



Austin Foster

A GRANDFATHER'S
REMINISCENCES

—
1822-1900
—

HARTFORD, CONNECTICUT

CHRISTMAS 1890

WE have just returned from John and Clara's, after spending a delightful evening in company with Dr. Leslie Baxter¹ and wife, Mrs. Berry, Mary Lillian, Miriam Nelson, Mary Jane, Stephen, little Katherine, and my own dear wife. The joy of the occasion would have been complete, could we have had our dear ones at Somerville present to witness with us the pleasure of all upon seeing the beautiful Christmas tree, so richly laden with the evidences of tender thoughtfulness and love.

Among many lovely gifts, I found this blank book from my darling grandsons, Austin and Richard, with a request that I should, from time to time, write down upon its fair pages such thoughts or incidents, as might occur to me, of my life, more especially of my boyhood. I should make no such attempt to comply with the request, were it not that I know my dear grandchildren are very much pleased with any little recital from me, however uninteresting it may be to others, and so I will try to recall such incidents and will write them here in the hope that my dear boys may derive a small share at least of that pleasure which they anticipated when they sent the book to the Christmas tree at Derby Line. I will date these entries as I write them.

A. T. F.

I WAS about six years old when I first went down to Montpelier village, and I well remember that I thought, when we came in sight of it, there could not be another place that had so many houses.² It was on the Sabbath day, and my father was carrying Rev. Mr. Dean to an appointment, so he took me with them, and at every turn of the road, when we came in view of buildings, they would ask me if that was not the village. When we really did come in sight of it, from the top of the high hill, I was astonished indeed to know there was a place in the world so large, although at that time it was much smaller than now.

The first wedding I ever witnessed was when my sister Mary³ was married to Hiram Sibley. I thought it was a splendid affair. It was in the evening and the whole company accompanied the newly married couple to their new home, which was just over the brook, where my brother Henry died many years later, but not in the same house. As the company walked over to this new home, I thought it was a sort of fairy land. The ladies all in white, to me looked so beautiful, as they passed over the bridge on that moonlight night.

I well remember making sister Mary a call in her new home under circumstances that made her think I was crazy, not long after she commenced housekeeping. The men had all been at work in the field and I had been with them. As I thought I was an important man too, I felt that I must be ready to go back with them after dinner. As my sister Harriet³ had said that she did wish she had a swing, I believed I could make one, could then eat my dinner, and go back with the men. The moment they sat down to the table I went into the woodshed, took a heavy logging chain and wound it around my body, and then went to climbing up, to put it over a beam. But instead, just as I was about to make a grand success of it, I fell to the ground, and in falling my hand caught on a wrought iron nail which caused a very severe

wound, the scar of which has always remained. My mother, naturally, was much excited, and in the hope of doing something to help me, she poured the wound full of rum, which in fact made me wild. I ran over to Mary's house screaming, opening every door and into every room, and then back home, without telling her what had happened.

I had to have my hand in a sling all that summer, as it took a long time to heal.

Dec. 28, 1890.

I am sure I used to suffer a good deal from a lack of confidence in myself, and all through my boyhood days this made me at times very unhappy. On one occasion, I think I was ten years old, my father and mother told me that I might go to the village and select for myself cloth for a pair of pants. I was to ride a grey horse named Tiger. I was delighted with the prospect of having some new clothes and to think I could have so long a ride on Tiger's back. I set off from home with the greatest delight, but before I had gone far my joy was turned into sorrow, and for no good reason, except that I could not rid myself of the thought that I was soon to enter the village where so many would see me. I was sure the village boys could ride so much better, and what to do I could not tell, but I could not think of turning back home. Thus I rode along in great anxiety. At last when I came to the top of the hill where one sees the village, I dismounted and made sure that Tiger was well tied to a fence. I could go the rest of the way on foot and thus would escape notice. I walked about a half mile, purchased my cloth, and returned to Tiger. I found him all right, and rode home in great relief, without having anyone laugh at me. At the time I thought this was a great success.

When I recall the following incident, I am sure I was not always a good boy. Sister Diana^a was receiving attentions from Robinson Tabor, whom she afterwards married. Although I was young, I understood that father and mother did not like him very well. For some reason I took a strong dislike to him also.

One afternoon Diana asked me to build a fire in the parlor, and I felt sure that Bob Tabor (as he was frequently called) was to make her a visit. Disliking him as I did, and very likely not wishing to build the fire, I was in very bad humor and meant to punish him in some way for coming to see my sister. I hit upon this plan. I knew he was always given the rocking chair. So I filled the cushion full of pins on purpose to prick him (bad boy that I was). And instead of feeling sorry, I was delighted when I learned that my plan worked.

After they were married I liked Robinson pretty well, as he used to let me ride his horses. The couple came home and lived at our house. Here he burned a coalpit for his own use, as he was a blacksmith and made his own coal.

This is the way it was done. They would pile a great many logs together until the pile was very high. Then they covered the logs with dirt and set fire to those at the bottom. It would take a good while to turn the logs into coal. During these burnings Tabor had a little cabin in the woods where he would stay all night, to see that the coalpit did not burn up, as was liable, if it was not watched, and the fire must be kept well covered over with earth. I used to think it great fun to go up in the evening and see the great mound smoking all over, and going into the cabin I would lie down on the straw that he had for his bed. Mother did not let me stay all night, but she would allow me to go almost every evening, and sometimes I stayed pretty late.

