WHEILDON WILLIAM WILLDER

CURIOSITIES OF HISTORY: BOSTON, SEPTEMBER SEVENTEENTH, 1630-1880

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Содержание

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INTRODUCTION

It seems proper to say in offering this little volume to the public, that no attempt has been made to exhaust the subjects of which the papers respectively treat; but rather to enlarge upon matters of historical interest to Boston, which have been referred to only in a general way by historians and previous writers.—This idea rather than any determination to select merely curious topics, has in a large measure influenced the writer; and the endeavor has been to treat them freely and fairly, and present what may be new, or comparatively new, concerning them, from such sources as are now accessible and have been open to the writer. It is not, however, intended to say that an impulse towards some curious matters of history has not been indulged, and, indeed, considering the subjects and materials which presented themselves, could scarcely have been avoided, which was by no means desirable. Although it has been impertinently said, that

"the most curious thing to be found is a woman not curious," we submit that curiosity is a quality not to be disparaged by wit or sarcasm, but is rather the germ and quality of progress in art and science and history.

It has been impossible to correct or qualify, or perhaps we might say avoid, all the errors, mistakes, or contradictions, which have been encountered in preparing these pages; and very possibly we may have inadvertently added to the number. At all events, with our best endeavors against being drawn into or multiplying errors, we lay no claim to invulnerability in the matter of accuracy, or immaculacy in the way of opinions; and we very sincerely add, if errors or mistakes have been made and are found, we shall be glad to be apprised of them. There are errors in our history which it is scarcely worth the while to attempt to correct, although they are not to be countenanced and should not be repeated.

A period of two hundred and fifty years since the settlement of the town includes and covers a history of no ordinary character, involving progress and development, not merely of customs, manners and opinions, but of principles, passions and government. The city is a creation, as it were, by the art and industry of man; and, with the reverence of Cotton Mather himself, we add, "With the help of God!" and we venture the comparison that no change or growth, improvement or embellishment, is to be found in the settlement or the city, that may not be paralleled in the growth, advancement and elevation

of its people: indeed, we go even farther than this, the material progress to be seen around us, in all its multifarious forms and combinations, item by item, small or great, is indicative only of the advancement of the people, and marks the progress of moral, mental and intellectual power—of art, science and knowledge.

We take this opportunity to acknowledge our indebtedness to several friends for the loan and use of many rare and valuable works in the preparation of this history, and in particular to Messrs. John A. Lewis and John L. DeWolf, of Boston, and Mr. J. Ward Dean, of the N. E. His. Gen. Society.

I.
TOPOGRAPHY OF BOSTON

THE ORIGINAL PENINSULA

There is a line of Cowper to the effect that "God made the country, and man made the town;" and there is probably no more striking evidence of the truthfulness of the axiom than is to be found in the history and growth of Boston, between the years 1630 and 1880, confirming in a remarkable manner Capt. Wood's prophecy concerning the town, in 1650: viz., "whose continuall inlargement presages some sumptuous city." The original territory which has formed the basis, so to speak, of Boston proper, was a peninsula, and appeared like two islands, or, by the continued operation of the sea, was likely to become so. Its distinguishing feature was to be found in its three prominent hills, or, perhaps, its two hills and its three-peaked mountain. These were her jewels: they have since represented her fame, her history, her sentiments; for these were all wrapped around them. The peninsula was a point of land projected into the harbor, with a narrow neck connecting it with the mainland, and another narrow place in the vicinity of what is now Dock Square, which was once quite open to the harbor. In length from the south

line at Roxbury, it was something less than three miles (two and three-fourths and two hundred and thirty-eight yards). Its width at the widest point, between Wheelwright's wharf (afterwards Rowe's, and now Foster's) to Barton's Point, Leverett Street, was something over one mile, and its circumference about four miles.

CURIOUS EARLY DESCRIPTIONS

The first impression of the "island" which has been recorded is that of Anne Pollard, who died in Boston, Dec. 6, 1725, at the age of 105 years, and left over one hundred descendants. She always said that she came over from Charlestown, in 1630, in the first boat that crossed with Gov. Winthrop's party, and, being what might now be called a romping girl for those times, ten years of age, was "the first to jump ashore;" and she afterwards described the place "as being at that time very uneven, abounding in small hollows and swamp, and covered with blueberry and other bushes." We do not think there is any one inclined to dispute this statement, or question its truthfulness.

There are several descriptions of early Boston, topographical and otherwise, which have been quoted by subsequent writers upon the subject, rather as curious and original than as having any particular merit in themselves. First among these is that of Capt. Edward Johnson, in his "Wonder-Working Providence of Sion's Saviour in New England," written about 1640. He describes it as surrounded by the brinish flood, "saving one small Istmos which

gives free access to the neighbor townes," and says, "At their first landing the hideous thickets in this place were such that wolfes and beares nurst up their young from the eyes of all beholders.... The forme of this Towne is like a hearte, naturally situated for fortifications, having two hills on the frontice part thereof next the sea." These were Fort and Mill (Copps') Hills. "Betwixt these two strong armes lies a large cove or bay, on which the chiefest part of the town is built, overtopped with a third hill" (Sentry or Beacon Hill). There were two smaller hills on the Common, on one of which Gen. Gage afterwards built a battery, when the town was in his military possession, and on the other a powder-house.

