

CHAPTER XLI

THE LORING FAMILY

THE Lorings, too, have had intimate association, through several generations, with the college at Cambridge. But public service — in Europe as well as in this country — further mark their history, in which we find color and romance to a remarkable degree.

They began simply enough over here. Most of the American Lorings trace their descent from Deacon Thomas, who came to Massachusetts from Axminster, Devonshire, England, in 1634 and had four sons. But there were distinguished Lorings in England, nearly four hundred years before the day of Deacon Thomas. One of these was Robert, poet and mathematician, who built the cathedral of Hereford and was made bishop of that See in 1279. Another Loring was knighted by Henry the Third; his son, Roger, was also knighted. Roger had a son, Sir Neell (Nele, Neale or Nigel) Loring, who is the hero of the late Sir Conan Doyle's well-known historical novels, "The White Company", and "Sir Nigel." While no *certain* connection has thus far been established between Sir Nigel's family, which belonged to the Bedfordshire Lorings, and the founder of the American family the genealogists incline to the opinion that they were of the same stock.

Deacon Thomas Loring was already married to Jane Newton, "a woman of lively spirit . . . skilled in the practice of physick", when he joined the church colony at Hingham. He was a farmer by occupation but in 1637, by permission of the town, built a weir to catch the floating fish that in those

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days abounded along the Hingham shores just as they do in these. He was an innkeeper too, perhaps the first in the plantation. His license from the General Court bears the date of March, 1637. He died April 4, 1661, leaving no will. On this account an inventory of his possessions had to be made and we are provided with a document which gives valuable insight into life as it was lived among our pioneer ancestors in the seventeenth century.

We thus ¹ learn that the deacon possessed cows, calves, swine and horses, land in Hingham and at Hog Island, "Broad Cloth", shirts, hats and house furnishings, as well as 2 Bibles, "one warming panne and six hand cherchers."

For many generations there has always been at least one Caleb in the Loring family. The first Caleb Loring learned the trade of weaver but later became a physician. Though born in Hull (June 9, 1674), he made his home in Plymouth for many years, removing afterwards to Plympton where he was so busy with his practice that he had a door cut in the Meetinghouse, close by his pew, so that he could come and go without disturbing the congregation in meeting time. He was also one of the proprietors of a forge for the production of bog iron ore. For the most part the Lorings continued to live on the South Shore, where they originally settled, but Isaac, of the third generation, removed from Hull to Boston in 1687. When he died in that city, in 1702, he was mourned by Judge Sewall as a great loss to the Old South Church. The connection of the Loring family with the Old South continues to this day — though this branch of the Lorings have been Unitarians for many years — through Miss Katharine Peabody Loring. Miss Loring is a devoted member of the Old South Association which controls the activities of the historic Old South Meetinghouse at the corner of Milk and Washington streets, Boston.

¹ See pp. 3, 4, 5 of "Loring Genealogy", by Charles Henry Pope and Katharine Peabody Loring, printed by Murray and Emery Company, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1917.

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Israel Loring, who was also of the third generation, was graduated from Harvard College in 1701, studied divinity and was called to the Ministry of the church in Sudbury. A journal which he kept for many years has been preserved in the Sudbury Public Library. Here is recorded with deep emotion the sickness and demise of the servant Simeon, who, born a Negro slave and brought up in the Loring family, had only just attained his freedom when he died.

The Reverend Israel took for a wife a woman of extraordinary efficiency and vitality. A Boston paper states in her obituary notice that "for forty-five years past" she had "eaten but one meal in twenty-four hours and that was ordinarily but a little bread and cheese at night a little before she went to bed. Yet her health was such that she was at the head of her family affairs and business until about ten days before her death." It is unfortunate for those interested in unusual diets that counter propaganda about this same case is extant in the Journal of the lady's husband. He testifies that, though his wife *did* exist on one meal a day, she had for many years been "in an invalid condition!"

