An account of a late military massacre at Boston, or the consequences of quartering troops in a populous town, March 12, 1770. [New York, John Holt, 1770.

An Account of a late Military Massacre at Boston, or the Consequences of Quartering Troops in a populous Town.

BOSTON March 12, 1770.

THE Town of Boston affords a recent and melancholy Demonstration of the destructive consequences of quartering troops among citizens in time of Peace, under a pretence of supporting the laws and aiding civil authority; every considerate and unprejudic'd Person among us was deeply imprest with the apprehension of these consequences when it was known that a number of regiments were ordered to this town under such a pretext, but in reality to inforce oppressive measures; to awe and controul the legislative as well as executive power of the province, and to quell a spirit of liberty, which however it may have been basely and even ridicul'd by some, would do honour to any age or country. A few persons among us had determin'd to use all their influence to procure so destructive a measure, with a view to their securely enjoying the profits of an American revenue, and unhappily both for Britain and this country, they found means to effect it.

It is to Governor Bernard, the commissioners, their confidents and coadjutors, that we are indebted as the procuring cause of a military power in this capital.—The Boston Journal of Occurrences printed in Mr. Holt's York Journal, from time to time, afforded many striking instances of the distresses brought upon the inhabitants by this measure; and since those Journals have been discontinued, our troubles from that quarter have been growing upon us: We have known a party of soldiers in the face of day fire off a loaded musket upon the inhabitants, others have been prick'd with bayonets, and even our magistrate assaulted and put in danger of their lives, where offenders brought before them have been rescued and why those and other bold and base criminals have as yet escaped the punishment due to their crimes, may be soon matter of enquiry by the representative body of this people.—It is natural to suppose that when the inhabitants saw those laws which had been enacted for their security, and which they were ambitious of holding up to the soldiery, eluded, they should most commonly resent for themselves—and accordingly if so has happened; many have been the squabbles between them and the soldiery; but it seems their being often worsted by our youth in those ren counters, has only serv'd to irritate the former.—What passed at Mr. Gray's rope walk, has already been given the public, and may be said to have led the way to the late catastrophe.—That the rope walk lads when attacked by superior numbers should defend themselves with so much spirit and success in the club-way, was too mortifying, and perhaps it may hereafter appear, that even some of their officers, were unnappily affected with this circumstance: Divers stories were propagated among the soldiery, that serv'd to agitate their spirits...
particularly on the Sabbath, that one Chambers, a serjeant, represented as a sober man, had been missing the preceding day, and must therefore have been murdered by the townsmen; an officer of distinction so far credited this report, that he enter'd Mr. Gray's rope-walk that Sabbath; and when enquired of by that gentleman as soon as he could meet him, the occasion of his so doing, the officer reply'd, that it was to look if the serjeant said to be murdered had not been hid there; this sober serjeant was found on the Monday unhurt in a house of pleasure.—The evidences already collected shew, that many threatenings had been thrown out by the soldiery, but we do not pretend to say there was any preconcerted plan; when the evidences are published, the world will judge.—We may however venture to declare, that it appears too probable from their conduct, that some of the soldiery aimed to draw and provoke the townsmen into squabbles, and that they then intended to make use of other weapons than canes, clubs or bludgeons,

Our readers will doubtless expect a circumstantial account of the tragical affair on Monday night last; but we hope they will excuse our being so particular as we should have been, had we not seen that the town was intending an inquiry and full representation thereof.

On the evening of Monday, being the 5th current, several soldiers of the 29th regiment were seen parading the streets with their drawn cutlasses and, abusing and wounding numbers of the.

