

CELEBRATION

AT

North Bridge, Salem,

JULY 4th, 1862.

ORATION

BY

DR. GEORGE B. LORING.

BOSTON:

J. E. FARWELL AND COMPANY, PRINTERS TO THE CITY,

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1862.

PROCEEDINGS.

THE Celebration of the Fourth of July at the North Bridge, in Salem, was an occasion of extreme interest. In June a meeting was called of the citizens of North Salem, for the purpose of making suitable arrangements for the celebration, and of raising the American Flag upon the spot, where the attempt of Lieutenant-Colonel Leslie, under orders from General Gage, to seize cannon in Salem, was successfully resisted. At this meeting a committee was chosen to get subscriptions for defraying the expenses of the Celebration, and the following gentlemen rendered pecuniary aid: —

Charles A. Ropes,
George F. Brown,
William Saunders,
James Ropes,
Nathaniel Horton,
Stephen Symonds,
J. Ford Smith,
A. A. Evans,
F. E. Smith,
H. M. Scott,
Thomas Symonds,
E. G. Symonds,
J. W. Pepper,
Francis Cox,
F. P. Porter,
Theron Palmer,
Samuel Church,
H. O. Roberts,
C. H. Pepper,
George Batchelder,
William Nourse,
A. J. Loud,
A. E. Nelles,
Josiah Bickford,

Francis Peabody,
William D. Northend,
R. G. Goss,
Charles E. Symonds,
Nathaniel A. Horton,
Ebenezer Symonds,
Ira J. Webber,
Samuel Rowles, Jr.,
P. D. Egan,
S. A. McIntire,
J. M. Prime,
N. G. Symonds,
C. C. Davis,
J. H. Towne,
William Hill,
Simon Stoddard,
Humphrey Cook,
George H. Devereux,
C. A. Dearborn,
John Chandler,
John D. Eaton,
A. J. Loud,
Ariel Cook,
W. A. Read,

D. Mason,
 E. B. Ide,
 C. H. Ingles,
 D. W. Lord,
 James Clarke,
 Edward Melcher,
 G. W. Goldsmith,
 N. E. Millet,
 Thomas Twormey,
 R. Harrington,
 D. C. Symonds,
 R. H. Manning,
 F. Carleton,
 William Cockerine,
 C. H. Buxton,
 James Donaldson,
 J. W. Davis,
 W. S. Dixon,
 F. Smith,
 Joseph Farmer,
 William Perry,
 Mark Sanborn,
 Daniel H. Johnson,
 George Bodwell,
 Henry J. Cross,
 J. Barker,
 Edward Danforth,
 T. Bryant,
 J. B. Edwards,
 S. S. Symonds,
 A. S. Harris,
 George Wood,
 Robert Saunders,
 George H. Estes,
 N. J. Lord,
 E. Quimby,
 D. B. Gardner,
 J. S. Leavett,
 L. Brown,
 W. S. Spauldin,
 James Ropes,
 E. Kimball,
 W. G. Choate,
 R. Brockhouse,
 S. F. Rogers,
 T. Looby,

J. Foster Knights,
 Lieut. D. H. Johnson, Jr.,
 William Symonds,
 William P. Buffum,
 David Merritt,
 E. G. Burbank,
 James Sanborn,
 J. D. Fisk,
 Isaiah Straw,
 T. P. Symonds,
 T. I. Giffords,
 Henry Osbern,
 Joseph W. Sloan,
 William Maynes,
 Jonathan P. Davis,
 Joshua Upham,
 Joseph P. Farmer,
 E. F. Carleton,
 T. Stedson,
 Charles Beckford,
 John H. Wheeler,
 Samuel Kinsman,
 I. F. Knight,
 William McIntire,
 James Nichols,
 Frederick Coombs,
 George H. Davis,
 J. W. Symonds,
 C. Moulton,
 Josiah Foster,
 William Mead,
 William P. Hayward,
 E. H. Quimby,
 Stephen H. Phillips,
 J. B. F. Osgood,
 J. S. Rowe,
 A. Smith,
 William Muloon,
 A. Goodale,
 R. S. Rantoul,
 D. Johnson,
 E. Brown,
 Willard P. Phillips,
 A. Huntington,
 George P. Farrington,
 J. W. Davis,

J. Chapman,
 J. C. Lee,
 J. W. Pepper,
 N. D. Symonds,
 George Sanborn,
 D. W. Lord,
 George B. Loring,

O. P. Lord,
 N. S. Symonds,
 T. Palmer,
 C. B. Fowler,
 Henry Gardner,
 Joseph S. Cabot,
 Samuel Brown.

At a meeting of the subscribers, held June 25th, it was voted to invite Dr. George B. Loring to deliver an oration, and Hon. George H. Devereux and Hon. Stephen H. Phillips to speak also. Hon. Stephen P. Webb, mayor of the city, was requested to preside, and Rev. Willard Spaulding was invited to offer a prayer on the occasion.

The flag-staff, 135 feet high, was raised on the 3d, a suitable platform was erected, and both staff and platform were beautifully decorated by the ladies of North Salem. The names of MASON, FELT, SPRAGUE, BARNARD, and FOSTER, all prominent citizens engaged in the conflict, were inscribed on the front of the platform, surmounted by the name of WASHINGTON. The whole was properly adorned with flowers.

On the morning of the Fourth a salute was fired at 6½ o'clock. The Salem Brass Band was in attendance. His Honor Mayor Webb called the large concourse of people — which covered the wharf and the street and bridge adjacent — to order at quarter before seven, with a short and feeling appeal for the day and the Flag. Prayer was offered by Rev. Willard Spaulding, and the following Ode, composed by Miss Mary E. Todd, was read by the Mayor: —

O D E .

Sons of Freedom, raise the Banner!
 Fling its starry folds abroad;
 Consecrate anew the symbol
 To our country, and to God!

Traitor hands have marred its lustre!
 Trained its honors in the dust!
 Trampled on the hallowed emblem,
 Our Forefathers' sacred trust.

God, our Heavenly Father! hear us —
Shade of Washington! draw near!
As we here renew the compact
Sealed by Patriot blood so dear.

