

LIFE

OF

JOSEPH WARREN,

BY

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JOSEPH WARREN.

CHAPTER I.

His Family and Education.

THE name of JOSEPH WARREN is one of the most conspicuous in the annals of the Revolution. His memory is cherished with even warmer regard than that of some others, who, from the greater length of their career, and the wider sphere in which they acted, may be supposed to have rendered more important services to the country. This distinction in his favor is owing in part to the chivalrous beauty of his character, which naturally excites a sympathetic glow in every feeling mind; and in part to that untimely but glorious fate, which consecrated him as the first distinguished martyr in the cause of independence and liberty.

It is much to be regretted, that the materials for the biography of one, in whom we feel so deep an interest, are not more abundant; but

the circumstances of his active life were not such as to create a large mass of written and published documents for the information of future ages. The short period of time during which he was prominent in public affairs, and the confined circle that limited his efforts, afforded no scope for the voluminous correspondence, which forms the basis of the biography of most distinguished men. It is chiefly, therefore, as the young martyr of Bunker's Hill, that he lives, and will for ever live, in the memory of his countrymen. What ambition could desire a more glorious destiny? In consequence of this deficiency of materials, the present brief notice will be necessarily confined, in a great measure, to a rapid sketch of the events that filled up, or immediately preceded, that memorable day. A few particulars of his early life, which have been preserved by the affectionate care of his family, may serve as an introduction.

JOSEPH WARREN was born at Roxbury, in Massachusetts, in the year 1741. The house in which his father resided is still standing, near the centre of the principal village, in a street which has received his name. The father was chiefly employed in the cultivation of land, and particularly in raising fruit. He was the person who introduced into the neighborhood of Boston the species of apple denominated from him the

Warren Russet. One day in autumn, as he was walking in his orchard, after the apples had been mostly gathered, he saw one remaining upon the top of a tree, which tempted him by its uncommon beauty. He climbed the tree to pluck it; but, just as he was putting his hand upon the apple, the branch upon which he stood broke under him, and precipitated him to the ground a lifeless corpse. His youngest son, the late Dr. John Warren, of Boston, then four years old, who had been despatched by his mother to the orchard, to call his father to dinner, met the body borne by two laborers. By this fatal accident, the mother of Warren was left a widow, with the charge of four boys, of whom the eldest, Joseph, was then about sixteen years of age. The fidelity, with which she executed this arduous trust, is sufficiently attested by the eminent virtues and talents of her children. She lived to a very advanced age, at the house in Roxbury, surrounded by the younger members of the family, and reaping, in their affectionate attention, the best reward for the exemplary care with which she had herself discharged the maternal duties.

Joseph Warren was instructed in the rudiments of learning at the public school in Roxbury, one of the best endowed and most flourishing in Massachusetts, and entered Harvard College

at fourteen years of age. He was remarked at school and at college, as a young man of superior talents, gentle manners, and a frank, independent, and fearless character. A trifling incident, which occurred during his residence at Cambridge, and of which an account has been handed down by tradition, illustrates very agreeably the last of these qualities, and may, perhaps, be worth repeating.

A number of Warren's classmates were engaged in one of those youthful frolics, which occur periodically at all colleges, but of which they knew that Warren did not approve. The leaders, apprehending, that, if he were present at their meetings, his eloquence and influence would draw off their followers and defeat the plan, determined to prevent him from attending. They accordingly fastened the door of the room in which they met, and which was in the upper story of one of the college buildings. Finding that he could not get in at the door, and perceiving that there was an open window in the room, Warren determined to effect his entrance by that way, from the roof. He accordingly ascended the stairs to the top of the building, and getting out upon the roof, let himself down to the eaves, and thence, by the aid of a spout, to a level with the open window, through which he leaped into the midst of the conspirators.

The spout, which was of wood, was old, and so much decayed, that it fell to the ground as soon as Warren relaxed his hold upon it. His companions, hearing the crash, rushed to the window, and, when they perceived the cause, loudly congratulated him upon his escape. He coolly remarked, that the spout had retained its position just long enough to serve his purpose, and, without further notice of the accident, proceeded to harangue his audience upon the matter in hand. We are not informed of the result; but it can hardly be doubted, that prudent counsels, advanced with so much fearlessness and address, were adopted.

This little anecdote was related fifty years after the occurrence of the incident described, that is, about the year 1807, by a person who was present at the time, and who pointed out the window, which was the scene of a part of the action. There is, therefore, little doubt of the correctness of the statement. It exhibits, on a small scale, the same combination of qualities, which afterwards led Warren, at the most eventful period of his life, first, to dissuade his more aged and experienced colleagues in council, from engaging in the attempt to occupy the heights of Charlestown; and, when his efforts proved ineffectual, to throw himself forward, into the midst of danger, and perish in endeavoring to

give effect to the plan, which he had vainly opposed. He seems, in fact, to have possessed by nature, and to have exercised through life, that precious union of valor and discretion, which is so rarely to be met with; and which, when it does exist, constitutes the perfection of practical wisdom.

CHAPTER II.

His Professional Studies and Practice.— Entrance into Political Life.

WARREN left college at the close of the usual period of residence, and applied himself immediately to the study of medicine. At the age of twenty-three, he established himself at Boston, and commenced the practice of his profession, which he pursued with distinguished success.

He is represented as having been particularly fortunate in his treatment of the smallpox, which prevailed about this time in Boston, and was then a much more formidable disease than it is now. In fact, the zeal with which he entered upon the study and practice of his profession, his fine talents and finished education, together with his agreeable person and manners, and naturally frank and amiable character, opened before him an easy path to wealth and eminence. In quiet times, he would have risen rapidly to the highest rank as a physician, passed his life in the active and literary pursuits belonging to that profession, and bequeathed to posterity a name distinguished only by the peaceful triumphs

of science and letters. During the brief period of his professional career, he had acquired so much distinction, that, at the opening of the war, he was designated as Surgeon-General of the army; and it was after having declined this place, that he was elected Major-General.

But the circumstances, in which the country was then placed, almost necessarily directed the attention of Warren from professional pursuits, and concentrated it upon political affairs. The same superiority of talent, and ardor of temperament, which would have given him an easy success in any profession, rendered him more than ordinarily susceptible of the influences, which then operated upon the community; and threw him forward into the front rank of the asserters of liberal principles. The fact, however, that men like Warren, of the finest talents, and in every respect the fairest promise, were among the first to join in the opposition to the measures of the government, shows sufficiently how completely the whole mind of the colonies had given itself up to the cause, and how utterly impossible it was for the ministry to sustain their pretensions by any power that could be brought to bear upon the people of America.

The establishment of Warren in Boston, as a physician, coincided with the close of the Seven Years' War, which was terminated by the de-

finitive treaty of Paris, of 1763. By that treaty, France, then in the last stages of that long disease of misgovernment, which finally produced, by reaction, the convulsions that marked the termination of the century, threw from her, as if in wantonness, the whole splendid domain, which she had previously possessed on this continent; and which, had it been retained, and well administered, must have ultimately rendered her mistress of the whole. The two Canadas and Florida were ceded to England. Louisiana, the boundaries of which were then unsettled, but which, as claimed by France, included the whole vast valley on both sides of the Mississippi, from the foot of the Alleghanies on the east, to that of the Rocky Mountains on the west, was transferred to Spain. This arrangement, so fatal to the greatness of France, was generally considered, at the time, as securing to the British crown the dominion of the whole of North America. Possessing, already, an unbroken line of coast, from Hudson's Bay round to the mouth of the Mississippi, with nothing to oppose her inland progress, but a torpid Spanish colonial government, there was every reason to expect, that, as population and civilization advanced in the colonies, the British government would gradually, by conquest and purchase, push the unsettled boundary of Louisiana farther and farther to the westward,

until they had driven the Spaniards from the continent. The same career, in short, was anticipated for America, as an appendage to Britain, which she has already pursued, and is still pursuing, as a union of independent States.

This was one of those cases, in which the course of events belies the most probable conjectures. The cession of the Canadas to Great Britain, instead of increasing her power upon the continent, was one of the most active immediate causes of the dismemberment of the empire. While the French, in close alliance with the natives, over whom they have always exercised a much stronger influence than any other European nation, hung upon the rear of the colonies, and, whenever Great Britain and France were at war, carried fire and sword through their peaceful villages, their whole military and political activity was exhausted in efforts to ward off this imminent danger. The coöperation of the mother country in effecting this object, naturally generated good feeling between the parties; and, as long as this relation continued to exist, it did much to prevent any considerable difference upon any subject. Never had this coöperation between the parent country and the colonies been so cordial; and never had the colonies distinguished themselves so much by their zeal and success in supporting the pretensions of the

crown, against a foreign enemy, as in the brilliant campaigns of the Seven Years', or, as it has often been called, in this country, the Old French War, the great school in which our fathers disciplined and exercised themselves for the desperate struggles of the Revolution.

The cession of the Canadas to Great Britain, delivered the colonies from this dangerous neighborhood, and left them no employment for the intense political activity to which they had always been accustomed, but the adjustment of their relations with the parent country. By a sort of fatality, the ministry seized the moment to enter upon a new system of policy, involving pretensions and principles, which had never been put forth before, and to which the colonies could hardly be expected to give a quiet assent. Till now, they had paid no taxes, except such as were imposed by their own legislatures, for the purpose of defraying their own colonial and municipal expenses. They were now called upon to contribute to the general expenses of the empire, by taxes imposed, without their participation, by the general government. The effect was electric; and the magnitude of the results is hardly less astonishing, than the rapidity with which they were brought about.

Between the conclusion of the definitive treaty

of peace, which terminated the French war, and the battles of Lexington and Bunker's Hill, which opened that of the Revolution, there intervened a period of only eleven years. Many of the officers, who had distinguished themselves in the preceding wars, were still surviving, in the full vigor of their faculties, to give their countrymen the benefit of their experience and skill in this new struggle. The same unerring eye, which, at the first capture of Louisburg, on the 17th of June, 1745, directed the shell, which fell upon the citadel, and occasioned the surrender of the place, was employed, on the thirteenth anniversary of that day, in laying out a position for the first regular engagement between the colonial and British armies. So rapid, in some cases, are the movements that regulate the fortunes of nations, and change the aspect of the world.

