

BOSTON IN FICTION

Described and Pictured by Frances Weston Carruth

Part II—About the Common

I. WHEN COMMERCIAL BOSTON WAS RESIDENTIAL.

The commercial section of the Boston of to-day differs from the Boston of fifty years ago as much, perhaps, as the city of the middle of the nineteenth century had changed from the town of wooden houses of the Revolutionary era. Modern enterprise has transformed the old streets, while a whole and entirely new Boston has risen on land which was submerged by every tide and where in fresh winds the salt whitecaps rolled and tumbled oftentimes to the destruction of the viaduct of the railroads which had boldly bridged the waste of waters which surrounded the almost island city.

In the beginning of its life Boston was essentially a commercial town and its inhabitants looked to the sea for their bread and for their riches. The wealth of its people was in ships above and far above everything else. With the broadening of its scope as the profits from manufacturing came to the front, the relative importance of its commercial interests declined, and the residences of its wealthier citizens, instead of clinging along the water-front, where tall masts could be seen from the windows and where the smell of tar constantly greeted the resident, pushed toward the westward, as if the salt water had become of less interest.

Summer Street, where to-day crowds of purchasers throng the sidewalks and busy shops, was laid out as a street of fine residences with ample gardens; an evolution from the closely built streets and alleys of the North End, where the ship owners had been contented to abide. Fort Hill crowned with its park, and Federal, Pearl, Oliver and other streets, which were either at its foot or climbed its steep sides, were the birthplaces of the older generation of aristocratic present-day Bostonians. In writing of this section, Mrs. A. D. T. Whitney in *Hitherto* says: "These were the days

when the city was not conglomerate but individual, . . . there were houses of home quiet in cool, watered streets and unprofaned 'Places', where vines covered the house fronts and caged birds sang in the windows . . . and great crowns of forest trees surged up among the chimneys. Boston was in her pleasant young matronhood then." In Church Green, just off of Summer Street, with a garden at the back of their house, lived the Holgates (*Hitherto*). This locality as it then was lends itself admirably to the neighbourhood atmosphere so characteristic of all of Mrs. Whitney's work.

At an earlier period we find Summer Street in Bynner's *Agnes Surriage*. This was the upper part of Summer Street in the middle of the last century, when it was scarcely more than a short lane, originally called "Ye Milne Street," because of a mill, erected in 1636, to which it led. Bynner gives us a charming picture of the exterior of Madame Vassall's splendid mansion which stood on the southern side of the street on the spot now occupied by a well-known dry-goods shop. He shows it to us through Agnes's eyes as she, about to make her social début at a rout there, approaches in the wake of a long line of coaches, chairs and chaises, and has ample leisure to study "the noble portico and balcony over the door, the gambrel roof, and luthern window, the courtyard paved in blue and white pebbles laid in quaint patterns, the garden fragrant with box and honeysuckle, the octagonal summer-house shaded by a huge English walnut-tree, and the long arcades adjoining the stable decorated with elaborate panel work and painted in two shades of yellow to match the house." During the early half of the last century, so fine were the orchards and gardens of the old estates on Summer Street that "the hospitable residents could set before their guests cider of their own manufacture, or butter from their own dairies."

Washington Street, busiest of thoroughfares into which Summer leads, in its

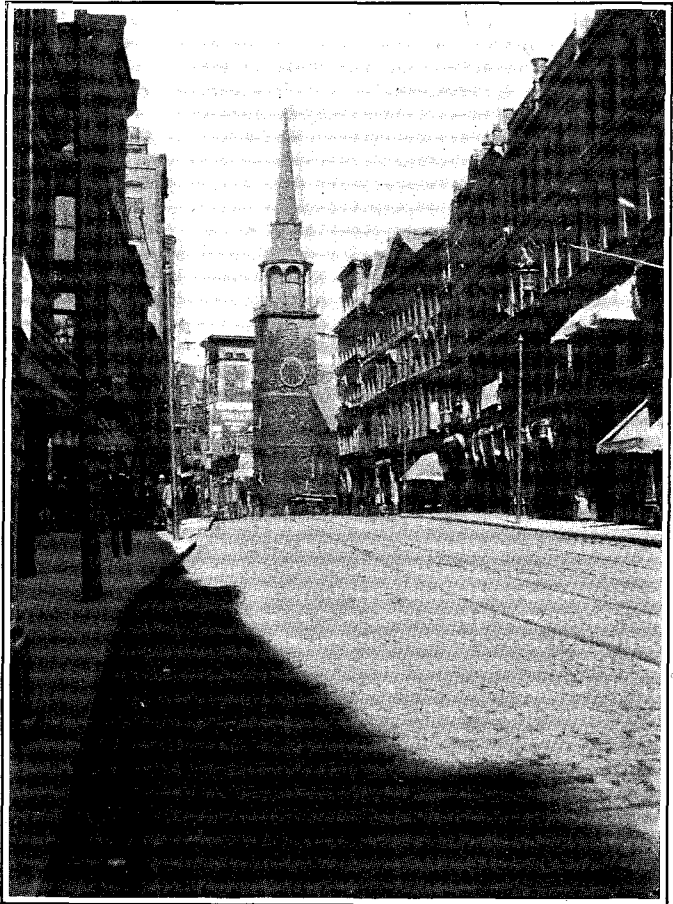
shopping district fifty years ago is referred to in Mrs. Whitney's *Hitherto* as "dear, old mixed-up Washington Street, where everything was small and wedged together and you knew your way by the angles and corners, and nothing stared out at you through great plate glass, but you must know enough to begin with to go in and enquire." Florimond, the priggish young hero of Mr. Henry James, in *A New England Winter* (who owed his romantic name to the fact that every one was reading ballads in Boston at the time he was born, and his mother had found the name in a ballad), in walking through Washington Street observed that "supreme in the thoroughfare was the rigid groove of the railway, where were oblong receptacles of fabulous capacity, governed by familiar citizens, jolted and jingled eternally, close on each other's rear, absorbing and emitting innumerable specimens of a single type. The road on either side was traversed periodically by the sisterhood of shoppers, laden with satchels, and parcels, and protected by a round-backed policeman." Though this was as seen by Florimond twenty years ago, it remains an exact picture of the street to-day. Mr. Howells in *A Woman's Reason* makes a characteristic comment in writing of this locality when he says: "There is doubtless more shopping in New York or London or Paris, but in these cities it is dispersed over a larger area, and nowhere in the world perhaps has shopping such an intensity of physiognomy as in Boston. It is unsparingly sincere in its expression. It means business, and the sole business of the city seems to be shopping."

Leaving the shopping district and proceeding east-

ward, we approach at the corner of Washington and Franklin Streets that hallowed spot where stands the Old South Church, one of the oldest monuments in Boston. So splendidly historical a thing was not to be ignored by the poet and novelist. Sings Dr. Holmes:

Full sevenscore years our city's pride—
The comely southern spire—
Has cast its shadow, and defied
The storm, the foe, the fire.

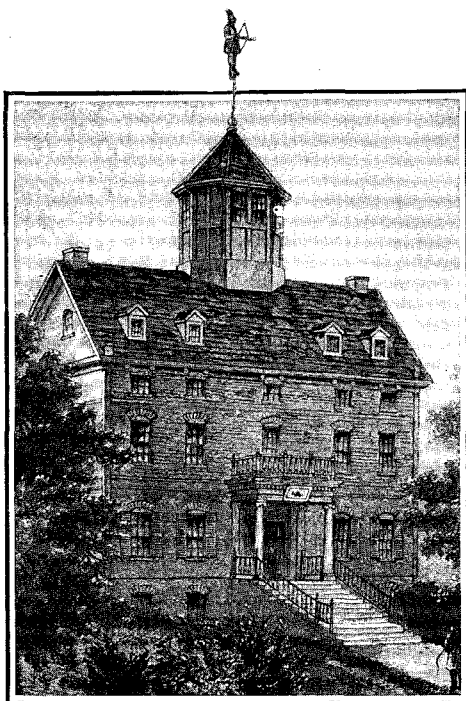
In the eighteenth century the people of



"Full sevenscore years our city's pride—
The comely southern spire—
Hast cast its shadow, and defied
The storm, the foe, the fire."

—Holmes.

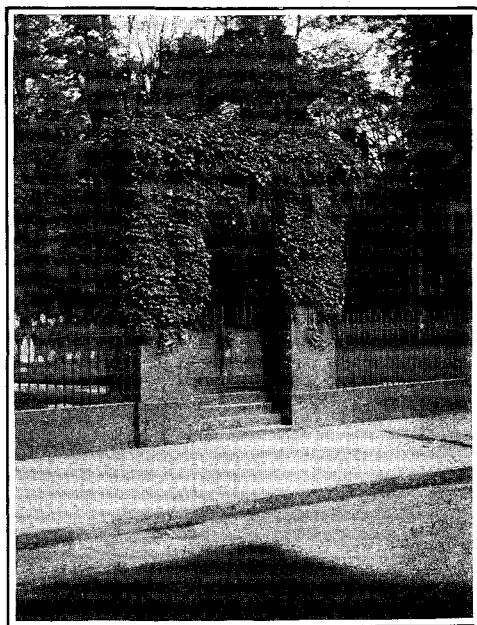
"He looked up at the face of the clock to find pity there, but the square steeple only frowned down upon him, as if to corroborate the fearful words just spoken."—Kane's *"Curse of the Old South Church."*



"The square front of the Province House, three stories high, and surmounted by a cupola, on the top of which a gilded Indian was discernible."—Hawthorne's *"Legends of the Province House."*

"... where Howe entertained the leaders of the royal army."—Cooper's *"Lionel Lincoln."*

Lydia Child's *Rebels* listened with varied emotions to the deafening clang from the steeple, which was part of the celebration of the repeal of the stamp act. And Cooper's British Lionel Lincoln on his return to Boston had his first glimpse of the edifice—known throughout New England with a species of veneration, when led there by Job Pray, who said: "This is what you call a church, though I call it a meetin' 'us. . . . It's no wonder you don't know it, for what the people built for a temple, the King has turned into a stable." On entering, Cooper tells us Lionel was amazed to find he stood in an area fitted for the exercise of the cavalry. The naked galleries and many of the original ornaments were standing; but the accommodations below were destroyed, and in their places the floor had been covered with earth for the horses and their riders to practise in the caverson. "The abominations of the place even now offended his senses, as he stood on that spot where he remembered so often to have seen the grave and pious



"Stop before we turn away and breathe a woman's sigh over poor Benjamin Woodbridge's dust. Love killed him, I think. . . . The Schoolmistress dropped a rosebud she had in her hand, through the rails, upon the grave."—"The Autocrat of the Breakfast Table."

colonists assemble, in crowds, to worship." This is what is meant by the last line on the tablet now in front of the church, which in its entirety reads:

OLD SOUTH.

Church gathered 1669.

First House built 1670.

