JUNE 17, 1775.

W. W. Wheildon on the Rise and Progress of the Revolution.

A Comprehensive View of the Struggle at Bunker Hill.

BOSTON AND NEW YORK.

How Gage Was Surprised and the British Driven Out.

General Warren's Death a Sign of Victory for the Colonies.

BEGINNING OF THE WAR.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE HERALD:—

Governor Everett, who was familiar with the history of the times, says "the actual commencement of hostilities in the war of the American Revolution might be said to be accidental." But the truth is the thrilling news of the expedition to Concord to destroy the military stores of the colony, and the bloody conflicts of the 19th of April, if accidental in themselves, produced effects which were serious and well considered. Parliament had been distinctly and emphatically told that the Port act would produce the union of the colonies; and Bancroft says, in three weeks after it reached Boston, "the Continent, as one great Commonwealth, made the cause of Boston its own;" but the blood spilled and the outrages committed on the 19th of April indicated war, and the colonies so understood it. The state of the case was most tersely and strongly expressed in a little note from George Bancroft, in 1850, in which he said, "the deeds of that day made conciliation impossible and independence certain."

CULMINATION OF REBELLION.

The battle of Bunker Hill was the clear, certain and legitimate conclusion of that long and interesting chain of events which preceded it, from 1765 to 1775, beginning with the destruction of the Stamp Office in Boston, and followed successively by the shooting of young Snyder, the Boston massacre, the destruction of the tea, the excursion to Salem and the expedition to Concord, which was the culmination of the difficulties, and when General Gage said rebellion was now "too open and manifest to meet the opinion of law officers." In fact it was now revolution."

THE PEOPLE AROUSED.

The murderous proceedings of Gage on the 19th of April, aroused the whole country. This was one of the most unjustifiable and barbarous inroads ever made by a civilized army into a civilized country, characterized from beginning to end by murder, acts of rapine, robbery, theft and incendiarism, without a single feature, even that of a lawless and successful raid, to redeem it. It was in no respect creditable to the British nation or its representatives, and was censured as severely in England as in America; but it excited and aroused the spirit, energy and determination of the people. Their military ardor was awakened and the Provincial Congress, which had just concluded its session at Concord, immediately afterward called the people to arms; and before a month had elapsed there was, in fact, an army, such as it was, nearly equal in numbers to that of General Gage, assembled at Cambridge, determined, as they were, to revenge the conduct of the enemies of the country—whose presence they had already too long endured—and drive them out of it.

MATTERS IN BOSTON.

Boston, which had been denounced in Parliament as the "ringleader" in the rebellion, and deserved to be "punished" and "knocked about the ears" for setting the example to New York of throwing the tea overboard, was at this time a

MILITARY GARRISON.

There had been British troops in Boston, more or less, from 1767 to 1774, the time of the Port Act, under an exceedingly offensive act of Parliament of 1764, which authorized the King to send troops into any of the colonies and quarter them on the people, but after the Port act (June 1, 1774) went into operation the town was simply a military garrison, containing at the close of the first year of that act at least 10,000 troops of all arms, sustained and protected by a fleet of ships of the Royal Navy, under Admiral Graves, all of which it is believed took part in the assault upon the little redoubt and handful of men on Breed's Hill. The ships were the Somerset, 68 guns; Cerberus, 36; Glasgow, 24; Lively, 20; Falcon, 20; Symmetry, 20—and they must have had at least 1,200 men and nearly 200 guns.

ERECTION OF FORTIFICATIONS—REMONSTRANCES.

One of the early movements under this military *regime* was the erection of fortifications on Boston Neck—the only entrance to the town excepting by means of the ferries—and this excited the utmost indignation of the people when they saw the "big cannons" which were mounted there. The authorities of Boston protested earnestly against the work; the county assemblies protested against it; the Continental Congress at Philadelphia (September, 1774) remonstrated against it, and the Provincial Congress of Massachusetts (October, 1774) protested against it. Communications, messages and committees were sent to General Gage concerning the matter—all without effect. To the Provincial Congress he said the menaces and warlike preparation made it necessary to construct "what you call a fortress, which, unless annoyed, will annoy nobody."

This last expression surprised the Congress, and they retorted upon His Excellency very sharply, and claimed that the fortress, or whatever he was pleased to call it, "cut off communication between the country and the capital, imprisoned the many thousand inhabitants of the town of Boston," and was a continual annoyance to that oppressed community. The letter from the Continental Congress, comprising (as they took the opportunity to inform General Gage) representatives from "all the colonies from Nova Scotia to Georgia," was very strong and decided—based upon the resolution which they had adopted, that "the town of Boston and the province of Massachusetts Bay are considered by all America as suffering in the common cause."

Gage replied, "there is not a single gun pointed against the town, and no man's property has been seized;" but he admitted that "two works of earth had been raised, and guns put in them; old works have been strengthened and guns placed there likewise," and he excused himself with the plea that it was his duty.

