

Sesquicentennial Celebration.

ONE HUNDRED AND FIFTIETH ANNIVERSARY OF THE FORMATION OF A TOWN GOVERNMENT.

On Saturday, July 4, 1903, Keene held the most successful celebration in her history, when the 150th anniversary of the formation of the town government and Independence Day were fittingly observed. In happy contrast to the almost incessant rain of the centennial celebration of 1853, the day was perfect, with clear skies, moderate temperature and a light, refreshing breeze. The main streets of the city and its Central square and business section were in gala attire. The public buildings and business blocks were elaborately decorated, and along the line of march of the procession private residences were handsomely trimmed, the decorations being practically continuous.

An immense crowd of people was present, numbering, it is estimated, from ten to twelve thousand in addition to the population, making over twenty thousand people in the city. Owing to the width of the streets and the orderly character of the people, there was no unpleasant crowding, and the throng conducted itself in an entirely orderly manner, the total absence of drunkenness and rowdiness being notable.

The day was a particularly fortunate one in its freedom from accidents of all kinds, including those usually due to explosives. No injury of any account was reported. The ambulance was stationed during the morning at city hall, with horses attached, ready for emergencies, and in the evening, during the fireworks, near Elisha F. Lane's residence on Main street.

All the features of the day passed off most successfully. Notable among these, from a spectacular point of view, were the parade in the morning, the living flag by the children in the afternoon and the fireworks in the evening.

A concert was given by the City band of Rutland at the driving park at 7 o'clock, and on the platform on Central park the American band of Claremont played about an hour early in the evening. The Knights of Pythias band of Bellows Falls also played on Main street and on Church street in the afternoon and evening. Among the bands that of the L. J. Colony Chair Co. of Munsonville, was noticeable for its good playing and full quota of instruments.

The Fourth was preceded by a general celebration by the young people and their elders which began at dark and continued until towards midnight. Firecrackers, bombs, tin horns and all sort of noise producers

were everywhere in evidence. The city was well policed in all quarters and there were no demonstrations resulting in disturbances. The request that bonfires be omitted on account of the decorations was enforced without difficulty, and on the whole the night before was one of the quietest and most orderly for years.

The celebration of the day began at sunrise with the ringing of bells and firing of guns. At 10.30 came the grand parade, with its beautiful floats, marching bodies and trades displays, lasting until noon. At 1 o'clock there was a ball game at the Keene Driving park and at 3 o'clock another on the Island street grounds. At 4 o'clock came the 150th anniversary exercises, at 7 band concerts were given, and at 8.30 the fireworks display took place at the driving park.

The beginning of the Fourth of July celebration was in a suggestion of Mrs. Wm. F. Holbrook that the various women's clubs join in organizing a parade of the school children. Mr. Thomas C. Rand in an article in the Sentinel several months before had urged the celebration of the sesquicentennial. From these two beginnings, taken up by the city government and committees of the citizens, gradually grew the grand celebration of the day, with its many features.

THE PARADE.

The grand civic and military parade, which began at 10.45 and continued until 12.15, covering a route a mile and a half in length, was the finest ever given in Keene. The excellent organization, under Chief Marshal Babbidge and his efficient aids, was most commendable. While marching it took the line thirty minutes to pass a given point. A spectator counted over 1,300 persons in the line and 245 horses.

The features of the parade were the quality of the displays, which were of a high order, the variety of the exhibits, comprising many beautiful floats, an ingeniously fashioned engine of the railroad men, business men's displays and different types of marching bodies, such as militiamen, firemen, school boys, secret societies, workmen's organizations, cowboys, Indians, etc. The following was the order of the parade:

Chief Marshal Paul F. Babbidge and aids, with company of mounted cowboys.

First division—Major E. M. Keyes, marshal, and aids. City band of Rutland, Vt. Keene Light Guard battalion. Battalion of school boys. Members of John Sedgwick Post, G. A. R., in carriage. Keene fire department, with apparatus. Sons of Veterans, including Camp General Griffin of Keene, Antrim Camp, Hillsboro Bridge Camp, Bennington (N. H.) Camp and Peterboro Camp.

Second division—Capt. M. V. B. Clark, marshal, and aids. Knights of Pythias band of Bellows Falls, Vt. Uniform Rank, Knights of Pythias. Wood and Chapman's drum corps. Union Canadienne Francaise, with officers, aged and prominent members in carriages. L. J. Colony Chair Company band of Munsonville. Foresters of America, including Court Ashuelot of Hinsdale (with drum corps), Court Winchester of Winchester, Keene Matchless drum corps, Court Minnewawa of Marlboro, and Court

General Wilson of Keene (with guests from Bellows Fall and Winchendon). Keene Commandery of United Order of Golden Cross. Independent Order of Red Men, Keene.

Third division—John F. Clark, marshal, and aids. Wheeler's band of Bellows Falls. Keene Circle No. 83, Allied Metal Mechanics. Old Homestead Lodge No. 319, International Association of Machinists. Mount Monadnock Lodge No. 371, National Boiler Makers and Iron Ship Builders of America.

Fourth division—Dr. Burton C. Russell, marshal, and aids. Historic and society floats, and business men's exhibits, with American band of Claremont.

The parade was reviewed on Court street, near Mechanic, by the chief marshal, city government and prominent citizens.

In addition to a three hours' struggle between baseball nines representing the Boston & Maine railroad shops in Keene and Mechanicville (which was won by Mechanicville 20 to 15) and an eleven innings game between the Keene High school nine and the Marlboro town nine (which was won by Marlboro 10 to 3), the day was further enlivened by good contests in three classes of horse trotting, for purses of \$200 in each race. The details of these events were published in the newspapers, at the time, but are omitted here as they lack permanent historical interest.

ANNIVERSARY EXERCISES.

The 150th anniversary exercises, held in Central park, were largely attended. A crowd filled the park and the sidewalks on Central square near by, while teams and automobiles took their places outside the park railing. Mayor Taft presided. A concert by children followed closely, making the two programs in reality one. The children also assisted in the anniversary celebration. The combined programs were as follows:

Chorus, "To Thee, O Country.".....	
Invocation.....	Rev. J. E. Robins, D. D.
Remarks.....	Mayor J. S. Taft
Chorus, "Tramp, Tramp, Tramp.".....	
Oration.....	Rev. Josiah L. Seward, D. D.
Chorus, "Praise the Father.".....	
Benediction.....	Rev. E. A. Renouf, D. D.
Selection.....	Band
Chorus, "Columbia the Gem of the Ocean.".....	
Chorus, "Battle Hymn of the Republic.".....	
"America.".....	Audience
Selection.....	Band

In the north end of the park, facing the south, was a platform for the speakers, with a stand for the children in the rear. On the platform, besides the speakers, were the members of the city councils, ex-mayors of the city, the clergy, an adult chorus, the accompanists and the band. On the stand in the rear were the children arranged as a living flag.

