LEXINGTON AND CONCORD.

The historical sights and scenes in and around old Boston, constitute a veritable paradise for the delver into revolutionary archives. The old state house with its interesting relics, the old south church, with its historical collections, Faneuil Hall, with its inspiring memories, the old north church, where Paul Revere's lanterns were hung, Copp's Hill, Bunker Hill, the Washington elm, are all very near and very dear to the American heart. A visit to them is to the enthusiastic American almost a Mohammedan's pilgrimage to his beloved Mecca. Of all these historical scenes none are more interesting or suggestive than those connected with the first engagement of the war, the battle of Lexington and Concord. (I use both names, because there is to this day a sort of rivalry between the two old towns, as to which should be honored as the place where the war commenced, a controversy which I shall not atempt to settle.)

It was my prvilege, in July last, to spend a day visiting, with an experienced guide, all the points associated with this historic battle, and studying it in detail. My visit gave me so much new light on this episode in our country's history that I think an account of it will add something to the average reader's knowledge of the momentous events of April 19, 1775. It is with such a hope that this article is written.

The subject of a visit to the famous battle place should be introduced by a brief account of the conditions which produced the conflict. The American colonies had entered upon a course of active opposition to the rule of England and resistance to some of the laws imposed upon them. This opposition the mother country interpreted as rebellion, and proceeded to extreme measures to put it down. Among these measures was the stationing of troops in what were considered the most rebellious places, Boston being the chief of these. Some encounters had occurred between these troops and the citizens of Boston, among them the famous "Boston Massacre" of 1770. Events subsequently developed so rapidly that all hope of reconciliation was lost. Too much concession was asked by the British and the Americans demanded more than England was willing to grant. Therefore, it was but a matter of time for actual hostilities to break out. Both sides were preparing for them. The British sent more troops to strengthen their hold on Boston, and the American "minute-men" were in readiness for a moment's call to arms. They were also collecting supplies and military stores in different places around Boston, with the ultimate purpose, if the course of events continued, of attacking the British troops and driving them out of that city. It was the collection of some of these stores at Concord, which gave the occasion for the famous battle. A brief account of the event will be given, before close details are entered into.

Late on the night of April, 18, 1775, about eight hundred British troops, under Colonel Smith, left Boston to march northwest some sixteen miles to Concord, to destroy the patriots' supplies. An attempt had been made to keep the movement a profound secret, but "a little bird whispered it," and the Americans determined to checkmate it. Before General Gage could give his orders to prevent any person from leaving the city, Ebenezer Dorr and Paul Revere had departed for Lexngton and Concord, to warn John Hancock and Samuel Adams, whose capture was contemplated, and to arouse the minute-men along the road. The good old sexton of the "Old North Church" had arranged to hang signal lanterns in its spire, to inform Paul Revere of the actual intention of the British. On the other side of the river, Revere eagerly awaited the signal. Instantly upon seeing it, he mounted his horse, and by devious ways and stealthy riding, eluded the British patrols along the road, and aroused the county of Middlesex to arms; while the sexton crept out of the back window of the church and went to bed, there to be arrested, tried, and acquitted for lack of evidence. Revere's ride accomplished its purpose.

"It was a brilliant April night. The winter had been unusually mild, and the spring very forward. The hills were already green. The early grain waved in the fields, and the air was sweet with blossoming orchards. Already the robins whistled, the bluebirds sang, and the benediction of peace rested upon the landscape. Under the cloudless moon, the soldiers silently marched; and Paul Revere swiftly rode, galloping through Medford and West Cambridge, rousing every house as he went, spurring for Lexington and Hancock and Adams, and evading the British patrols who had been sent out to stop the news. Stop the news! Already the village churches were beginning to ring the alarm, as the pulpits beneath them had been ringing for many a year. In the awakening houses, lights flashed from window to window. Drums beat faintly, far away and on every side. Signal guns flashed and echoed. The watchdogs barked. Stop the news! Stop the sunrise. The murmuring night trembled with the summons so earnestly expected, so dreaded, so desired. Such was the history of that night in how many homes! The hearts of those men and women of Middlesex might break, but they could not waver. They had counted the cost. They knew what and whom they served; and as the midnight summons came they started up and answered, 'Here am I.'"

