

and perseverance. Give us the best possible Bread, Butter, and Cheese, Wine, Beer, and Cider, Houses, Ships, and Steamboats, Gardens, Orchards, Fields, not to mention Clothes or Cooks. If your investigations lead accidentally to any deep discovery, rejoice, and cry "Eureka!" But never institute any experiment with a view or a hope of discovering the first and smallest particles of matter.

I believe with Father Abraham and Sir Isaac Newton in the existence of spirit distinct from matter, and resign to the Universal Spirit the government of his heavens and earth.

I pray you to consider this letter as confidential. If it should get abroad, I should be thought a candidate for the new Hospital, before it will be ready to receive

Your obliged Servant,

JOHN ADAMS.

Professor GORHAM.

Mr. DEANE presented, in the name of Mr. W. F. Poole, a copy of the beautiful new edition of Johnson's "Wonder-Working Providence," of which Mr. Poole is the editor. Mr. Deane availed himself of the occasion to speak in high terms of the editorial labors of Mr. Poole in preparing this new edition for the press; and, on his motion, the thanks of the Society were ordered for the gift.

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#### DECEMBER MEETING.

A stated monthly meeting of the Society was held this day, Thursday, December 12, at eleven o'clock, A.M.; Vice-President Colonel ASPINWALL, in the chair.

The Librarian announced donations from the American Academy of Arts and Sciences; the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions; the Essex Institute; Lawrence Academy, in Groton; the State Historical Society of Iowa; the Trustees of Oberlin College; the Editors of the "Advocate"; John H. Ellis, Esq.; Professor Daniel C. Gilman; Reuben A. Guild, Esq.; Benjamin P. Johnson, Esq.; Henry O'Reilly, Esq.; Charles Scribner & Co.; Edward Shippen, Esq.; Rev. E. M. P. Wells, D.D.; Wm. A. Whitehead, Esq.; and from Messrs. Brigham, Green, Lawrence, Metcalf, C. Robbins, Sibley, Wheatland, Whitmore, and Winthrop, of the Society.

The Corresponding Secretary read a letter from James C. Farish, M.D., dated Yarmouth, Nova Scotia, November 19, 1867, which inclosed a copy of an inscription upon a stone found at the surface of the ground on the shore of Yarmouth, a few feet above high-water mark. The writer was desirous of obtaining some information or opinion concerning this inscription.

A communication from Mr. George T. Paine, of the "Narragansett Club," Providence, R.I., was read to the meeting, asking leave to reprint the letters of Roger Williams published in the Society's volumes, and to compare the printed letter of Williams to Major Mason, with the transcript of the letter (made by Williams himself, and sent to Governor Prence, of Plymouth) in the Society's Library; and his request was granted.

Mr. BRIGHAM read the following passage from the Nineteenth volume of the Sussex "Archæological Collections," p. 67, relating to William Shirley, Governor of Massachusetts, 1741-56:—

“ While at Boston, General Shirley built a house for himself, with bricks imported from England at a vast expense, which he afterwards covered, both within and without, with boards. The house, which remains, is called ‘ Shirley House.’ ”

Mr. Brigham stated that the house, which of late years has been known as the “ Eustis House,” had lately been removed from its ancient site; that it was found that the cavities between the outside and inside boarding were filled with bricks, according to the fashion of the time; that these bricks might have been imported, but it was hardly possible, inasmuch as, at the time when the house was built, — which was between 1740 and 1750, — there were bricks enough made in the Province, and suitable, too, for the purpose for which these were used.

J. Winter Jones, F.S.A., Principal Librarian of the British Museum, was elected a Corresponding Member.

Mr. AMORY read the following paper on the seals of the Colony and of the State of Massachusetts: —

### *Seals of Massachusetts.*

No full or satisfactory account of its seals, State, Provincial, or Colonial, is found in the Histories of Massachusetts. Information on the subject is only to be gathered from records or similar sources. In a portion of the present inquiry may be traced the footprints of diligent explorers; and acknowledgment is due to our associate, Mr. Joseph B. Felt, who, in the appendix to his “ History of the Currency of Massachusetts,” printed in 1839 for restricted circulation, has left, on many points, little to glean.

