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Reverend Charles O. Screven, a son of General James Screven, was graduated at Brown University in 1795, received the degree of doctor of divinity in 1826, and died in 1830. He had a classmate at Brown University, Thomas Screven, who also died in 1830, and both were classmates of Ezekiel Whitman, LL. D., of this state, who was a member of the seventeenth congress, also chief justice of the supreme court of Maine, and died in 1866.

A REFUGE FOR MARIE ANTOINETTE IN MAINE.

BY RUFUS K. SEWALL.

Read before the Maine Historical Society, December 7, 1898.

[With Mr. Baxter's Remarks.]

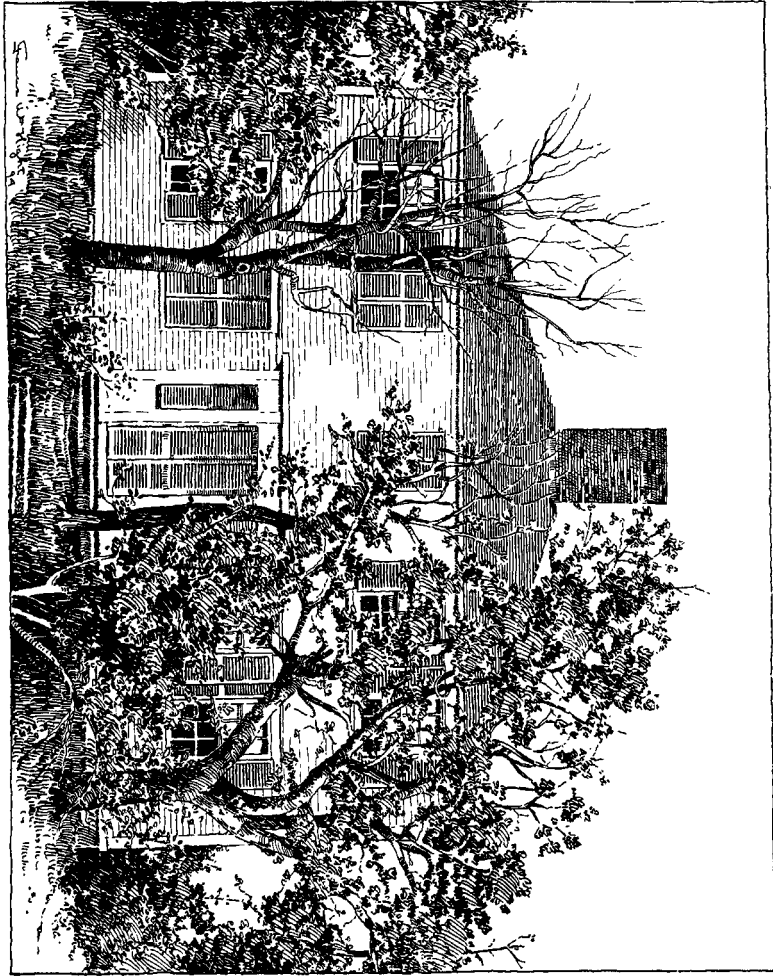
ROMANCE OF A CENTURY.

WAS there an asylum for the Queen of France, an American refuge to Marie Antoinette, on the banks of the Sheepscot, beyond reach of the guillotine of Robespierre's reign of terror?

THE MARIE ANTOINETTE HOUSE, EDGECOMB, MAINE.

Recently has appeared in the Boston press an elaborate tissue of facts and fiction, afloat in the traditions of Maine and Massachusetts a century ago, entitled "Tracking a Romance,"¹ of which a notable old man-

¹ Boston Herald, September, 1898.



"OLD CLOUGH HOUSE," Edgcomb, Maine.

sion house near Wiscasset is the central figure. It now stands on a declivity of the east shore of the Sheepscot, at the eddy, so called, embowered in an orchard. This house, in the publication named, figures as an asylum, designed as a retreat for the unfortunate queen, widow of Louis XVI of France, and as a refuge in the political turmoil of the French revolution; suggested by public rumor of its history, well authenticated facts, as well as relics a century old.

We propose to lift the curtain, uncover the tracks, which begin here in Maine, center in Paris, and end in Massachusetts, near Boston.

ITS ORIGINAL SITE, HISTORIC.

