

## MEMOIR OF CALEB BINGHAM.

WITH NOTICES OF THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS OF BOSTON, PRIOR TO 1800.

BY WILLIAM S. FOWLE.

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CALEB BINGHAM, who enjoyed an enviable reputation as a private and public teacher in Boston, Mass., toward the close of the last century, and, who, through his school books, was, perhaps, more extensively known than any contemporary teacher in the United States, was born at Salisbury, in the north-western corner of Connecticut, April 15th, 1757. His father\* was a very respectable farmer, and his mother a descendant of Roger Conant,† first among the worthies that settled at Salem, before Boston was founded by Governor Winthrop.

Little is known of the youth of Caleb. Salisbury was a new town, containing many Indians of such doubtful character, that the worshippers on Sunday, went to church armed; and the log house used for a church had portholes like the forts of older New England towns, and a guard was stationed at the door. Such a state of society would afford but little chance for a regular education, and the tradition is, that Caleb was prepared for college by the Rev. Dr. Salter. The sisters remembered that Caleb was a slender boy, while his brother Daniel was unusually robust, and there can be no doubt that the same mistake was made, in this case, that is every day made in our agricultural districts; the boy who needed air and exercise was con-

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\* There may be no difficulty in tracing his paternal ancestors. The tradition is that Jabez, the grandfather of Caleb, presented his son Daniel, with a hundred acres of land in Salisbury, near the mountain, and he, after the birth of Caleb, purchased the beautiful farm between the Lakes Washinee and Washining, and lived there till his decease, February 1, 1806. His wife had died just a year before him, and the homestead came into the possession of Caleb, whose local attachment induced him much against his interest and the advice of his family, to buy out the other heirs, and erect a somewhat expensive house adjoining the old mansion in which he had spent his youth.

† Cotton Mather informs us that, about the year 1624, a worthy gentleman, Mr. Roger Conant, was sent over from England to Salem, for the purpose of encouraging, strengthening, and promoting the settlement of the new country. Soon after his arrival, which was with a company of whom he was chief, his son Exercise was born. How many other sons he had we are not told, but this Exercise had Josiah and Caleb, and removed into Connecticut, where he died. His remains were deposited in the burial ground of the First Society in Mansfield, where his tomb stone is still to be seen. Josiah had but one child, Shubael, who was a counsellor for the state, colonel of the regiment, judge of the county court and of probate, and deacon of the church in Mansfield. Caleb had seven children, of whom Hannah, the youngest, married Daniel Bingham, and removed to Salisbury, in Connecticut, where Caleb, their second son, the subject of this memoir, was born.

fined to, what is more fatal than hard labor in a penitentiary, the narrow walls of a school-room or college, and the hearty boy, who was able to endure such inactivity, was sent into the field. Whether Caleb had shown any unusual love for study is not known, but if he was feeble, as seems to be the fact, he was probably indulged, and allowed to read while his brother was at work.

The family of Dr. Wheelock, the founder of Moor's school and Dartmouth college, and that of Mr. Kirkland, the distinguished missionary to the Indians, were related to the Bingham, and this probably led Caleb to Dartmouth rather than to New Haven. Moor's Indian school had been removed to the wilderness a few years before, and the high character of the elder Wheelock, had even obtained aid from England to found a college, where the scattered condition of the inhabitants made even common schools a rarity. Mr. Bingham entered college in 1779, a bustling period on the frontiers, and he graduated in 1782. Immediately after he graduated, he was appointed master of Moor's charity school, which was an appendage to the college, and under the direction of the same persons who managed the affairs of the higher institution. The respectful intercourse that always existed between Mr. Bingham, the Wheelocks, father and son, the professors of the college, and the venerable Eden Burroughs, clergyman of the town, to much of which the writer was a witness, abundantly proves the high estimation in which Mr. Bingham was held as a scholar and a man. While an under-graduate, Mr. Bingham united himself with the church under the care of Mr. Burroughs, and his affection for this excellent man no doubt led him to take the interest he did in endeavoring to check the wayward career of his son, the somewhat notorious Stephen Burroughs.

Mr. Bingham removed to Boston, about the year 1784.\* He had

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\* It is suspected that, on the way to Boston, he stopped at Andover, and had the care of Phillips Academy, a few months, after Dr. Pearson left it to assume the professorship of Hebrew at Harvard college; for the venerable Josiah Quincy thinks he was for several months a pupil of Mr. Bingham at Andover, where an unsuccessful attempt was made to induce him to become the permanent Principal. There is much truth and feeling in the following extract from a letter of this distinguished man, and to fully appreciate the tribute, it should be known that the parties were at the opposite extremes in politics, when such a position generally embittered all the intercourse of life. "As the subject lies in my mind," says Mr. Quincy, "in the autumn of 1785, Mr. Bingham succeeded Dr. Pearson, in the care of the Academy, but did not remain longer than the April of 1786. While there, I was his pupil, and recollect well that his kind and affectionate manner of treating the scholars gained their attachment, so that his determination not to become a candidate for the permanent instructorship was a subject of great disappointment to the boys. All my impressions concerning him are of the most favorable kind. He was a man of heart; and his feelings led him to take great interest in the character and success of his pupils, and, as is usual with such men, his kind affections were reciprocated by those who enjoyed his instruction."

This reminiscence, which is entitled to great weight, places Mr. B.'s advent in Boston, much later than the time named by his family, and as he married in 1786, it hardly allows a reasonable time for forming an acquaintance, which must have commenced after his arrival.

learned that there was an opening for an enterprising teacher in Boston, and he came with the strongest recommendations from the government of the college.

The main object of Mr. Bingham in coming to Boston was to establish a school for girls; and the project was of the most promising description, for the town of Boston had even then become eminent for its wealth and intelligence, and, strange to say, was deficient in public and private schools for females. It certainly is a remarkable fact, that, while the girls of every town in the state were allowed and expected to attend the village schools, no public provision seems to have been made for their instruction in the metropolis, and men of talents do not seem to have met with any encouragement to open private schools for this all important class of children. The only schools in the city to which girls were admitted, were kept by the teachers of public schools, between the forenoon and afternoon sessions, and how insufficient this chance for an education was, may be gathered from the fact, that all the public teachers who opened private schools, were uneducated men, selected for their skill in penmanship and the elements of arithmetic. The schools were called writing schools; and, although reading and spelling were also taught in them, this instruction was only incidental, being carried on, we can not say "attended to," while the teachers were making or mending pens, preparatory to the regular writing lesson.

This had probably been the state of things for more than a century, and at the advent of Mr. Bingham, there were only two such schools, while there were two others devoted exclusively to the study of Latin and Greek, although the pupils of these latter schools hardly numbered one tenth of the others. Of course, the proposal of Mr. Bingham to open a school, in which girls should be taught, not only writing and arithmetic, but, reading, spelling and English grammar, met with a hearty reception, and his room, which was in State street, from which schools and dwelling houses have been banished nearly half a century,\* was soon filled with children of the most respectable families. There does not seem to have been any competition, and Mr. Bingham had the field to himself for at least four years before any movement was made to improve the old public system, or to extend the means of private instruction.

