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A Family Letter From W. Rodman Peabody

The following reminiscences were dictated for his children by Mr. William Rodman Peabody of Milton, Massachusetts, shortly before his death in 1941. The grandparents of whom he writes were Francis Minot Weld and Elizabeth (Rodman) Weld.

I
MY GRANDFATHER

MY earliest memories are of the great brown house in Jamaica Plain where my mother, as well as I was born. As a matter of fact, it was only by good luck that I was born at all for when my mother was an infant the house caught on fire. Enthusiastic friends were eagerly tossing its contents out of the windows and were just throwing a bundle of bed clothes from an upper room when they were interrupted by a scream. My grandmother dashed into the room and rescued Baby Cora from a blanket poised on the window sill.

My grandfather was descended from one of the first settlers to arrive in the Massachusetts Bay Colony. Captain Joseph Weld took a tract of land in what was then the Town of Roxbury. Our cousin, Sarah Swan Weld, has written about the early members of the family as follows:

Captain Joseph Weld, the direct ancestor of Francis Minot Weld, was born in 1598 in Sudbury, County Suffolk, England. He came to New England, not an adventurer, penniless and outcast, but a Puritan who left behind him in old England, home, comfort and prosperity, and sought in the new land freedom for conscience. He became a freeman of Roxbury Colony on March 3, 1636, and acted as representative for the Colony from 1637 to 1645. He was well trained in arms, and when he was chosen captain in the service of the Colony in 1641, he proved a valuable aid to Governor Winthrop in military affairs and fought in many engagements with the Indians. In 1641, Captain Joseph Weld was one of the commissioners appointed to settle the boundary between Roxbury and Boston; and in 1643, he served with Governor Winthrop on the commission which made a treaty with the Pequot Indians. In this year the Colony gave him a grant of several hundred acres of land, which estate is now known as West Roxbury Park and Arnold Arboretum. He lived on Roxbury Street.

Captain Joseph was one of the earliest friends of Harvard College, to which he was a donor in 1642, and the first bequest in his will is to that college . . . 'Being visited by the hand of the Lord . . . my spirits being restless and out

of quiet because my house is not set in order' he begins quaintly . . . 'I do therefore make this my last will and testament as follows: IMPRIMIS, I give to the college in Cambridge Ten Pounds to be paid in 5 years,—viz: 40 shillings per annum, to the help and furtherance of such in learning as are not able to subsist of themselves.' . . . Savage states that at the time of his death in 1648, Captain Weld was the richest man in the Colony. His will was one of the first on record there, and is extremely interesting in its details of family practices and matters. It also shows the close relationship that existed between himself and the Apostle Eliot, who was his best friend.

When Anne Hutchinson was tried for heresy and sentenced to banishment by the Massachusetts Bay Colony, she was quartered as a prisoner in the House of Captain Weld until the sentence could be carried into effect. It was then winter, and the Indians and wolves were abroad. Captain Weld was at that time a magistrate of the Colony, but not as was his brother Thomas, on the court which tried Mrs. Hutchinson. Regarding her sojourn in his house from November, 1636, to April, 1637, Anne Hutchinson said that, except for the fact that she was obliged to have a companion when she walked out, she would have thought that she was an honored guest in his home.

As we follow the direct line of descent from Captain Joseph Weld, we find in nearly every generation a Weld prominent in civic or military affairs,—John Weld fought against the Pequot Indians in 1676, in King Philip's War, and both his son and his grandson were officers in the service of the Colony.

Captain Weld's farm included the present Bussey Arboretum. His grave and those of his family are at the top of Bussey Hill and the house in which the Peters family now lives was for generations the Weld family homestead. An early Weld married a Minot, a daughter, I think, of the housewife, who, when her husband was absent, noticed an Indian looking through the window and with quiet presence of mind hid her two children, who were playing on the floor, under a great iron pot. As an incident to their lives as farmers, the Welds operated a saw mill on the Hemlock Gorge Brook of the present Arboretum. It is a family tradition that in 1775 the Weld sawdust pile concealed a large supply of Colonial powder. When the British raiding party was forming on Boston Common on the evening of April 18th and the signals were set by the city patriots in the old North Church it was understood that one lantern would indicate that the troops would march by land over Roxbury Neck for the Weld sawdust pile in West Roxbury. Two such lanterns would give warning that the troops would cross to Charlestown by boat and search for the military stores which were secreted in Concord.

