

EIGHTH ANNUAL REPORT,
1903, OF THE AMERICAN
SCENIC AND HISTORIC
PRESERVATION SOCIETY

TO THE LEGISLATURE OF
THE STATE OF NEW YORK

TRANSMITTED TO THE
LEGISLATURE APRIL 22,
1903

ALBANY
THE ARGUS COMPANY, PRINTERS
1903

Colonel Lambert Cadwalader, commanded defense of south defenses November 16, 1776; captured.

Colonel William Baxter, commanded Laurel Hill defenses; killed and buried there.

Lieutenant-Colonel William Bull, commanding Pennsylvania militia and Aide-de-Camp to Magaw.

Major David Lennox, of Third Pennsylvania, opposed with 150 men the charge of the Forty-second Highlanders at One Hundred and Sixty-fifth street and Harlem river; captured.

Lieutenant-Colonel Moses Rawlings, commanded at Fort Tryon, with 600 men opposing 4,500; wounded, captured, imprisoned in Jersey prison ship and escaped.

Major Otho Williams, Second in Command at same spot; wounded, imprisoned, exchanged, afterwards became General.

Major Hubley, commanded in gallant attacks on Hessian outposts at Inwood, near Isham property, November 8 and 9, 1776.

On "Fort Tryon," or Forest Hill, was erected a fort which was defended most gallantly by the *Maryland* and *Virginia* riflemen against overwhelming numbers of German troops. In this fort John Corbin and his wife, Margaret, were employed in the artillery; Corbin was killed and the woman wounded. The title of Tryon was applied by the British; how it came to be maintained cannot be ascertained.

Revolutionary Heroes Who Fought on the Heights.

In the Battle of Harlem Heights, fought in the Manhattanville Valley and along the Morningside Heights, there were mortally wounded Colonel *Thomas Knowlton* and Major *William Leytch*. Both died on Washington Heights and were buried on the east side of the hill, about One Hundred and Forty-seventh street, at St. Nicholas avenue.

In the attack on Montresor's (now Randall's) Island, September twenty-third, there fell *Major Thomas Henly*, whose body was brought to the Heights and buried at same spot.

Nathan Hale was quartered on the Heights during August, 1776; from thence started in his fatal journey.

FOURTEENTH ANNUAL
REPORT 1909, OF THE AMERI-
CAN SCENIC AND HISTORIC
PRESERVATION SOCIETY

TO THE LEGISLATURE OF
THE STATE OF NEW YORK



TRANSMITTED TO THE
LEGISLATURE, APRIL 26
1909



FOUNDED BY ANDREW H. GREEN AND
INCORPORATED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF
THE STATE OF NEW YORK IN 1895



ALBANY
J. B. LYON COMPANY, STATE PRINTERS
1909

Robbins of Babylon. There is one vacancy in the board due to the resignation of Col. Henry W. Sackett. Mr. Elliott J. Smith of Islip, N. Y., is secretary and treasurer of the Commission.

FORT TRYON MONUMENT.

We are pleased to record the offer of Mr. C. K. G. Billings of New York city, a member of this Society, made through Mr. Wm. C. Muschenheim of New York city, another member, to erect this fall under our auspices a monument to mark the site of Fort Tryon.

“Fort Tryon” is the name which was given by the British to the northern outwork of Fort Washington after the capture of the latter, November 16, 1776. The citadel of Fort Washington was located on Manhattan Island, on the western side of Fort Washington avenue on a line with 183d street (See pp. 19-22 of our Seventh Annual Report, 1902.) Six-tenths of a mile north of the Fort Washington monument, at a point between the lines of 195th and 198th streets, where the backbone of the ridge breaks away suddenly, was a two-gun-redoubt, originally erected by the Continental troops. On November 16, 1776, the Hessian forces which swept down from the northward to the attack on Fort Washington here met with desperate resistance from the combined regiments of Maryland and Virginia riflemen and the little party of American artillerymen. Among the latter was John Corbin of Pennsylvania, who was accompanied by his wife Margaret. During the thickest of the fight, Margaret Corbin took a soldier's part, cleaning and loading the gun until her husband fell dead at her feet. Then she took her husband's place in working the gun until she in turn fell, not killed, but terribly lacerated by three grape-shot.

After the fall of Fort Washington, the British strengthened this northern work, and in honor of the last colonial governor of New York named it Fort Tryon.