It was while Tabor was burning his coalpit that I gave my father and mother a great fright. It was in this way. Robinson was out of oats for his horses. He had a large gentle mare, and he sent me with her up to one Jo Andros, to get a bagful. Mr. Andros put the bag of oats on the mare and helped me mount on top of it. Everything went all right until I got to the Hincer place, where in some way my bag of oats slipped off. I did not think of going home and letting some of the folks know about it. I got off and tried many times to put the bag on again, but it was impossible, for I was a small boy and my horse a very large one.

After thinking it over, I saw no other way than to let my horse go, for it was just as much as I could do to pull the bag after me through the snow, which was quite deep. As soon as my gentle mare got home they were all very much frightened; I must be surely hurt. So father and brother Henry³ harnessed as quickly as possible, to find me. When they came in sight, they felt sure I was badly injured, for I was going backwards as I pulled the oats along, and was much bent over. When they came up to me and saw how it was, they were greatly relieved.

Dec. 30, 1890.

The only time I ever remember my father punishing me was when I was a very small boy to go off a fishing alone. I had permission to fish down the brook by our house, that we called the Great Brook, until I came to where the West brook joined it, and then I could fish up that to a certain point beyond the West house. I have no doubt I was very slow in making the trip. At all events they became much alarmed, and father² started after me. When he overtook me I was fishing away as contented as possible just above the bridge by Mr. West's house. He called to me to come up on the bridge; I did so, and he boxed my ears warmly, and my straw hat went off down stream. He bade me go and get it. I went, but as mad a little boy as ever was, for I knew the punishment was unjust, as I had not gone beyond the limits.

When we got home I told mother⁴ how it was, and she agreed with me that I had not gone beyond the place where I had liberty to go. At once father said he was very sorry that he had punished me and hoped I would forgive him, which showed him to be just the noble man that he was. I felt so happy by his telling me that he was sorry, that I was almost glad he had given me the boxing.

When bro. Stephen² was clerk in Montpelier Village, we all thought it a great event when he would come home, for he would almost always bring me some candy, as I was the baby in

the family. As I remember him in those days, I think he was a remarkably handsome young man.

The first time I ever heard of Canada and Derby Line I was sitting on the meal chest in the porch, and sister Mary told me that brother Stephen was going away off to Derby Line to live. I thought it so far away that I should never see him again. I had a hard cry and it seemed as if I never could stop.

Dec. 31, 1890.

I must have been very young when Uncle Rufus King⁴ (who later was killed in Rochester, Mass., by a rock falling upon him) made us a visit. The two things that make me remember the visit so plainly are, that he had a red chaise which I thought the most beautiful carriage that ever was, and that he used to put me upon his shoulder and carry me about the front yard. I enjoyed these rides exceedingly. He was so good to me that I thought he must be the best man in the world.

I was very fond of doves, and bro. Henry made a dove house over the room that was used as father's shop, and they told me I could get a pair of doves, which I did. I used to spend much time in looking at them before they were full grown, and after they increased in numbers. They became very tame.

After I left home I remember hearing my mother say they troubled her a great deal by coming into the kitchen when an open door presented itself, and if it were not that I was so fond of them and had brought them when young, she would have had them killed. I think they became so troublesome, that after a while bro. Henry had them driven off or killed.

Jan. 11, 1891.

Bro. Henry caught a little striped squirrel one day and carried it into the school in his coat. He put the coat down upon his desk, and by and by the squirrel was so comfortable that he began to chirp just as he would in the woods, which made all of us boys laugh. My sister Diana, who was the teacher, tried to

find out what caused the laughter, but we would not tell, for we thought it such fun to have the squirrel in the school. When school was out Henry tied a string to him and would let him run on ahead of us. When we got home, he put the squirrel in the parlor. But mother was not pleased, and said he must be taken out. But Henry was determined to have him stay long enough for him to make a cage to keep the little fellow in. After the cage was ready, as he was putting him in, the squirrel bit Henry through the end of his finger, upon which he killed him in the front hall. This was a very different ending from what Henry had anticipated, as he had been telling us how tame he was going to have him, and what fine times they would have together.

Jan. 14, 1891.

One fall I helped to gather corn in the ear, and would carry one side of the basket after it was filled. When it came for me to take hold with my left hand, I would ask to change sides, as my side had become very lame indeed, and before night of the last day it pained me so badly I went home crying. My mother seeing Dr. Clark⁴ going by the house, called him in. He told them that I would probably have an abscess, which frightened my mother very much. I suffered a great deal, crying all that night. In the morning the Dr. came and directed mother to keep on applying hot flannels wet in vinegar and sugar of lead for twenty-four hours longer. If I was not better and the swelling had not gone down, she was to poultice it, as it would have to come to a head. Before the next morning I had fallen asleep, and when morning came mother said the swelling had gone down a good deal, and it was a happy time all around. For many years after I was troubled a great deal by severe, deep pains but at last they left me, and that side became just as strong as the other.

I well remember the summer bro. George³ went out on a peddler's cart to sell tinware for Elisha White. I thought it pretty fine that he had risen to be a tin peddler. When he started for Derby Line, to peddle in Canada and to get his goods from Stephen, he painted his pung a sort of slate color, and the night

before he left home, one Thomas Brooks gave him a large shaggy dog named Growler for his watch dog. The next morning he started off with his sorrel pacing horse, and Growler chained to the pung. But the dog broke loose and came back, and bro. George was forced to turn around and come back too. So we all had to bid him good bye over again. When he arrived at bro. Stephens', he remained in the store as clerk and never went out to peddle, as he had expected to do. This pleased father and mother very much.

Jan. 25, 1891.