In common with so many other New Englanders, the Welds heard the call of the sea ringing loudly and persistently in their ears. By 1800, at least one member of the family was trading with Europe in command of his own square-rigged ship. In 1802, William Gordon Weld, my great grandfather, while in command of his armed ship "Jason" off Tunis, fought and beat off an Algerian ship, one of the terrors of the sea, and recaptured two American brigs with their crews. In 1812, his ship "Mary" was lying in the river at Lisbon. He had discharged his cargo of dried fish and barrel staves and was waiting for his factor to collect his return cargo. Nearby the English frigate "Spartan" swung at her anchor. Your great great grandfather was of a companionable character and like all other Welds since his time regarded a good cook as one of the necessities of life. It was a natural result, therefore, that Mr. Weld and the captain of the "Spartan" formed the habit of dining with each other on alternate evenings. Eventually, the "Spartan" received orders to sail for England and dropped down the river on an ebbing

tide. Shortly afterwards, Mr. Weld, despairing of obtaining a profitable cargo, determined to return to Boston in ballast with the proceeds of his outward voyage converted into doubloons, which were packed into kegs.

The voyage was monotonously slow, but Cape Cod was passed at last. Just as he raised Boston Light, a familiar sail appeared to windward. It turned out to be the "Spartan." She bore away and signalled Mr. Weld to back his foresail. A boat was launched from her and came alongside to receive the cordial greetings of the American. To Mr. Weld's amazement, the embarrassed lieutenant in command announced that the War of 1812 had begun, and that the ship was a prize of war and was to be taken to Halifax for condemnation. In memory, however, of many pleasant dinners the captain authorized the lieutenant to permit Mr. Weld to leave the ship in his dinghy and proceed to shore balanced by a keg of his own doubloons. He landed, lonely and disgruntled, somewhere near Wollaston Beach, heaved the keg onto his shoulder and made the best way he could to his West Roxbury home. His cup of wrath ran over when he found the house empty and locked. In his absence, his wife, fearing a British raid, had sought security for herself and her children with relations in Lancaster. It is said that Mr. Weld became so angry that he pulled a chair on the veranda, put his feet on the railing and took an oath that he never again would do any work. This vow, it is believed, he fulfilled. At any rate, I myself have investigated the railings and have found in them deeps dents which could only have been made by the repeated scratches of cowhide boots. So, there is every reason to believe that the story is true.

The Weld family remained in Lancaster while the children grew up, but one after another of the boys drifted back to Boston. First came the elder brother, William. He entered the shipping business and amassed the largest fortune acquired by any Boston merchants of his time, but died unmourned and with the reputation of grasping acquisitiveness. Incidentally, he gave Weld Hall to Harvard University.

A younger brother, Francis Minot Weld, in his turn felt the lure of the city. I have always been told that he drove a cow from Lancaster to the Brighton stock yards, and went on to Boston to seek his fortune with his brother. He was, however, of a very different character from William, and he soon set up in business for himself. I know very little of his youth, but as an older man he enjoyed a wide reputation for vivacity and charm. It is said that when relations found themselves faced with a dull dinner party it was their custom to summon Cousin Frank whose gaiety and humor would be sure to make the party a success. He became not rich, but a successful Boston merchant, always ready to take a chance, always borrowing to join his friends in a financial venture, always suffering acute distress until his note was paid, always making solemn vows that he would never borrow again and always yielding to the opportunities offered to him by his richer neighbors to share in another Western railroad venture. Apparently he was admitted to what we would now call underwriting syndicates, not because his presence added any financial strength to the group but because his presence in the directors' room brought with it an atmosphere of gaiety and charm. Whether he benefited permanently from these financial opportunities is doubtful. At any rate, when his death occurred a crop of notes

appeared which it took his children over a decade of effort and family economy to pay.

Grandfather Weld might have found it difficult to resist an opportunity to increase his fortune, but it is equally true that he could not resist an opportunity to do a kindness. Once when my father was a young minister in Cambridge he mentioned to his father-in-law that a Mr. Williston, one of his parishioners, wanted much to be Superintendent of Boston schools. Mr. Weld was a friend of the then Mayor of Boston. He called upon him and so convincing was his statement of the qualifications of Mr. Williston for the office that the latter was appointed. Shortly afterwards, Grandfather was walking up School Street with the Mayor when a gentleman bowed to him with cordiality. "I wonder who that man is," said my grandfather, "he looked as if he knew me well, but I do not remember ever having seen him before." "Why, that," said the astonished Mayor, "is our new Superintendent of Schools, Mr. Williston, who was chosen upon the strength of your personal and unqualified recommendation." It is fair to add that Mr. Williston's successful career entirely justified his appointment.

