

THE MCCLARY FAMILY OF EPSOM

A series of articles



The Life and Death of Major Andrew McClary

by Gilbert H. Knowles for the Epsom Historical Association

John McClary and his Descendants (including Michael McClary)

compiled by Gilbert H. Knowles

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THE LIFE AND DEATH OF MAJOR ANDREW McCLARY

Compiled by Gilbert H. Knowles, 1971, Revised 1974

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A likeness of Maj. Andrew McClary from the Trumbull portrait of the Battle at Bunker Hill.

This Andrew McClary, Jr., who from now on we will refer to mostly as Major Andrew, was fond of military tactics, and shared largely in the warlike spirit of the times. At an early age we find him acting as a scout and later as an officer in Rogers' famous company of N.H. Rangers. He was also a leader in all local expeditions against the Indians.

"The French and Indian War of 1745-'49 was the great interruption in Epsom's history and caused a complete desertion at one time." It was during that period when the settlers had all gone to the Garrison at Nottingham that the Indians spoiled all the ox-teams in town. The oxen had been left to feed as best they could, and the Indians killed one in each yoke, cut out their tongues, took the bell that was on the neck of one of them, and left. The owners of the oxen were Andrew McClary, Charles McCoy, Samuel Blake and George Wallace. In this same period, August 21, 1747, Mrs. McCoy was captured by the Indians when she and her husband were on their way to the Garrison to join the other members of their family. Young Major McClary was undoubtedly doing scout duty at that time. There is a record that he trained a company of men for garrison duty when

bands of Indians were lurking around.

"During the French and Indian War the people had lived in constant fear of the scalping knife and tomahawk. The clearing of the land, hunting, scouting etc., all required bravery and endeavor; also the rough sports such as wrestling and boxing. In all of these labors and pastimes Andrew McClary was the acknowledged champion. He was a host in himself. He stood over six feet, straight as an arrow, finely proportioned, symmetrical of form, every muscle well formed, rough and ready, jovial, generous, with a stentorial voice, blue eyes, florid complexion and such a man as would be picked out of a thousand as born to command."

"McClary's Farm Tavern was always the home of Major McClary. He had helped his father to build it and had a major part in its operation. After the death of Andrew McClary Sr. (1764 or 1765) his son, Andrew Jr., became the proprietor. A stone tablet makes the location of the Major's home. Major McClary married one Elizabeth McCrillis, by whom he had seven children. The Major kept tavern carried on the farm, operated (with his brother) the saw mill and grist mill. He also handled considerable merchandise over a period of more than twenty years. Before the first meeting house was built in 1764, all town meetings were held at McClary's Farm Tavern.

In 1900 Warren Tripp of Epsom, a descendant of Major McClary's youngest sister, wrote as follows: "It is more than possible that the innkeeper's comments on a Scotch-Irish settlement what 'they were a people who would praise good whiskey and drink it and damn bad whiskey and drink that with equal relish', may have included the Major, for it cannot be denied that he was somewhat given to conviviality". Mr. Tripp also told about how the Major on a visit to Portsmouth for into an argument with six British officers. That was a few years before the war broke out. The officers were evidently not pleased with the sentiments expressed by McClary and undertook to eject him from the room. According to Mr. Tripp the result was that the Major threw the whole six of them out the window.

Major McClary had the personal acquaintance of such noted fighters as Rogers, Stark and Goffe. His farm-tavern was the gathering place of military characters, "where the all-absorbing subject which was agitating the whole country was freely discussed, and the warlike spirit was kindled into a devouring passion. - - - The battle of Lexington was fought April 19, 1775. This was the signal that started into activity

every patriot.” As soon as the news reached Exeter a messenger started at once for Nottingham, Deerfield Parade and Epsom. “Young McClary was plowing in the well-known muster field when he heard the ‘blowing of horn’, and was roused by that tocsin to arms. He left his plow in the furrow, hastily armed himself, and dashed off to Deerfield, accompanied by a few daring spirits. At the Parade, patriots were awaiting him, and on they went to Nottingham. A company of some eighty heroes here assembled, leaving the Square about four o’clock the same day, traveling all night, and reaching Medford early the next morning.”

Perceiving the absence and need of appropriate organization, on April 23rd, 1775, Major McClary wrote from Cambridge, Mass, quite a lengthy letter to the Clerk of the Provincial Congress sitting at Exeter. In closing he said – “I doubt not but your wisdom will dictate and point out such measures as will be most conducive to extricate us from our present difficulties.” He signed off with ‘Gentlemen, I am with all imaginable Respect, Yours and the Country’s most obedient Humble Servant, Andrew McClary.’”

“At Medford, two regiments were organized, composed of New Hampshire men. John Stark was chosen to command the first, as colonel, and Andrew McClary as Major”. For the next several weeks Major McClary was busy training his men. It is said that he was the handsomest man in the Army. He was the idol of his troops, yet in an emergency he could swear enough for a battalion. He had a kind heart that would give not rest until every soldier in need of help was personally looked after.

Col. Stark’s Regiment consisted of thirteen companies and was the largest regiment in the army. Medford, where they were quartered, was about four miles from the place of anticipated attack. One of the companies in Stark’s Regiment was commanded by Henry Dearborn of Nottingham, as captain; Amos Morrill of Epsom as lieutenant; and Michael McClary of Epsom as ensign.

This Henry Dearborn was later promoted for meritorious conduct to the rank of Colonel in the Revolution; then deputy quartermaster-general on Washington’s staff; he was United States Marshall from Maine; served two terms as member of Congress; became Secretary of War in 1801; and in the War of 1812 he was commander in chief of the American Army. There is a fine portrait of General Dearborn in our State House at Concord.

This same Henry Dearborn wrote a wonderful account of the Battle of Bunker Hill which I regret to say is too lengthy for me to include here in full, but I shall quote somewhat from it in the next few pages. (The complete account as written by Dearborn may be found in Cogswell’s History of Nottingham, Deerfield and Northwood).

The 17th of June came and the troops were ordered to march. (We now quote from Dearborn’s account).

“After completing the necessary preparations for action, the regiment formed and marched about one o’clock. When it reached Charlestown Neck, we found two regiments halted in consequence of a heavy enfilading fire thrown across it, of round, bar and chain shot from the lively frigate and floating batteries anchored in Charles River and a floating battery lying in the River Mystic. Major McClary went forward and observed to the commanders, if they did not intend to move on, he wished them to open and let or regiment pass; the latter was immediately done. My company being in front, I marched my the side of Col. Stark, who, moving with a very deliberate pace, I suggested the propriety of quickening the march of the regiment that it sooner be relieved from the galling crossfire of the enemy. With a look peculiar to himself, he fixed his eyes upon me and observed, with great composure, ‘Dearborn, one fresh man in action is worth ten fatigued ones’, and continued to advance in the same cool and collected manner.”



John Stark from
State House
Portrait

When they had reached Bunker Hill, the enemy was soon discovered, and it was not long before action became general. Col. Stark and Maj. McClary upset British General Howe's plans by maintaining unheard of "continuous musket fire" on the light infantry bayonet charge up the Mystic River beach. Stark had placed his men in three ranks behind a stonewall, and he chewed up the light infantry companies of four British regiments. British casualties totaled almost fifty percent, the heaviest in the war. Here the Americans, called a rabble in arms, mostly New Hampshire farmers in homespun – had turned back the best infantry in the world and had struck a blow forging unity in the colonies. On hearing of the stand at Bunker Hill, George Washington commented, "the liberties of the country are safe."

"Of the troops stationed around Boston on the 17th of June, about fifteen hundred were actually engaged in the fight at Bunker Hill, of which the larger number were from New Hampshire, connected with the two regiments under Col. John Stark and Col. Joseph Reid." Henry Dearborn refers to the bravery of the American troops as follows –

"I did not see a man quit his post during the action, and do not believe a single soldier who was brought into the field fled, until the whole army was obliged to retreat for want of powder and ball."

For more about Major McClary we continue to quote from the writings of Dearborn.

"He (Major McClary) was among the first officers of the army; possessing a sound judgment, of undaunted bravery, enterprising, ardent and zealous, both as a patriot and soldier."

