

Around the hall, next the ceiling, ran a singular and beautiful decoration—a border designed of *fleur-de-lys* and Virginia creeper, in a rich shade of brown, harmonizing well with the old-rose tint of the walls—and following the trailing vine the lines:

“Now read the rede of this old roof tree,
 Here be trust fast, opinion free,
 Knightly right hand, and Xtian knee.
 Worth in all, wit in some,
 Open laughter, slander dumb,
 Hearth where rooted friendships grow.
 And the sparks that upward go
 When the hearth-flame dies below.
 If thy sap in these may be
 Then fear no winter, old roof-tree.”

The effect of it all—the quaint dignity of the place, the old-fashioned simplicity and grace of its arrangements—the teeming associations with the old, old days they had been taught to love—that they had such reason to love—went straight to the hearts of the assembly of kinsmen.

Surely the old place had cherished until now the secret of some magic influence over its own, and they were not slow to feel it—to feel that something new and delightful was taking them by surprise.

The plan of the reunion had been a simple one, promising the obvious pleasure that must arise from the meeting of a large number of kinsmen, all interested in the same topic—family history; but no one had expected the old house to take any but a passive part in the proceedings. Nobody had supposed that in these nineteenth century days of progress and improvement, an old dormer-windowed, queer-gabled house, with its odd lines of roof, its erratic ways and unaccountable changes of level, its irre-