The building and arming of these fortifications was a great annoyance to the provincials, and while it was in part the work of the defence, it was one of the immediate measures which brought on the battle of Bunker Hill. They were the talk in the camp as indicated in a letter from a poor soldier's wife, who was to be left a widow, as she feared—"they are building batteries around the town and so are we. We are expecting the town to be burnt down every day, and I believe we are sold!"

ITS DISTRESSED CONDITION.

In the meantime the condition of Boston, with its ten or twenty thousand inhabitants, and its garrison of more than half as many soldiers, was getting to be deplorable, dreadful. There are numerous letters from British, provincial, tory, military and other sources which might be quoted in proof of this statement. All trade, commerce, business of all kinds, building, manufacturing, &c. (or by whatever other terms the occupations of a people are to be described), were at an end. Various things were attempted and persisted in, such as brickmaking, to employ and occupy the people; but the truth is, as money, provisions and supplies of every description grew scarce the town was almost solely dependent upon donations—at first from the nearest towns, as a flock of sheep from one town (Chelmsford), salt fish from Marblehead, and so on from every quarter of the country from Nova Scotia to Georgia; flour and bread from New York, flour from Alexandria, rice from South Carolina. It came in vessel loads to the port of Salem, and in some cases, when the right port could not be reached, or reached in season, the cargoes were sold and the money sent to the Donation Committee in Boston. Virginia, Pennsylvania and Maryland contributed very liberally to the relief of Boston; and Charlestown, as "being in the same predicament," as the committee expressed it, received seven per cent of all donations.

ITS MORAL AND SOCIAL CONDITION.

This may well be left to the imagination of the reader when he considers the condition of things described. Gage, who had received orders from the King that you "do make the town of Salem the place of your residence; that you do require all officers, &c., to attend you there," &c., undoubtedly found that place incompatible with his safety, as it certainly was with his comfort and pleasure. So he soon found an excuse, after the General Court had distinctly insulted him, for removing to Boston and bringing the soldiers he had there with him. There was a stately Province House in Boston, which was doubtless something in the eyes of Mrs. Gage, and there was unquestionably some society of position in character among the army officers, and more especially perhaps in the families of the mandamus councillors, who were in Boston, with other influential tories.

But all there was of fashion, elegance, taste, luxury or style—Gage left at least three carriages behind him when he went to England and Howe declined to take them away—or even Christian worship in one portion of the city and among one portion of the people, it may well be believed, found its full counterpart in the other. Still Gage and his retinue did the best they could toward an enjoyable and luxurious life in the colonial mansion. The discipline of the soldiers would occasionally be loose, the parades became monotonous, the marches outside the town, which were sometimes indulged in, lacked excitement, as the people would not even look at them. There were forays and foraging parties in all directions, by land and water, to help out the salt provisions. There was little firing beyond the morning and evening gun. All else was waste of powder, and even this was sometimes indulged in.

Church and State were closely united, and there was preaching for the people and prayers for the King in King's chapel on Sundays, attended almost exclusively by His Majesty's army and navy officers, no doubt with most punctilious etiquette, sure to be kept up by the high officials and imitated by all who were clothed in a little brief authority below them, while on all other days of the week the usual monotony of camp life prevailed.

THINGS IN NEW YORK.

COMMITTEE OF CORRESPONDENCE—CONTINENTAL CONGRESS.

Long before the battle of Bunker Hill, New York, State, county and city, as in full communion with Boston, and Bancroft gives special credit to New York for her early, if not actually first, movement in the assembling of a Continental Congress, and declares that she anticipated Boston in this important matter. The "Sons of Liberty" in New York were very active and very patriotic, and were composed quite largely of the middling class, as in Boston, not including the wealth and real estate of the city. In May, 1774, the merchants, real estate owners and other wealthy citizens, not altogether satisfied with the proceedings of the Sons of Liberty, called a public meeting, and appointed fifty gentlemen as a committee of correspondence, "for the important and salutary purpose of keeping up a correspondence with our sister colonies," &c., thus superseding the Sons of Liberty, but, as it seems, not extinguishing them. On the 19th of May, three days later, another meeting was held (there being some dissatisfaction with the preceding one), at which the doings were confirmed and one more added to the committee. The Assembly at Albany had previously, in January, appointed a committee of correspondence, consisting of thirteen members.

CONTINENTAL CONGRESS.

At a meeting of the Committee of Fifty-one on the 23d of May a letter from the Boston committee was read and referred to a committee, and at eight o'clock the same evening the committee reported a reply to the Boston letter, in which the subject of non-importation was referred to and briefly considered, and then the committee say, "Upon these reasons we conclude that a Congress of Deputies from the colonies in general is of the utmost moment, and that it ought to be assembled without delay," adding, "We request your speedy opinion of the proposed Congress"—a measure which John Hancock earnestly suggested in his oration at Boston on the 5th of March preceding.

WARREN FEARS NEW YORK.

