

**OLD NEW  
ENGLAND TRAITS**

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Old New England traits by George Lunt

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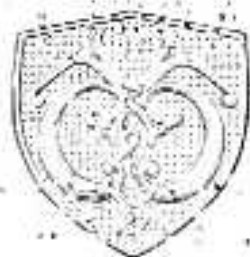


OLD  
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EDITED BY

GEORGE LUNT

. . . this story's actually true.  
If any person doubts it, I appeal  
To history, tradition, and to facts,  
To newspapers, whose truth all know and feel.  
BYRON



NEW YORK  
PUBLISHED BY HURD AND HOUGHTON  
Cambridge: The Riverside Press  
1873

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## INTRODUCTION.



THE Editor of this little volume does not deem it incumbent upon him to explain in what way the author's manuscript came into his possession. He hopes it may be enough for him to say, that the writer believed himself to be the only person whose memory retained most of the incidents and anecdotes herein recorded; and a long and familiar acquaintance with his character enables the Editor to state, that entire credence is due to his narrative of facts, written down as occurring within his own knowledge and to his relation of whatever he alleges himself to have derived from others. A slight veil of mystery seems to have been originally thrown over the story; especially in regard to the names of persons; but, as all who are

familiar with the locality will at once recognize its general features, the Editor has thought it best, for the benefit of others not so well informed, to make all proper explanations on this point in the Index.

Sometimes, New England has been spoken of as devoid of the elements of romance; but perhaps this idea may be owing to the fact, that the means of presenting a different aspect of the case have not been sufficiently investigated. A similar impression has prevailed in respect to Roman history and literature, whether fabulous or otherwise; and the fathers of New England, at least, have been thought to have exhibited some of the traits, especially the simplicity and severity of character, which distinguished those more ancient worthies, whose names and deeds have been so long famous. But without making other citations, I may remark, that I am scarcely acquainted with a poem more thoroughly romantic in conception and sentiment, than

“Gallus,” the tenth eclogue of Virgil; and Macaulay, in his “Lays of Ancient Rome,” has turned some of its legends to fine poetical account. Where can be found, for instance, a prettier, or more suggestive picture, than the passage in his “Virginia,” which some inspired painter might make immortal upon canvas, as it is in verse:—

“With her small tablets in her hand, and her satchel on  
her arm,  
Home she went bounding from the school, nor dreamed  
of shame or harm.”

Perhaps, the solemnities of the colonial history of New England may have overshadowed much of whatever poetical interest might be discovered in its private annals. It depends upon the reader, whether the present narrative may be thought in some measure to qualify the imputation in question.

G. L.





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—♦—  
CHAPTER I.

IT was the winter of 18—, between fifty and sixty years ago. Certainly the winters of New England began earlier and were more severe than they have seemed at a later period. After the fervid heat of summer has become subdued by the progressive changes of the season, no atmosphere could be clearer, purer, more exhilarating than the prevailing tone of our October days, and this kindly influence, as if by way of preparing the human frame for the gradual approach of winter, generally extends, with occasional stormy intermissions, through November, and often very far into the frosty domain of December itself. And such snow-storms as we once endured! It

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may be alleged, that distance of time forbids accuracy of comparison, and that masses of snow which appeared vast to a child would not seem so immense to a full-grown man, and were really no more huge than some of those with which winter nowadays envelopes the ground. But facts within my memory do not admit of such an explanation, for I distinctly recollect the driving storm which continued for days and piled its accumulating heaps against the front of our dwelling-place, so as entirely to cover the windows of the lower story of the house, and to rise above the main door which was of ordinary height, and that at length we were released from this imprisonment by means of an archway to that entrance, dug through the drift by the friendly efforts of an opposite neighbor.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> As I set down these reminiscences I observe the following paragraph in a Boston daily paper of November 27, 1872:—

“NOVEMBER SNOW. Fifty-two years ago to-day there were twenty-eight inches of snow on a level in the vicinity of Portsmouth, N. H.”