

AN

ORATION,

DELIVERED BEFORE THE

INHABITANTS OF SOUTH BOSTON,

ON

SATURDAY, JULY 4, 1835,

THE FIFTY-NINTH

ANNIVERSARY OF AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE.

BY J. V. C. SMITH.

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SOUTH BOSTON, JULY 4, 1835.

DEAR SIR,

The undersigned, a Committee in behalf of the inhabitants of South Boston, return you their thanks for your very interesting and eloquent Oration this day pronounced before them, and ask the favor of a copy for the press.

JOSIAH DUNHAM,  
TH. RICHARDSON,  
JOSIAH L. C. AMEE.

To DR. J. V. C. SMITH.

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QUARANTINE GROUND, AUGUST 15, 1835.

GENTLEMEN,

The Manuscript of the Oration, of which you have done me the honor to request a copy for the press, is placed at your disposal.

Very respectfully yours,

J. V. C. SMITH.

To MESSRS. JOSIAH DUNHAM,  
TH. RICHARDSON,  
JOSIAH L. C. AMEE, } *Committee.*

## O R A T I O N .

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WE have not assembled to celebrate the nativity of an hereditary ruler. We have not been invited to come together to render homage to imperial dignity, nor to commemorate the endurance of a hateful dynasty. Nor are we called upon by the customs of our fathers to acknowledge on this, or any other day, a dependence on regal authority for the protection of our civil or religious privileges. A citizen of the United States of America can alone appreciate the thrilling associations connected with the return of an Anniversary which calls forth a spontaneous feeling of gratitude to the God of nations. It is the BIRTHDAY OF POLITICAL FREEDOM—the hallowed FESTIVAL OF PATRIOTS.

While unnumbered millions are suffering the deprivation of all those peculiar blessings which have their origin in a government completely under the control of the people, we are in the undisturbed possession of all that is valuable to intellectual man.

No complicated machinery of arbitrary power embarrasses our advancement in those great principles of self-government, essential to the preservation of what we already possess. No feudal tenure restrains us from the manifestation of sentiments which we may hope are never to be subdued by absolute exactions, till all intelligent beings have participated in that virtuous freedom which is now specifically and rightly denominated our own.

To trace the history of our country, or even attempt to detail, minutely, the train of circumstances which contributed to its present elevation and character, would be an act of supererogation. The story is written in the green fields ; it may be read in the beautiful structures of our great commercial cities ; and it is painted on the walls of our ships—those missionaries of the federal constitution, carrying to every port on the habitable globe the glorious intelligence that the problem has been solved—A NATION CAN BE FREE. It is a tale of the child's nursery—the theme of admiring historians. Who can be ignorant of those momentous events which characterized the emancipation of this fair country from the threatened thraldom of a foreign administration ? Who could have been so culpably neglected, particularly by a New England mother, as not to have had rocked into his constitution both the narrative and the spirit

that produced the revolutionary achievement of his ancestors?

Important as it may be to keep in vivid recollection the struggling spirit of the age in which it was most happily discovered that the king could do wrong, notwithstanding the potency of that fundamental doctrine which inculcated the divine rights of a crowned head, it is no less necessary to make sure and ample provision for the future, in reference to those who, in turn, will have a commanding voice in counsel. On our success will certainly depend the perpetuity of boasted institutions, which arose from the ashes of colonial jurisdiction. They have already been watched with anxious solicitude by philosophers as well as politicians, who have gazed on the infantile progress of this gigantic republic, with a view to the decision of a mooted question—Can a people govern themselves, and maintain national consequence abroad, without the artificial fixtures and appurtenances of royalty, and the train-bearers of monarchical splendor? But we, also, may inquire—Can there be no efficiency—no energy of character—no wisdom—emanating from a voluntary association of men professing themselves accountable to their Creator, who have discovered that they can frame their own laws, can make provision for their own physical wants and the moral culture of their offspring, independently of

those burdensome, those intolerably oppressive concomitants of the old governments of Europe, which inculcate implicit obedience to the sovereign will of rulers wholly inaccessible to the common orders of subjects? Has the bold experiment—for such, till comparatively recently, it has been regarded—of allowing every man the gratifying privilege of selecting his own magistrates, resulted in a failure—fulfilling the once supposed prophetic annunciations of those who declared, in the strength of their grey-haired profundity, that a democratic form of government was incompatible with the natural tendencies of man? Do these United States exhibit to the world the sad spectacle of national degeneracy, since the cord was severed by which they were once connected to the Juggernaut wheels of British sovereignty? Does not this fertile land, under the protection of that mightiest effort of human genius, the written constitution under which we live, demonstrate an incontrovertible truth—that greatness of soul, intellectual vigor, and the habitual practice of virtues acceptable to God, conducing alike to peace at home and respectability abroad, may all flourish in a country where ducal honors can find no nourishment?

As no one among us now pretends to deny the feasibility of a well-regulated representative government, in which equal rights shall be maintained

and justice bear an even balance, theoretical speculations in regard to the manner of its organization are beginning to be laid aside. But a far more weighty inquiry occupies the thoughts of practical philanthropists, which has for its object the surest method of giving permanency and stability to the glorious foundation which was laid, at the expense of so much blood, on the American continent. Is it probable that this magnificent edifice, the first temple of freedom the anxious world has ever beheld, reared by unremitting toil and privation, will by and by fall in consequence of the complexity and vastness of its proportions? Will our successors be doomed to mourn the instability of laws which have conduced to the unexampled prosperity and rational happiness of those independent States which now constitute the confederated strength of the only genuine republic on earth? Can these altars of freedom in after times be forsaken? Will legislative corruptions at some future period overthrow the watch towers so faithfully guarded by sentinels, who, however operated upon by the conflicting claims of partizan warfare, have never yet lost sight—no, never—of the high destiny of the nation confided to their charge?

By contrasting the condition of the people of this, with that of the most favored governments of Europe, some adequate conception may be formed of

the immense superiority of our institutions. Ushered into being where the very atmosphere invigorates and enlarges the capacity for understanding the unalienable rights of a citizen, and knowing no superiors but such as have excelled in acts of disinterested benevolence to the wronged and afflicted, the sons of America are the only lords of America. Like Hercules resting upon his club, they survey the broad expanse before them, and, though possessing nothing but the energies of an untrammelled spirit, they decide upon the course of life most congenial to their inborn disposition—and then no obstacle can oppose the attainment of the highest objects of commendable ambition. They discover no dangers in the way of honorable distinction—and as for Fear, it was never discovered by any transatlantic phrenological cabinet in the well-developed heads of such freemen as these, who were nurtured on the produce of their own farms. Without presumptuous boasting, may we not ask—Where exists a parallel race of men? and where, if not in the land of our nativity, is that desirable resting place in which life is not one uninterrupted struggle for the maintenance even of the minor class of privileges? No royal potentate here lays an impost on the scanty purse of the laborer for the use of heaven's light that shines upon his misery through a single pane of glass. No titled nobility



are preying upon the harvest earnings of a depressed, wretched, heart-broken tenantry. No venal church hierarchy drags within the vortex of an insatiable appetite for worldly possessions, the tenth sheaf from the farmer's door. No *mort-main* claims to terra firma paralyze the efforts to successful enterprise. No military chieftain, glittering in stars and garters, the ensigns of hereditary authority, terrifies with the despotic mandates of his sovereign lord and master. No minions of a vicious and corrupt court trample under foot those aspirants to usefulness and fame whose blood, according to the artificial distinctions of a few, is more polluted by plebeian admixture than their own. Such is the inimitable construction of our favored government, that the obscurest occupant of a hut in the wilderness may aspire to the highest places of distinction. He looks forward, too, with paternal solicitude, to the time when his sons, as hardy and as honest as himself, shall become eminent in the annals of their country's fame. However humble his origin, guided by those unerring principles of the moral law which render justice and mercy to all, there is no limiting the onward and upward march of an American born citizen.

If such are among the invaluable advantages of the charter of independence, who can possibly be indifferent to the exhibition this day made, throughout

the vast region under its protection and fostering care? Who does not feel that life would be bereft of its chief enjoyment, if unaccompanied with the hope of transmitting this heritage to a succeeding generation, as untarnished and spotless as it came from the hands that won it?