On the 31 of June New York, still adhering to her opinions, renewed her proposition for a general Congress, but, we think, did not at this time select her delegates. In the meantime a movement was made by the patriots, headed by Sam. Adams, in the General Assembly at Salem, toward a general Congress, and Dr. Warren, still having some misgivings in regard to the merchants of New York, wrote to Adams, urging his attention to the matter, and saying, "I fear New York will not assist us with a very good grace; but she may, perhaps, be ashamed to desert us, at least if her merchants offer to sell us" (the British Ministry had tried hard to bribe them, by offers of the trade and business of the whole country), said Warren, "her mechanics will forbid the auction."

TRUE TO THE CAUSE.

But the truth is, as the British Ministry soon discovered, they could not rely upon New York whether Boston could or not. The Assembly at Salem, on the 17th of June, 1774, elected their delegates to the Continental Congress, and on the 13th of July New York elected as her delegates Duane, Livingston, Alsop, Low and Jay.

In October the committee called a meeting of the importers, and they resolved not to advance the prices of goods beyond a reasonable profit, and declared if any retailer should do so, "we will, as one man, decline dealing with him," and hold him or them responsible for "all the disturbances that shall be consequent thereon."

NON-IMPORTATION ADOPTED.

In October the Continental Congress determined upon, "for the present," certain peaceful measures, the first of which was, "to enter into a non-importation, non-consumption and non-exportation agreement or association." This was soon after adopted by all the colonies. One section from the text of this association, very curious in itself, will also show the spirit of the times and the people.

MEASURES OF ECONOMY.

"8. We will, in our several stations, encourage frugality, economy and industry, and promote agriculture, arts, &c., and will discountenance and discourage every species of extravagance and dissipation, especially all horse-racing and all kinds of gaming, cock-fighting, exhibitions of shows, plays and other expensive diversions and entertainments; and on the death of any relation or friend none of us, nor any of our families, will go into any further mourning dress than a black crape or ribbon on the arm or hat for gentlemen, and a black ribbon or necklace for ladies, and we will discontinue the giving of gloves and scarfs at funerals."

BOLD ACT BY THE SONS OF LIBERTY.

General Gage, during the winter of 1774-5, had hardly been able to sustain his troops in Boston, notwithstanding all the foraging of the soldiers and the cutters of the men-of-war, and had secured early in the spring two cargoes of bread, flour and other supplies in New York, as probably he had been in the habit of doing. These were lying at the wharf when the affair at Lexington and Concord happened. On receiving the particulars of these events the Sons of Liberty proceeded to the wharf and, it is stated, promptly unloaded both vessels.

THE CITY ALARMED.

In June, 1775, when the battle of Bunker Hill was near, there was much excitement in New York, on hearing that British troops, in then uncounted numbers, were to be landed in that city, and possibly Boston, which had received such essential aid from New York in her distress, relieved of the war by its transfer to that city. The Continental Congress, in which New York had pinned her faith, being in session, application was made to it for advice. Congress promptly replied, advising them to put their women and children in some safe place, allow the troops to occupy the barracks in turn, but in no event allow them to throw up fortifications; but it now turned out that the war was to be in Boston and not in New York. Just a month before this Warren, in a letter to Philadelphia thanking her for "four hundred and twenty dollars," said, as if foreseeing the ministerial plan:—"We are all embarked in one bottom; if one colony is enslaved she will be immediately improved as an engine to subdue the others."

THE CITY RELIEVED.

New York, on the 17th of June, was relieved of her anxiety, as will be seen by the following interesting document:—

"IN PROVINCIAL CONGRESS, NEW YORK, June 17, 1775.

GENTLEMEN—We are this day informed, by Mr. Jeffrey, of the Lord Hyde packet boat, that the Mercury ship-of-war was cruising off our coast, and is now at Sandy Hook to order the transports from Ireland, with troops destined to this city, to proceed immediately to Boston, and did on Tuesday last, about three leagues to the south of Sandy Hook, deliver those orders to the old Spy, man-of-war (now a transport, with a part of the Forty-fourth regiment on board), who immediately altered her course.

Captain Jeffrey told us he had this information both from the officers of the troops on board of the Spy and from some of the officers of the Mercury man-of-war.

From this information we are induced to conclude that some capital stroke is meditated against our brethren of the Massachusetts Bay. We therefore, gentlemen, think it our duty to despatch this information to you, that it may be known to the Continental Congress.

We are, gentlemen, your very humble servant,

P. V. B. LIVINGSTON, President.

TO THE NEW YORK DELEGATES IN CENTENNIAL CONGRESS."

These delegates were Philip Livingston, James Duane and John Alsop.

PATRIOTIC COINCIDENCE.

It is worthy of remark that probably at the very hour this letter was written in the Provincial Congress of New York the Continental Congress at Philadelphia was adopting the commission of George Washington, and the extemporized Provincial army around Boston were fighting the first battle of the American Revolution. It was "read by paragraphs, and debated, was agreed to, and (the record says) is as follows." It begins:—

"THE CONGRESS.

"The delegates of the United Colonies (naming the twelve) in Congress assembled,

"TO GEORGE WASHINGTON, ESQ.