"After leaving the field of battle, I met him and drank some spirit and water with him. He was animated and sanguine in the result of the conflict for Independence, from the glorious display of valor which had distinguished his countrymen on that memorable day".

"He soon observed that the British troops on Bunker Hill appeared in motion, and said he would go and reconnoiter them, to see whether they were coming out over the Neck, at the same time directing me to march my company down the road toward Charlestown. We were then at Tuft's house, near Plowed Hill. I immediately made a forward movement to the position he directed me to take, and halted, while he proceeded to the old pound, which stood on the site now occupied as a tavern-house, not far from the entrance to the Neck. After having satisfied himself that the enemy did not intend to leave their strong posts on the heights, he was returning towards me, and, within twelve or fifteen rods of where I stood with my company, a random shot from one of the frigates lying near where the center of Craigie's Bridge now is, passed directly through his body, and put to flight one of the most heroic souls that ever animated man."

"He leaped two or three feet from the ground, pitched forward, and fell dead upon his face. I had him carried to Medford, where he was interred with all the respect and honors we could exhibit to the manes of a great and good man. He was my bosom friend; we had grown up together on terms of the greatest intimacy, and I loved him as a brother."

It is a sad thing that neither friends nor the State of New Hampshire have reared any sort of monument at Medford to distinguish the resting place of Major Andrew McClary from those of other un-honored dead around him. "Generous, brave and patriotic, he nobly hazarded his own life, and encouraged others to forget self, for the life of his country. His example was a power for good in the cause of freedom."

"With the bravery of Stark, he possessed greater mental endowments and culture. With the natural ability of Sullivan, he possessed the magic of power to incite his men to noble deed. - - - Had his life been spared he would have without doubt ranked among the most noted officers of the Revolution", like his friend, General Henry Dearborn.



Henry Dearborn
from State House
Portrait



In 1905 the Center Historic Club of Epsom erected a monument near the site of Major McClary's home. The monument consists of a granite slab with a bronze place affixed to it; it is on the left side of the road as you travel east, and is just before the turn into the Serrine driveway. The inscription on the monument is as follows:

*On this site
Stood the home of
Maj. Andrew McClary,
Who, leaving his plow
In the furrow
Hastened to respond
To his country's call
And was killed at
The battle of Bunker Hill*

Erected by the Center Historic Club, 1905

The write was a very small boy at the time, but he can remember of being in attendance at the dedication of the Major McClary monument.

CHILDREN OF MAJOR ANDREW AND ELIZABETH (McCRILLIS) McCLARY



Major Andrew McClary and his wife had seven children: four sons and three daughters. At least three of the sons took after their father in being extremely interested in military affairs.

James Harvey McClary – born in 1762, succeeded to his father’s business as a merchant, farmer and taverner. He was highly respected; had great influence in the organization of the Eighteenth Regiment, and was one of its first commanders, and was, in time, promoted to brigadier-general of the militia. He married Betsey Dearborn of North Hampton, a daughter of Dr. Levi Dearborn. (Dr. Dearborn was a cousin of Major Andrew McClary’s close friend, General Henry Dearborn). Besides holding local offices, James Harvey McClary was in the Legislature, first in the House, then a member of the State Senate in 1802-1803. He built a house and kept store on Center Hill. The building is still standing (1974) and is the house between the Deinhardt and Wells residences. The Wells house which was the Congregational parsonage for many years, was built in 1781, and

the house where James Harvey McClary kept store was probably built a few years later. James Harvey McClary died July 11, 1810, when but 47 years old. Mrs. Loella M. Bunker, in her ‘Historical Sketch of Epsom’ said that James Harvey McClary was the first postmaster in Epsom. We find, however, that the Epsom Post Office was established in 1811, a year after Mr. McClary’s death. But there were, of course, periodic mail deliveries to Epsom before 1811 and it is very likely that Mr. McClary did distribute some mail from his store as a branch office.

Andrew Jr. (or Andrew III), the second son of Major Andrew McClary was born in 1765. He entered the regular army, was promoted to the rank of captain, served for a time on the frontier, and for several years a clerk in the war department at Washington. He died in middle life and there is no record that he ever married.

John, the Major’s third son, was born in 1767. He also entered the regular army and was made captain. He married Abigail Pearson of Epsom by whom he had one son, Charles. This Charles later moved to Stanstead, Canada, where his uncle had settled.

William, the Major’s fourth son, was a blacksmith by trade. He was born in 1769 and married Elizabeth Dickey in 1791. He moved to Stanstead, Canada in 1798 where he was a pioneer like his grandfather from Ireland had been in Epsom, NH. This William had two children and his nephew, Charles, had a number of children so it is likely that there are descendants.

We can only mention briefly the Major’s three daughters. Elizabeth became the wife of Captain Simon Heath, who kept a tavern where Watson Ambrose has lived in recent years – (This historic old home and tavern was burned to the ground August 13, 1973). Margaret McClary married Rev. Ebenezer Hazeltine, beloved pastor of the old Congregational Church for thirty years. They lived in what is now the James Wells place. They had a number of children, but some died very young. Nancy, the Major’s third daughter married a John Stevens who was a man of “not much account.” He died after a few years and Nancy married second “old man Marden. Nancy had no children.

Major McClary’s widow, Elizabeth McCrillis McClary, married again some years after the Major was killed, She Married Col. Samuel Osgood (1794). She died April 5, 1808.

JOHN McCLARY AND HIS DESCENDANTS

Compiled by Gilbert H. Knowles

We will commence once again with Andrew McClary, Sr., who came to America from Ireland in 1726. His oldest son, John, was born in Ireland Jan. 1, 1720. Andrew McClary Jr., (the Major) was about ten years younger and was, of course, born in this country. The McClary boys also had three sisters whom I briefly mentioned last year. This particular paper has to do mostly with the Major's older brother, John, and his descendants. I would like you to listen carefully to the following sentence, which is taken from some genealogical material that was compiled in 1886.

“John McClary removed to Epsom from Nottingham at the same time his father did and for more than fifty years succeeding was the most prominent and useful citizen who ever resided, either before or since, in that town. That is a tremendous statement; But John McClary was an outstanding citizen of early Epsom.

In 1741 John McClary's father helped him to build a one-story house on the south side of Center Hill Road. This house was greatly enlarged as the years went by, and still stands today. Always, since I was a small boy, I have known it as The McClary place. It is now owned by Miss Catherine L. Berry, who is a direct descendant of the builder. I believe it is the oldest house in Epsom and will continue to believe so until someone can show me proof that some other place is older. In 1747 Andrew McClary St., deeded to his son John, lots 19 and 20, containing 100 acres of land on which the historic house is located. It is my understanding that Miss Berry still owns the same 100 acres that John McClary received from his father in 1747. the deed could have been a wedding present of a sort, because on January 22, 1746, John McClary and Elizabeth Harvey were married in Nottingham. They had come over from Ireland on the same ship with their parents. It is mentioned in some records that the girl's parents were opposed to the marriage, because the Harvey family in Ireland had enjoyed a higher social position than the McClary family. One record goes so far as to say that that feeling is why the McClary's left Nottingham and came to Epsom. This sounds to me like imagination or mere gossip because the McClary's came to Epsom in 1738, and John and Elizabeth were not married until eight years later. If there was a little feeling on the part of Elizabeth's parents, we trust they soon got over it. The fact remains that the McClary's were always proud of their Harvey connections, and the Harvey name is carried down through the younger generations.

There is a pleasing story about John and Elizabeth after their marriage in Nottingham. It is said that in the early spring, after their January marriage, they came to Epsom on horseback, and that the charming young Elizabeth carried a willow stick as a whip. When they arrived at the driveway leading to their new home they dismounted, and Elizabeth stuck the willow stick into the ground. The willows growing in that area today are said to have sprung from that stick!

Esquire John McClary – there is no mistake about it – was a leading citizen and office holder in the town of Epsom for many, many years. Beginning in 1745, he was Surveyor of Highways, Clerk. Constable, Juror, Selectman, Moderator, Justice of the Peace and so on. He represented Epsom, Allentown and Chichester at the annual meetings held in Exeter and he was a conspicuous member of the first Convention held for the purpose of organizing a colonial government. When Mrs. Loella Bunker compiled her “Historical Sketch of Epsom, NH” in 1927, she wrote, “In reading of the influential men who helped make Epsom's history, we find that Col. John McClary stand foremost”.