A few minutes after nine o'clock, four youths, named Edward Archbald, William Merchant, Francis Archbald, and John Leech, jun. came down Cornhill together, and seperated at Doctor Loring's corner, the two former were passing the narrow alley leading to Murray's barrack, in which was a soldier brandishing a sword of an uncommon size against the walls, but of which he struck fire plentifully. A person of mean countenance armed with a large club bore him company. Edward Archbald admonished Mr. Merchant to take care of the sword, on which the soldier turned round and struck Archbald on the arm, then push'd at Merchant and pierced thro' his clothes inside the arm close to the arm pit and grazed the skin. Merchant then struck the soldier with a short stick he had, and the other person ran to the barrack and brought with him two soldiers, one armed with a pair of tongs the other with a shovel; he with the tongs pursued Archbald back through the alley, collar'd and laid him over the head with the tongs. The noise brought people together, and John Hix a young lad, coming up, knock'd the soldier down, but let him get up again; and more lads gathering, drove them back to the barrack, where the boys stood sometime as it were to keep them in. In less than a minute 10 or 12 of them came out with drawn cutlasses, clubs and bayonets, and set upon the med boys and young folks, who stood them a little while but finding the inequality of their equipment dispersed.—On hearing the noise, one Samuel Atwood, came up to see what was the matter, and entering the alley from dock square, heard the latter part of the combat, and when the boys dispersed he met the 10 or 12 soldiers aforesaid rushing down the alley towards the
square, and asked them if they intended to murder the people? They answered Yes, by G—d, root and branch! With that one of them struck Mr. Atwood with a club, which was repeated by another and being he turned to go off, received a wound on the left shoulder which reached the bone and gave him much pain. Retreating a few steps Mr Atwood met two officers and said, Gentlemen what is the matter? They answered, you'll see by and by. Immediately after those heroes appeared in the square, asking where were the boogers where were the cowards? But notwithstanding their fierceness to naked men, one of them advanced towards a youth who had a split of a raw stave in his hand, and said damn them here is one of them; but the young man seeing a person near him with a drawn sword and a good cane ready to support him, held up his stave in defiance, and they quietly passed by him, up the little alley by Mr. Silsby's to King Street, where they attacked single and unarmed persons till they raised much clamour, and then turned down Cornhill street insulting all they met in like manner, and pursuing some to their very doors.

Thirty or forty persons, mostly lads, being by this means gathered in King-street, Capt. Preston with a party of men with charged bayonets, came from the main guard to the Commissioner's house the soldiers pushing their bayonets, crying, Make way! They took place by the custom-house, and continuing to push, to drive the people off, pricked some in several places; on which they were clamorous, and, it is said threw snow balls. On this, the Captain commanded them to fire, and more snow balls coming he again said, Damn you, Fire, be the consequence what it will! One soldier then fired, and a townsman with a dudge struck him over the hands with such force that he dropt his firelock; and rushing forward aimed a blow at the Captain's head, which graz'd? hat and fell pretty heavy upon his arm: However, the soldiers continued the fire, successively, till or 8, or as some say 11 guns were discharged.

By this fatal manœuvre, three men were laid dead on the spot, and two more struggling for life; but what shewed a degree of cruelty unknown to British troops, at least since the house of Hanover has directed their operations, was an attempt to fire upon, or push with their bayonets the persons who undertook to remove the slain and wounded!

Mr. Benjamin Leigh, now undertaker in Delph Manufactory, came up, and after some conversation with Capt. Preston, relative to his conduct in this affair, advised him to draw off his men, with which he complied.

The dead are Mr. Samuel Gray, killed on the spot, the ball entering his head and beating off a large portion of his skull.

A mulatto man, named Crispus Attucks, who was born in Farmingham, but lately belonged to New Providence and was here in order to go for North Carolina, also killed instantly; two balls entering
his breast, one of them in special goring the right lobe of the lungs, and a great part of the liver most horribly.

Mr. James Caldwell, mate of Capt. Morton's vessel, in like manner killed by two balls entering his back.

Mr. Samuel Maverick, a promising youth of 17 years of age, son of the widow Maverick, and an apprentice of Mr. Greenwood, Ivory Turner, mortally wounded, a ball went through his belly, and was cut out at his back: He died the next morning.

A lad named Christoper Monk, about 17 years of age, an apprentice to Mr. Walker, Shipwright; wounded, a ball entered his back about 4 inches above his left kidney, near the spine, and was cut out of the breast on the same side; apprehended he will die.

A lad named John Clark, about 17 years of age whose parents live at Medford, and an apprentice to Capt. Samuel Howard of this town; wounded a ball entered just above his groin and came out at his hip, on the opposite side, apprehended he will die.

Mr. Edward Payne, of this town, merchant, standing at his entry door, received a ball in his arm, which shattered some of the bones.

Mr. John Green, Taylor, coming up Leverett's Lane, received a ball just under his hip, and lodged it in the under part of his thigh, which was extracted

Mr. Robert Patterson, a seafaring man, who was the person that had his trowsers shot through in Richardson's affair, wounded; a ball went through his right arm, and he suffered great loss of blood.

