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on the whole, and there are few who may not profit in their speculative theories or their practical living, by considering the facts brought to light in this entertaining volume.

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12. — *The Acts and Resolves, Public and Private, of the Province of the Massachusetts Bay : to which are prefixed the Charters of the Province. With Historical and Explanatory Notes and an Appendix. Published under Chapter 87 of the Resolves of the General Court of the Commonwealth for the Year 1867.* Boston : Wright and Potter, Printers to the State. 1874. Vol. II. pp. 1187.

THE second volume of the Provincial Laws of Massachusetts, prepared by Mr. Ames and Mr. Goodell, under the authority of the Commonwealth, was all but ready for publication, when the whole edition with the stereotype plates was destroyed by the great fire in Boston in 1872. We receive a copy of the reprint just as we dismiss the last sheets of this number. We expressed our sense of the singular value of the work at the time of the appearance of the first volume, four years ago.\* No less is to be said of it than that it is a work perfect in its kind ; and the kind is of high importance, were it only for the uses of the historical inquirer. The legislation of a community during any period is the skeleton of its history for that time. In enacting laws, men soberly, carefully, and at the moment, make a record of their condition, their wants, their aims, their intelligence, the amount and quality of their public spirit. The statute-book is a series of documents which in respect to contemporary facts there is no disputing, and which present themselves to the interpreter with all the advantage belonging to their studied precision of statement.

This second volume of the Provincial Laws of Massachusetts covers the period of the thirty years' peace between England and France in the reigns of the first two kings of the house of Hanover. It is the least interesting portion of Massachusetts history. Yet the student of the causes of the growth of states will find matter for thought in observing the arrangements made here from year to year for keeping the people safe, orderly, healthy, peaceable, intelligent, industrious, moral, and religious ; for courts of justice, for churches, ministers, and schools, for facilities of communication, for the restriction of pauperism and the support of the poor, for a just distribution of public burdens, for the encouragement and control of business. Nor are the wisdom and energy of the domestic administration alone brought

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\* N. A. Review, No. CCXXVIII.

into notice. The Charter granted by William and Mary to Massachusetts established a new relation between that community and the parent government. The problem for the provincial patriots was to interpret the instrument in such a manner as to make it allow to them as much as possible of the liberty which they had enjoyed in old times under the grant of Charles the First. The aim of the British ministers was to establish the opposite construction of the new Constitution. They could spare but little attention to this while King William and Queen Anne were waging their wars on the Continent. But George the First left them more at leisure for colonial business, and, among less material measures, they undertook to reduce Massachusetts to better subordination by extracting from her a regular and fixed salary for her governor. By refusing this provision for him, and paying him at her pleasure from year to year, she preferred keeping him dependent on her good-will for his living; much as the early Parliaments of Charles the First aimed to check that ill-calculating monarch. The controversy upon this crucial question, though opened at an earlier time, and though nominally revived for a moment at a time a little later, was in fact included within the period to which this volume belongs. Shute, the well-meaning, shallow-witted martinet, knowing as much of the way to deal with Massachusetts as was to be learned in Flemish campaigns, — Burnet, the narrow, honorable, straightforward, arrogant English gentleman, expecting, between his own lofty positiveness and the liking of the colonial farmers for his father, that they would find it hard to stand against him, — Belcher, the managing politician, not so clever certainly as some of his kind at this day, but still a proficient well in advance of his own contemporaries, — successively tried their hands at the business, and all with equal ill-success. Sir Robert Walpole was wiser, or more timid, than was Mr. George Grenville in the next generation. He was willing to let the Board of Trade bluster and bark without stint against the intractable Colony. But he held them well in hand, taking care that their threats of the king's hot displeasure against the Colony's continual obstinacy should get no substantial confirmation from the king. Becoming used to brute thunder, the Colony became more and more plain-spoken in its refusals. It took an attitude of inflexible will. And in fact nothing did shake it as to this matter, from first to last. And as noticeable a feature as any of the case was that in all the time there were no leaders to keep the public spirit up to the needful point of resolution. No individuals were prominent in that action. What carried the point was a public sentiment, considerate, circumspect, wise, and brave.

"The Great Awakening," so called, took place partly within the period embraced by this volume; but the book bears no trace of it. Massachusetts did not undertake to adjust it by any law-making. Connecticut took hold of it, and burned her fingers with a wound beyond Governor Law's surgery.

We repeat that it is impossible to speak in too high praise of the execution of this work. Of course we have not verified the correctness of the copies of the statutes, extending in the two volumes through two thousand closely printed pages. But there is every appearance of the extremest exactness in the transcription. The book contains the abundant wealth of a wide and accurate learning, and the apparatus of tables and indexes furnishes perfectly fitting keys for access to the heaped-up treasures.

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13. — *Memoirs of John Quincy Adams, comprising Portions of his Diary from 1795 to 1848.* Edited by CHARLES FRANCIS ADAMS. Vol. III. Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott & Co. 1874.

THE third volume of this work is likely to be more attractive to the general reader than either of its predecessors. Whilst the interest in the personal narrative remains about the same, the scenes and events vary more strikingly. At the close of the second volume the curtain was about to rise and display at Ghent the conclave of negotiators for a peace between Great Britain and America. The two belligerents had become pretty equally tired of a needless and unprofitable war. But there was still doubt whether the pride of either was so much reduced as to bring about works of repentance. Great Britain, though much exhausted by the great continental struggle, had come out of it with honor, and was therefore not unlikely to indulge its wonted arrogance in dealing with a power incomparably inferior to that which it had just helped to overcome. On the other hand, the United States government had succeeded so far beyond their fears, especially on the ocean, that they were by no means inclined to submit to the dictation of terms likely to entail upon them anything like discredit with the great body of their people. Hence on both sides the assemblage was felt to be a critical experiment.

There was, however, a wide difference in the attitude of the respective negotiators. With the British little or no personal responsibility was attached to their action. They were within easy reach of their masters in London. The distance from Ghent to that metropolis was quickly traversed even in that day when railroads and elec-