“John McClary at an early period connected himself with the Congregational Church at Epsom and for many years was an elder in the same. His religious opinions were of the ultra Calvinistic School. He was very ‘long-winded’ in prayer, as was the fashion in the time in which he lived”. In 1761 John McClary was one of the Committee appointed to extend a call to Epsom's first minister, the Rev. John Tucke.

Most all the men in the McClary clan took part in military affairs. Esquire John was a captain in the militia and did some scout duty during the French and Indian War. He was appointed a Colonel of one of

the New Hampshire regiments, but it does not appear that he was ever in any actual engagement with the enemy. As Mrs. Bunker pointed out, Major Andrew McClary had the strong military spirit of the Suncook Valley and his brother, Esquire John, had the Civil Authority.

John and Elizabeth (Harvey) McClary had six children, but several must have died quite young. In fact, only two were still living when John McClary made his will in 1792. His sons, John Jr., and Michael were active participants in the Revolutionary war. I found brief mention of a younger son, Andrew, who died at age 16. Michael was born in 1752, and John Jr., in 1754, and they were of course, at ripe military age when the War broke out. I have told you in my earlier paper how Michael was made an ensign in Henry Dearborn's company, in John Stark's regiment. He was in the battle area when his uncle, Major Andrew McClary was killed.

Michael's brother, John Jr., became a Lieutenant on General Whipple's Staff at the Battle of Saratoga. He died of wounds at Albany, Nov. 26, 1777. It appears that Michael and an older sister, Mary, were the only children of Esquire John McClary who married. This Mary, born Oct. 29, 1748, married Daniel Page of Deerfield, NH. Epsom's first minister, Rev. John Tucke, performed the ceremony on Dec. 6, 1770. Mary and Daniel Page had four sons, three of whom married, so there are likely some descendants from that line. A great-grandson of Esquire John McClary, one George Page, kept the hotel at Deerfield Center around 1865-1870.

Esquire John McClary was 55 years old at the time of the fighting at Bunker Hill. He was a delegate at the Provincial Congress sitting at Exeter in the spring of 1775.

After the war, Esquire John and his son Michael, both took active part in State Government. The New Hampshire State Senate first met in 1784 and John McClary was one of the first members of that body serving three or four years. Indeed, in 1785 he was President of the N.H. Senate (the only Epsom man who had ever held that office).

Esquire John's oldest son, Michael "served four years in the army, taking part in some of the most decisive engagements of the war and suffered with his men, some of the severest privations and fatigues".

Michael was married Dec. 19, 1778, to Sarah Dearborn (daughter of Dr. Levi Dearborn of North Hampton, NH) apparently while still in the army. They soon came to live at the McClary Place where Michael had been born, and where his parents still lived. Records of early Epsom reveal the following facts about Michael McClary's part in government:

Town Clerk of Epsom 1779-66, 1800, 1822-23

Town Auditor, beginning in 1785

Selectmen 1786-1789

Grand Juror 1800

Representative in General Court 1790, 1794 & 95

Justice of the Peace 1791-1823

Being well versed in military affairs, and of good executive ability, Michael McClary was appointed (1792) Adjutant General for the State of New Hampshire. He organized that department and held the office twenty-one consecutive years. In 1796 he was elected State Senator and was a member of that body seven years. Such was his popularity that the votes in Epsom were unanimously in his favor, and nearly so in the adjoining towns. He was U.S. Marshall for a long time, which during the war of 1812, with a large amount of privateering prosecuted at Portsmouth, was a very responsible office. General McClary was tendered the nomination as a candidate for Governor, but this he declined to accept.

General Michael and Sarah (Dearborn) had eight children, all born in Epsom. The first child was born in 1780 and the youngest in 1794. The three oldest children died in infancy or childhood and their graves are marked by stones in McClary cemetery.

The General's father, Esquire John, died in Epsom June 16, 1801 (age 81) and the General's mother Elizabeth Harvey died Oct. 8, 1807.

Esquire John's will, after carefully providing for the support of his widow during her remaining years. Gave to his daughter Mary Page (wife of Daniel Page of Deerfield) L990 lawful money; and all the rest, residue and remainder, real and personal to his son, General Michael McClary. It seems to me that the person who made that tremendous statement about John McClary being the most prominent and useful citizen who ever lived in Epsom was forgetting about the General.

"Though well known throughout the State and respected by leading citizens everywhere, his popularity, power and influence in his native town was most remarkable. He seemed to control the affairs of Epsom with almost universal consent". My studies have convinced me that no man was ever more influential in the affairs of Epsom than General McClary, not even his father. The General was tall, commanding, well proportioned, and prepossessing. He was engaging in his manners, interesting in conversation, hospitable and public spirited. His acquaintance and correspondence was remarkably extensive, embracing many of the most distinguished men of the country. Very recently his correspondence with Paul Revere has been brought to my attention, and here, for you to look at tonight, is the copy of a letter that Revere wrote to the General relative to some cannons that had been ordered for New Hampshire.

"An unlisted, unpublished letter has recently been discovered" etc. so wrote Mr. Karl Fredrik Morris, Sr. of Ware, Massachusetts, on June 20th 1972. "It seems that in the spring of 1813 great alarm existed because British cruisers were continually hovering upon the New Hampshire coast, and as a result Governor William Plumer (of Epping) directed Adjutant General Michael McClary to purchase pieces of cannon for four different artillery companies." These cannons were cast by Paul Revere for General McClary. Mr. Morris has kindly made me an exact copy in long hand for the Paul Revere letter for the Epsom Historical Association. The value of the original had been estimated at over \$1500.00. The letter has been checked by Godspeeds in Boston and found to be the exact handwriting of Paul Revere. In case one has trouble reading the copy itself, the typed version is as follows:

Boston, April 4th, 1813

Michael McClary, Esq.

Sir;

Enclosed you will find bills for the pair of three pound cannon cast for you. They will be forwarded immediately by Mr. Wells. We have paid Mr. Burbeck's bill. – We should have sent the guns last week, but Mr. Burbeck couldn't attend to the proving of them. You will please to forward the amount of the bills by the first safe hand.

Your humble servants

Paul Revere and Son

Five children of General and Mrs. McClary, 2 sons and 3 daughters, lived to grow up. The General's two sons were in their teens when their grandfather, Esquire John, died in 1801. The older one, John, was of great personal beauty and accomplishments. He was representative in the Legislature and in 1819-1820 he was a member of the N.H. Senate (as his father and grandfather had been before him). He was a very popular young man and was for a time a clerk in the War Department at Washington. When his father was U.S. Marshall he assisted in taking the Census. He was town clerk of Epsom in 1820, 1821. Like his grandfather he was often called the 'Honorable' John McClary. He was killed by falling timbers of a frame building at a raising in Epsom, Dec. 15, 1821. He was but thirty-six years of age. I am still hoping to learn what has happened to an oil portrait of him painted by Thomas Cole of Voyage of Life fame, which was at one time in possession of his nephew Michael McClary Steele.

The General's second son, Andrew, had a roving disposition. He was born Sept. 26, 1787. He married Mehetable Duncan of Concord in 1813. He was a Captain in the War of 1812 and very soon after the war he went to England. He entered the British Army, deserted, and started for Calcutta on a vessel out of Portsmouth, England. He was never heard of again. He had one daughter by his Concord marriage and there may be descendants. The General had a clause in his will making a bequest to Andrew in case he was found alive, but he was never heard of at all.

The General's oldest daughter, Nancy Dearborn, married Samuel Lord of Portsmouth. They had three children, but only one married and there are no descendants. Mary, General McClary's youngest daughter, was married, after her father's death, to Robert Parker, and settled in Fitzwilliam, NH. The Parkers had four children and there are probably descendants. One son, John McClary Parker, was a State Senator in 1881-82.

The General's second daughter (the middle one), Elizabeth Harvey, (note the 'Harvey' name still being carried down) married Jonathan Steele, a lawyer, who came from Peterboro and settled with his wife at the McClary homestead.

