

CHAPTER XVII.

DORCHESTER IN THE LAST HUNDRED YEARS.

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Minister of the First Parish, 1876-80.

THE history of Dorchester for the last hundred years is not a history of striking events. From the external side it lacks brilliancy and incident, and may not be very picturesque; but the history of no New-England town could be written from its external side only. Beneath the staid, quiet, homely life of the last century there have always been deep currents of moral, intellectual, and religious force, which worked silently and persistently, and carried the life of the town with them. In critical times we see these forces breaking out with great vehemence; but, for the most part, they move on as noiselessly as the sap ascends the channels of the tree.

We may see by looking at such a town as Dorchester, and many other New England towns, how much growth may take place in ideas, morals, and the internal life of a community without greatly affecting its external institutions. It may be truly said of the New-England town, what seems rather paradoxical when applied to material things, — that it is larger on the inside than on the outside. Nevertheless, we soon distrust the permanence and reality of the spirit of progress unless we see it taking outward form and effect; and Dorchester can point to substantial embodiments of that spirit in its own history. It may be said, however, that in this town progress always struggled with a powerful conservative tendency which prevented it from advancing too hastily on the one hand, while it retarded sometimes that advancement which was necessary for its health. If the old settlers could wake up and see the town as it is to-day, they would recognize a vast number of changes. Would they be willing to admit that every change is an improvement?

In our last chapter¹ we carried the history of Dorchester through the provincial period to the close of the Revolutionary War. We find the town, geographically and materially, just where it stood before, but with the old-time loyalty directed with increased fervor towards the new government to which it had transferred its allegiance, and which it had given so much of its

¹ Vol. II. p. 357.

blood and treasure to establish. It is a fact to be noted, that whatever conservatism Dorchester may have had in practical methods, it was always radical and progressive in its patriotism. Whenever the question of civil liberty came up, it was in the fore-front.

It has been noticed that Dorchester's jealousy of any interference with State rights and liberties led it to be suspicious and oppositive of the union of the colonies proposed in 1754; but when such a union was needed for the protection of the colonial liberties, the town was prompt and warm in its acceptance, and never wavered in its loyalty. In 1809, when Massachusetts was greatly disturbed and excited, owing to the imposition of the embargo, and inflammatory meetings were held in various towns protesting against the course of the Government, Dorchester was firm in its support. It drew up a remonstrance, and saw "with the sincerest sorrow that a number of towns were so lost to their national allegiance, and so heedless of the conflict which might result from the prosecution of their measures," that they had passed resolutions and presented petitions to the Legislature "highly insulting to the national authority, and appealing to the authority of the State to resist the laws of the Union on a subject exclusively within the constitutional authority of the Government of the United States. We consider," they add, "the union of the American States as the ark of our safety and the rock of our defence against invasion from without or violence from within. We will, therefore, cling to it as the last hope of our liberties." There was an apprehension in Dorchester that the motive of some of the leaders in that "uneasiness" was to demolish the republican government and to erect a hereditary monarchy on its ruins. "A system of this kind or any part of it," they said, "we are free to declare we will oppose to blood." If the views of the town upon the subject of State rights are not indicated with sufficient clearness in the preceding paragraphs, they are left beyond doubt in the paragraph which follows: "To resist by arms a law of our State Legislature of an interior and local nature would be treason against the Commonwealth. On such an occasion the inhabitants of this town would be found among the first to support the laws and repel the treason. It also cannot be less an act of treason against the National Government to resist by force a law of theirs on the subject of national concerns, although unfortunately such resistance should be sanctioned by the State Legislature."

Surely here is a change from the suspicious spirit of 1754, when Dorchester feared a union of the colonies as destructive to the liberty of the State. If such was the position of the town in 1809, we need not be surprised at the stand which it took in 1861. It is hardly necessary to say that during the war of 1812-14 the town, without distinction of party, used all its means to "defend its soil and repel the hostile invader."