Another curious description of Boston is given in Wood's "New England's Prospect:"—

> "Boston is two miles North-east from Roxberry. His situation is very pleasant, being a Peninsula hemm'd in on the south side with the Bay of Roxberry, and on the north side with Charles River, the marshes on the back side being not half a quarter of a mile over; so that a little fencing will secure their cattle from the woolves. It being a Necke and bare of wood, they are not troubled with those great annoyances, wolves, rattlesnakes and musquetoes.... This Necke of Land is not above four miles in compasse, in forme almost square, having on the south side at one corner a great broad hill, whereon is planted a Fort, which can command any ship as shee sayles into any Harbour within the still Bay. On the north side is another Hill equall in

> bignesse, whereon stands a winde mill. To the north-west is a high Mountaine, with three little rising Hills on the top of it, wherfore it is called Tramount.... This town although it be neither the greatest, nor the richest, yet is the most noted and frequented, being the Center of the Plantations, where the monthly Courts are kept. Here likewise dwells the Governor. This place hath very good land, affording rich Corne-fields, and fruitful gardens, having likewise sweete and pleasant springs."

There were two large coves projecting into the peninsula,—one from the harbor and one from Charles River, nearly opposite to each other, and producing the narrow portion of the land already spoken of, so that if the peninsula was not formed of two islands originally, as has been supposed, the cutting of a creek across this narrow portion, nearly on the line of Blackstone Street, and uniting the waters of the two coves, had the effect practically to make it so, at least at such times as the waters of Charles River and the harbor met across the neck, near Roxbury; so that the peninsula can hardly be said to have been heart-shaped, much less square.

But the most curious description of Boston, though it may hardly be called such, is that given by Edward Ward—a low, but ingenious and scandalous author, whose book cannot enter a decent presence—in his "Trip to New England."[1] He says of "Boston and the Inhabitants,"—

[1] The Second Volume of the Writings of the Author of the London Spy. London: 1706.

"On the south-west side of Massachusetts Bay is Boston, whose name is taken from the Town in Lincolnshire, and is the Metropolis of all New England. The houses, in some parts, join as in London. The buildings, like their women, being neat and handsome. And their streets, like the hearts of the male inhabitants, are paved with pebble.

"In the chief or High Street there are stately edifices, some of which have cost the owners two or three thousand pounds the raising, which I think plainly proves two old adages true, viz., That a fool and his money is soon parted; and, Set a beggar on horseback he'll ride to the devil; for the fathers of these men were tinkers and pedlars.

"To the glory of religion, and the credit of the town, there are four churches, built with clapboards and shingles, after the fashion of our meeting houses; which are supply'd by four ministers, to whom some, very justly, have applied these epithets, one a scholar, the second a gentleman, the third a dunce, and the fourth a clown."

These extracts afford no idea of the scandalous character of the book, nor do even sentences like these: "The women, like the men, are excessive smokers." "They smoke in bed, smoke as they knead their bread, smoke whilst they are cooking their victuals, smoke at prayers," &c. "Eating, drinking, smoking, and sleeping take up four parts in five of their time," &c. "Rum, alias kill-devil, is as much ador'd by the American English, as a dram of brandy is by an old billingsgate," &c. We can give our readers no further idea of the gross and indecent character of the whole

volume, without offending in the way the author has done.

THE SOUTH COVE

The South Cove extended from what is now Batterymarch Street to near the North Battery, at the foot of Fleet Street, curving inward as far as Kilby Street and near the old State House, with creeks extending towards Spring Lane, Milk and Federal Streets. Dearborn says, "Winthrop's Marsh, afterwards called Oliver's Dock, was near Kilby Street, and between the corner and Milk Street, a creek ran up to Spring Lane." An aged citizen once said he remembered hearing Dr. Chauncy say that he had taken smelts in Milk Street; and a Mr. Marshall remembered that when a boy they were caught in Federal Street, near the meeting-house, (Dr. Channing's). Another aged inhabitant is reported to have said, that, in the great storm of 1723, "we could sail in boats from the South Battery to the rise of ground in King Street," near the old State House. Dock Square was at the head of a small cove, the tide rising nearly to the pump, which was formerly there, at the foot of Cornhill. The statue of Sam Adams, recently erected, is directly over the well in which the pump stood.

A narrow point or tongue of land projected into the cove between the Town Dock (then near Faneuil Hall) and Mill Creek, and upon this land stood the celebrated triangular warehouse,—a remarkable building for the time. It stood opposite the Swing

Bridge, and a little north of the dock, measuring forty-one feet on Roebuck Passage (named after the tavern near it), and fifty feet on the back side. Near this place, in the small square formed by the junction of Ann, Union, and Elm Streets, was the Flat Conduit, so called. Ann Street was originally Conduit Street as far as Cross Street; and Union Street, in 1732, lead from the conduit to the Mill Pond.

