A SKETCH

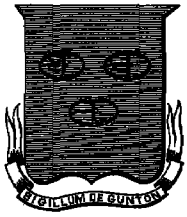
OF THE LIFE OF

DR. WILLIAM GUNTON,

BORN AT

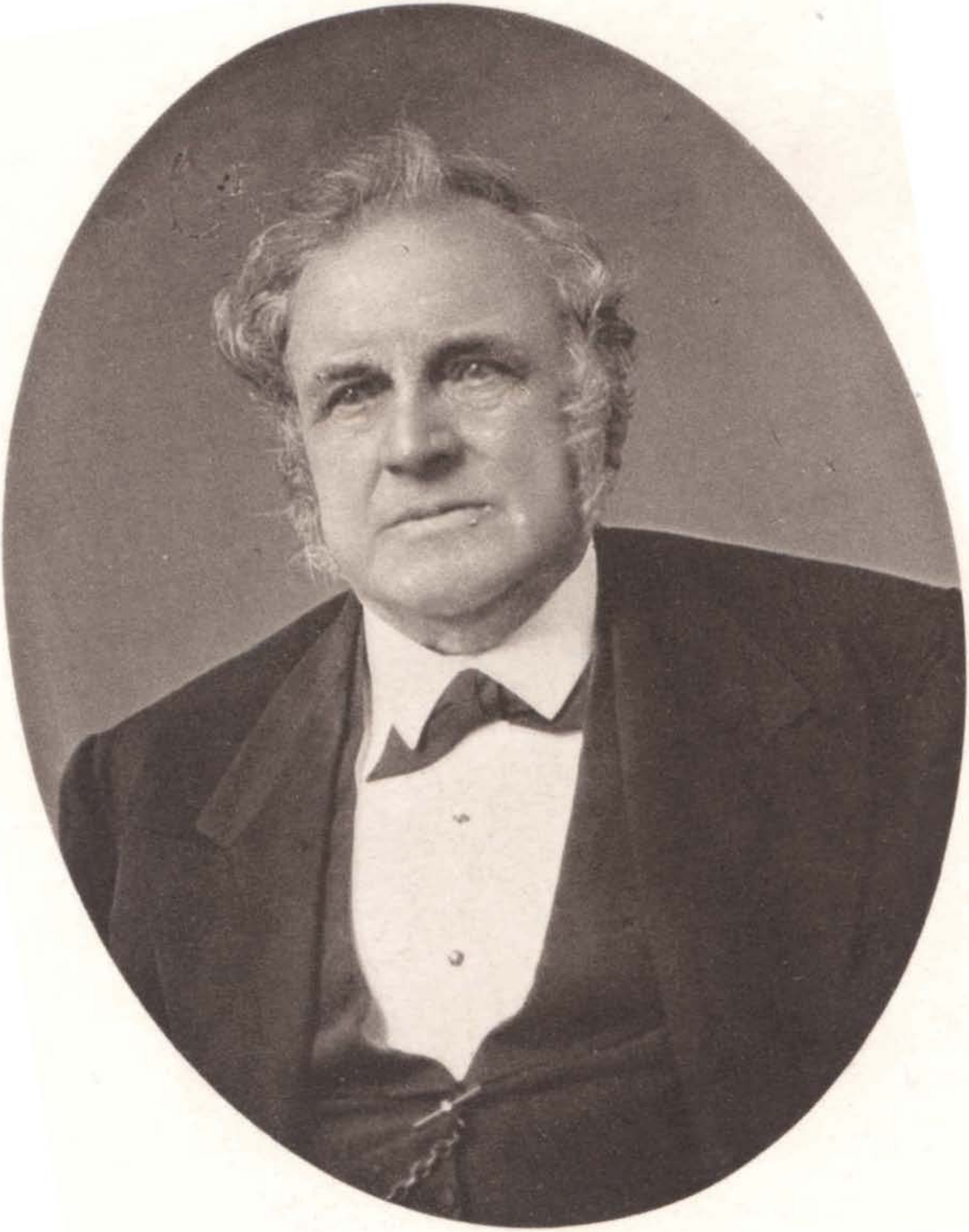
AYLSHAM, NORFOLK, ENGLAND,

October 29th, 1791.



Pro me: si merear, in me.
(Norfolk motto.)

WASHINGTON:
JOSEPH L. PEARSON, PRINTER.
1878.



WASHINGTON, *Dec. 26th*, 1878.

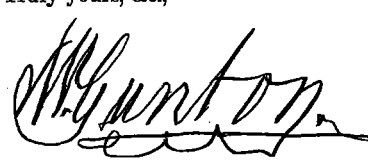
To Dr. JOHN B. BLAKE,
President of the Association of the
Oldest Inhabitants of the District of Columbia.

MY DEAR SIR: In transmitting through you to the venerable Association over which you have so long presided, a small volume containing an account of the principal events of my life, now protracted far beyond the allotted age of man, permit me, as a personal friend of many years, to congratulate you on the distinction you have so worthily attained as the President of so notable a Body of men, and to thank the Members of the Association for the honor they have annually conferred upon me in designating me as one of their Vice-Presidents, and in continuing to me that honor for so many years.

As one of the objects of this eminent Association is to preserve the traditions of past times in the biographies of its Members, and as a kind Providence has permitted me to mingle so long with my fellow-men in this city, and to have a somewhat extended experience of its affairs, I have thought it expedient to ask that this account of my life, and the events that have entered into it, may be preserved in the archives of the distinguished Association to which we belong.

I trust, therefore, that the offering I herewith make may prove acceptable both to yourself and to the Members of the Association. And I take leave to add that, while the incidents recounted in this volume are mine, yet the glowing manner in which they are set forth belongs to my valued personal friend, the Rev. Dr. Sunderland, to whose communication I would respectfully call your attention.

With sentiments of high esteem, I am,
Truly yours, &c.,



THE ORIGIN OF THE FOLLOWING BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH.

In the years 1877–'78 I had a number of very intimate conversations with Dr. William Gunton in reference to the story of his long career. I have known him personally for the last quarter of a century, and I felt a deep interest in knowing more of the specific incidents that have marked his life. By many questions, which I took the liberty of propounding, I drew out from him the facts on which the following Sketch was founded. The style I have adopted in presenting these facts is one for which I only am responsible, and the work I have performed is one which I can sincerely call a labor of love. I have conceived it at least the most fitting offering I can lay on the altar of Memory to one whom it has been my privilege to know so long. And if its testimony shall prove as gratifying to his posterity as its preparation has been to myself, they will cherish it as among the most precious relics of his character and name.

B. Sunderland

Pastor First Pres. Church.

WASHINGTON, *Nov. 28th*, 1878.

DR. WILLIAM GUNTON.

In the time of William the Conqueror, A. D. 1066–1087, the Guntons were a strong family among the gentry of Norfolk. Their lands lay about midway between Norwich, the capital of the county, and Cromer, on the coast of the North Sea. Gunton Hall stood some four or five miles N. E. of Aylsham. The Gunton lands were in Gunton, Marsham or Martham, Hemesby, Dalling, Worstede, and Castre.

Matthew de Gunton was lord of the Manor in the reign of Henry I., A. D. 1122.

His two sons were Roger and Thomas, who each had a moiety, styled Over Hall and Nether Hall. This division of the Gunton estate seems to have continued for a long period.

Bartholomew de Gunton held one moiety or lordship in the reign of Richard I., A. D. 1189.

In the first year of King John, A. D. 1199, there was a pleading about lands in Martham and Hemesby between Walter de Bassingham and the Bishop of Norwich, in which lands the family De Gunton had an important interest.

