



ORATION

DELIVERED AT

The Centennial Celebration

OF THE

MECKLENBURG DECLARATION

OF INDEPENDENCE,

AT

Charlotte, N. C., May 20, 1875,

BY

Hon. JOHN M. BRIGHT,

Of Tennessee.

NASHVILLE, TENN.:
ROBERTS & PURVIS, BOOK AND JOB PRINTERS.

1875.

Speech of Hon. Jno. M. Bright, delivered at Charlotte, N. C., on the 20th of May, 1875, in honor of the Mecklenburg Declaration of Independence, one Hundred Years Before.

My Countrymen :

Being a descendant, on one side of the house, from the "Old North State," and having spent several years of my boyhood under her classic oaks in old Orange, my feelings kindle with more than ordinary interest on this proud occasion. Thousands of hearts, familiar with the cradle songs of Carolina, far beyond the blue mountains in the West, now pulsate in unison with your own.

Gladly have I come from the "Great Daughter, Tennessee," to bear her kindly greetings, and to mingle her voice in your rejoicing. The voice of her Legislature and Historical Society was but the voice of the State, in the expression of her interest in this celebration. Children of Carolina! Sons of Freedom! Patriots of our Common Country! This celebration is the festival of the heart upon the glorious memories of the past.

That people have far sunk in degeneracy, and have become as the dry bones in the valley, when they feel no stir of inspiration, as the images of their illustrious fathers are passing before their eyes. The heart, not the head of a nation, is the fountain of patriotism, bravery and virtue. The emotional nature of a people, like the sea, contains the saline virtues which purify and preserve the State. The living age is but a pensioner on the works and wisdom of the past. It has been the custom of all civilized nations to celebrate the ancestral deeds and virtues to stimulate the rivalry of the future generations. The ancient Greeks erected monuments and statues, instituted games and festivals, and awarded apotheosis to her heroes and benefactors. Her Poets swept their country's lyre in their praise, and her most renowned orators were chosen to extol their deeds at the national celebrations. Pericles pronounced the oration in honor of the brave sons who fell in the first Peloponnesian war, and Demosthenes pronounced a similar oration in honor of those who fell in the battle of Chæronæa. The whole line of Jewish history was marked with memorial stones and altars, and with sacrifices and jubilees. All their rivers, lakes, seas, mountains, villages and cities became monumental. This day Ebal and Gerizim, Sinai and Calvary, Bethlehem and Jerusalem, all rise fresh

before our memories. Even the floods of praise which dashed from the harp of David were but the memorial songs of his nation.

Then this celebration has a far nobler aim than the mere-pastime of an hour. And while we have gathered around these old altars of freedom, and hoisted the flood-gates of our joys, we should not fail to be inspired with the sublime virtues of our fathers.

The "Old North State" has treasures of history which, to the outer world, have long been embedded in her own bosom, like the rich ores of her mountains. And, while her historians have not been idle in garnering up many of her deeds, yet they have not been emblazoned to the world, nor the generations imbued with their teaching. All the nurseries of the land ought to be made vocal with Carolina's songs, and our juvenile orators ought to make them ring in scholastic declamation, in the one hundred and forty thousand schools and colleges in the land.

It is too true that all our Southern States have indulged in a literary stupefaction, while other States have furnished our school and nursery literature, in which, with excusable vanity, they have painted the thrilling incidents of their own history.

It is time we were tearing the poppies from our brows, and adorning them with the bays and the laurels. We have deeds and heroes that are worthy the tongue of a Demosthenes, and the harp of a Homer.

But I did not come to chide you, whose patriotism and gratitude have risen to ecstasy on this occasion. Your sympathies are now in electric communication with the past, and your hearts are warm with its inspiration.

You are yearning to hear and will not be wearied with even a repetition of some of the deeds of your fathers.

The news of the passage of the Stamp Act fell upon North Carolina like a spark into a powder magazine. The explosion of indignation shook the Colony to its center, while John Ashe, the Speaker of the General Assembly, rang the articulate echo into the ear of Governor Tryon, "THIS LAW WILL BE RESISTED TO BLOOD AND DEATH."

When the sloop of war, Diligence, anchored in the Cape Fear, with stamped paper for the use of the Colony, the brave men of Hanover and Brunswick, headed by the heroic Ashe and Waddell, prohibited the terrified Captain from landing the cargo. From thence they marched to Wilmington, besieged the Governor's palace, and extorted from him a pledge, and swore his Stamp Mas-

ter; not to attempt the execution of the law. Here the King, Parliament and Viceroy were all defied.

Here we have an act far transcending in daring the Boston Tea Party, who were disguised as Indians to escape identity; while here the act was performed in open day, the parties were without disguise and known, and it was because they were known that the Governor capitulated in his castle.