The monument which will be erected will bear the following inscription:

HUDSON-FULTON CELEBRATION COMMISSION

1776.

1909.

ON THIS HILL-TOP STOOD
FORT TRYON
THE NORTHERN OUT-WORK OF FORT WASHINGTON.

ITS GALLANT DEFENCE AGAINST
THE HESSIAN TROOPS

BY

THE MARYLAND AND VIRGINIA REGIMENT,

16 NOVEMBER, 1776,

WAS SHARED BY

MARGARET CORBIN,

THE FIRST AMERICAN WOMAN

TO TAKE A SOLDIER'S PART

IN THE WAR FOR

LIBERTY.

THIS TABLET IS HERE PLACED
THROUGH THE GENEROSITY OF

C. K. G. BILLINGS,

BY

THE AMERICAN SCENIC AND HISTORIC

PRESERVATION SOCIETY.

PARK PROTECTION IN NEW YORK CITY.

Van Cortlandt Park.

During the past year the Society has had occasion to exert its influence against several projects which the trustees believed to be inimical to the interests of the general public in the parks of New York city.

In June, 1908, we requested the Mayor and the Police Commissioner of the city of New York to refuse the license sought for a cheap pleasure resort proposed to be established on the west side of Broadway near the entrance to Spuyten Duyvil Parkway and directly opposite the Broadway entrance to Van Cortlandt Park in the Borough of the Bronx. This establishment, designed for the usual merry-go-round and Ferris-wheel equipment and similar accessories, was already in course of construction at the point mentioned; and it promised to be not only a distressing disfigurement to the environment and a noisy distraction to the visitors to the Park, but also, from indubitable testimony concerning the character

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DEDICATION OF THE FORT TRYON TABLET.

As stated on page 46 of this report, the American Scenic and Historic Preservation Society was enabled, by the generosity of Mr. Cornelius K. G. Billings and with the valuable co-operation of Mr. William C. Muschenheim, to erect a monumental tablet on the site of Fort Tryon, in New York city, as one of the Society's contributions to the Hudson-Fulton Celebration in 1909. The tablet is erected upon the face of the living rock on the west side of Fort Washington avenue, six-tenths of a mile north of the Fort Washington monument. The latter is in the line of 183d street if projected. We are indebted to our fellow, Trustee, Mr. Reginald P. Bolton, for some of the details of the history of Fort Tryon. The fortification of this commanding height was undertaken by the American forces in the summer of 1776, and the earthworks which crowned the summit of this part of Mount Washington, locally known as "Forest Hill," formed the northerly out-work of Fort Washington. The character of the hill and the nature of its natural defenses, which were supplemented by abattis of felled trees, made this position exceedingly strong from a military point of view, had it been adequately provided with artillery. It was, however, equipped with only three small six-pounder cannon, and on the occasion of its defense on the 16th of November, 1776, it was manned by a battalion of Virginia and Maryland soldiers, about 600 in number, the survivors of the two Southern regiments which took part in the battle of Brooklyn, commanded by Col. Moses Rawlings.

The attack which was made upon the fort was conducted by Baron Wilhelm Knyphausen, leading personally, with much gallantry, the Hessian division of about 4,600 men, with a battery of howitzers. This force advanced across the Dyckman meadows and directly assaulted the fort, making three

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successive charges at the point of the bayonet. The accurate and incessant firing of the Southerners ensconced behind rock and trees defeated two of these attacks and stayed the advance of the entire operations against Fort Washington until the fort was taken in flank on the Hudson side by a detachment from the Hessian forces under the redoubtable Colonel Rall, just at the time when the commander of the fort, as well as his major, Otho Holland Williams, fell wounded. The final charge of the Grenadiers of the von Koehler battalion, under Colonel Rall's personal leadership, resulted in a butchery of the garrison by the bayonets of the Hessian soldiery, which was witnessed by Washington himself, who stood on the brink of the Palisades anxiously watching the progress of this part of the defense of Fort Washington. The Hessians as well as the Americans suffered severe losses, particularly among their officers, of whom several of high rank were killed, and were buried, with many private soldiers, around the neighborhood of the fort.

After its capture, the fort was renamed Fort Tryon, in honor of the last British Governor of the Province of New York. The fort was strengthened and enlarged into a six-gun battery, and the earthworks, of which a few remains may still be seen, are probably the remaining evidence of this work which was largely carried out by men of the Hessian royal body guard and of the von Donop regiment.

