

lature, he failed of an election to the United States Senate. In 1829 President Jackson appointed him Second Comptroller of the United States Treasury. He was elected United States Senator 1830 to 1836, and Governor of New Hampshire 1836 to 1839. He was Sub-Treasurer at Boston 1840 to 1841, and for a long time Pension Agent.

In 1840, with his two oldest sons, he established *Hill's New Hampshire Patriot*, which they published till 1847. He also published the *Farmers' Monthly Visitor* during the last fifteen years of his life. He died at Washington, D. C., March 20, 1851, aged sixty-three.

## BILLERICA.

BY FREDERICK P. HILL.



THE little colony first established by the Puritan fathers at Salem, within ten years after the arrival of Governor Winthrop and his company had stretched itself along the shore to the northward, had touched hands with its sister colony of Plymouth, and, finding the immediate vicinity of the coast insufficient for the wants of its increasing population, had begun settlements on the frontier, at Concord, Sudbury, and Woburn.

The country in the vicinity of the Shawshin River was prospected as early as the year 1637 by order of the General Court; and five years later<sup>1</sup> a grant was made to the town of Cambridge, of "all the land upon Shawshin River, and between that and Concord River, and between that and Merrimack River, soe that they erect a village there within five years, and soe as that it shall not extend to prejudice Charlestown village or y<sup>e</sup> village at Cochittuate nor y<sup>e</sup> farmes formerly granted to the now govenour of 1,260 acres, and to Thomas Dudley Esq<sup>r</sup>. 1,500 acres, and 3,000 acres to Mrs. Winthrop."

Little effort was made to establish the desired settlement, and in the following year the court made an unconditional grant to Cambridge of the described territory, excepting only such lands as had previously been given to "the artilary company or others, provided the church and present Elders continue at Cambridge;" but it was not until some seven years later that the beautiful meadows and wooded hill-tops which were the

<sup>1</sup> This renewed a grant of 1641 of similar tenor. — Ed.

portion of Billerica began to come under the dominion of the settler's scythe and axe.

The country thus granted was called Shawshin, — said to signify meandering, — from the stream so named by the aborigines in describing its course.

It is evident, however, that the pioneers preferred the more familiar, homelike name of Billerica, in remembrance of the old town in Essex, England, whence some of them are believed to have come; for in 1650 reference was made by residents of Woburn to lands "on the east side of Billerica," and a petition from the inhabitants to the General Court in 1654, asking for a further grant of land, especially requested that the settlement might bear the name of "Billericay."

From this time the growth of the infant settlement was assured. The inhabitants were so far increased in number as to form a body politic, and adopt suitable measures for their government and the care of life and property. The earliest records of the town in existence bear date from this year, and evince by their simple and vigorous style, their wise and careful apportionment of public duties, and their regard for civil and religious rights, the sterling character of the men who founded this ancient town of Billerica.

In 1655 the inhabitants again petitioned the General Court, "requesting Immunities and freedom from all publick rates and charges at Cambridge," and that the land might belong entirely to them, for "y<sup>e</sup> better encouragment and carrying on publick charges that will necessarily there fall out." An agreement was made between the town of Cambridge and the progressive inhabitants of the young settlement, and on the 29th of May,

1655, the court confirmed the arrangement and granted the petitioners' request.

The names of those who signed the propositions on the part of the new town were "Ralph Hill, Senr., Willm French, John Sternes, Willm pattin, George Farley, Ralph Hill, Junr., John Croe, James Parker, John Parker, Jonathan Danforth, Henry Jefts, Willm Chamberlin and Robert Parker," who were "the present inhabitants."

The territory thus granted was of great size, almost unexplored, surrounded by unknown and treacherous savages, made up of rocky hills, rank swamps, verdant meadows, rippling brooks, and slowly winding streams.

Additional grants were made to the town in 1656 of lands on the Concord River, known as the "Blood Farms," and of eight thousand acres lying at Natick on the Merrimack. This last large tract of land was soon after sold to William Brenton, and the proceeds used to purchase the land in town owned by the non-residents.

The years immediately succeeding the incorporation the records show to be full of action. Town orders were passed regulating the division of lands, according equitable privileges on common property, fixing the rates for town and county taxes, prescribing the limitations and rights of those who wished to become inhabitants, laying out the highways, settling minor questions of where the cattle should be driven to feed, and ordering how the swine should be "yoked and rung."

Particular care was given to prepare the way for the establishment of a church and ministry. It was thought needful to protect their dearly bought privilege of freedom in state and religion, and it was agreed that "What person or persons soever propounde themselves to be granted amongst us to Prtake of the priviledge of the comans divisions, if not knowne to us he or they shall bringe with them a sertificate from the place from whence they come such a testamoney as Shall be Satisfactory to o<sup>r</sup> town or Selecte p<sup>o</sup>ns." This right to admit or reject a proposed inhabitant was jealously guarded for more than a century. The right of suffrage was also strictly cared for, and it was ordered that any person who should presume to give his voice or his vote in "ordering of herds, schooles, or in y<sup>e</sup> dispose of any of o<sup>r</sup> towne previledges," if he were not qualified, should be subject to a fine of five shillings.

Soon after the beginning of the settlement the inhabitants bought of Thomas Dudley, their hon-

ored ex-governor, the land which had been given him by the General Court, consisting of fifteen hundred acres; and this tract was taken as a basis, or measure, to reckon from in the distribution of meadows, woodlands, and other rights.

No person was permitted to take from the common land more than one twelfth part of this farm, to consist of one hundred and thirteen acres of upland and twelve of meadow; and only such persons as owned a share or less were termed proprietors with the right to general distribution. It was agreed, also, that the land owned by any inhabitant should not be sold or given away, even to his children, without the consent of the town; thus more perfectly to secure the peace and safety of their little community. Besides the grants mentioned there had been given, before the settlement, extensive farms to Harvard College, the church of Cambridge, Mr. Richard Daniel, Mr. Thomas Oakes, and other prominent men of the time.

It was in the vicinity of these farms, on the borders of the pleasant Shawshine, that the first settlers had erected their simple homes. But now, in properly laying out the town, the high land overlooking the placid waters of the Concord — in the Indian, Musketaquid, or river of the grass-ground — was chosen, and time has proved the wisdom of the selection. Billerica then was of great size, including within its bounds the present town of Tewksbury, portions of Bedford and Carlisle, and that part of Lowell called Belvidere; yet the "township," so distinguished for the reservation of home-lots, was of comparatively small extent. It was laid out from the north line of Mr. Dudley's farm, the boundary of which is still known by the name of Churnstaff Lane, and followed the course of the Concord about one mile, the river forming its western boundary. The common land spread beyond its northern and eastern limits, there being about one square mile in the home municipality.

The principal surveyor was Jonathan Danforth, although Ralph Hill, Sr., George Farley, and others occasionally made surveys. Danforth was one of the esteemed fathers of the town, a man of eminent ability, of rare and sincere Christianity. To him, perhaps more than to any other, was the town indebted in those early days for wise and discriminating judgment and devotion to its affairs.

The town lots having been divided and homesteads built, the choice of a minister was the next important matter to be decided. The inhabitants, in 1658, made provision for building a house for

the minister, and suitable allotments of land, both for the ministry as glebe, and as a gift in settlement, were carefully reserved. The house was built under the direction of John Parker, one of the most honored citizens, and among the charges fifteen shillings were paid "to henry Jeffs for briks 300 for y<sup>e</sup> minister's Chimley."

The choice of a minister fell upon the Rev. Samuel Whiting, a young man fresh from Harvard College, cultured, pious, and animated with the divine spirit of liberty. The invitation to Mr. Whiting was cheerfully accepted, and an agreement was made between the freemen, nineteen in number, and himself to settle him with them. A liberal arrangement was made for his support, — £40 for the first two years, £50 for the second two, £60 for the third; and they further promised "to better his maintenance as the Lord should better the estates of his people." This was no idle promise, for the next year it was "agreed by the major p<sup>rt</sup> of the Towne that Mr. Whiting shall have £50 for this yere for his maintenance and caring down corne and makeing a well and hovill for his catell: which is 10£ more than o<sup>r</sup> agreement."

