

Charles D'Wolf

Of Guadaloupe, his Ancest^{ors} and
Descend^{ants}. Being a complete
Genealogy of the "RHODE ISLAND
D'WOLFS," the descend^{ants} of
SIMON DE WOLF, with their
common desc^{ent} from
BALTHASAR DE WOLF,
of Lyme, Conn.
(1668)

WITH A BIOGRAPHICAL INTRODUCTION
AND APPENDICES ON THE

Nova Scotian de Wolfs

AND OTHER ALLIED FAMILIES
WITH A PREFACE BY

BRADFORD COLT DE WOLF

BY

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TO
MY PARENTS

JAMES DE WOLF PERRY

WHO WITH SPOTLESS REPUTATION MAINTAINED THE
HONOUR OF HIS NAME;

AND

JULIA SOPHIA JONES PERRY

WHO, BY PRECEPT AND EXAMPLE, WITH UNTIRING AFFECTION,
TAUGHT HER CHILDREN TO EMULATE ALL THAT WAS BEST IN
THEIR ANCESTORS, THE FOLLOWING PAGES ARE
DEDICATED WITH GRATEFUL AFFECTION

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* Only after many urgent requests did the author introduce his own portrait when, with few exceptions, pictures of the living do not appear in these pages. He consented less reluctantly on discovering that the only picture of himself he could furnish was with his brothers in the last meeting at the old Home with their mother before her death.

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PREFACE

A VOLUME could easily be written on the history of the several branches of the de Wolf family in Europe; but, according to the plan outlined by the author of the present genealogy, the writer will confine himself, in this preface, to the origin of the name and the relationships in Belgium, Holland, Germany and the Russian Baltic Provinces.

It must certainly be a matter for satisfaction for the numerous representatives of the de Wolf name and blood in America, to know that there are few families in the United States, and indeed in Europe, which hold such a distinguished position, in so many different countries as the de Wolfs. This statement may, at first sight, seem exaggerated, until it has been explained that not only do the de Wolfs belong to the oldest aristocracy of Flanders, Saxony and Livonia, but that in the present generation, as in the past, the representatives of the family in these countries have now an enviable name for themselves in public life, in the domain of literature and science.

During the course of my travels, and almost life-long residence on the Continent, more especially in Belgium, it has been my good fortune to become personally acquainted with leading members of the de Wolf family, among them being Baron Ariste de Wolff, of Riga, Livonia, now in the Russian diplomatic service; and Baron Louis de Wolf de Moorsell, of the Château de Trevierès, Bracgnies in the Province of Hainaut, a well-known member of the Belgian aristocracy. Baron Louis de Wolf's ancestor, Maximilian de Wolf, son of Frederick de Wolf, a Baron of the Holy Roman Empire, had lands conferred upon him by the Emperor Charles the Fifth, and took up his residence in the neighborhood of Ghent in 1535. He was created a

baron in the following year. Several of Maximilian de Wolf's descendants held appointments in the French army and diplomatic service. Baron Charles de Wolf, Maximilian's eldest son, joined the cause of the Belgian people in their revolt against Spain at the time of the revolution in the Lowlands, in 1579. Baron Joseph Henry de Wolf, a great grandson of Charles de Wolf, after the cession of the seven Belgian provinces to the Empire, took up his residence at Haarlem in Holland; his son, Joseph, Baron de Wolf, became an Admiral in the Dutch service, and Governor-General of the Dutch East Indies from 1751 to 1757.

The Barons de Wolf, of Belgium, are closely related to the best known families of the Kingdom, and have intermarried during the past three centuries with the scions of the oldest aristocracy. Among the more noteworthy of these relationships are those with the Dukes d'Ursel; the present head of this family, the Duc d'Ursel, is President of the Belgian Senate, and a warm personal friend of King Leopold; the Princes de Ligne, whose family seat, the Château de Beloeil, is one of the marvels of Belgium; and the writer's friend, the Vicomte de Spoelberch de Lovenjoul, of the Château de Lovenjoul, one of whose maternal ancestors was the Baroness Theodora de Wolf. The Vicomte de Spoelberch de Lovenjoul is one of the most eminent *littérateurs* of the day in Belgium; as the author of "*A History of the Works of Honoré de Balzac*," "*A History of Theophile Gautier's Works*," "*A Love Romance—the true story of Balzac and Madame Hauska*," and of several other works, crowned by the French Academy. The Vicomte de Lovenjoul's renown is not only not confined to his own country, but has crossed the Atlantic. The Vicomte's palatial residence in Brussels—with its library containing, besides all of the existing manuscripts of Balzac's novels, the unpublished correspondence of the great novelist with Madame Hauska—is perhaps the most unique sight in the Belgian capital.

The legend of the origin of the name of de Wolf is practically the same in every country. According to the family tradition in Belgium, Frederick de Wolf's first

known ancestor, Louis de Saint-Etienne, of the French noble family of that name, was one of King Charles the Fifth's attendants on a hunting expedition. During the chase, a wolf cub crossed the King's path; Charles threw his lance at the cub, mortally wounding it, and breaking the weapon against a tree. An enormous she-wolf, seeing her offspring wounded, rushed from the forest upon the King, who had nothing but his hunting knife to defend himself with. Louis de Saint-Etienne rushed between the wolf and the King and despatched it with his sword, thus saving the King from the danger that threatened him. As a reward the King knighted Louis, who, from this time, was called de Loup, and was the ancestor of the noble French family of that name. His grandson, Emile de Loup, accompanied the Princess Mathilda to Germany at the time of her marriage to the eldest son of Frederick, Elector and Duke of Saxony in 1423. Emile de Loup became a great favorite at the Saxon Court, and had the title of Baron conferred on him in 1427. He then changed his name from the French to the German, and was known afterwards as de Wolf. It was his direct descendant, Maximilian de Wolf, who founded the Belgian branch of the family. The ancestral seat of the de Wolfs in Saxony is the Castle of Crimmitzshaw. The arms of the family are:—Or, Three Wolves' heads, erased sable borne on the breast of an Imperial double-headed Eagle, sable-beaked, or, a Coronet of Baron of the Empire. Crest: Out of a Ducal Coronet, a Demi-Wolf, gules, holding in the dexter paw a fleur-de-lis, or. The motto: *Vincit qui Patitur*. He conquers who endures.

The title of Baron is borne to-day by the de Wolfs in Belgium, Holland, Saxony, Prussia and Livonia (Baltic Provinces of Russia). This in itself might be of small importance, for the number of *parvenus* with this or other titles of nobility is legion on the Continent. In the case of the de Wolfs the proof of their noble origin lies in the fact that the several branches of the family have borne coat-of-arms for centuries. In the official *Archives Nobiliares of Belgium*, it is recorded that the de Wolfs have borne arms

since the beginning of the sixteenth century, in Flanders. It may, perhaps, be hardly necessary to state that it is the right to use armorial bearings which has always been the distinctive test of nobility. Coats-of-arms in the early dawn of feudalism were the mark of the French *gentilhomme* as of the English *gentleman*. Consequently, the de Wolfs have, in the broadest acceptation of the word, the right to "that grand old name of *gentleman*, defamed by every charlatan and soiled with all ignoble use." In this connection it is a most noteworthy fact that the European de Wolfs have always looked upon their long line of ancestry as being in itself far more honorable than a mere title. They have always, let it be noted, retained the distinctive family name of *de Wolf*, and have never, as is so often the case, particularly in Belgium, allowed their original family name to be replaced by that of their estates. This pride taken in their name rather than in the title, recalls the splendid old motto of the Rohans: *Roi ne puis, Monseigneur ne daigne, Monsieur sius*.—A King I cannot be, a nobleman I do not deign to be, a gentleman I am.

Concerning the origin of the de Wolf family in America, there can be but little doubt from the investigations the writer has made, that our first American ancestor was a scion of the Livonian branch, which is, itself, an offshoot of the Saxon branch. There is a well-established tradition in Baron Ariste de Wolff's family, that, in the early part of the seventeenth century, a younger son of the Baron de Wolff of that day, left Livonia to emigrate, presumably to America, and was never again heard from. The crest of the Livonian de Wolffs, it should be observed, in this connection, is the same as that of the American branch—to wit: Out of a Ducal Coronet, a Demi-Wolf, gules, holding in the dexter paw a fleur-de-lis, or.

The writer concludes this preface with a plea in favour of the original spelling of the name *de Wolf*. This is certainly the only logical manner of spelling the name; for those members of the family, at least, who bear the de Wolf coat-of-arms. In France and Belgium, only those families who have the particle "*de*" (in Germany "*von*"),

have the right to bear coat-of arms. In Belgium and Holland there are many family names with the prefix "*De*," which, in Danish and Dutch, means "*the*," but this prefix, apart from the similarity of spelling, has nothing in common with the French particle "*de*," and it would not only be absurd, but illegal, on the Continent, for the members of these families to use coats-of-arms, unless they had previously been ennobled.

BRADFORD COLT DE WOLF.

BRUSSELS, December 30, 1901.

CHAPTER I.

DESCENDANTS OF MARK ANTHONY DE WOLF.

