



OLD DARTMOUTH  
HISTORICAL SKETCHES

No. 12

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Being the proceedings of the Winter meeting of the Old Dartmouth Historical Society, held at the Rooms of the Society, December 8, 1905, and containing the following paper:

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FRIENDS HERE AND HEREAWAY Continued  
Mary Jane Howland Taber

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[NOTE.—The "Old Dartmouth Historical Sketches" will be published by the society from time to time and may be purchased for a nominal sum on application to the Secretary].

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President Crapo, in his opening remarks alluded to the seal of the society. He said that all associations like the Old Dartmouth Historical society had a corporate seal. The duty of preparing such a seal in this instance devolved upon the directors, who gave much attention to the matter, soliciting sketches and asking for suggestions, which were received and considered. Walton Ricketson kindly furnished a sketch of the Gosnold tower, which was well adapted for a seal and was highly

commended. But it was urged by some that Cuttyhunk had never been a part of the territory of Dartmouth and that it was desirable that the seal should represent some natural object or event or pursuit peculiar to the town and distinctively prominent in its history. This idea has been admirably carried out in the design presented by Clement Nye Swift, which has been adopted by the directors, subject to the approval of the society.

It recalls the earlier days when the



whaling industry flourished here and New Bedford and her sister towns were known in every foreign port and in the islands of the sea. It is a reminder of the time when ships, which were the product of Dartmouth mechanics, whose voyages were planned by Dartmouth merchants and manned by Dartmouth officers and crews, sailed out from Acushnet, Apponegansett and Westport harbors to distant oceans, returning after many months, sometimes years, of perilous adventure with their rich cargoes of oil and bone. As a rule these ventures, although attended with many hazards and uncertainties, were successful and brought profit and prosperity to this region. This success was due to the thoroughness and integrity of the work performed by our shipwrights and boat builders, coopers and sail makers, and blacksmiths who fashioned and tempered the harpoons and lances; it was due to the foresight and sagacity of managing owners who directed the enterprise, and above all it was due to the daring and endurance and skill of the men who pulled at the oars and threw the harpoon in the encounter with the monsters of the deep.

In 1785 William Rotch, Sr., of Bedford village, who was then the foremost whaling merchant in America, went to England to secure, if possible, the repeal or reduction of the custom dues that Great Britain had imposed on American caught oil. England was ambitious to be the mistress of the sea and to this end did not hesitate to throw obstacles in the way of those who might possibly in the future challenge her pretensions. The growing maritime importance of New England and especially the increase of its whaling fleet and the many thousand well trained seamen employed in that service provoked the enactment of a law which practically closed the British market against our whale fishery. The petition of Mr. Rotch was denied. He then asked that a concession might be made by which he would be permitted to take his ships to some English port there to prepare them for their voyages and return them to said port for the discharge of their cargoes in this way avoiding the prohibitory tax. This

was denied. Lord Hawksbury, who was then in control, said to him, "Mr. Rotch, we do not want your ships, we have shipyards of our own, we build ships, but (he added) we do want your men, we want your hardy Dartmouth and Nantucket whalers."

This tribute to our sailors came from an unfriendly source. The man who would destroy the business life of this little community could not conceal his admiration for our seamen.

It was in a more kindly and generous spirit that Edmund Burke ten years previous in his celebrated speech before parliament urging conciliation which would avert war between the mother country and the colonists, with glowing eloquence seldom equalled, recounted the great achievements of the New England whalers and declared that they were superior to those of every other nation, not excepting those of Great Britain.

These were the men who a hundred years ago guided and controlled the moral and intellectual and social progress of this town. It can be truly said that Old Dartmouth reared a race of self-reliant men not surpassed in any quarter of the globe.

When the historical student a century hence comes across our seal and comprehends its meaning he will be led to a closer study of a story full of romance and thrilling adventure.

George H. Tripp moved that the society accept as its seal, the design presented by Mr. Swift. He stated that the design was the result of a great deal of work on both the part of Mr. and Mrs. Swift, who had spent a great deal of time in getting it out. He renewed his motion that the society accept the seal with appropriate thanks.

The motion was carried.

Mrs. Taber then read her paper, which follows. During the reading of it she presented the society with an old fashioned coffee pot, a book telling about Jethro Wood, who invented the plow, and an old table linen made by a Dartmouth woman and taken away in 1782, which comes back after more than 100 years. The articles presented are described in the paper with their associations.



# Friends Here and Hereaway Continued

By Mary Jane Howland Taber

Mr. President, Gentlemen and Ladies—Having been invited to "devote myself further to a presentation of those strong, unique characters in our local history, who are familiar to the younger generation in name only," I looked over the roll of our ancient worthies, and smile after smile flitted over my lips, and tear after tear rose to my eyes, as I thought of the comedies and tragedies that had filled their lives.

Then I said: "What right have I to meddle with these family histories? Certainly, a post-mortem examination is not so cruel as a vivisection; still, each family has a right to say what shall or shall not be put on record, in the past lives of their fathers and mothers. If I write anything, I must return to my own people."

In my former paper I said nothing of my mother's family, for the reason that, since my recollection, they have lived elsewhere, but they were born in Dartmouth, and looked fondly back to the old home, often talking of the time when they should revisit the loved scenes of their childhood, where their ancestors had dwelt in peace and quiet happiness for more than a century.

I do not approve of tracing one's pedigree back to Noah, but to show you the firm hold this branch of the Howland family has on Plymouth and Dartmouth soil I will mention a few names.

My mother's grandfather, Benjamin Howland, was the son of another Benjamin, son of Nicholas, son of Zoeth, who was the first of the family to settle in Dartmouth, and who was killed by the Indians, and so back to Henry Howland of Pilgrim days. His wife, Mary Stocum, traced her ancestry to Anthony Stocum, through his grandson, the enterprising Eleazer, who made the runaway match with Miss Fitzgerald, the daughter of Edmund Fitzgerald, fifth earl of Dublin, presumably to the immense disgust of her family.

On the mother's side Mary Stocum descended, not from titled earls, but from the three Ralph Earls, who in the succession of father, son and grandson, held a memorable place in Dartmouth story.

Having established ancestral rights in Old Dartmouth, I must now confess that another century has rolled away since Benjamin Howland and his wife and children exchanged the stony pastures of Bristol county, in the commonwealth of Massachusetts, for the fertile

fields of the great Genesee country, in New York state, where they sought and found the Promised Land. Still, perhaps you will kindly take an interest in the later fortunes of our emigrants.

