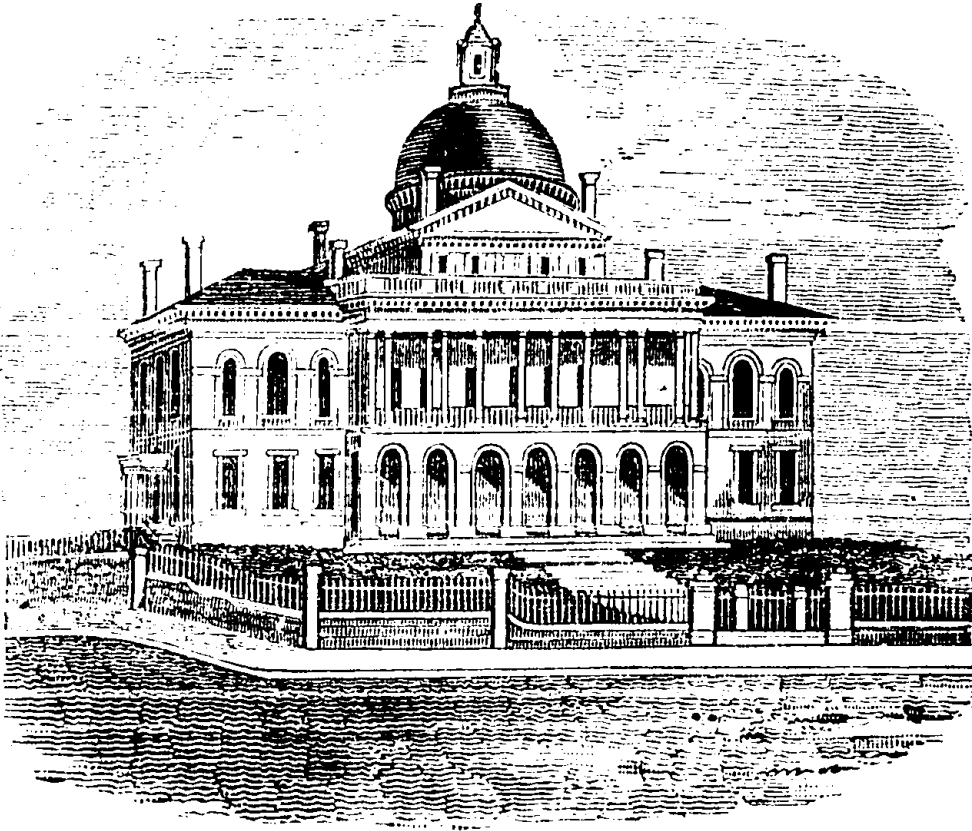


HISTORY OF BOSTON.



BY ROBIN CARVER.

BOSTON :

LILLY, WAIT, COLMAN, AND HOLDEN.

1834.

CHAPTER XIX.

Visit of Lafayette. His early Adventures. His arrival at Boston in 1824. His Welcome. Great Parade. The Schools make a procession. Laying the Corner stone of Bunker Hill Monument. Visits of the Presidents. Reflections.

1. I HAVE said before, that since the revolution, few incidents, which would be of great interest to you, have occurred in our history. It is not then surprising, that one of the most striking events of our more recent annals should also be connected with that great event. I refer to the visit of Lafayette to Boston in 1824, of which you may like to hear a short account.

2. Lafayette, you already know, was born in a village of France, in 1757. When about nineteen years of age, he secretly left his native land, to engage in the cause of American liberty. Our country was at that time in a very un-

fortunate and gloomy condition, and his arrival created great joy among the feeble and almost despairing patriots.

3. The young foreigner was at once appointed to a command in the Continental army. This he declined, and having raised, and equipped a body of men at his own expense, he entered the service as a volunteer, without pay. He rendered very important aid to the cause, by his personal exertions and valor here, and his influence at home. For a long time, he lived in the family of Washington, and was always honored with his full affection and confidence.

4. He returned to France, soon after the close of the revolution, and has carried with him through life, his early love of liberty. Several invitations had been given to him, to visit once more the country of his early exploits. At length, he consented. In August 1824, he landed at New York, and was received there with the shouts of thousands, who crowded to greet and welcome the old friend of their fathers.

5. In a few days, he reached the residence of Governor Eustis, his old companion in arms, at Roxbury, in the neighborhood of Boston. Every where, in the country through which he passed, he was received with the greatest delight and enthusiasm.

6. On the morning after his arrival at Roxbury, a cavalcade of eight hundred citizens of Boston, waited on him, to form an escort to the town line. Here he was met by the mayor, and other city officers, and a military escort. On

receiving from the mayor a welcome, in the name of the city, Lafayette made the following brief, but apt reply :

7. ‘ The emotions of love and gratitude, which I have been accustomed to feel on entering this city, have ever mingled with a sense of religious reverence, for the cradle of American, and, let us hope it will be hereafter said, of universal liberty.

8. ‘ What must be, sir, my feelings at the blessed moment, when, after so long an absence, I feel myself again surrounded by the good citizens of Boston, where I am so affectionately, so honorably welcomed, not only by old friends, but by several successive generations ; where I can witness the prosperity, the immense improvements, that have been the just reward of a noble struggle, virtuous morals, and truly republican institutions.

9. ‘ I beg of you, Mr Mayor, gentlemen of the City Council, and all of you, beloved citizens of Boston, to accept the respectful and warm thanks of a heart, which has for nearly half a century been devoted to your *Illustrious City*.’

10. The procession then formed, and began to advance towards the city, at about 11 o’clock. It passed through all the principal streets, and during its progress, Lafayette was continually received with the cheers and shouts of the multitude. The windows of all the houses were crowded with spectators, waving handkerchiefs, and throwing garlands into his barouche as he passed.

11. On this occasion, a truly beautiful sight was present-

ed. The children of the public schools, dressed in a neat uniform, were ranged in two rows, by the lower part of the common, under the direction of their teachers. As the procession passed through the lines formed by these boys and girls, they raised their little voices to add one more shout of welcome, to the thousands that had greeted the friend of Washington.

12. During the stay of General Lafayette in the city, the excitement of the people seemed constantly to increase. Every mark of respect and affection was paid to him, both in private and public. When he left Boston, he expressed his intention to return by the seventeenth of the following June, to be present at the laying of the Corner Stone of the Bunker Hill Monument.

13. On that day, he was again in Boston. The weather was mild and pleasant, and large numbers of people had collected, from all quarters, to witness the ceremony. At about half past ten in the morning, a procession was formed near the State House, to escort the General to the former scene of the revolutionary battle.

14. An immense crowd of people was collected. Old men, and boys, seemed equally excited by the occasion, and thronged in vast numbers to engage in the services of the day. First marched the military escort, which consisted of sixteen companies, and a corps of cavalry, in full uniform. Then came the aged soldiers, who had fought fifty years before in the battle, and who had been so fortunate as to live to witness this scene of triumph.

15. After these, followed the other surviving soldiers and officers of the revolution. Then came the members of the Association formed to build the monument, all wearing suitable badges. The various companies of Free Masons, and the officers of the Association followed. General Lafayette, in a coach and four, came next, and the procession was closed by the various officers of state, and a large body of citizens.

16. This procession moved from the State House, passed through some of the principal streets of the city, and then to Bunker Hill. The corner stone of the Monument was then laid, an oration was delivered, and the day closed with festivity and rejoicing.

17. Boston has been twice visited by presidents of the United States; by James Monroe, in 1817, and by Andrew Jackson, in 1833. On each of these occasions, there was, perhaps, a greater display of splendor and pageantry, than is consistent with republican simplicity.