The original site of this house was on the head of Squam island, so named, of Indian occupancy in Indian tradition, west shore of the Sheepscot expansion into Wiscasset bay. As it stood in modern isolation, on the point under the headlands of Squam, it was universally known as the "Old Clough House," a conspicuous landmark to the Wiscasset harbor entrance, as well as a notable deserted homestead, attractive to all passers up and down the river on account of its storied relation to the unfortunate queen, its adornments of French tapestries and paper hangings, costly finishings and royal furnishings. It so stood on its original foundations till 1838. Gardiner Gove, an Edgecomb merchant, then bought up its titles, moved it off, rolled it on to big flatboats, and ferried it across the river to "The Eddy," and drew it to its present site by long strings of oxen, of all which

we were eye witnesses. Its original site is the terminal north of what was called "Edgecomb island" a century ago, and Jeremy Squam by the Indians.

The house is alleged to be of oak framework, hewed and built by Moses Davis, Esquire, of "Folly Island," and a representative to the Watertown Revolutionary Convention from the precinct of the Sheepscot.¹ He built the house for a Captain Joseph Decker, in 1774. Decker was a well-to-do ship-owner and master of those days. He owned and occupied a "thirteen acre" lot on Squam point, the northern extremity of the present town of Westport, Maine, which in Decker's days was one of the "cells" of which Wiscasset point was called² the "commercial bee-hive."

The island of "Jeremy Squam," of ancient times, divides the Sheepscot's tides eleven miles to the sea. Its head, the original location of the "Old Clough House," is remarkable for deep water indentations, sheltered coves and boorage facilities for the giant timber of a century ago in mast and spar rafts, and a depot for heavy lumber trade, then distinguishing Wiscasset and its precincts, as a mart for such shipping to Europe.

The point itself is an expansion of arable land, the flattening out of the pine-clad granitic heights of old "Fort McDonough," which shapes and turns the deep waters of the ocean tides here congested at "the eddy" under "Folly Island" (the site of the elaborate military works of Fort Edgecomb of 1809) north and east, into what in 1793 was "Decker's Narrows," the

¹ Moses Davis' Diary.

² J. H. Shepard.

ship channel entrance to Wiscasset harbor. The topography and hydrography of the locality gave the point eminence as a secure Indian trade station for Walker of Sheepscot, in 1676, with its stone garrison house and appurtenances, subsequently owned by a Mr. Delano, at the close of our Indian wars. The same peculiarities gave it eminence for commercial activities, in 1772, when Decker acquired possession of the place. Thereafter, the old stand was destroyed by fire, when Decker replaced the garrison buildings and covered the ruins with the wooden manorial house in question, added wharves, warehouses and docks on the east front by the Sheepscot shore, in 1774, adorning the point with a stately mansion of Virginia plantation style in architecture, and notable commercial adjuncts¹ the eleventh of October, of that year. The boomage of ranging timber and mast pines for foreign export enhanced the site as a shipping point for timber and lumber, into which Captain Joseph Decker entered with enterprise and success.

In¹ 1792, Decker died at sunset, December 17, and was buried the twentieth, but Captain Stephen Clough had entered into Decker's family and shipping business. On settlement of the Decker estate, Clough bought in the titles and succeeded to the Decker homestead, and business on the point.

APPEARANCE OF THE SWAN FAMILY.

In² 1793, Clough was the registered owner of the ship "Sally of Wiscasset." By these changes the

¹ Davis' Diary.

² Custom Register.

Decker mansion became the notable "Clough House." As¹ early as 1773, a master of an English mast-ship named "Swan" harbored at the point for freight. This Captain Swan ate his Christmas dinner of "roast goose"¹ at the table of Moses Davis, Esquire, and his New Year's supper, also of roast goose, at the same table in 1774, while his ship laded ranging timber from "Oven's Mouth," an eastern estuary of the Sheepscot below, out of the Decker and Davis rafts.

SCOPE OF WISCASSET'S TIMBER TRADE.

Spain, England and France utilized Wiscasset's timber and lumber trade in early times.