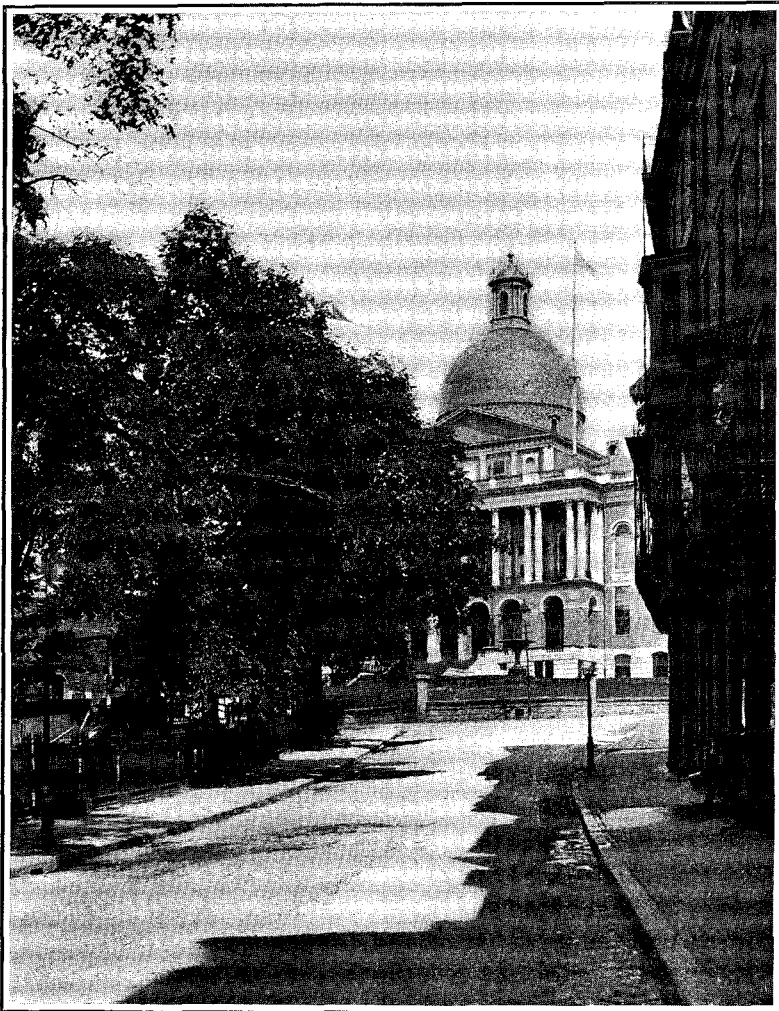
This House erected 1729.

Desecrated by British Troops, 1775-6.

Chaplain J. J. Kane chooses this old landmark whereon to hang his weird tale, *Iliad; or, The Curse of the Old South Church of Boston*, which, as he says, is the story of a great crime and the punishment meted out to the guilty—in the narration of which he apparently drew inspiration from every quarter of the globe and the oceans of the world, which he takes pleasure in mentioning at length in his introduction, written in 1888 aboard the U. S. flag-ship *Pensacola*. The porch of the church is the scene of many secret meetings between Professor Homeward, of this novel, and the beautiful Southern spy, Helen Claymuire of South

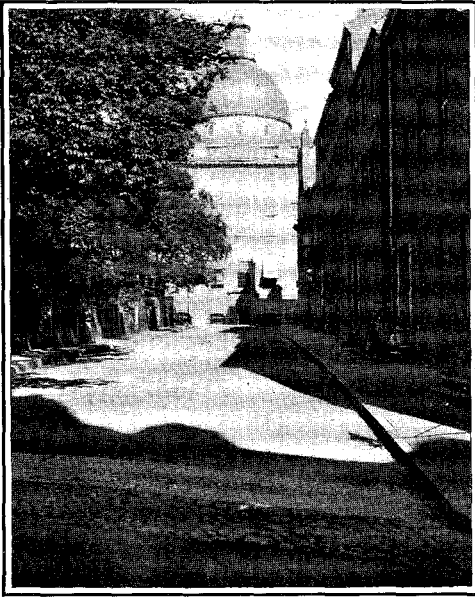
Carolina, frequently at an hour when the bell tolled midnight. Here, frenzied at the thought that the Professor meant to marry Miss Rathmine, the Southern woman called down the malediction of retributive divine justice upon their union. It was a terrible curse—prophetic of accumulated miseries—and with it she left him. “He looked up at the face of the clock to find pity there, but the square steeple only frowned down upon him, as if to corroborate the fearful words just spoken.” All of which did not prevent this Dr.-Jekyll-and-Mr.

Hyde sort of man from marrying Miss Rathmine on the day appointed. “At noon the bell in the steeple of the Old South Church rang out a wedding refrain, and the edifice was packed to overflowing. After the ceremony, in the porch of the church, the bridegroom was destined to encounter his former love standing . . . like a statue of the goddess Athena, calm, dignified and haughty, with a look of scorn that pierced to the inmost soul of the guilty man.” How the curse affected the life of the Professor, all who run may read in the pages of

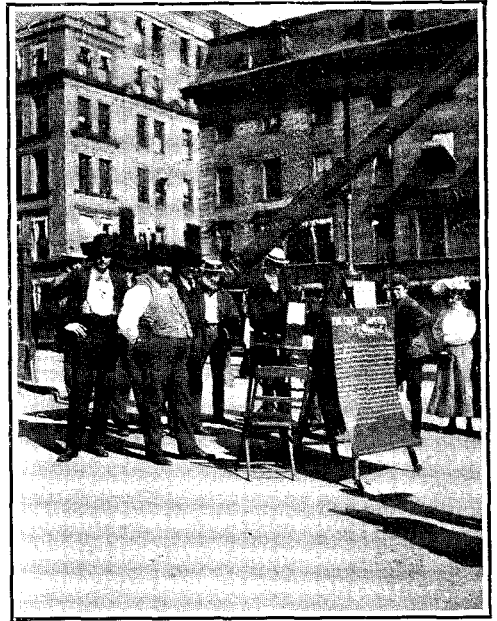


“High in the air, poised in the right place, over everything that clustered below, the most felicitous object in Boston—the gilded dome of the State House.”—*Henry James's "New England Winter."*

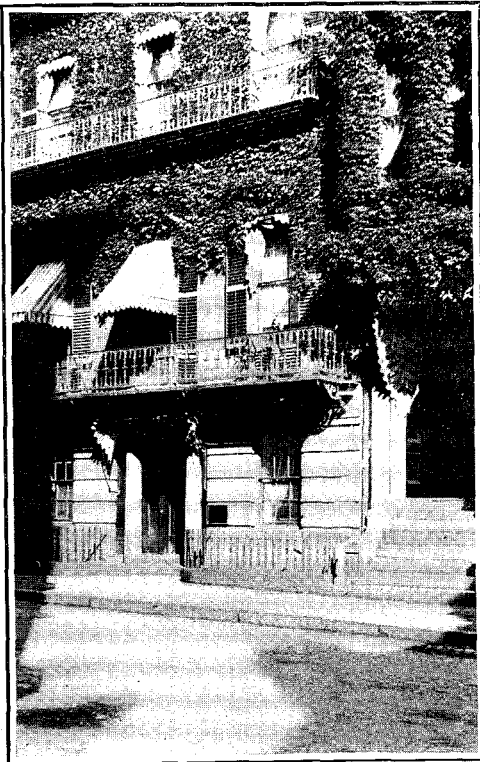
“He stretched his arms to the gilded dome as if he would embrace it and all Boston at once.”—*Helen Campbell's "Ballantyne."*



"That commodious nook which is known as Mount Vernon Place."—Henry James's *"New England Winter."*



"Ever since I had a ten-cent look at the transit of Venus . . . through the telescope in the Mall, the earth has been wholly different to me from what it used to be."—Holmes's *"Over the Tea-Cups."*

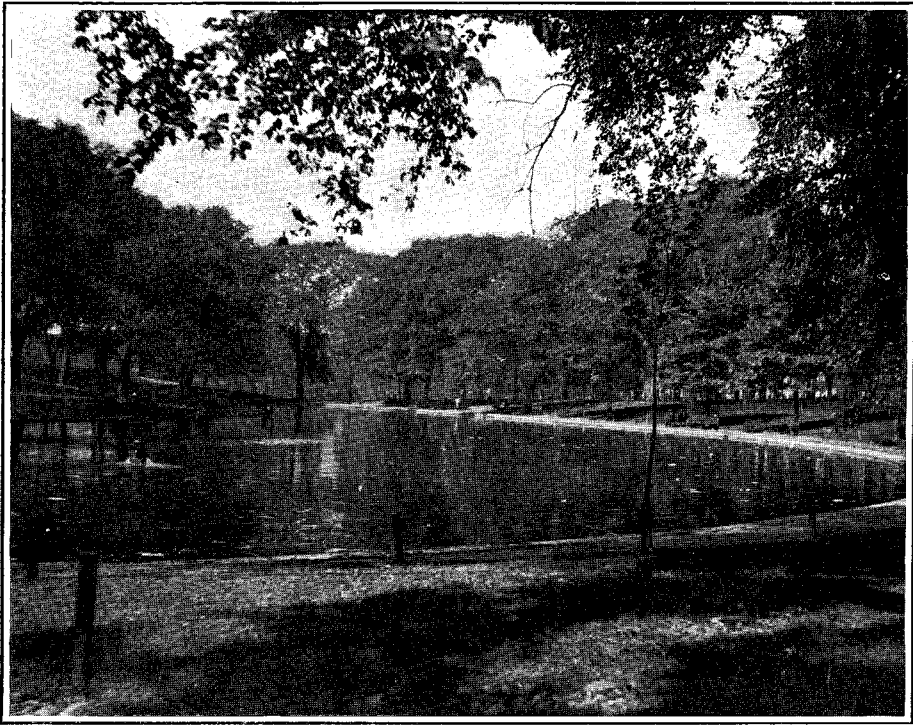


48 MOUNT VERNON STREET—THE HOME OF THE COREYS.

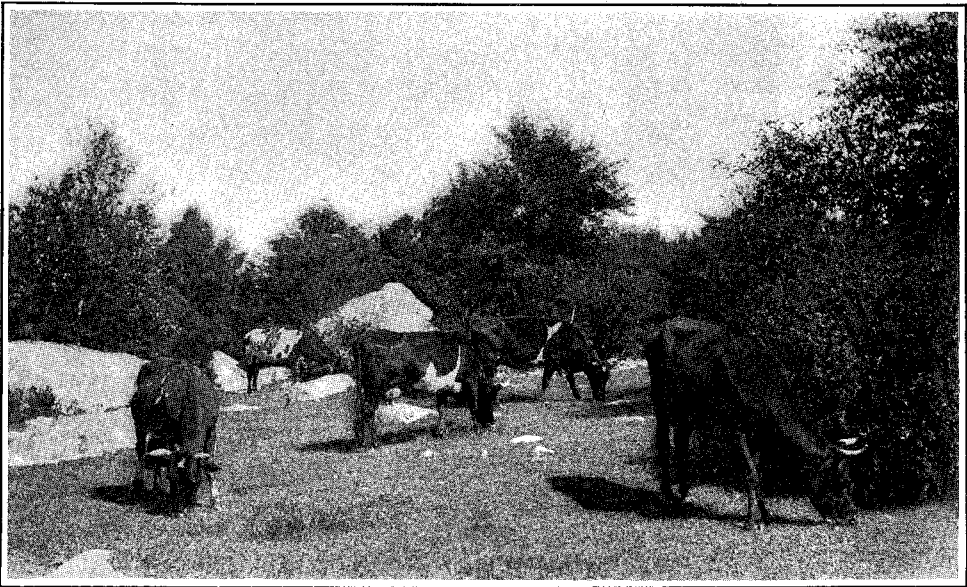
"The whole place wears an air of aristocratic seclusion."—Howells's *"Rise of Silas Lap-ham."*