At that time, and for more than a century and a half, the public schools of Boston, and indeed, those of the state had been under the control and supervision of the selectmen, three to nine citizens, elect-

\* Probably in the building on the lower corner of Devonshire and State streets, afterwards the Post Office.

ed annually to manage the financial and other concerns of the several towns, without much, if any, regard to their literary qualifications. The selectmen of Boston were generally merchants, several of whom, at the time under consideration, had daughters or relatives in the school of Mr. Bingham. It was natural that the additional expense thus incurred, for they were taxed to support the public schools, from which their daughters were excluded, should lead them to inquire why such a preference was given to parents with boys; and the idea seemed, for the first time, to be started, that the prevailing system was not only imperfect, but evidently unfair. The simplest and most natural process would have been to open the schools to both sexes, as the spirit of the laws required, but this would have left the instruction in the hand of the incompetent writing masters, when a higher order of teachers was required; or it would have involved the dismissal of all the writing masters, a bold step, which the committee dared not to hazard, because many citizens were opposed to any innovation, and the friends of the masters were so influential, that no change was practicable, which did not provide for their support. After much consultation, therefore, there being some complaint of the insufficient number of the schools, the school committee proposed the only plan which seemed to secure the triple object,—room for the girls, employment for the old masters, and the introduction of others better qualified.

The new plan was to institute three new schools, to be called **READING SCHOOLS**, in which reading, spelling, grammar and perhaps geography, should be taught by masters to be appointed; the two old writing schools to be continued, a new one established; and one of the Latin schools to be abolished. As no rooms were prepared, temporary ones were hired, so that the same pupils attended a writing school in one building half the day, and a reading school in a different building, at a considerable distance, and under a different and independent teacher, the other half. Each reading school had its corresponding writing school, and while the boys were in one school, the girls were in the other, alternating forenoon and afternoon, and changing the half day once a month, because, Thursday and Saturday afternoons being vacation, this arrangement was necessary to equalize the lessons taught in the separate schools. This system afterwards acquired the name of the double-headed system, and it was continued, essentially, for more than half a century, in spite of all the defects and abuses to which it was exposed. Even when the town built new school houses, the upper room was devoted to the reading school, and the lower to the writing, the masters never changing rooms, and the

boys and girls alternating as before. The points gained, however, were very important, the girls were provided for, better teachers were appointed, and the sexes were separated into different rooms. This latter provision, which we consider inestimable, and the great distinction of the Boston schools, seems to have been the result of accident or necessity, but the deepest insight into human nature, the profoundest sagacity, the highest wisdom, could not have invented a more effectual barrier against vice and depravity. Sentimentalists sometimes tell us of the beneficial influence of the gentler upon the ruder sex in mixed schools, but a long and wide experience has satisfied the writer that the evil influences arising from mixed schools, whether primary, high, or normal, are incalculable. Mr. Bingham would never have taught a mixed school, and he foresaw that even the primary schools of Boston, would be nurseries of vice, if, as was proposed, the separation, which existed in the upper schools, was not extended to them.

As no provision was made in the reading schools for any exercise in writing, no such exercise was required there; and the immense advantage arising from having the teacher able to give instruction in penmanship, as well as in orthography, and composition, was wholly lost. The writer passed through an entire course in the Boston schools, and was never required to write a sentence or a word of English. The first three reading masters were good penmen, and Mr. Bingham was distinguished for his skill, but this was not afterward considered an essential qualification of the reading master; and when, forty years afterward, a change was proposed in the schools, by which the "double-headed system" was to be reduced to a single head, the reading masters were found as incompetent to teach penmanship as the writing masters had always been to teach any thing else. Another amusing error prevailed in the schools for more than a quarter of a century. The committee adopted the notion that girls could not attend school in Boston, where there were sidewalks, although they did in the country where there were none; and so the girls were only allowed to attend the schools six months, from April to October, and, during the winter months, half the boys attended the reading schools, while the other half attended the writing, alternating as the boys and girls did in summer.

Before the new system went into operation, the great object was, to secure the services of Mr. Bingham, and he was accordingly appointed with a salary of two hundred pounds. His letter accepting the appointment, is dated Dec. 12, 1789, and is characteristically modest:—"He is not sure that he shall fulfill their expectations, and hopes the pecuniary sacrifice he makes by relinquishing his private school will be a

public gain." The same room he had before occupied, was hired by the town, and Jan. 4, 1790, the new system went into operation. Previous to this reform, the writing masters had been allowed to teach private schools, but this was soon strictly forbidden, and a general remonstrance signed by all the reading and writing masters, did not move the committee to rescind the regulation. Much dissatisfaction prevailed, but Mr. Bingham, not having opened a private school, did not enter into the controversy so zealously as Master Carter and some others. The small compensation of the teachers, and the want of schools for girls, under the old plan, had led to this abuse, but, while we praise the committee for their discernment in abolishing the privilege, we can not praise their liberality in refusing to raise the salaries according to the loss evidently incurred.

Another evil in the new system also held its ground for many years. Boys had been admitted into the Latin school at the early age of seven years, on the mistaken idea, that the very young are best qualified to learn a dead language, as they undoubtedly are to learn a spoken one. The age was increased to ten years by the new system, but, as before, no provision was made in the Latin school for their instruction in English, in penmanship, or in any of the common branches. To remedy this serious defect, the Latin scholars were *allowed* to attend the writing schools two hours, forenoon or afternoon, and about thirty availed themselves of the privilege, although they were obliged to neglect one school to attend the other, and unpunctuality and disorder, in all the schools, were the natural consequence.

The prohibition, to teach private schools, does not appear to have been of long continuance; for, although the records do not show that the order was repealed, these intermediate private schools were common early in the present century, and permission to the Latin scholars to attend the writing schools was withdrawn. The teacher of the Latin school in connection with a writing master, kept a private English school in the Latin school-room, while the writer, was a pupil there, in 1808, and the writer himself attended a private school kept by a reading master in another part of the town. Of course, it was a passport to favor in every public school, to attend the master's private school also, and those who only went to the public school, were considered a somewhat inferior caste. Sometimes the ushers opened private schools in the evening, but these were chiefly attended by apprentices, and boys who attended no other school.

Every master was allowed one assistant called an *usher*, and several of those first employed, were afterwards advanced to the mastership, but this was always treated as a very subordinate situation; for

the salary could not tempt a man of any talent, and the committee soon let it be seen that ushers were not candidates for promotion.

