

AN AMERICAN LORDSHIP.



AT THE LANDING, GARDINER'S ISLAND.

ON an ancient brown-stone tablet raised upon four legs above a grave in one of the old burial-grounds of New London, may be found a knightly coat-of-arms cut upon a piece of slate which has been let into the larger slab; underneath the coat-of-arms appears this inscription:

“Here lyeth buried ye body of his excellency John Gardiner, Third Lord of ye Isle of Wight. He was born April 19th, 1661 and departed this life June 25th, 1738.”

Here is a puzzle for any one who should come upon it without knowledge of the facts which explain it! Why should the ashes of a lord be deposited on New London soil, and how did it happen that a nobleman from the Isle of Wight should have come so far to die? These are the questions one would naturally ask. But he would find, on searching, that there is no “Lord of the Isle of Wight” in the British peerage. The person here buried, then, must have been an American lord? That

is it, precisely. The Isle of Wight was the old name of what is now known as Gardiner's Island, lying off the eastern end of Long Island, and the John Gardiner above mentioned was the grandson of the first English settler in the province of New York.

Lion Gardiner, first English settler of New York, and founder of an estate which has ever since remained in the hands of his descendants, was a man of mark and service in his time, still known to students of colonial history; and his name, since extended to a numerous and wide-branching family, is inseparably connected with the manorial domain which he acquired in the New World. Yet very few, I suppose, among the three million inhabitants of the State,—even of those who have skirted the island in fishing-boats,—know more about him than I did when, a couple of years ago, I first sailed to those shores. Although one branch of the writer's family had, long ago, twice intermarried with the Gardiners of Gardiner's Island, I con-

fess that my ideas about Lion Gardiner were vague; and often as I had traversed the Sound, I had never looked upon the island, though it lies almost within sight from the deck of any Newport steamer, behind Plum Island and the Gulls, blending with the outlines of the Montauk promontory.

But even a nearer view from the water gives no adequate notion of the beauty and variety of the demesne. As the pretty sloop-yacht that carried us ran in to anchor near Home Pond, on the sheltered south-west side, we heard the notes of fish-hawks echoing, as if in surprise at the approach of visitors, over manor woods in which the gray trunks and branches of the outermost trees appeared curiously in-laid. Then came quite a different glimpse,—that of the manor-house (built in 1774), nestling among big-bolled cherry-trees, willows, and horse-chestnuts, behind a low ridge like a moraine, and guardedly overlooking the bay from six dormers in a single roof, to which time and sea air have given a mellow coat of greenish-orange moss. Nearer by stood the windmill that supplies flour for the whole population; it is close above the landing-place. The privacy of the manor is protected by the absence of a wharf, and to get ashore and off again is not always an easy matter; but, once on land and across the sandy beach, we found the spot charming. The high, rolling downs called “commons,” behind the mansion, end towards the north and west in rich and glorious woods containing more than a few trees of primeval growth; and the other half of the island is not only supplied with woods, but also with orchards and broad tracts of grain. The nearest land is three miles and a half distant, at Fireplace. Shelter Island on the west, and the north and south arms of Long Island, help to convert Gardiner’s Bay into a spacious roadstead (where the British fleet lay anchored during a part of the Revolutionary War); but from the high bluffs on the east you gaze upon the open Atlantic. A solid bit of earth, seven miles long and from one mile to two miles wide, with a circuit of twenty, it incloses three thousand good acres, and lies completely undisturbed in the busy track of commerce,—an ancestral property which seems to have conferred upon the present owner, besides its more tangible qualities, the comfortable repose of the past.

Gardiner’s Island was the first founded of the old manors of New York, and it is the only one of them that has remained intact. Not a foot of the ground has ever been owned by any but a Gardiner since it first passed from the possession of the Indians, two hun-

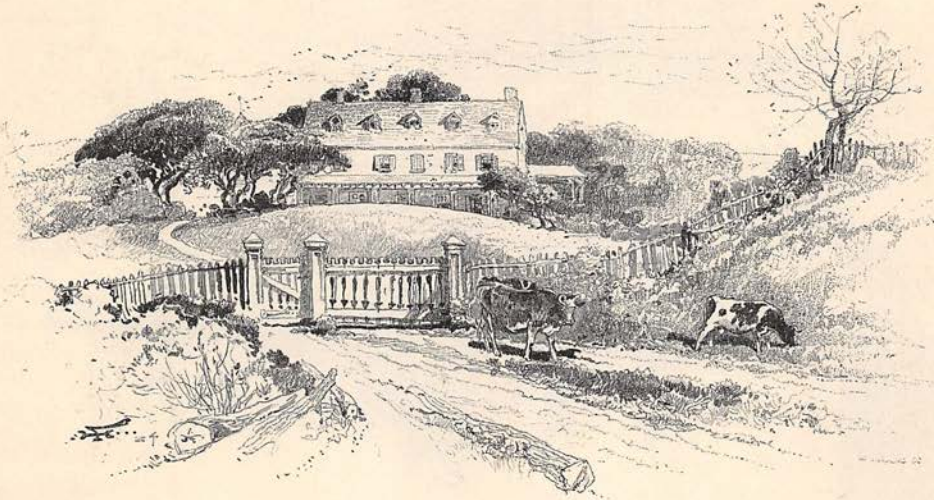
dred and fifty years ago; and all persons living on the island, apart from members of that family, have been servants, slaves, or tenants of the proprietor. All the tenants to-day, numbering from forty-five to sixty, are employed by the owner of the estate; the only exception to what I have said being that the United States has taken a small reservation of sand-spit at the north-west extremity for its lighthouse. Moreover, besides being a manor, Gardiner’s Island was a lordship; for the terms of Governor Dongan’s confirmatory grant in 1686 were, “do erect and constitute the said Island . . . one Lordship and Manor to all intents and purposes, and the said Island shall henceforth be called THE LORDSHIP AND MANOR OF GARDINER’S ISLAND.” Hence the title recorded on the tomb of John, third proprietor, at New London.