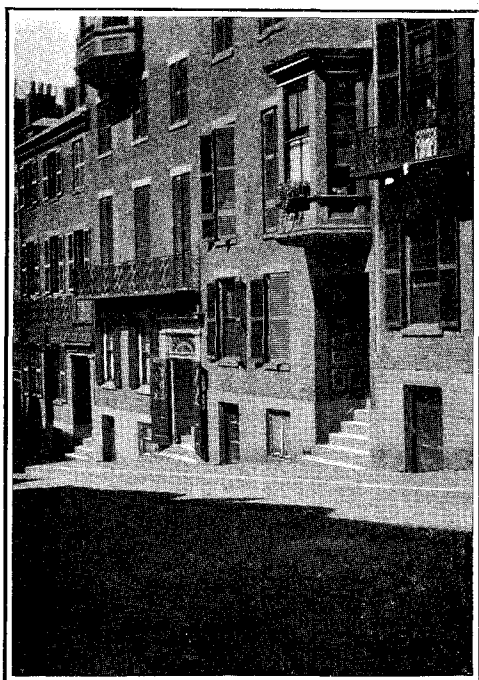
"When she came to the Athenæum, she was so tired that she decided to take refuge beneath its friendly shelter."—Eliza Orne White's *"Miss Brooks."*



"When he had his cry out he felt a little better, and he got up and went to the pond in the hollow and washed his hands and face."—*Howells's "Minister's Charge."*



"'Boston cows don't love grass British soldiers have trampled on.' Many a time in those anxious days, Lionel, listening for a stir of soldiery on the Common, heard only the faint lowing of cattle from the meadows."—*Cooper's "Lionel Lincoln."*



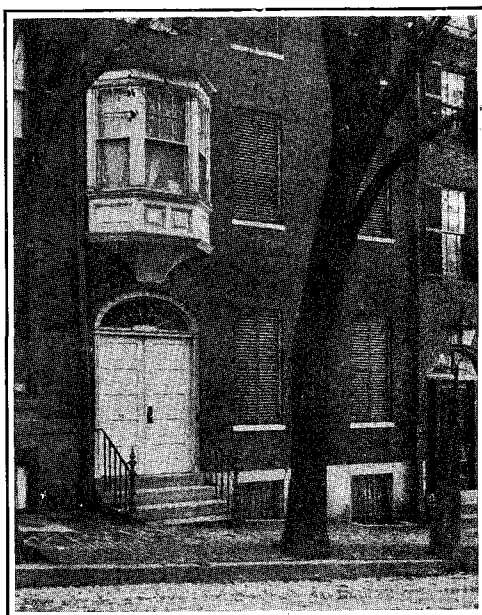
73 PINCKNEY STREET—THE HOME OF THE LACYS.

"When spring came they rowed on the river, down to which they looked from the bay-window of the drawing-room."—*Helen Campbell's "Ballantyne."*

Ilion. Emerging from the porch—by Chaplain Kane so darkly shadowed—into the sunshine of the street, it is charming to look up and imagine what, no doubt, the poet N. P. Willis saw:

On the cross-beam under the Old South bell
The nest of a pigeon is builded well.

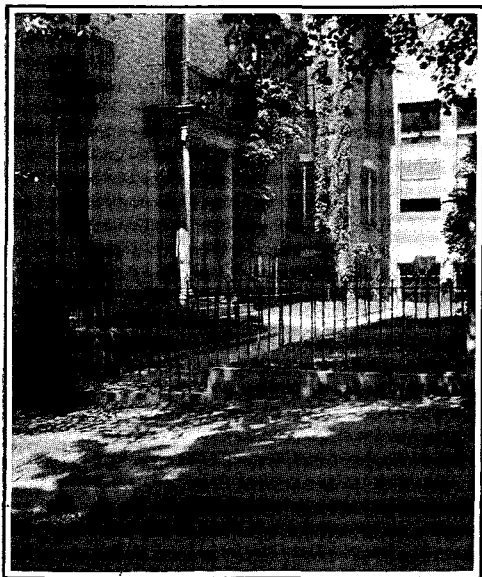
In Colonial days the Old South stood almost under the windows of the dignified Province House, the residence of many of the royal governors. This ancient abode was standing as late as 1864 on the site of what is now Province Court and was originally surrounded by fine lawns and trees as shown in the illustration. Hawthorne, who weaves four fanciful legends about it, thus describes it in his day: "Entering an arched passage, which penetrated through the middle of a brick row of shops, a few steps transported me from the busy heart of modern Boston into a small and secluded courtyard. One side of this space was occupied by the square front of the Province House, three stories high, and sur-



82 MOUNT VERNON STREET—THE HOME OF THE RANDOLPHS.

"He had almost reached their house, when he saw a slender girl coming down the steps."—*Eliza Orne White's "Miss Brooks."*

mounted by a cupola, on the top of which a gilded Indian was discernible, with his bow bent and his arrow on the string, as if aiming at the weathercock on the spire of the Old South." This Indian was carved by Deacon Shem Drowne, to whom, as the hero of one of Hawthorne's tales, allusion has been made. *Lionel Lincoln*, Mayor of the 47th, "Wolfe's own," frequently entered the gates of the Province House, where Howe entertained the leaders of the royal army. Cooper permits us an interesting glimpse of the banquet hall, along the centre of which gay apartment was spread the hospitable board of the entertainer. "It was surrounded," he writes, "by men in the trappings of high military rank, though here and there might be seen a guest whose plainer attire and dejected countenance betrayed the presence of one or two of those misjudging colonists whose confidence in the resistless power of the crown began already to waver. The lieutenant of the King held his wonted place at the banquet, his dark visage expressing all the heartiness of the soldier's welcome, while he pointed out this or that favourite among an abundant



"One of the last spells of the past was lifted for him when he saw strange faces looking out of those sun-purpled window-panes."—*T. B. Aldrich's "Two Bites at a Cherry."*

collection of wines, that included the choicest liquors of Europe." In earlier times than this the Province House is to be seen in festive attire if we go with Captain Somerville, the Osbornes and Dr. Willard (*The Rebels*), who, walking out to witness the celebration of the repeal of the stamp act, stop opposite the Province House to examine the fanciful devices that had been prepared, in the eagerness of gratitude and joy. A full-length picture of Liberty hurling a broken chain to the winds particularly attracted their attention.

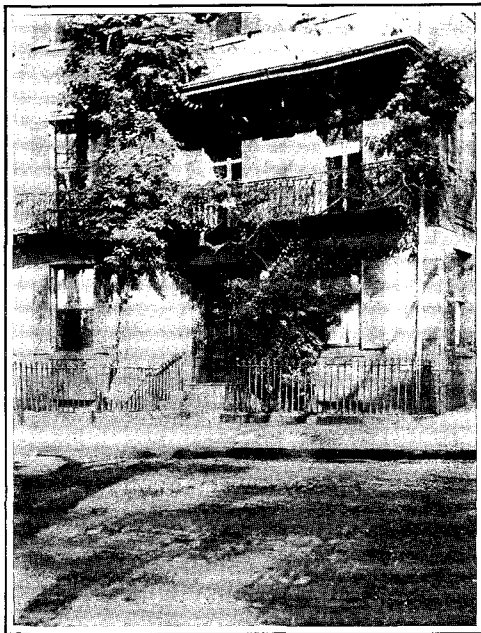
II. APPROACHING THE COMMON.

Directly north of the Province House, and like it now demolished, stood in Tremont street, at the corner of Beacon, the Tremont House, where Thackeray, Dickens and other foreign notables stayed, and which Dickens said "had more galleries, colonnades, piazzas and passages than he could remember or the reader would believe." He has left us a most humorous account of the first order he gave at this hotel:

"Dinner, if you please," said I to the waiter.

"When?" said the waiter.

"As quick as possible," said I.



"In her blue room overlooking the Common was little Mildred Wentworth in the midst of her Christmas toys."—*T. B. Aldrich's "Christmas Fantasy."*

"Right away?" said the waiter.

After a moment's hesitation, I answered, "No," at a hazard.

"Not right away?" cried the waiter, with an amount of surprise that made me start.

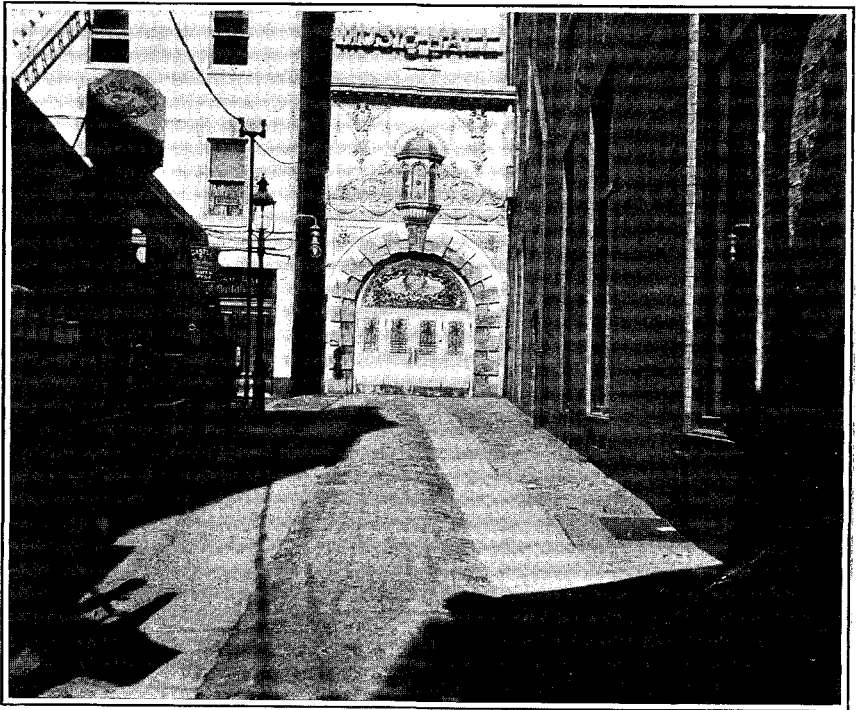
I looked at him doubtfully, and returned, "No; I would rather have it in this private room. I like it very much."

At this I really thought the waiter must have gone out of his mind; as I believe he would have done but for the interposition of another man, who whispered in his ear, "Directly."

"Well! and that's a fact!" said the waiter, looking helplessly at me: "Right away."

