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Concord Fight,

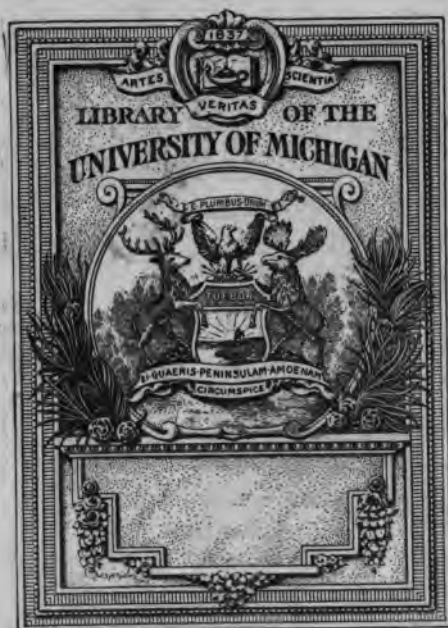
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APRIL 19, 1775.

BY

REV. GRINDALL REYNOLDS,
CONCORD, MASS.

A. WILLIAMS & CO.,
CORNER OF SCHOOL AND WASHINGTON STREETS,
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CONCORD FIGHT.

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What was there in the character and position of the town of Concord a hundred years ago, or in its relations to the larger interests and transactions of the times, to make it the object of the first really powerful, hostile movement of the British governor? Any one who visits Concord now finds a neat, quiet town, of moderate size, girdled by low hills, and looking out upon broad green meadows, and upon the most winding and most tranquil of rivers. It is a pleasant town to see, and restful to the eye. To its own children it seems as towns are apt to seem, the pleasantest spot on the earth. To a stranger, no doubt, it does not differ essentially from scores of villages which nestle amid our hills, or sun themselves along our streams.

It is very difficult, therefore, in 1875, to appreciate that in 1775 this quiet town was one of the great centres, not only of intellectual life, but also of political influence and power. Yet so it must have been. Of all our inland settlements in population, it was almost the largest, in resources almost the wealthiest. As a shire town there came to it necessarily that continual excitement which stimulates in any community mental activity. Thither, five or six times a year, came the various courts of law, with their retinue of judges,

jurors, lawyers, and suitors, numbering many scores came, not as now, borne quickly there by the rail in the morning, and as quickly away at night, but make the town a home for days and weeks. Here conventions for all manner of objects of county interest were accustomed to gather. Here, especially, in the old Indian fashion, in the meeting-house, the choice spirits of the county, or, as Paul Revere termed them, the sons of liberty, met to discuss grievances, to deepen the love of freedom, and the purpose to resist oppression, and, above all, to ripen feeling of patriotism or indignation into wise action. It was not an unimportant circumstance either that Concord was the first settlement in the State off tide-water. For a time our fathers clung to the rocky and barren shores of that ocean which divided them from their old home. At Plymouth, Salem, at Boston, at Dorchester and Roxbury, and many other places on the seaboard, the germs of flourishing towns and cities were planted. But inland there was nothing but the wilderness and the savage. Not until fifteen years after that immortal voyage of the "Mayflower," in 1635, did a little band of Puritans cross the first barrier of hills which shuts from sight the ocean, and settle by the side of what the Indian call from its wide meadows, the "grass-ground river." They named the new home Concord,—title strangely unpropitious of that bitter fight which ushered in the bitter struggles of the Revolution! As a necessary result of this early origin, the town became one of the few homes from whose redundance New England was peopled. Everywhere its children went. In all the towns along the seaboard of Maine, in the new settlements which were springing up in southern New Hampshire and Vermont, in the younger villages of Middlesex and Worcester Counties, in far off Connecticut, as it was then, there were men and women whose ancestral home lay within the territorial limits of old Concord. So its name was a household word on the lips of many who ne-

had seen, and perhaps never should see it, with the bodily eye.