In 1750, a Spanish² man-of-war loaded mast and spar timber at the wharves and docks at and about Wiscasset. In 1778, the French mast-ship, Lafayette, was captured by an English forty-four gunship, the Rainbow,³ Commodore Collier, in the Sheepscot below the cross, which vessel had been seized in September, 1777, above Wiscasset at Sheepscot Falls by English barges, that were beaten off by the yeomanry of the neighborhood. In 1789, "Squam,"⁴ then called Edgecomb island, at Hodgdon's cove below Wiscasset, had Salt Works established by the French under Bennetté Claude De St. Pry, a native of Lyons, who, in fact, was an officer of the French government, sent to observe and report the progress and workings of the American revolution, but engaged in business near Wiscasset on the Sheepscot below, the better to conceal the purpose of his mission.

¹ Davis' Diary.

² Crooker's Diary.

³ Dr. Packard, English Account.

⁴ French occupancy of the Sheepscot.

This establishment seems to have had a Boston connection; and also associated trade in lumber with salt making with Langdon & Page, merchants of Wiscasset point. Captain Joseph Decker was connected with this firm in foreign trade. Captain¹ Stephen Clough succeeded him, and appears to have been concerned in the French lumber exportation with the Swan shippers, Colonel James then residing in Boston but in business in Paris. Heavy lumber exportation was its important feature, and Captain Clough was the active Wiscasset operator, under Colonel Swan's² agent, General Henry Jackson, by contracts for Paris markets.

CLOUGH IN PARIS.

That Captain Clough was in Paris in 1793 is fully established by authentic family tradition. He was there, it is presumed, in execution of his Swan lumber contracts and in his ship, the Sally, with cargo for Swan's Paris trade.

The family record is, "That he was at Paris during the reign of Revolutionary Terror, under Robespierre, and actively engaged in aid of the victims of Revolutionary vengeance."

In Swan's shipping lumber service, between Wiscasset and Paris, with his ship Sally, 1793, under charter or otherwise, whatever agency Swan and other American sympathizers may have undertaken in plans to save human life, and relieve the horrors of the bloody episode of infidel lawlessness in this crisis of French history, it is presumed the big-hearted American

¹ Letters of I. H. Treat, J. J. Sanderson, grandchildren of D. Fry.

² Court Records of Suffolk County, Boston.

sailor would have entered, apart from any prospective valuable freight service to his ship, the Sally.

PUBLIC SYMPATHY AND ITS EFFECTS.

Especially would Captain Clough be likely to coöperate in the well-known plan projected to save the unfortunate queen, the broken-hearted Marie Antoinette, from the guillotine, by the use of his ship in port, or at sea. The entire civilized world stood appalled at the atrocities of the French revolutionary mob, and its humanity instinctively recoiled against the fiendish brutality with which the poor queen and her children were treated. Whatever was done or contemplated was by spontaneous impulse at the demand of the best instincts of humanity and natural justice.

There seems to have been a coöperation with other American and royalistic French sympathizers to rescue the queen; and Talleyrand, it is well known, was proscribed by the convention for his royalistic proclivities. The story of the queen's execution, we think, will throw fuller and further light on the problem of the traditions afloat. Lamartine has recorded the facts in detail.

REIGN OF TERROR AND EXECUTION.

A revolutionary faction of the French nation, called a convention, assumed sovereignty of state in July, 1793. Terrorized by lawless workmen, beggars and women, in and of the streets of Paris, yelling: "Death or bread," to placate and divert the mob, the convention decreed process against the queen.

Robespierre and Marat were leading demagogues, had enumerated the heads to be cut off by the steel, as the proscribed could be seized with a view to hold and wield the sword of state in their own behalf, and strike without pity.

“Let us initiate terror as the order of the day,” cried the committee of public safety.

Jacobin judges were seated on the bench, juries organized of extreme partisan fealty, and of the least intelligence and most ferocious dispositions. The slums of Paris furnished the panel. Nobles, priests, bankers and strangers, all were classed among the suspected. Indeed, the court was organized to deal out death at the call of a mob. Within sixty days ninety-eight heads had fallen into the basket of blood. Implacable and cowardly vengeance now howled for the head of Marie Antoinette, their foreign-born queen, a princess of the house of Austria, beautiful, cultivated and brilliant. She was, however, devoted to the church of Rome as a Christian representative, and to her idolized husband Louis XVI, who had already been executed. His noble wife, however, was held guilty of royalty, a crime with the rabble of Paris.