In the autumn of that year he came to live among them, and continued in his sacred office beloved and revered by all, until his decease, a period of over fifty years.

During the first few months it is supposed that the preaching was in private houses; but in 1659 the inhabitants agreed "that there shall be a meetinge hous built: this winter follinge: thirty foote Longe: and: twenty and foure foot wide: and twelve foot hige: and the studs to be 3 foot asunder: the sids and eands shall be covered w<sup>th</sup> bords: and the Roof w<sup>th</sup> thatch." The location selected was a little east of the present edifice of this venerable parish, the land having once been granted to Captain Daniel Gookin, superintendent of the Indians, but exchanged by him for a farm in the southern part of the town. The meeting-house was built, therefore, in the winter of 1660, but it was not until the 27th of April, 1663, that the church was regularly organized, "when y<sup>e</sup> Counsell of Elders and messengers from other churches" were present, and not until November 11, nearly seven months later, that the ceremony of ordination was performed, and the pastor solemnly installed after the simple but impressive manner of the Puritan faith.

A decade had passed since the morning greeted the smoke from the first hearth-places in the valleys of the Shawshine and Concord, and the records

give evidence that the residents had made many improvements in civil and religious affairs. Every freeman was made to feel his personal responsibility in the conduct of business, and a penalty of one shilling was ordered for non-attendance at each town-meeting, which was set for the "first second day" of every month, "to begin: about the sunn one our and a halfe hy." In 1657 John Parker had been "aprooved Clarke of y<sup>e</sup> Writts." The next year William Tay was chosen town-clerk; and in the succeeding year Jonathan Danforth was ordered to keep the town's books. He continued for about twenty years to perform the duties of clerk, greatly to the advantage of all who have followed him in that office. Although it is probable that selectmen, or "townsmen," as they were frequently called, were chosen prior to 1660, no record of the fact is extant until that year, when John Parker, Lieutenant William French, Ralph Hill, Sr., Thomas Foster, and Jonathan Danforth were "chosen Selectmen for y<sup>e</sup> yere inseuinge."

In the course of the next year the difficult question of seating the people in the meeting-house was settled, and it was agreed that "y<sup>e</sup> Towne doe apoynt Left. Willm french: and John Parker, Ralph Hill, senr., and William Tay to sitt in y<sup>e</sup> Deacons Seate and also y<sup>e</sup> Towne doe apoynte and impower thease four men joyned w<sup>th</sup> Mr. Whitinge to apoynt y<sup>e</sup> reste of y<sup>e</sup> inhabitantes and proprietors, there severall places where they shall sitt in y<sup>e</sup> meetinge house acordinge to there best discreteans." The method followed far into the next century was to seat according to age and the amount of rates paid, giving to age the preference.

With that regard for the morals of their children characteristic of the Puritans, the fathers of the town ordered "y<sup>t</sup> Leiftenet Willm french: and Ralph Hill, senr., doe take care and examin the sevr<sup>ll</sup> families in o<sup>r</sup> town, whether: there children and Servantes, are, Taught: in y<sup>e</sup> precepts, of: relidione in readinge and Lerninge there Caticise acording to y<sup>e</sup> law of y<sup>e</sup> cuntry," — and from time to time this injunction was repeated.

Very soon after the first locating a military company was organized, of which all able-bodied men between the ages of sixteen and sixty were members. In 1660 "Simon Burd: was sworne: Clarke of o<sup>r</sup> Trayne bande, by Captin Gookin," and a slight fine was imposed for "not trayning" upon persons who were absent on the regular field days. The higher officers were appointed by the General Court, and it was considered a great



Assault on Billerica.

honor to receive a commission; but the subordinate officers were usually elected by the towns: thus, in 1661 "Thomas Foster was chosen Eldest Corporall, George Farley, corporall, Samuell Kempe Drumer and Willm Hamlitt Clarke," of the company here. The titles, once given, were generally borne through life. The officers wore swords, and carried partisans, sometimes known as leading-staves. The sergeants bore halberds, and the common soldiers muskets with matchlocks, besides a pair of bandoleers, or powder-pouches, for each soldier. In nearly all trainbands there were some pikemen, who were the tallest men in the company. They carried pikes, the handles of which were of wood ten feet in length, and defensive armor was worn by them, ordinarily consisting of "a sufficient corselet, buff coat, or quilted coat."

The records of the town in the ten years which had passed show that the Concord and Shawshin rivers had been well arched with substantial bridges; that known as the "Great Bridge" over the Concord having first been built near the "Fordway" previous to 1658. It was removed farther up the stream a few years after, and again, at a later period still, to its present site. Saw and grist mills were very early built, not only on both rivers, but on various small brooks in different parts of the town. To guard the heavy slumbers of the tired workers in the village, a watch was ordered to patrol nightly whenever there seemed to be danger of invasion from the dreaded savages.

Few, if any, of the faded records of these primitive days have more interest than the one bearing the simple statement that on April 10, 1663, Ralph Hill, Sr., gave to the town half of an acre of land "for a burying place." The little flock had already lost some of its precious ones, — the first death being that of Hannah Foster, daughter of Henry and Mary Foster, which occurred early in May, 1653. In less than three weeks after making the gift of this land to the town the aged and esteemed donor closed his earthly existence.

The South Burial-Ground, as it is called, enlarged by numerous additions, is yet a sunny, old-fashioned place of rest, where the brown thrush builds her nest unmolested, and where the squirrel leaps nimbly over the rustic, vine-clad walls.

A score of years had elapsed since the organization of the town, and nothing had disturbed the profound peace and security of the little hamlet; but now, when the fruits of their arduous exertions were beginning to ripen, the settlers were thrown

into alarm and peril by the sudden uprising throughout the borders of the colony of the Indians, under the leadership of Philip, the powerful chief of the Pokanokets, the ruling mind of the New England tribes. The horrors of that dreadful time are familiarly known through the medium of song and story; but while the bare record is still sufficient to blanch the cheek, what imagination can adequately portray the terrors of that dark season to the scattered and remote settlements where the rustling of the wind through the leafless boughs of winter, the accidental report of firearms, the very aspect of the clouds at nightfall, — all warned the awe-struck people of the manifold cruelties of the savage foe? The people of this town, living in the immediate vicinity of the Wamesits, — a considerable tribe who were located near the confluence of the Concord and Merrimack rivers, — were especially affected by the solemn forebodings of danger. The Wamesit Indians, it is true, under the chieftaincy of Passaconaway and his son Wannalancet had proved themselves the friends of the white men in the past; but now, while the emissaries of Philip were rallying the tribes to a last desperate resistance, little faith could be placed in their amity. It is but just to them to say, however, that it is believed they were generally true to the English. On St. John's day, in 1675, Philip began his ravages. The people of this town, imbued with fear, instantly resorted to such means of defence as were in their power. The outlying farms were deserted, the harvest-fields untouched by the sickle, and all gathered in the neighborhood of the village for better protection.

At a public meeting held on the 13th of August the town passed the following vote: "The Towne, Considering the providence of god at the p'sent calling us to lay aside our ordinary occations in providing for our creatures and to take Speciall care for the p'serving of our lives and the lives of our wives and children: the enemye being near: and the warninge by god's providence upon our neighbors being very Sollemne and awfull: do therefore order and agree joyntly to prepare a place of Safty for women and children and that all persons and teames shall attend y<sup>e</sup> said worke untill it be finished."

The houses best adapted for defensive purposes — some of which are yet standing — were immediately fortified, and the families were assigned their proper places at the different garrisons.