Bro. Henry, sisters Corrilla³ and Harriet, and myself attended school the winter that Mr. L. H. Tabor⁵ was the teacher, and I well remember that father came for us one night, and we were all in a single sleigh together. Father let me drive, as we had a gentle horse. As we got past the Burgess brook, so called, there was, what I thought, a little speckled dog right in the road. As I felt pretty smart with such a big load, I just thought I would make the little dog get out of the road pretty quick, so I gave him a smart cut from my whip. The result showed us that instead of a dog it was a skunk.

We went home a bad-smelling sleigh-load of folks. Mr. Tabor suffered the worst, so they dug a hole and buried his clothes (to take out the smell). The next day he wore father's clothes to school, much to the amusement of the scholars, as they did not fit very well. At recess, when the boys went out, the word was passed from one to the other that there must be a skunk under the school house, as all declared they could smell him. Instead of telling them that I was the skunk, we ran round to where there was a hole in the wall, and as I got down with the other boys, to try if we could see anything of him, they all declared they knew he was there, because they could smell him so much the stronger when looking under the house.

It took a long time for our clothes to get rid of the dreadful odor, and I think there were several things the girls had on which they never could wear again.

Jan. 2, 1891.

We had some large boys who attended our school, and sometimes they were very unruly. One winter a Mr. Carpenter⁶ was the teacher, and he was entirely successful in making them obedient, but not without a good deal of excitement. One of the larger boys, by the name of Templeton, was passing around a paper among the others, which caused considerable sport. Carpenter called upon Templeton to bring the writing to him, and I remember just how he looked. But the boy put the paper on his breast and buttoned his coat over it, as he went down to the desk where the master sat. He asked to see it, but Templeton refused. The master told him to take his books and to leave the school, which he did. But the next morning he was back in his seat, and when the master asked if he had come with an apology, he replied, "No, Sir." Then said Carpenter, "You must leave the school, for I am master here, and we can not both remain." After a trial of strength, and the master choking him until he was pretty black in the face, he went out, but in a very short time returned with his father and grandfather. Both were very angry and used bad language. Upon that the master stepped in front of the three, with a large fire shovel raised above his head, and declared if they spoke an uncivil word, he would split their brains open. They saw that it was no time for trifling and sat down, remaining perfectly quiet until the school was out. The master had no more bad boys after that.

Jan. 7, 1891.

SECOND PART.

My first visit to Derby Line⁷ was in the winter time with father and mother. We went in a sleigh, and it was a great pleasure to me, particularly as father allowed me to drive part of the way. He had a beautiful bay mare, named Katy, and I thought a great deal of her.

The first day we drove to Judge Fuller's in Hardwick; the next day to Major Kimball's in Barton, and the third day we arrived at brother Stephen's. At Major Kimball's I was much interested to see a boy by the name of Skip get in his wood for the night by having a dog harnessed to a sled, to draw it in. I was about nine years old and had never seen a dog harnessed. I thought it great sport. When we arrived at brother's, his house happened to be pretty full of company, and bro. George who was clerk in his store said he would ask Barnard Langdon (another clerk) to go to the hotel, so that I could sleep with him at the store. This pleased me, as I thought it would be great fun. But to our mutual disappointment, Langdon would not give up his bed, so a bed was made up in the dining room with buffalo robes and blankets, where I passed my first night at Derby Line.

Father and mother used to laugh at me for being in such great haste to get to the Line. When we came over the hill, where Mr. Albee now lives, father said, "We are in sight of Derby Line; that is the village where Stephen lives." I was driving Katy, and I whipped her and kept making her go faster and faster, until she went into a gallop. Then father took the reins away from me, saying that he was ashamed to be seen running a horse through the village. I said, "Let me get out and run, for I can't wait." This shows how little I knew, for at the time Katy was going much faster than I could run. They laughed at me, and told the story of my haste many times afterwards.

Jan. 13, 1891.

In the spring of 1834 I went to bro. Stephen's to board and do his chores. While there I attended school. The old school house stood very near where the present Rock Island⁷ school is. A Miss Hibbard was the teacher. It was the first of my being away from home and a part of the time I was very homesick, although, on the whole, I enjoyed myself very well.

Major Kimball⁸ lived at bro. Stephen's, and during that summer Stephen went West. While he was away they had a real horse race just beyond Stanstead Plain⁷. Being a lover of horses, I thought it a great treat.

When the time came for me to go back to Montpelier I went on the stage, and could hardly endure the slow pace of the horses. I left the stage at the schoolhouse above the Sibley's and proceeded home on foot. A happier boy than I could not be found.

Jan. 25, 1891.

I ought to relate my experience in taking part in that race on Stanstead Plain. I have always felt a little ashamed of my part in it. However, as I really think the lesson I learned was beneficial to me, I will give it here, as it not only will amuse my grandchildren, but may possibly save them from going through as foolish a performance.

In the first place, let me say here, that from my youth up I have always been exceedingly fond of a horse, and when I found there was to be a race, I was a good deal excited. As I had the care of Brother Stephen's very powerful horse, I believed he could run as fast as any other. Major Kimball had raised Charley from a colt, and I always have thought that he should have told me, a mere boy, better. But instead, he assured me that Charley was the fastest runner when a colt, and "always way ahead of all the other colts."

I would often take Charley out and gallop him up and down on the road leading past the Chase farm, where Dr. Cowles now lives. Poor simple boy that I was, I was sure no other horse could beat him. When the day of the race came, I paid the entry fee of three dollars and hired Frank Holmes to ride Charley for

me, feeling very sure that he would beat them all (some ten or twelve at the start, horses that were trained racers, finely groomed, and with riders who wore jockey caps, short pants, and fancy boots). When the word was given to start, with all on a line as nearly as possible, my Charley, being a very spirited animal and exceedingly quick-motined, was one of the first, and continued so for a short distance. Then one would go by, and then another, and before they got one quarter round he was far behind, and it seemed to me that he was merely jumping up and down, while the others were laying right down to their work, so to speak, and before Frank was half way round, he left the track and came jogging back at his leisure. I know a boy never felt more ashamed than I did. Really, the Major was more to blame than I, but it served a very good purpose, for I think, had I been successful, I should have tried it again. Charley was a very great traveler, strong and muscular, and bro. Stephen kept him a long time, as he was a very useful animal.