The Caleb Loring of this third generation of Lorings in America was Captain Caleb of Hull. He had no less than three sons whom he perseveringly named Caleb. A Bible presented to the first of these by his maternal grandmother became in turn the possession of the two succeeding sons who bore the name. And because the third of the name lived to have a family, the Bible has descended in his line from one Caleb Loring to another. In recent years its owner has been the late Honorable William Caleb Loring, for twenty years justice of the Supreme Judicial Court of Massachusetts. Celia, a daughter of Captain Caleb of Hull, was married in Boston, on May 30, 1769, to Peter Sigourney, thus setting the Loring offspring an example, which they have steadfastly followed since, of marrying into other interesting and distinguished New England families.

As might have been expected, many Lorings in the fifth

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generation covered themselves with glory in resisting British oppression. The house of Deacon Joseph Loring of Lexington was one of those wantonly burned during the battle of April 19, 1775, and he has left us an interesting categorical list of his losses :

An account of the Real and Personal Estate belonging to Joseph Loring of Lexington, destroyed and carried off by the British troops in their ravages of said town on the 19th of April, 1775 :— A large Mansion House and a barn seventy feet long and a Corn House, all burnt, £350. Household Goods and Furniture viz; eight good Feather Beds and bedding, a large quantity of Pewter and Brass ware, 3 cases of draws; two Mahogany Tables with the furniture of eight rooms; all the wearing apparel of my family consisting of nine persons, £290. All my Husbandry tools and utensils with a Cider Mill Press, with about five tons of hay, and two Calves £72. About 2— Rods of Stone Wall thrown down, £15, and £3 in specie. Total £720. The above-mentioned buildings were the first that were destroyed in the town, near the ground where the Brigade commanded by Lord Percy met the detachment retreating under Col. Smith. It does not appear that any of the militia were in or near these buildings, neither could they any ways expose or retard the British Troops in their operations; therefore the destruction must be considered brutal, barbarous and wanton.

Joseph Loring.

This statement was sent to the Provincial Assembly, but no action was taken, as was natural under all the pressure of the hour. But the Committee of Supplies of the Provincial Congress was ordered on May 1, 1775, to furnish a barrel of pork to Deacon Joseph Loring, his son Joseph and two others whose property had been destroyed.

Another Loring of this generation espoused the cause of the king, however, instead of that of the colonies. He was Joshua, born in Boston, August 3, 1716, and married in 1740 to Mary, the daughter of Samuel Curtis of Roxbury. A tanner by trade, he went to sea when he came of age and four years after his marriage found himself master of a privateer.

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Also master of sufficient funds to buy a large estate in Roxbury and to build that fine house, which is still standing, at the corner of Center Street and Greenough Avenue, Jamaica Plain, now generally known as the Loring-Greenough House.

Joshua Loring, the Tory, had been a lieutenant in the naval service in 1745 and was advanced in rank until he attained the distinction of commodore. During the French and Indian Wars, he was in charge of the fleet in Lake Champlain and Lake George. Afterwards, he did good service at Quebec. But when, at the outbreak of the Revolutionary War, he accepted an appointment as one of Governor Gage's mandamus counselors, his estates were confiscated and his whole family went to Halifax, Nova Scotia, and later to England. There he died in Highgate, London, in 1781. It is interesting that it was only as a result of very serious consideration and consultation with friends "the whole night through" that he decided to throw in his lot with the Royalist party. His wife, who survived him for many years, is said to have regretted that they had ever left their native country.¹

The first rich Loring who could count himself altogether American was Benjamin, born in Boston in December, 1775. He was a son of Joshua Loring of Hingham and of his wife, who had been Ruth James of Cohasset. With his twin brother, Josiah, he carried on a highly prosperous stationery business in Boston. Neither of these brothers married, but a sister of theirs, Mary, became the wife of Alexander Young, publisher of the *New England Palladium* and father of the distinguished antiquary, Reverend Alexander Young, D.D. Another prosperous Boston Loring of this period was Doctor John Loring, who kept an apothecary shop at the corner of