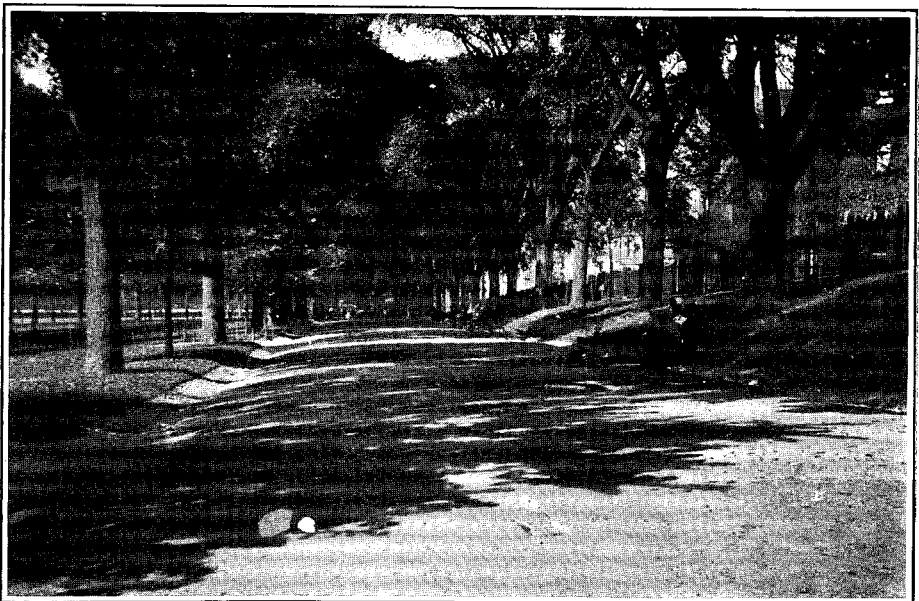
I saw now that "Right away" and "Directly" were one and the same thing. So I reversed my previous answer, and sat down to dinner in ten minutes afterward; and a capital dinner it was.

John T. Trowbridge tells us that Martin Merrivale had an unsatisfactory meeting with his uncle at the Tremont House, and it is further invested with literary interest from the fact that in one of its private rooms were held, in the forties, the meetings of "The Jacobins' Club," humourously so dubbed by the literary men of which it was formed—radical thinkers



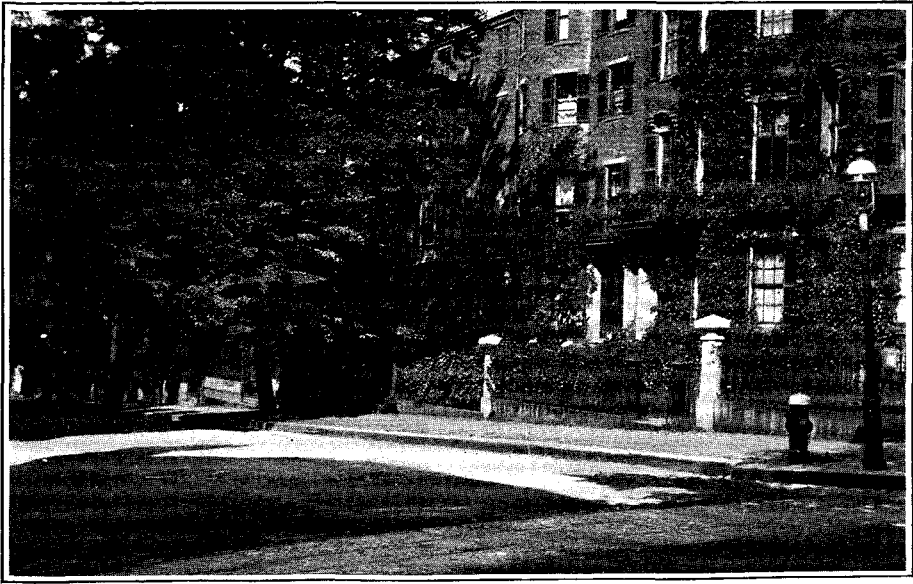
"As he gazed down the vista, the approach for pedestrians . . . he thought it looked expectant and ominous."—*Henry James's "Bostonians."*

"Where a handful of people gathered to hear the music, and all the rest of the world crowded for the sake of having been there."—*Arlo Bates's "Philistines."*



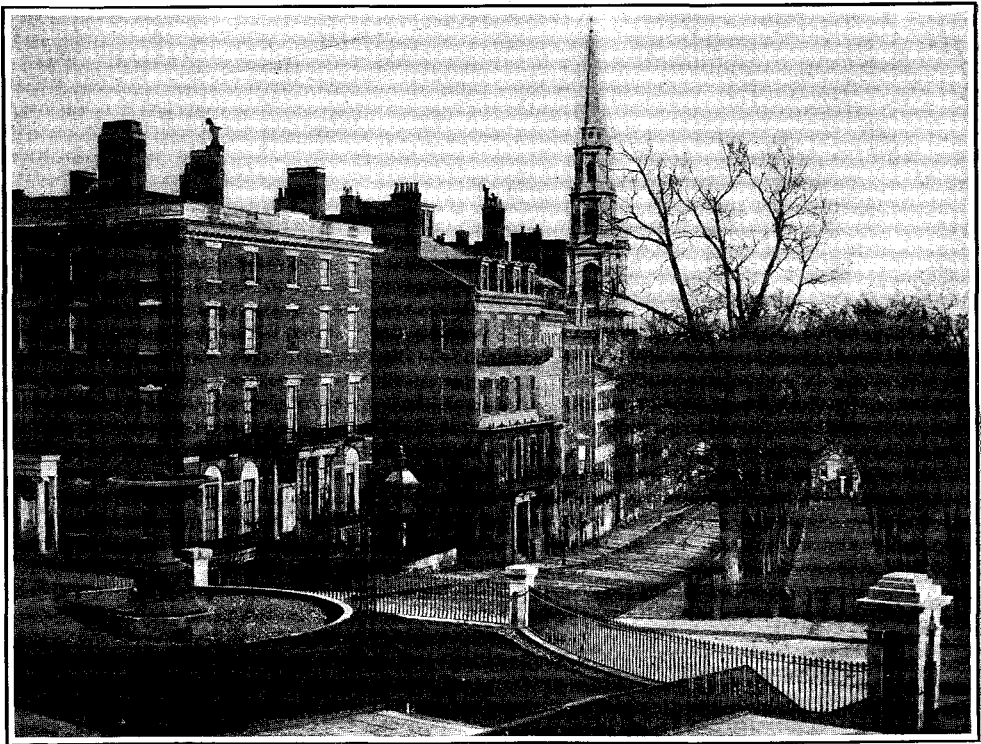
"A pensive golden light streamed through the long, loose boughs and struck across the slopes of the Common."

"So far from knowing that they must not walk in the Common, they used to sit down on a bench there in the pleasant weather, and watch the opening of the spring."—*Howells's "Modern Instance."*



"I always peer around for a fleeting glance of Priscillas, John Aldens, or other far-away people who rightfully belong among those quaint old houses, still breathing out history and romance."—*Margaret Allston's "Boston Experiences."*

"Vancouver was fond of standing in one of the semicircular windows of the Somerset Club."—*Crawford's "American Politician."*



TICKNOR MANSION.

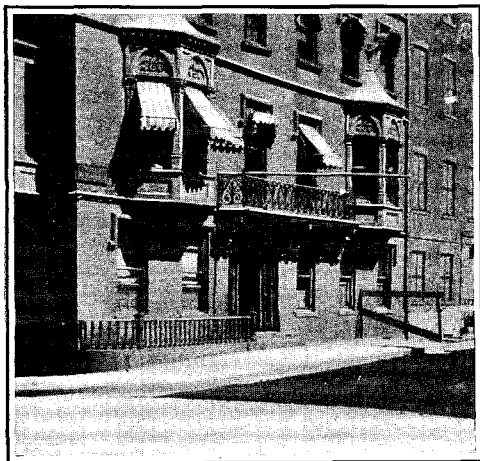
UNION CLUB.

PARK STREET CHURCH.

MALL.

"In an hour he found himself seated at breakfast at his club."—*Wheelwright's "Child of the Century."*

"We are in a magnificent rolling park, laid out in avenues and paths, with long, double rows of trees.' . . . After resting some time upon a bench in a shaded spot they returned to the boarding-house."—*Trowbridge's "Martin Merrivale."*



41 MOUNT VERNON STREET—THE HOME OF MRS. HARRISON GRAY OTIS.

"Miss Mehitable Quincy lived in one of those fine old houses at the head of Mount Vernon Street."—Mrs. L. C. Moulton's *"Miss Eyre."*

and reformers, all of them. In literature these men, says a recent writer, were essayists, ready to overhaul art, science, philosophy and theology with improved microscopes.

The side windows of the Tremont House overlooked the Granary Burying-ground—a burial ground, according to a Western humourist, being "part and parcel of all Boston hotels." Bynner's hero, Sir Harry Frankland, attended the burial in the Granary ground of Mr. Peter Fanueil, and near by is the grave of young Benjamin Woodbridge, beside which the Autocrat and the Schoolmistress mourned so sentimentally. "The grey squirrels," says the Autocrat, "were looking out for their breakfasts, and one of them came toward us in light, soft intermittent leaps, until he was close to the rail of the burial ground. He was on a grave with a broad blue slate stone at its head and a shrub growing on it. . . . Stop before we turn away and breathe a woman's sigh over poor Benjamin's dust. Love killed him, I think. . . . The Schoolmistress dropped a rosebud she had in her hand, through the rails, upon the grave." In *The Pagans* of Arlo Bates we find Fenton, from one of the windows of his studio, admiring the tops of the trees of the old Granary ground opposite. This burying ground gets its

name from the town granary which in the early days it surrounded.

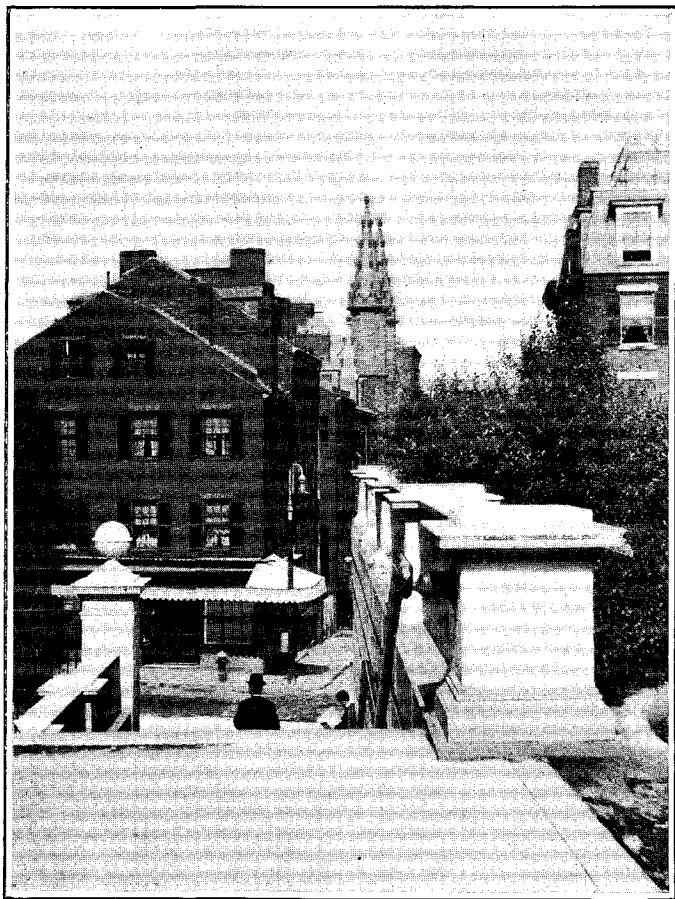
Across from here a little eastward stands Tremont Temple, to-day a new edifice in place of the one of which in *The Bostonians* Henry James writes: "The only thing that was still actual for Miss Birdseye was the elevation of the species by the reading of Emerson and the frequentation of Tremont Temple." And in another part of the novel he tells us that Verena Tarrant's mother had no higher ambition for her daughter than she should marry a person connected with public life—which meant, for Mrs. Tarrant, that his name would be visible in the lamplight, on a coloured poster, in the doorway of Tremont Temple. To the initiated the place recalls the man, a musical eccentric, who under a thin disguise figures as Killings in *Martin Merivale*. He made himself notorious in the Boston of his day by purchasing at the auction in Tremont Temple the first ticket sold for Jenny Lind's concert, for which he paid the fabulous price of \$625. This so roused public curiosity that his hitherto slimly attended concerts were crowded, and his seemingly reckless expenditure of money proved the good investment he intended. In speaking recently of this man—the prototype of Killings—Mr. Trowbridge said that many Bostonians would recall certain posters which flooded such of the shop-windows as would take them during Jenny Lind's stay. Very large and highly coloured posters they were, representing a group of three figures—the central one, Jenny Lind, flanked by P. T. Barnum, her manager, in the act of presenting to her with a great flourish the man to whom her song was "beyond the price of avarice." In *Martin Merivale*, Killings also figured as the publisher and editor of the Literary Portfolio, which existed in fact as the Literary Museum.