Without reference to local politics, or, indeed, any of those engrossing topics of the day, in relation to public affairs, in which it is utterly impossible not to indulge in preferences, one way or the other, the ostensible design of the exercises to-day, in this section of the city, is to commemorate, in a public and appropriate manner, the ever memorable declaration of the independence of these United States. Differences of opinion in regard to legislative or executive measures—which, however, produce no breach of friendship between those professing the political creed that all men are born free and equal—necessarily result in the nature of things, where restrictions on the liberty of speech are unknown, and where the press, the mightiest engine of all, thunders its anathemas, or commends the virtuous firmness of the servants of the people. However divided in respect to the precise method of conducting immediate government operations, confided as they necessarily must be to the discretion and direction of a few, there can be no settled division endangering the permanency of

the established order of things, in this matchlessly devised confederacy, while honesty and virtue remain. Each one theorizes as he pleases, proposes whatever he chooses, censures or applauds as he is disposed, without fear and without reservation;—and yet, with all these dreadful instruments of internal mischief in less propitious climes, men of all parties, from A. D. 1775, to A. D. 1835, have invariably united, most heartily and cordially, in maintaining the unspotted honor, dignity and integrity of the union.

It is a singular trait in the character of the people of this country, that while they have ever shown themselves stubborn and unyielding in any attempt to force them against the clear convictions of their own indomitable minds, they actually enjoy the reputation, wherever the genial influences of civilization have been extended, of being the most docile, peaceably disposed, and quiet respecters of the whole law, of any people in the universe. When they have discovered the expediency of establishing legal enactments, no exhibition of military power is required to enforce their obedience.

By what combination of circumstances have these national characteristics been established? Mainly by that remarkable discovery, in the first misunderstanding between Great Britain and her colonial settle-

ments in America, that all men are positively and undeniably equal—that the Being who rains upon the unjust as well as the just, has given no authority in the divine revelations of his will, and no indications in the architecture of any man's body, that any particular individual or representative of a family possesses a superior or exclusive claim to the uncontrolled civil relations of others.

Under the mild beams of our free constitution, our general system of education tends still further to overcome false estimates of the value of property in conferring consequence upon its possessor, beyond enlarging his sphere of usefulness in warmly co-operating in plans for increasing the amount of comfort to those less fortunate, and in raising the value and productiveness of the possessions of others. Thus, those at all distinguished in any department of active life, have passed through nearly the same scenes of mental discipline, rendering it extremely difficult for any assumed superiority, not founded on generous principles, to be long maintained, that may not be completely demolished by equals in birth and equals in education.

The advantages of this admirable scheme of education are both seen and felt, from the august halls of legislation to the log house of the forest. Poverty here interposes no barrier to the exaltation of the

poor man's child from the village school to the university, nor from thence to the study of the learned professions—the stepping stones to enlarged scenes of usefulness. Are there such ample provisions made for the penniless, at the expense of the rich, in any other country? No; the policy of the moss-grown monarchies of the old world has invariably been to suppress and subdue the latent sparks of intelligence, which occasionally break forth from the very depths of political misery, shining with surprising splendor and effect. Knowledge cannot be safely trusted with the menials of a crown, lest it should explode with a vengeance, and in its liberation from the green withes of degradation and ignorance, overthrow the decaying fabrics of legitimacy.

Instead of delighting in the practice of that very antiquated philosophy, as old as the first formation of civil society, that the security of wealth depends upon the absolute ignorance of a certain portion of mankind, it is to be presumed that doctrine can find no advocates among the reflecting here, where the rich and the poor are mutually dependent on each other. The former can no more dispense with the habitual services of their poor neighbors, than both classes can maintain vitality independently of the sustaining agency of their Creator. Nor can the poor dispense with the assistance of the rich. Whatever may have

been the result of determined enterprise, in changing the aspect, at least, of the rugged features of the Northern States, it has been achieved by the combined energies of different classes of the community. Such bold conceptions as are continually being carried into effect, exhibited in the removal of mountains that we may outstrip the feathered races in the rapidity of our intercourse, or in ploughing through every sea under the awning of the blue sky above, where it is practicable to float a plank, are the efforts of no single mind. A mutual and reciprocal interchange of offices, from which none should be excluded but the imbecile or the morally incompetent, characterizes, in an eminent degree, the present condition of this great nation. While this state of things continues, and under our present form of government, no lasting evils can arise from a monied aristocracy, that bugbear of a politically distempered imagination. Death itself limits its benumbing influences, if any such it ever exerts over a people so jealous and so keenly alive to their patrimonial immunities. Overawed by the vigilant regard to the established provision originally made in the organization of the general government, for the safety and happiness of the whole, the accumulation of wealth, flowing in one unbroken stream to these western shores, contributes as much to the prosperity of the man who toils for

his daily meals, as it does to those who take upon themselves the vexations of its management.

Bound together by a unity of purpose, under the excitement of the sacredness of the cause, in which there was neither division of sentiment nor exclusiveness among the friends of their country, the indestructible principles of the Puritans roused their vigorous descendants, in the revolutionary struggle, to the performance of deeds of mighty import. Determined upon sustaining whatever was right, and equally decided upon suppressing whatever was wrong, they conducted to successful issue the most extraordinary revolution recorded on the page of history. It were a useless expenditure of time, on the present occasion, to recount incidents illustrative of all the transactions of those eventful days. They are written every where. The nearly obliterated remains of turf-bound fortifications that protected the lives and the homes of our brave and ardent forefathers, are lively mementoes of their illustrious achievements. Even the very spot of earth on which we stand, from whence orisons are raised to a protecting Providence for an extension of that knowledge which is power, and for the diffusion through benighted and less fortunate lands of the principles of conservative liberty, has once been the scene of awful preparation.

Of no great apparent value in the estimation of its original proprietors, SOUTH BOSTON remained almost unoccupied, compared with its present appearance of thriving industry and opulence, and certainly unprofitably improved, till the eagle eye of that best, that disinterested, heaven-guided defender of our beloved country, discovered the prolific qualities of its soil. Under his observant tillage, in one solitary night, it yielded a crop that freighted a whole British fleet, which has never shown a desire to return to the port of Boston for a second cargo raised on the memorable HEIGHTS OF DORCHESTER.

Of so little consequence, in the early settlement of Boston and Dorchester, was this now beautiful section of the metropolis of New England, that in 1637 it seems to have been presented to the majority of the inhabitants of Dorchester, not precisely as residents, but as proprietors in right of pasturage. [Note A.] The record says that "The settlers found the Neck free from trees and in the condition of a pasture—a desirable consideration to the comers, for they brought cattle." Admitting this to have been the fact, a new growth of timber must have appeared, south of Mount Washington, as in 1775, at a legal town meeting in Dorchester, it was "*voted*, To sell the wood of Dorchester Neck;" also, "*voted*, That



the above vote be so far reconsidered as that one or two trees be preserved for shade." [Note B.]

Being a peninsula, and, at every high water, an island, it was easily converted into a safe place for cattle by the erection of a few rods of fence near the present locality of the toll-house. From thence, a causeway led to the Neck, commanded by a gate. [Note C.] Herdsmen were appointed to collect and drive all the kine there, and go for them at night. The "oxen and steers," says the chronicle, "were in one fenced pasture, by themselves, and the younglings in another." In 1776, it is supposed that no particular alterations had taken place, as on the 5th of May, in that year, it was "*voted*, That the income from the common land at Powwow Point this year, be allowed towards maintaining a gate across the way leading to Dorchester Neck." After the lands in other parts of the town were brought to, the common use of the Neck was relinquished, and purchases were finally made of the proprietors of Matapan, or grants obtained for actual occupancy. The first settlers were of the names of Bird, Blake and Foster. The Blakes, says the venerable Dr. Harris in a recent note, were officers of distinction in town and church—being deacons, elders, selectmen and town clerks. The very last hold of the Bird family to the inheritance of their ancestors,

passed from them about nine weeks ago. The descendants of those three families were many of them meritorious officers in the revolution.