In the eighth year of Henry III., A. D. 1224, we find another Matthew de Gunton in possession, who had married Isabell, daughter and heir of Sir Robert de Castre, and who granted by fine to the Prior of Norwich the advowson of the

Church of Martham. He also, A. D. 1228, being lord of Castre in right of his wife, granted to Thomas de Castre and his heirs certain lands, services, and customs.

We find also that Sir Roger de Gunton, son of this Sir Matthew, gave a messuage and land to God and the Church of the Holy Trinity of Norwich.

The son of this Roger was again Sir Matthew de Gunton, whom we find in possession in the reign of Henry III., A. D. 1235. His daughter Isabell married William de Stalham, to whom Sir Matthew granted a portion of his estates in Dalling and Worstede.

We find John de Gunton, brother of this Sir Matthew, holding a moiety of the Gunton Manor in the reign of Edward I., A. D. 1277. This John died without issue, leaving his sisters and co-heirs—

Isabella, wife of Roger de Bavent.
Margaret, wife of John de Mithwold.
Catherine, wife of Simon de Lincoln.
Sibbilla, wife of John de Gymingham.
Juliana, wife of Simon Peche.

In the reign of Edward II., A. D. 1323, we find a Sir Roger de Gunton, possessor of a moiety of the Gunton Manor, Rector of the Church of St. Andrews, and that he died that year.

In the reign of Edward III., A. D. 1343, we find another John de Gunton in possession.

And in the same reign, A. D. 1347, we find a Sir Thomas de Gunton lord of the Manor of Langham.

We next find Milicentia, daughter and heir of Sir Walter de Gunton, who married Sir Walter de Walcot, by whom she had a son, the second Sir Walter.

This Sir Walter married Joan, daughter of Sir William Clopton. Four daughters and co-heirs were the issue of this marriage—

Margaret, wife of Birney.
Elizabeth, wife of Wylton.
Catharine, wife of Dorward.
Margery, a nun of Carhow Abbey.

Joan, granddaughter-in-law of Sir Walter de Gunton, and relict of Sir Walter de Walcot, then married Sir Roger Beauchamp, and after his death she obtained letters of administration on his estate, A. D. 1374.

In the year A. D. 1781 a very full and accurate history of the county of Norfolk was published, from which it appears that Gunton Hall was at that time the seat of Sir Harbord Harbord, and the following reference is made to the grounds and buildings:

"Gunton Hall is at present a small house, but is going to be enlarged, and has lately been ornamented with new offices under the direction of Mr. Wyatt. They are by far the most complete buildings for the purpose of any in this Kingdom. The new style of architecture is by its lightness and extreme elegance well adapted to offices, and these are particularly worthy the attention of strangers from the studied contrivance for conveniency in the apartments, as also for the slate covering, which consists of small square pieces of slate, each fastened with wood screws.

Not far from the house is the parish Church, which, by the late Sir William Harbord, was taken down and rebuilt with a magnifi-

cent portico of the Doric order. This receives an additional degree of sanctity from two venerable druidical oaks which grace the front of it."

The house and offices stand on an eminence, but as they were not sufficiently advanced to permit any drawn representation of them at the time of the publication of the history, only the Church, standing in the spacious park, could be illustrated by the work of the artist, the copy of which is here to be seen, showing the singularly venerable beauty of the Gunton Church and its noble environment.

The Chronicles show, in process of time, that while the name of Gunton remained to the Hall, the lands were transferred under other titles and many branches of the family became extinct. So that after the lapse of four hundred years, the date when this sketch should properly begin, there was but a single household of the name of Gunton in all that part of the country.

This was the family of Mr. Thomas Gunton, attorney-at-law of Aylsham, who had married Miss Jane Mendham of Lynn, a sister of the Rev. William Mendham, a dissenting minister at Briston. This family consisted of father, mother, and six children: Thomas, Elizabeth, Mary, William, Harriet, and Anne.

William, the subject of this article, was born at Aylsham, Norfolk Co., Eng., Oct. 29th, 1791, and named for his maternal uncle, William Mendham Gunton. The middle name, however, has been omitted, and he has long been known as Dr. William Gunton, his autograph "W. Gunton"

GUNTON CHURCH.

in the Park of Sr. Harbord Harbord Bart. J. Thompson sculp.

Published as the Act directs August 12 1779 by M. Booth.

being of the simplest possible form, but written in large bluff characters and connected by a peculiar link-like flourish so familiar to many eyes. How he acquired the title of Doctor will subsequently appear.

Aylsham or (as pronounced) Elsham stands on a branch of the river Bure and directly in the route from Norwich, almost due north to Cromer, about eleven miles from the former, and ten from the latter place. A century ago it was a pretty market-town of some 4,000 people. It had been famous for the superiority of its linen textures, when the principal business of the place was the production of these fabrics. It then stood with its fine Church and Rectory, its principal inn, called the "Black Boys," its open streets and blocks of well-built stores and dwelling-houses, its spacious market-square, its extensive flour-mill, its high bridge over the Bure, its lately finished canal terminating at the bridge and raising high hopes of increased business in navigation, its chalybeate spring, once a great resort but now abandoned and hedged in by shrubs and primroses. Its principal school was kept by a clergyman, minister, or teacher, in his own residence, an ordinary three-story house, where he had some forty pupils, children of the well-to-do families, while there were some minor schools for children in humbler circumstances. Beside the usual holidays, it had two annual fairs, March 23d and September 26th, and also Lammas day, which was August 1st, the day of the feast of fruits and paying in of tithes. The town was distant about one and a half miles from Blickling Hall

and lake, the seat of a noble Baron, Henry Hobart. It was in a level country, much of which was covered with forest, where partridges, pheasants, and hares furnished abundant game, and where man-traps and spring-guns were thickly set to prevent poaching, quite prevalent in those days.

The sports of the young consisted of races in the market-place, fishing and bathing in the stream, and skating on the lake of Blickling whenever the ice was sufficiently strong.

In the days to which this narrative refers, the Bishop of Norwich, whose See embraced this region, was represented by his church Rector, a stout man of the name of Collyer, who was at the same time a Major of militia, Manager of balls, and Director of all plays enacted in the theatre, which was then a common barn-building turned into a play-house. And by virtue of all these high offices he got the tithes.

The house of Mr. Attorney Gunton was a long two-story brick structure, with his office at the extreme end, a garden at the side, and a small yard fronting to the East. Here for twenty years he continued the practice of his profession—chiefly in civil suits—his business being not to plead, but carefully to prepare cases for counsellors who did.

Meanwhile the children were growing up, and for some of the later years of this period, Thomas, the eldest, was employed in his father's office. At about the age of ten, William was sent to the principal school of the place, then in charge of the Rev. Mr. Allison. Here he continued for about four years, acquiring such knowledge of the English

language and other rudiments as the elementary instruction of those times could impart. The boy soon took the head of his class, where with rare exceptions he remained. Indeed, he was noted for doing well all he undertook. Of a strong, vigorous English constitution, he was foremost among his companions in all athletic pastimes. He often stood in the mill-door, where few were privileged to be for the purpose, and fished in the stream which came rolling down the flume. Again, he would sport in the water below the mill, the finest of all the swimmers. Then he would speed over the glassy ice the most lithe and supple of the skaters. And again, he would be running races in the market-square, the fleetest of all the runners.

This was the kind of boy he was—yet withal, exceedingly modest and easily abashed. An instance of this is told of him at a dinner at his Uncle Mendham's, in Briston. The principal dish was a roasted ox-heart, which, though highly relished by many people, the lad could not stomach. With abundance of it on his plate, he could neither swallow it nor else dispose of it. His plague all through the dinner hour was how to manage not to attract observation. Thankful when it was over, he will probably remember that dinner to the latest day of his life.

