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With the Compliments of

Wm H. Sumner.

REMINISCENCES

OF

GEN. WARREN AND BUNKER HILL.

By GEN. WILLIAM H. SUMNER.

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REMINISCENCES RELATING TO GENERAL WARREN AND BUNKER HILL.

[By Gen. William H. Sumner.]

Read before the New England Historical and Genealogical Society.

Upon the occasion of the inauguration of the statue of General Joseph Warren, at Charlestown, on the 17th of June, 1857, the different addresses then made contained very many interesting incidents illustrative of the life and character of that martyr of American liberty. The perusal of these has brought to my mind some additional facts connected with Warren's death which may be considered valuable as historical items. Desirous that nothing should be lost relative to one whose name shines so brightly on the historic page, I make the information in my possession the subject of this article; and in this connection it may be proper to remark that from my early boyhood I have been acquainted with different members of the Warren family. I was born within a fourth of a mile of Gen. Warren's house in Roxbury, and enjoyed familiar intercourse with his three brothers, his mother, and his aunt, and the patriot himself was one of my father's teachers in the Roxbury Grammar School. Thus, from my earliest recollections, associated with a family so honored in our country's history, many interesting facts and incidents came to my knowledge, some of which may be here embodied.

The unwavering patriotism of General Warren is well illustrated in an incident related to me by some one whose name I do not now recall. It is well known that the British commander was anxious to secure the services of American officers of known bravery for the government, and that tempting offers were made to Putnam to induce him to leave the provincials and join the royal army. The valuable acquisition which Warren would be to the royalists did not escape their notice, and (as the account was given to me) Dr. Jeffries, a surgeon in the British army and an intimate acquaintance of Warren, was conversing with him, a short time before the actual resort to arms, on a pile of boards near the Winnisimmet Ferry Ways, from which they had a full view of the British fleet. During this conversation, which naturally turned upon the hostile feelings which existed between the provinces and the mother country, Dr. Jeffries suggested that in his opinion Warren might receive a high commission in the British army, if he would accept of it. This was a fruitless suggestion.

But the main object of this communication is to bring out something more important in a historical point of view, although incidents like the one just related possess a value peculiarly their own, and which it would be difficult to overestimate.

Upon the anniversary of our nation's birthday, 4th of July, 1825, at the public collation given at the State House to the State and City authorities, I gave a toast, the sentiment of which was founded upon facts which I had collected as Adjutant General from some of the old soldiers who were engaged in the battle of Bunker Hill. They had been requested to meet at my office on the occasion of laying the corner stone of the Bunker Hill Monument, on the 17th of the preceding June, by the Marquis de Lafayette, to join in the procession on that occasion. A large number of them came, and at that time I inquired of them what they

knew about the battle, and made some minutes of their conversation and replies to my interrogations.

At the collation, Major General Henry Dearborn gave as a toast : —

" *The memory of General Warren, who gallantly died in the cause of his country.*"

Immediately after this I rose and said I would give as a toast the sentiment contained in the dying words of that first great martyr of American liberty (whose name had just been announced) to the soldiers who were near him when he fell, after receiving his death wound : —

" *I am a dead man ; fight on, my brave fellows, for the salvation of your country.*"

The sentiment was received with acclamation ; but Dr. Benj. Waterhouse, one of the professors in Harvard College, who had no friendship for Dr. John Warren, also a professor in the same institution, took occasion in a newspaper article (signed " Historian," his usual signature being " Historicus ") to question the authenticity of the words embodied in that toast, and called upon the Adjutant General, as it came with the weight of authority from his mouth, to state upon what testimony it was founded, at the same time expressing some doubts in regard to it.

The cause of the ill feeling before alluded to on the part of Dr. Waterhouse toward Dr. Warren, as stated to me by Robert H. Gardiner, Esq., of Gardiner, Maine, was this :—Dr. Waterhouse wrote several articles for the newspapers, in which he meddled with the affairs of the college, and called in question the fitness of some of his brother professors for the positions which they held. This gave general offence, and Dr. Warren joined with the several other professors in a complaint to the government on the subject. Dr. Waterhouse was requested to desist ; but as he continued to write similar articles, a memorial for his removal was signed by Dr. Warren and the other professors, and he was accordingly dismissed.

The article by Dr. Waterhouse referred to was as follows, and is copied from the " Boston Patriot and Mercantile Advertiser " of the 16th of July, 1825 :—

" Messrs. Editors :—In your paper of the 6th is mentioned, among the list of toasts, one of considerable importance as an historical fact, given by the Adjutant General ; for if, on investigation, it turn out true, it settles a doubtful point in history ; if not true, the sooner the mistake is rectified the better. It was given immediately after Major General Dearborn drank to the memory of General Warren, who ' gallantly *died* in the cause of his country.' Whereupon the Adjutant General gave as his toast, ' the dying words of Warren to the soldiers who were near him when he fell after receiving his death wound.' His words, the Adjutant General said, were :—' *I am a dead man ; fight on, my brave fellows, for the salvation of your country.*'

The Adjutant General would confer a very great favor on the annalists and historians of the present times, if he would, through the medium of some paper, inform us more particularly of the fact, and mention the source whence he obtained that interesting allusion, which may lead to truths equally important. Hitherto the manner, time, and place on the hill where he fell, is left uncertain, while that of Major McCleary's is ascertained. As it regards Warren, the prevalent idea now is, that never having been a soldier, and having accepted a commission of a general, he repaired to Bunker Hill to learn, by actual observation, how to com-

mand in battle on a future day. He said as much to Vice President Gerry the morning they parted; and the late Judge Winthrop testified that he saw him and spoke with him before they reached the hill, Winthrop with his musket, Dr. Warren with only a cane, and in citizen's clothes. He was afterwards seen conversing with General Putnam; but after the battle began to rage there is no account whatever of him, excepting this given by the Adjutant General.

