

# HISTORY OF BELMONT.

BY ALLAN J. HACKETT.

## CHAPTER I.

PREVIOUS to 1859 the section comprising the present town of Belmont was a part of Gilmanton. In 1761 the proprietors of Gilmanton laid off a tract, six miles square, on the Barnstead line. This section was thereafter known as the Lower Parish. The rest of the town was divided into two parts,—Gunstock Parish on the northeast, and Upper Gilmanton, or, as it was called later, the Upper Parish, on the southwest. In June, 1812, Gunstock Parish was severed from Gilmanton and incorporated as a town under the name of Gifford. Previous to this time the term Upper Parish appears to have been applied to the whole section of the town lying north of the Lower Parish; subsequently, it was employed to describe what is now the town of Belmont. It will be so used in this article.

Previous to the division, in 1859, the political and general history of the section comprising the present town of Belmont was so closely identified with that of the rest of the town of Gilmanton that it is obviously impossible, at this late day, to separate the one from the other. The Upper Parish does not appear to have been a very important part of the town. The Lower Parish (now Gilmanton) was settled at an earlier date, and, in addition to this advantage, the founding of the academy, in 1794, formed a nucleus around which, or, at least, in whose near vicinage, was gathered by far the greater proportion of the wealth, culture, enterprise and social distinction of the town. In those old days, before the advent of the manufacturing genius induced settlement on the banks of the streams, the pioneers of civilization courted the hill-tops and piously shunned the valleys. As Mr. Howells' Lady of the Aroostook "wanted to know," so, evidently, these early settlers "wanted to see." They made their homes, for the most part, on the high, slightly ridges, and this habit doubtless explains the otherwise inexplicable fact that nearly all the old highways of the town fully merit the name, being constructed over the loftiest hills, in utter disregard of all questions of economy, with sublime contempt for the consideration of mere distance, and to the annoyance and serious detriment of modern travel.

The settlement of the Upper Parish progressed but slowly. The site of the present village of Belmont remained an unbroken forest for many years after the "Corner," as the Academy village is still called, had become a thriving and somewhat noted settlement. The first store was opened in 1820. In 1834 an association of public-spirited citizens, foremost among whom was Governor Badger, built a brick factory for the manufacture of cotton cloth. This building is still standing, and is used by the Gilmanton Mills Company, to which reference will be made further on. Previous to the building of the factory, the village, if it may be dignified by that name, had been known as "Fellows' Mills,"—the ambitious plural being possibly justified by the fact that the one building was used both as a grist-mill and as a saw-mill. This building, long ago destroyed, is said to have been located on the right bank of the river, below the bridge, and not far from the dam of the present Gilmanton Mills. After the building of the Badger factory, the village grew quite rapidly, and was called "Factory Village," as a compliment to the new industry. This name is still frequently heard. About the time that the factory was built, Governor Badger also built a saw-mill and a grist-mill, at the upper dam, a few rods above the bridge. The saw-mill was situated on the right bank of the stream; the grist-mill on the left bank, and nearly opposite. In the spring of 1852 there was a great freshet. The dam at the reservoir, five miles up the stream, was broken through, and the flood wrought sad havoc in the little village. Several buildings were swept away, and among them the grist-mill. The other mill escaped. In 1876, it was purchased by the Gilmanton Mills Company, enlarged and altered, and used in the manufacture of cases. It was burned in May, 1885. The freshet entailed a severe pecuniary loss upon Governor Badger, and that gentleman dying a few months later, the village experienced no considerable growth, either in size or in general prosperity, for several years.

But the devout settlers did not await the slow development of worldly prosperity before erecting houses of worship. Perhaps, no other feature of the early history of New England is so striking

and impressive as the religious zeal of its people. Notwithstanding the bigotry, fanaticism and harshness which so largely characterized the religion of the Puritans, one cannot but admire their devotion,—a devotion so intense, so imperious and so despotic, even, that it subordinated to itself all other emotions and passions, and not only became the controlling influence in their own lives, but was also transmitted, almost as a part of their being, to their descendants. In this respect, the history of one is the history of all, the history of each community, the history of every other community. Worship was as truly a necessity as food or raiment. In none was the religious spirit stronger than among the settlers of the old township of Gilmanton, whose grant was signed by the hand of a Wentworth. They brought, unimpaired, to the wilds of this frontier town that same brave and perfect faith which, a century before, had guided the Pilgrim fathers to the frozen fastnesses of the Massachusetts coast. In the charter of the town, grants of land were reserved for a parsonage and for "the first settled minister." For several years there was no meeting-house, the religious services being held in private houses and in barns. The first church in the Upper Parish was erected at the Province road (so called) in 1792. The members of this church adopted the tenets of the Free-Will Baptist denomination in 1816.

