

THE SEDGWICKS OF BERKSHIRE.

By H. D. SEDGWICK.

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I have been asked by the Berkshire Historical Society to read a paper on the Sedgwick family, including some account of Miss Katharine Maria Sedgwick. This subject has been chosen because the meeting is held in Stockbridge. In other towns other families would have equal or greater historical interest. I hope this explanation will excuse the otherwise preposterous family egotism of this paper.

While still in the midst of a direful war it seems tame, but may not perhaps be altogether unprofitable to turn our attention for a few moments to a brief consideration of the Berkshire family of which I am an unworthy descendant. Certainly the figure to which your attention will be presently drawn is a sweet illustration of the blessings of that peace for whose return we are all praying and which happily now seems in sight.

I hardly need formally outline to you the life of Miss Sedgwick's father, Judge Theodore Sedgwick. It is already tolerably familiar to Berkshire residents. Born in May, 1746, at Hartford, Connecticut, he belonged to the fifth generation in direct descent from Major General Robert Sedgwick, the first of the name to emigrate to America, and who after receiving from Oliver Cromwell the supreme military command of the island of Jamaica, died there in 1656. Through the kind aid of his elder brother John, afterwards a major-general in the Revolutionary army, Theodore was partially educated at Yale college, which he left somewhat prematurely owing to an unfavorable view taken by the college authorities of some of his doings outside of the class-room. Thereupon, after some hesitation between the muses of law and divinity, he chose to woo the former, which he did in Great Barrington, under the supervision of Mark Hopkins, grandfather of his namesake, the distinguished president of Williams college. Up to the final breach with the mother country Sedgwick's loyalty to the crown was

unshaken. Even as late as May 15, 1776, I find him refusing to admit the idea of national independence. How strong a sentiment that loyalty had been, showed itself in after life by his unabated and efficient friendship to honest loyalists, some of whom, such as Henry Vassall, Colonel Elijah Williams, and the three brothers, Peter, David and Henry Van Schaick, he aided in the recovery of their estates unjustly seized or threatened with confiscation under the severe anti-tory legislation of New York and Massachusetts, and in obtaining their relief from harsh decrees of expatriation. These efforts as some of the loyalists gratefully recognized, were at the risk of losing his popularity. But notwithstanding his painful reluctance to finally break with Great Britain, no one was more outspoken in his censure of the British government for its unjust treatment of the colonies. Soon after his admission to the bar, which he entered before he was twenty-one, he acted as secretary of two meetings, one of lawyers and another of citizens, both held in Berkshire in July, 1774, to formulate a practical course of peaceful resistance to British usurpation. These resulted in the case of the meeting of the bar, in a vigorous protest against the tyrannical suspension of the courts, and in the other in the adoption of pledges similar to those taken in Boston and elsewhere in New England against the importation and use of British manufactures.

At the outset of the Revolutionary war Theodore served for a time on the staff of General John Thomas during that officer's unfortunate expedition to Canada. On the return of the expedition, after declining an invitation strongly urged on him by Aaron Burr, (then his very affectionate friend though they were afterwards widely alienated), to a position as secretary and aide on the staff of General Putman, he served during the latter part of 1776 and throughout 1777 as commissary for the northern department of the army. In this capacity, by obtaining provisions on moderate terms at a period of scarcity when, as again long after in the civil war, the times bred cormorants, he perhaps rendered as useful a service to his country as did many known to fame as successful soldiers in the war of independence.