At the close of the Revolutionary War nearly all of the leading American and French commissioned officers, including both Washington and Lafayette, combined to form the Society of Cincinnati. The purpose was to cement the friendship and to perpetuate the memories incident to the war. General McClary helped organize the NH Branch of the Society and was its Treasurer for twenty-five years. Three or four of the annual meetings were held at the McClary place, and probably called together more noted men than ever assembled on any other occasion in the Suncook Valley.

It has been said that the sad fate of their sons fell with crushing and disastrous effect upon General McClary and his wife during their last years. But the daughter, Elizabeth Harvey and her husband, Jonathan Steele, soon began to raise a family and the little grandchildren must have helped some to brighten the hearts of the old folks. When General McClary died March 27, 1824, the two oldest Steele boys were aged 4 and 2 respectively. The General's wife, Sarah Dearborn, lived twenty years longer (1844); by then having five grandchildren in her home, some of them quite grown up.

After General McClary's death his estate was appraised at \$13, 218.24. The will gave to his wife, Sarah, ownership of the farm and buildings for the remainder of her life. After the death of Sarah in 1844 the property came into the hands of the daughter and son-in-law, Elizabeth and Jonathan Steele.

All but one of the six children of Elizabeth and Jonathan Steele grew up and married. There must be many descendants, although widely scattered now. The oldest son, Charles Augustus, born Oct. 10, 1820, married Hannah Cilly. He was a farmer and lived at Center Hill in the house that James Harvey McClary had built – (now 1972, owned by LaFleur). This Charles Augustus was the father of Senator Charles M. Steele and grandfather of James M. Steele, our town Clerk's husband.

The second son of Jonathan and Elizabeth Steele, John McClary Steele, graduated from Dartmouth College and became a Congregational minister. He died in New York State in 1857, aged 35. His remains were brought back to McClary Cemetery. His two children lived in Cincinnati, Ohio when last heard of. Their mother remarried.

The third son of Jonathan and Elizabeth Steele was born Nov. 1, 1824, (after General McClary's death in March of that year). This son was named Michael McClary Steele. He received a good education and carried on a business in Brooklyn, New York for some years. Mr. Steele married Catherine G. Burden whose mother was a Sanborn from Sanborn Hill in Epsom. Michael McClary Steele and his wife, Catherine, had four children. There was only one boy and he died in 1866 when but eight years old (killed while playing around a two-wheeled ox-cart. The heavy tongue of the cart came down and crushed him). This boy's name was John. His three sisters were; Helen Burden, Catherine Gray and Elizabeth Harvey (note the Harvey name still being carried on). After a period of great success with his New York business, during which he accumulated considerable wealth, Michael McClary Steele experienced reverses which

finally concluded his days in Brooklyn. He brought his family back to Epsom and spent the remainder of his life on the old homestead of his grandfather, General McClary, and great grandfather, Esquire John McClary. While Mr. Steele's money held out the family lived very high, employing two maids and maintaining fancy carriages and driving horses. In his last years, however, his savings were used up, his wife went to live with the Sanborns, and he had a lonely existence. He died Dec. 27th, 1906, age 82.

Only one of Mr. Steele's three daughters married. This was the older daughter, Helen. Her sisters having passed away, she inherited the McClary Place from her father. She was a talented musician. She became the wife of Dr. Benjamin P. Barstow of Kingston, Mass. They were the grandparents of the present owner of the McClary Place, Miss Catherine L. Berry.

In closing I would like to quote from an article that appeared in the Manchester Union on May 13th, 1893; it refers to the McClary Place.

"The venerable mansion has a history more genuinely interesting than often attaches to buildings of even legendary fame. In it great men have been born and lived; in its dining hall famous men have sat at the board; in its chambers distinguished statesman, jurors and heroes have slept; before the wide fireplace in the reception room have gathered the wit and beauty of a time when men were strong and women fair and wine was red. No wonder that the echoes of long lost and forgotten music are said to return at night when darkness and silence reign. Alone in the great guest chamber, one might fancy he had for companions the shades of Daniel Webster, General Sullivan, Jeremiah Mason and other distinguished men who have in other days slept within its walls".

THE McCLARYS OF EPSOM

By Warren Tripp.



ON a ship leaving Port Ruch, Ulster, Ireland, on Aug. 7, 1726, came Andrew McClary with his family, reaching Boston, Oct. 8. He seems to have passed the winter in Haverhill and reached the Scotch-Irish settlement at Londonderry on April 19, 1727, and immediately after to have located at Nottingham.

The McClary family at this time consisted of Andrew McClary, his wife, and son John, who was seven years of age. Here the family remained for eleven years, during which time there were born to them another son, Andrew McClary, Jr., and three daughters, Margaret, Jane, and Ann.

In 1738 they moved to Epsom and settled upon a rising knoll of beautiful land on which now stands the old McClary house, where he reared his family to habits of industry and thrift, and was himself a competent business man, as well as a brave pioneer. The records show that he was chosen selectman for eight years prior to 1756. The family was not large and never became so; at no time were there more than four, and most of the time but two or three, eligible to public office. Yet the records show that from 1743 to 1804, a period of sixty-one years, they filled the office of selectmen of Epsom for thirty-one years; that from 1796 to 1819 they served ten terms in the New Hampshire senate, and that one of them, "Hon. John," was a delegate from the senate to the provincial congress in 1775; that all through the French and Indian and Revolutionary wars they were prominent members of the New Hampshire Committee of Safety, which for twenty five years held its sessions at the McClary house; that

they were active and influential in the organization and support of the state militia, one of them holding the position of adjutant-general for twenty-five years, and two of them holding at different periods the office of brigadier-general; that one of them, "General Michael McClary," was tendered the nomination of governor of the state, but refused it; that for eighty-three consecutive years they held important positions of trust and honor in the state.

At the beginning of the Revolutionary war the family comprised the old emigrant, probably about eighty years of age; his two sons, John, about fifty-five, and Andrew, about forty-five; also three daughters; Margaret, who married Dr. Samuel [Deacon George] Wallace, Jane, who married John McGaffy, and Ann, who married Richard Tripp. There were also two grandsons, aged twenty-one and twenty-three, making only three men of proper age for army life.

These three men promptly enlisted at their country's first call, and one only returned. Andrew McClary, who held the rank of major under Stark, was killed at Bunker Hill. John McClary, with rank of lieutenant in Whipple's brigade, was killed at Saratoga in 1779. Michael McClary, who served in Dearborn's company as ensign at Bunker Hill, was promoted to a captaincy in Scammell's brigade, and served four years. He lived to be seventy-two years old, and died at Epsom. So influential was he in all local affairs that it became a trite saying among the mothers that if their children would obey them as readily as the people of Epsom obeyed General McClary, they would be fully satisfied.

Major Andrew McClary of Revolutionary fame was the second son of Emigrant Andrew McClary. For ten generations his ancestors had lived in an atmosphere of danger, and exercised that eternal vigilance which was to them the price of safety as well as liberty. The earliest recollections of his childhood must have been of the gatherings at the blockhouse, where in times of danger the mothers took their little ones for safety. The stories of his youth were the recitals of adventure from the lips of brave scouts, who made his father's house a common resort. Thus we find him at an early age acting as scout himself, and later an officer in Rogers's famous company of New Hampshire Rangers. He was also a leader in all local expeditions against the Indians. While he possessed in full measure the true Scotch-Irish thrift, he could not be classed with the Presbyterian congregation, for tradition says he was open-handed and generous and much given to hospitality.

It is more than possible that the innkeeper's comments on a Scotch-Irish settlement that "they were a people who would praise good whiskey and drink it and damn bad whiskey and drink that with equal relish," may have included the major, for it cannot be denied that he was somewhat given to conviviality.

He was a favorite officer, nearly six and one-half feet in height, with a Herculean form in perfect proportions, a voice like Stentor and strength of Ajax, never equaled in athletic exercises and unsubdued in single combat. Whole bodies of men had been overcome by him, and he seemed totally unconscious that he was not equally unconquerable at the cannon's mouth. We find record of his visiting Portsmouth, and while in an argumentative state of mind entering into discussion with six British officers, who, not being pleased with his sentiments, undertook to eject him from the room, with the result of themselves being thrown through the window by this doughty patriot.

