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September the Seventeenth, 1830,

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INHABITANTS OF BOSTON, SEPTEMBER THE SEVENTEENTH, 1830, \*\*\*

AN

# ODE:

PRONOUNCED BEFORE THE

INHABITANTS OF BOSTON,

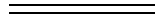
SEPTEMBER THE SEVENTEENTH, 1830,

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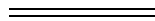
**CENTENNIAL CELEBRATION**

OF THE

SETTLEMENT OF THE CITY.



**BY CHARLES SPRAGUE.**



BOSTON:  
JOHN H. EASTBURN ... CITY PRINTER.

MDCCCXXX.

# CITY OF BOSTON.

IN COMMON COUNCIL, SEPTEMBER 17, 1830.

*Ordered*, That the Committee of Arrangements for the celebration of this day be, and they are hereby, directed to present the thanks of the City Council to CHARLES SPRAGUE, Esquire, for the elegant, interesting and instructive Poem, this day pronounced by him, and respectfully request a copy thereof for the press.

Sent up for Concurrence,

B. T. PICKMAN, *President*.

*In the Board of Aldermen, September 20, 1830.*

Read and concurred.

H. G. OTIS, *Mayor*.

A TRUE COPY—ATTEST,

S. F. M'CLEARY, *City Clerk*.

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*Boston, September 17, 1830.*

CHARLES SPRAGUE, ESQ.

The Undersigned, the Committee of Arrangements for the Centennial Celebration of the Settlement of Boston, have the honor to enclose you an attested copy of a vote of the City Council, and respectfully ask your compliance with the request contained therein.

HARRISON GRAY OTIS,  
BENJAMIN RUSSELL,  
WINSLOW LEWIS,  
BENJAMIN T. PICKMAN,  
THOMAS MINNS,  
JOSEPH EVELETH,  
JOHN W. JAMES,  
JOHN P. BIGELOW,  
WASHINGTON P. GRAGG.

# ODE.

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## I.

Not to the Pagan's mount I turn,  
For inspiration now;  
Olympus and its gods I spurn—  
Pure One, be with me, Thou!  
Thou, in whose awful name,  
From suffering and from shame,  
Our Fathers fled, and braved a pathless sea;  
Thou, in whose holy fear,  
They fixed an empire here,  
And gave it to their Children and to Thee.

## II.

And You! ye bright ascended Dead,  
Who scorned the bigot's yoke,  
Come, round this place your influence shed;  
Your spirits I invoke.  
Come, as ye came of yore,  
When on an unknown shore,  
Your daring hands the flag of faith unfurled,  
To float sublime,  
Through future time,  
The beacon-banner of another world.

## III.

Behold! they come—those sainted forms,  
Unshaken through the strife of storms;  
Heaven's winter cloud hangs coldly down,  
And earth puts on its rudest frown;  
But colder, ruder was the hand,  
That drove them from their own fair land,  
Their own fair land—refinement's chosen seat,  
Art's trophied dwelling, learning's green retreat;  
By valour guarded, and by victory crowned,  
For all, but gentle charity, renowned.  
With streaming eye, yet steadfast heart,  
Even from that land they dared to part,  
And burst each tender tie;  
Haunts, where their sunny youth was passed,  
Homes, where they fondly hoped at last  
In peaceful age to die;  
Friends, kindred, comfort, all they spurned—  
Their fathers' hallowed graves;  
And to a world of darkness turned,  
Beyond a world of waves.

## IV.

When Israel's race from bondage fled,  
Signs from on high the wanderers led;  
But here—Heaven hung no symbol here,  
*Their* steps to guide, *their* souls to cheer;  
They saw, thro' sorrow's lengthening night,  
Nought but the fagot's guilty light;  
The cloud they gazed at was the smoke,  
That round their murdered brethren broke.  
Nor power above, nor power below,  
Sustained them in their hour of wo;  
    A fearful path they trod,  
    And dared a fearful doom;  
To build an altar to their God,  
    And find a quiet tomb.

## V.

But not alone, not all unblessed,  
The exile sought a place of rest;  
ONE dared with him to burst the knot,  
That bound her to her native spot;  
Her low sweet voice in comfort spoke,  
As round their bark the billows broke;  
She through the midnight watch was there;  
With him to bend her knees in prayer;  
She trod the shore with girded heart,  
Through good and ill to claim her part;  
In life, in death, with him to seal  
Her kindred love, her kindred zeal.