But I am forgetting old Lion Gardiner. That was his rugged way of spelling his name; and when one learns that he was three months and ten days on the voyage from Gravesend to Boston, in a twenty-five-ton barque, one is tempted to call him a *sea-Lion*.* The common noun, however, is more applicable to his courage as a fighter. In the inventory of his personal property, drawn up at his death, one item reads, “piece of a corselet.” Where that old scrap of armor has gone to is unknown; but by furbishing it up in imagination, adding a steel cap, a buff coat and cross-belt, a “sword, pistols, and carbine” mentioned by himself, and grouping a few historical facts around these properties, we can make out a fairly life-like figure of the hardy colonial warrior. In the time of Charles I. he went from England to Holland to serve there as lieutenant with the English allies under Lord Vere. He married a Dutch lady, Mary Willemson, daughter of a “deurcant” in the town of Woerden, and became, by his own account, “an engineer and master of works of fortification in the legers of the Prince of Orange, in the Low Countries.” But, being a friend of the Puritans and a Parliament man, he was engaged in 1635 by Lord Say and Seal, with other nobles and gentry, to go to the new plantation of Connecticut, under John Winthrop the younger, and to build a fort at the mouth of the river. He set sail in the barque *Bachelor*—odd circumstance, considering that he was a pioneer of population, destined to be the father of the first English child born in Connecticut and afterwards the first English child born in New York! At Boston he was induced to stay long enough to take charge of and complete the military works on Fort Hill—those that Jocelyn described, later

* It may be noted, by the way, that Cooper’s novel, “The Sea-Lions,” opens at Oyster Ponds, Long Island, some twelve miles direct sail across from the manor; and that the hero of that book is named Gardiner.

on, as mounted with "loud babbling guns." Arrived at the mouth of the Connecticut, he proceeded to construct, amid the greatest difficulties, and though he had but few men to aid him, a strong fort of hewn timber —

to a still more secluded home; purchasing Manchonake — which signified "place where many had died" (of a pestilence) — from the Paumanoc Indians, for "ten coats of trading cloth." Manchonake, or the Isle of Wight,



THE MANOR-HOUSE, GARDINER'S ISLAND.

with a ditch, drawbridge, palisade, and rampart — which he named Saybrook. It was the first stronghold erected in New England outside of Boston. An old Geneva Bible (dating from 1599), now at Gardiner's Island, contains an entry in antique and much faded writing, probably copied from some earlier record made by Lion himself. Those crabbed characters speak faintly from the yellowed page as with his own voice, through the centuries, thus:

"In the yeare of our Lord 1635, July the 10th, came I, Lion Gardiner and Mary my wife, from Woerden, a towne in Holland. . . . We came from Woerden to London, and from thence to New England, and dwelt at Saybrook forte four years, of which I was commander; and there was borne unto me a son named David, in 1636, April the 29, the first born in that place. . . . And then I went to an island of mine owne, which I bought of the Indians, called by them Manchonake, by us the Isle of Wite."

The four years at Saybrook fort were years of hard work, of anxiety, danger, and active warfare with the Pequots, diversified by agriculture carried on under the enemy's fire and efforts to strengthen the plantation. Gardiner himself was severely wounded in one close encounter; but he had the satisfaction, in 1637, of aiding in the plans which resulted in the defeat and almost the annihilation of the Pequots. When his engagement expired with the lords and gentlemen, nothing daunted by his hard experiences, he betook himself

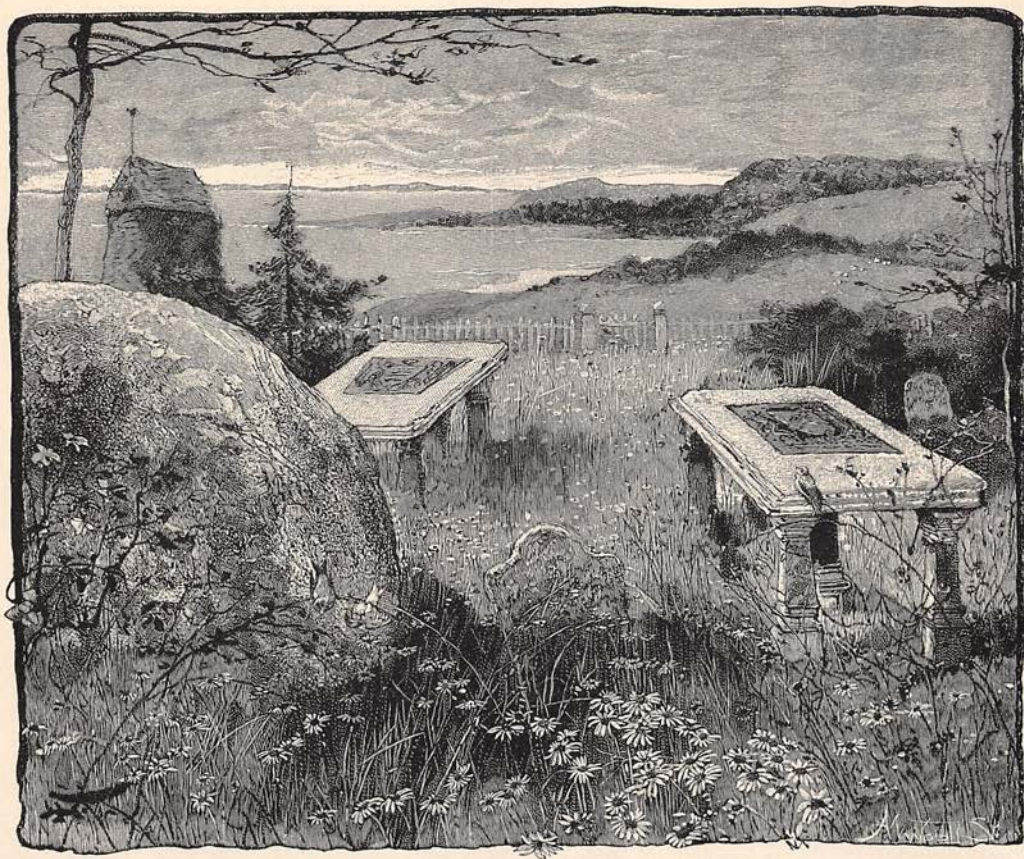
now Gardiner's Island, was sixteen miles distant by water from the nearest settlement of English at Saybrook. Long Island and Shelter Island were still occupied by Indians; and the only inhabitants of Manchonake were Indians, who with their descendants remained tenants at will for three or four generations. But when we conceive of the isolation of the place at that time, we get some notion as to the sturdy self-reliance and unshaken courage of a man who, after a perilous voyage across the sea and a still more perilous sojourn in the wilds of "Kennecticot," was ready to plunge into a deeper solitude and sever himself from fellowship with the colonists, in his search for a permanent abode. He had seen men killed by the Pequots, or burned alive; and in his "Relation of the Pequot Wars" (written three years before his death), speaking of dangers still impending from the red tribes, he mildly says: "Now I am an old man I would fain die a natural death, or like a soldier in the field, with honor," and not be impaled, flayed, and have his flesh cut off piecemeal, to be roasted and thrust into his mouth, "as these people have done" to others. Small wonder that, with such memories, he should recall as "a pretty prank" played upon Pequots who were lurking near the fort at night, to set it afire, the following device. Large doors, stuck full of nails as sharp as awl-blades, were laid on the ground at the approaches; the Indians came, "and as they skipped from one they