"We, reposing special trust and confidence in your patriotism, valor, conduct and fidelity, do by these presents," &c.

"This commission to continue in force until revoked by this or a future Congress. By order of the Congress. JOHN HANCOCK, President.

"PHILADELPHIA, June 17, 1775."

Thus were the three great cities of the United Colonies of that day, Boston, New York and Philadelphia, variously occupied, unknown to each other, on the 17th of June, 1775, one hundred years ago.

THE COMING WAR.

GAGE MUST BE DRIVEN FROM BOSTON.

The question very naturally began to be considered and asked—in fact had been some time considered among the provincials—how long is this condition of things to last? The patriots of Boston felt, and in fact were told, that the country was looking to them to know what was to be done. All eyes were turned toward the town, not simply in sympathy for her sufferings, for with every cargo of supplies came words of encouragement and hope. Hancock, who was on his way to Congress, on the 24th of April, wrote to the Committee of Safety:—

"For God's sake do not suffer the spirit of the men to subside until they have perfected the reduction of our enemies. Boston must be entered; the troops must be sent away."

They had murdered our people; they had burned their houses; they had robbed the magazines of powder, the islands and shores of cattle, and were daily threatening further aggressions. When Connecticut proposed to send commissioners to General Gage, with a view to reconciliation, Warren was indignant, and wrote to her people that they did not seem to be sensible of the miseries to which General Gage's army had reduced the wretched colony." He said to them in most emphatic language—not proposing in the least to discuss the matter with them—"Our relief must now arise from driving General Gage, with his troops, out of the country, which, by the blessing of God, we are determined to accomplish or perish in the attempt."

This was the feeling at this time, no doubt, of the people of the colonies. It was the feeling of the army, which had almost gathered itself together at Cambridge. It was the fear of Gage himself and of Percy, who had written to a friend in England that they were expecting an attack, as the Provincials had now a train of artillery. It was felt at this time on both sides that war was inevitable; and the Americans were a little disposed to profit, and did so to some extent, by an early recognition of the fact, in the taking of Ticonderoga and Crown Point, which supplied them with cannon and implements of war, which were so much needed by the improvised army of Cambridge.

PROPOSITION TO FORTIFY BUNKER HILL.

On the 12th of May, 1775, the first proposition to fortify Bunker Hill came before the Committee of Safety, which was, in fact, the Executive Committee of the Provincial Congress, and, after naming other similar measures in the circumvallation around Boston for offensive and defensive purposes, the report says:—"Also a strong redoubt raised on Bunker's Hill, with cannon planted there."

PROCEEDINGS THEREON.

The Committee of Safety, who were only joint partners in this report, under further consideration, referred the whole matter to the Council of War—viz., the officers of the army, Ward, Putnam, Heath, Henshaw, Prescott and others. The subject was not lost sight of, as we now know from other sources, although there was no further official action until the 15th and 16th of June, when the measure was earnestly advised by the committee, taken before the Council of War and instantly determined upon—hastened, as Sam Adams says, by "secret intelligence from Boston, by means of spies, that the British were about to take possession of Dorchester Heights."

ORDERS—PARADE—PRAYERS.

General Ward, it is said (for there is no record of the fact in his orderly book), on the evening of the 16th, acted in the matter, and Colonel Prescott says:—

"I received orders to march to Breed's Hill in Charlestown, with a party of about 1,000 men, consisting of 300 hundred of my own regiment, Colonel Bridge and Lieutenant Brickett with a detachment of theirs, and 200 Connecticut forces, commanded by Captain Knowlton."

These were ordered upon the parade ground, prayer was earnestly offered in their behalf by President Langdon, of Harvard College, and at about nine o'clock the detachment moved toward Charlestown.

BREED'S HILL.

Colonel Prescott does not say so, for there was no need of saying so, according to his account; but other authorities do say that at the Neck, at the base of Bunker Hill, or on Bunker Hill, he held a consultation with his officers and communicated to them his orders, and that here General Putnam joined them. So that whether his orders said Breed's Hill; whether they agreed to go to Breed's Hill, or whether they went to Breed's Hill, "by some mistake," as Mr. Thatcher says, it is impossible to determine. It is certain that they went there and commenced the work they were ordered to do. Colonel Gridley, the engineer, marked out the lines, and "we began the intrenchment about twelve o'clock," and the work was continued until daylight without interruption. A guard had patrolled the shores of the town during the night, and it is said that Colonel Prescott and General Brooks had been down to shore and found all quiet. But at daylight from "the masthead of the Lively," (or quite as likely from the cook house), the cluster of men at work was seen on the hill. Sure enough, there were the rebels! Now what!

THE INTRENCHMENT

It was twelve o'clock at night, bright and clear and silent, when the first spade was put into the ground,

> The silent stars were burning bright
> No cloud obscured the sky;
> The breath of nature sleep was hush'd
> And only seem'd to sigh.