These were the houses of Ralph Hill, Jr., Thomas Foster, Simon Crosby, Thomas Patten, James Patterson, James Kidder, Jonathan Danforth, Jacob French, George Farley, Timothy Brooks, and Rev. Mr. Whiting, whose house was "to bee y<sup>e</sup> maine garrison, and y<sup>e</sup> last refuge in case of extremity." Mr. Richard Daniel and Mr. Job Lane, "being very remote from neighbors," were allowed to fortify themselves, and be freed from the general expense. Mr. Lane was promised "two soldiers if the country could spare them." There were, it would appear, at this time eighty-two men who were counted as soldiers, including twenty-one from the militia sent to the town's assistance.

Although the people did not suffer as some others did, yet at least one engagement occurred with predatory Indians on a hill in the northern part of the town; and at the attack on Quaboag, now Brookfield, Timothy Farley, a native of Billerica, was killed. At the same time Corporal John French was wounded, and in after years the town, "in consideration of that weakness as to his wounds in his country's service" abated his taxes, gave him a more prominent place in the meeting-house, and allowed his wife to occupy a seat "in the front gallery, with Mrs. Foster and those women placed there."

In 1676 Philip advanced the line of desolation yet nearer to this town. In the early spring the town of Lancaster was destroyed, and Groton, Marlborough, Sudbury, and other settlements ravaged. Chelmsford was also attacked, and it is said that two houses were burned in Billerica on the 10th of March.

Again, on Sunday, the 9th of April, while the people were assembled in their meeting-house, the Indians "beset Billerica round about," and, firing upon the people as they came from their worship, killed one person. The inhabitants instantly rallied, and, under the brave leadership of Rev. Mr. Whiting, succeeded in driving off the foe. Thus were the towns-people filled with excitement and anxiety through those troubled months.

The war, fortunately, was not a long one; and the death of Philip effectually terminated this bloody struggle.

In 1677 the town was divided by order of the General Court into tithing districts, and Joseph Walker, George Farley, Joseph Tompson, Richard Hassett, and Samuel Manning were appointed the tithing-men. The year following, Richard Hassett was ordered "to inspect the young lads on y<sup>e</sup> Sab-

bath days, those of them that sit below in y<sup>e</sup> meeting-house," and irksome it must have been for irrepressible boyhood to be the subject of such particular attention.

For several years the old meeting-house had been found to be too small for the needs of the now fast growing town, the records giving every few years long lists of new freemen who took "y<sup>e</sup> oath of fidelity." Still, the cost of a new meeting-house would bear heavily on the slender means of the people, so it was agreed to build galleries, and otherwise to improve the old house, which was done in 1679. The building was used for worship until 1694, when a new edifice was erected.

Some idea of the condition of the town in 1680 may be formed from the return made to the county court for that year, wherein it is stated that "the number of families able to bare up publicke charges is about fivety, the number of aged Helpless, y<sup>e</sup> widdowes and poor persons that want reliefe is ten, the annuall allowance to our revered pastor is seventy pound  $\text{₹}$  a<sup>n</sup>im, in Country pay: as for schooles, wee have no gramer schooles, en<sup>s</sup>igne Tompson is appointed to teach those to write and read that will come to him, also several women, Schoole Dames. As for young p'sons and inmates we know of none amongst us but are orderly." As a portion of this generous salary in country pay allowed Mr. Whiting, he was to receive one pound of butter for every milch cow in town. There were then about one hundred and fifty cows in various herds, all under the care of "keepers." Feeling, perhaps, that the original owners of the soil had not been quite fairly treated, the whites purchased of them, in 1684, their title at four Indian meetings.

In the same year Jonathan Danforth was chosen a deputy to a "speciall General Court." The town had occasionally sent deputies before this to represent them in particular cases, but in the early years of the settlement Humphrey Davie, Esq., of Boston, had generally served them in that capacity, and the town had gratefully acknowledged his service by the present of a "fatt beast," bought with some of the town's land. From this time representatives were regularly chosen.

The second Indian attack on this town occurred on the 1st of August, 1692, during King William's War. The records are extremely meagre; but it is known that six persons were killed, — Ann, the wife of Zachary Shed, and two children, Agnes and Hannah; Joanna, the wife of Benjamin Dutton,

and two of her children by a previous marriage, named Mary and Benoni Dunkin.

Far more exciting, however, to the people of those days than even the horrors of Indian warfare were the awful and tragical scenes enacting throughout the neighboring county of Essex, particularly in the vicinity of Salem Village. The terrible delusion that hung like a pall over the people of New England, known as the witchcraft mania, shadowed within its sombre folds some unfortunate victims who had once been happy residents of this pleasant, tranquil village. Stories of sorcery, of midnight carousals

“Mongst horrid shapes, and shrieks, and sights unholy!”

filled with terror the simple and imaginative minds of the country folk. There were those who declared they had seen the forms of witches crossing and recrossing the waters of the Concord, in the neighborhood of the old mill at the falls; and with the mill itself were long connected certain dark and mysterious legends.

The family of Thomas Carrier, which had recently removed hence to Andover was arrested, and the mother, Mrs. Martha Carrier, was executed for witchcraft. Thomas Carrier, otherwise known as Morgan, was a native of Wales. He was admitted an inhabitant of Billerica in 1677, having previously been refused, although he had lived in town several years. His marriage with Martha Allen was solemnized by General Gookin, May 7, 1664. The members of his family arrested, besides his wife, were four children; and Mrs. Carrier's sister, Mrs. Toothaker, and her daughter, of this town, were also imprisoned. The children were obliged to testify against their mother; but “her two sons refused to perjure themselves till they had been tied neck and heels so long that the blood was ready to gush from them.”

Besides the Carrier family, Rebecca, the wife of William Chamberlain, and John Durant, both of Billerica, died in prison at Cambridge, where they were incarcerated for the supposed crime of witchcraft.

Nearly twenty years after this fearful deception the General Court authorized the payment of a sum of money to the heirs of those who had suffered, and “Goody Carrier's” descendants were rewarded with the munificent amount of £7 6s.

The third and final attack by Indians on Billerica occurred during King William's War, on the 5th of August, 1695. Several families living

in the northern part of the town, knowing the Wametsits to be friendly, had felt but little apprehension of an invasion. On the day named a number of horsemen were seen approaching, but “were not suspected for Indians till they surprised the house they came to.” They entered the house,—that of John Rogers,—and finding him reposing on the bed, instantly fired an arrow at him. He woke with a start, withdrew the weapon, and expired. One woman, who was in the chamber, jumped from the window and made her escape. Another woman was scalped and left for dead, but recovered and lived to old age. Two of Mr. Rogers's family, a son and daughter, were taken captives. Another family, that of John Leviston, was almost utterly destroyed, six persons being killed and one captured. Dr. Roger Toothaker's wife was killed, and his daughter taken prisoner. In all, ten persons were murdered and five carried away into the wilderness on this memorable day. The Indians—supposed to be Abenakis—were pursued by troops from the Centre, who did not succeed in overtaking the wily foe. It was said that the savages had even tied up the mouths of the dogs, for fear of betrayal by their barking.

This pathetic statement occurs in the town records: “Aug. 5, 1695.—This day we received that awful stroake by the enemy.—More sad than we met withall three years before when we met upon the occasion.”

The eighteenth century dawned brightly for the people of this town. The mists of superstition—the barbarities of savage life—were to be things of the past. The state of society was henceforth to become more settled, and the arts and industries of peace were now to be greater objects of care.

The fathers of the town, however,—those who yet remained of the first hardy company,—were, before the first score of years had closed, nearly all gathered into the silent communion of the sleeping. Among them was the revered pastor, whose death occurred on the last day of February, 1712.

In the same year the wise and good Jonathan Danforth died. His eminent ability, his unaffected piety, have been the theme of the historian and of the poet.