The Memorial at Fort Tryon commemorates, in particular, the heroism of the first woman who took an active part in actual warfare in defense of American liberties. Margaret or Margery Corbin was the wife of John Corbin, a private soldier of York county, Pa. He was probably of Scotch-Irish descent. She accompanied her husband in 1776 and shared with him the privations of his life as an artilleryman. On the occasion of the assault and defense of the northern outwork of Fort Washington, she was aiding her husband in the loading and cleaning of one of the guns, when at the most critical part of one of the assaults, John Corbin was killed. Margaret immediately took charge of

the cannon and loaded and fired it herself, with conspicuous "skill and vigor," until she in turn was also wounded by grape-shot from the Hessian field battery. She was afterward specially mentioned by Congress. She recovered and lived as a pensioner of the United States until about the end of the century.

The Fort Tryon tablet, which was designed by Mr. Charles R. Lamb, and erected by J. & R. Lamb of New York, cost \$5,000. It is about 9 feet wide and 12 feet high, and is built of black polished granite from Maine, embellished with bronze-work and a cannon. The latter is a real piece of ordnance, known as a French gun, which was obtained from the United States arsenal at Watervliet. The tablet bears the following inscription:

1776. Hudson-Fulton Celebration Commission. 1909.

On this Hilltop Stood
 Fort Tryon
 The Northern Out-work of
 Fort Washington
 Its Gallant Defence Against
 The Hessian Troops
 by
 The Maryland and Virginia
 Regiment
 16 November 1776
 was shared by
 Margaret Corbin
 The First American Woman
 to take a Soldier's Part
 in the War for Liberty.
 Erected Under the Auspices of
 The American Scenic and Historic
 Preservation Society
 Through the Generosity of
 C. K. G. Billings

The tablet was dedicated with impressive ceremonies on Wednesday, September 29, 1909. The scene was rendered picturesque by the presence of a group of Iroquois Indians, who gave their

ceremonial "Feather Dance." The programme of exercises was as follows:

George F. Kunz, Ph. D., Sc. D., President of the American Scenic and Historic Preservation Society, Presiding.

Invocation: Rev. Frank Oliver Hall, D. D., Chaplain-General, National Society Sons of the American Revolution.

Address: "Purpose of the Tablet." Dr. George F. Kunz, President, American Scenic and Historic Preservation Society.

Address: Presentation of the Tablet on behalf of the Donor. Col. Daniel Appleton.

Unveiling of the Tablet: Miss Blanche Pauline Billings, escorted by Mr. Albert M. Billings Ruddock.

Salute by a detachment of the First Battery Field Artillery, N. G. N. Y.

Address: "The History of Fort Tryon." Mr. Reginald Pelham Bolton.

Address: "Margaret Corbin, the Heroine," Mrs. William Cumming Story, Chairman of the Hudson-Fulton Committee, Daughters of the American Revolution.

Address: "The American Woman in Peace and War." Miss Helen Varick Boswell, National Federation of Women's Clubs.

Song: "America." The Audience.

Benediction: Rev. Milo H. Gates, Chaplain, Washington Heights Chapter D. A. R.

Address by George Frederick Kunz, Ph. D., Sc. D.

Dr Kunz, in opening the proceedings, spoke as follows:

Ladies and Gentlemen: On this quiet spot, which has changed but little from the time when the white man first landed on Manhattan Island, we are assembled to-day to give honor to those who, one hundred and thirty-three years ago, stood shoulder to shoulder in defense of the liberty of their native land. This tablet, erected through the generosity of Mr. Cornelius K. G. Billings, will take its place among the other memorials dedicated to the heroes of the past.