An aged, intelligent lady, a lineal descendant of Mr. Foster, residing west of the Episcopal Church [Note D], has a distinct recollection of the topographical appearance of South Boston before the war—being eight years old when the tocsin of alarm was first sounded. At that eventful epoch, twelve small families only resided here ; and it is quite remarkable that the number had never increased up to the day of its affiance with the old town of Boston. In her childhood there was a thrifty orchard, of considerable extent, stretching from two delightful trees south of the Episcopal Church, just adverted to, to the base of the eminence south of the Catholic cemetery. [Note E.] In the preparations contemplated for fortifying the Heights, all these fruit trees were cut down and strewn in a long range, as a sort of breastwork, at the foot of the hill, to obstruct the passage of any who might attempt the annoyance of the laborers, intended for the future fortress, still higher up.

On the day of the battle of Lexington, April 19, 1775, South Boston, then occasionally called *Matapan Neck*, was completely forsaken, for the first time since the settlement of Dorchester, not a single

individual remaining—knowing full well that the vengeance that exterminates would be hurled upon the defenceless, by the now exasperated foe. On making inquiry of the good lady above mentioned, whether there were any tories residing on Matapan—“No,” she exclaimed, in the true spirit of her patriotic blood, “every one here was ready to fight till he died.”

Some Continental soldiers, who came over to the Neck for a stroll, at that particular period, could scarcely be restrained from destroying her mother's house, in consequence of having discovered, accidentally, that some of the rooms were papered—a species of elegance to which they were so unaccustomed, that, in their sage imaginings, none but a tory or a traitor could reside in such a palace.

At the water's edge, south of Hawes Place Church [Note F], is the once celebrated Powwow Point [Note G], where the wild aborigines held their mystic orgies, long after Dorchester and Boston had become quite flourishing settlements. As late as within one or two years of the war, their roving descendants were in the habit of coming from Stoughton and its neighborhood, yearly, where many of them had wigwams, for the celebration of a feast at Powwow Point.

Nearly all the old buildings in South Boston were

destroyed with fire in 1776, by a party of British soldiers who came over from Boston and the Castle, on the ice. Five small ones, only, out of the whole, of little value, however, were saved by the owners. The papered house of Mrs. Foster, on this barbarous visitation, was reduced to ashes. The two large trees, before spoken of, mark its precise locality.\*

In 1804, by an act of the General Court, Dorchester Neck, the ancient Matapan, became a part of the town of Boston; not, however, without considerable opposition on the part of their Dorchester friends. Two, out of the twelve inhabitants of South Boston, never would give their consent to the separation, notwithstanding the amazing increase of value given their property by the transaction. One of those two men once held a farm of fifty-two acres, now intersected by streets and covered by numerous dwellings. In order to accomplish the scheme, which certainly demonstrates the foresight of the projectors, one of whom is still living, and induce the Bostonians to acquiesce in the proposed annexation of nearly six hundred acres of territory, it was confidently asserted that Boston could not contain many more people: it was expedient, therefore, that the opportunity should be improved of securing a

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\* November 23, 1772, widow May's barn was burnt, which belongs to the memorable items of those days.

prize immensely important to the future accommodation and convenience of a rapidly increasing town. After many unsatisfactory negotiations with Dorchester committees, the town being offered, through them, six thousand dollars not to oppose the application then pending before the General Court, which they, unfortunately for the treasury, contemptuously refused, the design of making it a part of Boston was speedily effected, to the no small chagrin of the conscript fathers of Dorchester, who not only lost the money offered them, but the jurisdiction of Matapan Neck forever. [Note H.]

But there are other reminiscences connected with the history of South Boston, of far deeper concern; and to the survivors of the Massachusetts militia lines, who gave an earnest of their devoted patriotism during the long and gloomy siege of the capital, the following narrative of events that transpired on this very ground, will doubtless recall some youthful emotions.

On the 20th of July, sixty years ago, the Provincial Congress recommended the observance of a solemn fast throughout the colonies, to implore the divine benediction on the country. British troops were then master of the lives and property in Boston and its environs. All the eminences in the vicinity were beginning to be secured by one party or the

other. In the following August, the rural town of Roxbury presented the confusion of a camp. Breast works were thrown across the main street, from which bombs were daily thrown into Boston.\* An event of considerable importance occurred on the 10th of the ensuing October. General Gage, of hateful memory, was succeeded in the command of his Majesty's forces on the Boston station, by General Sir William Howe, who marked the commencement of his absolute career by a proclamation of peculiar severity. General Gage, not succeeding in the mission for which he was considered eminently qualified, returned to England in the same month, 1775. General Howe threatened the terrors of a military execution against any one who should presume to pass the boundaries of Boston, without a written permission. In case they escaped apprehension, in disobedience to his order, they were to be dealt with as traitors, and their effects forfeited. A further provision made it penal, even when departing with a license from the Commander in Chief, to carry more than five pounds of specie, on the further pain of fine, forfeiture and imprisonment. What humiliating conditions were these, to men who were

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\* A fortification was erected on the Neck, between Boston and Roxbury, as early as 1710. About the commencement of the revolution, the Neck was commanded by an iron gate, confided to the charge of a British soldier.

destined to become transcendantly renowned—whose darings for their country's freedom will be remembered when the colossal obelisk on Bunker Hill shall have been lost in the accumulating rubbish of a mutable world.

In a word, Boston had been insensibly transformed into an extensive British garrison, while its entire body of inhabitants were held in close imprisonment. Although an express arrangement had been made on the part of General Gage, previously, and a solemn promise given, that on the surrender of their arms the citizens should have a free egress and ingress to and from the country, he had no sooner effectually disarmed them, than he shamefully violated his word, and by one infamous act of falsehood, forfeited all claims to the character of an honorable, humane, or generous officer. By this intolerable decree, members of families, who, as it were, had but just walked beyond the confines of the camp, were painfully separated: for not being permitted to return, even on abject terms, little children were left to cry for bread in the streets, while their fathers, in one place, and their mothers, perhaps, in another, were alarmed and distressed by these accumulating miseries.

After the destruction of the tea [Note I], which exasperated the mother country beyond measure, and which was represented by the King in person, to

both Houses of Parliament, as an atrocious subversion of the constitution, that grave assembly resolved to make poor devoted Boston an object of direful legislative vengeance. A bill was forthwith passed, entirely prohibiting the landing or discharging of cargoes, or shipping goods, wares or merchandise, in Boston. This was the celebrated port bill.\* By following that impolitic, unjust act, by another equally as unjustifiable, for the better regulation of the government of the Province of Massachusetts, which, indeed, contemplated the complete overthrow of its charter, the alarm extended wherever the English language was spoken on the continent. As the difficulties first begun in Boston, and more particularly in consequence of the daring act alluded to, the King was determined to have a quick and thorough example of such rebellious and undutiful subjects, not doubting the success of ministerial preparations for accomplishing his supreme behest.

Nearly the last of that fearless company of patriots who constituted the celebrated Boston Tea-party, is now before the audience—the venerable relic of a century. This is Mr. George Robert Twelve Hewes—who will be one hundred years old on the 5th day of the coming September—formerly

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\* The Port Bill was passed March 31, 1774, and the news arrived in Boston on the 10th of the following May.



a citizen of Boston, who, on the verge of eternity, earnestly desired to revisit the early scenes of his youth, that his eyes might be gladdened with objects in which they once delighted. How wonderful!—one hundred years of age!—yet in the full possession of his faculties, and susceptible of all the enjoyments and pleasures of social intercourse.

Let the youth who have this rare opportunity of gazing upon the features of this extraordinary, this last man, as it were, remember the circumstance, that in their old age they may say to their children, they saw on the 4th of July, 1835, a man who assisted in throwing into the ocean three cargoes of tea, in order to resist the exactions of foreign taxmasters—and may the spirit which animated him on that remarkable occasion, live in them and their posterity, while home has endearments and true patriotism exists in the land which gave them birth.

