CONCORD.

BY JOHN MCKINSTRY MERRIAM.

I HAVE been asked to prepare for record in the Proceedings of this Society a brief summary of a visit by many of its members to the town of Concord, June 6, 1893, the fourth of a series of excursions planned by our senior Vice-President, and upon his invitation, to the more important historic places in Massachusetts. There is no place in the length and breadth of America which has greater and more varied significance to the student of our history than the town of Concord. Senator Evarts has said that nobody knew what the world was waiting for after the discovery of America until Concord was settled one hundred and fifty years later. "But when Concord was settled, it was known that that would have been impossible if America had not been discovered, and Concord produced, justified Columbus." Underneath the keen wit of the after-dinner speaker, there is much truth in these words. The simple story of Concord, traced but vaguely through the struggle for American independence, through American statecraft and jurisprudence, art and letters, is a complete answer to the labored efforts of Abbé Raynal and the other French writers of a century ago to prove that the discovery of America had resulted more in human ill than human good.

The farm of Simon Willard and the site of the house of Peter Bulkeley were the first two places visited by our party. They are also the two places which were most closely associated with the very beginning of Concord's history. Rev. Peter Bulkeley and Maj. Simon Willard were

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the leaders of the little colony of fourteen families or more, who obtained from the General Court, September 2, 1635, a grant of a plantation six miles square at Musketaquid. By the terms of this grant the name of the place was hereafter to be Concord, a name selected because of the Christian union of the members of the first company.¹ This was the first settlement in Massachusetts above tide-water, the plantation being at that time "away up in the woods," bounded on all sides by Indian lands, with Watertown and Cambridge as the nearest neighbors.

The work thus undertaken by these hardy pioneers was, as Governor Winthrop says, "to begin a town," and it is instructive to notice the three objects which were first accomplished. Peaceful possession of the soil was acquired from the Indian dwellers, by a bargain concluded at the house of Peter Bulkeley, by which the land was fairly purchased and satisfactory compensation made. The deed was subscribed by the marks of Squaw Sachem and Tahattawan, and other representatives of the native owners, and "the Indians declared themselves sattisfyed and told the Englishmen they were welcome."

Civil order was established by the formation of a New England town, Maj. Simon Willard probably being the chief Selectman.

A Christian Church was organized July 5, 1636, with Peter Bulkeley as teacher and John Jones as pastor. Thus three objects were accomplished which justified these earnest adventurers in giving to their new settlement the name of Concord — rightful possession, civil order, and religious worship.

The story of the purchase of the land from the Indians is preserved on a bronze plate set in granite, marking the site of Peter Bulkeley's house, and bearing the inscription :

¹Shattuck's History of Concord, p. 5, note.

HERE IN THE HOUSE OF THE REVEREND PETER BULKELEY FIRST MINISTER AND ONE OF THE FOUNDERS OF THIS TOWN A BARGAIN WAS MADE WITH THE SQUAW SACHEM THE SAGAMORE TAHATTAWAN AND OTHER INDIANS WHO THEN SOLD THEIR RIGHT IN THE SIX MILES SQUARE CALLED CONCORD TO THE ENGLISH PLANTERS AND GAVE THEM PEACEFUL POSSESSION OF THE LAND A. D. 1636.

Peter Bulkeley is a marked example of the choice grain which God sifted from a whole nation to plant in the wilderness of America. "He was of noble family, a man of wealth, a scholar and divine." He was the father, the prophet, and counsellor of his people, a friend and correspondent of John Cotton and John Wilson, the moderator of the first ecclesiastical council in New England, and a valued leader among the Puritan clergymen.

Two of his manuscripts have been preserved in the collections of this Society, one being an earnest defence of Congregationalism against Episcopacy.

The motto on his coat of arms, "Nec temere, nec timide," is the essence of the Puritan character. Quiet, unfaltering courage to accomplish dearly cherished and carefully determined ends brought the Pilgrims to Plymouth, led Bulkeley and Willard through the wilderness to Concord, guided the Minute Men in their resistance to British tyranny, and firmly planted constitutional government in State and nation.

