

My Recollections of Miss Anna Bradshaw by William R. Cutter acc.907.60.20 Society Paper
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Miss Anna Bradshaw was the grand-daughter of the Rev. Samuel Cooke, the first minister settled in the parish which is now Arlington. She lived alone in the house which his people had given him in 1740 on land which before that date had belonged to Jason Russell, the martyr of April 19, 1775. She now occupied her grandfather's lands, and this was the bulk of her property. She took great pride in her ministerial lineage; and on one of my visits to her I found her reading a History of the Second Church in Boston, and she told me she loved to read such books, for they reminded her of her grandfather's times, and she loved to read his manuscript sermons, of which she had a large number, which she gave in bulk to me, feeling that I was an antiquary and a descendant of the town, having the interest of such things at heart. She was kindly intentioned and generous, a believer in the faith of the fathers, and anxious for the spiritual welfare of the community, especially the young. Thus, about the year 1817, when she was about thirty years old, she went to adjoining towns and helped found Sunday Schools, then a new thing. She gave away books to the young scholars, in which she subscribed her name, some of which I have seen. If she thought young persons were going astray, she would make a personal appeal to them, even if they lived in other towns, and would also appeal to their parents. In some cases, perhaps, she overestimated the difficulty, but she meant well, and felt it her duty to go to the rescue.

She was a generous benefactor to the Church which she helped found, and gave all that she was able, namely her lands. When it is considered that she was a person of not large means, the value of this gift is better appreciated.

She was born in the year 1786, and died on the 30th of November, 1869, aged 84 years. Her parents both died in the same year, 1793, when she was seven years old, and she was practically the last of the Ministerial Cooke family. During her last illness I called on her. At that time I was writing a family history. She said to me, "I should like to live to read your Cutter History; but I would rather go to Heaven!" Again, she asked, "Why do you wear glasses?" I told her I was nearsighted. "Can you see through mine?" she said and handed me her spectacles. I tried them, and said I could. I thought no more of the subject. But after her death, I received her spectacles as a last gift from her, she innocently thinking I could use them. This incident, which was no trifle to her, is an illustration of her benevolence of heart.

In person Miss Bradshaw was small of stature, with dark eyes of considerable keenness and a somewhat large nose for so small a face. She had a sprightly demeanor, especially when engaged in conversation. She made a tender to me of many family relics for which I, as a young man, had her particular use, and I suppose now that those are all scattered. This was before the days of relic departments in private libraries.

All honor to this small, but lovely lady, imbued with the spirit of the Master, who sent about doing good to the extent of her power. "She hath done what she could!"