To begin, I will give you a slight sketch of the first half of Benjamin Howland's life as it was lived in Russell's Mills. He was a man of such sterling honesty and integrity, and his fellow citizens of Dartmouth had such abounding faith and trust in him, as to make the following story possible.

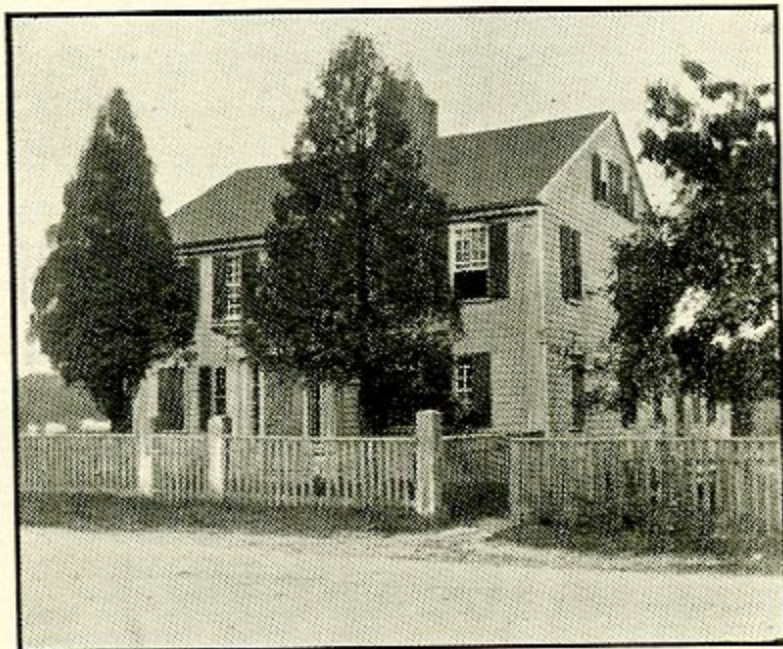
He was a selectman in the early days, soon after the establishment of the constitution of the United States, when the farmers of South Dartmouth grumbled at the loss of time occasioned by going to the polls to vote. "Why," said they, "it spoils a whole day's work." Whereupon they arranged with "Uncle Ben," as they called him, that he should set out in his "curricle" very early in the morning on election days, and gather in the popular vote for town, county and state officers, (perhaps they gave themselves the trouble to vote in their own persons for the president, I don't know how that may have been). This shining example of probity was furnished with a blank book, wherein were recorded the names of the voters in his township. Then he went from house to house, saying to each man, "Well, friend, how does thee want to vote?" and writing the names of the chosen candidates as they were given to him. Having gone the rounds he appeared before the selectmen with his roster. "Uncle Ben's votes," as they were called, were received and counted without question, and were never challenged by one single human being. Where is the man today whom the people would trust, or the community who would trust any man to do this thing, which "Uncle Ben" did simply as a matter of course? One election day he had a memorandum written against a voter's name, which read: "James had gone to mill, but I took the names from Silvy, for I knew it would be just as she said, anyway." Pass along that anecdote to the next woman's suffrage convention. They ought to make "Uncle Ben" a retrospective honorary member of their society. Only one vote, and that one the woman's! James and Sylvia's descendants, who are with us today, can add to the story the surname, which I omit.



Although the members of the Old Dartmouth Historical society are deeply versed in antiquarian lore, they may not all have in their minds a clear picture of "Uncle Ben's curriole," as it existed a hundred years ago, therefore it may not be amiss to explain that the dictionary defines a curriole as "a two-horse, two-wheeled vehicle, with a pole." In other words, a chaise drawn by two horses. We read of the deacon's wonderful one-hoss shay, that went to pieces all at once, with a thrill and a spill, but this two-hoss shay must have been still more wonderful, though it did

tells us his grandfather bestowed on a certain springless conveyance of the olden time. He called it his "circulator," not because it circulated over the roads with remarkable velocity, but because it promoted the circulation of the vital fluid. In a case of dyspepsia, too much spring in one vehicle may have been as efficacious as too little in the other.

Besides varying existence with curriole-riding, and vote-collecting, this irrepressible Benjamin was a mason by trade. He also at times disported himself on the ocean wave for a short



BENJAMIN HOWLAND HOUSE

not give up the ghost all at once, for I recollect seeing the pole triced up among the rafters of the big barn, as a sort of relic. The children called their grandfather's one-horse chaise "the jiggle-joggle," and many a frantic ride they took in it, on the barn floor, even to the breaking of the recumbent shafts. I can't think what they would have named their great grandfather's chaise, kept in agitation by the uneven trotting of two horses. They might have adopted the name George Eddy

whaling voyage on the Atlantic coast, while the leviathans were yet so obliging as to come here to be harpooned. Furthermore, after his migration to the wilderness, he was a model pioneer, and added dentistry to his manifold accomplishments, extracting teeth for hapless, suffering neighbors, who sometimes remunerated him with thanks, and sometimes with abuse, somewhat according to the length of time they had gyrated around the rooms with his pincers in their mouths,



for the amateur dentist had a strain of the bull dog in his composition and never loosened his hold. "Howland grit" they called it, I believe. By the bye, Howland grit, far more than conjugal felicity, is said to be responsible for the small number of divorcees in the family.

It was in 1792, at the age of 38, that this favorite son of Dartmouth left his home in Russell's Mills and journeyed with Mary Slocum, his wife, and their young children, to Saratoga, in New York state, where they abode six years.

While living in Saratoga the eldest daughter, Sylvia, married Jethro Wood, also a native of Dartmouth, and the youngest son, Slocum, made his appearance in a world where he was destined to be of much service to many poor souls.

Not feeling satisfied with the unfertile soil at Saratoga, and being lured onward by glowing accounts of the great Genesee valley, Benjamin Howland decided to continue his westward migration. Early in March, 1798, he put his wife and five children, (leaving the bride and groom behind them) into a long bob-sleigh drawn by horses, and driven by himself, while another sleigh, or rather sled, drawn by oxen, contained their household goods and chattels, and was "evoluted," as he said, by Benjamin Wilbur, another Dartmouth emigrant. Mary Howland was at first a trifle suspicious of the new word, evolved, fearing that young Wilbur had watched the evolutions of the soldiers, on muster day, at the spring training, and had coined the word, inconsistent with the peace principles of Friends, but long before the end of the journey she forgave him, and adopted the word herself, as she watched from her vantage ground, at the hinder end of the little procession, and observed the skill with which he not only dominated his oxen, with his "haw! gee!" but at the same time controlled the herd of twenty head of cattle, and the flock of sheep he drove before him. No general of infantry, cavalry, or artillery could have evolved to better purpose, though even his skill, combined with that of "old Dog Tray," did not always suffice to keep order, occasionally the beasts became unruly, then it was that my future grandparent, the eldest son, Humphrey, a youth of eighteen, was called upon to round up the flocks and herds. The lad had a Biblical turn of mind, and declared it reminded him of Abraham offering up Isaac, with a difference. "The ram was caught in the thicket by its horns," all right, but no angel appeared to stay his father's hand from sacrificing him. He considered having his feet soaked in snow water for a fortnight was as bad as be-

ing bound and laid on a pile of wood with a sharp knife at his throat. Of course rubber boots were unknown, and it was surprising the boy did not die of pneumonia.