Near Tremont Temple, with entrances on Hamilton Place, School and Winter Streets, is the Music Hall, recently descended to the level of variety shows, but for many years a distinctive institution not to be overlooked by any novelist wishing to faithfully portray Boston. "As all the world knows," says Henry James, in *The Bostonians*, "the opportunities in Boston for hearing good music are numerous and excellent, and it had

long been Olive's practice to cultivate the best. She went in, as the phrase is, for the superior programmes, and the high, dim, dignified Music Hall, which has echoed in its time so much eloquence and so much melody, and of which the very proportions and colour seem to teach respect and attention, shed the protection of its illuminated cornice upon no face more intelligently upturned than those of Olive and Verena." This was the hall daringly engaged for Verena's debut, by Olive, who felt it was the only temple in which the votaries of their creed could worship. Little Dr. Prance described the place as pretty big, but not so big as Olive Chancellor's ideas—ideas for the emancipation of her sex, destined to be ruthlessly crushed by the masculinity of the determined Basil Ransom. Who does not remember how, suddenly coming to Boston for Verena, he found her appearance in Music Hall immensely advertised. "As he gazed down the vista, the approach for pedestrians which leads out of Winter Street, he thought it looked expectant and ominous." And that night we all know the expectant, impatient audience called in vain for Verena, who never made the great speech which was to liberate her sex from bondage, but was literally snatched bodily from the anteroom by her masterful lover, who dramatically whirled her off to live for him instead of for the "cause."

It was during a symphony concert in Music Hall that Truth Dexter, in the novel of that name, inwardly tortured by the thought that her husband did not love her, was taken ill and rushed precipitately from the building. To these Saturday evening concerts, accompanied,

after he went blind, by the ever-devoted Kate, came Dan Howard, whom Miss Frothingham makes appeal so tremendously to our sympathies in *The Turn of the Road*. As Mrs. Staggchase's guest (Arlo Bates's *The Philistines*) Miss Merrivale is also taken to the concerts, "where a handful of people gathered to hear the music, and all the rest of the world crowded for the sake of having been there." These concerts are always preceded by a public rehearsal on Friday afternoons, which, in her *Boston Experiences*, Margaret Allston assures us no one enjoys, in the ordinary acceptance of that term, but every one respects, exalts, bends the knee, imbibes—yea, even unto the state of worship known at Beyreuth. Another novelist, Eliza Orne

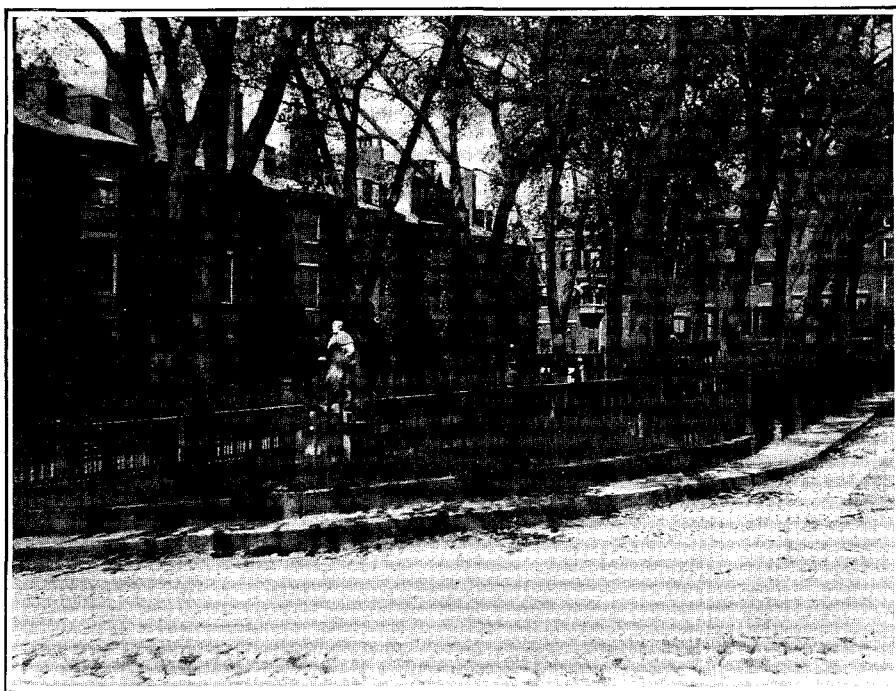


"BEACON STEPS."—HOWELLS'S "A WOMAN'S REASON."

"Streets of charming houses over behind Beacon Hill and beyond the State House."—Mrs. A. D. T. Whitney's "Hitherto."

White, in her clever portrayal of a typical young woman of the Hub, unhesitatingly declares that Mary (*Miss Brooks*) went to the rehearsals from a sense of duty mingled with a desire to see her friends. John Graham, whom she dragged along, owned frankly to himself that he went to see Mary. It was only Janet, of the Brooks family, who really loved the music which "exalted her, and made her feel that there was no heroic deeds she could not do." Though the affair was called a lecture, in accordance with the

of The Pagans, Arthur Fenton and Tom Bently, had studios there, where in reality occurred recently, said Mr. Arlo Bates in discussing this novel, far more brilliant and original talk among The Pagans than is the imaginary conversation he makes for them. Bently's studio, as he describes it, was the envy of all his brother-artists, with its "stuffs from Algiers, rugs from Persia and Turkey; weapons from Tripoli and India and Tunis; musical instruments from Egypt and Spain; antiques from Greece and Germany and Italy; and



LOUISBURG SQUARE—FORMER HOMES OF LOUISA ALCOTT AND MR. HOWELLS.

"Having wandered into the neighbourhood of Louisburg Square, he suddenly recalled that one of the old household lived here."—*Helen Campbell's "Ballantyne."*

time-honoured custom of Boston, Crawford would have us understand it was a political speech An American Politician made there. In his audience was a little colony of Beacon Street. "It is not often that Beacon Street goes to such lectures, but John was one of themselves."

In Tremont Street, only a few steps away from the old Music Hall (the new one, called Symphony Hall, is out on Huntington Avenue), is the Studio Building, once the working place exclusively of artists, but now encroached upon by business in one form or another. Two

pottery from everywhere." Differing, but equally luxurious, was Fenton's where much that was dramatic occurs. In the same building, but far more of a workshop, was the studio of Allestree, with whom as Roweny and, later, Mrs. Keats Bradford, in the two books so named, Maria Louise Pool's heroine studied art before going to Paris.

III. IN AND AROUND THE COMMON.

At the head of Park Street, which bounds the Common on the east, stood

until within a few years the beautiful Ticknor mansion—during George Ticknor's time a rallying point for literary Boston, and likewise famed as being the house where Lafayette stayed during his visit in 1824. This is undoubtedly the house where Margaret and Laura lived in Mrs. Lousie Chandler Moulton's *A Letter and What Came of It*. Next door down the sloping street is the Union Club, shown, as is the mansion in the illustration, before either had undergone

apartment because she liked the odour of business which in recent years has crept into the street. On the corner, facing on Tremont Street, is the Park Street Church, which Martin Merrivale attended. Opposite these Park Street buildings is the mall of the Common, which takes its name from the street to which it runs parallel. Like similar paths in the Common, its leafy arch has furnished inspiration to many writers. Howells, who presents varied phases of the Common, first intro-



"The perfect Gothic arch formed by the trees that line both sides of Mount Vernon Street."—Helen Reed's *"Miss Theodora."*

alterations. Sewell, Mr. John T. Wheelwright's *Child of the Century*, was a member of this club and, it will be remembered, entertained Strong at breakfast there. It is interesting to know that Mr. Wheelwright originally intended Sewell to be a kind of Yankee Pickwick who travelled about in search of adventure; but he got involved in the Mugwump campaign of 1884 and became ruined by what Mr. Wheelwright called, in speaking of him, "the fatal contact with politics." Just below the club, Roweny (Mrs. Keats Bradford) took an

duces in *A Woman's Reason* Mr. Joshua Harkness at half past five of a hot summer day toiling heavily up this mall and finally sinking with exhaustion on to a bench, where he remained until an obliging policeman found a carriage to take him home. At the head of this mall Bartley Hubbard and Marcia (*A Modern Instance*), taking their first walk in the Common, stopped to see the boys coasting under the care of the police, between two long lines of spectators. On one of the near-by benches Martin Merrivale and the little blind Alice sat many a day

while he described to her the beautiful slopes and regal trees about them. The gentle Alice, though a fictitious character, was suggested to Mr. Trowbridge by his friendship with a woman who was an interesting psychologic study, she having remarkable prophetic visions, as Alice did. No doubt Martin and Alice in their walk down the mall often encountered the telescope man whom Holmes has immortalised: "Ever since I had a ten-cent look at the transit of Venus, . . . through the

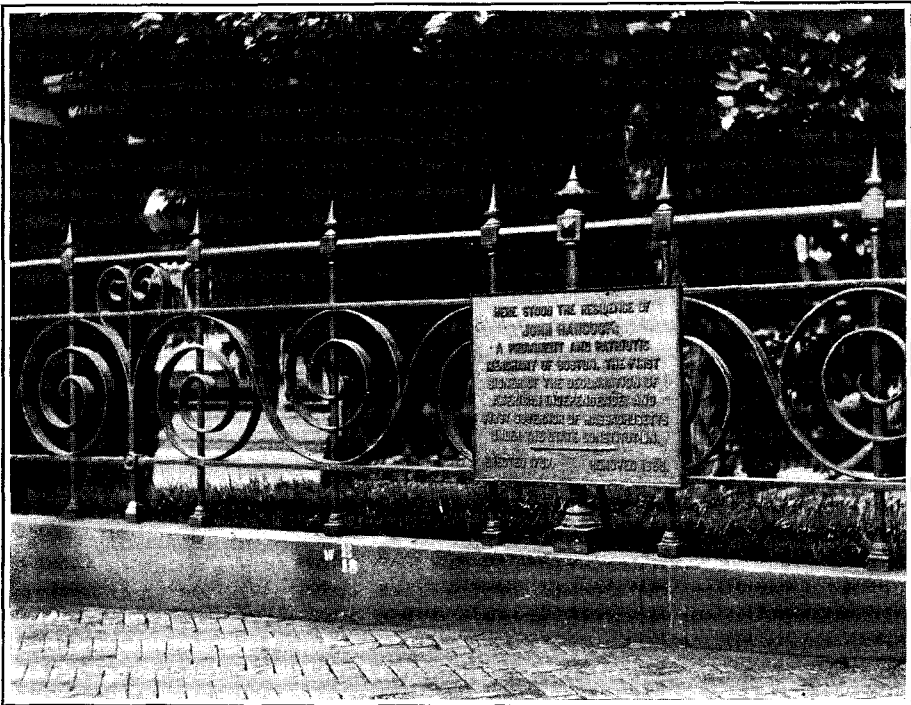
British redcoats on the Common. In *The Rebels*, Lydia Child also refers to the British drawing up as if to blockade the town, stretching a long line of tents here and there, surmounted by the red cross standard.