One thing is clear, that he was buried with the promiscuous slain in the common trench of the dead. Had the British known him, this would not have been the case, if considered only as a *Mason* of a high order, But the greatest wonder remains,—why did not our own people seek out the body of our courageous patriot? Why did not Prescott, or Putnam. or some Bostonian, apply to the British commander for the remains of their fearless patriot? According to the present popular impression, the probability is that the death of Warren was not known until after the British had buried all the slain of their opponents without knowing any sort of distinction among them. The body taken up and honorably buried a long time after was mere conjecture, simply on that of an artificial tooth.

Any light which the gentleman in question can give on this melancholy subject will, without doubt, be gratefully acknowledged by every American. HISTORIAN."

My attention was called to this article by the Hon. James Lloyd, who said that, in his opinion, the matter required an explanation. Upon reading the doctor's communication, which I had not before seen, as it was published in a newspaper which I did not take or often read, I saw the propriety of giving the evidence establishing the questioned fact. With the view of obtaining it, I went to Tewksbury, and called upon the person who had given me the information in the presence of the old soldiers at my office, to obtain more formal evidence of the fact, and inquired of him more particularly as to his recollection of the incident he had before related to me, and he certified it in the most ample manner, as will soon appear.

Having collected many interesting incidents connected with the death of General Warren, and obtained unquestionable evidence as to the authenticity of the words embodied in my toast, I published an article in the "Patriot" of the 9th of August, 1825, in answer to the interrogations of "Historian," including an original letter from Amos Foster, the soldier who heard the heroic words of Warren as he fell. My communication was as follows:—

GENERAL WARREN.

MESSRS. EDITORS,—"Historian," in your paper of the 6th ult., quotes from the newspaper account of the celebration of the 4th of July, at the State House, a toast given by me contained in the sentiment of the words of General Warren after he was shot on Bunker Hill; and, questioning the truth of the historical fact, requests that "the Adjutant General would mention the source whence he obtained that interesting allusion, which may lead to truths equally important."

It is evident that "Historian" was not present at the table, as the toast was there given upon the authority of Mr. Amos Foster of Tewksbury, a private in Capt. Walker's company and Bridge's regiment, from whose mouth the words were taken on the morning of the 17th June last.

Mr. Foster is a hale man of seventy-two, of respectable appearance, and gave his account of the events of the battle with great clearness both of recollection and expression. He is possessed of considerable property, I learn, and is a man of undisputed veracity. He represents that Dr. Warren was wounded when he addressed them, and spoke like a person in the greatest extremity, who thought all was lost, raising up his hands and saying "I am a dead man;—fight on, my brave fellows, for the salvation of your country." I stated to Mr. Foster that it was generally supposed that Dr. Warren was shot in the head. He replied that it did not appear to him that he was wounded in the head at that time, but that his side was bloody.

Immediately upon seeing the communication of "Historian" in your paper, I addressed a letter to Mr. Foster, informing him that inquiry was made in a public manner of me for the authority I had for giving the sentiment as the dying words of Warren; and requested him to furnish me with such further particulars as were within his recollection; but, not having received a reply to my letter sent through the post office, with which the old soldier has probably but little connection, I have not chosen to wait longer in giving "Historian" the requested information, lest the delay might tend to confirm the doubts expressed in his communication.

My office, on the morning of the 17th, was crowded with revolutionary soldiers, who were requested to meet there before joining in the procession. Many anecdotes and old soldier's stories were related interesting to the "Historian," and never perhaps fifty years after any like event were so many witnesses of it present, face to face, shaking hands and reciting to each other their toils and perils and hair-breadth escapes as were collected together at the late celebration. Under the resolve of the Legislature, a small allowance for attendance and travel was allowed to each of them as "reported themselves at the Adjutant General's office on or before that day, and gave him satisfactory evidence of the fact of their having been in the battle of Bunker Hill on the 17th of June, 1775;" as far as the time allowed, such reports were made and the evidence received. My inquiries, therefore, relating to the events of that day, of the officers and soldiers who reported themselves, were not those of curiosity merely, but were a necessary means of obtaining the "satisfactory evidence" the resolve required. Such was the bustle of the morning, and the shortness of the time, it was impossible the purpose of the resolve could be accomplished, and the Legislature afterwards extended the time for complying with its provisions to the 4th of July, when one hundred and forty-one out of upwards of two hundred present, had applied and given the evidence required.

Impressed with the belief that posterity will consider the events of that conflict as of more importance than even the enthusiastic actors themselves attached to them, I availed myself of the opportunity thus afforded, which gave me the means of seeing the greater part of the living actors in those scenes, to make minutes of the important facts relating to what may have heretofore been considered as mysterious circumstances of the battle, and particularly such as respected the conduct and death of the first great martyr of American liberty. It was impossible to do this generally in the crowd of the morning of the 17th; but, with regard to the important facts stated by Mr. Foster, this was not the case; for that I took down in writing, and, in the presence of Gen. Patterson of Philadelphia, who was very attentive to the old soldier stories, spoke of the importance of the

anecdote to Mr. Foster, and read my minutes to him, to ascertain whether I had recorded it correctly.