A profound interest in the life and development of the nation, of which Dorchester was one of the first seeds, is a marked feature in its history; yet the local affairs of the town were never neglected. The arts of peace were

more sedulously cultivated than the arts of war. The public spirit, which was prompt to rally when the nation was in danger, manifested itself in the long years of peace and plenty. It is shown in all matters relating to public improvements, in the construction of roads, the care of the old cemetery, the administration of the schools, and in a pious regard for the interests of religion. While the town is anxious over the result of the embargo, it is seriously considering the question of "inoculation by cow-pox." We are impressed again with the importance of the ministerial function at this time. "The two reverend ministers of the town and the selectmen" were appointed a committee to return "a respectable answer" to the important and interesting letter addressed to them by the selectmen and committee of the town of Malden on this subject. The town afterward voted to approve of the method, and to recommend it to the inhabitants of the town; and the ministers were requested to read these votes to the congregations the next Lord's Day after divine service. The doctors were asked to keep a register of those inoculated, and to return it to the town clerk; but otherwise they do not seem to have been consulted. The ravages of small-pox, which had visited Dorchester in previous years, may have hastened a decision on this point.

In reading the town records we are struck by the thoroughness with which the committees did their duty. Dorchester evidently seemed to them an important place; it was worthy of their best work. The reports on the condition of schools and on the general subject of education are models of conscientious and painstaking fidelity; and some of them, made within the last forty years, would bear re-printing for their broad and sensible views. In another part of the town records we have from the committee on roads a long treatise on the art of road-making, showing great practical knowledge of the subject, and written not only to interest the town ear, but to influence the town pocket. The excellent roads of Dorchester to-day are not wholly owing to annexation.

The cause of education did not languish. The individual bequests to the school fund, already noticed in the first volume, were increased in 1797 by the gift of nearly ten acres of woodland from the Hon. James Bowdoin, son of Governor Bowdoin; and in 1803 by the gift of a lot of land containing about five thousand feet, from John Capen, Jr. Noah Clapp, town clerk, in a letter to the Massachusetts Historical Society in 1792, says that up to that time more than thirty from Dorchester had been graduated at Harvard College, and that more than twenty of these had been preachers of the gospel, — a fact which shows that a close relation was assumed between education and religion.

In 1784 the town voted "that such girls as can read in the Psalter be allowed to go to the Grammar School from the first day of June to the first day of October."¹ This is the first vote in which provision is made for the public education of girls. Though there were dame-schools in which they

¹ *Town Records*, iv. 79.

received instruction in sewing and reading and spelling, their attendance on the public schools seems to have been confined previously to one afternoon annually at the general catechising in the fall of the year, "where each child was expected to answer two questions at least from the Assembly's catechism."¹ By the year 1803 there were four annual schools established. The town made a small yearly appropriation for their support, the salary of the teacher being about what a private soldier receives now in our army, — thirteen dollars a month and board. The annual appropriation for schools in 1812 was \$2,700, and from 1820 to 1824, \$2,300. The six school-masters then received \$400 each, the income from school funds amounting to \$257. In the years 1825 and 1828 the appropriation was \$2,500; in 1830, \$2,300. In 1857 the amount voted for schools in Dorchester was \$23,622.98, or ten times as much as in 1830. The sum appropriated by the town for the public education of each child between the ages of five and fifteen was in that year (1857) \$13.18. Dorchester stood in that respect the third in the Commonwealth, and the second in Norfolk County, — the towns of Brookline and Nahant alone exceeding it. In 1869 — the last year of Dorchester's life as a town — the appropriation for schools was \$54,000.

A committee in 1827 reported it expedient to have a High School; but the report was not accepted, and final action was not taken until 1852, when an appropriation of \$6,000 was made for the building and a central location selected, so that four fifths of the children of the town were within two miles of the school-house. Such a central location was necessary, as the town, in spite of loss of territory, was still nine miles long and two and a half broad,² and contained eight thousand inhabitants. The High School was opened in December, 1852, when fifty-nine scholars were admitted. The first principal was Mr. William J. Rolfe, who was succeeded by Mr. Jonathan Kimball in 1856. Mr. Elbridge Smith is the present incumbent.