The cultured of the convention, it is said, blushed to deliver the queen over to the mercies of public caprice, as a victim. Even Robespierre said, “Ideas are pitiless, but the people should know how to forgive.”

The twentieth of January, in 1793, the royal household were pensioners of state, in the Temple of Justice, where Marie Antoinette had been torn from the

embrace of the king, as he was dragged to execution. She there reclined on her bed, in her clothes, during the agony of suspense, plunged in continuous swoons, broken by sobs, tears and prayers, seeking, says Lamartine, "the exact moment the fatal knife should sever the life of her husband, to attach his soul to her own, and make him as a protector in heaven, whom she had lost as a spouse on earth." The shouts of the mob and the roar of cannon, indicated the sad event. The queen asked "if he died as a king." The council refused the consolation of an answer. A lock of his hair and his marriage ring were also denied to the widowed queen.

The shadows of sorrow deepened apace. In the midst of alarms, out of humanity's reach, Marie Antoinette was hurried to more merciless issues.

Decree of separation from her son was passed and executed, with untold anguish to the mother's heart.

On the second of August, 1793, at two A.M., she was roused from her bed to prepare to meet the bloody court above. She betrayed neither astonishment nor grief, but stood still, half-naked, obliged to dress before the men seeking her life. She was led to a vault under the Palace of Justice, paved and walled with freestone, blackened with the smoke of torchlights and encrusted with damp mold. A pallet of coarse cloth, with no curtains, a deal table and wooden box, with two straw chairs, were all its furniture. Here immured at midnight, she was left with tallow candles. Soldiers, with naked swords, guarded the prison vault.

These transactions moved every thoughtful and human heart to sympathy for the forlorn queen. Plans of rescue were at once organized. Thoughtful and sympathetic ones contrived to intervene, with hopes to deceive the ferocious impatience of the Paris rabble. The object was the queen's rescue. The record is, "Even many municipals joined secretly in plans for the queen's escape." A gentleman of royalistic sympathies gained access to the prison, and contrived to meet and see the queen. Was it Talleyrand? He handed her flowers in which was concealed a note. It told her of deliverance. Unfortunately the guards detected it, and the secret of escape was betrayed! The queen trembled.

Aggravated insult and oppression followed; but the orders of the brutes of the convention "no woman's hand could be found to execute" on the poor queen.

On the thirteenth of October notice of accusation and trial was served. The humidity of her dungeon had impaired the only two dresses allowed her, "a black gown and a white gown."

ANGEL OF MERCY.

The daughter of Madame Bault, her prison keeper, moved with pity for the distressed and hapless queen, became an angel of mercy to her wants in ministering relief. She mended the queen's tattered gowns and shoes, and secretly distributed pieces and shreds as memorials and keepsakes to royal sympathizers. The kind-hearted girl softened the harshness of the queen's guards, and was allowed to dress her head and hair for

her public trial — “hair once so thick and bright now turned white — which fell from a head but thirty-seven years old.”

On the fourteenth of October, at noon, she was led up to the Judgment hall, environed with armed men, and was seated on the bench of the accused. Her countenance had changed, faded in grief, but showed no signs of humiliation. Her eyes were encircled with dark lines of tearful sorrow and sleeplessness, but still darted rays of their former brilliancy into the faces of her enemies. Her beauty, which had intoxicated a court and dazzled Europe, had indeed gone, but traces thereof remained. The natural freshness of her northern complexion struggled still with the pallor of prison life. Her hair, whitened not with age but with anguish, fell down her back. The crowd was silent at her apparition, though made up largely of women who surrounded the scaffold with every possible insult. Herman, the arch Jacobin, held the court. “What is your name?” he cried from the bench. “I am called Marie Antoinette of Lorraine, in Austria,” she answered. “Your condition?” “Widow of Louis, formerly king of the French,” was her response. “Your age?” “Thirty-seven,” she said. A part of the accusation was the foul and odious echo of the tattle of Paris, embellished with the calumnies of the slums of the debauched city.

The queen heard it all without emotion; answered with presence of mind and such refutation that her only mistake was the defense itself.

One Herbert, a noted cynic, appeared and imputed

to her depravity, extending to the corruption of her only son.

