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REAR ADMIRAL

Henry Knox Thatcher,

U. S. N.







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HENRY KNOX THATCHER,

REAR ADMIRAL U. S. NAVY.

BY
GEO. HENRY PREBLE, U.S.N.

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REAR ADMIRAL HENRY KNOX THATCHER.

HENRY KNOX THATCHER, the son of Ebenezer and Lucy Flucker (Knox) Thatcher, was born in Thomaston, Maine, at Montpelier, the seat of his grandfather Major General Henry Knox, May 26, 1806.*

The following description of the Admiral's birthplace is derived from the pages of a local historian.†

“In 1793 Knox sent workmen from Boston, under the superintendence of Ebenezer Duntton the architect, who commenced preparing and erecting a spacious mansion of three lofty stories, including the basement of brick, and surmounted by a fourth, central and cupola like, in the roof; together with stables, farm house and other out-buildings to match. The work was finished the following year * * * in a style of beauty, symmetry and magnificence, seldom excelled, and at that time said to be unequalled in any part of the commonwealth. The site chosen for this *palace*, as

* Gen. Knox died October 25, 1806. See memoir of Henry Knox, by Francis S. Drake, in the REGISTER, October, 1880; also “Knox and his Home in Thomaston, Me.,” in Eaton's History of Thomaston, vol. i. pages 205-225.

The marriage of Admiral Thatcher's grandfather was thus announced in the *Massachusetts Gazette*, June 20, 1774: “Last Thursday was married, by the Rev. Dr. Ciner, Mr. Henry Knox of this town [Boston] to Miss Lucy Flucker, second daughter of the Hon. Thomas Flucker, Esq. Secretary of the Province.

“Blest tho' she is with every human grace,
The mien engaging, and bewitching face,
Yet still a higher beauty is her care,
Virtue, the charm that most adorns the fair;
This does new graces to her air inspire,
Gives to her lips their bloom, her eyes their fire;
This o'er her cheek with brighter tincture shows
The lily's whiteness and the blushing rose.
O, may each bliss the lovely pair surround,
And each wing'd hour with new delights be crown'd.
Long may they those exalted pleasures prove
That spring from worth, from constancy and love.”

† Cyrus Eaton's History of Thomaston, &c.

it might well be called, or *chateau*, as French travellers* and visitors delighted to term it, was well selected, nearly on that of the old fortress, with a delightful prospect in front extending eight or ten miles down that river, finely sheltered by forest on the north-east, and open on the south-west to the breezes which on the hottest days of summer seldom failed to come with the tide to fan and refresh the balconies and corridors, arbors and alcoves of this tasteful and noble residence. At the present time [1865] the view from its roof, in which the villages of Thomaston and St. George lie like a map beneath the eye, is superb; but the original grandeur and elegance of this residence can scarcely be conceived of, from what now [1865] remains of it. On each hand, a little back from the mansion, a range or wing of out-buildings extended east and west from it, inclining backwards from the river so as to form, with the mansion in front, a crescent or segment of a circle—nine buildings in each wing, commencing on one side with the cook house, and on the other with the mews or stable. These two structures being built of brick, are [1865] still remaining in their places. The rest have been removed or taken down. * * *

“Beautifully at the water’s edge sat this sumptuous villa as it first caught the eye and struck the lofty mind of Mrs. Knox, as she with her husband, children and retinue, first passed up between the sombre evergreens and dusky forests that shaded either side of the river, to take possession [1795] of her new abode on her ancestral domain. Pleased with so elegant a creation, the romance of its site, and the contrast it presented to the surrounding landscape, its new mistress, in conformity to the French taste, imbibed through her intimate friend, Mrs. William Bingham of Philadelphia, for some time a resident in France, named the mansion *Montpelier*.”

The General also erected on a slightly spot a large three story house, intended as a residence for Admiral Thatcher’s father; but it was unfinished at Knox’s death, and was subsequently sold, taken down and removed. A fine avenue was to have been opened through the intervening woods to keep the two residences in communication and view of each other.

The remains of General Knox were at first deposited in a tomb on the grounds of Montpelier, but they were in 1860 removed by Lieut. Thatcher to the old town cemetery, Thomaston, where they now repose. Having been urged to again remove them to a more sightly spot in the same cemetery, where a public monument could be erected over them, Lieut. Thatcher, in a letter dated July 19, 1860, says: “My feelings revolt from the idea of again disturbing the ashes of my departed kindred, if it can be avoided. I have a sort of veneration for the modest old monument which my grandmother

* The Duke de la Rochefoucault-Liancourt, Louis Philippe, afterwards king of the French, Talleyrand and others, who visited it.

raised over her husband's tomb. Nevertheless, I should highly appreciate any efforts which the citizens of our beloved old town might be willing to make to perpetuate the memory of a man who gave all the energies of his life to the great cause of establishing for us this model republic, and his latter days to the interests of the town which he had selected before all others for his home; and I cannot but feel a glow of pride that he is not yet forgotten by his townsmen and their successors."