IN Bristol, Rhode Island, at one time an old town of Plymouth Colony, stands a De Wolf Mansion, always spoken of as "The Mount." It fronts upon what is now called De Wolf Avenue. Behind it rises "Mount Hope," the seat of the famous Wampanoag Chief, "King Philip." All this was once part of the extensive possessions of the Hon. James De Wolf, "in his time the dominant personality of the town." The sun as it gilds the roof of the busy city of Fall River, and glances across the intervening waters of Mount Hope Bay illumines the eastern windows of the old home while its declining rays glimmer through the honey locusts, casting their shadows on the western porch. Then it sinks over the hills beyond Poppasquash, a peninsula where stands other stately mansions of the De Wolf family and the shores of which so encircle Bristol Harbor that its resemblance to the Bay of Naples has often been remarked; indeed those Italian waters are scarcely bluer than the beautiful Narragansett Bay. That fine old mansion, "The Mount," was for more than half a century the center of gatherings of successive generations of that branch of the family commonly known as the "Rhode Island De Wolfs." The walls of the long drawing-room are quaintly painted by hand, with scenes from "Paul and Virginia," interspersed with panels on which slaves are seen toiling in rows of coffee plants on Cuba Plantations belonging to members of the family. These latter well typify two chief sources of the princely fortunes of the De Wolfs of that day—the slave trade and the West Indian trade.

This house, colonial in style, is not earlier than the time of James De Wolf. His father Mark Anthony De Wolf, the first to settle in Bristol, the common ancestor of all the De Wolfs

of Rhode Island, lived in humbler homes both in Bristol and the neighboring township of Swansea. There is a much older house at the opposite end of the town, where the Town bridge spans a creek from which the old place takes the name "Silvercreek;" "Just North of the Town Bridge on the East side of the road stands," says Prof. Munroe in his *History of Bristol*, "the first house erected within the limits of Bristol." Built in 1680, the year the town was settled, by Deacon Nathaniel Bosworth, it had within its walls, in the southwest room, the parlor, the first gathering for religious worship held in Bristol. Notwithstanding many exciting scenes and dangers, Indian Wars, the Revolution, the "Dorr Rebellion," the Civil War, the great "September Gales" of 1815 and 1869, it has never failed to shelter descendants of its pious builder. Descending through Ruth Bosworth and her son Judge Benjamin Bourn, it was inherited by his granddaughter Julia Jones, the wife of James De Wolf Perry; their sons, the writer and his brothers, own the place at this day. These old places have so much in common, as will appear later in our narrative, that it seemed fitting that they should be mentioned together.

Charles De Wolf, father of that Mark Anthony who was first of the family to come to Bristol, was not, as has been frequently said, a Frenchman, but a good Connecticut Yankee. Born at Lyme, Conn., 1695, the starting point of many New England families of note, with the spirit of enterprise characteristic of the family he emigrated to Guadaloupe, an island of the French West Indies, as a young man, establishing himself as a millwright, one of many of his race to be connected with the building and ownership of mills. The interesting essay of Mr. John M. Dolph, read at the Dolph Reunion, Aug. 21, 1901, at Kinsman, O., says that Charles before leaving Connecticut, "carried on a business, trading with the West Indies and went to Guadaloupe to facilitate this trade." Whether he married before or after leaving the country, the writer has not been able to absolutely ascertain, but one of the oldest of his Rhode Island descendants is authority for the statement that his wife Margaret Potter was an English woman and a member of the Church of England, in which faith she brought up her children, two sons and two daughters. The oldest, Simon, returned to the home of his grandfather Charles in Middletown, Conn., as a boy. As he was born in 1718, he was only thirteen when

his grandfather died in 1731, his youngest uncle Joseph and himself were lads of about the same age.

"April 3, 1731, Charles De Wolf (this was the father of Charles of Guadaloupe), of Lebanon, Conn., bought of Thomas White of Middletown, Conn., his dwelling house and about 19 acres of land on the east side of the Connecticut River in Middletown, now a part of the town of Portland. The town records give the death of Charles De Wolf as Dec. 5, 1731, at the age of 58. His will, dated Nov. 4, 1731, was presented to the Hartford Probate Court, Jan. 4, 1731-2. In the will he gave one-fourth of his personal estate absolutely, and the whole of his real estate to his wife Prudence during her widowhood; to his sons John and Stephen he gave 32 acres of land in Glastonbury, that which he purchased of Thomas and Sarah White; to his sons Simon and Joseph he gave after their mother's death or marriage, his house and lands in Middletown which he purchased of Thomas White; to his daughters Prudence and Elizabeth, Sarah and Rebekah, three-fourths of the movable estate after their mother's death or marriage; to his sons and daughters in equal share he gave the land given to him by his father in the town of Lyme, "that is if it should ever be recovered."

From the home of his father in Guadaloupe, the second son Mark Anthony was brought to Bristol, R. I., by Capt. Simeon Potter of that town. His visit to that island may have been merely in pursuit of trade. Possibly some tie of kindred may have existed between Margaret Potter, Mark Anthony De Wolf's mother, and the Potters of Bristol. Mark Anthony who had received his education in a French school and spoke several languages, became Capt. Potter's Secretary, in which capacity he sailed with him on a number of voyages.

Arriving in Bristol, Capt. Potter seems to have had some presentiment or design, in introducing his companion to his family. Mr. Charles De Wolf Brownell, himself now one of the oldest living De Wolfs, remembers hearing in early days from an aged member of the family, that "when 'Sim' Potter brought home his man Mark, as they entered the door his sister Abby put her arms across the passage, playfully blocking their entrance. 'Let us in,' cried her brother 'or you shan't have Mark.'" Whether as a part of a preconcerted, possibly cousinly, plan or not, Abigail Potter soon became the wife of Mark

Anthony De Wolf. The scene of this coquettish reception and subsequent courtship was the home of Hopestill Potter on the southeast corner of Hope and Church Streets where in 1720, his son Simeon was born and which was burned by the British in 1775.

How soon after his arrival in Bristol the nuptials took place it is impossible to say, for the date of the former does not seem known. As young De Wolf was only eighteen years old when, on the 25th of August, 1744, he became his friend's brother-in-law, the courtship was probably brief. Certainly brief was the honeymoon. In less than four months from his wedding day he was sailing out of Bristol Harbor with far other purposes than love making. Those were stirring times. War had been declared between Great Britain and France. Four months, less three days, from his marriage, Mark Antony, on the Privateer *Prince Charles* of Lorraine, commanded by his friend and brother-in-law Captain Sim Potter, was surprising the settlement of Oyapoc in French Guiana. The account of this remarkable naval engagement is preserved in a spirited letter of the Jesuit Father Fauque, translated and published by Bishop Kip. Invaluable to the Rhode Island De Wolf's would have been a description by this sprightly writer of their ancestor, Mark Anthony De Wolf. Bishop Kip simply tells us he was first officer of the vessel. William P. Sheffield of Newport, an acknowledged authority on the subject of Privateers, describes him more accurately as Capt. Potter's clerk. He may however, have been acting as second officer on this occasion. Of Captain Potter, Father Fauque tells more. As through his sister Abigail Potter, as much Potter as De Wolf blood flows through the veins of the Rhode Island De Wolfs, everything that throws light upon the Potter character, is interesting. Still more so, if, as we have suggested as possible, they have received a double portion of the same family traits through Margaret Potter, Mark Anthony's mother. And fiery, impetuous, adventurous, thrifty, often overbearing and impatient under contradiction, yet withal frank and in a way, generous that Potter character was. As revealed even by this writer smarting under defeat, and personal loss, "if the daring little captain," as Prof. Munro says: "does not present a very pleasing picture," yet neither does he appear without redeeming traits. Allowance must be made for a writer who speaks of "Rhodelan" (*i. e.* Rhode Island) as "a little Republic

which had scarcely any intercourse with Europe, which did not pay any tribute to the King of England and had not even any silver money, but only notes for daily commerce" and who by these facts accounts for the crew in their pillage being "like a band of monkeys or of savages who had never been away from the depths of the forest." Yet his description of Capt. Potter the "Chief of the Corsairs," with "commission from William Guenee of Rhodelan" is not altogether to that officer's discredit. "He was a man small in stature, and not in any respect differing from the others in dress," writes the Priest. "He had his left arm in a sling, a sabre in his right hand and two pistols in his belt." He thought him "a young man about thirty years of age"—he was in fact only twenty-four. If the Sacred Vessels of the Church formed part of the booty yet "the Captain told me he would willingly give to me what he was able to return but that he had no control over the others; that all the crew having part of the booty, he was not able as Captain to dispose of any but his own share." In this Capt. Potter appears neither ungenerous nor unjust. If the roistering crew were "constantly drinking" the narrative adds, "I ought to say in commendation of the Captain that he was entirely sober." If "on Sunday morning" the Priest waited in vain "to see some religious service" the Captain took out a book of devotions (his Prayer Book), "and I noticed this day and the following Sunday he occasionally looked at it" and "he frequently expressed the pain he felt at the excesses of his crew to whom, according to the custom of these pirates, he was obliged to allow an abundance of liberty." He was the only one wounded on either side. Thus we see him democratic in dress and in relation to his subordinates, not shrinking from personal danger but foremost in the fight, not without generous impulses, and in the midst of rough life and rude companions, preserving religious habits and moral conduct, and withal giving the impression as he presided over his ship of a man six years older than he really was. Hot blooded, imperious and "proud as Lucifer" he undoubtedly was. When later galled by the condescending encomiums of officers of His Majesty's Navy, visiting the *Prince Charles*, he replied to their suggestion of applying for a commission and obtaining a larger and better ship—"When I wish for a better ship I will not ask His Majesty for one; I will build one myself."