Complaints of insufficient pay, were constantly made in the shape of petitions from both masters and ushers, but no change was made during the official career of Mr. Bingham. Mr. B., was a modest and sometimes even timid man, but there were at least, two occasions on which he showed that there was no lack of moral courage, when his course was clearly indicated by duty. He had not long been in office, before he, and all the other teachers, had reason to complain of the unpunctuality of the town in paying their salaries. The treasurer was accused, either for the want of funds, or for the sake of speculation in the stock he created, to give a paper to the teachers, certifying that the town owed them a certain sum, and this certificate, which was called a "town order," the needy masters were obliged to sell at a considerable discount. As remonstrance might be followed by dismissal, the teachers bore the imposition a long time; but, at last, Mr. Bingham, smarting under the repeated losses that he had suffered, and not readily finding a purchaser, advertised a "a town order for sale at a liberal discount." At a town meeting that occurred soon after, the insult, thus publicly offered to the town, was the subject of severe remark, and the meeting, highly indignant, despatched an officer to command Master Bingham instantly, to appear and apologize for the offence. He promptly accompanied the officer to Faneuil Hall, and after the offence was formally stated to him by the chairman of the selectmen, he was called upon for his apology. Mr. B., nothing daunted, stretched himself to his full height, and, in a voice that no one failed to hear, gave a brief history of his experience, with which the citizens were, probably, unacquainted, and then concluded with these words: "I have a family and need the money. I have done my part of the engagement faithfully, and have no apology to make to those who have failed to do theirs. All I can do is to promise, that, if the town will punctually pay my salary in future, I will never advertise their orders for sale again." The treasurer immediately slapped him on the shoulder and said, Bingham, you are a good fellow; call at my office after the meeting and I will give you the cash. Mr. B., had little trouble after that in collecting what was due him for his services.\*

Among the beneficial changes of the new system, was the addition of twelve citizens to the board of selectmen, for the sole purpose of

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\* To the other instance of personal courage, which happened twenty years or more afterward, the writer was a witness. The government of the town had determined to break up a large settlement of houses of ill-fame, and the accompanying haunts of vice, that had long been a disgrace to the town, and an annoyance to all peaceable citizens in the neighborhood. An active police officer, named Reed, had made several arrests, and was singled out by a desperate mob as the victim of their vengeance. This mob, armed with clubs and missiles of

superintending the schools. A law authorizing this change had been enacted by the legislature, mainly at the request of the metropolis; but the advantage expected from it was almost neutralized in Boston, by the retention of the selectmen as *ex-officio* members of the school committee; the chairman of the former always presiding at the meetings. Those acquainted with the history of Boston will recognize, in the following list of the first school committee proper, an amount of intellect and character rarely seen in our day.

John Lathrop, D. D., of the North Church.

Samuel West, D. D., of the West Church.

James Freeman, D. D., of the Stone Chapel.

N. Appleton, M. D.,

Thomas Welch, M. D., } all distinguished physicians.

Aaron Dexter, M. D., }

George Richards Minot, Judge and Historian of Massachusetts, after-

Christopher Gore, LL.D. [ward Governor.

Hon. Jonathan Mason, Jr., Senator.

Hon. William Tudor, Judge.

Hon. Thomas Dawes, Judge.

Hon. John Coffin Jones, Merchant and Senator.

Not one of this first committee was a common man, but no one is now living to witness the result of his labors. Their unanimity in adopting the reform, and selecting Mr. Bingham to lead in the improvement, is no faint compliment to the rank and ability of their teacher.

Allusion has been made to some of the alterations introduced by the new system, but, perhaps, the state of education may be better illustrated by an extract or two from the records. One regulation

every description, pursued Reed, who, running for his life, dashed into Mr. B.'s yard for shelter. Mr. B., opened the door to him, told him how to pass through the house and escape; and then went out to face the mob. He had no hat on, and his white hair and dignified personal appearance, for a moment quieted the rioters. He seized the happy moment, and, standing on an elevation where he was seen by the crowd that beset the house, he said in the powerful voice, that he is said to have inherited from his father, "Fellow citizens, you are breaking the laws, and I command you in the name of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts to disperse. I am a magistrate." His family urged him not to venture out, for it would cost him his life; but he saved the officer, and dispersed the mob, in less time than it has required to record this anecdote.

The personal appearance of Mr. Bingham, was favorable to such a demonstration. His height was about six feet, and his frame well proportioned and well developed. His face was pleasant, but rather short. His eyes were light blue, his nose short and rather sharp, his hair was dressed with earlocks, powdered, and braided behind, exactly in the style of Washington's. He wore almost to the last, a cocked hat, black coat and small clothes, with a white vest and stock, and black silk hose. In winter, he wore white topped boots, and in summer, shoes with silver buckles. His appearance and manners were those of a gentleman; he was respectful to all; affable, gentle, and free from any of the traits which are apt to cling to the successful pedagogue. At the age of sixty, he began to stoop a little in consequence of disease that principally affected his head, and his nerves began to shake; but though represented to be feeble in his youth, there was no appearance of debility in manhood. He could dress himself and walk the room twenty-four hours before he died.



requires the writing masters to teach "writing, arithmetic, and the branches usually taught in town schools, including vulgar and decimal fractions." Another regulation required the reading masters to teach "spelling, accent, and the reading of prose and verse, and to instruct the children in English grammar, epistolary writing and composition." "Boys and girls were to be admitted at seven years of age, if previously instructed in the woman schools," which, it will be recollected, were all private schools, over which the committee had no control, and to which those only who could pay were admitted.

The Latin school under Master William Hunt, was kept in a small, square, brick building, which stood on a lot opposite the present City Hall, in School street. The north reading school, was in Middle street, and the north writing, in North Bennett street. The central reading was in State street, and the south writing, was at the corner of West and Tremont street, the south reading, being in Pleasant street. The central writing, under Carter, is said, in the record, to be in Tremont street. The north Latin school, that was discontinued, stood on a lot by the side of the north writing school.

The books used in the reading schools were, the Holy Bible, Webster's Spelling Book, Webster's Third Part, and the Young Lady's Accidence. The Children's Friend and Morse's Geography were allowed, not required; and "Newspapers were to be introduced, occasionally, at the discretion of the masters." This is the first time\* that the writer ever saw newspapers required by a school committee, but there can be no doubt that the regulation was the result of true wisdom. The misfortune was, that the rule was entirely neglected, as was that requiring composition to be taught in connection with English grammar. The probability is that, for twenty years, not a newspaper was read in any school, nor a word written. The Latin school was divided into four classes, and the books used were,

FIRST CLASS.	SECOND CLASS.	THIRD CLASS.	FOURTH CLASS.
Cheever's Accidence.	Clarke's Introduction.	Cæsar.	Virgil.
Cordery.	Ward's Latin Gram.	Tully's Epiet. or Offic's.	Cicero's Orations.
Nomenclator.	Eutropius.	Ovid Metamor.	Greek Testament.
Æsop, Latin and Eng.	Selects e Vet. Test.	Virgil.	Horace.
Ward's Latin Gram.	Castallo's Dialogues.	Greek Grammar.	Homer.
or Eutropius.	Garretson's Exercises.	Making Latin from	Gradus ad Parnassum.
		King's Heathen Gods.	Making Latin contin'd.