This period of eleven years, which intervened between the close of the French war, and the opening of that of Independence, was filled up by a succession of interesting events, many of which occurred in the neighborhood of Boston. The Stamp Act; the tumults which followed it; its repeal; the Tea Act; the troubles which attended its enforcement, and which terminated in the celebrated *Boston Tea Party*; the military occupation of Boston by the British army;

the hostile encounters, that occurred so frequently between the troops and the citizens, including the fatal events of the 5th of March, 1770; these occurrences, with various others, of less importance but similar character, were the pre-ludes to the far-famed tragedies of the 19th of April, and the 17th of June, 1775. A detailed review of these events, would, of course, be irrelevant to the present occasion. They belong to the history of the country. It may be proper, however, to advert to the part taken by General Warren, on one or two of these occasions, before proceeding to a somewhat fuller account of the brief period, during which he may be said to have been the leading spirit of the colony, and which will be for ever distinguished in our annals by the memorable battles of Lexington and Bunker's Hill.

CHAPTER III.

Events of the 5th of March, 1770.—Warren's Anniversary Addresses.

THE great authority and influence, which Dr. Warren exercised over his fellow citizens a few years afterwards, evidently show, that he must have taken an active and zealous part in political affairs, from the commencement of his residence at Boston, which coincided, as has been remarked, with the close of the French war. For some time, however, his activity must, of course, have been confined to a secondary sphere. The foreground of the stage was already occupied by the great men, who will figure in history as the fathers of the Revolution, John Hancock, John and Samuel Adams, James Otis, Josiah Quincy.

While these eminent characters were on the spot, and in full activity, the patriots of a younger class labored, of course, under their direction. This was the position of Warren for the first seven or eight years of his residence at Boston. At the close of that time, accidental circumstances removed, or deprived of their capacity for usefulness, at once, nearly all the persons who had acted as leaders in Massachusetts. Otis lost

his health, and retired into the country. Quincy left the colony to visit Europe, and returned the next year, only to breathe his last sigh upon the shores of his beloved country. Hancock and the two Adamses, with Robert Treat Paine and Elbridge Gerry, represented the colony in the Continental Congress. In their absence, the direction of affairs passed, of course, into the hands of the prominent patriots of the next succeeding generation; and it was then, that the commanding genius of Warren carried him, at once, to the helm, and rendered him, for the brief period of his subsequent life, both in civil and military affairs, the most prominent man in New England.

It was one of the distinguishing traits in the character of Warren, that he combined in a remarkable degree the qualities requisite for excellence in civil pursuits, with a strong taste and aptitude for war. In this particular, he stood alone among the leading patriots of Massachusetts; and the circumstance, had his life been prolonged, would have contributed very much to establish and extend his political influence. He also possessed, in high perfection, the gift of eloquence; and, in exercising it, he is represented as having exhibited the discretion, which, in all respects, tempered so honorably the ardor of his character. His voice was often raised in

public, for the purpose of dissuading the people from tumultuous movements, and exhorting them to seek redress for their wrongs, as much as possible, according to the forms of law, and without detriment to the rights of individuals, or a breach of the public peace.

The first occasion, however, on which the name of Dr. Warren appears in connexion with any public proceedings, was one when his eloquence was exerted for a purpose more congenial to the feelings of an ardent patriot. I allude to the addresses which he delivered on the 5th of March, 1772 and 1775, in commemoration of the sanguinary scene which was exhibited in Boston, on the same day of the year 1770.

The riots, which followed the attempt to enforce the new revenue laws at Boston, however natural under the circumstances, produced, as must have been expected, the military occupation of the place by British troops. In the course of the year 1768, two regiments, which had previously been stationed at Halifax, and two from Ireland, making, with part of a regiment of artillery, a corps of about four thousand men, arrived at Boston. They were placed under the command of General Gage, an officer who had honorably distinguished himself in the preceding French war. The General, whose head-quarters were at New York, came to Bos-

ton, to superintend the arrangements for quartering the troops, which were not effected without great difficulty, and much opposition from the inhabitants. It was, in fact, found impossible to induce them to furnish barracks, agreeably to the act of Parliament, providing for the occupation; and the General was compelled to hire houses for the accommodation of three of the regiments. The fourth, with the artillery, was quartered in tents upon the Common.

The military occupation of Boston, although, on the view of things which was taken by the ministry, a matter of indispensable necessity, led, of course, to frequent quarrels between the troops and the citizens. In these, the latter were, probably, from the nature of the case, pretty often in the wrong. This was certainly the fact on the famous occasion of the 5th of March, 1770.

On the evening of that day, a mob of citizens, armed with clubs, without any previous provocation, insulted, and finally assaulted, the soldiers, who were on guard at the Custom House, in King Street, now State Street. The guard exhibited great forbearance, and it was not until one of their number had been actually knocked down at his post by one of the mob, that they fired; whether with or without orders was afterwards disputed. The first discharge killed three persons on the spot, and mortally

wounded two others. Here the affray terminated; and, so clearly were the citizens in the wrong, that Captain Preston, who, as commanding officer of the guard, had been brought to trial, was acquitted by a verdict of the jury, having been defended by the two great leaders of the patriotic party, John Adams and Josiah Quincy.

But, whatever might be the merits of the case on this occasion, as between the parties immediately engaged, it was impossible, on a general view of the subject, not to regard the occurrence as one of the unfortunate results of the new line of policy adopted by the British government. If the bloody retribution, which unreflecting citizens had brought upon themselves, by excesses growing out of the exasperation produced by the ministerial measures, were in itself technically, and even substantially, as between the immediate parties, just, this was only an additional reason for regretting and reprobating a policy, which almost inevitably drew the people into that worst of all misfortunes, the commission of voluntary wrong; which first led them into temptation, and then punished them for yielding to it. Considering the occurrence under this aspect, the leading patriots determined to set apart the day for an annual celebration; and it was accordingly so observed for several years, until the

anniversary of the Declaration of Independence was finally substituted for it, as furnishing, on the whole, a more suitable occasion for commemorating the great results of the controversy between the mother country and the United Colonies. This arrangement has been continued ever since, and will probably never be abandoned, while the union of the States is permitted to endure.

On the second of the anniversary celebrations of the 5th of March, in the year 1772, Samuel Adams was invited to deliver the address. He declined the task, which was then committed to Dr. Warren, who acquitted himself with great ability. On a similar occasion, three years afterwards, he again delivered an address, which has attracted more attention than the former one, from the thrilling interest of the circumstances in which the orator was placed, and the more excited state of the whole community.

The mutual exasperation between the troops and the citizens had then reached a very high point; and it had come to be considered as a service of a somewhat critical character, to deliver the anniversary oration. Warren volunteered to perform the duty. When the day arrived, the aisles of the church, the pulpit stairs, the pulpit itself, were occupied by the officers and soldiers of the garrison, who were

doubtless stationed there to overawe the orator, and, perhaps, prevent him, by force, from proceeding. Warren, to avoid interruption and confusion, entered from the rear, by the pulpit window; and, unmoved by the hostile military array that surrounded him, and pressed upon his person, delivered the bold and stirring address, which we have in print. It combines, with a somewhat exuberant display of imagination, a firm exposition of the rights of the colonies, and the sternest denunciation of the previous excesses of the troops, in whose presence he stood. Such was the influence of his courage and eloquence, that he was listened to without a murmur.

I am informed, however, by the Rev. Dr. Homer, of Newton, Massachusetts, who was present on this occasion in the Old South Church, where the address was delivered, that there was, at least, one silent but not wholly insignificant demonstration of feeling, from the military part of the audience. While the oration was in progress, an officer, who was seated on the pulpit stairs, held up one of his hands, in view of the orator, with several pistol bullets on the open palm. Warren observed the action, and, without discontinuing his discourse, dropped a white handkerchief upon the officer's hand. How happy had it been for the country, if this gentle and

graceful admonition could have arrested the march of violence, and averted the fatal presage afforded by this sinister occurrence of the future fate of the patriotic speaker; a presage too soon and too exactly realized, on the following 17th of June!

CHAPTER IV.

Political Organization of Massachusetts.—Warren is elected President of the Provincial Congress, and Chairman of the Committee of Public Safety.—Events of the 19th of April, 1775.

THE first public appearance of Dr. Warren, in connexion with the political affairs of the day, was, as I have remarked, on the occasion of the delivery of the anniversary address of 1772. In that year, the Committee of Correspondence was formed at Boston; an institution which exercised, in a private way, a very strong influence in promoting the progress of the Revolution.* Of this Committee, Dr. Warren was an original member. The earliest active proceedings, of a

* This Committee was designed for corresponding with the several towns in Massachusetts. The plan was first suggested by James Warren, of Plymouth. The Committees of Correspondence for the Colonies were organized the year following, and were first proposed by the Virginia House of Burgesses, in March, 1773. The same system of Committees of Correspondence had likewise been adopted to some extent in the time of the Stamp Act. See Sparks's edition of FRANKLIN'S WRITINGS, Vol. VII. p. 264.

public character, in which he took a part, were those which grew out of Governor Gage's determination to fortify the southern entrance of Boston, by lines drawn across the isthmus or Neck, which unites it with Roxbury.

On this occasion, a convention was held, of delegates from all the towns in the county of Suffolk, which then comprehended the present county of Norfolk, for the purpose of endeavoring to prevent this measure from being carried into effect. Dr. Warren was a delegate to this convention, and was made chairman of the committee, which was appointed to prepare an address to the Governor upon the subject. The Governor replied, in a brief and unsatisfactory manner. The committee rejoined in another address, of greater length, which was transmitted to the Governor, but received no answer. These papers were written by Dr. Warren, and they give a very favorable idea of his literary taste and talent, as well as of his courage and patriotism. The correspondence was communicated by Dr. Warren, as chairman of the committee, to the Continental Congress; and that body, in their reply, notice, in terms of high approbation, the part taken in it by the committee.

Dr. Warren had never served as a representative in the General Court of Massachusetts, under the colonial government. The representa-

tion of Boston was, at that time, very limited in number, and naturally fell into the hands of the more experienced among the patriotic leaders. These, however, as has been already stated, were removed, by a concurrence of accidental circumstances, from this quarter of the country, at about the time when the government was reorganized, under the direction of the popular party, in the autumn of 1774. The legislative power^e was intrusted, under this arrangement, to a body of delegates, denominated the Massachusetts Congress; and the executive power was exercised by a committee of thirteen from that body, called the Committee of Public Safety.