In the previous record the religious history of the town has been practically synonymous with the history of the parish. It continued to be so until the early part of this century. With the increase of population other houses of worship became necessary. With larger toleration and growth in opinion, Dorchester, characterized for nearly two hundred years by remarkable religious unity, became the home of a variety of churches and sects.

The Rev. Thaddeus Mason Harris succeeded the Rev. Moses Everett as pastor of the First Parish, and was ordained October, 1793. He was born in Charlestown, Mass., July 7, 1768; graduated at Harvard in 1787. He is well remembered by many of the old citizens of Dorchester and Boston for his genial nature, his sparkling wit, his aptness in the choice of texts and subjects, and the fountains of tears that were often unsealed in the delivery of his earnest and moving discourses. The shelves of Harvard College Library, of which he was librarian for a short time before going to Dorchester, bear many of his works, which attest his scholarship and the

¹ *History of Dorchester*, p. 450.

² *Records*, x. 610.

wide range of his studies in science, religion, and history. Dr. Harris was a prominent member of the Massachusetts Historical Society, and he deserves especial mention in this book because of his deep interest in the history of the town and of the church whose pastor he was for forty-three years. He did more than any one before him to collect and arrange the written, and to record the oral, traditions of the place and people.

Dr. Harris was succeeded by the Rev. Nathaniel Hall, who became associated with him as colleague in 1835, was made sole pastor in 1836, and



THADDEUS MASON HARRIS.¹

held the office till his death in 1875, — a period of forty years. Mr. Hall's saintly character and his devotion to his calling were marked features of his effective but unpretentious ministry. He was succeeded by the writer of this chapter.

In a period of two hundred and fifty years the First Parish of Dorchester had but ten successive ministers; but from the settlement of Richard Mather, in 1636, to 1876, — a period of two hundred and forty years, — there were but seven successive ministers, with an average pastorate of thirty-four years each. There have been six deacons who have held office over forty years each. Deacon Ebenezer Clapp, the father of the present deacon of that name, held office for fifty-one years. Deacon Henry Humphreys, one

¹ This cut follows a miniature likeness owned by his daughter, still living in South Boston. A copy is in *4 Mass. Hist. Coll.*, ii. See also *Funeral Sermon* by Rev. Nathaniel Hall.

of the present deacons, has served forty-eight years. Meeting-house Hill has been the site of the church building for two hundred and ten years. The society has had five meeting-houses, some of which have been previously noticed. The present building dates from 1816, but has received various additions and improvements.

There is one very interesting feature about the history of the First Parish, to which allusion was made on the two hundred and fiftieth anniversary of its formation, held June 17, 1880. It is, that, while from time to time there were controversies and agitations concerning practical measures, such as the introduction of a new hymn-book, or the change of the method of singing from "lining out" into singing by note, there is nothing in the history of the church which shows just when it ceased to be Calvinistic and became Unitarian. The transition was silently and almost insensibly made.¹

In 1806 the Second Church was formed at the south end of the parish, to meet the wants of the residents in that locality. The separation from the First Parish was very peaceably and affectionately made. Dr. Harris preached the dedication sermon of the new church.² When Dr. John Codman was ordained pastor in 1807, the sermon was preached by Dr. Channing. The property of the First Church and Parish was afterward divided between the two organizations and the subsequently formed Third Society, in proportion to the numbers of each.

The theological controversy, which the First Parish was spared, began soon after to rage with considerable violence in the Second Church. The theological councils that settled it could not allay the bitter feeling which was engendered, and which, though now extinct, continued for many years. As a result of this controversy, the Second Church allied itself with the Orthodox party, retaining its pastor, Dr. Codman. The opposing party withdrew and formed the Third Religious Society. Dr. Codman remained pastor of the Second Church till his death in 1847. The Rev. James H. Means was ordained and succeeded to the pulpit in 1848; and after a very successful pastorate of thirty years, marked also by eminent fidelity as a citizen of the town, he resigned in 1878. His successor, the present pastor, is the Rev. E. N. Packard.