The living flag was one of the really fine features of the day, and was a novelty. It was a representation of a flag composed of 350 children. The little people were arranged on a tier of seats extending twenty-five feet from base to top and seventy-two feet from end to end, making

a flag seventy-two feet long and twenty-five wide. The field was made up mostly of boys, who were dressed in blue, and forty-five of them held white stars fastened to wands. The stripes were made up of girls, who wore red capes and white skirts. As the children were seated they made a complete picture of a flag, seven red and six white stripes in the correct alternate order, and a blue field with forty-five white stars.

The children met in city hall and marched to the seats, making their appearance at 4.25 o'clock. They came on the seats in double file, the highest row first, marched up the center of the seats and separated, half going to the right and half to the left. Each row was preceded by and was in charge of two ladies who acted as guides or chaperons and who were seated at each end of each row. In all there were seven rows of about fifty in a row. The white skirts of the lowest row, which would have made a fourteenth stripe, were hidden by the occupants of the speakers' platform in front of them and the flag was perfect in appearance. It was a brilliant sight, one that the spectators appreciated and will never forget.

The flag was under the general charge of Mrs. W. F. Holbrook, who inaugurated the plan.

As inspiring as the sight of the flag was the singing of the children who composed it. In two choruses, "To Thee, O Country," and "Praise the Father," they were assisted by fifty adult voices, male and female, from the Keene Chorus Club. The rest of the choruses the young people sang alone. They were full of the spirit of the occasion and aroused the audience to hearty applause after every selection. They were under the direction of Mr. Nelson P. Coffin, the director of the Chorus Club, who achieved splendid results with them. At the same time it must not be forgotten that the basis was laid in the public schools, from which most of the children came.

Three accompanists aided in the choruses, Mrs. Berdia C. Huntress and Miss Florence Silsby on two pianos and Mr. E. H. Holbrook on an organ.

The exercises began at 4.45 and closed at 6.15. The remarks by the mayor were graceful and brief, and were greeted by a round of applause. He said:

"We are here today, not only to celebrate the birthday of our nation, but to commemorate another issue of the long ago, the founding of the city of Keene.

"As Keene was among the first of the pioneer towns to respond to the call of liberty, it is most fitting that as we call to mind the one, we remember the other.

"The purpose of our exercises today is largely educational; and the development of this plan has brought into a prominent place the children of our public schools. Through the inspiration of the hour we trust these children will better understand the true meaning of the day we celebrate; will have a deeper reverence for the things pertaining to the welfare of our cherished city.

"And may not we of maturer years catch this inspiration? Standing

at the junction of these magnificent streets bordered with stately elms, surrounded with institutions of learning and spires pointing Heavenward, may we not most fittingly call to mind the men whose lives and characters made possible the Keene of today."

From an anniversary point of view the chief event was the oration by Dr. Seward. Long residence in Keene and an intimate knowledge of its history enabled the speaker to do justice to the day and the place. He gave his fellow townsmen a discriminating, sympathetic and learned historical address, which was listened to closely by his hearers and was received with cordial approbation.

The band to furnish music for the above program was the City band of Rutland, Vt. Its two selections, the overture from "Poet and Peasant" and the popular two-step "Hiawatha," gave much pleasure.

The celebration was brought to a close with an exhibition of fireworks at the Keene Driving park, which attracted some seven thousand people.

The exhibition was given in the field southwest of the judges' stand and began at about 8.30 o'clock. The night was a magnificent one, the clear skies and bright moon adding much to the beauty of this closing feature of the celebration. The pyrotechnic display was a good one and was considered one of the best ever given in this city. It consisted of varied colored and floral shells, willows, cannon, tourbillions, serpentine rockets, Roman candles, whirlwinds, fountains and nine set pieces. During the exhibition colored lights were frequently used.

The first set piece read "1753 Keene 1903." The second piece was that of a magic scroll. The third piece was a display of hanging lights in various colors, 100 feet long, and was one of the prettiest and most effective illuminations of the evening. The fourth piece showed illuminated wheels propelled by magic fires with such rapidity as to form beautiful rainbow circles producing quick successions of brilliant colors. The fifth set piece showed an old-fashioned windmill. It consisted of large revolving arms and scrolls of colored lance jets. The sixth set piece was called "The Star of the Union" and was in crimson and blue colors. The next piece showed a kicking mule. The representation was a very good one, the comical performances of the animal provoking much laughter. The eighth piece represented a palm tree in various colors. The ninth showed "Good Night," the entire open space at the same time being illuminated by a blaze of color.

The electric road ran trains of from four to seven cars to and from the park as rapidly as possible from between 6 and 7 to 11 o'clock. The cars were packed to their utmost capacity and made trips once every half hour carrying from 1,000 to 1,500 an hour. Many barges and private carriages were also used. Nevertheless hundreds of people were obliged to walk to and from the park, Main street being lined with foot passengers from 7 o'clock until nearly 11. No accidents were reported. Many people, especially those having children, did not attempt to go to the park and a large number of families had private displays of fireworks.

DR. SEWARD'S ORATION.

Mr. Mayor and Citizens:

“My tongue, by inspiration taught,
 Shall parables unfold:
 Dark oracles, but understood,
 And owned for truths of old,
 Which we from sacred registers
 Of ancient times have known,
 And our forefathers' pious care
 To us has handed down.
 Let children learn the mighty deeds
 Which God performed of old,
 Which, in our younger years, we saw,
 And which our fathers told.
 Our lips shall tell them to our sons,
 And they again to theirs,
 That generations yet unborn
 May teach them to their heirs.”

A century and a half of the corporate existence of this municipality of Keene has passed. The ashes of the last of our forefathers who cleared the primeval forests and laid the foundations of Upper Ashuelot, the cradle of the later Keene, have long since mingled with their kindred dust. We come today to seek to recall their heroic deeds, their patient toil, and their exemplary virtues. If we would lift the veil which conceals from us their many daring exploits, their labors in subduing the wilderness, their consecrated efforts to maintain public worship, their fierce encounters with the savages, and their progress in municipal government, we shall find a large portion of this civic life shrouded in darkness. Here and there, the imperfect records of the town and the first church, together with the preserved traditions of aged residents, enable us to catch glimpses of the course of events and to weave something like a connected web of historical detail.