The high sense, which was now entertained by his fellow citizens, of the value of the services of Warren to the cause of liberty, was strikingly evinced on this occasion; first, by his election as a delegate from Boston to the Congress; and secondly, by his designation as President of that body, and Chairman of the Committee of Public Safety. By virtue of these places, he united in his person the chief responsibility for the conduct of the whole civil and military affairs of the new commonwealth, and became a sort of popular dictator. The Congress was organized at Salem, but shortly after removed to Concord, and, a few days before the battle of Lexington, adjourned to meet

again at Watertown, on the 10th of May, 1775. The Committee of Safety held its meetings, at this time, in a public house at West Cambridge, and seems to have been in session every day.

It was soon apparent, that the station now occupied by Warren in the councils of Massachusetts would be no sinecure. The second anniversary address which he delivered on the 6th of March, 1775, was the bold and spirit-stirring overture to the events of the following 19th of April and 17th of June.

The events of the 19th of April, including the battles of Lexington and Concord, were of such a character, that no individual could well occupy a very conspicuous position in the field. There was no commander-in-chief, and, properly speaking, no regular engagement or battle. The object of the British was to destroy the military stores at Concord; that of the Americans, to prevent this, if possible, and to show, at all events, that, in this quarter of the country at least, every inch of ground would be desperately contested. For the vigor and determination, which marked the conduct of the people on this important day, it is not too much to say, that the country is mainly indebted to the vigilance, activity, and energy of Warren.

It had been the intention of the British commander, to surprise the Americans; and so severe

were the precautions taken for this purpose, that the officers employed in the expedition were only informed of it on the preceding day. Information of a meditated attack had been, however, for some time in possession of the Americans; the first intimation having been given, as is said, by a patriotic lady of Boston, the wife of a royalist officer. A most vigilant observation was, in consequence, maintained upon the movements of the British; and, in this operation, great advantage was derived from the services of an association, composed chiefly of Boston mechanics, which had been formed in the autumn of the preceding year. The late Colonel Paul Revere was an active member of this society, and was employed by Dr. Warren, on this occasion, as his principal confidential messenger.

Some preparatory movements took place among the British troops, on the 15th of April, which attracted the attention of Warren. It was known, that the principal objects of the contemplated expedition were to seize the stores at Concord. Presuming that the movement would now be made without delay, the Committee of Safety took measures for securing the stores, by distributing a part of them among the neighboring towns. John Hancock and Samuel Adams were then at the house of the Reverend Mr. Clark, in Lexington, and Colonel Revere was despatched as a special

messenger to inform them of the probable designs of General Gage. On his return to Boston, he made an agreement with friends in Charlestown, that, if the expedition proceeded by water, two lights should be displayed on the steeple of the North Church; if it moved over the Neck, through Roxbury, only one.

The British commander finally fixed upon the 19th for the intended attempt; and, on the evening of the 18th, he sent for the officers whom he had designated for this service, and communicated to them, for the first time, the nature of the expedition upon which they were to be employed. So strict had been the secrecy observed by the Governor, in regard to this matter. The same discretion had not been maintained in other quarters; for Lord Percy, who was to command the reserve, on his way home to his lodgings, heard the expedition talked of, by a group of citizens, at the corner of one of the streets. He hastened back to the Governor's head-quarters, and informed him, that he had been betrayed. An order was instantly issued, to prevent any American from leaving town; but it came a few minutes too late to produce effect. Dr. Warren, who had returned in the evening from the meeting of the Committee of Public Safety, at West Cambridge, was already informed of the movement of the

British army, and had taken the necessary measures for spreading the intelligence through the country.

At about nine o'clock, on the evening of the 18th, the British troops intended for the expedition were embarked, under the command of Colonel Small, in boats at the bottom of the Common. Dr. Warren inspected the embarkation in person; and, having returned home immediately after, sent for Colonel Revere, who reached his house about ten o'clock. He had already despatched Mr. Dawes over land as a special messenger to Lexington, and he now requested Colonel Revere to proceed through Charlestown on the same errand.

The Colonel made arrangements, in the first place, for displaying the two lights on the steeple of the North Church, agreeably to the understanding with his friends in Charlestown, and then repaired to a wharf, at the north part of the town, where he kept his boat. He was rowed over by two friends, a little to the eastward of the British ship-of-war *Somerset*, which lay at anchor in this part of the channel, and was landed on the Charlestown side. He pursued his way through Charlestown and West Cambridge, not without several perilous encounters with British officers, who were patrolling the neighborhood, and finally arrived safely at Lex-

ington, where he met the other messenger, Mr. Dawes, whom he had, however, anticipated. After reposing a short time, they proceeded together to Concord, alarming the whole country as they went, by literally knocking at the door of almost every house upon the road. They had, of course, been in part anticipated by the signals on the North Church steeple, which had spread intelligence of the intended movement, with the speed of light, through all the neighboring towns.

By the effect of these well judged and well executed measures, Hancock and Adams were enabled to provide in season for their personal security, and the whole population of the towns, through which the British troops were to pass, were roused and on foot before they made their appearance. On reaching Lexington Green, they found a corps of militia under arms and prepared to meet them. At Concord, they found another; and when, after effecting, as far as they could, the objects of their expedition, they turned their steps homeward, they were enveloped, as it were, in a cloud of the armed yeomanry, which thickened around them at every step, and did such fearful execution in their ranks, that nothing but their timely meeting with the reinforcements under Lord Percy, at West Cam-

bridge, could have saved them from entire disorganization and actual surrender.

Colonel Revere, many years afterwards, drew up a very curious and interesting account of his adventures on this expedition, in the form of a letter to the corresponding secretary of the Massachusetts Historical Society, which is printed in the Collections of that body, and is now familiar to the public.

It would be irrelevant to the present purpose to enter into the detail of the events of the 19th of April, in which Dr. Warren took no further part, until the British troops reached West Cambridge, on their return from Concord. Warren was at this place, in attendance on the Committee of Safety. On the approach of the British, he armed himself and went out, in company with General Heath, to meet them. On this occasion, he displayed his usual fearlessness, by exposing his person very freely to the fire of the enemy; and a bullet passed so near his head, as to carry away one of the long, close, horizontal curls, which, agreeably to the fashion of the day, he wore above the ears.

In other times this accident might, perhaps, have been regarded as a sinister omen. When the priests of the ancient religions sacrificed a victim to their divinities, they commonly began by cutting off a lock of his hair, and throwing

it into the fire. By this ceremony, he was supposed to be devoted to the god. A mind under the influence of such a prejudice might have seen, in the loss of General Warren's hair, a presage of the doom that awaited him. But Warren himself, even in a superstitious age, would never have yielded to any such notions. His frank, fearless, and generous character would have rather led him to sympathize with the gallant Trojan hero, in the Iliad, who, when he was advised to wait, before he entered upon a battle, till the omens, deduced from the flight of birds, should become favorable, replied, "What care I for the flight of birds, whether they take their course to the right or the left? I ask no better omen than to draw my sword in the cause of my country."

"Without a sign his sword the brave man draws;
And asks no omen but his country's cause."

CHAPTER V.

Formation and Character of the New England Army. — Warren is elected Major-General. — Gridley. — Prescott. — Putnam.

THE events of the 19th of April announced to all the world, abroad and at home, that the long anticipated crisis had arrived; and that the questions at issue, between the parent country and the colonies, must be settled by an appeal to arms.

The public mind throughout the colonies was prepared for the result. At their first meeting, after the battle of Lexington, the Massachusetts Congress resolved, that an army of thirty thousand men was wanted for the defence of New England; that, of this number, Massachusetts would raise thirteen thousand six hundred; and that the other New England States should be requested to furnish their respective proportions. It was resolved, at the same time, to raise a regiment of artillery, the train to consist of nine fieldpieces; and Richard Gridley, a brother of the celebrated lawyer of that name, himself already distinguished by his services in both the preceding French wars, was appointed its colonel.

The troops began to assemble about the middle of May; and, before the middle of June, fifteen thousand men had reached the neighborhood of Boston. Of these, Massachusetts furnished ten thousand, and Connecticut three. The rest were supplied by the other New England Colonies. The troops were distributed into companies of fifty, of which ten composed a regiment.

On the 21st of May, General Ward was commissioned as commander-in-chief of the Massachusetts forces, and his orders were obeyed by all the other troops within the limits of the colony. His head-quarters were at Cambridge, where he had with him about eight thousand of the Massachusetts troops, and one thousand of those from Connecticut. The latter, with Sargent's regiment from New Hampshire, and Patterson's from Berkshire county, were under the immediate command of General Putnam, who was stationed in advance of the main body, at Inman's Farm, where a redoubt and breastwork had been thrown up, near the Charlestown road. General Ward had with him at Cambridge five companies of artillery.

The right wing of the army, consisting of two thousand troops from Massachusetts, two thousand from Connecticut, and one thousand from Rhode Island, was stationed at Roxbury, under the command of Brigadier-General Thomas, who

had also with him three or four companies of artillery. A thousand of the New Hampshire troops, under Colonels Stark and Reed, stationed at Medford, and another detachment of the same troops, with three companies from Gerrish's regiment, stationed at Chelsea, composed the left wing.

On the 14th of June, Dr. Warren was elected by Congress a major-general. He had already received his commission, when he went upon the field as a volunteer, three days after, at the battle of Bunker's Hill.

Such were the strength and composition of the little army, which the events of the 19th of April and the resolutions of the Congress had summoned, from all parts of New England, to the neighborhood of Boston. In regard to the character of the troops, it is sufficient to say, that they were the flower and pride of our hardy yeomanry. They were not, like the rank and file of the regular armies of Europe, the refuse of society, enlisted in the worst haunts of crowded cities, under the influence of a large bounty, or perhaps an inspiration of a still inferior kind. They were, as they are correctly described, in the British "circumstantial account" of the battle of Lexington, the "country people."

Though generally unaccustomed to regular service, and not well skilled in the technical learn-

ing of the art of war, they were all, officers and men, expert in the use of arms, and in the habit of employing them in continual conflicts with the Indians. Many of the officers had already distinguished themselves in the French wars of 1745 and 1756, when the old Provincial standard was displayed, with so much glory, in the Canadas. It is remarkable, indeed, on examining the composition of the New England army of 1775, how many names we find of men, either previously or subsequently illustrious in the history of the country. The fact is one, among many other proofs, how completely the spirit of the times had taken possession of the whole mind of the colonies, and drawn within the sphere of its influence the most eminent professional, political, and military characters, as well as the mass of the people.