Venerable old man! May heaven's choicest blessings rest upon your frosted head. Since you were born, three hundred millions of human beings have probably gone down to the grave—and yet you are spared, perhaps by Divine Providence, to be a living monitor to us to cherish our precious institutions, and to transmit them unimpaired to succeeding generations. Though you come to the land of your childhood leaning upon a staff, and feeling your de-

pendence on the charities of a selfish world, you are surrounded by friends who feel that their prosperity is referable to the privations, sacrifices and personal labors of you and your brave associates in arms. May your last days be peaceful, calm and happy,—and with your last breath, I beseech you invoke a blessing on our common country.

“May your last days in one smooth channel run,  
And end in pleasure as they first begun.”\*

General Gage, it seems, in preference to many others, was conceived to be the fittest person for carrying into successful operation the master stroke of policy devised by the British counsel of ministers, in regard to the town of Boston. The very day after his arrival, May 1<sup>4</sup>, 177<sup>4</sup>, a numerous town meeting was called to consider the port bill, and it was resolved—“That it is the opinion of this town that the colonies come into a joint resolution to stop all importations from Great Britain and every part of the West Indies, till the act be repealed,—the same will prove the salvation of North America and her liberties; and that the impolicy, injustice and cruelty of the act, exceed all our powers of expression. We therefore leave it to the just censure of others, and

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\* When the speaker addressed Mr. Hewes, he rose before the audience, supported by the venerable Col. Henry Purkitt, who is reported also to have been one of the Boston Tea-party.

appeal to God and the world." Copies of this daring resolution were sent with astonishing rapidity, considering the natural barriers and hindrances then existing, there being neither bridges, mail coaches nor even tolerable roads. Boston was doomed to political destruction for teaching false notions of liberty to others, till rank rebellion raged throughout the colonies. This will explain the state of affairs at this particular juncture, and also account for the concentration of foreign troops in such numbers in this metropolis.

A growing disposition to dislodge such desperate intruders upon domestic rights, preying, as it were, upon the vitals of the community, from a town of incalculable importance to the well-being of the whole colonial territory, could not long be kept in secret, and the more it was agitated, the more impatient were the people to carry the proposition into immediate execution.

Thus, says Dr. Holmes, in his *Annals of America*, the inhabitants of Boston, distinguished for politeness and hospitality, no less than for industry and opulence, were sentenced, on the short notice of twenty days,\* to a deprivation of the means of subsistence. Contributions were raised for their relief,

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\* The Port of Boston was closed June 1, 1774.

at the same time that addresses and letters of applause exhorted them to be firm and unyielding. To the lasting honor of Marblehead, in that dark hour of despair, they offered, as a town, in the most generous manner, to the Boston merchants, the use of their harbor, wharves and warehouses; and, lastly, for they were friends in need, they also proffered their personal services, free of all expense. May the children of such benefactors, as their fathers did before them, build upon a Marblehead rock; and may their generosity be kept in perpetual remembrance by a city that was once glad to receive a piece of bread from the hand of a Marblehead fisherman.

Owing, in part, to the limited intercourse with the interior, and an unexpected loss of several store-ships, captured by our privateers in the neighborhood of Marblehead, bound to Boston for the support of the soldiery, inexpressible anguish was depicted on every face, as starvation actually threatened the besiegers as well as the besieged. Driven, finally, to the last resource for saving life, some of the citizens, less favored than their vigilant overseers, were compelled to eat horse-flesh, or die of famine. The weather becoming extremely cold in the month of November, and fire-wood being as scarce as provisions, the wharves were stripped of timber, and the Old

North Church, beside upward of one hundred houses, were torn down for fuel. Added to these hardships and privations, the smallpox [Note J] raged extensively through the town, so that soldiers and citizens were alike in respect to its ravages. The British officers, in the midst of these multiplied afflictions, in the most insulting manner, occasionally exhibited farces in Faneuil Hall. The Old South Church was converted into a circus and riding school for a squadron of cavalry. Seven hundred soldiers had previously been quartered in the present City Hall, and Hollis Street, the West and First Baptist, and Brattle Street Churches, were changed into barracks and hospitals.

After the conflagration of Charlestown [Note K], the King's troops were principally stationed on Bunker Hill, and on the Neck, near the location of the well-known *Green Store*, where a redoubt of considerable magnitude was erected. Our forces, in the mean time, were stationed in Roxbury, Cambridge, and Dorchester, and therefore completely cut off from all intercourse with their friends in the town. From all that can be gathered of the actual state of public feeling, all were anxious for some decisive blow. Washington unquestionably conceived the plan of making an attack, as the only means of liberating the suffering inhabitants.

It should not be lost to history, that while all these rigorous exactions were enforced, countrymen were allowed to convey vegetables over the lines, occasionally, for the tables of those who could indulge in such luxuries. Carts being less common then, than now, it was customary to carry this kind of marketing in paniers, on horseback, through the streets and lanes. As an evidence of the shrewdness and determined spirit which animated the people of that day, the following anecdote cannot be unacceptable.

George Minot, a Dorchester farmer,\* and son of John Minot, one of the select-men, went so frequently on these excursions, that the guard at the Green Store became quite remiss in the examination of the returning paniers, in which he was in the constant habit of bringing out powder for the powderless patriots who constituted Washington's army of observation. In that humble capacity, he rendered invaluable service to his country. There being little or nothing in the town treasury, from which to draw purchase money in support of this singular but well-timed traffic, the father [Note L] advanced it to the persons of whom it was thus clandestinely procured, trusting to the justness of the claim on the government he clearly foresaw must rise on the ruins

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\* By those who knew him personally at the time, he is said to have been a butcher. He was born November 27, 1755, and died in Dorchester, his native town, September 14th, 1826.

of the colonial wreck. His confidence was not misplaced ;—it became a funded debt, and with it he purchased a part of Thompson's Island, now the location of the Farm School, of the Rev. Dr. William Walter [Note M], then rector of Trinity Church.

On another occasion, the same individual being permitted to enter the town with an an ox-team for offals, driven by a colored servant, purposely kept out of the way till the load was ready, which reached home safely, with a four pound cannon at the bottom. A few days after, as the honest negro again leisurely drove up to the sentinel's post, he was asked, " Well, Cuffee, what are you stealing to-day ? " " O, same sort of stuff, massa," answered the Ethiop, and thus a second gun was adroitly procured of the Boston select-men. [Note N.] These same pieces were exchanged by the Dorchester Artillery, not many years since, for others of a larger size ; but it is believed they might easily be identified, and they should be kept by the town as choice keepsakes for posterity.

Through the whole war, Dorchester was remarkable for its patriotism. Town meetings were held very frequently, and seldom dissolved without some spirit-stirring resolution. At one time the town voted to cut four hundred cords of wood for the army, the price being fixed at " twelve shillings for oak, and

thirteen for walnut." May 23, 1776, by unanimous consent, it was "*voted*, That if the Continental Congress should think it best to declare an independency with Great Britain, we will support them with our lives and fortunes." There were then but 1548 inhabitants in the town, and thirty-five of these were negroes and molattoes. They encouraged each other to enter the army, and voted bounties, liberally, though the treasury was nearly empty. June 5th, 1776, they "*voted*, To spare the town's stock of powder to such inhabitants as have none, or have not a sufficiency—that no one person be allowed to purchase more than one pound, and that such as have some powder be allowed to purchase no more than enough to make up a pound to each man, with what he already has ;—that they pay for the powder when they take it, at the rate of four shillings per pound." July 18th, "*voted*, That the town will give the sum of eight pounds to each man that shall enlist for the reinforcement of said Continental army, upon their passing muster." Same day, also, "*voted*, That there be forty shillings added to the bounty this day voted by the town," &c. August, 1776, "*voted*, That each man of this town shall be allowed twenty shillings per month in addition to the wages allowed by the colony, while in service." November 17th, 1776, "*voted*, That the treasurer



be directed and empowered to borrow the money to pay the men, if there be not money in the treasury." This is enough to secure the imperishable reputation of that delightful town, now rich in all that her resolute select-men saw in perspective through the haze and clouds of revolutionary strife.

