

It will be far more adapted for the sincere conception and right apprehension of *Divine Truth*; without which, all the knowledge and ornament of this world will be worse than labour in the end. Human learning may flatter its possessor in this world, polished manners may secure him a flattering career in society, but neither the one nor the other will avail him for an existence beyond the narrow bounds of time, nor prove a passport to a more exalted sphere. "*In all thy getting, get understanding*," is the emphatic admonition of the inspired writer; and that *understanding* does not mean the mere conception and familiar acquirement of human knowledge, but a full and perfect acquaintance with the will of the Almighty Creator of the Universe, a sincere endeavour to do our whole duty in that state of life in which His Providence has placed us, and a humble desire to be and to do in all things to His Glory.



### THE OLD FAMILY MANSION.

A SKETCH FROM DOMESTIC HISTORY.

It is quite deserted now, that ancient edifice! The garden, once luxuriant with native plants and choice exotics, is now overgrown with noxious weeds and ragged briars. The very path which marked the march of time, when the sunshine was its chronicler, is broken into fragments, and the green mantle of the pool dries out the spot where once the silvery fountain shot high into the bright atmosphere. The mutilated statue of a nymph mourns over her deserted grotto. The box is rusty and unopened; the garden gate hangs upon a single hinge: and, in short, the very spirit of desolation seems brooding over this spot, once the pride of the vicinage.

The house itself tells a sad tale of decay.—The roof is green and rank with an unhealthy antiquity, and the damp moss clings to the very weather-beaten shingle. The chanceler upon the weather-cock, as if stricken with the numismatism, rarely moves unless the wind has blown from one quarter for some hours, regarding the vacant zephyrs and inconstant airs with supreme contempt as he shivers on the apex of his rusty rod. To a few of the windows yet cling some time-worn Venetian blinds, but the daring school-boys of several generations have made sad havoc with the glass, so that the wind has free ingress and egress and roars through the empty halls and vacant chambers like an evil spirit seeking whom it may devour. From the walk in front

of the mansion, with its party-coloured mosaic pavement, to the dilapidated stable in the rear, there is an air of mystery about the premises which piques the curiosity, and, of course, the edifice is not without its ghost. Every village has its haunted house, and why should Brookline be without one?

Be it ours to call up the spirits of the buried family from their dread repose. Some eighty years have passed since this rickety building was in its prime. A great day was that for the villagers of Brookline—the raising of the framework—and though Squire Witherell was reputed to be haughty and purse-proud, the lavish abundance of the table set out on this occasion silenced every murmur, and almost raised the wealthy gentleman to popularity.—I call him wealthy, for such he undoubtedly was for that colonial period. Everything about his dwelling betokened it. The deep embrasures of his windows were piled with costly cushions of cut velvet; the oaken chairs were curiously carved and gilded; the tables of massive mahogany were supported upon griffins' claws of the very largest dimensions; and the little round mirrors were brilliant as the silver bucklers of the Saraccenic chivalry. But why make an inventory of the pages of my sketch? The library deserves mention, whose volumes were selected by a master mind, whose pictures, few but choice, displayed an artist's taste. An amiable and lovely woman, and two fine boys, with a man and maid-servant, (in those days a liberal allowance for a gentleman's household,) completed the family.

In touching on some prominent features of the old family mansion, I had forgotten to mention one—the treasure-room. Here, guarded by grated windows, and by a double locked door, stowed away in boxes and bags of various sizes, reposed the sum of sixty thousand dollars, then composing a large portion of Mr. Witherell's wealth. Let us accompany him on a nocturnal expedition to this chamber of gold. He has just made a tour of the house, finds that the family are all abed, the fires all extinguished, the bolts all shot, and then he creeps noiselessly, taper and key in either hand, to the depository of his worldly gear.—Ah! it would have done you good to see the jolly fat bags, with their plethora of guineas, and the heavy boxes, surfeited with ingots, while I know not how many bills, bonds, and securities, reposed in the secret drawers of an escriptoraire. Here Squire Witherell used to pass an hour or two of every day, gloating over his possessions and trembling for their security.—