At times Capt. Potter was as fierce as he was intrepid and always impatient of contradiction even to knocking down his Rector, apparently as imperious as himself. For this "knock-down argument" he was fined £500. Neither of the hot blooded antagonists seemed to have harbored resentment. Capt. Potter continued to be a Vestryman of St. Michael's Church, and under Puritan oppression a valient defender of the English Church to which he was devotedly attached, enriching the Parish with many valuable gifts. He was also to the end of his life, a warm friend of his old antagonist's son and successor, Rev. John Usher, Jr. The hot blood did not cool with age. When about the time Bristol became part of Rhode Island (1646-47) he retired from active business to the enjoyment of no inconsiderable fortune for those days, he abandoned battling with armed foe and stormy winds only to continue to the end of his long life of 86 years, closing Feb. 20, 1806, "rarely without some law suit or personal quarrel on hands." Hot tempered and easily offended yet he was certainly enterprising and most successful in money making. "Make money! Make money!" he replied to a less successful nephew inquiring for advice, "I would plough the ocean into oat porridge to make money." His sword did not rust after his retirement, nor his adventuresome spirit forsake him. In 1773 we find him commanding the Bristol contingent to the "fleet" of nine long boats commanded and in great measure provided by Capt. John Brown of Providence, engaged in capture and burning of the *Gaspee*. The testimony of one of the crew of that ill-fated ship as to Capt. Potter's stature differs from that of the Jesuit. "Tall and slim" the sailor describes him, "with a long nose, in light colored long clothes, his hair tied behind, looking more like a shore-man than a sea-man." Shoremen or seamen, the plucky party of Yankees under leaders like Brown and Potter, in the words of the popular ballad attributed to Capt. Swan of Bristol.

"Set the men upon the land
And burnt her up we understand."

Thus shedding the first British Blood in the American Revolution. A year later, having been for several years a member of the Assembly, he was chosen to fill the newly created office of Major General of the Rhode Island forces, and the following

year, 1775, during the Bombardment of Bristol by Capt. Sir James Wallace, he went in the hottest fire to the head of the wharf, hailed the British ship *Rose* and arranged to treat with the enemy. Thus could he face an enemy as bravely at fifty as he had at twenty-four, throwing himself with enthusiasm into his country's struggle and so justifying his quaint doggerel still preserved in his handwriting by his descendants:

"I love with all my heart
The independent part
To obey the parliament
My conscience won't consent.
I never can abide
To fight on England's side.
I pray that God may bless
That great and grand Congress."

Although young De Wolf became thus bound by double bands of kinship and comradeship to the wealthy ship owner of Bristol, he never seems himself to have attained any considerable fortune. Mrs. Middleton, a great-grand-daughter of his still living in one of the fine old De Wolf mansions, that of his son William, preserves the tradition however, that he was at least in more than comfortable circumstances when in 1778 his was among the nineteen dwelling houses burned by the British. It was situated on the South corner of Burton Street and Main Street, having been built by Stephen Burton, one of the four proprietors. Impoverished by his loss, Mr. De Wolf moved his family to a safer distance from the defenceless coast, and on a farm in Swanzea, with the courage under reverses that has characterized many of the family began industriously to repair his losses. It was of this time of struggle that in after days, when the great fortunes of his sons had rendered them famous, Mrs. Peck, mother of Mr. Viets Peck, used to tell of the stitches her mother would take in the gaping brim of his straw hat when he came down to Bristol to sell the berries gathered on his farm. Less kindly did his boys seem to take to farming. Several of them who had been sweating in the corn rows one summer day flung down their hoes declaring they would no longer hoe corn when they knew they could get places on their Uncle Sim Potter's privateer about to sail from Providence. So off they trudged upon the road to that city. As after their long dusty walk they emerged from

Seekonk Woods near the "old Red Bridge," James, the youngest but one of the party, becoming conscious of the dilapidated condition of his hat, and with the vanity of a handsome lad less resigned than his father to his appearance, cried out, "Boys, I'm not going through Providence like this," and flung the brimless crown—or was it a crowless brim?—into the wayside bushes. Bareheaded he presented himself with his brothers to his no doubt astonished yet sympathetic, bluff old Uncle Sim Potter. They secured the coveted places in the ship and thus began that life of devotion to the sea, which the sea was soon so richly to repay. After their return from this voyage, the boys' wardrobe, scant enough no doubt on the start, had not been improved. In reply to a remark of some one that William had barely enough clothes to decently cover him, "Never mind," said the stout old Captain, "the boy has come home covered with glory."

Years afterwards, when the boys had grown into famous men, as William and James De Wolf rode in their stately coaches respectively of blue and yellow, into Providence, James ordered his to a sudden halt. Putting his head out of the window and pointing to a dilapidated hat which by some strange accident had lodged just where he had thrown his own, many years before, he cried gaily, "Brother William, there's my old hat."

In later years Mark Anthony De Wolf lived again in Bristol. The following letter was written from that town but five years before his death. It is not the letter of a "rude or illiterate man," as he has by some been represented. If his early service on privateers caused some of the earlier biographical sketches of the De Wolfs to describe them as a "race of pirates," this letter of his old age is that of a serious, God-fearing man, whose counsels may well be commended to his many descendants :

BRISTOL, March 24th, 1788.

"SON LEVI :

These will be handed you by your brother William, which I hope will find you in good health as they leave us at present, through the blessing of God. Yr brother James has purchased a schooner about 40 tons, and is gone upon the ways, the old shop is sold to your uncle Potter for 600 dollars. I likewise inform you of the death of Mrs. Potter, who left this world the 14th of this month. I hope you are not forgetfull of your own latter end, as Death pays no regard to age nor sex, therefore our great concern is to get

ready against that hour, and place our trust and reliance on Christ, the Saviour of man. I should be glad to hear from you, times here are just as they were when you left us. I hope your dear brother John has enjoyed his health in the voyage, to whom send my kind love. Remember my respects to Mr. Gorham. Yr mother sends you a small Chief, and remembers her love to both of you.

I remain your father and well wisher,

MARK ANTHONY D'WOLF."

The romantic incidents of the youth of James De Wolf were well worth a complete record did the limit of this work permit. He was twice captured by the British, many weeks a prisoner in the Bermudas. He could have been a lad of not more than fourteen or fifteen when he trudged hatless through Providence. In ten years he had amassed a fortune sufficient to retire upon, and live at ease. But to the day of his death, at the age of seventy-three, Capt. De Wolf was never inactive. When the war clouds of 1812 gathered, in opposition to the general sentiment of New England, he was a vigorous supporter of the war-measures. Undoubtedly the shipping interests in Bristol had its influence in directing his sympathies, as it did with the merchants of Salem and Boston, of Baltimore, Norfolk and Charleston. Yet we cannot believe the bitter taunt of John Randolph of Roanoke, that the resentment of that period against Great Britain was the "mere effusion of mercantile cupidity." Unlike their brother William, who was a staunch Federalist, Charles and James De Wolf were of the Jeffersonian party, then called Republican, the sympathies of which were with the French rather than with the English. Some French influences and traditional sympathy from residence in Guadeloupe may have made this leaning to the French side of the disputes more natural, although their father on arrival from his French home had quickly espoused England's quarrel against France. But what was likely to have had a stronger influence in his enthusiastic support of the anti-British party, is the fact that Capt. De Wolf's boyhood had been spent in the stirring times of the Revolution, and all his life had been passed in intimate companionship with the "old survivors" of that birth struggle of the nation. Gov. Bradford, his father-in-law, had been dead but four years, his uncle "Sim Potter" but six. Lafayette, while intrusted with the "defence of Warren, Bristol and the Eastern shore," and having head-

quarters at the house of Mr. Joseph Reynolds, now the home of his great-grandson, Judge John Reynolds, may have been a figure familiar to him in the streets of Bristol; indeed he may have seen Washington himself on the 13th of March, 1781, addressing the people of Bristol at the "Town bridge." Gen. Varnum, at "Silver Creek," (the home of the General's brother-in-law, Judge Bourn), may have told him anecdotes of Washington's camp; or Capt. Perry may have entertained him with tales of sea fights of that infant navy to the fame of which his son Oliver was soon to add on Lake Erie. Indeed, the memory of days in gloomy British prison-ships must have deepened his resentment aroused by the recent losses of merchantmen from British warships. Mr. De Wolf therefore became not only an ardent advocate of his country's cause, but confident of her final success, not only influenced the banks in which he had controlling voice, to lend their funds, but advanced liberally from his private purse. He sent forth privateer after privateer to avenge alike his country's wrongs and his own losses. He accomplished both ends so effectually as to supply the strongest answer to John Randolph's scornful prophecy that England's merchantmen would not, as in the Revolution, "become the prey of paltry privateers." He soon had so far recouped himself, that he could with grim humor re-name the British ship *Shannon*, the *Balance*, and another privateer which soon followed her, the *Remittance*. Though none could surpass in speed the *McDonough*, none brought such rich returns as the *Yankee*. She netted a round million of dollars in prize money, a large part of which went to increase Capt. De Wolf's now rapidly accumulating wealth.

