Yellott- Address - 1854

ADDRESS

Delivered on October 19th, 1854,

BY

COLEMAN YELLOTT, ESQ.,

Upon the Occasion of the Laying of the

CORNER-STONE

OF THE

Court House of Baltimore County,

AT TOWSONTOWN.

TOWSONTOWN:

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1854.

ADDRESS.

Ladies and Gentlemen:—This day will be remembered as an important one in the history of your County. We have laid the Corner Stone of the building. From its completion will date the final and complete separation of Baltimore County from Baltimore City.

The building we have this day begun will be erected, not only for the present, but for many future generations. A century hence your descendants will assemble in this Temple of Justice; and then the ceremonies of this nineteenth of October, eighteen hundred and fifty-four, will have become a tradition of the past, and those who now witness them will be referred to as men of the "olden time."

In this country, and in this progressive age, a century is a vast period. How many wonderful changes, and what important events it brings forth! Among the nations of the Old World, Time creeps along at a sluggish pace; but here he flies upon eagle wings. What it there requires many hundred years to accomplish, is here performed in a single life-time.

A century ago, nine-tenths of the present area of this great Republic was a wilderness, tenanted only by roving savages.—The settlements of the European colonists were scattered over the comparatively narrow space between the eastern slope of the Alleghanies and the Atlantic coast; and the entire population of those settlements did not equal half that now contained within the single State of Pennsylvania.

A century ago, there stood on Manhattan Island, at the mouth of the Hudson River, a thriving little town, about equal in population to one of the twenty wards of Baltimore. That little town is now a vast city—with a population of over six hundred thousand—and a commerce rivaling that of London.

A century ago, there stood along the swampy shores of the Patapsco, an inconsiderable village, containing four brick houses, about twenty others, and about three hundred inhabitants. That village is now Baltimore City.

Europe has never witnessed such wonderful changes—such rapid progress in the march of improvement—as are here going on in every quarter of the land; and if time is to be measured by events, we may justly claim to be the longest lived people of the world.

The history of your own County is a striking illustration of the ever-changing, ever-progressive character of our country and people.

Baltimore County was established in the year 1659. Its limits were then far more extensive than at present—embracing not only all of Harford and Carroll Counties, but large portions of Anne Arundel, Howard, and Frederick. At that time, the population of all Maryland was only twelve thousand, and that of the newly erected county was probably less than one-sixth of that number. Now, there are within these original limits of Baltimore County, over three hundred thousand inhabitants, or more than half the population of the whole State.

In 1726, an act of assembly was passed, taking from Baltimore County, and adding to Anne Arundel, all that portion of her territory south of the Patapsco.

In 1748, Frederick County was established, and the limits of Baltimore County thereby greatly narrowed on the West.

In 1773, Harford was taken from her on the East; and in 1836, she was made to contribute another large portion of her territory for the erection of Carroll.

Baltimore, sixty years ago, was known only as "Baltimore Town in Baltimore County." Her population having increased to about twenty thousand, she was incorporated as a city in the year 1796. But she still remained a portion of the county.

It is true that she had been allowed a distinct representation in the Legislature of the State. But, in almost every respect, she was but Baltimore City in Baltimore County. The same Court of Oyer and Terminer exercised criminal jurisdiction over both; and Baltimore County Court, at the same terms, heard and decided all civil causes, whether the parties were residents of the city or county. There were the same Sheriff, Clerk, and Jurors.—There was the same Record Office, the

same Court House, Alms House, and Jail. The incorporation of Baltimore into a City did not separate her from the County —in so-far as the administration of the laws was involved. In this respect, at least, they remained as before, constituting the same political division of the State.

The separation now about to be consummated has been a gradual one.

In 1816, Baltimore City Court was established—with criminal jurisdiction within the city only.

In 1823, an act of Assembly was passed, requiring the Judges of Baltimore County Court to hold distinct terms for the trial of causes in which the defendants were "residents of the county, without the limits of the city." The same act directed that the jurors summoned to attend these county terms, should be selected from among the residents of the county outside the city limits.

At the session of 1843, the General Assembly affirmed an act of the previous session, (which thus became a part of the State Constitution,) providing for the election of a separate Sheriff for Baltimore City.

The Constitution adopted by the Convention on the 13th of May, 1851, provided for an entire change in the judiciary system of the State. The operation of that Constitution is to complete the separation of Baltimore City and Baltimore County. They are now distinct political divisions of the State—as much so as any two of the counties. Though your courts still hold their sessions within the city limits, they only do so by virtue of a special proviso in the Constitution, which declares "that Baltimore County Court may hold its sittings within the limits of the city of Baltimore, until provision shall be made by law for the location of a county seat, within the limits of the said county proper, and the erection of a Court House and all other appropriate buildings, for the convenient administration of justice in said court." Thus the territory embraced within the corporate limits of Baltimore, no longer constitutes a portion of Baltimore County; and the area of the latter has been to that extent still further reduced.