The use of seals, for authenticating documents and adding solemnity to important transactions, is believed to be as an-

cient as civilization. Heraldic devices were the product and growth of feudal times. When war was the chief occupation of man, and its leaders and principal combatants rode to the field, clad in mail, with visor closed, the blazon on the shield was frequently the only mark distinguishing friend from foe. These devices, at first personal, came in time to be hereditary, and transmitted from sire to son; each family of note for possessions or public service retained through its several generations and branches the arms selected by its founder, and confirmed by the heralds as its exclusive inheritance. These arms were carved on precious stones, and worn as signet rings, or engraved on broader surfaces of metal. Impressions from them, on wax, were affixed by feudal superiors to their treaties and laws; by personages of less degree, to their deeds and obligations. In the mother-country, upon the accession of each successive monarch to the throne, a new seal is prepared, with the royal arms on one side, and some appropriate device upon the other; the old seal becoming by custom the perquisite of the Lord Chancellor at the time of the demise. It is one of the functions of that officer to keep the great seal in his custody; and public acts derive their validity and sanction from the assent of the crown, indicated by the royal signature, and by having attached to the instruments that specify their purport, disks of wax, for the most part of later years sheathed in paper, whereon the seal has been impressed. Such impressions were no doubt affixed to the grand patents of 1606, from the crown to the London and Plymouth companies, as to that of the Council of New England in 1620, under which these New-England States were planted; and also to the charters of the several colonies, delegating powers of government and legislation. Seals being no exclusive privilege of crowned heads or private individuals, but a very essential element of all corporate bodies, the Grand Council, as it is sometimes styled, was presumed to have had a seal. There could be little doubt

it had been attached to the numerous grants within its territorial limits; yet all the impressions that remained upon such patents as have been preserved are too broken and defaced to enable us to distinguish the device. The attention of our associate, Mr. Deane, whose historical acumen nothing escapes, having been two years ago called to the subject by Dr. Palfrey, a paper in our recent volume of Proceedings, 1866-67, at page 470, furnishes the result of his researches. He had observed upon the reverse of the titlepage of Captain Smith's "Advertisements for the unexperienced Planters of New England," published in 1631, a coat of arms with which he was not familiar. He soon after found the same arms upon an elaborately engraved titlepage of Smith's "History of Virginia, New England, & the Summer Isles," 1624. A part of this titlepage was a curtailed map; and observing, near that part of it representing Virginia, the arms of the Virginia Company adopted by that colony; near the Islands, the arms belonging to them, — it was a natural conclusion that a third coat, near the delineation of New England, identical with that in the "Advertisements," was what he sought. A copy of it forms part of the titlepage of Dr. Palfrey's "History of New England," ed. 1865, and will be found, with the communication alluded to, in the Proceedings, at page 471. The shield is party per fess. In the upper portion are the royal arms of England, quartered with the Harp of Erin and Lion of Scotland; and the lower compartment is barry wavy of six, argent and azure. The crest is Neptune mounted upon a sea-horse, with a trident held aloft. The supporters are two allegorical female figures, which may be interpreted to represent wisdom and science; and the motto "*Gens incognita mihi serviet.*"

It seems reasonable to presume that the proprietary plantations, derived from the council, required no other seals than those of their proprietors. In the titlepage of the Plymouth Records is to be found a vignette of the seal of that colony.

The shield is divided by a cross into equal portions, in each of which is an Indian kneeling; and on either side of each figure is a diminutive pine-tree, rising no higher than the knee. In April, 1629, the Company of Massachusetts Bay, in an official letter, inform Governor Endicott that they have sent, by Mr. Samuel Sharpe, passenger in the *George*, the Company's seal in silver. It bore the representation of an Indian, having a full head of hair, a covering of leaves around his loins, a bow in the right hand, and an arrow in the left. He occupied wild and uncultivated ground, and near by are two pine-trees, one on each side of him, somewhat more developed than those on the seal of Plymouth, and rising to the waist. Appended to his mouth is a label, with the phrase, "Come over and help us"; indicative of one leading motive that prompted the settlement,—that of converting the natives. Around the seal is the inscription "SIGILLVM GVB. ET SOCIET. DE MATTACHVSETS BAY IN NOVA ANGLIA"; and over the head of the Indian, between the words "Sigillvm" and "Anglia," is a cross. This seal, or its counterpart,—for one is said to have been engraved by Hull, Master of the Mint in 1657,—seems to have been kept in the custody of the Governor, who, by law, in 1651, was authorized to receive five shillings for affixing impressions of it to private commissions and powers of attorney, and attesting the same with his signature. With the abrogation of the colonial charter, Oct. 22, 1684, speedily followed by the death of the king, passed away its ancient seal. It was long cherished in the hearts of the people, and, in a modified form, resumed a century later, when the colony had become a sovereign State. Andros arrived at Boston, Dec. 20, 1686, as Governor of all New England; and for nearly three years the inhabitants were fretted and fevered by the caprices, at times seemingly malignant, of authority unchecked. It was proposed to divest of their property those who did not submit without murmur, and distribute it