As an officer, he was the idol of his troops, "hail fellow well met," but whose kind heart would give him no rest until every wounded soldier was personally looked after. A true history of all his adventures would be as thrilling as Cooper's tales, but if he kept any record of his work, which is improbable, it was burned with his house and other effects while he was fighting at Bunker Hill.

At the beginning of the Revolutionary war he was at Epsom, cultivating his large and productive farm. On April 20, 1775, while he was ploughing the parade ground, which is the field now belonging to Joseph Lawrence, a messenger came with news of the Battle of Lexington. Within twenty-four hours he was at Medford, seventy miles away, ready to take his part in the impending conflict.

Cogswell's "History of Northwood" gives an account of this forced march ; of his being chosen captain of a company of eighty heroes, who traveled on foot from Nottingham square to Medford in the short time of about twelve hours, a feat unparalleled in the Revolutionary war. His being chosen major of the regiment, his cool judgment and daring feats in the battle are matters of history with which we are familiar.

He was killed by a random shot from one of the British frigates that was stationed at a point in the Charles river, now known as the center of Cragie's bridge. The shot which passed through his body put to flight one of the most heroic souls that ever animated man. He leaped two or three feet from the ground and fell dead upon his face.

At the dedication of Bunker Hill monument, the orator of the day, Daniel Webster, in mentioning the important part taken in the battle by Major McClary, closes in words as follows :

"Thus fell Major McClary, the highest American officer killed at the battle, the handsomest man in the army and the favorite of New Hampshire troops. His dust still slumbers where it was laid by his sorrowing companions in Medford, unhonored by any adequate memorial to tell where lies one of the heroes who ushered in the Revolution with such auspicious omens. His death spreads a gloom not only over the hearts of his men, but all through the Suncook valley; his sun went down at noon on the day that ushered in our nation's birth."

James Harvey, the oldest son of the major, succeeded to his father's business of taverner, storekeeper, and manufacturer. He served one or more terms in the senate, and was for several years brigadier-general of the state militia. He built the house and kept store where Charles Steele now lives. Andrew and John became military men and died in public service. William, the youngest son, emigrated to Canada. One of the daughters married Mr. Haseltine, the first settled Orthodox minister in Epsom.

John McClary, the oldest son of Michael, was born in Ireland in 1719, settled in Epsom with the family in 1738. John became industrious, methodical, and exacting, a stern Presbyterian, very different from his jovial, rough, impulsive, convivial brother, Major Andrew. He early became one of the leading men in Epsom; was chosen moderator, and for over forty years was one of the principal officers and advisers in town affairs. He was justice of the peace under the provincial government, and all cases of litigation in this vicinity came before Esquire John McClary for trial.

He was called out to do scouting duty in the French and Indian war; was captain of the militia at that time and rose to the rank of colonel before the Revolution.

While his brother represented the military spirit of the Suncook Valley, Esquire John represented the civil authority. The towns of Epsom, Allenstown, Chichester, and Pittsfield were classed together and Esquire John McClary was annually chosen to represent them in the con-vention at Exeter.

Esquire John McClary was a prominent member of the first convention to organize a colonial government, and afterwards in framing our state government, and was an active member for twenty years. He was treasurer of the Committee of Safety from 1777 to 1783. This committee had power to call out troops at such time and in such numbers as they deemed necessary.

In 1780 he was elected to the council, and annually for the four succeeding years. In 1784 he was chosen to the council and also to the senate, and served as member of that honorable body for three years.

He was tall, erect, commanding, dignified, and made an excellent pre-siding officer. In early life, he was married to Elizabeth Harvey of Nottingham. When she came to this town with him they rode on horse-back, she having for a whip a willow stick which she stuck in the ground near the entrance of the driveway leading to the McClary house. The tree is now standing which grew from the twig placed there by the hand of the bride, 161 years ago.

They had four children,—the oldest son, John McClary, Jr., was killed at the battle of Saratoga in 1779. They had but one daughter, Mollie, who married Daniel Page of Deerfield.

The McClarys owned a very large landed estate, which was divided into several valuable farms for the sons and daughters. In 1741, Esquire John built a one-story house on the south side of the road. This house was enlarged at various times and became the venerable looking mansion it now is. For twenty-five years it was the headquarters of the New Hampshire Committee of Safety, and the Society of Cincinnati, of which he was president, met here three times. Many of the schemes influencing the early history of New Hampshire were concocted within its walls. In it great men have been born and have lived. In its dining hall famous men have sat at the board. In its chambers distinguished statesmen, jurists, and heroes have slept. Before the wide fireplace in the reception room have gathered the wit and beauty of a time when men were strong, and women fair, and wine was red. No wonder that the echoes of long lost and forgotten music are said to return at night when darkness and silence reign.

Alone in this great guest chamber one might fancy he had for companions the shades of Daniel Webster, Jeremiah Mason, General Sullivan, and other distinguished men, who have in other days slept within its walls. It is at present owned and occupied by Michael McClary Steele, of the fifth generation of the McClarys, and great grandson of Esquire John. This is the most historic place in all southern New Hampshire, and a visit here will be found very interesting. The present owner is a gentleman of ability and will receive you most cordially.

General Michael McClary, second son of Esquire John, married Sally Dearborn, daughter of Dr. Dearborn of North Hampton. They had five children. The oldest, John, born, in 1785, was of great personal beauty and accomplishments. He was representative, senator, and held a clerkship at Washington. He was killed by a falling timber while assisting to raise a shed, when but thirty-six years of age. The funeral was said to be the largest ever held in the Suncook valley.

The second son, Andrew, born in 1787, sailed for Calcutta and was lost at sea. General McClary also had three daughters of rare attraction. The oldest, Nancy, married Samuel Lord of Portsmouth. A son of theirs, Augustus, once purchased a part of the McClary estate and improved it for some years. Elizabeth Harvey married Jonathan Steele, a lawyer from Peterborough. They settled on the homestead now owned and occupied by their son, Michael McClary Steele. The third daughter, Mary, married Robert Parker of Fitzwilliam.

After the marriage of Ann McClary, the youngest daughter of the old emigrant, to Richard Tripp, they settled on the farm now owned by Samuel Quimby, where he cleared a small place and erected buildings thereon.

The country being new and they being poor, they were subject to many hardships, but being Scotch-Irish they were strong and muscular and enabled to endure the hardships which circumstances compelled them to pass through. Tradition says she was able to pick up a barrel of cider from the ground and place it in the cart. And at one time she traveled on foot seven miles through the woods to visit a neighbor, carrying a child in her arms, and the cloth

to make a shirt. After making the shirt, she returned home the same day. There are many other instances that might be related that go to show the wonderful muscular power which this woman possessed.

In the year 1781, they, with their two sons, Richard and John, moved on the place now occupied by the writer at Short Falls, they having cleared a few acres previously. At this time their nearest neighbor lived where Benjamin Fowler now resides. They afterwards built a sawmill, just above where the Short Falls bridge is, where they sawed out four-inch white oak plank and sold them for one dollar and fifty cents a thousand, delivered on the hill near the house where Hiram Holmes now re-sides, where they were purchased by parties from Durham for shipbuilding, using the money to pay for the land, the price of a thousand of lumber paying for an acre of land.

D. H. Kurd's history of New Hampshire says: "The town of Epsom has furnished many worthy men during the past one hundred and fifty years who have held positions of trust and honor in the state and nation, but none stand out in such bold relief or are more worthy of remembrance than the McClarys. In fact no family in the Suncook valley fills so large a space in its history or the hearts of its people. For nearly a century they were the leading influential men in all our civil, political, and military affairs, and were identified with all the important events and measures that received the attention and governed the acts of the successive generations during that long period of time. We know of no instance in our state where history has so sadly neglected to do justice to a family which has rendered so efficient service in defending the rights and promoting the interests of our commonwealth and nation, as in this instance."

General Michael McClary

By JOHN C. FRENCH

MICHAEL, second son of Esquire John McClary, was born in Epsom in 1753. He received the advantages of a fair education, was a smart, active lad and, in common with other members of the family, had military tastes. At the age of twenty-three, he joined the army at the breaking out of the Revolutionary War, and was appointed Ensign in Captain Henry Dearborn's company in Stark's regiment. This company rendered heroic service at the battle of Bunker Hill. In 1777 he was promoted and made Captain in Colonel Scammel's regiment. He served four years in the army, taking part in some of the most decisive engagements of the war, and suffered with his men some of the severest privations and fatigues.