And over all the open green,

Where grazed of late the harmless kine,
The cannon's deepening ruts are seen,

The war-horse stamps, the bayonets shine.

Job Pray told Lionel he objected to the



"We turn away from the old mansion so easily conjured up by the imagination and see in reality, on a low iron fence, a tablet which marks the site upon which it stood."

telescope in the mall," he says, "the earth has been wholly different to me from what it used to be." As in the Doctor's time, ever cheerfully ready is he to-day to show the wonders of the planet.

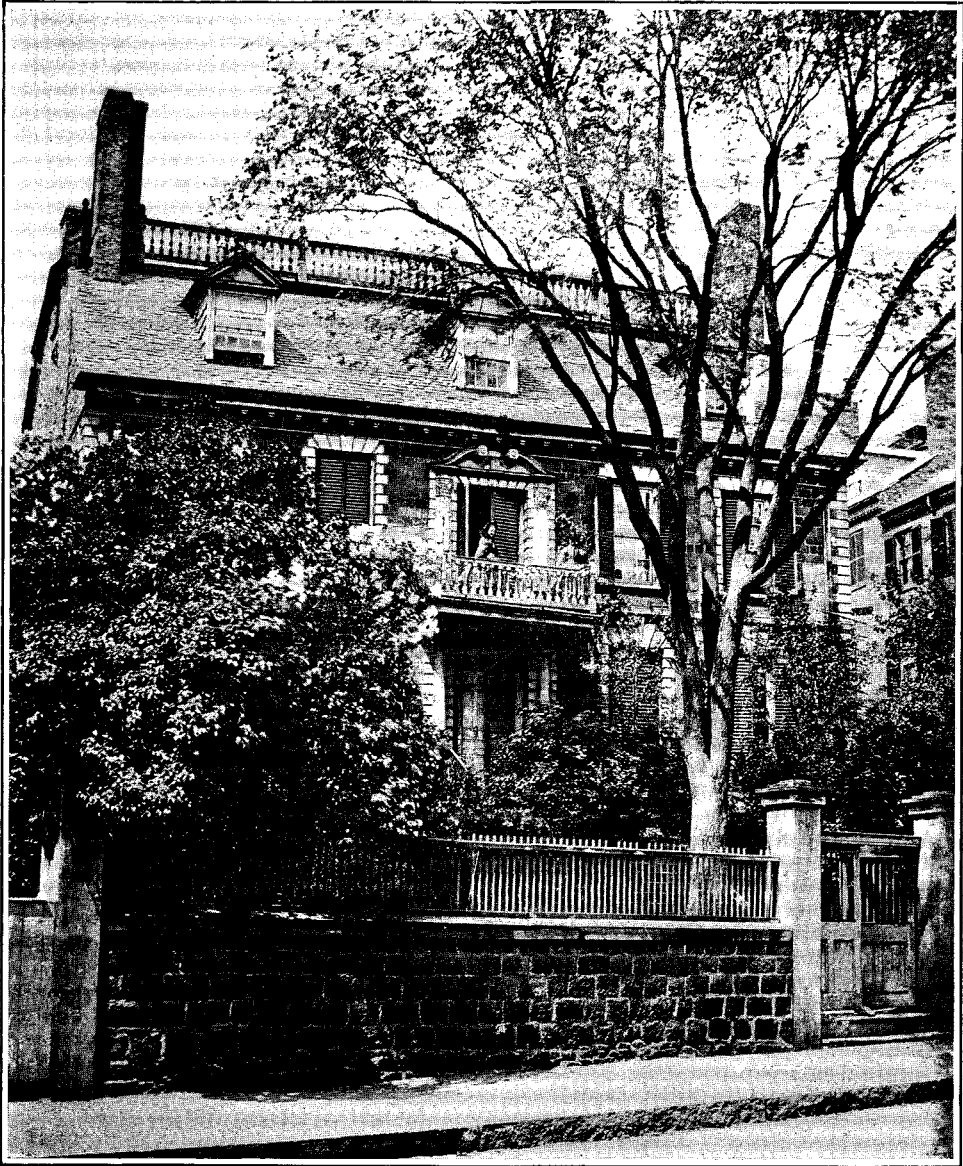
The Common with its malls and well-regulated intersecting paths is not quite the sunny meadow and pasture for cows Lionel Lincoln found it when he came to Boston, nor, indeed, Agnes Surriage, years before him. Soon after Lionel's arrival the bucolic rusticity of the scene was somewhat broken by the quartering of

soldiers, because they starved the cows: "Boston cows don't love grass that British soldiers have trampled on." Many a time in those anxious days Lionel, listening for a stir of soldiery on the Common, "heard only the faint lowing of cattle from the meadows." What would seem to us now as strange a spectacle as the cows was the spinning craze, which led the belles of the colony to bring their wheels to the Common. This novel scene Bynner describes in *Agnes Surriage*. "Rows of young women with their spinning wheels were busy at work

in the open air," he says, "while elderly men and matrons went up and down the hill to give them countenance and keep at a distance the gaping crowd. 'Tis the fashion," Frankland explained to Agnes,

enjoyed the admiration of the swains close at hand, and he laughingly hurried Agnes away lest she join the ranks.

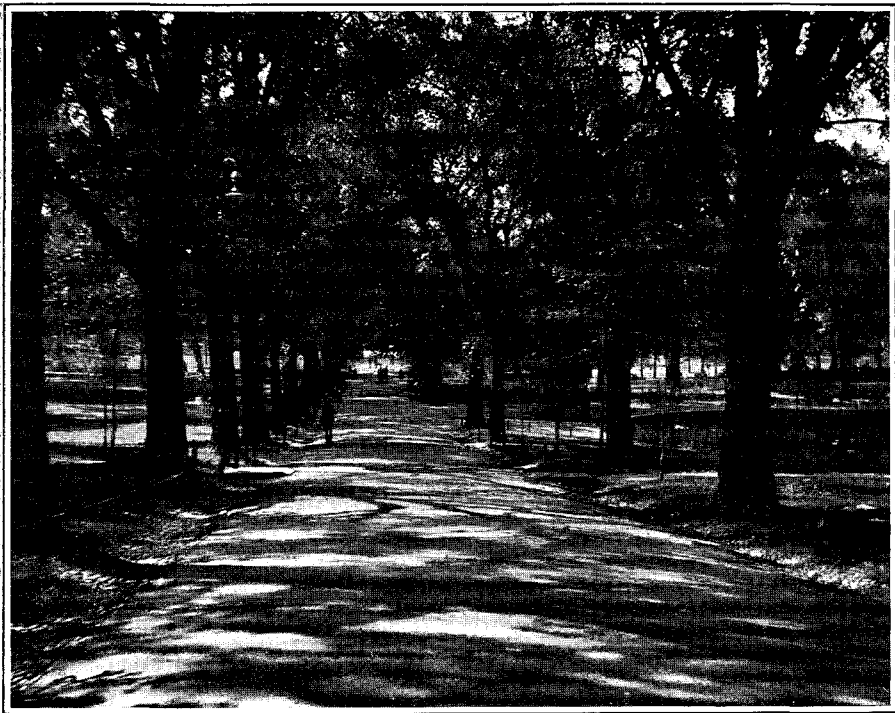
To the literary rambler the Common holds no walk so full of interest as "the



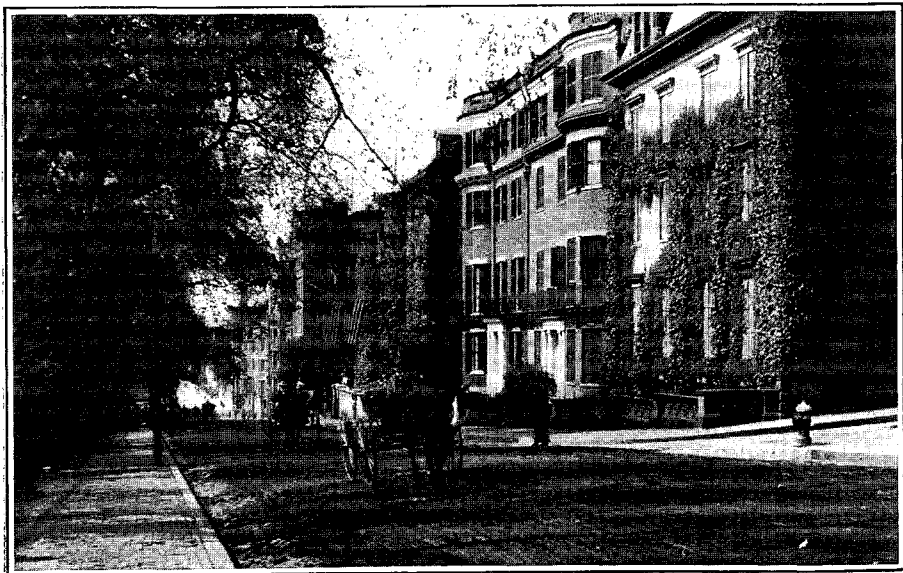
"Nan lived in an ancestral home where British officers had danced stately minuets when Massachusetts was a colony."—Mrs. Louise Chandler Moulton's *"Miss Eyre."*

"to encourage industry and thrift; these are the daughters of our most substantial citizens come forth here to give an example to the meaner sort." From the coquetry of the pretty minxes he suspected they

long path," running down from Joy Street southward to Boylston Street, which the Autocrat and the Schoolmistress walked together. At the head of the path the ginkgo-tree under which he suggested



"'Will you take the long path with me?' 'Certainly,' said the Schoolmistress, 'with much pleasure.' 'Think,' I said, 'before you answer; if you take the long path with me now, I shall interpret it that we are to part no more!' . . . She answered softly, 'I will walk the *long path* with you.'"—*The Autocrat of the Breakfast Table.*"