In this order the family party plodded on through the forests, and over the corduroy roads for two weary weeks, till at last they reached their destination, two miles east of the little village of Aurora on Cayuga lake.

There was a farm (so called by courtesy) of 135 acres of heavily timbered land, for which they paid about \$800, with a log house and saw mill thrown in, the former owner having beat a hasty retreat, after clearing three of the 135 acres, and making the aforesaid improvements.

Mary Slocum Howland had come into the wilderness to live, but she did not wholly forget her aristocratic ancestress, the earl's daughter, and she drew the line at log houses. There was a covenant duly entered into, that she should have "a frame house, two stories high in front." Accordingly one was immediately begun. As I have said, her husband was a mason, and a good one, if we may judge by the massive wide throated chimney of that house, which bears witness for him to this day, and looks as if it might continue to do so for ages yet to come. He laid the foundations of many of the homes and firesides of the settlers. Not a little of his work still stands attesting the thoroughness of the worker. He was in such request that he was paid three dollars per day for himself and an assistant. The highest price paid at that time in that part of the world for any labor, ordinary farm hands receiving only 50 cents a day, and hired girls (when there were any), 50 cents a week.

In the front room of this new house, the first Friends' meeting in the county was held in 1799. Just 100 years after the first Friends' meeting was held in Dartmouth.

At all times and places Quakers settle in small colonies and forthwith establish a meeting. Among the little group at Scipio were a number from Dartmouth. Paulina, wife of Judge Wood, Allen and Hannah Mosher, Sylvanus and Lydia Hussey and their families; also Content Hussey (called "Aunt Tenty.") Welcome Mosher had been a Revolutionary soldier, disowned for joining the army, but reinstated. These zealous souls came to meeting (often times a silent one) through miles of rain or snow, not to mention the more terrible mud, when the hubs of the wagon wheels rolled on the top of the ground, and three miles an hour was rapid progression. They came faithfully every First Day and every Fifth Day, and when a business meet-



ing was held once a month, the men considerably retired to another room leaving "Women Friends" to transact their business untrammelled by the sterner sex.

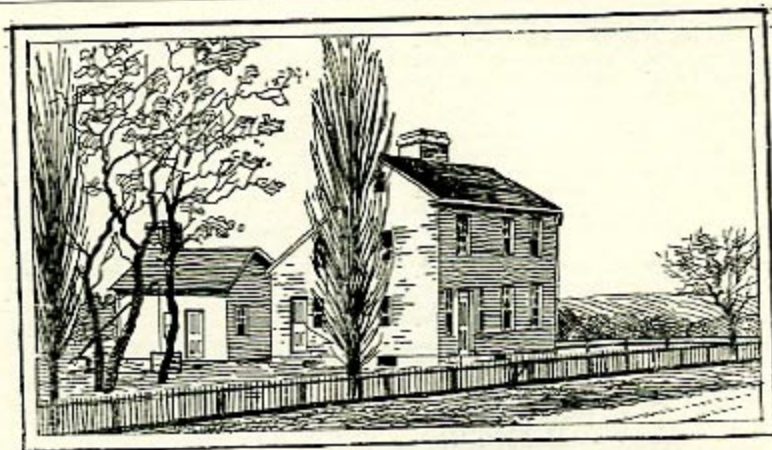
James McLaughlin, an Irish emigrant, often expressed his sentiments in meeting on this wise: "Truth, Justice and Mercy, my friends, show me an honest man, and I will show you a Christian." On one occasion, after a prosy discourse from a stranger, he rose and pithily remarked: "There are persons, who can say more in a single sentence, than others do in a long harangue." The "r" in harangue being trilled with such startling elocutionary effect that the discomfited preacher nearly jumped off his seat.

Benjamin Howland's eldest son, Humphrey, had taught himself survey-

had nothing to do but to sell his land at an enormous profit. Thus the plain farmer boy, the son of Uncle Ben, the mason, had, at 30 years of age, become a rich man.

One of my grandfather's made a fortune by the rise in land, the other by the rise in oil. What a pity some of their children had not known how to keep the money bequeathed to them, but both fortunes are now scattered to the four winds of heaven.

While Humphrey Howland was pursuing his work as a surveyor, he sometimes came in contact with young men fresh from college, engaged in the same business, who made use of their recently acquired knowledge to sow broadcast the names they shook out of their classical dictionaries. How much better to have kept the Indian names!



BENJAMIN HOWLAND'S HOME, SCIPIO, N. Y., BUILT 1798

ing, and being a very energetic and ambitious youth, with no taste for digging stones out of the earth, or embedding them in mortar, he sought and found employment as a surveyor for wealthy Quakers in New York city on the look out for profitable investments in the interior. Thus in the early years of the last century he carried a chain and compass over a large part of western New York, displaying the same acute business capacity as was shown by his remote cousin, George Howland, Sr., of New Bedford. Whenever in his surveys he came across a particularly valuable piece of land for sale cheap, by some disgusted settler, on his way back to civilization, he bought it from the savings from his wages, also many broad acres for a mere song at tax sales. He had not long to wait before immigrants flocked in from all quarters, and he

Listen to a few specimens of the appellations they freely bestowed on these unoffending settlements and townships, which still stagger under this conglomeration of ancient history: Syracuse, Ithaca, Utica, Troy, Tyre, Carthage, Macedon, Palmyra, Romulus, Aurelius, Marcellus, Camillus, Sempronius, Scipio, Cicero, Cato, Conquest, Seneca, Medina, Hannibal, Hector, Ovid, Montezuma, Lysander, Pompey—until one can almost trace the footsteps of these surveyors through the forests where in many places the blazed trees were their only guides. Humphrey Howland, with the natural good taste which always distinguished him, protested against these names, but quite in vain. Years afterward he received a letter containing only these words: "Do you prefer Penn Yan to Pompey?" Mr. Howland knew perfectly well that



it came from one of those gay young surveyors, so he replied: "It is more appropriate to name a town Penn Yan, for Pennsylvania and Yankee settlers, than Pompey, for a Roman soldier; but it is not necessary to do either." He addressed his letter to "A former surveyor of Cayuga, Tompkins and Cortland counties," at the postoffice where the letter was mailed. It was delivered, and the old-time acquaintance renewed, with mutual pleasure.