Mr. Patrick Carr, about 30 years of age, who work'd with Mr. Field, Leather-Breeches maker in Queen-street, wounded, a ball enter'd near his hip, and went out at his side.

A lad named David Parker, an apprentice to Mr. Eddy the Wheelwright, wounded, a ball enter'd in his thigh.

The people were immediately alarmed with the report of this horrid massacre, the bells were set a ringing, and great numbers soon assembled at the place where this tragical scene had been acted; their feelings may be better conceived than expressed; and while some were taking care of the dead and wounded, the rest were in consultation what to do in these dreadful circumstances.—But so little intimidated were they, notwithstanding their being within a few yards of the main-guard, and seeing the 29th regiment under arms, and drawn up in King-street; that they kept their station, and
appear'd as an officer of rank express'd it, ready to run upon the very muzzles of their muskets.—The Lieut. Governor soon came into the Town House, and there met some of his Majesty's Council, and a number of civil Magistrates; a considerable body of people immediately enter'd the Council chamber and expressed themselves to his Honour with a freedom and warmth becoming the occasion. He used his utmost endeavoure to pacify them, requesting that they would let the matter subside for the night, and promised to do all in his power that justice should be done, and the law have its course; men of influence and weight with the people were not wanting on their part to procure their compliance with his Honour's request, by representing the horrible consequences of a promiscuous and rash engagement in the night, and assuring them that such measures should be entered upon in the morning, as would be agreeable to their dignity, and more likely way of obtaining the best satisfaction for the blood of their fellow-townsmen.—The inhabitants attended to these suggestions, and the regiment under arms being ordered to the barracks which was insisted upon by the people, they then separated and return'd to their dwellings, by one o'clock. At 3 o'clock Capt. Preston was committed, as were the soldiers who fir'd, a few hour after him.

Tuesday morning presented a most shocking scene, the blood of our fellow-citizens running like water thro' King-street, and the Merchant's Exchange, the principal spot of the military parade for about 18 months past. Our blood might also be track'd up to the head of Long-Lane, and thro' divers other streets and passages.

At eleven o'clock, the inhabitants met at Faneuil-Hall, and after some animated speeches, becoming the occasion, they chose a Committee of 15 respectable Gentlemen, to wait upon the Lieut. Governor in Council, to request of him to issue his orders for the immediate removal of the troops.

The Message was in these Words:

THAT it is the unanimous opinion of this meeting that the inhabitants and soldiery can no longer live together in safety; that nothing can rationally be expected to restore the peace of the town and prevent further blood and carnage, but the immediate removal of the troops; and that we therefore most servently pray his Honour, that his power and influence may be exerted for their instant removal.

His Honour's Reply, which was laid before the Town then adjourn'd to the Old South Meeting House, was as follows;

Gentlemen,

"I AM extremely sorry for the unhappy differences between the inhabitants and troops and especially for the action of the last evening, and I have exerted myself upon that occasion, that a
due inquiry may be made, and that the law may have its course. I have in council consulted with the commanding officers of the two regiments who are in the town. They have their orders from the General at New-York. It is not in my power to countermand those orders. The council have desired that the two regiments may be removed to the Castle. From the particular concern which the 20th regiment has had in your differences, Col. Dalrymple, who is the commanding officer of the troops, has signified that that regiment shall, with out delay, be placed in the barracks at the Castle until he can send to the General and receive his further orders concerning both the regiments; and that the main guard shall be removed, and the 14th regiment so disposed and laid under such restraint that all occasion of future disturbances may be prevented.”

The foregoing reply having been read and fully considered—the question was put, Whether there report be satisfactory? Passed in the negative, only 1 dissentient out of upwards of 4000 voters.

It was then moved and voted John Hancock, Esq; Mr. Samuel Adams, Mr. William Molineux, William Phillips, Esq; Dr. Joseph Warren. Joshua Henshaw, Esq; and Samuel Pemberton, Esq; be a Committee to wait on his Honour the Lieut. Governor, and inform him, that it is the unanimous Opinion of this Meeting, that the Reply made to a Vote of the Inhabitants presented his Honour in the Morning is by no means satisfactory; and that nothing less will satisfy, than a total and immediate removal off all the Troops.

