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AN ADDRESS

Delivered at the Annual Meeting of the New England Historical and Genealogical Society, held, by adjournment, at its Room, No. 5 Tremont Street, Boston, January 20th, 1858.

[By SAMUEL G. DRAKE, M. A., President of the Society.]

GENTLEMEN:—The few remarks I have to make will occupy but a small portion of the time of this evening; and, with your kind indulgence, I will, in a plain way, without formality, proceed with them: observing, by the way, that it is quite embarrassing to be placed in the position I now happen to occupy,—a place so lately and so ably filled by the talented and eloquent gentleman who declines a further service.

In the first place, I beg to tender to you, gentlemen, my hearty thanks for this mark of your confidence and favor; and while I accept the place of President of this highly important and extensively useful institution, I must at the same time observe,—I do so with very great diffidence; but, gentlemen, you all well know, so far as you can know anything about it,—that the presidential chair of this Society was never sought by me. However, as your committee of nomination were disposed unanimously to nominate me, and as you have seen fit to confirm that nomination by an election, I feel it my duty to submit to the decision.

I was content to be a *common laborer* in the historical field, and to remain a soldier in the *antiquarian ranks*, but you have determined otherwise, and I acquiesce with no other protest than that which I am about to make. One nearly worn out in any service, can do little for its advancement. I therefore can promise little, nay, very little, though with your aid and encouragement I hope to do something.

We all have our fortes, or hobbies, if you will. All men are fitted by nature and training to fill certain spheres or stations in life, while at the same time it is wisely ordered that all men are not fitted for the same occupation. Some may be good mechanics, while others never can be. Some may be good public speakers, while others will ever appear to great disadvantage in attempts of

Joseph Stanten, sunn of Thomas Stanten was baptysed March the twenty one in the yeare of or Lord one thousand six hundred forty and six.

Samiwell Ellmer sun of Edward Ellmer was baptised March the twenty and one in the yeare of or Lord one thousand six hundreth forty and six.

Sara Hulberd, daughter of William Hullberd was borne y^e tenth of July one thousand six hundreth forty and seuen

Samewell Bloumfild sun of William Blomfild was borne July the twellth one thousand six hundreth forty and seuen.

Samewell Gridla, sun of Thomas Gridla was born y^e twenty and fifth of Nouer 1647.

Abriham Brunson was baptised Noum the twenty and eaight one thousand six hundreth forty and seuen.

Stuen Kellsa sunn of William Kellsa was baptised Nouemr the seuenth one thousand six hundreth forty and seuen.

Sara Whitmore daughter of John Whitmore was born Desem the sixtenth one thousand six hundreth forty and seuen.

(To be Continued.)

LETTER OF THE REV. JONA. PARSONS OF NEWBURYPORT.

MIDDLETOWN, CONN., Dec. 12, 1857.

MY DEAR SIR:—I herewith send you, for insertion in your "Genealogical Register," a letter written at Newburyport, Mass., October 20, 1769, by the Rev. Jonathan Parsons to his son, Samuel H. Parsons of Lyme, Conn., giving his reminiscences of family history, which may, perhaps, interest some of his descendants. I give the whole letter, verbatim et literatim. You can publish what you please. I am

Very respectfully yours, &c.,

SAMUEL HOLDEN PARSONS.

Dear child :

I am glad to hear by yours of y^e first & 10th Instant y^t your health is restored, & pray God to give y^e a heart to serve him in newness of Spirit. Sorry am I to find y^e Ch^m are thrown into Confusion, & y^e more so, as I understand much of y^e Controversy is whether y^e Children of those Parents who do not come to y^e Lord's Table shall be baptized or not? My Judgement is y^t no minister or Ch^a has a right to deny Baptism to those Children whose Parents openly profess good principles & lead a moral life, even tho' they do not come to y^e Lord's Table. & I am very sorry Dr Bellamy & others have stirred up Strife abt y^t Matter. I think they may be easily answered, and were I a minister in your Colony I believe I should think it my duty to enter y^e List. I am persuaded if the Seperatists from Mr Edwards had an able Leader, Mr Edwards must either be convinced or removed. Mr. Bird is not his Match & perhaps those y^t seperate do not desire him if he was. I should be loth to stand in a special connection with a particular Church that goes into y^t new Scheme. The like controversy gave great disturbance to y^e protestant Church about 150 years ago, but was happily calmed by some able Pens.

