

*Miss Sarah Bacon.*

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A T O K E N

OF A

People's and their (late) Pastor's

R E G A R D .

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PROCEEDINGS

OF A

SOCIAL GATHERING,

AND THE

PRESENTATION OF A GOLD WATCH

TO THE

REV. SAMUEL HUNT,

AT THE TOWN HALL IN NATICK,

JUNE 21, 1850.



BOSTON:

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TO MY MANY KIND FRIENDS IN NATICK:

During my ministry among you, I have been constantly receiving tokens of your regard and liberality. The only return, however, I have been enabled to make, has been a more decided purpose and earnest effort to serve you, with greater fidelity, in the station I have been called to occupy. But now that opportunity is taken from me; and that too, just at the moment, when your *recent* manifestations of generous sympathy make me doubly anxious to acknowledge my gratitude to you—at least to afford some other expression of it, than the mere *remembered* words of our last parting interview. And yet what have I to give? In kind, nothing commensurate with what I have received. With Peter I can say: Silver and gold have I none; but such as I have give I,—the *recorded* acknowledgment of my obligation, for what you have done for me; and for *her*, “the loved and lost one, who now sleeps far away, amid the scenes of her youth” on her “Island home.”

Accept then, as a feeble testimonial of my remembrance, this *printed* Report of a meeting, of which I can never think, but with feelings of the deepest interest and gratitude. *Preserve it for my sake*: and may its perusal, in coming years, when I may be far distant, or in my grave, call up to your recollections, scenes hallowed by Friendship and the sacred relation of Pastor and People.

July, 1850.

S. H.

NOTE.—In this report of the remarks made, perfect accuracy is not vouched for, although the substance, and, generally, the exact form of expression are given.

## PROCEEDINGS, ETC.

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### EXTRACT FROM THE LETTER OF INVITATION.

NATICK, June 11, 1850.

REV. AND DEAR SIR :

I have the pleasure of informing you that your friends here propose meeting you on some evening of next week, for the purpose of manifesting their high appreciation of your personal worth, and of the loss they are obliged to sustain in your removal from the interesting and sacred relation you have so long and so ably sustained among them. We desire *once* more, at least, to take the hand that has so often been extended to us, in friendly recognition, and to give you *our* farewell.

And, Sir, lest amid new and perhaps more pleasant and interesting companionships, you might be tempted to forget your friends here, they propose forging a little *golden link* which they hope—from its *frequent use*, more than from any *intrinsic value* it may possess—may serve to remind you of them. We wish you to designate on what evening it will be convenient for you to meet us at the Town Hall, so that notice may be given next Sabbath. Gen. Wilson will make the presentation speech, and we anticipate much pleasure in meeting you. \* \* \* \*

In behalf of the Committee,

Very respectfully yours,

E. C. MORSE.

## EXTRACT FROM REPLY.

ATTLEBORO', June 14, 1850.

DEAR SIR :

Yours of the 14th inst. has been received. \* \* \* Of course, I can but feel both grateful and flattered by the character of the invitation you have extended to me, and the kind terms in which it was expressed. It will but add another to the many *links* that bind me to the good people of Natick; and although it may occasion additional pangs of regret in view of my separation from them, still it can but alleviate the severity of the blow that has severed the connection which has for eleven years subsisted between us.

It will afford me great pleasure to meet you at the Town Hall as you propose, on Friday evening, the 21st inst., if that shall best consist with your convenience. \* \* \*

Yours, very truly,

SAMUEL HUNT.

E. C. MORSE, ESQ.

According to the intimations above given, an invitation having been extended from the pulpit, to "the *friends* of the Rev. Mr. Hunt to meet him in the Town Hall," a large number assembled on the evening designated. The most of the evening having been spent in friendly greeting and social conversation, the meeting was called to order. Prayer was offered by Rev. Mr. Watson, of the Baptist church in South Natick, after singing

"Blest be the tie that binds," &c.

Gen. Wilson then presented the *watch* with the following remarks :

RESPECTED FRIEND :

The relations which have existed between us for eleven years having now been dissolved, we have assembled here to-night to express our high appreciation of your services as a pastor, our profound respect for your character as a man, and our personal regard for you as a friend. We are here, also, to pass a few fleeting moments in your society—to exchange with you a few parting words—to take you once more by the hand, and with hearts overflowing with emotion, to bid you farewell.