¹ Their grandson, John Wentworth Loring, who had been born in Roxbury just before the outbreak of the Revolution, married in England a daughter of Admiral Philip Patton and, having been in the British navy from his youth up, rose to be an admiral and was at one time Lieutenant Governor of the Royal Naval College. Ten years before his death he was made a Knight of the Order of the Bath. A brother of his became Fellow at Magdalen College, Oxford. Another brother was a colonel in the British army during the War of 1812



HON. CALEB LORING (1764-1850)

*From the portrait by Stuart long owned by the
late William Caleb Loring of Boston*



MRS. RICHARD C. DERBY
(MARTHA COFFIN)

*From the miniature by Malbone in the possession of the
Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York*

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Cornhill and the lane leading to Brattle Street. This shop was the resort of the wits of the time and it was said that Loring's laugh could be heard as far as Faneuil Hall. During the Revolution, Doctor Loring acted as surgeon, and a deposition of his regarding the treatment of citizens by British soldiers in Boston during the Revolutionary period is one of the important historical documents of the time. He is remembered as belonging to the group which introduced inoculation for smallpox in Boston.

As bearing on the tradition that the Lorings are people of unusual ability, it is to be noted that Caleb of this fifth generation was a State senator, had his portrait painted by Gilbert Stuart and employed about forty seamen annually in foreign trade because a member of the firm of Loring and Curtis. Beginning with this fifth generation, we find the Lorings having a good deal to do with the sea. This is particularly true of that branch which had gone to live in and around North Yarmouth, Maine. One of these, a Loring of the sixth generation named Jacob B. (born at Perry, Maine, September 5, 1836), was married in the old Knox mansion at Thomaston, just before he attained his majority, to Caroline Young. Having begun life as a ship's carpenter, he ended as a prosperous boat builder of Rockland. But in between he won a captaincy in the Union army.

Another Loring of the sixth generation realized wealth and romance to an unusual degree as a result of following the sea. This was George, brother of the twins who had been successful stationers in Boston. Born in Hingham, November 18, 1771, George entered Harvard College, in those days a preparation usually for the calling of parson, lawyer, or writer. But George preferred to be a sea captain and after a number of voyages, he settled in Malaga, Spain, where he became a prominent and wealthy merchant, the local agent of Baring Brothers of London, and the pioneer in American commerce with Malaga. He has come down to us as the first American to ship raisins from that port to this country. His wife,

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whom he married at the Church of El Sagrario, Malaga, July 31, 1817, was Maria del Rosario. By reason of this alliance, very interesting Spanish names, and even occasional Spanish titles, appear from now on in the Loring family history.

The eldest son of this interesting alliance came to Boston as a lad and received his education under the care of his father's relations. Then he returned to Spain and carried on the export business in Malaga. George Henry, a younger brother, was not only educated in this country, but became an American citizen. Later, he too returned to Spain, where he built Andalusia's first railroad and for many years represented Malaga in Parliament. In 1856 he was created Marquis de Casa Loring.¹ Amalia, a daughter of this marquis, married (April 25, 1875) Don Francisco Silvela, who was Prime Minister of Spain during the minority of King Alfonso, and leader of the Conservative party. His widow was created Marquesa de Silvela and a Grandee of Spain and, since titles in Spain descend in the female as well as the male line, the Silvelas are now the Marquises of the Casa Loring.

While certain Lorings of the sixth generation thus successfully followed the sea others gave evidence of a remarkable capacity for the law. Charles Greely Loring, a Phi Beta Kappa man in the class in 1812 at Harvard, has come down to us as having defended the fugitive slave, Thomas Sims, in Boston in 1851. When Charles Loring was ready to study law, the only law school in the country was at Litchfield, Connecticut. He matriculated there and for his first wife married a Litchfield girl, Anna Pierce Brace. His second wife was the daughter of Justice Samuel Putnam, of Salem and Danvers, who for twenty-eight years was a justice of the Supreme Court of Massachusetts. His third wife, the widow of George A. Goddard, was one of the founders of the New England Hospital for Women. Of

¹ He was also called Marquis della Caridad, in recognition of his charities.