SOME RELICS.

trod upon another, and left the nails and doors dyed with their blood, which you know we saw the next morning, laughing at it." His taste in the humorous had grown somewhat tough. But his tact and shrewdness had not been impaired; for, before going to his island, he made friends with Wyandance, afterwards chief of the Montauks, and he was as successful in cultivating peaceful relations with the Indians as he already had been in waging war against them. Twice he foiled conspiracies for a general onslaught on the English, by means of the warnings which his firm friend gave him. Another time he remained as hostage with the Indians, while Wyandance went before the English magistrates who had demanded that he should discover and give up certain murderers. Again, when Ninigret, chief of the Narragansetts, seized and carried off the daughter of Wyandance, on the night of her wedding, Gardiner succeeded in ransoming and restoring her to the father. Wyandance, in gratitude, gave him a large tract of land westward along the Sound, which is now Smithtown; and when the sachem died, he left his son to the guardianship of Lion and his son David. Never, perhaps, has a more remarkable friendship between white man and red man been recorded. They acted in concert with entire mutual trust, keeping the Long Island tribes on peaceable terms with the English by swift and severe measures in case of wrongdoing, tempered with diplomacy, and with justice to both sides. Gardiner's Island was never in any way molested by the savages; and indeed, if Lion Gardiner's advice had been taken in the first instance, there might not have been a Pequot war.

Truly, this wise, brave, and able man makes an ideal First Settler. For thirteen years he remained on the island, exerting his good influence; at the same time developing his territory and deriving an income from the whale-fishery, which then flourished about eastern Long Island. Afterwards, leaving the isle in charge of the old soldiers whom he had brought from the fort as farmers, he passed ten years in East Hampton, where he had bought much land, and died there in 1663, at the age of sixty-four. The place of his sepulture is not known; but in the older East Hampton cemetery, among the graves of many Gardiners, may be seen two extremely ancient flat posts of "drift cedar" sunk deep in the soil and joined



THE GRAVEYARD, GARDINER'S ISLAND.

together by a rail of the same material, about the normal length of a man. The wood is mossy, is bleached and furrowed by time and weather. Under this primitive memorial, it has been surmised, rests the body of Lion Gardiner.

Lion bequeathed the island to his wife; and she at her death left it to their son David "in tail" to his first heir male and the first heirs male following, forever. David, in leaving it to his eldest son, reexpressed the entail; in 1829 by the death of the eighth proprietor without issue, the estate passed to his younger brother, after descending from father to son for more than a hundred and fifty years.

Lion Gardiner's right to the land by purchase from the Indians was confirmed by a grant from the agent of the Earl of Stirling, who obtained a reckless sort of patent from the King for an immense slice of territory, in which the island was embraced. But this grant allowed Gardiner to make and execute such laws as he pleased for church and civil government on his own land, if "according to God and the King," "without giving any account thereof to any one whomsoever"; and,

although David Gardiner formally acknowledged his submission to New York, he received from Governor Nicholls a renewal of his privileges for the consideration of five pounds in hand and a yearly rental to the same amount. The archives of the Hague show that the Dutch complained, so early as 1656, that the English had usurped "in the Krommegou [crooked district] what is called Garnaet's Island"; but the Dutch did not attack the usurper, and the island long remained an independent plantation tributary to the King. Each royal governor who came out to New York, by a species of "political assessment," levied a charge of five pounds for issuing a nice new parchment patent confirming the older ones; but at length Governor Dongan, for a considerable sum paid down, gave David Gardiner the patent which created the island a lordship and manor, and in so doing expressly agreed that the King would thenceforth accept, in lieu of all other tribute, one ewe lamb on the first of May in each year. David, the son of Lion, was thus the first of the family who was authorized to call himself a lord. The title does not seem to have been

much insisted upon by the owners; but it appears on the tombstone of David at Hartford (where he died suddenly and was buried), on John's tablet at New London, and on some of the slabs set up over the graves of Gardiners at East Hampton. It was also generally recognized by the contemporaries of these "lords of the isle." At all events, it gave me a vivid sense of their sovereignty to see the original voluminous document by which the title was conferred, now preserved at the manor-house. Appended to it is a huge disk of dry and hardened brownish wax, on one side of which are stamped the royal arms of England, and on the other a full-length effigy of "Anne, by the grace of God Queen," etc., receiving the homage of two kneeling Indians, who offer a beaver-skin and a roll of wampum. This Great Seal of the Province is a curious and valuable trophy.