Thus, from various reasons it happened that, in 1775, among all the inland towns in eastern Massachusetts, Concord was the most prominent,—the natural, as it was the political, centre of the great and patriotic county of Middlesex. It was a small town, as we estimate towns, never in its best estate before the Revolution having exceeded two thousand people. But we must not forget that Massachusetts, according to modern standards, was itself a small State.

It was no doubt on account of this prominence in character and position, that Concord was, from the beginning, chosen to be the place for the first meeting of the first Provincial Congress of Massachusetts. In making this statement, we do not overlook the just claims of Salem. It was at Salem that the vote was passed which created that Congress. It was at Salem, too, that the General Court resolved to become a part of that Congress. But we repeat, in *its wholeness*, with *all* the members which constituted it, the Provincial Congress first met and transacted business at Concord. As the creation of a Provincial Congress drew after it by almost necessary sequence "Lexington Alarm," Concord Fight, Bunker Hill, and to no little degree the national independence, it is well to count the steps by which it came into existence. In the summer of 1774 thoughtful people saw that a break between the legislative and executive branches was at hand,—to be followed, inevitably, by a stern struggle for supremacy between the two. When that break took place, where should the representatives of the people find a legislative home? Boston was dominated by a great British army. Salem and all the sea-coast towns would, in event of trouble, be at the mercy of British fleets. A town, itself thoroughly patriotic, and surrounded by a population of the same temper, near enough to Boston to be in communication with its sons of liberty, far enough from it

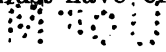
to be safe from the interference or threats of the royal governor, seemed to be the first requisite. All eyes turned to Concord. A convention of the best men in Middlesex held in its meeting-house, "voted, August 31, 1774, that each town in the county be recommended to elect one or more delegates to attend a Provincial meeting to be holden at Concord, the second Tuesday in October. Suffolk County, in an equally important convention held at Mr. Vose's house, Milton, September 9, recommended to its towns the same course. Cumberland County, in what was then the distant province of Maine, added its voice to the same effect, September 22. And Worcester County spake with no uncertain sound. It advised "its towns to instruct the Representatives, who may be chosen to meet at Salem, in October next, absolutely to refuse to be sworn by any officer or officers but such as are or may be appointed according to the constitution. And should anything prevent their acting with the Governor and Council, as is set forth in the charter, that they immediately repair to the town of Concord, and there *join in a Provincial Congress with such other members as are or may be chosen for that purpose.*" The General Court met at Salem, Oct. 5, 1774, waited two days for the Governor to take the proper steps to qualify its members,—waited, as no doubt it expected to wait, in vain,—and then proceeded on the seventh to elect John Hancock its chairman, and Benjamin Lincoln its clerk, and by the following votes to merge its own existence into that of the new and larger body: "Voted, that the members aforesaid do now resolve themselves into a Provincial Congress, *to be joined by such other persons as may have been, or shall be chosen for that purpose,* to take into consideration the dangerous and alarming situation of public affairs in the province, and to consult and determine on such measures as they shall judge will tend to promote the true interests of his Majesty in the peace, welfare and prosperity of the province. Voted, that the Con-

gress be adjourned to the meeting-house in Concord." Arrived at Concord the second Tuesday in October, the first business was to reconsider the votes by which John Hancock was elected chairman, and Benjamin Lincoln clerk, and then to elect the same persons to similar positions under the titles of President and Secretary. Such action was had, no doubt, because the presence of additional members made the form of reorganization both respectful and proper. It is absolutely certain that in some cases such additional members were chosen. It is well-nigh certain that more than one-half of those who were at Concord were not elected to Salem. The body thus reorganized and its successor for six months met alternately at Concord and Cambridge. The Second Provincial Congress was in Concord in March and April, 1775, and adjourned only four days before the encounter at North Bridge. By its sessions there it must have helped largely to make the town an object of interest to the friends, and an object of enmity to the foes, of freedom. In that old meeting-house, which, repaired and remodelled, alas! stands now on the same church green, what words, to fire men's souls, were spoken, what policy, to shape the destiny of the state, was enacted! There, Joseph Warren, John Hancock, Samuel and John Adams, Elbridge Gerry, names memorable in the state and national history for the next generation, and with them Prescott, Heath, Ward, Lincoln, the first military leaders of the Revolution, played their part. Scarcely Independence Hall itself has more venerable associations.

