

wharf, and inhabited one of the finest buildings then to be seen on Beacon Hill.\* He had but one child, a daughter.

In the year 1744, war was declared between France and Great Britain. George II. was upon the throne, and Sir William Shirley, then Governor of Massachusetts.

The news reached Cape Breton, by a fast-sailing packet, three weeks before it was received in Boston; and this afforded the French a fine opportunity of making incursions into the neighboring province of Nova Scotia. In this manner, Canso, a small fishing town, was taken by surprise; and the inhabitants, and a large number of vessels were captured, and taken to Louisburg, as prisoners of war.

These early attacks awakened the English Colonies to their danger; and it soon became apparent that Nova Scotia, and perhaps all the English settlements in North America, depended on the conquest of Louisburg, the strong fortress and capital of Cape Breton.

Some of the colonists, however, in defending the town of Annapolis, in a second incursion from the French, obtained some prisoners, whom they exchanged for the inhabitants of Canso, taken in the spring, and who brought an accurate account of the strength of the fortifications of Louisburg, to Boston.

From this account, Sir William Shirley, Governor of Massachusetts, conceived the idea of taking the city by surprise, before any farther aid could be obtained from France. In this he was encouraged, particularly by those who were engaged in the cod fisheries of Massachusetts and New Hampshire; as this branch of trade must be utterly suspended, while Louisburg remained in the hands of the French.

To obtain the opinion of the General Court, Sir William early in January, requested its members to bind themselves, under oath of secrecy, to receive from him an important communication. This was complied with, and he proposed his plan of attacking Louisburg, and asked their consent. This was kept a secret for a number of days from the public. At last it was discovered by an honest deacon, whose whole soul was so filled with the plan of the expedition, that he inadvertently made mention of it at his family devotions, by

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\*It will be seen by referring to the Probate records, at Boston, that the administrator had two different times of rendering an invoice of Gibson's estate. In one of them the building referred to is called "the mansion house on Beacon Hill, Boston." Among other articles, "a brass sword and belt, and a silver snuff-box," are mentioned.