There is a deep-rooted sentiment in the human heart which urges us to honor those who have done noble deeds of valor or generosity, and this is both right and fitting, for the spirit of a

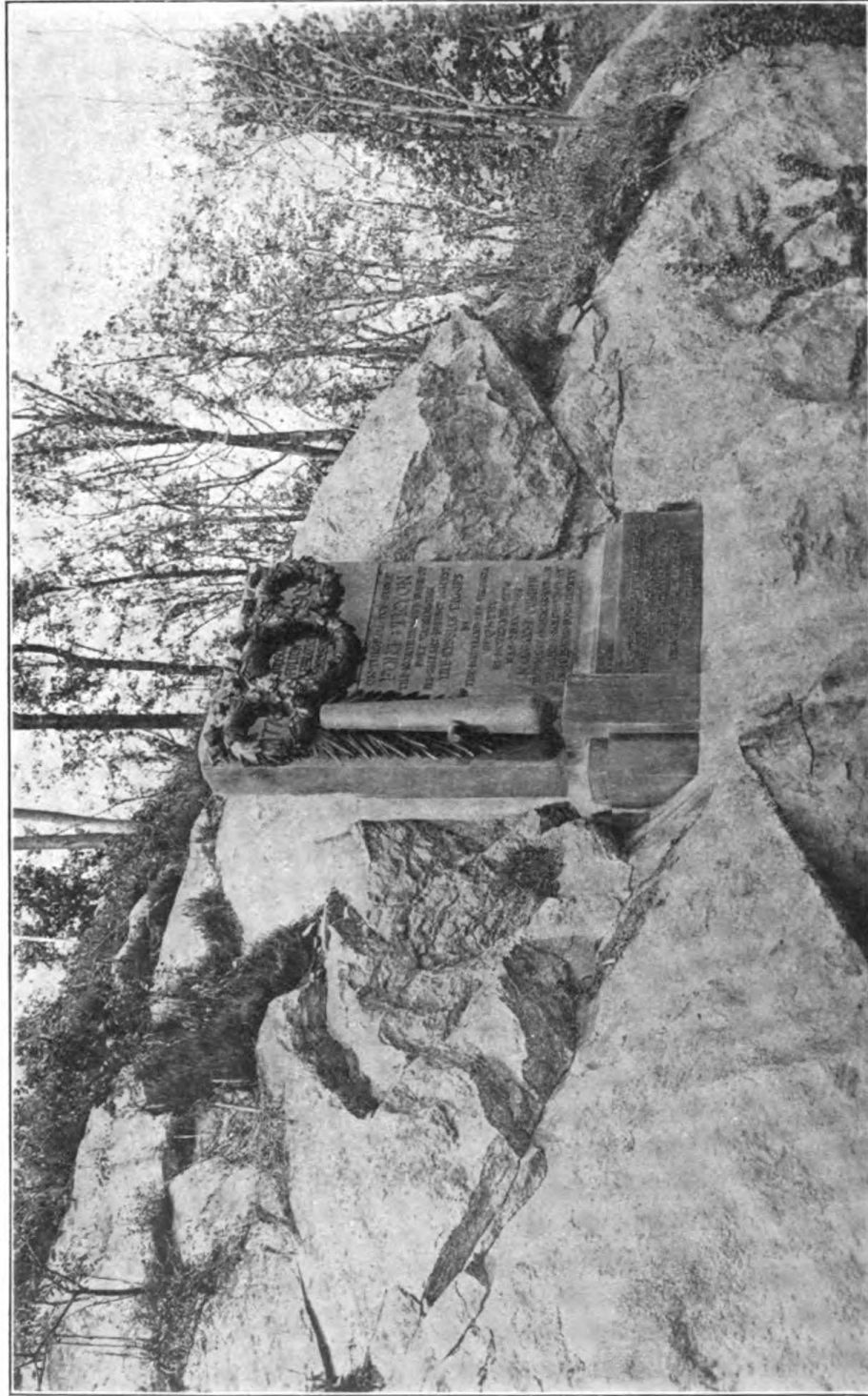
good deed lives on in the memory of after generations and inspires them to higher and ever higher effort.

Although none of us here present may ever be called upon to take up arms in defense of our country as did the heroes of the Revolution and those of our other wars, nevertheless we all have to fight the battle of life, to combat error and wickedness and to strive for truth and goodness, and this battle is often the hardest to fight.

In Russia, on the spot where a human life is lost, a small cross is erected and all who pass by, even thieves and other criminals, cross themselves devoutly. This tribute of the living to the dead is just and proper; but are not far deeper feelings aroused when we stand on the spot where brave men, whose example is an inspiration for ages, have laid down their lives, willingly and gladly, for the success of a great and pure cause? Such a spot is hallowed ground, and we feel as though the spirits of those who have gone still linger here, for nowhere else is the reality of their sacrifice brought home to us so vividly.

