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MEMOIR OF WILLIAM PYNCHON.

[By CHARLES STEARNS, of Springfield, Mass.]

The name of William Pynchon, the father of Springfield, is familiar to all who are in the least acquainted with the early history of New England. He was of the County of Essex, England, and was born about the year 1590.* He was a man of wealth, talents, and enterprise. His name appears in the Charter of 1628, as one of the Assistants, and he was again chosen while in England, in 1629. He came over in company with Governor Winthrop, in 1630, and was treasurer of the Colony; and always a magistrate, until his removal from Roxbury, of which town he was one of the principal founders.

He was the leader of the band who boldly struck off to the valley of the Connecticut, in 1636, one hundred miles distant from civilized man, and founded the town of Springfield. There are strong reasons to believe, that Mr. Pynchon, with his son-in-law Henry Smith, and Jehu Burr, and others of Roxbury, visited the valley of the Connecticut in the year 1634, and selected a place for their future settlement. During this year, application was made to the General Court, by sundry inhabitants of Newtown, (Cambridge,) Dorchester, Watertown, and Roxbury to remove to the Connecticut valley, which, at the time, was unsuccessful. The next year permission was given by the Court for removal, but with the condition that they should not remove from under the jurisdiction of Massachusetts. The Dorchester people settled at Windsor, the Watertown people at Wethersfield, the Newtown people at Hartford, and the Roxbury people at Agawam, soon after called Springfield.

Immediately after permission was given to remove, two men, John Cabel and John Woodcock, were sent forward to build a house, which was done at the common charge of the colonists. Their journey through the trackless wilderness occupied five days. This house was built on the west side of the Connecticut river, on a tract that has been from time immemorial called the "Agawam meadows," and the particular locality

* Inscription on the portrait of William Pynchon, in the possession of the Essex Institute, at Salem, from which the engraving which accompanies this article has been copied:—"Guil. Pynchon armig. Effigies | Delin. Anno Dom. 1657 | aet. 67"

On the reverse side:—"Hon. William Pynchon first settler of Springfield (Mass.) and one of the original Patentees of the Royal charter under King James 1st."

It is from the above I learn the year of his birth.

C. S.

BRIEF MEMOIR OF REV. ANDREW LE MERCIER.

REV. ANDREW LE MERCIER was probably educated at the University of Geneva, in Switzerland. When about 23 years of age, he came to this country, through the influence of Andrew Faneuil, Esq. This was in 1715. Rev. Peter Daillé, minister of the French Protestant Church, in Boston, died on the 20th of May, 1715, aged about 66. Mr. Le Mercier was his successor. In 1716, a brick church was erected by the society, the congregation having hitherto worshipped in a school house belonging to the town. Mr. Le Mercier says, "the Text, of the first sermon that I preached in this House of Prayer of ours, built soon after my arrival," was from "Ezra 6 chap. 16th verse." The new church was located in School street, on the lot next east of the present Universalist meeting-house, (Rev. A. A. Miner's,) being the site of the present publishing offices of the Christian Register and Boston Recorder. This building was occupied by the Huguenots, as a place of worship, for about 30 years.

We find no record of the marriage of Mr. Le Mercier. The name of his wife was Margaret. They had six children, whose names are found on the Boston Records, viz: *James Andrew*, born 17 June, 1720, d. 11 Nov. 1720; *Margaret*, b. 10 Dec. 1721, m. Zachariah Johonnot, 24 April, 1777; *Peter*, b. 7 Aug., 1723, d. 20 Aug., 1723; *Zechariah Andrew*, b. 24 Oct., 1724; *Jane*, b. 6 May, 1726; *Stephen Bartholomew*, b. 4 Dec., 1727.*

On the 2d of Oct., 1722, Mr. L. purchased about 20 acres of land in Roxbury, bounded easterly on Dorchester line. Stephen Avery, of Roxbury, and Mary, his wife, were the grantees. Consideration £200. This seems to have been his first move in the purchase of real estate, about eight years prior to his availing himself of the legal security provided by the Act of Naturalization. In 1730, he, with five others, petitioned the General Court to be admitted to the privileges of citizenship; which was readily granted. They "cheerfully admitted us," he says, "into the great and valuable Privileges which they enjoy." The following is a copy of the Petition, as found in Mass. Archives, Vol. XI, p. 488:—