## VI.

They come—that coming who shall tell?  
The eye may weep, the heart may swell,  
But the poor tongue in vain essays  
A fitting note for them to raise.  
We hear the after-shout that rings  
For them who smote the power of kings;  
The swelling triumph all would share,  
But who the dark defeat would dare,  
And boldly meet the wrath and wo,  
That wait the unsuccessful blow?  
It were an envied fate, we deem,  
To live a land's recorded theme,  
    When we are in the tomb;  
We, too, might yield the joys of home,  
And waves of winter darkness roam,  
    And tread a shore of gloom—  
Knew we those waves, through coming time,  
Should roll our names to every clime;  
Felt we that millions on that shore  
Should stand, our memory to adore—  
But no glad vision burst in light,  
Upon the Pilgrims' aching sight;  
Their hearts no proud hereafter swelled;  
Deep shadows veiled the way they held;  
The yell of vengeance was their trump of fame,  
Their monument, a grave without a name.

## VII.

Yet, strong in weakness, there they stand,  
On yonder ice-bound rock,  
Stern and resolved, that faithful band,  
To meet fate's rudest shock.  
Though anguish rends the father's breast,  
For them, his dearest and his best,  
With him the waste who trod—  
Though tears that freeze, the mother sheds  
Upon her children's houseless heads—  
The Christian turns to God!

### VIII.

In grateful adoration now,  
Upon the barren sands they bow.  
What tongue of joy e'er woke such prayer,  
As bursts in desolation there?  
What arm of strength e'er wrought such power,  
As waits to crown that feeble hour?  
There into life an infant empire springs!  
There falls the iron from the soul;  
There liberty's young accents roll,  
Up to the King of kings!  
To fair creation's farthest bound,  
That thrilling summons yet shall sound;  
The dreaming nations shall awake,  
And to their centre earth's old kingdoms shake.  
Pontiff and prince, your sway  
Must crumble from that day;  
Before the loftier throne of Heaven,  
The hand is raised, the pledge is given—  
One monarch to obey, one creed to own,  
That monarch, God, that creed, His word alone.

### IX.

Spread out earth's holiest records here,  
Of days and deeds to reverence dear;  
A zeal like this what pious legends tell?  
On kingdoms built  
In blood and guilt,  
The worshippers of vulgar triumph dwell—  
But what exploit with theirs shall page,  
Who rose to bless their kind;  
Who left their nation and their age,  
Man's spirit to unbind?  
Who boundless seas passed o'er,  
And boldly met, in every path,  
Famine and frost and heathen wrath,  
To dedicate a shore,  
Where piety's meek train might breathe their vow,  
And seek their Maker with an unshamed brow;  
Where liberty's glad race might proudly come,  
And set up there an everlasting home?

### X.

O many a time it hath been told,  
The story of those men of old:  
For this fair poetry hath wreathed  
Her sweetest, purest flower;  
For this proud eloquence hath breathed  
His strain of loftiest power;  
Devotion, too, hath lingered round  
Each spot of consecrated ground,  
And hill and valley blessed;  
There, where our banished Fathers strayed,  
There, where they loved and wept and prayed,  
There, where their ashes rest.

## XI.

And never may they rest unsung,  
While liberty can find a tongue.  
Twine, Gratitude, a wreath for them,  
More deathless than the diadem,  
Who to life's noblest end,  
Gave up life's noblest powers,  
And bade the legacy descend,  
Down, down to us and ours.

## XII.

By centuries now the glorious hour we mark,  
When to these shores they steered their shattered bark;  
And still, as other centuries melt away,  
Shall other ages come to keep the day.  
When we are dust, who gather round this spot,  
Our joys, our griefs, our very names forgot,  
Here shall the dwellers of the land be seen,  
To keep the memory of the Pilgrims green.  
Nor here alone their praises shall go round,  
Nor here alone their virtues shall abound—  
Broad as the empire of the free shall spread,  
Far as the foot of man shall dare to tread,  
Where oar hath never dipped, where human tongue  
Hath never through the woods of ages rung,  
There, where the eagle's scream and wild wolf's cry  
Keep ceaseless day and night through earth and sky,  
Even there, in after time, as toil and taste  
Go forth in gladness to redeem the waste,  
Even there shall rise, as grateful myriads throng,  
Faith's holy prayer and freedom's joyful song;  
There shall the flame that flashed from yonder Rock,  
Light up the land, till nature's final shock.