Jan. 16, 1899.

In the summer of 1834, while I was living with bro. Stephen, the boys got up a large company and chose their officers. At the first meeting they made me Capt., John A. Pierce, 1st Lieutenant, Amos Fox, 2d Lieutenant, and John Thornton⁹, 1st Corporal. We had over sixty in our company, and as I now remember it, I think it was a nice looking company. We all had paper hats, made after the style of the "Napoleon cap." The officers had theirs made from thick white paper, with much gilt paper for ornamentation, long tassels suspended from each corner of the cap, and a paper cockade quite prominent in the center. We used to meet and train. One day the Militia was to gather at Ruiters' Corner, and Deacon Page, who owned a stage route, said, if we would go out, he would take his coach with six horses and give us a ride. We did so. We had a man that played the fife and a triangle, and we thought our company had much better music than the older company. We were all treated to a good dinner.

The fact that I was Capt. made me somewhat prominent. One day, when we were on drill at Stanstead Plain, they were holding a picnic in the grove, and the ladies sent word for me to come to it. After the drill I did so, and when refreshments were passed it was stated that whoever got a piece of cake with a ring in it, was to have first choice of a partner to go home with.

William Grannis¹², a younger boy than myself, drew the ring and at once began to cry. His sister (now Mrs. Meigs¹²) took the ring and gave it to me, intimating that I was her choice. But through fear of being laughed at for going home with a lady, I made a very poor excuse by claiming that I could not wait, but must go at once, which, of course, was very uncivil. So I went off alone, rather than to be seen going with a nice young lady.

The same year, on the 4th of July, the boys were having a sort of celebration. At such times boys almost always had to use powder. At this time Alanson Way and John Thornton⁹ were most forward in the sport. They had the powder in a tin basin and both had pistols. In their haste and carelessness the powder in the basin took fire and exploded, burning the two boys very badly. They suffered great pain, and each had his face covered for days with cotton batting saturated with sweet or linseed oil, in the hope that this would prevent scars. But Thornton's face showed the marks in a slight manner through life.

Feb. 22, 1891.

The fall after I returned home I boarded with my sister Diana, who lived on the same farm where she died many years later. While there I attended a select school taught by Rev. Mr. Hemphill. I remember the school as a very pleasant one. We used to have the hall in the hotel for special occasions. One evening we put up a platform and had speaking. I had a piece, and was dressed in my best. But just before I was to speak, as I stepped upon the platform, which was rather high, my pants which were very tight split out badly, and I had to go back to my sister's (more than three-fourths of a mile), get in through a

window (as the folks had locked the door and gone), change my pants, and get back in time to speak. This took all the pleasure away. I was dreadfully heated when I mounted the platform and my pants were not nearly so good looking as the others. Take it all together, I did not enjoy the evening at all.

Through that winter I attended our district school, which I remember as a very poor one.

Jan. 28, 1891.

In the spring of 1836, when I was thirteen years old, bro. George wanted me to come and live with him and be a clerk in his store at Shipton (now known as Richmond, P. Q.). He was not married, and part of the time he boarded himself in the store and part of the time he boarded at the hotel. Father and mother decided to let me go, and I rode up to Derby Line with Elisha White. Bro. Stephen was to send me down to bro. George's. Finally he got me a chance to go with a Mr. Joslin, who had bought a drove of horses that he was to take to Port St. Francis.

The horses were tied together and fastened to a long rope, all except one little gray French stud horse that could not be tied with the others, and I was to ride him.

We arrived at Lenoxville the first night, and the next afternoon reached Melbourne. I had ridden all the way without blanket or saddle, and it was a cold, windy time in March. I was so sore before we came to Melbourne, that I cried a good deal of the way. Some people told me where to cross the river and directed me to bro. George's store. I started alone on foot, and had not any more than started to cross the ice before I found it was a great deal worse than being on the warm back of a horse, for it was bitter cold and the wind blew very hard. Then too I was raw all up and down my legs. Thus I went crying all the way across the river, and made a fine appearance for a clerk as I entered the village. But I could think of nothing else but my suffering. At last I found the store and my brother took as good care of me as he could. It was not many days before I was well again.

Jan. 25, 1891.

For a long time after I began at the store I had a hard trial in doing anything in the way of business. I was never quick at figures, and at that time, and for many years after, the currency of Canada was pounds, shillings, and pence, instead of dollars and cents, as it now is. I knew almost nothing about it in theory, and as far as practice was concerned, it seemed as if I never could learn to make change. I was always inquiring how many cents a shilling was, or how many dollars in a pound, and then would think I could do it correctly. Brother George would keep telling me to let dollars and cents alone just as if there were no such things, and to set down the pounds, etc., and subtract whatever amount in the same currency I wished to take out, and then give back to the customer the difference. I found it so hard and made such bad work of it, that for a long time it seemed to me I should never get so I could sell goods. I worried so much that I could not sleep nights. I well remember lying awake one night, and bro. George, who slept with me, asked if I was sick. I said "No," but that I had been there so long with him paying my board, and I had not earned him a cent, and it was too bad.

He laughed at me and said, "Nonsense." This was a great relief, for it showed me that he did not regard my troubles in the dreadful light that I did. After a while I got so I could make change as well one way as another.