"To his Excellency Jonathan Belcher, Esq^r. Governor & Commander in chief in and over his Majesty's Province of Massachusetts bay, to the honorable the Council and the house of Representatives in General Court assembled

The Petition of the Persons hereto subscribed, sheweth that the Petitioners for the most part were forced to leave their native Country of France on account of the Protestant Religion in which they had been bred up and professed and for which some of the Petitioners have been greatly persecuted and distressed. And farther, the Petitioners most humbly remonstrate to your Excellency and to this great and General Assembly, that the most part of them have for almost the space of forty years, or upwards, (during which time they have chiefly resided in this Country) behaved themselves justly to their neighbours, and in their respective callings, with unshaken fidelity towards the Government here, and the Crown of Great Britain, and have been allways subiected as well as to pay rates and taxes, as also to bear offices of Constable, &c. which several of them have sustained and executed with great faithfulness, in their respective

* Polly Le Mercier, dau. of Peter & Polly, born 3 March, 1782.

Cecile Charlotte, dau of Peter & Polly, born 9 Sept., 1784.—*Boston Records*.

dutys; & so that they hope by the favour of this great and General Court (which is well known at all times, to act with great equity, and to relieve, where they can, the distressed,) that as they have been always subject to do dutys, so they may be intituled to all the privileges of a Denisen, or natural born subject of his Majestys, so far as is consistent with the power and iustice of this great and General Court; it being what hath been generally practiced by most Nations of Europe, in favour of the French Protestant Refugees, but more particularly by the Crown of Great Britain, and the dependent Colonys, as the Petitioners can prove, by many instances. Therefore, upon the whole, the Petitioners do humbly pray an order of this great and General Court, to confer upon them the rights and privileges of Denizens, or free born subjects of the King of Great Britain, or be otherwise relieved, notwithstanding any law, usage, or custom to the contrary, or that they may be farther heard by the Council in the premises; They say relieved as this Great and General Court shall judge meet; And as in duty bound your Petitioners shall ever pray &c.

Andrew Le Mercier
Daniel Johonnot
Andrew Sigourney s^r.
John [Peters?]
Adam Duchezeau.

the same fauour is humbly Desired by a protestant German Came from Hanover.

Martin Brimmer.

In Council Feb 25th 1730. Read & Ordered, that the Prayer of the Petition be so far granted, as, that the Petition^{rs} together with all other foreign Protestants, Inhabitants of this Province, shall, within this Province, hold & enjoy all the Privileges & Immunities of His Majestys natural born subjects. And that they have Leau^e to bring in a Bill accordingly.

Sent down for Concurrence.

J. WILLARD, Secry.

In the House of Rep^{ts}. Feb 26th 1730. Read and Concurred.

J. QUINCY Sp^{ks}.

In 1732, Mr. Le Mercier published a minute and interesting history of the Geneva church, in five books, 12mo., 200 pages; also, in the same volume, "A Geographical and Political account of the Republick of Geneva," 76 pages. His "Treatise against Detraction, in Ten Sections," was printed in 1733, "and sold by Daniel Henschman." In the Dedication "to the Elders, Deacons and all the Heads of Families of the French Church of Boston, in New England," he speaks of "the uninterrupted Peace and Union in our Church for the almost eighteen years that I have preached the Word of Salvation to you." The Preface, is in the form of a Dialogue, between Tertullus and the Author. Some may consider this as a large book on a single subject, the work being a duodecimo of 303 pages. The author says, "I dont believe the whole World cou'd contain the Books which might be written on this subject. This is a great deal, but not too much to say thereof, since a good part of the Discourses of our Ancestors and of our own has been but Detraction differently modified." He defines detraction, as the "telling to one or several Persons, without Necessity, true Things which hurt the good name of our Neighbour, whatever Means and Ways may be used to accomplish that."