In 1835, it was incorporated by the name of the "Third Free-Will Baptist Meeting-House Society in Upper Gilmanton." Soon after, the society lowered its meeting-house to one story, removed the gallery-pews, and made other alterations. So far as the writer can learn, this building, still in use and in a good state of preservation, is the one that was erected in 1792. If so, it is the second oldest building of the kind in this section of the State. There are no church records to be found previous to 1835; but it would appear, from Lancaster's "History of Gilmanton" (1845), that "Elder John Knowles," one of the founders of the church, was its pastor from 1816 until his death, in 1837. At this time the church was re-organized. Following is the list of pastors from 1837 to the present time: Samuel P. Fernald, 1837-38; John G. Tuttle, 1838; Hugh Beede, 1845-48; Lemuel Mason, 1848-50; E. G. Knowles, 1850-52; H. F. Dickey, 1852-55; W. A. Sargent, 1855-57; Uriah Chase, 1857-61; H. F. Dickey, 1861-65; J. B. Leighton, 1865-68; O. F. Russell, 1869-70; John Davis, 1871; G. B. Blaisdell, 1872-75; C. M. Emery, 1876-79; S. J. Gould, 1880-83, and J. C. Waldron, the present pastor, who came to the church in April, 1883. The present membership is forty-four.

In 1810, a church, composed of persons who had previously constituted the "Third Monthly Meeting," was established at what is now Belmont village. Lancaster's "History of Gilmanton" states that the meeting-house was built in 1811, but private information puts the date of its erection at 1815. In 1835

the society was incorporated by the name of the First Free Baptist Society in Gilmanton Upper Parish. Rev. Peter Clark was the first pastor, and officiated for more than thirty years. He was a man of very considerable ability, intense convictions and commanding personal appearance. He was one of the most widely-known clergymen in this part of the State, and probably performed more marriage ceremonies than any other man in the history of the town. He was succeeded by Rev. David Moody, about 1841, but continued to preach occasionally after that time. Mr. Moody, who is still living at an advanced age in Sutton, N. H., finally severed his connection with the church in 1851. Other pastors have been, L. S. Wells, J. M. Bedell, 1854-55; H. S. Sleeper, 1856-61; W. H. Yeoman, 1861-64; Almon Shepard, 1864-65; M. Cole, 1865-68; Hosea Quinby, 1869; A. K. Moulton, W. G. Willis and J. Walker, 1870; M. Henderson, 1871; J. L. Sinclair, 1872-76; M. A. Quimby, 1876-81; and T. G. Wilder, the present pastor, whose connection with the church began in 1881. The present edifice was built in 1852. The membership in 1884 was one hundred and six.

A Christian Baptist Church was established at the village in 1839. It was incorporated in 1841. A meeting-house was built in 1840, and was burned in 1867. The present building was erected in 1868. The following have been the pastors: Richard Davis, 1839-42; Josiah Knight, 1842-43; John Burden, 1843; John Gillingham, 1844-47; Samuel Nutt, 1851; Moses Polley, 1852-56; George Osborn, 1858; Abiah Kidder, 1860-72; E. S. Moulton, 1879-81. There is at present no pastor, and the membership is small. These three are the only churches that have ever been organized in the town.

The most distinguished citizen in the history of the town was Hon. William Badger, who was born in 1779. He was the son of Hon. Joseph Badger and the grandson of General Joseph Badger. Both these gentlemen were distinguished soldiers in the Revolution. Joseph Badger (2d) removed from the Lower to the Upper Parish in 1784 and settled upon the farm which has ever since been owned by the Badger family. His son, William Badger, received his education in the common schools and at Gilmanton Academy. He was an active Democrat, and early became prominent in political life. He was representative in 1810, '11, '12; State Senator in 1814, '15, '16, and president of the Senate in the year last-named; justice of the Court of Common Pleas from 1816 to 1820; sheriff of Strafford County from 1820 to 1830; Governor of the State in 1834-35; and Presidential elector in 1836 and 1844. He was also for a long time president of the board of trustees of Gilmanton Academy, and filled other places of trust. As has already been stated, he was chiefly instrumental in building the cotton-factory and other mills at the village, and he may be said to have been the founder of the manufacturing industry in Belmont. He was a gentleman of great business

sagacity and enterprise, an honest man and a public-spirited citizen. He died in September, 1852.

Governor Badger's first wife was the daughter of Rev. Isaac Smith, the first settled pastor of Gilmanton. She died in 1810, leaving a son and a daughter, both of whom died a few years later.

In 1814, Mr. Badger married Hannah Pearson Cogswell, daughter of Dr. William Cogswell, of Atkinson. She was a woman of great ability, highly accomplished, and distinguished for her benevolence and public spirit. She came of a family that is very prominent in the history of New England. Among her numerous relatives now living and eminent in political circles, may be mentioned her nephews, John B. Clarke, of the *Manchester Mirror*, Colonel Thomas Cogswell, of Gilmanton, and General J. B. D. Cogswell, of Massachusetts, and her cousin, "Long John" Wentworth, of Illinois. She died in February, 1869. Her two sons are living,—Colonel Joseph Badger, who lives at the old homestead, and Captain William Badger, U. S. A., at present stationed at Salt Lake City.

Houses, like faces, are either passed heedlessly by, or impress upon the mind a sense of their individuality. Of the latter kind is the old Badger mansion. It needs but a glance at its generous proportions, its wide grounds, its grand old shade-trees to enable one to realize that it has a history. It is situated on a high hill, at a right angle in the road from Belmont to Gilmanton, midway between the two villages. The present building is a large two-story wooden house, fronting the southwest, and was erected by Governor Badger, in 1825. The Badgers have lived on this farm for more than a hundred years. In Governor Badger's time it was the most noted and valuable country-estate in this part of New Hampshire; but the farm has since been somewhat reduced in size.