"Historian" calls on me "for further light on the subject," and has not left in obscurity the objects to which he wished my attention directed; but under the heads of "prevalent ideas" and "popular impressions" in some instances, and in others by direct assertions, conveys his own doubts of the great worth of Warren's services. He says that "after the battle began to rage there is no account whatever of him, except this given by the Adjutant General." That "the manner, time, and place on the hill where Warren fell is left uncertain." That he went there in his common clothes without uniform "to learn by actual observation how to command in battle on a future day." That "he was buried with the promiscuous slain in the common trench of the dead," which would not have been the case "if the British had known him," and that "even our own people did not seek out the body of their *fearless* patriot." (I have underscored the epithet, though I hope no slur was intended by your communicator when he used it.) That "the body taken up afterwards," which was near the place of the greatest slaughter of the Americans, "was mere conjecture." In fact, if I understand the drift of the communication, it is, that there is no evidence that Warren on that day did anything to distinguish himself.

When the sentiment of that dying hero was promulgated, it was without the least idea that it would invoke an inquiry into his general conduct; but, it is not to be regretted, if there is doubt in any mind, that the inquiry is instituted while many of the witnesses are living, as it must result like those respecting the conduct of other important actors in those scenes in the establishment of those great truths which have already emblazoned their names on the historic page.

There is no need of recurring to evidence in support of commonly received facts. Respecting such as are not generally known I will endeavor to cite the authority.

It is generally understood, I believe, that Warren, at the time of the battle, had not received the commission of Major General, to which office he was appointed on the 14th; that he left Watertown, where the Provincial Congress was sitting, on the morning of the 17th, and was present with the Committee of Safety in Steward Hastings' house, on Cambridge Common, where also Gen. Ward's head quarters were, when Major Brooks arrived from Charlestown and delivered Colonel Prescott's request for reinforcements. That he soon after left the Committee of Safety, of which he was Chairman, and walked a part of the way towards Charlestown, with Dr. Townsend, his pupil, and was spoken to by Judge Winthrop, before he reached the hill, in his usual dress, which was a light colored coat with a sprig on the button, as Gov. Eustis informed me. I have Gov. Brooks' authority for the fact of Warren's presence with the Committee of Safety, when he made his communication from Col. Prescott. He has often detailed to me the observations and opinions of that gallant officer at the councils of war, which were held before the message was sent to Cambridge, and the particulars of his own interview with General Ward first, and afterwards with the Committee of Safety, who sat in the adjoining room.

As it is probable I shall have no other so good opportunity, I can hardly refrain from mentioning one or two circumstances which I have learned in these conversations, although they are not immediately connected with

the object of this communication. After despatches had been sent over to Mystic for Stark's and Reed's regiments, and other reinforcements were ordered to march, messages were sent to the neighboring towns, requesting them to bring in their own supplies of powder. As these arrived the Committee distributed themselves, and, seated on the tiller of the carts, dealt out a gill of powder to each soldier, as he came up, some of whom had powder horns, and others wrapped it up in paper. Meanwhile, Brooks, who was not detailed with his regiment for duty the day before, in consequenee of his absence at Reading, (called home by the confinement of his wife with her first child,) but who on his return had the permission of the General to go as a volunteer, provided he would report at head quarters in the morning, was collecting the two remaining companies of his regiment, which had been on guard near the General's quarters. It is well known that the General, apprehensive that the movements towards Charlestown were only a feint to cover a real attack of the main position at Cambridge, was fearful of weakening his force at that place. Brooks says to him, "now General, I have reported according to promise, I hope you will let me march these men where they can be of some use." To which he answered, "I am sorry I cannot comply with your request." "But look at them, General," said Brooks anxiously, "they have got bayonets—there are none scarcely on the hill, and I assure they will be wanted there." "I shall want them here, sir," was the reply, which terminated the interview, and he did not get orders to march until it was too late for him to arrive before the retreat.

But to remove the uncertainty of the time, place, and manner of Warren's death, which "Historian" says exists, let us recur to the evidence; and, first, as to the time and place.

Upon his arrival at the redoubt, Prescott saw Warren, and supposing he came to take the command, said to him he was glad to have assistance; to which Warren replied, as Mr. Wright (now of Beverly, then of Hollis, who was in Prescott's regiment and heard it, says) "No, I did not come to take the command, it is too late in the day; but I'll give you all the assistance I can." Warren was afterwards seen conversing with Putnam, who said to him in the presence of Lt. Col. Parker, who was wounded in the knee, taken prisoner, and afterwards died, but whose wounds were dressed by Dr. Jeffries on a fascine, to whom he related it, "they will beat us from the work, I know; but we shall do them infinite mischief, though we must at last retreat." Col. Whitmore, then a Lieutenant in Capt. Perkins' company, in Little's regiment, states that he was wounded in the thigh *in the retreat from the redoubt;* at the same moment Warren fell, about six feet from him. Capt. Coburn, on *the retreat from the redoubt*, spoke to Warren, and Gen. Winslow saw him lying dead *about sixty yards in the rear of the redoubt*, the morning after the battle, with his hands under his head. Major Small of the British army, who acknowledged that he owed his own life to the humanity of Putnam on that occasion, in his turn attempted to save the life of his friend Warren, whom he saw, as he entered the redoubt, and called to him to stand, or he would be killed. This is his own relation to Dr. Jeffries, who went over with the British troops as surgeon after the first attack. There can be no mistake about this, as Maj. Small and Dr. Warren were very intimate friends; and Dr. Jeffries, who was a professional rival of Warren's, used to meet them frequently at Mr. Scollay's—and Dr. Warren had, a few evenings before, offered him a place in the medical staff. Here is abundant evi-

dence, but more is at hand if needed, as, to avoid prolixity, I have omitted many minute particulars which would corroborate the facts, that Warren, although he was opposed to the plan of taking possession of the heights of Charlestown, thinking the Fabian policy the best in the condition the army then was, and though he was seen sick in his bed after he came from Watertown that morning with a nervous headache; when he heard Major Brooks' communication from Col. Prescott, requesting reinforcements and ammunition, left the Committee of Safety and repaired to the scene of action, was in various parts of the field, "*after the battle began to rage*," *and was killed near the redoubt as the British entered it.*