One of the reminiscences he was fond of repeating was this: One day in the wildest part of the wild woods he came upon an unfinished log cabin, whose owner asked him in to dinner, and it would puzzle you to guess what was on the hospitable board—literally a board, and a rough one at that. There was neither fish, flesh, nor fowl, bread, butter, cheese, milk, eggs, tea, coffee, sugar, vegetables, fruit nor even salt—the banquet consisted of beech tree leaves and vinegar, washed down with clear water from the nearby spring.

Speaking of reminiscences, there was one story which made a strong impression on my childish memory. It belongs to an earlier period than these surveys, to a time when the Indians were still on the warpath, the savage Cayugas being particularly inhuman in their treatment of the whites.

Unfortunately I have forgotten the heroine's name. I only know that she belonged to the Dartmouth clan and possessed her full share of Howland grit. Some years ago I wrote for a newspaper an account of her adventure which I will copy here:

#### A True Story of Frontier Life.

It is a stormy afternoon in winter. A woman sits alone in a log house, in a clearing near the shore of Cayuga lake in New York. She gazes sadly out of the window at the charred tree stumps, half buried in the snow, which encircle her new home. Then her eyes turn slowly and wearily to the unhewn, mud-plastered logs of the wall and to the damp, sodden earth of the floor; finally with a long drawn sigh she seats herself before her spinning wheel. She spins industriously but her eyes keep their far-away look, and her thoughts are busy with the home she has left. There in her father's house are ease and comfort. Here in the depth of the forest in the new home which she and her young husband have sought to create, are privation, suffering and danger. The tears stand in her eyes and her whole attitude betokens discouragement, almost despair.

What is this sudden change? She glances out of the window. She listens intently, a look of mortal terror over-spreads her face, a deathly pallor, which seems the forerunner of a swoon. But, no! A desperate courage takes

possession of her. Her features stiffen to a look of stony calmness. She sits bolt upright in her chair and rapidly whirls her wheel and draws out her thread as though her life depended on it, and surely her life does depend on it, for well she knows that the one slight chance which remains to her ever to see the light of another day, ever to see her loving husband again, may possibly be won by coolness and bravery, and by that alone. Suddenly the door of the cabin is flung wide open. A hideous savage stands upon the threshold, frightful war paint stripes his brawny chest, tall feathers crown his head, a bright tomahawk gleams in his hand. He advances into the room, followed by another, and another, and still another of his murderous tribe, until the house is filled. They stand in silence, and in silence the brave woman pursues her task. No sound is heard, save the whirr of the wheel, her cold impassive face betrays no sign of fear, her hands do not tremble, she appears unconscious of or indifferent to her visitors. The stoical chief, accustomed to the shrieks of his "pale face" victims, gazes at her in dumb admiration, as at a kindred spirit. Now, he will try her still further. He strides behind her chair and brandishes the gleaming hatchet in the air over her head, but she does not flinch. Now, he cuts the skein of flax from the back of her chair, fastens it in his belt instead of the long fair hair of the scalp lock he had intended to take for his trophy, and with one wild, ringing warwhoop, the Indians leave the cabin.

To return to Humphrey Howland, when he was 25 years old he visited a settlement of Friends at Amawalk, near New York, in search of a wife. His errand was an open secret, and Phebe Field with a weather eye to the main chance in the disposal of her daughters, said to herself: "Deborah will not do, she is eighteen, that is too old, I must send for Sarah." Sarah had reached the mature age of fifteen, and was attending the Friends' boarding school at Nine Partners. Home she came, filled the bill, was married and followed the western trail. Then the ambitious young man began to build what was for the time and place a palatial residence. He cleared twenty acres of land, cutting down all the forest trees, grubbing out the roots, and levelling the ground until it was as smooth as a floor, then he sowed it with fine grass seed, made a semi-circular driveway from two gates, one at each end of the lawn, planted the drive on both sides with stately Lombardy poplars, these trees being of quick growth, and looking as unlike the surrounding

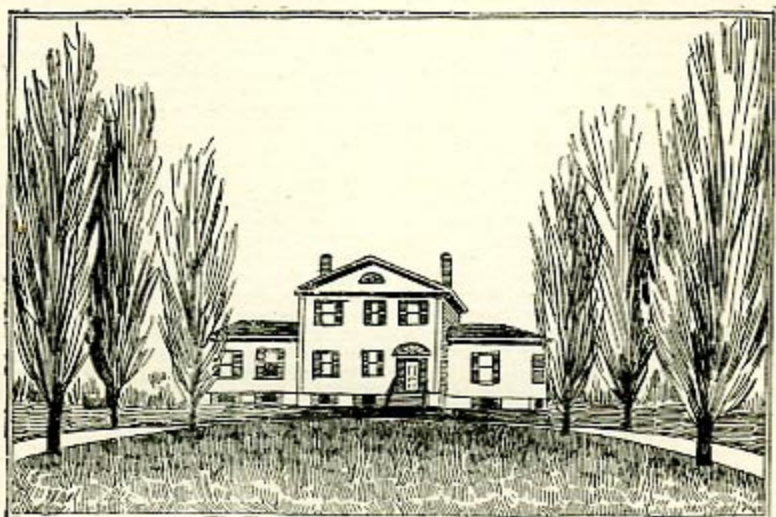


forests as possible. Three weeping willows and three black walnuts were grouped in separate clumps in the centre of the lawn, and along the line of the fences locust trees were planted. None of these trees were indigenous to the soil, but served to proclaim to all beholders: "This is cleared land."

At the top of the semicircle a house was built which was long the show place of the country, and until it was burned down a short time ago, it remained a fine residence. Every nail in it had to be brought on horseback from Utica, a hundred miles away. Each one of the floor timbers was the heart of a tree, and it being desirable to rid themselves of trees as fast as possible

ported with the aristocratic appearance of the place. People came from near and far to view the house. One day a sightseer exclaimed: "The door hinges baint solid silver, be they? I didn't raly s'pose they was?" Then she made the discovery that the logs in the fireplaces were not turned in a lathe, and turned away with turned-up nose at finding so many of the reports untrue. She really felt aggrieved and defrauded.