In the time of John, "third lord" (actually the second), a memorable incident befell the manor, in the form of a visit from Captain Kidd. The absurdities that have been committed in digging for Kidd's "buried treasure" have, I am aware, brought his name into a still greater disrepute than it suffered while he was alive; the crowning obloquy of all is, that many suspect the bold pirate of having never existed. But if he was a myth, the English State Trials are also a myth; and if Kidd had known that he was to be made the victim of such doubts, he would, I am sure, have delayed the ceremony of being hanged in chains at Execution Dock until he could have prepared satisfactory proofs of his reality. In the last part of the seventeenth century people had not critical sagacity enough to question his existence, after they had caught him. But they knew a pirate when they saw him, and used to spell the word with a capital P.

The injury to honest commerce from these marauders was so great that in 1695 the King, Lord Chancellor Somers, the Duke of Shrewsbury, the Earl of Bellomont, and others joined in fitting out a ship to cruise against pirates, under royal commission; the King reserving one-tenth of the profits that should result, while the other contributors of rank were to share according to their investment in the enterprise. Captain William Kidd, then a skillful merchant captain sailing between London and New York, was chosen as commander, on the recommendation of Colonel Richard Livingston, of the latter town. For a while he cruised on the American coast, in the *Adventure* galley, and was considered so useful that the New York Assembly voted him a present of two hundred and fifty pounds. Soon after this he sailed for the East Indies, and there came to the conclusion that he would do a

little buccaneering on his own account. Capturing a rich Moorish vessel, he transferred his forces to her and burned the *Adventure* galley; and thus he went on, moving his quarters whenever he met a ship that struck her colors and his fancy at the same time; collecting enormous booty; roaming from the East Indies to the West; picking up prizes on the African coast; making his headquarters at Madagascar much of the time. The inducements to this line of conduct may be guessed when the fact is recalled that part of the goods sold from the ship *Queda*, taken off Africa, is said to have yielded him forty thousand pounds.* Complaints of his depredations were made in Parliament, and an exciting debate ensued, in which the Lord Chancellor and the titled projectors of Kidd's expedition were accused of sharing in the proceeds of piracy. Some suspicion, I believe, fell even upon the King. At last the situation became so grave that the King was obliged to offer a reward for Kidd's arrest, and with this he coupled free pardon to all pirates who should surrender before April 30, 1699.

Meanwhile the Earl of Bellomont, who was one of the company that fitted out Kidd, had been appointed Governor of New York, and afterwards of Massachusetts (holding both offices at once), and was making a stir over the pirate question in the colonies. The English State Papers disclose that he wrote to the home government with great show of testy vigor, in July, 1699, complaining that Long Island was a "Receptacle of Pirates." "The Pirates," he says, "are so cherished by the inhabitants that not a man of them is taken up." There is need of an honest judge and one or two active prosecuting attorneys; so this righteous, indignant governor declares. In one letter he sets forth the colossal profit to the citizens from traffic with the pirates. "'Tis the most beneficial trade that ever was heard of." Merchants, it seems, can buy rum at two shillings a gallon in New York, and sell it at the piratical rendezvous in Madagascar for fifty shillings (twenty-four hundred per cent. advance in price)! A pipe of Madeira wine, nineteen pounds in New York — three hundred pounds in Madagascar. "Beneficial" trade, indeed! On the other hand, it is very pleasant to have the pirates send stolen goods to New York, which can be resold at a delectably high figure to the confiding consumer. While Bellomont is visiting the infant metropolis, eight or nine pirate ships (if we are to believe his dispatches) enter the harbor, and, but for his presence, would have landed one hundred thousand pounds in gold and silver, besides

* The State Trials give the value at only £4500, with £400 more for the vessel itself.

quantities of goods; the impossibility of doing which, while the Governor is on hand, puts the local merchants very much out of sorts. Tell-tale "Arabian gold," also, is very plentiful in New York. Briefly, the impression left by these reports is, that the New York provincials, though in principle opposed to piracy, did not deny themselves any advantages that might be had while the system lasted. We have seen something similar in the pirating of books within the present century; otherwise we might refuse to believe that New Yorkers had ever been so naughty.

But is it not rather strange that the Earl of Bellomont, who could exert so much epistolary vigor against the pirates, was unable to bring a solitary offender to punishment, even when eight or nine came into the harbor under his official nose? Remember that Bellomont was one of the company owning the cruiser; bear in mind, also, the startling charges made in Parliament against the members of that company. An appearance of anti-piratical zeal on the Governor's part, even though unattended by active measures, would certainly be a good means of distracting attention from possible dividends that would not bear scrutiny. But now we come to a still stranger circumstance.

November 23d, 1698,—only a few days after Bellomont's letter concerning New York,—the King issued his proclamation against Kidd. Seven months later, viz., at the end of the next June, Kidd—who was in constant communication with other vessels, and must have known all about the proclamation—calmly made his appearance in Gardiner's Bay, *en route* for Boston.