Mr. L., it would seem, was a man of generous feelings, hospitable and humane. His benevolence was directed in an especial manner to the relief of shipwrecked mariners on the Isle of Sables, as will be seen by the

following advertisement from the Boston Evening Post, of the 30th Jan., 1744. "This is to give Notice to the Publick, that I, the subscriber, did in the year 1738, petition the Gov^r & Council of the Province of Nova Scotia for the Property of the Island Sables, setting forth, that I had sent thither Cattle,* Provisions, built a house, &c. for the relief of those who might be Shipwreck'd upon or near the said Island; praying that they would issue out a Proclamation to forbid any of his Majesty's Subjects from hurting the settlements I had begun there: (which God be praised for, it hath been the means of saving many Lives; according to the present Motto of the said Island *Quos destruo servo*.) The said Gov^r &c. of that Province were pleased, immediately, to issue out a Proclamation, in April 1738, forbidding all & singular His Maj^y subjects residing within the said Province, from hindering me from settling thereon; forbidding the killing, taking or destroying any of the Cattle, Goods or other Chattles, which I had sent thither, or might cause afterwards to be placed there, upon Pain of being proceeded against, with the utmost Rigour of the Law. In the said year, 1738, I applied also to his Excellency the Gov^r &c. of this Province, praying that they would likewise forbid persons from stealing the Cattle & goods belonging to me & Associates from said Island. Upon my humble Petition, a Proclamation to the same Purpose, was issued out & printed in order to protect this *Sea-Hospital*.

Notwithstanding those two Proclamations, the *love of Money*, which is the Root of all Evil, is so deeply rooted in the Hearts of some Fishermen, that they have sundry times stole our Cattle & our Goods, regarding neither the Laws of God or of Man; neither Justice to me or Humanity to Shipwreck'd Men, which by their Wickedness they endeavour to starve, & minding neither natural or revealed Religion & their eternal Damnation, nor even their own temporal Interest, which is certainly not to hinder, but to promote, the above said settlement, since it may be their Case one Time or other to be cast away upon the Island Sables, & to want there, those Things which they have carried off.

In order to prevent such Wickedness, & deter Men for Time to come from such Robberies, as it were upon the high Seas, for fear of the Punishment, which is very great in the Province of Nova Scotia, I promise to pay to any Person, not belonging to the Island of Sables, that shall discover said Robbers, the sum of £40, Old Tenor, but to forgive the offen-

*"From the earliest period that there is any authentic account of this Island, it appears to have had a herd of wild cattle upon it. The Portuguese were the first who made this humane provision for the unfortunate, by landing some calves, which increased in a few years to such an extent, as to induce unprincipled men to hunt them for the sake of their hides and tallow, and in some instances to remove them alive." *Haliburton's Nova Scotia*, vol. II, p. 268. After the lapse of more than a century, the cattle were exterminated. The island "was again stocked, but the cattle shared the same fate as" before. Mr. Haliburton says, subsequently, Mr. Le Mercier "sent cattle thither, and proposed to remove there himself." "Among the Records of the Province," he says, "there is an application from him to Lieut. Gov^r Armstrong at Annapolis, for a grant of the Island, but as he declined to accept it on the terms proposed, of paying a quit rent to the King, it was finally withheld." This statement seems to be at variance with the account given by Mr. Le Mercier, and the action taken upon it by him; for, it will subsequently appear, that he offered the Island for sale, as his own property, in 1753. Mr. H. states, that the Governor issued his proclamation, however, forbidding the destruction of the animals. They were finally destroyed and succeeded by horses. The latter animals had so increased in numbers, that in 1829 it was estimated there were three hundred on the island. Many were killed every year to supply fresh provisions for crews detained there. The meat of the young male horses is said to be "tender and by no means unpalatable."

ders, if they make known their Accomplices to Capt. John Gorham, of *Casco Bay*, or to me; including in this declaration & Promise of mine, the Discovery of those who some Months ago stole some Sheep, a cable, some Nails, Cart Boxes, &c.

ANDREW LE MERCIER.

About ten months previous to the issuing of the above advertisement, the annexed invitation was given:—

“Any Person or Persons, single or married, that might incline, upon a reasonable Encouragement, to go to the Island Sables, there to live for 3 Months, one Year or a longer time, may apply to *Andrew Le Mercier*, Junior, now living at his Father’s House in Winter st. Boston.”—*Boston Evening Post*, 23 April 1774.

