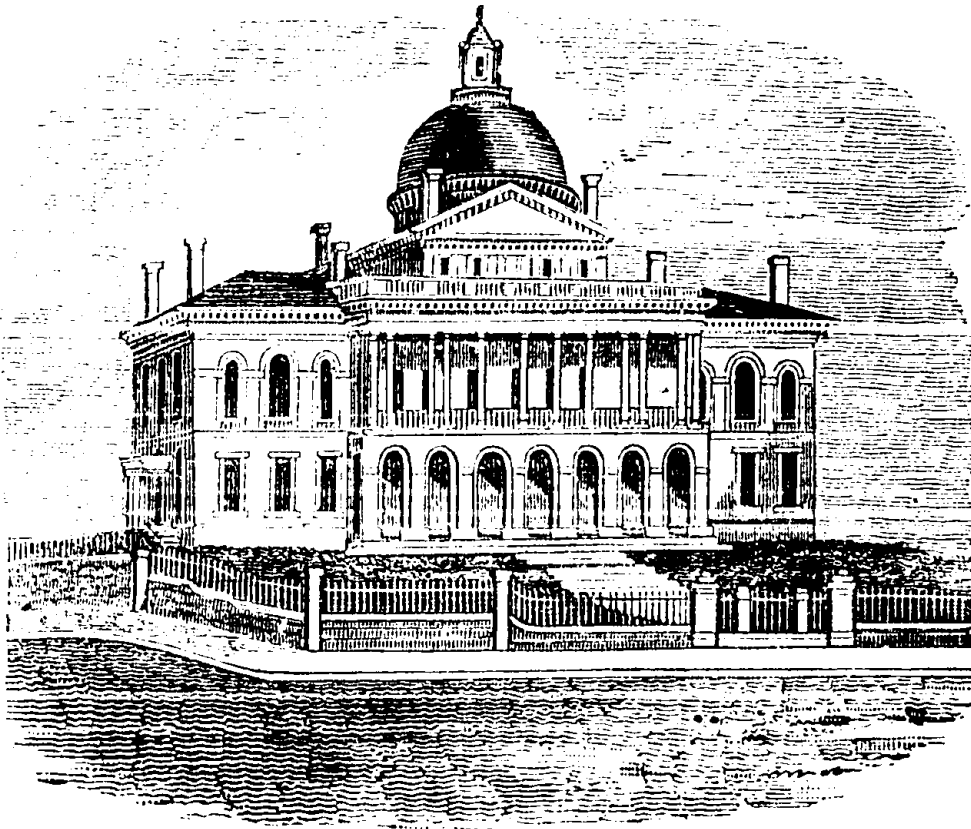


HISTORY OF BOSTON.



BY ROBIN CARVER.

BOSTON :

LILLY, WAIT, COLMAN, AND HOLDEN.

1834.

CHAPTER XVIII.

War of 1814 with England. Chesapeake lying in Boston harbor. Battle with the Shannon. Death of Lawrence. Reflections.

1. BUT few events have occurred, in the history of Boston, since the period of the revolution, which would interest you much in the recital. During the second war of the United States with England, which was declared in 1812, our city did not directly suffer from the attacks of the enemy. One melancholy incident of that war, however, is so connected with our city, that I will relate it to you in this place.

2. On the first of June, 1813, a noble frigate of the American navy was lying at anchor in Boston harbor. She was named the Chesapeake, and was under the command of Captain Lawrence, as valiant a sailor as ever walked on a deck. In the preceding month of February, he had cap-

tured the British brig Peacock, after an action of only fifteen minutes.

3. A British frigate, the Shannon, had been some days cruising about in the neighborhood, and its captain had sent in several challenges to Captain Lawrence, to bring the two ships to an engagement. The Chesapeake was badly provided with men, and not in a fit condition for the conflict, but the bravado of the enemy was too exciting for the spirit of our gallant seamen.

4. On the morning mentioned above, the Shannon appeared off our harbor, and made a taunting display of the British flag. The Chesapeake was lying below Fort Independence. On observing the enemy's colors, a gun was fired from the American ship, and the banner of stars and stripes was soon floating at her mast-head. Sailing orders were immediately given, and as soon as the tide permitted, the Chesapeake was got under way, and, under a full press of sail, followed the Shannon out of the harbor.

5. Every eminence in the neighborhood of Boston, which commanded a view of the sea, was soon crowded with anxious spectators. The ships took such a direction, that the battle could not be observed from the shore; but many boats and small craft sailed out to witness the conflict, and bring back information as to its issue.

6. Our citizens soon knew that the Chesapeake was captured, and that British colors had taken the place of the

Union flag; but it was not till a fortnight afterwards that they learned the full extent of their loss. The Shannon with her prize, immediately sailed for Halifax, and it was hence that the first authentic account of the battle was received.

7. The Chesapeake fired the first gun, and the Shannon immediately hove to, and prepared for action. During the first few minutes of the battle, the enemy sustained most severe injury, but unfortunately the vessels came in direct contact, and became so entangled, that the Chesapeake could not bring her guns to bear. She was immediately boarded by the enemy, and, in the confusion and alarm that followed the loss of her chief officer, was easily captured.

8. Captain Lawrence had been wounded in his leg, at an early period of the engagement. Refusing to be carried below, he remained upon deck till he received a second wound, that completely disabled him. He was now borne to the cock-pit, from which, though in the severest pain, he continued to issue his orders. 'Fight her till she sinks,' he exclaimed, 'keep the guns going. The Shannon was beaten when I left.'

9. When told that the enemy had carried the upper deck, he sent to his crew the memorable message, — 'Don't give up the ship!' But it was in vain; the ship was lost, and Lawrence did not long survive the misfortune; after linger-

ing in extreme pain for the space of four days, he died. He was honorably buried at Halifax, but his body was afterwards removed to New York, where a monument has been erected to him. His memory will ever be held dear by Americans, for he was gallant, and true to his country.