Could these friends have controlled events, the chain that bound us together in the relation of pastor and people would have remained unbroken. You would have continued with us and of us. Having passed your days with us in the performance of your duties, participating in our joys and sharing in our sorrows, when your "race of existence was run," we would have you repose in the bosom of our mother earth with the people of your early choice—in yonder spot, hallowed and consecrated as the last resting-place of this people and their children.

But it has been ordered otherwise. We must acquiesce in an event we could not avert. You are to leave us, to seek other fields of labor—to form new relations—to gather around you other friends. But, Sir, wherever you may go, be assured that you will bear with you our warmest wishes, that heaven will shower upon your pathway its choicest blessings. Wherever in the providence of God you may be summoned to labor, may friends, true-hearted, steadfast friends, cluster around you to cheer you onward in every beneficent effort to advance the cause of religion and humanity.

You will leave behind you, Sir, in retiring from the place you have so long filled, many evidences of your deep and abiding interest in our present prosperity and future welfare. The recollection of your many acts of kindness will be cherished by us with unabated affection until the hearts upon which these acts are engraved shall cease to beat forever.

Desirous that you should carry with you some parting token of our friendship, your friends have purchased the Watch I hold in my hand, and have commissioned me to present it to you. In their behalf I beg you to accept it. Take it, Sir,—cherish it, not for its intrinsic worth, for it is of slight value, but as a trifling tribute to your worth, and a memento of the respect, esteem and affection of its donors. As a memorial of our friendship I trust you will not consider it altogether valueless. It will not beat more accurately the passing moments than will the pulsations of our hearts ever beat responsive to the friendship we entertain for you.

We fondly indulge the hope, Sir, that in after life, amid its pressing cares and duties, it will sometimes remind you of the friends of those

"Earlier days, and calmer hours,  
When heart with heart delights to blend."



In the calm and quiet of your study, where the world and its cares are shut out, as the ear shall hear it beat the fleeting seconds, or the eye see it mark the passing hours, may it recall to mind reminiscences of the past, recollections of these scenes, of this place where were passed the first years of your ministry, where were spent so many years of your early manhood, that portion of existence when impressions are most indelibly engraved upon the mind and heart, where your children were born, and where your home was blessed and made joyous by the grace, love and piety of the wife of your bosom, the pure and gentle being, the loved and lost one, who now sleeps far away amid the scenes of her youth, but whose memory will ever be fondly cherished by this people, for

“None knew her but to love her,  
Nor named her but to praise.”

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The following inscription was elegantly engraved upon the watch.

*Presented to the*  
**Rev. Samuel Hunt,**  
*by his Friends in*  
*Natick, June 21,*  
*1850.*

The accompanying reply was then made, the choir sung pieces appropriate to the occasion, the parting hand was given and the last farewell spoken, and we separated, never *all* to meet again in Time; but — may I *hope?* — in Eternity,

“On that blest shore  
Where billows cease to beat, and tempests never roar.”

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I cannot well express to you, Sir, nor to this large company, the deep and grateful feelings of my heart for this renewed expression of your regard. The presence of so many, the rich and beautiful gift you have made, and the kind words with which you, as the almoner of their generosity, have accompanied its presentation, all conspire to strengthen impressions already made, and entwine more closely my affections around the many, many friends I love, and whom I

can never cease to love, so long as the ability to love remains. And although, on the one hand, they can but increase my feelings of regret and sadness, as I think of my separation from you, and bear in mind that we have but met to extend the *parting* hand and say our last farewell; still I can but feel, on the other, that they will alleviate the pain of that separation and soothe somewhat the anguish of our final adieu.

As I have said, I cannot tell you how much I prize this social gathering of my friends, met for the purpose which has brought you together. I may however indicate, nor does it seem improper that I should indicate some of the reasons why I should prize, and highly prize it. And if the few remarks I may make are personal, and mainly personal, in their character and bearing, I trust that my motives for so doing will be duly appreciated and regarded.

