

the I Ross Memorial.

At the February meeting of the Lancaster County Historical Society, a communication was received from Messrs. John A. Coyle, John H. Hiemenz and Dr. M. L. Herr, the proprietors of " Rossmere," a suburb of Lancaster city on the northeast, proposing to erect a pillar and tablet, with a suitable inscription, to the memory of George Ross, a signer of the Declaration of Independence, and once the proprietor of Rossmere. It was further proposed that the Historical Society should make all the arrangements required to carry this scheme into execution, secure a design for the pillar, prepare an inscription for the bronze tablet, and finally take charge of the dedicatory services.

The society accepted the generous offer and a committee consisting of Hon. W. U. Hensel, George Steinman, F. R. Diffenderffer, S. M. Sener and Richard M. Reilly were appointed to carry out the project. With such energy was the scheme carried forward that everything was found in readiness to hold the ceremonies on June 4, 1897, the regular monthly meeting day of the Society. On that day, at 2:30 o'clock, the Lancaster County Historical Society, the High Schools of the city, and the Daughters of the Revolution, in the presence of a large concourse of people from city and country, dedicated this memorial to the only signer of the Declaration of Independence from Lancaster county. A handsome Ross memorial souvenir had been prepared, giving a portrait of Ross, a photographic representation of his mansion house which formerly stood on the site of the newly erected pillar, and a cut of the latter. These were freely distributed and formed a pleasant feature of the occasion.

There has always been a question as to the exact day of Ross' death and the place of his burial. The following paragraph from the Philadelphia *Evening Post*, of July 16, 1779, lately brought to light, seems to set both these doubts to rest:

"Last Wednesday died at his seat near this city the Hon. George Ross, esq., judge of the admiralty of this State, who justly merited it. A firm and impartial judge, and yesterday his remains were interred at Christ's church by a number of the most respectable inhabitants. He was buried from his home in this city, in North Alley, above Fifth street."

The following order of *exercises* was successfully carried out.

. . . Programme . .

2 p.m.

1. INVOCATION, REV. PERCY J. ROBOTOM.

Almighty and Everlasting God, from whom cometh every good and perfect gift, we bless, thy holy name for that thou didst put it into the heart of thy servant, whose memory we now seek to honor to subscribe to the Declaration of Independence of these United States. We render unto thee most hearty thanks for the good example of thy servant, and we beseech thee to grant unto us who have entered into the inheritance of this blessing that we may show forth in our lives the blessed fruits of a Godly liberty. May we all live to consecrate our gifts for the good of thy church and the welfare of our Country. Through Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen.

2. OPENING CHORUS, By the HIGH **Sonoma**, with HIGH **SCHOOL** ORCHESTRA.

"**Columbia, the Gem of the Ocean.**"—*David T. Shaw.*

The Star Spangled Banner."—*Francis Scott Key.*

3. PRESENTATION, . JOHN A. COYLE, ESQ.

4. MUSIC: National Airs, HIGH SCHOOL ORCHESTRA.

5. ACCEPTANCE. . . W. U. HENSEL.

6. CHORUS, . . . By the HIGH SCHOOLS. "Hail Columbia."—*Francis Hopkinson.*

"Battle Hymn of the Republic."—*Julia Ward Howe.*

7. POEM, . . . MISS BLANCHE NEVIN.

8. CHORUS, . . . By the HIGH SCHOOLS. "Our Flag is There."—*Anonymous.*

"Ark of Freedom." (Music of Austrian National Hymn.) —*Joseph Haydn.*

9. DEDICATORY ORATION, HON. MARRIOTT BROSIUS.

10. CLOSING CHORUS, . . . By the HIGH SCHOOLS. "My Country, 'Tis of Thee."—*Samuel F. Smith.*

GEORGE ROSS MEMORIAL.

The Memorial Services.

The exercises began at two o'clock in the presence of a large concourse, the following excellent programme being rendered. The music, under the direction of Prof. Carl Matz and Prof. Carl Thorbahn, was an excellent feature and was participated in by everybody :

Mr. Coyle's Presentation Address.