Although it was only about four hours before the men were discovered and fired upon, the work was continued until nearly twelve o'clock the day of the battle. The men had worked with a will in the intrenchment and on the breastwork, which extended some rods down the hill on the left of the line. Beyond this, and between the breastwork and the shore of Mystic River, was that redoubtable and important work, the rail fence, which, however, was not put together until late in the day when the engagement was at hand.

SURPRISE OF GENERAL GAGE.

The information obtained through the spies employed proved to be true, as General Burgoyne distinctly says the heights around the town were to be occupied, "to begin with Dorchester Heights," and "everything was disposed accordingly * * * to be executed on the 18th." For this movement, therefore, General Gage was prepared when the cannonading of the Lively began to roll around and wake up the town so early on the morning of the 17th; and it may easily be conceived how much surprised—"thunderstruck" can hardly express it—he was when intelligence of what had been done by these paltry peasantry during the night reached him at the Province House. Lord Percy may possibly have expected something of the kind, and perhaps General Gage himself did; but at all events they were not prepared for what they saw on Breed's Hill, which one of the English writers absurdly calls "a prodigy."

EXCITEMENT IN BOSTON.

The excitement which prevailed through the town as fast as the news spread among the people, when the battery on Copps' Hill followed the lead of the Lively, may easily be conceived by the reader, but could hardly be described by an eye witness of the scene. The firing of cannon was perhaps not so very rare a thing in a garrisoned town, but so terrific a roar as that which ensued, until Admiral Graves was wide awake enough to check it, had certainly never been heard around Boston before. It may well have been believed by some of the least superstitious among the classes of people left in the town that the day of doom had come in earnest—and some of them hoped it had for the troops and tories.

COUNCIL OF WAR.

It seems unaccountable that it could have been nearly half-past eleven o'clock in the forenoon before an order, so far as we know, went to the troops. Certainly the people were aroused at an early hour, but the officers who were to form the council of war may have been dilatory in rising. However, when they did assemble there was the scene before them, not at Dorchester but on the heights of Bunker Hill; and of course they must be dislodged. The council, it is said, recommended landing up the river, in the rear of them; and certainly this would have been an effectual proceeding. The Neck was very narrow and ships of war or batteries could sweep across with their guns either from the Mystic or the Charles River; but Gage, who certainly was quick to see some things, as his letters prove, perceived at once that it placed his forces in a situation to be attacked on both sides—in fact, though perhaps he did not know it, from three directions. Ward must have come down from Cambridge, Stark from Medford and Prescott from Bunker Hill. He must have rejected the opinion of his council or overruled it, and determined to attack the intrenchment *seriatim*. So the council broke up and

ORDERS ISSUED FOR TROOPS.

Of course these went through General Howe, second in command. It had often been said that "the flower of the British army" was in Boston, and these, ten selected companies, with the Thirty-fifth and Forty-ninth regiments, were on their way to Long Wharf at twelve o'clock. If the people at Concord had had the same length of time to prepare for Colonel Smith's visit two months before neither he nor Pitcairn, nor a man of his detachment, would ever have returned to Boston on the 19th of April.

EMBARKATION AND LANDING.

The boats and barges were ready at Long Wharf; the cannon were mounted over the bows of some of them; the red coats were brilliant and beautiful; their arms flashed in the sunlight; the General and his staff, no doubt, were elegantly dressed, and the whole stream of boats, as they moved in parallel lines, must have looked picturesque and gallant, while the royal fleet of Admiral Graves lay about them with colors flying and full of excitement, ready to cover their landing at the right moment.

We have only space to call the attention of the reader to this magnificent scene, as it was calmly viewed by the "rebels" in the redoubt on one side, and His Excellency the Governor of the colony of Massachusetts Bay, Admiral Graves, of the Royal Navy, the self-confident General Burgoyne, and the nervous Clinton, on the other. These last sat there, on Copp's Hill, about one mile as the bird flies from the redoubt, and watched the terrible scene of conflict which soon followed this brilliant display.

Prescott says he ordered the artillery and the Connecticut troops to oppose their landing, and we presume such an order was given; but it is certain that no attempt was made to obey it or carry it out. The British accounts say the troops landed without opposition, and Prescott says the men left him and he supposed went to Bunker Hill, whence they returned with Putnam and were placed by him at the rail fence.

PREPARATORY MOVEMENTS—DESERTIONS AND EXECUTIONS.

The troops were landed under cover of firing from the ships; the men brought into line on Moulton's Point, near the northerly end of the present Navy Yard. Howe and Pigot were at their posts. Howe surveyed the rebel works, saw more men coming toward the intrenchment, as he supposed—they were going to construct that memorable rail fence—and at once ordered the boats to return for a reinforcement, as his men only numbered two to one at this time. When the troops arrived they were formed in hollow square. General Howe briefly addressed them, sent out a guard along the river shore, as the accounts say, and prepared for a movement between two and three o'clock in the afternoon, his men all refreshed with provisions and rum for strength and excitement.

The statement is made on British authority that some of the men attempted to run away, some tried to join the rebels, and of the latter two were hanged.