And yet the feat of tumbling the tea into Boston harbor is known to every school boy in the land, and the last celebration of the event was held in the rotunda of the National Capitol.

All the histories of North Carolina concur in the fact that it suffered more from the insults, extortions and oppressions of the government officials than any other one of the American Colonies. With but few exceptions, all the Governors, from Sir Wm. Berkley to Josiah Martin, seem to regard the Colony but as a royal plantation, the people but as serfs, the true object of government but a source of thrift to its officials, and the "sword but a sceptre."

The clerks of the interior courts plundered the people by extortion, while the tax-gatherers, in some instances, stripped the farms of the work beasts, and the people of their apparel. Smarting under such misrule, the people sought redress from the courts; but there they were met with mockery. They indicted Edmund Fanning for extortion, but he being one of the minions of the Governor, and through the over-awing presence of the Governor at the trial, was fined only *six cents*, though convicted of the infamous offense. The insult rolled like a burning wave over the people. All their efforts had been baffled, all their expedients exhausted, save the God given right to defend themselves.

They were familiar with the hereditary teachings, that the King and Parliament were the sources of power; but they now resolved to begin at the other end, and assert that the people were the true sources of power. To meet the aggressions of the Governor and his subalterns, according to the distinguished historian of North Carolina, Mr. Wheeler, in April, 1768, a formidable body of the people organized themselves into an association for regulating public grievances, and the abuse of power. Hence the name was given to them of "REGULATORS."

Clearly distinguishing between liberty and licentiousness, they resolved "to pay only such taxes as were agreeable to law, and to pay no officer more than his legal fees."

After three years of aggression on the one side, and of resistance on the other, Governor Tryon marched with 1,100 men, with artillery and banners, to meet the Regulators, about 2,000 of whom had hastily collected on the banks of the Alamance. And here was the first battle shock on the soil of an American Colony, in resistance to British oppression.

The Regulators were beaten, after exhausting their ammunition, leaving *twenty dead* and several wounded on the field. Of the royal troops, sixty-one were killed, wounded and missing. The Governor marched his victorious army through the country, confiscating property, burning houses, and administering forced oaths of loyalty to the people. For this ignoble triumph of tyranny over liberty, the Governor was applauded by the home government, and he was rewarded by his promotion to the Governorship of New York. Some of the Regulators were executed, some were pardoned upon taking the oath, while others crossed the mountain, bearing with them the unconquered love of liberty, and the undying hatred of tyranny—destined to reappear upon another field and to exchange the odium of the *outlaw* for the glory of the *patriot*. Fortunate it was that they were defeated. Success then would have drifted them into the horrors of civil war. Many good men and patriots who did not comprehend the magnitude of their grievances, fought against them. Besides, the other colonies were not then ripe for revolution. Nevertheless, the fact is immortal, *that theirs was the first battle—theirs was the first libation of blood—theirs was the first vicarious sacrifice offered on the altar of American liberty*. Let not a breath soil the fame of the patriots of Alamance. Their battle stood upon as high ground of merit as the battles of Lexington and Bunker Hill, and all other battles before the 4th July, 1776—*resistance to oppression*. They were the Hampdens and Sidneys of America, and they deserve a monument heaven-high to their memory. Let no one despise the day of small things. The pebble in the brook may change the course of the river, which afterwards bursts through mountain barriers and floats a nation's commerce. So one bold resolve may change the course of empire. In a few years all the Colonies were caught in the draught and were borne along on the rushing tide of revolution.

I shall not offend your intelligence by going into the general details of the American Revolution. The most of them are consecrated by song, tradition and history. Passing over the discussion of the stamp act, the fishery act, the tea duty and the Boston port bill, I

pause only to remark that, according to Mr. Bancroft, "American independence, like the great rivers of the country, had many sources, but the head spring which colored all the rest, was the navigation act."

Amidst the reigning discord preceding the revolution, the colonial statesmen and patriots were too sagacious to be deceived by the devices of the British Parliament and machinations of the Tory Ministry of George the III.

George the III., with an obstinacy only equalled by his tyranny, persisted in a policy which, according to James Otis, "cost one King of England his head and another his throne," and, it may be added, which cost George the III. his American Colonies. The ground texts of the American Colonies were, "NO TAXATION WITHOUT REPRESENTATION." "RESISTANCE TO TYRANNY IS OBEDIENCE TO GOD." All the Colonies were now burning with resistance. The news of the battle of Lexington resounded from Nova Scotia to Florida. It was borne by relays of heralds, day and night, all along the coast of the Atlantic, and from the coast to the mountains; the Alleghanies shouted it to the Cumberland, awakening the settlers on the Watauga, and sending echoes far beyond to the hunters of Kentucky, who on receiving the news, named their camping ground Lexington, now the site of a flourishing city, in memory of the battle-ground which had been consecrated by the blood of the patriots.