At the close of that war he tried to practice law in Great Barrington, where he took an office, and as Miss Sedgwick says in some autobiographical recollections, like Dennis Bulgruddery in George Colman, Jr.'s play of "John Bull," vainly looked up and down street for a client. In a letter to his son Harry, dated July 16, 1811, describing his professional start in life he says, "I was nineteen years old, and seventy pounds in debt without any means of paying one dollar. For, I believe, nearly two months, I had not a single application. It is true I was almost discouraged, but I continued to hope. I remained in my office night and day without ceasing, and was determined so to remain until despair should oblige me to abandon. Indeed, this being always at your post is the most important object to be observed. An almost momentary absence might be the loss of effectual introduction to permanent competency." At the end of some weeks of uncongenial idleness he removed to Sheffield, where he acquired a large practice, all that there was to be had in that day. In 1785 he changed his residence to Stockbridge, where, says Miss Sedgwick, he soon became the leading lawyer west of the Connecticut. He had, when in active practice, retainers in all important cases arising in Columbia county and the other adjacent counties in New York.

In 1786 and 1787 he took an active part in suppressing the rebellion known as "Shay's war," which, as you are aware, was the culmination of the resistance in some counties of the commonwealth, including Berkshire, to the efforts of creditors to collect debts, and of the state to collect taxes from an impoverished people. On the occasion of an expected collision between the state forces and the insurgents, although the government troops on the ground were hardly a fourth of the insurgents in number, Judge Sedgwick, with a touch of martial instinct, which might perhaps have been the making of a soldier had he taken the field instead of the forum for his career, detecting signs of hesitation among them, rode in front of the advancing rebels and, assuming an air of authority, ordered them to lay down their arms, which most of them did, while the others made off on their legs. He was a pet object of hatred to the malcontents, and on one occasion, when riding

on the circuit, was joined by two truculent fellows, who did not know him by sight, rather fortunately for him, as the conversation turned unpleasantly on the public troubles, and, in the course of it they expressed a lively desire to cut the judge's heart out and refresh themselves with a cup of its blood.

Mr. Sedgwick received a fair share of state and federal honors. He was a delegate to the convention which formed the constitution of the commonwealth of Massachusetts, and of that which after a memorable struggle ratified the federal constitution. He was a member of the old Continental Congress, that body of which Chatham said, that "for solidity of reasoning, force of sagacity, and wisdom of conclusion, no nation or body of men can stand in preference to the general congress at Philadelphia," and was successively chosen either to the House of Representatives or the United States Senate in the first six Congresses under the constitution, in the last of which he was speaker of the House. He was district attorney in the western district of Massachusetts, and was subsequently attorney-general of the commonwealth. He was appointed a justice of the Massachusetts court of common pleas, but never took his seat on that bench. He was twice a commissioner on the part of Massachusetts to settle the boundary between this State and New York. The secretaryship of the treasury was offered him by Washington after Hamilton's retirement from the office, but declined. In 1800 he was chosen Major General of a division of militia. Having withdrawn in 1801 from public life, against the wish of his party and the entreaties of his friends, among whom Chief Justice Marshall and Rufus King may be mentioned, he died in 1813 while on the bench of the supreme court of the state, of which he had been for eleven years an associate justice.

Judge Sedgwick, though able as a lawyer and statesman, was perhaps more remarkable for the force of his character than for the brilliancy of his talents. An uncompromising federalist and cordially hated by some of his party opponents, no man in Congress, in his day, was more respected or more upright. Efforts were twice made during his public career to cast a slur upon his integrity, once when he was at the head of the north-

