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Annexation of Charlestown and Somerville to Boston.

A CONDENSED REPORT OF THE

ARGUMENT

OF

HON. ELLIS W. MORTON,

BEFORE THE COMMITTEE OF THE LEGISLATURE ON TOWNS,

*In behalf of the petitioners for an act authorizing the
union of Charlestown and Somerville
with Boston,*

MONDAY, FEB. 27, 1871.

BOSTON :

ALFRED MUDGE & SON, PRINTERS, 34 SCHOOL STREET.

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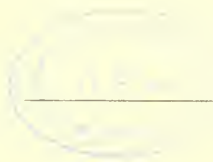
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Mr. Chairman and Gentlemen:

IN the outset of my argument, permit a suggestion that the various petitions referred to you do not call for a determination of the question of *annexation* itself. In frequent instances petitioners request the legislature, by the exercise of its high authority, to adjust municipal boundaries, not in accordance with the sanction of a majority of all the people interested, but in concurrence with the will of *certain* people. This class of cases oftentimes presents serious difficulties to the impartial legislator.

The question now debated is a simple one: whether a rectification of boundaries may be permitted in accordance with the deliberately recorded will of a majority of all the people of all the communities concerned.

The committee might properly dispose of this investigation with the limited inquiry — Are there any sufficient reasons why the union of Boston, Charlestown and Somerville, should not be assented to? but the tendency of the hearing has been towards the broader inquiry why it should be, and the committee will involuntarily entertain it.

The very facts of this hearing and of the patient sittings of yourselves and your predecessors in similar investigations, are a complete refutation of the

theories of "natural boundaries," at least so far as it is sought to apply them to the communities of Massachusetts.

A few untaught individuals, living in an isolated position, might be restricted to their territory by natural obstacles; but when intelligent communities, ready in art and science, subject water to ferries, as is the case with different sections of Boston, or when they actually tie themselves together by a bridge, as Charlestown and Boston have done, then it is idle to discuss "natural boundaries." The bridge thrown over the railways between Boston proper and South Boston, does not differ as a connection, or as an avenue of travel, from that which spans the waterway between Boston and Charlestown.

If there may be a "natural boundary," a river is certainly not often established as such in commercial places. It is regarded as a valuable commercial highway, the possession of which seems almost a condition of importance. I might cite in support of this suggestion, nearly every conspicuous city abroad.

Boundaries must be adjusted to communities, not communities to boundaries.

The committee will, doubtless, consider somewhat the significance and extent of the agitation in favor of annexation, and while the inquiry whether a majority of all the citizens in the three municipalities are annexationists is unessential, and must be a subject of difference, yet it is incumbent upon the petitioners to show that a sufficient number desire it to entitle them to the attention of the legislature.

In 1854, the legislature passed an act authorizing the union of Boston and Charlestown, and it was accepted by a very large majority of the voters of both cities, but subsequently set aside by the supreme court for a constitutional defect. Never since, though repeatedly demanded, has an opportunity been given by the legislature to these cities to re-assert their desires in this domestic matter.

The only time they have been enabled to declare their judgment, the majority of the people pronounced emphatically in favor of annexation. Since then, Boston has indicated her concern to enlarge her cramped limits by the annexation at different times of Roxbury and Dorchester. This year, you have heard the voice of her citizens through her representatives in the city government, who have instructed the mayor to petition the legislature to submit the question of annexation to the decision of the people, in recognition of the high principles of democratic government. In aid of this authoritative petition, you have those of a very large and estimable body of individuals.

Charlestown has, since 1831, been troubled with the untiring attempts of a great number of her citizens to secure the exercise of a right, hardly a privilege, which has been once accorded. When, in a solitary instance, the right was admitted by the legislature, they unhesitatingly exercised it in favor of annexation; but having lost the enjoyment of the fruits of its exercise through an oversight of the legislature itself, their almost yearly petitions, ever regarded

favorably by committees, have been rejected through the influence of the enormous county of Middlesex, the largest in the commonwealth, with its open treasury, which they themselves helped to fill, a county with which they have no harmony of interests, and within whose uncongenial grasp they are confessedly held solely because they pay her annually twelve thousand dollars more than they cost her.

Now these oft-disappointed, I may say aggrieved humble petitioners, men of high character and broad views, many of them men of wealth, with enterprise to direct its employment to the public advantage, all of them intelligent, earnest, progressive, good citizens, are here for the ninth time, supported by evidence of unusual worth; and if needs be, they will come for the tenth time to pray that their community may be suffered to enjoy the rights yielded freely to others similarly situated, rights, the enjoyment of which are, in their belief, absolutely necessary to the advancement of their personal prosperity and development of the highest public interests.

