D. "
Day, George F., Uxbridge.	Davenport, John L. J. "
Day, Miss Abbie E. "	Davenport, Austin "
Day, Miss Emma A. "	Davenport, Miss A. L. "
Day, Daniel, Providence, R. I.	Davenport, Miss — "
Day, Mrs. Daniel "	Dadman, Mrs. J. J., Fitchburg, Ms.
Day, Miss Louise M. "	Darling, Mrs. M., Boston.
Daniels, Maney, Franklin, Mass.	Darling, Miss Jennie "
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