Near the close of Mr. Whiting's life the inhabitants of the town engaged the Rev. Samuel Ruggles to serve as his colleague. He was ordained in May, 1708, and remained at his charge, a faithful, sincere pastor, for more than forty years. At his death the town defrayed the expense of his

funeral, and erected a monumental stone to his memory.

The Billerica of a century and a half ago must have presented a very pleasing appearance. Along the lines of the main highways leading to Chelmsford, Concord, Woburn, and Andover the settlers' primitive houses of logs, unhewn and mud-chinked, had given place to well-framed houses, built of heavy oak beams, and covered with pine clapboards or shingles. Large barns for the storage of the harvest, substantial walls and fences, corn-ricks, and monstrous haystacks, all showed the results of hard labor, but were conclusive signs of prosperity. The plain little meeting-house already gave proof by its crowded state on days of worship that a newer and larger edifice was needed. Around it were clustered the brown homesteads of the villagers, whose latticed windows gleamed a welcome at nightfall, and where, beside the cosy ingle-nook, the aged grandsire dreamed of the days of his youth. One of these landmarks, the house that sheltered Danforth, still defies the ravages of time.

The daily wants of these frugal folk were simple, and were supplied almost wholly by the products of their farms. These showed broad fields of grain, principally corn and rye.

Orchards of apple-trees were early planted, and the fruit was found to attain a size and flavor unknown in England. Within the memory of persons now living a giant pear-tree stood in the garden of the James Kidder place. It was cut down forty years ago, and was then known to have borne fruit for one hundred and sixty years.

In the streams, shad and alewives were so abundant that in the spring they were forced far up the small brooks, whence they were taken to be used for enriching the land.

In their dress the people were simple, and accustomed to spin and weave the necessary cloth in their own homes. The laws of the colony prohibited many articles of wearing apparel that now might be considered needful; but it was probably little hardship then to give up the use of "lace and other superfluities, short sleeves, or sleeves more than half an ell wide, immoderate great breeches, knots of ribbon, broad shoulder bands and vails, double cuffs and ruffs," and the rest of the prescribed list.

From the beginning of the century until 1765, when the mutterings of the coming storm could be heard even in the most retired hamlets, the years were crowded full of active life. In the wars of

Queen Anne and George II. the men of Billerica were found at the post of duty. Benjamin Kidder, a native of this town, was among those who died at the capture of Louisburg in 1745. He had been wounded during the raid of the famous Captain Lovewell, a score of years before, in which affair the town was also represented by Jonathan Kittredge, who was slain in the engagement, by Solomon Keyes, who had an almost miraculous escape, and by Ensign Seth Wyman, who, though not a native, was closely connected with Billerica by his marriage with the daughter of Thomas Ross. He was one of the family of Wymans whose farms lay partly in Woburn and partly in Billerica, and an old ballad of the day thus describes him at that terrible fight:—

"Seth Wyman who in Woburn lived,  
(A marksman he of courage true,  
Shot the first Indian whom they saw,  
Sheer thro' his heart the bullet flew."

The town was represented in the contest known as the French and Indian War of 1755, and in a sortie from Fort William Henry, Lieutenant Simon Godfrey of Billerica was killed.

Within the town time had wrought its inevitable changes. In 1738 a new meeting-house was built, with galleries, square pews, and a sounding-board; and there are some among us whose memory can recall the time when it was filled to overflowing with young and old; when the galleries were occupied by trim lasses and sturdy lads, who trilled and quavered through the fugues of the melodious old hymns then in favor.

In 1747, Rev. Mr. Ruggles having become enfeebled by age, Mr. John Chandler of Andover, who had previously taught school here, was ordained as colleague, and after the death of Mr. Ruggles he continued to perform the duties of minister until his dismissal, which occurred in 1760. He appears to have been a man of good understanding and excellent education; but a slight cloud rested over his labors, in consequence of certain charges of levity; "some being dissatisfied at y<sup>e</sup> chearful behav<sup>r</sup> of y<sup>e</sup> Pastor at y<sup>e</sup> bringing of a second Wife into his house." He consequently asked for a dismission, which was granted, with "a free forgiveness of every past offence." He resided in town, occasionally preaching and performing other clerical offices until his death, November 10, 1762. After the removal of Mr. Chandler, the church was without a settled pastor for several years; but on the 26th of January, 1763, the Rev.



Henry Cumings, a young graduate of Harvard, was ordained to the ministry of this town and parish, and for upwards of sixty years the sacred office was held by him to the greatest satisfaction of his charge.

The town was shorn of a portion of its land in 1729 by the incorporation of Bedford, and five years later Tewksbury was taken almost wholly from Billerica. The last division occurred in 1783, when a strip of territory was assigned to Carlisle.

The material wealth of the town just before the Revolution had much increased since the opening of the century. Many influential families located here during that period. The descendants of the first settlers, by the natural results of their industry and economy, were become among the leading people. In 1765, there were rather more than thirteen hundred persons in town, fourteen of the number being negroes, all, or nearly all, held in slavery.

In freeing his slave, "Simon Negro," in 1693, the Rev. Mr. Whiting set the first example on record in Massachusetts, it is believed, of the manumission of a slave. Nevertheless, his beneficent act was not greatly imitated, for through the score or more years before the Revolution colored bondmen were owned in Billerica. The ancient records of the First Parish contain many such curious passages as the following:—

"Nelly y<sup>e</sup> daughter of Lydia York, y<sup>e</sup> negro slave of y<sup>e</sup> widow Hannah Bowers was baptized at y<sup>e</sup> desire and on y<sup>e</sup> account of its Mistress, May 24, 1752." In the town records for 1772 there is mentioned the "manumittance of a negro child named Flora," by John and Esther Nickles, in consideration of twenty pounds from Penelope Vassall of Cambridge, whose servant Tony was father of the child. Among the poor people harbored in town for a number of years was a family of French Neutrals from Acadia.

Much attention was paid to maintaining good schools, and they were regularly kept, a grammar school at the Centre, and a "squadron" school for the outlying districts. The masters were well paid, and were usually men of learning. Among them were Jonathan Kidder, Stephen Shattuck, and Jonathan Frye; the first named, a native of the town, graduated at Harvard in the class of 1751.

It does not belong to us to rehearse the great events of the Revolution; the immediate sentiments and actions of this town are more pertinent

to our sketch. Here, as elsewhere, the most ardent patriots were the men of education and character, such as the Rev. Mr. Cumings, Colonel William Tompson, Captain Ebenezer Bridge, Enoch Kidder, Esq., Captain Jonathan Bowers, and their compatriots.

The infamous "Writs of Assistance," the obnoxious Stamp Act, and other measures having aroused the indignation of the people, they assembled on the 21st of December, 1767, and after considering the distressed and impoverished state of the country, with the belief that the encouragement of home industry was a duty, they unanimously agreed that after the 31st of that month they would neither use nor import goods of British manufacture.

On the 21st day of September, 1768, the town assembled to consider the "Critical state of our public affairs, more especially the present precarious Situation of our Invaluable Rights and privileges civil and Religious," and William Stickney, Esq., was chosen to attend the convention to be held the next day at Faneuil Hall. In the succeeding years meetings were frequently held, all expressive of the most profound solicitude in the political situation. The resolutions and reports of these meetings elicit our admiration for the patriots who framed them.

In 1774 the town voted concerning the tax on tea. It was declared to be "an artful piece of Policy for accomplishing wicked and Base Purposes," and "ought to be treated with the utmost abhorrence and Detestation by every one who has the least Regard for the Preservation of the Liberty and Virtue of America." The "Liberty of America!" was henceforth to be the watchword. The tone of the succeeding resolutions indicates this very forcibly.