The house contains many objects of historic interest, but the limits of this article admit only of the briefest reference to a few of them. In the west parlor are the oil portraits of Governor and Mrs. Badger, painted in the early days of their married life. It would be difficult to find a more comely pair. The portrait of the Governor represents a handsome gentleman, with a large, florid, open face, and a suggestion of portliness that gives promise of the three hundred pounds to which he attained later in life. That of Mrs. Badger is one of unusual beauty, and is said, by those who remember her in her youth, to be a faithful likeness. On a table near by, lies the sampler which her young hands wrought eighty-five years ago.

Across the wide hall is the family sitting-room. The walls are hung with paper in rich brown and wood tints, representing a variety of Eastern pictures, comprising street scenes, landscapes and sea-views. This paper cost one hundred dollars in Portsmouth sixty years ago. It is in an excellent state

of preservation, and its like is probably not to be found anywhere in the country. Suspended from the wall are the Governor's sword and horse-pistols. The sword was taken from a British soldier near Crown Point, in 1777, by General Joseph Badger, the Governor's father. It has an ornamental silver hilt, and its faded scabbard attests its age. Adjoining this room is the china closet, in which are to be seen the old family china, that was brought from Portsmouth in saddle-bags, and which is excellently well preserved, and the silver tea-service. The latter is massive, and of a beautiful unique pattern. It would tempt the collector of antiques to break one of the commandments, and it is by no means certain that the sin would not be forgiven him.

Ascending to the chambers, the visitor finds in one of them the canopy bedstead and quaint, high-backed chairs, which Mrs. Badger brought from her girlhood's home in Atkinson three-quarters of a century ago. The view from these upper windows is wide and beautiful, ending, as do all westerly views in this part of the town, in the majestic outlines of "Ione Kearsarge." Among the objects of interest in the great roomy attic, may be mentioned several tall, stiff military caps, relics of the old "training" days, and a venerable poke-bonnet, that is a prodigy of size and a marvel of ugliness. It is at least two feet deep. The carping critic, who is wont to declaim against the foibles of the feminine mind of to-day, should peer into the unfathomable depths of this ancient monstrosity, and "ever after hold his peace."

Descending by another stairway, the visitor enters the dining-room. The dining-hall of an old mansion is frequently the room richest in historic associations. Here, in this room, the largest in the house, have been entertained a President, a member of the Cabinet, Senators, members of Congress, Governors and State functionaries almost without number. Such a royal banquet-hall would be incomplete without its great clock, and there it stands, a grand old time-piece, aged but not defaced by the more than a hundred years, whose flight it has faithfully recorded, the while its solemn moon-face looked down upon the revelers, and its deep voice, like that of the now silent poet's never silent horologe, kept on repeating,—

"Forever, Never!  
Never, Forever!"

A few rods south of the Badger mansion, is the early home of the late Hon. W. H. Y. Hackett, a distinguished lawyer, banker and legislator of Portsmouth. Mr. Hackett was born at the Academy village, September 24, 1800, but his parents removed to this part of the town nine years later. He received his early education in the common schools, and at the academy, walking daily to and from the latter institution. He began the study of law in the office of Matthew Perkins, Esq., of Sanbornton, and remained there a year and a half. In 1822 he went to

Portsmouth and continued his studies in the office of Hon. Ichabod Bartlett. He was admitted to the bar in 1826, and immediately entered upon the practice of his profession in Portsmouth. In the same year he married Olive, daughter of Joseph W. Pickering of that city.

Mr. Hackett was assistant clerk of the Senate in 1824-25; clerk of the Senate in 1828; representative in 1850, '51, '52, '57, '60, '67, '68, '69; Senator in 1861-62, and president of the Senate the latter year; Presidential elector in 1864; member of the Constitutional Convention in 1876. He was president of the First National Bank of Portsmouth (which was the first national bank organized in the country); president of the Piscataqua Savings-Bank, and trustee of the Portsmouth Savings-Bank. He also held many other positions of honor and trust in the city which was his home for more than fifty years.

Originally a Whig, he naturally joined the Republican party, and for years he was one of its acknowledged leaders. He ranked among the ablest lawyers and most successful financiers of the State, and was a man of strict integrity.

He always retained an active and affectionate interest in his native town. Indeed, so warmly was he attached to "old Gilmanton," that when the bill to change the name of Upper Gilmanton to Belmont was introduced in the Legislature, in 1869, he voted against it.

Mr. Hackett died August 9, 1878, and was buried in the South Cemetery, at Portsmouth. His brother, Charles A. Hackett, occupies the old homestead. A short distance to the east of the house, is the highest hill in this section of the town. The view is beautiful and extensive, and, a few years ago, a signal was placed here for use in the triangulation of the State.

Belmont owes its existence as a separate town to a combination of political convenience and partisan advantage. The political convenience subserved by the separation of the town from Gilmanton, is explained by the fact that the elections were held at the Academy village, and the voters in the upper part of the town were forced to travel a tediously long distance, amounting, in many cases, to eight or nine miles. How serious an affliction this really was, needs not to be explained to the country voter, who has had a personal experience of the difficulties of going to the "March meeting," over roads either blocked by snow-drifts or, rendered equally impassable by the spring "thaw."