The tide of emigration from Europe was about that time setting strongly outward. Many families had sought new fortunes in the Western world. There was scarcely any neighborhood in the British Islands from which some persons had not come to America. The new Republic was growing

in popularity, and the National Government had established its seat at Washington. The cities of Alexandria and Georgetown were within the famous District, and the current of the broad Potomac rolled between them. Correspondence of adventurers with the friends at home stimulated still further the spirit of adventure.

All this was passing in the mind of Mr. Thomas Gunton about the year A. D. 1806. Advising with friends, some counselled him to go to Buenos Ayres, but the scale of probabilities soon turned in favor of the land of the Stars and Stripes, and of the District of Columbia, as the point of destination. Accordingly he set about preparation to transplant his family on these Western shores—a far more formidable undertaking than the present generation are likely to conceive. Then, instead of what we now witness, but a single vessel in a year set out from Liverpool for Alexandria—and that was a sailing vessel—relatively small, with slender accommodations, many discomforts, and the voyage, even when prosperous, requiring nearly three months' time.

But the decision made, his practice was given up, his furniture sold, and the house abandoned. His son Thomas found a place at a fair salary in the Law Office of Messrs. "Foster, Unthank and Foster," of Norwich, taking with him his mother and sisters to reside till they, too, could follow to America.

The father and his son, William, armed with letters to a Mr. Thomas C. Wright, already settled in Georgetown,

made their way, in the spring of 1807, to Liverpool, taking on their route Wisbech and Peterborough, where they found acquaintances. It was between these places that William saw for the first and last time an English May-pole, which greatly delighted him; and while stopping at the latter place a grand fete was in progress in honor of the day when some favored Englishman was attaining his majority. The town was in a blaze of enthusiasm, a whole ox was roasted, and some friends of William went out with him to share in the spectacle. On this day barrels of beer twenty-one years old, kept all that time in prospect, were broached, and freely dispensed among the people. William drank about a wineglass. When he got back to the Inn he was too weary to be able to pull off his boots! The liquor had so fatigued him! This was a cause of grief and mortification both to father and son, and left such a lesson behind it as the boy never forgot.

Bidding their friends a long farewell, they reached Liverpool and found they must there wait for the sailing vessel for many weeks. This time was spent by the father in making inquiries, arranging details, and preparing for the voyage, while William, who then thought he would be a printer, amused himself in one of the large printing establishments of the city, where he acquired an incipient taste for that business.

But at length the day of departure came, and on July 23d, 1807, the vessel, "William and John," dropped down the Mersey seeking the Western sea, and launched on a rough

wild voyage. Captain Woodhouse, whose brother was first Mate, shared his quarters with Gildea, another sea-captain, now a passenger. The cabin was wholly occupied by Mr. Kincaid, wife, and four or five children, one of whom was already a young lady—people from Scotland. Mr. Kincaid was coming over to America in some official capacity, having a friend in Mr. Patton, British Consul at Alexandria. Besides these, were the Guntons, Messrs. Gordon, Atkinson, Martin, and one or two others.

The Kincaids had brought with them a barrel of oat-meal, which, in addition to the ship's fare, they esteemed quite a luxury. The first three weeks interfered somewhat with the appetites of the voyagers, but after that they could manage anything but the oat-meal of the Scotchman.

The captain was one of the most profane men when no serious danger threatened. He would walk the quarter-deck for hours, cursing the wind and sea and the God of both, and calling down on his ship all manner of imprecations. Mr. Gunton's blue coat with covered buttons giving him a somewhat clerical appearance, Mrs. Kincaid, alarmed at the amazing profanity of the commander, once requested him to speak to the captain, almost fearing that Providence might take him at his word and send them all to the bottom together. Yet it was very noticeable that when real danger seemed impending the captain ceased his swearing and moved about with reverence or at least the gravity of silence.

The long voyage was at last drawing to completion; the vessel had sighted the Capes, and, while ascending the Chesa-

peake Bay, at length hailed a schooner bound to Baltimore, which took one or two of the little company to that city, leaving the remainder to continue their voyage up the Potomac. And they were yet two weeks in reaching Alexandria. During this fortnight the stores of the vessel having been well exhausted, supplies were drawn almost daily from the shore, the principal article of which, new to the emigrants, was the American yam (sweet potato), and which unfortunately seemed not to be a favorite with the new comers.

As they were approaching the town on Saturday, the last day of the voyage, Master William, eager with expectation, was moving about the deck, when a strong whisk of wind striking across the vessel, between the main and mizzen mast, swept his hat overboard, and it was gone beyond recovery. With bared head, thus the lad approached the soil of his future efforts and triumphs.

But as the vessel drew to the dock at midnight the moon shone down in her full silver beauty, almost eclipsing the dancing lights which flickered here and there with a feeble ray. It was October 18th, 1807, and they were safe again on shore! And though so far from home and family, yet with what gladness and heartfelt gratitude they proceeded to the "Marshall House," the first roof to shelter the strangers, and where their first breakfast was eaten on Sunday morning, those can tell who have in a similar way escaped the perils of the great deep and found themselves once more on *terra firma*.

The boy had had enough of the ocean. He has never tried it since! The first thing in the morning was to replace his hat—a matter of some difficulty, it being the Sabbath, and places of business closed. However, on explaining to a hat vendor the necessity, the scruple gave way, and the hat was forthcoming. Invitations came for supper at the house of Mr. Entwisle, an Englishman residing in the city, and the same evening Mr. Gunton and son, and Messrs. Martin, Gordon, and Atkinson were seated at the table of their new-made friend, where they found a generous provision and a hearty welcome.

On the following day the Guntons found a small Packet, Captain McPherson, running to Georgetown, and at once availed themselves of the opportunity to reach their destination. Anxious not to be set down at the wrong place, as soon as he stepped on board the Packet Mr. Gunton began making inquiries of a group of passengers who were going up the river, and, singularly enough, he found in the person who answered to his questions, a Mr. Cooper, an old friend whom he had known in England. This gentleman, coming from Norwich, had been residing here a number of years and was able readily to give the desired information. On reaching Georgetown they soon found Mr. Wright, to whom their letters were directed, and who received them warmly, and at once extended them the hospitality of his house. They found here also a Mr. Bell, who had preceded them by a few months, and a number of gentlemen from England already in the employ of the Government,

among whom were Nicholas and Robert King, the former a surveyor, Mr. More, in the Land Office, John Gardner and Dr. Dinmore, also clerks under the Government, and others.

His hope was to obtain a Government position, but as this was not feasible at this time, he opened a school in a house of Mr. Mecklin, between what was then known as the Six and Seven Buildings, near the residence of the British Minister, on Pennsylvania avenue, having among his pupils a young girl who afterwards became the famous "Mrs. Eaton." Relinquishing his school after a time, he became private tutor in the family of George Calvert, Esq., who resided at Riversdale, near Bladensburgh, and at the end of two years he obtained a clerkship in the Land Office, which he retained to the time of his death in 1821.

Mr. Cooper had just undertaken to publish a small newspaper of octavo form, with John B. Colvin, editor. Into this office the son, William Gunton, entered, with the purpose of following the business of a printer. But an experience of a month or six weeks led to a distaste for this kind of life and prepared him for some more congenial pursuit. About that time Dr. John Ott, a druggist of some years' standing in Georgetown, whose store was located at the corner of Bridge and High streets, was in want of an attendant, and on speaking of it to Mr. Wright, the Doctor was advised by him to secure the service of the son of Mr. Gunton. Negotiation was at once opened, and William was apprenticed by his father to Dr. Ott. The terms of compensation were board and clothing and twenty-five dollars

annually for spending-money. Thus the lad, boarding with Dr. Ott, settled down to the business of druggist, and so obtained the title of Doctor.

