CHAPTER XXXI.

POLITICAL AND PUBLIC EVENTS AT THE CAPITAL.

CHARLES R. CORNING.

In the time of Governor Wentworth, Concord, lying fifty miles from the sea, was of small importance. Owing, undoubtedly, to its nearness to Boston, Exeter had been the meeting place of public men during the months following the outbreak of the Revolution, but soon after peace had been declared the inconvenience of traveling to Exeter several times a year and in all seasons began to suggest to the people a meeting place more centrally located. Immigration had followed the rivers; and towns were springing into activity along the Connecticut and Merrimack, around Winnipiseogee and Sunapee, and beyond the forests encircling the base of the White Mountains.

On February 28th, 1778, the assembly at Exeter, after considering the question relating to a constitutional convention, voted that the president of the council issue to every town, parish, and district within the state a precept recommending to them to elect one or more persons to convene at Concord on the tenth day of June for the purpose of considering a new plan of government.

The citizens of Concord, not insensible to the coming honor, voted at an April meeting to repair the meeting-house for the convention, and appointed James Walker, John Bradley, and Amos Abbott as a committee to take the matter in charge. The population of Concord at that time did not probably exceed eleven hundred, and of this number fewer than a third lived within two miles of the meeting-house, yet the members of the convention found abundant hospitality and good cheer among the few taverns and the scattered dwelling-houses stretching from Parson Walker's to the South end. The convention contained men like John Langdon, William Whipple, Nathaniel Folsom, Matthew Thornton, John Bell, Josiah Bartlett, John Dudley, Joseph Badger, and Timothy Walker. The session lasted a month and then adjourned to June, 1779, when the constitution was completed and submitted to popular vote only to be emphatically rejected.

That convention, however, deserves remembrance as being Concord's first popular assembly, and the initial step toward making the town the permanent capital of the state. A form of government

being still necessary, the Exeter law-makers voted, April 6th, 1781, to send out precepts for choosing a second constitutional convention to convene at Concord. There was now more reason for selecting Concord than existed in the first instance, for the towns along the Connecticut were unquiet and manifested a disposition to join their fortunes with their neighbors on the west bank; therefore Concord was shrewdly chosen, not only as more central, but as more neutral and less under the influence of the older towns near the Massachusetts line.

On the appointed day, June 6th, the convention met, holding its meetings, so tradition says, over the store of John Stevens, on the site of the Masonic Temple. The number of members was about sixty. The famous Mother Osgood tavern, standing on the spot now the site of the First National bank, was the headquarters for the members, and many were the stories afterwards told of lively hospitality and late hours.

Constitution making had not, however, reached an exact science, and the results of this second convention fared no better than those of the first; but by the terms of the law the convention was to continue its existence and go on submitting constitutions to the people until one was adopted. At last, in June, 1783, after several adjournments and seven different sessions, a constitution was prepared, submitted to the people, and accepted.

Concord, in the meanwhile, had become the popular place for public meetings; its inhabitants had extended a cordial welcome to the delegates of the several conventions, and now that a state government was created, Concord was favorably regarded as most convenient for the meeting of the legislature. Accordingly, Concord's first session of the legislature convened in March, 1782, holding its sessions in an improvised building belonging to Timothy Walker,—the meeting-house, with its austere denial of comforts, not being suited to the requirements of the law-makers. The following year, however, a committee of citizens remedied this inconvenience by making the sacred edifice weather-proof and comfortable, and there the legislature held its intermittent sessions for several years.

In June, 1784, the new government established by the late convention met for organization at Concord. The venerable Meschech Weare, the first president, attended by the legislature, the public officials, ministers of the gospel, and citizens from Concord and towns near and far, marched with music to the meeting-house, where the oaths were administered and the government was formally inaugurated, after which the Reverend Samuel McClintock of Greenland preached the first election sermon.

During the early years of the state it was customary to hold sessions of the legislature in different towns according to convenience and political considerations, and prior to 1816, when the capital was finally established at Concord, the town had had the following sessions:

March 13,	1782	June 7,	1797
June 11,	1782	November 21,	1798
September 10,	1782	June 5,	1799
June 10,	1783	June 4,	1800
October 28,	1783	November 19,	1800
December 17,	1783	June 2,	1802
June 2,	1784	June 1,	1803
February 9,	1785	November 23,	1803
October 19,	1785	June 6,	1804
June 7,	1786	November 21,	1804
June 6,	1787	June 5,	1805
June 4,	1788	June 1,	1808
November 5,	1788	November 23,	1808
June 3,	1789	June 7,	1809
June 2,	1790	June 6,	1810
January 5,	1791	June 5,	1811
June 1,	1791	June 3,	1812
June 5,	1793	November 18,	1812
December 16,	1794	June 2,	1813
December 2,	1795	June 1,	1814
November 23,	1796	June 7,	1815

Scarcely had Concord been agreed upon as a political meeting place when another convention convened which for important results and historical interest has never been surpassed in New Hampshire. It was the convention called to ratify or to reject the constitution of the United States. The first meeting had been held at Exeter in February, 1788, but considerations of various kinds suggested an adjournment to Concord, where, in the old meeting-house, on June 18th, assembled that body of men whose deliberations were to bring honor and fame to their state. There were one hundred and thirteen delegates elected, and nearly every one was present. From Wednesday to Saturday the meeting-house and the adjacent green were crowded with people, for the condition prerequisite to the life of the federal constitution was its adoption by nine states. Eight states had already voted affirmatively, and New Hampshire's vote was all-important.

The great event had attracted a large crowd to Concord. The sparse accommodations of the period were severely taxed, taverns and private houses were full of guests, and everything was done for their comfort. When the vote that made New Hampshire the ninth state was announced, the quiet town reeled with revelry and good cheer,

and Concord went to sleep that night satisfied with the honors of the week.

The sessions of the legislature having become features in the social life of the town, everything was done to make the members feel at home. Few dwelling-houses in the main village were without "court boarders." The meeting-house, notwithstanding its generous proportions, was not a desirable place for the legislature; accordingly the town-meeting, in August, 1790, voted to raise one hundred pounds for building a house for the accommodation of the general court, and to locate it on the "land of William Stickney, near Dea. David Hall's."

Private subscriptions became necessary, and citizens contributed five hundred and fifty-five dollars. This building, in reality the town house, with such additions as were called for by the meetings of the legislature, occupied the northeast corner of the present city hall and county court lot. It was one story in height, surmounted by a pretentious cupola whose roof was supported by a circle of slender, fluted columns, and capped by an enormous weather-vane. The entrance in the middle opened into a wide hall, on each side of which was a spacious room,—that on the north for representatives, that on the south for the senate, while in the rear were several committee rooms. This structure, which was the town house and state house in one, after many public uses and business vicissitudes, was finally moved near the railroad on Bridge street, where fire destroyed it in the early eighties. The town house was so completely appropriated by the legislature that the governor and council held their sittings in the northwest parlor of Dr. Samuel Morril's dwelling-house, on the opposite side of Main street.

In September, 1791, another convention assembled in Concord for the purpose of revising the constitution of 1783. There were more than one hundred members, too many for the town house, consequently the meeting-house was used for the sessions. The convention held four sessions, lasting in all thirty-six days, finally adjourning in September, 1792, when the result of its deliberations had been favorably received by the people. The constitution as revised, notwithstanding the convention of 1850, was destined to remain almost unchanged for three quarters of a century.

Aside from political gatherings, Concord was also becoming noted as a religious meeting place; and hither journeyed many a conference in the earlier years of the town. One gathering of this nature, the ordination of the Reverend Asa McFarland in March, 1798, was remembered on account of its importance and good cheer. The town paid all expenses, for the minister was as much a part of the official town

as the board of selectmen. People came from towns near and remote, and booths appeared on the meeting-house green for the sale of drinks and refreshments; for the occasion had all the features of a public holiday. During the day a long procession marched to the meeting-house headed by a band of music, while in the evening Stickney's Indian Chief tavern was the scene of a brilliant ball.