Admiral Thatcher received his early education in the schools of Boston, and July 1, 1822, was admitted as a Cadet at the West Point Military Academy. The records of the Academy state that he was "absent with leave, sick, from Nov. 23, 1822, to April 3, 1823," when his resignation is recorded. His predilection being for a sea life, he succeeded in exchanging his cadetship for a midshipman's appointment in the U. S. Navy, bearing date March 4, 1823, when not quite seventeen years old. His first order was to the Washington Navy Yard, where he made himself useful in aiding to equip the so-called "Musquito fleet" of Commodore David Porter, designed to operate against the pirates, who at that time, to the annoyance of our commerce, infested the West India Islands and the Carribean Sea. His next service was, from 1824 to 1827, on the Frigate United States, the flag-ship of Commodore Isaac Hull, in the Pacific Ocean. In 1828 we find him serving in the Mediterranean, on board the Delaware, 74, the flag-ship of Commodore William M. Crane. He returned in her to the United States to be examined for promotion, and March 23, 1829, being then about twenty-three years of age, and having been six years in the service, was promoted to the grade of Passed Midshipman* while serving on board the Independence 74 at the Boston station.

In 1830 the Navy Register records him as on "leave of absence." In 1831 we find him Acting Master of the Sloop of War Erie, 18, Master Commandant Lawrence Rousseau, in the West Indies. On Capt. Rousseau's detachment in 1832, he obtained a leave of absence and returned home. On the 28th of February, 1833, when about twenty-seven years of age, he was again promoted, commis-

* This title was abolished on the re-organization of the navy in 1862, and that of Ensign substituted for it.

sioned a Lieutenant, and ordered to the Navy Yard at Boston. In 1834 he was ordered to the Sloop of War Falmouth, under his old Captain Rousseau, attached to the West India Squadron, and remained in her until she was paid off in 1836. In 1837, '38 and '39 he is registered as "waiting orders." In 1840, '41, as attached to the Frigate Brandywine, Captain William Compton Bolton, in the Mediterranean. In 1842, as attached to the Naval Rendezvous at Portland, Maine, under the command of Commander John Stone Paine. In 1843, Executive Officer of the Receiving Ship Ohio, 74, Capt. Joseph Smith, at Boston. In 1844, on "leave of absence." In 1845, "waiting orders." In 1846, again attached to the Receiving Ship Ohio at Boston. In 1847, "waiting orders." In 1848, on board the Sloop of War Jamestown, 20, flag-ship of Commodore William C. Bolton, another of his old commanders, on the coast of Africa. In 1849 Commodore Bolton was transferred to the Mediterranean squadron, and hoisted his broad pennant on the Frigate Constitution, 44. The Jamestown conveyed him to his new command, and Lieut. Thatcher remained in her as her executive officer until she was put out of commission in 1850, when he was ordered to the Boston Navy Yard as an Inspector, where he remained until ordered to command the storeship Relief in 1852. The Relief was attached to our squadron on the coast of Brazil, and this was his last sea-service as a Lieutenant.

In 1853 we find him well up on the list of Lieutenants (No. 25), and "waiting orders." In 1854-5 he was the executive officer of the Naval Asylum at Philadelphia; and September 14, 1855, at the age of 49, through the action of the naval retiring board, known as "the board of fifteen"—which put aside and dismissed many officers from the service—he was promoted and commissioned a Commander, jumping from No. 15 on the Lieutenants' list to No. 25 on the list of ninety-seven Commanders—an advance of *eighty-seven* numbers. Notwithstanding his promotion he remained on duty at the Naval Asylum until ordered, in 1857, to succeed Commander Gansevoort in the command of the Sloop of War Decatur, 16.* The Decatur was attached to our squadron in the Paci-

* An interesting account of the service of the Decatur in Puget Sound, written by Commodore T. S. Phelps, U.S.N., can be found in "The United Service," for December, 1881. It is entitled Reminiscences of Seattle, Washington Territory, during the Indian war, 1855-56.

fic, and he remained in command of her until she was put out of commission at San Francisco, Cal. On his return from this cruise, August, 1859, he was again ordered to the Boston Navy Yard as its executive officer, and remained on that duty earnestly engaged in fitting out the vessels equipped from that station in the early days of the rebellion, until, in the first months of 1862, he was ordered to the command of the *Constellation*, 24, a decked corvette at Portsmouth, N. H., fitting for special service in the Mediterranean, where the Secretary of the Navy in his annual report says: "Her presence and visits to the commercial ports of the Levant was conducive of good results."

July 16, 1862, through the numerous resignations and dismissals of that exciting time,† and the re-organization of the navy by the establishing of a permanent retired list and the introduction of new grades into the service, he was promoted from No. 9 on the list of commanders to a commodore (No. 16) on the active list, passing the intermediate grade of captain, a clear advancement of *fifty-one* numbers. Desiring active service nearer the seat of war, and a command more in accordance with his new rank than the sailing corvette *Constellation*, he was relieved by Captain Stellwagen in July, 1863, and hastening home was ordered at once to the screw steam Frigate *Colorado*, 52, a *first rate*, preparing for sea at the Navy Yard, Portsmouth, N. H.