Almost immediately on their arrival in America, measures growing out of the difficulty between the "Chesapeake" and the "Leopard," suspended the entrance of British vessels into American ports. First the embargo and then the non-intercourse law, lasting for several years, dissipated all hopes of the coming of that part of the family left behind in Norwich. The war with England ensued, and it was not till the year 1817 that the mother, sisters, and brother rejoined those who had preceded them hither.

At this epoch Georgetown, first laid out in 1751 and incorporated by the State of Maryland in 1789, was virtually the principal place of business east of the Potomac in the District of Columbia. A cluster of houses at the Navy-yard had been rapidly collected, but between these two points, Washington, the Capital City, though surveyed and mapped out, lay in almost virgin nakedness. The grand avenue of Pennsylvania, running from one extreme to the other, had indeed been opened, as had also parts of other streets in its vicinity. The buildings in the city could then easily be counted. Near the Georgetown Circle stood the Six and Seven Buildings, and in the vicinity the boarding-house of Mr. William O'Neal, the father of the now noted Mrs. Eaton. About where the Treasury Building now stands were three or four houses. Near what is the corner of 12th street and the Avenue were two or three more. Near the

corner of 7th street and the Avenue were one or two buildings, in one of which a Mr. Samuel Harrison Smith had established a newspaper, styled the "National Intelligencer," a journal which afterwards obtained a most enviable reputation, and was long continued by his successors, Messrs. Gales & Seaton, as the principal newspaper of the Capital. Near by was a little building called the "Marsh Market," which has since been replaced by the splendid structure of the Center Market of this day. Further along, on Capitol Hill, was Long's Hotel, quite famous in its day as a resort of the public men of the nation; and finally the city tapered off in a dozen brick-yards, which extended down to the river itself. But most of the area of the National Capital was then covered with bushes and undergrowth, which fell off here and there into pasture grounds and commons, or terminated in slashes and marshes. Nearly the whole of the lower part of what is now called the Mall was then a piece of wet, marshy ground covered with reeds and wancopins, where sportsmen shot ortolan, where cattle formed paths in zigzag courses, where negroes hunted straying cows with tinkling bells about their necks, and where fishermen often took their spoil, especially at full tide. Many parts of the Avenue touched the water's edge, and the road was "corduroy." Logs were piled in to fill up the mud-holes and miry places along the route. Once crossing the Avenue at 7th street, our young druggist lost a shoe, which sank into the ooze and was with some difficulty recovered.

But Jefferson, who was then President, in his second

term, did much to improve this avenue and had it lined on either side with a double row of poplars.

The Executive Mansion was even then not altogether finished, and the Capitol had been rendered tenantable only in certain parts. As the observer looks around him now he must see with wonder the contrast which seventy years have made. Dr. Gunton is one of the very few men who can look back in Washington over so long a space.

Beginning empty-handed, but with principles and habits from which he has never swerved, he showed his early qualities during his six years with Dr. Ott. He was not long in becoming familiar with every branch of the business to which he was devoted, and his value to the establishment soon became manifest.

This was due as well to his excellent home training as to the ideas of salutary subjection to the fundamental principles of business economy which were then observed. For at the period when the young apprentice was on the threshold of his career, the sentiments of society had not suffered the relaxation which to-day so lamentably prevails. The avenues of business were not then filled with a throng of adventurers inflated with the notions of speculation and extravagance, and intoxicated with the prospect of amassing sudden and enormous fortunes. A more rational estimate of the legitimate gains of business then controlled the judgment and aspirations of individuals. Young men were content to work out a term of years which gave them little more than a decent and comfortable living. They still recognized the force

of authority and the propriety of subordination; and if, on attaining their majority, they had well mastered the knowledge of their chosen pursuit, they considered it a fortunate preparation for the subsequent exercise of a more direct and personal responsibility.

And withal there was less dissatisfaction and complaint, and less restlessness under restraint in that state of things than under the loose and irresponsible system which has since prevailed. Young men of bright faculties spent their energies for their employers in good faith, sustained by the consciousness of duty faithfully discharged, and inspired by the conviction that those rugged virtues would certainly meet with a due reward.

Such, at least, was the feeling of the young man in the store of Dr. Ott. Under this close attention to business, this almost precocious gravity of character, there lurked, however, a spirit of humor which frequently enlivened the routine dullness of business and became the standing theme of laughter in the circle of friends. One instance of this is remembered to this day. An English family had arrived in Georgetown, from the same neighborhood with the Guntons, in Norfolk. They had been, in their old home, in the laundry business, and rather struggling with poverty for many years. But once set down in their new homes in these Western wilds, they affected superior airs, and frequently spoke of the *ships* which their family owned and through which they had plied a wealthy trade to Yarmouth. These unseemly boastings from people who had obtained a

livelihood by washing clothes for the inhabitants of Norwich, rather excited some surprise among the rest of the English emigrants, and one day Mr. Cooper, speaking with young Gunton, asked: "What sort of *ships* do you suppose they had in Norfolk?" To which William quickly replied: "I know of no *ships* they could have had, unless they were *hard-ships!*"

It was about this time that the idea of soda-water fountains came into vogue. John Hart, a well known Quaker druggist of Philadelphia, with whom Dr. Ott had been an apprentice, had devised an apparatus for charging cooled water with carbonic acid gas, and thus furnishing a very acceptable beverage. To charge an ordinary fountain with this gas required some twenty pounds of acid and some forty-eight hours in the process. Dr. Hart at once set about the introduction of his invention. Dr. Talbot, another Quaker druggist of Baltimore, had one of these fountains put up in his establishment. Georgetown could not be left behind, and Dr. Ott purchased an apparatus at a cost of $1,700. It was a complicated and clumsy affair, set up in the cellar, and giving results not equal to the anticipation. After inspecting the working of the apparatus in Baltimore and making some trials of his own, the worthy Doctor became discouraged, and in his despair offered $1,000 to any one who would take it off his hands. While matters stood thus, Dr. Charles Beatty, a prominent physician of Georgetown, who was often in the store, one day said, "Turn it over to Gunton." "No," replied the young man, "I

know nothing about it." But, nevertheless, it was turned over to him, and seeing the question thus forced upon him he commenced to study it, determined to succeed with it if success were possible.

The apparatus consisted of a large hogshead to hold the acid, the water, and the pulverized marble. This connected by pipes with a half-barrel partially filled with water, which again connected with an air-pump, and this with the copper cylinder or agitator containing two water-fountains, from which pipes led down to four other fountains buried in the earth-floor of the cellar. After the materials had been placed, the process was, to force the *fixed air* into the agitator and then to press the impregnated water into the buried fountains, whence the beverage was drawn for sale. But there were many defects about the operation which young Gunton set himself to overcome. He first dispensed with the half-barrel, he then changed the position of the valves in the air-pump. He next got rid of the cylinder, and finally resurrected the buried fountains themselves, had them bound with iron, which was soundly done by Mr. Shaw, the white-smith, and thus made the whole apparatus more simple and effective. While this was going on letters were dispatched to the inventor asking his advice on the changes proposed, to which the astute Quaker, invariably replied, withholding his assent. Nevertheless, the changes were made with most gratifying results. But a single difficulty remained to be overcome. The common air filled about a third part of the fountains and decidedly interfered with the proper impregnation. A

brilliant thought struck the youthful philosopher, which was, first, to fill the fountains with water, thus expelling the common air altogether, and then to pump out the required quantity, leaving space for the *fixed air*, which was then forced in. When these things were accomplished and about two-thirds of the original apparatus dispensed with, the remainder was so much improved that it now required for charging an ordinary fountain only twenty minutes time and about six pounds of acid. In fact, the young druggist had produced an almost entire new apparatus, the product of which his patrons pronounced one of great superiority. The Ott soda fountain became immensely popular, and in that single year it cleared for him the handsome sum of two thousand dollars.