Although thus deprived again and again of portions of her territory, Baltimore County has continued steadily to increase in wealth and population. As we have before stated, her population two hundred years ago was about 2000. In 1773, it had increased to 17,238. Since then, Harford, half of Carroll, and Baltimore City have been taken from her; and yet, four years ago she could boast a population of 41,592, larger than that of any other county of the State.

This is the fourth time the County Seat of Baltimore County has been removed.—It seems to be the general impression that the first Court House for Baltimore County was at Joppa, upon Gunpowder River. But this is an error.

It is a singular fact, that no living man can tell, with any degree of certainty, the place where the County Seat of Baltimore County was first located. The County was established in 16 9, and the Court House was not built at Joppa until nearly 50 years afterwards.

The County Court held its first session at the dwelling of Captain Thomas Howell, in the year 1661. Soon afterwards a Court House was built, not at Joppa, on Gunpowder River, but at some point on Bush River, which empties into the Bay about four miles farther north. By reference to Bacon's edition of the Laws of Maryland, it will be found that the County Seat was on *Bush* River, as late as 1683, and that a port of entry was established there in that year.

The Court House on Bush River was abandoned at some period between 1683 and 1707, and a second one erected on Gunpowder River, at a place called "Forster's Neck."

In 1707, the Provincial Assembly of Maryland passed an act, directing that the Court House at Forster's Neck "should be deserted, and in lieu thereof fifty acres of land in a tract on said river, belonging to Anne Felks, called "Taylor's Choice," should be erected into a town, and the Court House of the said county should be built there." The place designated for the County Seat by this act, was the same afterwards known as Joppa.

The Commissioners appointed for the purpose, proceeded forthwith to build the new Court House, and had nearly finished it, when to the great disappointment of the good people of the county, the news came across the ocean that Her Royal Highness, Queen Anne, had vetoed the bill! What grave reasons influenced Her Majesty to prefer that the Court House of Baltimore County should not be removed from Forster's Neck to Taylor's Choice, history hath not disclosed. At all events, the Commissioners discovered that they had been proceeding under a void act; and they found

it necessary to obtain a subsequent law to legalise what they had done. This was passed in 1712, and is entitled "an act for settling Baltimore County Court at the new house at Joppa." It recites the former proceedings of the Commissioners, confirms them, and then declares—"that Baltimore County Court shall be from henceforth held at the said Court House, now built at the town of Joppa, and not elsewhere; and that the same house be, to all intents, constructions and purposes, adjudged, used, reputed and taken, as the proper Court House for Baltimore County."

It appears that the Commissioners for building this Court House at Joppa, were peculiarly unfortunate. Their first blunder was in commencing operations before the Queen had approved the bill. They made another one equally serious; in putting the building upon the land of a minor, to which they had acquired no legal title. It was found necessary to get an act passed in 1724 to remedy this latter mistake. This act, as published in Kilty's edition, states, in its preamble, that a Court House and Prison had been erected at Joppa, at the county expense, but that the right of the land was in a minor, "who could not convey, although his father, Col. James Maxwell, had received full satisfaction for the same." It then proceeds to declare, that the two acres of land on which the Court House and Prison were built, "shall be to the use of the County forever." It further provides that certain Commissioners should, by purchase or condemnation by a jury, obtain twenty acres of land at Joppa, and lay it out into forty lots, "to be erected into a town." It also directs that no house to be built in said town, shall have any chimney unless of brick or stone, and that each house shall cover at least four hundred feet, or about twenty feet square.—But the most important provision in this law, in reference to the commercial prosperity of Joppa, was one which would be regarded at this day as rather a curious specimen of legislation.

The last section provided, that every debtor who should bring tobacco to Joppa for the purpose of paying a debt, should be allowed a discount or reduction of ten per cent. on the claim. This was intended as an inducdment to draw trade to the new county seat, which was also made a port of entry. The result proved that the legislators of that day were tolerably good judges of human nature. Tobacco was brought to Joppa in vast quantities; and tradition informs us that she soon became an important shipping point, carrying on a considerable commerce, not only with the West Indies, but with Europe. Her population was never large, but she was one of the most prosperous and important seaports of Maryland, before the first house had been erected at Baltimore.

The Courts were held at Joppa down to 1768. In that year, an act was passed for the removal of the County Seat to "Baltimore Town." From that time may be dated the "decline and fall" of the ancient town of Joppa. No vestige of her former glory now remains. The old court house was sold, and has long since crumbled away; her wharves, at which hundreds of the largest merchantmen have been laden, have disappeared; her dwellings have fallen, one by one, until scarcely their foundations can be traced. A solitary tenement, of antique style and venerable appearance, standing on the Harford shore of Gunpowder River, about half a mile north of the railroad bridge, is seen by the traveller passing between Baltimore and Philadelphia. That lonely building is all that now remains to mark the spot where Joppa once stood. Her history has never been written, and those who could have furnished the materials for it, have now passed to the tomb. By this time her very existence would have been almost forgotten, except for the name of the numerous "Joppa roads" which still exist, and remind us that the inhabitants of every section of Baltimore and Harford counties were once accustomed to resort to that important county seat, to attend to Courts and pay their debts in tobacco, less ten per cent. deducted according to law!