The *Colorado* was soon after ordered to the North Atlantic Squadron, commanded by Rear Admiral David D. Porter, and in her Commodore Thatcher commanded the first division of Porter's fleet in December, 1864, and January, 1865, during the attacks upon and final capture of Fort Fisher and its dependencies. Concerning the last attack Commodore Thatcher wrote: "I commanded the first division of the attacking fleet, and the attack terminated in the fall of that fortress (Fort Fisher) and all the surrounding works. Here, in January, 1865, the gallant 'Terry' and his command won immortal honor in his splendid and successful assault on those works after the bombardment by the navy had disabled or dismantled nearly

† The Secretary of the Navy in his Annual Report says that 259 officers had resigned their commissions or were dismissed the service. The late Rear Admiral Charles Henry Davis presented to Harvard College Library a carefully marked copy of the Navy Register, showing all these resignations and dismissals.

every large gun on the forts. The rebels fought gallantly with their small arms, but the bravery of the troops under 'Terry' was too much for them. Col. Lamb, the rebel commander, evinced a heroism worthy of a better cause."

This was a generous appreciation of the military commanders, union and rebel, but not a word was said about himself. Rear Admiral Porter, however, in his official report to the Secretary of the Navy, dated January 28, 1865, fortunately supplies his deficiency. He says :

"After such an engagement and success as this fleet has met with, I think it due to the officers engaged to mention those particularly who in my opinion deserve the commendation of the Department or merit promotion. * * * I trust that some promotions will grow out of this, if only to show the officers there is reward in store for those who do the fighting.

"First and foremost in the list of commodores is Commodore H. K. Thatcher. Full of honest zeal and patriotism, his vessel was always ready for action, and when he did go into it, his ship was handled with admirable skill; no vessel in the squadron was so much cut up as the *Colorado*; for some reason the rebels selected her as a target. I believe Commodore Thatcher would have fought his ship until she went to the bottom, and went into the fight with the full determination to conquer or die. There is no reward too great for this gallant officer; he has shown the kind of ability naval leaders should possess, a love of fighting and an invincible courage."*

After this victory, there being no further occasion for the large vessels to remain off Wilmington, they were sent north, and as a result of the recommendation and commendation of Rear Admiral Porter, Commodore Thatcher was appointed almost immediately an Acting Rear Admiral in advance of his regular promotion to that grade, and ordered to take command of the West Gulf Squadron, as the successor of Vice-Admiral Farragut, who, after the surrender of the forts at the entrance of Mobile Bay, had returned north in ill health.

On reaching the Gulf, in consultation with Major Gen. Canby, U. S. Army, Admiral Thatcher says: "It was determined to make a combined movement against the city of Mobile and its defences, which were of immense strength and extent, covering a distance from

* Commodore Thatcher's official report of the part taken by the "*Colorado*," and of her officers and men on shore in the first and second attacks upon Fort Fisher, can be found in full in the appendix to the Secretary of the Navy's Annual Report, Dec. 4, 1865.

east to west of eight miles, and mounting not less than 400 guns of the newest pattern and heaviest calibre." "After nineteen days work we succeeded in capturing the works, when the troops under Gen. Maury fled to the interior, leaving the city an easy prey. Being summoned to surrender April 15, 1865, its mayor at once complied with the command, but the naval forces under Farrand (rebel), formerly a commander in the U. S. Navy,* fled up the Tombigbee with his fleet, sinking two large iron-clad rams in his flight. Being closely pursued by us he concluded to surrender his entire command yet afloat, consisting of the 'Nashville,' 'Morgan,' 'Baltic,' and 'Black Diamond,' three of which were powerful and superior iron-clads, well armed; one hundred and twelve officers of these rebel vessels were also surrendered as well as their crews.

"Mobile having been secured and recovered to the United States, preparations were immediately made for attacking Galveston. Whilst these were going on, rebel commissioners were sent to surrender the state of Texas without further contest. The authorities of that state knew the fate of Alabama, and that our land and naval force on the Gulf was at liberty to advance on them, and deemed prudence the better part of valor."

Admiral Thatcher went immediately to Galveston in his flag-ship and took possession of the forts, manning them, without opposition from the enemy, with his blue jackets, and holding them until troops were sent from New Orleans by Major General Philip H. Sheridan, who had relieved Major General Canby.

About this time rumors, which were soon after confirmed, reached the Gulf that Generals Johnson and Lee had surrendered, and the war was virtually ended. †

The Secretary of the Navy, after the surrender of Mobile, addressed to the Admiral a complimentary letter, dated April 29, 1865, which he closes by saying: "I am happy in extending to you and those under your command, the congratulations of the Navy Department for this victory, which places in our possession, with but one

* Ebenezer Farrand, born in New York, entered the U. S. Navy from New Jersey March 4, 1823, the very day that admiral Thatcher did. When he left the service to join the confederacy he stood six numbers above Thatcher on the list of commanders. He was then a resident of Florida.