Only upon such services to his country, and such as we have seen his father rendered as a British subject against the French, could the accusation be founded that the "De Wolf's were pirates." It is hardly the part of patriotism to so name the owners and commanders of privateers when the great Senator from Massachusetts, Judge Hoar, has not hesitated to maintain on the floor of the United States Senate that "Our independence in the War of the Revolution had been won at sea. England could have continued for a hundred years if necessary the land-war of the Revolution, because she was able to pay the cost. It was not a French alliance, but the rate of maritime insurance which compelled the unwilling monarch to

come to peace. It was New England sailors and other sailors of the maritime states who won the battle. The rate of insurance on English commercial ships then was 28 per cent. in the Mediterranean. It was the ship owners of Bristol who won the battle by privateers, and not the navy."

Playing so prominent a part in the War of 1812 himself, it is not surprising that Capt. De Wolf conceived not only a great admiration but a warm affection for the "Hero of Lake Erie." He entertained him with lavish hospitality at The Mount, had a portrait of him painted and hung by the side of those of his own family and that of Bishop Griswold in the great hall of his home; advanced from his private purse the money to build and equip the sloop of war *Chippewa*, which Commodore Perry had been commissioned by the United States Government to have built at Warren; and when Raymond, the handsome younger brother of the Commodore, became a suitor for the hand of Marianne, the beautiful daughter of Captain De Wolf, consent to their marriage was readily given.

A letter of Raymond to his mother—that sprightly little Scotch-Irish mother of heroes, Sarah Wallace Alexander—the direct descendant of an uncle of the famous Scottish chieftain, Sir William Wallace—is worthy of a place as a sketch of life in Bristol and of De Wolf hospitality of that day. The letter is dated "Off Bristol Harbor 28th Nov."—no year being given. After speaking of a visit to Providence with his brother Alexander—James Alexander, whose figure is familiar to those who have seen the painting of the Battle of Lake Erie, in the Capitol at Washington—he attributes the attention he received to the gallantry of this younger brother, "everyone anxious to be introduced to the young hero of Erie." He then continues: "My father was on board this evening on his way to Newport, where he says it will be necessary to visit often. I cannot express how much my satisfaction is to see him so much pleased with his appointment" (Collector of Newport). "He is in excellent spirits; every one in Bristol seems anxious to serve him. The De Wolf's are wrapped up in his interests. The female part of the family talk much of the pleasure of your society as soon as you can join them. The house is a very good one and stands in the best part of the town." (a house on Church Street near High Street, into which Capt. C. R. Perry and his family moved about this time). "Mary Ann De Wolf is a

charming girl and I have reason to believe *very much my friend.*" (The italics his own). "We were to a pleasant ball two evenings since in honor of Oliver. The house was brilliantly illuminated and over the entrance was the appropriate motto 'Don't give up the ship.' I was received with more politeness than all my vanity could flatter me I deserved, but I was next brother to the greatest man in our country. I will write the girls if we do not get out [of the harbor] but this letter is for them too.

Your affect. son

Raymond,"

We have quoted this letter so literally as it not only foreshadows the marriage that united the Perrys and De Wolfs but betrays the charming pride of Lieut. Perry in his two brave brothers, the heroes of Lake Erie. "The girls" to whom he refers were of course his sisters: one of whom was afterwards Mrs. Commodore Rodgers of New London, the mother of Admiral C. R. P. Rodgers and other distinguished officers of the United States Navy; the other, Mrs. Jane Butler, the mother of General M. C. Butler, United States Senator, brave handsome O. N. Butler, and other brave soldiers of the Confederacy.

For almost thirty years Capt. De Wolf represented Bristol in the State Legislature: for two years he presided over the Lower House, then was elected to the United States Senate. Mr. De Wolf was an ardent protectionist and while in the Senate took, with Henry Clay and others, a prominent part in supporting the Tariff Bill of April, 1824, as appears from the speech of Senator Hayne in that famous debate. Although his business experience made him at once a recognized authority in commercial matters, the pressure of business at home and his dislike of Washington life caused him to resign before his term expired and he returned to his beloved "Mount," to his counting house on the wharf and to the increase of his fortune, although he remained in the Rhode Island Legislature until his death. That his wealth was largely made from trading in slaves cannot be denied, although he had built the Arkwright Mills, was enthusiastic in agriculture, and owned several plantations in Cuba. It must be remembered that the slave trade had only begun at that time to be condemned, and few took exception to it. Much of the wealth of Bristol was due to this

traffic, and many of the people owed their employment to it. When laws were first enacted against it, they were regarded as acts of oppression, much as the repression of smuggling was viewed by the dwellers on the Cornish coast or the enforcement of the excise laws by the illicit distillers of the Tennessee Mountains. That this was the case is evident from an old yellowed document which now lies before the writer, casting such a weird, yet humorous side-light on the history of the day that it seems justifiable to give some of the details of the affair.

In July of the year 1799, the schooner *Lucy* lay in Bristol Harbor and the brig *Eliza* at one of the wharves of Warren, then no mean rival of her sister town as a seaport. The United States Government had seized these vessels, and condemned them for "a breach in the law prohibiting traffic in slaves." Mr. Ellery, Collector of the District of Newport, had written Mr. Samuel Bosworth, surveyor of the port of Bristol, to learn the value of the vessels and attend the sale in order to bid for the government. This, Mr. Bosworth "fearing" as he declares in a letter some years later "for his life," had no great desire to do. He wrote Mr. Ellery, giving him all needed information, but suggesting that "some more competent person be employed." The collector was inexorable, though later he did consent that Mr. Phillips, surveyor at Warren, should attend to the *Eliza*, and granted Mr. Bosworth's further request that if he must perform so unpopular a duty he might at least make known the authority under which he acted.

The Bosworths were not a race to flinch from duty. Seeking counsel of his nephew Judge Bourn, (his sister Ruth's son), he prepared in concert with Mr. Phillips for his ungrateful task.

A few days later Mr. Bosworth learned through Judge Bourn that his purpose had been betrayed by some unknown persons and was "mentioned in public company." He was hastily summoned to the office of Mr. John Brown in Providence. Mr. Brown was one of the princely merchants of that city, in whose service Capt. James De Wolf had first commanded a ship. Brown himself had but recently been acquitted of a violation of the same law, not for lack of fullest evidence to convict, Mr. Bosworth asserts, but on account of the widespread prejudice against the law.

Mr. Brown with James De Wolf and the latter's brother Charles, owner of the *Lucy* "opportuned and severally urged Mr. Bosworth to decline the appointment to attend to the sale, alleging that it was not in the line of his duty and that he would be considered a volunteer in a business which he knew to be very obnoxious to his fellow citizens." But the old Puritan conviction of duty in the 18th century had not become invertibrate in the presence of the money power. Though the De Wolf brothers returned to the attack the next morning in Bristol, the surveyor continued to declare that he must and should execute his orders. On the morning appointed for the sale, July 25, we find him setting out from home, a little before ten o'clock, the hour fixed for the auction. He is walking along Thames Street, which follows the shore of Bristol Harbor, and is only one hundred rods from the Charles De Wharf, less than a rod from the water's edge—suddenly he is seized by eight men, fantastically dressed, their faces painted with lamp-black, and quickly bundled into a small sail boat, his captors maintaining absolute silence. He "struggled, resisted, exclaimed for help," but all in vain. "There were several men in sight." He calls a "Mr. Warren, master of a carpenter shop hard by." A captain Aaron Usher started to assist him, but "too late." Capt. Charles Collins, who like Capt. James De Wolf, had married a daughter of Governor Bradford, had given the signal to the supposed Indians by waving his hat. Many were gathering at the wharf as well as on the deck of the *Lucy*, who later assure Mr. Bosworth "they heard a voice of a person in distress" but saw neither him nor the boat. A strange blindness at ten o'clock in the morning on Thames Street at a public auction. Was the whole community quietly enjoying the scene and in sympathy with the genial slavers who had made their town prosperous, attractive and popular? Evidently the business of enforcing the law *was* "very obnoxious to Mr. Bosworth's fellow-citizens," as laws that stand in the way of ease and wealth, no matter how ill-gotten and at what cost to others, often are in other times and later generations. Now the boat with its prisoner glides through the Bristol Ferry into the beautiful waters that lie between Fall River and Mount Hope. On the shore of the latter they land their captive. No word has been spoken during the whole "nefarious affair," except

some "unintelligible jargon" "which concealed the identity of the captors" and probably amused them as much as it tantalized Mr. Bosworth. Evidently no personal injury was intended to the government agent, but in landing him more than two miles distant from the scene of the place where he was seized, it was purposed to give the De Wolfs or their friends time to "bid in" the ship. In this they were disappointed. The United States Marshal on account of Mr. Bosworth's absence, had adjourned the sale to the following Monday. What the final result was regarding the vessel, Mr. Bosworth does not say. "Everyone was very indignant, full of sympathy for Mr. Bosworth, including "Mr. Brown of Providence."

"There is such general indignation that the District Attorney will soon obtain evidence to convict perpetrators of the deed." Alas! Vain hope! In 1804, he is writing the new Secretary of the Treasury in Jefferson's administration, not only of the failure to obtain redress, but bitterly complaining (and certainly it would seem with good reason), that he has been unceremoniously turned out of office to be succeeded by this same Capt. Collins, quondam captain of the *Lucy*, but now Collector of the Port, though still, as Mr. Bosworth avers, part owner of a slave ship *Armstadt* which he had the previous summer himself sailed in the interest of "his near relatives, the Messrs. De Wolf," from Congo to Georgia with its human cargo. He was also owner of another slaver nominally the property of Capt. Manchester, and on the same day that he received his commission as Collector, had been assured by a letter from Havana of a brother's safe arrival "in the brigantine *Minerva* from Africa with a cargo of some 150 slaves," of which he was also believed to own a quarter interest. Is it strange that the righteous soul of the brave defender of the law, who declares his only offense to be that he has refused his political support to the De Wolfs, waxes wrathful?