ern commissariat, early in the Revolution, after making enemies among the dealers by his stern exaction of good weight, full measure and fair price, and once in the fourth Congress, when the speculators, Randall and Whitney approached him and other influential members of Congress to solicit their aid in obtaining the sanction of the House to the purchase of the peninsula formed by Lakes Erie, Huron and Michigan, containing nearly 60,000 square miles and afterwards constituting the State of Michigan. In both instances his integrity came out absolute, without shadow or stain. If it be true that a man is known by his companions, Sedgwick's character is sufficiently established by the high respect of Washington and the intimate friendship of most of the eminent members of his party. Washington on frequent social occasions gave him the place of honor at his table, and almost uniformly treated him with an affectionate deference of manner. Once only the slightest coolness existed between them. It was during the period when the fixing of the site for the capital of the nation was under discussion. From considerations of what he thought public convenience and equity, Mr. Sedgwick did not immediately acquiesce in the position on the banks of the Potomac, which was naturally dear to Washington, who for a time appeared to misconstrue his non-approval. Soon after, however, the president did full justice to the purity of his motives by drinking his health at a presidential dinner, in an emphatic and significant manner. A list of Sedgwick's close friends includes Alexander Hamilton, John Jay, Rufus King, Fisher Ames, Christopher Gore, Nathan Dane, James Bowdoin, and most of the great federalists who aided in establishing the national government. Hamilton's last letter, written the day before the great tragedy of his death, was to him. In letters from some of his distinguished correspondents, such as Gore, Rutledge, King, Ames, Charles Cotesworth Pinckney, Charles Carroll of Carrollton, and various others, there is an intensity of admiration and affection which sound strange to ears accustomed to the colder expression of our generation.

His personal courage, as shown in the above mentioned incident of his dispersing the Shay's mutineers or in sharp discus-

sions on the floor of Congress with the opposition leaders, such as Madison, Gallatin, and Giles, was invariably unflinching. I fear, indeed, that a close scrutiny of the congressional records will show that the founders of the republic have received from their descendants rather more credit than they were entitled to for self-restraint and decorum on the floor of Congress, and that Judge Sedgwick's demeanor there was on some exciting occasions far from unruffled or respectful to his forensic antagonist. Nevertheless, he had, as an almost unbroken rule, great personal dignity, and through his courtesy of manner and his judicial enforcement of professional propriety after his taking a seat on the supreme bench of Massachusetts, a great change for the better was introduced into the manners of the bar of Berkshire and indeed of the Commonwealth. At the same time, as I have intimated, he had an impetuous, not to say imperious, nature, though it was never betrayed in his domestic relations, and he might have earned from Dr. Johnson the praise of being a good hater. His federalism was so intense that it was impossible for him to recognize any virtue politically in the democrats whom he invariably referred to in his letters and conversation as Jacobins, sharing heartily the convictions of that honest federalist clergyman who declared that he would not say that every democrat was a horse-thief, but that he would say that every horse-thief was a democrat.

Sedgwick's federalism, however, did not prevent his being really a democrat in that original sense which made him the kindest of neighbors, not less among the very poor than the well-to-do. Yet he had a certain aristocracy of temperament which led him to choose his associates from among the well-bred and cultivated, and it was in times of political controversy only that he was led to regard the mass of the people as a mere mob. No doubt he shared the faults as well as the virtues of his party, and when the power passed from the hands of that grand but rather bigoted old party and Jefferson was elected, he half-thought that all the sacrifices of the Revolution had been in vain. Like Webster at a later day who saw "no star of hope above the horizon but the intelligent, united and patriotic whig party of the United States," he be-

held beyond the eclipse of the federal party no coming dawn, nothing but blackness and ruin. Poor mortals, both! Wise in the short-sighted wisdom of their generation, how would language fail them if they could look to-day on the Great Republic and its almost too proud position among the nations. The danger now is that we become too mighty, too imperial.

Two of Sedgwick's conspicuous characteristics as a statesman were, first, his faith in *government*, and second, in a liberal political *economy*. Wherever a motion was introduced, the result of which would tend to transfer to congressional committees or to fritter away in any respect or degree the legitimate executive power of the president or the heads of departments, Sedgwick was counted on with absolute certainty to oppose it. Whenever a needless or extravagant appropriation was proposed in Congress, for even in those days which in public dealings we are inclined to think of as more rigorously honest than ours, "jobs" were not unknown, no man was more sure to scent the "job" and raise the warning.

