

The Sturgis Library : a Poem

From the *Barnstable Patriot* newspaper, April 24, 1916

Far back from the street it stands, that house of "ye bygone days,"
Built by John Lothrop – 1644 – so the ancient record says.
The flickering shades of summer, half conceal the manse from view,
Spacious and homelike it seems, like an old friend welcoming you.

True pastor was John Lothrop, kindly e'en though austere,
From England, then from Scituate, his people he led here.
Gold, silver, being scanty, his flock well understood,
Grain, hay, or salt, he'd take as pay, or loads of seasoned wood.

Shod with the gospel of peace, he ran his godly race,
No need of sheriff, jail, or stocks, while John Lothrop held his place.
He drew near to his three-score and ten, on his brow a silver crown,
In sixteen hundred and fifty-three, his rod and his staff he laid down.

Generation after generation of the Lothrop's passed away,
They were gathered to their fathers, and on quaint Burial Hill they lay.
Then the Sturgis' here lived, and the house to them was most dear,
Open-hearted hospitality ruled, with kindness and good cheer.

Years passed, a descendant of the first ruling order came,
De Chillenham, in Domesday Book, plain Chipman now by name,
Goodman Isaac and Goodwife Relief were kindly, upright, and meek,
A hatter he was by trade, his shop just across the street.

Sunday morning to the buggy, he harnessed old Dobbin white,
Drove his wife to the church she loved, himself to the church he thought right.
And out of this home went William, brave Captain, lost at sea,
And the gentle maiden Caroline, the doctor's bride-to-be.

I remember well, the old stone wall, that we climbed with nimble feet,
The robins chattering overhead, feasting on black hearts sweet.
And ever and anon would fall a cherry to the street,
For Goodman Isaac, so the townsfolk all averred,
Left one tree for the children and another for the birds.

Years rolled by, again was closed the hospitable door,
When the good William Sturgis said, "Books in this house shall dwell forever more."
Now books and still books from the floor to ceiling we see,
And the manse of pastor John Lothrop is the Sturgis Library.
For this great book and blessing words cannot our gratitude express,
As we con the treasures over, and the name of the donor we bless.