The disposition of the citizens of Somerville has been declared in a resolve passed in a legal town meeting, April 10, 1869, in favor of annexation, and by the election of Mr. Bowman, the annexation candidate, to the legislature, by a vote of 537 against 237 for the regular republican nominee, who received the votes of many annexationists.

It is true, that when their wish was found not to enlist the sympathy of the last legislature, and when it was supposed repeated rebuffs would dishearten

the annexationists of Charlestown, the territory of which lies between Boston and Somerville, the town voted (38 to 12), without rescinding the previous vote, to ask this legislature for a city charter. Their first choice is annexation; failing in that, they desire a city charter, and it is but ordinary justice that they should have one.

Passing the matter of public interest in the question of annexation, let me establish the palpable propriety of it.

This is found in the smallness of the area of the three places, in the propinquity of Charlestown and Somerville to the business, working, actual centre of Boston, and in their entire identity of interest with her.

Boston, the capital of the commonwealth, the commercial exchange of New England, at least she should be, has but 9,902 taxable acres, between three and four thousand less than the *average* area of our towns. Charlestown, against the solemnly registered will of a majority of her citizens, suffers the grievous burdens of the support of the machinery of an independent government for a comparatively insignificant spot of 520 taxable acres; less land than many a Massachusetts farmer rules. If the State were cut up into towns of the size of this dwarf city, whose influence is nothing to that of the Middlesex county commissioners, we might boast of 8,522 instead of 338. Somerville has only 1,975 taxable acres, taken from Charlestown, at a time when she had two dis-

inct and unharmonious classes of citizens, — a commercial and manufacturing class, and an agricultural class, — living under a system of government not adapted to both.

Wipe out the artificial outgrown boundaries of a former and different time, and unite these small parcels of territory, and our commercial metropolis will have for her growth only 12,397 acres, less still than the average of the towns of the commonwealth, as against the 82,560 acres of Philadelphia.

The city hall of Charlestown is but a mile from the city hall of Boston, and Charlestown divides Suffolk county. The whole of the territory of Somerville, more easily and frequently accessible by rail than any other suburb of Boston, is nearer to her city hall than are the extremes of her southern line.

There is an admitted community of interests between the petitioners; they are actually one commercial people, whose business and employment have a common centre in Boston; their prosperity depends upon the same conditions; they are mutually benefited by the municipal enterprises, though unequally taxed, and they are alike injured by the municipal errors or neglect of Boston.

The Charlestown merchant is nearer his Boston counting-room than the majority of the Boston merchants, and the Somerville-Boston merchant is as prompt at his warehouse as the merchant of the West or South End. Three-fourths of the polls of Charlestown find daily occupation in Boston, and four-fifths of the business men of Somerville have

their business in Boston, eight or nine hundred of their names being in the City Directory. The citizens of Charlestown have a more direct interest to-day in the removal of Scollay's building, ordered by the city government of Boston, than a majority of her own people. It appears by the report of the Chief of Police, that Nov. 12, 1870, a day chosen by chance, there passed out from Boston over Charles river and Warren bridges, between four o'clock P. M. and twelve o'clock, midnight, 12,150 persons.

Having drawn attention to the three prominent facts which establish the propriety of annexation, smallness of the territory of the several municipalities, the propinquity of Charlestown and Somerville to the business centre of Boston and their obvious community of interests with Boston, permit me to direct your observation, upon the supposition that the committee will choose to consider why annexation should be authorized, rather than the naked proposition why it should not, to a few of the advantages which each municipality will realize; Boston will gain,

First. A limited advance toward the equitable proportion of territory to which she is entitled, ignoring her dense population, simply as one of 338 cities and towns of the commonwealth, while the territory to be acquired is of peculiar value from its convenient situation to receive her growth, and the abundance of easy lines of communication with it. It will hardly be conceded that Worcester should be shorn of her size as being cumbersome or too large

for her proper development, and for a systematical provision for her increase; but if 21,094 acres is only a suitable area for her population of 41,107, how can you reasonably resist the inference that this moderate expansion to an area of little more than half that extent must be of incalculable moment to a population of 250,526 ?