The address of presentation from the donors to the Historical Society was made by John A. Coyle, Esq., who spoke as follows :

Responding to the call of the Committee of Arrangements, formal presentation to the Lancaster County Historical Society is now made of this monument to the lawyer, statesman and patriot, George Ross. Another, and an eloquent, voice will pay just tribute to his memory ; the proprieties of the occasion restrict me to the mere formality of presentation, yet permit me to give public assurance, which I now do, of the accuracy of the location of this marker.

Many broad acres surrounding us on all sides, and where now there is the hum of industry and the habitations of many persons, were the farm and this the home of George Ross. Passing from him to the various owners named on your programmes, these premises became in large part the property of Michael Kelly, now deceased, in the year 1837, and remained in the ownership of himself and his children, James and Catharine M. Kelly, until 1893. So that there are living witnesses who during their lives occupied, owned and were familiar with every nook and cranny of the Ross house.

The depression in the ground, which you will see to the west of the stand, was the lane leading directly from the city to and in front of the house. At the eastern end of the pavement in front of the marker was the large spring which gushed forth in the cellar of the house until the construction of the Clay street sewer, which runs its course slightly to the north of us. The house must have been built many years ago, for an attempt to hold together the considerable portion of it not taken by the opening of Ross street was unsuccessful. All that is left of it is this pile of foundation stones turned up when excavating for the pavement, a lot of rafters, a couple of doors and window sash ; one of these sashes stands aside of me. On one of the panes of glass is written the name of George Ross. It is done with a stone, corresponds with the manner in which George Ross wrote his name and has some similarity with **his** handwriting. There is no doubt that this name has been on the glass for over fifty years. It is believed to have been written by George Ross himself.

There is, therefore, no doubt of the identity of the spot of which your society to-day takes possession and which is marked by this shaft. If in the sight of yonder school house it shall stir the hearts of boys and girls—the coming men and women—to noble deeds not only in public station but by the fireside, also; if, built of voiceless material and answering only to the eye, it shall attract the glance of the passes-by and show him the beauty of heroism, the just pride of one's descendants in a life well lived; if it shall draw hither and thence to many other historical spots in this city—soon to be, marked, I hope—the stranger within our gates and show to him, too, that here was

the blood of which martyrs are made, a distinct good will be done to the community, an added renown brought to this dear old city. So may it be.

M. Hensel's Acceptance.

In accepting the gift of the memorial on behalf of the Lancaster County Historical Society, Mr. W. U. Hensel referred briefly to the extraordinary growth of Lancaster, and especially in the north-western section of the city, where stately mansions now occupy sites that a half century ago were swamps and thickets, and where millions of dollars' worth of improvements cover lands that were, within the period of living men, ordinary farms. In this great material development, historical sites and incidents are apt to be forgotten and submerged. It is, therefore, extremely fitting that such memorials as these should

be erected, and that this be done under the auspices of the Historical Society. That organization hoped to make this simply the initial of a long series of like events. There were a hundred spots in Lancaster made memorable by historical events and by associations of great and noble men, upon which tablets or pillars should record the names and events. One of the most notable things to a traveler in the Old World is this custom, and even in New England the historical spirit of the people has thus attested itself in many places. Pennsylvania and Lancaster county need to be more self-assertive, and the speaker hoped to see the day when the house in which John Andre was here a prisoner of war, the site of the college founded by Benjamin Franklin, the houses where Henry lived, where West painted, where Tom Paine wrote, where Robert Fulton experimented, *where Buchanan and Stevens*

lived and practiced law, sites of the old revolutionary buildings, and others, would be thus marked. It is better for a community to depend upon its own public spirit and upon the individual liberality of its citizens for these than to look for municipal or legislative aid. In this regard the present occasion was likewise memorable, and the donors were entitled to the hearty thanks of the Society and the community for their public spirit and generosity.

Miss Blanche Nevin's Poem.