The writer remembers Master Hunt, as a frequent visitor at Mr. Bingham's bookstore. The committee removed him after several years' service under the new system, and the injustice of the removal was the burden of his conversation. He taught private pupils several years after he left the public service, was a venerable looking man,

\* Comenius did this two hundred years before. Ed.

and is well represented by his grand children, one of whom has been distinguished as a teacher of the same school.

Furthermore, it was ordered that, in the writing schools, the children "should begin to learn arithmetic at eleven years of age; that, at twelve, they should be taught to make pens." Until eleven years old, all the pupils did, in a whole forenoon or afternoon, was to write one page of a copy book, not exceeding ten lines. When they began to cipher, it rarely happened that they performed more than two sums in the simplest rules. These were set in the pupil's manuscript, and the operation was there recorded by him. No printed book was used. Such writing and ciphering, however, were too much for one day, and boys who ciphered, only did so every other day. If it be asked, how were the three hours of school time occupied? The answer is, in one of three ways,—in mischief; in play; or in idleness. The pupils were never taught to make their own pens, and it occupied the master and usher two hours of every session to prepare them. The books were generally prepared by them out of school hours. The introduction of metallic pens, relieved the teachers from their worst drudgery, and left them free to inspect the writing of their pupils, which was impossible before.

In the reading schools, the course was for every child to read one verse of the Bible, or a short paragraph of the Third Part. The master heard the first and second, that is, the two highest classes, and the usher heard the two lowest. While one class was reading, the other studied the spelling lesson. The lesson was spelled by the scholars in turn, so that the classes being large, each boy seldom spelled more than one or two words. In grammar, the custom was to recite six or more lines once a fortnight, and to go through the book three times before any application of it was made to what was called parsing. No geography was prepared for the schools until Mr. Bingham left them. Morse's abridgment began to be a reading book about the year 1800, and soon after, Mr. Bingham prepared his little Catechism, which was probably based upon it. When Mr. B's American Preceptor was published, it displaced Webster's Third Part. His Child's Companion superseded Webster's Spelling Book in the lower classes, and the Columbian Orator, was the reading book of the upper class, to the displacement of the Bible, which, instead of being read by the children, was read by the reading masters as a religious exercise, at the opening of school in the morning, and at its close in the afternoon. The writing masters were not required to read or pray for fifteen or twenty years after the great reform.\*

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\* The above, the writer believes is a fair account of the system, which has given Boston an

The Franklin Medals were introduced during the public service of Mr. Bingham, but he never heartily approved of the influence thus exerted; for it was evident, he said, that only a very small portion of the pupils had any hope of acquiring a medal, or made any effort to do so, while the disappointment of many who did endeavor, caused him no little pain. It is to be hoped that the school committee will contrive to strip this well meant bequest of the great Bostonian of its unequal and often injurious influence.

There were three reading masters; Mr. Bingham was undoubtedly the first, and the second in rank was Elisha Ticknor. This gentleman was also from Connecticut, and a graduate of Dartmouth, and is supposed to have been invited to Boston, to assist Mr. Bingham in his private school. The writer well remembers him as a tall, thin, erect and grave man, a deacon of the old South Church, and more stiff and ceremonious than his remote relative, Mr. Bingham. He married a widow lady of some property, soon after he took the South Reading School, and, becoming dissatisfied with the slender income of a public teacher, he resigned his office at the end of five years, turned grocer, and by frugality and strict attention to business acquired a handsome property before his decease, which took place in 1827.

The third reading master was Samuel Cheney, who was teaching in Tyngsborough, Mass., when he was appointed to the north school in Boston. He had graduated at some college, but his letter of application, now on the files of the school committee, indicates a very low state of English scholarship. He did not give satisfaction, and was dismissed in 1793, although many parents of his pupils, and several influential citizens, strove hard to induce the committee to retain him.

The chief writing master was John Tileston. He had long been in the public service, and by faithful attention to his narrow round of duties, was retained, although destitute of energy and invention. He was born at Braintree, near Boston, about 1738, and, when a boy, was taken by Master Proctor, (deacon of the First Baptist Church in Bos-

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en-venable reputation throughout the world. It is evident that it must not be measured by what education ought to be, but by what it had been. It is by no means certain that the schools of Boston were any better than those of the country before 1790; for, although the Boston schools were open the year round, while the country schools did not average six months, it is claimed that as much was learned in the six months as in the twelve, and while the school age was restricted to fourteen years in Boston, it was unlimited in the country, and girls as well as boys were taught in less crowded schools. If it be said that Boston has maintained a high rank in literature and mercantile enterprise, it may be also said, with truth, that the greater number of her literary men, and most enterprising merchants, were not born or educated in Boston. Of all the first set of teachers under the new system, not one was of Boston, and of the many hundreds that have succeeded them, the writer can not call to mind a half dozen Bostonians.

ton,) to be his apprentice. Before the Revolution, he became an usher, and, at the death of Deacon Proctor, was appointed master. In this office he continued till 1823, when, at the age of eighty-five, or thereabout, he was allowed a pension of six hundred dollars a year, and the rank of master, without any school. This was the first case of a pension on the records of the town, and but one other case has since occurred. How forcibly does this neglect of useful citizens contrast with the practice that prevails in every *civilized* country, of pensioning soldiers, often the most worthless members of the community, whose life, at best, is one continued warfare upon the true interests of society, and at variance with the leading principles of the Gospel of the Prince of Peace. Master Tileston was a very short and thick man, of a fair and ruddy complexion, and always wore the horsehair wig, bushy, but not curled, that was worn by the clergy of Boston, until near the end of the last century. When young, some accident by fire had crippled his right hand, and yet his penmanship was elegant for the times. He loved routine; and probably, if he had taught a school a century, he would never have improved any arrangement of it. Printed arithmetics were not used in the Boston schools till after the writer left them, and the custom was for the master to write a problem or two in the manuscript of the pupil every other day. No boy was allowed to cipher till he was eleven years old, and writing and ciphering were never performed on the same day. Master Tileston had thus been taught by Master Proctor, and all the sums he set for his pupils were copied exactly from his old manuscript. Any boy could copy the work from the manuscript of any other further advanced than himself, and the writer never heard of any explanation of any principle of arithmetic while he was at school. Indeed, the pupils believed that the master could not do the sums he set for them, and a story is told of the good old gentleman, which may not be true, but which is so characteristic as to afford a very just idea of the course of instruction, as well as of the simplicity of the superannuated pedagogue. It is said that a boy, who had done the sum set for him by Master Tileston, carried it up, as usual, for examination. The old gentleman, as usual, took out his manuscript, compared the slate with it, and pronounced it wrong. The boy went to his seat and reviewed his work, but finding no error in it, returned to the desk, and asked Mr. Tileston, to be good enough to examine the work, for he could find no error in it. This was too much to require of him. He growled, as his habit was when displeased, but he compared the sums again, and at last, with a triumphant smile, exclaimed, "see here, you *nurly* (gnarly) wretch, you have got it, ' If four tons of hay cost