Of the officers, who commanded in this army, Warren has been rendered, by subsequent events, by far the most conspicuous. Prescott and Putnam, both veterans of the former wars, occupied with him, at the time, the highest place in the confidence of the country. But, in addition to these, there were many others whose names are not much less extensively known throughout the world than theirs. General Greene, by common acknowledgment second only to Washington in military service during the revolutionary war, was

the colonel of one of the Rhode Island regiments. General Pomroy, of Northampton, was at headquarters as a volunteer. He had served, with the rank of captain, under Sir William Johnson, in the war of 1756; and he was distinguished in the celebrated battle with the French and Indians under Baron Dieskau. Stark, afterwards the hero of Bennington, was the colonel of one of the New Hampshire regiments, in which the late General Dearborn was a captain. The late Governor Brooks, of Massachusetts, had the rank of major; the late Governor Eustis was a surgeon of artillery; Knox, afterwards a general in the continental army, appeared as a volunteer.

Gridley, the veteran colonel of artillery, then sixty-four years of age, was an officer of high distinction. In the war of 1745, when Massachusetts alone raised an army of three thousand two hundred men for the expedition against Cape Breton, he commanded the artillery, and, as was remarked before, pointed, with scientific accuracy, the mortar, which, on the third fire, threw into the citadel of Louisburg the shell, which determined its surrender. He was rewarded by a captaincy in Shirley's regiment. In the war of 1756, he again entered the service, as chief engineer and colonel of infantry. Two years afterwards, he assisted at the second taking of Louisburg, with so much distinction,

that General Amherst tendered him the valuable furniture of the French commander's head-quarters, as a present; which he, with chivalrous delicacy, declined to receive. At the siege of Quebec, he commanded the provincial artillery under General Wolfe, and was fighting by his side when he fell. At the close of the war, the King rewarded his gallantry by a grant of the Magdalen Islands, with an extensive cod and seal fishery, and half pay as a British officer. At the opening of the Revolution, his agent at London inquired of him, by order of the British government, what part he intended to take. "I shall fight," he replied, "for justice and my country." His pay as a British officer, was of course, stopped. The arrears, which were offered him, he, with characteristic spirit, refused to receive.

To this list of distinguished persons, whose presence graced the New England army, may be added the name of one now more extensively known, perhaps, than any of the others, though in a different line; and who, subsequently to this period, entered the British service. I mean that of Benjamin Thompson, afterwards Count Rumford. He held no commission in the New England army, but was present at head-quarters, and, on the day of the battle of Bunker's Hill, accompanied Major Brooks as a volunteer, with the last reinforcements that were sent from

Cambridge. He had solicited in vain the place of major in the artillery, which was due to his eminent merit, but which the parental partiality of Gridley had reserved for his own son. For this act of venial frailty the veteran was severely punished, by the misconduct of his son in his first action on the 17th of June, and by the loss to the country of the great talents of his competitor; a loss, however, which we need not regret, considering with how much brilliancy and success those talents were afterwards employed, on a still more extensive scale, in the cause of humanity and the world.

While these and other kindred spirits, of perhaps not inferior merit, though somewhat less distinguished fame, filled the ranks of the New England army, the two persons who, with Warren, occupied the most conspicuous place in the public eye, were undoubtedly Prescott and Putnam.

Prescott, the colonel of one of the Middlesex regiments, was the officer, who, on the 16th of June, received the orders of the commander-in-chief to occupy and fortify the heights of Charlestown, and who commanded in the redoubt on the day of the battle. He was a native of Pepperell, in the county of Middlesex, where his family, one of the most distinguished and respected in the State, still reside during a

part of the year. Prescott inherited an ample fortune from his father; but he seems to have possessed a natural aptitude for military pursuits; and, at the opening of the war of 1756, he, with so many others of the noble spirits of New England, joined the expedition against Nova Scotia, under General Winslow, with a provincial commission.

He served with such distinction, that, after the close of the war, he was urged to accept a commission in the British line; but he declined the honor, and preferred returning to the paternal estate. Here he resided, occupied in the peaceful pursuits of agriculture, and in dispensing a frank and liberal hospitality to his neighbors, many of whom were his old companions in arms, until the opening of the Revolution called him, already a veteran, to the council and the field. He was tall and commanding in his person, of a grave aspect, and the simplest manners; holding in utter contempt the parade and pageantry, which constitute with many the essence of war. During the progress of the battle of Bunker's Hill, he was frequently seen on the top of the parapet, attired in a calico frock, with his bald head uncovered to the sun, observing the enemy, or encouraging his men to action. Governor Gage, who, at one of these moments, was reconnoitring the American works through a tele-

scope, remarked the singular appearance of Prescott, and inquired of Willard, one of the council, who he was. "My brother-in-law, Colonel Prescott," was the reply. "Will he fight?" returned the Governor. "Ay," said Willard, "to the last drop of his blood."

Putnam, another veteran of the French wars, was not less bold in action, and equally regardless of unnecessary show and ceremony. He was a native of Salem, in Massachusetts, but emigrated early in life to Pomfret, in Connecticut, where he employed himself, like Prescott, in agriculture, though on a smaller scale, until he was called, like him, into the military service, by the opening of the war of 1756. He commanded a company of provincial rangers, and, in this capacity, rendered the most essential services; passing through a series of adventures, the details of which, though resting on unquestionable evidence, seem like a wild and extravagant fable. After the close of the Seven Years' War, Putnam returned to the plough, and was in the act of guiding it, when he heard the news of the battle of Lexington. Like Cincinnatus of old, he left it in the furrow, and repaired at once to Cambridge, though now more than sixty years of age. After consulting with the leading characters at the camp, he returned to Connecticut, to organize a regiment, with which he ap-

peared shortly after at head-quarters, as brigadier-general.

Putnam was athletic and active in person ; energetic even to coarseness, but keen and pointed in conversation ; and his face, though deeply furrowed by the savage tomahawk, as well as by the finger of time, was always radiant with a broad good-humor, which rendered him the idol of the army. He was particularly earnest, in the council of war, in recommending the measure of fortifying Bunker's Hill ; a part of his regiment was detached for the service, and he was present and active himself on the field, through the night before the battle, and during the action. Whether, as some suppose, he was charged by the Council of War with a general superintendence of the whole affair ; or whether, like Warren, he appeared upon the field as a volunteer, is not now known with certainty ; for the official record of the orders of the day is lost ; and the want of it is not supplied, for this purpose, by any other evidence. It is certain, however, from all the accounts, that his agency in the action was great and effectual.

CHAPTER VI.

*Strength and Disposition of the British Troops.
— The Americans occupy the Heights of
Charlestown.*

SUCH were the composition of the New England army, and the character of some of the prominent officers. The British army, which they were to encounter, was quartered within the limits of Boston. It consisted, at the time of the battle of Lexington, of about four thousand men; but, before the end of May, large reinforcements arrived, which raised the number to about ten thousand. On the 14th of May, General Gage, who had recently superseded Hutchinson in the government of the colony, arrived from New York. He had served with honor in Europe and America, had married an American lady, and, in other times, would have possessed a great personal popularity. The troops were the flower of the British army, and the officers were generally men of distinguished merit. Among the principal, were Generals Howe, Clinton, Burgoyne, Pigot, Grant, and Robertson. Earl Percy and Lord Rawdon, afterwards Earl of Moira and Marquis of Hastings,

had each of them a command. Earl Percy and his hardy Northumbrians took a pride in braving the severity of the climate in an encampment on the Common ; and, to secure themselves from the cold, made use of double tents, having the space between them stuffed with hay. The light-infantry were encamped on the heights of West Boston, then called Beacon Hill. There was a squadron of cavalry, for whose use the Old South Church had been appropriated as a place of exercise. A strong battery for cannon and mortars had been thrown up on Cops Hill, opposite to Charlestown ; and this point was the post of observation of the British commander and his staff, during the action of the 17th of June. A strongly fortified line had been drawn across the Neck, at the southern entrance of the town from Roxbury. There was also a battery at the northern extremity of the town, and others on the Common, on Fort Hill, and on the shore opposite to Cambridge.

The British troops were in the highest state of equipment and discipline, and were amply furnished with every description of necessary stores and ammunition. In these respects, their condition formed a complete contrast to that of the Americans. To aid them in their operations, they had several ships of war stationed in the waters around the peninsula. The *Glasgow* lay

in Charles River, not far from the present position of Craigie's Bridge, and enfiladed with her battery the isthmus that connects Charlestown with the continent. The *Somerset*, the *Lively*, and the *Falcon*, were stationed in the channel between Boston and Charlestown, and, during the action of the 17th of June, pointed their guns directly at the American works.

It may be remarked, that the principal British and American officers were personally known to each other. They had served together in the French wars, and, in some instances, had contracted a close and intimate friendship. Not long after the battle of Lexington, there was an interview at Charlestown, between some of the officers on both sides, to regulate an exchange of prisoners; and Governor Brooks, who was present, was accustomed to relate, that General Putnam and Major Small, of the British army, no sooner met, than they ran into each other's arms.

In this state of the hostile preparations of the two parties, and with the strong feeling of mutual exasperation, which, notwithstanding occasional instances of a different character, prevailed generally between the masses of both, it was apparent, that a trial of strength on a more extensive scale, and of a much more serious and decisive kind, than any that had yet occurred, must soon take

place. In this, as in other cases of a similar description, accidental causes would naturally regulate, in some degree, the time, place, and other circumstances, under which the trial should be made. The concentration of the New England troops around the peninsula of Boston would, of course, suggest to the British commander, if he intended to retain that position, the importance of occupying the neighboring heights of Dorchester and Charlestown. He had accordingly determined upon this measure, and was making his arrangements for taking possession of Dorchester Heights, now South Boston, on the 13th of June.

Information of these intentions and arrangements had been conveyed to the American army, and had become the subject of frequent and serious discussion in the Council of War and the Committee of Safety. It was proposed, on one side, to anticipate this movement of the British, by a corresponding one of our own, and to occupy the heights of Charlestown at once. The troops were full of zeal, and eager for action. It was thought wise to take advantage of this disposition, while it still existed in all its freshness, unimpaired by the weariness that would soon be created by absence from home, and the privations and hardships of military life. It was also necessary, that the attempt, if made at all,

should be made immediately ; for, if the British were permitted to intrench themselves in these positions, it would be impossible to dislodge them, and all hope of recovering Boston must be given up.

It was urged, on the other hand, that the attempt to occupy the heights of Charlestown would, of course, be resisted by the British ; and, if sustained, would bring on a general engagement, for which the army was entirely unprepared, from a want of ammunition. There were, at that time, only eleven barrels of powder in the camp, and only sixty-seven within the State of Massachusetts. It is remarkable, that the more decisive, not to say rash, course, was recommended, on this occasion, by the veterans of the council, Prescott and Putnam ; while the part of prudence was sustained by the young and ardent Warren. The result evinced the correctness of his views. The attempt failed, as had been anticipated, precisely for want of powder. Strict prudence might, perhaps, have counselled the delay, or rather abandonment, of the enterprise ; for, if not attempted at once, it could not, as was intimated above, be attempted at all.