Respecting the "manner" of his death, there is more uncertainty; though, to use the language of "Historian" to express one's own idea, "the popular impression" that he was wounded some time before he was killed, in the arm or side, gains strength from the circumstances and facts related by the witnesses who were assembled on the late occasion. Mr. Jonathan Clark, now living in Abington, 80 years old, but who then belonged to Boston, and was in Lock's company and Gardener's regiment, "who knew Warren, who had attended him as a physician," is positive in his testimony "that he was first wounded in the arm, and being pressed to retire, said he would never set the example of retreating to the "bloody blacks." "The mortal wound," Mr. Clark says, "was in the head."

Gen. Warren's body had mouldered in the grave for ten months, when it was disinterred, which made it impossible at that time to ascertain the correctness of this supposition,—not so with the wound in the head. After the evacuation of Boston, Warren's friends were informed where he was buried. This was not as "Historian" says it was, "with the promiscuous slain, in the common trench of the dead;" though it was in the same grave with a person with a frock on. Warren's body was found stripped of its covering, while the other was buried in its common habiliments. Mr. Clark, above-named, as well as another soldier whose name I have forgotten, was here on the 17th, who assisted at the exhumation in the presence of the Doctor's two brothers, who were satisfied of the identity of the body, by many circumstances which they detailed. If stronger evidence of its identity were wanting, that afforded by Col. Revere, who set the artificial tooth, (which "Historian" says led to the "mere conjecture" that it was Warren's body,) and who recollected the wire he used in fastening it in, would afford it. One thing, however, is certain; that the skull was perforated by a musket ball in the upper part of the head, in such a place, as I am informed by professional gentlemen, would probably have produced sudden, though it might not instant death. "Historian" will observe that all these facts relating to the "*time*," *place and manner* of Warren's death accord with the account which Major Small gave to Major Gordon, at the American minister's, in London, in the year 1791, when he told him that though he saw Warren fall, "life had fled before he saw his remains;" to Col. Trumbull, in 1786, at the time he was engaged in painting his celebrated historical picture, in which Major Small is represented in the exercise of the humane act which has been ascribed to him. (See Gordon's and Trumbull's printed letters.)

But "Historian" says "that according to the present popular impression, the probability is that the death of Warren was not known until after the British had buried all the slain of their opponents without knowing any sort of distinction among them." If it be the popular impression, it is time that this as well as some other "prevalent ideas" in "Historian's"

communication was corrected. That Gen. Howe saw him *fall* is even to be inferred from Major Gordon's letter to Major Jackson of Philadelphia, above quoted, in which he relates the conversation between Gen. Howe and Maj. Small, at the time they supposed he fell, from the latter of whom he derived it; but that his *death* was known to the British commander is shown as well by that letter, as by the facts recorded in Dr. Jeffries' diary, of which, it is much to be regretted, great part was lost in a late fire, but from which leaf Samuel Swett had taken minutes, and the facts relating to which the present Dr. Jeffries, his son, perfectly recollects. The Doctor's story was that after the battle was over, while he was dressing a British officer, Gen. Howe came up to him and said, "Jeffries, there is a general officer fallen; do you know Warren?" "Do I know my right hand, you may as well ask?" says Jeffries. "Come here then," says Howe, "and let me know if the report is true that he is dead." Jeffries accompanied the General to the redoubt, and on the way Howe again asked him if he was certain he could identify the person; he replied anybody can do that, for he had a whitlow on a certain finger, naming it, by which he lost a nail; and he had also a particular artificial tooth. Howe soon pointed out the body, which was immediately recognized by Jeffries. When therefore "Historian" says that "Warren's body" could not have been known or he would have been buried with distinguished honors, even if he only was considered as a mason of a high order," he argues upon a probability against the truth. Not being a mason, I am not conversant of the customs of masons in this particular, (though I never heard of fallen enemies being buried with distinguished honors because they were masons; armies would have enough to do beside their "accustomed work" if this were the case,) and I am apt to think that "Historian" is in a similar cause with myself, as it appears that Warren was known, and was not only buried without any such honors; but, as it appeared at the time of the disinterment, the body was rifled of its covering.

If "Historian" thinks it is a "prevalent idea" that Warren could not have taken any important part in the events of that day, because he was dressed in his common clothes instead of his uniform; I should reply, that not being commissioned and qualified to act as an officer, he could not with propriety have worn a uniform, even if he was provided with one, which is not probable, for it is to be inferred from Gen. Ward's orderly book in my possession, that there was not a person in uniform nor an epaulette worn within the American lines till some time after Washington arrived at Cambridge. But that Warren was distinguished by his *coadjutors* as a "*courageous*" and "fearless patriot," besides other testimony, the toast that was given at a meeting of the field officers of the sixth brigade, under Col. Frye, who assembled two months after the battle at the house of Jonathan Hastings, to celebrate the memorable 4th of August, (repeal of the stamp act) is sufficient evidence. "Immortal honor to that *patriot* and *hero*, Doctor Warren, and the brave American troops who fought the battle of Bunker Hill on the 17th of June, 1775."