When my grandfather was a director of the Boston & Providence Railroad the proposal was made to construct a terminal station at Park Square. As the station was to be a prominent civic improvement it was suggested that the architect be chosen by competition. My grandfather agreed that a competition should be held, but with the proviso that his son-in-law's brother, Robert Peabody, who had just married and needed the business, should be the architect of the station. It is said that this compromise was duly accepted by the Board of Directors. The competition was held, Robert Peabody was duly selected and everybody, except possibly the other competitors, was content. Again, however, Grandfather was justified in his notion for the Peabody plans were obviously superior to all the others and for two generations the Providence station was the most dignified and convenient railroad terminal in Boston. Your mother tells of the other side of this story. When her father learned that he had been appointed architect for the Providence station he hurried home from the office to report the glad news to his bride. It was his first large building, and they celebrated by walking downtown together and buying her a new pair of shoes.

Until 1857 Grandfather had been in the shipping business in partnership with his cousin under the firm of Weld and Minot. Their ships must have covered the seven seas for they seemed to have traded regularly with Canton (China) and apparently they had a branch office at New Orleans. The picture by a Chinese artist of the ships lying off the Tongs below Canton at the Ahampau anchorage must have come from the days of Weld and Minot for I found it in bad repair in the Suncook mill office and had it restored. The New Orleans office of the firm seems to have been a source of some embarrassment to the Boston partners because one of the assets of the firm in that office was a slave. Whether existence of the slave was known to Abolitionists neighbors in Jamaica Plain I have never known.

The panic of 1857 brought the firm of Weld and Minot to the verge of bankruptcy. My mother used to tell of the family economies during that winter. An addition was being put onto the house just at the moment when freights were

going down, but the greatest impression upon the nine year old child's memory seems to have been the fact that liver was introduced into the family meals as a substitute for steak. It was in the winter of 1857 that two sets of china arrived from Canton on a Weld and Minot ship. In those days a set of Canton china consisted of two or three hundred pieces and served for all purposes. There were insufficient ready funds to permit the keeping of both sets, so the everyday china was retained and is now our best dinner party china. The other set was sold to a prosperous neighbor, Mr. Head. On the death of Mr. Head's daughter, Mother was given a coffee pot and a few other pieces by the family, and so what remains of the whole importation is now back again on the family shelves.

The experience of 1857 satisfied Grandfather that he had been in the shipping business long enough. Therefore, with a few friends he bought a little mill situated upon a water power at Suncook, New Hampshire, at a point where the Suncook River empties into the Merrimack River. His neighbor, Mr. Howe, put up a little more than half the money and became president of the company. Grandfather was elected treasurer and administrator of the mill. They engaged a Mr. Micajah Pope as agent. As Mr. Pope was proceeding by train to Concord in order to take on his new job he looked across the Merrimack River and saw the Suncook cotton mill a mass of flames. This catastrophe proved a blessing, however. The old mill had been thoroughly insured. With the insurance money the young company was able to build and equip with the newest machinery a larger mill which was named after the town of Pembroke. Profits from the Pembroke mill were so satisfactory that, after paying dividends sufficient for the support of the families who were dependent upon the enterprise, the surplus profits were adequate to build and equip a still larger mill which was named after Senator Webster. These two mills provided ample funds for a third mill known as the China Mill, the purpose of which was primarily to produce clothing for the heathen Chinese, —and thus the Welds and Howes did their part in foreign missionary work.

For sixty years these mills were the main source of support for the growing Weld family and if today they seem unrewarding it must be remembered that from them have accrued most of the family capital and that no money was ever put into them except the original investment in the little mill which was burned.

The naming of the Webster mill was significant. My grandfather might worry about his own notes at the bank, but there was one promissory note which could not have been purchased from him. He was one of the intensely loyal followers of Daniel Webster. The great senator's philosophy was his doctrine; the senator's friendship was his privilege. An oil painting of the Senator hung in the dining room opposite Grandfather's chair, and when the Senator himself stood in the Weld dining room under the painting Grandfather's cup of happiness was full to brimming.

Webster was a conscienceless borrower, but to be a creditor entitled one to call the great Daniel his friend. A note of Daniel Webster was the passport to the society of the elect. To be a follower of Mr. Webster, however, stamped a man as a conservative who was out of sympathy with the Abolition movement. The Seventh of March Speech divided the men of

Boston not only politically but socially. To the followers of Webster the salvation of the Union was even more important than the abolition of slavery. A war between the States was to them evidence of political bankruptcy. Therefore, when the war came, the Welds were among the so-called "Copperheads" who could not approve it and would not support it. When the oldest son was drafted as a soldier, Grandfather bought a substitute for him and sent him on a journey to the Far East. It may be that Grandfather's course was based upon his strong political feelings, or it may be that he was moved by the influence of our grandmother who was a Quaker and therefore opposed to war, or it may be that he was influenced in part by a mistaken, misdirected parental love. At any rate, from the point of view of the effect upon his son, it was a terrible mistake.