It is the part, not of wisdom, but of the most ordinary prudence, to attempt to explore the immediate future, and make some seasonably adequate preparation for its necessities. Either the utmost possible growth of your capital is absolutely determined and limited today by the rigidity of boundaries not adapted to the communities they fetter, or some territorial enlargement must occur to *contain* merely, not accommodate the natural regular increase of the next twenty-five years. Within less than that time every foot of our lately acquired districts will be as closely settled as the centre of Boston is now. The steady and rapid encroachments of trade are fast forcing a surrender of dwelling places. The aspect of some of our wards has been completely changed within five years. The annexation of Charlestown and Somerville is not in anticipation of future requirements, but is an inadequate measure for the present. It is clearly for Boston's interest that her present growth, at least, should not be forced without her limits; and too early attention cannot be devoted to systematic plans for the convenient, comfortable and healthful occupation of the territory which is to receive it. Parks, squares,

avenues and streets, proportioned to the magnitude of a city, and not measured by the wants of a town, should be seasonably laid out, and the enormous expense of eventually remodelling a place of chance and irregular character avoided.

Second. She will gain in the direction of her government and affairs generally, a population, very largely native, of 43,000 people whose interests are commercial, whose places of business are chiefly in Boston, whose property is there, and whose prosperity depends entirely upon the prosperity of Boston.

The dangers to which the administration of the affairs of a great city is exposed, arise not from its size or populousness, but from an abandonment of municipal concerns to a class whose motives are not regulated by important individual interests by those who are compelled to live in the suburbs, — suburbs in name only. As traffic usurps place after place, changing the natural and ordinary distribution of population, it is seen that many parts of Boston are left to the management of the very poor and the very rich. Annexation will neutralize influences likely to be prejudicial and antagonistic, and tend to equalize the benefits of a government which should be for the common profit and happiness of all whom it directly affects, and which should be shared in by those actually living within its close reach, and who are bound fast to the city that supports it, by interests which no technical boundaries can restrain.

Third. Boston will receive credit in the markets of the world for additional population, really Bostonian, thoroughly commingled with her nominal population in business association and social intercourse, distinguished from it in nothing, and separated from it only by an unfit boundary which has long since ceased to be more than an unnecessary political line.

The importance of commercial cities is very largely governed by the rank the census gives them; and numerous witnesses, familiar with finance and engaged in trade, have most earnestly challenged your attention to this point. The census returns of population are always anticipated, not only by great rival cities, but by neighboring towns with sensitive interest. They fix their comparative rank and rate of growth; and the establishment of this rank is positive, unaccompanied by any explanations of conditions which might properly affect it.

By the last census, Boston is declared the *seventh* city of the Union, and thus she is known at home and abroad. The stranger merchant only knows that six cities of the United States are larger, by the common measurement, than our capital, and this fact regulates, to a great extent, his dealings with us. Her nominal rank deceives him; he is misled as to the real market which invites his trade; he is unaware that he has learned only the rank of a little municipality, and not that of the great community who are ready to buy of him and sell to him.

The proclamation of her station, which limits largely her power of commercial attraction, is not supple-

mented by a statement that the sleeping-places of her merchants, artisans, mechanics and laborers, her true business, manufacturing and productive population, constitute separate municipalities to which they are credited, the existence of which lessens the common importance and lowers the rank of the great community of which they are parts, and which they should unite as districts and not divide into inconsequential towns; nor is it stated that the higher rank of other cities is based upon the population of an area very much larger, and in one instance about eight times larger than that of Boston, an area embracing their entire population, and having space for their natural and attracted growth.

By this proposed conformation of bounds to facts, the capital of Massachusetts will outrank, as it ought, the capital of Maryland.

Fourth. Annexation will place in the united concordant control of Boston and the people to be made a part of her people, and to participate equally with them in all her concerns, the water front, the common anchorage of all nations, from the Neponset to the Mystic, and this advantage to our commercial metropolis is not open to dispute.

We now have one port of entry subject to the jurisdiction of two municipal governments. The liberal designs which have been entertained and partly carried out by Boston to make our docks and wharves tempting to shipping, and to furnish such conveniences to trade as shall lead it to a port one day nearer Europe than New York, must be

checked at that part of the port where the narrow Charles river flows under the short avenues which connect the dwellings of Boston's business men with their counting-rooms. Beyond the Charles she is impotent. The interests of the whole port she cannot recognize; they must be developed by two communities, which, separated, have manifestly diverse interests in some respects, but united, could have only identical collective interests to advance.

Among the most strenuous advocates of annexation are the representatives of railroad corporations, business and manufacturing corporations, and private individuals owning wharf property the other side of the Charles; they tell you that as Boston wharves they would have a standing which as Charlestown wharves they cannot obtain, even with an exposition of their contiguity to Boston.

