

**A HAND BOOK OF
BUSINESS IN
LOWELL, WITH A
HISTORY OF THE CITY**

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A Hand Book of Business in Lowell, with a History of the City by Charles Cowley

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BY CHARLES COWLEY, ESQ.,
A MEMBER OF THE MIDDLESEX BAR.



LOWELL:
PUBLISHED BY E. D. GREEN.
1856.

9"



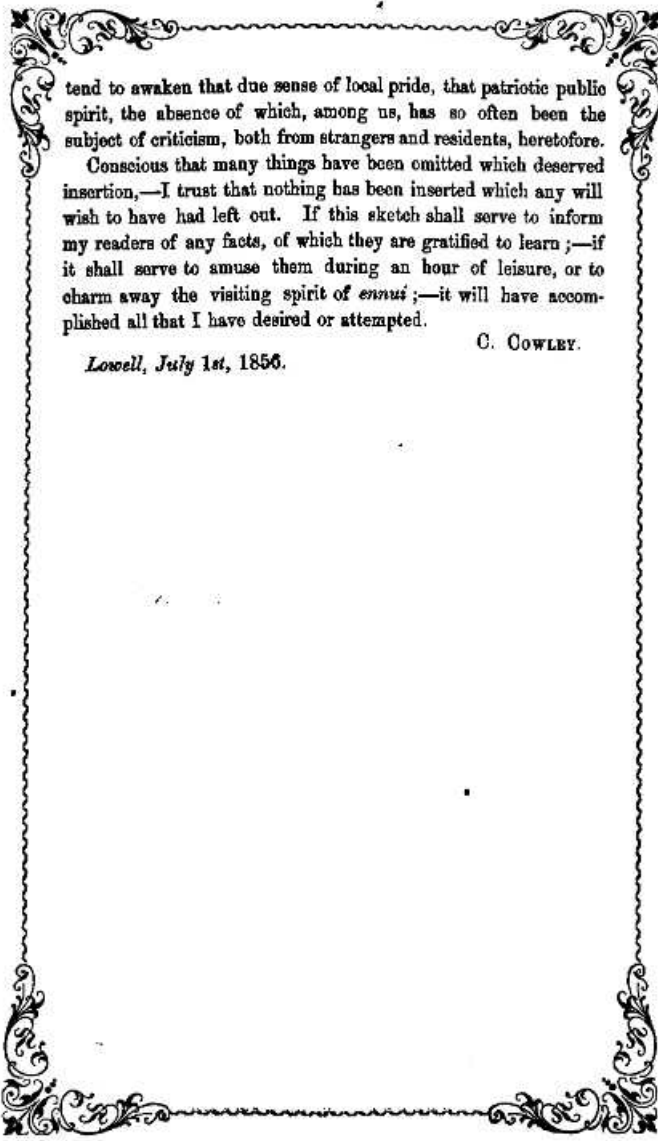
PREFACE.

TWO OBJECTS have been sought to be compassed by this work. The first was, to exhibit, by cards and advertisements, a sort of daguerreotype view of the business of Lowell;—"to hold, as 'twere, the mirror" up to the trade and industry of this busy and thrifty community. The other was, to present a concise and general view of the history of this place,—from its occupation as the head-quarters of the Pawtucket Indians, two centuries ago, to the close of the second decade of its existence as an incorporated city.

In preparing this historic outline, my chief purpose has been, to seize on the salient points, facts, incidents and events of our urban history, together with such traditions and episodes as have any local interest; and to weave the whole together in the form of a readable and interesting narrative. The character of the work did not admit of minute details, a display of erudition, or a parade of rhetoric. The solemn monotony and stately dignity of history,—the painful particularity and prudish precision of chronologers and almanac-makers,—have been freely sacrificed for the lively flow of story.

I acknowledge, with pleasure, my obligations to the City Clerk, and to various individuals whose names delicacy forbids me to mention, for their politeness in favoring me with the use of records and documents, which have aided me much in the composition of this work.

Far from wishing to cultivate in the breasts of my readers a *sentimental* attachment to a place confessedly deficient in intellectual attractiveness and the charms of a refined social atmosphere,—I still cherish the hope, that the perusal of these pages may



tend to awaken that due sense of local pride, that patriotic public spirit, the absence of which, among us, has so often been the subject of criticism, both from strangers and residents, heretofore.

Conscious that many things have been omitted which deserved insertion,—I trust that nothing has been inserted which any will wish to have had left out. If this sketch shall serve to inform my readers of any facts, of which they are gratified to learn ;—if it shall serve to amuse them during an hour of leisure, or to charm away the visiting spirit of *ennui* ;—it will have accomplished all that I have desired or attempted.

C. COWLEY.

Lowell, July 1st, 1856.

The Merrimac River Valley.

Few regions on the globe possess more natural loveliness than this valley. Few have won such renown as theatres of manufacturing enterprise. Man and Nature, coöperating to a common end, have here reared a noble monument of physical beauty and mechanic art. Even in an agricultural point of view,—but especially when considered in respect to the extent and variety of its operations in manufactures,—this valley ranks among the most interesting regions on the western continent.