The partisan advantage secured by the division of the town, consisted in the gain of two Republican representatives in the Legislature. Under the old apportionment, Gilmanton was entitled to three representatives. For a long time political honors were about equally divided. Victory perched with approximate impartiality upon the banner of either party. But about the time of the formation of the

Republican party, the Democrats had gained a permanent control of town affairs. They were in an overwhelming majority in the northern section of the town, while the Republicans outnumbered them in the southern part. A careful analysis of the vote showed that a division of the town on the old parish line, would give the lower section two representatives and the upper section one. The subject was considered for some time, and, in 1859, it took the definite form of a petition to the Legislature for a division on this basis. The bill was introduced into the House by A. H. Cragin, of Lebanon, afterwards United States Senator from New Hampshire. The representatives from Gilmanton were Abraham S. Gale, Joshua B. Pulcifer and Epoch Brown, all of them Democrats, and all opposed to the division. The bill was warmly contested, almost wholly on partisan grounds. It was put upon its passage June 24th. The minority filibustered persistently. Motions to postpone, to adjourn and to lay on the table, were successively made, the roll-call being demanded upon each motion. But the bill passed by a vote of one hundred and seventy-four to one hundred. An equally vigorous, but equally futile opposition was met in the Senate, and the bill was approved June 28th. Following is the first section of the act, defining the limits of the town:

"All that part of the town of Gilmanton contained within the following described limits, to wit: Beginning at the northeasterly corner of said town, where its easterly line is met and intersected by the southerly line of the town of Gifford; thence running in a northwesterly direction, following the division line between said towns of Gifford and Gilmanton, until said division line is met by the parish line, so called, as the same is laid out and described upon the original plan of lots in said town of Gilmanton; thence running southwesterly, following said parish line, until said parish line meets and intersects the westerly line of said town of Gilmanton, as the same now is; thence southerly on said westerly boundary line of said town of Gilmanton to its southwesterly corner; thence easterly on the southerly line of said town of Gilmanton to its southeasterly corner; thence northerly on this easterly line of said Gilmanton, as said line now runs, until it arrives at the point begun at, he and the same hereby is severed from said town of Gilmanton, and made a new body politic and corporate under the name of Gilmanton; and that all the territory remaining, which, together with the part severed, constituted the town of Gilmanton, as the same was before the passage of this act, shall be called by the name of Upper Gilmanton."

The act further provided that all demands, dues and funds should be divided between the two towns in the proportion of \$6.50 to Gilmanton and \$3.50 to Upper Gilmanton. It is suggestive of the change in the relative wealth of the towns, that in the apportionment of public taxes in 1883, Gilmanton was assessed only one cent per thousand dollars more than Belmont.

The first meeting for the choice of town officers in Upper Gilmanton, was called by John E. Page and Isaiah Piper, August 6, 1859. In the following October the line between the two towns was drawn.

But there was soon developed a considerable dissatisfaction with the name of the town. Its length was found to be quite formidable by those who had to write it often, and as there were three post-offices in the town of Gilmanton, there was much confusion in

the delivery of the mails. Therefore, in 1869, ten years from the division, the citizens of Upper Gilmanton petitioned the Legislature to have the name of the town changed to Belmont. There was no considerable opposition to the proposed change, the bill passed, and the rechristening of the town was celebrated by a picnic held in Sawyer's Grove, July 5th, the day when the act went into effect.

An amusing incident in connection with this change of name, is to be found in the town records. It appears that a meeting was called on the second Tuesday of November, 1869, "to see if the town would vote to notify Hon. August Belmont, of New York, that the town had been named Belmont, as a mark of honor to him, and invite him to make a donation to the town as a token that he appreciates this action of the town." It further appears from the records that "the prayer of the petitioners was granted." But this language applies only to the action of the meeting. The prayer for a donation has never been granted. The great banker has shown himself surprisingly indifferent to the high honor thus conferred upon him, not having acknowledged the compliment even by the inexpensive formality of a courteous letter. Perhaps he did not fully realize how great the distinction really was. Perhaps it occurred to him that the name, not having begun with him, was not likely to die with him. Possibly he suspected that the idea that the town was named for him, was only an afterthought of the tax-payers. Possibly, he had received similar letters before. But whatever the reason, the hard fact remains that he has never sent his expectant namesake so much as a godfather's blessing, but continues to enjoy and profit by the honor so trustingly conferred upon him, without rendering therefor any equivalent whatsoever!

It should be added, for the good name of the town, that only fifty-eight voters were present at the meeting in question, to share the responsibility for this mendicants' appeal.

The Belmont of to-day is a thriving farming and manufacturing town. By "Fogg's Statistical Gazetteer" (1874), it ranks twenty-first among the towns of the State in the value of its agricultural products. The assessors' valuation for 1884 was as follows: Polls, \$31,100; real-estate, \$324,874; stock in banks and other corporations, \$21,060; stock in public funds, \$1,000; money on hand, at interest, or on deposit, \$16,452; stock in trade, \$8,042; mills, factories and machinery, \$21,600; carriages, \$918; live-stock, \$39,463; total, \$464,509. The population in 1880 was 1226; it has probably increased somewhat since that date. Belmont is bounded on the north by Laconia and Gilford; east, by Gilford and Gilmanton; south, by Gilmanton and Canterbury; west, by Northfield and by the Winnepesaukee River and its line of lakes, which separate the town from Tilton and Sanbornton. The surface of the town is broken, hills

abounding everywhere except in the southwestern part, where the land is low and level.