But it was all owing to the pluck and ingenuity of young William, who really should be regarded as the second father of soda-fountains in America. This unexampled success after so great a depression, filled the heart of Dr. Ott with pride and pleasure. The finishing-stroke was given to the apparatus, when some small zinc tubes surrounded by ice were added to produce the degree of coolness in the beverage, on a sultry day, which so much contributed to its favor. The generosity of the worthy Doctor toward his ingenious and thoughtful assistant was sensibly excited, and he began to talk of further allowances in case another year should prove as profitable as the first.

But time rolled on, and the indenture one day expired, leaving William Gunton his own free-man. The alterna-

tive was then placed before him to enter into partnership with his recent employer, to have a salary of $150 per annum, or to set up for himself and take goods from the store, or have letters of credit to other business firms where he might desire to make transactions. While holding the matter under consideration, he continued another six months in the store. He had hitherto been treated as a subordinate in the family of the Otts. He felt that this distinction ought now to cease. But comparatively trifling as it was, a matter of sitting at the second table, it was not changed, and upon the trial of half a year, young Gunton concluded to leave his old employer and set up for himself. The question of location which now arose before him was settled by one circumstance. Mrs. Ott, being an invalid, was going up to Frederick, in Maryland, hoping for the benefit of this temporary change. Young Gunton was requested to go with her. His observation while there determined him to open his store in that place. The Germans formed a considerable proportion of its population, and there were two small shops kept by men of that nationality, but they were of a very inferior grade, and indeed the business of a druggist in that locality gave but a slender promise of success; and of some fifty persons to whom he bore letters of introduction, there was but a single man who gave him any encouragement. But confident in his own plans and relying on making a business far superior to that which the people of the town had known, he arranged with Dr. Ott to take stock from the store in Georgetown, first to the

amount of $2,200, together with a soda-fountain costing $190. So equipped, he opened his place of business in Frederick and went to work with two Dutchmen for his competitors. He had much to do to overcome the difficulties of the beginning. First he had to set up the soda-fountain, next to provide an ice-house. For this, was needed a quantity of plank. He repaired to an old man by the name of Howard, a hypochondriac, who had a saw-mill some three or four miles away. Some prior work in the mill furnished its owner with an excuse, and the plank could not be sawn. But the young druggist, not to be bluffed, unfolded his enterprise to the singular old gentleman. He pointed out the benefits of the soda-fountain to those who were afflicted as Howard was. By this powerful allurement he fired the old man's enthusiasm and he became a lively convert to the utility of the soda-water. The other work was set aside and the plank for the ice-house were speedily secured. Then the plans of the new-comer were rapidly carried out, much to the astonishment of the staid old town. Finding it necessary to a branch of his business, he bought out the two confectioners of the place and commenced the manufacture of candy on a larger scale.

But there was still another difficulty which his genius had to overcome. The currency of the country was in a lamentable state. Turnpikes were then as prominent an institution as railroads are in our day. To facilitate the business of the public, these companies issued scrip or shin-

plasters of all conceivable amounts and kinds. These were paid for all kinds of purchases, and every night the till of the apothecary would be full of them. How to negotiate them for actual money became a serious question. A Mr. Joseph Talbot was the keeper of one of the leading hotels of the town. He was in the receipt of considerable money from travellers stopping at his house. With him an arrangement was soon effected, by which this scrip was exchanged for valid currency. By this means the Doctor (for by this time he had well earned the title) was enabled to send down to his quondam principal, Dr. Ott, first two hundred, then three hundred, and finally two thousand dollars, in payment of the liability of his original outfit. This unexampled success aroused the feeling of the latter gentleman, who began to think he had made a great mistake in not insisting upon the partnership, and drew forth from him a rather lugubrious and querulous letter upon the subject. However, it was now too late to mend the matter, and the establishment at Frederick went on prospering and to prosper.

Its energetic head had shown not only a faculty for invention and enterprise, but a far-reaching financiering ability, which thus early pointed him out as a shrewd and safe manager of capital in perilous and sinking times.

Many and curious were the incidents which enlivened the scenes in that store at Frederick. Two brothers of the name of Darnell, rough men and almost outlaws, were living then in the vicinity. They were reckless fellows and a terror

to the community. One day they entered the store together, and were immediately attracted by the soda-fountain. "What the d——l is that," cried one of them. Upon explanation of its use they immediately contracted for one dollar, to drink it dry. After swallowing sixteen glasses they gave it up, planked down the dollar, and left the store in disgust, remarking as they went, "There is no bottom to the d——n thing, anyhow."

A Mr. Fischer, who was a hatter, lived in the town. His son, Mr. Wm. Fischer, was then a young man, and about a year after the store was opened by Dr. Gunton, he accepted young Fischer as an attendant. This ultimately led to his marriage into the Gunton family.

On going to Frederick, Dr. Gunton had leased a building for the term of five years, unless it should in the meantime be sold. On the ground-floor he conducted his business, while the stories above were occupied by the family of the clergyman of the place, the Rev. Patrick Davidson, of which Miss Hester Livingstone Brown, his wife's sister, born in Carlisle, Pa., was then a member. This lady the young Doctor married in the year 1816. She was a devout Christian, and a faithful member of the Presbyterian Church. At the end of the first year this property was sold, thus compelling Dr. Gunton to seek another stand. This was soon found on the opposite side of the street, where he had a house to himself, that was far better suited to his purpose and his trade. In the following year, 1817, the event which had been so

long anticipated transpired. The father and son were joined by the rest of the family who had been left behind in Norwich many years before. Landing in Baltimore, they came thence immediately to their friends. The party consisted of the mother, the brother Thomas, and the four sisters, Elizabeth, Mary, Harriet, and Anne.

The father, then living at 18th street, in Washington, near what was then known as "The Seven Buildings," took to his home his wife and the three children, Thomas, Elizabeth, and Mary, while the Doctor took his two younger sisters, Harriet and Anne, to reside with him in Frederick.

The son, Thomas, had scarcely been a week in Washington, before he obtained a position in the Capitol, through the kind offices of Mr. P. R. Fendall and Richard Bland Lee.

Mr. Peter Hagner was then the Third Auditor of the Treasury, and the young Englishman being a very fine accountant, materially assisted him in preparing his various reports on the great question of Horse claims and claims on other matters, then passing through the office. These reports obtained great eclat for their clearness and ability, and were highly lauded by such men as Elisha Whittlesey, who was then in Congress. This naturally reflected no little credit on Thomas Gunton, who for many years held a responsible position in the Treasury, and whose accuracy and ability were long after recognized in the most flattering terms by such men as Silas Wright, Daniel Webster, and many others. For a period of three or four years, through

political changes, he was out of office, but when Mr. Whittlesey became First Comptroller of the Treasury he was reinstated, and continued in his place, trusted and honored, and universally respected till the day of his death.