Jan. 29, 1891.

It was not long after this that I was dreadfully shocked at seeing a man, named Daniel Kern, and his wife intoxicated. They were in such a condition, that, when they went into a shed to start for home, both fell down. They used very profane language, as each claimed the other one was drunk. I think they must have fallen three or four times before they got started. A long time, it seemed to me, I could not think or see anything else except that man and his wife scrambling up and holding on to each other, only to fall again. Since then I have seen many in a state of intoxication, but I am glad to state that I never have seen anything so revolting as that was.

Brother George went to Montreal to purchase goods and left me in charge of the store. If anything should come up that I could not get along with, he told me to go and ask one of the neighbors, a Mr. Dresser, for advice. The price of a good many of the goods was marked in letters used as a private mark. One day I sold a man part of a box of window glass and made a mistake in the price of it, in that I had not charged him enough. I found my mistake after he had taken the glass away. I went over to Mr. Dresser's and told him about it. He came to the store and found on examination of the mark that it was as I stated. As the man had only gone over to the hotel, I found him there and explained my mistake. His reply was: "I can't help it. I have bought it and paid for it, and it is my property." I felt badly enough and told my brother immediately on his return. When I gave him the man's name, George said that he had no doubt the fellow knew all the time that it was a mistake, as he was not an honest man.

Feb. 12, 1891.

Although my brother was making money and laying the foundations for his large estate, he sold but few goods comparatively and therefore we were not closely confined to the store. He had a pearlash where he manufactured salts which paid him a fine profit. He used to draw the wood from his woodyard to the manufactory, and many days we would lock up the store for this purpose. He had a handsome horse for his cart, and I enjoyed driving it very much.

In proportion to the amount of business done at the store, he sold a large quantity of liquor. He kept a general assortment of different kinds, and purchased alcohol in large hogsheads. I used to draw out a certain quantity into another cask and then go to the river and bring water to put into it, so as to make it just about what they called "proof." I remember thinking that it was not much matter if we put in a good lot of water, for that surely would not hurt those who drank it. Sometimes customers would drink too much "to go straight." At that time almost all

stores in that section of Canada kept it, not only for the profit, but it was thought that such customers would buy other goods and would not be so particular as to prices, which I have no doubt was strictly true. But what a dreadful principle!

When my brother was about to be married, he took me with him in a chaise to Danville (P. Q.), locked up the store, wrote a notice, and nailed it upon the door: "Gone to get married." Although young, I was his best man. Lucina Cleveland, sister of the bride, and I stood up with George and Elvira during the ceremony. I remember being told that just as soon as the wedding rites were performed, I was to step forward and hand to Rev. Mr. Parker, who performed the service, the cash for his efforts, which I accordingly did. After dinner my brother took his bride and me into the chaise, and we three rode back to Richmond together. After that the newly married pair went to Montpelier for their wedding trip, and I was left alone with the business.

Feb. 16, 1891.

At Montpelier my brother swapped horses with bro. Henry and drove back a black mare named Nancy that was raised on the farm. Some time after he returned, she got loose, and brother found that she had started towards Montpelier, and before he overtook her she swam the river St. Francis and was very near the town of Sherbrooke, a distance of twenty-four miles. He had no doubt whatever, if she had been left to her own inclinations, that she would have kept on to Montpelier, where she came from.

At the time I lived in Richmond there was no bridge there, and we had no way of crossing the river in summer except to ford it, or go in a horse boat. In winter we generally had very good sleighing on the ice, but in the spring and fall this was very unsafe. Many times teams would break through the ice. When the ice left in the spring, it would generally set back and dam up, and for several days the river would be entirely unpassable.

During my stay in Richmond I used to go out on the river with others for a boat ride, I did not get to be an expert at paddling a canoe, but would sometimes try it.

Like some other members of the family, my brother was quite fond of horses. He owned a handsome stallion which he allowed me to drive, and I enjoyed it very much indeed. One day George was biting a colt, when it reared, came over backwards, fell, and killed itself.

It was in the winter, while I was at Richmond, that Sister Corrilla^s died at Derby Line. A man sent to let us know of her death arrived late in the afternoon, and before we could get started it was almost night. The sky had a very peculiar appearance, being entirely covered with a wonderful red tint, to that extent, that, as we rode along that winter night, the snow seemed a bright red, a reflection, of course, of the sky. As I recall that night, it impresses me now as a wonderfully sad ride, with that strange appearance of both earth and sky, and the knowledge that Sister Corrilla was dead.

We rode all night and arrived at the Line in the morning, and found father and mother at Mr. Johnson's^s. I was overjoyed at seeing them, and it seemed to give me great comfort, especially after such a night of sadness. After the funeral bro. George returned to Richmond, but let me go with the rest of the family to Montpelier, where Corrilla was buried. After a few days I came back to Richmond.

Feb. 18, 1891.

The horse which George let bro. Henry have in exchange had improved greatly in his hands, and George bought him back and sent me to Montpelier for him the next summer. I remember he was a large bay and fine looking. I rode him under the saddle, quite a different experience from my trip on the little French horse from Derby Line to Richmond, and yet, I was a little sore from the long journey, as I was not accustomed to

riding any distance. I enjoyed my visit with father, mother, and Harriet, and felt well paid for any discomfort which I experienced.

Feb. 22, 1891.

