

LECTURE BY P. M. WETMORE BEFORE THE
HISTORICAL SOCIETY.

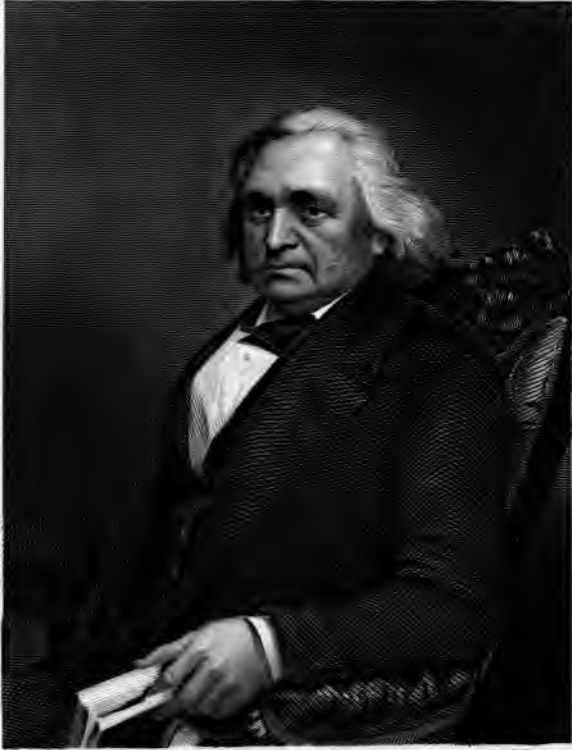
Last evening PROSPER M. WETMORE, Esq., delivered an interesting lecture before the Historical Society, on "The Antiquities of New-York." The paper bore evidence of careful preparation, showing that Mr. WETMORE, with his multifarious business engagements, is still able to devote much time to literary labor. The lecture of last evening was listened to by an intellectual audience with marked attention, frequently eliciting applause. In introducing his subject, the lecturer said that the island of Manhattan, with its opulence of waters and countless accessories of lesser islands that dot the bays and sloping shores which fringe the broad estuaries, seems to have been designed by nature for a great mart of commerce, and nobly did the early residents respond to the natural advantages spread invitingly before them. The commercial sceptre at one time was about to be grasped by Rhode Island, Newport offering unusual advantages of access and climate; Massachusetts also soon became an earnest competitor, Boston retaining the prestige of the revolutionary era; while Virginia was not without a claim to ultimate triumph, for JEFFERSON founded great hopes on the Potomac and the never-freezing waters of the Chesapeake. The speaker glanced rapidly at the success which attended the first commercial ventures of the merchants of the "olden time," and said he would speak of the local incidents and the visible objects which connect the present time with the city of the past. The casual observer will find but few existing memorials of the early days of New-York. Occasionally the removal of an ancient edifice attracts attention, calls for a newspaper paragraph, and another relic of by-gone days passes forever from our sight, and is forgotten.

The first branch of national industry which gave an impulse to the growth of the city, was that of weaving, which soon became prosperous, and, as a natural sequence, the workmen needed flocked to our shores to ply their handicraft. The hand weavers became a community of themselves in the city at an early period, maintaining a good repute as industrious, useful and orderly people.

In the year 1822 the yellow fever, which had so often spread suffering and death among the people, made its last malignant visit to the city. The people of the lower wards fled at its approach; the banker closed his doors; the merchants deserted their stores, and churches no longer echoed the words of divine truth. But a few days elapsed from the first alarm, and business had found a refuge and resting place. What was then the village of Greenwich, and is now the Ninth Ward of the city, became the improved centre of trade and commerce. A considerable number of Scotch weavers erected modest dwellings, set up their frames, and gave their new home the name of "Paisley-place."

The lecturer passed a high eulogium upon the character of the men who filled the Mayorality in the early history of the city, Stephen Allen, William Paulding, Walter Bowne, Richard Riker, Benjamin Bailey, John F. Irving, Samuel Alley, Preserved Fish, Eidad Holmes and others.

