

# CORRESPONDENCE.

## About Old Times.

2/1/1870 p1 SOUTH HADLEY, Jan 24, 1870.

*Editors of Gazette & Courier.*—In your paper of August 24, you say when speaking of Rev. Hiram Meade, that he "was greatly beloved during his nine years settlement at Hadley Falls." I know of no such place as Hadley Falls in this region. Will you tell us where Hadley Falls is located?

Rev. Mr. Meade was pastor of the First Congregational church in South Hadley, and as you remarked was greatly beloved, but the First Church is four miles north of the village of South Hadley Falls. If you were giving to a stranger the location of the Williston Seminary, would you tell him that it was located in Hampton?

About the same time a correspondent of yours, who I believe signed his communication L. W., says that after the execution of Daley and Halligan, the name of the plain on which they suffered, was ever after called Gallows Plain.

I did not know of this, and in my communications have referred to it as Pancake Plain. I knew very well, that strangers generally, called it Gallows Plain or hill, but I have never heard it called so by Northampton people, and I will stake my reputation as a guesser, that if in the records of your town meetings there are any allusions to the plain, it is called Pancake Plain. If I am not correct about this, then some of my expressions will be hardly understood. As we are on the subject of names, and as at present Pleasant street seems rather inappropriate to the one to which it is applied, I would suggest the propriety of another change, as the two buildings which stand on either corner of what was once the Jail yard, are suggestive of any thing but pleasantness, and the buildings, piles of lumber, &c., on the opposite side add but little to the beauty of the street. The street alluded to, has had several names within my knowledge, such as Jail St., Bartlett St., Comfort St., and as I was about to propose another, it occurred to me that incongruous names was a city fashion. For instance, in Boston they have Haymarket Square, a regular triangle, Church Green, paved with cobble stones with nothing green about it, and several equally inappropriate names, so I conclude that it may as well be called pleasant as any thing else, even if it is not so.

I saw in the GAZETTE not long ago, that some person has given a new name to a street in South Hadley, hitherto known as Cooper Lane, he gives it the more euphonious cognomen of "Silver street." This is all well if the denizens of that

location, have enough of the chink to back it up, and if not it is well I think, for our records say that it was originally laid out twelve roods, four and a half inches wide. Have you anything in your records more exact than that? Pretty good width for a lane.

In the same paper from which I copied the remark in relation to Rev. Mr. Meade, I find among scraps of old times history, the following in the bill of expenses for hanging Daley and Halligan. "To cash paid A. Pomeroy for dinner for clergymen, \$3.00." Now, lest it should be thought that this \$3.00 was wasted on Roman Catholic clergymen, I will here state that I have been informed that A. Pomeroy refused entertainment to Bishop Cheverus because he was a Catholic. Mr. Joseph Clarke, then living at the lower end of Pleasant street, hearing of the fact, sent word to the Bishop that he would be cared for at his house if he chose. The Bishop gladly accepted the offer and Mr. Clarke's house was his home while he remained in Northampton.

His heretical act Mr. Clarke, although not excommunicated from the church, was pretty severely censured by some of his brethren and although within a few years from the time his wife died, his house was struck by lightning, and for aught I know, his cattle died and blighted was his corn, yet in all this he failed to recognize the hand of Providence chastising him for his heresy.

Mr. Clarke was a peculiar man, always clothed in Quaker garb, he paid little regard to the behests of fashion. It would have excited but little surprise in Northampton, to have seen him walking side by side with the dignitaries of the court, (who frequently boarded with him) and if a rainy day with a frock "white as the driven snow," a pair of striped linen or cotton pants, rolled nearly up to his knees, without shoes or stockings. I recollect of frequently hearing such remarks as this: "If Mr. Clarke should lose his wife I think he would wear his drab coat to the funeral." And he did.