- It may be appropriate to remind Massachusetts legislators that the Tunnel railroad line, in which the State has its millions, has its water end in Charlestown. The shippers of the West, the carrying of whose produce it is to compete for with gigantic rival lines of New York and Pennsylvania, are to be invited to choose their market not between the cities of *Boston*, New York and Philadelphia, but between historical, though commercially unknown *Charlestown* and the first and second cities of the country; and the managers of that line and those of another Massachusetts line, controlling directly a thousand miles of road, which has just purchased thirty acres of Charlestown wharf property, tell you

unqualifiedly that such a choice must operate to the prejudice of their lines and consequently of the commonwealth.

Fifth. Boston will secure an incalculable fortune in the resources of the Charlestown Water Works, supplied by the almost inexhaustible Mystic, with a daily yield of more than 30,000,000 gallons of pure water, which can be increased by a connection with Horn Pond and the Lower Mystic.

The territory of Charlestown is capable of containing a population of but 75,000 persons, which under ordinary regulations, will require 5,000,000 gallons per day, — her present population requires less than one half that quantity. To-day, Boston is dependent upon, and purchases water from this source for a portion of her citizens. The present value of this boon, to be acquired by the pacific vote of its possessors, will not fail to be realized by the hundreds of manufacturers and the many thousands employed by them, their very bread contingent upon their employment, who have been notified by the Boston Water Board since this legislature convened, that unless Providence interposed with rain before a certain specified day, the water, without which their entire business must suddenly stop, would be cut off. The threatening warnings and urgent appeals, rather commands, issuing from the office of the mayor, at the same time excited universal apprehensions of what might follow next.

It may be answered that Boston might buy of her neighbor in case of a water famine; but there is no

power to compel her to sell, and though motives of friendship or desire of gain, might send her water through Boston pipes, none but the criminally improvident would neglect a fair, honorable opportunity to obtain an ownership in this great property rather than to let extremities dictate the terms of a temporary lease. What may be the wants of Boston the thoughtful may conceive when they remember that in 1860 a committee reporting a bill to authorize what is now asked, mentioned among the benefits Boston could offer Charlestown her "waste water," and then reflect upon the portentous fact, that in the short space of ten years Boston has come to within a few days of the end of the unrestricted allowance of water to her inhabitants.

In response to the inquiry by counsel for our water board, I will say to the committee, that its president is a petitioner and expected to be a witness.

Sixth. It will give her access to the remainder of Suffolk county, which is now divided by the 520 acres of Charlestown.

While this may not be of vital consequence, it is very far from an indifferent advantage. The communication of one portion of the county with the other should not be at the "mercy of the waves." Surely, a tolerable symmetry is to be sought for the first county of the commonwealth.

I will let my "sixth" be my last.

I have not endeavored to present all the main advantages of annexation to Boston; indeed, the task would be exhaustless and exhausting. I have

but indicated a few, in the train of which follow many, more or less prominent as viewed from the standpoint of different persons.

Permit me now to advert to Charlestown.

Not seldom does it happen, when the settlement of boundaries is considered, that a by no means trivial element in the matter is sentiment, an element strong and deep in its manifestations, and most worthy of respect. I still hear the lamentations of the citizens of "good old Dorchester" ("good old" are the regular technical words for this class of cases), when the legislature, in wisdom amply proved, carved out a portion of that revered place for the people of Hyde Park; and the wailings of "good old Norfolk," when Dorchester was subsequently empowered to link her fate with Boston. No such element is to be consulted now. From a place of reasonable extent, the "good old Charlestown" of a former day has been gradually hewn into sections, and all but a fragment of five hundred and twenty acres distributed among the people of Cambridge, West Cambridge, Stoneham, Woburn and Somerville.

Opposing counsel have appeared to expect me to assail the government and institutions of the community, which I, as a Boston man, would consolidate with our own; and they have forestalled me by a defence of their schools, police and fire departments, streets, sidewalks, gutters and drains. They might have spared themselves this exertion.

Boston schools and Charlestown schools are alike

Massachusetts schools, and this is not the occasion to criticise any of them—the committee would be restive under it. The police of Charlestown is the police of an orderly law-abiding people, and the fire department may be assumed to be efficient. I have tried to lift this subject of your deliberations far above sidewalks and drains. Let them remain where they are. I will acknowledge Charlestown to be a monument of wonder and success, taking account of her unfortunate position.

Charlestown will gain by annexation:

First. An immediate and substantial enhancement of the value of her real estate.