The defense of Fort Tryon was signalized by an act of bravery that should especially appeal to the progressive American women of our day. When Margaret Corbin stood by the gun alongside of which her husband was shot down and took his place in the ranks of the defenders, to be wounded herself, she was unconsciously setting an example for the women of a later time. For though oratory and argument are the weapons used in the political arena, the same quality of dauntless courage is requisite to gain the day, and perhaps some of our sisters who are standing fearlessly by argumentative guns may in time be considered as heroic in their own way as was Margaret Corbin.

This memorial has a firm foundation, for it rests upon the geologically oldest ridge of the world. Manhattan Island, now the heart and center of the second largest city in the world, has natural advantages peculiarly fitting it for its proud destiny. Washed on all sides by tide-water, surrounded by such great and beautiful rivers, the primitive rock covered by a sandy soil, the geological conditions are most favorable for the health, the well-being, and the commercial prosperity of the inhabitants. Hence it need not surprise us that, quiet and peaceful as is still this northern end of the island, to the south and across the East river there is a population of three and a half million, while the whole



FORT TRYON MONUMENT, NEW YORK.
See Page 351.

great territory of our city embraces a population of upwards of four millions.

Was there ever a more beautiful island than this, as Henry Hudson first saw it? Its sloping shores, its low and pleasing hills, its ponds and streams, all combined to make an ideal picture of tranquil beauty. But how the hand of man has changed it! The hills have been leveled, the water courses and depressions have been filled in, and hundreds of miles of streets have been laid out with geometrical precision. No one, a century ago, even in the wildest flight of his imagination, would have dared to predict that so mighty a city, with its great structures and its unrivalled facilities for transit, would develop on this island and its vicinity.

Last Saturday fully four, and perhaps five million citizens and visitors saw the greatest naval pageant that has ever taken place on a river near a great city. But in gazing on the imposing array of seventy warships, seven hundred merchant vessels and many hundred smaller craft, we noted that there was room for ten times as many, without risk of confusion or congestion, and we realized more fully than ever before that our majestic river will afford ample room even for the phenomenal growth of another century.

Tablets like this and everything that helps to stimulate civic virtue and encourage high ideals in our immense population are of inestimable value, and nothing is better calculated to accomplish this than memorials of the heroism and self-sacrifice of our ancestors.

May those assembled here to pay tribute to the gallant defenders of Fort Tryon take to heart the noble example set by those heroes, and may the boys and girls, the hope of the future, also draw a lesson from the past that will make them both happier and better.

The deed is done, the victory won, and while paying due tribute to those who helped to free our land, let us hope that the memorials of our own and later days will celebrate the triumphs of art, industry, and commerce, and that this tablet and all other memorials of bloody strife will be an assurance to our children that the era of War is past and that Peace must reign even to the uttermost parts of the earth, even if it is maintained by great fleets and navies, and better still by international arbitration; but better war than permanent oppression.

Address by Colonel Daniel Appleton, N. G., N. Y.

Ladies and Gentlemen, Soldiers and Sailors: It affords me the greatest pleasure to present this beautiful and artistic tablet to the American Scenic and Historic Preservation Society at the request of Mr. Billings, the donor. I should like to tell you some of the many unobtrusive patriotic and generous acts of Mr. Billings that I know of and that you do not, but Mr. Billings is present and knowing his innate modesty and how much he shrinks from publicity, I will refrain, for I value very highly his personal friendship. I will, therefore, confine myself to trying to draw a lesson from the past to help us in the future.

This tablet appeals to Mr. Billings and myself very forcibly, because it not only records the bravery of our ancestors at the dark period of the Revolution, but it gives us an opportunity of calling your attention to the importance of preparedness for war.

No people in the world are more patriotic, more brave, more impatient for success than Americans. We are to-day, in war times, as patriotic as were our ancestors at Fort Tryon in 1776, and is there any incident in history more sublime, more heroic, more patriotic than that of Margaret Corbin, the wife of a Pennsylvania private, who, here on this spot, in the thickest of the fight when men were falling around her, her husband dead at her feet, took a man's part — "loaded and fired a gun herself with vigor and skill," until she too fell.

Fellow citizens! We need that same innate spirit of enthusiasm to animate us to-day. We want you to show your patriotism now in time of peace. We want you to encourage your brothers, your husbands, and your sons to go in for military training, for rifle shooting, and for learning the art of war.