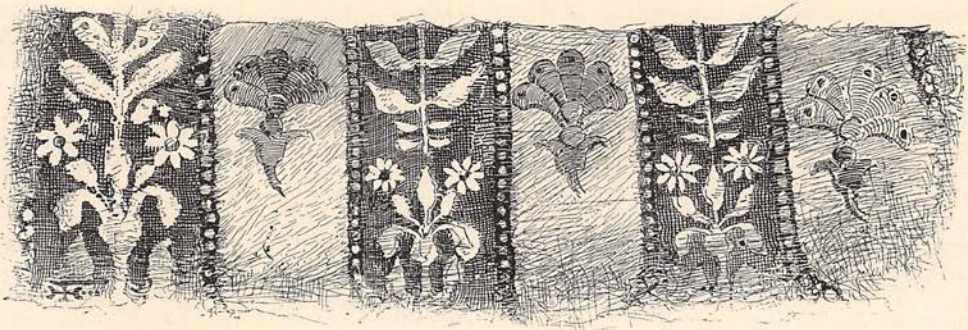
Lord John, one June evening, observed a mysterious sloop with six guns riding at anchor off the island. It was Kidd's last vessel, the *Antonio*. This Lord John was a large, hearty man, who lived generously, was "clever" to the Indians and squaws, and had so much ability in affairs that, although he married four times and spent a great deal of money, he portioned off his daughters handsomely and left a large estate at his death. He was not a person to be scared by a mysterious armed sloop; so, after she had lain in sight two days without making any sign, he put off in a boat, to board her and inquire what she was. As he came up over the side, Captain Kidd—till then unknown to him—received him with the traditional politeness of a thriving desperado, and asked after the health of himself and family. Then, in answer to Lord John's inquiries, he said that he was on his way to Lord Bellomont at Boston: would Gardiner do him the favor to carry two negro boys and one negro girl ashore, to

be kept there until he returned or sent an order for them? Gardiner consented, and went back to the island. The next morning Kidd resumed intercourse by sending ashore a request that Gardiner should come on board at once, and bring six sheep with him. This was rather forcing the acquaintance, Gardiner may have thought; but he complied. Thereupon Kidd promptly ripened acquaintance into intimacy, and asked him if he could spare a barrel of cider. Lord John once more proved neighborly, and found that he *could* spare the cider, sending two of his men ashore to fetch it. While waiting for their return, Kidd got out from his cargo two "pieces" of damaged Bengal muslin,—a rare and valued fabric in its pristine state,—which he put into a bag and requested Gardiner to take as a present to his wife. It is likely enough that the captain, seeing in hearty Lord John a capacity for such things, produced some of his fifty-shilling rum, or three-hundred-pound Madeira to be tasted. Something, at any rate, warmed him up to increased generosity, for "in about a quarter of an hour" he presented the Lord of the Isle with some muslin for his own use. When the men came back with the barrel of cider, he gave them four pieces of gold for their trouble. Furthermore, after getting ready to sail, he offered to pay for the cider; but Gardiner protested that he was sufficiently rewarded by the present to his wife. They parted at last; and Kidd, gallantly firing a salute of four guns, stood for Block Island.

His purpose in lingering in these waters was to get rid of his suspicious freight before going to Boston. During his stay near the island two New York sloops took off part of his cargo; and three days later he returned from Block Island in company with another nefarious sloop, which relieved him of chests containing plate and gold and other goods. This time Kidd again sent for Gardiner and committed to his charge a chest, a box of gold, a bundle of quilts, and four bales of goods. The box of gold, as Gardiner, afterwards solemnly deposed, was destined by Kidd for Lord Bellomont. All the treasure and merchandise was buried in some swampy land near Cherry Harbor, beside Home Pond, within a mile of the manor-house, to be kept for Kidd or his order.

"If I call for it and it is gone," Kidd declared to Lord John, "I will take your head or your son's."

Nevertheless, he sweetened this warning with a present of a bag of sugar before he went. It was probably at this time that the bold corsair made known to Mrs. Gardiner that a small roasted pig would be acceptable. The



FRAGMENT OF A PIECE OF CLOTH-OF-GOLD PRESENTED BY CAPTAIN KIDD TO THE WIFE OF JOHN GARDINER.

frightened lady supervised the cooking of the animal with great care; and the conjunction of roast pig with live Kidd seems to have been auspicious, for the captain returned Mrs. Gardiner's favor with a blanket of cloth-of-gold, long retained by her descendants as an heirloom. It was a rich fabric of silk completely interwoven with gold thread in a very graceful pattern; and, although it has unfortunately been cut up and distributed bit by bit to successive sons and daughters, so that only two small pieces are now known to remain, one of the fragments is still kept at the manor.

It is clear from Kidd's behavior that he counted on absolute immunity, under Bellomont's protection; but things had grown "too hot" for the Governor, and when the pirate chief got to Boston he was arrested and imprisoned; whence he was sent to London, tried in 1701 for piracy and the murder of one of his men, and executed. Bellomont, securing his memoranda of deposits in various places, sent out a demand for their surrender; among others, to Gardiner, who made haste to dig up the chests and bales, and carry them to Boston. The receipt given him by the Governor's committee, dated July 7, 1699, now in the possession of the twelfth proprietor and by him shown to the present writer, specifies: three bags of "dust-gold," one of coined gold, one of silver coin; a bag of silver rings and precious stones, and one of unpolished gems; a piece of crystal, some carnelian rings, two agates, two amethysts; also, bags containing silver buttons and lamps, broken silver, gold bars and silver bars, sixty-nine precious stones "by tale." Their value was set at £4500. A large amount of stuff was likewise found in a house in New York; and Bellomont estimated that the recovered booty would foot up altogether about £14,000.

There can be no doubt as to the solid worth of "Kidd's treasure"; but the obstacle to its availability to-day is that his hiding-places were all known at the time; and if any of the buried valuables escaped the govern-

ment's confiscation, they were dug up by Kidd's accomplices or enforced trustees, and disposed of, one hundred and eighty-five years ago.