The farm of Simon Willard is marked by an inscription on a panel in a stone near the Three Arch or South Bridge :

> ON THIS FARM DWELT SIMON WILLARD ONE OF THE FOUNDERS OF CONCORD WHO DID GOOD SERVICE FOR TOWN AND COLONY FOR MORE THAN FORTY YEARS

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The story of this farm has been delightfully told by one of our associates, Rev. Grindall Reynolds, in a lecture entitled, "The Story of a Concord Farm and its Owners," which was delivered before the Concord Lyceum, February 1, 1883. On this farm is the hill Nashawtuck. Evidence in perpetuam memoriam of the Indian occupation of this hill is found in the inscription on a large rock known as Egg Rock.

> ON THE HILL NASHAWTUCK AT THE MEETING OF THE RIVERS AND ALONG THE BANKS LIVED THE INDIAN OWNERS OF MUSKETAQUID BEFORE THE WHITE MEN CAME

Simon Willard cared for the civil and temporal interests of the people of Concord as zealously as Peter Bulkeley ministered to their spiritual welfare. He was the leading magistrate from the beginning; he served as Town Clerk for eighteen years: as Deputy of the General Court almost continuously from 1636 to 1654: as military Commander of the forces of Middlesex County, and as Assistant. He was often called upon to settle boundaries between the lands of individuals, of towns, and even between Massachusetts and New Hampshire. He was also entrusted with the duty of selling strong water, which, Mr. Reynolds tells us, was in itself almost a certificate of good character, as rum selling was then committed to men in high standing. It would thus seem that there is a precedent near at home for one feature of the so-called Norwegian system of liquor selling, which has been under consideration by our Legislature during the present year.

A place closely associated with the early growth of Concord, and of Middlesex County, is the site of the old Town House and Court House on the west side of the open space which has been the Public Square to the successive generations from Peter Bulkeley and Simon Willard to the present day. One of the tablets erected by the town tells us that :

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NEAR THIS SPOT STOOD THE FIRST TOWN HOUSE USED FOR TOWN MEETINGS AND THE COUNTY COURT 1721-1794.

From King Philip's war to the Revolution there is little in Concord's history beyond the usual life of a quiet country town. This century is important, however, as a period of preparation for the conflict for independence, and for the construction of a new order of governments under written constitutions. It has recently been made the subject of special study by Charles H. Walcott, whose "History of Concord in the Colonial Period" has given much of interest in addition to the earlier work of Shattuck.

The discipline of this period, to use a passage from Senator Hoar's address at the 250th anniversary of the Incorporation of Concord, was threefold. The heroic temper of 1775, the peculiar genius for war displayed by the Revolutionary heroes, and the fitness of the fathers of the Constitution for their untried task, came from the constant discipline of the people in "war, straining to the utmost every resource of courage, endurance and skill,"---"from the century-long discussion of the natural rights of the people, their rights under the charter and British Constitution which lay at the foundation of the State,--- and the constant consideration of the relation of man to his Creator and to the controlling law of duty."

From this school-time of rugged discipline, we come now to the glorious result.

The most sacred spot in Concord is the battle-field at the North Bridge. Well might the Centennial orator be moved to exclaim, "Let us put off the shoes from off our feet, for the place whereon we stand is holy ground !"

Near the battle-field, our party was joined by Judge John S. Keyes, the authority of Concord in matters of local history and the genial President of Concord's quartermillennial in 1885. As we approached the bridge, Judge

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Keyes briefly told the story of the famous fight of the 19th of April, 1775, and pointed out the positions of the King's troops and the "embattled farmers," the rallying point of the Minute Men on Punkatasset Hill,¹ their approach to the bridge to rescue their homes from apparent destruction, the place where the British fire was received and the order given by Major John Buttrick, "Fire fellowsoldiers, for God's sake, fire," the spot where Captain Isaac Davis fell, and the path of retreat of the British soldiers. After this account by Judge Keyes, the members of the party, scattering in groups of three or four, reviewed the well-known incidents of the fight, paying due honor to Major Buttrick, Col. Robinson, Col. Barrett, Captains Davis, Brown and Hosmer, Lieutenant Hoar, and their men from Concord, Acton, Lincoln and other neighboring towns.

The story of the Concord fight has been told in many ways by historians, poets and orators, but the most eloquent of them all will always be the beautiful and spirited statue of the Minute Man. Here, on the spot which received the blood of the gallant Captain Davis, near where the command was given which made the Declaration of Independence inevitable, the sculptor has embodied in a figure of enduring bronze the very genius of the place,—the alert and uncompromising patriotism, ever ready to turn from peaceful industry to the manly defence of home and country.