As a natural consequence the committees of safety and supplies — the most important bodies which ever existed in the Commonwealth, to whom the whole work of arousing the people and preparing for their defence was intrusted, who were to call into existence soldiery, to find officers, to procure arms, to gather supplies, to appoint depots, to be, as it were, eyes and hands to all the rest — were constantly at Concord. : They. were

there — John Hancock at their head — on the 17th April, not more than thirty-six hours before brave men were massacred almost before his eyes on Lexington Green.

Very early in the history of these committees, it is stated that they ordered to be deposited in Worcester two hundred barrels of pork, four hundred of flour, and one hundred and fifteen bushels of peas; and in Concord, one hundred and thirty-five barrels of pork, three hundred of flour, one hundred and fifty bushels of peas, and fifty-five tierces of rice; and “voted, that all the cannon, mortars, cannon-balls and shells be deposited in the towns of Worcester and Concord in the same proportions as the provisions are to be deposited.” These votes, so far as Worcester was concerned, were never carried into effect. But Concord became one great store-house. Every farmer’s barn, the town-house, the court-house, the tavern-shed, the miller’s loft, all became extempore depots for provisions and munitions of war. Very likely in other places there were limited supplies. But gradually, in comparison with the means of the State, a vast store was accumulated at Concord. Eleven hundred tents, ten tons of cartridges, eighteen tons of rice, eight tons of fish, many hundred barrels of flour, fifteen thousand canteens, a thousand iron pots, besides cannon and mortars, round-shot and grape-shot, canister and shells, spades, pick-axes, bill-hooks, shovels, axes, hatchets, crows and wheelbarrows, wooden-plates and spoons, cartouch-boxes and holsters, belts and saddles, and many other articles, make up this astonishing deposit. No doubt Concord was made such a depot because it was a large town, and had several military companies; because, too, it was near the probable scene of action, yet far enough away to be reasonably safe from any sudden attack. One cannot but think that the thoroughly trustworthy character of Col. James Barrett, who was the sole custodian of these treasures, must have entered largely into the calculation. The



committee were aware how precious was the charge committed to the brave old town. They enjoin Col. Barrett to keep watch day and night. He must always have teams ready to transport away the goods at the first alarm. He "must not so much as mention the name powder, lest our enemies should take advantage of it." But such a secret could not be kept. Tories stole to Boston to tell it. British officers came thither in disguise, noting all the difficulties of the way, and seeking to find the places of deposit. Tradition says that Maj. Pitcairn had visited the town. Finally the committee was alarmed, and the day before the battle, too late fully to accomplish their purpose, ordered that the munitions and provisions should be distributed among nine different towns. Meanwhile each patriot in Boston was a volunteer sentinel, watching every movement of Gen. Gage, with eye quick to detect each change of military position, with ear open to catch the faintest whisper of danger. So that when the royal Governor resolved upon action, almost before he gave his order to Col. Smith to march to Concord and destroy there the munitions of war, his counsels were known; and, while the soldiery were embarking to cross Charles River, Paul Revere was taking that adventurous ride, over which poet and historian alike delight to linger.

Why did the fight happen at Concord? It could happen nowhere else. With Boston for a centre, within a radius of twenty-five miles there was no other spot where Gage could strike to such profit. He might, indeed, in quiet villages find men to whom it was sweet to die for country; for brave hearts were plenty then. He might burn the humble homes of those who loved freedom more than safety. But such acts exasperated rather than weakened. But, at Concord, had the four hundred militia, gathered on Ponkawtasset Hill, held aloof, and left the provincial stores to the mercy of the British troops twenty-four hours, Gage had struck a deadlier blow than if he had slain five hundred on the

battle-field. The direction of his march was neither of accident nor of choice, but of necessity. When Revere knew that Gage was on the war-path, he did not have to ask whither to ride.