Humphrey Howland was intensely interested in the construction of the Erie Canal. Of course there were no railroads known or thought of in those days, and this canal was to open up cheap and speedy transportation be-



POPLAR GROVE, BUILT BY HUMPHREY HOWLAND, 1810, SCIPIO, N. Y.

these timbers were placed so close together that when a furnace was put into the house in modern times, it proved impossible to get space for the registers without chiseling these obstructions on each side of the openings.

The parlor was 14 feet high, 24 feet each way, and circular at one end. The hull went through the house and was 40 feet long by 15 wide. Everything was on a grand scale, even to a tall clock, nine feet high, all to correspond with the stately poplars outside, which set the keynote of the stiff and somewhat pompous grandeur. The kitchen was banished to the basement, a most unnecessary inconvenience where land was so superabundant, but it com-

tween the Great Lakes and the Atlantic seaboard, from Buffalo to Albany, thence down the Hudson river to New York. DeWitt Clinton was the governor of the state, and the head and front of the whole scheme, devoting his best energies to its success for ten years. He was a presidential candidate in 1812 but was defeated by James Madison. Had he been elected it is probable the canal would have been built by the Federal government, as it was, the New York state legislature assumed the responsibility. Humphrey Howland had many conferences with the governor concerning the multitude of "hindering letting things" which obstructed the great work. They were



warm personal friends, and Clinton was much at Poplar Grove. During a visit of the governor and Mrs. Clinton about 1820 their maternal coffee was poured from this coffee pot, which in its cracked, broken and mended condition my sister Hannah Hoxie Howland now resigns to your tender mercies. After their return to the Gubernatorial mansion in Albany, Mrs. Clinton had many stories to tell concerning the "Castle in the Wilderness," as she named Poplar Grove. One of them was this: She said the place was so beautifully kept that she told the governor one morning that he ought not to have thrown his shaving paper out of the window, and she laid a wager with him that within five minutes a servant would come out and pick up that paper. She won the bet, which was a ring she always afterward wore and called her shaving paper ring. Mrs. Clinton sometimes complained that her husband's rotation in office fairly made her dizzy. Assemblyman, senator, mayor of New York, lieutenant governor, governor. She had only grown used to being lady mayoress, when she was transformed into governor's lady, and had narrowly escaped being the first lady in the land, an honor which she was told was yet in store for her. But the worst of it was that in 1816 she she must always remember to speak of her husband and address him as governor, but in 1817 and 1818 she must recollect that he was plain Mr. Clinton, and that to bestow another man's title on him would be a great breach of etiquette. Then in 1819 he was re-elected and she had just grown accustomed to hearing "your excellency" on all sides, when presto change, no more use for it till 1824 again set him on his pedestal. He was elected for the fourth time in 1826. In 1828 he died.

Once while weather bound at Poplar Grove in a severe equinoctial storm, Clinton said to the members of his staff: "I will erect a lodge in this parlor and we will install Mr. Howland as a brother Mason." Carpenters were brought and the thrones and altars and other requisite paraphernalia were constructed. The Grand Master in the east sat on the sofa, and then and there Humphrey Howland was installed. Degree after degree was worked until he was dubbed a Sir Knight of the Temple of the Holy Order of St. John of Jerusalem. This is the only instance on record of a lodge being erected in a private house, and its owner being knighted therein. It was probably the highest Masonic honor ever conferred at one time.

DeWitt Clinton was the highest Free Mason in the United States, out ranking all other Masons. But my grand-

father had to pay pretty dear for his whistle, for such honors are by no means gratuitous, moreover, he could never attend a lodge meeting, nor display his glories in any way, for it was imperative that the Quakers should not know he was a member of a secret society under penalty of disownment. If Clinton had lived longer he would probably have been elected president of the United States, and Humphrey Howland would have been his secretary of state. Then I fancy he would have bid farewell to Quakerism.

When at last the great canal so long derisively called "Clinton's Ditch" was an accomplished fact, the triumphant governor at a grand ceremonial function in New York city poured a libation of water which had been brought from Lake Erie into the Atlantic ocean, while at every town along the route for six hundred miles, cannons were fired at the same moment of time. You may be certain that on that long anticipated day Humphrey Howland's heart beat high with joy and exultation.

He soon took his family to New York on one of the canal boats, or packets as they were called. I quote from an old letter written by one of his young daughters:

"It is very wonderful and strange to ride in this way. We sit on the deck and glide smoothly along, yet we see no means of propulsion, no oars, nor sails, only a rope tied to the boat, and when our eyes follow it to the shore we see horses on the tow path, walking along as if they had nothing much to do, yet if we were on terra firma they could not move the great vessel and its contents one inch. I think our governor is one of the greatest benefactors of the human race who has ever lived, and mother does too, for I asked her and she said, 'O yes,' We have good beds and sleep as well as at home."

As the canal was completed in 1825 the writer of this letter must have been about 12 years old. Would our girls nowadays get in "means of propulsion," and "terra firma," and profound reflections about benefactors of the human race in their letters? I think not, though they might be sharp enough to better understand the mother's gentle smile and the quiet assent she gave rather than dampen her daughter's enthusiasm.

If we have no distinguished man amongst our blood kin, we have at least one by marriage, for my grandfather's eldest sister Sylvia married Jethro Wood the inventor of the modern plough. I wonder that Dartmouth does not place his name high on the bead roll of fame, as one of her most



honored sons. I will quote scraps here and there from this book which I hold in my hand, and which contains the story of his life. Jethro Wood was born in Dartmouth in 1774. His parents were members of the Society of Friends. His mother, Dinah Hussey Wood, was a niece of Ann Starbuck, who, during the

of braces he made a miniature harness, with which he fastened the family cat to the plough and drove her about the flower garden. For this piece of mischief he received a good old-fashioned whipping. As he grew up the chief desire of his life was to invent a ploughshare which from its shape should meet



absence of all the men on whaling voyages, was virtually the ruler and governor of Nantucket. As a boy Jethro Wood showed the trend of his mind. When only a few years old he moulded a little plough of metal which he obtained by melting a pewter cup. Then cutting the buckles from a pair

with the least resistance from the soil, and which could be made entirely of cast iron, with bolts instead of screws to fasten the different pieces, so that broken ploughs could be mended by farmers in the field, without having recourse to blacksmiths. Day after day, he whittled so persistently that the



neighbors nicknamed him "the Whittling Yankee." He would take a large oblong potato and cut it until he believed he had obtained the exact curve he desired, then a model was made to test his success, and so on, time and again, with unwearied perseverance. At the same time Thomas Jefferson, president of the United States was at work on the same problem, but Jethro Wood not being cumbered with the cares of state was the successful inventor. He received letters of encouragement from Jefferson wishing him all success. The Scientific American ranks him with Franklin, Whitney, Fulton, Goodyear, Morse, Howe and McCormick. There have been great improvements in other inventions, but the plough came from his hand simple and perfect as it now is, and there is no other in use. His invention never brought him the reward it should have done. Had he been blessed with the business sagacity of George or Humphrey Howland he might have been "rich beyond the dreams of avarice."