I know of no other place so appropriately marked by monuments as the battle-field of Concord. There can be no better preparation for the study of America's history

¹This place is marked by a tablet with the inscription :

ON THIS FIELD THE MINUTE MEN AND MILITIA FORMED BEFORE MARCHING DOWN TO THE FIGHT AT THE BRIDGE. [April,

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than a visit to this battle ground. No lover of country can turn from the immortal words of Emerson :

> "By the rude bridge that arched the flood, Their flag to April's breeze unfurled, Here once the embattled farmers stood And fired the shot heard round the world."

No true American can gaze on the calm, determined face of the Minute Man, and not feel his pulses beat more quickly with intenser love of country and increased pride in his glorious birthright.

From the North Bridge, our party returned to the village, past the old Elijah Jones house, which is now the home of Judge Keyes. It was in this yard that the British troops halted after they were driven from the bridge. A bullet from a British gun, directed at the Americans on the hill in the rear, lodged in the shed of the house, and the hole has been carefully preserved and treasured — pardon the inaccuracy of my language — by the enthusiastic owners of the house. Another interesting object at this point is the stone over which Captain Davis fell as he was shot dead by the first British volley, which has been moved to a prominent position in the yard.

We are told that the British troops retreated in some confusion to the village, and then turned back to Boston, protected, so far as possible, by flanking parties. • The Americans, in the meantime, crossed the great fields or meadows from the North Bridge to Meriam's Corner. where they were joined by Minute Men from Bedford and Reading. At this place the flanking party came down from the hill to the level ground "with a slow but steady step, without music, or a word being spoken that could be heard," according to the description of the Rev. Edmund Foster, an eve-witness from Reading. "Silence reigned on both sides. As soon as the British gained the main road and passed a small bridge near the corner, they faced about suddenly and fired a volley of musketry upon us. Thev

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over-shot, and no one, to my knowledge, was injured by the fire. The fire was immediately returned by the Americans and two British soldiers, fell dead at a little distance from each other in the road near the brook. Several of the officers were wounded, including Ensign Lester."

The place of the encounter is the extreme eastern end of the Concord settlement, at the junction of the Lexington and Bedford roads.

The Meriam brothers, Joseph, George and Robert, came from Hadlowe, in Kent County, early in the history of Concord. One or more of them may have been with Bulkeley and Willard in 1635. It would seem that one of them came first to reconnoitre, and returned to England for his family and brothers. The name is frequently found in Concord's history from 1638. The first recorded birth is that of Elizabeth Meriam, November 8, 1641, and the oldest stone in Concord is over the grave of Joseph Meriam, a son of the first Joseph, who died April 20, 1677. At the time of the Revolution there were three Meriam houses at this corner, one of which, the Ephraim Meriam house, on the Bedford road, is standing to-day. An older house, which was occupied by my father's grandfather, Josiah Meriam, was located on the Lexington road, about the same distance from the junction of the roads as is the existing house. All traces of this house have disappeared, but its location was pointed out to me by my father a short time before he died. Josiah Meriam was a sergeant in Captain Joseph Hosmer's company of Minute Men, and his son, Josiah, Jr., was a private in the same company.¹ In February, 1775, the father was one of a Committee appointed by the town to inspect the Minute Men, and to enforce the three articles of their organization, which pledged the signers

(1) "to defend to the utmost of our power, his majesty, King George the Third, his person, crown and dignity;

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¹ Mass. Muster and Pay Rolls, Vol. 55, p. L. 18, p. 78, file L.