Around the South Cove, as has been said, in the early time the chiefest part of the town was built; and from thence it gradually expanded along the shore to the south and to the west. John Josselyn, in 1638, visited Boston, and wrote a volume entitled "New England Rarities," in which he says, "It was then rather a village than a town, there being not above twenty or thirty houses."

THE NORTH COVE

The Cove on the north side of the peninsula, Charles River, commenced near the Charlestown Ferry, curving inwardly nearly to Prince Street, Baldwin Place, Haymarket Square, nearly on the line of Leverett Street, to Barton's Point, where the almshouse formerly stood. "The Mill Pond," as it was afterwards called, says Shurtleff, "was bounded by portions of Prince and Endicott Streets on the east, and Leverett Street, Tucker's pasture, and Bowling Green on the west; and on the south it covered the whole space of Haymarket Square. Most of the estates on what is now

Salem Street, … and on the west on Hawkins Street and Green Street, extended to the Mill Pond Cove." The margin of the cove, it is said by another, "passed across Union, Friend, and Portland Streets, to the bottom of Hawkins Street; thence westerly, across Pitts and Gouch Streets, to Leverett Street, which at one time was called Mill Alley. The descent of the land here was very steep. A street was laid out on the line of Temple Street [Staniford] from Leverett Street to Beacon Hill, where steps led to the top of the hill, a hundred and thirty-eight feet above the sea."

THE MILL CREEK

The Creek, or the Mill Creek, as it was afterwards called, was undoubtedly prior to the formation of the Mill Pond; and it is doubtful if it was ever included in it, although Shaw conveys the idea that the North Cove was simply a piece of salt marsh, and that the creek was used for the purpose of covering it with water at flood-tide, and thus forming a mill-pond. As early as the 5th of July, 1631, an order was passed by the Court of Assistants, "that £30 be levied on the several plantations for clearing a creek, and opening a passage to the new town,"—the town at this time being the settlement around the South Cove; so that the "clearing of a creek" was "a work of industry" on a small scale for such an enterprise. It was made across the narrow neck of land between the two great coves, and while it united the waters of Charles River with the harbor, divided the peninsula into two islands or

sections. The creek, whatever its relations may have been to the Mill Pond in the later years of its existence, was used by the boats coming from the Middlesex Canal, which terminated at Charlestown Neck, and furnished to them a shorter way to the harbor with their freights of wood, lumber, &c. A few extracts from the town records will afford some further insight into the character and uses of the creek.

In 1648, in describing the property of Thomas Marshall, who owned some land near the Water Mill, Mill Creek, it is stated, "with liberty of egress and regress in said creek with boats, lighters, and other vessels;" and it is added, "Thomas Marshall shall not build any nearer the creek than the now dwelling-house of said Milom, and that he shall not hinder the mills going by any vessel in the creek."

> 1656, Aug. 25.—Butchers may throw their "garbidge" into the Mill Creek over the drawbridge, and in no other place. [The drawbridge was in Ann Street.]
>
> 1659, Oct. 20.—As the people were returning from the execution of Robinson and Stevenson [Quakers], the draw of the drawbridge fell upon a crowd of them, mortally wounding a woman, and severely hurting several others.
>
> 1691, August.—A fire broke out on Saturday evening, "consuming about fourteen houses, besides warehouses and brue houses from the Mill Bridgh down half way to the Draw Bridgh."
>
> 1698, Nov. 6.—Mr. James Russell of Charlestown and Mr. John Ballentine of Boston, or "whoever else may be

concerned, or owners of the bridge over the Mill Creek, are ordered forthwith to repair the pavement on each side of the bridge, and to move the gutters beside it, that it might be passable for horse and cart, according to the grant of the Town, or pay 20*s.* a week till it should be done."

1712, March 10.—Ordered to make the draw-bridge (so called) in Ann Street a fast, firm bridge the width of the street. A committee was appointed to inquire if any damage be sustained by anybody in making the bridge in question a "fast bridge."

THE MILL POND

The Mill Pond was formed by the building of a causeway across the head of the cove, as the street now runs, where there was, it would seem, a sort of Indian causeway, or pathway, at some prior time. It is represented by writers on the subject to have been built from Leverett Street to the Charlestown Ferry; but as this would include the creek, built some ten or twelve years before, this seems to be impossible; for if the creek was connected with the pond, without a gate to shut it off, there could be no mill-power. The creek, therefore, must have been separated from the pond by a gate, while there was a gate from the pond into Charles River.