The following is the exquisite gem read by Miss Blanche Nevin. As will be seen, it rehearses the story of the events preceding and leading up to the Declaration of Independence, and pays a glowing tribute to the fifty-six "good men and true" who affixed their names to that immortal paper :

To chafing hearts in sorest need,
To people fretting to be freed
From foreign yoke, when foreign greed
 With taxes wrung them; God
gave strong leaders, not a few,
Courageous men, upright and true,
And—Lancaster—He gave to you
 George Ross among them.

Ill brooked the sons of pioneers
The sound of cowardice, and sneers
From dapper soldiery in his ears.
 It was small wonder,
Defiance was hurled back again
By irritated frontiersmen ;
To tease the wild wolves in their den
 Was fatal blunder.

(Ah ! after many a bitter year
Each braggart boast and swaggering jeer
Cost every pretty soldier dear
 As they surrendered.
When beaten, and with downcast head,
Their hats pulled low, and eyelids red'
They followed in Cornwallis' tread,
 As swords were tendered.)

iv.

Long time it was the writhing land
 Insulted felt the tyrant hand
 The spark was waiting to be fanned
 On freedom's altar.

Yet, though the cause be just and right,
 Long will men hesitate to light, If "
 round their necks is pressing tight
 A threatened halter."

v.

But yet we know—dear Liberty—
 Man is about as true to thee As,
 with his nature, he can be

To any woman ;
 That very neck for thy sweet sake
 At certain times he risks to break;
 Nor holds his life too dear to stake,
 Nor all things human.

I.

And Patrick Henry's passionate breath, "
 oh, give me liberty or death."
 Thrilled through the anxious land beneath
 All party faction.
 Throughout the broad Atlantic States
 Where brooding war' impatient, waits
 The moment which precipitates
 The crash of action.

And so, when time was[■] ripe, men came
 From far and near to sign each name
 Upon that proudest roll of fame,
 Our Declaration.

Facing disgrace, that patriot band,
 The nervous force of all the land,
 Stretched cut the pen and sinewy hand
 That framed the nation.

VIII.

Now let the British lion lash
 With angry tail her sides, and gnash
 Her teeth and bounding forward dash
 With roaring hollow ! At last the
 eagle's wings have grown'
 The chain is snapped which held him down
 High in the air where he has flown,
 Lions can't follow !

Ix.

Good faith! That day you need not think
 That Philadelphia lacked for ink; Or
 men, whose fingers aid not shrink
 At thought of fetters.
 For well each knew that shortest shrift,
 And tightest rope, and highest lift, Might
 be to him stern England's gift
 For those few letters.

Aye—every signer knew that war
 Would follow and torment him sore.
 Outlawed by it—and all his store
 Unless he hid it
 Was forfeit to the distant king. Who
 held him but a chattel thing Fran
 which another tax to wring,
 And yet—he did it.

Men made for the occasion, they, More
 apt for earnest work than play. Coined
 for the purpose of the day,
 From precious metal. Men
 to a solemn epoch sent, Shaped
 by the friction of event To fitness
 for some great intent,
 New thoughts to settle.

XII.

Men of big frame and bigger heart
 Which had not lost the power to smart
 Of pious faith—the greater part
 Of training holy.
 Who yet felt heaven in sun and sky.
 And held themselves when they should die
 Responsible to God on high,
 And to God solely.

mfr.

Who dreaded an avenging hell,
 And honor prized too dear to sell,
 Who did not love their lives too well
 To risk for others.
 For a great principle of right
 Willing to die, ready to fight,
 Who kept their conscience clean and bright,
 And loved their brothers.

XIV

Doubtless before his lot was cast,
 Each hero struggled through *a past*
 Of dubious fears, but, at the last,
 All vacillation
 And tremor being thrust aside,
 Purpose was resolute, to abide
 Whatever upshot should betide
 The new-fledged nation.

XV.

Fifty-six names were written there, In
 all the world's long history, where Find
 ye a list which can compare
 With this in glory ?
 Of nobler lives ; of fairer fames
 Of less self-interested aims;
 Of cleaner, more untarnished names.
 There is no story.

XVI.

