

THE following Memorial, was presented to the Board of Common Councilmen, at their session on Thursday evening last, and is now respectfully submitted to the inhabitants of the City of Boston, by

THE BOSTON AQUEDUCT CORPORATION.

THOMAS A. DEXTER, *Secretary.*

Boston, March 19, 1838.

To the Mayor, Aldermen, and Common Council of the City of Boston, the Memorial of the Boston Aqueduct Corporation, respectfully represents :

On the 20th of August, 1836, your memorialists presented a communication to the Mayor and Aldermen, wherein your memorialists explicitly stated the ability of the Boston Aqueduct Corporation, upon the published opinion of Loammi Baldwin, Esquire, their engineer, after a careful and elaborate survey, to furnish the city with "ten times" the quantity of water supplied at that time, and at any height where it might reasonably be required. Your memorialists then stated their perfect willingness to make the necessary arrangements and pecuniary outlay, for the attainment of this object, upon any reasonable security against municipal competition. Your memorialists also expressed their readiness to sell their franchise to the city, for a reasonable compensation.

Your memorialists, at this time, renew the foregoing proposition to the city authorities; and, as some exception is understood to have been made to the

original proposal, because no definite sum was affixed, as the price of the franchise, your memorialists now tender to the city all their right, title and interest in the Boston Aqueduct Corporation, saving their accumulated funds and water rents, accruing and accrued, until the first day of October, 1838, for the sum of \$150,000. If the city should decline to negotiate for the purchase of the franchise, your memorialists respectfully but earnestly enquire, if no assurance can be afforded them, against an overwhelming competition with the city, whereupon your memorialists may invest their money for the contemplated extension of their works, with a feeling of security.

To enable the City Government to form an opinion of the value of this property and of its future capabilities, your memorialists submit the following statement.

The corporation now supplies between 1,400 and 1,500 families; about one dwelling house in every four, within its range, is supplied, on an average. In certain streets, recently laid out, where new buildings are erected, nearly all the houses take the water; and, in most of these cases, no other supply of water is afforded. This is especially true of new houses on the neck lands, and in all the new streets and avenues, extending south from Pleasant street, and in Front and Charles streets, and in some of the streets north of Cambridge, and west of Chamber streets. In many of the old streets, Washington, Tremont, Essex, Summer, &c., the aqueduct passes a large number of houses without supplying them. In Washington street, ranging from No. 183 to No. 833, the whole number of customers is 183. In Tremont street, which numbers as far as West street, in which there is a main pipe, 143 houses, there are

only 30 customers. In Mason street, a main supply pipe was laid down upwards of four years ago, at the earnest solicitation of inhabitants in Colonnade row, so called, and, up to this date, four houses only in the row have applied for the water. At the present time, 15 miles of lineal extent of supply or main pipe are laid in the city, which distributes the water through the whole extent of Washington street, as far as the Marlboro' Hotel, and, branching off easterly through Front street, extends as far north as the Exchange Coffee House, which it supplies, as well as the Pearl Street House, the Commercial Coffee House, and a part of Broad street in an easterly direction. It also branches off westwardly through Pleasant and Charles streets, and supplies the Massachusetts General Hospital. All the Mill Pond Lands, and lands adjoining, and South Cove Land are within the level, and near the lines of supply; and the corporation will extend their supply pipes to meet the wants of these sections, whenever they can feel themselves secure from an oppressive competition with the city.

The commissioners especially advert to the great advantages to the city, resulting from an aqueduct passing over their neck lands. There is no field, more obviously adapted to the operations of the present aqueduct, than the whole tract from Pleasant street to the boundary creek, and entirely across the isthmus. The superior purity of the Jamaica Pond water, which is the source of supply to the Boston Aqueduct Corporation, is universally admitted, and expressly, by the City Commissioners in their report. Your memorialists have stated, that about one family in every four, within the range of the aqueduct, is supplied with the water; thus, if 1,450 families are supplied, 4,350 families within its range are without

the water. They have not applied for it, and do not seem to desire it. This fact, your memorialists are well aware, is not likely to strengthen the popular impression, in regard to the actual demand for water. Such however is the fact, proved to our entire satisfaction, after an experience of thirty years.

The water commissioners, in their report, have stated that, in the city proper of Philadelphia, more than 13,000 customers take the water. There the aqueduct, or hydrant, has been relied on for supply, during a very long series of years. Few wells comparatively exist in that city. The citizens rely upon the hydrant almost altogether. Your memorialists respectfully suggest, that it is not so here. Habits are not easily changed. Wells are numerous in our city; and, notwithstanding the extraordinary efforts, which have been made, for a few years past, to prove them worthless, with scarcely an exception, we believe it will not be an easy task, to convince a large number of our fellow-citizens, that those sources contain no other than a poisonous beverage, from which they and their fathers have drunken to a good old age, and for many generations. The facts, already recited, prove conclusively, that very many families are entirely satisfied with their wells and cisterns, since they permit the proverbially pure and soft water of Jamaica Pond to pass, untasted and uncalled for, before their very doors.

After careful and continued enquiry, for years, your memorialists are constrained to believe, that the very current assertions, respecting the general ill condition of well water in this metropolis, are highly exaggerated and unjust. The waters of sundry wells have been professionally analyzed, and pronounced *not pure*. So rare a thing is pure water, however, that

medical prescriptions, when *pure* water is desired, direct it to be *distilled*. The water commissioners themselves are diametrically at issue, as to the purity of one of the two sources proposed. In reply to Mr. J. F. Baldwin's statement, respecting the Mystic Pond water, of whose unfitness and impurity he speaks unequivocally, his colleagues, Messrs. Treadwell and Hale, observe, "it is by no means pleasant to dwell upon the sources of impurity, to which all waters, which can be procured in civilized life, are exposed, whether in ponds, rivers, wells, or even springs." It may not be "*pleasant*" but it appears to your memorialists, that, by "*dwelling*" on these sources of impurity, real or imaginary, the city is well nigh precipitating itself into a vast and needless expenditure of money.

