

**LIFE OF REV. SAMUEL
WILLARD, D.D., A.A.S.
OF DEERFIELD, MASS.**

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Life of Rev. Samuel Willard, D.D., A.A.S. Of Deerfield, Mass. by Samuel Willard & Mary Willard

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SAMUEL WILLARD & MARY WILLARD

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LIFE

OF

Rev. Samuel Willard, D.D., A.A.S.

OF

DEERFIELD, MASS.

EDITED BY

HIS DAUGHTER

Mary Willard

BOSTON

GEO. H. ELLIS, 441 FRANKLIN STREET

1892

"The seer who saw, through blinded eyes,
True glories of immortal skies;
Who clearly heard, through darkened years,
The music of the heavenly spheres,
And with a faithful vision keen
Saw mysteries of the Unseen."

G. B. BARTLETT.

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PART I.

ANCESTRY — EDUCATION — PROFESSIONAL LIFE —
MARRIAGE AND THE HOME — FAILURE OF SIGHT
— RESIGNATION OF PARISH — VARIOUS RESI-
DENCES — DOMESTIC CHANGES — CLOSING SCENES.

REV. SAMUEL WILLARD, D.D., A.A.S.

CHAPTER I.

PEDIGREE—CHILDHOOD AND EARLY EDUCATION—LIFE
IN PETERSHAM.

A GENERATION has already passed away since the Rev. Samuel Willard, D.D., of Deerfield, Mass., ceased from his labors here, and entered on the activities and joys of the higher life beyond. Of all the large circle of those who once knew him personally, but few remain; and that small circle is contracting year by year. Therefore, lest the memory of a life, notable in many ways, should become little more than a tradition gradually fading away, it seems fitting that some memorial, more extended than has yet appeared, should be left to tell his story. It is always a delicate task to undertake the biography of a very near and dear relative; but in this case no other than one very closely related remains, to whom that life in all its phases was intimately known.

Samuel, the seventh in a family of eleven children, was born April 18, 1776, in Petersham, Mass., now one of the favorite summer resorts, but then an obscure village among the hills of Worcester County.

His father, William Willard, was son of Rev. Samuel Willard, of Biddeford, Maine, and brother of Rev. Dr. Joseph Willard, President of Harvard College. Mr. Willard of Biddeford was grandson of Rev. Samuel Willard, D.D., minister of the Old South Church, Boston, and really President of Harvard College, though as his parishioners were unwilling to give him up, and the President was required to reside on the college grounds, a quibble was made, and the title Vice-President given him by way of getting over the difficulty. His memory is especially dear to his descendants, for the unpopular course he took in steadfastly withstanding the persecution of the so-called Salem witches, whom he would visit in prison at the risk of his own reputation, if not of his life. This he did, notwithstanding that one of the principal judges, who tried and condemned these poor victims, was a most highly valued parishioner and friend.

The father of the Vice-President was Major Simon Willard, who came to this country in 1734, from the county of Kent, England, in which country, according to the late Joseph Willard, Esq., of Boston, the family had been a "gens," or landholders, from about the time of William the Conqueror, though the name was variously spelled. "In the year ~~1635~~ 1635 Major Willard was one of the principal agents of a company in buying of the Indians the town of Concord, and dividing the lands among the proposed settlers. There he lived and was one of the most prominent citizens for about twenty

years." His name figures largely in the histories of the times, and also bears honorable mention in John Fiske's "Beginnings of New England" as a valiant warrior in the troubles with the Indians. He had seventeen children, and his son, the Vice-President, twenty. They certainly contributed their share toward peopling the country.

I now quote from an autobiographical sketch, written by my father after the age of seventy-five for his children and grandchildren, evidently not intended for publication in its present form.

"My grandfather had five sons and a posthumous daughter, whose names were Samuel, John, William, Josiah, Joseph," afterward President of Harvard College, "and Eunice. Samuel and Josiah died before their father. By great personal exertions and the aid of friends, John and Joseph obtained a collegiate education, and were settled in the ministry, — John at Stafford, Conn., where he passed the residue of life, and Joseph in Beverly, whence he removed to Cambridge. . . . My grandfather's house in Biddeford stood on the Saco River, near its mouth. When travelling that way in the summer of 1805, I was induced, by a strong desire of visiting the house and the enclosures where my father and his brothers sported together in early childhood, to leave the stage-coach, and make the excursion, though attended with no little difficulty.

"William Willard, my revered father, was born in 1735, and was about six years old when his father died. For want of the like taste with his brothers,