Even the magnificent diamond ring, worth thousands of dollars, which was sent him by the Czar Alexander of Russia, was impounded and sold for his own benefit by the trusted friend, who wrote the French letter which accompanied the plough to Russia. Probably the letter was worded in such a way that the czar supposed Mr. Mitchell was the inventor of the plough. I will not quote any further, but give you the book so that you may read of your fellow townsman's efforts, triumphs and disappointments at full length.

I can tell you a story about him which is not in the book, but is very characteristic of the man. A supercilious Englishman visiting the United States compared everything he saw to the glory of the "tight little island," and to the disparagement of the great American continent. Jethro Wood endured it patiently for a time, then he went to a farmer's wife, who was noted for her super excellent cooking, gave her five dollars, and told her to prepare a breakfast fit for a king, to be served at eight o'clock the next morning.

He took his guest for an early morning drive. After the usual enconlums on England and the English, Jethro Wood said: "You must be getting hungry, let us go into one of these farm houses and get some breakfast. There is one down there by the lake shore, suppose we try that?" The Englishman gasped and said: "But can we eat the food?" "If we can't, we can have breakfast when we get home," was the rejoinder. They went in. The

hostess asked them to "set by and have a bite."

Such a meal is not often seen on a nobleman's table as was spread before them. The Englishman stared and ate, and ate and stared, and when he could eat and stare no longer they went home, and he sat down and wrote a letter which was the means of bringing a stream of emigrants from England to Cayuga county, but much I fear that the poor misguided things, found it did not rain larks every day.

Another inventor whose name in her opinion, was fit to stand beside any of the great ones, was Amelia Bloomer, who invented the celebrated Bloomer Costume. She said she "took the sense of the ward on her dress, but Madam Fashion took the non sense and carried it ten to one." She was a sister of Humphrey Howland's housekeeper, and sometimes came to Poplar Grove to visit her. The master of the house was a great stickler for propriety. The short dress and pantalets were too much for him, and he told the inventress to put on decent clothes or go home. I believe she preferred departure to abandonment of her cherished toggery.

Mrs. Bloomer's much respected sister, Sarah B. Wood, lived at Poplar Grove, as child and woman, for 60 years. At last, both she and her employer died of old age, on the same day, and were interred in the family burial ground.

Never were two brothers more unlike than Humphrey and Slocum Howland. The only thing they had in common was the ability to make money, and the round shoulders so much reprehended by George Howland.

The elder brother was fond of show, and power, and position, holding himself haughtily aloof from his fellow citizens, in what some people called "dignified isolation." The younger cared absolutely nothing for the gods of his brother's idolatry. Was always ready to aid the high and the low, the rich and the poor, never turning a deaf ear to a cry for help. He was a man greatly to be respected and honored, a worthy son of "Uncle Ben." His daughter Miss Emily Howland is yet with us. She had not the advantage of being born in Dartmouth, but aside from that, I don't know anything against her. She is the bright consummate flower of our branch of the Howlands. At 76 as brilliantly intellectual as any young person. She holds office as a bank director, attends peace conferences, presides at Woman's suffrage conventions, spends a part of each winter on her Virginia plantation, where ever since the Civil war, she has superintended a colony of self supporting Negroes, civilizing them with



church and school. At her home in Cayuga county she has built a beautiful schoolhouse, where many of her neighbors have received an excellent education, otherwise quite unattainable, and she has taken many young women from a distance into her house and given them a home while they pursued this course of study. If I should devote the rest of the evening to her good deeds I could not enumerate them all. To know her is a liberal education. I am indebted to her for anecdotes of Benjamin Howland and others contained in her "Historical Sketch of Friends in Cayuga County." She has sent you this bit of linen, a part of a table cloth which was hand spun and hand woven by a long dead and gone ancestress in Dartmouth, and carried by Mary Howland on the ox-led through the wilderness in 1793. After 107 years of absence it comes home again.

In a former paper I alluded to the Separation in the Friend's Society between the Gurneyites and Wilburites. The leader of the Wilburites in New York state was a man named Job Otis, a native of New Bedford, who formerly lived in the house still standing on the corner of Third and Bush streets, (now called Acushnet avenue and Madison street.) Daniel Ricketson in his "New Bedford of the Past, falls into rhyme, when he writes, "I must just notice Job Otis." Friend Otis had been very active in the Hicksite Separation in procuring the disownment of those who were called "unsound," and in the Wilbur division he was no less bitter against Joseph John Gurney. His invectives were very displeasing to Humphrey Howland, who had been sumptuously entertained at Earlham, while in England, and as a natural consequence thought very highly of Joseph John, and his religious tenets. One cold winter day Job Otis came, as he often did to Poplar Grove, and soon began a tirade against his pet aversion. Friend Howland remonstrated with his guest, telling him he would not allow any one deliberately to misrepresent and falsify in his house. There was a roaring fire in the great Franklin stove, and just at this juncture the wood, which was piled high on the dogs, came down with a clatter and shower of coals to the front of the hearth. Job continued his railing, the heat of the burning coals was intense, between Job and the excessive heat the host lost his temper, and seizing the long handled shovel, raised it in the air, and with action that would have graced Satan's stoker in the bottomless pit brought it down on the old Franklin like the opening of the anvil chorus. The shovel was flattened out into a pancake turner, and

the fire flew. Humphrey Howland said: "If thee repeats this abuse, I will call my men, and have thee taken out of the house, and thrown into the high way."

He would not have needed to call any men, for he had the muscular ability to pick up his adversary with one hand, open the window with the other, and hurl him into space, but the little man hastily took his hat, coat and cane and departed. They never recognized each other again in public or private life.

After this scene we can credit the tale of the Howland ancestress 200 years ago, sitting at her home in Dartmouth in her rocking chair, tipping forward, lifting a cider barrel on her lap and drinking out of the bung hole. At all events it is certain, grandfather was a very strong man in his prime, for he was able to raise a barrel of potash from the ground which is about as heavy as so much lead. Supposing DeWitt Clinton to have witnessed the flattening of the shovel would he have reconsidered the promised secretaryship, or would he have made his friend secretary of war instead of state?