The lives of the merchants in the era between 1840 and 1880 were not wholly given to the acquisition of wealth. Money came easily even though it sometimes went quickly. The work day was over in time to take the 2:40 train on the Providence Railroad which brought a man home for dinner at 3:30. Indeed, even in my boyhood days to return upon the 2:40 train was for the gentlemen who lived in the neighborhood of Roxbury, Jamaica Plain and Forest Hills almost a ritual. There could be no excuse for missing this train, on any day except Saturday. Saturday afternoons were spent at the Temple Club on Temple Place. Only the young bloods of the next generation graduated to the more modern Somerset Club.

In those days, membership in a military organization, which in theory at least might be called upon for service at any time, was a cause for exemption from duties upon a jury. Grandfather and Cousin George Minot joined the Ancient and Honorable Artillery Company. As recruits in the rear line they attended their first drill on Boston Common. Suddenly, Grandfather looked at the clock on the tall tower of the Providence Railroad station and whispered to George: "George, the 2:40 train leaves in five minutes." Quietly the two soldiers slipped from the ranks, leaned their muskets against a tree and ran for the train. The muskets were never seen again. This is the only military experience of which I have any knowledge in our branch of the Weld family.

Time could be taken off in the fishing season. There was an annual chowder party at Ponkapoag Pond. The fishing club consisted of Mr. Whitney, whose house is the present McGinley estate, George Minot, the grandfather of our Cousin George Minot, old Mr. Peters from Forest Hills, and others. They drove in state on a Saturday in each spring to Ponkapoag Pond, where the morning was spent in fishing for perch, pickerel and perhaps bass. Meantime, a skilled retainer had started a fire on the shore, and a chowder lunch accompanied by well iced champagne was served in due course. After lunch was over, it was time to be driven home. It was a tradition that the chowder was a chef's dream, but I have always believed that the champagne must have prejudiced the judgment of the picnickers. I also remember that this club, or another, once met at Jordan Pond at Mount Desert. Grandfather was driven home, very wet, was much petted and was put to bed. It afterwards turned out that he had insisted on an armchair being placed in a narrow Adirondack rowboat which he had used as a fishing punt. For some reason, unstated, the boat had cap-

sized. He died in 1866, a deeply beloved, leading citizen of Boston.

II
MY GRANDMOTHER

Your great grandmother was Elizabeth Rodman of New Bedford. The Rodmans had been early settlers and planters on the Island of Barbados. In the year two Rodman brothers arrived in Newport, Rhode Island. They must have had some means, for one of them bought the island of Block Island. The other brother found his way to New Bedford where he married the daughter of William Rotch who was the leading citizen of the town. If you will look at the picture "New Bedford Fifty Years Ago" you will see William Rotch in his one horse chaise. The son-in-law, Samuel Rodman, is standing on the street corner dressed in brown with a white stock and with a Quaker three-cornered hat.

THE SOMERSET CLUB, BEACON STREET, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS
Photograph taken about 1900.

The Rotch family were Quakers from Nantucket who for generations had been engaged in the whaling industry. As Quakers they were unsympathetic with war, and as islanders they professed an indifference to colonial aspirations. They wanted to be left alone in order that they might maintain their religious principles without interference and sell their whale oil wherever the market was highest.

Quakers had not been popular in Boston since the days of Anne Hutchinson, and it may well have been an additional irritation to the Boston patriots that the East India Company had chartered three of Mr. Rotch's ships to bring the tea of the East India Company to Boston. During the Revolution, both American and English vessels found refuge and a source of supplies in Nantucket. So little tie was there between the Quakers of Nantucket and the mainland that after the Revolution was over Rotch, the head of the family moved his business to France. An interesting diary of this Mr. Rotch has been printed and is in our library. Subsequently, the branch of the Rotch family which remained at Nantucket found that the harbor bar carried too little water to permit their larger ships to enter even with the aid of camels. Therefore, as the phrase then was, they determined to become "off-islanders" and to settle in New Bedford.

Your great grandmother was brought up a Hixite Quaker. Her theology differed little from Unitarianism, but upon her marriage to a Boston Unitarian she was duly read out of the church. This formal separation from youthful religious conservatism did not affect the habits and instincts which she had developed with her Quaker characteristics. She had a gentleness and lovableness in her character which she transmitted to your grandmother. It was her nature to be quiet in moments of emotional strain. Once at Mount Desert when our house was entered by a burglar she was awakened by the man in her room. She spoke to him, and he disappeared into the hall with her watch in his hands. For half an hour she lay silently in bed and then rose and tapped at my father's door. When asked why she did not call for help she replied quite simply that it was of the first importance that nobody should be hurt.