The Boston Port Bill was vigorously attacked, and the people unanimously agreed that "the Blow Struck at Boston is aimed at the Province in General, and is a Prelude to something further, Equally Vindictive;" they also voted to support the people of Boston, to "strengthen them to the utmost of our power, and to join with them in any measures that shall be Judged expedient for our Common Safety and Defence." On the 22d of September, 1774, they voted "that our Representative pay no Regard to the King's new Mandamus Council," and that "if the Governor should Dissolve, prorogue, or adjourn the court, that our Representative join the house in forming themselves into a pro-

vincial Congress." Besides passing resolutions, the town took early and decided measures to be ready for instant action. The militia was arranged, and a new company of minute-men was formed. The militia and the minute-men were both to train one day each week. Arms of all kinds were very difficult to obtain, and the rusty old swords and firelocks, with bloody bayonets that had seen service in the Indian wars, were brought out and burnished anew.

On the 8th of March, 1775, Thomas Ditson, Jr., one of the minute-men, went to Boston to sell a load of vegetables, and, if possible, to procure a gun. He was decoyed by a soldier into the barracks, and while endeavoring to purchase a gun, the cry was raised that "a rebel was tempting a soldier to desert." Ditson was immediately seized, tarred and feathered, and drawn through the streets in the midst of a mob of soldiery belonging to the 47th regiment. Finally, when under the famous Liberty Tree, he was allowed to depart. It is said that on this occasion the world-renowned tune of Yankee Doodle was first sung in mockery to English words:—

"Yankee Doodle came to town,  
For to buy a firelock.  
We will tar and feather him,  
And so we will John Hancock."

This outrage created great indignation in Billerica. The selectmen wrote and went to Boston to demand satisfaction, and declared further, that, if such a thing were repeated, they should "hereafter use a different style from that of petition and complaint."

On the 19th of April the alarm was early given in Billerica, and her men marched to the support of their comrades at Concord. The minute-men, fifty-four in number, were under the command of Captain Jonathan Stickney. One company of the militia, of thirty-five men, was under the command of Captain Edward Farmer; the other, of twelve men, was commanded by Lieutenant Oliver Crosby. On the retreat from Concord, our troops met the British, and John Nichols and Timothy Blanchard were wounded; while in the rout at Lincoln, Nathaniel Wyman, a native of Billerica, was killed. He sleeps with his fellow-martyrs in the old graveyard at Lincoln. Lieutenant Asa Spaulding, one of the minute-men, that day observed a "red-coat" about to fire upon him from behind a tree. Instantly his own gun was raised, and the soldier fell, mortally wounded. In the course of an engagement Lieu-

tenant Spaulding captured one of the British, and brought him to Billerica, where he was regarded for some time as a great curiosity. Fears for the safety of John Hancock and Samuel Adams, who were in Lexington, induced them to remove for the day, and they were hospitably entertained at the house of Mr. Amos Wyman, of this town, near the Burlington line.

The startling events of this day caused the greatest excitement throughout the town; and thenceforward, until the close of the war, the records teem with acts, orders and resolutions, charges and accounts, all relating to the great conflict. In May, Ebenezer Bridge, the first captain of the minute-men, was chosen colonel of the 27th regiment in the Massachusetts army.

In the ever-memorable battle of Bunker Hill, Asa Pollard of this town was killed by a cannonball from the ship Somerset, lying off Charlestown, and the manner of his death is thus described by Colonel William Prescott: "He was so near me that my clothes were besmeared with his blood and brains, which I wiped off in some degree with a handful of fresh earth. The sight was so shocking to many of the men, that they left their posts and ran to view him. I then ordered him to be buried instantly. A subaltern officer expressed surprise that I should allow him to be buried without having prayers said. I replied, 'This is the first man that has been killed, and the only one that will be buried to-day. God only knows who or how many of us will fall before it is over.'" Besides Asa Pollard, Samuel Hill, Benjamin Easty, Timothy Toothaker, and Benjamin Wilson were killed,—all of this town; and Colonel Bridge was wounded, with many others, on this bloody day.

On the 23d of May, 1776,—six weeks before the Declaration of Independence,—the following bold and expressive resolution was unanimously passed by the citizens: "*Resolved*, That if the Hon<sup>ble</sup> Congress should, for the Safety of the Colonies, Declare them Independent of Great Britain, they, the said Inhabitants, will Engage with their lives and fortunes to support them." Such was the sentiment shown until victory and freedom were secured.

The outbreak known as Shays' Rebellion, in 1786, called out Captain Jonathan Stickney's company, which marched to guard the Court at Cambridge.

In 1779 the Rev. Mr. Cumings was chosen a delegate to attend the convention for forming a

state constitution, and a few years later Colonel William Tompson represented the town in the convention that adopted the Constitution of the United States. From that time the arts of peace once more began to flourish, and the wasted farms and industries soon took on the vigor of a new existence.

In ecclesiastical matters the town has been well favored. Just before the new century came in the present handsome structure of the First Parish was erected. It was much improved in 1844, when it was turned partly around. The bell which was given to the town by Billericay in England was accidentally broken the previous year.

In 1814, the Rev. Dr. Cumings having become enfeebled by age, a colleague was given him, the Rev. Nathaniel Whitman being ordained to that position. The period of ten years following was one of great religious interest. The promulgation of the Unitarian belief then became more pronounced, and Dr. Cumings and Mr. Whitman both took ground with the new school. Since that time the church has been Unitarian in faith. Dr. Cumings died on the 5th of September, 1823, at the advanced age of eighty-four years. Mr. Whitman remained as pastor until 1835, when he was dismissed at his own request, leaving many warm friends who yet remember his piety and virtue. He was followed by various clergymen of culture and ability,—the Rev. W. E. Abbot, the Rev. T. H. Dorr, the Rev. James Thurston, and others, until 1866, when the society secured the services of the Rev. C. C. Hussey, who continues the honored pastor of this ancient and thoroughly vigorous parish.

In 1828 a Baptist society was formed, which worshipped for a few years in the "Fordway" school-house. At a later period the meeting-house, first erected near the "Great Bridge," was removed to its present beautiful location in the central village. The church has had a succession of excellent pastors since the first incumbent, Rev. J. W. Sargeant. Rev. E. T. Lyford has accepted a call to this parish. In 1829 another church was organized on the Trinitarian Congregational creed, and its house of worship, also at the Centre, was dedicated early the next year. It is at present without a pastor. Universalist and Methodist societies were formed in 1842 and in 1854 respectively. Their existence was short, the Universalist soon uniting with the Unitarian. By the efforts of citizens of North Billerica, a second Baptist society was

formed there a few years ago, and, greatly by the aid of an esteemed resident, they were enabled to build their charming little church edifice. The Rev. Nathaniel L. Colby is the minister in charge of this enterprising parish.

The only other religious organization in the town at present is that of the Roman Catholics, whose modest structure is pleasantly located near the same village.

In educational as in religious affairs, Billerica has ever held a position not unworthy of the general progress of the hour. Since the days of the venerable "schoole dames" and of Master Tompson, through the "squadrons" under Frye and Kidder, the children of the town have been well taught. In 1797 the celebrated Dr. Ebenezer Pemberton removed hither, and opened an academy for the instruction of youth, which continued ten years, greatly to the improvement of learning. Another institution was incorporated early in 1820, and for sixteen years the Billerica Academy flourished. These seminaries numbered among their students at different times many who have since become famous. The names of Rev. Joseph Richardson, Judge Henry C. Whitman, Hon. Thomas G. Cary, George Bruce Upton, George H. Preston, Abram R. Thompson, M. D., Hon. Josiah B. French, Joseph F. Hill, M. D., Hon. Onslow Stearns, and others will ever be held in esteem by the citizens of this town. In 1852 the now widely known Howe School was founded upon the bequest of the lamented physician, Dr. Zadock Howe. This institution, under the preceptorship of Mr. Samuel Tucker, A. M., is in a healthful and progressive state.