As "Historian" requested "such further light on the melancholy subject as the gentleman in question could give," I have mentioned these facts, and referred to the authority from which they are derived, as I did at the time I promulgated the words which it was said the enthusiastic patriot uttered, in the time of his country's greatest need, when the enemy seemed to be carrying all before them, and after he had received what he himself

considered a mortal wound, "I am a dead man—fight on, my brave fellows, for the salvation of your country."

We have seen that it was not impossible, from the manner of his death, that he might thus have spoken, whether he was wounded once or twice before he fell. Those only, therefore, who are envious of the honors of the illustrious dead, *will be eager to disprove* the positive declaration of one who heard him. The evidence in support of the fact is of the highest authority. Let not his country, then, be deprived of the glorious example of the patriotic volunteer "without authority, yet whom none commanded," upon speculative surmises. The truth of the declaration ascribed to Warren is not only positively testified to; but the sentiment accords with his whole character. It is consistent with the account of his conduct at this particular crisis given of him by Col. Swett in his Historical Sketch of the Battle; of which, availing himself of the information collected at the late Jubilee, the public will be gratified to learn is preparing a new edition. "The chivalrous Warren," says he, "lingered to the last. His exalted spirit disdained, as a disgrace, a retreat the most inevitable. He animated the men to the most desperate daring, and when hope had fled he still disdained to fly." It is also perfectly compatible with the ardor of his feelings, when he said, "he would not set an example of retreating to the bloody blacks," and consistent to that fearless devotion to his country's cause, which led him previous to the battle to declare to Major Small, when doubting in conversation whether we should stick together, if the troops should be obliged to come to the last resort, (as I have the authority of Perez Morton, Esq., at that time Secretary of the Council, for asserting that he did,) "Depend upon it, my friend, whenever you pull a hostile trigger against my countrymen, you will find me among them."

The sentiment which he uttered in the hearing of Mr. Foster is a noble one. Though it does not increase Warren's fame, it adds something to his countrymen's pride; and no one that hears it can help throwing his thoughts back a few hours, to the interesting interview between him and Vice-President Gerry, to whose remonstrances against his exposing himself in the battle, Warren, perfectly aware of the necessity as well as the danger of it, so beautifully and prophetically replied, "Dulce et decorum est pro patria mori."

I send you Mr. Foster's letter in reply to my interrogatories, received while copying the above, which I beg you will consider as a part of this communication.

I am, respectfully,
Your obedient servant,
W. H. Sumner.

Tewksbury, August 3, 1825.

Sir,—I have read the piece in the Patriot in which it is doubted whether the toast you gave on the 4th of July, as the words of Warren, are correct. They are strictly true, and stated exactly as I told you on the morning of the anniversary. I knew Dr. Warren before that day: had seen him among the troops at Cambridge, and am certain of the fact. His words made a lasting impression on my mind, and I have repeated them a thousand times. I was a private in Capt. Walker's Company, in Bridge's Regiment, and was on the ground all the night before, building up the works. After the old engineer had fixed his stakes, Eliakim Walker,

Jonathan Beard and myself, (who are both living I believe, Mr. Beard was at the celebration with me) thought he had not got them quite straight, and we moved one of them to square it up.

The day of the battle I was near the redoubt; we did all we could; but were obliged to give up at last. The last time the British came up we were moving off all in a hurry into the rear of the redoubt, to stop them as they came up, and there it was that I saw Gen. Warren; his clothes were bloody, when he cried out to us, "I am a dead man, fight on, my brave fellows, for the salvation of your country." We had no time to do much, but got off as soon as we could. I never saw Warren after that. The British fired upon us both small and large guns on the retreat, and more of us got off than could reasonably have been expected.

I knew Gen. Putnam and Col. Prescott, well. I saw Putnam riding round, very active. I saw him ten times, at least, I should think. Putnam went off with David Baily and a number of others, and they took tools with them to intrench on Bunker Hill, but a number of them came back again. I was close by Asa Pollard when he was killed. He was the first man that was killed. The ball struck the ground and hopped along before it struck him. Mr. Benjamin Baldwin rolled him up in a blanket, and they carried him off and buried him. I do not remember anything more of very great importance. I saw a good deal, and remember a great deal, but it is not worth writing that I know of. I am willing to tell all I do know. It appears to me the blood was running down his (Warren's) arm or side when he spoke the words, but we were all in such a hurry I wont be certain about that. I shall send an order for my money under the resolve.

I am, Sir,
Your most obedient servant,
AMOS FOSTER.

General William H. Sumner.

The evidence in support of the questioned fact contained in the preceding communication, and in the letter of Amos Foster, was so conclusive that another article appeared in the Patriot of the 15th of August, 1825, acknowledging the successful vindication of the authenticity of the toast given upon the preceding 4th of July. This article, although without any signature, was universally attributed to Dr. Waterhouse, and the internal evidence points to that source, for even here is an apparent unwillingness to allow to Warren the honor he so richly merited.

The article referred to is in these words:—

BATTLE OF BUNKER HILL—ONCE MORE.