How different a fortune was destined for Baltimore, the next and fourth County Seat of Baltimore County. Of all the chief commercial cities of the Atlantic coast, she is the youngest, and, considering the recent period since she was founded, her growth has been the most rapid and wonderful. New York, originally called New Amsterdam, was founded by the Netherlanders, as far back as 1614. Boston was founded in 1630, and Charleston in 1680; Philadelphia, on the arrival of Penn in 1684, contained 2,500 inhabitants. New Orleans was founded in 1718.

It was not until 1729, that the Provincial Assembly of Maryland passed an act, entitled "an act for erecting a town on the north side of Patapsco, in Baltimore Coun-

ty, and for laying out in lots, sixty acres of land, in and about the place where one John Fleming now lives." This John Fleming seems to have been, at that day, the sole inhabitant—the entire population of Baltimore Town. The act appointed Commissioners for the purpose of laying out Mr. Fleming's homestead, then called "Cole's Harbor"—into sixty equal lots of about one acre each. Such was the sagacity of this "oldest inhabitant," and such the foresight of the members of the Assembly, that they thought it not unreasonable to suppose, that, in due course of time, and under the encouragement of favorable legislation, a town might be made to grow up around "Cole's Harbor," with a population of full sixty families. These sanguine hopes were not disappointed.

In 1732, three years afterwards, another act was pased "for erecting a town on a creek, divided on the east from the town lately laid out in Baltimore county, called Baltimore Town, on the land whereon Edward Fell keeps store." This new city was called "Jonas-Town," afterwards Jones' Town; and was of the moderate dimensions of ten acres laid out into twenty lots.

In 1745, in the joint petition of the inhabitants of both places, Baltimore and Jones' Towns were incorporated into one, under the common name of "Baltimore Town." In 1747 Baltimore Town was further enlarged by the addition of about eighteen acres of ground. The act of assembly providing for this extension contained the following wise provision for the safety of all the tenements then, or afterwards to be, erected in Baltimore:—"Any person having a house in the said town with a chimney, and in use, who shall not, after the first day of December, keep a ladder high enough to extend to the top of the roof of such house, shall forfeit and pay ten shillings current money. He must have been a true patriot who suggested this important measure for providing against conflagrations. Who can tell whether it was not the means of saving the infant settlement again and again from destruction, and preserving "Baltimore Town," that she might become what we now behold her!

Fostered by such prudent legislation, and protected by her high ladders and numerous water buckets, Baltimore continued to prosper and increase in population, until, in the year 1752, she could boast of having full three hundred inhabitants, and shipping to the amount of one brig and one sloop.

Two years afterwards there was great consternation in Baltimore. Braddock's army had been defeated; and it was reported that the French and Indians had advanced eastward to within thirty miles of the town. The Inhabitants were so alarmed that they had prepared to desert their homes and embark on board vessels in the harbor for the purpose of seeking safety in Virginia. The report fortunately proved unfounded. But it is nevertheless an historical fact, strongly illustrating the wonderful progress of this country, that as late as November, 1754, only one hundred years ago, the inhabitants of yonder great city seriously apprehended an attack from a band of a few hundred Indians advancing across the Alleghany mountains.

Fourteen years afterwards, Baltimore had become so important a place that it was proposed to make her the county seat. An act for that purpose was accordingly passed on the 22d of June, 1768; and very soon afterwards the first court house was built at Baltimore at the place where the Battle Monument now stands—that being then the northern termination of Calvert street.

When the constitution of 1776 was adopted, Baltimore had so much increased in population that it was thought just that she should be allowed the privilege of electing two delegates to the General Assembly, the same number given to Annapolis. But the members who formed the constitution seemed to have been suspicious that the prosperity of Baltimore was an ephemeral one, and that she might probably soon begin to decay like her neighbor Joppa. They, therefore, added a proviso in these words: "If the said inhabitants of the town shall so decrease, as that the number of persons having a right of suffrage therein shall have been, for the space of seven years successively, less than one-half the number of voters in some one county in this State, such town shall thenceforward cease to send two delegates or representatives to the House of Delegates, until the said town shall have one half of the number of voters in some one county in this State."

They had much more confidence in the continued growth of Annapolis; and, therefore, thought it entirely unnecessary to insert any such condition to the enjoyment of her right of electing two representatives.

Seventy-eight years have since rolled

round—and Annapolis, the former "Athens of America," still adorns the banks of the beautiful Severn—but her commerce and prosperity are gone, and her population of three thousand is less than one third that of the smallest county—while yonder stands Baltimore town with nearly a quarter of a million of inhabitants, more than were to be found in all Maryland when the constitution of 1776 was adopted. Such is the uncertainty of all human predictions, and such the wonderful changes which the period of a single life-time will bring forth in this Heaven-favored land.

Such is a brief narrative of the establishment of the former county seats for Baltimore County. You have assembled to witness the foundation of a new one. There is a peculiarity about this meeting which distinguishes it from all former ones convened upon similar occasions. When your ancestors assembled to lay the corner-stone of their first court house on Bush river—when they met at Forster's neck upon Gunpowder river—when they met to found Joppa—and when they met to witness the commencement of the court-house at Baltimore—they met together as the subjects of a British King. You have assembled here to-day as American freemen.