The indignation of the crowd broke out upon him. Outraged nature asserted its majesty and rights. The poor queen answered with tokens of horror, "There are accusations nature refuses to answer."¹ Then she arose and turned to the crowd of women around the bar, and called for the testimony of their own hearts, in an appeal to their motherly instincts to give the lie to such beastly insults to the sex. A shudder of horror ran through the crowd against her accuser. The queen, however, justified the honor of her dead husband, and as to him answered as if she desired to carry back to him in heaven his memory honored and avenged. In an hour she was declared guilty. To the verdict she made no reply and to the sentence of death, no answer; but rose, wrapped herself in silence, her last protection, and walked out to execution. A round of applause greeted her exit.

At half-past four, morning of the fifteenth of October, 1793, the queen called for a pen, ink and paper, and wrote a touching farewell to her sister Elizabeth, directing her to instruct her son not to avenge the blood of his parents. She then fell asleep for some hours. On waking, the daughter of Madam Bault dressed and adjusted her flowing hair. Marie¹ Antoinette then took off her black gown and put on the white one for a death-robe. A white handkerchief enwrapped her shoulders, and a white cap with black ribbon covered her head. The chronicler describes

¹Lamartine.

the day to have been shrouded in a pallid autumnal fog, which hung over the river Seine, as if nature in grave sympathy forestalled its horror, to hide the bloody transactions at hand. Roofs and trees along the way passed by the death march to the scaffold of the bloody ax, were covered with people, the coarse women of Paris in the ascendant.

At eleven, the procession started. A man of God, of the queen's proscribed faith, by pre-arrangement, stood hidden in a window as she passed, to grant her the absolution she craved in Christian death-service of her church ritual. A gesture, inexplicable to the gaping crowd, revealed to Marie Antoinette the watchful presence of her faithful spiritual guide. The queen closed her eyes, bowed her head to an invisible presence, under an unseen hand extended in blessing, made the sign of the cross on her breast, so far as her manacled hands would suffer. The crowd thought she prayed and respected her attitude.

Inward joy and consolation from this moment lighted the queen's countenance. Reaching the foot of the guillotine she mounted the steps, aided by a revolutionary priest and the executioner at her elbow, a sop to the Christian formalities of the day and decency of the occasion, vouchsafed by the godless authorities of state.

"Pardon me," cried the queen, as involuntarily she trod on the foot of the executioner in her ascent to the scaffold. Then kneeling an instant in half-audible prayer, she rose to her feet, and cried, "Adieu, my children, once again! I go to rejoin your father,"

turning toward the towers of the temple, where her son and daughter lay, with their Aunt Elizabeth, imprisoned.

The executioner trembled as he stretched forth his shaking hand to loose the ax for its fatal stroke. The head of the queen was instantly severed from her body. The bloody sacrifice to wanton human vengeance and lawlessness in ghastly exhibition started a shout, *Vive la Republica!* This climax of human savagery was the outgrowth of deified reason, rioting in the shadows of the doctrine, "Death is an eternal sleep," as a decree of state."

The revolution believed itself avenged, "but was only disgraced," says Lamartine; and I may add, from that fatal day forward God has given France blood to drink.

THE RELIC.

Now a relic of this tragedy found in the "Old Clough House" and as an heirloom in the family of its owner, Captain Stephen Clough, becomes pertinent. It is a carefully preserved fragment of the white death robe of Marie Antoinette, with the legend inscribed within a knotted loop of its alleged trimmings, viz.:—"This was taken from the dress which Queen Marie Antoinette wore at her execution, by an eye witness, Captain Stephen Clough." This relic of alleged royal wardrobe is authenticated by the earliest family tradition of the highest respectability, socially and other ways.

TRADITION.

The family hearsay is that Captain Clough was in France three years and during the revolution; that he helped exiles and refugees save their treasures, and once came near losing his life; that he brought home many beautiful chairs, vases, etc., which went largely into the family of the late Judge Silas Lee of Wiscasset, and a clock now supposed to be in Washington, in the house of a member of Mrs. Lee's family¹.

Among articles of apparel shipped on board of Captain Clough's vessel was a satin robe of the royal household goods, which it is said the king wore on state occasions. Dresses of the royal wardrobe also came with other household stuffs in this ship. The satin robe was cut over for the use of the captain's wife. The royal belongings to the personalities of the royal family, left in the home freight presumed of Clough's ship the Sally, are suggestive of shipment for royal use abroad.

OTHER RELICS.