However, the causeway was built, and the mill-pond and the water-power it furnished, used for more than a hundred years

without any special publicity or inquiry concerning them. In fact, it would seem as if the subject, and the large piece of territory involved, had been pretty much forgotten; so that in 1765, in March, a committee was appointed to inquire "by what terms the mill-owners held the mill-pond mills." In May following, this committee reported, that on the 31st of July, 1643, there was granted to Henry Simons, George Burden, John Hill, and their partners, all the cove on the north-west side of the causeway leading towards Charlestown, with all the salt marsh bordering thereupon, not formerly granted, on these conditions: that within three years they erect thereon one or more corn-mills, "and maintain the same forever; also make a gate ten feet wide to open with the flood for the passage of boats into the cove," &c. This gate was also to be "maintained forever."

The Mill Pond, it is said, included about fifty acres,—nearly as large as the north end island,—and, of course, must have furnished during the time it was available—from an hour or two after full tide until an hour or two before the next tide, night and day—a very large and extensive water-power, and was, no doubt, though probably not half used, a very valuable property.

It is stated by Drake, as if it were a consequence of the action of the committee, that, "four years after the above report, a committee took possession of the premises, as having reverted to the town." These proceedings, it will be noticed, all refer to the "mill-pond mills," but may be presumed to include the pond and the whole grant made in 1643; so that in 1769 the property

was in the hands of the town, as appears from these statements.

After this time, by some means or other, the Mill Pond Company, or Corporation, came into possession of the property, as Shaw says, "for the consideration of five dollars;" and in 1807, the town became a partner in the matter of tilling it up, the town to have the streets, we presume, and one-eighth of the lots filled within twenty years. Permission was also given to use the gravel of Beacon Hill for the purpose. The filling was completed more than fifty years ago, and the entire space has long been covered with buildings, and in 1832 included a theatre. The Boston and Maine Railroad Station stands over the creek; and the large depot buildings of the Fitchburg, Eastern, and Lowell Railroads are all on land taken from the river outside the ancient causeway: so that no one of the great railroad depots in the city stands upon the original land of the town.

CONCLUSION

Thus we have seen what were the features and topographical characteristics of the original peninsula which forms the groundwork, as it were, of the city proper of to-day. In the steady march of progress and improvements which have marked its growth for two hundred and fifty years, such changes and enlargements have been made, that neither its early outlines or its original shape are any where to be observed. The great coves on either side of the town have disappeared; and the renowned

Tri-mountain, around which so much of history gathered, and so much of puritanism and patriotism were enshrined, is shorn of its ancient prestige, although still, as it were, the summit of State authority; and of "Corne Hill," whereon the settlers of Boston, Charlestown, Roxbury, and Dorchester, in 1632, built the first fort for the defence of the settlement, not a vestige now remains.

Yet, broad and extensive as these improvements and enlargements of the original peninsula have been, they are at least equalled, if not exceeded, by what has been accomplished in other parts of the town; so that Boston proper—at first two islands, or nearly so, and afterwards a peninsula—has long ceased to be either the one or the other, and must now be regarded as a portion of the mainland. And this, too, while Charles River, by encroachments upon its bed on both sides, the numerous wharves projecting into it, and the bridges, railroads, and other structures resting upon its bottom, has been reduced in its proportions to one-third of its original size, and, in fact, has almost ceased to be a river in the proper sense of that term. So also on the south side of the town: Four Point Channel, which reached to Dover-street bridge, is now a narrow stream; and the South Bay, which lay between Roxbury and South Boston, has been greatly reduced in its proportions, and is crossed by the New England Railroad. So that it may be said, the city proper to-day stands consolidated on one side of the ancient neck with Roxbury and Dorchester, and on the other with Roxbury and Brookline. There still remain, however, a section of Charles River, forming

a bay of itself, between Boston, Cambridge, and Brookline, and a considerable portion of the South Bay between Roxbury and South Boston. Brookline—originally Muddy Brook—was formerly considered as belonging to Boston, and its lands were apportioned among the early settlers of the town for agricultural purposes and the keeping of cattle. It is now nearly surrounded by the enlarged city, Brighton and Roxbury both belonging to Boston.

There is, however, one feature of Boston which may be said to remain intact, and that is Boston Common. When the settlers bought the peninsula of William Blackstone, or all his interest in it, excepting six acres, which he reserved for his own occupation, "the town laid out a place for a training-field, which ever since and now is used for that purpose, and for the feeding of cattle." This was undoubtedly the origin of Boston Common; and the date of the transaction, as appears from the town records, was on "the 10th daye of the 9th month, 1634," which, as the year commenced with March, would be November, 1634. It has undergone many changes, some enlargement by filling up the marsh on the river side, and numerous improvements in its general appearance by laying out its malls and walks, setting out trees, excluding cattle, walling around Crescent Pond (formerly Frog Pond), introduction of the Cochituate water and fountains, and, last, by the erection of the Army and Navy Monument on its highest elevation, once occupied as a fortification against its rightful owners by Gen. Gage and Gen. Howe.