I have alluded to the pain of *separation*. But this is not all. By the accompanying circumstances, to which you have referred—circumstances too, which at a distance will be but vaguely and imperfectly apprehended—there will inevitably be excited, in the public mind, the suspicion of delinquency. And although there has been a singular and marked absence of any assigned *reasons*; although completely exonerated by the action of both the Church and Council of even the slightest imputation of blame, or *failure* even; still I expect, where the facts of the case are not known, to feel, with something of their bitter significance, the force of Shakspeare's oft quoted words:

“He that steals my purse steals trash. 'T was mine, 't is his,  
And has been the slave of thousands. But he that  
Filches from me my good name, robs me of that  
Which not enricheth him, but makes me poor indeed.”

Whatever then shall tend in the least degree to weaken or remove this suspicion, or reassure the public confidence, that *so large a proportion* of this community do not deem me unworthy of this marked exhibition of their regard, is most grateful to my feelings. Nor can I ever fail to remember this occasion, this rich, this generous, this *golden* gift, with the deepest interest. Like the remembered virtues of departed friends, which do but increase the anguish of separation, although we garner them up, in the store-house of our recollections, as the choicest relics they have left behind; so this demonstration,

while it does but quicken my feelings of regret and sadness at leaving you, will nevertheless be cherished, in the coming years of my future life,—should such be allotted me,—as among the most pleasing reminiscences of the past.

And not only so, but I feel some degree of assurance, from what I am now permitted to witness, that for a while at least, I may be remembered by you. “It is one of my saddest thoughts,” said a friend to me once, “that I shall be forgotten.” And who is there before me, who has not had his thoughts saddened by a similar reflection?

“To have no whispering of a name on earth;  
Such thought is cold about the heart, it chills the blood.”

And although the thing is, in itself, inevitable, and we must ultimately bow before the mandate that shall consign us to oblivion, it will yet be some comfort to think, that that doom may be deferred a little, and our memory be awhile rescued from its dark and fatal influence. I know, Sir, that I shall soon be forgotten, that my name will soon cease to be spoken, and that my memory will soon fade from your recollections. Other scenes, other companionships and the daily attrition of toil and time will conspire to produce a result at once so humiliating and sad. Your meeting this evening, however, leads me to hope that that hour may not arrive so speedily as otherwise I might reasonably have apprehended. Should I not prize it?

No doubt *I* shall be forgotten. But can I ever forget *you*? Can I ever forget, that this people—if I may be allowed the expression—were my *first love*? That, here was formed my first pastoral relation? That, here I entered, with all the freshness of youthful enthusiasm, upon my then recently assumed professional and ministerial responsibilities? That, it was in connection with *your* moral and religious experience, that were unfolded to my view, in all their stern and significant features, the greatness and difficulty of the work I had undertaken? That, it was here for the first time, and among you, and that with an intensity of interest I can feebly describe, I watched that wonderful moving panorama of life, those “dissolving views” of human progress, as infancy glided imperceptibly into childhood, childhood into youth, youth into manhood and manhood into old age; while old age itself was lost amid the shadows of

the grave? That, here, as you, Sir, have affectingly alluded to it, I spent nearly the whole of my domestic life, with the dear departed companion of my youth and the mother of my children? That, here those children were born, and here *Death claimed his first tribute for the grave?* That, here I walked those many weary months of sorrow, enveloped in that strange darkness, that unwonted eclipse which disease and death shed upon my pathway? That, here so many words of sympathy were spoken, and so many acts of kindness performed? Can I forget all this? No: I *must* remember. You may forget: I never can. As the sailor, leaving his native land, gazes upon some lofty mountain which fixes his attention, long after the haze of distance shall have hid everything else from his view, so, no doubt, to me will this place, with its tender and hallowed associations, stand conspicuous among the receding recollections of the Past, the longest to be remembered, the last to be forgotten.

