

£400 towards the establishment of a College—a larger sum than one year's revenue of the whole Colony, which then consisted of not more than five thousand persons, settled in ten or twelve villages. But those adventurous emigrants came there for permanent settlement; and among them were several graduates of the English University of Cambridge. This was a bold and noble commencement. Two years afterwards, in 1638, Rev. John Harvard left by will to the College the sum of £779, and upwards of 300 volumes of books. Again, two years later, in 1640, the General Court granted to the College the proceeds of Charlestown Ferry; and two years later still, in 1642, the Governor, with the Magistrates, Pastors and Elders of the Churches, were empowered to establish statutes and regulations for the government of the College; eight years afterwards, in 1650, a Charter was granted, which was protected by an Article in the first Constitution of the State, adopted, after the Revolution, in 1780, and which remains at this day the fundamental law or charter of the oldest institution in America.

But at the very time, in 1642, when the Governor and others were empowered to frame statutes and regulations for what was called Harvard College, in Cambridge, and chartered as a University, the General Court laid the foundation of the general educational instruction, character, and prosperity of the Colony by the following enactments:—

“Forasmuch as the good education of children is of singular behoof and benefit to any commonwealth; and whereas many parents and masters are too indulgent and negligent of their duty in this kind:

*“It is therefore ordered by this Court and the authority thereof,* That the selectmen of every town, in the several precincts and quarters where they dwell, shall have a vigilant eye over their brethren and neighbours, to see, first, that none of them shall suffer so much barbarism in any of their families, as not to endeavour to teach, by themselves or others, their children and apprentices so much learning as may enable them perfectly to read the English tongue, and knowledge of the capital laws, upon penalty of twenty shillings for each neglect therein; also, that all masters of families do, once a week, at least, catechise their children and servants in the grounds and principles of religion, and if any be unable to do so much, that then, at the least, they procure such children or apprentices to learn some short orthodox catechism, without book, that they may be able to answer to the questions that shall be propounded to them out of such catechisms by their parents or masters, or any of the Selectmen, when they shall call them to a trial of what they have learned in this kind; and further, that all parents and masters do breed and bring up their children and apprentices in some honest lawful calling, labour, or employment, either in husbandry or some other trade profitable for themselves and the commonwealth, if they will not or cannot train them up in learning to fit them for higher employments; and if any of the Selectmen, after admonition by them given to such masters of families, shall find them still negligent of their duty in the particulars aforementioned, whereby children and servants become rude, stubborn, and unruly, the