The wanton destruction of cattle, upon the island, continued, and the reward for the apprehension of offenders was increased. We copy from the News Letter of Feb. 26th, 1747:—

“Whereas, the Measures hitherto taken, to prevent and hinder Fishermen, and other Persons, that might go on Shore on the Island Sables, from killing the live Stock, or stealing any thing on the said Island, have had little or no Effect among the ruder Sort of Fishermen, since some have (even last Summer) stole some of the Cattle, and robbed the Island in a piratical Manner, to the great Prejudice both of the Owners and the Publick: We the Subscribers, Owners of the said Island, do declare that we will for the future cause the English Laws to be put in Execution against such Offenders; and that they may be prosecuted, we do hereby Promise, to give the sum of *One Hundred Pounds*, old Tenor, to any Person or Persons that will discover and make known unto us, any of the said mischievous Persons, so that they may be brought to publick Justice in *Old* or *New England*.

N. B. If any Families of well minded Persons are inclined to go and settle there, (even upon a Tryal) they shall have all reasonable and sufficient Encouragement from us.

And whereas, the Lonesomeness of the Place, is almost the only Difficulty that may attend that Settlement, We make it known that some Families have already expressed their Willingness of settling there: They may know further by Enquiring of us, the Subscribers.

Andrew Le Mercier,
Henry Atkins
Thomas Hancock.”

Boston the 24th of February 1746-7.

The French Protestant church having become much reduced in numbers, dissolved their connection. On the 7th May, 1748, for the sum of £3,000, old tenor, the proprietors of said church, gave up all right and interest in it, to the Trustees of the New Congregational Society, over which Rev. Andrew Croswell was installed pastor, the 6th of October, of the same year. After the decease of Mr. C. in 1785, notwithstanding the former expressed conditions of the sale, that the property should remain for “the sole use of a Protestant Church, from henceforth and forever,” it was changed into a Roman Catholic Chapel. The first performance of Mass, in that church, was on the 2d of November, 1788.

About six month after the deed of sale of the church had been “signed, sealed and delivered”* to the said Trustees, by the Proprietors of the

*The Deed was not acknowledged until the 7th March, 1748-9, ten months after it had been given.

French Protestant Church, and their minister, the latter drew up a petition, and presented it to the General Court, which is as follows:—

Province of the Massachusetts Bay.

To His Excellency, William Shirley Esqr., Captain General Governor & Commander in Chief in and over his Majestys said Province, and to the Hon^{ble} the Council & House of Representatives in General Court Assembled.

The Petition of Andrew Le Mercier, Clerk,

Most Humbly Sheweth, That in the year 1704, James Mears, by his Deed herewith presented to your Excellency and Hon^{rs}, for the Consideration therein Expressed, Conveyed the Land, therein mentioned, unto John Tarlaron, Francis Bredon, & John Dupuis, Elders of the french Church, in Boston, and to their successors in the same Office for ever; that, in the year 1715, Andrew Fanueil Esqr. in London, Contracted with your Pet^r., in behalf of that Church, to be their Pastor, at & upon the Annual Sallery of one hundred pounds, New England Currency, which your Pet^r., being a stranger, imagin'd very little less than Sterling: that about the year 1716, a Meeting House was built on said Land, which is now known by the Name of the French Meeting house, in said Boston, where, by the Blessing of God, Your Pet^r., has performed Divine Service to this time; that your Pet^r., during said time, has greatly suffered by the Depreciation of the publick Bills of Credit, but now, so it is, that by the Will of God, in taking to him several of the principal supports of the said Church, and the succeeding Generation, altogether Educated in the English Tongue, frequenting & belonging to the English Churches, the said Congregation is thereby rendered incapable of paying even the said annual Nominal Sum, & for Years last past, the Male Communicants & Subscribers in said Church were about twenty, & now reduced to about seven, & without burthening those few beyond what their Circumstances can bear, your Pet^r., & four Children, can no longer be Supported, And, of Necessity, there must be a dissolution of said Church & Contract, to the unspeakable Grief & Concern of your Pet^r., who ever had their spiritual Interest, equal with his own, at heart; & though it's a melancholy Reflection, that now in his advanced Age he must resort to some secular Employment to gain a Livelihood for himself & family, Yet, your Pet^r., Supports himself in his absolute Confidence in the Divine Providence and the Concurrence of * those few of said Congregation left, if judged necessary, in this his Application to your Ex^{ty} & Hon^{rs} that your Pet^r with humble Submission is Advised & Informed, that, inasmuch as the said Grantees are dead, and, for the Reasons aforesaid, a dissolution of said Church unavoidable, and consequently, no successors, that it is settled Law, the said House & Land is the Soil and Freehold of your pet^r., and not to trouble your Ex^{ty}. & Hon^{rs}. with many Authorities to this point, your pet^r. therefore humbly herewith presents one, only, and upon this Assurance, your pet^r. has treated with Mr Edward Jackson, in order to sell him the said house and Land, in order to raise Money to Enable your pet^r. to Enter into some Business, for a Maintenance; But the said Jackson, as he is desirous of giving the very full value for the said premises, is also, of having the Title made secure to him, And as the Case is now, in this province, humbly Joins with your pet^r. in this Application to your Ex^{ty}. & Hon^{rs}. for your sanction to be given to said Sale, and, Notwithstanding such sale, your