If a bird's-eye view of this immediate vicinity, in what geologists would call a recent geological age, could be reproduced for us, it would disclose a vast lake covering the beautiful valley in which we are. It extended on the north to the hills of Surry, with a bay reaching to the high lands of Alstead. Surry mountain was a beautiful promontory jutting into this lake from the northeast, which a bay reaching up what is now the Beaver brook valley separated from Beech hill. On the east, this lake reached to Beech hill and to the high hills of Roxbury and Marlboro, with bays reaching out towards what are now Marlboro village and East Swanzy. The southern boundary was the hills of Richmond and the western shore was on what we call the West mountain and the hills of Westmoreland and Surry. The outlet was by way of what we call the valley of the Ashuelot, into the valley of the Connecticut. The lake must have been a most beautiful sheet of water, about fifteen miles in length and from three to five miles in width. Evidences of its existence have been repeatedly discovered and described. Gradually the soft earth at the outlet was worn away and, little by little, the lake disappeared, until only traces of it were left.

The earliest inhabitants of this fair valley which succeeded the old

lake were the Ashuelot Indians. They were probably a branch of the great tribe of Pequots who occupied the valleys of the Connecticut and its tributaries. These earliest Indians, who gave their name to our river, a name which ought still to characterize our municipality, were not the same as those troublesome Indians who annoyed the first settlers of Upper Ashuelot. The latter found their way here from Canada and were induced to come by the French, who were opposed to the English in the European wars of that period. The struggle in Europe had its echoes in America, where the colonists of the two countries fought each other, until the great victory on the Heights of Abraham decided the long struggle in favor of the British government.

In order to understand the historical setting of the first settlement of this place, it is necessary to recur to certain facts. The territory granted to Gorges and Mason, on the 10th of August, 1622, and known as the Province of Maine, was to include all the land of New England between the Merrimac and Sagadahoc rivers and from the sea coast between their mouths to a line connecting points on the rivers, or in the continued direction of the general course of the rivers, three score miles from the mouths of each. It was then supposed that the rivers, both of them, flowed generally in an easterly direction. The grant of Massachusetts, to Sir Henry Roswell and others, March 19, 1627-8, confirmed to the grantees all the land three miles north of any and every part of the River Merrimac. On Nov. 7, 1629, the Council of Plymouth granted to Capt. John Mason, his heirs and assigns, "all that part of the mainland in New England lying upon the seacoast, beginning from the middle part of Merrimack river, and from thence to proceed northwards along the seacoast to Pascataqua river, and so forwards up within the said river and to the furtherest head thereof, and from thence northwestward, until three score miles be finished from the first entrance of Pascataqua river; also from Merrimack through the said river and to the furtherest head thereof, and so forward up into the lands westwards, until three score miles be finished; and from thence to cross over land to the three score miles end accopted from Pascataqua river," etc.

As a result of these indefinite, in fact impossible, boundary lines, which conflicted with the bounds of the Massachusetts patent, many conflicts arose between the settlers of the two provinces in regard to their rightful limits. Massachusetts claimed that the patent of Mason, properly construed, would not allow him a foot of land south or west of any part of the Merrimac. Consequently, in the year 1652, the general court of Massachusetts Bay appointed Captains Edward Johnson and Simon Willard as commissioners to ascertain the source of the Merrimac. Accompanied by two surveyors and some Indian guides, they proceeded to ascend that river. They followed the more easterly of the two streams which unite to form the Merrimac and arrived, on the 1st day of August, 1652, at the source of that stream, at the outlet of beautiful Lake Winipisiogee. Realizing the importance of their great discovery, they inscribed upon a rock, in the midst of the little stream, at the outlet of the lake, the letters E I, for Edward Johnson (I and J being formerly considered

as the same letter); S W, for Simon Willard; WP JOHN ENDICUT GOV, for Worshipful John Endicut (or Endecott), Governor. That 1st day of August, 1652, precisely 250 years ago, the 1st day of last August, an even century before Keene was incorporated, is a memorable date in New Hampshire annals. Acting upon this information, Massachusetts, for more than a century, not without rank protest, continued to lay claim to all that part of our state which is west of any part of the Merrimac river.

Now we are prepared to understand that problem which has puzzled so many, why this lovely valley of ours should have been first settled under the auspices of Massachusetts. It was because Massachusetts claimed this part of the state west of the Merrimac, in consequence of the construction which was put upon the meaning of words used in describing the boundary lines of the provinces in the old charters.

But the claims of Massachusetts were warmly and, in the end, successfully contested. It would be passing beyond the proper limits of this discourse to give the details of that controversy, so interesting to lawyers and historians. It will answer the purpose to say that, after many delays, it was decided by the king, in council, that the line between Massachusetts and New Hampshire should begin at a point three miles north of the mouth of the Merrimac, thence proceeding on a curved line, parallel to that river, to a point exactly north of Pawtucket Falls (which are in Lowell now), thence on a line due west to his majesty's other governments. I might add that the establishment of this line gave to the people of New Hampshire the notion of claiming, as a part of their province, much of the present territory of Vermont, a claim which they were not destined to make good.

Before this decision had been rendered, however, Gov. Belcher of Massachusetts had conceived the idea of establishing townships within the disputed limits. Accordingly, the house of representatives of the general court of Massachusetts passed an act July 3, 1732, in which the council concurred April 20, 1733, and which the governor approved on the same day, establishing four new towns, one to be in what is now Massachusetts, one in Maine, and two on the Ashuelot river. That day, April 20, 1733, was accordingly the date of the first establishment of this municipality, which was known as Upper Ashuelot. It was not immediately settled. On Oct. 19, 1733, the general court appointed a new committee, consisting of Joseph Kellogg, Timothy Dwight and William Chandler, with directions to lay out the townships on Ashuelot river forthwith. They made a report in the following February. This report is accompanied by a report of the surveyors, William Chandler and Nathaniel Dwight. They established as their initial station from which to execute their surveys a spruce tree on the east bank of the Ashuelot. A line east and west from this tree was the dividing line between the upper and lower townships which they were to survey. On the map which accompanies their report, they locate this tree, with the legend: "Ye spruce tree heare Described is ye Sentor tree in ye Deviding line betwene ye Secontt & Third township which we made our first

Station." Our city clerk, in 1902, reported that "persons living in Keene have seen the old bound which marked the location of the first 'Statia,' an old spruce tree, long since removed." It has been customary to call this central point of that original survey Statia, and a former map named the Thompson farm on which it is found Statia. The name, however, was intended to be a designation of that survey-point. On March 6, 1902, our city councils voted to mark it by a stone post, on the north side of which are the letters, "K. & S. T. L.," for Keene and Swanzey Town Line. On the south side is inscribed, "No. VIII," it being the eighth post in the line between Keene and Swanzey indicating that line. On the east side is the inscription: "Statia. 1733." It is well that this historical landmark of our history is thus preserved.