First, Massachusetts, stung to rage
 By foolish North or fatuous Gage,
 Sent five strong men to sign the page,
 From different classes. And
 Hancock, gentleman, indeed, Wrote down
 his name to take the lead ; "So large," he
 said' "the king may read
 Mine without glasses."

XVII.

Adams, the incorruptible!
 Who "loved the public good too well For
 private gain its rights to sell," Noble
 in scorning.

Whose voice with no uncertain ring,
 When agents came a bribe to bring,
 Sent back that message to the king
 And "gave him warning."

XVIII.

Impetuous Houston, in his race
 For Zuley, lost deserved place
 Among the founders of his race.

Zuley, a spying
Judas, discovered in the act Of
 treachery, denied the fact,
 But fled to Georgia; Houston tracked
 The traitor flying.

And frequent was the moment, when The
 casting vote which made free men Was
 given by the State of Penn,
 Amid confusion.

For Morton, to our lasting pride,
 Came forward when the vote was tied,
 And cast his ballot on the side
 Of revolution.

XX.

Carroll—(lest people would not know) —
 Added "of Carrollton" to show
Which Carroll faced the dangerous foe.

"Now hang together
 Or we'll hang separately," said he.
 The die was cast, and valiantly And
 long they faced a stormy sea
 Er, cleared the weather.

We glean from the recording pen
 Truth which is now. was also then,
 Conspicuous—that heroic men
 Had noble mothers.

And Francis Lewis—(kindly grant
 Attention to my modest vaunt)
 Was "brought up by his maiden aunt,"
 And "there are others."

XXII.

The more one hears—the more one reads,
Examining their lives and deeds,
The more the critic spirit heeds
With admiration.

Ere half their worthiness was sung,
If praises due should well be rung,
Your ears would weary of my tongue
And its narration.

XXIII.

Among the strongest and the best
Our delegate sustained the test, And
cast his ballot with the rest.

Brave, wise and witty,
Of broad, well educated mind ; King's
advocate, and well inclined To weigh
the rights of human kind,
Ross, of our city !

xxiv.

To-day we come, with honest pride,
From city and from country side, To
mark the spot where did abide
This man of merit.

And make the letters deep and clear,
That they may last for many a year, To
testify that we hold dear
What we inherit.

xxv.

It is not meet that gratitude. Or
loving memory of the good. Should
perish—for the coffin wood
Can only cover

The oust—the vehicle of clay,
Which served the soul its passing day,
The deeds of men die not away,
Are never over.

xxvi.

The world was better where he trcd,
When Gecrge Ross rendered up to God
His soul—his bcdy to the sod,
Well dcne his duty.

The white man and the red man, too,
Full well his generous Justice knew.
Bright Ills example shines for you,
A thing of beauty.

XXVII.

Our town, recognizant of zeal,
And service for the common weal,
Voted him "costly plate," "genteel
And ornamented."

But he the civic gift put by
Making magnanimous reply,
" Only what each should do did I!"
Modest—contented.

We offer to his memory's sake,
The gift he. living' would not take ;
And tribute of affection make

With hearty pleasure.

God rest his soul, where'er it be,
Safe in the peace which such as he
Deserve throughout eternity,

In goodly
measure. xxix.

The story of the war is fraught
With lesson, and renews the thought
That nothing great was ever wrought
Without hard trial. Gold cannot
buy, beyond dispute,

God's highest gifts. The finest fruit
And flower of goodness take their root,
In self-denial.

XXX.

Lancastrians, who your acres plough,
Whose fertile fields are ripening now, In
gratitude, remember how

They were defended.

What years of suffering were borne,
How long the sharpened sword was worn ;
How great the hunger, scant the corn,
Ere war was ended.

XXXI.

See ye to it—who peaceful stand
And gather with unshackled hand
The crops that ripen in the land

In generous bounty:

See ye to it that not in vain
Their red blood soaked the battle plain,
When men for liberty were slain,
Oh, town and county!

XXXII.

The present guardians of your race
A little while ye fill a space,
Rise to the dutie^s of your place !