The Indian name, Merrimac, says Douglas, an early writer, signifies "a sturgeon." It was applied to the river in consequence of the abundance of sturgeon and other fish, taken from its waters. The first settlers frequently called it "Sturgeon River."

The head of this river is on the northerly border of Merrimac county, in New Hampshire. Here the Winnipisawkee, the outlet of the lake of that name, unites with the Pemigewasset, which rises in the White Mountains, that "milk the clouds." The union of these two streams forms the great river of the valley. The tributary waters of the Contoocook, Shelugan, Nashua, Concord, and a hundred lesser streams, are received by the Merrimac at various points of its course. The general direction of the river, during the first eighty miles of its career, is southerly; but after entering Massachusetts, it bends to the northeast. Having described a journey of a hundred and ten miles, it discharges into the Atlantic, a brief distance below Newburyport.

Its course is interrupted by numerous water-falls, which furnish incipient agents of mechanism, that will endure till manufactures perish, or these waters cease to flow. By means of dams and

canals, these natural resources of water-power have been much augmented and improved. The wild Merrimac, which once rolled unchecked to the Atlantic, has been tamed to the purposes of man, domesticated to labor, and charmed into bondage to "the wizard of mechanism." Populous cities, great bee-hives of industry, have sprung up all along its banks, like the enchanted palaces of the Arabian tales. The whole valley, from lake to sea, teems with the sights and sounds of the spindle and the loom.

At the head of this valley stands Concord, the capital of New Hampshire, "the Switzerland of America." Below Concord is Hooksett, just rising into the eminence of her sister-cities. A little lower is Manchester, a fine miniature of her English namesake. Where a single saw-mill stood, twenty years ago, now stand the Stark Mills, which consume more cotton, and weave more cloth, than any similar establishment of which the world can boast. Fifteen miles lower is Nashua, and still lower looms up the Queen-City of the valley,—LOWELL,—the subject of this sketch. Ten miles lower on the river,—

"Which still in varying beauty flows along,"—

is Lawrence,—fitly named after the great Merchant Prince, the Medici of America. Ten years ago, a few sandy farms were all that it contained. Now, it displays a double row of factories, among which is the largest mill in the world; and the sites of many others yet to be. Below Lawrence are Haverhill, Bradford, West Newbury, Salisbury, the two Amesburys, with Newburyport, the key of them all.

With a population of two hundred thousand souls,—all engaged in the industry of the factory or of the farm,—what an aggregate of productive force is here! In adventurous enterprise, in energy of character, in general intelligence,—not to mention civil and religious freedom,—the people of this valley are unsurpassed by any of the communities of Christendom. But when we consider in what struggles they are engaged, and what difficulties beset their path to competence, we shall find that the life of these industrious artisans, whose fabrics are sold in all the marts of the world, is anything but paradisaical;—it is not the life of which poets have

A. LAWRENCE, M. D.,

D E N T I S T ,

Office and Residence No. 11 John Street,

(ESTABLISHED Oct. 1st, 1839.)

DR. LAWRENCE INSERTS THE

BEST PREMIUM TEETH,

ON

GOLD PLATE AS PURE AS GOLD COIN.

THOSE PREFERING

SILVER, OR GUTTA PERCHA PLATES

CAN BE ACCOMMODATED.

Teeth Filled with Chemically Pure Gold.

Extracting, Cleansing, &c., attended to.

CHARGES ACCORDING TO CIRCUMSTANCES.

DENTISTS wishing Fancy Work to exhibit at Fairs, supplied at short notice.

To avoid all mistakes in the person or locality, remember
JOHN STREET, No. 11, opposite Samuel Kidder's
Apothecary Store.

sung;—it is not the fairy-life of Atlantis, Utopia and the Isles of the Blest.

Who shall say, that, when some centuries shall have rolled by, this valley will not fill a place in history, similar to that of the Nile, the Euphrates, the Rhine, or the River-God Ganges? Who shall say, that, some centuries later still, some traveler,—moved by the curiosity which led Layard to Ninevah, and Park to Ethiopia,—shall not brood over the ruins of these temples of industry, when our mechanical civilization, like the martial civilization of the ancients, has forever passed away?

The admiring genius of Whittier has attuned his lyre to the praise of our Merrimac:—

“——I have stood
Where Hudson rolled his lordly flood;
Looked down the Appalachian peak
On Junia's silver streak;
Have seen along his valley gleam
The Mohawk's softly winding stream;
The level light of sunset shine
Through broad Potomac's hem of pine;
And autumn's rainbow-tinted banner
Hang lightly o'er the Susquehanna;
Yet wheresoe'er his step might be,
Thy wandering child looks back to THEE.”

Topography and Natural Scenery.

The city is situated at the confluence, and on both sides, of the Merrimac and Concord rivers. Its bounds, as extended by repeated annexations of circumjacent territory, include about six square miles. The Pawtucket Falls on the Merrimac, and the Wamesit Falls on the Concord, are both embraced within its precincts. It is twenty five miles north-west from Boston.

The natural scenery of the place is marked by the same picturesqueness which characterizes the whole valley of the Merrimac. It has neither the grandeur of the Alleghanics, which

“Have pinnacled in clouds their snowy scalps,”—

nor the limitless expanse of the western prairies, rolling in unbroken billows towards the regions of sunset. But it presents a