The Fourth of July seldom passed without a noisy manifestation of patriotism announcing the significance of the day. Great preparations were usually made and guests invited from neighboring towns. Concord had one of these Fourths in 1811 which impressed itself deeply on town annals. The celebration was generally undertaken by one or the other of the two political parties, the party not participating retiring into the wilderness for the time being, and leaving the glory and responsibility of the festivities to its rival. At the jollification of 1811, Amherst and Wilton were largely represented, swelling the crowd to proportions greater than Concord had ever known. Cannon shattered sleep at daybreak, and people began to gather. Vehicles of every description raised clouds of dust on every highway; men on horseback, women in carts and wagons, a few dignitaries in chaises, a concourse on foot, children in ox carts and barges, while scattered in the throng were aged men wearing uniforms that had seen service on more than one battle-field of the Revolution. Militia companies, with fife and drum, paraded Main street and went through their evolutions on the meeting-house common to the delight of the spectators. Firing salutes near the Federal bridge was a representation of the ship *President*, famous for its recent encounter with the British warship, *Little Belt*, while on the brow of the hill near Parson Walker's the artillery company made thundering reply. A procession comprising so-called Republicans formed near Pleasant street at 10 o'clock, with Timothy Walker as marshal, and proceeded to the meeting-house, where with prayer and addresses the day was glorified. Then followed feasting, with toasts and fierce invectives against the Federalists. It was a grand celebration, and furnished a theme of conversation for many a winter's evening. Successful as it had really been, the opposition newspapers ridiculed it and described with much humor the fight between the *President* and the *Little Belt*, as lately witnessed in Concord:

Interesting Interior Ship News.—The United States Frigate *President*, sailing with four wheels on dry land, emblematic of our dry dock policy, and mounting one iron and twelve wooden swivels, while passing Horse Shoe Pond near Concord, N. H., on the 4th inst. fired upon the British Sloop of War, *Little Belt* (an old canoe or rather a hollow log, each end being well secured with mud to keep it from

sinking) and shocking to tell, made such havoc and confusion among the musquitos, that she struck her colors and surrendered at discretion.

The War of 1812 made a lively town of Concord, for Concord was selected as the rendezvous of soldiers intended for the sea-coast defense and for the protection of the northern frontiers. Two large barracks were established, one at the north, the other at the south end of Main street, the former being the present residence of Dr. William G. Carter. Soldiers were frequently arriving and departing, commissary stores were collected and dispatched to the seat of war, ammunition trains rumbled through Main street, while now and then drums and fifes and the music of regimental bands broke the wonted quiet of the smart New England village, and unconsciously furnished a picture of the greater conflict of half a century later. During the war, many soldiers made their temporary home in Concord, and, as might be supposed, the order of the town was more than once threatened and sometimes seriously disturbed. Party animosities were, however, quieted in the hour of the country's peril, and at a meeting held at Stickney's tavern Federalists and Republicans pledged themselves to this resolution:

WHEREAS, in defense of our altars and firesides, our property and our country, Americans can have but one opinion;

Resolved, That it is expedient to form a military association in the town of Concord, of such persons as are not enrolled in the militia, to be in readiness at a moment's warning to act under the direction of the commander-in-chief for the defense of the state.

To the credit of the town such a company was formed and stood ready for service. The close of the war found Concord more active and influential in the affairs of the state. Population had increased to about fifteen hundred, new stores had opened, industries had grown, and Concord began to be seriously considered as the seat of the state capital.

In pursuance of that sentiment the legislature voted that the town of Concord, or its inhabitants, should convey to the state a suitable piece of ground and properly prepare it for a state house, besides furnishing all the stone necessary to its construction, free of all expense to the state. Immediately there broke out a local rivalry, peppered with sharp retort and uncharitable insinuations. The North end claimed a superior location for the proposed capitol; the South end ridiculed and opposed the site and submitted one of its own. Both sides tried in every way to influence the governor and his council, for to them had been left the selection of the location. One side was strenuous for placing the state house just north of the present city hall lot, while the other side insisted on placing it farther south. In

this contest the influence of Isaac Hill, who had recently moved to Concord, was shown, for it was through him and the Kents and Lows that the present site was finally selected. These men were among the leading citizens of the time, their acquaintance was extensive, their dispositions liberal, and their hospitality well known.

The state house was begun but not finished when Concord was honored by a distinguished visitor in the person of President James Monroe. It was during the summer of 1817, while on a tour throughout the eastern parts of the country, that he became a guest of the people of Concord. Mounted escorts accompanied the president from town to town and the journey partook of continuous ovations. Leaving Dover early in the morning of Friday, July 18th, the president rode through Nottingham and Epsom to Chichester, where the selectmen of Concord and the citizens' committee of reception were awaiting him. The procession then moved on across the dusty plains, approaching Concord over the lower bridge. On Butters's hill, where the artillery fired a salute, were gathered a large concourse of citizens and strangers to do their part in welcoming the chief magistrate. Other committees, with several militia companies, now joined the party, and all marched up Main street to Barker's Washington tavern, near Fisk's store, which had been selected as the place of entertainment. The tavern and vicinity were decorated with flags and flowers, and a platform tastefully trimmed and roofed with boughs wound with festoons of roses had been built for the exercises. Around this bower crowded the people and the infantry companies. Thomas W. Thompson, a distinguished citizen of Concord and an ex-senator in congress, was chairman. He addressed the president, bidding him hearty welcome to the town, and congratulating him on the peaceful condition of the country. The president acknowledged the greeting, and at the banquet later in the day he offered this toast, "The town of Concord—may its inhabitants continue to flourish and prosper."

In the evening the president listened to an oratorio given by a musical society in the North meeting-house. Diversions in those days were not many, and Concord, owing to its inland situation, offered but little in the way of amusements and interest. However, the president found pleasure during his sojourn, for after driving with Mr. Thompson on Saturday an interesting and delightful excursion was undertaken. Navigating the upper Merrimack was in those times an important branch of commercial industry. The Middlesex canal was in operation, and contributed to the material advancement of the town. The agent of the Canal company, John Langdon Sullivan, nephew of General Sullivan, happened to be staying in Concord. Mr. Sullivan conceived the plan of treating Mr. Monroe to a ride on

the Merrimack, so selecting one of the company's steam towboats, of which he was the inventor, he trimmed it with flags and gave it the name of *President*. In this unique craft, drawing in its wake a long flotilla of pleasure boats, Mr. Monroe, accompanied by the committee with a band of music and a company of more than one hundred and fifty ladies and gentlemen, steamed down the Merrimack to the junction of Turkey river, and there entering the locks (five in number), descended into the stream below Garvin's falls, and continued several miles beyond. Reaching a point near Hooksett the party left the boats, and, taking vehicles in waiting, drove back to Concord over the river road. In after years Mr. Monroe often mentioned this excursion on the Merrimack, and recalled the picturesque stream with wooded banks cutting a landscape of consummate beauty, as he described it.

That evening the president was entertained at the house of William A. Kent, where a distinguished company had assembled. On Sunday he occupied a pew in the North meeting-house, and heard a sermon by Dr. Asa McFarland. Early on Monday the president, with his traveling companions, General James Miller and Colonel Joseph G. Swift, an engineer officer, took his departure, escorted as far as the oaks in Boscawen by the committee of arrangements, who there bade him good-by and thanked him for his visit.

At the beginning of the second decade of the last century the growth and increasing importance of towns about Concord made the creation of a new county a political necessity. Belonging to Rockingham and Hillsborough counties, the inhabitants of many towns including Concord were put to the expense and inconvenience of going to Exeter, Amherst, and other places, to attend to public business and private affairs, consequently the movement for a new county met with favor. The sentiment of Concord was practically unanimous, as the vote in the town-meeting respecting the formation of Merrimack county showed five hundred and twenty-two yeas to six nays.

After some delay, the legislature passed an act at the June session of 1822, creating the new county and naming Concord as the county seat. This movement added again to the political importance of the town, and the selectmen were instructed to change the town house so that the courts might be accommodated.

The state house having been completed the town house had reverted to its original uses, but alterations were now necessary to meet the new requirements of public affairs, consequently the building was moved farther back on the lot, set end to Main street, and a story added. For this improvement the town appropriated eight hundred

dollars, and the citizens contributed half as much more to meet the cost of preparing the interior for court and county needs.

About this time Concord's official observance of the nation's birthday was discontinued, the 4th of July, 1826, marking the abandonment of the time-honored custom. Being the capital of the state these celebrations were on a liberal scale and attracted many visitors, but party bitterness and possibly questions of economy began to be urged against the continuance of the custom. But the observance died with honor and the programme of July 4th, 1826, was long the subject of convivial conversation. It was the semi-centennial of the Declaration of Independence, and the proceedings were of unusual fervor and excellence. Cannon and bells announced the opening of the day, crowds began to congregate, booths were built, and private houses from the lower bridge to the meeting-house offered greetings and good cheer.