ACCOUNTS OF THE BATTLE.

There are various accounts of the battle of Bunker Hill, contemporary and compilations, mostly well known. Among the contemporary accounts the most full and complete, perhaps, is that published under the authority of the Committee of Safety, written by Rev. Peter Thatcher, who had associated with him Rev. Messrs. Cooper and Gardner. Following this are the accounts of the Provincial Congress; that of the British Annual Registry for 1775, supposed by Edmund Burke; the official account of General Gage; the letters of Burgoyne, Colonel Prescott and many others; and there are numerous modern accounts and compilations, more or less partisan, and more or less reliable.

In the great leading features of the engagement, from the evening of the 16th of June to the evening of the 17th of June, there is in all the contemporary accounts a very reasonable, if not in fact remarkable, concurrence of statement, yet not without discrepancies; and outside of this, it is believed, no single authority can be considered as absolutely reliable for any statement. We propose, as briefly as we may, having already given a sketch of preliminary history, to give a rapid and we hope clear view and statement of the events of the memorable day, as derived from contemporary materials, public documents and private authorities.

PIGOT'S FIRST ATTACK.

The first attack was made by General Pigot on the redoubt. "At this instant," say the Committee of Safety, "smoke and flames were seen to issue from the town of Charlestown." Other accounts represent this to have occurred at the time of the second attack; but the committee say it was intended "to cover their attack upon our lines, and perhaps with a design to destroy or rout one or two regiments of provincials who had been posted in that town." This statement is inexplicable.

Pigot's men met a warm reception when they had got near enough to be seen and selected, and they very soon fell back "in some disorder"—that is, in fearful confusion. The fire of Prescott's men slaughtered them, and some of those who escaped made for the boats with all haste.

Pigot had the Fifth, Thirty-eighth, Forty-third, Forty-seventh and Fifty-second regiments, and Pitcairn, with a regiment of marines. Prescott says they marched to the attack in "three columns;" but whether he means to include the whole force under General Howe in this remark or only the force coming toward the redoubt is somewhat uncertain. We suppose a simultaneous movement was intended; but, undoubtedly, if Pigot did not move first, he commenced the battle with the redoubt some time before Howe became engaged with the left wing of our army, and in this way the fight was continued, each acting independently of the other.

HOWE'S FIRST ATTACK.

Howe moved the right flank of his army forward and attacked the hay fence, when, to his surprise, the men did not retire. They were for a time warmly received by Callender's field pieces from the upper portion of the line; but his men absolutely fired at random, and it is said did not lift their guns to their shoulders. They were a little annoyed by the marshy land, which swamped their artillery, and their balls went over the heads of our men.

The consequence was that his men were actually picked out by the Connecticut and New Hampshire marksmen, and the slaughter was so great that the "men of Minden" were glad to run away, and it is a little doubtful, taking the British accounts as authority, whether Howe's men or Pigot's got to the boats first. Howe was amazed, and the same authority says his officers were shot down around him and he was left almost alone.

THE SECOND ASSAULT.

That there was a second assault made by General Pigot, and likewise, after a while, by General Howe, is pretty positively asserted by the Rev. Mr. Thatcher, with the same result as the first. He says—"At length they were rallied, and marched up with apparent reluctance toward the intrenchment. The Americans again reserved their fire until the enemy came within five or six rods, and a second time put the regulars to flight, who ran in great confusion toward their boats."

Nothing is said here, however, about Howe's second movement, and some of the accounts that mention the rallying of his men omit all reference to the movements of General Pigot, leaving the account incomplete. Some of the British writers try to make it out that there was not a second repulse—Burgoyne positively so said in Parliament. On the other hand it is positively said that Howe did rally his men and made a second attack, from which he was thrown back as before. Stedman, a British authority, however, admits that they were stopped twice, and two or three other contemporary authorities agree in the same statement.

It would appear, from all the accounts which we have seen, that Putnam, among the provincials, and Pitcairn, among the regulars, were the only officers on horseback in the engagement. General Pomeroy, it is well known, took a horse from Cambridge and rode to Charlestown Neck; but, seeing the balls flying across it so numerously, he handed his horse to a sentry, for the reason that it was a borrowed one, and walked to the rail fence.

THE THIRD ATTACK.

Prescott remained at his post in the redoubt, which he did not leave at any time during the engagement; and if, as he says, he had only 150 men, his defence was truly wonderful. At this time, of course, Howe must have been fearfully anxious and resolute. He must have sent a second time for reinforcements, and they came; and what was still more important, General Clinton, of his own accord, according to Burgoyne (probably Gage was in the church steeple at this time, very likely where Paul Revere's lamps had been hung out), came also, and led them on in aid of Pigot against the nominal breastwork.

The fighting now went on more fiercely than ever, and the slaughter was terrible, as described by the best and most reliable British authorities. The flower of the British army was being annihilated.