The public schools of the town are ten in number, of which two are grammar schools. They are well taught, as a rule,—the teachers being young women of good education and social standing.

The town is yet wanting in one important department of learning; there is no public library. It is to be hoped that there will be one in the near future. There are, however, six society or association libraries in town, numbering more than two thousand volumes, with a yearly circulation of over twelve thousand.

It is an interesting fact that from the very first settlement of the place some attention has always been directed to industrial pursuits considered separately from the general vocation of agriculture. Scarcely three years after the incorporation of the town the freemen allowed certain privileges to the "minerall company on fox hill, the south eande

thereof," and it is known that John Sheldon soon had a "siller forge." The building of saw and grist mills has been mentioned. A fulling-mill was early in operation on the Concord, to which the farmers carried their homespun cloth to be made more serviceable.

In 1708 a grant was made to Christopher Osgood of water privileges at the falls on the Concord. Years after the place was known as Carleton's mills, then as Richardson's. It became, in 1793, the property of the Middlesex Canal Company, who sold, in 1811, a portion of the water-power and some of the mill property to the late Francis Faulkner. He continued the business of dyeing and finishing cloth previously carried on, and also immediately began the manufacture of woollen cloth. Mr. Faulkner was one of the first woollen manufacturers in the country.

The property, greatly enlarged and improved, has been for many years owned by the firm of James R. Faulkner and Company. In 1851 the Canal Company sold the remainder of their rights and property to Messrs. Charles P. and Thomas Talbot, who had already begun the manufacture of dyestuffs and chemicals in the vicinity. They have erected large and costly mills for the manufacture of woollen goods, besides vastly increasing and improving their old works. With the other prominent company they have had the pleasure of seeing the little hamlet of thirty years ago grow into the flourishing village of North Billerica.

At South Billerica, at the outlet of Nutting Pond, is the mill privilege of Messrs. Charles H. Hill and Company, who manufacture improved machinery, among the varieties being the celebrated machine for splitting leather, the invention of Major Samuel Parker, a native of this town. The glue-factory of Messrs. F. and J. Jaquith, and another for making fine cabinet furniture, of Messrs. A. H. Patten and Company, are the other distinctively manufacturing establishments in Billerica. The total capital invested in manufactures in Billerica, according to the best advices, amounts to \$516,910, and the estimated value of the annual production reaches \$1,287,610.

Intimately associated with the development of manufactures and the growth of the town, which now numbers about 1,900 inhabitants, have been the means of communication with the metropolis, eighteen miles distant.

The Middlesex Canal Company began operations in 1804. The canal passed through the eastern

part of the town, the water being drawn from the Concord River at North Billerica. The opening of the Boston and Lowell Railroad in 1835 superseded its use. There are now two stations on the road named, in the town; one at East, and the other at North Billerica.

The residents of the central and southern portions of the town, feeling the need of better accommodations in travelling, organized, in 1877, the Billerica and Bedford Railroad Company. The road was opened for travel in the autumn of the same year. It is but two feet in gauge, yet well and handsomely equipped and very generally popular. Taken in all,—its length being only about eight miles, or from Bedford to North Billerica,—it is probably the smallest passenger railroad in the world, and has naturally excited considerable attention. Unfortunately the company was obliged to enter bankruptcy; but measures are taking to reorganize, and it is expected that the road will soon be in successful operation.

In its agricultural aspects the town has made some changes in the century. It is still, however, eminently a farming town, although much more attention is paid now than formerly to horticulture and market-gardening.

The citizens celebrated in 1855, with much pomp, the two hundredth anniversary of the incorporation of the town, and the address on the occasion was given by her honored son, Rev. Joseph Richardson, many years pastor at Hingham.

In 1876, on the Centennial Independence Day, Rev. Elias Nason, resident here, delivered an oration before the assembled inhabitants, in which he vividly contrasted the social life of a century ago with that of to-day.

There stands in the beautiful village of Billerica, under the ever-changing shadows of mighty elms, a statue, carved in northern granite,—the figure of a Union soldier at rest.

Of one hundred and thirty-three brave men who left their homes in Billerica during the Rebellion, twenty fell in the sacred cause of liberty. Their names are: Albert E. Farmer, John C. Stewart, Edward A. Adams, Stephen H. Parker, William S. Collins, William Hayes, Charles A. Saunders, Pollard R. Shumway, Franklin Hannaford, Denis Buckley, George C. Gilman, James Shields, Reuben J. Gilman, James T. Edmunds, Asa John Patten, Joseph F. Richardson, Thomas H. Maxwell, Charles N. Fletcher, Ward Locke, and Edwin W. Huse.

In reviewing the lengthy record of this town's existence, it would doubtless be interesting to narrate the story of the lives of some who must be passed over; but it perhaps will be sufficient to refer to the families of Parker, Crosby, Hill, Tompson, Kidder, Bowers, Stickney, Richardson, Abbot, Baldwin, Rogers, Whitman, Locke, Bennett, Preston, and Faulkner in order to understand what a shining roll could be made of names historic in religion, law, medicine, and literature, and in military, mechanical, and mercantile affairs.

First in point of time, the Rev. Samuel Whiting is eminent by his works and the beneficence of his career. He was the oldest son of the Rev. Samuel Whiting of Lynn, by a second marriage with Elizabeth, the daughter of the Rt. Hon. Oliver St. John, Lord Chief Justice of England in Cromwell's time. He was born about the year 1632, probably at Skirbick, near Boston, in Lincolnshire, England, at that time his father's place of residence.

The cause of the Puritans found an ardent supporter in the elder Whiting, who removed with his family at an early day to this country, where he became minister of the church of Lynn. His son Samuel soon entered Harvard, graduating in 1653. Three years later the young student of divinity was married to Dorcas Chester, at Watertown, on the 12th of November, 1656, and having completed his theological course, came to Billerica in 1659, where, as shown in the preceding article, he was solemnly ordained, November 11, 1663, pastor of the First Church of Christ. This holy office was filled by him "with great prudence, diligence, and circumspection," until his death, February 29, 1712, at the venerable age of eighty years. His faithful wife preceded him by only a few days, her death occurring the 16th of February, 1712. Their children were seven sons and four daughters.

The character of Mr. Whiting is described by Mather in his "Magnalia" as that of "a reverend, holy, and faithful minister of the gospel;" and the annals of this town show that he was not only a spiritual guide but a brave leader and wise counsellor in the trials of the early fathers.

The following lines are from a poem written on his death:—

"Whiting, we here beheld a starry light,  
Burning in Christ's right hand and shining bright;  
Years seven times seven sent forth his precious rays,  
Unto the gospel's profit and Jehovah's praise."

Mr. Whiting was the founder of a family some of whose members—as the Rev. John Whiting, Captain Oliver Whiting, Deacon Samuel Whiting, Augustus Whiting, M. D., and others—have kept alive the esteem which was accorded to their revered ancestor.

Contemporary with Mr. Whiting as one of the founders of this town was Jonathan Danforth, who was also of high and ancient lineage, and shares in the veneration of posterity. He was born at Framingham, Suffolk, England, on the 29th of February, 1628, his father, the Rev. Nicholas Danforth, being a gentleman of such fortune and position "that it cost him a considerable sum to escape the knighthood which King Charles imposed" on all of a certain estate. The family came to New England in 1634, and settled at Cambridge, where the father died four years later. The sons, Thomas, Samuel, and Jonathan, all attained positions of trust and consideration. Jonathan was educated for a surveyor, and followed the profession through life, becoming distinguished in it.

His nephew, the Rev. John Danforth of Dorchester, wrote of him in a poem published on his death,—

"He rode the circuit, chain'd great towns and farms  
To good behavior; and by well marked stations  
He fixed their bounds for many generations.  
His art ne'er fail'd him, though the loadstone fail'd,  
When oft by mines and streams it was assail'd."

