BOSTON LIGHT-HOUSE.

Early in the last century the inhabitants of Boston agitated the subject of erecting a light-house at the entrance to their harbor, in consequence of the growth of their commerce. Accordingly, in 1715, an act was passed to "build a light-house on the southernmost point of the Great Brewsters, called Beacon Island, because there had been a great discouragement to navigation by the loss of the lives and estates of several of His Majesties subjects, and that after the building of the light-house and kindling a light in it, to be kept from sun setting to sun rising, that an impost shall be paid by the masters of all Ships and Vessels, coming in and going out of the harbor, except Coasters, the duty of One Penny per Ton, inwards, and One Penny per Ton, outwards, before they Load or Unload the Goods therein."

The first light-house keeper was George Worthylake, a man familiar with every island in the harbor from childhood, having been brought up on the island where Fort Warren now stands. At the time he became keeper of the light he had a farm on Lovell's Island, where he resided. He was paid fifty pounds for his service the first year, which amount was increased to seventy the second year, in consequence of the loss of fifty-nine sheep which were drowned in the winter of 1716, through want of his care during enforced absences in attending the light. Mr. Worthylake was unfortunately drowned, together with his wife Ann and their daughter Ruth, off Noddle's Island, now East Boston, while on their way to town, and their remains now rest in Copp's Hill Cemetery. This incident was the orign of the ballad called the "Light-house Tragedy," which Franklin says he was induced by his brother to write, print, and sell about the streets, and which he said "sold prodigiously though it was *wretched stuff*."

The old light-house was much injured by fire in 1751, and was struck by lightning several times. During the revolution it was demolished and rebuilt by both the American and British forces, as the occasion arose to serve their ends thereby, as the following account from Frothingham's Siege of Boston will show:—

A party under Maj. Vose of Heath's regiment, in whale boats, landed on Nantasket Point, before day, and set fire to the light-house. At daylight the men-of-war discovered them and fired upon them. An eye-witness says: "I ascended an eminence at

a distance, and saw the flames of the light-house ascending up to heaven like grateful incense, and the ships wasting their powder. He also brought from Nantasket a thousand bushels of barley and a quantity of hay. An armed schooner and several barges engaged the detachment, and wounded two of the Americans. Maj. Vose gained much credit for his success in this enterprise. The enemy commenced rebuilding the light-house, and July 31st, 1775, Maj. Tupper, with three hundred men, was detached with orders to disperse the working party. The enemy prepared to receive the Americans in a hostile manner. Maj. Tupper landed in good order on the island, marched up to the works, killed ten or twelve on the spot, and took the remainder prisoners. Having demolished the works, the party were ready to embark, but the tide leaving them, they were obliged to remain until its return. Meantime, a number of boats came up from the men-of-war, to reinforce those at the island, and a smart firing from both parties took place. A field piece, under Maj. Crane, planted on Nantasket Point to cover a retreat, sunk one of the boats, and killed several of the crew. Maj. Tupper brought his party off with the loss of only one man killed and two or three wounded. He killed and captured fifty-three of the enemy. Washington the next day, in general orders, thanked Maj. Tupper, and the officers and soldiers under his command, "for their gallant and soldier-like behavior." June 13th, 1776, the British fleet evacuated the harbor, and as they passed the light-house they sent their boats ashore and brought off a party of regulars, and blew up the light-house with powder, then the whole fleet made all sail they could and went to sea, steering their course for Halifax. This island was, therefore, the last spot occupied by a hostile force in Boston Harbor. The present light-house was erected in 1783, but has been refitted since then with improved apparatus. In 1860 the old tower was raised and now measures ninety-eight feet above the sea level. Its revolving light can be seen at a distance of sixteen nautical miles.

The view in mezzotint of the first light-house built in America is from a mezzotint in the possession of the Light-house Board, Treasury Department, Washington. It was engraved by W. Burgis, who engraved a map of Boston, in 1729.

The line engraving represents the second Boston light-house, and is reproduced from the "Massachusetts Magazine" for 1789.