Inhibitions, however strong, are usually balanced by some form of indulgence. The Quakers were restrained in dress, were seemly in deportment and were unresponsive to artistic appeal. Nothing in their creed, however, or in their conscience, forbade their bodies to be well fed. Cooking was the Quakers' fine art. The perusal of your great grandmother's cook book will today stimulate the gastric juices. Her table was a culinary triumph. Her cake closet was a small boy's heaven, and her jelly pantry a treasury of delight. It is said that some Rodman recipes began with the phrase: "Take one dozen eggs, one quart of cream, and one quart of Madeira." After that it did not make much difference what ingredients were added. Rodman Madeira was seasoned in Rodman ships which went around Cape Horn after the sperm whales. An entry in the diary of my great uncle, William Logan Rodman, is as follows:

> First Day. Sultry. Went to meeting in the morning. In the afternoon decanted 100 bottles of Madeira which had arrived in the ship.

Rodman cream came from imported Jersey cows.

III
JAMAICA PLAIN

Your great grandparents lived in ample but unostentatious comfort. The house was large enough to hold not only the family but the guests of all the children, and when these children had married there was room for them to return at Christmas time with their own children. The living room with its early Victorian furniture offered every material comfort,

even if today the furniture would not meet the demands of modern good taste. The library shelves were filled with American as well as English editions of books which a gentleman ought to own, though I cannot remember many books being taken from these shelves. An exception, however, would have to be made of books which dealt with the upkeep of a gentleman's place, with the breeding of poultry or the diseases of horses and of course an exception would have to be made of the Waverley Novels which my Uncle Rodman knew almost by heart. The dining room was not spacious but three generations could sit about the dining room table in comfort and at Christmas and Thanksgiving when decorated with the 1857 china and the Georgian silver it had a heavy magnificence. The billiard room with its elevated platform on which was a sofa placed so high that a spectator could look over the table with ease, and the walls covered with sporting prints, was a masculine refuge when not the site of children's holiday revelry.

Music must have meant little in the family life, though I can remember my grandmother playing "The Campbells are Coming" and "I Dreamt I dwelt in Marble Halls" on a tinkling grand piano and it is said that she went to "Pinafore" forty times. On one occasion she took with her her eldest grandson; it was the first time I had ever been to the theatre. There were oil paintings on the living room walls, but except for the portrait of Mr. Webster in the dining room, I think that the pictures were regarded primarily as appropriate wall space coverings.

To the male members of the Weld family life on Forest Hill Street centered in the barn. In the loft close to the hay were the coops of fighting cocks—splendid, noisy, gorgeous creatures. As a little boy I was seldom invited in the harness room on Sunday mornings, but I do remember one Sunday morning after church being securely perched on a bench when a rat was let out of the trap to test the spirit of a New Bedlington terrier imported from Yorkshire. I have since learned that this harness room was the scene of many famous cock fights, in which the Weld family cocks fought it out with the champions from Brookline and West Roxbury. These fights were never mentioned in the house. It was recognized that Grandmother disapproved, and she in turn appreciated that assumed ignorance made moral issues unnecessary.

The next story of the barn was given to the horses,—Grandmother's matched pair, two utility horses for the carryall, and two trotters for the light pleasure wagons. Grandmother was short, dumpy and round. In size and figure she was not unlike Queen Victoria. On pleasant afternoons her carriage appeared at the door, the bay horses a little restive under their silver mounted harness with the gold family griffins on the blinders, and fat Dan, the coachman, erect on the box in plum colored livery and high hat. Grandmother, all in black, with a little black bonnet tied under her chin by broad black ribbons, and her small folding sunshade in her hand, was tucked in by the devoted Julia who then placed at Grandmother's feet a Nantucket basket filled with pears, or glasses of jelly, or fresh vegetables. The whip cracked, the horses danced a little, and Grandmother said: "There is no hurry, Dan," and then put up her little sunshade. So she set out on her errand of love, perhaps to Cambridge, perhaps to dear Cousin Annie Peabody's in Brookline, or perhaps to Milton where lived her two friends, the Miss Channings, maiden

daughters of William Ellery Channing. Sometimes pressed by her side was a very small boy who was wishing that his own father and mother were not so far away.

To Grandmother, whose tastes were very simple and whose personal wants were few, a horse and carriage was an essential part of daily life. If she had to go shopping at Hovey's in Boston, it would never have occurred to her to go otherwise than in her carriage. When she died in 1896 she had never in her life stepped into a street car, and I doubt whether if she had done so she would have had the necessary five cents in her pocket to pay her carfare. For years after their father's death it was the first duty in the minds of his sons to pay off the promissory notes. Their mother, however, should of course be given all the comforts of a lady. She could run up bills which they gladly paid, but money was forbidden to her; she might give it away in mistaken kindness or squander it unwisely on charities. I think that one sorrow in Grandmother's life was that though she could take fruit, flowers, Pears soap, or a table cover as a weekly present to her daughter she never could slip a bill into the hands of the young mother in Cambridge who was struggling to bring up a growing family on the restricted salary of a college professor.