Parents! We want you to teach your children to respect and honor the army and navy. Archbishop Ireland says: "It is a bad sign when the army and navy are not generally honored and revered. It is a bad sign for any country when the uniform of the soldier does not secure honor for the wearer."

Whether we wish it or not, we must look a probable war in the face. Just as long as commercial rivalry exists, nations will appeal to arms, Hague Conferences notwithstanding.

Our school histories describe the battles we have fought and won, but do they describe the delays, the disasters that have prolonged those wars? Let us avoid the mistakes of the past. Let

us be prepared for any and every emergency. We are no longer isolated, we are a world power. We have not only our own coast to guard, but over-sea lands to protect.

It will hardly be denied that the happiness and welfare of a people depend to a large extent on a full and abiding sense of security from any possible attack.

Of the great nations of Europe, there is only one, the Empire of Germany, in which the feeling of confidence prevails. The young German knows that he needs fear no foe — needs fear no invasion for all his comrades are strong men armed.

The young American, though potentially a strong man, is yet a man unarmed. We are strong in the sense that we have many men and that those men are brave. In a military sense we are weak because a very small proportion of the men know anything of military service. We are weak in many of our wonderful resources. We have no transportation for moving an army. We have no merchant marine. Our coasts are inadequately defended. Our military resources may be inexhaustible but they are as yet undeveloped. We want an army and navy so efficient and strong in numbers and organization that no sane opponent would contemplate invasion. The army, of course, to-day, includes the organized militia.

Let our National Guard be a strong right arm for national defense and let the ranks be always filled.

Our unpreparedness is our danger. It is an incentive to foreign nations to make adequate preparations to invade us. Paradoxical as it may seem, if our preparations were to become adequate, the risk of their ever being used would disappear.

“In Peace Prepare for War.” Those five words have done far more to avoid war than all the books and articles that have been written since the world began.

Let us not neglect so important, so obvious a duty as preparedness for war. Then if we are called upon to meet the enemy, on land or sea, or perhaps in the air, we shall be sure of a quick, short, and decisive victory.

Time permits me only to lightly touch upon this national problem, only to draw your attention to it.

Friends, there may be diversity of opinion regarding preparedness for war, but I am sure that you will all join in heart with me in expressing our gratitude to Mr. Billings and our appreciation of his beautiful gift to the city.

This tablet is a work of art, of beauty and of patriotism, it honors the dead, and inspires the living. It points the way to duty, to patriotism and to preparedness for war, even to the giving of our lives.

Address by Mr. Reginald Pelham Bolton.

Mr. President and Ladies and Gentlemen: In the regrettable absence of our venerable historian, Gen. James Grant Wilson, I am asked to speak of the historical associations which cluster around this scene. It is no small privilege for a great community to find among its members some of those, who, like the donor of this memorial, are the possessors and guardians of some historic place or structure in the possession of which they take a pride and exhibit an interest.

And surely, among the places fragrant with memories of the deeds of those who fought to win for us our cherished institutions, no one exists in which the historic interest is more fully blended with the scenic interest than in Fort Tryon.

Before us we see not merely the site of an event of national interest, but also the very rocks and hills upon which the struggle took place which made of this end of Mount Washington an American Thermopylae; centered between the hills of Fordham, of Spuyten Duyvil and the precipices of the Palisades, and between the placid waters of the Harlem and the broad estuary of the Hudson, no place within the bounds of the Greater City can exhibit a more picturesque setting added to the rugged character of the eminence on which we stand.

Such may well have been the thoughts of some of the British and Hessian soldiery as on November the 16th of the first year of independence, they came in sight of the hill, in their advance upon Fort Washington.

The hill no doubt presented a strange and formidable appearance from a military point of view, for the trees were felled to form the abattis behind which lay the Southern boys of the Maryland and Virginia battalion armed with their turkey rifles. And as the Hessian division, under the personal command of Baron Knyphausen, moved over the Dyckman vale below us, the rifles rang out the first notes of the defiant defense, in answer to the pounding of the guns of the frigate Pearl, tacking to and fro in the Hudson off this point.