If care relaxes,

New forms of tyranny creep in;
Greed and corruption will begin,
Be vigilant, or they will win.

Lcok to your taxes!

XXXIII.

Stand by your cclors without fear,
In spite of cynic, scoff and jeer,
See that you treat "Old Glory" dear
With reverent manner.

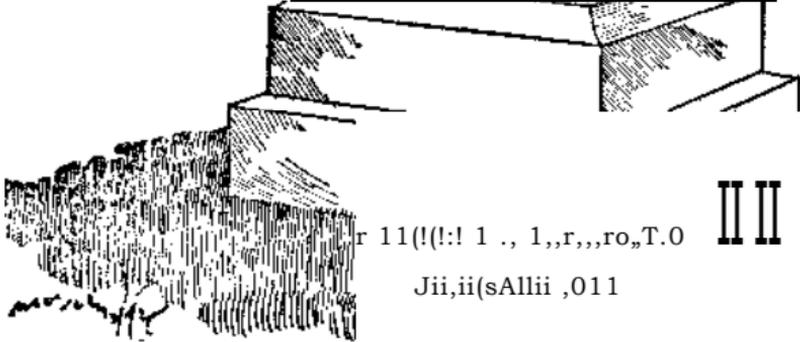
God help the day—God help the hour
If hearts degenerate lose the power
To thrill—to glow at sight of our
Star Spangled Banner.

BLANCHE NEVIN.

LANCASTER, June 4th, 1897.



tel,,
 -wq _____
 STOOD THE HOUSE OF
 G e o r g e R o s s
GEOURGE ROSS, Declaration
 • Signer of the Declaration
 • rator of Independence BORN
 1750 DIED 1773
 lawyer, statesman; patriot.
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 [Decorative symbols]

THE ROSS MEMORIAL.

George Ross—born in Newcastle, Delaware, December, 1730; some-
 time resident of Lancaster ; died in Philadelphia, July 13, 1779—was a law-
 yer, a statesman and a patriot. He was the only Signer of the Declara-
 tion of Independence from the city or the county of Lancaster. The
 pillar and tablet erected to-day commemorate his residence here and his
 services to the community, to the commonwealth and to his country. The

story of his life is told in the words of the eloquent orator and in the verses of the gifted poetess.

While he dwelt in Lancaster his city house stood on the site of the present court house on East King Street near Duke. A considerable part of its woodwork was taken up into and is still conspicuous in the stately Lightner mansion at the southeast corner of Duke and Lemon Streets. The site marked by the memorial now erected was where his country home and farmhouse stood, then in a suburban section.

The pillar and tablet are a gift to the Lancaster County Historical Society by Dr. M. L. Herr, Mr. John W. Hiemmenz and John A. Coyle, Esq. These gentlemen have been notably prominent in the development of the northeastern part of the city, and the beautiful surroundings of the memorial are largely due to their enterprise and public spirit. The section known as "Rossmere" had this name bestowed upon it in honor of the Signer. He is also commemorated by a splendid stained glass memorial window in St. James P. E. Church, the gift of Miss Mary Ross, the only lineal descendant who bears his name. The Hopkins, Eshleman (D. G.) and Lightner families are also descended from George Ross on their maternal side.

The memorial is erected under the auspices of the Lancaster County Historical Society ; its officers at present are as follows : *President*, GEORGE STEINMAN, Lancaster. *Vice-Presidents*, SAMUEL EVANS, ESQ., Columbia; JOSEPH C. WALKER, Gap. *Recording Secretary*, F. R. DIFFENDERFFER, Lancaster. *Corresponding Secretary*, W. W. GRIEST, Lancaster. *Librarian*, SAMUEL M. SENER, Esq., Lancaster. *Treasurer*, B. C. ATLEE, Esq., Lancaster. Executive Committee, W. U. HENSEL, Lancaster ; HORACE L. HALDEMAN, Chickies ; ADAM GEIST, Blue Ball ; REV. C. B. SHULTZ, Lititz ; DR. C. A. HEINITSH, Lancaster ; J. W. Yocum, Esq, Columbia ; RICHARD M. REILLY, Esq., Lancaster ; PETER C. HILLER, Conestoga ; HON. ESAIAS BILLINGFELT, Adamstown ; PROF. H. F. BITNER, Millersville. [The officers are also members of the Executive Committee by virtue of their offices.]