If this proposition had not been proved in precisely similar cases, in the face and eyes of every one of us, it might require the attendance of some argument, most easy to be made; but I shall not, under the circumstances, heap up reasons in its support. When the territory of a little city becomes a part of and shares the prominence of a large one, when it is guaranteed the magnified development and fortunes of a great capital, its value is the value of the territory of a great, busy, attractive, growing metropolis, instead of that of a small, over-shadowed municipality. If one seeks a residence in Boston, he cannot be diverted to Charlestown by the offer of a better house for less money, and in a location more healthful, pleasant, and nearer the business and attractions of Boston, and simply because he is determined to be in name as well as in fact Bostonian, and persuasion cannot shake him.

A witness very familiar with the matter, one who steadfastly held the part of a leader in the annexation movement which finally established the permanent importance and prosperity of Roxbury, informs you that the act of annexation has doubled and quadrupled the market value of her territory; that it has made the conservative land owners who resisted it rich, and given the politicians who dreaded annihilation better offices with greater pay. Dorchester furnishes a like example. Her lands are in demand at high prices, and her public men have downy nests.

I need go no further; indeed, it is claimed by my opponents that this inevitable result is the motive of the petitioners, who are said to be men of property; but that such a consequence will not help the man of moderate means, who lives in his own house, nor the poor man who has no house.

Mr. Chairman, I have yet to learn of the first complaint from a man of moderate means, that his estate by singular fortune has been suddenly doubled in value; that his resources, in vigorous manhood or old age, in health or in infirmity, have been enlarged; that he has become the owner of ten thousand dollars' worth of property instead of five, or of twenty thousand dollars' worth instead of ten. The committee will not attend with patience an argument to sustain the theory, that, all things considered, a man is a trifle better off in this world, at this period of its existence, with ten thousand dollars than with five thousand. As to the poor man, who has failed through improvidence or mishap to accumulate any

property, it might be said, that the welfare and happiness of his well-to-do friends is not to be sacrificed to his misfortune; but this is unnecessary. The truth is that any advanced value of land compels its improvement, multiplies the demands for labor, and leads to the erection of cheap, agreeable, wholesome houses for the laborer. The prosperity of one is the prosperity and hope of all.

Second. Annexation will change the scale of public improvements from that suitable for a somewhat obscure city, — obscure from its peculiar situation, being overtopped by Boston, — to that befitting a great city. Future developments will bear the impress of a different hand. New avenues and new public buildings will testify to the new magnitude of the locality. The streets of Charlestown and Somerville will be properly connected and characterized by a broad system, not likely to be adopted now, nor hardly feasible. It has been testified that Roxbury had very good streets before annexation; but they began nowhere, and ended nowhere. Now they are of liberal proportions, and planned with better system.

Third. It will put at rest the long and sharply contested question of the support of the bridges, and very soon win for the citizens of Charlestown, what the legislature cannot ordain, the substitution of a solid structure, of appropriate size and architectural beauty, for the rude, unsightly, unstable, rotting, cramped, always choked, dirty, disgraceful bridges, which are utterly inadequate for their accommodation.

The petition of John Skinner and Isaac Warren and others, for permission to build a bridge over Charles river—to be free when paid for—was urged upon the legislature nearly fifty years ago, with the statement “that the petitioners desired to increase the facilities of communication between Boston and Charlestown, and eventually to make them one municipality.”

Boston will not for many years to come be inclined to join in the construction of a new Charlestown bridge of proper materials and dimensions, and Charlestown singly cannot afford to engage in such a costly enterprise, however much her citizens may suffer for want of it, and as to the matter of their serious inconvenience there is no division of testimony. This union alone will reconcile conflicting interests, and lead to such action as will comport with the united requirements and be commensurate to the dignity and circumstances of a great, harmonious population.

Fourth. The citizens of Charlestown, doing business in Boston, as most of them do, will enjoy an equalization in taxation.

Now the Charlestown-Boston merchants are compelled to pay large taxes to the support of the schools and other institutions and departments of the Government of Boston, in the management of which they have no voice, and in the benefits of which they have either none or a very unequal share. The beginning and end of their part of the matter is the enforced payment to officials of others' appointment

of so much money, in the distribution of which they have no volition. At home they must again contribute to the charges of other schools and other institutions and departments of another government — a government of a territory smaller than many gentlemen's private estates.

Fifth. Annexation will lift the public credit to the standard of Boston's credit.

