

THE HONORABLE JOHN READ.

BY CHARLES J. MCINTIRE.

John Read, of Boston, Attorney-General of the Province, was one of the most eminent lawyers and distinguished citizens that New England ever produced. He was a scholar, a wit and orator, and a jurist, possessed of broad views, extensive acquirements, and vigor of intellect; but, although chief among the wise, witty, and eloquent, little has been written of him aside from the many anecdotes bearing testimony to his learning and sagacity, his witticisms and eccentricities. It was said of him by John Adams that "he had as great a genius and became as eminent as any man." And he styled him at another time as "that great Gamaliel."

Elliott, in his Biographical Dictionary, relates that "Mr. Read was a gentleman of very brilliant talents, of sterling integrity, a friend of the people, of the laws, and of government. For his superior abilities he was considered as one of the greatest lawyers in this country. The succeeding generation indulged a pride in quoting his legal opinions and sayings in common conversation. . . . While he sat at that board [the Governor's Council] he was their oracle, and was eminently useful to the country."

Hutchinson regarded him as a "very eminent lawyer, and, which is more, a person of great integrity and firmness of mind." Knapp adds that "as a legislator he was conspicuous, but so unambitious a man could not have been a regular leader. He was too independent and enlightened for a lover of prerogative, and too honest for a leader of faction; he spoke with frankness, regardless of political consequences. A great man who condescends to enter into the politics of the day, and bear the heat