As the Hessians swarmed up this hill-side, climbing over trees and rocks, led in person by their gallant commander, their artillery opened fire with grape-shot upon the little fort which crowned the spot where we stand, and the fierce fight which lasted for three hours began, watched with anxious solicitude by the great leader of the American cause, from the Palisades yonder. The overwhelming forces of attack were supplemented by a military manoeuvre by which the Grenadier battalion of von Koehler, led by that picturesque character Rall, was brought around the margin of the Hudson to the flank of the fort. Twice the advance of the main Hessian body was rolled back, but the ammunition was failing; and the weapons of many of the defenders were too foul to fire. Upon the final charge on front and flank the little garrison was overwhelmed and the sight of succeeding slaughter of many by the bayonets of the enraged Hessians brought unaccustomed tears to the eyes of Washington.

Such very briefly is the story of the gallant defense of the north outwork of Fort Washington by the Southern boys of which this noble monument will visibly remind the passer-by for all time.

Among the various events which this great Celebration has brought prominently into view, none appeals more directly to the spirit of patriotism which it is so necessary to foster, and none evidences a greater degree of the noble spirit of self-sacrifice, than the heroism and actions of those young Southern men, fighting on northern soil for the benefit of the Nation.

It is by the widening interest in the motives and causes of historical events that we have reason to believe in the perpetuation of the American spirit of liberty and equality, and surely the Hudson-Fulton Celebration, covering as it does in this and other memorials, events of historic interest far beyond the scope indicated by its title, is achieving a work of vast future import.

While we thus unite in acclaiming the work and sacrifices of the heroes of the past and in acknowledgment of the value of the results of their labors and achievements, let us not forget that in all their doings, as in all the results flowing therefrom, the strong hand of the Almighty has been peculiarly visible to the advantage of our land and its people, and let us ascribe to the Highest Source the results which this great Celebration is commemorating, as I venture here to do in the following form:

THE ASCRIPTION.

Hudson-Fulton Celebration.

"Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us
But unto Thy Name give Glory."

God of the Mai-kan¹

On his fierce lust Thy ban, curbing the savage man,
'Twas ever thus
Thine the restraining Word: Thine was the Power, O Lord,
Not unto us, O God,
Not unto us.

God of the Pioneer,²

Thine was the hand to steer, through mist and waters drear,
And ever thus
Thou wast his watch and ward; to Thee the blessing, Lord,
Not unto us, O God,
Not unto us.

God of the Patriot³

Directing every shot, that brought his foes to naught,
'Twas ever thus,
Thy hand upon his sword; Thine be the Glory, Lord,
Not unto us, O God,
Not unto us.

God of the Engineer,⁴

Making his purpose clear, hope and achievement near,
Ever 'twas thus,
Thine the benign accord; Thine all our gain, O Lord,
Not unto us, O God,
Not unto us.

God of our Babylon,

Strong in her steel and stone; weak against wrong alone,
And ever thus.
Be thou her Guide, O Lord; then Thine the great reward,
Not unto us, O God,
Not unto us.

¹ The oboriginal inhabitant.

² Hudson.

³ The American patriot.

⁴ Fulton.

Address by Mrs. William Cumming Story.

Mr. President and Ladies and Gentlemen: In representing the Daughters of the American Revolution I am sensible of the honor that you have conferred upon me in asking me to speak on this important and interesting occasion. I realize that our organization stands for high ideals and a great purpose, and, unless we can in our day serve worthily the community in which we live, we will fall short in the responsibility that rests upon us as descendants of the noble men and women who sacrificed life, liberty, and happiness that our Republic might live.

It is well, therefore, that we should recall the heroism of this past and I am happy in having assigned as my topic one of the brave and true women who served our country and on this spot proved her devotion, Margaret Corbin.

Margaret, daughter of Robert Cochran, was born in what is now Franklin county, Pa., November 12, 1751. During the Indian raids of 1756, her father was killed and her mother taken prisoner. She was never heard from again, though seen in 1758, 100 miles west of the Ohio, and the children, Margaret and her brother John, remained under the care of their maternal uncle.

About 1772, Margaret married John Corbin, a Virginian by birth, and when, at the beginning of the Revolution, he enlisted as a matross in Captain Proctor's First Company, Pennsylvania Artillery, she having no children to demand her care at home, accompanied her husband, giving woman's care to him and his comrades in the army.

