

# **THE OLDEN TIME IN NEW YORK**

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The Olden Time in New York by William Ingraham Kip

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**WILLIAM INGRAHAM KIP**

**THE OLDEN TIME  
IN NEW YORK**



THE  
**Olden Time in New York.**

BY

A MEMBER OF THE NEW YORK GENEALOGICAL AND BIOGRAPHICAL SOCIETY.



KIP'S BAY HOUSE IN 1691.

- I. NEW YORK SOCIETY IN OLDEN TIME.  
II. TRACES OF AMERICAN LINEAGE IN ENGLAND.

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NEW YORK:  
G. P. PUTNAM & SONS,  
M DCCC LXXII.

TO

EDWARD FLOYD DE LANCEY, Esq.,

OF NEW YORK.

NEARLY thirty years ago the author dedicated to your venerated father the first book he published. There is a propriety, therefore, in inscribing to the son the last he may ever write.

It harmonizes, too, with the spirit of this work to place on this page the name of one who now represents in this country the loyal and chivalrous De Lancey of "the olden time."

NEW YORK SOCIETY

IN THE

OLDEN TIME.

## P R E F A C E.

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PROBABLY no article has appeared for years in a New York literary journal which excited the attention of the community to the extent of the first of those reprinted in this volume—"New York Society in the Olden Time." It was published in *Putnam's Magazine* for September, 1870. While the papers generally criticised it, and contended that the present times were best, those, on the contrary, whose associations stretched back into the past, hailed it as a faithful portraiture of life as it was in the Colony and in the generation which succeeded our separation from the Mother Country. A member of one of our oldest Colonial families writes to the author: "I did not know there existed in this *modern time* any one having the knowledge as well as courage to write so clear and un-biassed a review of the past."

The author has yielded, therefore, to the request of friends to enlarge the article and give it a more permanent form. It is a picture of a state of things gone never to return, and perhaps for that reason is worthy of preservation. A few years longer and no one will be left who could give these reminiscences.

The second article in this volume is different in its style and object, being published in a journal of a widely different character. It appeared in the July, 1871, number of the "New York Genealogical and Biographical Record." This also has been considerably enlarged by notices of other families.

Perhaps, together, these two articles may save from perishing, some recollections of the Old Régime.

While for the young, who are looking only to the shadowy future, these pages may possess but little interest, perhaps



there are those with whom the light is fading, who will find here familiar scenes and names which will call up again "the buried past," until the tones sound to them (as one writes the author) "like the voice of their own dear kindred."

NEW YORK, Jan., 1872.

## NEW YORK SOCIETY

IN THE

OLDEN TIME.

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To lament the days that are gone, and believe the past better than the present, is a tendency which has been remarked as far back as the days of Solomon. "Say not thou," says the wise king, "What is the cause that the former days were better than these? for thou dost not inquire wisely concerning this." However this may be, it is a propensity which has always existed, to compare unfavorably the present with the distant past. The Golden Age of which poets sang was in "our fathers' day, and in the old time before them."

From this feeling the writer realizes that he is not free, and, in many respects, might be inclined to impute his estimate of the present to the waning light in which he sees it. When dealing, however, with facts with which he is well acquainted, he feels that he cannot be prejudiced; and in this way it is that he contrasts the society of the present with that which once existed in New York. From his distant home he looks back on the rush and hurry of life as it now exists in his native city; and, while he realizes its increased glitter and

splendor, he feels that it has depreciated from the dignity and high tone which once characterized it.

Of the society of the olden time he can, of course, know but little by actual experience. His knowledge of it began when the old *régime* was just passing away. In the days of his childhood, the men of the Revolution were fast going down to the grave. Of these he knew some in their old age. His father's contemporaries, however, were somewhat younger, though brought up under the same influences. But when that generation departed, the spirit which had aided in forming their characters had gone also, never again to be felt. To many of these men he looked up as if they were superior beings; and, indeed, he has felt, in all his passage through life, that he has never seen the equals of those who then stood forward prominently in public affairs.

The earliest notice we have of colonial society is in Mrs. Grant's delightful "American Lady." She was the daughter of a British officer who came over with troops during the old French war, and her reminiscences begin about 1760. Her residence was principally in Albany, with the Schuyler family. Still, she was brought in contact with the leading families of the colony, and as she was in the habit of often visiting New York, she learned much of the state of things in that city. She writes thus of the old Dutch and colonial families of that day: "They bore about them the tokens of former affluence and respectability, such as family plate, portraits of their ancestors executed in a superior style, and great numbers of original paintings, some of which were much admired by acknowledged judges." In New York, of course, the highest degree of refinement was to be seen, and she says: "An expensive and elegant style of living began already to take place in New York, which was, from the resi-