As a mere money-making transaction, it will be perceived that this gain in dollars and cents will be very great, sufficient to pay for many extensive public improvements, or if the difference were funded, to pay Charlestown's debt. Boston has a high credit in the financial markets of the world, where her standing is known, and her untarnished name duly estimated. The bonds of Charlestown, whose fame is fair, and whose pecuniary ability should be unquestionable, find only a domestic market, at a considerable discount, and at higher rates of interest than Boston bonds bear which sell at a premium.

A knowledge of simple arithmetic will suffice for the calculation of the additional value annexation will impart to a public dollar.

Sixth. It will work a just release from disproportionate county burdens.

Charlestown should unhesitatingly and cheerfully respond to every equitable demand of the county. She should promptly open her treasury to the payment of the last dollar and the last cent of her due proportion of the county expenses. She should, as a large community, submit even to liberal

calculations against her; but she should not, upon any theory of government, or any code of county commissioners, or principles of taxation, be treated as a source of profit to the county. This is wrong, it is illegitimate, it is a grievance. She is confessedly used as such a source of profit. It is not denied that she pays Middlesex county annually much more than she costs her. It is patent, from the statements submitted, that her severance from the county will be an honest relief to her of many thousands of dollars every year.

Seventh. The new importance of Charlestown as a part of Boston, quickened by the impulses of a vigorous healthful commercial centre, will save to her a large number of those who are continually turned into the strong current that bears away many of the best of her citizens to wider fields for the investment of their capital, whether money, brains or hard hands.

She has found disappointment in the last census returns. Witnesses tell you that she is becoming noted as a place to leave; that men take her official posts for a time and then migrate. The distinguished counsel for the county commissioners, has narrated with melting pathos what she has done for him; he has made touching acknowledgments of what he owes her; he has told you with unaffected modesty, that she has honored him with the crowning rank of mayor. He, too, her favored one, has joined the departing throng, and is here now, a citizen of Newton, the advocate of county authorities, resisting the petitioners' appeal, that the city which had the good

sense to set him in her foremost place, may be allowed to exercise the same sense in the disposition of a matter affecting them vitally. Every able-bodied man who abandons one place for another is in himself a positive loss to the place he leaves, and a positive gain to the place in which he settles. What he takes with him is an additional loss.

The sons of Massachusetts have gone to all parts of the country, they have been the pioneers in the manufacture of territories into States and in planting the villages which have swelled into thriving towns, and towns which have grown into strong cities. In this work they have done well; but now that the power of the West is year by year more marked, now that her capitals are eclipsing our own, a good policy for the commonwealth requires the retention within her own borders of her own population and the invitation of those who seek new homes to come here. This policy is now the true policy of all our municipalities.

Eighth. Charlestown will gain an ownership in the public library of Boston, a library which has few equals.

The worth of such a proprietorship cannot be reckoned. The opportunity to freely use such a fountain of knowledge, of instruction and entertainment, is no mean privilege; but one that must exalt itself in the minds of her people, who have in their midst an annual circulation of 57,000 volumes from their library of about 30,000.

But I must pause somewhere in my specification of

distinct advantages to be reaped by annexation. As the vision gradually opens upon the subject, the mind is filled with the outlines of its new aspects; and we try to imagine the face Charlestown would wear today, if the will of her people, as declared at the ballot box, sixteen years ago, had taken effect.

I had intended to enumerate somewhat in detail the promises annexation offers to the thriving town of Somerville. I shall, however, content myself with a general statement that the various features the case presents in respect to Charlestown are discernible in its relations to Somerville. The value of her lands will rise; she will be saved the expense of an independent city government, contemplated if annexation fails to receive the warrant of the legislature; she will be insured a development upon a scale designed in anticipation of the events of the prosperous future of a grand city; she will attract the immediate notice of Boston capital, and, like Boston, will get an ownership in the water works, which now supply her by contract.

I will consume no time in undertaking to depreciate the testimony of the witnesses for the remonstrants, or to underrate them individually. They are entitled to respect and their evidence should be gravely weighed. Some are office-holders, some are merchants, who always register themselves as residents of Boston when away from home; one is a real Charlestown man, living there, keeping a little store there, and hoping to die there; and one is an ex-

collector of customs, under a former administration, who lives on a fancy farm in West Roxbury, and thinks the general tendency of things is bad. Few of them represented to any extent the very gross, and according to my learned friend, the rather debasing interests of property. They are fascinated with the simple beauty of town governments, imbued with their importance as schools for political education, charmed by the complete machine of a government working in the little space they inhabit.

All this is very reasonable, if political discipline is the *object* of government, and not an incidental *result* of government; and it must be regarded very carefully.

