

**LETTERS,
1832-1899**

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Letters, 1832-1899 by Edward Chipman Guild

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EDWARD CHIPMAN GUILD

**LETTERS,
1832-1899**

LETTERS
OF
EDWARD CHIPMAN GUILD

©

L E T T E R S

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EDWARD CHIPMAN GUILD

1832—1899

PRIVATELY PRINTED

1903

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BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH.

EDWARD CHIPMAN GUILD was born in Brookline, Massachusetts, on the odd day, February 29th, 1832. His father was Benjamin Guild, his mother Eliza Eliot, and from both of them he inherited those refined and elevated tastes which come in perfection only through generations of high thinking and feeling. He was the sixth generation from John Guild of Glasgow, who came to Dedham in 1636, Edmund Quincy who came to Boston in 1633, Rev. Henry Flynt who came to Boston in 1635, and Governor Thomas Dudley.

At his father's house he was surrounded by an atmosphere of culture and refinement, the visitors there being the distinguished men and women of the day. A few quotations from the reminiscences of his childhood, which he began to write shortly before his death, will give an idea of the influences with which he came in contact.

“There were three influences which led to my forming the habit of desultory reading which has lasted all my life. One was that my father assisted William Crosby in establishing himself as a bookseller in Boston, and I was permitted to take any book from the counter and read and return it as if it had been a circulating library.

“Another was the free use of Mr. Ticknor’s¹ library. A blank-book was placed on his study table and we young folks were allowed to take what we pleased, entering our names and the title of the book in the record book.

“Another was the use of the Athenæum Library.

“The Library was not so much used then as now. Old Mr. Bass was Librarian, and at one time a young English boy, Fisher Keeler, was employed there, with whom some of us who frequented the Library formed an alliance, and we used to play marbles with him on the floor of the long alcoves, where we were rarely interrupted by any older person. . . .

“Another incident which helped to give me a taste for poetry was a gift from my aunt, Mrs. Ticknor, of a prettily bound copy of Wordsworth’s ‘Excursion’ which would go into my

¹ His uncle, George Ticknor, LL.D.

pocket. I had at this time a small camp-chair which I used to put under my arm, and go off by myself and read Wordsworth under a tree. I was too young to understand much of it, but the big words and the stately rhythm had a fascination for me. No doubt there was a good deal of affectation about it all, and I was in real danger of becoming a prig. But if there is in a boy any touch of conceit and insincerity, it is at least something that it should be turned in the direction of high ideals and pure standards of taste. What was at first very largely affectation became, as my mind matured, a genuine and sincere love of poetry and literature.

“Another influence which acted in the same direction came from Mr. T. W. Higginson — Cousin Wentworth, as we all called him — who was employed as a sort of private tutor by the families of Mr. Stephen Perkins and Mr. Stephen Higginson, and whose instruction I was permitted to share. He used to set us, as copies in our writing books, lines of Tennyson and other poets. By constant repetition, they became very familiar and helped to form my ear for verse.

“I must not forget to mention also mother's patience in teaching us hymns and sacred poems on Sunday. Thompson's 'Hymns to the Seasons,'