On the left as one approached the horse stalls in the barn was the coach house. How strange those cumbersome vehicles would appear today. Alongside of Grandmother's dainty Victoria was the great closed carriage with its heavy springs. It was large enough to take the whole Peabody family to the Christmas Eve party at Cousin Hannah Weld's at Eliot Square "over on the Plains." Then, there was the booby hutch for winter, the carryall for station work, the Goddard buggy, the light top black buggy, the yellow wagon, and finally the Tilbury with its two red wheels and little seat facing backward for the groom. I think the Tilbury was used only as the background for gay adventures. Personally, I remember seeing it out but once. Minot and his friends were then attempting to drive two horses in tandem around the avenue. The whole family stood on the front steps to watch them start. The whip with the long lash snapped gaily over the head of the leader, which promptly turned around and faced the wheel horse. General confusion followed in which Dan and the stable boy grabbed the horses by the heads, and the party proceeded to return rather ignominiously on foot to the stable. Then of course there were the sleighs, big and little, down to the light cutter in which Molly, the fast bay mare, was driven on the Brighton road. When a carriage was taken in or out of the coach house, the jar on the floor set all the sleigh bells jingling.

Below the horses was the cow barn and father beyond the two pig pens. I once earned fifty cents from an amused uncle by catching a young pig by his hind legs. Unfortunately, I was thrown in the struggle, and my triumph must have cost Grandmother more than fifty cents to renovate my clothes. Everywhere there were hens—no Rhode Island reds, but great white cochins and dainty leghorns, all I think of foreign stock.

At the foot of the hill was Grandmother's garden with two rose beds at the upper end and the long lines of perennials which stopped abruptly at the pasture fence. To the left of the garden was the pond, and beyond the pond a densely wooded hill over which ran the path that the cows took when they went to pasture. It was a man-sized job for a boy of six to drive the cows home over that hill with only a switch and old Pat behind to put

in a rough word of command, if by chance a cow turned suddenly to look at the boy or lowed belligerently. To the right of the garden was an apple orchard, and then the hemlock woods ending in the unscalable pudding stone cliffs. In the cliffs, however, were two little caves which could be reached by the venturesome, and at the foot of the cliffs was a lovely bubbling spring. I have no doubt that the spring might have been a source of family fortune for its reputation for curative properties was so widespread in the neighborhood that people came from as far as the other side of the railroad tracks to fill their pitchers and cans from its clear waters. The time finally arrived when these pilgrimages were so constant and took on such an aspect of community celebration that the spring had to be protected by a high timber fence surmounted by barbed wire.

Grandmother's house was an example of family hospitality which in one aspect at least was undoubtedly unique. Most homes at one time or another are closed while the family is absent. For sixty years the front door of the Weld home invited every branch of the family to enter. During these sixty years there never was a day when the house was unoccupied or closed. The only question asked of a visitor was "Have you come to stay, or only for a meal?" For sixty years the door was never locked until the last latecomer got to bed.

I suppose its mid-Victorian furniture would be regarded today as representative of our worst architectural period. It provided, however, comfort, if not elegance, and a hospitable graciousness. If the heavy hangings carried a permanent aroma of stale Havana tobacco, there was always on a side table an open box of cigars available to any guest. Beside the cigar box was a carton of S. S. Pierce's chocolate wafers. If the great armchairs were swathed in antimacassars, they faced a fireplace where the great logs burned endlessly.

As the family grew, the house grew to meet the new demands upon it. A bedroom was placed next to the parlor, and the long window was left in its place connecting the two rooms. My mother liked to tell how she had a witness to one of her proposals. Her brother Rod was in bed on the other side of the window and overheard not only the ardent declaration, but also the gust of tears which followed her answer. I noticed, however, that any feminine satisfaction in this conquest was modified after her unsuccessful suitor not only had succumbed to the charms of a neighboring young lady but also in due course had acquired a second and then a third wife. His youthful disappointment seemed not to have been enduring.

Such was the household in which I spent much of my early life and which was the first home which I remember.