You write y^t one Samuel Parsons from Martinico desires to know from w^t part of England our Ancestors came. I will tell you as near as my Memory enables me, (as I have no records of the matter but what I heard from my Parent.) I suppose my Great Grandfather Parsons came from Great-Torrington about 20 or 30 miles from Tiverton, and not far from Exeter. He came over and brought my Grandfather Benjamin Parsons and other children about 130 years ago, perhaps 140. I believe

ye Record of my Great Grandfather and Grandfather might be found either at Great Torrington or Tiverton, & by y^t means it might be known whether we & Samuel Parsons are descended from one Stock. My great Grandfather Marshfield came from Exeter, and brought my Grandfather when he was abt 4 years old. My Grandfather Marshfield's name, I think was Samuel, and my great Grandfather's name Josiah; They came over about the same time with my great Grandfather Parsons and his family. I should be glad if the history of the families could be traced back as far as those y^t first came over, for it might be of service to some of their Descendants.

My love to my children and grand children & am your careful Father
Newbury Port, Oct. 20. 1769. J. Parsons.

(addressed) Samuel H. Parsons Esq,
Lyme, •
Connecticut

Benjamin Parsons, the grandfather of the Rev. Jonathan Parsons, married Sarah Vore, October 6, 1653, the daughter of Richard Vore of Windsor, Conn., and died in Springfield, Mass., August 24, 1689. [See Gen. Reg., Vol. I., for July, p. 269.]

Samuel Marshfield (the maternal grandfather of the Rev. Jona. Parsons) was the son of Thomas Marshfield, who is mentioned in 1640 as an owner of lands in Windsor, Conn., but removed from Windsor about 1642. His son, Samuel Marshfield, married, March 18, 1651, *Hester* Wright, the daughter of Deacon Samuel Wright, who settled in Springfield, Dec. 12, 1639, and had children: Sarah, d. May, 1653; Mary, b. June 10, 1653; Thomas, b. Sept. 6, 1654; Sarah, b. Feb. 2, 1656; Samuel, b. Aug. 20, 1661, m. Joseph Bedortha, July 24, 1634.

Hester, the wife of Samuel Marshfield, died at Springfield, April 3, 1664, in childbed, leaving a daughter, Abilene, b. April 2, 1664, who m. Thomas Gilbert, Aug. 15, 1686. And on the 28th Dec., 1664, Samuel Marshfield m. for his 2d wife, Mrs. Catherine Gilbert (the widow of Thomas Gilbert), by whom he had four children, viz.:

1. Josiah, b. Sept. 29, 1655; m. Rachel Gilbert, Sept. 22, 1686.
2. Hester, b. Sept. 6, 1667; m. Ephraim Cotton, March 26, 1685.
3. A child stillborn, Nov. 17, 1669.
4. Margaret, b. Dec. 3, 1670; m. Ebenezer Parsons of Springfield, the father of the Rev. Jonathan Parsons. [See Gen. Reg., Vol. I., p. 270.]

Mrs. Catherine Gilbert, the 2d wife of Samuel Marshfield, was the daughter of Deacon Samuel Chapin, who removed from Braintree to Springfield before the year 1643. She m., in 1646, Nathaniel Bliss of Springfield, son of Thomas Bliss of Hartford, by whom she had four children. She became a widow; and, July 3, 1655, m. Thomas Gilbert, who removed from Windsor to Springfield about 1655, Jan. 30, by whom she had four children, and again became a widow; and in 1664 m. Samuel Marshfield for her 3d husband, by whom she had four children, as above mentioned.

Samuel Marshfield frequently represented the town of Springfield as a deputy to the General Court, and held many important offices. He died at Springfield about 1692. His son, Josiah Marshfield, on the 23d Dec., 1692, presented an inventory of his estate before the Hon. John Pyncheon, Esq., Judge of the Probate of Wills, which is recorded at Northampton, Mass., Vol. III., p. 3.