## XIII.

Yet while by life's endearments crowned,  
To mark this day we gather round,  
And to our nation's founders raise  
The voice of gratitude and praise,  
Shall not one line lament that lion race,  
For us struck out from sweet creation's face?  
Alas! alas! for them—those fated bands,  
Whose monarch tread was on these broad, green lands;  
Our Fathers called them savage—they, whose bread,  
In the dark hour, those famished Fathers fed:  
    We call them savage, we,  
    Who hail the struggling free,  
    Of every clime and hue;  
    We, who would save  
    The branded slave,  
And give him liberty he never knew:  
    We, who but now have caught the tale,  
    That turns each listening tyrant pale,  
    And blessed the winds and waves that bore  
    The tidings to our kindred shore;  
The triumph-tidings pealing from that land,  
Where up in arms insulted legions stand;  
    There, gathering round his bold compeers,  
    Where He, our own, our welcomed One,  
    Riper in glory than in years,  
    Down from his forfeit throne,  
    A craven monarch hurled,  
And spurned him forth, a proverb to the world!

#### XIV.

We call them savage—O be just!  
    Their outraged feelings scan;  
A voice comes forth, 'tis from the dust—  
    The savage was a man!  
Think ye he loved not? who stood by,  
    And in his toils took part?  
Woman was there to bless his eye—  
    The savage had a heart!  
Think ye he prayed not? when on high  
    He heard the thunders roll,  
What bade him look beyond the sky?  
    The savage had a soul!

#### XV.



I venerate the Pilgrim's cause,  
Yet for the red man dare to plead—  
We bow to Heaven's recorded laws,  
He turned to nature for a creed;  
    Beneath the pillared dome,  
    We seek our God in prayer;  
Through boundless woods he loved to roam,  
And the Great Spirit worshipped there:  
But one, one fellow-throb with us he felt;  
To one divinity with us he knelt;  
Freedom, the self-same freedom we adore,  
Bade him defend his violated shore;  
    He saw the cloud, ordained to grow,  
    And burst upon his hills in wo;  
    He saw his people withering by,  
    Beneath the invader's evil eye;  
Strange feet were trampling on his fathers' bones;  
At midnight hour he woke to gaze  
Upon his happy cabin's blaze,  
And listen to his children's dying groans:  
He saw—and maddening at the sight,  
Gave his bold bosom to the fight;  
To tiger rage his soul was driven,  
Mercy was not—nor sought nor given;  
The pale man from his lands must fly;  
He would be free—or he would die.

## XVI.

And was this savage? say,  
    Ye ancient few,  
    Who struggled through  
    Young freedom's trial-day—  
What first your sleeping wrath awoke?  
On your own shores war's larum broke:  
What turned to gall even kindred blood?  
Round your own homes the oppressor stood:  
This every warm affection chilled,  
This every heart with vengeance thrilled,  
    And strengthened every hand;  
    From mound to mound,  
    The word went round—  
"Death for our native land!"

## XVII.

Ye mothers, too, breathe ye no sigh,  
For them who thus could dare to die?  
Are all your own dark hours forgot,  
    Of soul-sick suffering here?  
Your pangs, as from yon mountain spot,  
Death spoke in every booming shot,  
    That knelled upon your ear?  
How oft that gloomy, glorious tale ye tell,  
As round your knees your children's children hang,  
Of them, the gallant Ones, ye loved so well,  
Who to the conflict for their country sprang.  
    In pride, in all the pride of wo,  
    Ye tell of them, the brave laid low,  
    Who for their birthplace bled;  
In pride, the pride of triumph then,  
Ye tell of them, the matchless men,  
    From whom the invaders fled!