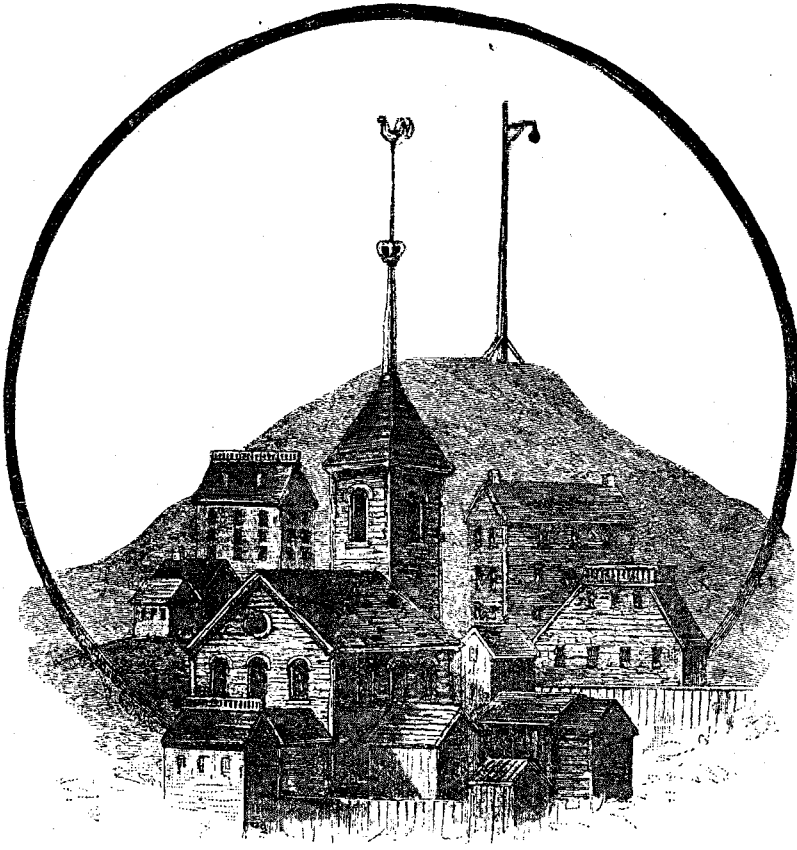


"The iron gate which, between stately stone posts shut off the domain of the Frostwinches from the world."—Arlo Bates's "*Puritans.*"

"A row of stately fine old houses, with little plots of lawn in front and high iron fences."—A. S. Pier's "*Sentimentalists.*"

that she sit—seeing how perturbed his proposal had made her—is still standing, and no doubt its delicate, fluttering leaves whispered their secret to the neighbouring tree-tops. As we all know, the Schoolmistress declined the proffered seat with a soft “I will walk the *long path* with you,” which meant that they were to part no more. How delightful to

On the Tremont Street mall used to sit old Mr. James Bowdoin (Stimson’s *Pirate Gold*) for half an hour before breakfast every morning, walking over from his home in Colonnade Row across the way. Near the Bowdoin’s residence stood half way down on West Street the Latin School, attended by Wheelwright’s Child of the Century and Philip Sander-



“One stately summit from its shaft shall pour
Its deep red blaze along the darkened shore;
Emblem of thought, that, kindling far and
wide,
In danger’s night shall be a nation’s guide.”

—Holmes.

have been the old gentleman who met them about the middle of the way down, walking arm in arm! That must have been about opposite the Frog Pond, where Ben and Ernest (Helen L. Reed’s *Miss Theodora*) often went skating and where Mr. Howells shows us Lemuel Barker, *The Minister’s Charge*, bathing his face in the water while other people were asleep on benches all around the pond.

son, in Mrs. Otis’s *Barclays of Boston*. Just around the corner, on Mason Street, is “The Old Elm, that subterranean retreat known to bachelors and busy husbands,” where Truth Dexter’s father-in-law heard his son unpleasantly discussed. To return again to the Common and cross it southwestward, we come to the beautiful Beacon Street mall, which seemed to Lemuel Barker a kind of

grove, so attractive and homelike that he lingered on one of the benches, where misfortunes soon befell him. Later in his career he took a memorable walk through this mall with Madeline Swan. Here, too, sat Bartley Hubbard and Marcia (*A Modern Instance*) in pleasant weather to watch the opening of the spring.

IV. BEACON HILL AND STREET.

Around the green, in morning light,

The spired and palaced summits blaze,
And, sunlike, from her Beacon height

The dome-crowned city spreads her rays.

True to the traditions of the Bostonese, all the fiction writers of the city pay their tribute to the State House with its splendid gilded dome. "High in the air, poised in the right place, over everything that clustered below, the most felicitous object in Boston—the gilded dome of the State House," writes Henry James in *A New England Winter*. Mrs. Campbell's Ballantyne, in her novel of that name, returning to Boston from the West, stretched his arms to the gilded dome, as if he would embrace it and all Boston at once. And the Autocrat's most celebrated saying is, "Boston State House is the hub of the solar system. You couldn't pry that out of a Boston man if you had the tire of all creation straightened out for a crowbar." Again and again he lovingly reverts to it. "Boston," at another time he writes, "has glorified her State House and herself at the expense of a few sheets of gold-leaf laid on the dome, which shines like a sun in the eyes of her citizens, and like a star in those of the approaching traveller." On the eastern side of the State House has been erected a shaft to mark the site of the old beacon which first threw its light across the adjacent waters.

One stately summit from its shaft shall pour
Its deep red blaze along the darkened shore;
Emblem of thought, that, kindling far and
wide,

In danger's night shall be a nation's guide,

sings the poet of this old hill and beacon. The stately summit was frequently climbed by Lionel Lincoln and his comrades for a better view of the doings of the town. Here the scene of the novel opens in April, 1775, with a large group

of spectators "spreading from its conical summit far down the eastern declivity," all gazing intently on a distant sail making toward the harbour. Under the beacon, beside the tall post that supported the grate, Ralph, echoed by Job, reproached Major Lincoln for his loyalty to the King's cause. Down its steep decline, in their childhood, Lincoln's cousins, Cecil and Agnes, many a time went coasting.

On the northeast corner of Beacon Street, in a house recently torn down, lived My Kinsman, Major Molineux, the hero of one of Hawthorne's romances. The real Molineux was a zealous patriot who died in 1774, and a rather amusing light is thrown upon Hawthorne's story of him by a contemporary writer, who says: "It is a curious irony of fate that Major Molineux should have a false place in literature at the hands of both Longfellow and Hawthorne." The despoil done to his memory by the former is less serious than that of the latter. In the "Tales of a Wayside Inn" in the prelude, the poet writes of the famous hostelry:

And flashing on the window pane,
Emblazoned with its light and shade,
The jovial rhymes that still remain,

Writ near a century ago

By the great Major Molineux,

Whom Hawthorne has immortal made.

If the reader will turn to *A Snow Image and Other Twice-Told Tales*, it will be seen that the kind of immortality given him by Hawthorne is of doubtful value; in short, it completely reverses his character and sends him down to posterity as a hated Tory, tarred and feathered by his outraged neighbours. At the culmination of his story Hawthorne writes, "Right before Robin's eyes was an uncovered cart. There the torches blazed brightest, there the moon shone out like day, and there in tar and feathery dignity sat his kinsman, Major Molineux." All of which may be resented by the historian; but fiction is not fact and the charm of Hawthorne lies in his romancing.

East of the site of the Molineux house is the Hotel Bellevue, where for many years Louisa Alcott stayed when she came down from Concord. Opposite it stands the old Athenæum, soon to be removed to the Back Bay, but on its

present site a landmark and distinctive Boston institution. This aristocratic library has been frequented by many characters in fiction. In *The Barclays of Boston* Mrs. Harrison Gray Otis tells us that old Mr. Egerton daily read the newspapers there; Henry James's Mrs. Daintry (*A New England Winter*) made remarkably free use of it; two of his *Bostonians*, Olive and Verena, in pursuit of their studies, had innumerable big books from it; in *Hitherto*, Mrs. Whitney's Hope Devine was a little bit shocked at standing face to face with the Venusses, and had been half afraid of the Laocoon. Janet Brooks (*Miss Brooks*), Mary's younger sister, took shelter in the vestibule on a stormy day, and to her infinite relief and pleasure was there discovered later by John Graham.

In colonial times and until 1863 there stood just west of the State House, on Beacon Street, the Hancock mansion, than which, as all who recall it will testify, there was never a more stately or picturesque house. It was surrounded by a beautiful garden, and many a Bostonian can yet sniff the delicious fragrance of the lilacs which clustered about the door and over the wall, perfuming the whole neighbourhood in the spring. Its owner, Hancock, its traditions and associations are richly historical, and it is not without fictional interest as well. It attracted the attention of Lionel Lincoln and Captain Polworth, who, looking down from the platform of the beacon, saw the smoking chimneys, which to them indicated that the "rebellious master" was at home. It is probable that this was the house Mrs. Harrison Gray Otis had in mind in picturing Mr. Egerton's home in *The Barclays of Boston*. Calling it the Amory mansion (*Miss Eyre*), Mrs. Louise Chandler Moulton also uses it as a setting for her Nan Amory, who "lived in an ancestral home where British officers had danced stately minuets when Massachusetts was a colony." Nan is introduced to us in the thick of a Theosophical winter. "It always is the something winter in that wonderful city," says Mrs. Moulton, "but perhaps nothing else had ever quite so forcibly taken hold of it as did Theosophy. If you went out to drink five-o'clock tea and shake hands with your neighbours, you found the company broken up into groups, and in

the centre of each one some eloquent woman discoursing of reincarnation, and Karma, and Devachan." Reluctantly we turn away from the old mansion, so easily conjured up by the imagination, and see in reality on a low iron fence a tablet which marks the site upon which it stood.

A few steps up the street, in a house now occupied by Dr. Paul, we can imagine dear little Mildred Wentworth (T. B. Aldrich's *A Christmas Fantasy*) in her blue room overlooking the Common, having her deliciously fantastic day-dreams in the midst of her new Christmas toys. Farther down the hill, at No. 40, is the stoop where Margaret Allston had one of the first of *Her Boston Experiences*, and which house, she says, is in the one block in that locality where certain families honourably continue their ancestral line. In the middle of this block is the vine-covered, ultra-exclusive Somerset Club, where Warren Hartwell put in half his days before he met Margaret Allston. It was also the rendezvous of Marion Crawford's American Politician and his friends, one of whom, Vancouver, was particularly fond of standing in one of the semicircular windows and watching the passers-by. On the corner below is the smaller Puritan Club, likewise a haunt of Warren Hartwell's; and of Vernon Kent, one of the sentimentalists in A. S. Pier's novel of that name. The atmosphere of this locality is sympathetically expressed by Margaret Allston, who says she "always peers around for a fleeting glance of Priscillas, John Aldens, or other far-away people who rightfully belong among those quaint old houses, still breathing out history and romance."