Prof. W. H. Munro says in his history of Bristol: "The higher moral tone which now prevails throughout the world has induced their descendants (*i. e.* of those who engaged in the slave trade) to suppress all the evidences which proved the participation of their ancestors in it." He adds with great truth: "This sensitiveness is natural but unnecessary. Let us not hold our ancestors responsible for deeds which in their day were not regarded as sinful." Their best defence is the

free publication of such documents as the above, showing on the one hand how generally public sentiment was with them, how honorable were the names associated with this now justly discredited pursuit, yet no less how worthy of honor were the pioneers of freedom who risked not only popularity and loss of office, but even their lives for conviction and duty. "No scruples," as writes Prof. Munro, "respecting the nature of their business appear to have troubled the importers of slaves," one captain piously writing: "we have now been twenty days upon the coast, and by the blessing of God shall soon have a good cargo!"

Many of the old Bristol families related to the De Wolfs by marriage, whose names will appear in the tabulated pages of this work, as Diman, Liscolm, Collins, Manchester, sailed their ships and had a liberal share in their profits. We, their descendants, need not fear to honor their hardy virtues though we condemn the traffic in which they were engaged; for since the final struggle for freedom, we have learned to hold it no inconsistency with our veneration for Sumner, Seward and Lincoln, that we have welcomed back into the Senate such brave men as Wade Hampton, M. C. Butler, Morgan, or Joe Wheeler, in spite of their contention for what we believed a mistaken as well as a "lost cause."

Even in those earlier days differences of opinion as to slavery did not break personal friendships. We have already had occasion to contrast Judge Bourn and Captain James De Wolf. They differed upon the question of slavery as indeed upon most political questions. Yet the older man, older by ten years, ever had a regard, indeed a fondness for Capt. De Wolf. In the most serious charge ever made against Capt. De Wolf in connection with this traffic, Judge Bourn shielded him. Bourn was known throughout New England as the "Just Judge." We may believe, therefore, that the Judge, as did many others, held him innocent.

When Judge Bourn died in 1808, at the age of fifty-three, in the fulness of his power, Capt. De Wolf was a young man with his highest honors before him. He was not U. S. Senator till 1821; Judge Bourn had sat in the First Congress in 1789. Some further comparison of the two men may illustrate the difference between a leading citizen in two different periods of Bristol's social life.

When Capt. De Wolf passed Silver Creek windows, driving "over the Bridge" in his "coach and four," on his way to Washington to take his seat in the Senate, the daughters of Judge Bourn would gather to look at him—so these great aunts of the writer have told him—shaking their heads solemnly at the un-republican pomp and contrasting it with the journey of their father to Philadelphia to Congress as first Representative of Rhode Island, clad in a long drab coat, knee buckles and shoe buckles of steel—still preserved by his family—his woolen stockings knit by the nimble fingers of his beautiful wife or her sister, the widow of Gen. Varnun (known once as the "beautiful child girls of Warren") leaning on his ivory knobbed cane, content to step unostentatiously into the old lumbering stage coach as it drew up at his arched gate. Yet, though only thirty-four, the stern Ciceronian face, large Roman nose, bushy black eyebrows over flashing dark eyes, closely cut hair and tall form made Judge Bourn a commanding figure. Says his biographer, Hon. Nathaniel Bullock, his law pupil: "Of dress he was negligent almost to a fault, but all thought of such negligence or of the sternness of his features in repose was forgotten when his face lighted up with affection or blazed with the fire of eloquence." When the writer's father, having married the granddaughter of Judge Bourn, was living in the "old Charles De Wolf Home" on Thames Street with their baby boys Raymond and James De Wolf, old Mr. James De Wolf would stop every morning on his way from the Mount to the "Counting-house" and call the young wife of his favorite grandson to hand him a goblet filled at the well he had known in his brother Charles' day. He still wore the exquisite costume more common in his early days—costly buckles at the knee and on his low shoes, his stockings of finely knit silk, delicate lace filling the shirt bosom and falling over the silk waistcoat with its long lapels, while the snowy hair, no longer needing powder, was drawn back from his firm, gentle face and tied with ribbon in the old time queue.

Mrs. De Wolf, who had inherited the jealous and irritable temperament with other nobler qualities of the Bradfords, would perhaps have made the old gentleman a little uncomfortable at such frequent chats with the pretty young wife of his grandson had she witnessed them, for she had never quite contentedly listened to his praise of Mrs. Perry's mother "the

fair widow Jones." But if Mrs. De Wolf was plainer of feature, she was devotedly loved by her husband who took with his usual good nature this implied sign of her devotion to him. The writer recalls an amusing example of this difference of natural temperament: As the writer's aunt, who inherited more of her grandmother's disposition than her grandfather's, sat fuming one day after her grandmother and herself had been exchanging electric sparks with great rapidity until the former, no longer able to contain herself, went out, slamming the door. "Grandfather De Wolf," who had gazed at the fire place during the conflict, too wise to interfere, quietly turned to his grandchild with his sweet smile and said: "Nancy child, Nancy child, a shut mouth catches no flies."

The old Mount House still stands far back from the road, picturesque among its gnarled and twisted trees, and the writer can remember the little dwellings nearby, where were quartered the last survivors of the old slaves of the estate, Polydore and Agiway.

Poor old Polydore and "Agie"! How we children used to tease them, shouting in front of their little hut:

"Polydore and Agiway
Sitting in the cellar way!
Agiway and Polydore
Sitting on the cellar door!"

But when at the end of her century of life, Agie, too infirm and dropsical to rise from her chair, held out her old arms and bid her "chile cum' gib ole Agie a las' kiss," although the "chile" was a man in Holy Orders, he reverently, if not rapturously, planted on her protruding lips the requested boon.

And Polydore, oh, with what an aroma of delicious "chowder" is his memory fragrant! Long after the old man's death others mixed the mighty broth at the "Family Clam-bake," some of them deservedly famous, but even when the mixture was at its best, the white haired members of the family would occasionally comment, as from their lips escaped something half way between a smack and a sigh, "yes, but if you'd tasted Polydore's!"

Are any of the younger descendants of the family so unfortunate as not to have happy reminiscences recalled by that endearing term, "family clam-bake?" Is their knowledge of a feast of clams limited to the modern yet not altogether unac-

ceptable form of it? What a degenerate evolution they witness. The bivalve is now served in long hot wooden sheds, and on tables crowded with many a stranger to customs of "the shore" whose habits are not appetizing, while the growing scarcity of that immortal yet vanishing shell fish causes the few half-filled pans of clams to be eked out with strange courses!

"*O tempora, O mores!*" Vastly different was the family clam-bake of the De Wolfs on the shore of Mount Hope, or on "Jones' Rocks." The appropriately dressed company of handsome men and beautiful women picturesquely grouped upon the grey rocks and beneath the dark and blue-green cedar trees; the curving shores of the harbor, the sandy beach, pitted and hollowed here and there, where the clams had been dug,—all added to the beauty of the scene.

At early dawn "the man with the hoe" had struck the silent sand until the tiny tell-tale stream of water spurted forth, then quickly digging to secure the toothsome prize, had drawn forth clams; yes, genuine clams with their oblong brittle shells, with the black projection, called by the uninitiate the "head," but which really is the foot—not the only creature which, as in Mother Goose lore, has "its head where its tail ought to be." Real New England clams they were; not the tough, leathery creature called by the natives "Quahaug," but by New Yorkers "Little Necks." Then from a more distant corner of the field comes borne on the steam-laden air the delicate perfume which might have been the clouds of incense at Bacchanlion feast—odors from the great outdoor oven "the Bake." There at early morn the great pit was dug, the circle of rocks placed in Druid-like order, the wood piled high as for a funeral pyre; then, when the rocks glowed with their store of heat and the smouldering embers were raked off, the "rock weed," that pungent odorous kelp, was piled on and between its folds, great baskets of clams poured, the fine tautog, each served in its own shroud: the ears of corn, the sweet potatoes and the loaves of bread, all cunningly dis-embowled that they might be stuffed with savory "fillings," the great black lobsters snapping their savage jaws in death-agony and turning red with wrath as they succumb in the thrice-heated furnace, then over the hissing bivalves and the squirming crustaceans, again the great black pall of rock-weed

is cast, and to keep the steam and preserve the luscious juices, a great sail is spread over all and pegged securely to the ground. No trifle is the preparation for this king of feasts. Meantime in the great iron pot suspended over a wood fire has been flung by Polydore and his assistants ingredients as varied though far more appetizing than those employed by the witches in "Macbeth" to make the gruel thick and slab." While round and round the dusky figures go, piling on wood, stirring the savory mixture and making "fire burn and cauldron bubble," and when the guests who have been stimulating their appetites in the bracing sea breezes with "Prisoners Base" or "Drop the Handkerchief" are all seated like bright flowers springing from the grey rocks, the plates of chowder, the tin pans heaped high with clams, and all the luscious morsels that have "been raked from the opened bake," are passed to the hungry company, while the merry laughter and happy play of wit is only interrupted by the "pop" "pop" of bottles taken from the ice and the pleasing gurgle that follows. We fear to displease "teetotalers" by naming the beverage. It was *not* ginger ale. One generous hamper after another is opened and guava jellies and other Spanish dainties from the family plantations in Cuba are added to the feast.