among the more subservient. Their condition was symbolized by the seal provided for them by the regal mandate. It bore the figure of James II. seated, and two figures kneeling before him; one tendering a petition, the other offering tribute, with the motto, ingeniously bitter and out of place, "Nvnqvam libertas gratior extat." On the reverse were the royal arms, with the inscription, "SIGILLVM NOVÆ ANGLIÆ IN AMERICA." Tyranny was as intolerable then as later, and provoked resistance. On the 18th of April, 1689, soon after the arrival of intelligence that the Prince of Orange had landed in England, the people rose in mass; and, overwhelming all opposition, sent Andros and his advisers prisoners to the fort. In re-organizing under the colonial charter, the former seal, if preserved, was probably in use; but affairs of vaster magnitude occupied attention, and action on a point comparatively unimportant was deferred. When the colonies of Plymouth and Massachusetts, with Maine, were consolidated by the charter of October 7, 1691, into the Province of Massachusetts Bay, Sir William Phips, the first governor appointed by the crown, who arrived at Boston on the 14th of May, 1692, brought, no doubt, with him, the province seal, with the royal arms and titles; and circular inscription in Roman capitals, "SIG. R. PROVINCIÆ DE MASSACHUSETTS BAY IN NOVA ANGLIA IN AMERICA." The appendages of the Lion and the Unicorn, as supporters, formed no part of the seal impressed on the Provincial acts down to Sept. 13, 1728, when the supplemental charter of George I. took effect; but they did from April 18, 1729, to June 29, 1773, after which there is no royal seal attached to the statutes. From this it may be inferred that the seal was attached after the act received the royal assent or sanction. July 9, 1767, the king commanded that the government of the province should use a new seal, which he sent them, differing only as to the royal name; and that the old seal should be sent to the council office in Whitehall, that it might be defaced by him in the Privy Council. When

British troops took possession of the capital, the Province seal was left, — to disappear. When they were forced to quit it, the people outside were putting on their own iron crown of sovereignty, preparing to seal their independence, if need be, with their blood.

Three sessions of the Provincial Congress passed, without reference to a seal, though Colonel Revere, with the aid of a committee, designed plates for bills, which were still of credit, and proved substantial sinews of war. The patriots insisted that the king was waging hostility against them, not they against the king; and to lose by abandonment no claim to such liberty as the charter permitted, should they be obliged to succumb, they re-organized, on the 19th of July, 1775, under the Province charter; the executive functions, the office being vacant, vesting in the major part of the council. A committee was forthwith appointed in the House to provide a seal; and, being joined, reported to the former body, that the device of the old Province seal should not be taken up, but the device therewith, presumed to be somewhat similar to that under the first charter, be the established seal for this Colony for the future. This was accepted August 7, by the council, with this amendment, that, instead of an Indian, holding a tomahawk and cap of liberty, there be an English American, holding a sword in the right hand, and Magna Charta in the left, imprinted on it; and around him these words, "Ense petit placidam sub libertate quietem;" which being sent down was concurred in. The council consisted of—

JAMES BOWDOIN.  
WALTER SPOONER.  
JOHN HANCOCK.  
ROBERT T. PAINE.  
JAMES PRESCOTT.  
MICHAEL FARLEY.  
MOSES GILL.  
BENJ. GREENLEAF.  
BENJ. CHADBOURNE.