His soldierly qualities, engaging manners and family connections gave him the acquaintance and friendship of the leading officers of the Revolution, and by a severe experience in the army he gained a thorough knowledge of men and national affairs, which proved of great practical advantage in after years. On returning from the army, he at once took a prominent position in social and political life, which he held for half a century. He took an active part in the organization of the State Government and, being well versed in military affairs and of good executive ability, he was appointed Adjutant-General for the State of New Hampshire. He organized that department and held the office twenty-one consecutive years, In 1796 he was elected Senator and was a member of that body seven years, and such was his popularity that the votes in Epsom were Unanimous in his favor and nearly so in the adjoining towns. He was United States Marshal for a long time, which, during

the last war with England, with the large amount of privateering prosecuted at Portsmouth, was a very responsible office. He was tendered the nomination of candidate for Governor, but declined to accept. Though well known throughout the State, with positions of honor and trust at his command, his popularity, power and influence in his native town was remarkable. He seemed to control the affairs of Epsom with almost universal consent. For over fifty years he served his townsmen in some capacity, either as Moderator, Town Clerk, Representative or Auditor.

Said an old Federalist, "If I had a family of children who would obey me as well as the people of Epsom do General McClary, I should be a happy man." Though once a Federalist, he cast his lot with the Democratic Party and carried the town with him almost unanimously. During the last war with England, party feeling ran high and party lines were closely drawn. Governor Plummer, through Adjutant-General McClary, called out detachments of the militia without calling together the Council or Legislature, which provoked a great deal of controversy. General McClary procured supplies for the troops, made preparation for the defense of Portsmouth, purchased cannon and munitions of war. But in 1814, when the Federalists rallied and elected John T. Gilman as Governor, General McClary resigned his office with virtuous indignation, which he had filled with credit and ability, and in which capacity he had reviewed every regiment in the State.

The town of Epsom strongly supported the war. A full company, under Captain Jonathan Godfrey, volunteered for the defense of Portsmouth.

Michael McClary also did much business as justice of the peace and probate judge. He took an active part in organizing the New Hampshire Branch of the Society of the Cincinnati. He was the first treasurer and held the office twenty-five years. This honorable body of Revolutionary officers met annually on the Fourth of July. Three of their annual meetings were held at the house of General McClary. This society is worthy of more extended mention, and their annual meetings called together more noted men than ever assembled on any other occasion. He was also a Free Mason. While in the army young McClary had met in secret conclave such men as Washington, Lafayette, Sullivan and other brothers of the mystic order and became an earnest worker in the craft. In connection with other ex-officers he was instrumental in organizing a lodge at Deerfield, and in honor of General Sullivan it was called Sullivan Lodge. He was the first Senior of this lodge, and afterwards Worshipful Master. In appearance General McClary was tall, commanding, well proportioned and prepossessing. He made a fine appearance as a military officer, either on foot or in the saddle, which, with his position, means, and hospitality rendered him exceedingly popular. He was remarkably affable and engaging in his manners, interesting in conversation, graceful in his movements, convivial in his habits, generous and public-spirited, fond of power, and when opposed displayed some traits not recorded among the Christian graces. His acquaintance and correspondence was remarkably extensive, embracing many of the most distinguished men of the country.

He married, in 1779, Sally Dearborn, an intelligent, interesting and accomplished lady, daughter of Dr. Dearborn of Northampton. They entertained company with style and grace, and around their festive board have been many happy meetings of the prominent men of the times. They had five children. The oldest son, John, born in 1785, was of great personal beauty. He was early promoted to offices of trust, Representative, Senator and a clerkship at Washington. He was killed by a falling building when but thirty-six years of age. The second son, Andrew, born in 1787, was wild and roving. He entered the army in the War of 1812 and served as Captain. He married Mehitable Duncan of Concord, in 1813, and had one daughter. Shortly after he sailed for Calcutta and was lost at sea. General McClary also had three daughters. The oldest, Nancy Dearborn, born in 1789, married Samuel Lord of Portsmouth, whose ability and wealth is well known. One of his sons, Augustus, purchased a large part of the old McClary estate. The second daughter, Elisabeth Harvey, married Jonathan Steele, a lawyer from Peterboro. The third daughter, Mary, born in 1794, married Robert Parker and lived in Fitzwilliam. General McClary and wife both lived to old age. He died in 1825, aged 72,

and was buried with his ancestors in Epsom, where rests the dust of many heroic dead, whose lives and deeds are fast fading from the memory of pass-ing generations.

WIDOWS PENSION FOR THE WIFE OF MICHAEL McCLARY

W17115 Cont. & N.H. Service

MC CLARY, MICHAEL

Sarah, widow

November 15, 1836 Sarah McClary of Epsom, Merrimack County, New Hampshire, eighty-one years of age, deposed:

that she is the widow of Michael McClary, late of Epsom, N.H., who was a Captain in the Revolutionary War; that soon after the battle of Lexington, in 1775, her husband "raised a number of men and marched to Boston; was in the battle of Bunker Hill where his uncle, Major ANDREW MC CLARY, was killed;"

that January 1, 1776, he was appointed First Lieutenant in the Fifth regiment of foot commanded by Col. John Stark, and was afterwards made a Captain,

that her husband continued to serve as Captain until the spring or summer of 1779 when he resigned on account of ill health "but with fixed determination of returning to the service should his health be restored;" that his health had been declining for some time previous to their marriage;

that during his service, her husband was at the capture of Burgoyne, and she believes at most of the battles fought in the Northern and Middle states;

that she was married at North Hampton, N.H., by Rev. David Macclure, then Pastor of the church there,

October 1, 1778, her maiden name being Sally Dearborn; and lived with her father in North Hampton while her husband continued in service; but when he resigned, she immediately moved to Epsom, the place of her husband's residence, which was July 14, 1779;

and that her husband died March 27, 1824.

Sarah McClary.

November 15, 1836 Josiah Sanborn of Epsom, N.H., seventy-three years of age, testified that he lived in Epsom during the Revolutionary war and at that time was "well acquainted with the late Gen. Michael McClary of Epsom;" knew that he went to Boston in 1775 as a Ensign; served seven or eight months; then enlisted for a year; and then was employed to enlist men for three years for the war; that he was in the expedition to Canada; was at the Surrender of Burgoyne; then joined Washington's army and was at the Battle of Monmouth, etc.

Josiah Sanborn.

October 20, 1834 Rev. Jonathan French of North Hampton, N.H., testified the records of marriages, solemnized by his "precessors in the ministry in this place, commencing in the year 1767" are in his possession; and that he finds among them in the handwriting of Rev. David Macclure, the following:

1778, October 1, Michael McClary of Epsom and Sally Dearborn of North Hampton.

Jona. French, Pastor of the Church in North Hampton, N.H.

November 5, 1836 DAN WOODMAN of Rockingham County, N.H., eight-eight years of age, testified that he joined the army under Gen. Gates at Bemis Heights in 1777 and McClary was there then; remained with the army except for a furlough, until the summer of 1779.

His Mark

(The commission of Michael McClary as First Lieutenant in Col. John Stark's Fifth regiment of foot, signed John Hancock, President, dated January 1, 1776, is on file in the Department. BMD.)

(The commission of Michael McClary as First Lieutenant in Col. John Stark's Fifth regiment of foot, signed John Hancock, President, dated January 1, 1776, is on file in the Department. BMD.)

Claim allowed and Certificate 582, Concord, N.H. Agency, was issued March 11, 1837, Act of July 4, 1836, Section 3.

(Only Revolutionary Pensioner, named Michael McClary under any spelling of the name from any state. From memorandum on file it appears that Sarah McClary, eighty-four, was living in 1840 at Epsom, N.H., with Jonathan Steele. BMD.)

**THE SERMON FOR the funeral of JOHN McCLARY, son of
Michael McClary who died at the age of 36 in 1821, by the
Reverend Mr. Jonathan Curtis.**

A

SERMON,

PREACHED AT EPSOM, NEW HAMPSHIRE,

DECEMBER 17, 1821

AT

THE FUNERAL

OF THE

Hon. John McClary

WHO DIED DEC. 13, 1821

AT THE AGE OF THIRTY-SIX YEARS

BY JONATHAN CURTIS, A.M.