IV
UNCLE ROD

Jamaica Plain was home to me more than to my brothers or sisters, because at different times I spent three full years there, when the family were in Europe, and because after I went downtown I made Jamaica Plain my summer headquarters while the family went to Mount Desert. From 1898 until I was married it was my summer home. During a portion of many of these summers Minot's family were at Bar Harbor, and he also lived at the house on Forest Hill Street. It was Uncle Rod, however, who was the host and presiding spirit of the house. He was my mother's eldest brother. I suspect that his youth had not been a very happy

one. He entered college with the Class of 1859, but as he used to say: "The faculty and I did not get along well together." I have been led to believe that he must have spent too much a proportion of his time in the billiard parlor which then existed under Lyceum Hall. At any rate, his college career seems to have finished at the end of his Freshman year. He participated in one inter-collegiate athletic event of which he liked to tell. In that college era the Harvard and Yale crews raced on Lake Quinsigamond in Worcester. On the evening before the boat race it was the custom for the representatives of the two colleges to participate in a billiard match at Worcester Hotel. "In the spring of my Freshman year," according to Uncle Rod, "Harvard lacked an adequately skilful billiard player, and to maintain the tradition of the college they finally engaged a Boston professional to represent them and duly presented him at the 'Night Before' as a young and promising Freshman. Yale, also, it seems, was required to turn to the Freshman Class for its billiard expert. When the champions of the two colleges approached the table they looked at each other and laughed. It appeared that the Yale Freshman was a well known New York professional billiard player. The two men had frequently met in billiard tournaments before. The situation quickly became recognized, and after hearty cheers all the spectators sat down to watch a skilled professional exhibition. It was the last time Harvard and Yale ever competed at billiards."

Soon after he left college the Civil War broke out, and as I have already said when Uncle Rod was drafted for the army a kindly but mistaken father hired a substitute and sent his son on a long journey to the Far East. The episode perhaps does not reflect very creditably upon the son's ardor to fight for his country or his independence of paternal influence, but his father was a forceful person and no one could have said that assertive independence was Uncle Rod's outstanding characteristic. In fact, he was unusually gentle at heart, but hid deeply his sweetness of character under a protective roughness of language and manner which only finally disappeared as he approached old age. The death of his mother wrought some inner metamorphosis of character and caused the prickly shell to crack open revealing a gentleness of heart and a winsomeness which made him the most beloved member of the family. During most of the year he lived at Jamaica Plain, outwardly a crabbed old bachelor yet actually a pathetic and lonely old man whose secret desire was to maintain the family home and tradition as his mother would have wished. His welcome was never effusive but his hospitality was unbounded. I never knew whether the invasions by nephews or by a whole family at one time were welcome interludes in his lonely life or were nuisances to be put up with because he was the head of the house and the house was the headquarters of the family.

In appearance, he was not unlike King Edward VII of England, and I rather fancy he enjoyed the resemblance which was often remarked upon by his friends and played up to it a little. His beard was cut in the same manner and his square gray derby hats were of the same shape as King Edward's. I think he admired King Edward, because, whatever may have been the latter's faults, he represented the traditions of a gentleman. The code of a gentleman was Uncle Rod's

religious creed. What a gentleman ought to do under any set of circumstances was to him the conclusive test of his or another's behaviour. "Pack some cigars in Mr. Rodman's bag," he said to old Julia (the housekeeper) when I was starting off for a summer week-end, and, turning to me, he said: "Remember, a gentleman only accepts his host's cigars after a meal; between meals he smokes his own." That my cigars were to be furnished by him he took as a matter of course. "Remember," he said to me once in reference to drinking, "no gentleman takes a drink before 3:00 p.m. or east of Park Street."

For many years he had his shoes made by a shoemaker in New Bedford named Watkins. One day Mr. Watkins came to him and said that he had an opportunity to furnish the shoes for the crew of a yacht named "Independence" which had been built by Thomas Lipton to defend the American Cup. Lawson was a widely known speculator in stocks who had made a fortune in exploiting copper stocks but whose reputation for financial integrity was not above reproach. On Uncle Rod's advice Watkins took the Lawson contract and made the shoes, but subsequently came back with the report that he had invested a substantial sum of money in the contract, but that Mr. Lawson had not paid any of his bills. Watkins was without cash to meet his own current obligations or to pay the weekly wages due his workmen. On hearing of this situation, Uncle Rod wrote substantially the following letter to Mr. Lawson:—

Dear Sir:

My shoemaker, Mr. Watkins, asked my advice as to whether he should furnish the shoes for your crew on the "Independence." He told me that the outlay would be so large that he could take no risks in regard to the credit. I told him I did not have the privilege of your acquaintance, but I understood that you were a gentleman and that a gentleman could be depended upon to pay his bills as they became due. I trust that I shall have no reason to modify this opinion.

Yours truly,
B. R. Weld

The bill was paid forthwith.

Incidentally, Uncle Rod had advanced to Watkins from time to time more cash in the form of loans than the latter was able to repay. For years Minot and I had our shoes made to order without cost to us, the price being deducted from the amount of Mr. Watkins' indebtedness to Uncle Rod.