* A blank in the original.

measure be supported by what he receives from them, so that they must very soon break up; and, for as much, as he apprehends, that in such Case, the Right in the Building & Land is vested in the Petitioner, as Pastor, & there is now a substantial Person offers to purchase the same, but is some what doubtful about the Title, Therefore, (praying that this Court would confirm the Petitioners Right to making a Conveyance of the Premises.

In Council, Nov. 16, 1748. Read & Ordered, that Petitioner forthwith serve Mr. Stephen Beutineau, Mr. Arnold, Brown, Messrs. Zachariah & Andrew Johonnot, & Mr [James] Paquinet, with a Copy of this Petition, that so they may shew cause, if any they have, on Friday next, why the Prayer thereof should not be granted.

Sent down for Concurrence,

J. WILLARD, Secry.

In the House of Rep^{ts} Nov 17 1748.

Read and Concur^d.

T. HUTCHINSON, Clerk.

There is nothing on the Records of the General Court to show that a reply was made by Elder Boutineau & his associates, or, that any action was taken in the premises. An answer *was given*, however, and a spirited one, too. It may be found in the Massachusetts Archives, Book 12, p. 527, and is as follows:—

Prov^{ts}. of the Mass. Bay. To His Excellency William Shirley Esq Govern^r &c. The Hon^{ble} Council & House of Rep^{ts}. in Gen^l. Court assembled.

The Answer of us, the Subscribers to the Petition of Andrew Le Mercier, of Boston, to Your Excellency & Honours.

We think it a Presumption of his & an Imposition on your Excy & Hon^{rs}. to bring such weak Reasons in order to drive us off from our Church.

He says he had but £100 p^r Annum when he first settled, & we have promised him no more, altho' we do give him considerable more, & may appear by his Receipts sufficient to maintain his Family in a handsome manner & purchase a considerable Estate, As he was in exceeding low Circumstances when he came to settle with us.

As for Depreciating of the Money, which he mentions, some have Rais'd from 40^s to £10, & And^r. Faneuil Esq. & James Bowdoin Esq., have left him, one, £170 p^r. y^r. the other, 20£ p^r y^r. Johonnot & Sigourney have left £100, by Will.

We have given him, from time to time, abt. £100, of the poors Money, but if he had so much reason to Complain, as he has, according to his Bargain, & agreeable to our Discipline & Church Platform, all his Remedy is, if he Complains, and is not Relieved, he shall have Liberty to go back for England, we paying his passage, or provide himself some where else. When he came to Us, there was a List of £100., subscribed, each of them, for himself, severally. We are not answerable for the Death of any of our People; he has driven all our Young People to Other Churches, notwithstanding we wish him well, & design, if we sell our Church, to Give him out of it about £1650, old tenor; but for him to Sell our Church, that we with our own Money have Built and Purchased, and so to turn us out of our Church, will be a President never before heard of, and if allowed of, Will be of a dangerous Consequence.

We therefore Pray your Exc^y & Hon^{rs}. to consider our Case, & as Mr Le Mercier has no Reason to Complain of us, or any Right to the Disposal

of our Church, We hope y^r Excellency & Honⁿ will Dismiss his Petition, as unjust & unreasonable.

Steph. Boutineau
Zach^b. Johannot
Jean Arnault
James Packnett,
John Brown
Andrew Johannot

for ours selves & other Proprietors absent.