A feverish excitement in every breast, demanded immediate efforts. The regular force of the Americans was not far from fourteen thousand, beside six thousand militia. With these, the Commander in Chief had a mind to take a station on the Heights of Dorchester, an admirable position, from whence the enemy's shipping might be considerably annoyed. General Washington apprehended an attempt to drive him away, that would bring on a general engagement, during which he hoped to take possession of the town with four thousand select soldiers, who were to be marched from Cambridge.

In the following letter to the President of Congress, we shall have an idea of the transaction from Washington himself. "Sir," says he, "the resolution relative to the troops in Boston, I beg the favor of you to assure Congress, shall be attempted to be put in execution the first moment I see a probability of success, and in such a way as a Counsel of War shall think most likely to produce it." This alludes to a resolve of the 22d of December, in which it is

declared, "That if General Washington and his Counsel of War should be of opinion that a successful attack may be made on the troops in Boston, he do it in any way he may think expedient, notwithstanding the town and property in it be destroyed."

John Hancock, the unflinching friend of his country, and the irreconcilable foe of its belligerent oppressors, then President of Congress, wrote a note, accompanying the resolve, couched in these remarkable words : " You will notice a resolution relative to an attack on Boston. This passed after a most serious debate in a committee of the whole house, and the execution referred to you. May God crown your attempt with success. I most heartily wish it, though individually I may be the greatest sufferer." His estate included the venerable stone house in Beacon street. The property which was left him by a relative, was valued at seventy thousand pounds sterling, and chiefly within the limits of Boston.

It is worth the while to examine the trying condition in which the immortal leader found himself, when meditating a blow of such incalculable benefit to the nation, as dislodging a British army from its comfortable quarters. In a letter to his brother, Augustine Washington, dated at Cambridge, March 31st, 1776, he says, " I have been here months together, with, what will scarcely be believed, not

thirty rounds of musket cartridges to a man. Having received a small amount of powder" (probably some of it through the Dorchester farmer), "I resolved to take possession of Dorchester Point, lying south of Boston, and looking directly into it, and commanding the enemy's lines on Boston Neck. To do this, which would force the enemy to an engagement, or subject them to be enfiladed by our cannon, it was necessary to possess two Heights, which had entire command of the Point. The ground at this time being frozen upwards of two feet deep, and as impenetrable as a rock, nothing could be attempted with earth. We were obliged, therefore, to provide an amazing quantity of chandaliers and fascines for the work, and on the night of the 4th, after a previous severe cannonade and bombardment for three nights together, to divert the enemy's attention from our design, we moved every material from the spot, under cover of darkness, and took full possession of the Heights without the loss of a single man. Upon their discovery of the works the next morning, great preparations were made for attacking them, but not being ready before the afternoon, and the weather getting tempestuous, much blood was saved, and a very important blow to one side or the other was prevented. That this most remarkable interposition of Providence is for some wise purpose, I have not a doubt."

The fascines here alluded to, were an immense collection of white birch faggots, procured in the upper part of Dorchester, from the farm of Mr. William Sumner, now eighty-seven years of age, from whom the facts have been collected. A Lieutenant and thirty soldiers were cutting the brush, early in the Summer; and the spot, on account of its obscurity, was probably selected for safely carrying on the labor, by Washington himself, who rode over the ground. The farm was then owned by Captain John Homans, of Boston, who, says report, being suspected of toryism, never presumed to ask compensation for the depredation on his woodland. [Note O.] The patriotic Dorchester yeomanry conveyed the bundles from thence to the toll-house. This shows the long-sightedness and calculation for contingencies, possessed by Washington. When the order was given for beginning the fort, three hundred teams, under the special charge of Mr. Goddard, of Brookline, were put in motion, as it were by magic, in the evening, and the whole mass of fascines carefully removed in a few hours to the south-western side of the hills. Being carried to the top, by hand, they were set up with stakes, like basket work, and the interstices filled up with whatever was procurable, the ground being completely frozen. Not the sound of human voice was heard through the whole of this

masterly *ruse de guerre*. Dr. Thatcher, then a surgeon, says that when he accompanied his regiment over to the Heights at four o'clock on the next morning, he observed an immense number of large bundles of screwed hay, arranged in a line next the enemy's residence, to protect the troops from a raking fire, to which they were exposed while passing and repassing. Some of the carts, he further remarks, had made three or four trips. Mr. William Sumner drove a team that night, and made five trips before daylight. [Note P.] Barrels of sand and stones were also piled up in rows, to let loose in case of any attempt by the British to reach the works.

An aged gentleman, doubtless the oldest resident of South Boston, whose recollection of all the circumstances is vividly and clearly retained, was on guard duty that night, on a look-out station, north of the Rev. Mr. Fairchild's Church. [Note Q.]

When the morning dawned, there was apparently a majestic fortification, raised into being like the creations of magic, amply supplied with men and guns, which had no tangible existence fifteen hours before.

Such were among the heroic achievements of those who fought for their fire-sides, their wives, their children and their heaven-born rights.

Nook Hill [Note R] had formerly upon its summit a redoubt, raised equally expeditiously, in one

night. It was the location referred to, where our aged friend was on guard. [Note S.] The weather being freezingly cold, the fatigued soldiers, on completion of the work, by some strange thoughtlessness made a fire, before which they laid themselves down. A shot, guided by the light, was sent from the Green Store Battery into the very midst of them, which unhappily killed three soldiers and a Dr. Dole, a regimental surgeon. These were the only persons sacrificed at South Boston, through the whole of that ingenious course of manœuvring, so important in its consequences.

The following morning, on discovering the changed aspect of the Heights, which, owing to a peculiar condition of the atmosphere, loomed, so as to appear vastly more appalling than they really were, General Howe is reported to have exclaimed—"I know not what I shall do; the rebels have done more in one night, than my whole army would have done in weeks."

Thus a miraculous interposition of Divine Providence, in producing an optical illusion, contributed, eminently, to the success of the enterprise.

General Howe, clearly apprehending his danger, chose, very wisely, to abandon what he could no longer retain, after having had complete possession of Boston eleven months. But to secure a retreat, he

resorted to the mean threat of burning the town if he was molested in his embarkation. The soldiers were not disturbed in a hasty movement to get on board their ships. They dropped down the harbor on Sunday morning, but a violent storm prevented them from going to sea till twelve days after. The concourse of spectators on the house tops and other elevated places in the vicinity, to witness the departure of remorseless enemies, who had desecrated their churches and involved the whole country in one common ruin, were filled with the warmest gratitude to God, the deliverer.

This was the auspicious moment chosen by the artist who executed the magnificent picture of Washington, now in Faneuil Hall, when the immortal commander in this bloodless victory stood in gratified amazement, gazing upon the retreating shadows of the foes of liberty and equal rights.

Thus, the preservation of the Capital, and almost the political redemption of North America, was effected on Dorchester Heights. So wonderful and so illustrious was this performance considered in other countries, that a medal was struck in Paris, in commemoration of it, bearing on one side a view of Boston with a fleet under sail in the distance, having Washington surrounded by his officers in the foreground, pointing to the vessels as they were wafted from his sight.

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This recital has merely contemplated one single local incident, intimately connected, however, with the circumstances of the great American revolution, which, alone, is enough to establish the nervous zeal, cautiousness and untiring perseverance of our ancestors.

Through their matchless efforts, we became the heirs to a splendid inheritance; and the world watches to discover whether it will be wasted through negligence and reckless indifference, or, strengthened, beautified and increased in value, go down to our children with all its original properties. Its maintenance obviously depends on the purity of the motives of those who are entrusted with its administration. This being conceded, no one will presume to doubt the propriety or importance of elevating men to official stations, whose unexceptionable lives inspire public confidence, and confer character and dignity on the country. Without high moral attainments, the feeling of responsibility is neither strong nor lasting. A perversion of delegated authority is a natural consequence of conferring power, where the temptations to abuse it are not restrained by a consciousness of accountability to a tribunal beyond the creations of man.

If no reference is made to this surest test of qualification, and the recklessly ambitious are raised to



places for which they are wholly incompetent, the nation, with all its resources—with all its treasure—must positively become weakened at home, and pitied and despised abroad. So long as candidates for the first offices are raised to them by the merits of a good name, and factious leaders are circumscribed by the common sense of the people, those manifold evils which dismember empires can never take permanent root, or materially affect the foundation of our civil liberty. Ignorance is the invariable forerunner of public political calamities; and vice, the german concomitant of irreligion, chains down the active powers of the soul to perpetual bondage, when rational beings, regardless of duty to themselves and to others, slight the only discovered highway to virtue and happiness.