The more active petitioners are accused of paying something more than a poll-tax, of having property to be appreciated, of being the promoters of business schemes, of being accessories to the filling of flats and building of wharves, of being corporators trying to enlarge their trade; in fact, they are charged with not being "the poor man"; and I fear there is a disposition to excite the laborers against their employers in this matter.

I must admit that these imputations are, in a measure, just; but as an offset, I will solicit the attention of the committee to a number of petitions, each bearing the names of several hundred Charlestown men, her worthy, honest, industrious citizens of small means, whose total property is less than twenty thousand dollars. The persistent petitioners are the same far-sighted men, who advocated years ago the erection of the bridges, and

recently the construction of the water-works, and the remonstrants are the same men who opposed them.

In reply to the claim of my learned opponent, that the petition of the city of Boston means nothing because the city officials are not here to press it, I desire to say, that I am in communication with the committee of the city government on legislative affairs, and it has been considered to be fairer to Charlestown, as she is not represented, that Boston should not appear to assume the aggressive, but that her petition alone should indicate her interest. That committee are ready to come here if desired, and offer any information or aid. The order for the city's petition was passed with the deliberation of delays, and I trust it is not to be explained away by the fluency of counsel.

Some of the witnesses have supported their objections to this measure by forebodings of bad government. They are very prompt to accord to the present government of Boston a merited commendation; they say that no ill results have attended the policy of annexation thus far; but their imaginations harbor undefined fears. Those fears are fed upon no experience; on the contrary, experience in Philadelphia and elsewhere, establishes the good effect of annexation upon municipal government; but they are the ordinary natural fears of the unknown and untried. Those who have been accustomed only to the very pleasant family government of Charlestown, distrust the project, which terminating it, seems to leave them

in foreign hands. They forget for the time that their mayor may still be their neighbor, that their aldermen will still be their friends, their councilmen chosen out of their own families, and their school committee men the same persons they have trusted heretofore. Will the participation of such men in a government contaminate it? Will their officials forget them? Are Roxbury and Dorchester overlooked? The former sends her own trusted mayor to the city hall, and both have a full representation in each branch of the council, and their representatives have been able to secure for their constituencies what could not have been accomplished under separate governments. When my brother's search for corruption has ended with newspaper comments upon the questionable taste of the expenditure of a paltry sum by the unpaid city council for the customary badges and copies of Cushing's Parliamentary Law, and when you are assured that such is the determination of our citizens to have their affairs conducted not only with strict integrity and prudence, but with rigorous propriety, that a resolve to check even this trifling expenditure was carried into our last election, I think I am not called upon to vindicate the capacity of Boston, either with or without Charlestown and Somerville, for self-government.

I will occupy a little time in exposing the more general objects of the policy, as applied to this case, of combining the intelligence, the energies and the resources, and giving scope for the growth and pro-

gress of adjacent communities, stimulated by the same motives, impelled towards the same purposes, and enjoying the same prosperity, or suffering the same depression.

Were your capital the only city in the world, and were your commonwealth the only state in the world, we might tranquilly meet the smooth course of destiny without being animated by eager thoughts of preserving a name and power in the midst of rival cities, and restless, struggling, advancing sister states. But we cannot ignore the size and rank of other places; we cannot view with indifference the provision of other capitals by the policy of annexation, for rapid and wholesome increase and augmented influence, while they are hotly contending with us for the trade and commerce which are our very life. There is now pending in the Assembly a bill for the addition of 46,000 acres, with a population of 125,000, to the city of New York.

It is hoped that your capital may attain and hold the place of one of the great centres of the world; that by making her more imposing, giving her new power of attraction and new capacities, she may exact the tribute the world pays to such centres.

They are marked with stars upon the map; they are lights by which their countries are seen, and their brightness or dimness discloses the condition of the state, whose index they are. Who speaks of the larger, though subordinate counties? Their names are never heard, even in adjoining states. Abroad their existence is not dreamed of. Nowhere is the

force of attraction more striking than in a community where great numbers aggregate. The strength of a grand chorus draws the multitude. Humanity clusters. Individuals halt with the crowd. The larger the population, the faster will it gather. Is this fancy, to be put to flight by tests?

I will quote a paragraph from the Philadelphia North American of August last, illustrative of the opinion of a commercial rival, who has tried the widest range of annexation.

“It seems not improbable that when Boston shall have succeeded in annexing all her suburbs, and shall stand forth in her *true proportions*, there will be a large emigration thither of floating population from all parts of New England and the British Provinces. At present, a considerable portion of this population seeks New York and Philadelphia, and its peculiar energy and capacity for business have been of immense service to both places. . . . She will also be the centre of a much increased European immigration, which, from thence, will be gradually diffused throughout the interior, and affect the whole character of the states there.”