We will tarry not, nor falter,
Till each darkening stain is borne
From thy plumage, Bird of Freedom,
Now by civil madness torn.

Trusting in the God of Battles,
We will hope again to see
Our proud banner nobly floating
O'er a land that's truly free.

An Oration was then delivered by Dr. George B. Loring, who was followed by Hon. Stephen H. Phillips, in a speech of great eloquence and taste.

ORATION.

FELLOW-CITIZENS of Massachusetts ; Americans by birth and by adoption ; Lovers of civil and religious freedom ; Supporters of the Constitution as written by the fathers ; Defenders of the Flag of the Union :

We have come up here in the early sunlight of this summer day, to pay our morning vows, as patriots and Christians, in this great temple of nature, to the God of Freedom whom our fathers worshipped. Let us rejoice that their government is still our own ; that no convulsion has opened between us and our Flag, the yawning and impassable chasm ; that ours is the country ; ours, the Constitution ; ours, the nationality born of the Revolution ; ours, the American history ; ours, the shrines, the temple, the sacred places, the tomb, the dear and hallowed relics, reminding us ever of the greatness and glory of our national birth, and of the blessedness of our inheritance. Ours is the anniversary of American Independence, the Fourth of July, the only Fourth, the day of days, sacred to freedom wherever the American heart beats. The altar at which we worship, is the altar erected by the founders of our Republic. The allegiance which we recognize, is the allegiance of Washington. The earth beneath our feet is still American soil, as he made it American. The seas, too, are ours. The waves that beat upon our shores, unbound as yet by other sway, proclaim to the mountains and the valleys that for themselves the Stars and Stripes are still supreme. And while we hear the tumult of the battle afar off, while our sons and brothers are pouring out their blood for their country, while the whole civilized world stands amazed at the strife which rages among us, while the awful reality of the conflict is written upon the wasted fields and burning villages of our brethren, and upon our own desolate hearthstones, our faith and hope are preserved, and all our desire is manifested in the Flag which we still call our own, and from which no star has yet been stricken by hand of ours. To others, one star after another may have dropped from the heavens, but not to us. To others the fine gold may be changed, but not to us. To others there may be the charms of a

new constitution and a new flag, but not to us. The love of our youth is still dear. And lured by no attractions, deceived by no promises, filled with no unnecessary fears, confident, devoted, faithful, believing in the intelligence of the people, in the wisdom of the government, in the justice of Heaven, and in all sound and healthy human progress, we find no monument more appropriate to mark the spot where the first successful resistance to the march of oppression was made on this continent, than the flag of our country, radiant with all the stars fixed there by an advancing nation. Marble and brass may perish; but of the story that in the midst of our country's trials, we commemorated the early heroic effort of our ancestors for independence, by planting here with pious hands the flag of freedom, unbroken, undivided, time shall not bedim the lustre. The faith that inspires the deed shall receive its reward. And if to this faith we add our works, sincerely wrought with courage and patriotism, and true wisdom; with superiority to all other questions, than that of restoring our government; with an undying belief that the largest philanthropy is embodied in our Federal Constitution, with all its provisions; with a large and liberal understanding of our institutions; with a generous welcome to all who may return to their allegiance; with a firm trust that what seems dark to us in our social organization, the Providence of God will one day illumine; we shall have done what in us lies to restore peace and happiness to our land, and to transmit our flag, with all its glorious memories and significance and promise, to those who come after us.

The event which we have met to commemorate is full of interest and of meaning. Eighty-seven years ago, when the right of British troops to cross this stream was disputed by the men of Salem, no freeman's foot pressed the soil on which we now tread. They were subjects of the crown, who rescued from a tyrant's grasp those weapons which were to be used for a tyrant's purposes. And not by accident, not by impulse, but taught and impelled by the events of years, did our citizens of that day oppose by force this early attempt at violent subjugation.

From the earliest settlement of the country, there seems to have been a spontaneous growth of representative governments. The colonial legislatures sprang into existence without concert of action on the part of the colonies, without special grant, but as it were from a popular instinct, that they lay at the foundation of that constitutional freedom which our fathers sought on this continent. "A House of Burgesses broke out in Virginia in 1620," says Hutchinson; and "although there

was no color for it in the Charter of Massachusetts, a House of Deputies appeared suddenly in 1634." All attempts to check this failed. "Lord Say tempted the principal men of Massachusetts to make themselves and their heirs nobles and absolute governors of a new colony, but under this plan they could find no people to follow them." The colonists were not to be led away from that principle of government, which was the great prize in the new world, and for the possession of which they braved the dangers of the sea, and welcomed the gloom and horrors of a savage wilderness. For nothing came from Europe but a free people, — a people determined to leave behind them all those social and political distinctions which ages had fixed there, and to bring with them a new charter of freedom, a new gospel for the healing of the nations. Under the benignant influences of free government thus founded, without ostentation and display, an intelligent, frugal, industrious people rose to a state of general prosperity and elevation unknown before. For nearly one hundred and fifty years the work went on, silently and imperceptibly, until there suddenly appeared before the statesmen of the old world, a vigorous, defiant, untamable young nation, whose political philosophy was expounded by Jefferson and Franklin, whose orators and warriors were Warren, and Hancock, and Washington, and Patrick Henry, and Putnam, and Greene, and the two Adamses, *duo fulmina belli*, before whose flaming words the orators of England grew dumb, — and before whose flaming swords the warriors of England laid down their arms.

The attempt of Great Britain to deprive the colonies of that representative system, of which I have spoken, hastened on the Revolution. The passage of the Stamp Act and the Port Bill, fell upon the minds of a spirited and jealous people like a decree of bondage. The presence of bodies of armed men, instead of producing that intimidation which was expected, served only to cement the colonies in a common bond for mutual support and protection.

History presents no parallel to the devotion exhibited by the various colonies then composing our country, scattered as they were, over a large extent of territory, and bound together, not by common interest, but by a common and all prevailing sentiment of freedom.