† For Acting Rear Admiral Thatcher's detailed reports of his command of the West Gulf Blockading Squadron, and of these transactions, see Secretary of the Navy's Annual Report, Dec. 1865, pages 358-392.

exception, all the chief points of our southern coast, and bids fair to be the closing naval contest of the rebellion."

On the second of June that one exception referred to, Galveston, was surrendered, and the supremacy of the government was once more established on the entire coast, from Maine to and including Texas.

After these transactions our naval forces in the waters of the Gulf were reduced, and the consolidation of the East Gulf Squadron, commanded by Acting Rear Admiral C. K. Stribling, and the West Gulf Squadron under Thatcher, was consummated, and thereafter the united force was known as the "Gulf Squadron," Acting Rear Admiral Thatcher remaining in command until May, 1866, when he was relieved. On the 22d of June, immediately on his arrival north, he was ordered to the command of the North Pacific Squadron, in which situation he remained until relieved in August, 1868, hoisting his flag on the U. S. Steam Ship Pensacola.

Soon after his orders to the Pacific Station, on the 25th of July, 1866, he was regularly promoted by seniority, and commissioned a Rear Admiral in the U. S. Navy, on the Active list, being then sixty years of age. On the 26th of May, 1868, having been above forty-five years in the service, and being then sixty-two years of age, in compliance with the existing law, he was placed upon the retired list, but retained his command afloat for the full term of two years, or until the following August.*

After his return east in 1869, he was ordered to assume the duties of Port Admiral at Portsmouth, N. H., which office he held until,* from motives of economy, it was abolished in 1871. This was his last active service; during the remainder of his retirement he lived at his residences in Winchester and Nahant, except a few months in the early spring in Boston—vigorous in mind and body as he ever was to within a few months of his decease.

At the date of his death, April 5, 1880, he was 73 years, 10 months, 10 days old, and had been attached to the navy fifty-seven

* The law of retirement at that time read, "shall be retired when 62 years of age or forty-five years in the service," from sea service. The law has since been altered to read, "when sixty-two years old"—the Admiral and Vice-Admiral being excepted from its provisions, and the retirement is from all service afloat or on shore, except in case of war, when retired officers' services may be made available.

years. Twenty-one years eight months of this time were spent at sea, ten years and eight months on shore duty, and twenty-four years and six months unemployed; but nearly twelve years of the "unemployed" time he was on the *retired list*.

The following "General Order" was issued by the Secretary of the Navy on the day following his death.

NAVY DEPARTMENT,

Washington, April 6, 1880.

The Secretary of the Navy announces with regret to the Navy and the Marine Corps the death, at Boston, on the 5th instant, of Rear Admiral HENRY KNOX THATCHER, after an honorable and meritorious service of fifty-seven years in the Navy.

Rear Admiral THATCHER was born in Maine, May 26, 1806, entered the Navy as Midshipman March 4, 1823, reached the grade of Commodore July 16, 1862, and was made Rear Admiral under the act of July 25, 1866, which authorized the selection for that grade of officers who had rendered the most efficient and faithful service during the recent war, and who possessed the highest professional qualifications and attainments.

His most prominent service was in the North Atlantic and West Gulf Blockading Squadrons. As commander of the 2d division of the former, and of the Colorado, he participated in the first attack on Fort Fisher, December 24 and 25, 1864, and in the second attack, which resulted in its capture, January 13, 1865.

As commanding officer of the West Gulf Blockading Squadron, under an appointment as Acting Rear Admiral, he successfully cooperated with Major General CANBY in the capture of Mobile. April 8, 1865, Fort Alexis and Spanish Fort were captured, and on the 10th Forts Huger and Tracy, which opened the way to the subsequent capture of Mobile, April 14, 1865.

The Secretary of the Navy, in acknowledging the reports of these operations, extended to Acting Rear Admiral THATCHER, and those under his command, and to Major General CANBY, the congratulations of the Navy Department for this victory, which placed in our possession, with but one exception, "all the chief points on the southern coast, and bid fair to be the closing naval contest of the rebellion."

On the 4th of July, 1865, a surrender was made to Acting Rear Admiral THATCHER of the confederate naval forces serving in the waters of the State of Alabama. Soon after this the remaining points on the coast of Texas were surrendered, which put an end to naval conflict in that quarter.

Rear Admiral THATCHER was appointed to command the North Pacific Squadron, June 22, 1866, and while so serving reached the age of 62 years, May 26, 1868, and in accordance with law was placed on the Retired List.

In respect to his memory it is hereby ordered that, on the day after the receipt hereof, the flags of the Navy Yards and Stations, and vessels in commission, be displayed at half-mast, from sunrise to sunset, and thirteen minute guns be fired at noon from the Navy Yards and Stations, flag-ships and vessels acting singly.

R. W. THOMPSON,

Secretary of the Navy.