The foregoing committees, being authorized to admit settlers, notified all persons desirous of taking lots to meet at Concord on June 26, 1734. A sufficient number for the purpose met on that day, at Jonathan Ball's inn at Concord, Mass. They drew their lots, gave their bonds, and paid in their five pounds in lawful money, according to the order of the court. Sixty proprietors were thus admitted for Upper Ashuelot. On the following day, June 27, the proprietors met and organized, at the inn of Ephraim Jones in the said Concord. They chose Capt. Samuel Sady of Medfield, moderator, and Samuel Heywood of Concord, Mass., clerk. They adjourned their meeting until Sept. 18, to be held at their new township of Upper Ashuelot.

As the time for this adjourned meeting approached, seven men of the proprietors started for their proposed settlement. It was late in the evening of Sept. 18, 1734, when these seven men and their guides reached the boundary of their new township at the "Statia" monument. They immediately opened a proprietors' meeting, which they adjourned until the day following. We are fortunate in knowing the exact date of the settlement, as well as the seven men who first crossed the boundary of the township with the intention of settling. They were Jeremiah Hall, Daniel Hoar, Seth Heaton, Elisha Root, Nathaniel Rockwood, Josiah Fisher (afterwards slain by the Indians), and William Puffer.

The house lots of the proprietors were drawn June 26, 1734, and were laid out according to a plan submitted at that meeting. Of the sixty-three lots nine were to be on the line of Lower Ashuelot. The other fifty-four were to be on two sides of a main street, four rods in width, twenty-seven upon either side. These lots were to be 160 rods in length, east and west, and eight rods in width, north and south, the street to run north and south through the centre of the lots. The north line of the north lot upon the west of the street very nearly coincided with the foundations of the southern wall of our railway station. Oct. 1, at a meeting adjourned from Sept. 30, 1736, the proprietors voted to widen the main street four rods, making a street eight rods in width, the settlers readily relinquishing four rods on the east of their lots in return for four rods at the west end. It is to the wise forethought of the proprietors at that meeting that we are indebted for that magnificent boulevard which forms our present Main street.

It was two or three years before the settlers had accommodations which enabled them to move their families or spend the winter here. They were scarcely prepared to do so before the news reached them that the king in council had settled the line between New Hampshire and Massachusetts, which left their new settlement well within the limits of New Hampshire. This was a source of great grief to the settlers, who were devotedly attached to old Massachusetts, from which they came. The king's decision was made March 5, 1740, and on the 3d of October in the same year, the proprietors of Upper Ashuelot held a meeting and voted that a petition be presented to the king's most excellent majesty, setting forth their distress at this decision and praying to be annexed to Massachusetts, to which they had always supposed that they belonged, and Thomas Hutchinson, Esq., was appointed to present the petition. Mr. Hutchinson had previously been appointed as an agent of Massachusetts to do the same thing. He made the voyage to England, but failed to accomplish the object of his mission.

The hardships of the infant settlement were made especially distressing in consequence of a malignant throat distemper, perhaps diphtheria, which raged in the years 1744 and 1745. A large number died, especially of children. John Andrews had come from Boxford, Mass., bringing with him nine children, all of whom succumbed to this disease within a year.

In the spring of 1744, war was declared between England and France. It is usually called, in American histories, King George's war. It had its origin in disputes concerning the kingdom of Austria which cannot be discussed here. The settlers were greatly alarmed, for the policy of the French in Canada, as an aid to the French side of the contest, was to encourage incursions of savages from that section to harass their English neighbors in the provinces to the south of them. The dwellers in Upper Ashuelot dared not perform their usual labors, or indeed to go far from the fort, without carrying arms and posting guards to be constantly on the watch for savages who were presumed to be lurking in the neighborhood. The first fatal encounter was on the 10th of July in 1745, when Deacon Josiah Fisher was killed, a little south of the present residence of Mrs. Griffin, as he was driving his cow to pasture.

An episode in the life of Ephraim Dorman, an early settler, serves to show the tremendous physical energy and endurance of these pioneer settlers. In the morning of the 23d of April, 1746, Mr. Dorman left the fort, which was near the present residence of Mr. Lemuel Hayward, to search for his cow. When he was some distance away, he perceived Indians lurking in the bushes. He immediately gave an alarm, crying "Indians! Indians!" and ran in the direction of the fort. Two of the Indians sprang towards him and fired at him, but neither hit him. They then threw away their arms and advanced towards him. Mr. Dorman knocked one of them senseless, the other he seized and, being a strong man, wrestled with him, using his favorite method of "trip and twitch." He tore the Indian's blanket from his shoulders, leaving him nearly naked. As the Indian was painted and greasy, he managed to slip away

from Mr. Dorman, who reached the fort in safety. On the same day, a Mrs. McKenney, who had gone to her barn, near where Mrs. Thayer now lives, to milk her cow, on her return was fatally stabbed by a naked Indian, probably the same one who had wrestled with Dorman. On the same day John Bullard, running to the fort from his barn, below where Mr. Hayward lives, was also shot in the back. He was taken into the fort and expired in a few hours. On the same day a circumstance occurred which gives a glimpse of the physical ability and endurance of our foremothers. A Mrs. Clark was at her barn, fifty rods from the fort. As she left it to go to the fort, she saw an Indian near her, who threw away his gun and sprang toward her, evidently with the intention of making a prisoner of her. She gathered her clothes around her waist and started for the fort. It was a splendid running match. The woman, animated by the cheers of her friends, outran the swift Indian, who, undoubtedly mortified that he had been beaten by a white squaw, skulked back for his gun.

Murder was not the only evil to be dreaded at the hands of the savages. To be made a captive by the Indians and dragged to Canada, through the pathless forests of a howling wilderness, entailed horrors and sufferings which words cannot adequately describe. Many a poor captive on his march has wished that the fatal tomahawk might have ended his mortal life before the awful journey began. Nathan Blake, on the day that these Indians attacked the settlement, leaving his barn, near where Milton Blake resides, fearing that he could not reach the fort, undertook to escape in the direction of the river. He was apprehended and taken to Canada. His captors could speak English in a broken way. When he remarked that he had not taken any breakfast, they replied that "it must be a poor Englishman who could not go to Canada without his breakfast." The story of Nathan Blake is so familiar that it will not bear repetition here. It will be enough to say that he returned from his captivity and died, in 1811, in the hundredth year of his age.