JAMES OTIS.  
CALEB CUSHING.  
THOMAS CUSHING.  
JONA. GERRISH.  
ELDAD TAYLOR.  
JOSEPH PALMER.  
JOHN FALES.  
JOHN ADAMS.  
JEDIDIAH FOSTER.  
THOMAS ADAMS.

WILLIAM SEVER.  
JOHN WINTHROP.  
SAMUEL ADAMS.  
ENOCH FREEMAN.  
BENJ. LINCOLN.  
SAMUEL HOLTEN.  
BENJ. WHITE.  
CHARLES CHAUNCY.  
JABEZ FISHER.



Hancock, Paine, and Cushing, members of the Continental Congress, and also of the council, were not among those recorded as present at Watertown.

To which of the members present is to be attributed the selection of the devise or motto, has not been transmitted, as they were all probably familiar with Algernon Sidney's "Discourses concerning Government." This work had been republished in 1763, at the expense of Thomas Hollis, the benefactor of Harvard College, and again in 1772.

From the circumstances under which it was written, similar in many respects to their own, and its principal doctrines that all government should of right be based on the consent of the governed, it was a constant study and standard authority with the patriots. But not only in his political faith and the perils to which it subjected him, but in his noble traits of character, and enthusiastic ardor for constitutional liberty, there were other points of resemblance to them. He also belonged to that army of martyrs whose memory is the common heirloom of the race. Highly educated, versed in political science, estimating aright the intolerable oppression it was his lot thrice to experience under the Charleses and the Protector, his good sense and steadfastness to principle, which tempered the impetuosity of his nature, also blocked the way to positions of influence, which he was too proud to seek, and too honest to attain. But if not sufficiently subservient to be of much account while he lived, his able and eloquent utterance of the sentiments for which they were contending, transmitted with the story of his exile and his death, had enshrined him in the hearts of the patriots. When, on that August morning, in the ancient church at Watertown behind the American lines, the verse which has ever since been the motto of Massachusetts was pronounced, it is reasonable to believe that it produced a sensation.

A younger son of Sir Robert Sidney, second Earl of Leicester, by Dorothy Percy, daughter of the Earl of North-

umberland; great grandson of Sir Henry, one of the best and wisest of Elizabeth's statesmen; and grandnephew of Sir Philip, who received his mortal wound at Zutphen in Sept., 1586,—Algernon Sidney was born in 1622. He took part, early in the civil war, with the Parliament, of which he was a member, and rose to the rank of colonel in its armies. He was not present at the trial of the king, though he approved the sentence. When Cromwell, chafing at any restraint upon his arbitrary temper, dissolved the Long Parliament, Sidney, standing near the speaker, was thrust out with the rest. He withdrew to Penshurst,—given a hundred years before to his ancestor, Sir William, by Edward VI., his pupil,—and there he remained until the death of the Protector. When Richard Cromwell succeeded, the Parliament resumed its sessions; and, in May, 1659, he was despatched to the continent to mediate a peace, happily effected between the Kings of Sweden and Denmark. It was while at Copenhagen, then, or a few months later, when on his return from Stockholm, that he wrote in the album of the University, as mentioned shortly after in a letter of reproof from his father, the Earl of Leicester, the celebrated lines—

“Manus hæc inimica tyrannis  
Ense petit placidam sub libertate quietem.”—

which were torn from the book by Terlon, the French minister, as a reflection on Louis XIV. Having no expectation of being included in the proffered amnesty, he remained abroad,—sometimes in danger of being assassinated by orders of his jealous monarch, who never said a foolish thing and never did a wise one. He occupied himself in study, and in preparation or completion of his “Discourses concerning Government,” supposed by some authorities to have been commenced under the Protectorate. While in Paris, attending some pageant of the court, the French king, attracted by the beauty of his steed, insisted upon having it; but, when sent