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(2) "at the same time, to the utmost of our power and abilities, to defend all and every of our charter rights, liberties and privileges, and to hold ourselves in readiness at a moment's warning, with arms and ammunition thus to do;

a moment's warning, with arms and ammunition thus to do; (3) "and at all times and in all places to obey our officers chosen by us and our superior officers, in ordering and disciplining us, when and where said officers shall think proper."¹

Josiah Meriam was a member of the Committee of Correspondence for Concord from 1777 to 1782 inclusive, and in 1779 was a delegate to the State Convention.²

On the morning of the nineteenth of April, when the alarm was given in Concord that the British soldiers were coming, Josiah Meriam, with his older sons, Josiah, Jr., and Timothy, went to the village, and later were among the forces at the North Bridge, and probably crossed the meadows and appeared again at the encounter near their Joseph, the youngest son, my grandfather, then house. seven years old, remained at home, as he always said, "to take care of the women," and soon went with them to a place of refuge in the woods behind the hill. The British soldiers entered the house, helped themselves to whatever breakfast they could find, taking the unbaked pies from the oven, took the kettle of soft soap from the crane over the open fire, spilled it upon the floor, and scattered the ashes from the fireplace. It was fortunate that they helped themselves liberally in the morning, for later in the day they repassed the same house when hot johnny cake and new baked bread and fragrant pies could not tempt them to linger.

My grandfather lived to be eighty-nine years old. He must have been among the very last who could, from actual recollection, tell the story of the 19th of April. Toward the end of his life he was asked if he thought the British soldiers understood the art of war. His reply was that

¹ Shattuck's History of Concord, p. 94.

² Ibid., pp. 121, 122.

"he did not know whether they did or not when they came into Concord, but he was pretty sure they did before they went out of it."

The old flint-lock used by Josiah Meriam at the North Bridge has come to our family. It is probably one of the oldest guns of the Revolutionary relics, as, according to family tradition, it was originally brought from England by the first Joseph Meriam before 1638. 'The name—Ioseph Meriam—on the barrel, in ancient letters, makes this tradition probable.

Meriam's corner has been marked by a stone placed in the corner of the wall, bearing the words :

MERIAM'S CORNER

THE BRITISH TROOPS RETREATING FROM THE OLD NORTH BRIDGE WERE HERE ATTACKED IN FLANK BY THE MEN OF CONCORD AND NEIGHBORING TOWNS AND DRIVEN UNDER A HOT FIRE .TO CHARLESTOWN

But Concord's glory is not alone in the annals of the Revolution. In the days of peace she has won even fairer laurels. Here were the homes of Emerson, of Hawthorne, and Thoreau. Lowell has said that never has it happened to any other town so small as Concord to have living in it as contemporaries three such men. Here, too, lived and wrote the sweet author of "Little Women"— and in the quiet shade of Sleepy Hollow, not far distant from the scenes familiar to them all, they rest, while the peculiar influence of each one reaches out, with ever continuing force, into and through human thought and life.

It is vain to attempt to enumerate the many features of Concord which have made it famous, and to which the different members of our party frequently alluded. No other town in America can show three houses, on hardly more than an acre of ground, from which have come in fifty

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years six representatives to the Congress of the United States, one of whom has been called to prominent service in the Cabinet of the President, and another to influence and power in the United States Senate.

My summary must include something, however, of the burial-places of Concord. I have already referred to Sleepy Hollow, a spot designed by nature, it would seem, as a resting-place for the noble dead. Below the ridge, where in close proximity, are the graves of Emerson,¹ Hawthorne, Thoreau and Miss Alcott, is the family burial-lot of Samuel Hoar, an illustrious father of yet more illustrious sons. The monument in the centre of the lot bears this beautiful passage from Pilgrim's Progress —

> THE PILGRIM, they laid in a chamber whose window opened toward the sun rising. The name of the chamber was PEACE. There he lay till break of day and then He awoke and sang.

The tribute by Senator George F. Hoar, to his father, is inscribed on the lower panel of this monument, and is as follows:

> SAMUEL HOAR of Concord born in Lincoln May 18, 1778; died in Concord Nov. 2, 1856. He was long one of the most eminent Lawyers, and best beloved citizens of Massachusetts.

¹ The quartz bowlder near Emerson's grave now bears an inscription on a bronze panel :—

RALPH WALDO EMERSON BORN IN BOSTON MAY 25 1803 DIED IN CONCORD ÅPRIL 27 1882 THE PASSIVE MASTER LENT HIS HAND TO THE VAST SOUL THAT OER HIM PLANNED 18

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A safe counsellor, a kind neighbour, a Christian gentleman. He had a dignity that commanded the respect, and a sweetness and modesty that won the affection of all men. He practised an economy that never wasted, and a liberality that never spared. Of proved capacity for the highest offices, He never avoided obscure duties. He never sought stations of fame or emolument, and never shrank from positions of danger or obloquy. His days were made happy by public esteem and private affection. To the latest moment of his long life He preserved his clear intellect unimpaired, and, fully conscious of its approach met death with the perfect assurance of immortal life.