One day when I was just starting [for] my law office a caller was announced. "I am Mr. Hoare," said the caller, "Mr. Rodman Weld's tailor from London. He tells me that your trousers do not hang right, that they have not the proper spring over your instep, and he has directed me to take your measurements for a suit of clothes." I posted over to Uncle Rod's office. "Did you see Hoare?" he asked. "No, don't try to look at your trousers. Don't you know that it is impossible for a man to judge of the hang of his own trousers? If your family are going away and you have to live with me, you've got to wear trousers that hang like those of a gentleman." Thereafter, as long as Uncle Rod lived Hoare came twice a year to my office and measured me for a suit of English clothes.

"Your name comes up for election to the Somerset Club next week," he said to me once abruptly. I protested that I had neither the money to pay the dues nor the present need of the club. "I thought of that and consulted Minot. We agree that you had better be elected at once. Some day you may do something. Whatever you do, some member of the Somer-

set Club will disapprove of it. I will pay your dues until the time when you tell me that you would like to be a member." During his life I never saw my club bill.

The Somerset Club was his second home. Every day at two-thirty he lunched there. From three to four-thirty he played cards. At four-thirty, Dan, the coachman, with Molly and the yellow wagon, pulled up at the club door, and in his Inverness cape and a large gray felt hat, the two broad backs overflowing the restricted width of the wagon seat, he drove the dainty mare down Beacon Street, saluting traffic policemen with a grave raising of the whip. He demanded of others the same formal courtesies which he as a gentleman felt called upon to offer. "William," said he, once to a friend at the Club who passed him hastily without a greeting, "Do we bow when we meet, or do we not? It is a matter of complete indifference to me, but it is for you to choose."

Once, I overheard him engaging a cook at Jamaica Plain. She had come to the interview highly recommended. "Can you make bread?" said he, "and can you bake a potato?" The amazed woman answered in the affirmative. "If that is so, you are a qualified cook. A woman who can make good bread and will take the trouble to bake a potato as it should be baked can cook anything." On Sunday evenings when I lived with him we would experiment with some special dish. I once tasted my product and exclaimed how good it was. "That isn't the question," said he with severity, "I don't care how good this is. What we should be considering is what you can suggest which would make it better next time."

The code of the gentleman may not require subjective moral philosophy, but it does entail acceptance of principles which meet the conventions of those with whom one associates. A gentleman need not attend church, but he should recognize the existence of the Sabbath. Card games were not played on Sunday by a gentleman. But, by an equally accepted convention, solitaire is not a game. Therefore, solitaire but not whist could be played on Sunday evenings. In the '90's this distinction was generally recognized. It was Uncle Rod's habit to cruise each summer on the Bigelow's steam yacht. Each week day evening the bridge table was brought out. Each Sunday evening small tables were unfolded. The host and his guests sat in different corners of the cabin, each busy with his solitaire. The rule as to cards was as rigid as the rule that on Sundays we ate beef and Yorkshire pudding.

I never knew why Uncle Rod never married. He used to say that he did not have the courage to take on the responsibility of a wife. It is true that his was not a venturesome nature. He never intentionally took a business risk. He had watched his father play solitaire through the night when financial anxieties made sleep impossible and he had spent ten years saving family funds to pay off his father's notes. He was proud of the business or professional successes of his brothers or his nephews, but for himself he preferred a life without disturbing incidents. But family loyalty brought obligations which to him seemed simple and inevitable, although to others they might have been regarded as extravagant and unnecessary gestures. When in 1907 his brother-in-law's firm needed cash resources, quietly he went to his safe deposit box, made up his securities into a bundle, took them to Uncle John's desk and said: "Have John use these as you need them. Let me have the money back

some time." For thirty years he was treasurer of Suncook Mills, but those were the days when running a cotton mill was not a complicated task. There were no labor unions. There was a constant demand for the simplest fabrics. It was merely a matter of buying cotton, turning out print cloths, and if the market would not stand a quarter of a cent a yard profit, then one must be content with an eighth of a cent. So, the day's work which began at ten o'clock was over at two, save for an occasional visit to the mill. He was at home for a cup of tea at five-thirty. In the evening there was the open fire, the solitaire table and Waverley Novels. On one morning a week he drove to Roxbury to a bank meeting; on one evening he attended the Whist Club; on Saturday nights he dined at the Somerset Club. There were few other interruptions in the even path of his daily routine. And yet he had an astonishingly formulative influence upon all with whom he came in contact. The tang of his caustic tongue but gentle words were the source of countless stories among his friends. The homely lessons in the code of a gentleman unconsciously directed many a younger life. And when he died men said again: "How we shall miss dear old Rod. We never realized how dependent we were upon him."