
The Great Pestilence in Virginia

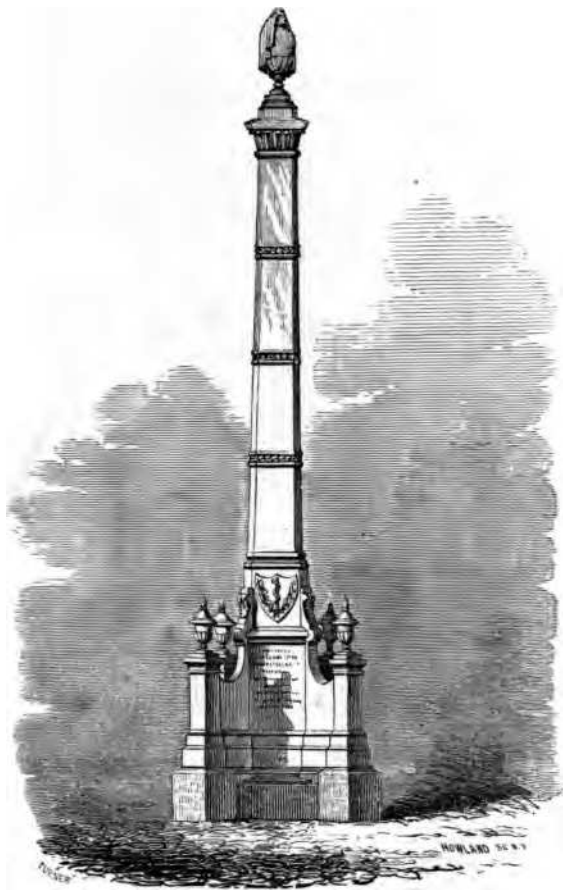
Forrest William S

Title: The Great Pestilence in Virginia

Author: Forrest William S

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Designed by John Baird, Ph.D.

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MONUMENT TO BE ERRECTED BY THE CITIZENS OF NORFOLK, IN MEMORY OF THE MAYOR, THE PRESIDENT OF THE HOWARD ASSOCIATION, THE CLERGY, PHYSICIANS, AND OTHERS WHO DIED AT THE POST OF DUTY DURING THE GREAT PESTILENCE IN 1665.—See page 219.

THE
GREAT PESTILENCE IN VIRGINIA;

BEING

In Historical Account

OF THE

ORIGIN, GENERAL CHARACTER, AND RAVAGES

OF THE

YELLOW FEVER

IN

NORFOLK AND PORTSMOUTH IN 1855;

TOGETHER

WITH SKETCHES OF SOME OF THE VICTIMS, INCIDENTS OF
THE SCOURGE, ETC.

BY

WILLIAM S. FORREST,

AUTHOR OF THE "HISTORY OF NORFOLK AND ITS VICINITY."

"Death, repulsive king, thine iron rule is terrible."

NEW YORK:

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1856.

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P R E F A C E.

WHEN the pestilence, which recently desolated the two adjacent sister sea-port cities of Virginia, had ceased its ravages; when the fearful death-storm, that raged so furiously, had swept by, a general and very reasonable desire was expressed to have an authentic account of the great calamity—a reliable record of Death's relentless sway—especially during those memorable months—August, September, and October, 1855.

Among others, the writer, who witnessed the almost unequalled fury of the disease, was kindly urged to undertake the task. But, imperative engagements occupying nearly every moment of his time during the day, he found that it would be almost impossible to accomplish so important

a work without relinquishing other necessary efforts, or delaying its completion beyond the limits of a reasonable period. He determined, however, notwithstanding the difficulties presented, to prepare a work on the subject, embracing an account of the origin, frightful progress, and terrible effects of the dreadful malady; together with various incidents, facts, opinions, and suggestions relative to the scourge, written during, and subsequent to, that memorable time of terror, sudden death, and woe.

It was deemed judicious to append, also, suitable tributary sketches of some of the victims of the destroyer, whose virtues and exalted character justly entitle them to the permanent remembrance of the living—while they sleep quietly in the grave to which their fallow remains were hurried during the rage of the mysterious disease.

It will be found that extracts from ably-written accounts of the pestilence, by other pens, have been given a place. These sketches, it is believed, will add interest and value to the work, inasmuch as they assist in forming a true description of the

calamity, as viewed by different observers, and from various points of observation.

If, in recording the noble, heroic, and generous deeds of those who braved the terrors of the scourge, and who labored so faithfully in assisting and relieving their fellow-men, in nursing and watching the sick, in shrouding and burying the pestilent dead, some among the meritorious are not mentioned, the omission must be considered as unavoidable. Time and space were insufficient for all, or half that could be written.

The result of his labor is before a discriminating public, and the writer confidently trusts that his work will be found to possess at least a melancholy interest, and that it will impart useful information to the living, both at home and abroad, relative to the appalling tornado of disease and death that raged throughout the length and breadth of two cities of the Old Dominion, crushing down, in its reckless course, people of all ages, all classes, and every condition—the rich and the poor, the learned and the ignorant, the fair and the lovely—leaving in its blood-stained track

the lifeless and corruptive remains of the strong and the weak, the young, the vigorous, and the beautiful, as well as of the old and decrepit; or hastily and promiscuously crowding them, as it were, in one common vortex of death and silence.

W. S. F.

NORFOLK, July, 1856.

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