But it may be said, on the other hand, that strict prudence would hardly have lent her sanction to any of the proceedings of the Revolution,

from first to last. It was throughout, in all its parts, an effort of noble and generous feeling, made in defiance of cool calculation; and the result furnishes one among the numerous instances to be found in the history of the world, in which such attempts have been crowned with success. Almost all the great political and moral revolutions have been the triumph of truth and justice over an overwhelming superiority of mere material force.

The feeling, that predominated in the Council of War and the Committee of Safety, was the same that prevailed in the army and throughout the country. It called for immediate action. Colonels Gridley and Henshaw, accompanied by Mr. Devens, had already, by direction of General Ward, surveyed the country, and pointed out Prospect, Bunker's, and Breed's Hills, as the points proper to be occupied. On the 15th of June, it was accordingly voted in the Committee of Safety, which, as has been remarked, constituted the real executive power, to recommend to the Council of War to occupy and fortify Bunker's Hill at once, and Dorchester Heights as soon as might be practicable.

The Council of War proceeded in conformity with this suggestion; and, on the following day, the 16th of June, General Ward, under their direction, issued orders to Colonel Prescott, to

proceed to Charlestown, and to occupy and fortify Bunker's Hill. He was directed to take with him, upon this expedition, his own regiment, and those of Colonels Bridge and Frye; a hundred and twelve men from that of General Putnam, and Captain Gridley's company of artillery, with two fieldpieces. Colonel Frye being absent on other duty, his regiment was commanded at the time by Lieutenant Colonel Brickett; but the Colonel, as I shall have occasion to mention, joined it in the course of the action.

The whole corps amounted to about a thousand men. They were ordered to take with them provisions for one day; and reinforcements, with additional provisions, were to be sent, if they should be found necessary. The detachment was mustered, early in the evening of the 16th, on Cambridge Common, near the Colleges, on which the main body of the army had been quartered. Religious service was performed by President Langdon; after which the troops took up the line of march. Colonel Prescott led the way, attired in his calico frock, preceded by two sergeants with dark lanterns, and accompanied by Colonel Gridley and Judge Winthrop, of Cambridge. Brooks, then a major in Bridge's regiment, joined him at the Neck.

For the information of those, who are unac-

quainted with the geography of the neighborhood of Boston, it may be proper to say, that Charlestown is a peninsula, about a mile long, and half a mile wide at the broadest part, where it is separated from Boston by a narrow channel; that it diminishes gradually in breadth from this part, until it terminates in a neck a hundred and thirty yards over, which connects it with the continent; and that it rises from the channel, and from the banks of the rivers Mystic and Charles, into a height of land composed of two eminences, denominated Bunker's and Breed's Hills. At the time of the battle, the latter name was less known, and that of Bunker's Hill was popularly applied to the whole height of land.

When the troops had reached the ground, and were preparing to execute their orders, the question arose, which of the two hills was intended as Bunker's Hill, and was, of course, the one to be fortified. The northern eminence was more generally spoken of under that name; while the southern, commonly called Breed's Hill, was evidently the one best fitted for the purpose. A good deal of time was consumed in discussing this question; but it was at length determined to construct the principal work on Breed's Hill, and to erect an additional and subsidiary one on Bunker's Hill. Colonel Gridley accordingly proceeded to lay out the principal work.

He placed a redoubt eight rods square on the summit of the hill, with the strongest side secured by projecting angles, looking towards Charlestown, and with an open entrance from the north, on the other side. From the northeastern corner of the redoubt he ran a breastwork, on a line with its side, to a marsh, which lay between the hill and the bank of the river. There was an opening, or sally-port, secured by a blind, between the redoubt and the breastwork. So much time had been lost in discussing the question where the works should be placed, that it was midnight before a spade entered the ground, and there remained less than four hours before daylight, when the operations would, of course, be seen by the British. The men, however, went to work with alacrity.

In the mean time a strong guard, under Captain Manners, was stationed on the Charlestown shore, to observe the enemy. The day had been fair, and it was a clear, starlight night. Colonel Prescott, accompanied by Major Brooks, went down twice to the shore, to reconnoitre, and distinctly heard the British sentries relieving guard, and uttering, as they walked their rounds, the customary, but, in this instance, deceptive cry, *All 's well*.

It may be remarked here, that Major Brooks, who was so conspicuous and useful through the

day, was not at Cambridge when the detachment was ordered to march. He had appeared as a major in Bridge's regiment of militia, at the battle of Lexington, and received, soon after, a similar rank in the line. On the day preceding the battle, he was at home, at Medford, on account of illness in his family ; but, hearing that his regiment was ordered on duty, he voluntarily repaired to his post, and, as has been remarked, joined his companions on their way at Charlestown Neck.

CHAPTER VII.

Commencement of the Action of the 17th of June. — The British open their Batteries upon the American Works. — The Americans send for Reinforcements, and are joined by the New Hampshire Troops, under Colonels Stark and Reed.

THE American troops continued their work unmolested until daylight, when they were discovered by the British. A heavy fire was immediately opened upon them, from the battery on Cops Hill, and from the ships in the river. It continued for some time without effect; until, at length, Asa Pollard, of Billerica, a private soldier, who had ventured without the works, was struck by a ball, and killed on the spot. Such were the circumstances under which the first blood was shed.

Not long after the British had opened their fire, some of the American officers, perceiving that the men were fatigued with the labors of the night, proposed to Colonel Prescott, that they should be relieved by another detachment. The Colonel immediately assembled a council of war, in which the same proposition was renewed.

Prescott, however, strenuously opposed it. The enemy, he thought, would not venture to attack; if they did, they would be repulsed; the men who had raised the works were best able to defend them; they had the merit of the labor, and ought to have the honor of the victory. The proposition to send for relief was rejected.

At about nine o'clock, movements were observed among the British troops in Boston, indicating the intention to attack; the men were now exhausted by fatigue and want of refreshment; the proposition to send for relief was renewed. Prescott again assembled a council, but still discountenanced the proposed plan, which was again rejected. It was thought expedient, however, to send immediately for reinforcements and provisions; and Major Brooks was ordered to proceed to Cambridge, and apply to General Ward for this purpose. For greater expedition, he was directed to take one of the horses belonging to Captain Gridley's company of artillery. To this proposal the captain demurred. Our fathers, as we shall presently see in another instance, seem, on this eventful day, to have been more anxious for the safety of their horses, than they were for their own. Captain Gridley's scruples prevailed, and Major Brooks was ordered to proceed, as rapidly as he could, on foot. He arrived at

Cambridge at about ten o'clock, and delivered his message to General Ward.

The General hesitated about the propriety of sending reinforcements to Charlestown. He feared that the enemy might seize the occasion to make an attempt upon the public stores at Cambridge and Watertown; and thought it hardly prudent to leave them unprotected. The Committee of Safety, who were then in session at head-quarters, were consulted upon the subject; and in this body there was also a difference of opinion. Mr. Devens, of Charlestown, who was a member of the Committee, influenced perhaps in some degree by local feeling, urged very strongly the necessity of sending a large reinforcement; and his opinion so far prevailed, that General Ward despatched orders to Colonels Stark and Reed, who were stationed, as has been remarked, at Medford, with the New Hampshire troops, to join Colonel Prescott.

Without intending to impute the slightest blame to General Ward, or to the Committee of Safety, whose conduct, through the whole affair, is above all praise, it may be conjectured, that, if they had perceived at the moment more distinctly the importance of sending reinforcements, and especially ammunition, the fortune of the day might perhaps have been different.

Had the Americans been supplied with powder enough to meet the enemy on the third attack, as they did on the two first, it is hardly probable that the British would have returned a fourth time to the charge.

Stark and Reed received their orders at about eleven o'clock, and, having supplied their men with powder and ball, an affair which, from the total want of preparation, occupied two hours, they took up the line of march at about one. When they reached Charlestown Neck, they found the entrance occupied by one or two regiments, who had been stationed there the day before, but had not yet received orders to march. Maclary, the major of Stark's regiment, rode forward, by his order, and requested the colonels of these regiments, if they did not intend to proceed, to open to the right and left, and let the New Hampshire troops pass through, which they did.

The troops were marching to slow time, and the Neck, as has been said, was enfiladed by the fire of the *Glasgow*. "My company being in front," says General, then Captain, Dearborn, in his account of the battle, "and I, of course, marching by the side of Stark, I suggested to him the propriety of quickening our pace, that we might relieve the men the sooner from the enemy's fire. 'Dearborn,' he replied, 'one fresh

man, in action, is worth a dozen fatigued ones.”

The march proceeded in slow time.

Stark, like Prescott, Putnam, and Gridley, was a veteran of the French wars. He had served as a captain of rangers, with the highest distinction; had fought with Wolfe, at Quebec; had been received, after the war, into the British service; and, like Gridley, had sacrificed rank and pay in the cause. Major Maclary was, likewise, an officer of great repute.

The New Hampshire troops arrived upon the field at about two o'clock. In the mean time, the American lines had been extended on the left, where advantage had been taken of a fence, composed of stone, surmounted by wooden rails, which ran about two hundred yards in the rear of the breastwork, from the hill to the bank of Mystic River. A little in front of this fence, the troops formed another, of a similar kind, out of the other fences in the neighborhood; and, by filling up the space between the two with the hay which was lying upon the field, constructed an imperfect substitute for a regular breastwork. Between the south end of the rail fence and the north end of the breastwork, there was an opening of about two hundred yards, which was entirely unprotected by any work whatever. This was the weak point in the American defences, and the one through which the British finally

poured in the raking fire from their artillery, which compelled the Americans to leave the redoubt.

General Putnam had posted his company of Connecticut troops, under Captain Knowlton, at the rail fence; and, when the New Hampshire troops came upon the field, he was employed, with a part of the original detachment, in throwing up a second, subsidiary work upon the northern eminence, properly called Bunker's Hill, in distinction from Breed's, which he seems to have regarded as a very important part of the operations of the day. He retained a portion of the New Hampshire troops to aid him at this point, and advised the rest to post themselves, with the Connecticut troops, at the rail fence. Stark accordingly took that course. Having encouraged his men by a short address, and ordered them to give three cheers, he put them at last into quick time, and marched up rapidly to the lines.