News of the attack upon Keene was soon sent by special messengers from town to town, down the Ashuelot and Connecticut valleys, as far as Northampton, where Col. Pomeroy commanded. He immediately took all the forces that he could muster and added to them on his way, reaching Upper Ashuelot forty-eight hours after the attack had begun, on the 25th of April. He found the trail of the retreating Indians but did not attempt to follow it far. In this attack upon the settlement about nine or ten of the savages were killed. Feeling that immediate danger had passed, Col. Pomeroy and his men returned to their homes.

In the spring of 1747 the settlers felt so insecure that they resolved to leave their settlement for a time and did so. Shortly after their departure, a party of savages visited the place and burned most of the buildings. The mill, however, and the house where the miller lived, and probably some other buildings were spared. As the place was not totally destroyed, and as the original settlers returned after a short absence, in 1750 and 1751, the fact holds good that the first settlement must be dated from Sept. 18, 1734.

Shortly after the settlers resumed their settlement, they applied to Benning Wentworth, governor of New Hampshire, for a charter. Accordingly he granted one to them, including the territory formerly known as Upper Ashuelot and an additional strip upon the east side, bringing the bounds, at that time, as far east as the old Masonian Patent line which formed the western limit of that territory which a famous syndicate, known as "The Masonian Proprietors," had recently purchased of John Tufton Mason, a claimant of the rights in that land vesting in him as the heir of the original John Mason, to whom New Hampshire had been granted, in 1629, with bounds of a very indefinite character. Time cannot here be taken to recite the story of that patent. The name given to the newly chartered township was Keene, an undoubted compliment to Wentworth's friend, Sir Benjamin Keene, who was, at one time, the minister plenipotentiary from Great Britain to the court of Spain. The first meeting of the voters, under the new charter, was on the first Wednesday of May, 1753, at which meeting it was voted to pay Benjamin Bellows 122 Spanish milled dollars for his services and expenses in procuring the charter. The charter bears the date of April 11, 1753. We are therefore two months and twenty-three days late in our celebration of the event today.

From this time the Indians gave but little trouble. Once in 1755, during the old French and Indian war, they appeared and captured a man named Benjamin Twitchell near Ash Swamp. Still later, they appeared and burned an old building in the direction of Surry. After this, the new town was not disturbed by them. From that time to the present day, the civic affairs of Keene have been transacted in an orderly, peaceful, and honorable manner. The old town meeting was the miniature model of a genuine republic. Here any voter could offer suggestions and cast his vote and feel that he was on a political equality with all his neighbors. Those old meetings were not without their breezy episodes. The building or repairing of a meetinghouse, the settlement of a new minister, the laying out of a new highway, the building of a new schoolhouse, the election of the town officers and the selection of one or more to represent the town in the general court, and the general appropriations, all brought out very animated debates, as the occasions would arise, but the majorities ruled and, however stubbornly any measure was favored or opposed, nobody doubted the sacred right of the majority to decide any question.

The most important political event in the history of Keene, since its incorporation by Benning Wentworth, was the change from a town to a city. The city charter was granted by the state legislature on the 3d of July in 1873, just thirty years ago yesterday. The first city government was installed on the 5th of May in 1874, with the Hon. Horatio Colony as the first mayor.

As we pass in hasty review the 150 years of municipal life since Keene was incorporated by that name, only a few of the most noted events can claim our attention here. The history of Keene cannot be given in a brief discourse. The admirable history, written by our late distinguished and lamented citizen, Gen. S. G. Griffin, will shortly appear,

and the multitude of interesting particulars which must be omitted in this review, or only incidentally noticed, will there be treated fully.

In 1764, the first school was established and six pounds voted to defray the expenses. This was surely a humble beginning of the educational history of Keene, but it was a vital spark which has kindled a great fire. From that humble beginning we trace the steady expansion of the public school system within the limits of Keene. There were, at one time, fourteen school districts in the town, including the one known as the Centre district. In 1831 there was no one of these districts which had less than twenty-five pupils. Since that time, the country districts have steadily declined in population, while the village, now the city, section has been as steadily gaining. The old country schoolhouses are still, for the most part, preserved and the most of them are still used for schools for some portion of the year, but the number of pupils has greatly decreased. Our school buildings in the city proper would do credit to any place of the size of Keene. They are a worthy exponent of public sentiment with respect to the importance of education.

Keene has taken high rank in educational institutions. On the 1st of May, 1814, Miss Catherine Fiske established a boarding and day school for young ladies in the house where Mrs. E. C. Thayer lives. It was unique at the time in this vicinity. The pupils represented families of culture and refinement and the young ladies were instructed not only in books but in such polite accomplishments as would fit them to take their stations in the most elegant society. Miss Fiske died in 1837. The institution survived for a short time longer under those who had been her assistants.

The old Keene academy was established in 1836 and opened in 1837. It had vital relations with the First Congregational church. The building, still well remembered by many, occupied the site of the present high school. The lower room was used by the aforementioned church as a vestry. The academy continued to provide instruction for seventeen years, until 1853, when the high school was established. There were in all about ten principals. The first was Breed Batchelder, a descendant of the man of that name who first settled Packersfield, at a place now in Roxbury. The last was William Torrance, who became the first principal of the high school. In 1853, the academy not having adequate funds to maintain such an institution, and a high school having been established, the trustees leased their building to the town for that school. Mr. Torrance, the first principal of the school, died in February, 1855. After two more principals, who served short terms, Mr. A. J. Burbank, aided by his accomplished wife, took up the work of this school, remaining until 1867, and bringing order out of chaos and establishing a high school of much merit. There were then about eighty pupils. The "Union School District of Keene," formed in 1865, attempted, about 1866, to purchase the building of the Keene academy. Not being able to do this, the property was finally taken by law for school purposes and the trustees accepted, finally, the sum of \$6,100 for the full settlement of their claims. This procedure created bitter feeling at the time and not without good reason. The proceeds have been carefully

invested by the trustees. The board of trustees of the Keene academy still exists and has in trust a handsome property which may yet be used for purposes not foreign to the wishes and desires of the founders. It is to be hoped that such may be the case. There is still room for an academy in Keene whose course of study shall not conflict with the functions of the high school and which would meet legitimately the original purposes of the institution. The land on which the old academy building was placed was donated by Mr. Abijah Wilder.¹

Immediately connected with the educational work of a community, nothing is more needed than a well equipped library. From an early period there had been small circulating libraries in Keene, besides those owned by the different religious societies. These could do but little to meet the increasing need of a general reference library, such as the present age demands. To meet such a demand, the town established a public library in 1859. It was located for many years under the town hall, now the city hall. In 1898, the late Edward C. Thayer presented to the city the Henry Colony house upon West street, and a fund of \$5,000 to purchase books was given by his widow, Mrs. Thayer, and his niece, Miss Chapin. The building was remodelled and a book-stack added, and the completed structure was dedicated Feb. 28, 1899. The generous donor did not live to witness the completion of the work.