Meantime events went forward with the Doctor at Frederick, and by the judgment and energy with which his business was conducted he was already counted as a capitalist. He continued business transactions with Dr. Ott till the date of that gentleman's death in the year 1818. In his last illness he sent for Dr. Gunton and proposed to sell him his stock. But Madam Ott, his second wife, who had a brother in the store, was opposed to this arrangement, and supposed she had broken it off. However, it was a brother of Dr. Ott who had established a drug-store in Washington, on the site of the house now occupied by Dr. James C. Hall, on Pennsylvania avenue, between 9th and 10th streets northwest. This brother dying in 1820, his business was left in the hands of his administrators, Messrs. Bradley and Richie. Dr. Gunton had now determined to establish himself in Washington, and accordingly he sold out his store in Frederick to his friend, Mr. William Fischer, at first with the hope of purchasing that of the late Dr. David Ott; but as delay was occasioned by a controversy between the administrators, after waiting for several months he made a purchase of the property at the corner of 9th street and Pennsylvania avenue, to which he added the adjoining house. Over the drug-store, in the spacious rooms above, he installed his family, and there for

many years they all resided. He had accumulated about $20,000 during his six years business in Frederick, and his first real-estate purchase in Washington cost him $9,000, while he paid $5,000 in addition for the stock of his store. A few years after, he paid $6,000 for the adjoining house, and in both buildings made several alterations and improvements.

Here for a number of years he carried on a most thriving business, being largely patronized by the many public men and noted women of the time. Not a few were the incidents which created amusement at the Doctor's drug-store which soon grew famous for the purity and excellence of the articles exposed for sale. In those days Calomel and Jalap were largely in demand, and the well-known Colonel Bassett, then a member of Congress from Virginia, once remarked to the Doctor that "his medicines were of the most powerful and sovereign efficacy he had ever known." "Why," said the Colonel, "all I have to do is to put them in my vest-pocket and carry them about a few days and they are certain to cure!"

The famous John Randolph, of Roanoke, then in Congress, once purchased some medicine of the Doctor and paid him in Virginia money, for which he received in change some bills of United States money. There was some discount at that time on the currency of the Banks of the "Old Dominion." The next day Randolph appeared at the counter and confronted the Doctor, with the words of his shrill, woman's voice, "Yesterday you made a mis-

take, Sir! a serious mistake, Sir! I have come to-day to see about it, Sir!" The Doctor, who was always the most careful in putting up his orders, began to be alarmed and to search for the Prescription on his files, supposing it was the wrong medicine he had given out, and solicitous about all imaginable evil consequences of any blunder he might have made. His interlocutor, whose well-known propensity for a joke led him to view with high glee the Doctor's evident anxiety, at last relieved his suspense by calling out, "Oh, it is not the medicine—that's all right, Sir; but I gave you Virginia money and you did not give me Virginia money in change!" It is needless to say this was a relief to the perturbed mind of the Doctor.

Before coming to Washington for business, the Doctor had purchased a quantity of stock of the Patriotic Bank, then a Banking Establishment of the city, with which a number of prominent citizens and men in Government office were connected—the well-known Messrs. Bradley, of Washington, being among them. While the Bank was doing an active business with the public, its affairs were loosely conducted, and the books really in great confusion. One day Mr. Stephen Pleasonton, the Fifth Auditor of the Treasury, said to Dr. Gunton: "We have determined to make you a Director of the Bank!" And much to his surprise, at the next meeting of the Board, he was so elected. As the Doctor had a somewhat inquiring turn of mind concerning affairs in which he was responsible, he soon discovered that the business of the Bank was managed in the most

careless manner, and that a new order of things was imperatively demanded. He immediately set about the work of reform in the conduct of the business. But as his views were not accepted by other parties involved, the matter soon broke out into open controversy. This unhappy conflict was protracted for several years, both in the courts and out of them, until at length the differences were adjusted, the course of the Doctor fully vindicated, and his opponents virtually acknowledged him to have been in the right. But not desiring any further experience of this kind, having been removed from the Board of Directors in 1828, he sold out his stock and terminated all connection with the Patriotic Bank. The records of this somewhat celebrated strife are all extant; but as it belongs to the tale of other days, it would be manifestly inexpedient and certainly unnecessary for any legitimate purpose to introduce them here.

Meanwhile another institution, the now well-known "Old Bank of Washington," had been running on much in the same way under an incompetent management, and its affairs had become so complicated that in the year 1834 it was obliged to suspend operations, with the prospect of being ultimately wound up altogether. Mr. Thomas Munroe, its President, was a fair but timid and inefficient man. He spent his summers at some watering-place, leaving the Bank to get on for itself. Its debts to the United States Bank, then still in existence, and to other important banks, were increasing instead of diminishing, and altogether the

outlook was very discouraging. In this exigency Mr. Hellen, a lawyer of Washington, and a large stockholder in the Bank, applied to Dr. Gunton to become a member of the Board of Directors. His objections to this step were very strong, remembering his former experience, but they were finally overcome by the earnest entreaty of Mr. Hellen and others, and he consented to go in for a month to ascertain the situation and see if it admitted of redress. The Bank had undoubtedly fallen into discredit, but the Doctor, after thorough examination, found it could be placed on a safe and reliable basis. Its debt was about $80,000. Dr. Gunton having business on his own account with the Bank of the United States, was brought in contact with the Cashier, Mr. Richard Smith, about this time. The Bank of Washington was then very largely indebted to the United States Bank, and Mr. Smith complained to the Doctor that he had been unkindly treated in his attempt to adjust the matter. He had offered to take in payment the discounted paper of the Bank of Washington, and the Board of Directors would not listen to it. Upon this information Doctor Gunton, who had then been elected President *pro tempore*, called the Directors together, who agreed to the proposal. He then had to make arrangements for a debt of $20,000 held by the Bank of the Metropolis, and for another debt of $20,000 held by a New York bank. To succeed in this effort he proposed to borrow $25,000 on a note to be signed by the individual members of the Board, and other stockholders, and all did sign it but Mr. Munroe, the President

of the Bank, who declared that before putting his signature to the note he would resign his office. The money was, however, obtained, and Dr. Gunton, afterwards, in January, 1835, was elected President of the Bank, a position which, after the lapse of forty-three years, he still holds. In four months after he entered it, the Bank resumed operations, and in one year from that date all its liabilities had been paid.

During the period from 1837 to 1844 a deep prejudice against the banks of the country seems to have pervaded the Congress of the United States, and under its influence the National Legislature determined not to grant or renew any further bank charters. The banks of the District of Columbia were on the eve of the expiration of their charters, and suffered more than those in any other part of the country from the disposition of Congress to make the District a scene of all manner of financial experiments. The prospect of the future was dark indeed. In this emergency separate meetings of the stockholders of the several banks in the District were called, and a general concert of action ensued by which the respective Cashiers of the several banks were ordered to transfer all descriptions of the property of the banks to Trustees appointed by the stockholders, with power to transact the business of the banks as nearly as possible in conformity with the former banking usages. This prevailing hostility to the banking system as it then existed, in connection with the individual responsibilities which the stockholders were obliged to as-

sume, had a most depressing effect, and the stock of the Bank could be readily bought at that time at a discount of forty per cent.

But by the faithfulness and energy of its new President this state of things soon passed away. The Bank has gone through the most severe money panics that have transpired in the country, but during all of them it has maintained its character, being among the last to suspend specie payments and the first to resume; and during the last four years of deep financial embarrassment, so general and wide-spread, it has proved to be one of the firmest and most prosperous institutions in the country. And to-day, after an experience of nearly thirty-five years, this Bank has declared dividends equal to nearly half a million of dollars. And the stock of the Bank cannot now be purchased for forty per cent. above par. And though there are about seventy stockholders, yet such is the general confidence in the management of the Bank, that although frequent applications have been made for the purchase of its stock, not a single share has changed hands for a number of years past. This is the highest praise that can be accorded to its management and to its venerable and honored President.

Of course a business career so established and successful could not fail to point out the man who made it, for other positions of trust and dignity. It is only necessary to enumerate the organizations with which the name of Dr. Gunton has been at one time or other during the last fifty years associated, to realize how busy and responsible his

life has been, and how large a place he has filled in the community.