But what happened at Concord? A body of American soldiers, organized under legal authority, at the command of their officers, advanced, in military array, received the fire of the enemy, and, when ordered, attacked and forced a similar body of British troops to retreat. This is what distinguishes the fight at old North Bridge from all previous affairs. Not to speak of the troubles in North Carolina, there had already been in New England hostile incidents and meetings more than one, though they are fast being forgotten. The boy Snider, who was shot in Boston streets the 22nd of February, 1770, was unquestionably the first revolutionary martyr. But he was murdered, not by a British soldier, but by a British sympathizer, who, resenting the posting of a brother tory, was driven home by a band of boys with many hoots and some stones, and in his fury shot a little fellow of eleven years, who happened to be present. Eleven days after, the Boston Massacre followed. Here a squad of British soldiers fired a volley into a crowd of people, killing three and wounding eight persons, most of whom had committed no offence whatever. But the affair was so connected with previous quarrels, and with immediate threats and insults, that an American jury, rather than run the risk of injustice, substantially acquitted the soldiery. The next encounter in order is the burning of the "Gaspee,"—one of the most gallant achievements of the whole period. The "Gaspee" was a British schooner of eight guns, which haunted the waters of Narragansett Bay, and, with little cause, and no evidence of rightful authority, stopped and harassed the vessels plying thereupon. This sea-wasp, pursuing a peaceful packet, got aground a few miles below Providence. John Brown, of that place, with others, fitted out eight whale-boats,

which dropped down the river on the evening of June 9, 1772, and reached the stranded vessel a little after midnight. After a brief struggle, the schooner was captured, her crew put ashore, and she burned. In the affray her commander, Lieut. Duddingston, was wounded, and could justly claim that from his veins had come the first English blood shed in the contest. Capt. Abraham Whipple led the Americans, and thus was engaged in the earliest private naval exploit, as three years later he commanded in the first public naval battle. But gallant as the achievement certainly was, it was a private expedition, and always disallowed by the Rhode Island authorities. Boston gave its celebrated tea-party Dec. 16, 1773. The festivities, though they closed with a masquerade and a libation to Neptune, need not be described. They certainly were not presided over by the authorities. Feb. 26, 1775, Col. Leslie stole out of Castle William with two hundred men, and made a rapid march through Marblehead, hoping to capture in Salem and Danvers certain military stores. He found the draw-bridge between the two towns up. A scuffle ensued for the possession of two flat-boats. And North Bridge, Salem, might have taken its place in history instead of North Bridge, Concord. For Col. Pickering was the best educated military man in the State, and the Essex militia afterwards, at the close of that hot April day, showed of what stuff they were made. But neither party was anxious to precipitate hostilities. And Leslie agreed, that if, for honor's sake, he was permitted to march thirty rods beyond the bridge, he would abandon the objects of his expedition. About this time an affair of great seriousness took place at Westminister, the shire-town of Cumberland County, which then included the whole southern half of Vermont this side the mountains. Under the direction of some sort of a rude organization, the people of Westminister and the vicinity took possession of the court-house March 13, and refused entrance to the royal judge, sheriff, and their attendants. A

parley ensued. It was agreed that the judge, without an armed force, should come into the court-house and discuss matters with the malcontents. This agreement was broken by the sheriff. For at midnight he appeared with a considerable party and demanded admittance. Being refused, he gave orders to fire into the building. One man was killed and one wounded. This was the first American blood shed by direct command of a royal official, when at the time no violence was offered or threatened. But, as there was then in Vermont no State authority of any kind, patriotic or otherwise, this affair too must take its place among volunteer movements.