Governor David L. Morril and his council, the senate with Matthew Harvey at its head, and the house, led by Henry Hubbard, the speaker, attended religious and civic exercises, marching to the music of the bands up Main street to the meeting-house, where prayer was offered by Dr. Bouton, after which Dr. Josiah Crosby read the Declaration of Independence and Richard Bartlett, secretary of state, delivered the oration.

Later in the day citizens and invited guests sat down to a banquet. Samuel Green presided, the governor sitting at his right and Timothy Chandler at his left. Witty and patriotic speeches set all in good humor, toasts were drunk with the best of feelings, and when Jonathan Eastman, Jr., proposed "Our Great-Grandfathers, who here, one hundred years ago, planted the tree of liberty in the wilds of Penacook," the enthusiasm evoked formed a fitting conclusion to the town's last official Fourth of July.

The "National Guest," as Lafayette was called, including New Hampshire in his triumphal journey of 1824–'25, visited Concord in June of the latter year. As the legislature was sitting, the welcome accorded the distinguished Frenchman came from both state and town. Great preparations had been made. Houses were decorated, fences festooned with flowers and evergreen, flags hung over the streets, and in the evening every window, it is said, from Deacon Wilkins's[1] to Horse Shoe pond beamed with welcome. The selectmen, Abial Walker, Jeremiah Pecker, and Robert Davis, did their utmost to make the occasion an honor to Lafayette and a credit to Concord.

At the time of Lafayette's visit Concord had been the permanent

[1] Near Rolfe and Rumford Home.

capital of the state not quite ten years, and the seat of the recently formed county scarcely one year. The inhabitants numbered a few more than three thousand, while the ratable polls did not exceed five hundred. The populous part of Concord in that day extended along Main street from Butters's tavern to Horse Shoe hill, a few highways sparsely marked with dwellings intersecting Main street at various points, while to the westward, now comprising the territory beyond State and Green streets, extended a hilly and uninteresting region containing scarcely a suggestion of pathway or dwelling.

The day to which all were so eagerly looking, Wednesday, June 22d, opened auspiciously. The citizens' committee met the marquis at the Pembroke line, where William A. Kent welcomed him to Concord. The procession then moved over the Plains past the Glover farm and across the lower bridge, where the artillery fired a national salute, and eight companies of light troops under the command of Brigadier-General Bradbury Bartlett were drawn up in line. On entering Main street Lafayette was greeted by thousands of citizens who had come from all parts of the state, while windows and doors along the route were filled with women and children. The long procession after marching to the north end of Main street countermarched to the residence of William A. Kent, now the site of the South Congregational church, where lodging had been prepared for Lafayette and his suite. At noon he was escorted to the gate of the state house yard, where he was received by Senators Webster and Bowers, who escorted him into the presence of the legislature. In the meantime an impressive company of more than two hundred soldiers of the Revolution, marshaled under the direction of General Benjamin Pierce, marched into the Doric hall of the state house, where they were introduced to Lafayette. The scene was an affecting one, long remembered by those who witnessed it.

At 3 o'clock a concourse numbering from seven hundred to eight hundred sat down to a dinner prepared by John P. Gass. The dinner was served on the lawn in front of the capitol, where a large pavilion had been erected. To mark the spot where Lafayette was seated a tree was planted, which is now standing. On Lafayette's right sat the governor and council, and on his left the marshal of the day, with Samuel Bell, Judge Green, the secretary of state, and the state treasurer. Conspicuous among those seated at one of the four long tables were the survivors of the Revolution, the speaker and members of the house of representatives, the president and the senate, and the Concord committee. After retiring from the table Lafayette was conducted to the front steps of the capitol where the militia passed in review before him.

Early in the evening he was escorted from Mr. Kent's to the state house, where a public reception was held. The building was brilliantly illuminated, and at the conclusion of the function the distinguished party paid a visit to Governor Morril at the residence of his brother, Judge Morril, on Main street nearly opposite the present court house. Later in the evening Lafayette and invited guests attended an oratorio given by the New Hampshire Musical society in the Old North meeting-house.

At half-past six the following morning the "grays" were again in harness, and the marquis left town in a barouche accompanied by his son and secretary, the committee of arrangements, Senator Andrew Pierce of Dover, and one of the governor's aids.

The political importance of Concord became marked soon after Isaac Hill took up his residence. The Jackson clique was to confer distinction on Concord, just as the Pierce coterie did five and twenty years later. Of all the devoted and energetic friends of Andrew Jackson, no one, South or North, surpassed Isaac Hill. Disappointed at Adams's election in 1824, the Jackson men were resolved that their hero should be next in succession, consequently Concord became an active center of the "Old Hickory" movement. In fact, the Democrats of Concord were among the earliest party men throughout the country to call a popular convention to set the people aright. The "booming process" is by no means a modern invention, for it flourished as far back as the twenties. In accordance with the sentiments of the hour, the leaders issued a call for a grand demonstration in favor of the man of the people, which with shrewd and dramatic foresight was set for January 8th, 1828, the anniversary of the battle of New Orleans.

The gathering was large and enthusiastic for midwinter,—the taverns and private houses overflowed with visitors, many had to sleep in sleighs and pungs, for bad as the travelling was, thousands of the faithful had made their way to Concord. The celebration was a political success, everything taking place as laid down on the programme. Samuel Dinsmoor was president of the meeting, and Joseph Towle had charge of the order of exercises. No sooner had light broken in the east than the town was awakened by a salute of twenty-four guns and the ringing of the meeting-house bell. Main street presented a lively scene of early arrivals, some on foot, some in sleighs and pungs drawn by two and four horses, and filled with men bearing flags and streamers lettered with patriotic devices.

At 11 o'clock the boom of cannon announced the forming of the procession in front of the state house, whence it soon began its march to the North meeting-house. First came the chief marshal,

with a band of music, followed by a numerous committee of arrangements; then the president of the day, the orator and the chaplains, the vice-presidents, and the gentlemen selected to deliver addresses at the banquet. Following closely was borne a large standard, upon which was painted a life-size likeness of Andrew Jackson, guarded by Revolutionary heroes, whose venerable appearance created boundless enthusiasm among the spectators, while trudging in the rear of the throng were the subscribers to the dinner and citizens of Concord. Arriving at the meeting-house the committee of arrangements separated into two lines, through which the procession filed into the edifice and listened to the exercises, which consisted of an opening prayer by Dr. Nathaniel Bouton, the pastor of the town, vocal music, an oration by Isaac Hill, and the benediction. The procession then reformed and marched to the state house, where dinner was served. Speeches and toasts were then in order, occupying several hours, and in the evening a grand ball was given in honor of the day in the new hall of the Eagle Coffee House. The hall was gay with flags and streamers, while conspicuous among the decorations were huge portraits of Jefferson, Madison, and Jackson, and also a fine transparency representing the battle of New Orleans.

A few years after this celebration, Concord was honored with a visit from President Jackson, who came attended by Vice-President Van Buren and Secretaries Cass and Woodbury of the cabinet. He arrived on Friday, June 28th, 1833, and remained until Monday. The cavalcade coming up the river road was met at Morse's, in Bow, by the committee and escorted into town. At the town line Colonel Robert Davis, chairman of the committee, with the military in holiday attire, awaited the distinguished soldier. The president at this point left his barouche, and mounting a horse led the long procession through the dust and heat up Main street to Horse Shoe pond, then down State and over School to the Eagle Coffee House. The president on his beautiful white horse created much enthusiasm; women waved their handkerchiefs; men cheered and shouted; and the general, with hat in hand, courteously bowed right and left. In front of the hotel a crowd gathered, calling loudly for a speech, so the president and his party, going out on the balcony, were introduced by Congressman Henry Hubbard. Some of the newspapers of that time estimated that fully ten thousand people came to Concord on that occasion to see General Jackson.