In addition to his seven years connection with the Patriotic Bank as Director, and his forty-five years connection with the Bank of Washington, he was President of the Eastern Branch Bridge Company and of the Navy-yard Bridge Company until the sale of the bridges to the General Government. He was for eight years a Director of the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal Company. For twelve years he was Foreman of the Grand Jury of the District of Columbia. For fourteen years he was a member of the Washington City Government. Since 1847 he has been a Director of the Columbian University, and he was recently elected Vice-President of the Board. Since 1846 he has been a Director of the American Colonization Society. Since 1836 he has been President of the Columbia Turnpike-roads Company. For sixteen years he was a member, and for seven years of the time, the President of the Board of Trustees of the National Hospital for the Insane. But in June, 1877, his commission expired, though not without the regrets of those with whom he had been so responsibly and so happily associated. This is an appointment by the President of the United States, and was tendered to Dr. Gunton under a number of Administrations. He was also President of the Baltimore and Washington Navigation Company. More recently he has become a Director in the Washington and Georgetown Street-Railroad Company. He is Vice-President of the Oldest Inhabitants' Association

of the District of Columbia. In 1841 he was elected Chairman of the Temporal Committee of the First Presbyterian Church of Washington, and was annually elected to the same position for a period of twenty-five years. Since 1828 he has been President of the Washington, Alexandria and Georgetown Steam Packet Company, which for many years kept a line of steamers plying, by the Potomac River and the Chesapeake Bay, between Georgetown and Baltimore. In 1844 an invention called "The Sickles Cut-off" was patented, and the parties professing to own the patent proposed to Dr. Gunton, as the President of this company, to put on one of the boats, called the "Columbia," this "Cut-off," at their own expense, in order to test its utility, and with the special object of bringing it to the favorable notice of the Navy Department of the General Government, and with the understanding that if it did not succeed, the owners of it would, after a certain time, remove it without cost to the company, and restore the vessel to its former condition. But if, upon experiment, the invention should be approved by the company, then they were to have the use of it on as low terms as the steamer "Augusta" or any other vessel using it. On these terms the patentees were allowed to put their invention on the boat. After some months time these parties sent in to the company a bill for a certain amount, which they claimed as due them for the use of their patent. Dr. Gunton replied to them, stating his understanding of the terms of the verbal agreement and reciting the delays and disadvantages which had resulted from a failure to make

good their representations. They then instituted suit against the company in the Courts of the District to collect the sums claimed to be due, from time to time, upon a calculation made by them under the terms of their pretended contract. The verdicts in the lower Courts were usually rendered against the company under the exceptions allowed by these Courts. On these proceedings, the cases were severally appealed to the Supreme Court of the United States, with the exception of the case in the year 1856, which, through the culpable negligence of the attorney of the company, in failing to prepare and present the case before the Supreme Court as he should have done within the time which the rules prescribed, was, on this account, summarily dismissed with costs. The effect of this was to exact from the company the sum of three thousand dollars, besides a large bill of costs. In all the other cases the decisions of the lower Courts were invariably reversed, and the further efforts of these claimants have resulted in a final reference of the case, which is now so narrowed down that the interest is comparatively trifling, and the controversy may be regarded as virtually at an end.

But all the documents show how a case of litigation may be commenced and carried on for a period of forty years by a set of unscrupulous men, and the culpable negligence of attorneys, and how all of them may continue to make large sums of money out of individuals or Corporations who have the ability to pay, and who are thus forced by the technicalties of the law to reward them in their chicanery. It has

become one of the famous cases in the records of the Courts of the District of Columbia, and the "Sickles Cut-off" case will long be remembered by the Washington Bar as one of the most successful rivals of the British suits in Chancery.

Dr. Gunton was also President of the old Perseverance Fire Company, which many years ago rendered valuable service in the protection of the property of the city. He was likewise a stockholder in the Firemen's Insurance Company of Washington and Georgetown from the beginning, and was elected its first President, July 28th, 1837, which office he held for three years, when he was succeeded in it by his estimable friend, the late Mr. James Adams, who continued in it till the time of his death. He was likewise in the Uniformed Volunteer Artillery Company of Captain Peter Force, and was afterwards offered the captaincy of a militia company of the District, which honor his advancing years and other numerous engagements—it being in a time of profound peace—constrained him to decline.

During the terrible crisis of the late civil war he was among the foremost of American citizens in his loyalty to the Government of the Union, and, though exempt by age from military service, he procured a substitute, and thus represented himself among the soldiers who fought for the preservation of the Union, and rendered a noble example of the devotion of a man who, though born on English soil, was yet fired with a lofty zeal for the triumph of the cause of his adopted country, and for the sovereignty of the Stars

and Stripes, to which his early allegiance had been given, and which he rejoices now to see floating over every part of the domain of an undivided Republic.

In all these stations of trust and responsibility Dr. Gunton has never failed to command the entire respect and confidence of the community, and his name thus came to be a tower of strength to any cause to which he was disposed to lend it. In 1838 his affairs had so extended that he gave up the business of the store and sold out the stock and patronage.

Through a comprehension which time has justified, and a far-seeing discretion, he extended his business with his growing years. His investments in real estate have greatly increased in value, while his profits from various other sources have steadily appreciated, till now his income is considerable—so ample that it would be both delicate and difficult to say precisely what it is. He has carried the same care and caution, with a proportionate success, into all his public trusts, so that on the whole, his life as a business man can only be regarded as one of the most impressive examples of stern integrity, unfaltering diligence, and sound judgment, totally distinct from the wild spirit of speculation and colossal adventures which has ruined, in later times, so many men of mark.

Though Dr. Gunton has been so long engaged in the public and private undertakings already indicated, these, by no means, complete the sum of his manifold labors. His aid has often been extended in many other directions—

in the management of difficult and complicated estates; in the enlargement of churches, and the countless objects of philanthropy and charity that have made to him their incessant appeals. In these, as in all other instances, he has never courted publicity, never sought for display or ostentation. Fond of old friends, old places, old associations, and clinging to them with the greatest tenacity, his mode of living may be described as one of economical abundance and elegant simplicity. It is only within a few years past that he has been persuaded to quit his old quarters at the corner of Ninth street, and remove to his new dwelling on K street—a spacious, substantial brick edifice, with every modern convenience, and fittingly furnished, not for extravagance, but for all propriety and comfort.

The family of the Guntons have, however, suffered the vicissitudes of nature. Mr. Fischer, having purchased the business in Frederick, was married to Miss Harriet Gunton, in the house of her brother, at the corner of Ninth street. The next day, in conveying his bride homeward, his vicious horse kicked the carriage to pieces. This was somewhat of a dolorous omen, but they were fortunate in escaping with their lives. He continued his business in Frederick till the year 1833, when he disposed of it to his brother and removed to Washington. He purchased and opened a store for Stationery, which stood on the site next to what is now known as the "Shepherd Building," on the corner of Twelfth street and Pennsylvania avenue. This business he pursued till his death.

Mrs. Thomas Gunton, the mother, died in 1818.

Mr. Thomas Gunton, the father, died in 1821.

After this the members of the family, excepting the Fischers and their sister Anne, lived together for many years in the old dwelling of Dr. Gunton at the corner of Ninth street.

To Dr. Gunton were born the following children:

Mary Jane, who was married to Mr. Edward Temple in 1862. Mr. Temple is Vice-President of the Bank of Washington and engaged in other public enterprises, and for many years has been a well-known and highly esteemed member of the community.

Harriet Anne, who died in 1837.

Thomas, who died in infancy.

Elizabeth, who, in 1841, married the Rev. Dr. William Ives Budington, for many years a distinguished Minister of the Congregational Denomination, and for nearly a quarter of a century Pastor of the Clinton Avenue Church in the City of Brooklyn, N. Y.; and—

William Alexander, who married Miss Mary R. M. Mullikin in 1848.