Upon receiving the news the patriots of Mecklenburg swarmed from the "Hornet's Nest." They met in convention on the 19th, and continued their session into the 20th of May, 1775; on which day they gave to the world the MECKLENBURG DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE. This declaration was not the child of a patriotic frenzy, which was not expected to outlive the paroxysm which gave it birth. It was the result of profound wisdom, sagacity and statesmanship. Casting their reflection beyond the irritating causes of the hour, we can imagine some of the grave questions which pressed upon their consideration.

For example: That the American Colonies were firmly planted, as political governments, in a territory as large as the whole of Europe, and that England could not fill up the territorial vacuum in ages with her disposable population; that there was ample room for all the tides of immigration pouring in from England, Ireland, Scotland, France and Germany; that they all would be needed for strength and protection, and such were their affinities of race, that

when run through a common hopper, "they would come out Americans in the grist;" that the three thousand miles of Atlantic waves that rolled between them and the Mother Country would prove an impassable gulf to their equal rights as Englishmen; that Europe had been a battle-field for a century, and that those wars which turned kingdoms upside down, drenched them with blood, and impoverished the people, frequently extended their sweep to the distant colonies of the contending parties, and made them objects of plunder and conquest. And fresh before their eyes was the bloody history of the Spanish and Austrian succession, the war between Peter the Great and Charles XII, and the seven years war instigated by Maria Theresa, for the recovery of Silesia, involving Austria, Russia, France, Sweden and Poland on the one side, and Prussia and England on the other, and catching in the outer circle of the vortex the colonial dependencies on the coast of Africa, in the East and West Indies, and the Colonies in North America. The frontiers of the American Colonies were still bleeding with what was known as the French and Indian war, (being part of European war,) which raged from the heights of Abraham to the Ohio. In the line of the same reflection, they saw, as an outgrowth of this European policy, which required so much blood and treasure to support the royal felons in their diversions "with human heads and cannon balls," that it would recoil on their respective governments and culminate in oppressive taxation.

They saw that they were already pursued with the fierce avarice of the Mother Country, and that the fruits of all their labor were subsidized to support the extravagance of the home government, with one hand reaching to her East India possessions and with the other reaching to her American Colonies, for revenues, and by her navigation act asserting absolute control over the commerce of the Colonies. And when they looked into the breast of their own Colony, they saw it lacerated and torn with the rugged harrow of extortion and taxation; and in Governor Tryon they saw a scourge and a tyrant, who had his counterpart in Warren Hastings, the rapacious Governor of British India. Following the logical drift of reflection to the end, they saw that if they stood still they would forever remain provincial tributaries to the Mother Country, doomed to political slavery, perhaps like Sepoys, farmed out to the rapacity of an East India company. If they resisted without dissolving their political bands, they would be regarded by the nations of the earth as in rebellion against the English government, and while

they might enlist their sympathies, they could not gain their alliance. Thus cut off from a national future—without guaranties for life, liberty, property or domestic happiness—with no assurance of foreign aid—with no star of hope, with no bow of promise painted on the lowering future—they turned their eyes from this picture of appalling gloom.

With faith in God, they saw no path of escape except that which was illumined by the light which flashes from the patriot's sword. They saw no sovereign remedy for their direful woes, except in absolute and unconditional independence. And they were the FIRST to reach the height of this great conclusion, and the FIRST to embody it in a high RESOLVE upon the American continent.

In full view of the gibbets of Alamance—with a full conviction that they would have to toil up a path, slippery with blood, to the grandeur of independence, yet their patriotism and courage towered and expanded before the danger, and burning the bridge behind them, "they hung their banners on the outer walls."

All honor to the twenty-seven noble signers of the Mecklenburg Declaration of Independence! Eulogy can not over-draw their praise, nor admiration surpass their merit. Let each name be consecrated to Freedom, and each find a sanctuary in every patriot's heart.

But some would make the disparaging insinuation that their Declaration was but the expression of a prevailing sentiment at the time. The facts of history do not sustain the position. Washington "abhorred the idea of independence" when he took command of the army, and he rolled the tide of war about one year before he was committed to the idea.

Mr. Jefferson, in a letter dated 25th August, 1775, said he "would rather be in dependence on Great Britian, properly limited, than on any other nation upon earth," but added, "rather than submit to the right of legislating for us assumed by the British Parliament, would lend my hand to sink the whole island in the ocean."

Joseph Galloway, at one time Speaker of the House of Pennsylvania, on his examination before the House of Commons, in a Committee on American Papers, on the 16th June, 1779, said, "I do not believe, from the best knowledge I have of the state of America at that time, (the time when the people took up arms) that one fifth of the people had independence in view."