He was twice married, his first wife, by whom he had a large family, being Elizabeth, the daughter of John Poulter of Raleigh, in Essex, England. Of his many children but two sons, Samuel and Jonathan, left descendants. His second wife was Esther Converse, to whom he was married on the 17th of November, 1690. Her death, April 5, 1711, was not many months prior to that of her venerable consort, which occurred on the 7th of September, in the succeeding year. In the old South Burial-Ground their moss-covered stones are still standing.

Eminent by his intellect and learning, of commanding presence and high moral character, the Rev. Henry Cumings, D. D., was not merely "considered by his contemporaries as one of the most distinguished divines of New England," but also as one of the firmest patriots and wisest leaders in the civil and political life of his time. He was born September 28, 1739, at Hollis, New Hampshire, and was educated at Harvard University. In 1763 he was ordained as pastor—the fourth in the

order of succession — of the church of Billerica. For fifty years he sustained the sacred charge unassisted.

Dr. Cumings was often called upon to preach on public occasions, and his discourses, some fourteen of which were printed, "afford evidence of superior talents, united with a sound judgment and great vigor of intellect." Dr. Cumings was thrice married. His first wife, Ann Lambert of Reading, to whom he was united May 19, 1763, was the mother of his five children, three daughters and two sons. She died January 5, 1784, and in 1786, November 14, Dr. Cumings married her sister, Mrs. Margaret Briggs. Her death occurred June 2, 1790. His third marriage was with Miss Sarah Bridge, daughter of his venerable contemporary of Chelmsford, the Rev. Ebenezer Bridge. Her death occurred the 25th of February, 1812.

Dr. Cumings finished his earthly labors September 5, 1823, in the eighty-fourth year of his age and the sixty-first of his ministry.

Zadock Howe was born in the town of Bolton, Connecticut, on the 15th of February, 1777, of humble parentage. He received only the advantages of country schools, and began life as a simple workingman. Native genius, an unconquerable desire for knowledge, and a spirit of great endurance at length placed him in a higher walk. The practice of medicine became the profession of his life, and in it he obtained eminence, fortune, and friends.

He died on the 8th of March, 1851, leaving, as a testimonial of his interest in humanity and its education, a noble bequest for the founding of an institution for the instruction of youth. The academy thus established by his wisdom and munificence was incorporated February 27, 1852, as the "Howe School."

As a mark of its high appreciation, the town of Billerica erected a solid shaft of granite to his memory. "Henceforth let every man speak, with mingled emotions of gratitude and reverence, the name of Zadock Howe."

Few men have gone from Billerica who have brought more honor to the home of their birth than the clergyman and legislator, the Rev. Joseph Richardson.

Born on the 1st of February, 1778, the son of Joseph and Patty (Chapman) Richardson, he was educated at Dartmouth, where he graduated in 1802. Four years after he was ordained pastor of

the first parish of Hingham, in this state, a position which he held for sixty-five years.

Mr. Richardson was married on the 23d of May, 1807, to Ann, the daughter of Mr. Benjamin Bowers, who was also a native of Billerica. Mr. Richardson repeatedly served in the state senate and house of representatives. He was chosen a member of the State Constitutional Convention of 1820, and was twice elected to the National House of Representatives, where he served from March 4, 1827, to March 4, 1831.

"At the close of his Congressional terms he resumed and attended to his parochial duties without interruption, except from ill health," until 1855, when he was partially relieved of the responsibilities of his charge by the appointment, with his approbation, of the Rev. Calvin Lincoln, as colleague.

Mr. Richardson died September 25, 1871, at the venerable age of ninety-three years. His wife had died the preceding year, at the age of eighty-five. Mr. Richardson always kept alive an affectionate interest in his native town, and on the occasion of the celebration of the two-hundredth anniversary of its settlement, May 29, 1855, he delivered the oration of the day.

Josiah Bowers French was the son of Luther French, and was born in this town December 13, 1799. His education was derived from the common district schools of the day, the humble advantages of which were obtained at intervals. Yet his keen intellect, his observing habits, and his strong determination to rise served, in spite of such meagre opportunities, to win success.

In his early business career he was interested in stage and railway operations, and later on showed great energy and prudence in the construction and development of the railroad system of the country. In enterprises of this nature he was eminently fortunate, and amassed a large property. During the latter part of his life he was interested in many manufactures and kindred industries.

In 1824 he was appointed a deputy sheriff for Middlesex County, when he removed to Lowell, which was afterwards his residence. In 1835, and again in later life, in 1861, he represented that city in the legislature. He was honored by the election to the mayoralty of Lowell for the year 1849, and was re-elected the following year; his efficient and careful conduct of municipal affairs, especially of finances, is still proverbial. In 1851, Mr. French was chosen president of the Northern

Railroad Company of New Hampshire, but soon resigned the office. The death of Mr. French occurred on the 21st of August, 1876.

Closely identified with the interests of Billerica from the beginning of the settlement, when John Stearns was one of the primitive inhabitants, the family of Stearns has furnished to the country its due proportion of divines, statesmen, and soldiers; but no one has occupied a more distinguished position than the late Hon. Onslow Stearns, whose high character and services have ever been regarded with pride by his fellow-citizens. He was born in Billerica, August 30, 1810, the son of John Stearns, and grandson of the Hon. Isaac Stearns, a man of much prominence in civil and military affairs in the latter part of the preceding century.

The education of Onslow Stearns was obtained in the common and academical schools of his native town. At about the age of seventeen he left his home and entered business in Boston. Becoming desirous of more active employment, he soon went to Georgetown, D. C., and was engaged in the engineers' department of the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal. In the performance of this work he was associated with an older brother, the late John O. Stearns, who had already attained considerable prominence in railroad affairs, and afterwards became widely known by the variety and extent of his railway interests. Upon the completion of the canal the brothers were for several years associated in constructing a number of the leading railroads of New York, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania.

In 1837 Mr. Stearns returned to New England, and undertook the building and superintendence of the Nashua and Lowell Railroad. The management of this road was relinquished by him in 1845, when he began the construction of the Northern Railroad, which was built wholly under his supervision. From this time the rapid increase of railway facilities found an earnest supporter in Mr. Stearns, and before many years had passed he was intimately connected with many of the most important roads of New England. Thus he at one time held the offices of president and manager of the Northern Railroad Company, — positions which he occupied for twenty-seven years, — and was also president of the Sullivan, the Contoocook Valley, and the Concord and Claremont Railroad companies, which were connected in interest with the Northern. He was also president and active manager of the Old Colony Railroad, of several tributary roads, and of the Old Colony Steamboat

Company, which, with the road of that name, forms the Fall River Line to New York from Boston. He held also the presidency of the Concord Railroad Company, which, with its branches and dependencies, is the centre of the railway system of New Hampshire.

As a patriot and legislator the career of Mr. Stearns was not less successful. In the early days of 1861, one of the first men in New Hampshire to uphold the National Union by his wealth and influence was Onslow Stearns. In politics he was a firm and conscientious Republican, and devoted his energies to the maintenance of the loyal sentiment and the protection of the government. He initiated the movement which resulted in the formation of the Soldiers' Aid Society of New Hampshire, to which he largely contributed from his abundant means.

In 1862, and again in 1863, he was elected to the state senate, in the latter year serving as president of that body. On the occasion of his taking the presidential chair he delivered an address to the senate filled with patriotism and sterling good sense. In 1864 he was a delegate to the National Republican Convention at Baltimore. The Republicans of New Hampshire in 1869, by a large majority, elected him governor of the state. He was re-elected in the following year, and "his two administrations as governor stand on record as among the brightest pages in the gubernatorial history of that state."

Mr. Stearns was united in marriage with Miss Mary Abbott Holbrook on the 26th of June, 1845, at Lowell, Mass. His death occurred at Concord, New Hampshire, on the 29th of December, 1878. Mrs. Stearns and five children, one son and four daughters, survive him.