To Mr. and Mrs. Fischer were born several children, the only surviving one being Harriet Anne Fischer, who married Mr. Wm. C. Zantzinger.

Mrs. Dr. William Gunton died in 1839.

Their daughter, Mrs. Elizabeth Gunton Budington, died in 1854, leaving her husband, Rev. Dr. Budington, and their surviving children.

Mrs. William A. Gunton died in 1853, leaving her husband and two children; one of which only now survives, and several months after—

Mr. William A. Gunton, her husband, was killed by being thrown from a horse on Eleventh street southwest, near the river, in 1854.

This was a peculiarly afflictive stroke to his father and family, as by his death the name becomes extinct, and with it the light of a rare example of the young manhood of the times. A graduate of Yale College in 1847—favored with all that parental fondness or generosity could bestow—his mind informed, his taste attuned to the embellishments of art, his character ennobled by classic influence and polished in the schools—of a spirit, at the same time, simple and devout—he died lamented by many friends, and his memory will be forever cherished by those who knew him best.

Mr. Thomas Gunton, brother of Dr. Gunton, died in 1853.

The sister, Elizabeth, died in 1858.

The sister, Mary, died in 1876.

The sister, Anne, in 1877.

The brother-in-law, Mr. William Fischer, died in 1852.

His wife, Mrs. Harriet Fischer, died in 1859.

So of all this noted family, very many have passed away, leaving but a remnant of the once wide circle that in other days surrounded Dr. William Gunton as the central figure.

There remain now the following of the family blood and name:

Dr. William Gunton, in the 88th year of his age, still as vigorous and active as a man of three-score years.

Mr. Edward Temple, husband of his daughter.

Mrs. Mary Jane Gunton Temple, his sole surviving child.

The children of his daughter, Elizabeth Gunton Budington, namely:

Elizabeth Hester Budington, who married Dr. A. D. Willson, a distinguished physician of Brooklyn, N. Y., and who died in 1872.

Mary Jane Budington, who married Mr. George Wilcox, an attorney-at-law of high standing.

Dr. William Gunton Budington, a surgeon of some prominence, and unmarried.

Julia Budington, who married Mr. F. E. Dana, a successful attorney-at-law; and

Thomas Gunton Budington, also recently married, and a young gentleman of great promise.

And also Mary M. Gunton, a daughter of Mr. William A. Gunton, who married Mr. Henry Carter, of Maryland, an engineer of marked ability in his profession.

When Dr. Wm. Gunton settled in Washington in 1820, his wife became a member of the First Presbyterian Church of Washington, and subsequently his three daughters, and this Church has ever since been the home of the members of the Gunton family residing in Washington.

Dr. William Gunton, though not himself a member of the Church, yet for many years identified himself effectually with the congregation.

His daughter, Mary Jane Gunton Temple, became a member of the Church in 1842, and so continues to this day.

Her father, Dr. Gunton, was, in the prime of his life, a very pillar of support in many ways to the Church of his family, and took the most active interest in its prosperity. In the year 1859 the church edifice was remodeled and enlarged at a cost of $27,000. Dr. Gunton was Chairman of the Building Committee, and by his well-known ability of management and pecuniary aid he contributed more largely than any other single individual to the success of that important enterprise, and the Church stands to this day as it was then left by him and his associates, a solid, massive brick building, with the largest audience-room of any Protestant Church in the city of Washington. Here it was that during the intense and troubled period of the great war for the Union, immense assemblies weekly gathered, and here the heart of Christian Patriotism from all quarters of the land looked for words of encouragement in the darkest and most perilous periods of the conflict.

Dr. Gunton's religious opinions have long been matters of conviction, and though differing in some things from the standards of faith and doctrine of the Presbyterian Church—so that he could not see his way clear to adopt them all, as a condition of church membership—yet his reverence for the Deity as our Heavenly Father was ever deep and always openly avowed. His views of the mysteries of the relation of Christ to the divine and human nature, were the principal obstacles in his way. So that it resulted more

from an intellectual estimate of the profound question, than from any promptings of his heart, that he felt the difficulty of coming to any conclusive decision concerning it.

Perhaps the best indication of his idea of practical religion may be found in the citation he wrote with his own hand in a Book of Common Prayer which some years since he gave to his granddaughter, Mrs. Willson:

Micah 6: 8. "He hath showed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee but to do justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with thy God."

But he was never disposed to religious controversy, and never sought even to know, much less to cherish or to propagate the numberless cavils and sophistries advanced against the doctrines of Christianity, and continuously expressed his earnest desire to believe and to adopt the exact truth, not only concerning the nature and mission of Jesus of Nazareth, but concerning every other essential teaching of the Word of God. And it is a circumstance to be specially noted in this connection, that he has never been actively associated with any congregation save that of his wife and daughters during his long experience and course of life.

In this Church, with the exception of a few brief intervals, he has always worshipped, and as a member of its congregation he is likely to continue to the day of his death.

In personal aspect Dr. Gunton is one of the finest specimens of the physical man. In former days he was often described as "the handsome young Englishman." At full

maturity he stood about five feet eight inches in height—of solid and well-proportioned form—with a head of regular and impressive mould—his hair a dark brown, his eyes blue and of singular brightness and penetrating power; an always smooth-shaven face, a complexion ruddy and indicating robust health, an expression of marked benignity mingled with determination, and an appearance altogether displaying a man of immense energy and endurance.

And when to this it is added that he has been a man of pure and simple habits and associations—that he was temperate almost to the degree of abstinence; that he never chewed nor smoked tobacco; that he never made a bet of any sort; that he never indulged in any of the hundred modes of men who resort to what may be called gambling or speculation; that he was as ignorant of the places of vice and dissipation in cities as a child unborn; that he would have no associates of questionable virtue, or who could influence him to doubtful courses; that even his ordinary conversation was remarkably free from the vulgar profanity which too sadly mars the speech of many men; that he resolutely subjected himself to the laws of health; and systematically apportioned his sleep, food, and exercise to the requirements of an unvitiated nature;—these things afford some clue at least to the secret of his long and prosperous life, and give a grateful insight into the constitution of the man. These were from the first the settled principles of his character. With habits of strict sobriety in all things, and an unswerving attention to the legitimate busi-

ness in hand; with a quick sense of obligation to every trust imposed in him; with the highest notions of integrity, honesty, and honor; with a life of singular system, temperance, and moderation, and with the most rigid ideas of economy, frugality, and independence, and yet at the same time with a spirit of modesty, a shrinking from all desire for show and ostentation, he was one who could not fail to gain the public confidence and to achieve a large success, while at the same time he was setting an example for all young men, most worthy of imitation.

Such has been the history of one of the most notable men now living in the Capital of the Nation, and in looking upon the example it brings before us, it may confidently be said that no man has been more free from that which can impair human character, or do injury to society, than he has been. Living through a long period—the most eventful and portentous—with a wide business acquaintance, and a most practical knowledge of affairs, at times involved in complicated and difficult questions of dispute, representing immense property interests, not all of which have escaped the contests of the law, he has never failed to make good his chosen position, or to be vindicated at last by the verdict of revolving time.

Approaching as nearly as the imperfection of all human nature will admit, to the standard of an unsullied manhood, he may be said to be a child of that good fortune which an all-wise Providence sometimes vouchsafes to the most favored sons of men.

Let the young men of our coming generations study the principles of such a character—imitate the virtues on which nearly a whole century has set the seal of approbation, and this great Republic, this intense American civilization, will be built up upon elements stainless as the honor of the storied Diana, free and lasting as the rocks of our eternal hills.