In the Provincial Congress, Watertown, Massachusetts, on the 26th of April, 1775, seven days after the battle of Lexington, "an

address to the inhabitants of Great Britain" was adopted, containing the following passage: "They (the British Ministry) have not detached us from our Royal Sovereign; we profess to be his loyal and dutiful subjects; and so hardly dealt with as we have been, are still ready, with our lives and fortunes, to defend his person, family, crown and dignity; nevertheless, to the persecution and tyranny of his cruel Ministry, we will not tamely submit."

On the 8th of July, 1775, every member of the Provisional Congress signed a petition to the King, stating that they "have not raised armies with the ambitious design of separating from Great Britain and establishing independence." Other evidences might be multiplied to the same effect. None of these had the ring of the old Mecklenburg Declaration; but they show the fact, that up to 4th of July, 1776, the continental war was waged for the redress of grievances, and not for independence. Thus it is clear, that the morning star of American independence first rose upon the field of Mecklenburg. But some have gone so far as to doubt the main fact of the Mecklenburg Declaration. The origin of this historical skepticism is, perhaps, traceable to the letter of Mr. Jefferson, of July 9, 1819, in reply to a letter of Mr. John Adams, in which he says, "I believe it is spurious." Mr. Jefferson did not *deny* the fact, but he did not *believe* it. However great his fame for statesmanship and knowledge, his incredulity should not be substituted for fact. The same remark is applicable to Mr. Adams, who said in his letter to Mr. Jefferson, "If I had possessed it I would have made the halls of Congress echo and re-echo with it fifteen months before your declaration of independence." But while Mr. Adams would thus have "sung the glories of Mecklenburg," his own Provincial Congress, as shown before, would have been singing loyalty to the British King.

With but poor facilities for collecting and preserving the treasures of our revolutionary history, no doubt many important facts did not come to the knowledge of either Mr. Jefferson or Mr. Adams.

Mr. Adams, being a witness himself, in a note dated "Quincy, January 3, 1817," addressed to the editor of *Niles Register*, said, "In plain English, and in a few words, I consider the true history of the American Revolution, and of the establishment of our present constitutions, as lost forever." While this was his opinion, it was also true, that facts buried to one generation, may be disinterred to another. Archæologists are now recovering, from the detritus of ages, the missing links in the chain of history.

But some, in the face of evidence, will doubt the facts of history. Lord Byron said:

"I've stood upon Achilles' tomb,
And heard Troy doubted; time will doubt of Rome."

If Mr. Jefferson and Mr. Adams could have seen the mass of testimony which lay concealed below the crust of nearly a half century, but since accumulated, they never would have doubted the Mecklenburg Declaration. Without going into elaborate details, it may be stated that any doubt, as to the fact of the Mecklenburg Declaration, is fully met and overwhelmed by the tradition of a century; by the official testimony of Governor Wright, of the Province of Georgia, and of Governor Martin, of North Carolina, copied from the British archives under the supervision of Mr. Bancroft; by a contemporary publication in the Cape Fear *Mercury*; by the testimony of Captain Jack, who bore a copy to the Continental Congress; by proof of copies of the original resolutions; by the proceedings of the Mecklenburg committee, on the 31st of May, 1775, which evidently derived their authority to act from the resolutions of May 20th; by proof of witnesses, taken by authority of the Legislature of North Carolina, who were present at the reading of the resolutions, and heard the shouts of the enthusiastic multitude; by the able lectures of Dr. Hawks and Governor Swain; by the indorsement of the historians of North Carolina, Martin, Jones, Caruthers, Williamson, Foote and Wheeler; by Ramsey and Putnam, historians of Tennessee; by the historians, Holmes and Alexander H. Stevens, in their histories of the United States; by Governor George R. Gilmer, in his book called the "Georgians;" by Dillon, the historian of Indiana, in his "Historical Evidence of the Government of the United States," copying from the "American Archives;" by Chief Justice Nicholson, of Tennessee, in his eulogy on the late President Polk; by the Legislature of the State of Tennessee; by the great historian, Washington Irving, in his life of Washington; by the masterly array of incontrovertible facts by Governor William A. Graham; by the celebrations of a half century; by the centennial celebration of this day, with the one hundred rounds of the booming cannon and the tens of thousands present who give credence to the immortal fact.

With the expiring moments of the present century, let every whisper of incredulity be hushed, and let the door of controversy be forever shut on the subject.

Let your lingering monument to their memory, under a new impulse, soar to the overarching blue, and let it stand until it grows gray with the centuries.