COMMITTEE OF ARRANGEMENTS :

W. U. HENSEL,

GEORGE STEINMAN,

F. R. DIFFENDERFFER,

R. M. REILLY,

S.M. SENER.

Address by Hon. Marriott Brosius

MY FELLOW CITIZENS: We are assembled today to keep a custom of the ages. Since Joshua commanded the stones to be piled on the banks of the Jordan as a memorial to the Children of Israel, monuments have been the customary means of commemorating great events, historic occasions and distinguished services. While our central purpose in this dedicatory service relates to the character and services of a citizen of Lancaster of Revolutionary fame, yet, as his career was associated with the illustrious events of his time, it is in a larger sense sufficiently inclusive to embrace the memorable occurrence of the achievement of Colonial independence and the birth of the Republic.

To be a citizen of a country without a peer, under a government whose cornerstones are the wisdom, virtue and patriotism of those it was appointed to govern ; to love and serve it and enjoy its protection is our singular good fortune ; but it was the extreme felicity of our Revolutionary father, our signer of the immortal Declaration, to share the glory of the achievement which made possible such a country.

George Ross was of Scotch descent, and his lineage is distinctly traceable to Malcolm, Earl of Ross, who was contemporary with Malcolm, King of the Scots, in the twelfth century. He doubtless owed his success in some measure to those effective traits of Scotch character which have been so much in evidence in our own country as to lead a distinguished American to observe: " Whenever anything

good is to be done in this country you are apt to find a Scotchman on the front seat trying to do it." His father, Rev. George Ross, was educated at Edinburg, where he received the degree of A. M. in 1700. In 1705 he emigrated to America and became Rector of the Episcopal parish at Newcastle, Delaware, where his son, George, was born May 10, 1730. His mother was Catharine Van **Gezel**. of Delaware, a granddaughter of Gerrit Van Gezel, of Amsterdam. who was nephew and secretary to Jacob Alrichs, the Dutch Governor or Vice Director of the Dutch colony on the Delaware.

He inherited from a long line of illustrious ancestors superior endowments and at an early age laid the foundation of a liberal education. He studied law in Philadelphia with his half-brother John, a lawyer of distinguished ability, whose only rival for leadership at the Pennsylvania bar was Andrew Hamilton. Samuel Adams in his diary refers to him as a lawyer of great eloquence and extensive practice, and a great Tory. It was said of him that he loved ease and Maderia much better than liberty and strife. In the early part of the Revolutionary period he justified his neutral attitude on the ground that, "Let who would be, King, he was sure to be a subject." Before his death, however, he followed the example of his brother and became a convert to the cause of the colonies. Another brother, **Rev.** AENEAS Ross, succeeded his father as Rector of the Parish of Newcastle. He was an earnest supporter of independence and preached patriotic sermons. His sister, Anne, married John Yeates, of Delaware, a cousin of the distinguished jurist, Jasper Yeates, a Judge of the Supreme Court of Pennsylvania, and a resident of this city. His sister, Gertrude,

became the wife of George W. Read, of Delaware, a member of the Continental Congress, of the Federal Convention of 1787. United States Senator, President and Chief Justice of Delaware, and a signer of the Declaration of Independence. Another sister, Margaret, was twice married, in both instances to clergymen of the Episcopal Church. Susanna also was married to a minister of the Established Church. Catharine was married to Wm. Thompson, the commander of the famous Thompson's Battalion of Riflemen, Pennsylvania's first troops in the Revolutionary war, and the first men from any of the colonies south of New England to join the American army before Boston in the summer of 1775. This gallant officer became General of the Continental Line, and was taken prisoner **at** the battle of Three Rivers, near Quebec, in June, 1776. **He** was exchanged in 1780, and died a *few* months later. His sister, Elizabeth, married Colonel Edward Biddle, of Reading, a distinguished lawyer, Speaker of the Pennsylvania Assembly, and member of the Continental Congress ; and Mary became the wife of Colonel Mark Bird, of Birdsboro, a prominent man of his day and an officer in the Revolutionary army. John Ross, nephew of George and son of Rev. Aeneas Ross, became the husband of Elizabeth Griscom (Betsy Ross), who made our first national flag. This recital of family connections is only important to show the character and distinction of the Ross family. It can add nothing to the lustre of the eminent personality of George Ross.