The people of this country are ever so intent upon the employments of the present, and so eager to anticipate the improvements of the future, that they are seldom inclined to pause and look back upon the scenes of the past. But there are occasions, like the present, when it is fit that those scenes should be recalled to memory. Though pride may tell us that we are wiser than our ancestors, we can always be profited by the contemplation of their noble examples; and gratitude should teach us never to forget the patriotic services of those by whom the foundations of our country's prosperity were laid.

We meet upon a day which should ever be held sacred by all true Americans. On the nineteenth of October, 1781, after a three weeks siege, Cornwallis surrendered himself and his army prisoners to George Washington. By that surrender the war of the Revolution was virtually ended, and the Independence of the American Colonies finally consummated.

In the glorious struggle which obtained that Independence, no State bore a more conspicuous and heroic part than our own Maryland; and no county of Maryland was more distinguished, through the gallant deeds of her patriotic sons, than that of Baltimore.

The richest wealth of any people is the fame of their great men. All other evidences of their existence may pass away—this only is immortal.

Carthage has long since mouldered into the dust—but the name of her Hannibal still lives and reminds us of what his country once was. Sparta is no more, but the name of her Leonidas preserves the remembrance of her ancient glory. Athens has dwindled to an unimportant village, but the fame of her Solon, her Demosthenes, her Themistocles, and many others distinguished in letters or in arms, remind us that she was once the freest and most enlightened nation of antiquity. And so with ancient Rome—the names of her Cicero and her Brutus, of her Cæser and her Scipio, hand down to modern times the remembrance that a city, built along the shores of the muddy Tiber, and now too weak to defend herself against the invasion of any petty army of French or Austrians who may choose to take possession—that this feeble city was once the proud mistress of the civilized world.

It is the duty of every people to cherish the memory of its great men—whether their distinction has been won by efforts of intellect or by deeds of heroism in arms. The renown of a great statesman, an accomplished scholar, an eloquent orator, or a successful warrior, forms a portion of the reputation of his country, and every citizen should feel a just pride in endeavoring to perpetuate its remembrance.

Full justice has never been done to the memory of the noble heroes whom Maryland contributed to the armies of the revolution. The first histories of that eventful struggle—prepared at times when the materials for accurate narratives were accessible—were generally the productions of citizens of the Northern States. The men of the South, prompt in action, had less taste than their Northern neighbors for writing accounts of their achievements, and fewer facilities for publishing such histories, even if they had been disposed to write them.

The result was, that the historians of the North, without meaning to do injustice to the patriot warriors of the South, gave especial prominence to the achievements of those who belonged to their own section. While enlarging with a just pride, upon the gallant deeds of their own ancestors and neighbors, they passed over in comparative silence those performed by the

soldiery from other sections of the confederacy.

Thus, every school boy in Maryland, for the last fifty years, has been taught to admire the heroism of a Montgomery, a Greene, a Gates, a Putnam, a Sullivan and a Wayne—while the equally glorious services of the patriot soldiers of his own State—of a Smallwood, a Gist, a Howard, a Smith and a Williams—have scarcely been heard of, or communicated as if they were of a character which made them comparatively unimportant.

It is full time that this injustice should be repaired. A recent interesting work written by Mr. M'Sherry, of Frederick, has done much to accomplish this object. I do not propose to go over the ground which he has already occupied with so much ability. The time which it is proper for me to consume by this address will not allow me to recite a history of the heroic achievements of the Old Maryland Line—achievements which covered them and their State with glory, and which should be remembered with admiration, gratitude and pride by their descendants, to the latest generation.

With a population scarcely exceeding two hundred thousand, Maryland contributed to the continental army no less than 15,229 regulars, besides more than 5,000 militia. No invading army occupied her own soil, but she generously sent forth half of her grown male population to defend that of her sister States. Maryland was the first to nominate George Washington as commander-in-chief of the American forces, and she ever sustained him with a devotion unsurpassed even by the State of his birth.

At Long Island, at White Plains, at Harlem Heights, at Germantown, at Brandywine, at Monmouth, at Camden, at Cowpens, at Guilford, and at Eutaw, the best blood of Maryland was poured out freely for the common cause, and it was Maryland soldiers who were first and always ready to meet face to face, with fixed bayonets, the veteran legions of British regulars. Among that noble band there were many deserving of a conspicuous notice upon the pages of history.

There was a Smallwood, than whom a more gallant officer was not to be found in the whole American army. He served throughout the war, and led the Maryland columns on many a victorious charge. Directly after the close of the contest, the Legislature of his State testified their admiration of his services by thrice electing him her Chief Executive. He now sleeps under the sod of his native county, near the waters of the Potomac, with not even a stone to mark the spot where the remains of a hero are laid.

There was a Williams, who began his career at the first dawn of the Revolution as a Lieutenant in a rifle company raised in Frederick, and marched to join the army of Washington, encamped around Boston. He came out of the war a Brigadier General—and no soldier ever won promotion by more arduous, patriotic, and gallant achievements.