Judge Sedgwick had always intense anti-slavery convictions, though in practice these were controlled by the compromises of the constitution, and the legislation conforming to them. He was, indeed, chairman of the committee that reported to the House the bill that became the original fugitive slave law, and I find among his papers a bill of sale by John Fellows to Theodore Sedgwick of a negro woman and girl, dated July 1, 1777. No explanation of this purchase has been preserved, though it was undoubtedly made from humane motives, and probably to save the "chattels" from a hard taskmaker. Sedgwick was one of the earliest members of the Pennsylvania abolition society, founded in 1775, of which Franklin was the first president. The defense of Elizabeth Freeman, known as Mumbet, the slave of Colonel Ashley of Sheffield, who had fled to his protection from the cruelty of an infuriated mistress, is known to most of you. The decision then obtained by him giving her freedom was the first practical construction which made the declaration in the newly adopted bill of rights of Massachusetts that "all men are born free and equal," something more than a "glittering generality." Together with a

judgment of similar purport soon after rendered in Worcester county, it precipitated the extinguishment of slavery in our noble commonwealth. Mumbet remained in his service until her death. She lies in the Sedgwick burial plot in Stockbridge. Those who would know what the negro race is capable of should read there her epitaph.

In Judge Sedgwick's well known dissenting opinion in the case of Greenwood against Curtis, in 1806, he held against the majority of the court that an action could not be maintained in this commonwealth on a promissory note given in Africa for a balance due on a contract for the purchase of slaves, even independently of a stipulation in the contract, which was in evidence, that the note and the account were parts of the same transaction. This opinion would, I think, be accepted to-day by the legal profession as sounder law than that delivered by the distinguished chief justice of Massachusetts on behalf of the majority of the court. In Congress, Judge Sedgwick was a steady worker, and as chairman of various important committees, reported much of the constructive legislation by which the fabric of the federal government was built on the foundation of the constitution. He reported all bills by which new states were admitted to the Union during his term of congressional service, and some of the amendments to the national constitution proposed in the first Congress and after ratified by the states. He debated on equal terms with the leading members both of the Senate and the House, and though his speeches were generally confined to succinct arguments, he sometimes spoke with a power which, had he desired such distinction, might perhaps have given him a reputation as an orator equal to that of his intimate friend, Fisher Ames. I will refer as an illustration to a speech made by him in March, 1796, in the House, just before his transfer to the Senate. It was on the occasion of Edward Livingston's famous motion after John Jay's negotiation of our first treaty with Great Britain that the president of the United States be requested to lay before the House a copy of the instructions to the minister of the United States who negotiated the treaty, with the correspondence and documents relating to it. Madison, Giles and other

leaders had spoken in support of the motion. To Mr. Sedgwick was confided the duty of leading the opposition to it. Of his speech, which in the eyes of the administration and their friends, amounted to a demonstration that the treaty-making power was vested by the constitution exclusively in the Senate and president, and admitted of no right of advice or even of examination on the part of the House in the formation or adoption of a foreign treaty, no skeleton even can be given in this paper. Although it failed of defeating the resolution, which was reserved for the president's veto, it was perhaps more praised than any delivered in Congress up to that time. When after some hours speaking, Mr. Sedgwick stopped from exhaustion, not of his subject, but of his strength, members with whom he was unacquainted as well as his friends crowded round him with compliments and thanks. Miss Patterson of Philadelphia sent him a delicate restorative confection with a note, thanking him for his "irresistible eloquence." The vice-president, who was present, took him by the hand, pressed it cordially, and said: "From my heart I thank you, I will not flatter. I never flatter, you least of all men, for I know you would despise it, but your speech for matter, style and delivery exceeds anything I ever heard, and I have heard much good speaking." Rufus King said it was one of the most perfect models of eloquence in the language, and George Cabot gave it similar praise. At a dinner of distinguished men in Philadelphia, Mr. Robert Morris, who for some years had not been on friendly terms with Mr. Sedgwick, said before the company, "There has been a great deal of good speaking in the House on the present subject, but I think that all the speakers ought to join in cursing our friend, for he has so distanced every one that their speeches compared with his appear mere trash," adding that "it was precisely such as he himself would have delivered if he could speak as he wished,—it was absolutely perfect." Chief Justice Ellsworth said to Uriah Tracy that till then he "had comparatively never heard good speaking." Letters of congratulation poured in from all sides. I quote a few sentences from a letter of Christopher Gore, dated Waltham, March 31, 1796, "Your speech on Livingston's motion has de-

