THE

Town of Roxbury:

ITS MEMORABLE PERSONS AND PLACES,

ITS HISTORY AND ANTIQUITIES, WITH NUMEROUS
ILLUSTRATIONS OF ITS

OLD LANDMARKS AND NOTED PERSONAGES.

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Crude and inharmonious as are the verses upon these stones, they exhibit no such glaring violation of good taste as does this couplet in Westminster Abbey, over the remains of the poet Mathew Prior: —

> "Life is a jest, and all things shew it,
> I thought so once, and now I know it."

For all its wealth of costly tombs, monumental marble, and storied urn, Westminster Abbey contains no more precious dust than that of the good old apostle Eliot, who sleeps in this hallowed ground.

On the north side of the yard are the gravestones of some of the Warren family, including Joseph, the father of Gen. Warren. Most of their remains have been transferred to Forest Hills.

A canal fifty feet in width, extending from the wharf at Lamb's Dam Creek nearly to Eustis Street, just east of the burying-ground, was built about the year 1795. Its enterprising projectors, among whom were Ralph Smith, Dr. Thomas Williams, and Aaron and Charles Davis, proposed by this means to save two and a half miles of land carriage from the centre of Boston, in their supplies of fuel, lumber, bark for tanning, flour, salt, etc., and in conveying to the shipping in the harbor and stores on the wharves, as well as exporting abroad, the salted provisions and country produce which constituted a large proportion of the trade and commerce of the town at that time. The line between Roxbury and Boston passed through the centre of this canal. Gen. Heath's manuscript journal, under date of March 9, 1796, notes the fact that a large topsail schooner that day came up into the basin of the new canal in "Lamb's Meadow."

When Northampton Street was built in 1832, the terminus of navigation was made where Morse & Co. now have their coal wharf. North of this street and east of Harrison Avenue was a dike to keep out the sea; all else was marsh flats save where the channel afforded sufficient depth to float

small vessels laden with merchandise to Roxbury. The canal, never a paying investment, long ago ceased to be of commercial importance, and is soon to be filled up by the city.

A little to the east, in the direction of the old magazine, ran a wide creek, in which the rite of baptism was frequently performed. At one of these ceremonies of unusual interest, the pressure of the spectators against a fence upon its border was so great that it gave way, and a number of sinners were immersed *nolens volens*, — a circumstance which greatly interfered with the solemnity of the occasion.

The old canal-house, where the lumber-yard of Wm. Curtis now is, was the storehouse of Aaron and Charles Davis, pork and beef dealers and slaughterers. This was at the head of the canal. Near the pier was a little beach or landing-place where fishermen disposed of their piscatory wares. Among them was Capt. Samuel Trask, a soldier of the Revolution, yet remembered by those who as boys frequented the beach and enjoyed its boating and other privileges as only boys can. The captain, who late in life kept a fishing vessel here, built in 1812, near the head of the canal, a schooner of about seventy tons. This vessel, laden with provisions by Aaron and Charles Davis, on sailing out of the harbor fell an easy prey to the British fleet then cruising at its entrance.

Trask had been an artilleryman at Monmouth, and one of his stories of that hot engagement was worthy of Munchausen. The bullets fell so thickly in his immediate vicinity, so he said, that after the battle was over he found his outside pockets filled with those fired from the enemy, they having fallen there, somewhat flattened, after first striking his person. To the occupation of fishing, Trask added that of roofing.

The old training-field, devoted to this purpose from the earliest days, contained seven acres, and was situated between Dudley and Eustis Streets, its western boundary being opposite Greenville Street. It formed the eastern por-