Five hours before the fight at Concord, the first hostile meeting between organized American and organized British soldiers, each party acting under what it held to be legitimate authority, took place. Before sunrise on that morning, at the first intimation of danger, forty to seventy minute-men (the exact number is uncertain) assembled by order of their captain, John Parker, on the little green in front of Lexington church. The promptness with which these men responded to the call, the courage which they displayed in a hot encounter later in the day, proves them to be entitled to the place of brave men among the bravest. As this party was drawn up across the upper end of the common, the sudden appearance of Maj. Pitcairn, his order to the Americans to disperse, and his quick command to his own soldiers to fire, made the quiet green the scene of a bloody massacre, and at the command of their captain, the Lexington men dispersed, leaving one-quarter, if not one-third of their number, dead or wounded. There has been a long and often needlessly warm discussion as to whether any guns were fired by the minute-men in return for the fatal volley which they received. Authorities certainly differ. And it is not possible quite to reconcile the adverse affidavits. So the question can never be absolutely settled. But a candid weighing of all the evidence makes it altogether

probable that, as the company dispersed, three or four, and possibly eight or ten guns were fired. But, as a military encounter, the contest was hopeless from the beginning. Such shots as were fired were discharged, not only without the orders of Capt. Parker, but in direct opposition to them, and were prompted by the impulse and courage of the individuals themselves. Beyond inflicting slight flesh wounds upon a soldier or two, they did no damage to the enemy, and scarcely delayed his onward movement. "The blood of the martyrs is the seed of the church." And it is impossible to exaggerate the importance of the cruel affair at Lexington, in exciting sympathy, in arousing indignation, in giving courage to the timid, and in fusing all different feelings and opinions into one united sentiment of patriotism. It is with just reason, therefore, that the sons of Lexington, and the whole State, hold in solemn remembrance the brave men who fell that day.

The peculiarities of the fight at old North Bridge, which divided it from all skirmishes or battles which had occurred previously, and which entitle it to distinct remembrance as an event of unsurpassed importance, are, that there every movement of the militia was made in accordance with the orders of those legitimately in command; that there, for the first time, British soldiers fell before an American fire; and, especially, that there the invader was turned back, once for all, never to make another hostile advance on Massachusetts soil, unless the few acres enlargement of his prison house, won by the awful slaughter at Bunker Hill, be called an advance. Other places have, and justly, their sacred memories. But within the bound of the original thirteen States there is no spot more interesting than the two secluded green slopes, with the quiet river flowing between, where the soldiers of the king and the soldiers of the people met in military array and exchanged fatal volleys.

"1775, 19 April. — This morning," writes the patriotic

Concord minister in his diary, "between one and two o'clock, we were alarmed by the ringing of the bell, and upon examining found that the troops, to the number of eight hundred, had stolen their march from Boston in boats and barges, from the bottom of the Common over to a point in Cambridge near to Inman's farm. This intelligence was brought us first by Dr. Samuel Prescott, who narrowly escaped the guard that were sent before on horses, purposely to prevent all posts and messengers from giving us timely information. He, by the help of a very fleet horse, crossing several walls and fences, arrived at Concord at the time aforementioned; when several posts were immediately dispatched, that returning confirmed the account of the regulars arrival at Lexington, and that they were on the way to Concord." Such is the account of the first tidings of the invasion in the very words of one who was an eye-witness of the events which succeeded. It was probably about three o'clock before the town thoroughly comprehended its danger. The hurry, the confusion, the excitement, the alarm, which must have filled this little village during the four hours in which it awaited the coming of eight hundred mercenary soldiers, can hardly be imagined, far less described. Every available man and team must be impressed to carry away or to hide the precious stores. The minute-men and members of the old military companies were preparing their arms and equipments for immediate service. Many of the women and children took to the woods for safety. Tradition preserves some simple anecdotes, which have not yet been recorded, and which reveal the varying humors of the time. Thus, one good lady, hearing that the regulars were coming, goes straight to the adjoining meeting-house, and takes the communion plate and buries it in her soap-barrel, in her cellar, in the arch under a great chimney which is still standing. Another, getting ready to take her children into the woods, in her confusion went to her drawer and put on

a checked apron, which in those days was the proper adornment on state occasions. This she unconsciously did over and over again, until, when she recovered her wits in her hiding-place, she found she had on seven checked aprons. No doubt every home had its tale, both pathetic and ludicrous, to tell.