He was a rigid teetotaler, a wonder for those days, pure water was his only drink, wine or strong drinks were not permitted in his house. Being quite sick at one time, his physician advised him to take some brandy. "Shall I die if I don't take it," was his query. "I fear you will," was the reply. "Then I'll die," was his ready response. But he neither died nor took the brandy at that time.

He built a large barn and it was a question whether it could be raised without the aid of ardent spirits. Cake was substituted and the barn was raised. It was said at the time that it was the best barn in town. The people said he had pews for his cows, as he had a separate apartment for each cow. The barn was burned a few years since. He used to raise silk worms, and had a large building for that purpose in the meadows, near where the railroad now crosses. His manner of raising and feeding the worms, was to plant the mulberry seeds in drills, and when two or three feet high, cut them with a sickle and spread them on the boxes or cases containing the worms. The cocoons were generally made into sewing silk. He once sent some reeled silk to Europe and had it manufactured, and a dress was made of it for his wife. The dress after her death was given to the mother of the writer, who was her sister. The late Dr. Daniel Stebbins prevailed on me to let him have what was left of it. As the Mulberry fever was raging at that time and the Dr. had it bad, I let him have it in hopes that it would work a cure, but it only made the fever worse. It was very heavy, resembling what was then called silk camlet. I might say more about the peculiarities of Mr. Clarke, but I shall refrain from doing so, as I have already said more than I intended to when I commenced.

It would seem rather queer in these days to be told that a person so conscientious as to refuse to harbor a person whose religious creed differs from his own, did not hesitate to deal out spirituous liquors without stint to any one who called, even on the Sabbath. But the times and customs have changed.

Mr. Asahel Pomeroy was a man universally respected and beloved. As late as 1822 (and I don't know but still later), he was one of the Selectmen of the town, he at that time being seventy-three years old. He was generally one of the school committee as far back as I can remember. He died March 22, 1833, aged 84 years. The house between the Smith Charities building and the railroad crossing was built by him, I should think about 1804. A wing of the old house that was removed to make way for the present one, was removed on to what was once my father's garden, and I presume it is there now. If there is a one-story gambrel roofed house in Hawley St., it must be the one.

I would not be understood to say that Mr. Pomeroy stayed away from church to sell liquors, or for any other cause, on the contrary, he might invariably be found there. I recollect well how he appeared. The large congregation kept their seats while the choir were singing. He, alone stood up and faced the choir, the tears rolling down his face like rain, but I suppose he did not cry for the same reason that the old Scotch woman did. Being asked by her minister why she always cried when he sang, she said "he reminded her of her poor jackass that died, and she could na help it." The singing when led by Mr. Huntington, I thought could hardly be bettered, and I think that those persons who are old enough to remember it, will agree with me in thinking it never has been, not even by Dr. Lucas. I have mentioned the fact of Mr. Pomeroy's selling liquor merely to show in what a different light such things are viewed now from what they were at that time, not that I considered any disparagement to him. He was, I think justly honored for his integrity, and constant piety. His official capacity was duly appreciated by his fellow townsmen.

In speaking of Mr. Clarke, I said something about the "dignitaries of the court," and it should be remembered that there was much greater deference paid to rank and station then than now-a-days. Here, in South Hadley, they voted in town meeting in 1734, that the meeting house be seated according to rateable estate, regard being had to personage and ability. In 1743 they "voted that Wm. Montague sit in the first or highest pew with the men, and his wife in the highest pew with the women," and "Madam Woodbridge in the pew next to the pulpit."

As the pews were on a level it required a vote of the town to tell which was the highest.

While what I have written about Mr. Clarke goes to show that in many of his ideas he was in advance of the age in which he lived. It is not necessary to suppose that Mr. Pomeroy was in any behind the times. I don't believe that he would have been guilty of retailing the poison now sold under the name of spirituous liquors. The times have changed and so have the liquors. Perhaps I ought to say that he was induced to refuse entertainment to Bishop Cheverus, like our great progenitor, by his better half. Mr. Pomeroy would not have been able to sleep a wink under the same roof with a Catholic Priest.