PASTOR OF THE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH IN EPSOM

PREFACE

It is presumed, that but few at the present time, who may read this discourse, will need to be informed of the circumstances of the death, which occasioned it. For the information of any, who may not know the circumstances, it may be well briefly to state - that he, whose death is here mentioned, was engaged with others in assisting a neighbor in the raising of a small frame. A considerable fall of snow during the afternoon, which, towards evening increased to a violent storm, doubtless very much tended to increase the danger of the undertaking. After the two broadsides had been raised, and the beams were about being placed, the whole fell, and produced the instant death, which occasioned this discourse.

SERMON.

Matthew xxiv.44.

"THEREFORE BE YE ALSO READY; FOR IN SUCH AN HOUR AS YE THINK NOT, THE SON OF MAN COMETH."

Not a higher, nobler object can be gained by immortal man, than a preparedness to meet the scenes, which are to open before him. From the time, when we first enter the threshold of life, till we find ourselves beholding the realities of an immeasurable eternity, more and more momentous are the scenes, which open before us. Though, in the world, we may find many blessings; still, on the whole, we are taught rather to expect tribulation from it. Sometimes we hear the Almighty speaking to us, and warning us to prepare to meet him as it were from behind the hills, which conceal his insupportable glory from our view, and in accents mild and tender as a father. At other times, his warning voice seems breaking over our heads in sounds as overwhelming, as if "seven thunders uttered their voices." One day the prospect before us may be a most pleasant one; but when the next day shows us the scene, that was behind it, our eyes grow dim at the sight; our grief is unutterable; our hearts fail within us. Afflictions in the present world, a dying hour, and a judgment scene, all must experience. If so, how important must be a readiness, a preparation to meet such scenes?

Our blessed Lord in the context had been speaking to his disciples upon the trying, momentous scenes, which were before them. The beautiful, wealthy, but wicked city of Jerusalem must be destroyed. The destruction would come suddenly. It would resemble the coming of Christ at the last day for judgment. "As the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be." Christ would not only admonish his hearers to be ready to flee from the destruction, which should come upon Jerusalem; but he seems also by his language desirous of directing their minds to a contemplation of his coming for judgment, and of his coming at death; for, as that would fix their character and state, it would be the same in its results, as if he then came for judgment. As a man would watch against the nightly depredations of a thief, so would he have all to be in readiness to meet his messenger death, who would often come at the most unexpected hour. "Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not, the Son of man cometh."

I shall endeavor,

I. *To show what constitutes a readiness, or preparation for death; and*

II. *That we are urged to such a readiness from the consideration, that our Lord may come at such an hour as we think not.*

We inquire,

III. *What constitutes a readiness, or preparation for death.*

I know there are those, who think all are ready, or in a state of preparation for death; who suppose, that all are happy, when they die. But do such regard the plain import of God's Word? That sacred Volume certainly teaches a sentiment directly the opposite of this. That teaches through the whole train of it that mankind are not naturally in a state of preparation for heaven; and therefore surely not in a state of readiness for death in the sense intended in the text. That teaches, that preparation such, as is therein plainly described, must be made in this life, or else 'where Christ has gone, thither we cannot come;* we shall not see life; but the wrath of God must abide upon us.' To say, that all are prepared for death and judgment, is to make a solemn farce of our Lord's description of the great separating day in the 25th of Matthew, when the righteous and wicked shall enter their different worlds. Such a course is virtually to renounce the Bible. And who is he, who can calmly and deliberately renounce the Bible? or, which is the same thing, set up his own perverted reason in opposition to it? Let it be remembered, that, if we discard the scriptures as our guide, we have no guide. Yes, we are on a dark, boisterous ocean, and have no guide; and is such a state desirable? But, if we profess to receive the Scriptures as our guide, we certainly ought to be directed both in our belief and practice by their plain instructions. If we would be directed in this great and important concern of preparation for death by the scriptures; we shall find them teaching us, that a great change must be previously effected in any and every heart. If you ask where such a change in the disposition of the heart is required, I would direct you to the words of our Lord in the 3d chapter of John. "Verily, verily I say unto thee, Except a man, (not man in distinction from woman or child, but man for the whole species;) except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." Christ explained this birth to be a spiritual change. It is being born of the spirit. The spirit of God is described as the great Agent in the change in disposing the creature voluntarily and cheerfully to take off his supreme love from the world, where it is naturally placed, and fix it on God, with this supreme love to God will always be connected a true repentance for sin, and a firm, operative faith in our Lord Jesus Christ; a faith which produces a Christian life. For "faith," we are expressly told,** "without works is dead." It is good for nothing.

This readiness spoken of in the text seems to imply, that we should aim at a deep and lively exercise of Christian feeling; that we should contemplate death not merely as certainly before us, but that we should strive to make ourselves familiar with it; that we should feel ourselves to be truly "strangers and pilgrims on the earth;" that we should feel so strong a love for our God and Savior and for heavenly and divine things, that death may be rather a welcome messenger than otherwise. He, who would always be ready for his departure, will not only see to it, that his soul rests on Christ by faith, and is kept habitually in a heavenly frame; but he will aim as much as possible to view himself a pilgrim on the earth, and will consequently strive so to manage and arrange his temporal concerns, that, if he shall be suddenly called away, no one shall experience injustice, or be made a sufferer by his departure. But, though some Christians may be in a state of more perfect readiness to depart than others; yet all are truly ready, that is, their great interest for eternity is secured, who have chosen Christ for the everlasting portion of their souls.

II. We are urged to be in such readiness from the consideration, that our Lord may come at such an hour as we think not.

This is the very reason given in the text, why we should be in readiness to meet our Lord, when he comes to call for us, viz. 'because in such an hour as we think, not, the Son of man cometh.' In the context also the sudden, unexpected time of our Lord's coming to call for us is described by the nightly approach of a thief; "But know this, that if the good man of the house had known in what watch the thief would come, he would have watched, and would not have suffered his house to be broken up." If the householder knew the particular hour of the thief's approach, he might with more propriety neglect to watch and prepare to resist him till the time of his coming. But, as he knew not the time, the only way to be safe was to watch all night. So in reference to our Lord's coming to call us away by death; the only way to meet him safely and happily is to be always ready.

The sudden and unexpected time of our Lord's coming to call for us is taught by the parable of the ten virgins.*** At midnight, the most unexpected season, the cry was made "Behold, the Bridegroom cometh; go ye out and meet him." They that were ready, you know, could go in with him to the marriage; but against the unprepared "the door was shut." Vain was their cry, "Lord, Lord, open to us." "Watch therefore," says our Lord, "for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh." James says, "Ye know not what shall be on the morrow: for what is your life? It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away." But need I multiply Scripture testimony to prove to you, that death is liable to come upon us at an unexpected hour?

I appeal to the testimony of what your own eyes have seen; to the suddenly expiring groans, which your own ears have heard; and to the grief, which your own hearts have felt, when beloved friends have suddenly bid you adieu. Have bid you adieu? O no. Often they have not even time for that. While engaged with us in the busy cares of life, they seem to hear the sudden cry, "The bridegroom cometh!" and in a moment they pass away from us.

To prove to your plainest senses, that death may come at an unexpected hour, I appeal to what this day represents to you. -- Why this assembly here today? The solemn shroud before you tells the cause. -- "And may it not be, that some one lies slumbering there, who was borne down by the infirmities and decay of three score years and ten?" It is not the case. He, that lies there in the sleep of death, had been but thirty-six. It is M'Clary, M'Clary the younger. It is the strength and vigor of manhood, that lies there. "And can it be," you ask, "that this is his funeral? that he is dead?" Look and see for yourselves. "But the countenance," you say "is the same as ever." Ah true; but your hand will tell you the spirit is not there. The lately animated clay is now cold. He no longer accosts you in the language of friendship. The lips are sealed in death. Had any one the last week told him or you, that that was his last week, who could have believed him? No one indeed could have told this without a sight at the book of God's decrees. Last Thursday, he was in perfect health; and, last Thursday, he was such as you now see him. One moment, he was in perfect health, and, the next, he was such as you now see him. Is anything more necessary, my hearers, to show you, that "in such an hour as ye think not, the Son of man cometh?"