In the possession of Honorable J. P. Baxter, President of the Maine Historical Society, is an inlaid French mahogany sideboard, surmounted with a large silver urn, traced to freight furniture of Clough's ship, as an article of the Marie Antoinette's household furniture, and found in the family of the late General Knox of Thomaston, as a relic of Clough and Swan's shipments.

Then the memory of the unfortunate Marie Antoi-

¹ Letters of Rev. J. E. Adams, a grandson.

nette has been honorably and tenderly preserved in Captain Clough's family. On his return he gave to his newly-born daughter the queen's name, which has been perpetuated as an heirloom in branches of the family for three generations, and is still an appurtenant to the old family mansion, yet owned and occupied by a granddaughter and a great-granddaughter of the captain.

The above facts are memorial records, affixed to the now famous homestead, as vouchers for its hospitable relations to Marie Antoinette in the purposes and plans of its owner.

TALLEYRAND PROBABILITIES.

The transactions, out of which the above facts grew, occurred in Paris in the fall of 1793. In the early part of 1794, Talleyrand, the proscribed French statesman, of alleged royal sympathies, with a young French companion, landed from a ship in Wiscasset, took letters there to a Colonel North of Augusta, traveled overland to the Kennebec, tarried in Dresden with High Sheriff Bridge, visited in Hallowell and other places, supposed to have been at General Knox's of Thomaston, and then after that went to the seat of government at Philadelphia.

Talleyrand and his companion, it is believed, were French refugees, hiding abroad from the guillotine of Robespierre and Marat. His sympathy with royalty had rendered him offensive to the convention, and it is not impossible he was one of the active royalistic sympathizing Frenchmen who had carried the fatal

flowers to the imprisoned queen. If so, and cognizant of the projected plans of her rescue, likely he would have taken shelter in the ship with the royal household goods on board.

It has been suggested his Wiscasset landing was from a ship of General Woods. This is, however, discredited by the general's son-in-law, Honorable J. H. Sheppard. Besides, the retaliatory measures of the French spoliations on American commerce had already been initiated.

As early as 1791¹ American shipping had been inhibited to the ports of France, and except in the service of French commerce liable to seizure and confiscation. General Wood's ship was in fact seized and confiscated thereafter, but Clough's ship, the Sally, has no record of a spoliation disaster. She, it is presumed, engaged in the French lumber trade with Colonel Swan between Wiscasset and Paris, would be exempt from French spoliation seizure.

The return voyage of the Sally, in 1794, we think brought Talleyrand and his protégé to the wharves of Wiscasset, with the royal findings and furniture on board, and that Talleyrand had good reason for leaving France as he did in Clough's ship.

CURRENT TRADITIONS

Seventy years ago, in Edgecomb, relating to incidents connecting the "Old Clough House" with the unfortunate queen, make definite and precise statements, and which may have originated with the Wool-

¹Dals' Opinions, Court of Claims.

wich seamen of Clough's ship, who related their experience in Paris, at the date of the royal tragedy, as is well known. The story is "That Captain Clough's ship was in France, and at the time Marie Antoinette was arrested by the revolutionary mob; the royal belongings had been carried on board Clough's vessel for the queen's use; and that she, being seized and beheaded on the eve of sailing, the royal parcels were left on board and brought away." This public statement of incident agrees with the facts in the published account of Marie Antoinette's execution, as well as with the hearthstone stories of the "Old Clough House."

We may surmise that haste and secrecy pressed Captain Clough's departure from France.

Nothing can be more probable than that Talleyrand was mixed in the purposes and plan of the queen's rescue with her American sympathizers, and was one of the gentlemen of the conspiracy to save the queen.

The collapse of the attempt projected, under the circumstances, involving as it did the lives and safety of the royal household and its partisans, would urge flight; and so taking with him a member of the royal blood, Talleyrand hastened to Clough's ship and took passage, with the royal goods, for America, landing, in 1794, at Wiscasset, then a well known center of interest and attraction in France as a noted place of business, as well as of official government observation, at De Pry's salt works below. The French salt works of the Sheepscot probably drew attention to Maine and her Edgecomb island of the Sheepscot,

where the incidents of the proposed royal reserve urged as a safe retreat during the revolutionary storm.