There were many others from other parts of the State, whose names are worthy of our remembrance and admiration. Of these, I have not time now to speak.

But there were men, not less distinguished than any of those alluded to—who stood during that war, among the columns of the American army, as the immediate representatives of the patriotism and bravery of your own County; and at a meeting like this, held upon the anniversary of a day so important in American history, the names of such men should not be forgotten, nor their services fail to be remembered.

In December, 1774, a convention of delegates from all parts of Maryland, assembled at Annapolis, and recommended to their fellow-citizens to prepare for the contest which they foresaw was soon to be commenced. A few weeks afterwards, in response to this call, a band of patriots assembled within the limits of your own County, and organized as the "Baltimore Independent Company." It was the first revolutionary corps organized in Maryland; and a young man, little over thirty years of age, a native of Baltimore County, was chosen its captain. That young man was Mordecai Gist. Three months afterwards news arrived that the war had actually begun, and that blood had already been shed at Lexington and at Concord.

On the 27th of August, 1776, General Howe's army of British and Hessians, thirty thousand strong, were on Long Island advancing to attack the City of New York. Gen. Washington was there, determined to defend it; but the forces under his command were but little more than half as numerous as those of the invaders. A large portion of the American army, under Putnam, were stationed around Brooklyn to resist the enemy and prevent his nearer approach to New York. Far in advance of the main body of Putnam's

army was stationed its right wing, under Sterling; placed there to defend the widest and most practicable of the three routes to Brooklyn. In this wing is found a battalion of Marylanders. At dawn of day the dense columns of the British forces advance upon the American lines. After sustaining for a time the attack of superior numbers, the left wing of the Americans is forced to retreat, and soon the centre under Sullivan also gives way. The British advance and occupy the grounds between the American right wing and their entrenchments at Brooklyn;—and there stands Sterling's little division almost completely surrounded by an enemy of more than five times its numbers. The only chance of escape is to ford a broad and dangerous creek always before considered impassable.

But Cornwallis' regiments are fast advancing upon them. Those regiments must be checked, or Sterling's entire command are lost. All the rest are ordered to make good their retreat,—while a devoted band of four hundred Marylanders, under their brave leader, rush forward with fixed bayonets upon the overwhelming forces of Cornwallis. Five times does this Spartan band charge upon the foe. Each time the Marylanders are forced back by the mere weight of superior numbers. Another and even more desperate charge is made—and lo! the choice veterans of Cornwallis are giving way, and victory is almost won where it was never hoped for. But at this very moment, the brave Marylanders are assailed by fresh forces in their rear, while the Hessians, under De Heister, reinforce Cornwallis in front. Outnumbered ten to one, and attacked on all sides at once, they attempt to escape. A portion are forced to surrender; but three companies, animated by the heroic example of their brave commander, cut their way through the thick ranks of the enemy, swim the deep creek behind, and arrive in safety upon the opposite bank. The valor of those four hundred Marylanders has saved the rest of the right wing—but it has been done at the sacrifice of one-half of their own numbers.

The man who led those gallant Marylanders upon that eventful day, and who at last lion-like fought his way triumphantly through clouds of encompassing foes, was Major Mordecai Gist, of Baltimore County. It was the first time that the American Continentals had dared to meet in the fierce encounter of bayonets the regulars of Great Britain—and it was Mordecai Gist who first taught his countrymen that they were equal to the sustainment of such a conflict.

Even to the present day the people of Long Island point out the scene of that desperate struggle, where Gist, with a few hundred Marylanders, withstood, again and again, the overwhelming shock of the whole left wing of the British army.

Shortly afterwards Gist was made a Colonel, and in 1779 a Brigadier General. At Germantown he was in the thickest of the fight; and on the disastrous field of Camden it was Gist who stood side by side with the noble De Kalb, and held the enemy in check long after Gates with the rest of the American forces had retreated from the field. Lee, in his memoirs of the campaigns of the South, says: "Rawdon could not bring the brigade of Gist to recede; bold was the pressure of the foe—firm as a rock the resistance of Gist."—Here, as at Brooklyn, Gist's command formed a part of the right wing of the patriot army, and here, as there, he was the last officer to retire from the field, and was able to do so and escape capture, only by cutting his way, with a mere handful of devoted followers, through the midst of the enemy's ranks. Had the rest of the army displayed half the same gallantry as the Marylanders, the battle of Camden, instead of a defeat, would have been one of the most glorious victories of the American arms. There fell the brave De Kalb, covered with wounds, and his dying moments were spent in expressing his praise of the noble Maryland regiments, and his admiration of Gist and its other gallant officers.

Among those officers, standing foremost in every charge upon that bloody field, and among the last to leave it, was another son of Baltimore County—and one, of whose achievements on many other occasions, she has just cause to be proud. I speak of the gallant, the lion-hearted Howard.