The scenery of Belmont is exceptional, even in a section so justly celebrated for its beautiful views. Only the unfortunate lack of railroad facilities can explain the fact that the town is so little frequented by tourists. The western and northern parts of the town do not suffer from this lack, and so boast of several houses for the accommodation of summer guests, the largest and best-known being the "Bay View," near the Laconia line. The views from "Ladd Hill," "Gale Hill" and "Prescott Hill," all within two miles of Laconia, cannot easily be surpassed. No element of a perfect landscape is wanting. In the foreground lies the embryo city of Laconia and Lake Village, flanked on the one hand by the fair lesser lakes of the Winnepesaukee, and on the other by a rugged hill country that finds its fitting climax in the bold outlines of the Belknap Mountains; while to the northward, a beautiful diversity of hill, field and forest, stretches away to meet the great blue mountains, the advance guard of the White Hills, whose higher peaks can be faintly discerned in the far distance. Other exceptionally fine prospects are gained from the summit of "Bean Hill," two miles from Belmont village, and from the hill in "Jamestown," near the village of East Tilton. There are many pleasant drives, the most attractive being the "Province road," the road from Belmont village to Laconia, that to Gilmanton Academy, and the shadowy, leafy "Hollow Route,"—always pronounced "holer out" in the local vernacular. Indeed, beautiful views abound on every hand, and it is the judgment of experienced tourists that the scenery of Belmont is surpassed by that of few towns in the State.

The air is dry and bracing. In point of healthfulness, the town will compare favorably with any in the State. Instances of great longevity are common. Mrs. Eunice Swain Sweatt, who died in 1881, at the age of one hundred and five, was, just prior to her death, the oldest person in the State.

The most notable natural curiosity in town, is "Porcupine Ledge," one and one-half miles southeast of the village. The name carries its own explanation. Porcupines are seldom seen at this time, but quills are frequently found. The "Ledge" is really a remarkable place, and well repays the slight trouble which a visit to it involves. Situated in the mountain or lake region, or in any other place largely frequented by tourists, it would long ago have become famous. It consists of a mass of great rocks, roughly tumbled upon each other, and is about one hundred and fifty feet in height. Either the ascent or descent is considerably laborious, but entirely devoid of danger. The summit of the cliff is formed by the great, overhanging "Table Rock," which is not unlike in appearance to its Niagara namesake, and whose shape suggests the probability that the other rocks were torn from its side by some natural convulsion. Directly below is "Pulpit

Rock," the largest of the number. It is about seventy-five feet high on its lower side, and almost perfectly perpendicular. The main rock is surmounted by a smaller one, whose fancied resemblance to a pulpit doubtless explains the name. Other points of interest are the "Kitchen," the "Arch," "Devil's Den" and the "Bottomless Pit"—the last two having no known diabolical associations that would seem to justify their unfortunate names. Local tradition has it that many years ago a gang of counterfeiters here made their rendezvous. The place has long been a favorite resort for those who have known of its charms. It enjoys high favor among the students of Gilmanton Academy, who come hither *en masse* at least once each year. Indeed, the "Ledge" appears always to have had a subtle but strong attraction for all love-sick youths and maidens, whether fresh from academic halls, or escaping for an hour from the din of factory life. The well-worn path down its steep side is a veritable "Lovers' Lane." The great rocks, could they speak, might repeat many an amorous tale whispered within their inviting shade. For a hundred years Cupid has shared with the fretful porcupine the possession of the miniature caverns, and worked far sadder havoc with his rankling arrows than his bristling cohabitant with his more visible darts. The scarred trunks of the old trees bear the illegible outlines of many a pair of initials carved in close and suggestive propinquity. Let us trust that the early love, thus rudely expressed, has more successfully withstood the ravages of time.

The only village in Belmont, the "Factory Village" of a half-century ago, and the "Fellows' Mills" of a still more remote period, is situated five and one-half miles east of Tilton, six miles south of Laconia and eighteen miles north of Concord, and occupies both banks of the Belmont River, or Great Brook, as it was formerly called. The village has a population of between five hundred and six hundred, or nearly one-half the entire population of the town. Most of the houses are new and freshly-painted, and the general appearance of the village is singularly thrifty and attractive. The principal business block is the building erected by Geo. W. Riley in 1874, and now owned by Haven Grant. This building is forty by sixty feet; the lower part is used for the post office, a store and tenements, the second story for tenements, and in the third is the principal hall of the town. The First Free-Will Baptist and Christian Churches, referred to elsewhere, are handsome buildings. In connection with the former is a beautiful cemetery, the largest in town. Among the more attractive residences may be mentioned those of M. Sargent, Jr., J. P. Cilley and T. E. Clough. The business directory is as follows: Postmaster, C. O. Judkins; groceries and dry goods, D. S. Hoyt & Co. and Bean & Smith; watches and jewelry, F. K. Johnson; meats and provisions, A. T. Bean; papers and periodicals, G. W. Hunt; millinery, Mrs. R. G. Hoyt; confectionery