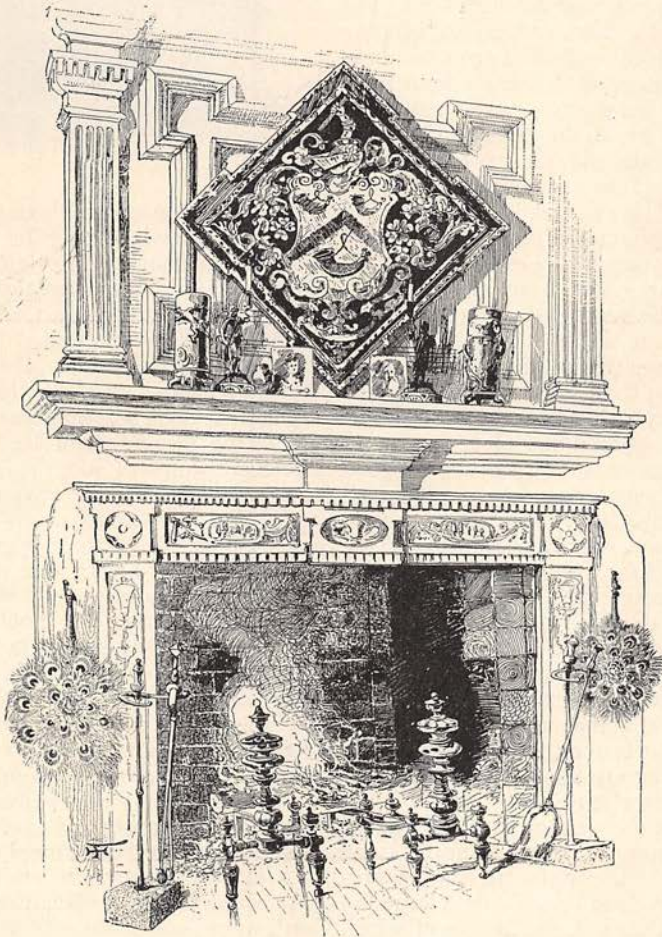
The only profit that Lord John Gardiner made out of this episode was accidental. On coming home from Boston, he unpacked his portmanteau in which some of the smaller packages had been stowed; and as he did so there rolled out upon the floor, to his horrified gaze, one guilty diamond that had got astray from the "precious stones by tale." He would have sent it after the rest, but his wife interposed; she thought he had been at pains enough, and on her own responsibility kept the diamond. Yet even this slight guerdon slipped away, after the manner of all magic or underhand wealth. Mrs. Gardiner gave it to her daughter; and the "large, hearty" John at that time kept a chaplain — one Thomas Green, of Boston — in whom his daughter became interested. Lord John kept the chaplain; the chaplain ran away with and married the daughter; and the daughter kept the diamond. From that little complication of affairs sprang the famous Gardiner-Greens of Boston. The first Gardiner-Green married a daughter of the artist Copley, sister of Baron Lyndhurst, Lord Chancellor of England. There are other family connections of the Gardiners which have historic interest. A son of one of the proprietors married the daughter of Sir Richard Saltonstall. A daughter of the Gardiners was the great-grandmother of George Bancroft; and the widow of John, fifth lord (who had been Deborah Lathrop), married General Israel Putnam, and died at his headquarters in the Hudson Highlands during the Revolution. It should be said here, too, that Mary, the daughter of Lion, married Jeremiah Conkling of East Hampton, the ancestor of Roscoe Conkling. She was "called old Grané Conkling, and was a famous woman in those times and very useful." In 1844 Miss Juliana Gardiner became the second wife of President Tyler. Another connection of some interest, though not one

of relationship, may be found in the fact that the first law-partner of ex-President Arthur was a Gardiner, descended from the valiant Lion.

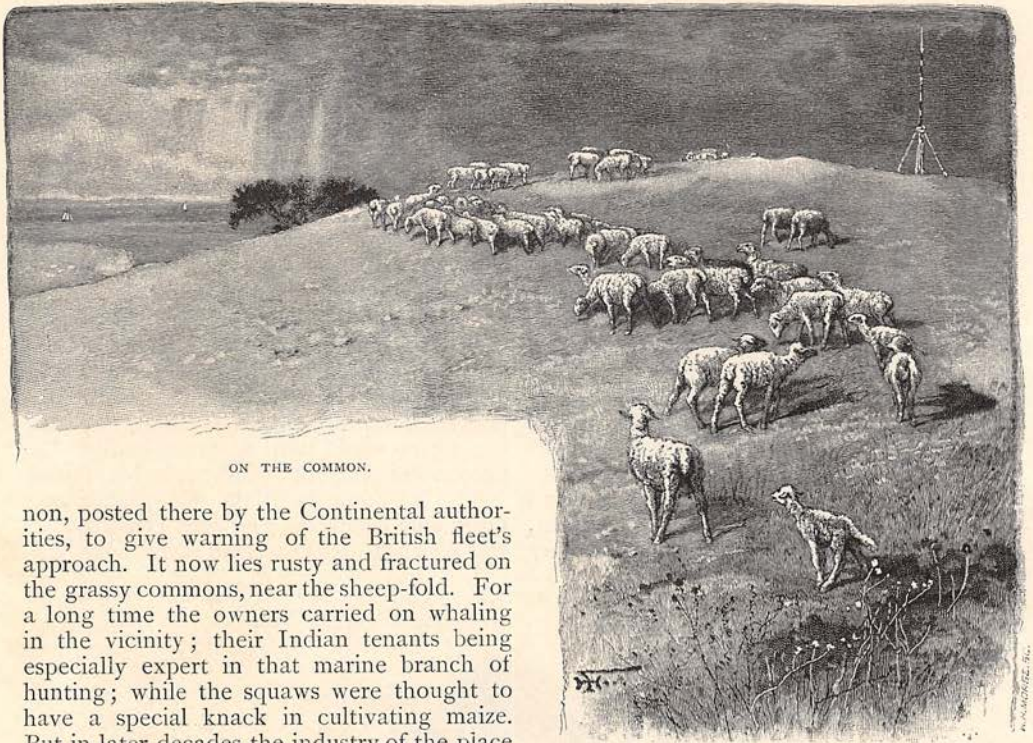
The third lord, so considerably treated by Kidd, was a good deal pestered by pirates, and did not always fare well at their hands. Twice he was invaded by them and had his house ransacked; family plate and cattle were carried off, beds were ripped open for the money ingeniously concealed in them; and once the proprietor himself was severely cut with swords, and tied to a mulberry-tree while the maraud went on. During the minority of the seventh proprietor, John Lyon Gardiner, the British in 1775 plundered the place of seventy cattle and twelve hundred sheep for General Gage at Boston; the rest of the stock was seized by the patriot committee and paid for in Continental money; the timber was much injured; and the officers of the British fleet, which lay for some time in Bostwick's Bay