The patriots of Mecklenburg made absolute and unconditional renunciation of allegiance to the King. They restricted their allegiance "*to God and the General Government of Congress.*" Believing that there was divinity in success, with sublime faith, they laid hold of that God who goes forth with the armies of his people, and who raises up one nation and puts down another. Without the alliance of any of the nations of the earth, they sought the alliance of Heaven. They knew that Heaven had fought for the people of the ancient covenant, with the stars and the floods, the pestilence and the tempest. With pious hands the Ark of Heaven was borne with our armies, through all the dark vicissitudes of the revolution. Thus Heaven-imbued the patriots prepared to meet the coming storm. With active zeal they soon made the Colony ring with martial sounds, from the coast to the mountains.

The Colonial Assembly and a convention of the delegates of the people met at the same place on the 4th of April, 1775. The Assembly, by resolution, approved the celebrated report made to the Continental Congress in 1774, setting forth the grievances of the Colonies, and the proper mode of redress.

Joseph Hewes, of North Carolina, was one of the most efficient of the committee who made that report, which falls but little below in dignity the Declaration of the 4th of July, 1776. But both the Assembly and Convention had risen to such disorderly temper, in the royal view, that Governor Martin quite lost his amiability, and denounced the Convention as treasonable and the Assembly as refractory, and on the 8th of April, 1775, he dissolved the Assembly, being the last Royal Assembly in North Carolina. Soon after this the Colony was all on fire, and he fled from the burning soil. On board his Majesty's brig of war, *Cruiser*, the Governor gave vent to his rage by cannonading his rebellious Province with paper denunciations.

The patriots of Mecklenburg were now merged with all the Colony in the common cause. The Colony pledged itself to share ratably in the expenses of the Continental army. On the 16th of September, 1776, the Continental Congress called for eighty-eight battallions to be enlisted for the war, and apportioned nine to North Carolina, which were promptly furnished. The military record of

North Carolina opened the 27th of February, 1776, with a splendid and important victory at Moore's creek.

Governor Martin, burning with revenge and willing to regain his lost authority at any cost, projected the plan of rousing the Indians to massacre on the frontiers, the negroes to insurrection, the Scotch Highlanders and Tories to rally to the royal standard, while reinforcements were to be sent from New York by Sir Henry Clinton and from England under Sir Peter Parker; and with this combination he was to sweep the Colony with desolation and fetter the people with oaths of loyalty. Gen. McDonald, in execution of the plan, had organized about 1,500 Highlanders and Tories, and attempted to form a junction with the expected forces at Wilmington. He was intercepted at the bridge at Moore's Creek, by Colonels Caswell and Lillington, with about 1,000 militia. They entrenched on the opposite side of the creek, "uncovered the bridge and greased the sleepers with soap and tallow," and awaited the charge.

The enemy marched to the assault with claymores drawn, and to music of the bagpipe and the bugle; but they soon recoiled from the galling fire which swept the bridge. In turn the patriots charged across the creek. The work was short and the rout complete. The loss of the enemy was 50 killed, wounded and missing; 850 prisoners, including the general; \$75,000 in money, besides a large quantity of army stores. This blow frustrated the shocking conspiracy against liberty and humanity—fired the hopes and roused the indignation of the people—broke up the formidable combination of Highlanders and Tories—sent the expected reinforcements dejected and disconcerted to another destination.

But this was not all. The people now wanted no reconciliation with a King who had shown himself destitute of humanity, by sanctioning a scheme to give their women and children to the tomahawk of the savage—their houses to the torch of the incendiary—and who could "wash his feet in the blood" of his subjects. The battle ground of Alamance now became holy ground, and the blood of its heroes was sanctified in the affections of the patriots. I have emphasized the battle of Moore's Creek, because it was a pivot on which the fate of North Carolina was poised, and probably, with her, the fate of all the Colonies.

But to proceed. The voice of Mecklenburg now became the voice of the whole Colony, and the voice of the Colony soon became the voice of the United Colonies, which proclaimed the United Declaration of Independence to the nations of the earth. The Pro-

vincial Assembly of North Carolina, on the 12th of April, 1776, was the first to instruct her delegates, in the Continental Congress, "to concur with the other Colonies in declaring independence."

Virginia, that grand old State, menaced by a similar diabolical scheme of massacre and insurrection, planned by Governor Dunmore, next instructed her delegates to vote for independence, on the 15th of May. As remarked by an impartial writer: "No members of that body (the Continental Congress) brought with them credentials of a bolder stamp than the delegates from North Carolina."

The war being fully opened, the Continental troops of North Carolina followed Washington along the Hudson, through the Jerseys, into Pennsylvania, and suffered with their comrades on the frozen sod of Valley Forge. They poured out their blood at Germantown and Brandywine. At Germantown fell the brave Gen. Francis Nash, who was a captain of the "Regulators," and in honor of whose memory the Capital of Tennessee was named.