and cigars, C. O. Judkins; drugs, E. C. Bean; hotels, Brown's Hotel (A. W. Brown), Belmont House (Ira Mooney); Gilmanton Mills, hosiery, M. Sargent, Jr., agent, D. W. Gale, clerk; lawyer, E. P. Thompson; physician, S. A. Merrill; justices, W. C. Wells, C. A. Hackett, A. P. B. Currier, I. Piper, J. W. Wells, E. P. Thompson, D. W. Judkins, I. Mooney, A. J. Hackett, E. C. Bean, C. E. Moody, J. B. Matthews, M. H. Philbrick, F. K. Johnson; livery stable, C. H. Aikens; lumber, J. L. Allen, J. M. Folsom, N. D. Garmon; blacksmiths, Abbott & West; builders, Cyrus Norris, Edgar Willard, Andrew Phillips, Dayton Hunkins; barbers, G. Woodward, H. J. Fuller.

Belmont has no railroad, but excellent mail and passenger facilities are afforded by the Tilton and Gilmanton line of stages, Davis & Son, proprietors. The first stage leaves the post-office at 8 A. M., and connects at Tilton with the 9.30 train for Boston over the White Mountains Division of the Boston and Lowell Railroad; returning, leaves Tilton on the arrival of the noon train from Boston, and reaches Belmont at 1.30 P. M. The second stage leaves Belmont at 1 P. M., connects with the 2.30 train for Boston, leaves upon the arrival of the up train, about 4 and arrives at Belmont at 5.30.

A charter for a railroad between Tilton and Belmont was granted by the Legislature of 1883, but work upon it has not yet been begun.

A branch line of the Winnepesaukee Bell Telephone Company runs through the town to Gilmanton Corner and Gilmanton Iron-Works, the central office in Belmont being at the post-office.

It will doubtless surprise not a few of the readers of this article to learn that here, in this little inland village, far removed from any railroad, and but little known to the general public, is located the largest manufactory of hosiery in New Hampshire. Such, nevertheless, is the case. The Gilmanton Mills, of Belmont, turn out a larger annual product than any other hosiery-mill in the State. These mills are situated on the west side of the principal street of the village, just south of the road to Tilton. They occupy the site of the old Badger mill, and this building, erected in 1834, is still standing and forms one of the group. After Governor Badger's death, in 1852, the mill property was successively owned by several parties, and the business conducted with indifferent success. Previous to 1865, the mill was used in the manufacture of cotton sheeting. At that time, M. Sargent, Esq., of Lake village, bought it, put in new machinery, and began to manufacture hosiery. In 1870, Hon. Amos Lawrence, of Boston, became the owner, and from this date the mill entered upon a new era of prosperity. In 1875, a joint-stock corporation was formed, with a capital stock of one hundred thousand dollars, Mr. Lawrence being elected president, and M. Sargent, Jr., clerk of the corporation. Mr. Sargent has been the local agent for twenty years, and ranks among the most successful and efficient



mill managers in New England. As has been already intimated, at the time of Mr. Lawrence's purchase there was but one building, the old Badger mill. This is a brick building, eighty feet by forty, and three stories high. Since 1870 several buildings have been added. These are a brick factory, one hundred and thirty-five feet by sixty; dye-house, one hundred and ten feet by thirty; three large store-houses, a machine-shop and the office. There is also a library connected with the corporation for the use of the operatives. The water is carried to the mills in a canal one thousand feet long, ten feet wide and five feet deep, and is conducted on to a giant turbine-wheel, through an iron penstock one hundred feet long, with a head of thirty-three feet, furnishing one hundred horse-power. There is also a steam-engine of fifty horse-power, for use as an auxiliary, there being about two months in each year when the water supply is insufficient.

The average number of operatives at the Gilmanton Mills, is two hundred, most of whom are of American birth. The annual product is two hundred thousand dozen; annual consumption, six hundred bales of cotton, and one hundred thousand pounds of wool. There are also used twelve hundred cords of wood, and one hundred and fifty thousand feet of lumber, each year. The power is supplied by the Belmont River, a small stream rising in Gilmanton, and tributary to the Winnepesaukee. The supply of water is carefully husbanded in three reservoirs, situated three-quarters of a mile, three miles and five miles from the mills, and called, respectively, the Badger, Sargent and Sawyer reservoirs. The Sawyer reservoir was constructed by Governor Badger, and contains fifty acres; the Badger reservoir was built by the immediate successors of Governor Badger in the ownership of the mill, about 1854, and contains twelve acres; the Sargent dam was built by the present company in 1871, at a cost of three thousand dollars, and the flowage is seventeen acres.

A freight team is kept constantly on the road between the mills and East Tilton. There are eight very good tenement-houses owned by the corporation.

It hardly needs to be added that the Gilmanton Mills constitute the leading industry of the town, nor can it be estimated how great a proportion of Belmont's prosperity is due to the presence and existence of this thriving corporation. Its owners and managers are courteous and public-spirited gentlemen, and their relations both with their employes and with the people of the town in general, have always been most cordial and friendly.

Farrarville is a small collection of houses, situated on the river, one and a half miles northeast of the village. Formerly, there was a mill here for the manufacture of cotton batting. The site is at present occupied by N. D. Garmon's lumber mill.