A little after sunrise two hundred armed men had come together. Three-quarters were from Concord, a few from Acton, and the rest minute-men and militia from Lincoln. Their advance was stationed a mile toward Lexington, at the end of that steep ridge which skirts the village on the north. The main body occupied, "as the most advantageous situation," the high point of that same ridge, directly opposite the meeting-house. A little before seven, the advance came hurrying back, saying that the enemy were at hand, and "their numbers were more than treble ours." A second position was now taken, "back of the town, on an eminence." This was probably somewhere on that high land which borders Monument street, though some think at the extreme northern end of the ridge first occupied, which many years ago was levelled to give room for the court-house. "Scarcely had we formed," says the same diary, "before we saw the British troops, at a distance of a quarter of a mile, glittering in arms, advancing towards us with the greatest celerity." So high was the courage of our people, and so unwilling were they to retreat, that not a few insisted upon meeting the enemy then and there, though some estimated his numbers at twelve hundred, and none at less than eight hundred. Finally, Col. James Barrett, who had been by the Provincial Congress put over all the forces in the neighborhood, and who about this time rode up, having been engaged since daybreak in securing the stores, ordered them to fall back over the bridge to Ponkawtasset Hill, a high eminence which overlooks the village, and their wait for reinforcements. This order was obeyed, as were all rightful orders given that day. By half-past nine the

Acton minute-men, two small companies from Bedford, and individuals from Westford, Carlisle, Chelmsford, and very likely from other places, had joined them. They numbered, perhaps four hundred and fifty, perhaps three hundred and fifty,—more likely the last than the first. Meanwhile a small body of British troops occupied South Bridge. A hundred, under Capt. Laurie, guarded North Bridge. A hundred marched by the river road to seek for stores at Col. Barrett's, possibly to seek for the Colonel himself. The main body of five or six hundred remained in the centre, looking, to very little purpose, for munitions of war.

At this time smoke and flame, rising from the burning of cannon wheels, became visible to these anxious watchers upon the hill. What was it? Were the cruel enemy setting fire to their homes? They could not longer remain inactive. A hurried debate was had. And then Col. Barrett gave orders to Maj John Buttrick to lead the little force down the hill to the bridge, charging him not to fire unless he was fired upon. There has been a hot discussion as to the relative position of men and companies in this advance. We shall not enter into it; for it belittles and insults a great event. Whether the Acton men led, or marched side by side with David Brown's Concord minute-men; or, if they led, whether it was because they had a more forward courage, or, as Amos Baker, of Lincoln, testified, because they alone had bayonets with which to meet the enemy, if he should trust to steel rather than lead,—are questions which can never be settled. Enough, that in fact the Acton men did occupy the post of greatest danger, and like brave men, as they were, held it firmly. But what swallows up every other consideration is the thought of the incredible courage which was in all these men. Was there not real courage in that Colonel, man of mark and position, foremost person of his town and neighborhood, with little to gain and much to lose, who, with his hair already whitening with

age, sat there on his horse, and issued a command which was nothing less than flat rebellion, which could never be forgiven him, except at the end of a successful civil war? Estimate for me, if you can, the courage of the last man in the last file of that little battalion; his physical courage who dared, with a few hundred militia, to march down to attack what he believed to be three times their number of the best soldiers in the world; his moral courage who, a plain farmer perhaps, averse to quarrels, law-abiding, in obedience to his political convictions was ready to confront with hostile weapons the servants of him who till that hour he had held to be his legitimate sovereign! Merely to have contemplated seriously such a step stamps all these men as heroes.