This is an age of mind: the economical and constructive arts are liberally encouraged; ingenuity is everywhere patronized; the exact sciences are appreciated and rigidly taught. Indeed, all varieties and shades of intelligence are exhibited on a field as broad and unencumbered as the most ambitious could desire. Our internal sources of wealth and independence are also exhaustless. Yet all these blessings had a beginning in the simplicity, honesty, piety and unobtrusive virtues of the Pilgrims. They brought the seed of American liberty in the hold of

the Mayflower; it was sown in a soil enriched by the sacrifice of human blood; it germinated in the revolution, and its golden fruits cluster upon our vines.

But with all this prosperity,—with all our boasted love of country,—with aspirations upon our lips to Heaven for its preservation in the simplicity and goodness of its generous founders, morbid cravings are discoverable in the community. Luxury, a gangrene which ever endangers the health of a nation, is creeping onward, gently, but not the less fearfully, as it irresistibly saps the foundation, and gradually undermines the solid pillars of a republic. Infidelity, too, that mildew of the brain, mocking the unchangeable laws of the Almighty, and blaspheming, with the audacity of a fiend, the Omnipotent God, is endeavoring to plant the standard of revolt in the very midst of us. The corrupt dregs and streetwashings of all Europe are likewise hastening onward to fill up the interstices of society—requiring barriers of no ordinary firmness to stay the pollutions that roll towards this tolerant and last home of civil liberty.

To meet and subdue these formidable phalanxes, requires the unceasing vigilance of all who prize virtue for its own intrinsic excellence. To guard the fountains, therefore, that no poisonous draughts may be drawn from that source, demands the most ener-

getic measures. Society is more artificial than it should be : there is less of that confiding, ingenuous single-heartedness, than before it was operated upon by the specific agency of these deteriorating causes.

Public virtue, like individual worth, contains, to some extent, the principles of self-preservation ; yet by suffering schools and the larger seminaries of learning to wane through negligence, and sanctioning in youth the attainment of flimsy accomplishments, in preference to the acquisition of plain, useful knowledge, we certainly enfeeble the moral structure, and open wide the portals to designing demagogues.

Good men are everywhere laboring to check the contagious progress of corruption, and convince the unreflecting that life without liberty—life without virtue—life without religion—has neither a hold upon earth, nor an abiding hope in heaven. The means of cultivating the intellect and educating the moral feelings have been immensely multiplied in this fruitful age : there is now no apology for ignorance.

Independence, therefore, instead of consisting in idolatrous prostrations to a ruler even of our own making—in striving to impede the timely and salutary alarm that intemperance is a national curse—in trampling under foot the moral code—or in bolstering up the limited understanding with the vain expectation of proving that man is alone accountable

to man, would be a perversion of his natural faculties. INDEPENDENCE—only worth possession—for which sages have legislated and our hardy progenitors bled—contemplates the progressive improvement and development of the innate qualities of the human mind, regulated by temperance, sobriety, religion, and the habitual practice of the virtues that ennoble man. This is the kind of independence which will make us useful to our families, useful to our friends, useful to the world—happy individually within ourselves, and happy beyond the boundaries of time.

To keep alive these acknowledged principles of liberty and equality, and to impress them upon the plastic minds of the youth, the anniversary of the Declaration of the Independence of the United States of America should be perpetuated with great public demonstrations of joy and gratitude. Then, in after times, when our bodies shall have mingled with the common dust, it may be said of our glorious constitution, in the splendid imagery of a Boston poet—

“Man looked in scorn, but Heaven beheld, and blessed  
 Its branchy glories, spreading o’er the West.  
 No summer gaude, the wonder of a day,  
 Born but to bloom, and then to fade away,  
 A giant oak, it lifts its lofty form,  
 Greens in the sun, and strengthens in the storm.  
 Long in its shade shall children’s children come,  
 And welcome earth’s poor wanderers to a home.  
 Long shall it live, and every blast defy,  
 Till time’s last whirlwind sweep the vaulted sky.”—SPRAGUE.

## NOTES.

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### NOTE A.

LIST, from the Town Records, of Inhabitants in Dorchester, 1637, among whom the land on the Neck (since called South Boston) was divided; consisting of those of the original settlers who remained after the removal of some to Windsor, and of those who arrived with Rev. Mr. MATHER, in 1635. [From the Rev. Dr. Harris's Centennial Discourses.]

Andrews, Thomas	Gibson, Christopher
Atherton, Mr. Humphrey	Gilbert, Mr.
Bates, Mr. James	Glover, Mr. John
Bellingham, Mr.	Greenway, John
Benham, John	Hatch, Thomas
Biggs, Mrs.	Hathorne, Mr. (house)
Blake, William	Hayden, John
Bullock, Edward	Hawes, Richard
Butler, Mr. Nicholas	Hawkins, Mr.
Capen, Bernard	Hill, John
Capen, John	Holland, John
Clap, Edward	Holman, John
Clap, Nicholas	Hull, John
Clap, Roger	Humphreys, Jonas
Clement, Austin	Hutchinson, Mr.
Collicot, Richard	Jones, Richard
Deeble, Robert	Jones, Thomas
Dickerman, Thomas	Knight, Mr.
Dimmock, Thomas	Kinnersley, Tho.
Duncan, Nathaniel	Kinsley, John
Dyer, George	Lambert, Thomas
Eelles, John	Lane, William Goodman
Elwell, Robert	Makepeace, Mr. Thomas
Farnsworth, Joseph	Martin, Mr.
Fenn, Benjamin	Mather, Mr. [Rev. Richard]
Flood, Joseph	Miller, Alexander
Foster, Widow	Miller, John

Millet, Thomas	Smed, Widow
Minot, Mr. George	Smith, John
Moore, John	Stoughton, Mr.
Munnings, Edward	Sumner, William
Newbury, Mr.	Swift, Thomas
Niles, John	Upsall, Nicholas
Parker, Mr.	Wade, Richard
Phillips, John	Wales, Nathaniel
Pierce, John	Way, George
Pierce, Robert	Way, Henry
Pitcher, Andrew	Weeks, George
Pope, John	Whitcomb, John
Preston, William	White, Edward
Price, Daniel	Whitfield, Mr. (house)
Proctor, George	Whitman, Mr.
Purchase, Widow	Wilkins, Bray
Read, William	Wiswall, Thomas
Richards, Thomas	Withington, Mr.
Rigby, Joseph	Wright, Henry
Samford, Thomas	Wright, Richard
Sension, Matthew	

#### NOTE B.

November 7, 1633, the inhabitants of Boston were allowed liberty to obtain wood on Dorchester Neck, for twenty years. It is difficult to understand these several conflicting records.

All the Islands in Boston harbor, though now entirely divested of trees or shrubbery, were once well wooded. We find that on the 13th of January, 1638, thirty men, going to Spectacle Island to cut wood, were driven out to sea several days, by a storm, and one of the number perished. After all the wood was cut in the town (Boston), the people were permitted to get it on Dorchester Neck (South Boston), and the Islands.

#### NOTE C.

No satisfactory history has been discovered of the origin of the causeway. It must have been a laborious undertaking, and was undoubtedly constructed by the united efforts of those who had a personal interest in the pasture; otherwise, some memorandum would have been placed on the town books, which are unique specimens of exactness in whatever pertained to the public property.

## NOTE D.

The services of the Protestant Episcopal Church were celebrated for the first time, in that part of the town called South Boston, on Sunday, March 31, 1816. For more than two years the congregation met in a school-house, and services were conducted by different clergymen and lay-readers. *St. Matthew's Church* was consecrated on the 24th of June, 1818, by the Right Rev. Dr. Griswold, bishop of the Eastern Diocess. It is situated on Broadway, and is a neat and commodious brick building. The expenses of its erection were chiefly defrayed by benevolent members of Trinity and Christ churches, with a view to the future wants of that section of the city. A service of plate for the use of the altar was presented by the ladies of Christ Church, and the pulpit, desk, and chancel, were furnished with appropriate dressings by the ladies of Trinity Church. The late Mrs. Elizabeth Bowdoin Winthrop was a most liberal benefactor. Religious services were maintained in this church, by occasional supplies, but it was not till June, 1824, that the parish enjoyed the stated labors of a minister in full orders, when the Rev. John L. Blake became rector.