servedly attained first place in the esteem of all the good and wise, and has put the subject in the best and strongest light. We here consider it unanswerable. Aristotle or Demosthenes or some other wise Athenian has somewhere said that to make a good oration you should say everything that can be said on the subject, and no more, and in the best manner. Your oration, in my humble opinion, contains the first and last quality, and if you had omitted the unjust praise of the Virginians, I would allow that it squared perfectly with the Athenian rule." A very effective passage in his speech was his contrast of the position taken by Madison, George Mason, George Nicholas and Edmund Randolph in the debates in the Virginia convention by which the Federal constitution was ratified, in support of that construction of the treaty-making power which they now defied.

Since this famous debate no serious attempt has been made by the House of Representatives to encroach on the exclusive right of the Senate to make foreign treaties.

Party-spirit raged fiercely during the first years of the republic, and Judge Sedgwick's inflexibility made him enemies in Congress as well as out of it. An unsuccessful attempt was made to censure him during his term as speaker, and the resolution of thanks which was tendered him at the close of his speakership had many dissenting votes.

One of Judge Sedgwick's most delightful traits was his domestic disposition. Nothing could exceed his devotedness to his children, or the mutual affection that existed between him and them. His letters to his wife during his many and long absences from home, though written in the elaborate and formal style of that day, overflowed with expressions of the tenderest solicitude for her health, which was often very delicate. His kindness of heart endeared him to his neighbors as warmly as he was detested by the Shay's men of other towns and counties who did not know him personally, and to whom he was the embodiment of federal tyranny.

He was married three times : first to Eliza Mason, a daughter of the elder Jeremiah Mason, who died within a year of their marriage ; second, to Pamela Dwight, daughter of Brigadier

General Joseph Dwight, and third to Penelope Russell, daughter of Charles Russell, who survived him. His ten children, of whom eight lived to mature age, were all born of the second marriage.

Of these three sons, Theodore, Henry Dwight, and Robert, reached distinction in the law. Theodore was the author of a considerable treatise on "Public and Private Economy." He was elected to the Legislature of the commonwealth for many years successively, and was repeatedly, though unsuccessfully, the democratic candidate for governor. His failure of election was not to his personal discredit, as the state went always whig. He was one of the first and stanchest advocates of the construction of the Western, now Boston & Albany, railroad, which was derided by Basil Hall and other Englishmen as a chimera, and which, when built, far outdid any previous triumph of railway engineering. Henry was the author of a remarkable pamphlet on the cumbrous absurdities of the pleading and practice at common law, which suggested to the late David Dudley Field, who in the beginning of his career, was a junior partner in the law office of H. D. & R. Sedgwick, in New York city, that plan for a codification of the procedure of the courts, which, as well as Mr. Field's further efforts to codify the common law itself, has gone far toward revolutionizing the judicial administration of justice, both in the United States and in Great Britain and her dependencies. Charles, who, for the greater part of his life and up to his death, was county clerk in Berkshire, left a memory dear and sweet to the people of his town and county. He had a captivating humor resembling that of Charles Lamb.

Susan, the wife of Theodore, and Elizabeth, the wife of Charles, both remarkable and interesting women, were writers of excellent juvenile works. To the expansive social energy of Mrs. Charles, and the elegant manners of Mrs. Theodore, which would have graced a court in old England, society in this part of Berkshire owes much, I believe, to-day. If originality and beauty of character, if vivacity and social charm were credentials to public notice, I should have the privilege which is now denied me of laying a little chaplet on the be-

loved graves of Jane, the widow of Henry, and Elizabeth, the widow of Robert.