General Dearborn, who was at the rail fence, says "the enemy fired so badly that forty-nine balls out of fifty passed from one to six feet over our heads; for I noticed an apple tree some paces in our rear, which had scarcely a ball in it as high [as low] as a man's head, while the trunk and branches above were literally cut to pieces." He says he commanded a full company, and had only one man killed and five wounded, which was a full average of the loss we sustained, excepting those who fell while sallying from the redoubt when it was stormed by the British column. "I did not see a man quit his post during the action."

GENERAL CLINTON ON THE FIELD.

General Clinton was a very important addition in this third attack, with his large force of fresh troops to lead on or push on those who had already been in close action. The fire had greatly diminished from the redoubt, for want of ammunition, and the troops were able to get near that somewhat uncertain breastwork, where they found but small opposition, and soon bundled over it toward the entrance to the redoubt. Here, it would seem, if the story of shooting Warren is reliable, there must have been an almost hand to hand fight, on most unequal terms in regard to ammunition and bayonets.

The redoubt was carried. Prescott says:—"The enemy, being numerous, surrounded our little fort, began to mount our lines and enter the fort with their bayonets. We were obliged to retreat through them, while they kept up as hot a fire as it was possible for them to make."

One of the most reliable and sensible British authorities, in regard to this battle, says:—"We should have been forced to retire if General Clinton had not come up with a reinforcement of five or six hundred men." If this was really so the compliments bestowed upon the British troops for maintaining their high reputation and superiority, by Gage and Howe and Burgoyne, were utterly absurd and meaningless. The truth is the victory, such as it was, was of no special credit to British arms, and pretty nearly terminated all actual British warfare in Massachusetts.

The truth is, when the battle ended at night neither party had gained their object; the British troops had only got possession of the hill, they had not conquered anybody, and they did not dare to follow the provincials across the Neck; nor had the provincials compelled Howe and the army to adopt the alternative which he had held out to them in his little speech:—"Remember, gentlemen, we have no recourse to any resources, if we lose Boston, but to go on board our ships, which will be very disagreeable to us all." In less than three months, however, General Gage advised the evacuation of Boston.

INTERESTING NARRATIVE.

In a pamphlet account of the battle, written by Oliver Morsman, Esq., of Henderson, Jefferson county, N. Y., "A Revolutionary soldier," which was published at Sackett's Harbor, in 1830, we find the following interesting narrative, which illustrates how some of the men got to the field:—

"The author belonged to Colonel Asa Whitcomb's regiment, stationed east, northeast from Cambridge College, in fair view of Boston, Charlestown, Breed's and Bunker's Hills. About one o'clock, seeing Gardner's regiment march, our regiment appeared anxious to go. Our Colonel was absent. The Major said that he had orders not to leave the post, but, notwithstanding, if part of said regiment would turn out, he (the said Major) would go. There was something like 100 turned out and marched immediately to Charlestown common, near the Neck, when cannon balls came across from the Glasgow frigate of 30 guns and three floating batteries, in the Mystic River, and began to destroy the board fences and houses. Then the Major halted his men, and expressed himself in this manner—'We have come without orders; now every man return to camp.' Captain Benjamin Hastings, a man nearly seventy years of age, who had served in the French war, stepped out and said, 'Boys, (true enough we were boys that turned out) you that are not afraid, follow me, for I will go on to the Hill, or die in the attempt.' Thirty-four followed the old hero, and arrived in time. Captain Hastings and his little spartan band was placed at the rail fence, north of the small redoubt." Of these boys five were killed, eight wounded, and among the last the author, who was born at Princeton, Mass.

CASUALTIES OF THE BATTLE.

DEATH OF WARREN.

"Him! the first great martyr in this great cause! Him! the premature victim of his own self-devoting heart! Him! the head of our civil councils and the destined leader of our military bands, whom nothing brought hither but the unquenchable fire of his own spirit! Him! cut off by Providence in the hour of overwhelming anxiety and thick gloom, falling ere he saw the star of his country rise, pouring out his generous blood like water before he knew whether it would fertilize a land of freedom or of bondage!" In these eloquent words of Webster who can suppress the emotions that rise at the mention of his name?

Nearly all that history can relate is told in these impressive words. Almost all the particulars of his going to the field of battle on the day of the 17th of June, of his presence there, of his death and treatment and burial are related by different contemporary writers in essentially varying statements. Nearly every contemporary account, British and American, mentions his fall, all of them with respect and consideration, save one from a Massachusetts unmitigated tory, who had made his escape into Boston and afterward fled to England, where he was pensioned.

The generally received account of Warren's career on that day is that he came from the Congress at Watertown that morning; was suffering from nervous headache and took to his bed; soon after, while the cannons were roaring about the town, rose and went to headquarters; thence, against remonstrances, to the field of battle. There he declined the command offered to him both by Prescott and Putnam in their different positions; went into the fight with a musket (or sword); encouraged the men by his example, and was subsequently shot on the retreat outside the redoubt by a British officer in the back of the head, although it is believed he was bleeding from his wounds at the time.

As the British continued to occupy the redoubt it was some time before his death was made certain and his body discovered—thrown into the ground, stripped of his clothes. It was recognized by certain marks on one of his hands and a particular false tooth.