History is under obligations to the Adjutant General for his successful elucidation of a doubtful point, referred to by "Historian." It would have been well had the like pains been taken 50 years ago, as it regarded the Battle of Bunker Hill: but alluring fashion, instead of heightening the charms of truth, injures her dignified simplicity. The partisans, amongst the "Sons of Liberty," following, in that day, the fashion of monarchies, were not contented with a *glorious battle*, fought by the *people*, but must needs have some particular leader or *Hero*,—some Leonidas, who might, for what we know, have been in the rear of his 300 Spartans. Our Fathers, like all those of the whole world, deemed it expedient to emblazon victory by some well known name or some man of rank, as the

Dukes of Cumberland or York, though dead weights on their respective armies. The good Washington, when he last visited Boston expressed his pain and uneasiness at having so much credit given TO HIM, during our seven years' contest, and so little to the patriotic army and officers which he commanded. The noblest democratic battle fought was that at Bunker Hill, where each man did that which seemed good in his own eyes.

It is a mistake to suppose that the writer grudged the great credit due to Dr. Warren. In proof of it we cannot help subjoining, that if any one should think fit to attach to Warren the epithet of "chivalrous," we hope he will add it to no other valiant American who fought on that day. Before the revolutionary contest ended, there were some *chivalrous* British and French who fought bravely under our banners; but Warren stepped forth as a private citizen, in a more serious and solemn manner. The error has been in calling him a *General*, instead of an illustrious and fearless *patriot*, as was likewise Judge Winthrop, who was slightly wounded, and among the very last who retreated.

The serious question is—why sink the names of Gardiner of Cambridge,—Parker of Chelmsford,—McClary of New Hampshire,—More of ——, who all had commissions, and lost their lives, to elevate the name of one *Bostonian* who had none? Our *country people* have thought, feeling and pride, and have talked all these things over their mugs of cider, on winter evenings, for half a century past; and, take them collectively, they generally think right; and when they come to know more of John Paul Jones they may think more justly of some other foreigners; more lightly of some of our people. Truth is eternal and unbending. It allows of no tamperings, humorings, intrigues, barters or exceptions, and is not at the caprice of times, places and persons. It depends not on particular lights or positions. In studied dress, or dishabille,—in every attitude and look, *Truth* is the same; equally captivating and commanding. Histories composed of ingredients of this high quality come forth but rarely; for few can produce them. A work of elastic spirit and commanding genius, which has all the mastery of a ruling mind, appears but now and then in the long course of centuries; and when it does it commands all before it, like that voice from the dominion of thought, which philosophers, real politicians and historians have considered the Vox Dei. That is the history which alone teaches philosophy by example.

On this general subject it may not be amiss to make a particular and illustrative remark, viz., that every account, and among them this of Gen. Sumner's, tends to confirm the narrative of the Battle of Bunker Hill, written by Major Gen. Dearborn, especially the incidental or circumstantial observation of Amos Foster, who, in his letter to Gen. Sumner, says: "I know Gen. Putnam (he should have said *Colonel*) and Col. Prescott well. I saw Putnam riding round, very active. I saw him ten times at least, I should think. *Putnam* went off with David Baily and a number of others; and *they took tools with them to intrench on Bunker Hill;* but a number of them came back again," (to Breed's Hill, where the battle was raging.)

This is precisely Gen. Dearborn's account of it, which has been corroborated by Governor Eustis, and confirmed by his friend the late Mr. Andrew Cragie, who were both together on the hill, and assisted in burying Asa Pollard; and who saw Col. Putnam, "*very active, riding about.*" Truth is a spirit too close for confinement.

That first military lesson which was given to Gen. Howe, on the 17th

of June, 1775, was emphatically *the battle of the people.* Col. Prescott was the first and most commanding character in it; yet if you cast your eye on that apocryphal painting of the battle by Mr. Trumbull, you will see Col. Prescott represented more like the driver of a baggage-wagon than a soldier, while the British officers appear in all their flattered pomp of Victory and *Humanity!* We cannot denounce too strongly, nor castigate too severely, false medals, false statuary, and false pictures, or value too highly faithful ones, because of their durability.

Perhaps there will be no more appropriate place than this to introduce one or two incidents relating to Bunker Hill which came within my personal knowledge. While I was Adjutant General, I learned that Gen. Ward's Order Book was in the hands of Mr. Ward of Brookfield, a relative of the Gen., who was the Commander of the American forces at Cambridge till the 3d of July, when Gen. Washington assumed the command. I obtained the loan of that Order Book, and found it so interesting that I caused the whole volume to be copied and placed in the Adjutant General's office, where I left it when I resigned, lest the original should be lost. In the same volume there was also made a copy of Gen. Thomas's Order Book at Roxbury. That volume is now, I presume, where I left it. My chief solicitude to obtain the Order Book of Gen. Ward was to ascertain what order he had given for the fortifying of Bunker Hill. I also wanted to read his account of the battle. I found nothing of the kind; but, on the margin of the book, against the seventeenth of June, there was this memorandum: "The battle of Charlestown was fought this day. Killed, 115; wounded, 305; captivated, 30; total, 450." Gov. Gage, in his account, acknowledged a loss on the part of the British, of 1054, of whom 226 were killed, 828 wounded, including 19 officers killed and 28 wounded. It is remarkable that no full account of the battle was recorded by Gen. Ward, because hereafter everybody will inquire for his Order Book to learn about the battle. It does not appear from that book that either Putnam or Prescott made any report; nor does there appear any order approving the conduct of the troops in the battle. This omission may be accounted for by the fact that the troops were not organized, and that Gen. Ward had as yet no regular staff.