At the attack on Fort Washington, a shot from the enemy killed John Corbin, and as there was no one to take his place at the gun, the officer in command ordered it withdrawn. Here Margaret Corbin showed what manner of woman she was. Unhesitatingly she took her husband's place, quietly and steadfastly she held his post, performing his duties, with skill and courage, until seriously wounded.

The officers of the Army warmly appreciated her services, and the State of Pennsylvania made prompt provision for her; but inadequate to her needs, and the case being brought to the consideration of the Board of War, Congress, in July, 1779, resolved:

"That Margaret Corbin, wounded and disabled at the battle of Fort Washington, while she heroically filled the post of her husband, who was killed by her side, serving a piece of artillery, do receive during her natural life, or continuance of said disability, one half the monthly pay drawn by a soldier in the service of these States; and that she now receive out of the public stores, one suit of clothes, or the value thereof in money."

On the rolls of the Invalid Regiment in Pennsylvania, commanded by Col. Lewis Nicola, as it was discharged in April, 1783, is found the name of Margaret Corbin. She was pensioned by her native State, at the close of the war, and until her death, which was caused by the wounds received in battle.

She resided in Westmoreland county beloved, honored, and respected by every one. She died about 1800, the precise date not being obtainable. De Lancey, writing of the capitulation of Fort Washington, wrote: "The deed of the Maid of Zaragoza was not nobler, truer, braver, than that of Margaret Corbin, of Pennsylvania."

Address by Miss Helen Varick Boswell.

Mr. President and Ladies and Gentlemen: I always like to talk about the American woman, in whatever connection her name may appear.

When I found myself scheduled to discuss her "in peace and in war," here before this beautiful tablet which is inscribed with the name of a woman so worthy of the reverent appreciation of every patriot in America, I thought of that other woman whose presence at the great function of the Hudson-Fulton Celebration Commission in the Metropolitan Opera House a few evenings since, was in itself a glowing exposition of the true American woman such as no word picture of mine, however eloquent, can create. She was a little woman, frail and bent, but the majesty of her womanhood made her the greatest among all that distinguished company.

Years ago, when the heart of our beloved Republic was throbbing with the agony of its Civil War, she gave the slogan of liberty to the Union in her "Battle Hymn." Through all the years that lie between us of to-day and that period so pregnant with possibilities of progress to our nation, that same little woman has stood before us in many a bloodless campaign in behalf of our country's honor — always the same matchless heroine, the same typical American woman — Mrs. Julia Ward Howe.

As my beloved friend and leader, Mrs. Story, was speaking of the illustrious deed which has inscribed the name of Margaret Corbin, not only upon this bronze memorial behind me, but upon the yet more enduring tablet of the hearts of the American people, I thought of the many thousands of women who are to-day standing side by side in the industrial world, as truly heroines as she who long ago shared in the gallant defense of this historic ground. These heroic women are almost as numerous as the men who are filling the ranks of wage and salary earners, and they are cheerfully, courageously — aye, and successfully, most of them —

maintaining their loved ones. Fathers and mothers, children and alas, too often! — husbands, are dependent upon the fortitude which never fails of these thousands and tens of thousands of women who are crowding the ranks of the industrial world. It is indeed the “woman’s invasion” in time of peace, but she fills her role with credit to her own energy, her own ability, and with honor to the country whose flag and the deathless principles it stands for, has made her emancipation a reality.

The sun is setting, and as he descends his splendor illumines the warships of many nations as they lie amicably side by side within the borders of our own fair land — here upon the bosom of the broad Hudson almost at our feet. Those ships are manned by sailors from other lands than ours, and yet as dear to them as ours to us. To each his own flag, his own soil, are the dearest on earth, for

“Breathes there a man with soul so dead
Who never to himself hath said
This is my own, my native land?”

Of all that multitude, gathered here in a common brotherhood from “all the nations of the earth,” there are few who have not come from some place in this wide world where a woman is watching for them, praying for them, working to keep their home, however humble, full of comfort and peace for their returning loved ones. They are all heroes — for I like to use the generic term irrespective of sex — these women of every nation, who so faithfully fill their places “in that station in life to which it has pleased God to call them;” and I know how ready is the tribute of my masculine hearers to the true womanhood of all the world.

Yet, I dare to believe that most of you are a little more ready to yield your allegiance to the American woman, and I dare to promise for her that she will hold up your hands, in peace as in war, and send you forth to do battle for the right, wherever the battle is to be fought.