Congress, inspired by the patriotic feeling of the whole country, on the 8th of April, 1777, voted to erect a monument to his memory in Boston, which never having been fulfilled, the last Congress voted some pieces of old cannon to his townsmen for the purpose of erecting a statue near the place of his birth.

KILLED AND WOUNDED.

PROVINCIALS.—Killed, 115; wounded, 305; prisoners, 30. Total, 450. Another account—Killed, 140; wounded, 271; prisoners, 30. Total, 441. Officers killed were Major General Warren, Colonel Gardner, of Cambridge; Lieutenant Colonel Parker, of Chelmsford; Major Moore, of Paxton, and Major McClery. A number of the prisoners died of their wounds in Boston Jail.

BRITISH.—Gage's account—Killed, 226; wounded, 828, many of whom died of their wounds. Of the officers killed there were 1 lieutenant colonel (Pitcairn), 2 majors, 7 captains 9 lieutenants and 15 sergeants; wounded, 3 majors, 27 captains, 32 lieutenants, 8 ensigns, 40 sergeants, 12 drummers.

It has been generally believed that Gage's account did not fully show the results of the battle. As an example, Captain Drew's company (Thirty-fifth regiment) out of 38 men had 15 killed and 20 wounded, 3 escaped, and Gage reports the casualties of the regiment as 19 killed and 50 wounded.

BURNING OF CHARLESTOWN.

As in regard to other features of this remarkable battle the details of this occurrence are various. The statements are that it was set on fire by the ships; that it was set on fire by the soldiers in various places; that it was set on fire by a detachment sent over in boats (either from the ships or the battery) for the express purpose. Then as to the time, whether it was before the action commenced or after the first attack, or, in fact, late in the afternoon is uncertain; some accounts say one thing and some another. Burgoyne expressly says Howe sent word to the battery to set the town on fire, and they then fired carcasses into it and did set it on fire; while, on the other hand, General Lee, in the Provincial council of war, declared that the town could not be set on fire and burned by means of cannon, as he knew by experience. Again, it is said that Gage had determined to burn the town some time before (possibly because some of his soldiers swam over there and got away), and took this opportunity to carry out his threat.

At all events the town was burned, and, like some other things which the British officers in America did, the people of England, if not the government, were either ashamed of or sorry for. There were about six hundred buildings in the town, two-thirds of that number being dwelling houses. It was set on fire in many places (one account specifies the number ten places), and of course no effort was made to stop the flames or, in fact, to save any property while the fire was raging. No doubt considerable property had been removed, and it is known that a large amount from Boston (probably brought out clandestinely), was stored in it, and this may have been a reason with Gage in burning it. Some of the inhabitants, it is said, remained in the town until the cannon balls passed through their houses. A few buildings toward the Neck were not burned at the time, but were well riddled with balls. They were afterward occupied as quarters, and, finally, used by the British soldiers as fuel. The loss of property was inquired into after the fire by the inhabitants when they returned to the town, on the recommendation of Congress, and was found to amount to more than $500,000; but they never received anything from the government. Professor Morse was born in one of the first houses built after the fire, and visited it, with his wife and daughter, in 1870.

QUESTION OF COMMANDER.

The question of commander in this notable battle on the provincial side has been discussed at different times, and seems now to be, as we should say, "somewhat muddled." Daniel Webster well said, "If there was any commander-in-chief it was Prescott;" and every careful reader of contemporary history disposed to consider everything to be found bearing upon the subject will find it difficult to reject his sagacious conclusion. John Fiske, a distinguished and very active patriot, in a letter to Sam Adams, July 20, says he has written all the particulars of the battle he has been able to obtain, and adds, "To be plain, it appears to me there never was more confusion and less command." A great deal of evidence may be produced to show the justice of this conclusion and the remarkable pertinency of Mr. Webster's gigantic "if."

Nevertheless, partisan writers, who contented themselves with probabilities a few years ago, and afterward thought their assertions were not to be doubted, now assume the entire field and the entire day as under the command of Colonel Prescott. It is not possible, we think, for any fair and candid reader of history to admit the correctness of this conclusion. If it could be proved by the written record of General Ward, or a written order in possession of the friends of Colonel Prescott, it would neither be true nor just, but neither of these things can be done. There is no record, and our own opinion is that there never was any written order issued to anybody. The assertion that Prescott received no orders from Putnam (which may or may not be true) is sufficiently met by the assertion (which we believe is true) that Putnam received no orders from Prescott.

Colonel Prescott, in his letter to John Adams (who had an idea that General Pomeroy was the first Massachusetts officer), says:—"On the 16th of June, in the evening, I received orders (he does not say from whom) to march to Breed's Hill, in Charlestown, with a party," &c.

If this was so what need was there of stopping at the base of Bunker's Hill to decide where they should construct the intrenchment? What doubt was there about it? and way do the Committee of Safety say there was a mistake in this matter. The "Prescott manusc