Governor Stearns rose by his own efforts from the obscurity of a simple farmer's boy to the highest trust of his adopted state. Of a generous nature, the hospitalities of his elegant home in Concord were extended to many of the distinguished men of the country, — prominent among whom were Presidents Grant and Hayes. The honorary degree of Master of Arts was conferred on him, in 1857, by Dartmouth College.

His Excellency, Thomas Talbot, present governor of the Commonwealth, is a distinguished citizen of Billerica, where he has resided for nearly forty years. He was born on the 7th of September, 1818, in the town of Cambridge, New York, and was the seventh of eight children, of whom

seven were sons. His parents had but recently come to this country from Ireland, — the father, who was a woollen weaver, obtaining employment at Cambridge. About a year after the birth of Thomas, the family removed to Danby, Vermont, at which place, five years later, the father died.

The care of the family now devolved almost entirely upon Mrs. Talbot, the oldest child being but eighteen years of age. The mother was a woman of much native strength of character, and succeeded in giving her children not merely a living, but opportunities for their education and advancement in life.

About 1831 the family removed to Northampton, in this state, where, at thirteen, Thomas Talbot began work in the carding-room of a woollen factory. At the end of four years he entered the employment of his brothers, Charles P. and Edward Talbot, who had started a small broadcloth mill in Williamsburg; and at the age of twenty he was made overseer of the finishing department.

Education obtained from schools was, in his circumstances, naturally limited; yet he attended the Cummington Academy for two winter terms of six months each, the preceptor of the academy at the time being Rev. Dr. Stockbridge of Providence, Rhode Island.

The death of Edward Talbot occurred in 1837, and in the following year the Williamsburg factory was sold by the surviving partner, Charles P. Talbot, who then removed to Lowell and began the manufacture of dyestuffs.

Thomas Talbot remained for a few months with the purchaser of the mill, and then, going to Pittsfield, he was employed by the Pontoosuc Manufacturing Company for a short time. In the latter part of 1839 Charles P. Talbot removed his business of preparing dyestuffs from Lowell to North Billerica. In the spring of the succeeding year he was joined by his brother Thomas, and the two associated themselves in the partnership of C. P. Talbot & Co.

The business, begun with little capital and without powerful friends, has steadily increased in importance. New chemical works and woollen mills have been added from time to time, and although the prosperity of the brothers has been very great, it has not been more so than their industry, economy, uprightness, and liberality deserve.

Governor Talbot has made the village of North Billerica his residence since the establishment of his business there, and in every way has become thoroughly identified with the interests and wel-

fare of the whole town; while the people have ever delighted to express their appreciation by especial marks of favor. He has repeatedly served the town in various positions of trust and honor. In 1851 he was returned to the legislature, and was elected a member of the State Constitutional Convention in the following year.

An earnest Republican in his political views, he was of great assistance to the town and state in the preparations and measures for suppressing the Rebellion, and aided largely by his generosity towards the support of the cause of the Union.

In 1864 he was elected a member of the executive council, a position which he held for five consecutive terms, during which his prudent and able council won him the respect of all parties. In 1872 he was elected lieutenant-governor. He was re-elected in 1873, but became acting governor in the spring of 1874, in consequence of the election of Governor W. B. Washburn to the United States Senate.

The Republican party nominated Mr. Talbot in the ensuing year as its candidate for governor, but were not successful at the polls. In the gubernatorial election of 1878, which was one of the most hotly contested ever held in Massachusetts, Governor Talbot secured an election over his opponent, General B. F. Butler.

The inauguration of Governor Talbot to the chair of state was marked by a message which explicitly indicated the policy of retrenchment and honesty adapted to the needs of the hour.

Governor Talbot was first married January 20, 1848, his wife being Mary H., daughter of the late Calvin Rogers, Esq., of this town. She died, leaving no children, September 11, 1851. Mr. Talbot's second marriage was with Miss Isabella W., daughter of the late Hon. Joel Hayden, formerly lieutenant-governor of this state. It occurred October 18, 1855, and of the seven children who have blessed their union, four — two sons and two daughters — are living. The home of Governor Talbot is noted for its simple elegance and genial hospitality.

Miss Elizabeth P. Peabody, an eminent authority on education, was born in Billerica, May 16, 1804. Her father was Nathaniel Peabody, M. D. Her mother, as Miss Elizabeth Palmer, was the first preceptress of the first female academy in New England. At the time of Miss Peabody's birth her mother was teaching a private school in Billerica, Elizabeth being almost "literally born and bred in





Van Dyke & Co. Boston

*Thomas Talbot.*

a school." Miss Peabody received a liberal and classical education, and at the age of seventeen began her life-work of teaching, and writing on education. In early life she paid great attention to developing methods for self-education. A complete list of Miss Peabody's works would include the departments of history, biography, essays moral and instructive, translations, and *belles lettres*. The efforts of Miss Peabody during the last ten years have been largely directed to the establishment of the "Kindergarten" method of teaching.

Miss Harriet B. Rogers, the principal of the Clarke Institution for Deaf Mutes at Northampton, Mass., was born in Billerica, April 12, 1834, being

the daughter of Calvin and Ann Faulkner Rogers. She early chose the vocation of a teacher; but not until 1864 did she undertake the difficult task of teaching deaf mutes the art of speaking and of reading from the lips. Her experiment was the first systematic attempt to teach the deaf by articulation made in this country. In 1866 she opened a private school in Chelmsford, Mass., where her efforts were most successful, and directly led to the founding, in 1867, of the Clarke Institution, of which she became and remains the chief instructor. The system in use at this school is that originated and mainly perfected by Miss Rogers.

## BOXBOROUGH.

BY REV. NATHAN THOMPSON.



At the last census the population of Boxborough was 318. The assessors for 1876 gave the following summary: Acres of land 6,429, dwelling-houses 72, horses 106, cows 431, valuation \$243,863, polls 98. The school report gave the number of pupils in the schools as 67. In 1843, 130 were reported from the same schools. Between 1830 and 1840 the number was probably greater. "The population in 1837 was 433, being smaller than that of any other town in Middlesex County." Like so many other of the hill towns in Massachusetts, for the last forty years it has been slowly losing its early prestige. Indeed, except some Hercules were born here, to be devoted to his native hills, the little town never stood any chance of extended growth. By nature, and the date of its organization, it was precluded from any such probabilities. A good farming area had brought in settlers. Here, in the outskirts of surrounding towns, they built their homes and were cultivating their farms. But they were so far from church that they purchased Harvard old meeting-house in 1775, and then asked the General Court to incorporate them as a town. There is preserved in the safe of the town an old map in outline, on parch-

ment, on a scale of two hundred rods to an inch, by Silas Holman. He made the survey in 1794, and gives the area as 7,036 acres and 100 rods. It was not a great extent of territory, nor a locality favorable for growth, that urged the petition for the little square town to be set off, but the convenience of the neighborhood. Distance from their old centres constrained them to work for a new one of their own. It was to be among the hills, and upon the highest of them. In its summer scenery it is delightful, with a view to the north, south, east, and west fit to be the envy of the dwellers of the plain. It was aside from any of the "great Boston roads" that were, or were to be. It had no streams to turn the busy wealth-making wheels of the nineteenth century. It had only the possibilities of railways skirting along one or two of its borders. It was destined, from the later date of its incorporation, and the necessity of its situation, to become one of the small, healthful farming towns; a good place to emigrate from; the home of sturdy, established New England yeomanry. Removed from the vices as well as the virtuous activities of cities and manufacturing villages, it was to be blessed with whatever life its own citizens put into it. Taking its greatest part from Stow, a goodly piece from Littleton, and something from Harvard, it helped the shape of those towns in becoming itself well fashioned.