Her troops also marched through the malarial swamps of South Carolina, and fought at Camden, Hobkirk's Hill, Eutaw and the siege of Charleston. They scaled the mountain with the brave Gen. Rutherford, to chastise the savages on the frontier. In the language of Governor Graham, "within a radius of forty miles of this capitol (Charlotte) are situated the scene of the battles of Hanging Rock, Buford's Defeat, Sumpter's Defeat, Rocky Mount, King's Mountain, Ramsour's Mills, Cowan's Ford, and the town of Charlotte itself was the theatre of a well contested action, between Davie and Tarleton's Calvary."

Indeed, a fierce partisan warfare raged all along her Southern border during the whole war. Nearly every creek, river, ford, bridge, road and village was the scene of a struggle; and nearly every thicket concealed an ambuscade.

And her heroic women were not behind in the sacred cause. They, too, made a Declaration of Independence, and pledged their sacred honor to spurn every kneeler at the shrine of beauty who would not defend his country against the ravages of the Scovilite Tories. True to their devotion, in the darkest hours of the struggle, they were pouring oil into the flickering lamp of liberty. In the first years of the war, our arms had a gilding of success, but in the latter years they were drooping with disaster. Charleston and Savannah had fallen; and Georgia and South Carolina were looked upon as subjugated. Not a flag of resistance waved from Florida to the

North Carolina border, except one displayed in the dash of a bold Partisan.

Cornwallis had matured his plans for the subjugation of North Carolina. Maj. Furguson's command formed the left wing of the extended line which was to encompass and crush the Colony. While the patriots were yielding to despair, an unexpected deliverance was at hand. Hearing that Furguson threatened to cross the mountain and swoop down upon the settlers of the Western waters, those heroes of the wilderness, some of whom were fugitives from Alamance, rallied to the standards of Colonels Shelby and Sevier, and uniting with Colonel Campbell, of Virginia, they went out to meet the foe—gathering in their march the detachments of Colonels Cleveland and McDowell, of North Carolina, and Colonel Williams, of South Carolina. Maj. Furguson, hearing of their approach, took position on, what he supposed, the impregnable heights of King's Mountain. The patriots quickly encircled the mountain, and, as they ascended, like a contracting girdle of fire, I can imagine a battle-cry broke from a part of the line, "REMEMBER ALAMANCE!" The brow of the old mountain was soon blazing with a coronet of flame:—next followed the surrender, and Alamance was revenged and American Independence was assured. Here was the first turn in the tide of our disaster. The patriots of the whole Colony were enthused, the Tories paralyzed, the invasion of North Carolina, for the time, abandoned, and General Greene had time to recruit and reorganize his army.

Mr. Jefferson said of this battle, "It was the joyful enunciation of that turn in the tide of success that terminated the revolutionary war, with the seal of independence."

The campaign of 1781 opened on the 17th of January, with the splendid victory of General Morgan over the insolent Tarleton, at the Cowpens. On the 15th of May following, Greene and Cornwallis met at Guilford, and fought one of the most important battles of the war. Greene retired, but Cornwallis was beaten. In three days Cornwallis went staggering from the field, pursued by Greene. Cornwallis refusing to fight, Greene carried the war into South Carolina, to break up the enemy's posts in detachments, while Cornwallis continued his retreat to Wilmington.

Finding the Colony too hot for him, he was next seen bending his way on a march of 300 miles towards Virginia—limping along the coast like Milton's fallen spirit "over the burning marle"—with his army flaggellated into shreds, in his own language, "his cavalry wanted everything, and his infantry everything but shoes."

He concentrated his army at Yorktown. Washington saw and seized his advantage. Yorktown fell, and the sun of American liberty rose resplendent in the heavens. The battle of Yorktown was only the complement of the battle of Guilford. Thomas H. Benton said, "the battle of Guilford put that capture into Washington's hands; and thus Guilford and Yorktown became connected; the lesser event was father to the greater."

It appears that the first Anglo-Saxon anchor which rested on the Atlantic coast was in 1557, on the sandy beach of North Carolina; that the first American manifesto against the encroachments of power, was made in 1678, in North Carolina; that the first battle which was fought in the cause of American liberty, was on the 16th of May, 1771, in North Carolina; that the first Declaration of Independence in any one of the American Colonies, was made on the 20th of May, 1775, by the patriots of Mecklenburg, in North Carolina; that the first instructions given to delegates to declare for Independence, in the Continental Congress, were given on the 12th of April, 1776, to the delegates from North Carolina; that the first blow which turned the tide of disaster, and "stamped the seal of independence," was mainly struck by North Carolina; and that upon the soil of North Carolina, and partly by her own sons, the blow was struck which "put the capture of Yorktown into the hands of Washington," and thus ended the struggle in a blaze of glory.