After his admission to the bar he removed to Lancaster, where he commenced his professional career in 1751. He early gave evidence of a discreet and well ordered mind. Almost the first suit he brought, and he prosecuted

it with success to final judgment in his favor, was for the hand of a beautiful and accomplished lady of Scotch-Irish descent, by the name of Anne Laulor, whom he married August 17, 1751. his city residence was at the corner of East King and Duke streets, where the Court House now stands ; while his suburban home was on the spot on which we are now assembled. In both places he dispensed a liberal hospitality and entertained the most eminent men of his time in law, politics, statesmanship and war.

The next scintillation of wisdom recorded of him was in devoting himself to the pursuit of his profession, eschewing politics for several years. His success at the bar brought him in a few years the appointment of prosecutor for the Crown, an office which he filled with distinguished credit.

In 1768 he was chosen a representative to the General Assembly and continued a member of that body until 1777, excepting the years 1772 and 1776. During this period the benevolence of his mind led him to study the condition of the Indians and the character of our intercourse with them. This preparation qualified him for great usefulness when he became the organ of the Colonists in their controversies with the red men and the mediator between them, making his country greatly his debtor by the judgment and wisdom with which he conducted their negotiations.

The same benevolent spirit and humane temper of mind led him to respond with promptitude to the claims of the oppressed and unfortunate from whatever cause. When the Tories became the subjects of persecution and sometimes imprisonment, and it was esteemed next to treason to defend them, he, with James Wilson and a few other eminent persons, was ever ready to plead in their behalf.

He was among the first of the Colonists to become sensible of the arbitrary acts of the English government and to feel "the sting of British tyranny." His indignation kindled at the extortionate and despotic demands of the Crown and he was prompt to co-operate in the initial movement to secure independence.

The Virginia resolutions, proposing a Congress of all the Colonies, were received in the General Assembly on the eve of its adjournment. Notwithstanding it was the opinion of many members that whatever measures might be adopted should proceed from a future Assembly fresh from their constituents, so commanding was the position of Mr. Ross among his colleagues that he was appointed a committee to draft a reply to the Speaker of the Virginia House of Delegates. In that reply he expressed with clearness and force how sensible *the* members of the Pennsylvania Assembly were of the importance of co-operating with the representatives of the other Colonies in every wise and prudent measure for the preservation and security of their general rights and liberties.

By the success of his services in the Assembly he ^plumed his wings for a higher flight of public usefulness. On the 22d of July, 1774, he was one of seven delegates chosen to represent the Province in the Continental Congress. His colleagues were Joseph Galloway, the Speaker of the Assembly, Samuel Rhodes, Thomas Mifflin, Charles Humphries, John Morton and Edward Biddle. On October 15th, on motion of Mr. Ross, it was ordered that John Dickinson be chosen an additional delegate. That Congress met on the 5th of September and adjourned on October 26th of the same year.