The funeral of Admiral Thatcher took place at St. Paul's Church, Boston, on Thursday, April 9th (the day appointed by the Governor as the annual Fast Day), at 11 o'clock, A.M., by request, without military parade, but was voluntarily attended by a large number of citizens and representatives of the various bodies of which the deceased was a member. Prayers were said at the Evans House by the Rev. Dr. Isaac P. Langworthy. The services at the church were conducted by his old friend the Rev. Dr. Thomas R. Lambert, of St. John's Church, Charlestown. By a special order of the Commandant, all the officers attached to the Boston Navy Yard and Station who could be spared from duty, as well as many naval friends resident in the city and suburban towns, were present at the church; as were also the Rev. Dr. Samuel K. Lothrop, Dr. Charles D. Homans, Alexander Williams and others of the Society of the Cincinnati; the Rev. Edmund F. Slafter, John Ward Dean and others representing the New England Historic, Genealogical Society; Col. Francis J. Parker, representing the Loyal Legion; the Hon. John B. D. Cogswell, ex-President of the Mass. Senate; Abbott Lawrence and many others in military, naval and civic positions. The floral offerings were of rare beauty, an anchor of lilies and choice flowers from the Cincinnati being the most noticeable and appropriate. The choral service was rendered by the choir of St. Paul's. The pall-bearers were Rear Admirals Green and Preble, Commodores Ellison and Ransom, and Col. Jones of the Marine Corps, representing the Navy; ex-Mayor Frederic W. Lincoln, representing the Bunker Hill Monument Association; ex-Mayor Samuel C. Cobb, Vice-President of the Society of the Cincinnati; the Hon. Marshall P. Wilder, President of the New England Historic, Genealogical Society, and S. C. Small, Commander of Post 148, G. A. R., of Winchester, and of the Maine Veteran Association, of which the late Admiral was a member. The remains were temporarily deposited in the receiving tomb at Forest Hills.

Col. J. Hemphill Jones, one of the pall-bearers, died of pneumonia in a week's time, the result of a severe cold caught or aggravated by his attendance at the Admiral's funeral [see REGISTER, xxxv. 197]; and by a singular fatality, the Colonel's brother, coming from Washington to attend his brother's funeral,

died in less than a week after his return to Washington, from a similar cause.

Immediately that the death of Admiral Thatcher was known, a special meeting of the Massachusetts Society of the Cincinnati was called by the Hon. Samuel C. Cobb, Vice-President, to take action upon the sad event to the society of which he was the honored president. The meeting was called to order by Mr. Cobb, who made the following address :

Brethren of the Cincinnati: We meet at this time to take note of a solemn and mournful event. Henry Knox Thatcher, a valued member of this Society for nearly thirty-seven years, died on the 5th inst. This is not the time or place to pronounce any eulogy on the life and character of the deceased. We who enjoyed the privilege of a personal association with him, and who are familiar with the distinguished record he has made, know full well how valuable was his life in all that constitutes a brave officer and a high-minded citizen. His name was borne upon the rolls of the navy as an active officer for more than forty years, and those who shall read the story of his eventful career will learn how rich was our brother in the virtues which predominate in the man who is ever faithful, diligent and fearless in the discharge of duty. The eldest grandson of one of the founders of our Society, Admiral Thatcher appears to have inherited many of the leading traits which distinguished his illustrious ancestor. His loyalty was of that grand and heroic type which makes it sweet to die in defence of one's country. His patriotism was of that resolute and uncompromising character which shames the arts of the politician. The purposes for which this institution was founded has had no nobler representative. Honored by his country, respected and obeyed by his brother officers, beloved by his associates in public and private life, he has had all that the great poet says should accompany old age. We shall miss from our councils his practical wisdom and his earnest devotion to the interests of the Society, and it will be long before the recollection of his dignified presence and his genial manners will be forgotten. * * *

At the conclusion of Mr. Cobb's remarks, the following resolutions, prepared by the Rev. S. K. Lothrop, D.D., were adopted by a rising vote :

"It having pleased Almighty God to take out of this life our esteemed associate and honored President, Henry Knox Thatcher, Rear Admiral in the United States Navy, we the members of the Society of the Cincinnati here assembled, desire to express our sense of his worth, and our own loss, in the following resolutions :

Resolved,—That while we bow in devout submission to the will of the Heavenly Father who is too wise to err and too good to do wrong, we deeply lament the death of one whom we have long known and honored, who for

many years has presided over our Society with dignity and urbanity, and both as an officer and a member was ever zealous to promote its best interests, to extend its usefulness, and to carry out the patriotic and benevolent purposes of its founders.

Resolved.—That we recognize with pride and satisfaction that our deceased friend, associate and president not only bore with honor while living and left untarnished at his death, the name of his grandfather of revolutionary fame and memory,—Henry Knox,—but by his own gallant deeds and brave and manly bearing in the service of his country, added new lustre and fresh laurels to that name with which hereafter in this Society his own will ever be associated with reverence and honor.