Some visitors from the unfortunate "interior," joining in the feast with gloved hands, might smile derisively at the rude methods of the natives. But sure disaster would speedily bring her to an humble imitation. It is not so easily an acquired art as it may be thought by the uninitiated to deftly cleave the double hinged doors of the delicious tid-bit, seize the indweller by its ebony handle, dip it into a dish of melted butter hard by, and give the globular stomach, suspended on its shoulder straps, the exact swing to safely land it between the open and expectant lips. Talk of Neopolitan macaroni eaters, of the manipulation of Chinese chop-sticks, or even the landing on the river's bank of the silvery gamey trout,—these are child's play to the proper handling and safe delivery into the mouth of a full-sized Rhode Island clam!

O yes, Polydore and Agiway were famous cooks. For at this point we digressed, and if the fragrant memories of clam bakes led us too much astray, it will be forgiven by those who recall their delights and may not be amiss to those unfortunate descendants born far from the salt breezes and hiding places of the clam on the native shore of their ancestors.

One form of the New England Clam Bake still survives in a few secluded spots called "The Church Bake," a means of adding to church revenues far more enjoyable, hence possibly more justifiable than the mercenary "Fair." "The St. Michael's Clam Bake," started at a later period than the "reign" of the older De Wolf's, is not inappropriately mentioned since it was connected with the old church in which so many of the family had worshipped, and because so many grandchildren of the older De Wolfs were among the masters of the ceremonies at this annual feast which was attended by hundreds of people from all Rhode Island, who crowded the summit of "Fox Hill," part of the Mount estate.

Many beautiful poems of classic purity and dignity could be gathered from the pen of Bishop M. A. De Wolf Howe, but the following verses written by him for the "Mail Box" at St. Michael's Bake give an example of the versatility of one of the wittiest as well as one of the wisest of the family.

Our St. Michael's bake, like a wild Irish wake,
Brings all the old neighbors together.
Here the sacred and funny—devotion and money
Are linked by a curious tether.

Our matronly church is much in the lurch
For a place to encradle her lambs;
So we play the old trick—a jolly pic-nic—
And a love feast of chowder and clams.

Our brothers in Warren, and the town surnamed Barren,
We ask to come over and cheer us;
And e'en Providence, though ten miles from thence
We invoke as if it were near us.

Here's bright Mrs. Perry, and Chevalier Sherry—
In energy who can come nigh them?
Yet good Mr. Bogert, though not quite so alert
In giving perhaps may go by them.

Here comes Mr. Waldron bringing fish from the cauldron
And clams reeking hot from the sea-weed;
While Carpenter Lawless, axe, gimlet and saw-less,
Offers chowder as fast as we need.

Then kind Miss Ruth Soley to quell melancholy
Dispenses hot coffee and buns;
While Lavinie so rosy, and Adie and Posey
Pour the cream, make change and the Puns.

Cold meats and ragouts, if such dainties you choose
 Abound at the board of the Dabney;
 Where a pig most uncommon, devouring a lemon
 Seems defying the butcher—"Come stab me."

In this lair of the fox you may find a mail-box
 With post-routes in every direction;
 Miss Willard you know, helps Postmaster Howe,
 Man of Letters, Fine Art and Dissection.

But hold! 'tis enough—though Miss Herreshoff,
 The Faleses, De Wolfs and the Gardners,
 Briggs, Wright, West and Munros, as everyone knows
 Are entitled to rank as our partners.

And good Parson Stow—his face all aglow
 With the light of two festals together
 Goes before—while his flock,—Hogg, Bullock and Ox
 Sheep and Lambs follow up their Bell-wether.

God's Grace, let it fall in rich blessings on all
 Who help Mother to shelter her Lambs!
 Alive through Christ's death, may they rest in His faith
 And at length share the Crown and the Palms.

BRISTOL, July 20, 1864.

UNUSQUISQUE.

It may illustrate what we have said of the activity of the De Wolfs in all the above industries (!) of the town that not less than ten of the names that the Bishop has so wittily introduced in his lines appear in the genealogical tables of this volume; this in addition to the author who might have signed the verses by his better known Latin name in college, Marcus Antonius de Lupus Quam.

This poem was written to be sold at the "Post Office" of one of the last of these Church Bakes, when money was being raised to build St. Michael's Chapel. The following verses are from a poem written by the author's mother in 1857, when another clam festival was held to get funds to pay off the debt for alterations on the "Old Church," which was burned the following year.

The Church of God, the Bride of Christ,
 Defend her holy purity;
 From age to age she firm hath stood,
 And shall to all futurity.

Although her lustre has been dimmed,
Her holy light been feebly poured ;
Her sacred aisles polluted by
Oppression, warfare, and the sword.

Still she doth stand, her pure light given
To every nation, every tongue ;
On every shore her spires have risen,
Within her courts God's praise is sung.

Cast forth, a callow, unfledged thing,
From her parent nest on high ;
To-day she soars on eagle's wing
Through every clime and sky.

But these last named events were in the days when the history of the De Wolfs had passed the zenith of its glory, and our story must return to the olden days when the family gatherings were more resplendent.

The writer well remembers his mother's description of her first impression of these "family gatherings" when she was welcomed to the home of her husband, James De Wolf Perry—who had, since his mother's second marriage, lived at the "Mount." From his home in New York City came the oldest son James and his beautiful wife, Julia Post, whose sister Ellen was the wife of the dashing younger brother, Francis De Wolf. James was the most accomplished of the family, popular in the Court circles of Europe, as was later his beautiful daughter Julianna—Mrs. Robert Cutting, of New York. Prescott Hall, of Newport, and his stately wife, the oldest surviving daughter of the house, was there. The oldest daughter and perhaps the most beautiful of all, Mrs. Perry, had died before her son's marriage. The other daughters were present; Nancy and her husband, Fritz Henry Homer, from Boston—she whose hand was so beautiful that a famous sculptor begged the favour of copying it as a model. Kate De Wolf, too, then radiant in her brilliant but too fatal charms; while the youngest daughter, Josephine must then have been just blooming into the glorious beauty which it was said at a later day so affected a sensitive young Cuban student, that on seeing her enter old St. Michael's Church, he fainted. Such was the family tradition though many a time has the writer heard this aunt laughingly protest against it as an unfounded myth—this great-aunt, who as Mrs. Charles Lovett, of Boston,

the last of Mark Anthony De Wolf's grandchildren, has died in extreme but lovely old age since these pages have been in preparation.

The sons had contributed to the exceptional beauty of the assembly not only by their own presence, but that of wives noted for their personal charms. The two beautiful Miss Posts who had entered the family have been already mentioned. The proud Mark Anthony had married Sophia Chappotin of a French refugee family from Martinique; and the writer can remember how on the streets of Baltimore, where in old age she lived with her granddaughter, Mrs. Theobald, men would stop and admire her stately carriage and her graceful French manners, which she retained as an octogenarian. Mark Anthony himself was of most lordly mien. He could at times be as terrible and imperious as at others winning and gracious, as when he used to summon us children from the nursery at dessert, and placing his dainty little granddaughter Caroline in the centre of the dining table, feed her with dainties.

There, too, was William Henry, perhaps the most renowned for personal beauty of them all. How handsome the writer in his boyhood used to think him as he used to walk down the marble walk of his beautiful home, crying to him, "Good morning, Commodore!" And his sweet-faced wife, Sarah Rogers, to whom the writer's father at the age of fourteen wrote this tribute to her beauty at the time of the birth of her daughter Rosalie (Mrs. John Hopper): "Dear Aunt: I have heard a great deal of babe. I have forgotten its (!) name, but if it is as handsome as you it must be handsome." Their grandson, De Wolf Hopper, comes well by his fine physique and grace upon the stage.

Lastly, there was the youngest son, bearing the name of his Puritan ancestor, William Bradford, and his beautiful young bride, Mary Soley,—dear "Aunt Mary," with such calm, placid beauty, even in her last years. As it was this gathering to welcome his mother which furnished the writer his earliest knowledge of the social life of the "Mount;" so it was the marriage of the oldest daughter of William Bradford, Harriett to General Loyd Aspinwall of New York, that in his boyhood caused the glory of the old "Mount" to leap up with what might be termed an almost expiring flash of brilliancy. It was the coming in of the new,—the passing of the old. The family

plate piled with new luxuries, the ancient mahogany groaning with the showy though less satisfying modern morsels, fitly accompanied by the supercilious tones of New York caterers as they banished to the sideboard the rich "whips" in long cut glasses, the delicate custards in antique cups, the trembling jellies of varied hues prepared by that fine old lady, the bride's "Aunt Ruth Soley."

And the glories of the De Wolfs of Bristol were waning with the old past. They were in their zenith in the times of Charles, James and William De Wolf and their brothers. Prof. Munroe says of Mr. James De Wolf: "When he died there was no one to take his place, and the news of his death seemed for a while to crush the life out of the town. With its every industry he had been more or less intimately connected; hardly a project had been set on foot where his aid had not been invoked; never a subscription for a worthy object had been started which his name had not generously led."