These were the principal reinforcements, that came upon the field in season to be of any use. At about one o'clock, when it had become apparent that the British intended to attack the works, General Ward ordered all the troops at Cambridge, with the exception of five regiments, to reinforce those which were engaged; but it was now so late in the day, that this order produced but little effect. Most of the troops did

not reach the ground; and those that did, came too late to be of much service.

The disposition of the American troops at the opening of the action was, therefore, as follows. Colonel Prescott, with Colonel Bridge, Lieutenant-Colonel Brickett, and the greater part of the original detachment of a thousand men, were in the redoubt and at the breastwork. Captain Gridley, with his company of artillery and two fieldpieces, and Captain Callender, with another of the same force, were at the opening between the redoubt and the breastwork. Colonels Stark and Reed, with the New Hampshire troops, and Captain Knowlton, with the Connecticut company, were at the rail fence on the left. Captain Manners, with the troops that had been stationed on the Charlestown shore in the morning, were at another rail fence, which had been formed on the right, between the redoubt and the road. General Putnam, who was on horseback, superintended the work on Bunker's Hill, whence he rode, as occasion required, to the rail fence, and once or twice in the course of the morning to head-quarters at Cambridge.

Pomroy, who, as has been said, held no commission in the line, when he heard the artillery, felt it as a summons to action, and could not resist the inclination to repair to the field. He accordingly requested General Ward to lend

him a horse, and, taking his musket, set off at full speed for Charlestown. On reaching the Neck, and finding it enfiladed by a hot and heavy fire of round, bar, and chain shot, from the *Glasgow*, he began to be alarmed; not, as may well be supposed, for his own safety, but for that of General Ward's horse. Horses, as has been already remarked, were at this time almost as rare and precious as the nobler animals that rode them. Too honest to expose his borrowed horse to "the pelting of this pitiless storm," and too bold to dream for a moment of shrinking from it himself, the conqueror of Baron Dieskau dismounted, delivered the horse to a sentry, shouldered his musket, and marched on foot across the Neck. On reaching the hill, he took his station at the rail fence. His person was known to the soldiers, and the name of Pomroy rang with shouts along the line.

CHAPTER VIII.

Progress of the Action. — A Detachment of British Troops lands at Charlestown. — View of the two Peninsulas and the neighboring Country. — General Warren comes upon the Field.

WHILE the Americans were employed in fortifying the heights of Charlestown, and in preparing to defend them against the enemy, the British, on their part, were not less busily engaged in preparations for attack. At daybreak, when the movements of the Americans were first discovered, a fire was opened upon them from all the batteries, which was continued, but without doing much execution, through the day.

At an early hour in the morning, Governor Gage summoned a council of war, at the building now called the City Hall. They were all, of course, agreed as to the propriety of dislodging the Americans, but there was some difference of opinion upon the mode of making the attack. Generals Clinton and Grant were for landing at Charlestown Neck, and taking the works in the rear; but this plan was considered by the Governor as too hazardous. It would

place the British between two armies, one superior in force, and the other strongly intrenched, by which they might be attacked at once in front and rear, without the possibility of a retreat. The plan preferred by the council was to attack the works in front.

Accordingly, at about noon, twenty-eight barges left the end of Long Wharf, filled with the principal part of the first detachment of the British troops, which consisted of four battalions of infantry, ten companies of light infantry, and ten of grenadiers. They had six pieces of artillery, one of which was placed in each of the six leading boats. The barges formed in single file, and in two parallel lines. The day was without a cloud, and the regular movement of this splendid naval procession, with the glow of the brazen artillery and the scarlet dresses and burnished arms of the troops, exhibited to the unaccustomed eyes of the Americans a brilliant and imposing spectacle. The barges proceeded in good order, and landed their freight at the southeastern point of the peninsula, commonly called Morton's Point.

Inmediately after they had landed, it was discovered, that most of the cannon balls, which had been brought over, were too large for the pieces, and that it was necessary to send them back, and obtain a fresh supply. "This wretched

blunder of oversized balls," says a British writer of the day, "arose from the dotage of an officer of high rank, who spends all his time with the schoolmaster's daughters." It seems, that General Cleveland, "who," as the same author says, "though no Samson, must have his Delilah," was enamored of the beautiful daughter of Master Lovell, and, in order to win favor with the damsel, had given her young brother an appointment in the ordnance department, for which he was not qualified. The accident, to whatever cause it may have been owing, created delay, and somewhat diminished the British fire during the first two attacks.

While the British commander was preparing and sending off his second detachment, the first remained unmolested at Morton's Point, and quietly dined, most of the men for the last time, from the contents of their knapsacks. At about two o'clock, the second detachment left Winnisimmett Ferry in the barges, and joined the first at Morton's Point; soon after which the reinforcements, consisting of a few companies of grenadiers and light infantry, the forty-seventh battalion of infantry, and a battalion of marines, landed at Madlin's shipyard, now the Navy Yard, near the east end of Breed's Hill. The detachment consisted altogether of about four thousand men, and was commanded by General

Howe. He had under him General Pigot, and Colonels Nesbit, Abercrombie, and Clark.

Such were the respective forces and positions of the two armies at the moment immediately preceding the battle. The spectacle, which was exhibited at this time by the two peninsulas and the surrounding waters and country, must have been of a highly varied and brilliant character. General Burgoyne, in a letter written two or three days after the battle, has given a spirited sketch of this splendid panorama, as seen by the British officers from the heights at the northern extremity of Boston. Immediately below them flowed the river Charles, not, as now, interrupted by numerous bridges, but pursuing a smooth, unbroken way to the ocean. Between them and the Charlestown shore, lay at anchor the ships of war the *Somerset*, the *Lively*, and the *Falcon*; and farther on the left, within the bay, the *Glasgow*. Their black and threatening hulks poured forth at every new discharge fresh volumes of smoke, which hung like fleecy clouds upon the air.

From time to time, as the veil of smoke was cleared away by the wind, the spectator could see, upon the opposite side of the river, rising from the shore by a gentle ascent, the sister hills of Charlestown, clothed in the green luxuriance of the first flush of vegetation, excepting

where their summits were broken by the low and hasty works of the Americans. Behind these scanty defences could be seen our gallant fathers, swarming to the rescue of freedom and their country. Their homely apparel had but little to attract the eye, but now and then, when some favorite officer made his appearance, a shout of gratulation passed along their ranks, which showed the zeal that inspired them for the cause. Below the hill, the flourishing village of Charlestown extended its white dwellings, interspersed with trees and gardens, along the shore; and farther to the right, the British troops spread forth their long and brilliant lines.

While both the armies, and the assembled multitude, were hushed in breathless expectation, awaiting eagerly the signal for the action, a horseman was seen advancing from Charlestown Neck at full speed towards the American works. As he crossed Bunker's Hill, General Putnam, who was there, and also on horseback, rode forward to meet him, and recognised General Warren. "General Warren!" exclaimed the veteran, "is it you? I rejoice and regret to see you. Your life is too precious to be exposed in this battle; but, since you are here, I take your orders." "General Putnam, I have none to give. You have made your arrangements. I come to aid you as a volunteer. Tell me where

I can be useful." "Go, then," said Putnam, "to the redoubt; you will there be covered." "I came not to be covered," replied Warren; "tell me where I shall be most in danger; tell me where the action will be hottest." "The redoubt," said Putnam, "will be the enemy's object. If that can be defended, the day is ours." General Warren pursued his way to the redoubt. As he came in view of the troops, they recognised his person, though he wore no uniform, and welcomed him with loud acclamations. When he reached the redoubt, Colonel Prescott offered to take his orders. "No, Colonel Prescott," he replied, "give me yours; give me a musket. I have come to take a lesson of a veteran soldier in the art of war."

These particulars, including the dialogue, are given substantially as reported afterwards by General Putnam and Colonel Prescott, and may be depended on as authentic. Warren, as has been already intimated, was originally opposed to the plan of fortifying the heights of Charlestown; but, when the majority of the Council of War had decided in favor of it, he told them, that he should personally take a part in carrying it into effect. He was strongly urged not to do so, but his resolution was immovable.

On the day preceding the battle, he officiated

as President of the Congress, which was in session at Watertown; and had passed the night in transacting business. At daylight he rode to head-quarters at Cambridge, where he arrived, suffering severely with headache, and retired soon after to take some repose. When information was received, that the British were moving, General Ward sent to give him notice. He rose immediately, declared that his headache was gone, and attended the meeting of the Committee of Safety, of which he was chairman. At this meeting, Elbridge Gerry, who entertained the same opinion with Warren upon the prudence of the attempt, earnestly requested him not to expose his person. "I am aware of the danger," replied the young hero, "but I should die with shame, if I were to remain at home in safety, while my friends and fellow citizens are shedding their blood and hazarding their lives in the cause." "Your ardent temper," replied Gerry, "will carry you forward into the midst of peril, and you will probably fall." "I know that I may fall," returned Warren; "but where is the man who does not think it glorious and delightful to die for his country?"

'Dulce et decorum est pro patriâ mori.'"

Such, as reported by the friends who heard it, was the language of Warren, in the Com-

mittee of Safety, on the morning of the 17th of June. After the adjournment of the Committee, he mounted his horse, and rode to Charlestown, where he arrived with the reinforcements a short time only before the commencement of the battle.

CHAPTER IX.

General Howe attempts to storm the American Works.—He is repulsed with great Loss.—Ill Conduct of the American Artillery.—Gridley.—Gerrish.—Callender.

THE plan of attack determined on in the British council of war, as has been already remarked, was to land in front of the works, and attempt to carry them by storm.

At about three o'clock in the afternoon, the force intended for the service being all in position, and every necessary preparation made, the signal was given for action, by a general discharge of artillery along the whole British line. The troops advanced in two divisions. General Howe, in person, led the right, towards the rail fence; General Pigot, with the left, aimed directly at the redoubt.

It would seem, that the order for a fresh supply of balls, had not yet been answered; as the fire of the British artillery is represented as having been suspended soon after it commenced, because those on hand were too large. It was, however, renewed immediately with grape shot. The little battery, which was stationed at the

opening between the redoubt and breastwork, in the American lines, replied with effect. In the mean time, the American drums beat to arms. General Putnam, who was still at work on Bunker's Hill, quitted his intrenchment, and led his men into action. "Powder is scarce," said the veteran, addressing them in his usual pointed and laconic style; "powder is scarce, and must not be wasted. Reserve your fire till you see the whites of their eyes. Then take aim at the officers."