The Third Religious Society, as already stated, was formed largely of members who left the Second Church of Dorchester. They built a meeting-house at the Lower Mills, which was dedicated in 1813, and was replaced by another built in 1840.³

Up to 1817, or a period of one hundred and eighty-seven years, Congregationalism was the only church polity known in Dorchester, and for one hundred and seventy-six years had been confined to a single organization. In 1817 the uniformity of the church government was broken by the estab-

¹ See *Proceedings of the 250th Anniversary of the First Church and Parish of Dorchester*, p. 118.

² The bill of expenses of that dedication service is still preserved by the Second Parish, and it is interesting to note among the items, "whiskey," "Madeira wine," and "gin for the sexton," as part of the approved expenses.

³ [The succession of pastors of this church is given in Dr. Peabody's chapter in the present volume.—ED.]

lishment of a Methodist Episcopal Church, whose first building was dedicated May 6, 1818, and succeeded by another in September, 1829.¹ The long roll of ministers which, in accordance with the Methodist system, this church has had, presents a strange contrast to the small number settled over the ancient church of the town.

A Baptist church was organized at Neponset in 1837; and another, — the North Baptist Church, corner of Sumner and Stoughton streets, — in 1840. An Episcopal church — St. Mary's — was organized in 1847. Instead of the single church existing at the beginning of this century, there are now twenty-one churches in the Dorchester District; namely, ten Congregational, — five of which are Trinitarian, four Unitarian, and one Universalist, — four Methodist, three Episcopalian, two Baptist, and two Roman Catholic.²

In the earliest years of its history the inhabitants of Dorchester found their chief occupation in fishing and farming and trading. Dorchester never developed great commercial importance, nor did it abound in manufactures; yet the water-power on the Neponset River was very early utilized, as was noticed in the first volume. The old grist mill was afterward followed by a fulling mill and a snuff mill. In 1727 a paper mill was established;³ and as early as 1765 the manufacture of chocolate was begun, — the first made in New England. Dorchester chocolate is still known throughout the country for its excellence; and chocolate and paper mills have continued to be very important features of its industry.

A corporation of the proprietors of mills on Mill Creek and Neponset River was formed in 1798. Several tanneries were also located in the town, and the pits where some of them stood have not yet been filled up.

In later years, while commerce at Commercial Point has decreased, the manufactories have mainly centred at Neponset; while South Boston — the district which Dorchester first ceded to the city of Boston — has become the site of many of the largest iron works in the country.⁴ What is still known as the Dorchester District, however, has been, and promises to remain for years to come, a place of residence for those whose occupation is in the city proper. A few of the old farms are left, but the majority have been cut up by streets and divided into building lots.

Dorchester has long been famous for its interest in horticulture. Dorchester and Roxbury furnished all the presidents and treasurers of the Massachusetts Horticultural Society for the first twenty years after its formation. The Rev. Dr. Harris, Captain William R. Austin, William Clapp, Zebedee Cook, Elijah Vose, Hon. Marshall P. Wilder, John Richardson, Samuel Downer, and Thaddeus Clapp are some among the living and the

¹ [See Dr. Dorchester's chapter in this volume. — ED.]

² If we add South Boston, Washington Village, and Hyde Park, which were included within the Dorchester limits at the beginning of this

century, the comparative number of churches would be much increased.

³ [See Vol. II., p. 462. — ED.]

⁴ [See the chapter on "The Industries of Boston," in Vol. IV. — ED.]

dead who have devoted themselves zealously to the culture and improvement of fruits and flowers. Hon. Marshall P. Wilder has cultivated in his own orchard more than twelve hundred kinds of fruit; and on one occasion sent over four hundred varieties of the pear for exhibition.¹