Early the next morning an endless stream of vehicles brought visitors from towns far and near to swell the crowds already assembled. At 8 o'clock the state militia paraded in a large field west of the state house, now covered with the federal building and dwelling-

houses along Green street. Afterwards the troops formed a lane from the Eagle Coffee House to the capitol, through which the distinguished party passed on their way to meet the governor and the legislature. Among those present that day were some who in after years were to achieve distinction. Among them was young Franklin Pierce, not then thirty years of age although a congressman, and with him were his colleagues, Henry Hubbard and Joseph M. Harper; there also was Isaac Hill, United States senator, one of Jackson's most intimate friends, and widely known as a leading spirit in the "Kitchen Cabinet"; close by stood two of New Hampshire's soldier heroes, General Miller and Colonel McNiel; while scattered in the throng were Representatives Noah Martin, Nathaniel S. Berry, Charles H. Peaslee, Arthur Livermore, and Leonard Wilcox, two future governors, a congressman, and a judge. State pride was excusable that day in such a presence of native sons, to whom must be added Secretaries Cass and Woodbury. The president afterwards visited points of local interest, among them the prison, and in the evening he held a public reception.

On Sunday morning General Jackson attended church at the Old North, where Dr. Bouton preached the sermon; in the afternoon he went to the Unitarian, and later in the day joined in the union meeting of the Baptist and Methodist societies held by Dr. Cummings in the church of the former denomination on State street. With Monday came the departure, and again Main street was lined deep with townspeople. Soon after 7 o'clock, escorted by the citizens' committee, General Jackson departed, an escort attending him to the Bow line, where he returned his thanks to the people of Concord for their hospitality and started on his way to Washington.

The first great Whig assemblage ever held in New Hampshire convened at Concord on the last day of September, 1834. The cause of the gathering was a complimentary dinner to Samuel Bell, then a United States senator, but it partook also of the nature of a ratification meeting of Whig principles. A large crowd came to town, for the attractions were many. A spacious pavilion of canvas had been erected on the open lot on School street, then called the common, where plates were laid for six hundred guests. It was a great event, for among the orators were Daniel Webster, John Holmes, Ichabod Bartlett, and Senator Bell. The proceedings were long remembered, and the "Bell Dinner," as it was called, marked an epoch in the political history of New England.

The jollification prompted this poetical effusion from the *Patriot*, an opposition organ:

Tories old of Seventy-six,
With twaddlers intermix;
Kent and Moore and Allen Hackett,
Jump ye in to swell the racket;
Ambrose, Elkins, Kimball, Chickering—
See the blue light flame is flickering—
Burgin, Darling, Low, and Odlin,
Come, for now's no time for twaddling.

Along during the thirties Concord had become a recognized place for holding party conventions, mass meetings, and gatherings other than political; its accommodations had increased, and although the railroad was still in the future numerous lines of stage-coaches radiated from Concord in every direction. Concord was a type of the conservative, intelligent, industrious New England town of the period. All at once an event happened that roused the sober townsfolk and associated the name of Concord with a movement destined later to bring about civil war. It was the attempt of George Thompson and his companion, John G. Whittier, to speak on anti-slavery. Concord was not wanting in good people who honestly believed in this movement, but the population generally had no sympathy with it, and the announcement of the proposed address caused prompt and undignified action.

Morally, one may look back on that unfortunate excitement without shame. The townspeople were not dealing with the question of slavery nor anti-slavery, they were dealing with what they believed to be a movement likely to disturb the peace, not only of Concord, but of the state and nation. Moreover, they considered the appearance of George Thompson as adding insult to the occasion. Thompson was an Englishman, a recent arrival, whose mission was to attack slavery by lecturing the people as to their duty in the matter, and this he did by speeches more or less aggressive. His career before coming to Concord had made him intimate with violence, yet heedless of warnings he persisted in his agitation, visiting various places in his travels, and finally arriving here from Plymouth, where he had spent some time with Nathaniel P. Rogers. George Kent, one of Concord's prominent citizens, was a believer in anti-slavery, and it was to his residence that Thompson repaired. Mr. Kent's house was on the site now occupied by the Centennial Home for the Aged, an imposing mansion in its day, noted for its distinguished guests and refined hospitality. Being apprised of the coming visitor, who was accompanied by John G. Whittier, Mr. Kent had circulated handbills announcing a meeting at the town hall for Friday evening, September 4th, at which "the principles, views, and operations of the

abolitionists would be explained, and questions answered by George Thompson and John G. Whittier."

It is needless to say that Mr. Kent's hand-bills caused immediate commotion. The principal men of the town, to the number of seventy-four, issued a call for a citizens' meeting at the court house, on Thursday evening, when the hall was crowded with citizens representing both political parties. Ralph Metcalf, afterwards governor, was chosen chairman, and speeches were made by Isaac Hill, Samuel Fletcher, Richard Bartlett, and others, whose sentiments were expressed in vigorous resolutions, and among them was the following:

"That we behold with indignation and disgust the intrusion upon us of foreign emissaries, paid by the money of open enemies to our government, who are traversing the country assailing its institutions and distracting the quiet of the people."

Robert Davis, chairman of the board of selectmen, then called on Mr. Kent, begging him to dissuade Thompson and Whittier from carrying out their intentions, but all to no purpose. As the hour for the meeting drew near, a crowd gathered near the town house bent on stopping the speaking, but the authorities meanwhile had ordered the doors of the hall to be locked.

It was then that the disturbance took place. Angry with the instigators of the affair, the crowd had started for George Kent's residence, when Mr. Whittier and Joseph H. Kimball, editor of the *Herald*, happened to come in sight, whereupon the excited partisans began pelting them with stones, dirt, and eggs. It is possible that the treatment of Mr. Whittier and his companion might have been more hurtful had not William A. Kent come to their aid, pulled them into his hallway, and bolted the door. Mr. Kent's action was a manly one, for he was not an abolitionist like his son George. The crowd, still eager in their hunt for the Englishman, refused to leave Mr. Kent's until Mr. Thomas, the Unitarian minister, told them that the man they were after was not there, whereupon amidst shouts and jeers the mob moved rapidly up Pleasant street to the residence of George Kent, where for a time matters looked threatening. Fortunately Thompson had already left the premises in company with Mr. Kent, who had pointed out to him the perils of the situation. Mr. Davis and Philip Carrigain having satisfied themselves that this was the fact, Mr. Davis addressed the crowd, persuading them to disperse, promising, however, that no meeting should be held, and adding that the object which had brought them together had been attained. Thus ended the overt act in Concord's only anti-slavery disturbance. The crowd slowly dispersed, save a few, who disappointed at the escape of their victim, constructed an effigy labeled "George Thompson," and

burned it in the state house park. This victory over free speech was further celebrated by impromptu fireworks, accompanied by discharges of cannon. In after years Mr. Whittier found much fun in referring to his Concord experience, and was fond of exhibiting the egg-stained coat that he wore on that eventful evening.

It was a pleasing inspiration that moved the citizens to meet at the town hall one day in 1843, to talk over the proposal to invite a distinguished public man, although at that time a private citizen, to become the guest of Concord. The unanimity and accord of the meeting were somewhat unusual for those days of party bitterness, and promised well for the undertaking. The public man to whom Concord extended its invitation was Richard M. Johnson, of Kentucky. Mr. Johnson leaving Boston Friday, October 25th, on an early train, was met at Manchester by Franklin Pierce and Nathaniel G. Upham, of the committee of invitation, who welcomed him to New Hampshire. There the party was increased by delegations from Lowell, Nashua, and Manchester, together with the famous Stark Guards. At Bow crossing the train came to a stop and the procession was formed. Colonel Johnson mounted a white horse, and followed by the committee and a cavalcade of citizens, with a long stream of vehicles and pedestrians, led the march into town. At the Countess Rumford mansion was another committee, and the militia commanded by Colonel Stephen Brown. Ira Perley welcomed the visitor, and Colonel Johnson responded amidst the cheers of the crowd. Charles H. Peaslee was chief marshal, with Jonathan E. Lang, William Walker, Nathaniel B. Baker, Calvin Ainsworth, Benjamin Grover, Cyrus Hill, R. D. Moores, and Lewis Downing as aids. The procession then moved through Main street, with the Stark Guards leading, followed by the Concord Artillery and the Concord Light Infantry, with their bands, and the committee of arrangements. Next came Colonel Johnson and mounted aids, followed by a company of horsemen, while trudging in the rear were hundreds on foot. During the march cannon boomed and bells rang, while spectators waved flags and handkerchiefs and gave cheer upon cheer for the guest of the people.