Now let reason say whether the consideration, that our Lord may call for us unexpectedly, should not excite us to be immediately and always ready. Were you about to take a voyage to some distant country, and knew, that the ship might sail away at any hour, what would be your conduct? Why you would say, "I must be immediately and constantly ready." Suppose the wretched murderer,**** now awaiting the execution of his sentence at Amherst, had been condemned, but informed of no particular time for his execution;--the officer might call him to the gallows at any hour; and what would be your advice to him? You would say to him, "Be in immediate readiness to meet your God; for you know not but that the next hour may be your last. Flee for your life, your immortal life; flee for your soul's sake to the only Savior of sinners. At the footstool of mercy humbly and earnestly seek for the pardon of your sins. Bring your guilty soul to the fountain of a Savior's blood, that it may there be cleansed and

purified. This immediately prepare to meet your God, for you know not the time, when he cometh."--Now is not such exactly the condition of all mankind? For sin all must die a temporal death; and we know not the time when. But the future consequences of sin may be avoided by embracing the provisions of the gospel; by faith in the atonement of Christ. But these must be embraced before the hour of death; for then 'as the tree falleth, so it lieth.'***** Then 'he, that is filthy, will be filthy still; and the righteous, righteous still.' What more powerful reason can be given, why we should be ready for the coming of our Lord, than because we know not the time when?

Though my business is not so much with the dead as with the living; still there were traits of character in him, who is gone, which may well be recalled and imitated by the living--As a son and brother, he was dutiful, kind, and affectionate;--as a friend and acquaintance, (and he formed acquaintances probably in almost every state in the union.) he was courteous, affable, and unassuming.--I may undoubtly affirm, that he was one, who much regarded what proceeded from his lips. He was one, who held a sacred regard to truth in all his conversation. I never knew that he abused the use of speech, as many do, in profane language.--Though, for one of his years, he had been much engaged in public business; yet he was very far from wishing to climb to honorable stations, as many do, over the defamed characters of the more deserving than themselves. Modest and unassuming himself, he appeared to be willing, that all should possess that respect, which properly belongs to them; which talents and worth deserve. Slander and detraction were entirely foreign from his feelings. Amidst all the contentions, which exist in society, (and he witnessed too many of them.) I never heard that John M'Clary ever said anything to the disadvantage of any one. "Yes," lately observed a judicious man to me, "though I have heard slander and abuse carried to the highest pitch in his presence; yet I never heard a word of the kind from him; but it appeared to affect him disagreeably." I have no doubt, that discord and contention were very abhorrent to his feelings. He was benevolent and pitiful to the poor and afflicted. He could sympathize in the sufferings of others.--These agreeable traits of his character may well be remembered and imitated. But neither friendship, nor wealth, nor honors, nor firm health, could preserve him from the arrest of death, a sudden death; for God gave the summons, which must be obeyed. It becomes me not to dwell upon the dead. He has gone; he has done with the world; a wise, holy, and sovereign God called him away; and in the hands of God let us leave him, while we, who survive, endeavor to receive profit from his sudden, distressing removal.

We may well conceive that the trial of the parents and family, of which the deceased was so lately a member, must be very great. To lose a son in the vigor of manhood, an only son, to whom the parents were looking for aid and comfort in their declining years, when they wish to be retiring from the business and cares of the world, must be no ordinary trial. How unexpected is the scene, afflicted parents, which God's providence had now opened before you! Your calculations had doubtless been, that this your son would continue more and more to relieve you from the care and perplexity of business, as your advancing age should bring infirmities and decrepitude upon you; -- that he should attend your calls around your bed, and shorten the wearisome hours of your last sickness; and finally attend a parent's remains to the grave. But how changed the scene! How liable to disappointment are all human calculations! The parents yet live; and the son is gone. The feeble stock remains still to bleed, where an important limb has been cut off.

The children had also certainly expected that their brother would attend them long in life to rejoice in their joys, and sympathize in their sorrows. But he has been suddenly taken, and you are left. How far above, and different from, our ways are the ways of the Almighty! He does show, that our calculations are in vain, unless they agree with his. God has shown you, my friend, and he does show us all, that he is a holy sovereign. He will do what he will with his own. God has done no wrong, though he has called you to a great trial. I can well conceive, that the burden of grief for all the bereaved family and friends must be very great. But, my friends, there is solid comfort, which may be felt in the midst of grief. There is support and consolation for parents in their old age, better than the kindest son could ever give. O, afflicted parents, let that support and consolation be sought by you. It is not

beneath the angels of light to hover around the throne of their Father God, and from him receive their highest satisfaction. How suitable then for his humbler, less deserving children on the earth to hover around their Father's throne, and to seek protection and comfort thence, when the billows of trouble roar around them?

Let the children, in their affliction, remember that the Friend, that is nearer than a brother; that can console them, when a brother's counsel and friendship fail. Bereaved friends, all of you, be instructed by this event to look far away from this world for durable peace and happiness. Another such event your family may probably never witness. A warning so loud and solemn as this you will probably never again will hear. O shall not, must not this be improved your saying, your everlasting benefit? If this event does not lead your minds to another and a better world, to a readiness to meet your Lord at his coming; pray what can you expect will? What effect this event will finally produce upon you, I know not; but the all-wise Jehovah knows, and eternity will show. My earnest desire is, that you may find a blessing connected with this trying dispensation; and that you may have abundant reason to say hereafter with the holy man, "It is good for me, that I have been afflicted." ***** To a merciful God, afflicted friends, I commend you, and in his hands I leave you.

As I am admonished by this sudden death, that I may never have another opportunity, --you or I may be in eternity before it arrives; I must address a few words to those, who were engaged with the deceased in the undertaking of that fatal, solemn afternoon; an afternoon, when even the storm itself could almost howl in sounds of woe. --When one in battle sees his fellow fall by his side, while his own life is spared, the providence is very impressive and solemn. But there you thought of no great danger. Where, O where can you then be, my friends, where you are out of danger? Was he singled out, because the greatest sinner there? It is not for me to answer. But hear what our Savior says in a similar case. "Those eighteen upon whom the tower in Siloam fell, and slew them, think ye that they were sinners above all men that dwelt in Jerusalem? I tell you, nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish."***** You may not die by a sudden death. You may live a life of worldly pleasure, and gradually sink into the grave; but expect you repent, you must perish hereafter. You have seen one taken in a moment from your side; and you are left. And why he taken and you left? God only knows. It may be, that some of you may be excited by this solemn event to a preparation to meet your God. I say some of you; will not, must not all of you be thus prepared? A most solemn scene, my fellow travelers for eternity, has been before you. I do not expect that those, who were there, will easily forget it; but my great desire is, that they might profit from it. My friends, if you do not profit from this, can you hardly expect to profit from any thing? Would one from the dead persuade you to repentance? Could those sealed lips be once more opened, would they not preach repentance to you? Would not the language be, "Prepare, friends, to meet your God? Be ready, for you know not when the son of man cometh?"

It is hoped that all this people, and all acquainted with the deceased, will see from this event what life is; what the world is; may make it their great concern to see what true religion is, and to be possessed of it, --not merely twenty years hence, but now.

This sudden and solemn event should be improved by all present this day. I am reminded by it, that I may never have, and probably shall not have, another opportunity of warning all present, till the Son of man shall come not only at death, but for judgment. As though it were the last time, let me then, brethren, warn each and all of you "to flee from the wrath to come." This very expression of Scripture shows, that there is wrath to be fled from; and that it will certainly come upon those to the uttermost, who do not timely flee to Christ, the only refuge, the only hiding place from the storm and the tempest. Flee this day to the city of refuge. Flee this day from a land of famine, a land of distress and dangers, as did the humble prodigal, to your heavenly Father's arms, that there you may be safe. Flee, I say, this day, for tomorrow may be eternity to you. Flee, this day, for you may never hear the warning again.

* John vii.34, and iii.36

** Ja. ii.20

***Matthew xxv, Ja iv.14

****Daniel D. Farmer.

*****Eccl. xi.3. Rev. xxii. 11.

***** Ps. cxix. 71.

*****Luke xiii. 4 and 5

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