The love of the simple old colonial ways lingered long in Dorchester, and made it somewhat intolerant of modern inventions. The conservative character of the town was shown in its opposition to railroads. In 1842 a petition was presented to the Legislature for the privilege of building a railroad from Boston to Quincy, by any one of three routes. The town opposed it at a meeting, Feb. 2, 1842, saying: "A great portion of the road will lead through thickly-settled and populous parts of the town, crossing and running contiguous to public highways, and thereby making a permanent obstruction to the free intercourse of our citizens from one part of the town to another, and creating great and enduring danger and hazard to all travel upon the common roads." The town suggested that, if it be built at all, it be built over the marsh. The representative of the town in the Legislature was instructed to use his "utmost endeavor to prevent, if possible, so great a calamity to our town as must be the location of any railroad through it." A committee was appointed and counsel employed to oppose the petition before the Legislature. The town believed that "the property and the comfort, and perhaps the lives, of their fellow-citizens were deeply interested in the result of their remonstrance, and that the expenses of the ablest counsel were not to be considered when such interests were at stake." In 1844, when a petition was made for the formation of the Old Colony Road from Boston to Plymouth, and the petition for a road to Quincy was renewed, it was opposed again by the committee of the town; but opposition was finally ineffectual, and Dorchester was eventually doomed to the "calamity" of having two steam railroads, with branch tracks. The nature of that calamity would receive a new interpretation to-day, if these roads for any reason should be abandoned.

The earnest and devoted patriotism which Dorchester showed during the two wars with Great Britain was repeated in the war of the Rebellion. It is hardly worth while to refer to the attitude of the town as expressed in the resolutions which it was prompt to pass at the outbreak of the war. A complete exhibit of what was really done would furnish more substantial testimony. From the report of Adjutant-General Schouler, it appears that Dorchester furnished one thousand three hundred and forty-two men for the war, which was a surplus of one hundred and twenty-three over and above all demands. Of these, thirty-one were commissioned officers. From figures furnished by Mr. N. W. Tileston, who has given much study to this subject, we learn that the whole amount of money appropriated and expended by the town on account of the war, exclusive of State aid, was \$125,319.30. The amount received by the town from the State as State aid

¹ [See Colonel Wilder's chapter, in Vol. IV. — Ed.]

was \$65,606.99. In the work of relief among the soldiers, the churches of Dorchester did a noble service. The Benevolent Society of the First Parish was organized Nov. 8, 1861, largely for this object. This society alone during the war sent to the soldiers provisions and supplies worth from fifteen to twenty thousand dollars. The other churches did similar work, and together must have furnished a like amount. On Sunday, Aug. 31, 1862, when the news of the result of the second battle of Bull Run reached Dorchester, all the parishes in town dispensed with religious services in the afternoon, and applied themselves to picking lint, making bandages, and packing clothes, wine, jellies, and other refreshments for the sick and wounded. The First Parish alone sent off twenty-one cases the next day. The amount contributed by societies and private individuals for the relief of soldiers and seamen during the war exceeded the sum of \$50,000.

The number of Dorchester citizens who perished in the war was one hundred. This does not include the number of men from other towns who were sent as recruits to fill up the Dorchester companies, or those who served in the navy. A large number of these were killed or died in rebel prisons, or were never heard from.

In previous chapters we have noticed the fluctuation in the Dorchester boundary. While the soul of the town was never diminished, there was from time to time an atrophy of the body. A slice was lost here and a slice there, until the original territory was very much diminished. Until 1793 Dorchester, as has been said, was a part of Suffolk County, and thus practically joined to Boston in all judicial matters; but more than fifty years before this time an agitation was begun for a separation from Boston, the complaint being made that the people who had business at the courts in the city were long detained, to the great expense of time and money. The town, therefore, voted, in 1743, that it was desirable that the country town-meeting be separated from Boston, and erected into a district and county by itself. In 1784 this vote was re-affirmed. When the separation was finally made, in 1793, public opinion seems to have altered, and the change met with much opposition. The town presented a memorial to the Legislature protesting against the division of the county of Suffolk, and praying that Dorchester might be re-annexed thereto. The reasons for the opposition were the cost of additional buildings, and the great advantages attending the transaction of business in the metropolis, as the new shire town was in a place inconvenient for the memorialists. The opposition, however, was not successful; but the centrifugal force which threw off Dorchester, with neighboring towns, into a new county, did not save it from the centripetal movement which was gradually to draw the whole town back again, not only into Suffolk County, but within the corporate limits of Boston itself. Hungry Boston did not swallow Dorchester at one bite,— it took three meals to do it. It began in 1803, by nibbling at Dorchester Neck, now known as South Boston. Boston was steadily growing and becoming more