The troops had marched so slowly as compared with the rapidity of Revere's ride, that the minute men who had been called out by him went back to their houses, after waiting a few hours for the British. At length the drum beat was heard, and at about daybreak on April 19, some seventy devoted Americans assembled on Lexington green and faced the road along which the troops were marching, a small body under Major Pitcairn being in the lead. Riding in front of his men, Pitcairn ordered the Americans to disperse. They hesitated. "too few to resist, too brave to fly." Discharging his pistol, Pitcairn ordered his men to fire. Their volley killed seven men and wounded nine. The survivors dispersed. The British pressed on to Concord, two miles farther, and destroyed the stores. They then attempted to cross the Concord river to the western bank, intending to capture or destroy additional supplies. Here they were met by the minute men of Concord. Each party fired a volley, and two were killed on each side. The British were forced hastily to retreat toward Boston. It was during this retreat that the greatest execution occurred. The route of the troops was continually harrassed by the "rebels," who hid behind rocks, fences, and trees, and poured in a galling fire. As the British reached the old Munroe Tavern, they fell to the ground, their tongues hanging out of their mouths, while Lord Percy, with cannon and reinforcements from Boston, protected them from their pursuers. After refreshment and a few hours' rest, they continued their retreat, the pursuit being assiduously kept up until the British crossed Charlestown Neck into Boston, a little after sunset. In killed, wounded and missing they had lost 273, the Americans 78. With this recital of the events of the battle in mind, the reader can understand the details which are to follow.

Early on the morning of Saturday, July 23, we took the electric car at Cambridge (Harvard square) and rode to Arlington. There we entered "barges" (capacious wagons) and proceeded along the famous old road. As we went, we could almost imagine that the same houses and fences were standing and the same trees, shrubs, and grain growing which gladdened the eyes of the revolutionary farmers, so quaint and picturesque is the region, and so suggestive of "ye olden tyme." The country is typical of New England, being marked by rolling hills, beautiful foliage and rock-bestrewn soil. Points of historic interest along the road are designated by stone tablets, bearing appropriate inscriptions. The first place of this kind we reached was the spot where Benjamin Wellington, a minute-man, was overtaken and disarmed by the British, before they reached Lexington. He borrowed another gun, however, and took part in the battle later in the day, as also other battles of the war. Next we reached the house of Jonathan Harrington, the last survivor of the Battle of Lexington, who died in 1854, March 27.

But one of the most interesting points on the road is the old Munroe Tavern, built in 1693, and occupied in 1775 by Major Munroe of the American militia. It is now kept by his grandson, a garrulous old gentleman, who delights in telling of the "events of Lexington." On the 19th of April, Munroe, hearing of the British advance thought that they were in search of Hancock and Adams, who were in another part of the village. He accordingly went to warn them, leaving the tavern in charge of Raymond, the old bartender. On their return from Concord, the British were met at this tavern by Percy's reinforcements, and lay down for a brief rest. Here a hospital was improvised for their forty wounded men, and here also they were served with drinks by old Raymond. Not liking his customers the poor old fellow tried to escape, but was wantonly shot down in the rear of the building. As the troops left the tavern, they attempted to burn it, but the fire was extinguished by its vigilant proprietor. The old place had a later interest, too. Washington rested there in 1789, and the chair in which he sat is still lovingly and reverently preserved.

Farther north are tablets marking the places where two of Lord Percy's field pieces were stationed to check the American pursuit of the British troops. The Lexington town hall was next reached. Here are many relics of revolutionary times, together with paintings and statuary, both historical and symbolical. The most conspicuous painting is "The Dawn of Liberty," by Sandham, representing the fight on the green. In this vicinity a great many houses were burned and other outrages committed by the British in their retreat.

But Lexington Green is the revered spot in this vicinity. It is a level, lawn-like place, on the west side of the road. Here the British met their first check on their march to Concord. The seventy patriots who had assembled here under Captain Parker, in response to the ringing of the old church bell, faced the enemy, who came on both sides of the church which then stood on the corner of the green. The spot where they stood is now marked by a granite boulder, bearing in inscription the words of Captain Parker to them, "Stand your ground. Don't fire unless fired upon. But if they want a war let it began here." Major Pitcairn shouted to them, "Disperse, ye rebels, ye rebels, disperse! Lay down your arms! Why don't you lay down your arms and disperse?" The British vol-