After a brief rest at the American House, the committee escorted Colonel Johnson to the state house, where a public reception was held. The representatives' hall was filled, gallery and floor, with eager spectators, whose appreciation of the occasion was frequently manifested.

Upon being introduced, Colonel Johnson spoke feelingly and wittily, saying friendly words about Franklin Pierce, who had been his congressional associate, and expressed his thanks for the generous welcome accorded him. He acknowledged his surprise at the warmth of

his greeting, for he had always heard that the people of New Hampshire were a cold-blooded, temperate people, who gave their hearts to nobody, but having found his error he should now go back to Kentucky and tell the Blue Grass population that with all their whiskey they could not outvie the Northern state of New Hampshire in friendship and generous hospitality.

At 3 o'clock the distinguished guest, with a large company, sat down to a banquet at Grecian hall, presided over by Franklin Pierce. William Low, an aged citizen, made a point at the banquet which added great interest to the occasion. He began by saying that he desired to put a very blunt question to Colonel Johnson, which was, "Did you, or did you not, in your own opinion, kill Tecumseh?" Colonel Johnson replied that, called upon in such a manner, among such a people, he felt not the least hesitation in answering the question promptly and fully. Thereupon he declared, "In my opinion, I did kill Tecumseh." He stated to the company the evidence upon which his opinion rested, that they might judge as well as he. The Indians, he said, near the quarter where he was, had been several times routed, and again brought to the charge by a leader who commanded and was obeyed as the principal chief. Colonel Johnson guided his horse towards this chief, determined to end the desperate fight by killing him if possible. As they approached each other the Indian fired, putting a ball through Colonel Johnson's bridle hand, then he raised his tomahawk, and when he was within some twenty feet, in the act of throwing it, Colonel Johnson leveled a pistol which he had concealed, and shot him dead. The pistol was loaded with a ball and three buckshot. Tecumseh was found killed at this very spot. A ball had entered his breast near the heart; one buckshot took effect a little higher up on the breast, another in the neck, and the third in the head. Colonel Johnson stated various other interesting facts tending to confirm his view of the occurrence. When he took his seat, Judge Upham rose and said that as mention had been made of a jury, and as an issue had been made up and the evidence laid before the jury, he would propose that the company be the jury, and return at that time their verdict. It was agreed to, and the opinion of the jurors was ascertained by rising. All were of one mind, and returned a verdict, "Guilty of the blood of Tecumseh." In the evening there was a public reception at the Eagle Coffee House, which was illuminated, as were many residences and buildings along Main street.

On Saturday morning Colonel Johnson visited the public buildings, and took a drive about the town, after which many called to pay him their respects. At noon he took his departure, going by stage to

Windsor, Vt. When the stage started from in front of the state house the parting guest was speeded by the hearty cheers of the crowd assembled in the vicinity.

For half a century after the legislature began meeting at Concord there was one day in every year when people from all over the state were wont to turn Concordward to celebrate the inauguration day of the governor, or election day, as it was popularly called. This used to be the supreme holiday of the calendar, and gave to Concord while it lasted a distinction as unique as it was interesting and amusing. The custom was observed in undiminished vigor to the close of the Civil War, but after that time there was a gradual lessening of interest, so that the former glory of the day is remembered now only by persons of mature years. The era of open booths, sports, boxing-matches, side-shows, cider carts, gingerbread and sweetmeat pedlers, hawkers, lottery wheels, medicine men, card sharpers, fortune-tellers, horse tamers, street singers, and money getters generally, came to a close in the sixties, or early seventies, when public laws became more repressive and local policing more stringent. Gradually the old-fashioned election day of the fathers lost its importance, falling away year by year until changed methods of transportation and changed characteristics and modes of livelihood deprived the day of its motley interest and picturesqueness, and then followed that amendment to the state constitution which did away with the annual summer session and at the same time sounded the death knell of the gay and frolicsome "'Lection day."

But election day in its prime was as much a Concord institution as the Old North meeting-house. "The famous gala day came round on the first Thursday of every June, and great were the domestic preparations for its coming. Paint and whitewash were laid on unsparingly, the old ovens were urged to their utmost, the best rooms were put in order, in short, transformation became the duty of every man and woman from one end of the town to the other."

In the days before the railroads, members of the legislature, and visitors as well, began to come into town on Monday morning, and the stream of arrivals seldom ceased its flow before noon on Thursday. Prior to the building of the state house, the spirit of "election day" was found at the North end,—attracted there by the meeting-house, the Washington tavern, and other public resorts of equal fame, —but later years saw that neighborhood surrender its crowds and shows to the greater charms clustering in the vicinity of the present gilded dome. The cavalcades of those days were spectacles long remembered,—the horsemen, the music, the long procession of legis-

lators and citizens, headed by the governor and council and high officials of state, whitened with dust, marching soberly to the Old North to hear the election sermon preached by some favored minister of Orthodox faith. Following those exercises was a public dinner, with toasts and social intercourse frequently prolonged far into the night. The old-time governors fitted in perfectly with the occasion; they were dignified men of middle age, somewhat stern in deportment, very precise in dress, and one or two of them, it is said, wore powdered hair and three-cornered hats, and were attended by body servants.

Governor Langdon was noted for elegance of manners and richness of attire, as were several of his successors. Governor Gilman wore an awe-inspiring hat decorated with an imposing cockade, while following a few paces in the rear walked his black servant, "London," whose showy uniform and majestic gait were the envy of all the other negroes and the delight of the children. This distinction in dress gradually waned; the last governor thus attired was Benjamin Pierce, who wore a three-cornered hat, blue coat with military buttons, buff vest, and knee breeches and silver buckles. This valiant old man was the guest when at Concord of John George, in the house so long the hospitable home of his son, John H. George.

"Election day" continued with slightly varying conditions for many years, the same crowds gazing at each other, moving up and down the tree-sheltered street, pausing at booths to eat and drink, crowding the state house and making a picnic ground of the velvet green park, and finally, at the approach of evening, seeking their chaises and wagons and carts, and driving homeward well satisfied with their holiday. Another change came over the day when the railroads were opened, bringing to the town a class quite different from the former farmers, their boys and hired men, and while the number of visitors was increased, the originality and individuality of the crowd was much lessened. Even the fakirs and show-men experienced the changed character of the day, and no longer reaped the easy harvest of earlier times.

In 1842 Edward Kent, a native of Concord, afterwards governor of Maine, wrote an interesting article on the old-time "election day" which impressed Isaac Hill so favorably that he published it in his *Patriot*. Mr. Kent bewailed the changes wrought since his boyhood, when the festival was in its prime, and lamented the disappearance of the characters that once made Concord such a lively place. "Can it have come to this?" he wrote. "Are there no booths with green boughs and bushes as the outward sign of good things within, no fiddlers to discourse music and mark time for the heavy fantastic toes

of the six-feet Yankees on the rough planking, no gorgeous display of punch, egg-nog, and pure ardent, no prancing horses at the end of a single rein, no paw-paw or black jack, no throwing at the pin, no bowling alleys extemporized for the occasion, no Potter to ride two horses by day and to astonish by the practice of the black art by night? Is there no old Green Parker, with his long staff, to preach lay sermons, no 'lection cakes glossed over with treacle, no Major Peter Robertson with his artillery? Is there no 'nigger 'lection' Wednesday, as there used to be? Taking my stand at Captain Ayers's [opposite Bridge street now] which was a sort of pivot or center of gravity, I see in the latter weeks of May the whole population busily engaged in raking chips, housing wood, and sweeping front yards. It is purification week. I see Stickney's orchard, which could tell tales of some boys, now covered with blocks and taverns and stores; is there no such thing as escorting the governor to town, raising the dust of the Dark Plains or of Pembroke street? Sweet is the remembrance of these triumphal entries, and their old-fashioned mode of testifying respect to the man, and none to the law and the office."