Thus we have seen Boston as it was in 1630 and subsequent years,—originally one of three prominent peninsulas on the coast of New England, known by the Indians as Shawmut, Mishawam, and Mattapan, and afterwards, by the settlers, as Boston, Charlestown, and Dorchester (now South Boston). Each of these was connected with the mainland by a narrow neck of its own, and now all three, with the addition of Roxbury, West Roxbury, Brighton, and Noddle's Island (East Boston), are included in the present metropolis, while Muddy Brook (Brookline) and Winnisimmet (Chelsea), which were originally attached to Boston, are not included within her present limits. The growth and expansion of the town, we judge, are unparalleled, in some respects, by any other city in the world, with a character of her own and a position in the history of the country of which she may well be proud.

II.
THE PUBLIC FERRIES

THE GREAT FERRY

The first settlers of Charlestown and Boston of course saw an immediate necessity for the establishment of ferries on both sides of them; so that, after considerable numbers had arrived, this became imperative, especially that across Charles River, —"the great ferry," as it was afterwards called. This may be called the first public enterprise undertaken by the colonists. There was, no doubt, from the first, means of crossing the river furnished by individuals before any public action had taken place, just as was done by Samuel Maverick at Noddle's Island, who was disposed and prepared to accommodate everybody that came along. Measures were taken for the establishment of the Charlestown Ferry soon after the arrival of Gov. Winthrop's party at Charlestown. At a meeting of the Court of Assistants, holden at Boston, Nov. 19, 1630,—present the governor, deputy-governor, Sir Richard Saltonstall, Mr. Ludlowe, Capt. Endicott, Mr. Coddington, Mr. Pinchon, and Mr. Bradstreet,—"It is further ordered, That whosoever shall first give in his name to Mr. Governor that he will undertake to set up a ferry betwixt

Boston and Charlestown, and shall begin the same at such time as Mr. Governor shall appoint, shall have 1*d.* for every person and 1*d.* for every 100 weight of goods he shall transport."

The ferry was no doubt undertaken at this time by Edward Converse; and, probably as it did not then pay very well, in June 14, 1631, an order was passed, "That Edward Converse, who had undertaken to set up a ferry between Boston and Charlestown, be allowed 2*d.* for every single person, and 1*d.* apiece, if there be two or more."

The lease to Mr. Converse, in 1631, was renewed Nov. 9, 1636, in form as follows: "The Governor and treasurer, by order of the general court, did demise to Edward Converse the ferry between Boston and Charlestown, to have the sole transporting of passengers and cattle from one side to the other, for three years from the first day of the next month, for the yearly rent of forty pounds to be paid quarterly to the treasurer: Provided, that he see it be well attended and furnished with sufficient boats; and that so soon as may be in the next spring he set up a convenient house on Boston side, and keep a boat there as need shall require. And he is allowed to take his wonted fees, viz., 2*d.* for a single person, and pence apiece, if there be more than one, as well on lecture days as at other times; and for every horse and cow with the man which goeth with them 6*d.*, and for a goat 1*d.*, and a swine 2*d.* And if any shall desire to pass before it be light in the morning, or after it is dark in the evening, he may take recompence answerable to the season and his pains and hazard, so as it be not excessive."

The ferry was a great accommodation, of course, and could not be dispensed with. Johnson mentions it quite early in his "Wonder-Working Providence." In speaking of Charlestown, the "neighbor of Boston, being in the same fashion, with her bare neck," he says "there is kept a ferry-boat to convey passengers over Charles River, which, between the two towns, is a quarter of a mile over, being a very deep channel." But at times, no doubt, the ferry proved troublesome and annoying. So that in the month of October, 1632, Mr. Winthrop records that "about a fortnight before this, those of Charlestown, who had formerly been joined to Boston congregation, now, in regard of the difficulty of passage in the winter, and having opportunity of a pastor, one Mr. [Edward] James, who came over at this time, were dismissed from the congregation of Boston." This, it was said, was after a rather boisterous summer on the bay and harbor.

WINNISIMMET FERRY

At a General Court, holden at Boston, the 18th of May, 1631, there were present Mr. Winthrop, governor; Mr. Dudley, deputy-governor; Mr. Ludlowe, Capt. Endicott, Mr. Nowell, Mr. Pinchon, Mr. Bradford, assistants (at which the governor and lieutenant-governor were chosen),—"Thomas Willins [Drake gives the name as Williams] hath undertook to sett up a ferry between Winnisimmet and Charlestown, for which he is to have after three pence a person and from Winnisimmet to Boston

four pence a person." Mr. Savage, in a note to Winthrop's journal, speaking of Samuel Maverick at Noddle's Island, says, "Winisemet Ferry, both to Charlestown and Boston, was also granted to him forever." He certainly did conduct a ferry on one or both these routes for a time.

Jan. 23, 1635.—"Thomas Marshall was chosen by general consent for ye keeping of a ferry from Milne Point [Copps' Hill] vnto Charlestowne, and to Wynnyseemitt, and to take for his ferrying vnto Charlestowne, as ye ferryman there hath, and vnto Wynnyseemitt for a single psn six pence; and for every one above ye number of two, two pence apiece." It is not probable that this ferry was continued for many years.