John Eager Howard, was born in Baltimore County, on the 4th of June, 1752. At twenty-three years of age he joined the American army as a Captain in the regiment of Col. J. Carville Hall, raised from Baltimore and Harford Counties. Soon after, we find him in the army of Washington at the battle of White Plains. At the battle of Germantown, in the absence of its Colonel, detained by sickness, the youthful Howard had command of his regiment and led it again and again into the thickest of the fight. He was with

Washington at Monmouth, with Gates at Camden, with Greene at Guilford, Hobkirk's Hill, and Eutaw—and at Cowpens, though not first in command, was the most prominent hero of the day. No American officer during those seven years' war was more frequently engaged in desperate conflicts with the enemy, and by none were performed more numerous acts of heroic daring. The distant cannonade was not the kind of warfare pleasing to his ardent temperament. He delighted to meet the foe in the close encounter of crossed bayonets. At Camden, Cowpens, Guilford, and Eutaw, he gave evidences of his unequalled skill in the use of that dangerous weapon. At Camden, after Gates had fled from the field, Howard at the head of his Regiment, charged upon the ranks of the enemy, drove them before him with his keen bayonets, and was near retrieving the fortunes of the day. At Cowpens, cheering on his men, he rushed like a thunderbolt upon the British Infantry while advancing as if to certain victory. The shock was terrible—the foe were unable to stand before it. Tarlton's best troops recoiled—fled—and Howard stood master of the field. He had charged without orders, and, as he stood with the swords of seven British officers in his hands, whom he had just taken prisoners, Morgan rode up to him and said—"You have done well, for you are successful; had you failed, I would have shot you."

After this victory at Cowpens, Gen. Greene gave orders that the Maryland Line should use the bayonet in every battle. At Guilford these orders were nobly executed; and Howard, with his Maryland bayonets, again drove before him the choicest veterans of the Brittsh army. At Eutaw, when a large portion of his army began to waver and fall back, Greene ordered the Marylanders and Virginians to reserve their fire and charge with the bayonet.

That desperate charge, made in the face of a close and murderous fire, decided the fortune of the day. Howard's regiment was received by the "Buffs," a choice Irish corps; and here was witnessed the fiercest encounter of that hard fought field. Ranks mingled together; bayonets were crossed; and for a time, there was between these two brave bands, the most bloody hand to hand struggle. But the "Buffs" were at last forced to give way. General Greene rode up and complimented Howard's regiment and its commander in the warmest terms. In his despatches, giving an account of the battle, Greene said: "Nothing could exceed the gallantry of the Maryland Line. Col. Williams, Howard, and all the officers, exhibited acts of uncommon bravery, and the free use of the bayonet, by this and some other corps, gave us the victory."

After the close of the Revolution, the State of Maryland testified her appreciation of Col. Howard's gallant services by thrice electing him her Governor, and afterwards twice sending him to represent her in the Senate of the United States.—Gen. Washington invited him to a seat in his Cabinet, as Secretary of War, which high honor he magnanimously declined.

During the war of 1812, Howard was still living. When the British army, flushed with their easy victory at Bladensburg, were threatening an attack upon Baltimore, some of the more timid of its inhabitants proposed to purchase the safety of their property from impending destruction by an inglorious capitulation.—Howard answered the proposition indignantly with a response worthy of his own character, and of lasting remembrance.—"I have," said he, "as much property at stake as most persons, and I have four sons in the field. But sooner would I see my sons weltering in their blood, and my property reduced to ashes, than so far disgrace the country."

There was another of Baltimore County's representatives in the armies of the Revolution, whose name should not be forgotten. Though not born on her soil, he had lived there from his earliest boyhood. Directly after the first news of the conflict at Lexington, the committee of safety of Baltimore, headed by its chairman, Mr. Purviance, took the bold resolution of forthwith arresting the British Governor of Maryland, (Eden) then at Annapolis. They looked around for some daring spirit, willing to execute their perilous command, and found the agent whom they sought, in the person of Samuel Smith, then commander of one of the newly raised patriot companies. Capt. Smith, then a youth of twenty-two, proceeded at once to the execution of the orders of the Committee. But these orders were disapproved by the general committee of the State, and Capt. Smith was ordered to return to Baltimore.

This gallant youth, soon after promoted to a Colonelcy, won unfading laurels by

his noble defence of Fort Mifflin, through a seven week's siege, against the powerful land and naval forces of the British, seeking to open the communication between Philadelphia and the Atlantic. He endured with Washington's army the privations of the winter's camp at Valley Forge; and his undaunted courage was displayed on the fields of Brandywine and Monmouth. After the adoption of the Federal Constitution, he was frequently elected to represent his district in the national Congress; and, for the almost unexampled period of twenty-three years, filled with great distinction, the exalted position of Senator of the United States from Maryland. In 1814, when the land and naval forces of Great Britain made their attack upon Baltimore, General Smith was the commanding officer charged with the responsible duty of its defence; and it was owing chiefly to the prudence and firmness displayed by him on that occasion, that the invaders were repulsed, and the fair Monumental city saved from the same fate which had just before befallen the National Capital.