In Boston, the opposition to the oppressive acts of the mother country had been most vigorous; to Boston, the torture which should produce submission was applied; and around Boston, the cities and towns and colonies clustered, with hearts full of sympathy and hands full of

aid. On the 10th of May, 1774, "the act closing the port of Boston transferring the Board of Customs to Marblehead, and the seat of government to Salem, reached the devoted town." From that hour the work began. The counsel and advice of the surrounding towns were asked by Boston, and given; the poor were provided for, in view of the coming trial; and the inhabitants, by the hand of Samuel Adams, made their touching appeal "to all the sister colonies, promising to suffer for America with a becoming fortitude, confessing that singly they might find their trial too severe, and entreating not to be left to struggle alone, when the very being of every colony, considered as a free people, depended on the event."

The cause of Boston became common cause for the other important towns in the colony. "The merchants of Newburyport were the first who agreed to suspend all commerce with Britain and Ireland. Salem, also, the place marked out as the new seat of government, in a very full town meeting, and after some impassioned debates, decided almost unanimously to stop trade not with Britain only, but even with the West Indies." A hundred and twenty-five of the merchants of this town protested against turning the trade of Boston into our own harbor, saying, "we must be lost to all feelings of humanity, could we indulge one thought to seize on wealth, and raise our fortunes on the ruin of our suffering neighbors."

The historian of the United States tells us that, "as soon as the true character of the act closing the port of Boston became known in America, every colony, every city, every village, and, as it were, the inmates of every farm house, felt it as a wound of their affections. The towns of Massachusetts abounded in kind offices. The colonies vied with each other in liberality. The record kept in Boston shows that the patriotic and generous people of South Carolina were the first to minister to the sufferers, sending early in June two hundred barrels of rice, and promising eight hundred more. At Wilmington, North Carolina, the sum of two thousand pounds currency was raised in a few days; the women of the place gave liberally; Parker Quince offered his vessel to carry a load of provisions freight free, and master and mariners volunteered to navigate her without wages. Lord North had called the American Union a rope of sand; "It is a rope of sand that will hang him," said the people of Wilmington.

Hartford was the first place in Connecticut to pledge its assistance; but the earliest donation received, was of two hundred and fifty-eight

sheep from Windham. "The taking away of civil liberty will involve the ruin of religious liberty also," wrote the ministers of Connecticut to the ministers of Boston, cheering them to bear their heavy load "with vigorous Christian fortitude and resolution." "While we complain to Heaven and earth of the cruel oppression we are under, we ascribe righteousness to God," was the answer. "The surprising union of the colonies affords encouragement. It is an inexhaustible source of comfort that the Lord God omnipotent reigneth."

The small parish of Brooklyn, in Connecticut, through their committee, of which Israel Putnam was a member, opened a correspondence with Boston. "Your zeal in favor of liberty," they said, "has gained a name that shall perish but with the glorious constellations of Heaven;" and they made an offering of flocks of sheep and lambs. Throughout all New England the towns sent rye, flour, peas, cattle, sheep, oil, fish: whatever the land or the hook and line could furnish, and sometimes gifts of money. The French inhabitants of Quebec, joining with those of English origin, shipped a thousand and forty bushels of wheat.

Delaware was so much in earnest that it devised plans of sending relief annually. All Maryland and all Virginia were contributing liberally and cheerfully; being resolved that the men of Boston, who were deprived of their daily labor, should not lose their daily bread, nor be compelled to change their residence for want. In Fairfax county, Washington presided at a spirited meeting, and headed a subscription paper with his own gift of fifty pounds. A special chronicle could hardly enumerate all the generous deeds. Beyond the Blue Ridge, the hardy emigrants on the banks of the Shenandoah, many of them Germans, met at Woodstock, and with Muhlenberg, then a clergyman, soon to be a military chief, devoted themselves to the cause of liberty. Higher up the valley of Virginia, where the plough already vied with the rifle, and the hardy hunters, not always ranging the hills with their dogs for game, had also begun to till the soil, the summer of that year ripened the wheat fields of the pioneers, not for themselves alone. When the sheaves had been harvested, and the corn threshed and ground, in a country as yet poorly provided with barns or mills, the backwoodsmen of Augusta county, without any pass through the mountains that could be called a road, noiselessly and modestly delivered at Frederick, one hundred and thirty-seven barrels of flour, as their remittance to the poor of Boston. Cheered by the universal sympathy, the inhabitants of that town "were determined to hold out, and appeal to the justice of the colonies and of the world;" trusting in God that

"these things should be overruled for the establishment of liberty, virtue, and happiness in America."

While this spirit of generous charity, which can never be forgotten, was displayed North and South, towards the principal object of the wrath of Great Britain, political movements were also going on in the colonies, whose importance was not fully appreciated in that day, and cannot be overestimated in ours. The sympathy which for a time found expression in acts of kindness, soon created a desire for a more practical and substantial Union; and the call was universal for a general Congress. The Sons of Liberty in New York, although at length overwhelmed by the moderate men of that city, proposed as their last act, the assembling of a Congress for the Colonies. Their appeal to New England and to the southern colonies was heard and answered — Philadelphia and New York, which had then passed out of the hands of the Sons of Liberty, alone giving a cool and feeble response.

Baltimore at once advocated suspension of trade with Great Britain, and a Congress; saying to the "friends" in Boston, "The Supreme Disposer of all events will terminate this severe trial of your patience in a happy confirmation of American freedom."

New Hampshire and New Jersey joined heartily in the movement.

South Carolina, although pressed with no grievances, and dependent chiefly for her trade on British factors, declared that "the whole continent must be animated with one great soul, and all Americans must resolve to stand by one another even unto death."

Virginia, loyal still, and entertaining no thought of revolution, guided by the eloquence of Patrick Henry, the wisdom of Lee and Washington, and the sagacity and learning of Jefferson and George Mason, adopted in its House of Burgesses, a resolution, which "was in itself a solemn invocation of God, as the witness of their deliberate purpose, to rescue their liberties, even at the risk of being compelled to defend them with arms." They selected the day on which the Boston Port Act was to take effect, as a day of fasting and prayer. And when for this act of disobedience, Lord Dunmore dissolved the House, a committee met at once, summoned a convention of delegates, and inaugurated a revolution. The influence of Virginia controlled North Carolina.