After remaining with my brother more than a year, I returned home in the fall of 1837. George looked over my account and found that I had taken for the year and a half nearly sixty dollars in clothing and other expenses. He handed me two five dollar bills as I left, which, at the time, seemed to me very great pay. My astonishment was great, when I arrived at Derby Line, to learn that George had written bro. Stephen, wanting me to return and offering me ten dollars a month for a year. It was decided that I had better keep on and make a visit at home, and learn what father and mother thought about it. Such a large amount for my services seemed remarkable to me, but father and mother thought I had better go to school, and it was so arranged. I went to Montpelier village, together with sister Harriet, and we boarded at a Dr. Smith's.

Mr. Pease was the teacher at the Academy. I was very sure to go home every Saturday, and if I found no opportunity to ride, I would go on foot, and return Monday morning. The school was a good one, but I had been out of school for more than a year and a half, and it took a long time for me to confine myself to books, and as I never was much of a scholar, I think I made little advancement. I remained for eleven weeks, and that winter attended our district school. A Mr. Fisk taught it, as poor a school as ever was known. This finished up my schooling.

In the spring of 1838 I came to Derby Line and went into the store of Spaulding & Foster as clerk, my brother Stephen arranging it for me. Lyman Mower, who had been their clerk, at that time left for the West. Ozro Morrill¹⁰, another clerk, remained more than a year after I came. I was then fifteen years old, and took my place as youngest clerk, commencing with all

the duties that usually pertain to that position, such as cleaning lamps, sweeping out the store, building fires, etc.

I slept above the store with Morrill, boarded with bro. Stephen, and did his chores. At times there was much talk in the store about the Rebellion¹¹, which was not yet entirely quelled. Although not much of a foothold had been gained by the so called rebels, the military was kept up on Stanstead Plain in full force, and every evening an incident of more or less interest was related.

The excitement upon the Border between two nations actually at war must be very great. At this time martial law was proclaimed, and almost daily some new case of arrest would take place, and the man suspected of being a rebel would be seized and sent to Sherbrooke jail. I used to hear a good deal in criticism of the Government, as Morrill was in sympathy with the rebels, and although a very young man, at one time it was thought he would be arrested.

Our store was on Rock Island, Canada, and so we were subject to England, and the Red Coats were upon our streets at all hours of the day. A sentry was stationed at the top of the hill and no one was allowed to pass without giving the countersign.

April 6, 1891.

The sentiment among the people at the Island, although in Canada, was fully as much in favor of the rebels as with the Tories, and all of the young fellows used to hear much from the Derby side in the way of making sport of their fears. One night we had a dance at the Derby Line hotel, and it was suggested that all of us boys go out in single file and see if we could frighten the guard. Sure enough, in a few minutes after our appearance in the street, the hill was covered with soldiers, many of them being mounted cavalry. We enjoyed it thoroughly and thought it great fun. Many times a report would be circulated that a large force of rebels was gathering on the Vermont side and was coming into Canada to burn and destroy everything possible. This kept up a great deal of excitement, but no army came.

April 7, 1891.

One of the most exciting days that I now recall was ushered in for me by George R. Holmes¹², who was clerk with me. I was in the chamber over the store where we slept, and he called out to me from the store, where he was building the fire, "Martin is killed, Kilbourn is wounded, and the military is called out." On further information, it seems that Col. Kilbourn¹² and Lieut. Martin¹² had gone out to Barnston to arrest some supposed rebels, taking with them quite a company of men, and just as they were passing a piece of woods beyond Mosher Corner, they were fired upon from the woods. Martin's horse was shot in the head and fell to the ground and Martin with him. But the latter was not injured and crept into some place of safety, but Kilbourn rode home wounded and gave the alarm. Such a day of general excitement in Rock Island and Stanstead Plain was not surpassed during the whole Rebellion.

It was supposed by all that Martin had been killed, and his wife, a brave woman, insisted on taking a team and going to Barnston in search of him, be he dead or alive. She found him safe and uninjured and brought him home. Kilbourn had a very narrow escape. It was said that a slight deviation from the course which the bullet took would have been fatal.

Some arrests were made in Barnston, but it never was proven who did the shooting, although the public mind was well settled upon a farmer who soon removed to Derby, Vt., and never went back into Canada.

When the stage left Stanstead Plain that morning for the south, the driver was so frightened that he ran his horses for dear life, and reported that people hailed him to escape with him, but he dare not stop to take them in. He left them to escape as best they could, fully believing that the place would be taken and burned by the rebels.

Feb. 17, 1892.

The first time I went to Montreal was a great event for me. Bro. Stephen had been in and bought his general stock of goods, but after his return he found that more things were wanted. He made up his mind to send me, although I was rather young to be entrusted with such important business.

I took the stage at three o'clock in the morning, going via Georgeville; crossed the lake to Knowlton's landing in a horse boat, passed over Bolton mountain, through Stukeley and Stanbridge, and reached St. Johns at eleven o'clock. I stayed there that night at the hotel, and in the morning bought a ticket on the only railroad in Canada, to La Prairie. The ticket was lettered and numbered, designating the compartment which I was to occupy, which would hold only ten passengers. When all were seated the conductor locked the door, which was not opened until we arrived at our destination. Here we took a horse boat, the only thing to do at that time, to cross the mighty St. Lawrence.

After doing what errands I had to do, I returned to St. Johns and took the steamboat for Burlington, Vt., then a stage to Montpelier, where I made a visit at home. From there I took another stage to Derby Line, thus completing one of the great trips of my life.

After that I went to Montreal one to three times a year for the next twenty-five years.

Feb. 17, 1892.