Resolved.—That in his long career in the Navy of the United States, an accomplished seaman, a gallant officer, a wise and considerate commander, a loyal, brave, patriotic man, of calm, fearless courage, ready in the face of danger and of death to do his duty at all times and at all hazards, Rear Admiral Thatcher has rendered services to his country at home and abroad, in peace and in war, that entitle him to be held in grateful honor and remembrance.

Resolved.—That in the private life and character of our departed friend we recall with pleasure his many amiable qualities, the frankness and simplicity of his manners, the kindness of his disposition, the quickness of his sympathy with whatever was good, noble and worthy, all that large, warm-hearted benevolence and honesty, and that earnest, steadfast christian faith, which made it a pleasure and a satisfaction to be associated with him, and will cause his memory to be long cherished among us.

Resolved.—That a copy of these resolutions be sent by the secretary to the family of our late President, and entered upon the records of this meeting.”

In seconding the resolutions, Mr. Winslow Warren briefly eulogized the character of Admiral Thatcher, Mr. Alexander Williams followed with appropriate remarks, and a committee was appointed to attend the funeral.

At the quarterly meeting of the New England Historic, Genealogical Society, April 7, a committee was appointed, of which Rear Admiral William Rogers Taylor, U.S.N., was chairman, to prepare resolutions in memory of Admiral Thatcher, and at the monthly meeting, May 5th, 1880, Captain William A. Parker, U.S.N., in behalf of the committee, reported the following resolutions, prepared by the Rev. Thomas R. Lambert, D.D., for many years a chaplain in the navy, and a lifetime friend of the deceased.

Whereas.—In the allwise ordering of Divine Providence, our honored associate, the late Rear Admiral Henry Knox Thatcher, of the United States Navy, has been taken from among us, and his place on earth shall know him no more; therefore

Resolved.—That the New England Historic Genealogical Society put on record a formal and at the same time heartfelt expression of our affectionate esteem for one who represented in our midst a name so revered in the past, and also in his own person and character gave it a new claim upon the reverent remembrance of those who are to come after us.

Resolved.—That as the name of Henry Knox has come down to us among those of the noblest of our revolutionary heroes and patriots, so that of his grandson, Henry Knox Thatcher, will live among those in peace as a high-toned, loyal and virtuous citizen—in war as a bold seaman, a brave and gallant officer and a fearless defender of his country's flag—honored in the service to whose highest rank he had so worthily risen.

Resolved.—That, as his fellow members, we personally have sustained an irreparable loss in the death of one who, by the extremely valuable gift of the Knox Manuscripts, has rendered himself one of the greatest benefactors of this society; one whose frank and kindly nature, large-hearted and generous impulses, and whose manly goodness, have won for him the most genuine affection and the deepest regret.

Resolved.—That a copy of these resolutions be forwarded to the family of our late associate, and be entered on the records of the society.

Captain Parker in reporting the resolutions alluded feelingly to the death of one of the committee appointed to draft them—Col. Jones, of the U. S. Marine Corps, who was also one of the pall-bearers at the Admiral's funeral.

Remarks on the character of Admiral Thatcher were also made by President Marshall P. Wilder, Mr. Frederic Kidder, and Judge G. Washington Warren, and the resolutions were adopted by a standing vote.

At the annual meeting of the Bunker Hill Monument Association following the Admiral's decease, June 17, 1880, Abbott Lawrence, Esq., offered the following remarks and resolutions:

Mr. President: You have already fitly and eloquently alluded to those of our numbers who have passed away since we last met, and whom we miss here to-day. Among them no one was held in higher respect and regard than our lamented friend and associate the late Admiral Thatcher. Born of heroic ancestry at Thomaston, Maine, on the 20th of May, 1806, he early showed a love for the sea, and at the age of 17 entered the navy as a midshipman. The well earned rank which is now so widely associated with his name, was conferred upon him in 1866. He was a brave and efficient officer, highly respected wherever he held command. With him patriotism was an instinct rather than a duty, and in this spirit he was a fearless and uncompromising unionist during the rebellion. He rendered important service in the battle of Mobile Bay, at the storming of Fort Fisher, and in the surrender of Galveston. He was a man of strong convictions,

steadfast purposes, incorruptible integrity, unshaken loyalty. At our meeting a year ago I happened to sit next the gallant old sailor, bronzed and worn with service to his country all the world over, and I shall never forget the marked interest he took in our proceedings. I rejoice, sir, that my own recollection of him will be indelibly connected with this anniversary. Let us pay his memory the tribute of honor and praise which it so justly deserves.

At the close of Mr. Lawrence's remarks the following resolutions were unanimously adopted :

Resolved,—That in the death of Henry Knox Thatcher, Rear Admiral in the United States Navy, this Association has lost one of its most honored members, and our country an able and gallant officer whose patriotism and devoted service in his profession, and whose loyal and noble character gave him a distinguished place on the roll of our naval commanders, added new lustre to the revolutionary name he bore, and ensured him our grateful and lasting remembrance.