This act of Virginia was consummated at Williamsburg, a spot upon which we now turn our eyes once more, with that same painful interest which filled the ardent breast of Samuel Adams, as he waited for a

voice from the Old Dominion, to cheer him in his gigantic labors. For at Williamsburg the cause of the Union, once more at stake, has been sustained through the fiery trial — at Williamsburg, where the name of McClellan, the Washington of this later day, has been a watchword for the sons of Massachusetts, in the struggle for the Constitution which made Boston and Williamsburg one, and united the Adamses and Washington as brethren.

The colonies were now fully aroused — and so was Great Britain. Thurlow and Wedderburne gave their opinion that the Provincial Congress of Massachusetts was a treasonable body ; and after long negotiations among the ministers, and various propositions, to all of which the king turned a deaf ear, it was resolved in December, 1774, to “interdict all commerce with Americans; to protect the loyal, and to declare all others traitors and rebels.”

In all this crisis Salem had taken an active part — not, however, without some division of sentiment among her people. Her two representatives in the Provincial Congress, William Brown and Peter Frye, voted to sustain the order of the king, to rescind the circular sent by Massachusetts to the other colonies, in opposition to the duty imposed by Parliament on paper, glass, painters' colors, and teas ; but the people here voted to thank the “glorious ninety-two,” who voted not to obey the king, “for their firmness in maintaining our just rights and liberties.” When General Gage determined to remove the trade from Boston to Salem, forty-eight of our merchants, “commended to him the trade and welfare of the town; but one hundred and twenty-five patriots declared in written address, that they had common cause with the oppressed city, and would in no way take advantage of the prohibition of her trade. On the 7th June, 1774, the Provincial Congress assembled in Salem, under order from Governor Gage. But he fared no better here than he had done in Boston, before the pressure of popular sentiment. For on the 17th of June, ten days after assembling, they resolved that a General Congress was necessary, and that they proceed to choose delegates. They protested against the arbitrary order for removal of the Assembly to Salem. Samuel Adams was among them ; and he never slumbered nor slept until he had succeeded in securing the election of Bowdoin, Samuel Adams, John Adams, Cushing, and Robert Treat Paine, as delegates to the General Congress, to assemble at Philadelphia on the first day of September. The Assembly sitting in Salem was immediately dissolved by Gage, whose secretary read the proclama-

tion on the stairs leading to the hall of meeting, finding it impossible to gain admission. This event occurred in the Town House, erected in 1718, and "situated on Essex Street, next to and westward of the First Church."

The people of Salem, filled with the fervor which inspired the whole country, had now taken matters into their own hands. They chose delegates in town meeting to attend the convention in Ipswich, and declared that "we hold our liberties too dear to be sported with, and are therefore most seriously determined to support them." They called on Peter Frye to apologize for issuing a warrant to prosecute the committee who allowed the town meeting, and to agree to hold no commission under the new act of Parliament; and he "gave his consent." They waited on William Brown, and demanded of him to resign his offices of counsellor and judge; he agreed to act with "honor and integrity." They required William Vans and others, who had signed an address to Governor Hutchinson, approving of his course, to explain and apologize for such conduct. They opened their arms to receive the Provincial Legislature, which met in Salem, October 5th, in disregard of the order of Governor Gage, and protected them until they adjourned to meet in Concord. They resolved that their collectors of taxes should pay "no more money to Harrison Gray, the province treasurer." And, as I have said before, they offered freely of their substance for the support of their suffering brethren in Boston.

The winter of 1774-75 came on. The gulf between the colonies and the mother country grew deeper and broader continually. Gage had grown weary of endeavoring to control the Provincial Assembly of Massachusetts, and had proceeded to fortify Boston. Twenty thousand volunteers from the inland counties had marched towards Boston, on the seizure of powder and field-pieces in Medford, and had sorrowfully dispersed, because they were told that "the hour had not yet come." "Outside of Boston the king's rule was at an end." All attempts of the crown judges to hold courts in the province failed. Oliver, the impeached chief justice, had declared it impossible to exercise his office, as none would act as jurors. The Suffolk Convention had met, and under the lead of Warren, to whom Samuel Adams, who was now in Congress, had entrusted the guidance of affairs in Massachusetts, had resolved "that the sovereign who breaks his compact with his people forfeits their allegiance. By their duty to God, their country, themselves, and posterity, they pledged the country to maintain their

civil and religious liberties, and to transmit them entire to future generations. They rejected as unconstitutional the regulating act of Parliament, and all the officers appointed under its authority. Attributing to the British commander-in-chief hostile intentions, they directed the collectors of taxes to pay over no money to the treasurer whom he recognized. They advised the towns to elect for themselves officers of their militia, from such as were inflexible friends to the rights of the people. For purposes of provincial government they advised a Provincial Congress, while they promised respect and submission to the Continental Congress," — a recognition of State and Federal authority, in a trying hour, worthy of notice. "They determined to act towards Great Britain on the defensive, so long as such conduct might be vindicated by reason and the principles of self-preservation, but no longer."

Congress, too, had met; and Patrick Henry, and Samuel Adams, and John Adams, and George Washington, and John Rutledge, and Richard Henry Lee, and Roger Sherman, had declared that "an entire new government must be founded," and that "our ancestors found here no government; and as a consequence, had a right to make their own." In support of this, the eloquence of Patrick Henry burst like a torrent from his native hills. By his side stood the intrepid and accomplished Lee. The right arm of Washington was nerved at once for the great service, which soon devolved upon him. John Adams, acute, impassioned, learned from the best New England schools, bore the cause on through all opposition. While Samuel Adams, "although by no means remarkable for brilliant abilities," carried the great proposition home to the people, and with a skill which no faction could resist, gave to the opening revolution all the tone, and manliness, and uncompromising resolve of his own undaunted spirit.