What disposition was made of the Island of Sables, by the Proprietors, we have never learned. It was offered for sale by Mr. Le Mercier, as appears by the subjoined advertisement, from the News Letter, of 8 Feb., 1753.

"To be sold by me, the Subscriber, the Island Sables. The Public hath here a short description of it for nothing. Said Island is situated at the distance of about 40 leagues from Halifax, 30 from Cape Breton, & 50 from Newfoundland; a good market for the produce of the Island, cattle & roots of all sorts. It is about 28 miles long, one mile over, & contains about 10,000 acres of land, 500 of which are quite barren, all the rest produces or may bear something. There are neither river or brooks of fresh water, but every where, even upon the beach, you may come to clear fresh water, by digging about 3 feet. The climate may be called temperate, for as in winter the snow hardly lies above 3 days, so it is never extreme hot in summer, & it is a rare thing to be frightened by thunder. It bears no venomous creatures of any sort, and hardly any flies, & nature hath furnished it with medicinal plants & shrubs. It produces naturally near 20 sorts of berries, out of which some people suppose very good liquors & wines might be expressed. It looks all green, in winter, with the juniper bushes, and red in summer, with the large strawberries & other wild fruits. By several pieces of petrified wood found there, it is supposed that the sand hath a property of petrifying wood.—Within these 7 or 8 years, Providence hath opened a communication between the great pond (15 miles long) & the sea, which hath made a safe and large harbor; but the entrance is barred, so that large sharp vessels cannot get into it; but as there is about 8 feet of water over the bar, at high water, there is a sufficient passsge for vessels of 30 tons or more, if not built sharp. The ponds abound with flounders & eels; the beach with clams and sand eels; the air with fowls, & especially with black ducks, so as to make money with their feathers; the soil very productive of roots, as turnips, some weighing 7 pounds a piece. Corn would grow very well, if the high winds in the fall did not break it. There are no trees nor stones. The grass is tall and thick. When I took possession of the Island there were no four footed creatures upon it, but a few foxes, some red and some black—some of which remain to this day. The advantages, which do accrue or may accrue from the improvement of that place are so great, that I would not easily part with it, if I was so skilful in navigation & shipping as it is necessary. That ignorance of mine induces me, (not any defect in the island itself,) to part with it. If any person desires to purchase it, & to know further about it, they may see, at my house, a map and plan of it.

ANDREW LE MERCIER,

Pastor of the French church.

Boston the 5th day of February, 1753.

We give an abstract of the Will of Mr. Le Mercier, made 7th Nov., 1761:—

I, Andrew Le Mercier, Clerk, of the Town of Dorchester, do make this my last will;—that all my Debts be paid, in the number of which I reckon the Money due by my son Bartholomew to Thomas Hancock Esq^r. for Goods he had of him, for which I was answerable;—that my Estate be equally divided among my Children, Andrew, Jane, and my son Bartholomew, if alive. Margaret & Jane, Executors.

In presence of
W^m Foster, Solomon Hall, Paul Hall.

ANDREW LE MERCIER.

Proved, by Paul Hall, & W^m Foster, 15 June 1764.

Codicil.—3 Feb. 1764.—“Margaret Le Mercier being now disordered in her mind that she is incapable of performing such trust,” [as an Executrix] “instead of said Margaret, that Zachariah Johonnot Esq^r., Execute, with my dau. Jane, said Will, and that said Gentleman be a Guardian to my dau. Margaret.”*

In presence of
Elizabeth Russell, Joseph Callender jun^r. Proved by them, 15 June 1764.

Inventory of the estate taken, 28 June, 1764, by Thomas Walley, John Kneeland, Thomas Green. Amt. £232.18.6. Proved, 20 July, 1764, by Jane Le Mercier.

The following notice of his death, is from the Boston Gazette, Monday, 2d April 1764.—“Saturday last departed this life,” [“after a long Indisposition of Body,” says the Boston Post Boy,] “in the 72^d year of his Age, Mr Andrew Le Mercier, formerly Pastor of the French Protestant Church in this Town. His remains are to be inter’d from Deacon Wait’s, in Queen Street, to Morrow Afternoon.” It is said, that he was buried in the Granary burying ground, Boston, near the Franklin Monument.—See Reg. (1852) p. 360.