V. THE WEST END.

For the western and northern slopes of Beacon Hill many novelists have a strong predilection, notably Mr. Howells, who, particularly on the northern side of the Hill, finds in the homely life of the unfashionable residents ample material for the portrayal of certain types of Bostonians which he presents to us with such fidelity. These are "those old-fashioned thoroughfares at the West End of Boston which are now almost wholly abandoned to boarding-houses of the poorer classes. Yet they are charming streets," and in

them lived the Hallecks, the Hubbards (*A Modern Instance*), Lemuel Barker (*The Minister's Charge*), Dr. Olney, Rhoda Aldgate and Mrs. Meredith (*An Imperative Duty*), and many other of his fictitious characters. Mrs. A. D. T. Whitney, too, is partial to this locality with its "streets of charming houses without any modern improvements over behind Beacon Hill and beyond the State House." In her recent story (*Miss Theodora*), Helen Leah Reed gives us a delightful series of pictures of the old West End.

No. 9 Beacon Steps (Howells's *A Woman's Reason*) is given as the residence of Joshua Harkness and his daughter Helen. "Beacon Steps is not Beacon Street," he says in the novel, "but it is of like blameless social tradition." As an actual street it never had any existence in fact, but the name was suggested to Mr. Howells by a short flight of steps which lead down from the State House to Temple Street, and though no definite house was intended, this was the locality he had in mind. In another of his books (*A Modern Instance*) his Clover Street is in reality Myrtle Street, where a few doors from Joy Street is the little house rented by the Bartley Hubbards. "The house seemed absurdly large to people who had been living for the past seven months in one room; and the view of the Back Bay from the little bow-window of the front chamber added all outdoors to their superfluous space." To the east of them, at 63 Hancock Street, is the boarding-house to which Janet (*Miss Brooks*) came in search of young Reinhart. Passing down Derne Street and through Bowdoin Street we come to Bulfinch Place, on the right, called Canary Place by Mr. Howells, who finds lodgings there for the Bartley Hubbards shortly after they came to Boston. Here, too, on the southern side of the street, is the Hotel Waterson, described in *The Minister's Charge* as the St. Albans, where Barker worked in various capacities until (in the novel) the hotel burned. North of this, on Bowdoin Square, is the Revere House, in and around which transpires much of *An Imperative Duty*. The Bartley Hubbards also stopped at this hotel, where "he entered his name on the register with a flourish." Brilliantly lighted Bowdoin Square and the high

pillared portico of the Revere House were also wonderingly observed on his wanderings by *The Minister's Charge*. This hotel was one much patronised by Mr. and Mrs. Howells during their residence in Belmont when, attending social functions or the theatre in Boston, they found it more convenient to spend the night in town. "Some colour of my prime impressions has tinged the fictitious experiences of people in my books," Mr. Howells says in his *Literary Friends and Acquaintances*.

If we now climb "those up-hill streets that converge to the State House," and stop at the top of the Hill, we come directly under the shadow of the dome, to "that commodious nook which is known as Mt. Vernon Place," in which resided Henry James's Miss Lucretia Daintry (*A New England Winter*)—delightful Miss Lucretia, "who wore her bonnet as scientifically poised as the dome of the State House . . . and had in an eminent degree the physiognomy, the accent, the costume, the conscience, and the little eyeglass of her native place." Just north is Mount Vernon Street, on which lived an astonishing number of fictitious persons, whose literary creators give it a preference over Beacon Street as an aristocratic residential thoroughfare. A fine old house, No. 41, at the corner of Joy Street, was the home of Miss Mehitable Quincy, whom we meet in Mrs. Louise Chandler Moulton's *Miss Eyre*. This house has further literary interest from the fact that it was the home of that brilliant woman novelist and social leader, Mrs. Harrison Gray Otis, who wrote *The Barclays of Boston* there. A few doors down, on the same side of the street, is No. 48, the home of the Corey's (Howells's *Silas Lapham*). This house is now a small hotel, called the Curtis, but was formerly the home of one of Mr. Howells's friends, and its entrance and part of the interior remain as he then knew and described it. To many, Bromfield Corey is by far the most delightful of Mr. Howells's creations, and it is with pleasure that we meet him in more than one of the author's books. No one forgets that memorable dinner given for the Laphams by the Coreys, in the reading of which we can scarcely be made to believe that we are not actually attending it, so

strong is Mr. Howells's realistic touch. So familiar do we become with the dining-room that we are keenly interested in the rest of the house, and delighted when we are permitted to wander into Mr. Corey's sanctum, the library, where Lemuel Barker (*The Minister's Charge*) "found himself dropped in the midst of a luxury stranger than the things they read of in those innumerable novels. The dull, rich colours in the walls, the heavily rugged floors and dark wooded leathern seats of the library, where he read to the old man; the beautiful forms of the famous bronzes, and the Italian saints and martyrs in their baroque or Gothic frames of dim gold; the low shelves with their ranks of luxurious bindings, and all the seriously elegant keeping of the place, flattered him out of his strangeness." Corey, it will be remembered, was alone at home while his family were at the shore, because he "would rather be blind in Boston than telescopic at Beverly or any other summer resort."

Looking down from the Coreys, we get a most beautiful view of "the perfect Gothic arch formed by the trees that line both sides of Mount Vernon Street" (Helen Reed's *Miss Theodora*). At No. 59 we find the home of the poet and novelist, Thomas Bailey Aldrich. His near neighbour is Mrs. Buskirk (Pier's *The Sentimentalists*), who lives in one of this "row of stately fine old houses, with little plots of lawn in front and high iron fences; they were of four high-ceilinged stories with well-proportioned bay-windows and deep vestibules, in which were tall jars of plants and palms." In his *Two Bites at a Cherry*, Mr. Aldrich speaks of crisp crocuses blooming in these little front yards in the spring.

Mr. Arlo Bates rarely has an actual house in mind in describing residences, but so real to him are homes of his characters that he has fallen into the way, he says, of inserting an imaginary house in the desired locality. So, though the fiction Rambler may not literally number them, he can pretty safely conclude that in this block of Mount Vernon Street lived Mrs. Gore (*The Puritans*), in whose drawing-room occurred the Persian reading when "Persian was the latest ethical caprice," . . . and one form of the "ethical jugglery, the spirit-

ual and intellectual gymnastics such as the Bostonians love." Here we also find "the iron gate which, between stately stone posts shuts off the domain of the Frostwinches (*The Puritans*) from the world, and marked with dignity the line between the dwellers on Mount Vernon Street and the rest of the world." And would any less exclusive neighbourhood have satisfied the wealthy and well-meaning Mr. Calvin who "was regarded by Philistine circles in Boston as a sort of reincarnation of Apollo"? (*The Philistines*.) Judge Rathmine, whose fortunes were so closely intermingled with *The Curse of the Old South Church*, lived in splendid style here. A view of this charming block of houses was to be had by the Kents (*The Sentimentalists*), who lived directly opposite in a "thin, flat-fronted house," by which Mr. Pier meant any one of the several that answers to this description. Below, the Kents at No. 82, lived the happy-go-lucky Sam Randolphs (*Miss Brooks*), with whom the Brooks girls stayed. On the steps of this house Janet had that chance encounter with John which so changed the current of her life.

John T. Wheelwright, to whose *Child of the Century* we have made allusion, lives at No. 99, Mount Vernon Street, and near by, in quaint old Louisburg Square, on the southern side, we find the former homes, a few doors apart, of Louisa Alcott and Mr. Howells. At No. 2 Silas Lapham and his associates first came into being, though the book was not completed until after the novelist had moved to Beacon Street. In this Square John (*Ballantyne*) found charming Mrs. LeBaron living; and overlooking the Square, on Pinckney Street, was Marion's former home, where years later, advised by Mrs. LeBaron, Ballantyne found lodgings in the then "anti-modern street." This house is No. 73, given over to boarders or lodgers, among whom might have been discovered Craighead (*Truth Dexter*) before he married. The character of this once aristocratic street is in these days very similar to the change in other parts of the Hill. This is remarked upon by T. B. Aldrich in his *Two Bites at a Cherry*.

Frances Weston Carruth.

FIVE NOVELS OF SOME IMPORTANCE

I.

GEORGE W. CABLE'S "THE CAVALIER."*

In *The Cavalier* Mr. Cable gives us a very lively story of love and adventure in the days of the Civil War. Excepting for the stagnation that occurs wherever the heroine and the hero fall to pondering over-much the question of the good of their souls, the plot runs with unusual swiftness and ease, and one is constantly pleased, sometimes delighted, by the author's absolutely simple, unaffected way of writing.

To say that the novel itself was pleasing, however, would be to admit the enjoyment of some pretty bald melodrama. While there are flashes in the book, notably the little descriptions and pungent details of the manners and conversation of the day, that remind us of the artist who wrote the Creole fiction with which Mr. Cable's name is always associated, it is lamentably true that these are but momentary flashes, interpolations, in a story which is both too glaringly unreal to be impressive and too conventional to be interesting. The opening chapters are so good that the plunge into bathos later on is all the more irritating; the whimsical account of the boyish young Confederate and the clerks' mess is an addition to the literature of the War, but his subsequent adventures with Coralie, the wild-eyed, and her villainous husband, are the kind of thing the boy would probably have imagined for himself, not what one looks to find in a novel of Mr. Cable's.

The main incidents are staged in the thick of some fierce guerilla fighting at the front, where the characters have opportunities of darting about surprisingly, appearing now in the full limelight glare of prosperity and romantic passion, now in the brooding darkness of some difficult, dangerous emprise. There are several highly effective curtain-drops. Take, for instance, the raid upon the dance at Gilmer's plantation house.

It is smothering hot in the crowded, candle-lighted room, while outside "the lightning fills heaven and earth, it shows

the bending trees afield, and the thunders peal at each other as if here were all Vicksburg and Port Hudson, with Porter and Farragut going by." The noise crashes upon the ears of the unflagging dancers as they sweep through the arches of a Virginia reel, to a contraband fiddler's electrifying tunes. They know nothing of the stealthy approach of the enemy until they are surrounded and surprised by the men in mud-splashed uniforms. Then we have:

Cries of masculine anger and feminine affright filled the hall, but one ringing order for silence hushed all, and the dance stood still with Ned Ferry in its centre. In his right hand, shoulder high, he held not his sword, but Charlotte's fingers lightly poised for the turn in the arrested dance. "Stand, gentlemen, every man is covered by two; look at the doors; look at the windows." The staff captain daringly sprang for the front door, but Ferry's quick boot caught his instep and he struck the floor full length. Like lightning Ferry's sword was out, but he only gave it a deferential sweep. "Sir! better luck next time!—Lieutenant Quinn, put the Captain in your front rank."

All of which is very gallant and graceful, and it is accompanied by a drawing in which every trace of the mud splashes has been properly obliterated.

Here is a scene which is typical: The Yankee captain lies on his death-bed in a Confederate mansion, nursed by Coralie Rothvelt, the strange, intense, passionate worker for the Southern cause. The bugle rings out the reveille. "Being a soldier," says the woman, "you want to die like one?"

"Yes, oh, yes!—the best I can. I'd like to sit half up—and hold my sword—if there's no objection. I've loved it so! It would almost be like holding—the hand that's far away. Of course it isn't really necessary, but—it would be more like—dying—for my country."

He holds the sword naked in his hand, and then he asks for a song, a soldier's song. At first she sings a hymn, "Am I a Soldier of the Cross?" and the Yankee prisoners in the yard take up the strain. The dying man then lifts a hand, demanding a new favour.

**The Cavalier*. By George W. Cable. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons. \$1.50.