It was now the month of February, 1775. On that month Chatham presented his "conciliatory measure" in Parliament, which satisfied Franklin, and which Jefferson approved, but of which Samuel Adams, the wary and far-sighted, said: "Let us take care, lest instead of a thorn in the foot, we have a dagger in the heart." On that month Massachusetts was declared by Parliament to be in rebellion; although Wilkes declared that "a fit and proper resistance is a revolution, not a rebellion." On that month, the Provincial Congress of Massachusetts appointed a committee of eleven, to take possession of the warlike stores in the province, and to muster so many of the militia as they should judge necessary. On that month, of a winter mild and beautiful beyond

compare, the people of New England turned their grateful hearts to God, as they recognized this "gracious interposition of heaven," amidst all their trials and sufferings; and listened with renewed courage to the words of cheer, which came to them from the farmers of the Mohawk and Hudson, from the "dwellers on the waters of the Shenandoah," from the adventurers in the valleys of Kentucky, from the sunny South, and even from the despotic shores of Europe. On that month, the event took place which we would now commemorate, and which derives its significance and importance from its connection with the great struggle which I have brought before your minds. Leslie's expedition was one of the measures adopted by Governor Gage to disarm the people of Massachusetts, who were preparing to strike for their freedom. It belongs to that series of events, of which the seizures at Medford and Newport were successful, and of which the march to Concord and Lexington furnished one of the great events in history. It was a bloodless victory of American citizens over their oppressors, a victory won by a display of that intrepidity and resolution which at last gave us our freedom. A single paragraph in history records the tale. But as we read the list of our townsmen, who took their fearless stand here, we find names which should be enrolled by the side of those who fell at Lexington and Concord, as ready to do, or die for their country, armed with jealous care against the first approaches of the foe and oppressor.

The "committee of eleven" appointed by the Provincial Congress to take possession of the warlike stores in the province, had been active in the discharge of their duty, in spite of the spies of Governor Gage, who watched them at every corner. Among the many little collections of the rude and primitive ordnance of the times, which they made in various parts of the province, there were seventeen cannon secured in Salem, and placed under the care of Captain David Mason, a painter, electrician, lecturer, a patriotic mechanic, a citizen soldier — one of that class who closed the workshops of New England during the darkness of the war, and returned not until the light of freedom broke over the land. Captain Mason had employed Robert Foster,* a blacksmith, whose shop stood near this very spot, to mount these guns on carriages, for the use of the province. A journeyman of Foster's, acting the part

* Felt, in his Annals of Salem, gives the name of John to Captain Foster, who took part in this affair. I have learned from his descendants, that Captain Foster's christian name was Robert.

of spy for Governor Gage, betrayed the secret to the British authorities in Boston, on Saturday afternoon, the 25th of February. Gage had not forgotten his recent troubles in Salem — the Congress here — the town meeting — the choice of delegates to the General Congress — the few stormy months of his residence among us. He was in hot haste to intimidate the rebellious town; and he ordered Colonel Leslie to leave Castle William, in Boston Harbor, the following morning, with a body of men sufficient to seize and remove the guns.

It was the early dawn of a Sabbath morning, at that season of the year, when all nature is wrapt in repose, that a transport filled with armed men, cast off from the wharf at Castle William. In the gray morning light, no other object was astir. The waters of the deserted harbor, bound with icy shores, lay without a ripple, as if the frost-king had already laid his hand upon them, and fixed them there. The tall and motionless mast of an English man-of-war stood sentinel over the scene. The oppressed and down-trodden city was wrapt in the depth of morning slumber, the aching and defiant hearts there all at rest. The transport passed on; and as the sun rose with cold reluctant ray upon that wintry landscape, she shot out from among the islands in the harbor, and turned her course along the headlands which mark the northern shore of Massachusetts Bay. At high noon of a short mid-winter day, the vessel, with its accursed freight, rounded the rocky point of Marblehead, and came to anchor. The steersman lounged lazily at the tiller; two or three men paced her deserted deck. The short "interim of divine worship," which the puritan allowed himself, was ended; and the church bells of Marblehead had summoned the inhabitants to their afternoon devotion. The last notes of the opening psalm had hardly died away, when the sound of drum and fife was heard in the streets, and three hundred armed men, the freight which that mysterious vessel had landed at Homan's Cove, met the gaze of the astonished worshippers. With a quick impassioned supplication for their country, the pastors sent forth their flocks to watch the course of the invaders.

Their steps were soon turned towards Salem. Suspecting the object of the visit, Major John Pedrick "hastened hither to give the alarm." Leslie and his troops marched on, over the then sparsely settled road between Marblehead and Salem, passed the Derby mansion, which then stood alone in the "South fields," and defiled along the crooked carriage path, occupying at that time the place of the present broad and beauti-

ful southern avenue to our city. On reaching the South Bridge they were obliged to stop and repair the damage done there by the inhabitants, to arrest their progress. Having accomplished this, the advance guard marched easterly towards Long, now Derby Wharf, while the main body advanced towards the Court House on Essex Street, thence up Court, now Washington Street, and down Lynde Street, towards North Bridge.

The inhabitants of Salem were already aroused. A body of people had gathered in front of the First Church, where the youthful Dunbar had just implored divine blessing on his country, and where the heart of the venerable Barnard lingered and worshipped, as he lay upon his paralytic bed. The younger Barnard, who had just commenced at the North Church a long career of piety, usefulness, large patriotism, and unbounded faith in Christ and his teachings, which gave peculiar lustre to that ancient pulpit; who, in the earliest days of the Revolution, wrote as a prophet to Judge Curwen, what the latter was pleased to call "fancies and delusions," with regard to the "power, strength, grandeur, and prowess, by sea and land, of the American people," "their policy, patriotism, industry, progress in the useful arts, and their fixed determination to withstand the attacks of tyranny;" had dismissed his congregation and repaired with them to the scene of action. In the East Church, the Rev. James Diman closed the Scriptures, which he had expounded to that people for nearly forty years, blessed his congregation, and departed to join his townsmen in arms. Antipas Stewart, the schoolmaster, who read the Church Service on that afternoon at St. Peters, hastened through the first lesson, and then led his hearers to the fight. The streets of the town, just now so silent, were suddenly filled with an anxious crowd, in Sunday attire, inquiring of each other what these things meant.

But one man in the multitude was found ready to point out to Leslie the way to the North Bridge. Samuel Porter, a lawyer, recently from Ipswich, used his cane for that purpose, and then retired with it to be heard of no more. We have no account of his evening walk. The Hon. Richard Derby, who owned a part of the cannon, when requested to exert his influence for their surrender, replied, "If he can find them, he can take them," — a privilege of doubtful utility in such an hour.