Katharine Maria was the fifth of the Judge's children. Though the circle of those who remember her is rapidly narrowing, her name is yet familiar and beloved among these hills. It is not to be regretted that the facts of her life, few and simple as they are, cannot be given in this paper. By those who care for details, they will be found in Miss Dewey's memoir of her, and in biographical sketches in some of the encyclopaedias. What I should like to describe if I could to those who have not had the privilege of knowing her, is the exquisite feminine charm and the gracious influence of her personality. As an author she had the good fortune to be first in point of time among her sex in this country in the field of fiction. Her works had a wide reputation for their portraiture of New England life and customs in the days before Mary Wilkins and William Howells had made that field their own. Her books for young people, some of which still have a lingering charm for a few of the sophisticated children of the present day, deserve, in my partial judgment, to remain on the shelf with Miss Edgeworth's for generations to come. Indeed some figures in her larger books, of which the story runs through our valley, are so identified with the scenes around us, Magawisca with "Sacrifice Rock," Crazy Bet with the "Ice Hole," that they will linger long among the localities they still vivify and make real to the few survivors of the last Berkshire generation. We cannot say that,

The meanest rill, the mightiest river,
Roll mingling with her name forever,

but for some of the passing generation at least, the Housatonic and Konk's brook may yet seem to syllable her name.

Regarding her as a woman and not an author, of course the class of which Miss Sedgwick was the type still exists, and if personalities were permissible I could in our little Berkshire circle even, point out one who has her grace, another, her strong sense, another, her sprightliness, another, her exquisite sympathy; but do not think I am not sensitively alive to all the virtues and attractions of this generation, if I say I do not,

from my limited experience, know where to find in one maid or matron the assemblage of all these qualities as they were united in her.

Miss Sedgwick was born for the country, and delighted in every sound and scent that belonged to unpolluted nature, and though after Christmas she passed the remainder of the winter with her sister-in-law in the city, she always yearned to get back to her rural life and neighborly charities. Though so fond of cultivated society, she seemed made for the flowers and the hills; and one might fancy that she drew from the first the delicate grace, and from the other, the sturdy vigor with which she charmed and sustained her rustic neighbors. She lifted her eyes to the hills from whence came her strength. That instinct of true democracy which she inherited from her federal father, with the kindness and benevolence welling up like twin perennial fountains in her heart, her femininity never outstepped, her exquisite modesty, which, like the robe of Pudicitia, was never loosened, made her what I like to fancy as the type of the genuine American woman. Fortunately for her brothers and their families, fortunately, too, for society, her absorbing domestic affections prevented her grasping any of the many manly hands which, some of them belonging to fine and distinguished heads, were offered to aid her solitary journey through life. She was famous for her hospitality, and was never more charming than at the breakfast parties, of which she had caught the idea in England from those favorite entertainments of Samuel Rogers, and which she delighted to give in her little addition to her brother Charles' house in Lenox, always known in the family as "the wing." Beginning with the early days, when first the Italian, and afterward the Hungarian exiles, who thronged in the first half of the century to our free and welcoming land, how many persons of distinction at home, how many famous for literary success as well as political misfortune abroad, who brought letters to Miss Sedgwick from Sismondi or Miss Mitford or some other European correspondent, found seats at her simple but bountiful and tasteful table!