Journalism is likewise the helpmeet of education. The history of journalism in Keene is especially interesting. Four weekly newspapers, all of much merit for their time, were established in Keene, between 1787 and 1795. They were the New Hampshire Recorder and Weekly Advertiser, the Cheshire Advertiser, the Columbian Informer, and the Rising Sun. All were short-lived. The New Hampshire Sentinel, which is now well along in its second century, was established here in 1799 by John Prentiss, who lived to be the oldest, as he had long been one of the ablest of American journalists. His brother and son were at different times associated with him in the publication of the paper. Among later editors of the paper, not now living, we find the names of Albert Godfrey, Samuel Woodward and Thomas Hale. A grandson of the founder is now connected with the Sentinel company. Oct. 20, 1890, the Sentinel company began the publication of a daily paper known as the Keene Evening Sentinel. Two more short lived papers were the American News, merged eventually in the Sentinel, and the New England Observer. The Cheshire Republican is the only paper in Keene which has been devoted to the interests of the Democratic party. This paper, as the successor of the Farmers' Museum, has a quite venerable antiquity. Under the older name, it originated in Walpole, in 1793, under the editorial management of the celebrated Isaiah Thomas, assisted by a Mr. Carlisle. In 1796 it passed under the editorial care of Joseph Dennie, a literary character of his time, who afterwards edited the Portfolio in Philadelphia. He was a descendant of the Mr. Green who edited the old Boston News-letter, the first

¹ Azel Wilder had conveyed his interest in the same lot to Abijah Wilder, for a nominal consideration, that it might be legally conveyed to the trustees of the academy, of whom he was one.

American newspaper. After the office was moved to Keene, the paper was edited by Nahum Stone. Under the present name, it has been edited by Benaiah Cook, Harvey A. Bill, Horatio Kimball, Morse & Allen, Julius N. Morse, and Joshua D. Colony & Sons. There is no other town in the state which can boast of two papers as old as the two in Keene. As we turn back the files of the old volumes of these journals, we find that both papers have had able editors, whose carefully written editorials have done much in shaping public opinion, one way or another, in this county and vicinity.

The most important events in the history of all the old New England towns, in their earlier days, were connected with the settlement of ministers and the locating and building of meetinghouses. Keene was no exception. These incidents in the history of Keene have been so often and so well told on the occasion of different church anniversaries that I can well pass over them rapidly.

All early New England towns were required by their grants or charters to support an "orthodox minister of the gospel." One of the first cares of our forefathers after they began the infant settlement was to organize a church and ordain a pastor. They did both, Oct. 18, 1738, and Rev. Jacob Bacon was their minister's name. He was a useful man in many ways. He was early made clerk of the proprietors, and the first records are principally in his handwriting. They are remarkably legible for that period, quite full, and probably very accurate. He remained as the pastor until the colonists dispersed in 1747. The last appropriation was for his official year ending on the 18th of October in 1747. He was, however, released from responsibility when the settlers temporarily left their home. The rude church in which he ministered was at the lower end of Main street, about where the house of Mr. Elisha F. Lane stands. It was erected pursuant to a vote passed Oct. 1, 1736. The vote stipulated that it should be finished by June 26, 1737. It was a framed building and was destroyed by the savages after the settlers left the place.

The second pastor of the first church was Rev. Ezra Carpenter, who was installed Oct. 4, 1753, in connection with the church at Swanzev. His ministry was continued seven full years from that date, when he relinquished the Keene charge and remained with the Swanzev church. In the spring and early summer of 1753 another meetinghouse was erected in Keene: It was built of slabs, with the earth for a floor, near where the late John Henry Elliot resided. In December of that year they voted to build another meetinghouse, and, in January, decided to put it at a place which would not be far from the present Cheshire House.

The third pastor was Rev. Clement Sumner, who, through his wife, became an extensive landowner and real estate dealer. He owned large tracts of land in Keene, Gilsum, Sullivan and the vicinity. He was ordained June 11, 1761, and dismissed April 30, 1772.

The fourth pastor was the Rev. Aaron Hall, the ancestor of persons of that name who have lived in Keene until quite recently. He was ordained Feb. 18, 1778, in the midst of the Revolutionary war, and

remained the faithful and honored pastor of the church until his death Aug. 12, 1814. During his long pastorate of more than thirty-six years, he aided the town to grow from a rude settlement to an important village, a sort of metropolis in this region. During his ministry the present church was built, but stood seventy feet south of its present position. At a later date it was removed to its present site and has been several times remodelled. In its present form, it is one of the choicest gems of architecture in New Hampshire. Its pure, classic style, its harmonious proportions and its stately spire are the admiration of all true lovers of art.

The pastorate of Mr. Hall was succeeded by the very short one of Rev. David Oliphant, of only two and a half years, from May 24, 1815, to Dec. 1, 1817 (not November, 1817, as some authorities give it). The sixth and next pastor was the Rev. Zedekiah S. Barstow, D. D., so well remembered by all of my older hearers, one of the most useful and accomplished men who have ever lived in Keene. He was ordained July 1, 1818. The fiftieth anniversary of this event was observed in a fitting manner. On that day he became the pastor emeritus and so continued until his death, March 1, 1873. He was the last pastor settled by the town, and here I must close the more particular account of ecclesiastical affairs.

A second trinitarian Congregational church was organized Oct. 15, 1867. Their church edifice, erected at a cost of \$35,000, was dedicated Sept. 16, 1869. They have had six pastors.