On the stone over his mother's grave, Judge E. Rockwood Hoar has written the following beautiful epitaph :

> MRS. SARAH HOAR WIDOW OF SAMUEL HOAR AND YOUNGEST CHILD OF ROGER SHERMAN, OF CONNECTICUT. BORN IN NEW HAVEN, JAN. 11, 1783, DIED IN CONCORD AUG. 29, 1866. AGED 83. WITH CLEAR GOOD SENSE, STRONG LOVE OF JUSTICE, AND A RESOLUTE WILL,

HER VIVACITY AND CHEERFULNESS CARRIED THE SPIRIT OF YOUTH INTO OLD AGE. SYMPATHIZING WITH EVERY DETAIL OF HUMAN LIFE, SHE KNEW NO SUPERIORS, AND NO INFERIORS; BUT, HONORING ALL MEN, ASKED OF OTHERS HER OWN FAITHFUL PERFORMANCE OF EVERY DUTY; AND RELIEVED THE

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YEARS OF PAIN AND INFIRMITY BY DEVOTING THEM TO HELPING THE POOR, THE FRIENDLESS, THE IGNORANT AND THE SINFUL.

The epitaph on the stone which marks the grave of Elizabeth Hoar, written by her brother, Edward S. Hoar, describing so beautifully a beautiful life, is like the sweet music accompanying a grand and noble song:

MISS ELIZABETH HOAR.

died April 7, 1878, aged 63. Her sympathy with what is high and fair brought her into intimacy with many eminent men and women of her time. Nothing excellent or beautiful escaped her quick apprehension; and in her unfailing memory precious things lay in exact order as in a royal treasury, hospitably ready to instruct and delight young and old. Her calm courage and simple religious faith triumphed over sickness and pain; and when Death transplanted her to her place in the garden of the Lord, he found little perishable to prune away.¹

At the grave of Col. George L. Prescott several members of our party paused to express tender memories of his gallant service and of his sweet personality. A simple cross marks this grave, and on it the true tribute — "Faithful to the last."

> Col. GEORGE L. PRESCOTT, Died before Petersburg, Va., June 19, 1864.

¹ At the grave of Edward S. Hoar in their lot, a stone has recently been placed bearing the inscription:

EDWARD SHERMAN HOAR, Born Dec. 22d 1823. Died Feb. 22d 1893. He cared nothing for the wealth or fame his rare genius might easily have won. But his ear knew the songs of all birds. His eye saw the beauty of flowers and the secret of their life. His unerring taste delighted in what was best in books. So his pure and quiet days reaped their rich harvest of wisdom and content. Our Librarian has recalled, in the following letter, a little incident of Col. Prescott's service, characteristic of his quiet earnest patriotism :

Worcester, Mass., June 14, 1893.

MY DEAR MR. MERRIAM :

Our Concord day, June sixth, was indeed both charming and instructive. You ask me to recall a brief conversation with you when you found me alone by the grave of Col. George L. Prescott. My relation to him, as to all the officers and men of the Fifth Army Corps of the Army of the Potomac, was unique. I was at the front in 1863, '64 and '65, the Field Relief agent of the United States Sanitary Commission for the noble Maltese Cross Corps, which was commanded by such soldiers as Porter, Sykes, Warren and Griffin. At the time of Prescott's death, Warren was his Corps Commander, and Griffin the Commander of his - the First - Division. But to the incident : On his last march of any length, while he was riding with Adjutant Kingsbury at the head of his regiment, I joined Their conversation had evidently been upon the them. prevailing topic of re-enlistment, for, as I saluted them, he said, with a gentle firmness which illumined his fine face, "Yes, Adjutant, there is but one thing for us to do - we must see this through," and, as with many another hero of the Sir Philip Sidney stamp, while the end of the war was not afar off, the end of this dear Colonel's royal service therein was nearer than he knew.

Very truly yours,

EDMUND M. BARTON.

The older burial-grounds are nearer the centre of the village. That on the hill is probably the oldest. A slate has been set in the wall marked —

On this Hill the Settlers of Concord built their Meeting House near which they were buried On the southern slope of the ridge were their Dwellings during the first winter Below it they laid out Their first Road and on the summit stood the Liberty Pole of the Revolution.