His wife never left her room after his death, and died the following week. In "A Discourse delivered in Bristol, R. I., Feb. 11, 1838, occasioned by the death of the Hon. James De Wolf and Mrs. Ann B. De Wolf, his wife," by Bishop Alexander V. Griswold, one of the most frequent and honored guests at the "Mount," he says:

"But a few weeks have passed away since it pleased our Heavenly Father to remove from this life in quick succession both the heads—the father and the mother of a numerous family who have long walked before you in the first ranks of society, and have borne an important and conspicuous part in the business and affairs of this town, and of the State, and indeed of the United States. * * The deceased had long been among the number of my best friends and kindest benefactors. Considering the rank which the head of the family had long sustained among you, his influence in society, the deep and active interest he has taken in whatever concerned the public good, of which he has been the instrument, together with the extensive family connexions who yet survive to mourn his loss—when all these and like considerations are brought into view, I may well address this congregation generally in the language of sympathy, as having lost a father,—a public benefactor. He was possessed of a strong mind and ardent feelings; his life was unusually active in profitable

business, and both he and his companion had noble, bright and amiable virtues, on which a eulogist would delight to dwell. * * He may be said to have been a father to the poor, whom he employed in various branches of business. His industry was blessed in the accumulation of an ample fortune, which has benefited not his family only, but many others, who without his aid might have been destitute. A rich man who makes good use of his wealth is a great blessing to society, and his death is a public loss."

In loneliness to-day many of these old De Wolf homes seem mourning over the memory of bygone days. They stand not without a certain solitary grandeur among the new summer residences rapidly lining the shores of the bay, in the life of which they have little part. Like those few fine "old-school" gentlemen who remain of a former generation, gazing benignantly, but with rather perplexed countenances, upon forms that lack somewhat of the stateliness and repose of former days. They seem to have some sense of superiority, with their great beams of blackened oak and stately columns, over the attenuated frames and slenderly laced figures of modern household architecture. Lost through many reverses, in some cases squandered or invested without the sagacity of the fathers—are many of the princely fortunes—princely at least for their time. Some of the descendants rank among the wealthy men of the day, and are conspicuous in public life. A greater number are earning modest incomes by honest toil; some, the truthful historian must record, either by undeserved misfortunes or by their own folly and incompetence, have experienced more bitter struggles.

When Capt. James De Wolf gave to the town of Bristol its "poor house," with its extensive surrounding farm, one of his fellow citizens protested: "Why Capt. De Wolf, there'll never be need of so large a poor farm in this small place!" The old gentleman, who had already begun to be troubled at the tendency to increasing extravagance on the part of his sons, replied with one of his quizzical smiles, "O, my grandchildren will be coming to live on that farm yet, and they are accustomed to plenty of room." We know of none who have sought shelter within its walls, but we know of some mighty efforts lest they should!

"Linden Place," the beautiful home of Col. Samuel Pome-

roy Colt stands to-day pre-eminently the finest residence in the central portion of the town. Col. Colt and his brother Judge Le Baron Colt, being grandsons of Gen. George De Wolf, the son of Charles, who was the eldest son of Mark Anthony, represent the oldest branch of the Rhode Island De Wolfs, as do their cousin and brother-in-law, Mr. Frank De Wolf and his children, Mr. Bradford Colt de Wolf and the Baroness de Kestelek. This beautiful house, with its long approach by pavement of marble, with its fine portico of lofty Corinthian columns, its old-fashioned balustrade of intricate pattern around the roof, was built in 1811 at a cost of \$65,000 by Gen. George De Wolf. The architect was Russell Warren, who designed many of the fine Bristol houses of that day. To this home of their girlhood two of Gen. De Wolf's daughters returned in 1866, after an absence from Bristol of thirty years. Mrs. Goode, an invalid, was little seen except by a few of the old friends of her youth, for whom she retained a warm affection. But Mrs. Theodore De Wolf Colt, with her family of talented attractive sons, soon made the old house again famous for its old-timed hospitality. Of fine literary tastes, the author of a volume of published poems, fond of gathering about her the picturesque and the beautiful, she ever cordially welcomed alike highest officers of State and the humblest acquaintances. Two of her sons died. Her only daughter became the wife of Mr. Francis Eugene De Wolf, the son of her oldest brother.

Mr. Frank E. De Wolf's beautiful home in Bristol, "Mirimar," although recently built is of the stateliest colonial style, quite worthy to enter into the family of De Wolf mansions. Of her two surviving sons, Le Baron rose to be United States District Judge, and after his marriage established his own home in Bristol, and later a winter home in Providence. The youngest, Samuel Pomeroy, remained in his mother's home, the beautiful home of his ancestors, where he still resides. Deeply attached to each other, mother and son united to make the fine old place noted for its open hospitality. Here was entertained in 1883, President Arthur; as earlier, another member of the family, William Henry De Wolf entertained President Jackson, whose portrait hangs in the spacious hall as a memorial of his visit; and as in 1817 Gen. George De Wolf, Mrs. Colt's father, celebrated the "Era of Good-feeling" by entertaining President Monroe.

A printed account of these Presidential visits says: "A solid silver pitcher and basin brought from England by Gen. De Wolf were used by the three distinguished guests, and waits the appearance of the next man worthy to follow."

Col. Colt rapidly rose to a distinguished position as a member of the Rhode Island Bar, as a member of the State Legislature, and in the great financial enterprises of the State, being now President of the Rubber Trust Co. and of the Rhode Island Industrial Trust Co. During all these years mother and son were inseparable, and no one gave the writer more extensive and sympathetic aid than Mrs. Colt in the preparation of this work. It was only after this volume was nearly ready for publication that at the advanced age of eighty-one, she was stricken with her last illness.

To her and to her son, Col. S. Pomeroy Colt, are largely due the possibility of preparing and publishing this work. Among the most recent and brilliant of the "festas" at "Linden Place," was the marriage of Mrs. Colt's granddaughter to Baron Louis de Kestelek of Hungary. Mrs. Colt also lived to witness, at her son Judge Colt's residence in Providence, the brilliant marriage of her granddaughter and namesake, Theodora, to Edwin Armington Barrows.

The home of Gen. George De Wolf's father, Charles, the eldest of the sons of Mark Anthony, was a house that stood upon Thames street, at the foot of Constitution street. This too, was a fine mansion in its day. Its terraced garden led down to the water which lapped a shore which had not then been curtailed of much of its extent and more of its beauty by devastating gales. Its summer house still ornaments one of the gardens of Bristol. But fire has dealt mercifully with the old place itself. When it was moved on to another part of the lot to make room for "Gardiner's Sawmill," it was converted into tenements for the mill hands. Its great rooms were still hung with imported paper of birds with "painted plumages gay," making a mute protest against altered circumstances until the pitying flames devoured the desecrated walls.

Here it was that Mr. Charles De Wolf entertained in the lavish style of the family, as the oldest son of the house, and years in advance of the first great feasts at "The Mount," for he was nearly twenty years older than his brother James. It was here that he learned that one of his ships could not pass

beyond the Ferry, for it was a severe winter when even that strong current had yielded to the death grip of the cold, and all the harbor was solid ice. But if his uncle Sim Potter "would plow the sea into porridge but he'd make money,"—the same dauntless spirit in his nephew made even such a field of ice no insuperable barrier between him and his gold. Down he tramped to his ice-bound ship, and back over the frozen harbor with bags of gold in his hands which he landed safely in the bank vaults in Bristol. It was of the gold brought in one of his ships from Guinea that a beautiful goblet was hammered out by hand, which later was given by his son George to Bishop Griswold, and is now in the possession of Mrs. Sydney De Wolf, widow of the Bishop's grandson.

After Mr. Charles De Wolf's death, the place was purchased by his brother James, and as we have already recorded became the home of his grandson, James De Wolf Perry, upon his marriage, and the birthplace of the writer and his two older brothers. When the writer's mother became heir to "Silver Creek," the family moved "over the bridge." The latter place was therefore the birth-place of all the writer's brothers younger than himself, of his beautiful little sister Julia, and also some of the grandchildren. Mrs. Julia Jones and Mrs. George De Wolf had always maintained the closest friendship, the latter having named a little daughter who died in childhood Julia Bourn for her friend. On the reverses of fortune which caused Gen. George De Wolf to take his family to his estates in Cuba, "Linden Place" also passed into the hands of James De Wolf, and was given by him to his son William Henry as the latter's home. For a space of years the house again became renowned for beauty and accomplishment as well as lavish hospitality. Of the beauty of Mr. De Wolf himself and of his wife we have already spoken, several of his children inherited it to a marked degree. One of the dearest and sweetest of the cousins of the writer, "sweet Kate Budd" as those who knew her loved to call her, "falling asleep" while aiding in the preparation of these chapters. Of them all only three sisters remain, all widowed, two living in New York City, and the youngest of the family residing in Paris with her daughter Lady Lee.

It does not seem necessary to follow the later history, when though still owned by the family, it was the famous hotel, the

De Wolf House, of Bristol It is enough to rejoice that it is again a De Wolf *home*.

Another old De Wolf home has disappeared, the earlier home of William De Wolf, upon the "Neck"—"The old Farm," as it was known in the family, originally bought from the Indians. It was purchased by William De Wolf, who built an ell to the old farmhouse and otherwise enlarged and beautified it. His son Henry began the erection of the beautiful mansion upon Poppasquash* Point, but being unable from business embarrassment to complete it, the father exchanged houses with his son, and finished the new residence in the very beautiful proportions it now bears. This latter house after being for many years the home of William De Wolf's two daughters, Mrs. Roberts Rogers and Miss Charlotte De Wolf, both dying at a great age and most truly "in the odor of sanctity," it is now the home of his granddaughter, Mrs. Russell Middleton, formerly of Charleston, S. C. Mr. William De Wolf, as we have already seen, became, like his brothers, one of the princely merchants of Bristol, and owner of plantations in the West Indies. He too entertained many distinguished people of the day, among them, as we shall see later, Judge Benjamin De Wolf of Nova Scotia, and several of the Connecticut De Wolfs.