crowded. Dorchester Neck, which could easily be connected by a bridge, seemed to afford the needed relief. Most of the residents of Dorchester Neck were in favor of the annexation. They were far removed from the centre of the town, and the building of the bridge to Boston promised them many advantages. Dorchester was willing to have the bridge built, but voted against the annexation. A committee was appointed to present a remonstrance to the Legislature. The committee presented the lamentable fact that, since the incorporation of Dorchester, "the towns of Milton, Stoughton, and others had been set off from it, so that the remainder was only ten miles in length, and contained little more than seven thousand acres of land."

But a joint committee of both Houses reported in favor of the annexation, without compensation to Dorchester. At a town-meeting, where the action of the legislative committee was detailed, one of the Dorchester committee stated that \$6,000 might be obtained provided the town would not oppose the project; but the town was obstinate, and voted *not* to accept the \$6,000 on the conditions offered. The bill passed the Legislature March 6, 1804; and Dorchester lost the money and the territory too.

In 1836 the inhabitants of Little Neck, Washington Village, petitioned to be joined to Boston. They were four miles from the town house, and upwards of a mile from any school, and represented that they were wholly debarred from school privileges for several successive days in each month by the tide-water being permitted to overflow the public road. The town of Dorchester opposed the annexation. The committee of the General Court reported against it, because Boston would incur great expense in laying out the streets across the salt marsh; but the matter was only delayed, for Washington Village was finally annexed to Boston May 21, 1855.

It took but ten or twelve years for Boston to digest this last slice of territory, and then it was hungry for more. The sister town of Roxbury was the first victim. Her annexation to Boston in 1868, far from meeting the growing wants of Boston, only indicated that the annexation of Dorchester was but a question of time. In 1867 the subject was more or less agitated by the citizens of Dorchester themselves, who brought the matter before the Boston city government, and secured the appointment of a board of commissioners to confer with commissioners appointed by the town. The commission was unable to agree, but expressed the opinion that it might become desirable to annex a portion of the town of Dorchester, "in order to complete the elaborate system of drainage and harbor improvement devised for the benefit of Boston." No immediate action followed, but a year later the matter was taken up, — this time from the Boston side; and by order of the common council, passed Dec. 22, 1868, the mayor was requested to appoint a commission of three discreet and intelligent persons carefully to examine the subject in all its financial, industrial, and sanitary relations, and to report the result of their doings to the city council. The final report of this commission presented many interesting facts

which serve to show the condition of Dorchester on the eve of the annexation.¹

While Dorchester from 1657 had steadily lost in territory through re-division of its boundaries, there was a great gain in wealth and population. The population of Dorchester in 1855 was 8,340; in 1865, 10,707, — an increase of 2,377 in ten years; a gain of $28\frac{50}{100}$ per cent. The magnitude which town affairs had assumed is also seen by the annual appropriations at town-meetings. Notwithstanding the much greater geographical extent of the original town, its early expenses seem small enough when compared with those for 1869, — a few months before the vote on annexation was taken.² The result of the city commissioners' examination was a unanimous report for annexation, based on "the necessity for a part, and the desirability of the whole, of the territory for the present and prospective wants of the city, and the highly favorable financial, industrial, and sanitary condition of the town." The commissioners noted the "strong feeling of attachment to the name of the town and its history and traditions" which was manifested, and thought that, by the annexation of the whole territory, Dorchester might continue to retain her boundary and local history as a precinct of the city.