The grave of Colonel John Buttrick is here. It is marked by a stone bearing an inscription written by Governor Sullivan:

> In memory of Colonel JOHN BUTTRICK, who commanded the Militia Companies which made the first attack upon the British Troops, at Concord North-Bridge, on 19th of April, 1775. Having, with patriotic firmness, shared in the dangers which led to American Independence, He lived to enjoy the blessings of it, and died May 16th, 1791, aged 60 years. Having laid down the sword with honor, he resumed the plough with industry; by the latter to maintain what the former had won. The virtues of the parent, citizen, & christian adorned his life, and his worth was acknowledged by the grief and respect of all ranks at his death.

The well known epitaph over the slave, John Jack, is found here.¹ It was undoubtedly written by Daniel Bliss, Esq.

¹ This epitaph is as follows:
God wills us free; — man wills us slaves.
I will as God wills; God's will be done.
Here lies the body of
JOHN JACK,
A native of Africa, who died
March, 1773, aged about 60 years.
Tho' born in a land of slavery,
He was born free.
Tho' he lived in a land of liberty
He lived a slave,
Till by his honest, though stolen labors,
He acquired the source of slavery,
Which gave him his freedom :
Tho' not long before

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The beginning of the change from the old slate stones, which — as good fortune would have it — were so universally used in our older graveyards, to the more modern white marble, is shown by this inscription :

> This stone is designed by its durability. to perpetuate the memory. And by its colour, to signify the moral character of MISS AUGAH, DUDLEY, who died June 4, 1812. aged 73.

Unfortunately, however, this stone is proving less durable than the discarded slate, and at times weather stains and dirt have sadly impaired the force of its inscription.

The graveyard near the old Block house on Main Street probably contains the dust of Rev. Peter Bulkeley and his son, Rev. Edward Bulkeley. The exact location of their graves has been forgotten, but the statement was made by Senator Hoar that he had understood that these early ministers were buried a short distance inside of the gate, and to the left.

In the half-century sermon of Dr. Ripley is a reference to the place of burial of Concord's first three ministers, the two Bulkeleys and Mr. Estabrook, stating that they were probably buried in a tomb together. Dr. Ripley gives the Latin epitaph, which is found in Mather's Magnalia, ⁴ translating it

> ⁶ Bulkeley is now gene, who had long since gene; Nor hath he changed his country nor searcely his life; Thither he has gone, whither he was wou't to go, and where he already was, ⁹ 2

> > Death, the grand tyrant, Gave him his final emancipation. And set him on a footing with kings. Though a slave to vice, He practiced those virtues, Without which kings are but slaves.

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² "Obiit jam qui jamdudum abierat Bulkleus; Nee patriam ille mutavit, nec pene vitam; Eo ivit, quo ire consueverat, et ubi jam crat. 1894.7

He adds \rightarrow that this inscription is not to be found in the graveyard, — that no stone designates the spot where this distinguished saint was buried or entombed. If the spot can be ascertained (which is probable), I would that at least a plain block of granite should there be placed, with his name indelibly inscribed."

But this wish of Dr. Ripley still (emains ungratified, and we have only the tradition pointing to the location of the tomb.

I have thus outlined roughly and imperfectly the chief objects which interested us at Concord.

The old church, where the first Continental Congress met, and over which Hancock presided, the Old Manse, dear alike to history and to story,—Wright's Tavern, the Revolutionary houses, the home of the Concord Grape, the Soldiers' Monument, the interesting collection of the Concord Antiquarian Society,—the Library and its priceless manuscripts, — all these I can simply name, knowing, however, that every name will bring to mind a chain of pleasing memories.

One paragraph more — We wish gratefully to acknowledge the courtesy of Judge Keyes, and Mr. George Tohnan, the Curator of the Concord Antiquarian Society, to whom we were indebted for much of the pleasure of our visit. The day was rounded out and made complete by the hospitality of Samuel Hoar, Esq., who turned our thoughts from Peter Bulkeley and the Concord fight to a bountiful lunch, and by a banquet in the evening in Boston, tendered by our host, — Senator Hoar, — to whose thoughtfulness the entire pleasures of the day were due.

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