Leslie and his men arrived at North Bridge, attended by a concourse of people, a few of whom were armed, but to find the draw raised, to prevent his further progress. He and his men were silent, sullen, and

somewhat "impatient to close the difficult mission;" evidently fearful of bloodshed. A dense mass of people hovered about his troops on one side of the river, and on the other was Timothy Pickering, with forty armed militia, and ranks increasing, ready to dispute his advance, should he cross the bridge. Captain Mason had meanwhile conveyed the ordnance to a thicket back of Devereux's hill, a mile's march from the water. The aspect of the popular leaders there was such as to remove all hope of trifling. Pickering, who had just been chosen Colonel of the 1st regiment, in place of William Brown, whose officers had resigned on account of his attachment to the royal cause, confronted the invader from the opposite bank, with a port and mien which few men, during his long and active life, dared to resist. John Felt, who had quietly "kept close to Leslie every step from the Court House," and whose name should be recorded for the admiration of all time, as that of a man whose self-possession and courage did not desert him in an hour of danger, whose eye and voice did not fail when death stared him in the face, who possessed all his faculties without undue agitation and concern when the time required him to be most a man, whose presence by the side of the invader was like the power of an opposing army — John Felt stood there, a pillar of indignant humanity, beyond which those men dared not pass. He calmly suggested to Leslie that a struggle with the people would instantly awake a personal struggle between themselves, in which the life of one or both should be sacrificed. When Leslie threatened to fire on the people, he said to him, "You had better not fire; you have no right to fire without further orders, and if you do fire, you are all dead men." "For there," said Felt, pointing to the dense mass of his townsmen on the shore, "is a multitude, every man of whom is ready to die in this strife." Major Joseph Sprague, too, will always be remembered as he who, unarmed, leaped into his boat and scuttled her, when the enemy proposed to use her in crossing the stream. These men all faced instant death, with a fearlessness which disarmed their foes, and gave them a charmed life, instead of the early martyrdom which they were ready to suffer for their country, with its immortal renown. Jonas Parker fell on the green at Lexington, having made a solemn vow never to run from British troops; and as his spirit ascended to heaven, his name was recorded high in the temple of fame for the admiration of all men, and as an example for his people. Let us write the name of John Felt, there, by its side, as of him who taught the men of Lexington how to face a foe.

The people had now become excessively exasperated. They heaped abuse upon the troops, as myrmidons of King George, who had come to murder an unarmed and defenceless people, whose wives and children appealed silently to them for mercy. They claimed the right to defend their own highway and their own property; and they vowed to do it even unto death. The assistants of Sprague and Felt had been wounded by the bayonets of the soldiers, as they were destroying the boats that lay in the stream. A bloody conflict was imminent.

The Rev. Thomas Barnard now appeared as a mediator between Leslie and the people. "You cannot," said he, "commit this violence against innocent men, here, on this holy day, without sinning against God and humanity. The blood of every murdered man will cry from the ground for vengeance upon yourself and the nation which you represent. Let me entreat you to retire, while yet this people is willing to listen to reason". On the other hand, he called upon his townsmen to adopt calm and moderate measures, and to consent to a peaceful adjustment of the troubles.

The counsel of this good man prevailed. The draw of the bridge was slowly lowered. Pickering and his men were drawn up in position on the other side. Leslie and his forces marched, by popular consent, thirty rods across the bridge, and wheeling, returned to Marblehead, and thence to Boston.*

The cannon were safe; the British authority had been checked; the lives of our citizens were preserved; but a spirit had been roused which never slumbered until Salem had performed her part in the active service of the war, and received with the country the rewards of an honorable peace.

*I have been informed by Mr. James Eustis of South Reading, that his grandfather, James Nichols, who witnessed the scene from his residence at the corner of North and Federal Streets, had frequently described it to him. He represented the English soldiers as a remarkably fine body of men, well armed and provided with coils of rope, for the removal of the cannon. On one or two occasions, a collision was very imminent; a citizen, who had been pricked by a soldier's bayonet, returned the assault with a brick; Captain Foster, from the opposite side of the bridge, called tauntingly on the troops to fire; a body of soldiers from Danvers were drawn up on the green on the same side of the river, and just above Lester's troops; the Captain of the Danvers men proposed often to fire, and was only restrained by Mr. Nichols and others, who represented the slaughter, and loss of property which must necessarily follow in a thickly settled town.

Not a person now lives in our city who, eighty-seven years ago, witnessed this conflict. The last survivor of all who saw it, Mrs. Bethiah Derby, died July 5th, 1861, at the age of ninety-five. The blood of those who took their stand at North Bridge still remains in the veins of many now within the sound of my voice. In their presence, let us renew our devotion to the cause for which their fathers fought here. And,

“O, stranger! stay thee, and the scene around
Contemplate well; and if perchance thy home
Salute thee with a father's honored name,
Go call thy sons — instruct them what a debt
They owe their ancestors; and make them swear
To pay it, by transmitting down entire
Those *sacred rights* to which themselves were born.”

Let us pause for a moment before this scene, and consider the great drama of which it forms a part, — the settlement, — the colonies, — the Revolution, — the great nation, — the civil war. The courage of the Revolution gave us our independence; the wisdom and patriotism of the confederated States gave us the Constitution; their trials and necessities gave us the Union. When the war closed, the work of freedom was but half begun. The colonies had successfully resisted the attempt of an arbitrary power to control their inherent rights; they were now called on to resist all the spirit of faction, the rivalry and jealousy, the local pride and local interest, which threatened to plunge them into domestic anarchy, infinitely worse than foreign despotism. In adopting the Constitution, they endeavored to furnish a common ground on which all could stand with equal security, with equal right, with peace and fraternal harmony; and they succeeded. But they did not succeed in removing the conflicting elements, which in their wisdom they sought to harmonize, — and of which the bloody and unnatural strife of our day is the fruit borne for us to gather. They left it for us to strike down the passions which would have defeated the Constitution, and to remove by the sword the heresies which would pervert and destroy it. They fought for freedom; we are fighting for the Constitution, that we may still have a charter of freedom. It is easy to see how the contest arose.