so much, what will seven tons cost?" When it should be, "If four tons of *English* hay cost so and so. Now go and do it all over again." Whether this be true or not, there is no doubt of the truth of the two following anecdotes, which are told more to show the state of instruction in the schools, than to expose the incompetency of the teacher, who was evidently retained from pity or affectionate regard, long after his usefulness was at an end. Once, after the writer had done the two sums in subtraction, which had been set in his manuscript, being tired of idleness, and seeing the master at leisure, he ventured to go up to the desk and ask the master to set him another sum. This was a bold innovation, and the old gentleman considered it nothing less, but, as the pupil was somewhat of a favorite, he only growled as he took the manuscript, and said, "Uh, you nurlly wretch, you are never satisfied." Again, after the writer was apprenticed to Caleb Bingham, Master Tileston called at the bookstore, and, out of respect for the venerable man, the pupil wiped his pen on a rag that hung by the desk for that purpose, and suspended his work. The old gentleman approached the desk, and carefully raising the rag with his thumb and forefinger, said, "What is this for?" "To wipe the pen on, sir, when we stop writing," said the respectful pupil. "Uh! it may be well enough," said he, "but Master Proctor had no such thing." Master Tileston, always wiped out his pens with his little finger, and then cleaned his finger on the white hairs just under his wig. His model, Master Proctor, had been dead half a century, perhaps, but he still lived in the routine that he had established. When will school committees discover that it is incalculably cheaper to pension one such deserving and faithful servant, than intellectually to starve a whole generation of children.

James Carter, the master of the centre writing school, that was connected with Mr. Bingham's reading school, was a different man. He also had been a public teacher many years before the great change, and was renowned for his elegant penmanship. Imperious in school, he lived freely, and at least to the full extent of his means. Accustomed to what was called good society, he had the free and easy manners of his associates, and was not particularly fitted to mould the manners of the young. He appears to have ruled the schools and the committee until the change of systems, and he did not yield with a good grace to that order of things which brought with it some restraint and more labor, while it made his office subordinate, in fact, to the head of the reading school. He died, however, in the harness, for he could not afford to resign the salary allowed him although inadequate to his support.

The third writing master was John Vinall, who was born in Boston, and had been a teacher in Newburyport, seventeen years before he obtained the south writing school in his native city. He was a very unpopular man, and complaints, especially of coarseness of speech, were made to the committee; and, though he indignantly denied their truth, the opposition continued until he resigned, March 28th, 1795. He was tall, thin, always meanly dressed, when the writer became acquainted with him, and his features pock-marked were very ugly, but a long and familiar acquaintance with him leads the writer to say that, though miserly in his habits, and having a doubtful reputation as a justice of the peace, there was nothing in his language, or manners, to indicate that there was any truth in the charges brought against him as a teacher. He early purchased an estate on Beacon street, that afterwards became very valuable; and he was said to be useful as a political agent to his neighbor, Governor Hancock. It may have been so, but this would rather account for the prejudices against him, than prove him an unprincipled man. In politics he was a Jeffersonian republican, and this was enough, in those days, to ruin the prospects of any man who sought distinction in Boston. Mr. Vinall was the only teacher besides Mr. Bingham, that ventured to publish a book, and he composed an arithmetic, which never sold, and which, though recommended to others by the school committee, seems never to have been adopted for use in the Boston schools. He died in Boston about the time that Mr. Bingham did, leaving a son and two very worthy unmarried daughters.

While a private teacher in Boston, Mr. Bingham had published a small English grammar, which, being intended for his female pupils, he called "*The Young Lady's Accidence, or a short and easy Introduction to English Grammar; designed principally for the use of Young Learners, more especially those of the Fair Sex, though proper for either.*" When the author entered the public service, his book followed him. It was the first English grammar ever used in the Boston schools, and was still in use there when the writer entered them in 1801. It continued to be used until "An Abridgment of Murray's Grammar, by a Teacher of Youth"\* was substituted, and the sale of the Accidence declined, until at the author's death in 1817, it was no longer an object for any one to print it. It was a very small book of 60 pages, and was probably only intended for an abstract of principles to be more fully explained by the teacher. This was the second American English grammar, Webster's having preceded it a year or two. The British grammar, a better book than either, had been re-

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\* Ann Bullard, probably, the successor of Mr. Ticknor, at the South Reading School.

printed in 1784, and Dr. Lowth's had been reprinted for the use of Harvard College, but they were little known, and not at all used in public or private schools.

Mr. Bingham and Noah Webster took advantage of the dearth of school books at the revival of common schools, which followed the war of Independence, and they fairly divided the country between them. Until their day, the only reading books used in the schools were the Bible and psalter, with such meagre lessons as were found in the New England Primer and the spelling books of Fenning, Moore, Dilworth and Perry which were successively introduced before the Revolution, but all superseded by Webster's or Bingham's soon after that event. Perry's Sure Guide was much used, and died hard, after having undergone a revision in the hands of Isaiah Thomas, Jr., a son of the venerable printer of Worcester. The New England Primer never deserved the name of a spelling book, but was probably valued and used for the abridgment it contained of the assembly's catechism, which was always formally taught in all the public schools of Massachusetts, until toward the close of the eighteenth century. It was disused in the Boston schools some years before it lost ground in the rural districts; but, even in Boston, it was retained in the private dame schools for young children, as late as 1806. Spelling having been left to the writing masters of Boston more than a century, it might naturally be inferred that the graduates of the schools were all bad spellers, but there is no appearance of any such deficiency in the manuscripts that exist, and the probability is, that, on the introduction of new branches of study, spelling became neglected, and this important and very difficult study never, probably, was in a worse condition than it is at the present moment.\*

Our rivals both made reading and spelling books; and the reading books of Mr. Bingham far outstripped those of Mr. Webster, but the spelling book of the latter far distanced the Child's Companion of Mr. Bingham, which was a smaller book, and treated rather as an introduction to Webster's than a complete vocabulary. It was but little used when Mr. Bingham died, and now, like the Young Lady's Accidence, is merely a curiosity. The American Preceptor and Columbian Orator of Mr. Bingham contain few original pieces by him, but the selections were more lively than those of Webster, and better adapted to the taste of the community, which was not over critical or refined, and they held their ground against all competitors for at

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\* The writer has, in his hands, letters from more than five hundred school committee men, and spelling exercises of more than five thousand teachers, male, and female, to corroborate the opinion above expressed.

least a quarter of a century.\* The chief feature of Mr. Bingham's two books, was their original dialogues. Who wrote those in the *American Preceptor* is uncertain, but those in the *Orator* were mainly written by David Everett, a Dartmouth graduate, who came to Boston, and established the *Boston Patriot* some years afterward. He was no poet, but, in sport, wrote for the *Orator* that little piece, "You'd scarce expect one of my age, &c.," which has been the charm of the young American orators for half a century.