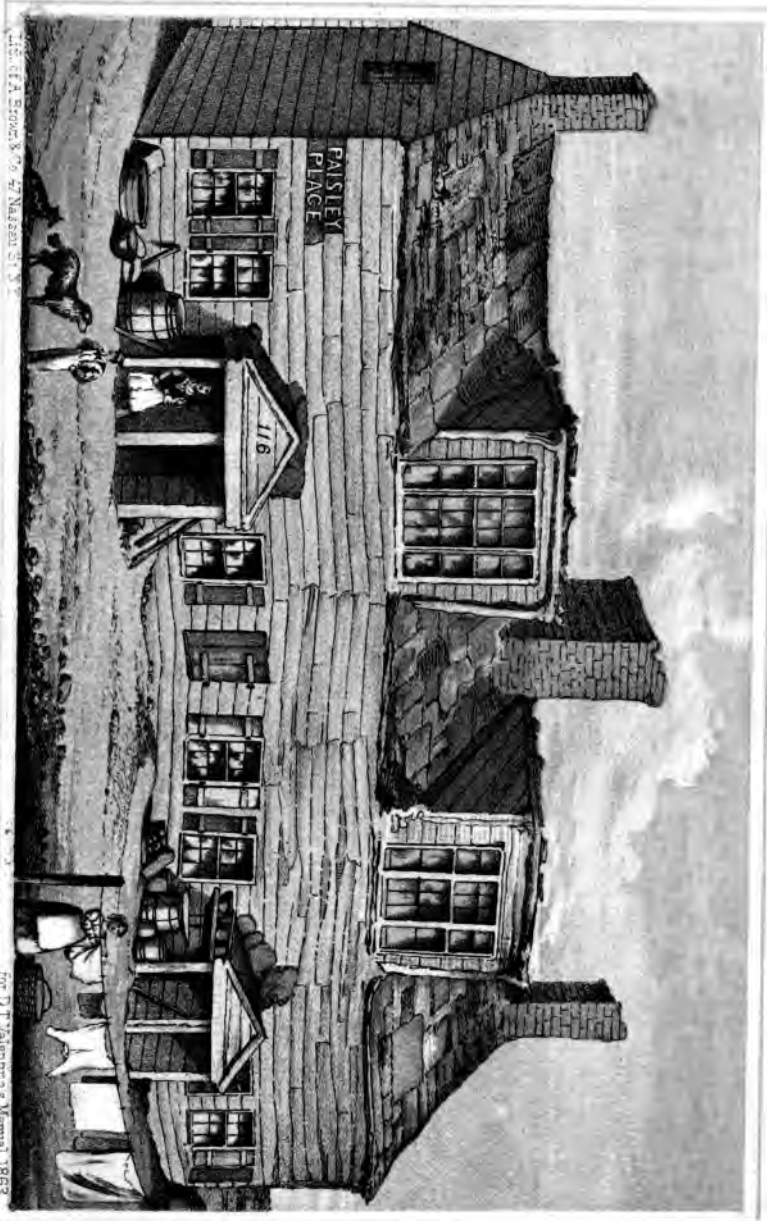
Mr. WETMORE said that under the shade of venerable sycamores, willows and locusts, still stands the old family mansion, known more than a century ago as the "Lady Warren House." It is a rare pleasure to find so charming a spot, with every feature of its antiquity faithfully preserved in the midst of a densely populated section of the city. No axe has ever invaded the sanctity of its groves. The mouldering trunks of trees that perished years ago still cast their shadows on the ground over which their youthful branches once answered with music to the breeze. Terraces are still green that have felt the footprints of unremembered generations—maidens and matrons, soldiers and civilians—subjects of a king and citizens of a republic—many of whose forms have lain so long in the earth that their burial places have faded away from the memories of the living. In concluding his address, Mr. WETMORE said that all the ancient landmarks which connected us with colonial times are rapidly passing away. Yet a little while and the surging waves of aggressive progress will doubtless have swept away forever even the few remaining vestiges of the days when the people dwelt peacefully and submissively under the shadow of the



C. Jarvis.

J. Rogers

Yours Resp^tly
D. J. Valentine



THE CITY ENGINE & 76 N. WASHINGTON ST. ST.

FOR D. T. VALENTINE'S MANUAL, 1863

PAISLEY PLACE, IN 17TH STREET BETWEEN 6TH AND 7TH AVENUES.

PAISLEY:
A LOCAL SKETCH,

FROM

VALENTINE'S MANUAL

For 1863.



NEW-YORK:
GEORGE F. NESBITT & CO., PRINTERS,
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1863.

PAISLEY.

[The Compiler is indebted to P. M. WETMORE, Esq., for the following sketch.]

EVERY person at all familiar with the history of Scotch manufactures will readily call to mind a busy, prosperous town, bearing the above name, in Renfrewshire, and chiefly known by its extensive trade in cotton and woolen goods.

There is another Paisley, much less distinguished in history, of which it is our purpose to speak at this time.

The mutations in trade, commerce and manufactures, which have occurred in a space of time but little more than is allotted to a generation, are remarkable for their importance, in the light of social progress, and are not undeserving of notice in a work of this nature.