## XVIII.

And ye, this holy place who throng,  
The annual theme to hear,  
And bid the exulting song  
Sound their great names from year to year;  
Ye, who invoke the chisel's breathing grace,  
In marble majesty their forms to trace;  
Ye, who the sleeping rocks would raise,  
To guard their dust and speak their praise;  
Ye, who, should some other band  
With hostile foot defile the land,  
Feel that ye like them would wake,  
Like them the yoke of bondage break,  
Nor leave a battle-blade undrawn,  
Though every hill a sepulchre should yawn—  
Say, have not ye one line for those,  
One brother-line to spare,  
Who rose but as your Fathers rose,  
And dared as ye would dare?

### **XIX.**

Alas! for them—their day is o'er,  
Their fires are out from hill and shore;  
No more for them the wild deer bounds,  
The plough is on their hunting grounds;  
The pale man's axe rings through their woods,  
The pale man's sail skims o'er their floods,  
Their pleasant springs are dry;  
Their children—look, by power oppressed,  
Beyond the mountains of the west,  
Their children go—to die.

### **XX.**

O doubly lost! oblivion's shadows close  
Around their triumphs and their woes.  
On other realms, whose suns have set,  
Reflected radiance lingers yet;  
There sage and bard have shed a light  
That never shall go down in night;  
There time-crowned columns stand on high,  
To tell of them who cannot die;  
Even we, who then were nothing, kneel  
In homage there, and join earth's general peal.  
But the doomed Indian leaves behind no trace,  
To save his own, or serve another race;  
With his frail breath his power has passed away,  
His deeds, his thoughts are buried with his clay;  
Nor lofty pile, nor glowing page  
Shall link him to a future age,  
Or give him with the past a rank:  
His heraldry is but a broken bow,  
His history but a tale of wrong and wo,  
His very name must be a blank.

### **XXI.**

Cold, with the beast he slew, he sleeps;  
O'er him no filial spirit weeps;  
No crowds throng round, no anthem-notes ascend,  
To bless his coming and embalm his end;  
Even that he lived, is for his conqueror's tongue,  
By foes alone his death-song must be sung;  
No chronicles but theirs shall tell  
His mournful doom to future times;  
May these upon his virtues dwell,  
And in his fate forget his crimes.

## XXII.

Peace to the mingling dead!  
Beneath the turf we tread,  
Chief, Pilgrim, Patriot sleep—  
All gone! how changed! and yet the same,  
As when faith's herald bark first came  
In sorrow o'er the deep.  
Still from his noonday height,  
The sun looks down in light;  
Along the trackless realms of space,  
The stars still run their midnight race;  
The same green valleys smile, the same rough shore  
Still echoes to the same wild ocean's roar:—  
But where the bristling night-wolf sprang  
Upon his startled prey,  
Where the fierce Indian's war-cry rang,  
Through many a bloody fray;  
And where the stern old Pilgrim prayed  
In solitude and gloom,  
Where the bold Patriot drew his blade,  
And dared a patriot's doom—  
Behold! in liberty's unclouded blaze,  
We lift our heads, a race of other days.

## XXIII.

All gone! the wild beast's lair is trodden out;  
Proud temples stand in beauty there;  
Our children raise their merry shout,  
Where once the death-whoop vexed the air:  
The Pilgrim—seek yon ancient place of graves,  
Beneath that chapel's holy shade;  
Ask, where the breeze the long grass waves,  
Who, who within that spot are laid:  
The Patriot—go, to fame's proud mount repair,  
The tardy pile, slow rising there,  
With tongueless eloquence shall tell  
Of them who for their country fell.

## XXIV.

All gone! 'tis ours, the goodly land—  
Look round—the heritage behold;  
Go forth—upon the mountains stand,  
Then, if ye can, be cold.  
See living vales by living waters blessed,  
Their wealth see earth's dark caverns yield,  
See ocean roll, in glory dressed,  
For all a treasure, and round all a shield:  
Hark to the shouts of praise  
Rejoicing millions raise;  
Gaze on the spires that rise,  
To point them to the skies,  
Unfearing and unfeared;  
Then, if ye can, O then forget  
To whom ye owe the sacred debt—  
The Pilgrim race revered!  
The men who set faith's burning lights  
Upon these everlasting heights,  
To guide their children through the years of time;  
The men that glorious law who taught,  
Unshrinking liberty of thought,  
And roused the nations with the truth sublime.