The suspected Talleyrand and his companion, the supposed prince royal and heir to the throne of France, landed at Wiscasset in the spring or early summer following the execution of the queen; and there is hardly a doubt that he came in Clough's ship the Sally.

But there was a Massachusetts ending. The story in the alleged "tracking of romance," has such. It must be taken into account in the solution of the problem of the proposed American rescue. The lading of the royal household stuff on board of Clough's ship was in October, 1793.

Of the Swan family Colonel James of Boston seems to have been a party to the pains, perils and freight proceeds of the alleged rescue. Associates in the Paris lumber trade, they also appear to have been parceners of the royal household belongings, as abandoned cargo of the probable return voyage of the Sally, in 1794.

On Swan's return to Boston after these revolutionary troubles, he built a stately mansion in Dorchester, which he adorned with costly French furniture and tapestries, among which was a "Marie Antoinette bed," and rich court dresses, reputed to have been the property of the ill-fated queen. It was the current rumor of the neighborhood of the Swan homestead. Even Drake, in reminiscences of the Swan relation to plans for the queen's escape, or other members of the royal family, speaks of the royal relics as having been stored

in one of Swan's vessels at Paris, in the reign of terror, and that between the guillotine which took off the royal heads, and Swan who took their trunks, there was little left of the unfortunate Frenchmen.

The ship spoken of is, no doubt, Clough's ship, Sally, which is found transferred to Boston during the transactions, in which, by charter, or otherwise, Swan had an interest in virtue of the Clough & Swan lumber business between Wiscasset and Paris.

CONCLUSION.

Stories of the dead and living members of Captain Stephen Clough's house had hearthstone tales of the "Old Clough House," with the recitals of notorious Boston Swan traditions, supplemented with royal household furniture and of the royal wardrobe in the Swan and Clough vessel, in addition to public current cotemporaneous hearsay, and aid by the French details of incident relating to the arrest, incarceration and execution of the queen, Marie Antoinette, gives credit to the theory of a "Tracking of a Romance," as published; and that the "Old Clough House" of Edgcomb should be recognized as the Marie Antoinette House in Maine, and that its relics and legend of her death scene are memorials of the infamous tragedy from which American hands would have saved her, in a refuge from the inhuman butcheries of Robespierre's reign of terror.

Captain Clough died in 1878, in sea service on the Mississippi river, it is said, and no papers or effects ever came back to his home.

THE MARIE ANTOINETTE, OR KNOX SIDEBOARD.

Upon the conclusion of Mr. Sewall's paper, Mr. Baxter, the President, gave an account of a sideboard in his possession. This interesting relic is a piece of antique French marquetry, semicircular in form, bearing a case for silver of similar shape, supporting an urn of elegant design, and has been known as the Marie Antoinette sideboard. The tradition is that it once had a home in the Tuilleries, and found its way to this country in this singular manner.

Marie Antoinette had been enthusiastically interested in the success of America in the revolutionary war; hence, when it became evident that she and the royal family were no longer safe in France, she naturally turned for refuge to the new country, whose cause she had so warmly espoused. Having gained the consent of Mirabeau to the flight of herself and family, arrangements were made with Captain James Swan, an American merchant doing business in France, to transport them to America with their belongings. Everything had been put on board Swan's vessel, which awaited the arrival of the royal refugees, but, as we know, they were prevented from carrying out their plan, and the vessel sailed without them, having on board a few friends, who were to accompany the unfortunate queen in her flight.

Of course the furniture and other valuables were never reclaimed, and were kept by the merchant to reimburse him for his risk and expense. His only son, James Swan, junior, came to America in the vessel as supercargo, and after his arrival visited the Knox

family and became interested in the General's daughter Caroline, whom he married.

This sideboard, brought by young Swan from France, thus found its way to the Knox mansion at Montpelier, and there it remained until the sale of the property, when it was purchased by a friend of the family. On the occasion of the visit of the Maine Historical Society to Thomaston in 1881 it was on exhibition with other Knox relics, and was then purchased by the present owner. The urn had been removed, but was traced by Mr. Baxter to Chelsea, and finally restored to its old position.

Captain James Swan, after his return to America, built a large mansion of unique design at Dorchester, Massachusetts, which was largely furnished with the belongings of the unfortunate queen and others, who came, or intended to come, in his vessel to America. Such is the story of the Marie Antoinette sideboard.