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Mr. Loring's law practice Theophilus Parsons has written, "From 1825-1855 . . . no other man in Boston had so large a number of cases in court and of the cases of no other was the proportion of cases so large which, by the novelty of the questions they raised . . . may be considered as establishing new law or giving more scope to recognized law." Mr. Loring was a Fellow of Harvard College for nearly twenty-five years and in 1862 became a State senator.

It is from Charles Greely Loring's time that the family connection with what is now known as Prides Crossing dates. He built a summer home in that section of Beverly in 1846 and here carried on a fine farm on which he raised high-bred swine, cattle and poultry. One of his daughters, Jane Lathrop, married Doctor Asa Gray,¹ the distinguished Harvard botanist, and another became the wife of Patrick Tracy Jackson.² His son, Caleb William Loring, was a lawyer by profession but added to the law a large trust business and became president of the Plymouth Cordage Company, founded in 1824 by Bourne Spooner and by Caleb Loring. Prides Crossing was at first the family residence during the warm-weather months only, but after 1872 Mr. Loring lived there permanently. With his father and Francis Amory³ he owned one of the first yachts large enough for cruising and in this yacht went around Cape Ann to Mt. Desert in the sixties. He died at Camden, South Carolina, January 29, 1897. One of his sons, the late William Caleb Loring, was for twenty years Justice of the Supreme Court. He married (September 25, 1883) Susan Mason Lawrence,⁴ a daughter of Amos Adams and Sarah Appleton Lawrence, and is the owner of the extremely interesting Appleton Diary, which was edited from manuscript by his wife and is of unique value for the insight that it affords into Boston's social life during the middle of the nineteenth century.

¹ See Gray Family.

³ See Amory Family.

² See Jackson Family.

⁴ See Lawrence Family.

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Charles Greely Loring, Jr., though a civil engineer by profession, spent the winter of 1852 on the Nile for his health. The following year he made a dangerous expedition across the desert to Petra and carefully studied Egyptian art and archæology. On the outbreak of the Civil War he entered the army as a captain, retiring in 1865 as a major general. When the Boston Museum of Fine Arts was founded in 1873 he was chosen its director, and he continued to administer the affairs of the institution with great success until shortly before his death in 1902.

Augustus Peabody Loring, second son of Caleb William Loring, is at the head of a large Boston law firm, as well as president of the Plymouth Cordage Company. Here he built a library and reading room for the employees, Mrs. Loring¹ providing the books, and several years in advance of other companies, he induced his firm to undertake an extensive program of "Welfare Work." He has been State senator and is well known for his many charitable undertakings.

A double cousin of Charles Greely Loring, Edward Greely Loring, was connected, in a way which has made history, with the Fugitive Slave Law, enacted by Congress in 1850. This law gave to United States commissioners jurisdiction on all cases of runaway slaves and Anthony Burns, a runaway slave captured in Boston, was ordered by Commissioner Loring to be returned to his master in the South. This caused great excitement in Boston. Judge Loring was threatened and badly treated, and an attempt was made to remove him from office "by address." Feeling ran so high, indeed, that the governor, who refused to comply with this demand, lost reëlection. But his successor, Governor Nathaniel P. Banks, signed the measure, with the result that Loring and twenty-six other judges went out of office. President Buchanan subsequently made Judge Loring a justice of the United States Court of Claims at Washington,

¹ She was born Ellen Gardner, daughter of George and Eliza (Peabody) Gardner.

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D. C., which post he filled with distinction until 1877, when he retired from active work. On the other hand, Judah Loring of the seventh generation was an uncompromising foe of slavery in the years when it cost a man a good deal to oppose this evil. He it was who took the family name to Kansas in 1857.