(1780-81), amused themselves by gunning in the manor-woods or resorting to the house, where on rainy days they pitched dollars on the dining-room floor. The marks of this diversion are still visible. At the end of the war the island had been stripped so bare of immediate valuables that there was hardly personal property enough to pay arrears of taxes. The seventh proprietor, however,—now plain Mr. Gardiner and well satisfied with that appellation, since the Gardiners were all staunch patriots,—held the estate together and restored its prosperity. He was, in addition, a man of scholarly and antiquarian taste; compiled a list of Long Island Indian words; and had a literary judgment so sound that Lyman Beecher, during his East Hampton pastorate, never would print a sermon until it had been submitted to Mr. Gardiner for his opinion.

The later annals of the island have been quiet and peaceful. The only armament of war which it ever possessed was a single can-



ESCUTCHEON AND FIREPLACE IN THE MANOR-HOUSE.



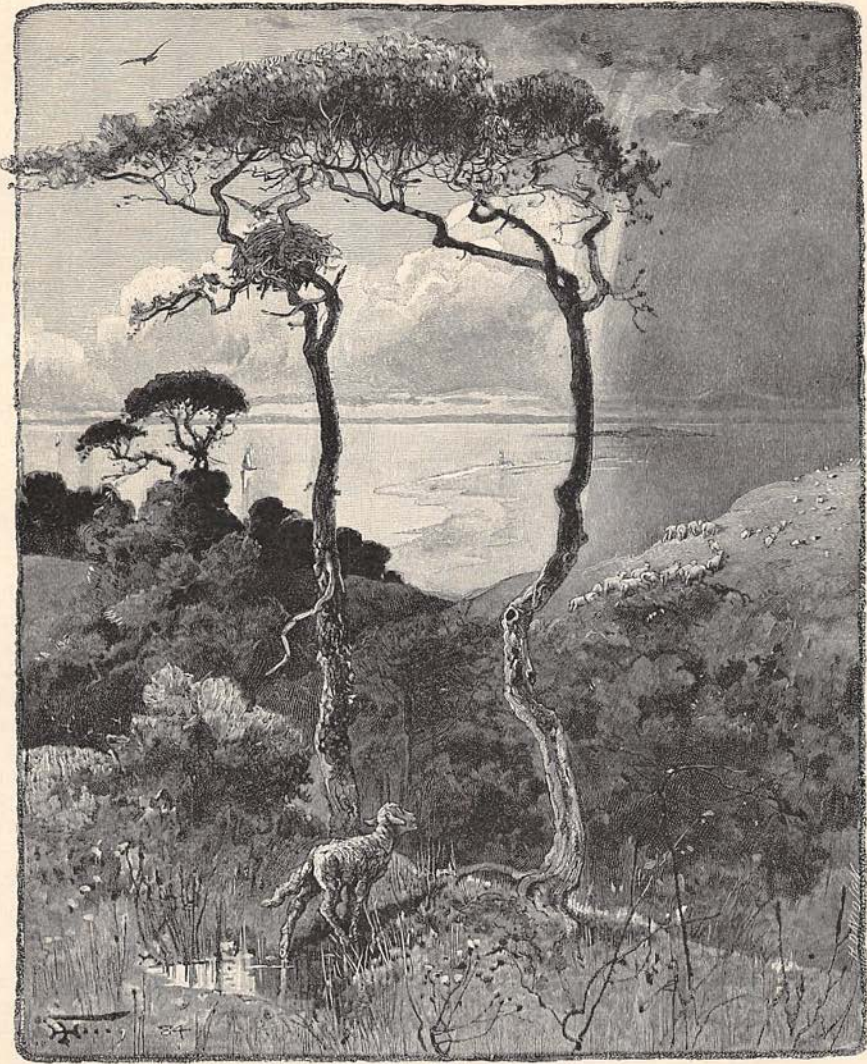
ON THE COMMON.

non, posted there by the Continental authorities, to give warning of the British fleet's approach. It now lies rusty and fractured on the grassy commons, near the sheep-fold. For a long time the owners carried on whaling in the vicinity; their Indian tenants being especially expert in that marine branch of hunting; while the squaws were thought to have a special knack in cultivating maize. But in later decades the industry of the place has been confined to farming, sheep-raising, and stock-breeding; the sea being resorted to only for such fish, clams, or lobsters as may supply the daily manorial needs. Except for tea, coffee, sugar, spices, wine, and manufactured articles, the territory is absolutely self-sustaining. There is no church and no antipodal rum repository within its borders.* Notwithstanding the power conferred on the pre-revolutionary owners, they never made any laws, but governed the place in a patriarchal way by the canons of good sense, good will, and friendly understanding, as their successor does to-day. There is not even a watchdog on the place. Yet the records of the island do not include a single crime or serious misdemeanor among the tenants. The little community is diligent, orderly, contented, happy. Even turbulent characters, who now and then drift thither among the hired summer-laborers, promptly grow calm under the peculiar and mild influence of the sweet landscape, the soft ocean air, and the ancestral quietude and dignity that invest the daily routine of this bucolic retreat.