I should, however, do violence to my own feelings, were I not to make a special reference, which I know you will pardon me for making. I allude to the particular exhibitions of kindness and generosity on the part of the ladies of my late congregation. No one but myself is aware of the continuous and unobtrusive acts of friendly regard which were constantly exhibited by them, to my dear wife and family, so long as she lived and that family remained unbroken. Not only her wardrobe, but almost every room of that then happy home presented rich and valuable evidences of their kindly interest and liberality. And their more recent manifestation of esteem and confidence, their efficient agency in securing this meeting and your rich gift, merit and receive my warmest and most heartfelt recognition. Let me assure the LADIES OF NATICK, that they can never cease to hold the highest place in my esteem and grateful remembrance.

The word of consolation has been sometimes whispered in my ear, and the hope expressed, that I shall find a *better place*, and be more eligibly located. I know not, Sir, what may be before me. Nor am I specially anxious to know; for, I think I can, in some good degree, adopt the language of the Christian lyricist, and from the heart exclaim,

My God: I would not long to see  
 My fate with curious eyes;  
 What gloomy lines are writ for me  
 Or what bright scenes may rise.

Concerning that I have been enabled to be free from any painful anxiety. Feeling that I can adopt Agur's petition, that God would give me neither poverty or riches, but food convenient for me; I have a strong faith and an abiding confidence that that prayer will be answered; and, if there is work to be done by me, that the *place* will be pointed out, and provision made for my necessities while I shall occupy it. But can I ever expect, that the same or similar sources of interest will ever be connected with any other spot, that, to my view, cluster around this! Externally it may be equally, or more eligible; but, in *the* things that bind me to Natick, it must ever be, in some degree, deficient. As the Swiss emigrant, in a foreign and more genial clime, may find more of the comforts and riches of life, and yet pine for his youthful mountain-home, so, I doubt not, whatever may be the external circumstances of my future experience, my memory will revert to this as the *youth* of my ministry, the spot consecrated by the dearest and tenderest recollections of former days.

And yet I would neither use the language of exaggeration nor pretend to feelings I do not possess. Anxious as I am to assure you of my grateful remembrance of your kindnesses to me, I would not affect forgetfulness of what is painful. Mine has indeed been a mingled experience. A dark shading has dimmed the otherwise bright picture of my history here. I grieve that my ministry has been no more profitable; that so few have sought and obtained the Pearl of Great Price; that I leave so many without hope and without God in the world. Nor will it be easy to forget those agencies, whose *result* has rendered this meeting appropriate and so desirable—agencies which have changed the current of events here, and given a new aspect to the moral and religious aspect of this community, as well as to my own experience. Like the remembered nightmare of a disturbed sleep the impression made cannot easily be shaken off. And yet I would forget and forgive.

But it is time I should draw my remarks to a close. It had indeed suggested itself to my mind, that I might have properly dwelt upon some of the general principles of my conduct among you, and reviewed, slightly indeed, my personal and ministerial intercourse with this community. But neither time nor circumstances will permit. Besides, my feelings have urged me to the

personal reference I have made; and I have taken counsel from them more, perhaps, than a severer taste or the maxims of a cold propriety would justify. And now, as the moment of separation hastens, let me once more express the deep sense of my gratitude for this occasion, *especially for this very valuable gift*. Nothing could have been more acceptable, as nothing could have been more significant of the purpose for which it is given. And be assured, I shall seldom use it to take note of the "passing moments," without thinking of the *time* I spent with you — the *time* I parted from you.

I could indeed have hoped that my labors among you might have reached a different conclusion — that it might have been my privilege, mingling my energies with yours, to have aided in guiding the uncommon, the almost unprecedented enterprise and thrift of this community into the channels of an intelligent morality — an enlightened, consistent piety. No higher ambition need fire the soul of any one, than to be the honored instrument of God in laying the broad and deep foundations of the future success and welfare of a place like this. I could have hoped, that, having borne with the mistakes and failures of my youth and inexperience, you might now be served with whatever of ability, greater maturity of years, the fruits of experience and trials, and a more simple devotion to your interests might have afforded. That hope, however, like the other hopes of a too sanguine spirit, has failed me; and I leave, myself to labor in another field, and other hands to toil in this, to reap, I would hope, a rich harvest for your well-being in Time — your salvation in Eternity. And now, dear friends, I must say Farewell, —

A word that must be, and hath been,  
A sound which makes us linger yet — FAREWELL.



61-62-63