These patriot heroes are now no more. Gist, and Howard, and Smith, and the other gallant leaders of the old Maryland Line, have all gone, one by one, to their final resting place. But the work which they aided to accomplish still survives—American Liberty, achieved by their valor and consecrated by their blood, still blesses their native land—the richest patrimony which they could bequeath to their descendants. The sun which shines upon us to-day, in all his course from creation's dawn, has never looked down upon a people like this, or a country as truly great and glorious as ours—

"Our Country! 'tis a glorious land!
With broad arms stretch'd from shore to shore,
The proud Pacific chafes her strand,
She hears the dark Atlantic roar;
And, cradled mid her clustering hills,
Sweet vales in dreamlike beauty hide,
Where love the air with music fills,
And calm content and peace abide:
For plenty here her fullness pours
In rich profusion o'er the land,
And sent to seize her generous stores,
There prowls no tyrant's hireling band.
Great God! we thank thee for this home—
This bounteous birth-land of the free;
Where wanderers from afar may come,
And breathe the air of Liberty:
Still may her flowers untrampled spring,
Her harvests wave, her cities rise;
And yet, till Time shall fold his wing,
Remain Earth's loveliest paradise!"

While enjoying these priceless blessings, let us never cease to remember with gratitude those through whose sacrifices they were obtained; nor forget that we too have an important duty to perform, not only to ourselves and our posterity, but to the whole human race.

Of the whole habitable globe, America is the only spot where enlightened, constitutional liberty finds a secure dwelling place.

Greece was once free, but the descendants of the brave Athenian democracy are now the degraded subjects of a king. Rome was once a great republic; but for centuries, all Italy has been divided into petty principalities, whose citizens have never been permitted to enjoy the smallest degree of either civil or religious liberty. France, towards the close of the last century, planted the tree of freedom, but the ambition of Napoleon the Great soon uprooted it from her soil. A few years ago, she again proclaimed herself a republic; but another Bonaparte is now her imperial master.

But America—our own loved America—still keeps burning, and as brightly as of yore, the sacred fires of Liberty kindled at her altars by the patriot heroes of seventy-six. These fires are beacon lights to the world—cheering the hopes of the oppressed, animating their hearts—and giving them courage to imitate our example.

Our gates have been opened wide to the pilgrims of every clime; and our hands have been outstretched to welcome them into this beautiful garden of Freedom, won by the valor, and consecrated by the toil and blood of our revolutionary sires. Its fruits they have been permitted freely to enjoy in common with ourselves.

But is the duty of hospitality the only one we have to perform? He takes but a circumscribed view of the destiny intended for America, by an all-wise Providence, who thinks it limited to so narrow a sphere. Her mission is even far more important. The benefits which she is destined to confer upon mankind are of a nature far more comprehensive and exalted.

It is impossible for all nations to become American citizens. Were we ever so willing to receive them, and our country ever so capable of maintaining them, it would be physically impossible for them to make one universal emigration to our shores. But there is one great benefit which we *can* confer upon every nation of the earth—there is one great everlasting charity which we have it in our power to extend to each and all of them; and this it is our duty to do. We can, by our example, teach them all the pathway to Freedom's shrine.

By guarding from every danger, foreign or domestic, our own liberties, and preserving as a sacred thing our own constitution, we will show the capability of mankind for self-government, and thus prove the fallacy of all former theories about the "divine rights" of kings; while the continuance of our country's unparalled prosperity will convince an admiring world that a people can govern themselves far better than it can be done by a monarch upon his throne. Thus America will hold aloft a lamp, whose sun-like radiance will illumine every shore, and enable nations hitherto in darkness, to see the deformities of those

"Pagod things of sabre sway,
With fronts of brass and feet of clay,"

whom they have been taught, for thousands of years, to reverence and obey as Demi-Gods especially delegated to rule them by the will of the Almighty himself. Then thrones will begin to totter; and upon their ruins will arise as in our own fair land, the sacred altars of civil and religious liberty. Then and thus, America will have accomplished her most important duty to herself and to the world.

I have before spoken of the men of the Revolution. But there was a more recent struggle, scarcely less important to the independence of this Republic—

"A century had Briton held
The trident of the subject sea;
And all that time, no eye beheld
Her flag strike to an enemy.

"Her Navy bore her swelling fame,
Afar and near, triumphantly;
And Britons claimed the proudest name—
The sov'reigns of the trackless sea."

The attack of the Leopard upon the American frigate Chesapeake, the numerous aggressions of great Britain upon our commerce, and her repeated exercises of her alleged right of search, at length forced our Republic to the choice of either making a virtual surrender of her rights as an independent nation, or of engaging in another war with the powerful aggressor.

In the early part of the year 1812, there was a young man, a native of your own County, industriously engaged in carrying on his agricultural pursuits, at the very place where we are now assembled. He had heard of the insults committed upon his country's flag, and his bold heart was fired with indignation. Presently the news came that Congress had at last resolved to vindicate the national honor by an appeal to arms. The young Baltimore County farmer heard that news with joy, and, abandoning his plow, and bidding adieu to the peaceful employments in which he had been engaged, he sought and obtained a commission in the army of his country. In a few days after his appointment as a Captain of Artillery, Nathan Towson had gathered around him on the spot where yonder Church now stands, a brave band of his fellow-countymen, whose hearts beat in sympathy with his own, and then and there was organized that company which soon afterwards carried terror into the enemy's ranks, all along the Canada frontier. War was formally declared on the 19th of June, 1812, and six weeks afterwards Towson was already on his march northward to join, with his company, the second regiment of artillery, commanded by Col. Winfield Scott.