Mr. B. has since been succeeded by the Rev. Horace L. Conelly, the present rector.

## NOTE E.

St. Augustine's Church was erected in 1819, by the Roman Catholic congregation in Franklin Street, then under the charge of the distinguished Right Rev. Bishop Cheverus, now the Archbishop of Bordeaux, in France, and principally by his assistance. Connected with the edifice, which is of brick, rather small, and apparently only occasionally used for a chapel, is a burial ground, in which catholics, only, are buried. It was doubtless the intention of the Rev. Mr. Thayer, who made provision in his will for the establishment of a convent of Ursuline Nuns, to have located the institution near this church. By invitation of Bishop Cheverus, in 1820, four nuns of that order arrived in Boston, and devoted themselves to the instruction of female children till 1826, when the Ursuline Community, which has since become extensively known by its misfortunes, was established at Charlestown.

## NOTE F.

The Hawes Place Society originated in the desire of several individuals, most of whom were members of the Rev. Dr. Harris's Society in Dorchester, to have a nearer place of worship. As early as June, 1807, soon after the annexation of Dorchester Neck to Boston, Mr. John Hawes had appropriated a piece of ground, on which a house for public worship was to be erected, and executed a conveyance of it to the inhabitants of South Boston. In the year 1810, he united with his neighbors, in erecting a building for a temporary place of worship.

In the year 1818, they obtained of the Legislature an act of incorporation, with the title of *The Hawes Place Congregational Society, in Boston*, and enlarged their temporary place of worship. On the 13th of May, in the following year, 1819, those members of the society, who were communicants, met to deliberate upon the expediency of forming a regular church; and "voted unanimously, that the Secretary of this meeting (Mr. Wood) be requested to take such measures as shall be deemed requisite to effect such object." They assembled, accordingly, an Ecclesiastical Council, October 27, 1819, and accomplished the object.

The church at first consisted of fourteen members, six male and eight female. They had their first meeting Nov. 15, 1819, at the house of Mr. John Hawes, and unanimously chose Mr. Wood to be clerk, and Isaac Thom and Thomas Hammond to be deacons.

With a view to render himself more useful to this church and society, Mr. Wood received ordination as an Evangelist, by a Council convened at Weymouth Nov. 13th, 1821, though he never held any pastoral relation to them.

Soon after the decease of Mr. Wood, in 1822, the Rev. Lemuel Capen, of Dorchester, succeeded him as master of the public school, and continued, by their request, to minister to them. At a legal meeting of the society, January 23th, 1823, they invited him to become their permanent minister; to which invitation he gave an affirmative answer. On account of his connection with the school, however, further measures for his installation



were deferred. At a legal meeting of the society, Oct. 8th, 1827, they unanimously renewed their invitation to him to become their permanent minister, of which he renewed his acceptance, and an Ecclesiastical Council was accordingly convened for his installation, October 31st, 1827. The present place of worship is a neat wooden building, 60 feet by 46, was built in 1832, and dedicated January 1st, 1833. It is in every respect a free Church, being built and supported entirely by funds bequeathed by Mr. John Hawes.

#### NOTE G.

Powwow Point lies south of the Rev. Mr. Capen's residence, facing Thompson's Island. Indian relics have been occasionally found there, and were excavations made in the neighborhood, many singular aboriginal memorials would probably be brought to light. Squantum Rock, still further south, on the main land, has also been famous in Indian history. Till within a very few years, an annual feast, as it was denominated, was held on that rough promontory, in commemoration of an Indian Treaty, of great importance to the first settlers. A singular whim in relation to the celebration, required that all the food used on the occasion should come out of the sea, and be eaten with clamshells.

Of the history of Boston, says Mr. Lewis, in his Annals, we have no other account before 1626, except a tradition furnished by John Thomas, a very aged Indian of Framingham. His father informed him, that when he was about sixteen years of age he lived with his father at the place now called Boston; that there was then a very great sickness, and the Indians lay dead in almost every wigwam. Both at Boston and Dorchester Neck, now South Boston, so many Indians died, that they remained unburied, and the few surviving Indians removed to other places.

#### NOTE H.

*Boston South Bridge.*—The building of this bridge grew out of the project for annexing Dorchester Neck, so called, to Boston, as a part of the city. In the latter end of 1803, there were but 10 families on that peninsula, which comprised an extent of

560 acres of land. These families united with several citizens of Boston in a petition to the town for the privilege of being annexed thereto, "upon the single condition that the inhabitants [of B.] will procure a bridge to be erected between Boston and Dorchester Neck." On the 31st of January, 1804, after several confused meetings on the subject, the town agreed to the proposition, on condition "that the place from which and the terms on which the bridge should be built, shall be left entirely to the Legislature. Application was made to the General Court, and measures were in train for authorizing a bridge from South Street to the Point. The inhabitants of the south end of the town, having opposed this measure in vain thus far in its progress, formed a plan at this juncture, in which they proposed to erect a bridge where the present bridge stands, and to obviate the objection that such a bridge would not lessen the distance from the Point so much as the South Street bridge would, they offered to construct a commodious street across the flats from Rainsford's lane to the head of the proposed bridge. They presented a petition to the Court to be incorporated for these purposes, upon the presumption that no liberty would be granted for the erection of any other bridge, to the northward of their bridge, unless at some future period the increased settlement of this part of the country should be such, that the public exigencies should require the same. This plan and petition met with so favorable a reception, that the Dorchester Point proprietors were induced to make a compromise with the South-end petitioners, in which it was agreed that the South Street bridge should be abandoned, and that the South-end bridge should be transferred to the Dorchester company, and the proposed street be carried forward by the petitioners. A joint committee made a report on the basis of this compromise, which was accepted in concurrence February 23d; and on the 6th of March, bills were passed for the three objects, the annexation of Dorchester Neck to Boston, the incorporation of the Proprietors of Boston South Bridge, and also of the Front Street Corporation in the town of Boston.

Messrs. William Tudor, Gardiner Green, Jona. Mason and Harrison Gray Otis, were the proprietors named in the Boston

South Bridge act. Seventy years improvement was allowed from the date of the first opening of said bridge for passengers, which took place in the summer of 1805. On the first of October, it was the scene of a military display and sham fight. This bridge is 1551 feet in length, and cost the proprietors about 56,000 dollars. In 1832 the proprietors sold the bridge to the city for \$3,500; since which it has been put in thorough repair by the city, at an expense of \$3,500, in addition to the amount paid by the corporation, and has been made a free highway.

*Boston Free Bridge.*—Within two years after the erection of the Boston South Bridge, an attempt was made for another to run from Sea Street to South Boston. Many other attempts have been made since that time, to establish a bridge at this place, but they were strongly opposed till the passage of an Act March 4, 1826, authorizing the erection of the present bridge. The committee of the Legislature, to whom the subject was referred, gave this reason for reporting in favor of the bill: “that if the public good or public interest required that the proposed bridge should be constructed, then the prayer of the petitioners should be granted; that indemnification should be made for property taken for the use of the bridge, but to no greater extent; that the navigable waters being public property, the legislature had the right to control the use of them. The committee therefore considered the only question arising was, whether the public exigency required this bridge. It appeared that about 100,000 people, if this bridge were erected, would be saved a travel of one mile by coming from the south shore over this bridge, instead of over the Neck; that an increasing intercourse would take place between the centre of business in the city and South Boston, and the distance be lessened a half a mile, which in a dense population is equal to ten or twenty miles in the country. The only objection to this bridge arose from persons in Roxbury, at the South End of Boston, and from a part of the proprietors of the old bridge; that it did not appear that any others would be injured, and that these persons would not be injured to the extent they imagined. It was admitted that the navigation might be made a little inconvenient, but not so much so as was expected.