Following is a complete list of the officers of the

town from the division, in 1859, to, and including, the present year:

- 1859.—Representative, John L. Keiser, Lyman B. Fellows, Jonathan Farrar, selectmen; N. D. Garmon, clerk; John W. Wells, treasurer; S. Lowell French, school committee.
- 1860.—Morrison Rowe, representative; Lyman B. Fellows, Perley Farrar, Stephen L. Taylor, selectmen; N. D. Garmon, clerk; John W. Wells, treasurer; S. Lowell French, school committee.
- 1861.—Morrison Rowe, representative; Stephen L. Taylor, Perley Farrar, John W. Wells, selectmen; N. D. Garmon, clerk; John W. Wells, treasurer; Daniel M. Page, school committee.
- 1862.—Joseph Badger, representative; John W. Wells, James S. Weymouth, Isaac Bennett, selectmen; N. D. Garmon, clerk; John W. Wells, treasurer; Daniel M. Page, school committee.
- 1863.—Joseph Badger, representative; John W. Wells, Isaac Bennett, John M. Roberts, selectmen; N. D. Garmon, clerk; John W. Wells, treasurer; Joseph Plummer, school committee.
- 1864.—Joseph M. Folsom, representative; Isaac Bennett, John M. Roberts, James C. Gilley, selectmen; N. D. Garmon, clerk; John W. Wells, treasurer; Joseph Plummer, school committee.
- 1865.—Joseph M. Folsom, representative; Isaac Bennett, James C. Gilley, John M. Roberts, selectmen; N. D. Garmon, clerk; John W. Wells, treasurer; Edgar A. Rowe, school committee.
- 1866.—No representative; Joseph Y. Weymouth, James S. Weymouth, Henry W. Gilman, selectmen; N. D. Garmon, clerk; John W. Wells, treasurer; William A. Bucklin, school committee.
- 1867.—Napoleon B. Gale, representative; Joseph Y. Weymouth, James S. Weymouth, Henry W. Gilman, selectmen; N. D. Garmon, clerk; John W. Wells, treasurer; William A. Bucklin, school committee.
- 1868.—Napoleon B. Gale, representative; James S. Weymouth, Henry W. Gilman, Joseph Y. Weymouth, selectmen; N. D. Garmon, clerk; John W. Wells, treasurer; Charles W. Knowles, school committee.
- 1869.—Benjamin B. Lamprey, representative; James S. Weymouth, Daniel T. French, James G. Cate, selectmen; William M. Leonard, clerk; John W. Wells, treasurer; Charles W. Knowles, school committee.
- 1870.—George W. Studlett, representative; Daniel T. French, Nicholas D. Garmon, James G. Cate, selectmen; William M. Leonard, clerk; Daniel E. Batchelder, treasurer; Elbridge G. Ladd, school committee.
- 1871.—Moses Sargent, representative; Nicholas D. Garmon, Daniel T. French, James G. Cate, selectmen; William M. Leonard, clerk; John W. Wells, treasurer; Elbridge G. Ladd, school committee.
- 1872.—Charles B. Gile, representative; Nicholas D. Garmon, Edgar A. Rowe, Dudley W. Judkins, selectmen; Ira Mooney, clerk; John W. Wells, treasurer; Herman C. Weymouth, school committee.
- 1873.—Joseph Sanborn, representative; Edgar A. Rowe, Dudley W. Judkins, Charles E. Moody, selectmen; Charles E. Clough, clerk; John W. Wells, treasurer; George B. Blaisdell, school committee.
- 1874.—Langdon Ladd, representative; Edgar A. Rowe, Dudley W. Judkins, Charles E. Moody, selectmen; Charles E. Clough, clerk; John W. Wells, treasurer; George B. Blaisdell, school committee.
- 1875.—Nathan Chase, representative; Charles E. Moody, Charles H. Rowe, Jewett E. Maxfield, selectmen; Charles E. Clough, clerk; Timothy E. Clough, treasurer; Charles E. Clough, school committee.
- 1876.—Jesse S. Towle, representative; Jewett E. Maxfield, Charles H. Rowe, Nicholas D. Garmon, selectmen; Charles E. Clough, clerk; Timothy E. Clough, treasurer; Solon F. Hill, school committee.
- 1877.—Arthur W. Brown, representative; Charles H. Rowe, Nicholas D. Garmon, Jewett E. Maxfield, selectmen; Charles E. Clough, clerk; Timothy E. Clough, treasurer; Solon F. Hill, school committee.
- 1878.—William A. Bucklin, Joseph Plummer (November), representatives; Calvin J. Sanborn, Dudley W. Judkins, James G. Cate, selectmen; Charles E. Clough, clerk; Isaiah Piper, treasurer; Allan J. Hackett, school committee; Charles A. Hackett, Charles W. Knowles, Solon F. Hill, supervisors.
- 1879.—Calvin J. Sanborn, Dudley W. Judkins, James G. Cate, selectmen; Walter C. Wells, clerk; Isaiah Piper, treasurer; Allan J. Hackett, school committee.
- 1880.—Elbridge G. Feltgen, representative; Dudley W. Judkins, James G. Cate, Calvin J. Sanborn, selectmen; Walter C. Wells, clerk; Isaiah Pi-

<sup>1</sup>The first election under the biennial system was held on November, 1878, necessitating the choice of two representatives that year. Also, the law providing for the choice of supervisors went into effect that year.

par, treasurer; Edmund S. Moulton, school committee; Charles A. Hackett, John C. Pearsons, John S. Young, supervisors.