I must pass over the other contests in which he was honorably engaged; the night attack upon the Caledonia and Detroit, two British vessels captured by the heroism of Towson and Elliott, from under the very guns of Fort Erie; his services at Queenstown; and his brave defence of Black Rock. I must pass over his gallantry displayed at the capture of Fort George, at the defence of Fort Erie and at Stony Creek. Time will not allow me to speak of these portions of his history.

But there were two engagements during that war which the pen of American history should every delight to record—for they covered the American name with glory, and first taught our vaunting enemy, that there still existed among our countrymen the same undaunted bravery which they had displayed forty years before, at Saratoga, Eutaw, and Yorktown.

It was on the afternoon of a hot summer day, the 5th of July, 1814, upon an open plain on the Canada shore, that the glorious battle of Chippewa was fought. There nineteen hundred Americans, under the heroic Scott, met in close encounter, and vanquished twenty-one hundred of the best regulars of the British army. The only artillery under Scott's command, was the company of Towson; and throughout that fierce engagement its guns poured upon the enemy's ranks a constant storm of canister, which mowed them down like grass, and materially contributed to their final defeat.

General Wilkinson, writing an account of this battle, says:

"A warm, close, and bloody conflict of small arms and field artillery ensued, in

which it was the good fortune of the gallant Towson to silence the enemy's chief battery. The oblique attack of the artillery, and the perpendicular fire of the American line, was insupportable; and valorous troops yielded the palm and retreated precipitately, leaving their killed and wounded on the field. Here, as at Minden, the fate of the day was settled by the artillery; and the American Towson may deservedly be ranked with the British Phillips, Drummond, and Foy."

Three weeks afterwards, amid the roar and almost within the spray of the mighty cataract of Niagara, was fought the memorable battle of Lundy's Lane, except Buena Vista, the bloodiest and most desperate ever fought by an American army. From sunset until after midnight, the hostile ranks were closely mingled together in the murderous struggle, which left upon the field, killed or wounded, nearly one-fourth of their whole numbers. Among the American forces were found Brown and Scott and Ripley—and Jesup, Miller, and Worth; and there, too, in the very thickest of the fight, was the brave Towson, pouring leaden death upon the foe, from where a continued sheet of flame marked the presence of his artillery, known then and ever after as "Towson's Light House." The official dispatch of the commanding officer says: "Towson's company was the first and last engaged, and, during the whole conflict, maintained that high character which they had previously won by their skill and valor." Both of his lieutenants, and twenty-seven of his thirty-six men were either killed or wounded upon the spot.

Speaking of his conduct upon another occasion, General Ripley said, "I cannot refrain from adverting to the manner in which Captain Towson's Artillery was served; I have never seen it equalled. This officer has so distinguished himself, that to say simply that he is in action, is a volume of eulogium; the army only to be informed he is there, by a spontaneous assent, are at once satisfied that he has performed well his part. I have no idea that there is an Artillery officer in any service superior to him in the knowledge and performance of his duty."

General Nathan Towson is now no more; but his gallant achievments will not be forgotten. His native county will never cease to remember with pride that his is one of the most glorious names which ever adorned the rolls of the American army.

The ceremony which you had assembled to witness, has now been performed. The Corner Stone of the building has been laid; and soon the edifice itself will rise towards the Heavens, attracting, by the beauty of its proportions and the simple grandeur of its walls, the admiring gaze of every traveler along yonder highway. May it stand for ages, in sunshine and in storm, firm and unshaken as the hill in which its foundations are planted; and may it ever be pointed to as a temple of *Justice!*

And now, standing upon this beautiful eminence—where the purest breezes of heaven delight to linger, and where Health would seem to have chosen her favorite home—one, who is a stranger to the most of you, but who cannot feel as if among strangers, while looking round upon scenes familiar to his boyhood, and remembering, that almost within view are his own birth place and the graves of his parents—standing here to-day and feeling as if once more a citizen of his native county, he would fain unite with you in offering sincere thanks to Divine Providence for her past prosperity, and invoking in her behalf the same auspicious favors for the future.

May you live long, but not long enough to see your country disunited, or her Constitution destroyed. May you be ever prosperous, but never cease to remember in your prosperity, the debt of gratitude due to those by whose patriotic toils that prosperity has been obtained. May Freedom ever be yours, but never degenerate into anarchy; may wealth bless you, but never corrupt; may peace smile upon you, but never enervate; may no hostile invader ever set foot within your borders; but if such visitors should come, may you be as prompt as your sires, to extend to them the hospitalities of a North Point welcome.

Above all, may you and your posterity to the remotest generation, enjoy that choicest of all earthly blessings—CIVIL AND RELIGIOUS LIBERTY PROTECTED BY JUST LAWS WISELY AND IMPARTIALLY ADMINISTERED.