### XXV.

Forget? no, never—ne'er shall die,  
Those names to memory dear;  
I read the promise in each eye  
That beams upon me here.  
Descendants of a twice-recorded race,  
Long may ye here your lofty lineage grace;  
'Tis not for you home's tender tie  
To rend, and brave the waste of waves;  
'Tis not for you to rouse and die,  
Or yield and live a line of slaves;  
The deeds of danger and of death are done:  
Upheld by inward power alone,  
Unhonoured by the world's loud tongue,  
'Tis yours to do unknown,  
And then to die unsung.  
To other days, to other men belong  
The penman's plaudit and the poet's song;  
Enough for glory has been wrought,  
By you be humbler praises sought;  
In peace and truth life's journey run,  
And keep unsullied what your Fathers won.

### XXVI.

Take then my prayer, Ye dwellers of this spot—  
Be yours a noiseless and a guiltless lot.

I plead not that ye bask  
In the rank beams of vulgar fame;  
To light your steps I ask  
A purer and a holier flame.  
No bloated growth I supplicate for you,  
No pining multitude, no pampered few;  
'Tis not alone to coffer gold,  
Nor spreading borders to behold;  
'Tis not fast-swelling crowds to win,  
The refuse-ranks of want and sin—  
This be the kind decree:  
Be ye by goodness crowned,  
Revered, though not renowned;  
Poor, if Heaven will, but Free!  
Free from the tyrants of the hour,  
The clans of wealth, the clans of power,  
The coarse, cold scorners of their God;  
Free from the taint of sin,  
The leprosy that feeds within,  
And free, in mercy, from the bigot's rod.

### XXVII.

The sceptre's might, the crosier's pride,  
Ye do not fear;  
No conquest blade, in life-blood dyed,  
Drops terror here—  
Let there not lurk a subtler snare,  
For wisdom's footsteps to beware;  
The shackle and the stake,  
Our Fathers fled;  
Ne'er may their children wake  
A fouler wrath, a deeper dread;  
Ne'er may the craft that fears the flesh to bind,  
Lock its hard fetters on the mind;  
Quenched be the fiercer flame  
That kindles with a name;  
The pilgrim's faith, the pilgrim's zeal,  
Let more than pilgrim kindness seal;  
Be purity of life the test,  
Leave to the heart, to Heaven, the rest.

### XXVIII.

So, when our children turn the page,  
 To ask what triumphs marked our age,  
 What we achieved to challenge praise,  
 Through the long line of future days,  
 This let them read, and hence instruction draw:  
     "Here were the Many blessed,  
     Here found the virtues rest,  
 Faith linked with love and liberty with law;  
     Here industry to comfort led,  
     Her book of light here learning spread;  
     Here the warm heart of youth  
     Was wooed to temperance and to truth;  
     Here hoary age was found,  
     By wisdom and by reverence crowned.  
     No great, but guilty fame  
 Here kindled pride, that should have kindled shame;  
     THESE chose the better, happier part,  
     That poured its sunlight o'er the heart;  
     That crowned their homes with peace and health,  
     And weighed Heaven's smile beyond earth's wealth;  
     Far from the thorny paths of life  
 They stood, a living lesson to their race,  
     Rich in the charities of life,  
     Man in his strength, and Woman in her grace;  
 In purity and love THEIR pilgrim road they trod,  
 And when they served their neighbor felt they served their  
     God."

### XXIX.

This may not wake the poet's verse,  
 This souls of fire may ne'er rehearse  
     In crowd-delighting voice;  
 Yet o'er the record shall the patriot bend,  
 His quiet praise the moralist shall lend,  
     And all the good rejoice.

### XXX.

This be our story then, in that far day,  
 When others come their kindred debt to pay:  
     In that far day?—O what shall be,  
     In this dominion of the free,  
 When we and ours have rendered up our trust,  
 And men unborn shall tread above our dust?  
     O what shall be?—He, He alone,  
     The dread response can make,  
     Who sitteth on the only throne,  
     That time shall never shake;  
     Before whose all-beholding eyes  
 Ages sweep on, and empires sink and rise.  
     Then let the song to Him begun,  
     To Him in reverence end:  
     Look down in love, Eternal One,  
     And Thy good cause defend;  
     Here, late and long, put forth Thy hand,  
     To guard and guide the Pilgrim's land.

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