A Baptist church was gathered at Ash Swamp, Sept. 9, 1816, through the efforts of Rev. Charles Cummings. A new organization was effected at the village and a pastor ordained Aug. 21, 1832. The first church was at Ash Swamp, the second edifice on Winter street, now the armory. Their present commodious structure, built at a cost of \$52,000, was dedicated May 12, 1875. They have had thirteen regular pastors, of whom the Rev. Wm. H. Eaton, D. D., who remained sixteen and a half years, served the parish much longer than any other.

The Methodist Episcopalians had preaching here at irregular intervals between 1803 and 1824. Keene was included in the Winchester circuit from 1824 to 1834. From 1834 to 1851, they were supplied from adjoining towns. In November, 1835, a church was organized, known as Grace Methodist Episcopal church. Since 1850, that church has had the benefit of local pastors, of whom there have been twenty-six in all. The present fine house of worship was built at a cost of about \$40,000, and was dedicated on Nov. 23, 1869.

The Unitarian society was organized March 18, 1824, and a church was gathered Dec. 27, 1825. Their first meetinghouse was dedicated April 28, 1830. It was rebuilt and rededicated Aug. 16, 1868. The present handsome stone church on Washington street was dedicated Jan. 24, 1895, the corner stone having been laid on the 11th of July, 1894. This society has had six pastors. The first was Thomas Russell Sullivan, the second was Rev. Abiel Abbot Livermore, D. D., later a president of the Meadville Theological school. The third pastor, Rev. William Orne White,

ministered to the society for twenty-seven years, an unusually long pastorate for the present time. His useful and benevolent life in this city is gratefully remembered. He still resides in Brookline, Mass., having recently been bereaved of his excellent wife. The next two pastorates were quite brief. The present pastor, Rev. C. B. Elder, is in the fourteenth year of his ministry in this place.

The Universalists began to hire preachers as early as 1860. The first who settled here was Rev. I. C. Knowlton, father of the late attorney general of Massachusetts. A church was organized March 12, 1876. They have worshipped in the town (now city) hall, in the old Baptist church, now the armory, and in a hall on Roxbury street, where their meetings are now held. They have had four pastors.

The parish of St. James' Protestant Episcopal church was organized May 13, 1859. Ground was broken for the beautiful church on West street, May 14, 1863. The building was first used Aug. 21, 1864, but was not consecrated until Nov. 22, 1877, after the debt had been extinguished. The present pastor is the tenth in succession. The esteemed first rector honored this community by establishing a permanent residence here, where his many virtues and cultivated tastes have imparted a beneficent influence for many years.

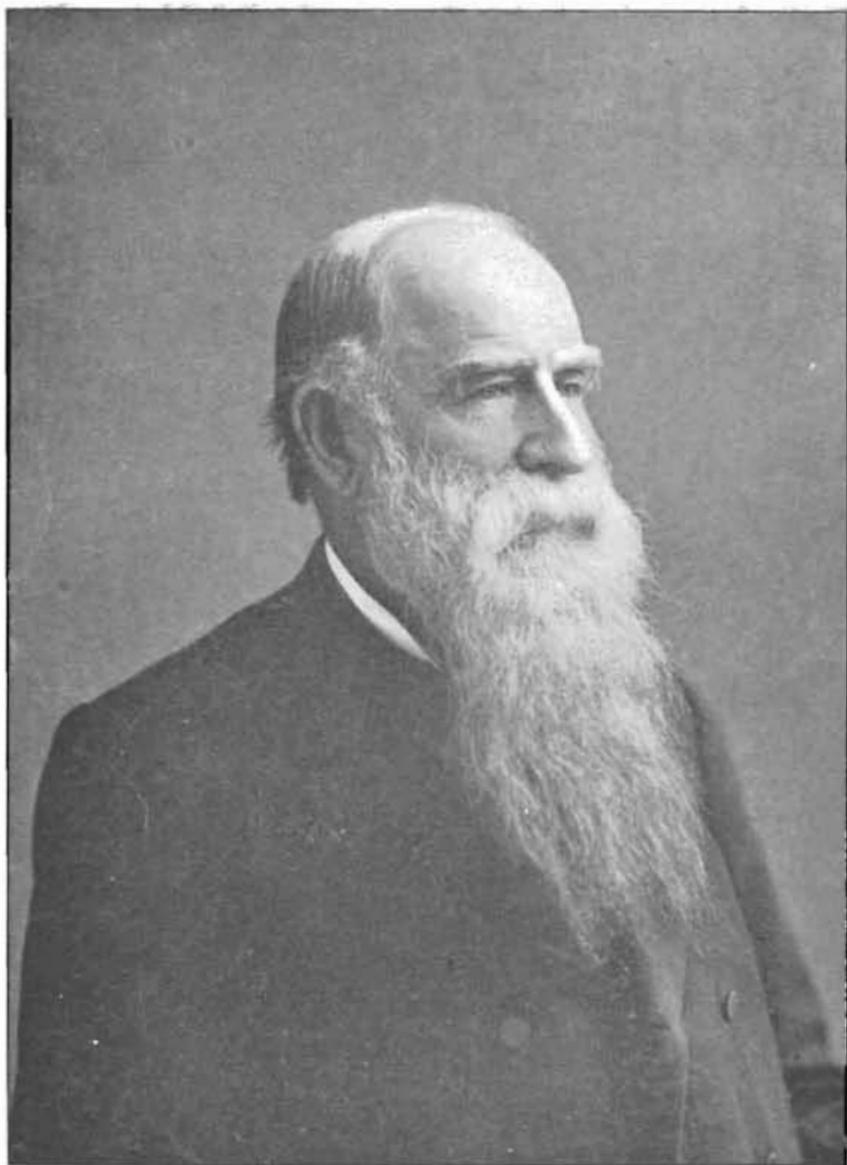
The Roman Catholics began their labors in Keene as early as 1856. Eleven priests have successively ministered to the needs of their people, assisted, at different times, by as many as five others. The parishioners have been very devoted to their cause. Their first place of worship was a wooden structure on Marlboro street. Their elegant church on Main street, built after great exertions and many sacrifices, was consecrated Nov. 20, 1892.

Besides these older established churches, we have today the Bethany Pentecostal church, which worships in what was once the Methodist church, but now moved to a new location; a mission of the First church on George street; the Gospel Mission, on Pine street; a new church started by our Swedish citizens; and a Seventh Day Advent society. There was formerly, also, what was called a Christian Advent society.

The military history of Keene is a familiar story and needs only to be epitomized here. There were men from Keene in the old French war, so-called. Keene's Revolutionary history, the reception of the news from Lexington and Concord, the departure of Wyman and his men for the seat of the conflict, the heroic services of Keene men at Bennington, Saratoga, in the Jerseys, and on the eventful expedition to Canada, have all been much discussed at recent meetings of patriotic societies.