What followed, everybody knows. The Americans marched down to within a few rods of the bridge, with wonderful self-restraint received a few scattering shots, which wounded Luther Blanchard, of Acton, and Jonas Brown, of Concord, and afterwards a volley by which Capt. Davis and Abner Hosmer, of Acton, were killed. Then rang out the startling order, "Fire, fellow-soldiers, for God's sake, fire!" And from all those silent pieces poured forth a volley. It was a deadly one. Out of a hundred men, according to Gage's official statement, three were killed, and nine wounded, and, by the American account, three killed and eight wounded. Of the killed, one died immediately by a shot in the head. One expired before his comrades reached the village, and was buried in the old graveyard. One, mortally wounded, was cloven through the skull with a hatchet by a lad, at whom, says Chaplin Thaxter, he had made a thrust with his bayonet. From the window of the house now occupied by the Hon. John S. Keyes, a little girl of four years was looking out. She never forgot how pleased she was to see the two hundred British soldiers march by in perfect order, with their bright weapons and scarlet coats and white pantaloons,

or how terrified to see the same men come back, hurried, in disorder, muddy, a great many as it seemed to her, with limbs tied up and bloody. In the record of this hot skirmish, five names stand out to receive peculiar honor. First, Capt. Isaac Davis, of Acton, a modest manly soldier of only thirty years, who could say that he had trained up a company, not one of whom feared to follow him, who assumed his position with a full sense of its gravity, and died first of all in the front rank; Maj. John Buttrick, of Concord, who himself, within sight and sound of his own home, led the advance, and at the right moment gave the word of command; Col. John Robinson, of Westford, who, reaching the field before his own townsman, as a volunteer walked side by side with Davis and Buttrick; Lieut. Joseph Hosmer, of Concord, who acted as adjutant on that day, and by his earnest words, "Will you let them burn the town down?" determined that heroic march down the hill to the river; Capt. William Smith, of Lincoln, who volunteered with his single company to attempt to dislodge the enemy from the bridge,— brave men were these, whose names must ever be connected with a memorable event, but possibly not braver than scores who that day played their part and are forgotten.

Here, perhaps, dramatic unity would close the story. For here ends the fight at old North Bridge. The Americans pursued the retreating foe a few rods, until he was strongly reinforced, then, turning to the left, climbed the hill back of Mr. Keyes' house, from which they had in all probability descended in the morning. As it was evident that there was no intention to burn the town, the insane attempt to dislodge twice their number from what Emerson terms "the most advantageous situation" was not made. But the field of battle was really won. Irresolution and timidity had entered the British counsels; and, after various marches and countermarches, at twelve o'clock they began their terrible retreat. Then a strong detachment of Amer-

icans hurried across the great fields, and at Merriam's Corner, a mile and a quarter below the village, joined the Billerica and Reading men in a fresh attack. Half a mile on, the Sudbury company came up, and there was a new struggle. On the edge of Lincoln, where then thick woods shut in the road, there was the severest encounter of the day. And so the fight merged into that persistent attack and pursuit, from all quarters of the British forces, through Lincoln, through Lexington, through West Cambridge, through Charlestown almost to the water's edge, and to the protection of the great ships of war. In Lincoln it was that Capt. Jonathan Wilson, of Bedford, who had been on the field among the earliest, through a too adventurous courage, died. During this pursuit, too, three out of the four Concord captains were wounded. So somewhere in that long route, if not at North Bridge, these men sought and found their post of danger.

What were results of the Concord Fight? If we look only at its immediate results, then we say, of itself it baffled the plans of the royal Governor. Had nothing occurred after the encounter at North Bridge, had Col. Smith gone back peacefully to Boston, as over a parade ground, none the less he would have gone back defeated. He did not steal out from Boston, with the best soldiers of her garrison, and swiftly traverse the fields of Middlesex, that he might see the beauty of the country,—not even to slay, in unequal conflict, ten rebels. He came to ravage that provincial store-house and magazine which Concord was. And he failed. Quite likely great efforts had been made in the preceding weeks, and especially on the day before, to deplete that store-house. Certainly that morning, while awaiting his arrival, wonderful energy was displayed by the whole people in removing stores to places of safety. Every conceivable expedient was tried. They were removed to neighboring towns. They were concealed in thickets. They were hidden under straw and feathers,