In December, 1637, Edward Bendall was "to keepe a sufficient ferryboate to carry to Noddle's Island and to the shippes ryding before the Town: taking for a single person ij*d.* and for two 3*d.*"

GRANT TO HARVARD COLLEGE

In 1640, the Charlestown Ferry was granted to Harvard College, to the support of which the town had been annually contributing, and had received from the ferry fifty pounds for the year previous, 1639. This grant was continued, and, for nearly one hundred and fifty years before the bridge was built, it was a source of very handsome income to the institution. In 1644, it appears by the records of the town, William Bridge

was appointed to keep the ferry in place of Mr. Converse, and "to have a penny a person for each that goes over, except they agree with him by the year, and two pence a person for each that goes over unseasonably." When the bridge was built in 1785, the gratuity to the college was continued by the terms of the Act authorizing it; and the sum of two hundred pounds per year was paid to it in commutation of its claim to the ferry.

Johnson, in his "Wonder-Working Providence," describes Boston as surrounded by the brinish floods, and as having, on the north-west and north-east, "two constant Faires, kept for traffique thereunto." A ferry to Cambridge is spoken of in 1652; and in the fall of that year Mr. Cotton took cold in crossing it, and died soon after.

COMPLAINTS OF THE FERRYMEN

In 1648, "the ferrymen, Francis Hudson and James Heyden, state in a petition to the General Court, that the ferry never was less productive: that contrary to law disorderly passengers would press into the boats, and on leaving refuse to pay their fare; that some pleaded they had nothing to pay, and others that they were in the country's service. And they further state, that the payment generally tendered was 'usually in such refuse, unwrought, broken, unstringed and unmerchantable peag' (wampum), at six a penny, that they lost two pence a shilling, being forced to take peag at six a penny and pay it at seven. They petition that if the

Court intend 'all soldiers with their horses and military furniture be fare-free,' that they might be paid for it by the colony: that strangers, not able to pay, may be ordered to give in their names: that the 'peag hereafter to us paid may be so suitably in known parcels handsomely stringed, and their value assigned, that it may henceforth be a general, current and more agreeable pay.'"

At a session of the General Court, at Boston, the 10th of the eight month, 1648, "For preventing ferry men's Damage by Persons not paying, &c., it shall be lawful for any Ferry man to demand and Receive his due before his Boat put off from the Shore, nor shall he be bound to pass over any that shall not give satisfaction, & any Ferry Man may refuse any wampum not stringed or Unmerchantable and such persons whether Horse or Foot which are passage free by Order of the Court must show something sufficient for their Discharge, or else pay as others do, except Magistrates and Deputies, &c., who are generally known to be free."

And again, Oct. 18, the Court ordered that "all 'payable peag' should be 'entire without breaches, both the white and the black, suitably strung in eight known parcels, 1*d.*, 3*d.*, 12*d.*, 5*s.*, in white; and 2*d.*, 6*d.*, 2-6*d.*, and 10*s.*, in black.' The Court also ordered that for transporting officers in the colony service, the ferrymen should be allowed £4 per annum for the past, and £6 per annum for the time to come."

PEAG, OR INDIAN MONEY

"Peag," or "wampum," or "wampumpeag," simply means stringed shells of a peculiar kind, or Indian money; and this, it seems, came early into use, as Hubbard says, "The people of New Plymouth, in the year 1627, began trade with the Dutch at Manhados, and there they had the first knowledge of Wampumpeag, and their acquaintance therewith occasioned the Indians of those parts to learn to make it." Hutchinson thinks the New England Indians, prior to this time, had not "any instrument of commerce;" and speaks of the Narragansetts as coining money, making pendants and bracelets, and also tobacco pipes. There seems, however, to have been among the Massachusetts settlers some other kinds of money in use, as, in 1635, the court ordered that brass farthings shall be discontinued, and that musket-balls shall pass for farthings.

PENNY FERRY

Penny Ferry, across the Mystic River, where the Malden Bridge now is, was established by the town in April, 1640, when it was voted, "That Philip Drinker should keep a ferry at the Neck of Land, with a sufficient boat, and to have 2*d.* a single person, and a penny a piece when there go any more." It was not a source

of any profit to the town for many years.

In 1651, the Penny Ferry was granted for a year to Philip Knight, who appears to have had the income of it for taking care of it, he agreeing "to attend the ferry carefully, and not to neglect it, that there be no just complaint."

In 1698, Judge Sewall makes the following entry in his diary: "February 19, I go over the ice and visit Mr. Morton, who keeps his bed. 21st, I rode over to Charlestown on the ice, then over to Stower's (Chelsea), so to Mr. Wigglesworth. The snow was so deep that I had a hard journey—could go but a foot pace on Mystic river, the snow was so deep. 26th, a considerable quantity of ice went away last night, so that now there is a glade of water along Governor's island, about as far as Bird island. 28th, a guard is set upon Charles River to prevent persons from venturing over on the ice for fear of drowning; and the ferrymen are put upon cutting and clearing the ice, which they do so happily, that I think the boat passeth once a day."