Our hero kept abreast of the times, and was as much excited over railroads when their turn came, as he had been over canals, and almost the first certificate of stock issued by the New York Central was owned by him. The back of the kitchen fireplace at Poplar Grove was lined with iron plates, which had formed a part of the first locomotive used on that railway. Of course they were a late addition long after the house was built. He was as fond of relics as this Historical society, and wanted to buy the door stone from his father's old house at Russell's Mills, where he used to sit and eat bread and milk when he was a little boy. It would require a considerable stretch of imagination to fancy George Howland senior, sentimentally contemplating the door step of the old farm house at Long Plain. "Up and doing! Go ahead!" was his motto, and as for your collection of rusty harpoons he would advise sending all that rubbish to the junk shop without delay.

Notwithstanding many radical differences between the two men, Grandfather Humphrey sometimes reminded us of Grandfather George, for instance, once in hiring a man for farm work at Poplar Grove he said: "Can thee think?" "O yes!" was the prompt and very animated reply. "I can think." "Then," said the Great Mogul, "I don't want thee. I do the thinking." Considered in reference to the long established type of character of the Howland family, these two men remind one of Aunt Dinah's twins, when she said: "George Washington am de mostest



like his fader dan Andrew Jackson am,  
but dey am bof angels."

Uncle Ben's youngest daughter Harmony was left to pine in single blessedness from a cause unique in the story of jilted damsels. She had a beau towards whom she was well affected, who was to dine at her father's house on a certain day, and she had planned a most enticing repast, when all her little arts of cookery and coquetry were to be best displayed for his dear sake. Unfortunately her mother insisted that Harmony must go to Monthly Meeting, and carried her point too, as the Slo-cums are very apt to do, down to this present day. It was settled that the mother should cook the dinner instead of the daughter. The poor girl had many misgivings, for her mother was old and very forgetful, but she presaged nothing so direful as the actual occurrence. When they sat down to the dinner table, and after the customary silent grace had been observed, the carver put his knife into the breast of the turkey. Harmony saw at a glance that her mother had failed to remove a very important part of its internal economy and when the kernels of corn came rattling down out of its crop on the platter, she snatched the turkey from the table, but all too late. This was one of the times when "the sins of the parents are visited on the children," for the young man never repeated his visit, that not being precisely the style of housekeeping he was searching for. Would that this foul accident had not happened:

"And Heaven had spared to me  
To see one sad ungathered rose  
On my ancestral tree."

So said Dr. Holmes in his poem addressed to "My Aunt, my dear unmarried Aunt," and so say I, for my aunt Harmony was always out of Harmony after that blow to her feelings. Long afterward she lived with her brother Humphrey and was mildly insane, but was quite harmless, and had her harmless idiosyncrasies, for instance, when a chimney took fire, she went back to her room at the supposed risk of her life, to shut the bureau drawers, because she thought they would burn up more comfortably, than if left partly open in an untidy fashion. When on a visit she caught a glimpse of herself in a long looking glass, and burst into the parlor exclaiming: "There's a great tall crazy looking woman in my bed room, and she's tossin' her arms up in the air as if she was scart to death at somethin'." This did not quite equal "Samantha at the World's Fair," when she saw herself in a mirror and remarked: "There's a very honery looking woman coming towards us, but she favors our family some."

One night Harmony declared she was very ill, and wanted sister Patty, she should surely die if Patty didn't come. In vain her brother assured her that it was a very cold, stormy night, and that it was quite impossible to send for Martha, but she continued her moaning plaint until a hired man was roused from his "beauty sleep," and sent grumbling to harness a horse and go a mile to fetch Mrs. Hazlitt post haste. She came and soothed the patient with great success, "Now," she said cheerfully, "We will put a mustard plaster on the back of her neck, and she will soon be asleep." It acted like a charm and the household retired to rest, but long before morning they were roused by a piercing shriek. With one accord they hastened to Harmony's room. She was sitting up in bed with wild eyes, as soon as she saw them she cried: "Oh my foot! my foot! Somethin' has bitten it. I know by the way it feels, it is a tarantula. Go keerful, and try to ketch it, so we can know what kind of pizen to doctor for." The tarantula was soon discovered in the shape of the mustard plaster which had slipped from her neck to her heel. Then they knew what kind of pizen to doctor for.

When quite an aged man, Humphrey Howland ventured alone into his deer park, an enclosure of a dozen or more acres, surrounded by palings twenty feet high, where he kept a number of tame deer. One cross old buck resented the intrusion into his domain, and fiercely attacked his owner, who, fortunately for himself, had a habit of wearing several broad cloth capes and coats one over the other, and with his usual resourcefulness made use of them in this extremity in regular matador style, though not to irritate but to blind the beast. Could it be possible that the grave Quaker had ever witnessed a bull-fight? I know he spent several winters in the West Indies, and on the shores of the Mediterranean. Maybe he had only read about it. This is what he did. When the buck nearly overtook him in his flight, he turned and threw a cape or a coat over the creature's horns, giving it a dextrous twist and twirl which so blinded and entangled the foe as seriously to impede his progress. You may feel assured good time was made towards the entrance while the animal was occupied in divesting himself of the incumbrance. After which the infuriated beast would recover his bearings and return to the charge, only to receive another extinguisher on his lowered head. In a way it must have been comical to see him bend down his head, as if to have his clothes put on. Just as he had freed his antlers from the



last garment the exhausted proprietor made his escape through the gate stripped like a gladiator. Thus you see instead of throwing away gun and knapsack, like the retreating soldier of a panic stricken army, he converted this extra weight of which he was glad to rid himself, into a weapon of offense and defence. Once outside the strong gate with the heavy bolts securely drawn, he felt the need of expression as on the day the shovel was flattened. He shook his fist at the animal, pawing furiously on the other side of the barrier, and said impressively: "I am Humphrey Howland, I own thee. Thee will die tomorrow." The farmer who had witnessed the performance from a distance, and who had come running to the rescue, armed with a pitchfork, was accustomed to repeat this speech with great gusto, and when people asked: "Did he die tomorrow?" answered with much solemnity: "He did, and we had his tough old carcass to eat down stairs in the kitchen."