Next to the William De Wolf house, and so that the contiguous lawns slope gracefully to the sea, and form one of the finest spots the eye can rest upon from the opposite shore of the town, is the beautiful home built by Mark Anthony De Wolf. It is an exact model in wood of the Temple of Minerva. "The Venus room," with its fine Italian mantel, supported by exquisite marble statues of the goddess from which the room is called, the long drawing room finished in mahogany, and the great hall, running the entire length of the house, makes it a mansion of fine proportions, a fit companion of the noble old house by its side. This too, is occupied by the granddaughter of its builder, Mrs. Margaret De Wolf Mudge.

The "old Farmhouse" on the "Neck" no longer stands,

* Prof. Munro's spelling of this word is adopted as, according to such authorities on Indian names as Dr. Usher Parsons, more likely to conform to the original Pokanoket word than Pappoose-squaw with its poetic but probably fanciful derivation from the use of this peninsula as a refuge for the wives and children of the Indian braves when at war.

though opposite it resides another of William De Wolf's granddaughters, Mrs. Charles Dana Gibson.*

Gone too is the noble elm at the gate, under whose shade Mr. Henry De Wolf used to sit, with his hair tied up in a queue, accompanied by his sweet old wife Nancy, and her saintly sister Miss Marsten, all still bearing the marks of the beauty for which they had been noted; while groups of children and grandchildren, who had inherited their full share of personal charm, sported under the wide spreading boughs. Of this old tree Mr. Henry De Wolf's granddaughter Mrs. Pratt writes, "Do you remember the old elm? A wondrously symmetrical tree. The night before the September gale, Grandma gave a reception for Mr. and Mrs. Erskine and as the guests were leaving, some one called attention to the beauty of the tree by lamplight. The family gathered under its spreading branches on that very warm September night and admired its wonderful beauty. The next day the greater part went over in that dreadful gale. It seemed as though the night before was a sort of farewell tribute to the old elm—the 23d of October—dear Grandma died about six weeks later." It might seem that the Rhode Island De Wolfs had shared the fate of the old elm. The loss of many of the branches of the family tree, lopped off by winds of adversity and, it is feared one must add, often falling by inner decay, have sadly shorn it of its symmetry. Comparatively few of its branches bear the surname De Wolf, it having largely been continued in female lines. Yet now and again vigorous new growth appears, sometimes conspicuously in the talent of an artist like Dana Gibson, a De Wolf by double descent, in the adventurous arctic exploration of his brother Langdon, in eloquence at the bar, in pulpit, in the pen of the ready writer, in the brilliant leadership in

*Since these lines were written this member of the De Wolf family, Mrs. Gibson has been called to her rest. My mother's friend, my boyhood's second mother, the mother of Charles De Wolf Gibson, companion of my school days, a dear handsome fellow of the noblest character. It was on her porch the writing of this book was planned and begun, as she held the great family Bible on her knees from which her daughter, Mrs. Pratt, her neice, Mrs. Erskine, and my wife, copied the records. O, the rare old days of us boys! Charlie and Matie Gibson, the proud stepping Henry De Wolf and dear Carlos De Wolf, with his refined delicate beauty. May our children know such friends. Of these playmates, H. M. Gibson and the writer alone survive!

society whether in America or as the brides of titled favorites at European Courts, while many another of the family, less conspicuous are yet forcefully fighting life's battle.

The home of the youngest brother of the family, Levi, a little north of the Poppasquash corner, upon the main road to Warren, still stands and was until quite recent years the home of his only surviving child Abby, generally spoken of as "Miss Abby Levi De Wolfe," to distinguish her from other Abbys of the family. Mr. Levi De Wolf did not amass a fortune as did several of his brothers. When early reverses of fortune fell to him, they united in sharing their profits with him.

But his lack of wealth was not always from involuntary causes. He made a number of trips as captain for his brother James, going to Africa three times. After a profitable voyage his brother James offered to fit out a ship for him, as a slaver adding, "the profits of this trip shall be yours." The offer was refused, "his conscience would no longer allow him to deal in trading of slaves, and he then made this remark, 'I will never die a rich man but I will never come to want.'" So writes his great-granddaughter from her father's boyish memories of his grandfather, "a lovable old man." This grandson, Mr. Charles Wesley Allen, still possesses the scales used in slave-trading for weighing gold dust, and a pair of cuff buttons with L. De W. engraved upon them, made of gold dust. In the old homestead on the "Neck" built from the plan of the home of his brother John on the Ferry road, Levi De Wolf lived a quiet religious life. Writing from Paris a few days after the battle of Waterloo, when he saw the Duke of Wellington and the British troops, he says, "all nations and kindreds and tongues are assembled here—but they are not all clothed with white robes."

Severer than any financial loss was the death of his son Levi, a most promising young man. It bowed his head and saddened his countenance, but only served to deepen his religious life. His mother had on one occasion come to his home from that of her son James, telling the latter that in the confusion of his luxurious hospitality, she found no time for her prayers—and Levi told his brothers that he spent in prayer for them the time for which their busy pursuit of wealth seemed to make no room. The venerable Dr. Taft of Pawtucket spoke of him "as a holy man." On the beautiful hill-side of a portion

of his estate known as the "Junipers," he was buried by his daughter Abby. An inscription records that at that very spot he was accustomed to spend hours in communion with God. In part her gift, the place has become the beautiful Juniper Hill Cemetery.

The home of Mr. Levi De Wolf was built from the same plans as that from which Capt. John De Wolf, his older brother, had built in 1798, his home which still is occupied by his great-grandchildren and nestles picturesquely among its old trees. Here Capt. John De Wolf, like so many of his family, retired from life upon the sea to the life of a farmer, and became famous as the best farmer of Rhode Island. We shall read in a succeeding chapter of his sheltering in his hospitable home cousins of another branch of the family, and of kindness the memory of which is still treasured in this present generation. He also found time to serve his town as its representative in the Legislature and held other positions of public trust.

His son and only child Professor John De Wolf, was one of the most distinguished scholars of the State, and for twenty years one of the faculty of Brown University, in the chair of chemistry, though he was equally well known as a scholar in mathematics and languages. He was twice married. By his first wife, Elizabeth James, he had one son a well known physician, the late Dr. John De Wolf of Providence, whose children and grandchildren are prominent in both professional and business life. His second wife was Bishop Griswold's beautiful daughter Sylvia, and the descendants by this marriage, the families of Mr. Sydney De Wolf, of Mrs. Bullock, wife of Judge Russel Bullock, and of Mrs. Robert Andrews, are still among the most representative citizens of Bristol.

Of the remaining three of the eight sons of Mark Anthony De Wolf, the writer can relate little as to their lives. Of Samuel Potter who died unmarried at the age of twenty-one, he has learned nothing but the brief record in the family bible, "Died at sea on the Privateer *Oliver Cromwell*." Mark Anthony the second son and his brother Simon his next younger brother, also perished at sea at any early age, thirty-two and twenty-six respectively. At least they sailed from Hispaniola homeward bound and were never heard from. They both left families. Neither of the sons of the former, Mark Anthony and Samuel, married. So the male line ended. His daughter

Elizabeth married Barnard Smith of Warren, her son, who continued the family name, Mark Anthony De Wolf Smith, left two sons, but Samuel died unmarried and George, who married Eliza Peck of Warren, died without children. His widow died quite recently in Warren. Mrs. Elizabeth De Wolf Smith had however, two daughters who married in the West, who very probably have descendants; if so they are the only direct descendants of Mark Anthony De Wolf and Abigail Potter, whom the writer has, if he is not mistaken, failed to trace.

Simon De Wolf left but one child to his widow Hannah May, and he was destined to add fame to the name of De Wolf. A reference has been made to the participation in arctic exploits by one of the youngest of the De Wolf family, Mr. Langdon Gibson. The adventures of one three generations earlier in northern latitudes, then equally unknown, may well find a place in this story. Simon's son John made a journey across Siberia, then unprecedented, which gave him ever after the sobriquet "Capt. Nor West John De Wolf."

The writer only remembers the fine old captain when age had whitened his hair. His daughter, the late Mrs. Downing of Dorchester, Mass., is another of the old members of the De Wolf family who gave cordial encouragement to the beginning of this genealogy, but has not lived to see it completed. The reader can best learn the achievements of Capt. De Wolf by some brief extracts from his published work, *A voyage to the North Pacific and a journey through Siberia more than half a century ago*, by Capt. John De Wolf, Cambridge. Welsh, Bigelow & Co., 1861. In the preface he modestly says: "Although I am not one who regard everything beyond the smoke of their own chimney as marvelous, I think my expedition to the Northwest coast was made a little remarkable from the circumstances that I met at Norfolk Sound, his Excellency Baron von Resanoff, to whom I sold my vessel and then crossed the South Pacific in a little craft of twenty-five tons burden, and after an overland journey of fifty-five hundred miles, returned home by the way of St. Petersburg. This was a voyage and travels more than half a century ago, and I was probably the first American who passed through Siberia. I know that others have claimed to be the first and have published descriptions of the country; but I had gone over the same route before any of these claimants were born."