Resolved,—That the secretary be instructed to transmit a copy of these resolutions to the family of Admiral Thatcher.*

These resolutions so summarize the character of Admiral Thatcher, that taken in connection with what has been shown of it in this memoir, there is nothing left to add, unless to say he was God's noblest work, an honest man, a firm friend, an agreeable messmate, a sound disciplinarian, yet kind commander, a christian gentleman, an uncompromising unionist, a competent and brave officer. His chief characteristic was prompt and unhesitating obedience to the orders of his superior officers, let the consequences be what they may.†

My acquaintance with Admiral Thatcher commenced in 1842-43, when he was the executive officer of the U. S. S. Ohio in Boston harbor, and I a passed midshipman on board. I soon learned to make allowance for his eccentricities and to admire him for his sterling integrity. We were drawn to each other from being natives of the same state. I never was associated with him again on duty, but frequently met him in the vicissitudes of naval service, and we remained good friends to the close of his life. I am glad to be able to pay this tribute to his memory.

* Proceedings of the Bunker Hill Monument Association, June 17, 1880.

† The story told of him in the notice of his death in the *Boston Evening Transcript*, April 5, 1880, about torpedoes and Farragut at Mobile, is not true, as he was not in that fight. The writer confounded him with Rear Admiral James Alden, also a native of Maine, whose bravery was undisputed.

Admiral (then Lieutenant) Thatcher was elected, in 1843, a member of the Massachusetts Society of the Cincinnati, as the successor of his grandfather Major General Henry Knox, one of the originators and founders of the Society, its first Secretary-general and the first Vice-President of the Massachusetts Society.

In 1870 he was elected Vice-President of the Massachusetts Society, in place of Winslow Warren deceased, and, in 1871, on the death of James Warren Sever, President, which office he continued to hold until his death in 1880.

While in command of the North Pacific Squadron he received a medal from the King of the Hawaiian Islands for services rendered, and was created a Knight of the order of Kamahameha I., honors he was allowed to accept by a joint resolution of the Congress of the United States, approved January 11, 1868.

April 1, 1868, Admiral Thatcher was elected a Companion of the Military Order of the Loyal Legion of the United States (M.O.L.L. U.S.), through the Pennsylvania Commandery, and remained in it until his death.

In 1872 he was elected an associate member of the Bunker Hill Monument Association.

He was admitted Sept. 1, 1871, a resident member of the New England Historic, Genealogical Society, and ever after, until sickness prevented, attended its meetings and took a lively interest in its objects, becoming himself a life member, and proposing the names of his friends for membership. In 1873 he showed his continued interest in the Society by presenting to it the manuscripts of Major General Knox, which in accordance with the conditions of his gift are now handsomely and strongly bound in fifty-five massive folio volumes and indexed.* The number of letters and documents in the collection is eleven thousand four hundred and sixty-four, in which are included sixty-six letters and documents, either written or signed by Washington.

He also presented to the Society a large original drawing of West Point, made by Major L'Enfant for General Knox, which has

* See the Rev. Mr. Slafter's Report on "The Knox Manuscripts," published in the Society's Proceedings, Jan. 5, 1881, and also in pamphlet form.

been framed, and occupies a prominent position in the directors' room of the Society.*

Admiral Thatcher, in a memorandum to the New England Historic, Genealogical Society on being elected a member, says :

"I trace my ancestors back to 1634. They originated in Essex and Sussex, in England, on the paternal (Thatcher) side, and the family arms are—viz. *FIELD Gules*, indicative of valor, charged with a cross moline, *argent*. A cross charged with a red crescent, implying that our ancestor had achieved victory over the Turks. The cross is *silver* (argent), emblem of purity. The upper part of the shield is *or* (gold), the most valuable of metals, and enhancing its honorable import. It is charged with three birds *volant*, indicative of speed or energy. The birds are *azure* (truth). From the heraldic records it appears that in 1634 an Heraldic visitation was made to revise the arms of families and confer honors, by which the Thatcher *crest* was discarded, that branch being extinct, and the grasshoppers representing the rural seat of the family, replaced by *Birds*, and the bloody *crescent* made a part of the cross."†

The Hon. Ebenezer Thatcher, the Admiral's father, was born in Cambridge, Mass., Oct. 9, 1778, and graduated at Harvard College in 1798. He studied law and commenced its practice in Boston in 1801; but soon removed to Newcastle, Me., and subsequently to Thomaston. He was appointed in 1812 a justice of the Circuit Court of Common Pleas, and held the office till Maine became a state. At one time he held the commission of brigadier general. He resided afterwards in Warren, Mercer and Bingham, Me., where he died June 9, 1841, aged 63.‡ About 1803 he married Lucy Flucker, daughter of Gen. Knox. He was a son of Col. Samuel Thatcher, who was distinguished in the Concord and Lexington fights, April 19, 1775, as a captain in Col. Gardner's regiment, and was so wounded as to be crippled for life. Col. Samuel Thatcher was a great-grandson of Dea. Samuel Thatcher, an early

* This drawing has been engraved on steel, and the engraving illustrates a History of West Point.