The ancient mode of receiving the new governors of the state was performed by a committee of the legislature meeting His Excellency at some well-known tavern just beyond the Concord line, or just within, and after passing the compliments of the occasion, escorting him to his lodgings on Main street, returning thither as the hour of inauguration drew near, and conducting him to the state house. It so happened that nearly all the early governors approached Concord from points to the eastward; consequently the legislative committee used to meet the incoming magistrate in Pembroke, or sometimes on Glover's hill, and there extend to him a welcome. When this occurred a battery stationed near the Eleven Lots fired a grand salute announcing the opening of the celebration. In later years, however, the governors came from every part of the state, so the meeting places had to be changed. Hubbard Weeks's tavern on the Hopkinton road was a favorite place for exchanging amenities between the new governor and the committee, and so were Ambrose's tavern in Boscawen, and Brown's in West Concord. When Governor Badger came from Gilmanton the committee received him on the bridge at East Concord, while Governor Harvey, who was practically a resident of Concord, merely met the gentlemen representing the legislature at the door of his boarding-house, and walked with them to the capitol.

For curious and original features no campaign has ever equaled the famous presidential contest of Tippecanoe and Tyler, too, in 1840. How thoroughly the town was cultivated politically is seen in the

evenness of the vote, which gave Van Buren five hundred and forty-five and Harrison five hundred and forty-four, yet until that year Concord had been very Democratic in its political faith. The culmination of the local campaign was on the 17th of June, when Concord was invaded by hosts of enthusiastic and song-inclined visitors. Towns far and near sent delegations varying in numbers, but equal in spirit and energy. Every delegation brought with it a float representing the symbolic article of faith,—the log cabin and the barrel of hard cider. Music was not wanting to stir the throng; brass bands, drum corps, fifes, bugles, and songs commingled in far-reaching refrain, while less demonstrative but very conspicuous were the fiddlers seated on moving platforms containing a log cabin and a barrel of hard cider. Ridicule was not lacking on the part of the Democrats, for in the next issue of *Hill's Patriot* appeared a review of the day's celebration. The article in question, entitled "British Whig Log Cabin Exhibition," is interesting, inasmuch as the "tow-headed Whig standing in the door discoursing sweet music" was Mason W. Tappan, while the "yellow-haired gentleman," editor of the *Log Cabin*, was Horace Greeley.

British Whig Log Cabin Exhibition.

The old Whigs and the young Whiglets came marching into town with banners and music, and driving in, in coaches, boats, waggons, log cabins, flat bottoms, and all the various kinds of vehicles which could be contrived, and our streets were crowded. About 10 o'clock the procession was formed and marched through the town, with several bands of excellent music. The Prince Albert, a very pretty British boat, built at Calcutta, and rigged like a ship, led the van, but the boatswain, a real old salt and a loco foco, not being so well paid as he had been promised, and provided only with hard cider to wet his whistle, whilst champagne was added to the ration of others, refused to pipe, and deserted the ship before the performance was half over. Then came a log cabin, with a tow-headed Whig standing in the door, "discoursing sweet music" from a three-stringed fiddle, and roaring out a bacchanalian Whig song. Then the procession divided off into counties interspersed with cider, and bearing flags with devices, containing Whig wit and sentiment. After going through the principal streets, they marched up to sand hill, where a stand had been erected, flag-staff planted, and seats laid down. The meeting organized by placing Ichabod Bartlett in the chair, who spoke some time, and closed by calling a yellow-haired gentleman upon the stand, whom he announced as the editor of a paper in New York called the *Log Cabin*. Mr. Bartlett wanted him to take note of the "spontaneous enthusiasm," and give an account of the whole matter in his paper for the benefit of posterity, and especially for the people of New York state and city. Mr. Bartlett then had a brass drum exhibited, which was taken from the British tories at Benning-

ton, where the ancestors of many of those present, labeled with Harrison badges, were taken prisoners with the Hessians. The celebration ended with fireworks and music.

On Thursday, July 1st, 1847, President James K. Polk visited Concord, coming partly as a guest of the town and partly as guest of the legislature. At 10 o'clock the president and his party arrived at the south end of Main street near the present gas-works, where the military escort, consisting of the Stark Guards of Manchester and the Concord Light Infantry, were drawn up facing the highway. Citizens filled the streets and the neighboring yards, and as the president stepped from the car and was announced to the people by Cyrus Barton, United States marshal, a cheer went up which must have convinced the chief magistrate that he had come among friends. Accompanying the president were James Buchanan, secretary of state, Nathan Clifford, attorney-general, Edmund Burke, commissioner of patents, Commodore Charles Stewart, the grandfather of Charles Stewart Parnell, the Irish leader of forty years later, ex-Governors Mouton of Louisiana, Toucey of Connecticut, Fairfield and Anderson of Maine, Woodbury, Hill, and Hubbard of New Hampshire, Mr. Appleton of the state department, Nathaniel Greene, postmaster at Boston, and United States Marshal Isaac O. Barnes of Massachusetts.

The procession, under command of Charles H. Peaslee, moved up Main street to the Old North, then down State and School to the American House. The streets were alive with sight-seers, and from windows and roofs ladies greeted the president with waving handkerchiefs. At the south end of Main street had been built an arch of evergreen and flowers, through which the procession passed. A short distance off floated a streamer bearing the inscription, "The ladies of the Granite State welcome the President to the Capital."

Early in the afternoon the president visited the legislature, and was received with dignified welcome. The Mexican War was then raging and partisan feelings were intense, but the president's speech manifested a patriotic and conciliatory tone which won for him the good opinions of friends and opponents. At 6 o'clock the president held an informal reception in the state house, which a large number of ladies and gentlemen attended. Mr. Polk's visit, however, soon came to an end, and by 8 o'clock that evening he and his distinguished party departed for Lowell on a special train.

Concord again became the center of public interest as the time drew near for the assembling of another convention to revise the constitution. The delegates were chosen in October, 1850, and met in the state house Wednesday, November 6th. The necessity for calling the convention had long been acknowledged by the people, and their

expectations as to the result of its deliberations seemed well founded, for nearly sixty years had passed since the meeting of the last convention, and reasons enough existed for making some necessary changes in the fundamental law.

The convention contained many able men. Among them was a future president of the United States, a justice of the supreme court of the nation,—Levi Woodbury,—besides others who achieved honor in after life. An adjournment was taken from November 22d to December 3d, then from January 3d, 1851, to April 16th. In the meanwhile the voters had made sad work of the proposed amendments, not one being adopted, so the convention after a single day's session having agreed upon certain new amendments to be submitted to the people at the March meeting of 1852, finally adjourned after sittings extending through fifty-one days.

Aside from a central and convenient location, there were personal reasons, as well, that gave to Concord a political importance. Among them was the prominence of Franklin Pierce, who, becoming a citizen of Concord in 1838, remained until his decease, in 1869, New Hampshire's most distinguished son. Thickly clustering about his head were the highest of political honors, which could but attract attention to the town of his residence. Congressman, senator, general, and president,—honors unparalleled in the history of the republic, save in the cases of Andrew Jackson and James A. Garfield. Moreover, Concord in those days was the headquarters of the Whig and Democratic parties, and it has continued to be the meeting place of politicians ever since. From the election of Polk to that of the last president every campaign has radiated from Concord.

The revolt of John P. Hale in 1845, followed by the secession of the Independent Democrats, brought Pierce into greater prominence than ever, and Concord was the scene of the first great encounter between these champions. No meeting of that period attracted so much notice or was followed with graver political consequences. It was really one of the opening acts of the slavery question which ultimately led to civil war. Hale and Pierce ceased from that hour to be local politicians, and became national leaders; for that debate was thereafter identified with New England's protest against the extension of slavery.

It was during the June session of the legislature in 1845 that the famous debate that was to send Hale to the senate and Pierce to the presidency took place. The Independent Democrats had announced a convention at which Mr. Hale was to be the principal speaker, and the Democrats, apprehensive of the effect of the meeting, resolved that Hale should be promptly and effectively answered on the spot,

and Mr. Pierce was selected as the only speaker qualified for the occasion. When the evening of Thursday, June 5th, arrived, the Old North meeting-house was crowded, floor and galleries, with members of the legislature, visitors, and the public. This meeting was not only an important event, but was the keynote of party policies for fifteen years to come. Franklin Pierce, a few years later, had become one of the accepted leaders of New England Democracy, while the War with Mexico introduced him to a wider and more national notice. At the Democratic state convention in 1852 the delegates enthusiastically endorsed him for the office of president of the United States. The resolutions were presented by Jonathan E. Sargent, of Wentworth, and eloquently seconded by William L. Foster, of Keene, both of whom in after years became residents of Concord and attained high judicial preferment. The nomination of Mr. Pierce at Baltimore was not so spontaneous as has been popularly supposed. Shrewd party managers, foreseeing the improbability of nominating Cass, Buchanan, Marcy, or Douglas, cast about them for a compromise nominee. During the early months of that year Concord people had frequently observed distinguished visitors from other states passing a few hours with General Pierce, among them being Caleb Cushing of Massachusetts. The Democratic convention met at Baltimore on Tuesday, June 1st, 1852, and continued until Saturday, when Mr. Pierce received the nomination. The telegraph immediately flashed the news to Concord, although the General was at that time spending a few days in Boston. All at once Concord became a household word throughout the country, and its citizens may be pardoned a pleasurable pride at so distinguished an event. Prominent Democrats immediately issued a call for a public ratification. Hand-bills were distributed and notices published in the newspapers.