All hail to the Old North State! Let the pages of history be crowded with the shining names of her heroes and patriots, and let those names become songs of deliverance to the coming generations.

They taught us the value of liberty; when to draw the sword, how to use it, when to return it to the scabbard and how to pursue the arts of peace.

Immortal be the names of the six Alexanders, and the names of Brevard, Balch, Phifer, Harris, Kennon, Ford, Barry, Downe, Graham, Queary, Wilson, Avery, Patton, McLure, Morrison, Irwin, Flennegin, Reese, Davidson and Polk, signers of the Mecklenburg Declaration of Independence; and the names of other revolutionary patriots, Ashe, Caswell, Davie, Franklin, Forney, Hewes, Harnett, Hooper, Jones, Lillington, Leach, Long, Macon, Moore, McDowell, Nash, Person, Polk, Rutherford, Waddell, and others beyond number.

After the achievement of our independence, North Carolina, with a generosity equal to her bravery, provided by law for the support of the families of her sick and disabled soldiers. She adopted a scale for

the purpose of ascertaining the value of her depreciated currency, taking the Spanish mill dollar as a unit of value. This scale shows the progress of depreciation at the end of the year 1777 as 1 to 3; in 1778, as 1 to $5\frac{1}{2}$; in 1779, as 1 to 30; in 1780, as 1 to 200; in 1781, as 1 to 725; and in 1782, as 1 to 800. Truly, the currency had depreciated to a mere financial trash; but it had performed its mission. It was only as the shells left in the nest after the eagle had hatched and flown—and this emblem bird of our nation took its Western flight, with scarcely a pause, until it beat its wings against the gates of the setting sun.

In default of money, the State lavished her Western lands in military grants upon the brave men who had won them as a heritage by the sword. She not only honored the great soldier, General Greene, with the name of a county, but she granted to him 25,000 acres of land on Duck River, in Tennessee, now worth \$1,000,000. She granted to each "private, 640 acres of land; each non-commissioned officer, 1,000 acres; a subaltern, 2,560 acres; a captain, 3,840 acres; a major, 4,800 acres; a lieutenant-colonel, 5,760 acres; a lieutenant-colonel commandant, 7,200 acres; a brigadier, 12,000 acres; each chaplain, 7,200 acres; each surgeon, 4,800 acres; each surgeon's mate, 2,560 acres."

Moved by a like spirit of justice and generosity, the State ceded to the United States all the territory now comprised within the limits of Tennessee, with the view "of hastening the extinguishment of the debts, and establishing the harmony, of the United States."

She now sprung forward in her illustrious career of civil development, founding schools and colleges, and a noble university, the equal of any other seat of learning in the country; her sons adorning all the liberal professions, and her old Statesmen rising in competing grandeur with the loftiest sons of other States. Her Macons, Gastons, Badgers, Mangums, Stanleys and others, all left their giant tracks in the Congressional walks of the nation.

Her distinguished living sons are too well known to need the praise of a stranger's tongue.

But she did not enfold all her honors to her own bosom. Many of her brave soldiers, to whom she granted lands, with other daring sons, crossed the mountain to provide homes, and lay the foundation of a great State. None but such hardy and heroic men could have encountered the perils of the wilderness, and "lifted the axe" against the old forest which had wrestled with the tempests of a thousand years.

These men gave a heroic base to the population of Tennessee. As if born with the impulse of their revolutionary fathers, at the first blast of the war trumpet, they gave such magic spring to arms that it won for Tennessee the proud distinction of the "Volunteer State." The State is not only imbued with the jurisprudence, but in every county may be found the sons, descendants and memorials of the mother State.

The names of Sevier, Shelby, Robertson, Alexander, Polk, Brevard, Bledsoe, Barry, Balch, Davidson, Hall, Haywood, Wilson, Franklin, and a thousand others of North Carolina extraction, are familiar names to Tennessee. Dr. Ramsey, the distinguished historian of Tennessee, and Judge Thomas Barry, and the late Mrs. Mary Hall, wife of Governor William Hall, of Tennessee, are the blood relations of the Alexanders who signed the Mecklenburg declaration.

In the early days of Tennessee arose a person with a proud and stately form, with the eye of a bald eagle, with a martial bearing, as if born to command, with a vigorous mind and iron will, with a fervid patriotism and undaunted courage. He rallied around him the brave volunteers of Tennessee, led them against the hostile Creeks, crushed their power in the battles of Talladega and Tehopka, quelled their ravages from Georgia to the Mississippi River, met their more powerful allies on the plains of New Orleans, where, with the volunteers of Tennessee and the "Hunters of Kentucky," in the language of Felix Grundy, "he silenced the roar of the British lion, and the American eagle took its loftiest flight and uttered its loudest notes of exultant liberty." He astonished Europe with his victories, while his grateful country elevated him to the highest pedestal of civil glory.