CHARLESTOWN FERRY

The use of the ferry was confined to foot-passengers entirely at first; and afterwards, when larger boats were built, chaises were allowed, as the common riding or travelling vehicle of the time. It would seem that double tolls had been demanded on certain days; and in 1783, when the names of the ferrymen were presented to the town for approval, it was agreed, on their not

taking double ferriage on those days, and their faithful promise to the same, to approbate them. It seems almost wonderful—but it is a fact—that this ferry was kept up as the sole means of communication, excepting the journey around through Roxbury and Cambridge, for more than one hundred and fifty years. It was over this ferry that the people came to Boston to assist in the fortification upon Corne Hill (Fort Hill) in May, 1632, and at other times for similar purposes. It was over this ferry also, on the 18th of April, 1689, that the troops came, in the time of the Andros Rebellion, to assist in maintaining the rights of the people at this early period in the history of the town. There were twenty companies in Boston, and it was said about fifteen hundred men at Charlestown that could not get over. Andros was imprisoned, the first charter of the colony dissolved, and Thomas Danforth came in as deputy-governor. On many other occasions during the long period of its continuance, and in cases of fire in Boston, the ferry had large duties to perform; and it is wonderful how it was ever made to answer its purposes for so long a time.

1741.—Oldmixon, in his "History of the British Empire in America" ("The History of New England," as a part of it is called), says, "Charlestown, the mother of Boston, is much more populous than Cambridge, and exceeds it much in respect of trade, being situated between two rivers, Mystic River and Charles River, and parted from Boston only by the latter, over which there is a ferry so well tended that a bridge would not be much more convenient, except in winter, when the ice will

neither bear nor suffer a boat to move through it. Though the river is much broader about the town, it is not wider in the ferry passage than the Thames between London and Southwark. The profits of this ferry belong to Harvard College in Cambridge, and are considerable. The town is so large as to take up all the space between the two rivers."

In 1763, April, the running of a stage-coach was commenced between Boston and Portsmouth, N.H., once a week,—out on Friday, and return on Tuesday. It is said, that, "owing to the trouble of ferrying the stage and horses over Charles River, they were kept at Charlestown, at the sign of the Three Cranes." The practice with this, and very likely other stage-lines, probably continued until the bridge was built.

The memorable night, April 18, 1775, when Paul Revere crossed Charles River, near the ferry, is of course well remembered. During the occupation of Boston Harbor by the British navy, the boats of the ferry were drawn up alongside the men-of-war every night at nine o'clock, and there was no passing after that hour; but it seems that Revere kept a boat of his own at the north end, and employed two men to row him across, "a little to the eastward where the 'Somerset' man-of-war lay." He landed at Charlestown below the ferry, and says, "I told them what was acting, and went to get me a horse," and then pursued his momentous ride to Lexington.

Imagine the continuance of this ferry, as the usual means of crossing the river between Boston and Charlestown, for a period

of more than one hundred and fifty years! and all this time probably without the use of sails, as the stream at this point was very narrow and the currents very strong, and certainly without the power of steam, now so generally applied to ferries all over the country. There was, no doubt, in the winter season, a good deal of passing on the ice. The Winnisimmet Ferry, for many years prior to the introduction of steam, was operated by the use of large sail-boats for foot-passengers only.

It is said that the Indian name of Charles River was Quimobequin, and that on Capt. Smith's map of 1614, it is called Massachusetts; and Hutchinson says, "Prince Charles gave the name of Charles river to what had been before called Massachusetts river." Smith himself says he called it Charles River; still Hutchinson may be right.

III.
THE BOSTON CORNFIELDS

It will hardly be realized at the present time that Boston, or the peninsula which originally comprised the town, was ever occupied by cornfields, or, as one may almost say, was a cornfield. If there were cornfields, as we assume there were, the curious thing about them is, that we know so little of them; for it can scarcely be said that they hold a place in history. There are, in fact, no definite statements about them; and a mystery seems to hang over them as to where they were, who owned them, who cultivated them, and what was done with the harvest. Were they private property or public property? We have not been able to find in contemporary or subsequent history any account of the Boston cornfields that will enable us with certainty to answer this question. The fair inference from statements made, however, is, that they were to some extent both public and private property. Perhaps the first allusion to them to be found in any record is that in 1632,—and there could have been no corn planted in Boston earlier than 1631, unless by Blackstone,—and this allusion is in the name of "Corne Hill." In 1632, May 24, "it was agreed to build a fort in that part of Boston called Corne Hill," meaning what thereafter was called Fort Hill; and one historical writer, quoting the record, says a fortification was begun on "*the* corn

hill;" and that was probably the only Corn Hill at that time. The question naturally arises, Why was it called Corn Hill? and the almost necessary answer to the question is, Because it was where corn was grown.