1851.—Isiah Piper, Horace C. Woodward, James G. Cato, selectmen; Edwin C. Bean, clerk; William H. Shepard, treasurer; Selden J. Gould, school committee.

1852.—Allan J. Hackett, representative; Isiah Piper, Horace C. Woodward, Alpheus L. Bean, selectmen; Edwin C. Bean, clerk; William H. Shepard, treasurer; Selden J. Gould, school committee; Charles A. Hackett, John S. Young, A. P. B. Carrier, supervisors.

1853.—Isiah Piper, Horace C. Woodward, Alpheus L. Bean, selectmen; Frank K. Johnson, clerk; William H. Shepard, treasurer; Walter H. Philbrick, school committee.

1854.—Allan J. Hackett, representative; Isiah Piper, Pike Davis, Samuel N. Jewett, selectmen; Frank K. Johnson, clerk; Edwin P. Thompson, treasurer; Walter H. Philbrick, school committee; Charles A. Hackett, John S. Young, A. P. B. Carrier, supervisors.

1855.—Pike Davis, Samuel N. Jewett, William H. Shepard, selectmen; Frank K. Johnson, clerk; Daniel W. Gale, treasurer; John M. Sargent, school committee.

But few of the present citizens of Belmont have held important offices outside of the town, or can be said to have become especially prominent in public life. Joseph M. Folsom was appointed bank commissioner by Governor Weston in 1871, and again in 1874. John W. Wells was county commissioner from 1871 to 1874. Charles A. Hackett has several times been the Republican candidate for Councilor and Senator; but, living in a Democratic district, has failed of an election. Moses Sargent, Jr., was the Republican candidate for Senator in 1880; but for the same reason was defeated. Napoleon B. Gale, president of the Belknap Savings-Bank, of Laconia, and representative from Laconia the present year, is a native, and, until lately, a resident of Belmont. His brother, Hazen Gale, who died in 1882, was a man of marked eccentricities. It is related of him that he somehow acquired a strong aversion to Laconia, and declared that he would never visit that town again. Although living within a few minutes' walk of the town line, he faithfully kept his promise until his death, more than thirty years later, except on one occasion, when his presence was required as a witness at court, and the sheriff would not respect his scruples. Captain William Badger, to whom brief reference has already been made, was born in 1826, graduated from Dartmouth College in 1848, and for several years was engaged in manufacturing. At the outbreak of the Rebellion he joined the Fourth New Hampshire Regiment, served as captain of Company D, and was honorably discharged in June, 1864. In February, 1865, after the death of Colonel Bell, he was appointed colonel of the Fourth Regiment. At the close of the war he joined the regular army, and still remains in the service, with the rank of captain. He is an accomplished soldier and a gentleman of ability and culture. He is engaged upon a history of the towns of Gilmanton and Belmont, which promises to be one of the most valuable and complete works of the kind in the State.

Such, in brief, are some of the more salient features of the past and present life of the town of Belmont. No attempt has been made to give a detailed biographical history. The narrow limits of this article have precluded such an attempt, and, even with a broader opportunity, the task would be neither easy nor grateful. The story of the simple daily life of a small country town is of little interest to the great, bustling outer world. Its local celebrities, its personal achievements, its struggles, its hopes, its disappointments, the thousand nameless factors in its existence,—these must therefore be found in home traditions and fireside legends, not in the printed page.

The local Warwicks, that have played upon this lesser stage the self-same dramas of political strategy and intrigue, which, cast in larger parts, have shaken nations; the village Hampdens, who were wont, on a summer eve, to discuss the great questions of the day, with a fire, vigor and rugged eloquence that might well be transferred to a wider forum; the mute, inglorious Miltons, who have thought the poems they could not put in words, as they followed the plow in its rocky course through the autumn fields; the hoary Nestors, that, on winter nights, stirred the young blood to quicker throbs, as they told of thrilling deeds in the olden time,—who shall write the history of these? And there is that other and still more sacred history, common to every town, but all the more pathetic because so common: those never-to-be-forgotten summer days, when nameless heroes, soon, alas! to sleep in nameless graves, rushed, heedless of the whitening fields, to fill the "quota" of the town; and those weary months that followed, when the lonely and heart-sick wives and mothers, sisters and daughters, waited and ever waited, longing for the tidings they might better never hear,—who may write such history as this, or who would write it if he might?

Loyal, honest, faithful, earnest people, patiently filling up the measure of their uneventful lives, neither squandering nor wanting, sparing in the midst of plenty, but having abundance in their rigid economy, bound together in that unspeakably close fraternity which characterizes every rural community, rejoicing in each other's joys and grieving in each other's griefs, mutually helpful and sympathetic, alike ready to attend the marriage-feast or to go forth under the cold winter stars to perform for the dead those last offices which here are never left to stranger hands,—their history, like that of the people of every other New England country town, lives in the hearts of those who know their worth.