When geography began to be read in our public schools, and class books were read long before any lessons were recited or any maps used, Mr. Bingham prepared the small "*Astronomical and Geographical Catechism*," based upon Dr. Morse's *School Geography*, which was read occasionally by the highest class in the Boston reading schools. Many copies of the *Catechism* were sold annually, and, meagre as it was, it was the only book used, and was recited literally, without any explanation or illustration by teacher or pupil.

Mr. Bingham, in connection with his eldest daughter, published a small volume of "*Juvenile Letters*," a collection of familiar epistles between children, calculated to introduce them to the forms of letter-writing and English composition. He also translated *Atala*, an Indian tale by Chateaubriand, which is almost the only one of his works by which his style of English composition can be judged. Mr. Bingham was a good French scholar, and spoke that language fluently, but where he learned it is unknown. The translation of *Atala* was well executed, and several neat editions were printed and sold.

Mr. Bingham had a high reputation as a penman, and pupils came from a distance to receive lessons of him. He never taught penmanship after he entered the public service, but he retained a love for the art, and was often employed to open and ornament books of record, and to write diplomas. When Jenkins, the writing professor, published his system, Mr. Bingham did all the writing gratuitously. Soon after Mr. Bingham left the school in 1796, he published a set of copy slips, probably the first engraved slips ever published in America. The coarse and fine copies were in separate books, the former being engraved from patterns of his own writing, and the latter from those by the daughter before mentioned. They were both engraved by Samuel Hill, one of the earliest Boston engravers, but, though well done for the times, they would not be much esteemed now as patterns. Mr. Carter was far superior as a penman, but neither must be judged by the taste that now prevails.

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\* When the writer became their proprietor, they were little used, and he projected and published that series known as the *Pierpont Readers*, which for years had a run at least equal to their predecessors.



Mr. Bingham published no other work that can be called original. He republished an historical grammar, making some slight additions to adapt it to our schools. He published two or three editions of Sermons by Dr. Logan, a Scotch divine, and he edited an edition of the Memoirs of Stephen Burroughs. A publisher in Albany, hearing of his intimacy with the father of Stephen, the venerable pastor to whose church Mr. Bingham joined himself while at college, proposed to Mr. Bingham to edit an edition. Having more than doubts of the utility of such books, Mr. Bingham endeavored to dissuade the publisher from reviving what was passing into oblivion; but, when he found that the edition would be printed at any rate, he consented to supervise it, and inserted a few notes to explain circumstances, or to nullify the evil influence he feared. These are all the literary enterprises in which Caleb Bingham ever engaged as editor or publisher, and although they may seem mean by the side of some modern undertakings, it must be recollected that, although he may have stood second to Noah Webster, when they died, he long stood first in the number of books published, and always stood first in regard to the number published by himself. Moreover, it may be said that not one of Mr. Bingham's books proved a failure, while only one of Mr. Webster's, the Spelling Book, proved successful. Of course this remark does not include the Dictionary, which was published after the decease of Mr. Bingham, and owes its success more to others than to the industrious author.\*

The success of Mr. Bingham's books, and the increase of vertigo and headache, no doubt brought on by the confinement incident to his vocation, induced him to resign his office in September, 1796, and though he lived nearly twenty years afterward, he never resumed the business of instruction in any form. He did not lose his interest in schools, however, for he not only visited those of Boston, but those of New York and other remote cities; and his store was, for many years, the head quarters of the Boston teachers. Brown who succeeded Bingham; Bullard who followed Ticknor; Little, who, with a short interval, when Crosby or Sleeper was master, was successor to Cheney;

\* It is an amusing circumstance, and shows the uncertainty of biographical notices, that the excellent Dr. Allen, whose family was personally intimate with Mr. Bingham's, and who married a daughter of President Wheelock, to whom Mr. Bingham had been a pupil, assistant and amanuensis, in his Biographical Dictionary, improved edition, 1832, says of Mr. Bingham. "He published an interesting narrative, entitled *The Hunters, Young Lady's Accident, 1789, Epistolary Correspondence, the Columbian Orator.*" The "Epistolary Correspondence" was the "Juvenile Letters" for children, and "The Hunters" was an anecdote of an accident that happened to Hugh Holmes, and an Indian boy of Moor's school. Mr. Bingham, for his amusement, wrote the story on a large slate, and the writer of this note copied it on paper, drew one or two embellishments for it, and printed it as a picture book for children. It never sold, although true, and very interesting. The style in which it was printed was a warning.

Snelling who followed Carter; and Rufus Webb who succeeded Vinal, were all intimate with Mr. Bingham. The first set, also, kept up their acquaintance, and, probably, the second great reform of the schools originated at the book store, for to Elisha Ticknor, more than to any man, Boston owes the free Primary Schools, which, in 1819, superseded the little private schools, kept by women, in which the children of both sexes, for nearly thirty years after the great reform, were prepared to enter the reading and writing schools. Mr. Bingham was a great advocate for these primary free schools, and the counsellor whom Mr. Ticknor most highly esteemed; but both of the friends died before the schools were fully established.

As a bookseller, Mr. Bingham would not now be called enterprising. He printed his own books, which were so salable that he procured in exchange any thing else printed in the country. His sales of miscellaneous books were very limited, and his stock in trade what would now be called small. His store, No. 44 Cornhill, was a single room, not more than twenty by twenty-five feet, and most of the books upon his shelves were there the whole period of the writer's apprenticeship. He preferred to let publishers print his books and pay him a premium for the privilege; and from this source he received annually six or eight hundred dollars as late as 1816. In the transaction of his business he was perfectly just and liberal, but somewhat singular. This peculiarity consisted mainly in his unwillingness to incur any debt, or to have any thing to do with banks. The writer was seven years in his employ, and does not recollect ever to have seen a note of hand signed by him. The moment he commenced business, he felt the injustice of having an asking and a selling price, and he adopted the one-price system and adhered to it through life. Indeed, all the booksellers in Boston were induced, probably by him, to form an association, and, for twenty years, they had uniform prices and fixed rates of discount; an example that stood alone, and that no body of merchants at the present day could be persuaded to imitate. Mr. Bingham served several of the first years as secretary, the only officer they had.

The establishment of town libraries, to furnish suitable reading for the young, was a favorite design of Mr. Bingham, and a better selection of books could generally be found at his store than elsewhere, for this purpose. His advice, too, was relied on by town agents, and, although the number of libraries sold was not great, he supplied a goodly portion of them. When he wished to do something to evince his deep attachment to the place of his nativity, in January, 1803, he selected a library of one hundred and fifty valuable books, and pre-

sented them to the town of Salisbury, for the use of all children from nine to sixteen years of age. The donation was gratefully received and diligently used. Trustees managed the library, and the town, from time to time, made additions, till the volumes numbered five hundred. This was done at a time when a town library was a novelty, and the effect of this upon the citizens is thus described by Judge Church in his centennial address, (1841.)