for, Sidney shot it, saying that his horse was born a free creature, had served a free man, and should not be mastered by a king of slaves. When his father's life approached its close, he was desirous of once more beholding his son, to whom he seems to have been tenderly attached, and who for seventeen years had been in exile. Influence was made through the Earl of Sunderland, his grandson, and Sidney was permitted to return. For a time he kept aloof from politics; but his ardent nature, impatient of arbitrary power, betrayed him into imprudent associations. He was accused of complicity with Monmouth; and, without proof,—fragments of his "Discourses" being adduced in evidence against him,—he was, in December, 1683, condemned and executed. His "Discourses" were first printed in 1698, soon after the reversal of his attainder, fifteen years after his death. If less interesting from having been in some measure controversial, and consequently less methodical than might have been wished, they have maintained their position as a standard work. Their eloquent arguments in support of the right of men to govern themselves, and denunciations of despotic rule, lent vigor and success to the American Revolution. It was in such esteem with Josiah Quincy, Jr., that he bequeathed his copy as a special legacy to his son. The felicity of the phrase inscribed in the album at Copenhagen, as a motto for a people struggling for freedom, and independence of a power that had become foreign to them, naturally impressed not only the unknown councillor who suggested it, but all the members of the General Court.

A few days after the adoption of these arms, an issue was authorized of bills of credit, to the amount of one hundred thousand pounds; each note to bear the figure of an American, with a sword and Magna Charta, and the motto of the seal, and the words "Issued in defence of American liberty." This emission is known as the "sword-in-hand money;" and the copper plates, from which it was struck,

engraved by Paul Revere, are in the State department at the State House. Immediately after the State Constitution was adopted, Nov. 4, 1780, a committee, consisting of Colonel Davis, Colonel Baldwin of the House, and Israel Nichols of the Senate, appointed to consider and determine upon a seal for this Commonwealth, reported, November 10, that the whole matter should be referred to the council. A strong popular sentiment prevailing in favor of the device on the first-charter seal, the figure of an Indian, — which then for a century had surmounted the roof of the Province House, and has been only within a few years removed, — not naked as before, but clad in shirt and moccasins, was substituted in place of the American. The council record on the subject, under date of Dec. 13, 1780, is as follows: —

“ WEDNESDAY December 13, 1780,

“ Ordered. That Nathan Cushing, Esq., be a Committee to prepare a Seal for the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

“ Who reported a Device for a Seal for said Commonwealth as follows; viz. *Sapphire*, an Indian dressed in his shirt and Moggosins, belted proper, in his right hand a Bow, *Topaz*: in his left an Arrow, its point towards the Base, of the second: on the Dexter side of the Indian's head, a Star, *Pearl*; for one of the United States of America.

“ *Crest* — On a wreath a Dexter Arm clothed and ruffled proper; grasping a Broad Sword, the Pommel & hilt *Topaz*: with this motto, *Ense petit placidam Sub Libertate Quietem* — And around the Seal — *Sigillum Republicæ Massachusettensis*. Advised that the said Report be accepted as the Arms of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.” — (*Council Records*, vol. 15, p. 49.)

Another emblem connected with our annals deserves a word. When this continent was discovered, Europe and England also, were, for the most part, Catholic, and, half their days, ate no meat. Codfish, as gold, attracted adventure to its shores, and has yielded in the centuries a more plentiful harvest. This bounty of Providence has been variously recognized. When Plymouth sold its Kennebec territory to

Tyng and his associates in 1661, they took for their cognizance the anchor and a codfish, with the motto, "Nec Frustra Dedit Rex." The representation of the codfish is found frequently on bills of credit, on seals of court, and, in the old State House burnt in 1749, was suspended in its hall of legislation. March 17, 1784, just eight years after British rule ceased in Massachusetts, Mr. John Rowe, a patriot of note, moved the General Court, that it should be hung up in their room as had been usual formerly, as a memorial of the importance of the fisheries to the welfare of the Commonwealth. With the other tutelary divinities,—the swords and drums, and pictures of the ancient worthies that looked down from their high estate on the popular branch, an example of decorum,—it was transported, in 1798, to Beacon Hill. Removed for a temporary purpose, it is hoped it will resume its place in benigner effulgence, as a relic of the past, and palladium of the future, proving — what the Seneca chief declared it at Barnstable — the emblem of justice, since it bore the scales.

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#### JANUARY MEETING.

A stated monthly meeting of the Society was held this day, Thursday, January 9, at eleven o'clock, A.M.; Colonel Aspinwall, the first Vice-President, in the chair.

The Secretary read the Records of the last meeting.

The Librarian announced donations from the Narragansett Club; the New-England Historic-Genealogical