The undersigned, a committee appointed for the purpose by the Democrats of Concord, invite the democracy of New Hampshire to assemble at Concord on Thursday next, June 10th, at four o'clock, P. M. to respond to the nomination of Gen. Franklin Pierce as Democrat Candidate for the Presidency, and to express their gratification at the honor thus conferred on them and the state through her favorite and most eminent son, and to exchange congratulations upon the bright prospects of the glorious victory which the nomination ensures to the friends of the constitution and of the Union.

JOSIAH MINOT,
N. B. BAKER,
JOHN H. GEORGE,
JACOB CARTER,
JOSIAH STEVENS,
JOHN L. TALLANT,
SAMUEL M. WHEELER,
Committee.

On that Saturday evening Main street was thronged with people expressing joy at the distinction bestowed on their popular and kindly townsman. State house park soon filled with spectators, who, gathering around a platform, were addressed by John H. George, Anson S. Marshall, John S. Wells, Jonathan E. Sargent, and others. Rockets streamed into the heavens, houses were illuminated, and on Sand hill the artillery, under the command of Jesse A. Gove, who afterwards gave his life to the Union, thundered into the night two hundred and eighty-two discharges, to signify the number of votes cast for the nominee at Baltimore.

The next scene following the nomination was the visit of the committee appointed by the national convention to notify Mr. Pierce officially of his high preferment. Prior to this nomination the custom had been merely to send an official communication by post, but on this occasion a committee waited personally on the nominee to inform him of his honor. The committee consisted of John S. Barbour of Virginia, Jacob Thompson of Mississippi, Alpheus Felch of Michigan, Pierre Soulé of Louisiana, and Erastus Corning of New York. These gentlemen were among the best known citizens of the country. Mr. Barbour was a leader among Southern statesmen, Jacob Thompson was a congressman of national reputation, Mr. Felch and Mr. Soulé were United States senators, and Mr. Corning was the millionaire railroad president of his time. Mr. Pierce having been advised of the visit requested a few of his intimate friends to meet the delegation at the station and escort them to his residence. The ceremony attending the mission was brief,—merely the presentation of the official letter, to which Mr. Pierce made an informal reply, saying that he would more fully convey his sentiments in writing. After an hour spent in conversation, Mr. Pierce and his guests entered carriages for a drive about the streets, reaching the American House early in the afternoon, where later a banquet was served. At the conclusion of the banquet the distinguished visitors repaired to the balcony of the hotel, and were introduced by John S. Wells to the large crowd in waiting. Each visitor made a short speech, that of Senator Soulé being, as was his wont, a most captivating and rare piece of impromptu oratory, thrilling his auditors and affording a topic of praise for some time to come. Mr. Pierce adopted a novel and pleasurable method of entertaining his visitors by giving them and other invited guests a ride over Lake Winnipiseogee, returning to Concord in the evening. The following morning the committee departed for New York, favorably impressed with the candidate and his home surroundings.

One of the features of the Pierce campaign was the famous barba-

cue at Hillsborough, Thursday, August 19th, 1852. The occasion partook of the nature of a migration of Democrats from all parts of the country to the birthplace of their standard bearer. Concord, being directly on the line of invasion, entertained a large number of visiting strangers who, during their brief stay, made the town exceedingly lively. On Wednesday Concord presented the appearance of a holiday. Those who remember the event, and attempt to describe it, agree in saying that Concord never witnessed the like before nor since. The Granite club, Concord's Democratic organization, found its hospitality utterly inadequate, but everyone was good-natured, and as long as hunger and thirst were appeased lodging was of little moment. The rooms of the club were inconvenient for the reception of the legions that had made Concord their temporary resting-place; so with bands of music discoursing the liveliest airs the members of the club, led by the president, Anson S. Marshall, arm in arm with Isaiah Rynders, president of the famous Empire club of New York, marched to the state house park, which was immediately converted into a place of entertainment, and amidst the flare of torches and headlights, congratulations and oratory extended into the night. If Concord lacked a cosmopolitan experience up to that moment, the want was liberally supplied by Captain Rynders and his exuberant followers. The captain was a well known political character of the epoch, one whose peculiar characteristics were more adapted to the city wards of New York than to the quiet shades of Concord. The *Patriot* called him a plain-spoken man who did not hesitate long in selecting his words, and who had the faculty of getting off a great many homely truths in relation to the Whig party in a very short time. There is no doubt that he acted his part that night with a richness of language thoroughly in keeping with his reputation. Among the speakers of the evening were Charles Levi Woodbury, and others known to political fame. The next morning saw the departure of the crowd for Hillsborough.

The autumn of 1852 was not wanting in interest to Concord people. National attention was focused here, and men of national reputation were constant visitors. At length election day arrived, and early evening brought the tidings of Mr. Pierce's victory. Politically, Concord was nearing a change in its sentiments, yet so popular was its favored townsman that Mr. Pierce's vote showed a considerable gain over the Democratic vote of the preceding March.

In February Mr. Pierce bade good-by to Concord and turned his face towards Washington, there to remain his full term with but a single visit to the old friends and familiar scenes of his home. From the day Mr. Pierce left Concord to assume the duties of his high

office more than three years were to elapse before he again met his fellow-citizens. During that time there had arisen the gravest public questions, whose influence throughout the country divided political parties and caused a bitterness among the people. In no state were these questions discussed with more earnestness or with sharper personal tone than in New Hampshire. Here a revolution in public opinion had taken place, and for the first time, with a single exception, the long dominant party of the president found itself in a minority. Departing on his inaugural journey with the sincerest wishes of his neighbors, Mr. Pierce returned in October, 1856, to find the political and social atmosphere chilled and uncomfortable. The repeal of the Missouri Compromise was having its effect. Mindful, however, of the occasion, his friends made elaborate preparations for his reception, and the day has passed into local annals as one of Concord's famous events. The reception took place in the midst of the exciting Buchanan-Fremont campaign, when the streets were bright with banners and bunting. Early in the day visitors began pouring into the city, and delegations from different towns, accompanied by bands of music and drum corps, paraded the streets. Notwithstanding the lack of spontaneity, Concord presented a gay and animated sight. From Boston and other cities in Massachusetts came campaign companies and party delegations, one of the features being the celebrated Boston Brigade band, whose excellent music contributed greatly to the public enjoyment.

A spirited rivalry for decorative effects impelled the citizens to contribute many pleasing features to the holiday. Many buildings along Main street, near the state house, were heavily hung with flags and banners, many of them bearing mottoes. Across the street, opposite the Eagle hotel, a handsome arch was erected, trimmed with evergreen, bearing on one side the motto, "Welcome the President of the Thirty-one States," and on the other, "New Hampshire welcomes home her Favorite and Honored Son." On the top were two large eagles, with miniature flags in their beaks. Pendant from the center was a portrait of the president. In front of the American House was a white flag, tastefully trimmed with evergreen, on which was inscribed, "The Ladies of the Granite State welcome the President to the Capital." The Patriot building, now Sanborn's block, was covered with flags, banners, and mottoes, while from the cupola of the state house floated the stars and stripes, with streamers stretching to the ground. The American House, brilliant with decorations and flags, presented a beautiful picture of the decorator's art, as did the Eagle hotel, the temporary headquarters of the president during his brief stay in Concord. Many private residences were trimmed

with bunting and evergreen, interspersed with mottoes of patriotic and flattering meaning.