Reference must be had to the uninviting tables of the statistician for full information on the topics to be considered. But it may not be out of place to remind the reader that forty years ago, the cotton sheetings, brown and white muslins, checks, stripes, drills, and bed-ticks, the substantial materials essential to the wants of the thrifty and well-ordered household, were mostly woven in hand-looms, and not as now, the products of immense manufacturing establishments, around which have clustered populous cities and villages in New-York and New England.

Inventive genius, inspired by the examples of Watt and Whitney, and Arkwright, conceived and executed the complex machinery, by the aid of which American enterprise now supplies the world with cotton goods, indispensable to most nations, but which were comparatively unknown to the commerce of this continent at the commencement of the present century. Before that time, these necessary appliances of domestic life were principally of linen

and woolen fabrics, imported from the British Islands and Continental Europe, while India, in exchange for our silver dollars, sent us sparingly of her delicate muslins, but abundantly of her coarsely woven "Baftas," "Gurrahs" and "Mammoodies," the handiwork of her patiently laborious, but most uninventive people.

From these distant teachings we drew our early lessons in cotton manufactures. Weaving soon became a prosperous branch of national industry, and it followed, as a natural sequence, that the workmen we needed resorted to our shores to ply their handicraft. Scotland sent over her hundreds of frugal and thrifty weavers, who speedily set up their looms to prepare the needful commodities. The yarns for their use became an important branch of trade; and as each piece of muslin reached its destined length, and each fragment of the apron-check, coveted by the industrious housewife, grew to its proper dimensions, they were transferred to the custody of the merchant, in exchange for current coin or a fresh supply of yarn.

The hand-weavers had become a community of themselves in our city at the period of which we speak, and had won and maintained good repute as an industrious, useful, and orderly people. These qualities have proverbially marked the Scottish character, and the national attributes were well sustained in the habits and conduct of our little Paisley community.

The year 1822 forms an epoch in our municipal history. The yellow fever, which had so often spread suffering and death among the inhabitants, made its last eccentric visit to our city in the autumn of that year. It brought, of course, its wonted terrors. The people of the lower wards fled at its approach. The banker closed his doors; the merchant packed his goods; and churches no longer echoed the words of divine truth. Many hundreds of citizens abandoned their homes and accustomed occupations, that they might seek safety beyond the reach of pestilence, putting their trust in broad rivers and green fields.

But a few days elapsed from the first alarm, and business had

found a refuge and a resting-place. What was then the village of Greenwich, and is now the Ninth Ward of the city, became the improvised centre of trade and commerce.

The village of that day is not easily traceable on the map which usually accompanies this annual volume. At a little distance from the spot where the larger merchants had made their temporary homes, ran a secluded country lane, which bore the somewhat pretentious name of Southampton road. Ancient trees of a growth anterior to the Revolution, lent their welcome shade in the sultry days of summer, and their protection from the inclement storms of winter, to the sparsely scattered dwellers in this pleasant suburb of the city.

A convenient nook by the side of this quiet lane was chosen by a considerable number of the Scotch weavers as their place of retirement from the impending danger. They erected their modest dwellings in a row, set up their frames, spread their webs, and the shuttles flew merrily from willing fingers. With the love of Scotland strong in their hearts, and the old town, from which they had wandered far away, warm in their memories, they gave their new home the name of "Paisley Place."

The writer, who well remembered and had dealt with the weavers of 1822, chanced to pass, a few days since, through Seventeenth-street, from the Sixth to the Seventh Avenue. Thoughts of the present, and not of the past, occupied his mind. An open gateway attracted attention, and invited entrance. Listlessly he sauntered within a charmed circle of ancient memories. He had unwittingly wandered into the path once known as Southampton road. The elms and maples had suffered the doom of city trees; the old chesnut, from whose gnarled branches the little urchins of the past had gathered the nuts of autumn, lived only in anti-quarian memories, but there stood plainly visible the Weaver's row, dim with the marks of age, yet fresh in the observer's mind, as an object of interest forty years ago. The paint had faded away from the time-worn materials which formed the humble structures,

but the simple words remained to mark the spot where once the busy weaver sat, humming his Scottish airs, while, swiftly as flew the ebbing hours of life, the checkered webbing grew beneath his plastic hands.

"Paisley Place" survives its fourth decade of years, but no shuttle flies under its fast decaying roofs. The weaver's song is hushed; time and death have done their work, and the little primitive fraternity has vanished before the advancing march of associated enterprise.

Our artist, with true antiquarian spirit, has faithfully preserved the features of this scene, as a memorial of an interesting incident in our local history.

NEW-YORK, *February 23, 1863.*