

thers. It would seem strange that, after the lapse of eighty-one years, I should find anyone who knew my grandfather, yet I saw several persons who stated that they were personally acquainted with him, although they could not remember when he moved away; but after doing so, he returned to that neighborhood, and visited his relatives and acquaintances, and they had distinct recollections of him, and gave me reminiscences of his history.

The graveyard at Topsfield contained no monuments over about eighty years old. I do not recollect the exact date. Among the oldest were the names of my great aunts and other relatives. Being a firm believer in the doctrine of baptism for the dead, I was anxious to procure the names of those departed persons wherever our records might be deficient, and I have, I believe, a prospect of obtaining the names of about nine hundred of the kindred of my great grandmother—Priscilla Gould.

The old portion of the burying ground at Topsfield, used by the early inhabitants, is totally without monuments—no gravestones whatever, so that I presume they simply used headboards or monuments of wood; and the place is now reserved as a sacred precinct in which, we were told that any of the kindred of those ancient worthies of the town might plant gravestones if they choose, but no person is allowed to be buried there. The cemetery had been enlarged, and from eighty years ago down to the present time there had been placed there many gravestones and handsome obelisks, some manifesting the pride and aristocracy of those who placed them there. I noticed one particularly, on which was inscribed a notice to the effect that the person buried there was a millionaire. It did not say whether he

obtained money honestly or by some other means.

In visiting the office of the town clerk, I examined the record kept by my great grandfather in 1776-8, at which time he was the clerk of that town. I also found, by examining the records ten years before then, that he had represented the town in the Legislature of the Colony of Massachusetts, and was a very firm supporter of the Revolution. Just as I was about leaving the office to go to the railway station, I was told by the clerk that he had a list of the names of the children of Robert Smith in the town record. Robert Smith was supposed by us to be the first of our family who settled in Massachusetts, sometime previous to the year 1665. I there ascertained what our family records fail to show. Our records show that he had a son Samuel, and that Samuel had a son Samuel, and that Samuel had a son Samuel and a son Asael, and Asael was our grandfather; but I ascertained that this Robert Smith had a large family, and their names are contained in that old town record.

The Genealogical Society of Massachusetts has got out books containing the records of some hundreds of the families of the oldest settlers of the colony. If our friends here, whose ancestors were buried in New England, would unite in purchasing an entire set of these works, they would be enabled to find collateral, if not direct, branches of their kindred; and so obtain a key to help them in making the necessary records to attend to the ordinances for their dead. But our faith is, brethren and sisters, that when we have exhausted all the powers within our natural reason and reach to obtain a knowledge of our dead, and the Lord is satisfied with us, revelations will be opened to our understandings by