

A CENTURY OF TOWN LIFE.

If not Benevolent Societies, the old *Fire Societies* were formed and maintained for the public or social good, and may properly be mentioned here. There were three organized

after the Revolution,—the Phoenix (1795), the Washington¹ (1800), and the Jefferson (1810). The oldest was, however, the Ancient,² instituted Nov. 8, 1743, composed of householders acting for mutual protection or aid, and maintained until paid public companies took the place of such early and more restricted associations. The number of members was limited to 25, one of whom was clerk and treasurer. Candidates stood proposed three months, and two negatives on a ballot excluded. Each member was obliged to keep two leather buckets, two bags ($1\frac{1}{2} \times \frac{3}{4}$ yd.) with his name on them, and a bed-key and belt, and, on notice of a fire, must "repair with his buckets, bags, and key, to the place where it happens" (Rules, p. 5), and "use his best endeavors" to save property of the members.

A pair of leather buckets that belonged to James Hunnewell, who joined the Society soon after his final return from the Pacific, still hangs a few yards from the writer's desk, a reminder of an old and necessary, but now disused, custom. A few rods distant, in notable contrast, is the incomparably equipped station, and the efficient professional corps of the Fire Department of the present.

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CENTURY OF TOWN LIFE:

A HISTORY

OF

CHARLESTOWN, MASSACHUSETTS,

1775—1887.

WITH SURVEYS, RECORDS, AND TWENTY-EIGHT PAGES OF
PLANS AND VIEWS.

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