It used to be the custom, in going thither from East Hampton, to signal from the Long Island beach directly opposite the manor-house. This was done by building a large fire of seaweed on the sand, the smoke of which

being seen across the three-mile channel, a skiff would be sent over for the visitors. It was this custom which originated the name of Fireplace. But my artist friend and I took a cat-boat from Greenport, when on a breezy afternoon of July we revisited the spot together. After the chafe and whirr, the sordid toil and fallacious glitter of a city hibernation, how idyllic it seemed! White clouds hung poised above the meek line of land, like the outstretched wings of some spirit of perpetual rest brooding over the wave-embosomed island. The soft, weird cry of the fish-hawks rang faintly out of the upper air, as before. The old manor-house, wise with a thousand unspoken memories and associations, still peered out from its cozy nook; and the bob-white whistled without fear in front of the very door, while blackbirds, robins, English sparrows, and the shy brown-thrasher flitted to and fro and chirped in happy unison, among the cherries and around the box-hedges of the tangled garden. We roamed through the wainscoted rooms and hallways of the well-proportioned house, and gazed at the framed escutcheon over the old fireplace in the parlor,—a marvel of exquisite embroidery in floss-silk, wrought by a daughter of the fourth lord, whose education was said to have cost

* The wife of the present proprietor maintains a Sunday-school for the island children.



GARDINER'S POINT.

more than the value of the cattle on the island. This escutcheon consists of a chevron between three bugle-horns, with a helmet above, and for crest an arm in armor holding a broken lance. The latter emblem betokens a warrior of great power, famous for disarming opponents. Underneath the insignia is the motto: "By the name of Gardiner." The arms are identical with those formerly borne by Thomas Gardiner, prior of the monastery of Tynemouth, England; but it has never been definitely ascertained from what family in England the Gardiners of Gardiner's Island came. When we returned from our wanderings hither and thither about the estate, the old portraits, the antique wainscots, the quaint engravings on the walls, drew us silently from

the present back to the past; and amid the varied conversation at the table there was always present on plate or glass that mailed arm grimly holding the broken lance; so that gradually we came to feel that we were ensconced in some placid feudal stronghold of the past.

Severed from newspapers, the mail, and the telegraph, we gave ourselves up to the delicious atmosphere of the place, and to the illusion of remoteness which it created. We rode over the breezy downs, where like shades of velvet the grass changes from dun to green or yellow, or to violet bloom, under wind and sun and cloud; where also a drove of a thousand old-gold sheep may sometimes be seen massing themselves on a blowy upland against a sky

of purple storm. Again we wandered afoot in the luscious woods, through which herds of wild deer, held sacred from the rifle, live free and unconcerned on companionable terms with humanity. Huge vines run upward and downward from the ground to the branches, suggesting tropical scenes. The intoxicating scent of wild-grape blossoms, that cluster in masses everywhere, streams through the leafy labyrinth; and the song-sparrows' roundelay mingles with the high, questioning note of the fish-hawks that build and haunt their ragged nests at will on the tops of moss-mantled cedars, hemlocks, oaks, or twisted pepperidge-trees. Blue herons often come to the Tobacco Lot Pond, and sometimes the white crane appears there.

And the curious names of localities! We find Hoop-pole Thicket, Whale Cliff, Eastern Plain, Stepping Stones, Marvel Mount Rock, Old Barn Field, and Tobacco Lot (where no tobacco has grown within the memory of white men). These are all shown on an old surveyor's map of 1722, which hangs in the upper hall of the manor and has been much nibbled by mice, who have apparently tried thus to exemplify the encroachments of the sea. The water gains upon Gardiner's Island at the rate of ten feet a year on the bay side, and much more on the lofty ocean shore. But as a computation shows that, at this rate, the tide will require one hundred and thirteen years to reach the manor-house, the present owner need not be anxious. Even then the center of the domain will be untouched. And there, on the open, rising ground, lies the lonely and solemn grave-yard of the Gardiners. A granite boulder—the only one on the island—forms a natural monument, around which the memorial stones are grouped; and when you stand there, compassing nearly the whole island in your view, with oblivious waters on every side, you feel that if this unique domain was the "place where many have died," it is

also the place where many have lived and may yet live.

It was a hard thing to forsake the baronial hospitality which, for the time being, had made us nearly as much at home on the island as its long line of proprietors have been. When our feet touched the soil of Greenport; when we heard the steam-cars again, and were infested by newspapers as by a swarm of mosquitoes; when we suddenly rediscovered the existence of dust, finding ourselves stifled by the hopeless, dowdy ugliness of an American village business street, the lordship and manor seemed as distant and desirable as if it had been three thousand miles away, instead of twelve. So unlike was it to everything else hereabouts, that I should have doubted its existence had I known of it only from hearsay. But had not my eyes beheld the Geneva Bible, the rare presentation copy of Eliot's Indian Bible, the old patents, and the inherited wampum belt? And these fingers had touched Kidd's cloth-of-gold! Moreover, I had slept in the haunted chamber, and been thrilled by odd apprehensions even before I knew it was haunted. Strange things could we tell—my friend and I—about mysterious noises, peculiar sparkles of light, and an uncanny ring of green flame revolving on the fireless hearth at midnight. But as our host did not divulge the ghost story, and I have found this untold tale as impressive as any I ever heard, I shall not further detail our experience. 'Tis enough that I know Lion Gardiner's legacy to be what I have described it, and more: a sea island quite unspoiled by time or pseudo-progress, yet the seat of a luxurious and independent home; a lovely solitude never defiled by a hotel; a little principality, where a good citizen rules without pomp and pays taxes on the mainland; a small country in itself, which no Caucasian ever called his own unless he was called "by the name of Gardiner."

George Parsons Lathrop.

THE POET.

HE walks with God upon the hills!
 And sees, each morn, the world arise
 New-bathed in light of paradise.
 He hears the laughter of her rills,
 Her melodies of many voices,
 And greets her while his heart rejoices.
 She to his spirit undefiled,
 Makes answer as a little child;
 Unveiled before his eyes she stands,
 And gives her secrets to his hands.

Ina D. Coolbrith.