The Committee having waited on the Lieut Governor agreeable to the foregoing Vote; laid before the Inhabitants the following Vote of Council received from his Honor.

His Honor the Lieut. Governor laid before the Board a Vote of the Town of Boston, passed this afternoon, and then addressed the Board as follows,

*Gentlemen of the Council,*

“I lay before you a Vote of the Town of Boston which I have just now received from them, and I now ask your advise what you judge necessary to be done upon it.”

The Council thereupon expressed themselves to be *unanimously* of opinion, “that it was absolutely necessary for his Majesty's service, the good order of the Town, and the Peace of the Province, that the Troops should be immediately removed out of the Town of Boston, and thereupon advised his Honor to communicate this Advise of the Council to Col. Dalrymple, and to pray that he would order the Troops down to Castle William.” The Committee also informed the Town, that Col. Dalrymple, after having seen the Vote of Council, said to the Committee, “That he now gave his word of Honor
that he would begin his Preparations in the Morning, and that there should be no unnecessary delay until the whole of the two Regiments were removed to the Castle.

Upon the above Report being read, the Inhabitants could not avoid expressing the high satisfaction it afforded them.

After Measures were taken for the Security of the Town, in the Night by a strong Military Watch, the Meeting was Dissolved.

The 29th regiment have already left us, and the 14th regiment are following them, so that we expect the town will soon be clear of all the troops.

The wisdom and true policy of his majesty's council and Col. Dalrymple, the commander, appear in this measure. Two regiments in this populous city; and the inhabitants justly incensed: Those of the neighbouring towns actually under arms upon the first report of the massacre, and the signal only wanting to bring in a few hours to the gates of this city many thousands of our brave brethren in the country, deeply affected with our distresses, and to whom we are greatly obliged on this occasion—No one knows where this would have ended and what important consequences even to the whole British empire might have followed, which our moderation and loyalty upon so trying an occasion and our faith in the commander's assurances have happily prevented.

Last Thursday, agreeable to a general request of the Inhabitants, and by the consent of parents and friends, were carried to their grave in succession, the bodies of Samuel Gray, Samuel Maverick, James Caldwell and Crispus Attucks, the unhappy victims who fell in the bloody massacre of the Monday evening preceeding!

On this occasion most of the shops in town were shut, all the bel?s were ordered to toll a solemn peal, as were al? those in the neighbouring towns of Charlestown Roxbury, &c. The procession began to move between the hours of 4 and 5 in the afternoon; two if the unfortunate sufferers, viz. Mess. James Goodwell and Crispus Attucks, who were strangers, borne from Faneuil-Hall, attended by a numerous twain of persons of all ranks; and the other two viz. Mr. Samuel Gray, from the House of Mr. Benjamin Gray, (his Brother) on the north side exchange, and Mr. Maverick, from the house of his distressed mother Mrs. Mary Maverick, in Union street, each followed by their respective relations and friends: The several hearse forming a junction in King street, the theatre of that inhuman tragedy! proceeded from thence thro' the main-street, lengthened by an immense concourse of people, so numerous as to be obliged a follow in ranks of fix, and brought up by a long train of carriages belonging to the principal entry of the town. The bodies were deposited in one vault in the middle burying-ground. The aggravated circumstances of their death, the distress and sorrow...
visible in every countenance, together with the peculiar solemnity with which the whole funeral was conducted, surpass description.

A military watch has been kept every night at the town-house and prison, in which many of the most respectable gentlemen of the town have appeared as the common soldiers, and night after night have given their attendance.

A Servant boy of one Manwaring the tide-waiter from Quebec, is now in goal, having depoased that himself, by the order and encouragement of his superiors, had discharged a musket several times from one of the windows of the house in King-street, hired by the commissioners and custom house officers to do their business in; more than one other person declared upon oath, that they apprehended several discharges came from that quarter.—It is not improbable that we may soon be able to account for the assassination of Mr. Otis some time past; the message by Wilmot, who came from the same house to the infamous Richardson before his firing the gun which kill'd young Snider, and to open up such a scene of villainy acted by a dirty banditti, at must astonish the public.

It is supposed that there must have been a greater number of people from town and country at the funeral of those who were massacred by the soldiers, than were ever together on this continent on any occasion.