Having appealed to my relatives for some reminiscences, I copy from a letter I have received from my younger sister, Sarah H. Mason of San Francisco. She writes: "I often think of the sleigh rides I used to take with Grandfather Humphrey in that remarkable conveyance of his. Do you remember? The back seat had a buggy top over it, and grandfather in his feeble old age had a green baize curtain made to hang down in front of it from the top, completely shutting out the driver on the high front seat, and making it as dark as Erebus behind the curtain. How well I recollect the sensation as the cumbrous vehicle rocked and creaked in going through the snow drifts, and into and out of the pitch holes, and I expected every moment that we should be overturned and dragged at the horse's heels. When it became too frightful I would cautiously raise one corner of the curtain a tiny bit, to convince myself that it was really daylight outside, but the octogenarian would always say: "Seems to me I feel a little draft." Then down would go the curtain and I would sit and tremble. The relief of a safe return home was great, yet strange to say, I was always ready to embark on another perilous passage."

A member of our family, who wishes to remain anonymous in these pages, writes: "My recollections of our mutual grandfather are not many. I remember seeing him pour his scalding hot tea into his saucer, looking at me over the edge as he drank it and saying, "Thy good mother does not let thee do this, and she is quite right." I recall reading the newspaper to him at the top of my voice, and his saying: "Don't mutter, child, don't mutter." It appears I had lofty notions of honor in

those days, for I am told he offered me a bright half dollar if I would eat a teaspoonful of peas, and that I replied with dignity: "I will eat a plateful of the nasty green pills to please thee, but ladies do not take bribes." What a dreadful little prig I must have been! However, the answer pleased him, and I had the half dollar, without the pills. This is all I can remember of our respected ancestor, but you tell me you are writing a screed for posterity, and as I shall soon be ancient history myself and regarded with the same half mournful curiosity we now bestow on our predecessors, I really think there is one instance of my great natural amiability that ought to be recorded for future generations.

When I was about four years old, I stood one day by the open fire in the wide kitchen fireplace—a place where I distinctly was not wanted, among the pot hooks, the roasting jacks, dripping pans and tin ovens. Orange Wilbur, our mother's "hired help" from Dartmouth, lifted the big steaming iron tea-kettle off the crane, and deposited it on the old fashioned brick hearth, which, for fear of fire, usurped half the kitchen floor. Orange said to me, "Don't kick over the kettle." The idea had never previously entered my head, but being presented to my receptive mind, as something I was forbidden to do, I acted upon the suggestion without delay, gave the kettle a vicious kick and received the whole deluge of boiling water on my foot, so that when I was placed on the settle, and my stocking was removed, the skin came with it. My screams brought in the entire family. Orange hastened to explain that she was not to blame for she had that minute told me not to do it. Mother said: "The very way to make her do it. She is as mullish as Father George himself." With this unbought and unsolicited testimonial from my own mother and his own daughter-in-law, George Howland and I should be amply content.

Shall I go on and relate the result of this transaction? I could not walk for as much as three months, but I passed the time pleasantly enough, sitting on the kitchen floor with my foot on a cushion, reading aloud. I had known my letters and read children's books for a year or more, but then I began to soar. I read anything and everything just for the pleasure of pronouncing the words, comprehension of the meaning was not of the slightest importance in my estimation. Poor Orange Wilbur, I suspect she was bored to death, for when any one remarked how smart I was, she said: "Yes, smart where the skin is off." And Thomas Wilbur, her husband, said: "Yes, but limited, very limited." I did not know the difference



between limited and liniment, and thought they were both talking about my foot, so my vanity escaped the shock it might otherwise have sustained. I became a drawing card and might have been exhibited as an infant phenomenon. People came in carriages to hear the baby read, and brought their own books to make sure I had not been coached. Unfazed by law, physics, or theology, I read on as long as my audience required. It was like a dog walking on its hind legs, it was not well done, but it was astonishing that it was done at all. My next exploit was spelling, I progressed swimmingly until I broke down on syzygy. And to this day I hate the word, sy-zy-gy what kind of a word is that?"

So much for my correspondence, I will now return to my own narrative, and finish with the appropriate ending of a ghost story.

After Humphrey Howland's death my husband bought the place and we went there to live. There was an almost forgotten ghost story connected with the house. It was said that a ghost carriage sometimes drove up to the door and stopped. It was covered with dust and trunks, but when anyone went out to investigate all had vanished. We laughed at the story but paid no further heed to it. One evening not long after our arrival, while we were at supper, we heard a carriage drive up and stop before the door. I said: "I wonder who has come." It was a warm, bright, moonlight night, and the windows were wide open. I looked but saw nothing. We went out of doors, but there was no one there. Then I thought of the ghost carriage and I must confess it was rather creepy, under the tall, sombre trees, especially as I looked up in the meadow to the family burial ground. My husband warned me to say nothing of the occurrence, "for," said he, "if we give the place the reputation of being haunted, we can not get any one to work for us." Nothing further was heard of the ghost carriage for a long time. At length one noon I was sitting on the front door steps, when I saw and heard a heavily loaded wagon passing along the road, which was at

a very considerable distance from the house. Just as it came opposite to the door, I noticed that I no longer heard the rumbling of the wheels, although I still saw the wagon. This attracted my attention. I listened and heard wheels again further down the road, although the wagon had passed out of sight behind the trees. I called one of the farm men and told him to dig in the road, on that spot. He hesitated, and appeared to think I was demented, but thought better of it, and did as he was told. In describing the affair that evening to the cook, I heard him say: "Old Humphrey looked at me, out of the madam's eyes, and I thought it was safest to dig." Very soon we came upon the remains of an old bridge, with quite a hollow place underneath, and I concluded that in certain conditions of wind and weather, if a heavy wagon happened to be passing, and if any one happened to be listening, those peculiar sounds were borne towards the house and noticed. If this explanation is not tenable, I leave it to this society to furnish a better one. Of course, the dusty carriage and trunks were natural embellishments of a good ghost seer's love of the marvellous.

In closing, I will just add that the small number of Benjamin Howland's descendants is remarkable. He was contemporary with Gideon Howland, whose descendants, as heirs under Sylvia Ann Howland's will, now number 500 strong, while there are scarcely fifty people on earth to claim descent from "Uncle Ben."

Apparently Humphrey Howland expected his progeny to multiply as the sands of the seashore, for he left money to found a girl's boarding school for his descendants, to which two-fifths as many other girls should be admitted. Since his death in 1862, there have never been more than three pupils who could have entered this educational establishment, and as two-fifths of three girls, is not an easily divisible fraction, and as, at the present time, there is not one solitary girl of an age to attend the school, the court has declared the bequest null and void. Thanking you for your polite attention I bid you good night.