It appeared that the present channel might, by individual right, be narrowed to three hundred feet, which would increase the current more than the proposed bridge; that the present current was about one mile the hour, while that at Charlestown Bridge was three miles; that the increase to the price of wood if the bridge were erected, would be only six cents the cord; and that with one or two exceptions all the bridges in the State had been granted without any indemnity for consequential damages, other than compensation for property converted to the use of such bridge. The committee came to the conclusion that no person ought to claim damages for an interruption of navigable waters, when the public accommodation required such interruption."

This bridge was completed in 1828, by a company of gentlemen who were proprietors of lands at South Boston, and by residents of that section, and who transferred it to the city in October.

#### NOTE I.

Seventeen persons, on the 2d of November, 1774, disguised as Indians, and armed, boarded three India ships, lying not far from Liverpool wharf, and threw overboard three hundred and forty-two chests of tea. The late Colonel Thomas Melville, reputed to have been one of the number, preserved a vial full, which has finally become a curiosity. The streets of Boston were lighted with lamps, for the first time, two months before this event.

#### NOTE J.

Boston has suffered more by this disease than any other city on the continent. In 1669 it prevailed extensively; again in 1678; and in 1721, eight hundred and forty-four persons died of it. In 1752, it became alarmingly fatal, and five hundred and forty-five died. In 1764, the smallpox appeared again, and one hundred and twenty-four died. Again, in 1776, it began to be developed; and in 1792, another fatal visitation was made by it.

#### NOTE K.

Charlestown was burned by the British, June 16, 1775. Many of the buildings were valuable, particularly one church, court house, prison, county house, and two school houses, beside

a workhouse and three hundred and eighty buildings of various sizes and value. A vast amount of property belonging to the inhabitants of Boston, who had stored it in Charlestown for safety, was totally destroyed.

#### NOTE L.

John Minot, who died June 25th, 1805, at the age of 74, appears to have been a most active patriot, and an excellent and skilful manager of the affairs of the town. The select-men usually met at his house. He was a select-man, according to the town records, through the perilous times of the revolution, and never flinched from any responsibility that was calculated to benefit his native place, elevate its character, or contribute to the success of his oppressed countrymen in arms.

#### NOTE M.

Dr. Walter, a man of considerable wealth, and certainly of great respectability, but a tory, left Boston with his Majesty's fleet, when Boston was evacuated, March 17th, 1776. Many years after the peace he returned to recover the property which he foolishly sacrificed. He drew a small pension from the British Government. The time and place of his death are not known to the writer.

#### NOTE N.

At this late period, it is difficult to get the exact phraseology of the conversation between the sentinel and the negro. Major Russell says that the quotation given is incorrect. The spirit of it, however, is considered by some others, who heard it repeated at the time, very much like that narrated.

#### NOTE O.

It is just to correct this gross libel on the character of that honest man, even at this late period.

Captain John Homans was born in Romansgale, Kent county, England, in 1703. He came to this country when a youth, and for many years commanded a ship employed in the London trade. He was exceedingly active and energetic, and having acquired a competency, being fond of agricultural pursuits, he purchased

the estate in Dorchester, long since known by the name of the Bowdoin Estate, situated at the four corners, on the upper road to Milton; there he built a house, and, being yet fond of the sea, so constructed it, that from his parlor windows he could view the vessels passing in and out of port. He possessed great decision of character, and such was his industry that he continued to labor with his men until the last day of his life, when he fell dead in the field, in the summer of 1778, at the good old age of 75 years.

He had a numerous family, the oldest of whom, the late Dr. John Homans, of Boston, graduated at Cambridge in 1772, and, before he had completed his professional studies, joined the army at Cambridge, and received a commission of Surgeon in 1775. Dr. Homans continued to serve his country as Surgeon until the termination of hostilities. Both father and son were, in the language of those days, true "liberty men."

#### NOTE P.

Mr. William Sumner, now eighty-seven years of age, and nearly blind, from whom these particulars were learned, owns and still resides on the Homans farm. From him it has been ascertained that General Washington was at South Boston in the course of the night on which the fort was erected: he recently informed the writer that he saw and recognized the General, as he rode towards the Heights, accompanied by a few officers.

#### NOTE Q.

The meeting-house here alluded to, and which has been recently taken down to give place to a larger, was dedicated on the 9th day of March, 1825. The church was organized on the 10th day of December, 1823, and was called "The Evangelical Congregational Church in South Boston." It is now known by the name of "The Phillips Church;" and the congregation in connection with it has been incorporated under the title of "The Phillips Church Society in Boston." The act of incorporation was obtained in the winter of 1834. The first pastor of the church, Rev. Prince Hawes, was installed on the 28th day of

April, 1824, and dismissed the 18th day of April, 1827. The installation of the present pastor, Rev. Joy H. Fairchild, took place the 22d day of November, 1827. At that time the church contained 38 members ; and they, together with the congregation, constituted an assembly of less than one hundred on the Sabbath. Since that period, 154 have been received to the communion, and the present number is 158.

The pews in the former house were not sufficient in number to meet the demand, for more than a year previous to its demolition. Hence the necessity of a larger house ; and the society are now erecting a new one, 80 feet long and 67 wide. There is a cellar under the whole, 7 feet in the clear ; and over the cellar are vestries and stores, 9 feet. The front view of the house is modelled after the Pine Street Meeting-house, except the tower, which is to be higher, and of a very different construction.

#### NOTE R.

On Nook Hill, near the Free Bridge, was the last breastwork thrown up by the American forces. The hill has since been nearly obliterated, and some part of its base occupied by dwellings.

#### NOTE S.

The individual here referred to, from whom some very interesting reminiscences have been collected relative to South Boston in his youth, is Deacon Abraham Gould. Mrs. Gould, his wife, was daughter of widow Foster, whose house was burned by the soldiers. She is a lineal descendant from widow Foster, whose name is in the catalogue of the first proprietors of the Neck.

In addition to the houses for public worship in South Boston already referred to in these Notes, there are the two following :

About the year 1826, the subject of establishing a new meeting for divine worship in the South part of Boston, began to engage the attention of a few Baptist friends. In May, 1827, stated weekly lectures were commenced by Mr. Ensign Lincoln in the Pedo-Baptist house of worship, and sustained by the neighboring pastors for a few weeks, but soon abandoned, for want of encouragement in the congregation.

Not in the least discouraged by this failure, one of the brethren, residing in this part of the city, immediately purchased a convenient house, previously occupied by the Methodists, upon his own responsibility, and gave the use of it to his brethren.

On the 28th of August, 1828, the desk having been supplied for the last year, principally by Rev. Harvey Ball and Rev. Otis Wing, 19 individuals were recognized as a branch of the Federal Street Baptist Church. "On the 1st of March, 1831, it was deemed expedient that these members be formed into a church. The measure was adopted with perfect unanimity," and 52 brethren and sisters were publicly recognized as the "South Baptist Church of the city of Boston."

From December, 1828, to April, 1830, this people enjoyed the able and efficient labors of the Rev. Thomas Driver.

On the 22d of July, 1830, the beautiful edifice, now occupied as a place of worship (72 feet long by 57 wide), was solemnly dedicated to the service of God.

In October, 1830, the Rev. R. H. Neale accepted the unanimous invitation of the church and society to become their pastor; but he was not publicly recognized as such till September 15th, 1833. This relation was dissolved March 19th, 1834. During Mr. Neale's connection with this people, extensive additions were made both to the church and society. May 25th, 1834, the Rev. T. R. Cressy was publicly recognized as pastor.

The Universalist Society in South Boston, was formed in the spring of 1830. During this spring they engaged Mr. Benjamin Whittemore, who was then residing in Troy, N. Y., to become their pastor. From this time until the spring of 1833, they occupied Harding's Hall, as their place of public worship. In the spring of 1833, they had completed a neat, convenient meeting-house, about seventy feet in length, by fifty in breadth, surmounted by a cupola, and containing eighty-two pews, with a gallery for singers. On the 10th of April, this house was dedicated, and Mr. Whittemore was installed. The society is in a flourishing condition—its meetings are well attended.