"At that time, when books, especially useful to youth, were comparatively scarce, this donation was of peculiar value, and gratefully received by the town. It was a small beginning, but it infused into the youthful population a new impulse, and a taste for reading, before unknown, was soon discoverable amongst the young." A venerable minister of the town attributed much of that intelligence, which he claimed for the citizens of Salisbury, to the influence of their library; and the lady of a reverend librarian said with much feeling, "I recollect the joy we girls felt at having a library of our own; books to read of our own. What happy times! What friendly contests for this or that book on delivery days! The donor's memory was very dear to us all, boys and girls, men, women, and children." Mr. Bingham's letter, accompanying the donation, is almost an apology for the liberty taken. He says, "I well remember, when I was a boy, how ardently I longed for the opportunity of reading, but had no access to a library. It is more than probable that there are, at the present time, in my native town, many children who possess the same desire, and who are in the like unhappy predicament. This desire, I think I have it in my power, in a small degree, to gratify; and however whimsical the project may appear to those who have not considered the subject, I can not deny myself the pleasure of making the attempt." He concludes as follows: "Should it so happen that the books should be rejected, or there should be any disagreement, so that the object in view is like to be defeated, please retain the books till you hear further from me." This letter was written to his brother Daniel.

In 1793, before he was a bookseller, Caleb Bingham was the chief agent in establishing the Boston library, which, until the recent movement for a free library, was considered a most important institution. It was not free, however, except so far as that any citizen, who could afford it, might purchase a share, for about twenty dollars, and become a proprietor, paying an assessment of two or three dollars a year, to meet the expenses and secure an annual addition of books. Mr. Bingham had the initiatory meetings at his house, and officiated gratuitously, as librarian for about two years.

This library now contains about eighteen thousand volumes of valuable books, in French and English, and the proprietors have always been amongst the most intelligent and useful citizens of Boston. The library room was always over the arch, in front of the old Monument in Franklin Place, but the building, which is valuable, and belongs to the proprietors, is about to be demolished.

Mr. Bingham had some reputation as a singer, and took a leading part in the musical exercises when Washington visited Boston. He generally sat and sang with the choir wherever he worshipped. He was a religious man from his youth up, but he disappointed the expectation of his father's family when he opened a school instead of becoming a minister of the gospel. His faith was that of the orthodox congregationalists, and when that remarkable change came over the churches of Boston, which made them all Unitarian, he united with the few who remained true to their early belief, and endeavored to restore the ancient faith of the New England churches. Park street church was the result, and he was one of three who became responsible for the price of the land on which that church is situated.\* But though so attached to his faith that he left the church of Dr. Kirkland, who was remotely related to him, still, neither doctrines nor forms could repress the natural kindness and gentleness of his disposition. He had true friends in every branch of the household of faith, and all men were brethren, and equal in his eyes, not because he was a republican in religion as well as in politics, but because he was a sincere and humble Christian.

He was a kind man, of tender feelings, and ready for any act of philanthropy. His pupils, many of whom still survive, speak of him with the greatest respect and affection. In the school-room, his discipline was steady but not severe, and when the school committee required the reading and writing masters to give their separate opinions in writing on the subject of discipline, all, except Mr. Bingham, declared that corporal punishment was indispensable; but even he was not sure that it could be entirely dispensed with, "*unless he could select his pupils.*" Three of the masters, Carter, Vinall, and Cheney, were early complained of for severity, notwithstanding the committee had enjoined upon them all to exclude corporal punishment from the schools, and, in no case, ever to inflict it upon females. The writer was present when Mr. Bingham undertook to punish the colored house boy for repeated and provoking misconduct. The boy, who was about ten years old, understood his master too well, for, although the flagellation was inflicted

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\* The price was about thirty thousand dollars; and the sureties, Mr. Calhoun, a Scotchman, William Thurston, a lawyer, and Caleb Bingham.

with a slender rod, and a reluctant hand, on a back well protected, the rogue screamed most pitifully. He did not shed one tear, but Mr. Bingham shed so many and suffered so much, that he soon concluded that, as he could not bear any more, the boy could not, and the offender was released upon just such a promise as he had made and broken a hundred times before. This kindness of disposition, devoid of such weakness, however, for the incident just related took place after Mr. Bingham had suffered long from the painful disease that shook his system, was especially shown, while he was a director of the state prison, by his endeavors to reform the criminals, and to procure employment for them after the expiration of their sentences. He was particularly interested in the younger prisoners, and procured the pardon of several on the promise to watch over and provide for them. He loved his immediate family, and was strongly attached to his kindred, however remote the degree, and many a mile did he go out of his way to visit distant and poor relatives, with whom he generally left a substantial blessing. He had no enemies, but, his politics, which were well known, though never offensively proclaimed, effectually prevented him from attaining to any other distinction in Boston than that of an honest man. His politics, as has been hinted, were those of the Jeffersonian school. He was a Republican when the opposing party were called Federalists; and few men of his party, in Massachusetts, were distinguished for wealth, talents or influence. His former position as a public teacher does not appear to have affected his standing; but it was evident that after the first, and, perhaps, the second race of teachers retired, the Boston teachers sank into a subordinate class, and no longer claimed respectability on account of their office. There was a falling off in quality, and nothing was done, intellectually, to command the respect of the community. A quarter of a century after the great reform, the association of teachers wished to make a public demonstration, but it was difficult to find a teacher who would attempt a public address, and that, finally delivered, had no claims to notice. For the first quarter of the present century we do not find the public teachers taking any part in literary meetings, or leading in any improvement, and it was not until the establishment of the English High School, and the marriage of one or two of the teachers into wealthy families, that an impulse was given to the whole body, which has gone on increasing, although this numerous and powerful body have not yet assumed the rank and influence to which they ought to aspire. The great fault of the Boston system and that of New England, is the control to which teachers are subjected. It is well that a committee should watch over the general

interests of the schools; but it has always paralyzed them to have all the teachers subjected to any common plan, any fixed course of instruction. When the committee are satisfied with the moral character, intellectual attainments, and aptness for teaching, of any master, the responsibility should be laid upon him; liberty should be given him to teach in his own way, and to alter and improve where he thinks proper. This has never been done; but all have been stretched on the same bed, and cut down to the legal size, until the whole profession have been dwarfed, and an independent public teacher is a prodigy. But to return from this digression. When Mr. Gerry, contrary to the course of politics in Massachusetts, was elected governor, Mr. Bingham was appointed a director of the state prison, and so humanely and prudently did he discharge the duties of his office that he was allowed to retain it several years after his party went out of power. Mr. Gerry also appointed him a justice of the peace; but he never acted as a magistrate except in the one case of riot which has been mentioned. During the war of 1812-15, the president of the United States appointed him an assessor of internal taxes for Massachusetts, but Mr. Bingham declined the appointment. For many years he was a candidate of his party, for the senate of the state, but, in those days, there was no third party, and he was never elected, though better qualified, probably, than any other man of his party in Boston, for any office in the gift of the people. The writer of these remarks was not of the same party as his master, but, as the bookstore was the head quarters of the Republicans, he had an opportunity to study the character of the leading men, and he feels a pleasure in bearing testimony to the perfect uprightness and disinterested political integrity of Caleb Bingham.