At noon the president, accompanied by his private secretary, Sidney Webster, J. D. Hoover, marshal of the District of Columbia, and General Anderson of Tennessee, arrived amidst the firing of cannon. He was received with enthusiasm, and the crowd pressing in on all sides gave expression to their feelings in loud cheering and the waving of hats and banners. Every one seemed eager to grasp Mr. Pierce by the hand, or failing in that, to secure a near sight of his well-remembered face. But when he mounted the horse provided for his use, for the president was a superb horseman, hearty and approving cheers broke from the thousands of devoted friends who had assembled to do him honor. So dense was the crowd that it required persistent effort on the part of the marshals to clear a passage so that the president might take his place in the procession.

As every company and delegation carried one or more banners covered with party mottoes, the effect of the long procession was indeed picturesque. During the march bells were rung and the cannon boomed a lively welcome. The streets were crowded and so were the windows and housetops, and every spot from which a sight could be obtained. The carriages were handsomely decorated with flowers and bouquets; the one occupied by the president's suite was a barouche drawn by six matched horses furnished by Prescott & Grover. Among the conveyances were the American and Eagle coaches, Frye's omnibus, and Hutchinson and Elliott's hacks, each drawn by four horses with gaily bedecked harnesses. The march occupied an hour and a half, the head of the parade reaching the state house park about 2 o'clock. A platform had been erected for the speaking, but long before the procession arrived the area in front of the stand was crowded with people eagerly waiting the president.

As the procession halted at the state house, lines of militiamen were formed from the center gateway to the platform, through which the president and the committee of arrangements marched to their seats. When the acclamations and noise had subsided, the chief marshal called for silence, whereupon the president was formally welcomed home by John H. George, the president responding in his exquisitely felicitous manner, which was wont to make every one his friend and confidant. With speeches and a reception the afternoon was far spent, and the next day, the president having taken his departure, Concord resumed its usual quiet.

One of the famous old-fashioned election days was observed on the occasion of Ichabod Goodwin's inauguration as governor in June, 1857.

Great efforts were made to give the day an especial renown, and when night came all agreed that the plans had been in every respect successful. Concord, at that time, had a set of enterprising young men who took interest in public affairs, and they determined to give the new governor a reception in keeping with the traditions of the day. It was not because greater popularity attached to Mr. Gooodwin than to his predecessors, but because of a desire to invest the day with more dignity and attraction, and to afford pleasure to the large number of out-of-town people who came yearly to the capital to witness the ceremonies. The citizens, appreciating the occasion, decorated their residences and business places; and the city and the state officials flung out flags and weaved streamers and bunting on the public buildings. Phenix hotel, which in those days was the meeting place for Republicans, was gaily festooned; while along the route of the procession nearly every house had flags or garlands of flowers.

Soon after noon Governor Haile, the president of the senate, the speaker of the house, with Senators Hale and Clark, and Congressmen Tappan, Cragin, and Marston, were driven to the lower end of Main street, where the procession was formed. At 1 o'clock the train from Portsmouth, bearing the governor-elect and a large number of people, came to a stop near West street. After an exchange of courtesies Mr. Goodwin was escorted to his carriage, and the command to start was given.

The procession was long and interesting, and its diversified character elicited the applause of the people gathered along the line of march. The fire companies were objects of peculiar interest, for Concord's recent fire record was everywhere known throughout the state; so when the flower bedecked and picturesque little engines rumbled through the street drawn by long lines of stalwart red-shirts, loud cheers greeted them. Main street, from Pleasant to Free Bridge road, was full of people slowly edging their way, pausing before the blockades caused by some grotesque peddler or sharp-witted fellow with jewelry to sell, or perchance medicine warranted to cure every ill; then streaming on in the direction of the state house park, where booths and tents allured the hungry and the dry. That gala day proved to be one of the last of those election day celebrations that lent so keen a seasoning to the life of the town. By nightfall the crowd had departed, the hawkers and peddlers had packed their wares, the booths were deserted, the show canvas rolled up, and over the scene fell a stillness in strange contrast to the variety and turmoil of a few hours before.

Pending the state election in March, 1860, a distinguished citizen of the West journeying to New Hampshire to see his son, then a

student at Phillips academy, Exeter, was persuaded to make a few political speeches in the state, one of which was allotted to Concord. He was a stranger only in person,—his name was known and his leadership recognized,—but few had ever seen him up to the moment when Edward H. Rollins introduced him to the crowd in Phenix hall as Abraham Lincoln of Illinois. The weather was excreble, and, moreover, the meeting had been but slightly advertised, yet so great was the desire to see and hear this champion of the West that the hall was filled to its capacity. For more than an hour Mr. Lincoln spoke as few men had ever spoken on the issues of the day, captivating his audience by the exuberant felicity of his phraseology and the surpassing power of his logic. That this speech made a deep impression was evident, and when the future president bade Concord farewell, as he took the afternoon train for Manchester, men who had listened to more than a generation of Concord oratory were agreed that the speech of Abraham Lincoln was a masterpiece.

Later in that eventful year, 1860, Concord welcomed another distinguished citizen of the West, the rival of Lincoln in politics, and his antithesis as well,—Stephen A. Douglas. His coming had been heralded, and elaborate preparations were made for his reception. Thursday, the last day of July, was an ideal one, and, true to the hospitable nature of the people, party lines were put aside, and every one did something to make the occasion a success. From Abbot's shops to the Old North, Main street was radiant with banners and streamers, with festooned houses and blocks, while hanging from the shade trees along the streets were flags without number.

This visit took place during the exciting political campaign in which Mr. Douglas himself was a candidate for the presidency. Main street had seldom presented a more pleasing effect of flags and decorations. Floating above his head Senator Douglas beheld the national ensign bearing the names of his competitors in the great contest,—Lincoln and Hamlin, Breckinridge and Lane, Bell and Everett,—and there, too, he read his own name coupled with that of Johnson. In those times a lofty and sturdy flagpole stood near the corner of Park street in front of the state house, from whose peak on that day depended long streamers and countless little flags and pennants, all gracefully swaying in the breeze.

Boston had sent its best decorator, and the transformation was complete wherever he applied his art, but nowhere did he exercise that art in more tasteful and charming profusion than in and about the city hall. Opposite was the mansion of Oliver L. Sanborn, afterwards the residence of George G. Fogg,[1] where the distinguished

[1] Now that of Henry Robinson.

statesman was to be entertained during his visit, and there, naturally, the decorator had arranged his choicest effects.

The train from the north bearing Mr. Douglas and Mrs. Douglas reached the station at noon, where they were received by the appropriate committees. The crowd in Railroad square was dense and ungovernable, and wanting as Concord then was in police regulations, the marshals having the reception in charge were well-nigh powerless to make headway against the throng. The carriage containing Mr. Douglas could with difficulty be stirred, so closely wedged was the good-natured crowd, but after repeated efforts the little procession moved to Main street. Cheers greeted the visitor, who responded by bowing right and left along the route, which comprised Washington, State, and School streets. At the state house Mr. Douglas alighted, and arm in arm with Henry P. Rolfe, chairman of the day, made his way to a stand erected over the steps of the center door of the old capitol. Senator Douglas looked down upon fully five thousand upturned faces. For more than an hour he spoke with an earnestness and intellectual vigor all his own, demonstrating beyond contradiction his right to the name of "the little giant," yet a twelvemonth had not passed when his lips were ashes. In the evening the grounds around the city hall—where a reception was held—were bright with Chinese lanterns and reflectors. With fireworks and serenades the day closed, and the following morning the distinguished statesman again resumed his famous journey.

As the capital of the state and its political center Concord was not unprepared for the outburst following the election of Abraham Lincoln, nor did the firing on Sumter find Concord people unresponsive to the duties of the hour.

The first week of war was an experience never to be forgotten by those then living in Concord. The realities of the hour had quickly transformed a quiet community into an active camp. Public meetings were called, and the people listened to the words of leading citizens, for in the beginning partisanship was paralyzed by the common shock, and every lip pronounced a resolve to sustain the government and preserve the Union. An enthusiastic meeting assembled in city hall on Friday evening, April 19th,—in response to a call hurriedly sent forth by prominent men,—at which speeches were made and a resolution couched in these terms was unanimously adopted: "That we, as American citizens and as citizens of the State of New Hampshire, acknowledge our fealty to our National and State governments, to the Constitution of the United States, and to the State of New Hampshire, and that we will support them in every required capacity."