

But there was little change in the habits and manner of living previous to 1830 or 1835. Agriculture was still the principal occupation, and the farms continued to be owned and cultivated by descendants of the first settlers. The housework was performed by their wives and daughters (the hired maid of foreign birth being then unknown), who also manufactured the larger part of the clothing worn. The houses were plain, without architectural ornament, and the furniture extremely simple. Woven carpets were seldom seen; if any carpets were used, they were generally made of woollen rags, braided and sewed together. There were churns and cheese-presses, spinning-wheels, hand-looms, and dye-pots, but no pianos or pictures, and but few if any books. Travelling was not indulged in to any extent, there being no railroads or steamships, and intercourse between different towns as well as between different sections of the country was difficult and therefore infrequent compared with the present time. Telegraphs were unknown, and the mails, instead of being carried by fast steamships and railroads, were transported by slow sailing-vessels, stage-coaches, and on horseback. The rates of postage were three to five times greater than they now are. In towns as remote as Leominster, which is about forty miles from Boston, a visit to that city was deemed of as much importance as is a trip to Europe now. Weeks of preparation were made for it, and the event was the theme of conversation in the family long after it had occurred. The journey, whether by stage-coach or the farm-horse and wagon, occupied the whole of a day. The farmers usually went to market in Boston once during the year, generally in the autumn after the crops were all harvested. They carried pork, turkeys, chickens, butter, cheese, eggs, and other farm produce, and returned with plaster of paris, salt, molasses, sugar, tea, and other groceries, and sundry articles of dry goods, which were expected to mostly supply the wants of the family in those articles until the next annual visit to the city. Contrasted with the manner of living at the present time this appears extremely simple and frugal; but it is a question whether greater wealth and luxury have produced or are producing a higher order of men and women or more real enjoyment.

After the advent of steam-railroads and the introduction of manufactures by improved machinery, such as the cotton gin, the spinning jenny, the power loom, and other labor-saving inventions, a great change took