Another interesting matter that occurs to me relates to the fortifications on Bunker Hill. After my appointment, in 1818, to the office of Adjutant General, by Gov. Brooks, his staff was completed by the appointment of Samuel Swett, Benjamin Pickman, and Theodore Lynam, as aids. About this time Gen. Dearborn made a publication respecting Gen. Putnam, in which his bravery in the battle of Bunker Hill was doubted. He also, in connection with the publication, gave a "plan" of the redoubt, the breastwork and the rail fence, behind which he stated that Col. Stark's regiment, in which he was a Captain, was stationed. The plan struck Gov. Brooks as being erroneous; and he said to Col. Swett and myself, "Gentlemen, I have not been on to that ground since the battle, and if you will accompany me I will go there and examine it."

It must be recollected that Brooks returned to Cambridge on the 16th of June, the day before the battle of Bunker Hill, and that the battalion of Bridge's regiment, in which was his company, was left at Cambridge, and not ordered to Charlestown. As the troops were about to march to Charlestown, Brooks applied to Bridge for leave to go with his company, among the other troops, to Charlestown. Bridge said he had no authority

to allow it, and referred him to Gen. Ward. On applying to him he replied to Brooks, "I did not order your battalion of Bridge's regiment to Charlestown, because I want to have troops here that I can rely upon, in case the enemy should consider that the main position at Cambridge is so weakened by the expedition, that they can safely make their main attack here." This may account for Brooks not being in the battle, when a part of his regiment was there; but, as he had obtained permission from Gen. Ward to go as a volunteer, under a charge to return to his command in case of necessity, he went as a volunteer, without his company, and was engaged all the night before the battle, in counselling Putnam, and Gridley the engineer, about the position of the works that were to be thrown up. He left early in the morning, with a message from Col. Prescott to Gen. Ward, requesting a reënforcement. His recital of the position of the works at Bunker Hill must be of the highest authority.

According to assignment, the Adjutant General and Col. Swett, his first aid, met the Governor on the hill, in the beginning of the month of June, 1818, for the purpose of examining the works and comparing them with Dearborn's plan. We went into the redoubt together. After looking about him and examining the ground, the Governor said, "Gentlemen, where is the sallyport? I do not see where it was. Let us look about and see if we can find it." We found an excavation in the lines of the fort on the side opposite to that where we afterwards found it had been when the works were thrown up, the night before the battle. "Gentlemen," said the Governor, "can we verify this? For," continued he, "the fact is, the breastwork ran in a northerly or northeasterly direction from the sallyport; and if we can ascertain where that breastwork was we can identify the true position of the sallyport." He requested Col. Swett and Major Swan, (who came down with the Governor from Medford, and whose father owned or leased the ground) to go several rods in a direction which he pointed out; then to turn and walk at right angles to the course they had before taken, to see if they could find where the old breastwork was, which had probably been ploughed down. The grass was high, and it could not be seen until the gentlemen, wading the grass, came into a hollow place and ascended a little height, and then passed down into another hollow on the other side. The gentlemen exclaimed, "We have found it." Gov. Brooks said, "I thought you would; let us examine a little further. Take the same course, und go down a short distance and see if you find there the same evidences of its position." They did so, and satisfied the Governor that they had discovered the place where the breastwork was built, and thus verified the fact, that the sallyport was originally in the place where he had indicated that it ought to be found.

It was plain to the observer that if the breastwork ran in the direction indicated by Gen. Dearborn's plan, it would puzzle the commander to tell on which side of it his men should be placed, in order to defend the main position. Thus it appears, from Gen. Brooks' recollection of the ground, that the plan which Gen. Dearborn had published, in connection with his work impeaching Gen. Putnam, *was not a plan of the ground, as it was on the 17th of June*, when the battle was fought. The explanation of these facts is probably this: that Dearborn's plan was that of *the works after the retreat of the American forces, and the consequent change of the relative position of the two armies.*

For, if the works had not been thus changed, it would have been easy

for the Americans, if they designed to re-take the fort from which they had retreated, for those of them who were posted on Winter Hill and Prospect Hill to pass over Charlestown neck, and for those on Cobble Hill to cross the mill-dam over the creek, or, in winter, to go over the mill-pond on the ice, and thence to march up the hill unmolested from the breastwork.

After finishing the examination of the works on the hill, the Governor pointed out the place where those who were on the ground at the time, stated to him that Warren was killed. It was about three or four rods northwesterly from the work, near a young elm tree which had grown up since the battle. The location of the "rail fence" was also pointed out.

The American redoubt was about eight rods square. Notwithstanding the firing from the Lively, man-of-war, which commenced early in the morning, the men continued to labor steadily upon the breastwork for some time. At dawn, the officers and men on the decks of the British vessels in the harbor were seen, with their spy-glasses, taking observation. As their firing upon the works continued, with some intermissions, at length one man fell mortally wounded. The name of the man who was thus killed was Coburn. The others were so much alarmed that they hesitated to work in that place. Prescott, to show that there was not so much danger of being killed as they supposed, mounted the parapet in his banyan gown, and, strutting backward and forward upon it, he raised his "*three-cornered scraper*," as his cocked hat was called, and in raising it turned his queue around so that it hung over his right shoulder, giving him a quite ludicrous appearance; and, swinging his hat in the air, with loud exclamations he shouted to the British, "Hit *me* if you can." The men still hesitated to work while the body of Coburn was lying there, and Prescott accordingly ordered it to be buried immediately. It was interred at once, a little in the rear of the redoubt. When the order was given for the man to be buried, some one exclaimed, "What! bury a man without prayers?" Of this, Prescott took no notice.