In October, 1842, I made a trip home from Montreal, so full of incident, that I always have had cause to remember it. Mr. Samuel L. French, then of the firm of Baxter & French, Rock Island, was with me, and we had hard work to get through our business in time to return on a Saturday. We were to leave the city on Friday by the horse boat, take the cars to St. Johns, stay all night there, and stage home on Saturday. The time had nearly arrived for us to start for the boat, when we learned that the boat was sunk. There was another ferry several miles down the River at Longueuil. Taking our grip sacks we went out on the street where there were many carters. We told them we wanted to be driven down to the other ferry, taken across, and driven up to the railroad station opposite, in time for the train. If anyone was willing to undertake it on the condition that he should be paid, if we were on time, we said he should be rewarded, otherwise he should have no pay. After some delay we concluded a trade, and a man took us in a two-wheeled conveyance, called a calash, and the way he drove was a caution. We reached the boat in time and crossed the river. Then came the tug. There had

been heavy rains, and the roads were dreadful, full of holes or deep mud. But that Frenchman made his horse go, part of the time on the dead run, and frequently he would be thrown from his seat onto the wheel, while all the time he was lashing the poor horse and pressing him forward, in order to secure his extra large fee. At last, spattered with mud from head to foot, we accomplished it and put up at St. Johns for the night. At three o'clock in the morning we were on our way again. It rained hard all that day. Coming over Bolton mountain we overtook Mr. Francis Judd in his single team, and he was very sick. We reached Knowlton's wharf just as it began to grow dark, and to our dismay the word was: "Horse boat sunk." Old Uriah Jewett, however, was on hand with a small boat. He was willing to take us across to Georgeville. But the lake was very rough, and it was found that he could not take us all at one load. So it was arranged that Mr. Judd and the trunks should constitute the first load, and French, John Chamberlain, and myself should wait. They were loaded and Jewett was about to push off, when Judd jumped out and declared, "I will not risk my life on that lake to night." Old Jewett laughed well at his fears, and asked if there was anybody who had courage to go. French and I said we would go, so the baggage was taken out and we started.

It was really a rough night. The white caps ran high, and by and by, as we struck out into the lake French cried out, "Keep close to the shore." Whereupon, old Jewett rang out, with an oath, that that was a pretty way to cross a lake. For years after, whenever I met Jewett, he would have a good laugh over French's fears. We reached Georgeville in safety, but the waves were so high and the water came in so fast, that we had to bail out all the time. As I now remember it, I think it was too great a risk, for it was apparent, although Jewett was a remarkable boatman, that he was somewhat intoxicated. Levi Bigelow, who kept the hotel at Georgeville, could handle a boat well, and he went over in the sleet and snow and brought Judd and Chamberlain. We all remained at Georgeville that night, and in the morning, Oct. 21, 1842, we had a deep fall of snow, so that we came home on runners. That snow remained upon the ground until the next April.

Feb. 19, 1892.

At this time the business of our section was done largely through the country merchants. For many years our firm of Spaulding, Foster & Co., used to purchase large quantities of pork in the hog, and in the winter send the same by team to Montreal. Some years we would load one hundred teams (or rather one hundred farmers' loads, some of course being small). It was considerable work to load them out, as well as when they came in. We would calculate to buy all our heavy goods in the winter; such as iron, paint and oil, Scotch stoves, fish, crockery, flour, hardware, glass, etc. To fit out every load and give the men a memorandum of each, meant business. A winter trip was a hard one at the best; selling the pork, buying and loading the merchandise, involved considerable risk. We paid only about one half as much per pound on winter freight as in summer, and consequently bought little except dry goods then. Some years the crossing over the St. Lawrence on the ice would be very difficult. Always the road had to be marked by trees set out as a guide, and if ever I was in a place where the wind cut close, I am sure it was in those days when passing over that mighty river bridged with ice.

When I think of the prices that the farmers received for their products, and the prices they paid for goods, I can not understand how they lived; but at the present time they complain full as much (sometimes I think even more than they did then). One year in particular, I remember, we paid three and one half cents per pound for the best heavy pork (hogs weighing 300 lbs. and over). And one year I sold in Montreal some three hundred tubs of butter at 5 pence per lb. (say eight and a third cents), and took the entire amount in dry goods, for I could not get a cash offer at any price. It was butter which we had taken in the way of trade at 10 cents per lb. During these same years we were selling prints (then called calico) from 25 to 30 cents per yard, nails at 8 cents per lb., and other things in proportion.

In collecting our pay from the farmers we used to take cattle and horses, and turn them into money as best we could. I can not recall a more foolhardy performance, that I was guilty of,

than buying a two year old steer at Ruiters' corner and driving him home. I was alone in a wagon, had a gentle horse, but I was more full of life and courage than judgment. I said to the man, who sold the creature, that I would take him home with me. He said: "You can't do it." I replied: "Turn him out." As I remember the performance, it was a continual and terrible struggle. My horse I kept along, part of the time in the road, part of the time in the ditch, and between my attentions to the team and the steer I nearly melted with heat (it was a warm day). When we reached the Plain, I asked permission to take the steer into Mr. Judd's barnyard, and got some men to take him the rest of the distance. On reaching home, I found I was exceedingly tired.

We had regular customers, some of whom came from a distance to trade. I remember that one fall I went out to what was then called Drew's Mills, now Dixville, to make collections. There was no hotel, and I had to stay all night. The people who took me in assigned me a bed. But after going to bed, I found they were putting up a curtain as a partition. Presently they made up another bed for Mr. and Mrs. Drew. By this I realized that I had made them a good deal of trouble, but the worst of it was that I felt I was almost in bed with them, as we were very near together. It seemed like pretty close quarters, to say the least. This was before I was married. Although I wakened early, I had to wait until they got up and dressed. I did not feel altogether at my ease all through my stay.

Feb. 21, 1892.