† In the Genealogical and Biographical Sketches of the descendants of Thomas and Anthony Thatcher, from their settlement in New England, June 4, 1635, published in Vine-land, N. J., in 1872, by a descendant, there is an engraving of the Thacher arms—"GULES a cross moline argent. On a chief of *or*, three grass-hoppers proper. *Crest*, a grasshopper proper." The author says the original spelling of the name was Thacher, and that Thatcher is a modern innovation.

‡ *Savage* in his Genealogical Dictionary says, per contra, "The Watertown descendants all retain the *old spelling* of the name *Thatcher*, as if deriving it from their early occupation of a thatcher, which seems probable."

† A memoir of the Hon. Ebenezer Thatcher will be found in Willis's *History of the Law, the Courts and the Lawyers of Maine*, pp. 396-9.

settler in Watertown, admitted freeman of Massachusetts May 18, 1642, through Samuel² and Ebenezer.³

The old family residence of the Thatchers was on land now included in that beautiful retreat for the dead, Mount Auburn.* It would have been appropriate to have placed the Admiral's remains at rest near the site of the old homestead, but he himself expressed no wish on the subject. They have found an equally beautiful resting place on Lantana Avenue in Forest Hills Cemetery, where a handsome and appropriate monument has been erected over them by loving hands.

Lucy Flucker Knox, the mother of Admiral Thatcher, and eldest daughter of Major General Knox, who was the friend of Washington and his Secretary of War, was born in Philadelphia, Penn., in 1780. She was a granddaughter of Thomas Flucker, the last English secretary of the Massachusetts Bay Province, who, loyal to the crown, left for England on the evacuation of Boston. She died Oct. 12, 1854, aged 77. Ebenezer and Lucy Flucker (Knox) Thatcher had eight children, viz. :

1. Julia K., b. 1805 ; m. Rev. Oren Sikes ; removed to Bedford, Mass. She and her husband are both dead. Their second and oldest surviving son, Henry Knox Sikes, of Peoria, Ill., is the oldest living male descendant of Gen. Knox, and is in the line of succession to the membership in the Massachusetts Society of the Cincinnati vacated by the death of Admiral Thatcher.
2. Henry Knox (the Admiral), b. May 26, 1806 ; bapt. April 11, 1809.
3. Charles, b. Feb. 1809 ; d. Oct. 8, 1810.
4. Lucy Ann, bapt. Aug. 3, 1810 ; she married Nyrum Leeson, and removed to Michigan, where she died.
5. Mary Henrietta, b. 1811 ; m. Rev. George C. Hyde. She died at Thomaston Aug. 30, 1853, leaving two daughters, Henrietta C. and Mary P. Hyde.
6. Caroline F., m. Benjamin Smith.
7. James Swan, bapt. Aug. 9, 1815 ; admitted to the bar, 1840 ; entered U. S. N., and as purser perished in the *Grampus*, March, 1843.
8. Harriet Elizabeth, m. George B. Page, of Belgrade, Oct. 28, 1841, and died Feb. 18, 1847.

* The pedigree and genealogy of Admiral Thatcher's ancestors can be found in Paige's History of Cambridge, Mass., edition of 1877, pages 669-70. He says the Thatcher homestead, which was occupied by Deacon Samuel Thatcher, the earliest American ancestor of the Admiral, was near the easterly corner of Mount Auburn Street and Coolidge Avenue, which until 1754 was included in Watertown. The Admiral's grandfather Samuel inherited this homestead, which was sold by his heirs to Governor Gerry in 1793. During the latter part of his life he resided on the westerly corner of Mount Auburn and Brighton Streets. Eaton's History of Thomaston, vol. ii. pp. 424-5, ed. 1865, has also a genealogy of the Thatcher family.

Admiral Thatcher was the last grandson, and his sister, Mrs. Caroline F. Smith, of Vineland, N. J., is now the only living grandchild, of Gen. Knox; but a number of his descendants in later generations are living. In 1843 the Admiral's brother, James S. Thatcher, sailed from Norfolk in the U. S. Schooner *Grampus*, of which vessel he was Purser. She was last heard of on the 14th of March, when off Charleston, S. C., and is supposed to have been lost in some of the severe gales which occurred about that time.

Dec. 26, 1831, Admiral, then Passed Midshipman, Thatcher was married, by the Rev. Josiah Peet, of Norridgewock, Me., to Miss Susan C. Croswell, a daughter of Andrew Croswell, M.D., of Plymouth, Mass., a graduate of Harvard in the class of 1798, of which Admiral Thatcher's father was also a graduate. The marriage was a happy one, and Mrs. Thatcher with an adopted daughter, Miss Susan Emerson Thatcher, the child of a sister, survives to do honor to, and to cherish his memory.

The engraved portrait which illustrates this memoir, is from a photograph selected by Mrs. Thatcher, and will convey to his friends a characteristic likeness of the Admiral, representing him to the life.



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