There were men from Keene in the old Indian wars. One of them, Major Josiah Willard, died while engaged in such service. There were Keene men also in the War of 1812 and in the Mexican war.

In the great Civil war, besides Brevet Major General S. G. Griffin, who lived here after the war, Keene gave Brevet Brigadier General Francis S. Fiske, Colonel Robert Wilson, Lieutenant Colonel John W. Babbitt, Majors Obed G. Dort and Edward E. Sturtevant, Surgeon George B. Twitchell, Captains Henry C. Handerson, Henry N. Metcalf, Solon A.



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Carter, and John W. Sturtevant, as well as many more officers of lesser rank and scores of private soldiers. Let us hope that, before it is too late, full biographical details may be written of the deeds of all these brave men in that memorable struggle.

In the last war, that between the United States and Spain, Keene was represented in the New Hampshire regiment by Captain Paul F. Babbidge and many others.

As we approach modern times, we cast one look at the long line of worthy men who have helped to shape the destiny and the fortunes of Keene. We see a long line of lawyers, whose efforts at the bar, or in the discharge of public duties, have given lustre to their names. Among them are Elijah Williams, the first lawyer; Daniel Newcomb, a judge of the superior court, and first state senator from Keene; Peleg Sprague, elected to congress in 1797; Noah Cooke; Samuel Dinsmoor, Sr., elected to congress in 1811, a governor of New Hampshire; Samuel Dinsmoor, Jr., another governor of the state; James Wilson, Sr., elected to congress in 1809; James Wilson, Jr., who rose to the rank of general in the militia and served in congress; Levi Chamberlain, a member of the Peace congress of 1861; Joel Parker, chief justice from 1838 to 1848, later a professor of law at Harvard university; Joseph Buffum, who served in congress; Salma Hale, who also served in congress and wrote a prize history of the United States; George S. Hale, son of the preceding, who was one of the most honored trust lawyers of Boston; Thomas M. Edwards, first president of the Cheshire railroad, also a member of congress; Elijah Parker; Foster Alexander; Elijah Dunbar; Phineas Handerson; Phineas Fiske; William P. Wheeler; Farnum F. Lane; Francis A. Faulkner, who declined a seat upon the bench of the supreme court; William Henry Burt; John Henry Elliot; Edward Farrar, long the clerk of the courts; C. C. Webster; and the late Francis C. Faulkner, who, like his father, declined promotion to the bench.¹

We see, too, a succession of physicians, noted for their skill and success, including Dr. Pomeroy, who refused to sign the Association Test, during the Revolution; Thaddeus McCarty, who introduced into Keene the inoculation for the small-pox; Daniel Adams, an early postmaster; still another Daniel Adams, who was the author of valuable school textbooks; Amos Twitchell, who has been aptly called "the autocrat of surgery in New England," whose skill and genius earned for him an extensive reputation and an immense practice; Charles G. Adams, a son of the first named Daniel, whose sunny face and genial manners in the sick room are still well remembered; Algernon S. Carpenter, who was for many years one of our most honored physicians; George B. Twitchell, a nephew of Amos, an able surgeon, widely known and universally respected; Thomas B. Kittredge; Ira F. Prouty; Thomas E. Hatch; and H. H. Darling, a homeopathist well remembered.

Two dentists cannot be forgotten, the elder and the younger Stratton, the latter the nephew of the former. They were ingenious mechanics and were masters of their profession as it was practised in their time.

¹ Alfred T. Batchelder, a prominent lawyer, lived but a few days after this address was delivered. No living person was mentioned.

I shall attempt no account of the numerous secret and other social organizations in Keene, nor can I attempt to name the long roll of business men who did so much to build up this prosperous city. David Nims, first town clerk; John Elliot, Justus Perry, Sumner Wheeler, the two Halls, John H. Fuller, Francis Faulkner, Josiah Colony, Charles S. Faulkner, Aaron Appleton, William Dinsmoor; S. W. Hale, governor of the state; S. D. Osborne, Lanmon Nims; Henry Colony, first president of the Manchester & Keene railroad; the latter's brothers, Timothy, Alfred and John Edward; also Joshua D. Colony and sons, L. J. and O. E., E. C. Thayer, George Tilden, George W. Tilden, E. G. Whitcomb, J. R. Beal, Charles Bridgman, Elbridge and Charles Keyes, J. B. Elliot, Charles Lamson, Reuel Nims, Eliphalet and William S. Briggs, Henry Pond, Abijah Wilder, Abijah Kingsbury; also Jeremiah Stiles, the old land surveyor; are a few only of the names of those who have passed on to the great majority, in former years, among our business men. More recently the names of Peter B. Hayward, Caleb T. Buffum, G. D. Harris and Edward Joslin have been added to the number. This list will be conspicuous for the many names which it omits, nor can I allude to the business of any who are now living.

The succession of public improvements in Keene has been rapid in the past half century. Men now living have witnessed the completion of three steam railroads into this place, now operated by one company; the introduction of the telegraph and the telephone; the establishment of a good fire department, with two steamers; paved streets, macadamized highways, and a street sprinkling apparatus; the inauguration of a system of water works which supplies the city with an abundance of pure water; an adequate system of drainage; the introduction of illuminating gas and more recently of electric lighting; the founding of the Invalids' Home and of the Elliot City Hospital, which last named institution preserves the name of a generous benefactor, as well as the Edward Joslin Home for Nurses which adjoins it; the building of the headquarters for the Young Men's Christian Association on West street; the founding of a daily newspaper; and, last of all, the construction of two lines of electric railways, under one company, the second of which was opened to travel yesterday. All these useful institutions and improvements are comparatively recent. They are but a few of all that might be named, although they are the more important.

In addition to these public utilities, we must remember our park system, for which we are indebted to our worthy citizen, Mr. George A. Wheelock, as well as to certain ladies.

Now, as we look to the future, we fancy that the comforts of life which it has been our privilege to enjoy, manifold as they seem to us, are but few in comparison with the luxuries which applied science will bring to future generations. Let us be grateful for any part, however small, which it shall be the good fortune of any one of us to take in promoting the welfare of our honored town and city. Let the recollection of those worthy forefathers, some of whose names have been so hastily brought to your notice, stimulate you all to do your whole duty that

the Keene of the future may sustain the enviable reputation which the Keene of the past has enjoyed, of being one of the most orderly and best governed, as well as one of the most beautiful cities in the American Union.