During the series of years when Mrs. Kemble was a summer

resident of the little house at Lenox called "the Perch," she was often at these delightful breakfasts, and after the refection she, sometimes with the other guests and Mrs. Charles Sedgwick's school girls grouped spellbound around, read aloud a play of the great master. Ah! those enchanted days! "Hans Breitmann gif a barty. Vere is dat barty now?" In the evenings, with Mrs. Charles Sedgwick's aid, she often had a gathering of young people, at which there were some of those simple diversions which under their inspiration and guidance then took the place of the costly and formal entertainments of the present day. One favorite game was this: A basket containing slips of paper with written queries and another containing corresponding slips, each having a single word written on them, were passed around. Each person present took a question and word at random, and wrote an answer introducing the word. These answers were read aloud, and the skill shown in bringing in an incongruous word made the fun. Here is one I chance to remember. The question was, "Who is the prettiest girl in the room?" The word to be brought in was "Hood." The verse ran as follows:—

Oh! horror! oh murder! oh Donner and Blitzen!
 I'm in the worst scrape a chap ever gits in;
 So many bright eyes now piercing me through.
 Tell which are the brightest, oh what can I do?
 I ne'er can decide. What mortal man could?
 So I bow to the feet of fair womanhood.

Christmas eve and St. Valentine's day, and indeed, any party of young people furnished occasions for letting off impromptu skyrockets in verse. There was a charming black-eyed girl among Mrs. Charles Sedgwick's scholars named Ellen Perry, the sister of the Horatio Perry, who was afterward United States minister to Portugal. Some swain had had the good fortune to see her fishing from a boat on the Stockbridge Bowl, and produced some verses, which after rapturously describing her manifold witcheries, ended somewhat as follows:—

A fly or a smile she has flung for her bait,
 And the pike and the hero seek freedom too late.
 Had I the sweet harp of the bard, Allan Baue,
 I would steal from its strings an appropriate strain,
 Which, in musical numbers, should softly awake
 Another fair Ellen, the maid of *our* lake.

That hope is in vain, but this be my share,
 That I may be caught by an angler as fair,
 Or that through this life the helm of my wherry
 May have pilot as lovely as Miss Ellen Perry.

If the poor fellow were caught, I fear the fair angler let him drop and bestowed herself, though I hope not her rod, on some fortunate young Izaak Walton.

I recall a scrap of wit on one of these occasions of which I was made the victim. Justly or unjustly, a high degree of devotion was attributed to me for a certain Miss Mary Foote, of whom, to my regret, I have lost sight in the engulfing years that have flowed over us since. The muse made me her butt in the following fashion :—

Here's wonder on wonder ! Swift Hal of the Wynd,
 Still farther to hasten the march of his mind,
 And at distance unmeasured all rivals to put,
 Hath ta'en to himself an additional *Foot*.

A collection of the mottoes and society verses of those happy days, if it could be made, might be a little incentive to the introduction of a dash of intellectual charm into the elegant *conversations* of the present time.

I beg pardon for bringing such unprecedented frivolity into a Historical Society paper. My only excuse, if a poor one, is the desire to show a phase of Miss Sedgwick's character most likely to be forgotten, but which ought not to be forgotten. Her inexhaustible love for young people was, perhaps, her most captivating characteristic. She delighted in them, and they idolized her. Her sympathies were unbounded alike with children to be petted, exiles to be consoled, the happy and successful to be congratulated, the poor and distressed in every rank and condition of life. Wherever she moved in our quiet valley, she was followed and embraced by the love and respect of all. With a captivating grace of appreciation perilously near, but yet escaping, flattery, she made old and young feel that each was the object of her solicitude and friendship. May I be forgiven if forgetting for the moment the astonishing progress of our day and people in arts, and how signally, alas ! in arms, and the social refinement and splendor of this opulent

and ambitious generation, I unduly exalt for a moment the grace, the simplicity, the unstrained joy of the social life of my young days, which has passed away, but, I trust, not forever. In every village there is a potential Miss Sedgwick. May I hope that the type will recur and expand, and as evolutions, like revolutions, never go back, may not there yet be in every Berkshire village a central and presiding feminine influence, whose sweetness and grace, whose purity and loveliness shall (without the dreadful ballot) woo back to society the genuine simplicity, the unsophisticated charm, which, in the days gone by, made Stockbridge and other villages of the plain so delightful a solace for the old, so permanent a joy for the young.