Your memorialists doubt not the fact, that very many inhabitants of this city, who pay a very small proportion of the public taxes, are quite willing to bring down this additional burthen. A few others, upon the high grounds and elsewhere, who pay taxes to a considerable amount, may be found on the same side of this question. The burthen, however, if it come, will principally fall precisely where it should not—upon the shoulders of the remonstrants, as may be readily perceived, by a glance at the petitions and remonstrances, upon the table of the Common Council.

Your memorialists beg leave to allude to the fact, that the proposed expenditure in New York has been placed before the public, by the Editor of the Daily Advertiser, one of the water commissioners, and contrasted with the comparatively trifling estimate for Boston, of \$1,507,000. Your memorialists have only to invite your attention to the vastly superior

wealth and numbers of that great emporium—to its extent of area, compared with our peninsular bounds—to the fact that it has not an aqueduct already in operation, supplying 1,500 families with an incomparably pure and soft water, and able, when properly improved, to supply “*ten times*” that number—and last, that the nauseous and disgusting taste and smell of the well waters of New York have notoriously driven its inhabitants to the measure, as a matter of *positive necessity*.

The stock of the Boston Aqueduct Corporation, though a most miserable property, in the hands of the original holders, is decidedly otherwise in the hands of those, who have purchased in recently, and at a lower rate.

Your memorialists, as they have done, upon several occasions already, conclude with an assurance to the City Government, that the books and papers of the Corporation shall, upon application, at any time, be fully and promptly exhibited for their inspection.

All which is respectfully submitted.

On the 16th of June, 1833, the Directors of the Boston Aqueduct Corporation employed Col. Loammi Baldwin, as their engineer, “To make an accurate survey of Jamaica Pond; to estimate the capacities of the water rights of the Corporation, and if found sufficient to authorize a more extensive supply of water, so as to meet the wants of the inhabitants of the City of Boston, in the elevated parts of the city, to make accurate estimates of the expense of raising the water to a reservoir of sufficient height, either upon the hill adjacent to the pond, or to some other suitable elevation in the City of Boston, and to obtain all possible information essential to the interests of the corporation, in reference to an ex-

tended use of the water, and an increase of income ; and to report as soon as may be.”

Col. Baldwin, as soon as his engagements would permit, attended to the request of the directors, and prepared two elaborate reports, which may be found appended to his “ Report on introducing pure water into the City of Boston.”

In his first report, after exhibiting some tabular statements in relation to Jamaica Pond, he employs the following words, “ The foregoing table furnishes sufficient authority for the belief that more than ten times the quantity of water hitherto used in the town of Boston, may be distributed there. But I shall leave all further consideration relative to the pond, and an increased and permanent supply, to a special report upon this branch of the inquiry, and proceed to examine the existing state of the conduit pipes, as well as to recommend a total change of the present system.”

The directors are fully sensible of the truth of Col. Baldwin’s remarks—nothing but an apprehension of an overwhelming interference by the city, has prevented them from carrying out the suggestions of their engineer. They believed themselves, at one time, upon the very point of associating with a number of intelligent and opulent citizens, for this highly desirable end, who, as they have good reason to believe, were driven from the undertaking, by a fear of the very same interference.

As the level of Jamaica Pond is not generally known, it may not be amiss to state, from the report of Col. Baldwin, that a point 6 inches above the foot walk in front of S. Appleton’s house in Beacon street, is the true level. The highest point of Fort Hill, near the centre of the circular enclosure, is a fraction more than 11 feet above the level.

Col. Baldwin’s first report concludes with the following words. “ You will perceive, by what has been done, that almost all the town can now be furnished from the pond, except the highest point on Beacon Hill round the State House, and in order that the water may be extended to the highest points with facility, a large conduit pipe should be laid. I have no doubt, that a pipe 12 inches in diameter will supply five or six times the persons who now take it, with more constancy than heretofore.”

His second report, bearing date January 19, 1835, commences as follows. "In my first report upon the water works of the Aqueduct Company, from Jamaica Pond, made May 16, 1834, my remarks were principally confined to the subject of the pond, the defective system of the main conduit pipes, with reasons for abandoning them altogether, and for substituting a continuous single cast iron main, for those now in use. Towards the close, I presented a list of many points in Boston, level or nearly level, with the surface of the pond, to shew the extreme height, to which the water may be carried, with pipes of sufficient size. The extreme points above the level accessible to the water, are confined to Washington square, on the top of Fort Hill, and the small district immediately around the square; the highest point of Copp's Hill, not including any houses; and the most elevated part of Beacon Hill, and the upper parts of all streets leading to the State House. All the town, excepting within these narrow limits, which embrace, also, the continued high ground of Beacon Hill to the eastward of Somerset street, may be reached by the pond water, to a sufficient extent, to demand all that source can furnish, with additional water which may be brought to it."

His second report concludes thus, "No suitable occasion has been afforded to guage the new sources, nor have I had an opportunity to collect the valuable information to be obtained from intelligent gentlemen living in the neighborhood; no certain estimate can be given therefore, as to the extent of additional supply to be obtained by the three modes of increase I have examined. But I am fully convinced that, by these means, Jamaica Pond may be made to furnish constantly, from 500,000 to 700,000 gallons a day. The mean, or 600,000, would supply 18,750 customers with one barrel, 9,375 with two barrels, and 6,000 with 100 gallons daily."