As a scholar Mr. Bingham took a respectable rank. When he graduated, the Latin valedictory was awarded to him. His classmates declare him to have been the best speaker in college, and, to the last, he was an excellent reader. For two years or more he taught Moor's school, in which youths were fitted for college exclusively. He was thought worthy to conduct Phillips' Academy, and, in Boston, he sustained the highest reputation as a teacher. He was a good French scholar, when French was not a common attainment. His English style was more pure than is generally attained by profound classical scholars, and his conversational powers were acknowledged, his language being always free from affectation, barbarisms, grammatical errors, and those inversions and involutions, that so often corrupt the style of scholars who attend more to other languages than to their own.

In his home, Caleb Bingham was an amiable, contented, cheerful man. The disease of which he died, dropsy of the brain, was probably induced at school, and troubled him more and more, until he was seldom free from headache and vertigo. The autopsy, which was conducted by his friend, the late Dr. George C. Shattuck, revealed an unusual degree of congestion, and led the witnesses to wonder that his intellect had never been impaired. The only thing that seemed to relieve him was travelling, and for many years he made long journeys about twice a year. In one of these he went from Boston to Niagara Falls, with his eldest daughter, in his own chaise. Bad as the road was in 1806, he went from Albany to the Falls in seven days and a half; and, while there, he measured the Fall by a line dropped from Table Rock, and, allowing for the inclination of the line and the shrinkage, the measurement did not differ essentially from the more scientific results of later times. On his return, he visited Red Jacket, who always addressed him by the French epithet *chanoine*, which indicates the impression that his personal appearance made upon that distinguished chieftain. But his journeys generally terminated at the homestead in Salisbury. His native town occupied a deep place in his affections. His father's farm was that delightful spot between Washining and Washinee Lakes, and after the death of his father, it was a great consolation to him to own it. The land and the improvements cost him more than he could well afford, and the necessity of curtailing the family expenses at home, led to some unpleasant complaints akin to reproaches; the farm having been purchased contrary to the wish of his family, and carried on without much regard to their advice. As an instance of his unsuccessful agricultural efforts, it may be mentioned that, when the speculation in Merino sheep commenced, he purchased six at a hundred dollars each, and after keeping them six or seven years, till the flock, pure and mixed, was reckoned by many scores, if not by hundreds, the whole were sold for about half the original outlay. Gentlemen farmers, who live remote from their farms, know how to account for this. Before his death, his books had become disused, and the copyrights of little value, so that they, with his stock in trade, farm, and other property, did not produce ten thousand dollars.

Mr. Bingham left a widow and two daughters. The widow survived him but three or four years. Sophia, the eldest daughter, was the highly educated and accomplished wife of General Nathan Towson, paymaster general of the United States army. She resided at Washington, D. C., and bore no subordinate part in elevating and refining the society of the capitol. She and her husband have both

died within a few years, leaving an only daughter, who married Lieut. Caldwell, late of the United States Army, and grandson of her mother's only sister. The second daughter of Mr. Bingham is still living and unmarried.

Notwithstanding his unremitting suffering, Mr. Bingham was a cheerful man, ready to smile and to enjoy the innocent pleasures which nature and society spread around him. His affability made him welcome everywhere, and his conversation, perfectly free from egotism and pedantry, was always pure, as well as interesting and instructive. The writer was in his family at least seven years, and never heard a profane or indelicate expression, or any thing that approached it, proceeding from his mouth; he wishes this example was more generally followed by teachers and those who claim to be gentlemen. That the tone of Mr. Bingham's mind was cheerful, appears evident from his compilations, which are lively, compared with many others even of the present day. The introduction of familiar dialogues, mostly original, was peculiar to him. For these he was chiefly indebted, as has been said, to David Everett, a Dartmouth graduate, who resided in Boston, and edited the Boston Patriot, in which enterprise Mr. Bingham acted as agent for William Gray, Jonathan Harris, Thomas Melville, Aaron Hill, Samuel Brown, James Prince, Gen. H. Dearborn, and Gen. Wm. King, who, with the exception of Benjamin and Jonathan Austin, were long the only Republican leaders in Boston. The two Austins were attached to the Chronicle, which it was the intention of the Patriot to rival, if not supersede. Both papers were afterwards ingulphed in the Daily Advertiser, once their most inveterate political opponent. Mr. Bingham wrote little or nothing for his reading books, and this probably through modesty, rather than any lack of ability. The moral character of Mr. Bingham's school books, and the decided stand they took in opposition to slavery, even at that early day, speak loudly and well for his principles as a Christian and a sincere republican. His remarks were often playful and witty, never severe or uncharitable. A sort of quiet humor, tempered by the spirit of kindness, often appeared in his conduct and conversation and compelled his hearers to smile. The writer may be pardoned, if, to illustrate this peculiarity of his venerated master, he relates a circumstance that happened in his presence, not many years before the decease of Mr. Bingham. Something had corrupted the water of the well attached to the house, and the inmates agreed, one and all, to pump it dry, each pumping a large tubful in turn. Mr. Bingham being the eldest, began just at nightfall, when nothing was distinctly visible in the pump-room. He was so long in



filling the tub, that his wife began to joke at his expense, saying, among other things, that she could fill it in half the time. When it was full, and her turn came, Mr. Bingham turned out the water, and, unperceived by her, trod out the bottom of the tub. The sink was so far below the level of the floor that the bottom of the tub could not easily be felt, and Mrs. Bingham, conscious of all she had said, began to pump with alarming vigor. When, somewhat fatigued, she stooped and felt to ascertain how high the water had risen in the tub, but not feeling it, and unwilling to appear to flag, she went at it again with desperate earnestness, stooping ever and anon to seek encouragement in the rising of the innocent fluid. She pumped long, but exhausted her strength before the water failed. She bore the joke very well, but not so well as her husband and the rest of us did.

For two or three years previous to his death, Mr. Bingham paid less and less attention to business. The pain in his head was always present and often very intense, and it was a painful circumstance to us all, that, as he drew near to the shadowy vale, he could find no comforting staff in the faith in which he had always walked. His constant fear was that he should be a castaway, and a deep feeling of personal demerit seemed to add untold weight to his physical debility. The encouragement of his friends only seemed to add to his distress, and when the writer of this sketch remarked to him that "if he had no hope in death there was no hope for any one," he reproved the speaker for supposing that he had any claims to merit, and began plaintively to sing his favorite hymn :

"God of my life, look gently down,  
Behold the pains I feel;  
But I am dumb before thy throne,  
Nor dare dispute thy will."

Happily for all concerned, the darkness began to disperse a day or two before he died; and when death came, he was no longer to him the King of Terrors. He died in peace as he had always tried to live, and the last duties were performed by the writer and Hiram Bingham, then a student at Andover, and providentially on a visit to the family. This event took place on the Lord's day morning, April 8th, 1817, and the body was afterwards deposited in the family tomb of his wife, on Copp's Hill, at the north part of Boston.