In the summer of 1840 my mother wished to visit her relatives⁴ in her native town of Rochester, Mass., and vicinity. As father did not feel like going, he wrote to bro. Stephen asking him to allow me to accompany my mother, and it was so arranged. Father hired a chaise for the journey and let us have his white horse Tiger. I went to Montpelier by the stage, and mother and I started, and a most delightful trip we had. I felt all the responsibility and care of the team resting upon me, and as I now look back upon that journey, I feel sure that a horse was never

looked after more carefully than ours. I was so careful that I always managed to see that the man fed the oats to him, and every day I had his breast washed in cold water everywhere we stopped. We drove slowly and carefully, and it took five days to make the journey.

We made our head quarters at Uncle Peckham's, where the family consisted of Uncle and Aunt Peckham, a son David (who had lost his mind by the almost daily return of fits), Jonathan, who was unmarried, Grandmother King, Aunt Lydia King, and Aunt Corrilla King (who afterwards married Deacon Edwards). When we arrived it made a small house pretty full.

We spent three weeks in visiting, and went almost every day to some new relative's, mostly on mother's side, although father came from the same town. I shall always remember Uncle George King, an excellent man, and his large family. He had spent a large part of his life on the ocean, and had made some very successful voyages in whaling. But he was not much of a farmer and much less of a horseman. I took the entire care of our white Tiger while we stayed there. From the lack of any bedding I found him very badly off in the morning, and so I went very innocently to Uncle and asked him where he kept his curry-comb and brush, as our horse was in such a condition that I must clean him. I shall always remember his answer. He was a very odd man and liked to let the boys down, especially if he thought they were a little "smart." He looked me full in the face, and without a smile on his countenance said that he always used a hoe, and I would find one in such a place. I then went to the house, fetched a pail of water, and washed Tiger off. Cousin George King, who is now a doctor living in Franklin, Mass., as I recall, was the only boy in the family, about my age.

During our visit Cousin Mrs. Tobey (Austin Tobey's mother) and others got up a large party from Wareham and we went out several miles to an island, where a clam bake was enjoyed by us all. On returning, as the wind shifted and the large boom was changed from one side of the boat to the other, in some way a rope caught a young lady of the party and threw her out into the ocean. But as good fortune would have it, she held on to the rope. She was a pretty girl, dressed in white, and it was a

thrilling sight to see her clinging there, with her body stretched out on the water and our vessel going at a good speed. It was all confusion and excitement for a time. Aunt Jane King was sure the word was, "George is overboard!" Mother got hold of me and held me fast, for she was sure that they had said, "Austin is over!" The whole party was very much alarmed. The young gentleman who had been sitting beside her (the word was that they were engaged), jumped into the water, thinking, no doubt, that he could be of service, but he was a great hindrance instead. He caught hold of her, thus making himself a burden, and she had to keep fast hold of the rope for them both. After a while the captain brought the boom nearer to the boat and a strong man let himself down on the same rope to which she was clinging, put his arm around her, and brought her safely on board amid great rejoicing of us all. The young man proved to be a good swimmer and finally reached out to the tender that was hanging at the rear of the vessel and without difficulty came on board. All were so excited that there was no more gayety the rest of the way home.

During our stay we visited at Cousin John Pitcher's¹³ (on father's side), and I was much interested in a large collection of different kinds of birds which he had in a room all by themselves. Some of them were singing all the time, and in a separate cage he had a parrot, the first one I ever saw. To me, it was wonderful to hear him talk. Many words he spoke very plainly.

At New Bedford we stayed one night at Mr. Tabor's. Aunt Pitcher¹³ lived with them. I remember her as being a very agreeable and remarkably genteel lady. As there were no young people in the family, I had a pretty stiff time. Usually we sat in the parlor, where it was dark, as the blinds were all closed, and each piece of furniture had a covering made to fit, to keep it from fading and being soiled, I suppose.

Mother had a lovely visit everywhere, and I felt perfectly at home at Uncle Peckham's, but at some of the places it was rather hard for me. However, my team took much of my time, for being fond of a horse, I enjoyed being with Tiger and taking care of him.

When the time came we started on our return. The first day we drove to Boston, as bro. Stephen had written me to pur-

chase several articles to bring home with me. One of the things, I remember, was a piece of black alpine. It was done up very nicely, but was a great inconvenience to us, for our chaise was full even with our personal baggage. It seems to me now that mother must have been much cramped for room. Add to it all, a trunk was strapped and hung swinging under the axletree. We were very fortunate and had no accident on the entire trip, until we arrived in Barre, Vt. The road looked all right, and I was driving along on a good trot, when Tiger's forefoot went into a hole, which threw him onto his head. Mother and I went out at the same instant. A chaise is so different from any other conveyance; when a horse stumbles the passenger inevitably pitches forward.

Mother struck upon her head and shoulder, and her bonnet was crushed into "a cocked up hat." As soon as she could speak she assured me that she was not hurt. I jumped upon Tiger's head, to hold him down, until some men came and freed him from the chaise, which we found so badly injured that we hired a wagon and went on to East Montpelier where we stayed that night at sister Diana's.

It was truly remarkable that mother was not seriously injured. As it was, she was not free from the effects of her fall for years after, as it gave her a great shock and ever after her hand trembled very badly. When the accident occurred we made a fine exhibit. Every available space in the chaise was filled, and where no larger thing could be stored, sea shells, some very small, were packed away. Every thing went out, and the road was strewn with packages large and small, shells, etc., and it took considerable time to gather them all up. It was rather strange, after we had driven so far and had been on the road so long, that we had such a smash-up within five or six miles of home.

The next day we found father delighted to have us at home again. He assured me that Tiger looked better than when he started out on the journey, which gave me great pleasure.

April 30-May 5, 1892.