This man was Andrew Jackson, the "Hero of the Hermitage," a native of old Mecklenburg, North Carolina.

Another person, in the same section of Tennessee, at a later date, arose with a countenance as open as the day, with an eye as bright as a star, a ripe scholarship, a mind clear, vigorous and comprehensive, indefatigable industry, indomitable will, and with the courtly art of persuasion, he rolled up the sky of his country's glory, like the sun in his ascendant path.

He was member of Congress, Chairman of the most important committee, Speaker of the House, Executive of Tennessee, and from thence mounting to the Presidential Chair. He shed a lustre on his administration unsurpassed by any other in the American annals.

He settled the Oregon difficulty, acquired Texas, with American artillery thundered "indemnity for the past and security for the future" above the crown of the Cordilleras, acquired New Mexico and California, and opened our broad ocean front on the Pacific. Impartial history will weave a chaplet for his brow as fair as ever worn by an American Statesman. He never failed nor faltered in a duty, and he fell, in the prime of life, a toil-worn martyr in the service of his country. His tomb is visited daily by the citizen and the stranger. His noble widow, the highest type of the American lady, sits close by, the guardian angel of his tomb. Not a breath has ever dimmed the burnished mirror of his fame. His name was James Knox Polk, another son of old Mecklenburg.

And still another person rose from his mountain home in East Tennessee, and he struggled up, by rapid strides, through all the offices, State and Federal, to the Presidency of the United States. But as he is still an actor on the stage and belongs to the future, lest I should violate the propriety of the occasion, I will merely note the fact of his elevation. His name is Andrew Johnson, another son of North Carolina.

Thomas H. Benton, the great statesman and historian from Missouri; William R. King, the great statesman from Alabama; and Meredith P. Gentry, the majestic orator and statesman from Tennessee, were all natives of North Carolina. But I have not time for further enumeration of the distinguished sons of North Carolina.

North Carolina and her Southern sister States have had their day of trial and of tribulation. I hope it will not be out of place, when I declare, as an act of justice to them, and to drop leaves of healing on the future, that the Southern States, in the recent strife of the sections, intended only to DIVIDE, and not to DESTROY, the common heritage of our liberty. In separation they intended to write "MIZPAH" between the sections—"THE LORD WATCH BETWEEN ME AND THEE WHEN WE ARE ABSENT ONE FROM ANOTHER." They accepted in good faith the arbitrament of arms. They nourish no latent treason—conceal no fires of malice—desire no hereditary feuds—seek no advantage of their sister States. They ask only an equal part and lot in the inheritance of their fathers.

They have many a self-sacrificing patriot now, who, as the Roman Curtius of old leaped in the gulf of the Forum, would leap in the "bloody chasm" and have it close upon him forever, if, with union, he could secure liberty, fraternity and justice.

The heroic affections of a people are the strongest political chords

of a nation—affections sanctified and strengthened by companionship in dangers, toils, sufferings, commingling of blood, and in the achievement of a common liberty and glory.

In these affections are involved honor, magnanimity, charity and justice.

While our revolutionary fathers lived, their heartstrings held us together in union; but as soon as their heads rested beneath the clods of the valley, we witnessed the parting ligaments. Happy it was for them that they never looked upon the land drenched with the blood of their sons; and happy yet will it be, if that blood should become the seal of perpetual concord and justice.

Although the country is deprived of the chords and stays of the heroic affections of our fathers, yet there is virtue in their memory.

We are here this day to be imbued with the sublime lessons of their example. We are here, with pious gratitude, to remove “the moss and lichen of neglect” from their tombs, and, like “Old Mortality,” with chisel and mallet, deepen their inscriptions. We are here to collect, in the urn of memory, their immortal deeds, to be passed down to succeeding generations, like the omer of manna by the children of Israel, along the highway of ages. Let all the sons and daughters of the Old North State, and the pilgrim patriots of all the land, meet from year to year, and from century to century, on this consecrated ground, and view the memorials of their fathers, as the ancient Jews gathered to their beloved Zion, and obeyed the command, “Go round about her; tell the towers thereof. Mark ye well her bulwarks, consider her palaces; that ye may tell it to the generations following.”

Let New England perpetuate her celebrations, and from Lexington and the heights of Bunker Hill, shout to us her fraternal greetings, and Mecklenburg will return the echo, as

“Jura answers

Back to the joyous Alps.”

And let us all hope for the fruition of our splendid anticipations, that all the land, from the frozen North to the Gulf, and from Ocean to Ocean, shall be dedicated to Republican Freedom, and be forever sheltered under the canopy of a just and benign government.