We close this article with extracts from a communication furnished by “Sigma,” to the Boston Evening Transcript, 28 Jan., 1851:—

“Judge Richard Cranch, the brother-in-law of the first President Adams, was a particular friend of Le Mercier; and, after his death, is said to have become the custodian of his papers, and among them, the mass of his sermons also. After *his* death in 1811, at the age of 85, the sermons of Le Mercier fell among the descendants of the Judge, by one of whom some of those sermons were presented to the reverend gentleman who has kindly sent one of them to me.

“The portrait of Le Mercier is still extant. A highly respected friend writes me thus:—‘It is now in the rooms of the Essex Institute, an institution formed several years since, by a union of the Essex Historical and the Essex Natural History Societies, where it is in very safe keeping and duly appreciated. It is in a state of good preservation, has an old black wooden frame, gilt round its inner edge, or once was. The painting has quite a fresh appearance. The picture has no signature or date, nor is there any thing about it to indicate who was the artist. It appears to be drawn in canonicals, with white bands, powdered wig, (a small wig) and a colored robe, thrown loosely over a black dress, without any show of

*Mr. Johonnot, it would seem, was doubly “faithful to his trust;” for, he married Margaret Le Mercier, 24 April, 1777.—See Reg. Vol. VII, p. 141.

hands or arms. On the top corner, back of the portrait, are the words, *In Christo*; on the opposite top corner, in front, *Vita est*; and, on the lower corner, under this, *Moriar Mercerus*. The original seems to have been a bright, good looking man, about 40 years old.

"Another friend informs me, that his grandfather, the Hon. Thomas Cushing, Speaker of the Massachusetts House of Representatives, before the Revolution, who died in 1788, was very much attached to Le Mercier, and owned this portrait, which my informant well remembers. It fell into the possession of his uncle, Col. Thomas Cushing, of Salem, who married an Orne, and through him, undoubtedly, passed to the Society."

Mr. Le Mercier was a subscriber to Prince's Chronology.

BENJAMIN MARSTON.

[Communicated by FREDERIC KIDDER.]

The following account of this gentleman, a graduate of Harvard College, (1749) is from a work in the library of the N. E. Historic Genealogical Society, entitled "African Memoranda," p. 115. This is a Journal kept by Capt. P. Beaver, during an attempt to settle an English Colony on the island of Bulama, on the west coast of Africa. This island is near Bissau, and the mouth of the Rio Grande.

Bulama Island, Sunday, Aug. 12, 1792. * * * That truly good and valuable man, Mr. Ben. Marston, our surveyor [was dead.] Mr. Marston was born in Marblehead, New England, where he was a respectable merchant, and had considerable property, at the commencement of those unfortunate troubles which terminated in the separation of that country from England. In consequence of his loyalty, he had not only lost a comfortable competency, but had undergone, for the last ten years, unheard of and almost incredible difficulties. Sometimes he was whole days without bread; and weeks together his daily expenditure amounted only to three half-pence—a penny-worth of bread and a half-penny-worth of figs. Too noble to beg, yet willing to work; but, unknown and friendless in England, no one would employ him. Thus did this good man struggle in poverty for ten years, in that country which he had fought for, in that country for whose interest he had quitted his friends, his relations, the land of his ancestors, and everything which is dear to man.

I never heard this good man rail at, nor say harsh things of that country, by which he had been so ill treated; he bore all patiently. He was about sixty years of age; had been educated in Harvard College, New England; and was both learned and pious. Happy in having known such a man, I felt it my duty to endeavor to record his virtues. Should this Journal, by any accident, ever reach Marblehead, it may be a consolation to some of his friends and family to know what became of him, and at the same time to know, that if he did not die a rich, he died a good man; for I cannot be suspected of flattering or overcharging the character of that man whom I never saw till in this expedition; and who, though it ought to have been otherwise, was in such a situation as would not be likely to procure an interested panegyrist. It may also be of some consolation to them to learn that his virtues were not unknown, and that though we may have but little ourselves, we have at least sufficient to respect it in others; that this good man lived respected and died regretted by all, and is now, we trust, receiving the reward of his virtues and sufferings in this world.