There can be no doubt that it became necessary, as early as possible, for the settlers to seek means for their future subsistence. The stock and supply of provisions brought over were, no doubt, for a time and under certain regulations, a common stock; and possibly some of Gov. Winthrop's party had supplies of their own in addition thereto. But, at all events, prudence and self-preservation required immediate attention to the cultivation of the soil and the raising of corn and other grains.

In 1628 (1629), before the arrival of Gov. Winthrop and his company at Charlestown, the place had been occupied by the Spragues, from Salem, under the direction of Mr. Graves, an agent of the company; and one of the first things they did was "to model and lay out the form of the town, with streets about the hill," which was approved by Gov. Endicott. They next "jointly agreed and concluded that each inhabitant have a two acre lot to plant upon and all to fence in common." The same year Mr. Graves wrote to England, "The increase of corne is here farre beyond expectation," showing that it had been grown, and most probably in the common cornfield; for it is afterwards said that Thomas Walford "lived on the south end of the westermost hill of the East Field." Another vote was passed the next year, 1630,—probably before the arrival of Gov. Winthrop,—that each person

"dwelling within the neck, shall have two acres of land for a house plot, and two acres for every male that is able to plant."

In the months of June and July, 1630, Gov. Winthrop and his party arrived at Charlestown, after a passage by some of the ships of seventeen or eighteen weeks, many of them sick of the scurvy. "The multitude set up cottages, booths and tents about the Town Hill;" and it is said "provisions were exceedingly wasted, and no supplies could now be expected by planting; besides, there was miserable damage and spoil of provisions at sea." Many of the party died,—some two hundred before December,—and others started out for other locations; and finally in September, 1630, by the invitation of Mr. Blackstone, the larger part of Gov. Winthrop's party crossed the river to Boston. This year there was a scarcity of corn, as will be seen by the following extract from Hutchinson's history:—

> "In August, 1724, John Quttamug, a Nipmug Indian, came to Boston, above 112 years of age. He affirmed that in 1630, upon a message that the English were in want of corn, soon after their arrival, he went to Boston with his father, and carried a bushel and a half of corn all the way on his back; that there was only one cellar began in town, and that somewhere near the *Common*."

Wood, in speaking of Boston in 1639, says, "This place hath very good land, affording rich cornfields and fruitful gardens," which, no doubt, were in existence years before he wrote his book. In 1635, it was voted, "Each able man is allowed two acres,

and each able youth one acre to plant." Provision of some sort on the subject was no doubt made before this time, and gradually reached the regulation here recorded. In 1633, great scarcity of corn is mentioned by Winthrop, as he says, "By reason of the spoil of our hogs, there being no acorns, yet the people lived well with fish and the fruit of their gardens."

Almost as a natural consequence of what has now been said, in March, 1636, we find that provision was made "for having sufficient fences to the Cornfielde before the 14th of the next second month (April); that for every defective rod then found, five shillings penalty;" and it was further provided, "The field toward Rocksberry to be looked into by Jacob Elyott and Jonathan Negoose; the Fort Hill, by James Penn and Richard Gridley; the Mylne field, by John Button and Edward Bendall, and the New Field by John Audley and Thomas Faireweather."

Thus it will be seen, if the rule adopted was carried out, that there were four or more large cornfields in Boston, and that the principal work of the people for a time was the raising of corn. At a later period parcels of corn were occasionally presented or sent to the governor by the Indians, who had their cornfields before the English people arrived. In fact, it is recorded in the next month after the arrival of Winthrop, that so much provision had been sold to the Indians for beaver, that food became scarce; and in October, 1630, a vessel was sent to the Narragansetts to trade, and brought home one hundred bushels of corn. In May, 1631, corn in Boston was ten shillings a bushel, as probably much

was required for planting at this time. In August, 1633, a great scarcity of corn was reported; and in November, the next year, a vessel arrived from Narragansett with five hundred bushels of Indian corn. It is very clear that corn was very early, and for some time, the great dependence of the settlers.

In Plymouth Colony, in 1630, the salary of the messenger of the General Court was thirty bushels of corn. In 1685, the secretary's wages was fifteen pounds a year, payable in corn at two shillings per bushel. In 1690, "one third the Governor's salary ordered to be paid in money, the rest in corne."

In 1637, April 16, "all the fences and gates to be made up. Sargeant Hutchinson and Richard Gridley to look after the Fort Field; John Button, James Everett and Isaac Grosse, in the Mill Field; Wm Colburn and Jacob Elyott on the Field next Roxburie." Again, in 1640, March 30, "To look to the fences: Richard Fairbanks and William Salter the field towards Roxbury; Benj. Gillam and Edmd. Jacklyn, the Fort Field; Wm. Hudson and Edward Bendall the New Field; Mr. Valentine Hill and John Button, the Mill Field."

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.