Make a seaboard city imposing, and she commands the regard of every foreign or domestic shipper who has a vessel to freight, of every merchant who wishes to buy or sell, of every capitalist who has a dollar to invest, and of every citizen and laborer who seeks a market for his skill and his toil.

It is contemplated to give your capital a new rank as a market, a new activity in great charities and philanthropy.

What bearing will all this have upon the state? If an unfavorable one, then only extraordinary boldness would enlist in behalf of the petitioners.

My learned friend has said, that "The State can do without Boston better than Boston without the State." The character of the idea surprises me — it conceals a feeling that all our other cities and towns are more naturally a part of Massachusetts than Boston; that the grand proportion of her loyal population which has settled in her chosen capital are not of the same consequence as the people of Middlesex, Franklin, or Hampshire; that the representatives from Suffolk are less Massachusetts representatives than are the representatives of other counties. Let it be remarked by the committee that the notion of a severance of Boston from the commonwealth, under whose beneficent protection and favor she has made herself a worthy capital of such a commonwealth, is presented by the counsel of the County Commissioners. The mere supposition of such an occurrence would not be hazarded by the petitioners.

Sir, — In no respect are the state and the capital antagonistic; they are inseparable; they are not to be imagined as distinct divisions; the one is within and of the other. Boston is but a component part of the state; her prominence and her importance belong to the state; her growth is the state's; her wealth is the state's, and if annexation yields advantages to reinforced Boston, she accepts them as a member of the state, and not independently.

I have told you openly, that beyond the special profits these three communities mutually look for, we covet, through a new rank, an additional weight in the balances of commerce.

Sir, — When we have in mind the fact that the industry of the commonwealth is almost exclusively directed to trade and manufactures, and remember that her climate is harsh, her territory uneven, and her soil stubborn, we cannot repel the conclusion that the more important her chief port, the better it shall be estimated as a market, the better off will be all within the State. Every foreign merchant who trades here, every capitalist who is induced to invest here, every man who emigrates here and becomes a citizen, contributes to lighten the taxes of Berkshire. The great marts of traffic draw taxes from every civilized nation of the earth. Boston now pays a third of the state tax; she may just as well pay a half in a few years. In this, if in nothing else, it will be felt that her wealth is the wealth of the state.

The bare hint of a variance between the interests of the state and Boston must be withdrawn from the light of truth. If there is any one spot more common to all the inhabitants of the state than any other, that spot is her capital. Here, her trusted officials and the representatives of every district are found assembled for the public good; here, the business men of every county meet as on their own ground; here, the wharves receive the raw material consigned to your factories, and the warehouses receive your products. The commission merchant is the

agent of the manufacturer, and to conceive of their hostility is unnatural. Boston's stores and counting rooms are auxiliary to the shoe shops, the cotton mills, the woollen mills, the paper mills, the shovel works, the iron works, the manufactories generally of the country. In Pearl street is registered the transactions of the shoe shops of Lynn; in Franklin street the operations of the mills of Lowell; in State street the condition of the banks. Under Faneuil Hall is learned the results of our farming, and a little beyond, the fares of our fishermen.

One witness has made the point that Boston as a city should be limited to the size of Massachusetts as a state. When you can gauge other states by ours, then will be the occasion to entertain such a suggestion.

It is the aspiration of every municipality to make steady headway, and their constant exertions will alone preserve for the voice of Massachusetts its authority in the councils of the nation, and keep her in the vanguard of states.

It has been objected that the political power of Boston may be unduly strengthened. Political power in the legislature is not the power of a town or a city. It springs from the people, and divided as they are into independent districts, it is a noticeable fact that the representatives of the several districts comprised in the large cities are almost invariably found on opposite sides.

This fact is singularly conspicuous in the Boston

districts. I have never witnessed the exercise of Boston power in the legislature.

Annexation will in no manner touch legislation. It no more affects the Charlestown and Somerville than it does the Worcester districts. The same people, with the same politics, in the same districts, elect the same men. Everything touching legislation and politics is absolutely unchanged.

I desire once more to remind you, after having patiently followed the range of my incomplete argument, that much as it may be desired, necessary as it may be, you are not asked even to favor the proposition of annexation. We only appeal to you, and this we do most ardently, that three intelligent communities, exceptionally small in extent, may be sanctioned in the disposition of their own fate by the formal expression of their will.

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