The substance of these remarks was repeated as an order along the line; but when the British had come within gunshot of the works, a few sharp-shooters disobeyed the injunction, and fired. "Fire again before the word is given at your peril," exclaimed Prescott; "the next man that disobeys orders shall be instantly shot." Lieutenant-Colonel Robinson, who, with Colonel Buttrick, had led the troops so gallantly at Concord, on the 19th of April, ran round the top of the parapet, and threw up the muskets. At length the British were at only eight rods distance. "Now, men! now is your time!" said Prescott. "Make ready! take aim! fire!"

So effectually was the order obeyed, that, when the smoke cleared away, the whole hill side was covered, as it were, with the fallen. The British returned the fire; they attempted to rally and

advance, but without success. After a moment's irresolution, they turned their backs, and hurried from the hill.

Such was the issue of the first attempt to storm the works. It was, in all respects, auspicious for the future fortunes of the day; and it may be safely said, that the timely arrival at this moment, of the reinforcements of artillery and supplies of ammunition, which had been ordered from Cambridge, would have insured the most brilliant success. It was now, that the practical mischief, resulting from Colonel Gridley's ill-judged exhibition of parental partiality, in giving the place of major in the artillery to his own son, in preference to Count Rumford, was severely felt.

Major Gridley, as his subsequent conduct proved, was entirely incompetent to the duty assigned him. Could the thorough science, with the vigorous and energetic character of Rumford, have been employed in doing justice to the orders of the veteran conqueror of Louisburg, there would, in all probability, have been no want of ammunition; powder enough would, in one way or another, have found its way into the works, and the day might still have been ours. But it was the fortune of America, on this occasion, to pay the penalty of Colonel Gridley's fatherly weakness, as Great Britain did, though

to a less disastrous extent, that of General Cleveland's superannuated gallantry.

The American artillery was badly served through the whole action. Early in the day, Captain Callender, who, as has been said, was stationed with his company and two fieldpieces at the opening between the redoubt and breastwork, drew off his pieces from the post assigned him, to Bunker's Hill, in order, as he said, that he might prepare his ammunition in safety. General Putnam attempted in vain to induce him to return, and was finally obliged to employ Captain Ford, who was crossing the hill with his company of infantry, and knew nothing of the artillery service, to drag the pieces back. By him, and by Captain Perkins of Boston, who was also stationed at the opening between the redoubt and the breastwork, they were served through the day.

Major Gridley had been ordered to proceed with his battalion from Cambridge to the lines; but had advanced only a few yards beyond the Neck, when he made a halt, determined, as he said, to wait and cover the retreat, which he deemed inevitable. At that moment, Colonel Frye, a veteran of the old French wars, whose regiment was in the redoubt, but who, being on other duty, as was remarked before, had not yet joined it, was riding toward the hill, and

perceived Major Gridley with his artillery in the position which I have described. Frye galloped up to him, and demanded what it meant. "We are waiting," said Gridley, "to cover the retreat." "Retreat?" replied the veteran; "who talks of retreating? This day, thirty years ago, I was present at the first taking of Louisburg, when your father, with his own hand, lodged a shell in the citadel. His son was not born to talk of retreating. Forward to the lines!"

Gridley proceeded a short distance with his artillery; but, overcome with terror, and unequal to the horrors of the scene, he ordered his men to recross the Neck, and take a position on Cobble Hill, where they were to fire with their three-pounders upon the *Glasgow*. The order was so absurd, that Captain Trevett refused to obey it, and proceeded with his two pieces. He lost one of them by a cannon-shot on Bunker's Hill; the other he brought to the lines. This little fragment of Major Gridley's battalion was the only reinforcement of artillery that came into action.

Colonel Gerrish, with his regiment of infantry, reached the top of Bunker's Hill, on his way to the lines; but there his courage failed. He had served with distinction as a captain in the provincial army of 1756, but had now become unwieldy from excessive corpulence. On reach-

ing the top of Bunker's Hill, he declared that he could not go a step farther, and threw himself prostrate upon the ground. Putnam, who was on the hill, attempted in vain to induce him to proceed. His men, discouraged, probably, by the conduct of their commander, were equally indisposed for action. "They could not proceed without their officers." Putnam offered to lead them himself. "The cannon were abandoned, and there was no chance without artillery." In short, the service of the regiment was entirely lost.

Gerrish, by some unaccountable accident, was not only not tried for his conduct on this occasion, but was even employed after the battle upon another service, in which his behavior was not much better. He was then brought to a court-martial for his delinquency in both the actions, convicted of conduct unworthy of an officer, and cashiered.

Major Gridley was tried for neglect of duty, and dismissed from the service.

Captain Callender was also brought to a court-martial, convicted of cowardice, and dismissed from the service; but he determined to clear away the stain upon his character in the most honorable manner. He continued with the army as a volunteer, and exposed himself desperately in every action. Finally, at the battle of Long

Island, after the captain and lieutenant of the artillery company in which he served as a private had been shot, he assumed the command, and, refusing to retreat, fought his pieces till the enemy were just upon him, when a British officer, admiring his intrepidity, interfered, and saved his life. He continued in the service till the end of the war, and sustained the character of a brave and energetic officer.*

* See *Washington's Writings*, Vol. III. p. 490.

CHAPTER X.

Conflagration of Charlestown. — General Howe attempts a second Time to storm the American Works. — He is again repulsed with great Loss. — Anecdote of General Putnam and Major Small, of the British Army.

AFTER the repulse of the British troops in their first attack upon the works, an ominous pause, like the lull that sometimes interrupts the wildest tempest, prevailed upon the scene of action, only broken by the occasional discharges of artillery from the ships and batteries. It was not, however, of long duration. General Howe determined, at once, upon a second attack; and, having rallied and reorganized his men, gave the order to advance. With unshaken intrepidity they proceeded through the long grass, under the heat of a blazing summer sun, loaded with knapsacks of more than a hundred pounds each, towards the lines. The artillery pushed forward, to within three hundred yards of the rail fence, and opened their battery to prepare the way for the infantry. In the mean time, a deep silence brooded over the American lines. The men were ordered to re-

serve their fire till the enemy should be within six rods' distance.

While the troops were thus advancing, a new spectacle burst suddenly upon the eyes of the assembled multitude, and added another feature, more startling, if possible, than the rest, to the terrible sublimity of the scene. Clouds of smoke were seen to overspread the air, from which sheets of fire flashed forth in all directions, and it soon became apparent that Charlestown was in flames. The British general had been annoyed, at his first attack upon the works, by the fire of a detachment stationed in the town, and had given orders that it should be burned. For this purpose, combustibles were hurled into it from Boston, which commenced the conflagration; and a detachment of marines, from the *Somerset*, were directed to land, and aid in giving it effect. The flames spread with great rapidity through the town, devouring, with unrelenting fury, house on house, and street on street. At length the large church took fire.

As the flames ascended from the body of the building along the lofty spire, it exhibited a curious and splendid spectacle. When they reached the steeple, the beams that suspended the bell were pretty soon burned off, and the bell itself fell to the ground, ringing continuously with a strange and startling alarm, which was heard

distinctly through the noise of crackling flames and crashing edifices.

Unmoved by scenes like these, which, in ordinary times, would drive the dullest souls to desperation, the armies coolly prosecuted their work. The British troops ascended the hill by slow and regular approaches, firing in platoons with all the precision of a holiday review, and though without aim, not entirely without effect. Colonels Brewer and Nixon were carried off wounded. Colonel Buckminster was crippled for life, by a ball through the shoulder. Major Moore was shot through the thigh. While his men were carrying him from the field, he received another wound in the body, which afterwards proved mortal. He called for water, but none could now be obtained short of the Neck, and two of his men set forth to get it for him.

In the mean time, the Americans, agreeably to their orders, reserved their fire till the British were at six rods' distance. The word was then given, and the discharge took place with still more fatal effect than in the former attack. Hundreds of the men, including a large proportion of the best officers, were prostrated by it. General Howe remained almost alone. Nearly every officer of his staff was killed or wounded by his side, and among them his aids, Colonels Gordon, Balfour, and Addison; the last belong-

ing to the family of the author of the "Spectator." So tremendous was the havoc, that it was found impossible to pursue the attack; and, for the second time on this eventful day, the order was given for the British army to retreat from the hill.

At this period in the progress of the battle, a little incident occurred, in which General Putnam, and Major Small of the British army, were the parties concerned, and which throws over the various horrors of the scene a momentary gleam of kindness and chivalry. It has already been remarked, that these two officers were personally known to each other, and had, in fact, while serving together in the former wars, against the French, contracted a close friendship. After the fire from the American works had taken effect, Major Small, like his commander, remained almost alone upon the field. His companions in arms had been all swept away, and, standing thus apart, he became immediately, from the brilliancy of his dress, a conspicuous mark for the Americans within the redoubt. They had already pointed their unerring rifles at his heart, and the delay of another minute would, probably, have stopped its pulses for ever. At this moment, General Putnam recognised his friend, and perceiving the imminent danger in which he was placed, sprang upon the parapet, and

threw himself before the levelled rifles. "Spare that officer, my gallant comrades," said the noble-minded veteran; "we are friends; we are brothers; do you not remember how we rushed into each other's arms at the meeting for the exchange of prisoners?" This appeal, urged in the well known voice of a favorite old chief, was successful, and Small retired unmolested from the field.

The anecdote, though it wears a rather poetical aspect, is understood to rest upon the well attested authority of both the parties, and may probably be relied on as substantially true. Its authenticity is, in fact, placed beyond a reasonable doubt by the connexion of the incident related with another of a similar kind, which occurred in the farther progress of the action and will be mentioned in the next chapter.

CHAPTER XI.

Third Attack upon the American Works, which proves successful.—The Americans leave the Redoubt.—Death of Warren.

THE British general, undaunted by the new and fatal evidence, afforded by this second repulse, of the determination of the Americans to defend themselves to the last extremity, gave orders, at once, for a third attack. He was now, however, so far enlightened by the lessons he had received, as to adopt a more judicious plan than before. He concentrated his whole force upon the redoubt and breastwork, instead of directing a portion of it against the rail fence. He also directed his men to throw aside their knapsacks, reserve their fire, and trust wholly to the bayonet.

He had discovered the vulnerable point in the American defences, and pushed forward his artillery to the opening between the redoubt and breastwork, where it turned our works, and enfiladed the whole line. General Howe, as before, commanded on the right, and General Pigot on the left. General Clinton, who had seen from Cops Hill the defeat of his countrymen, though

not himself on duty, volunteered his services, and hastened to the rescue. His well known gallantry and talents inspired new confidence. He took his station with General Pigot, on the left.