In May, 1869, the subject came up before the Legislature. The mayor and city council urged the annexation. The town of Dorchester was represented by a committee of eighteen gentlemen, who presented a petition signed by between eight and nine hundred citizens. The matter came to a hearing before the joint committee on towns. There was no organized opposition from Dorchester, but the measure was opposed by the Norfolk County Commissioners. As a result of these hearings a majority of the committee reported in favor of annexation, and presented the draft of a bill for that purpose. A minority report urged that the annexation would be of no commercial advantage to Boston, and that it would be of no benefit to Dorchester. "Her town affairs," they said, "appear to be well managed; her

¹ Its number of inhabitants was estimated at twelve thousand.

Dwelling-houses, May 1, 1868	1,830
Ratable polls	2,918
Legal voters	2,100
Churches	13
School-houses, of the larger class	7
" " " smaller class	3
One steam fire-engine, and several hand-engines	
Scholars	3,000
Acres of land	4,532

Valuation for 1868:—

Real estate	\$9,291,200
Personal	6,035,100

The financial condition of the town was as follows:—

Town debt	\$147,700.00
Cash on hand Feb. 1, 1869	
Due from State and for taxes	111,092.41
Actual debt	\$36,607.59
Valuation of town property	237,182.26

² The appropriations for that year were as follows:—

For Schools	\$54,000
Poor in alms-house	5,000
Poor out of alms-house	3,500
Insane at hospital	2,000
Fire department	10,000
Highways	25,000
Volunteer companies	1,050
Town officers	6,000
Cemeteries	1,500
Instalments and interest	27,000
Interest in anticipation of taxes	5,000
Abatement of taxes	4,000
Lighting streets	6,000
Police and watch	8,000
Incidental expenses	10,000
Removal of engine-house No. 3	2,000
Widening of Hancock Street	5,000
" " Minot "	4,000
" " Adams "	6,000
" " Bird "	3,000
Total	\$188,050

roads are in good condition; her schools are among the best in the Commonwealth: and we fail to see that there is anything in her local affairs which cannot be as well provided for by the town as by Boston, and with as great economy." The Legislature accepted the majority report, and passed an act annexing the town, provided that a majority of legal voters in Boston and in Dorchester were in favor of it. A special election was held simultaneously in both places, on June 22, 1869. The whole number of votes cast in Dorchester was 1,654. There were 928 for annexation and 726 against, — a majority of 202. According to the provisions of the act, the annexation took place on the first Monday in January (4th), 1870.

The last town-meeting was held Dec. 28, 1869, when the reports of the selectmen were received, and a vote of thanks tendered to all the town officers. And thus the town-meeting, which Dorchester was the first of the New England settlements to establish, ceased to be held in the parent town; but only when the town itself had no longer an existence. By this act of annexation the area of Boston, which with the annexation of Roxbury amounted to 5,370 acres, was nearly doubled, — Dorchester adding 4,532 acres. If we add the area which Boston acquired by annexing South Boston and Washington Village, 900 acres, the total acreage she obtained from Dorchester was 5,432.

It is now ten years since the annexation, covering a period of long business depression, unfavorable to rapid growth; but the results of the union with Boston are plainly visible. Houses are now springing up on hill and plain. Here and there a long block of brick buildings disturbs with its uniformity the picturesque variety of rural architecture, and reminds the old resident of the spread of the city limits. The work of cutting new streets, extending the sewers and water-pipes, and improving the roads goes steadily on. The stranger to-day who wishes to see how Boston is growing as a place of residence must inspect the Dorchester district. One hundred and seventy-five buildings were erected here in 1880, the greater number of these being dwelling-houses. By the latest census returns, we find that the Dorchester District, as it was before the ward division, has a population of twenty thousand, — an increase of eight thousand in ten years.

Amid all the changes which have been made and those which are still making, there is one spot in the town where the colonial, the provincial, and the national periods are all blended in the associations of the tablets which mark the resting-places of the dead. The old burying-ground is sacredly preserved. New and beautiful cemeteries have been added in other parts of the town, yet here, where the dust of the ancient settlers is gathered together, the iron gate is still open for the funeral cortége.

S. J. Parrows.