Just as well-known representatives of the Loring family were on both sides during the Revolutionary War and cousins of the seventh generation, as just noted, held diametrically divergent views concerning the justice of the Fugitive Slave Law, so Lorings were to be found in *both camps* during the Civil War. That many of them should have attained eminence in the Union army seems quite in the nature of things. But it *is* rather surprising to find a Loring who rose to the rank of general in the Confederate army. This was the distinction of William Wallace Loring, of the eighth generation, and is not *so* strange when one adds that he was born at St. Augustine, Florida, whither his father, Reuben, had removed from Hingham. He served in the Indian Wars in Florida and later in the Mexican War, where he lost an arm while leading his regiment of riflemen against the City of Mexico. He entered the Confederate army in 1861 and speedily rose to the rank of general. For a brief period after Lee's surrender he was a banker in New York. But like the distinguished Scotchman for whom he had been named, soldiering seemed his natural *metier*. So, leaving business behind, he went to Egypt, in 1869, and obtained an appointment as brigadier general in the army of the Khedive.

Piquant allusions to General William Wallace Loring's experiences in Egypt are contained in the book, "Recollections of a Rebel Reefer",¹ written by James Morris Morgan, who was associated with him in this service. We learn among other things that the general fell heir to a bay Arab stallion that had been presented to the Empress Eugenie

¹ Published by Houghton Mifflin Company in 1917.

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by the Khedive when she was his guest at the opening of the Suez Canal. "Napoleon", as this horse was called, had been left behind when the Empress went home because she had so many presents that she could not take them all. It was a great compliment to the reputation of General Loring as a horseman that the Khedive passed the animal on to him, for the beast was a plunger with a habit of taking all four feet off the ground every few minutes, and leaping high into the air. The mouth of a plunger must, of course, be humored, and since General Loring had left an arm at the storming of Belen Gate, and could shorten the reins of Napoleon only by carrying them in his mouth — at imminent danger to his teeth — the animal was perforce passed on to Morgan. Some of the time, while in Egypt, General Loring was in charge of the Department of Alexandria. Later he led an expedition against the Abyssinians.

Another member of this family in the eighth generation who had a taste for high adventure was Frederick Wadsworth Loring, a graduate of Harvard in the class of 1870. He accompanied the Wheeler Expedition to Arizona as correspondent of *Appleton's Journal* and, with four others, was killed (November 5, 1871) by Apaches who attacked the stagecoach in which members of the expedition were traveling. Good judges have declared that this Loring, who was really only a youth when he met his untimely end, gave promise of an unusual literary gift.

In every generation there seems to have been at least one Loring with an artistic bent. Early in the nineteenth century we find a Thomas Loring acting on the Boston stage! To be sure, he thought better of it. Having "attained no eminence" he removed to Raleigh, South Carolina, and became first an editor and then a highly honored mayor of the city.

Ellis Gray Loring was a more persistent "come outer." A devoted follower of William Lloyd Garrison, he is distinguished as having drafted, with Oliver Johnson, the con-

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stitution of the New England Anti-Slavery Society. It was through him that the girl "Med", who had escaped from slavery and was brought before the courts, secured her release in 1836. Whittier wrote a lovely poem about Loring after his death. Anna, the one child born to Ellis Gray Loring and his wife, Louisa Gilman, was married (on October 29, 1863) to Otto Dresel, a German pianist and composer. It was their son, Ellis Loring Dresel, who, in 1915, became attached to the United States embassy in Berlin, was later assigned to the embassy at Vienna, and rendered important service to the legation at Berne. From the strain of all this war work he never really recovered and died September 19, 1925.

In the admirable genealogy of the Loring family may be found a record of all the lineal descendants of that Commodore Joshua Loring who forsook his home in Roxbury to stand by the side of the king in the Revolutionary War. Accompanying the record are two pictures showing Lorings from the English branch of the family who lost their lives during the Great War. One of these was Walter Latham Loring, Lieutenant Colonel in the Royal Warwickshire Regiment. The other was Charles Buxton Loring, Major of the 37th Lancers and attached at the time of his death to the 34th Poona Horse.

Many other English as well as American Lorings, of course, served in both army and navy during the "World War."