A more dreadful tragedy has been acted by the soldiery in King-street, Boston, New-England than was some time since exhibitted in St. George's field, London, in old England, which may serve instead of Beacons for both countries.

Had those we thy Patriots, not only represented by Bernard and the commissioners as a faction, but as aiming at meaning a separation between Britain and the colonies had any thing else in contemplation than the preservation of our rights, and bringing things back to their old foundation What an opening has been given them?

Among other matters in the warrant for the annual town-meeting this day, is the following clause, viz. “Whether the town will take any measures that a public monument may be erected on the spot where the late tragical scene was acted, as a me memento to posterity, of that horrid massacre, and the destructive consequences of military troops being quartered in a well regulated city?”

*Boston Goal, Monday 12 th March, 1770.*

*Messieurs* Edes and Gill,
PERMIT me thro' the channel of your paper, to return my thanks in the most publick manner to the Inhabitants in general of this town—who throwing aside all party and prejudice, have with the utmost humanity and freedom slept forth advocates for truth, in defence of my injured innocence, in the late unhappy affair that happened on Monday night last: And to assure them, that I shall ever have the highest sense of the justice have done me, which will be ever gratefully remembered by their much obliged, and obedient humble servant, THOMAS PRESTON.

LONDON.

Dec. 30. Letters from Dantzick inform us, that orders have been given by her imperial majesty to fit out another fleet of twelve ships of the line with the utmost expedition, the command of which it is said, will be given to Mr. Kofmin, a Russian officer, who was educated in the British navy under the brave admiral Warren.

A bet of 100 guineas was yesterday evening made at a coffee-house not far from Charring cross, that the author of Junius would be in custody before the first of next February.

It was yesterday reported, that the author of the last Junius is known, and that proper measures were taking in order to come at his person.

A great man absolutely declared this week that Junius's last letter had operated totally different from its intentions; for that "thereby the ministry were now become immoveable."

It is reported that a great Personage has within these few days, had the real name of Junius, with the intelligence properly authenticated, sent by an anonymous hand, through the channel of the common post.

A certain very popular nobleman, and a great officer in the law department, have of late had several conferences on the subject of the Middlefex petition.

The national debt of this and our sister kingdom, Ireland, seems to terrify several among the moneyed men, who, in our present distractions, with so heavy a burthen, do not think their property over-safe in the public funds, especially in case of another war as expensive as the last.

It is said, that should the advice of Lord Catham be taken on an important subject, Mr. Wilkes will certainly take his seat without a dissolution of parliament.
A correspondent remarks that Junius, in all his letters never once shewed he wanted a head, till his last long laboured epistle, in which he struck at the supreme head both in church and state.

We hear that a petition from Mr. Wilks will be presented to the House of Commons, at the beginning of the ensuing sessions, desiring the house to examine the several parts of his former petition which have not as yet been enquired into: such as the evasion of the Habeas Corpus; the close commitment of their member for three days, with out the permission of seeing any person but his jailors; although charged only with a misdemeanour the breach of privilege, by serving a member of parliament with a subpoena; the counter notices signed Summoning Officer, sent to several of his jury only the day before the trial; and the papers seized under the general warrant, produced as evidence on his trial.

We are assured, from undoubted veracity, that the present state of the nation will undergo a very serious consideration at an ensuing meeting.

It is said that a noble Lord, who lately matched a certain cast-off Dutchess is, in the jockey-phrase already sick of the lay, and would willingly pay forfeit.

From the 15th of November to the 22d instant inclusive, the East India company have entered for their outward bound trade, of the woollen manufacture and other home commodities, to the amount of 213,000l. and as yet not near half of the? are freighted.
In reply to your inquiry of February 11 I wish to inform you that the Boston Public Library has a copy of An Account of a Late Military Massacre at Boston, March 12, 1770. The broadside was bought at the sale of the library of Robert Proud in 1903. It is listed as No. 201 in the catalogue of that sale, The Proud Papers... and A Collection of Americana. In this the name of the publisher is given as John Holt of New York, and the date as 1770. This is evidently the source of the pencil notation on the broadside itself. Evans's volume, which was printed in 1907, probably also relied on this entry.

Incidentally, on the verso four coffins are pictured, not three.

Sincerely yours, Zoltán Haraszti Keeper of Rare Books

ZH/MJE

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