Gen. Dearborn, in his publication, states that he saw Gen. Putnam carrying off spades and other intrenching tools when he should have been directing the forces. Dearborn, it should be noticed, was stationed behind the rail fence, which was not a favorable position for making observations. Putnam was as active as any man that morning. He saw how much necessity there was for reinforcement, and went to Cambridge to urge Gen. Ward to send it. That act Dearborn considered as retreating from the field.

From Gen. Ward's order-book, it appears that Gen. Washington took the command at Cambridge July 3, 1775, and that the first order respecting military operations which he gave, was one approving of the sentence of the court-martial upon Capt. Callender, which broke him. It is dated July 7th. Gen. Washington says:—

"It is with inexpressible concern that the General, upon his first arrival in the army, should find an officer sentenced by a general court-martial for cowardice; a crime of all others the most infamous in a soldier, the most injurious to an army, and the last to be forgiven, inasmuch as it may, and often does happen, that the cowardice of a single officer proves the destruction of an whole army. The General, therefore, with great concern, (and more especially as the transaction happened before he had the command of the troops,) thinks himself obliged, for the good of the service, to approve the judgment of the court-martial with respect to

Capt. John Callender, who is hereby sentenced to be cashiered. Capt. John Callender is accordingly cashiered, and dismissed from all further service in the Continental army as an officer."

The justice of this sentence was universally acknowledged. It should be stated, however, to the credit of Capt. Callender, that he was so much mortified by the decision, that he determined to restore himself to favor; and for this purpose, he joined his company as a volunteer private, and fought bravely in every action in which his company was engaged. At the battle of Long Island, after both the captain and lieutenant of the company were killed, by the request of the company he took the command. He continued in the service, and distinguished himself on many occasions.

It is a very singular circumstance, that Gov. Gage had determined to take possession of Dorchester heights on the same day that the battle of Bunker Hill took place; but the demonstration by the Provincials, in taking possession of Breed's Hill, diverted him from that purpose. In the following year, we took possession of Dorchester heights ourselves. At the time they were taken possession of, as I have received the impression from some person—whose name I do not now recollect—Washington had but little ammunition. In order to conceal from the soldiers the true state of the army in that respect, he ordered powder casks to be filled with sand, and that several loads of them should be carried to the heights by the way of Roxbury, where the right wing of the army, under Gen. Thomas, was posted. By this deception, the soldiers were satisfied that the army was in a condition to defend itself, notwithstanding the reports that the supply of ammunition was nearly exhausted.

After possession was taken of the heights, hogsheads were filled with earth, and so placed that they could be rolled down upon the enemy to break the columns, if they should dare attempt to march up the hill.

As my intentions in this article were limited to facts and incidents connected with Gen. Warren, I will forego the recital of other items which crowd upon my recollection, and which may form the basis of some future communication.

REMINISCENCE OF GEN. WARREN.

Dr. David Townsend, June 17, 1775, in the morning, went to Brighton to see Mr. Carnes's family of Boston. About one in the afternoon, Mr. Carnes came and reported that there was hot work. The British at Boston, with their shipping, were firing very heavy on our men at Bunker Hill. Dr. Townsend said he must go and work for Dr. Warren. He was very young, and a student with Dr. Warren, who was appointed Major General on the day previous. Gen. Warren left him in Boston to protect his effects, and he had just before come to Cambridge from Brighton to Gen. Ward's quarters, and found Cambridge quiet as the Sabbath,—all the troops gone, and no one at Ward's quarters but Gen. Warren, who was sick with one of his oppressive nervous headaches, and, as usual, had retired to rest, and taken some camomile tea for relief. Mrs. Hastings said no one else was in the house. Gen. Warren told Dr. Townsend that if he would wait he would accompany him to Bunker Hill immediately. He took tea and walked with him as far as the road to Milk Row, in Cambridge. People said there were some wounded soldiers there, brought away, and Warren remarked that Dr. Townsend had better remain and dress their wounds, which he did. The British ship Glasgow was firing across. Gen. Warren had presided in the Provincial Congress that morning, and was decorated very much. He wore a light cloth coat with covered buttons worked in silver, and his hair was curled up at the sides of his head and pinned up. He was very cheerful and heartily engaged in preparation for the battle, which was just commencing, and the muskets must have begun firing when he arrived. When Warren left Dr. Townsend he had a cane only. Dr. Foster of Charlestown was principal surgeon to the troops. Dr. Eustis, probably Dr. Hart, and Dr. Brickett, who was Lieutenant Colonel, and Dr. Townsend were at the hospital, the first house on the north side of Bunker Hill, known as the Sun Tavern. Col. Patterson's regiment was at Jack Tufts's storehouse, near down to the road leading to Milk Row. Dr. Townsend took dressings and instruments with him. He was rather of opinion that there was a battery in Mystic River. He saw nothing of Gen. Ward or his aids. All the troops, except Patterson's, went upon Bunker Hill. Col. Gardner was wounded with a musket ball, and carried home by four men with a blanket and poles. The wound was just plastered together before he arrived at the hospital. He did not remain there. Dr. Church did not belong then to the hospital. There was very little organization of that department. Col. Small and Gen. Warren were very well acquainted with each other, and both were remarkable for very fine manners. Dr. Warren cheerfully avowed his presentiment that he was destined to fall in the conflict. The truth of this presentiment, alas, was soon to be recorded in his heart's blood! A nobler heart never panted after immortality.

J. S. L.

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