

Rev. Theodore Parker, in a letter to the author of "The Colored Patriots of the American Revolution," says:—

"Not long ago, while the excavations for the vaults of the great retail dry goods store of New York were going on, a gentleman from Boston noticed a large quantity of human bones thrown up by the workmen. Everybody knows the African countenance: the skulls also bore unmistakable marks of the race they belonged to. They were shovelled up with the earth which they had rested in, carted off and emptied into the sea to fill up a chasm, and make the foundation of a warehouse.

"On inquiry, the Bostonian learned that these were the bones of colored American soldiers, who fell in the disastrous battles of Long Island, in 1776, and of such as died of the wounds then received. At that day, as at this, spite of the declaration that 'all men are created equal,' the prejudice against the colored man was intensely strong. The black and the white had fought against the same enemy, under the same banner, contending for the same 'unalienable right' to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. The same shot with promiscuous slaughter had mowed down Africans and Americans. But in the grave, they must be divided. On the battle-field, the blacks and whites had mixed their bravery and their blood, but their ashes must not mingle in the bosom of their common mother. The white Saxon, exclusive and haughty even in his burial, must have his place of rest proudly apart from the grave of the African he had once enslaved.

"Now, after seventy-five years have passed by, the bones of these forgotten victims of the Revolution are shovelled up by Irish laborers, carted off, and shot into the sea, as the rubbish of the town. Had they been white men's relics, how would they have been honored with sumptuous burial anew, and the purchased prayers and preaching of Christian divines! Now, they are the rubbish of the street!

"True, they were the bones of Revolutionary soldiers,—but they were black men; and shall a city that kidnaps its citizens, honor a negro with a grave? What boots it that he fought for our freedom; that he bled for our liberty; that he died for you and me? Does the 'nigger' deserve a tomb? Ask the American State—the American Church!