The war of Independence had been fought, the confederation had proved to be a “rope of sand,” and led on by Virginia, the States had assembled to form our present Federal Constitution. It had been

adopted by the Convention which framed it, and accepted by Delaware, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Georgia, and Connecticut. All eyes were turned upon Massachusetts, for upon her action depended very much that of New York, Maryland, and Virginia. The mass of the people here were opposed to its adoption, some from interest, as they supposed, some from principle, and some from jealousy. It met with violent opposition from the insurgents of Shay's army, many of whom represented the Western counties in the convention, assembled to consider the question. General Knox wrote to Washington, —

“The opposition has not arisen from a consideration of the merits or demerits of the thing itself, as a political machine, but from a deadly principle levelled at the existence of all government whatever. The principle of insurgency expanded, deriving fresh strength and life from the impunity with which the rebellion of last year was suffered to escape. It is a singular circumstance that, in Massachusetts, the property, the ability, and the virtue of the State are almost solely in favor of the Constitution. Opposed to it are the late insurgents, and all those who abetted their designs, constituting four fifths of the opposition. A few, very few indeed, well meaning people are joined to them.”

The debate in the Convention of 1788, sitting in Boston, grew warmer and warmer as each day went on. There were men who, guided by personal ambition, sat with their fingers upon the popular pulse, and governed their course by the unreasonable and narrow demands of an excited and just now rebellious community. The temptations of local elevation were more than they could resist. There were their obligations to Massachusetts, the opportunities which she presented, the favors which she had to bestow upon her sons who obeyed the behests of her people. There were then none of the brilliant achievements of a powerful Republic, none of the prosperity attending a Constitutional Confederation, no commanding presence before the nations of the earth, no flag crowded with a galaxy of increasing States, no projects in which all had a common interest. The history of the Revolution, with its privations and its brilliant close, seemed to be the only bond which held together rival States, each one of which was daily drifting farther and farther from its companions and partners, in the great work which they had commenced shoulder to shoulder.

The prize which Massachusetts presented was sure; the honors which might fall from a prospective Union, were doubtful.

Then it was that the unambitious patriotism and profound legal wis-

dom of Chief Justice Parsons, then a young lawyer in your courts, a son of Essex, conceived that interpretation of the Constitution; which disarmed its opponents, and which has become step by step the avowed policy of our country. First among the declarations prepared by him, and set forth by the Convention, was this: "That it be explicitly declared, that all powers not expressly delegated to Congress are reserved to the several States to be by them exercised." With this, the Constitution was adopted; the hopes of Washington and Madison, and Franklin and Jefferson, were realized. A Union of States commenced. That plan of government which has given us power at home and abroad was adopted. That system, which embraces all in ample folds of political equality, and which has given us security, stability, and renown, was inaugurated. And while freemen on this continent rejoiced in the increasing refulgence of an united people, the weary and heavy eyes of those who watched for dawn, amidst the darkness of despotism, became radiant with hope.

The compact thus formed; was intended to be the foundation of the most Christian Government among men. While it promised the richest material blessings to the associates in the bond, it appealed to their highest honor to maintain that bond sacred and unbroken, without irritation, without dictation, without self-righteousness, without arrogance; but with liberality, and confidence, and faith, and equal and exact justice.

They believed in State rights—not the right of a State to modify its obedience to the Constitution by its sentiments and interests—not the right of a State to fire on the flag—not the right of a State to seize the property of the Federal Government—not the right of a State to nullify the laws—not the right of a State to violate the Constitution—not the right of a State to trample the Stars and Stripes in the dust—but the right of a State to control her own domestic affairs, to encourage her domestic industry, to educate her people, and to cast her vote upon national affairs, with all the God-given prerogatives which belong to the majority of a free people speaking through the ballot-box.

There is a theory which would authorize each State to return to her primitive condition of helplessness, a prey to every domestic faction and every foreign foe. But that is not the Constitution. The sovereignty which each State possesses, under the Confederation, is hers, because it has been guaranteed to her by the bond which binds her to her fellows, for mutual protection and defence. That bond broken, it is hers no

longer, standing as she does without nationality, without flag, without existence, and reduced to the condition of an outlaw, whom madness has driven from the safety of a civil community and the comforts of a social life, into that aboriginal barbarism where his hand is against every man. But in this civil fabric which our fathers founded, they provided that the prosperity of the whole should secure the prosperity of each part. They knew that as State after State, and interest after interest, clustered about the Constitution, a nation would rise up commanding the respect of the civilized world, and to form a portion of which would constitute a civil position before unknown.

Does not Massachusetts, as a member of the Confederation, possess a power which is felt among the nations of the earth? Is not her voice heard in treaties? Does not her citizen find that his flag protects him everywhere? Do you think that Massachusetts independent, seceded, withdrawn, would maintain herself in boundary disputes, or in her rights upon the high seas? Would her mills be more profitable with her own tariffs, or her ships with her own flaunting flag? Do you think the citizen of South Carolina, suing for the protection of foreign powers, is more to be respected, than when he walked the earth under the shelter of the Stars and Stripes? Under the Constitution each State is great and powerful; without the Constitution, none so poor to do her reverence. The Constitution of our fathers, which conferred freedom on all, which furnished peaceful remedy for all grievance, which has oppressed none, which has invigorated old States, and given birth to new ones, which has opened every section of our Republic to our industry, which has been the admiration of the world, — let us cling to it, and preserve it, and respect it at home, and carry it with us into every conflict. To re-establish its supremacy, is a cause for which a people may well rush to arms. And with such an object for the war, I would have no obstacle presented to our success. We may be annoyed by foreign complications, — but from these we may deliver ourselves by patience, prudence, and sagacity. But from those complications which arise out of theorists who love their dreams better than their country, and out of traitors who love themselves better than their country, we can only deliver ourselves by the powers which the Constitution confers upon our rulers. I think all will agree with me, that in the present trials which surround the Government, no man has a right to place obstacles in its path; no loyal man will do so. The object of the war is the support of Government and the crushing of rebellion. Can we not leave all minor questions to be decided by the

circumstances which attend the result? In all this conflict, be it longer or shorter, I adjure my countrymen to keep their eyes firmly fixed on the great issue, the high object of the war, — the restoration of the Union and the Constitution. If we must diminish our comforts, and deny ourselves luxuries, let us do it cheerfully; for what are they all without a country? Let us stand by the Government, not by our party, not by our projects, not by our dreams and speculations, — for this is the only “military necessity” we can know. And may the Government in all things stand by us, rising calm and serene to the magnitude of the work, hopeful of the future, regardless of factions, forgetful of platforms, setting an example of high endeavor which we may all follow, as patriots and men.