In the mean time, the Americans were reduced to the last extremity. Their ammunition was exhausted; they had no bayonets; no reinforcements appeared. Colonel Gardiner, who had been stationed with his regiment at Charlestown Neck, but had received no orders to march, through the day, volunteered his services, and reached Bunker's Hill with three hundred men. Just as he was descending to the lines, he received a wound from a musket ball, which afterwards proved mortal.

As his men were carrying him from the field, his son, a youth of nineteen, second lieutenant in Trevett's artillery company, which had just come up, met and recognised his father. Distracted at seeing him in this condition, he offered to aid in conducting him from the field. "Think not of me," replied the father, with a spirit worthy of a Bayard, "think not of me. I am well. Go forward to your duty!" The son obeyed his orders, and the father retired from the field to die. He was a member of the General Court, from Cambridge, and one of the principal men of the colony. His regi-

ment was broken by the loss of their leader, and only one company came into action. This was the Charlestown company, commanded by Captain Harris. It was the last to leave the field.

Their line enfiladed, without ammunition, without bayonets, the Americans awaited with desperate resolution the onset of the British; prepared to repel them, as they best might, with the few remaining charges of powder and ball, with the stocks of their muskets, and with stones. Having reached the works, the foremost of the British attempted to scale them. Richardson, a private in the Royal Irish regiment, was the first to mount the parapet. He was shot down at once. Major Pitcairn followed him. As he stepped upon the parapet, he was heard to utter the exulting cry, "The day is ours!" But, while the words were still upon his lips, he was shot through the body by a black soldier, named Salem. His son received him in his arms as he fell, and carried him from the hill. He led the detachment, which first encountered our troops upon Lexington Green, on the 19th of April, had a horse shot under him on that day, and was left upon the field for dead.

General Pigot, who had mounted the southeast corner of the redoubt, by the aid of a tree, which had been left standing there, was the first

person to enter the works. He was followed by his men. The Americans, however, still held out. Gridley received, at this time, a ball through the leg, and was carried from the field. Colonel Bridge, who had come with the first detachment the night before, remained till the last, and was twice severely wounded with a broadsword. Lieutenant Prescott, a nephew of the Colonel, was wounded in the arm, which hung broken and lifeless by his side. His uncle advised him to content himself with encouraging the men; but he continued to load his musket, and was passing through the sallyport, to point it at the enemy, when a cannon ball cut him to pieces. Major Moore remained at the last extremity. His men, who had gone to the Neck for water, returned and offered to assist him, but he told them to provide for themselves, and leave him to his fate. Perceiving, at length, that further resistance would be only a wanton and useless sacrifice of valuable life, Colonel Prescott ordered a retreat. The Americans left the redoubt, and retired with little molestation from the hill.

General Warren had come upon the field, as he said, to learn the art of war from a veteran soldier. He had offered to take Colonel Prescott's orders; but his desperate courage would hardly permit him to obey the last. It was not

without extreme reluctance, and at the very latest moment, that he quitted the redoubt; and he was slowly retreating from it, being still at a few rods' distance only, when the British had obtained full possession. His person was, of course, in imminent danger. At this critical moment, Major Small, whose life, as has been mentioned in the preceding chapter, had been saved in a similar emergency by the interference of General Putnam, attempted to requite the service by rendering one of a like character to Warren. He called out to him by name from the redoubt, and begged him to surrender, at the same time ordering the men around him to suspend their fire. Warren turned his head, as if he recognised the voice, but the effort was too late. While his face was directed toward the works, a ball struck him on the forehead, and inflicted a wound which was instantly fatal.

These particulars of the death of Warren are understood to rest on the authority of Major Small himself, and are believed to be authentic. His body was identified the following day, by General Isaac Winslow, of Boston, then a youth, and by various other visitors of the field, who had been familiar with his person. The bullet, which terminated his life, was taken from the body by Mr. Savage, an officer in the Custom House, and was carried by him to England.

Several years afterwards, it was given by him, at London, to the Reverend Mr. Montague, of Dedham, Massachusetts, and is now in possession of his family. The remains of Warren were buried on the spot where he fell. The next year, they were removed to a tomb in the Tremont Cemetery, and were finally deposited in the family vault, under St. Paul's Church, in Boston.

General Howe, though slightly wounded in the foot, passed the night on the field of battle. The next morning, as he lay wrapped in his cloak upon a mound of hay, word was brought to him, that the body of Warren was found among the dead. Howe refused, at first, to credit the intelligence. It was impossible, that the President of Congress could have exposed his life in such a battle. When assured of the fact, he declared that his death was a full offset for the loss of five hundred men.

The battle, which commenced at three o'clock, lasted about two hours. The number of Americans engaged is estimated at about three thousand five hundred. The loss was a hundred and fifteen killed and missing, three hundred and five wounded, and thirty taken prisoners. Prescott's regiment suffered more than any other; in that alone, there were forty-two killed, and twenty-eight wounded. The other regiments, which com-

posed the original detachment, and the New Hampshire troops, also suffered severely. Colonel Gardiner, Lieutenant-Colonel Parker, of Chelmsford, Major Moore, and Major Maclary, were the only officers, above the rank of captain, who fell in the battle.

The number of British troops engaged was estimated, as has been said, at about four thousand. Their loss was rated by the Massachusetts Congress, in their official account of the action, at fifteen hundred. Governor Gage, in his official account, acknowledges a loss of one thousand and fifty-four; two hundred and twenty-six killed, eight hundred and twenty-eight wounded, including nineteen officers killed, and twenty-eight wounded. Charlestown was entirely destroyed by the flames. After the battle, the British took possession of Bunker's Hill, from which they kept up a fire of artillery through the night. The Americans occupied Prospect and Winter Hills. It was apprehended, that the British would pursue their advantage, by making an attempt on the stores at Cambridge; but their loss was probably too severe. They intrenched themselves on Bunker's Hill, and the Americans resumed their former position.*

* For many facts in the preceding narrative, we have been indebted to Colonel Swett's valuable and interesting "*History of the Battle of Bunker's Hill*," where the reader may find all the details of the action fully explained.

CHAPTER XII.

Resolutions of the Continental Congress in Honor of Warren. — His Wife and Family. — Concluding Reflections.

IN the official account of the battle of Bunker's Hill, by the Massachusetts Congress, the character of Warren is noticed in the most honorable terms. "Among the dead," says the account, "was Major-General Joseph Warren, a man, whose memory will be endeared to his countrymen and to the worthy in every part and age of the world, so long as virtue and valor shall be esteemed among mankind."

General Warren married, soon after his establishment in Boston, Elizabeth Hooton, the daughter of a respectable physician of that place. She died about six years afterwards, leaving four children, two sons and two daughters. After the death of Mrs. Warren, the children were committed to the care of their paternal grandmother, with whom they remained until the marriage of Dr. John Warren, the youngest brother of the General. They were then taken home by him, and were considered afterwards

as a part of his family.* Within a year after the death of Warren, it was resolved, by the Continental Congress, that his eldest son should be educated at the public expense; and two or three years later, it was further resolved, that public provision should be made for the education of the other children, until the youngest should be of age. The sons both died soon after they reached maturity. The daughters were distinguished for their amiable qualities and personal beauty. One of them married the late General Arnold Welles, of Boston, and died without issue. The other married Richard Newcombe of Greenfield, Massachusetts. Their children are the only surviving descendants of the hero of Bunker's Hill.

In addition to the public provision made by the Congress for the children of Warren, it was also resolved by that body, that a monument should be erected, at the national expense, to his memory. This resolution, like the similar one in honor of Washington, remains, as yet, without effect. The duty imposed by it will, doubtless, be discharged by the piety and patriotism of

* The three younger children were for some time under the care of Miss Mercy Scollay, of Boston, to whose solicitude and kindness they were much indebted.—See SPARKS'S *Life and Treason of Benedict Arnold*, p. 126.

some succeeding generation; but the noblest and most appropriate monument of both these great men, is, after all, to be found in the constantly increasing prosperity and power of their country.

Such are the only particulars of interest, that are now known, of the brief and brilliant career of Joseph Warren. Had it been his fortune to live out the usual term of human existence, he would probably have passed with distinction through a high career of usefulness and glory. His great powers, no longer limited to the sphere of a single province, would have directed the councils or led the armies of a vast confederate empire. We should have seen him, like his contemporaries and fellow patriots, Washington, Adams, and Jefferson, sustaining the highest magistracies at home, or securing the rights and interests of the country, in her most important embassies, abroad; and, at length, in declining age, illuminating, like them, the whole social sphere, with the mild splendor of a long and peaceful retirement. This destiny was reserved for them,—for others.

To Warren, distinguished as he was among the bravest, wisest, and best of the patriotic band, was assigned, in the inscrutable decrees of Providence, the crown of early martyrdom. It becomes not human frailty to murmur at the will of Heaven; and however painful may be the

first emotions excited in the mind by the sudden and premature eclipse of so much talent and virtue, it may perhaps well be doubted, whether, by any course of active service, in a civil or military department, General Warren could have rendered more essential benefit to the country, or to the cause of liberty throughout the world, than by the single act of heroic self-devotion, which closed his existence. The blood of martyrs has been, in all ages, the nourishing rain of religion and liberty.

There are many among the patriots and heroes of the revolutionary war, whose names are connected with a greater number of important transactions; whose biography, correspondence, and writings fill more pages; and whose names will occupy a larger space in general history; but there is hardly one whose example will exercise a more inspiring and elevating influence upon his countrymen and the world, than that of the brave, blooming, generous, self-devoted martyr of Bunker's Hill. The contemplation of such a character is the noblest spectacle which the moral world affords. It is declared by a poet to be a spectacle worthy of the gods. It awakens, with tenfold force, the purifying emotions of admiration and tenderness, which are represented as the legitimate objects of tragedy.

A death like that of Warren is, in fact, the

most affecting and impressive catastrophe, that can ever occur, in the splendid tragedy, which is constantly going on around us,—far more imposing and interesting, for those who can enjoy it, than any of the mimic wonders of the drama,—the real action of life. The ennobling and softening influence of such events is not confined to contemporaries and countrymen. The friends of liberty, from all countries, and throughout all time, as they kneel upon the spot that was moistened by the blood of Warren, will find their better feelings strengthened by the influence of the place, and will gather from it a virtue in some degree allied to his own.