The event at North Bridge, my friends, grew out of the devotion of the people of this ancient town to the cause of Constitutional Freedom. From that day Salem, one of the oldest and wealthiest commercial towns on the continent, made common cause with the Colonies, and her people spilled their blood freely on the battlefields of the Revolution. She was the first town “known in England to have hoisted the flag of independence.” How appropriate, then, is our work to-day! The flag of our country! — first unfurled at the head of the Continental Army, at Cambridge, on the first of January, 1776, by Washington, while yet the thirteen stripes were surmounted by the British ensign, before the Independence of the Colonies had been declared, — then thrown to the breeze in its present form by act of Congress, on the seventeenth of June, 1777, “that the flag of the thirteen United States be thirteen stripes, alternate red and white; that the Union be thirteen stars, white in a blue field, representing a new constellation,” — at that hour adopted by Massachusetts as her flag; — the flag of our country — what hopes and memories cluster around it, as it floats there, the stars still shining in their azure field, the stripes still telling the story of its birth. To us, who gather in peace beneath its ample folds, it appeals continually for our country; for that strong and powerful nation which advanced upon its high career, through the wisdom of the Constitution; for the only government on earth based on equal rights to all, for the only political system ever founded on the broadest Christian love and charity. It appeals to us to be patriots and men. When the whirlwinds of passion rage around us, let us remember its promises. May we never forget that a chosen star of that constellation is our own beloved Massachusetts, and that for her sake we would not have one

star differ from another in glory there, lest her own should be eclipsed. Emblem of popular freedom what a touching tale it tells of the sufferings of a feeble, starving, freezing people, flying before oppression with bleeding feet, undaunted still; driven from place to place, still strong in heart — until the admiration of the world is won, and freedom is accomplished! What a glorious tale it tells of national greatness achieved! How it calls to mind the brotherhood of States! How it bids the stormy sea of jealousy, and hate, and envy, be still! How it looks down upon us, radiant with all the philanthropic promises of its illustrious founders, before the grandeur of whose kind designs all malignant schemes sink into insignificance! How it rebukes all partizans and propagandists!

And those of us who have sons and brothers on the field of battle, can we ever forget that it is this dear old flag which guides and cheers them in their trials and dangers? In the long and weary march it reminds them of home, and the shining days over whose rejoicings the flag has waved triumphant. In the smoke and din of battle it inspires them with courage for the country, whose peaceful glories it represents, and with whose fate is bound its own existence. And the dying soldier, stricken down and left in all the agony of loneliness as the storm of war passed on, far from the gentle voice of child and mother, and wife and sister, with no affectionate hand to wipe the death-damp from his brow, who can tell the short delirious joy which fills his soul, as he turns his glazing eye to the flag of his country, still waving there, and knows that its folds encircle himself and them all, the dear ones, in a fond embrace. O, my friends, let us cling to the flag still! Let us cherish it, even if in the Providence of God, it should be doomed to fade. In the morning of our nation, our fathers adored it; if evening is upon us, let us worship it still, —

“As the sunflower turns to its God when he sets,
The same look that it turned when he rose.”

But I cannot believe that evening is upon us. Notwithstanding the complications which surround us, notwithstanding the repeated attacks which have been made on our system of government, notwithstanding the desperate efforts which have been made to substitute colonial dependency upon a foreign power, for the sovereignty of the State, notwithstanding the fact that in the blinding storm the Constitution has now

and then been lost sight of, I still have faith in the love which the American people bear to their old flag, and to the system of government which their fathers founded. I cannot and will not believe that the Union of States, which has blessed us all, will be broken up by the mad ambition of designing men anywhere. And I feel assured that when the darkness begins to break, and the heavy clouds roll away, and the storm sea grows still, we shall lift up our eyes and behold the grand old ship careering on her way, weather-beaten it is true, but staunch and noble still, and freighted with all those civil rights which have made us a strong and prosperous people.

And when, my fellow-citizens, the "gorgeous ensign of the Republic," floating in the breeze, exults once more in the pride of its supremacy, or when we shall have done all that may become men, to restore it to the full measure of its honor and power, let us repair once more to this spot, to plant a lasting monument of granite to the virtues of those who gave it a name in history. For I believe that the virtues which made this Union, can save it now. The intrepidity, the honesty, the liberality, the sense of justice, the faith in God, the charity to our fellow-men, which characterized our Revolutionary fathers, — O, may they be ours in this day of trial! There was but one Washington, it is true, — there is but one in history; but the land was filled with noble souls, each discharging a humbler duty, clustering round him, their type and representative, and feeling "his own great arm lean upon them for support." The American of the Revolution, — may he be ours now, — ours, in every hamlet, and village, and city, and county, and State, — the man for these times, — the man whom no threats can daunt, — whose firm and healthy mind no misguided popular frenzy can shake.

Justum et tenacem propositi virum,
Non civium ardor prava jubentium,
Non vultus instantis tyranni,
Mente quatit solida.

Such men were Washington, and Warren, and Adams, and Franklin, and Prescott; such men were the Parkers, and Harringtons, and Pearces, and Felts, who brought to more lowly service the same great virtues, mindful only of the duty they owed their whole country. Around the monuments erected to such men and their deeds, may our children and our children's children gather, delivered from the burden

of calamity which has fallen upon us, and entered upon a now and more glorious career, in which the name American shall receive its fullest honors, and in which the country shall be one through the faith which inspired the Revolution. So shall we and our fathers not have lived in vain.