weeks, it may be worth while to pause in our narrative long enough to take a glimpse of that notable Assembly, the first Continental Congress. It met in Carpenters' Hall. Its members were themselves mechanics of the highest order ; master-builders who laid firm and strong the foundations of a Republic which recognized the right of every man to an equal chance. Its personnel was remarkable. There was Samuel Adams, the master spirit of the movement for independence ; John Jay, the youngest member, in the dawn of his splendid career ; Stephen Hopkins, the patriarch of the Assembly, once Chief Justice of Rhode Island ; Sherman, of Connecticut ; Randolph, of Virginia, who was made chairman, and his colleague, Edward Rutledge ; Thomas McKean; John Dickinson, the learned "Pennsylvania Farmer," who gave the Colonists the potent shibboleth, "No taxation without representation ;" Christopher Gadsden, whose spirited reply to the suggestion that the British world burn our seaport towns was worthy the man: "Our towns," he said. "are built of brick and wood; if they are burned down we can rebuild them, but liberty once lost is gone forever ;" Patrick Henry, who crystallized the common thought of the hour that British oppression had wiped out the boundaries of the Colonies in that famous declaration, "I am not a Virginian, but an American ;" and Washington, whose modesty counseled him to take a back seat, though he was to become the foremost man in all that celebrated company. Of such men and others of less note was that Congress composed. Their work was the grandest of the ages. No body of men in ten times the period had ever before achieved so much for mankind as this half hundred in two and fifty days. They surveyed and mapped the rights of

man, declared that no *law enacted* out his consent was binding upon a British subject, that taxation without representation was tyranny, that the common law of England was every Englishman's birthright. Having defined the rights of America and solemnly declared their purpose to maintain them, they closed their work with a recital of their grievances and an earnest, calm, conciliatory and dignified appeal to the justice of the British nation for redress, for peace, liberty and security. Little wonder that the first Continental Congress extorted the admiration of the world. From the moment of their first debate, says De Tocqueville, Europe was moved. John Adams said that in point of ability, virtue and fortune they were the greatest men upon the continent. Lord Chatham in the face of the King declared: "I must aver that in all my reading of history that for solidity of reasoning, force of sagacity and wisdom of conclusion, under such a complication of circumstances, no nation or body of men can stand in preference to the General Congress assembled at Philadelphia."

But Mr. Ross was not a one term Congressman. He was re-elected on December 15, 1774, to the Congress which convened May 10, 1775. To the succeeding term he was not elected, but on July 20, 1776, he was again elected and immediately took his seat. In January, 1777, he obtained leave of absence on account of illness and never afterward returned. He thus occupied a seat in the Continental Congress from September 14 to October 26, 1774; from May 10 to November, 1775, and from July 20, 1776, to January, 1777.

While not in Congress his services were not withheld from the cause of the Colonies. He was a patriot firmly attached

to liberty and independence, and his service was always at their command. Even while a member of Congress he served in the General Assembly. The question of incompatibility of office was not raised. The pre-eminence he enjoyed among public men of his time was shown by the variety and distinction of the services to which he was called from time to time by the General Assembly. In July, 1774, he presided over a mass meeting of the citizens of Lancaster county to take into consideration the Acts of the British Parliament relative to America. At the same time he was on a committee of correspondence to cement union between the Colonies and a deputy to the Provincial Convention held at Philadelphia, July 15, 1774. In 1775, when the Assembly received a message from Governor Penn upon the unsatisfactory situation of the Colony and evidently intended to repress the ardor of those who favored the redress of grievances, a question of serious moment arose whether they should yield to the solicitation of the Governor or stand firmly by the measures of Congress. On this question there was a long debate in which Mr. Ross took a conspicuous part. He was an able debater, a persuasive and convincing speaker. The influence of his eloquence and the power of his logic prevailed. A committee of which he was a leading member was appointed to draft a reply to the Governor's message. That reply will challenge comparison with any other similar state paper on record. Jefferson himself could not have exceeded its exquisite diplomacy in form and temper. It exhibited conciliation without servility, respectful deference without obsequiousness, resolute firmness without offensive defiance. George Ross wrote it and the Assembly adopted it as their answer to the Governor's address.

When the situation became more critical and measures were required to put the Province in a suitable state of defense, he was appointed a committee to report such expedient measures as the situation required. The report recommended ways and means of defending the lives, liberty and property of the citizens and repelling any hostile invasion of British troops. It advised putting the Province on a suitable war footing, to prosecute their predetermined defense of their rights, liberty and independence. He was eminently qualified for exertions of this character, for no man better comprehended the difficulties under which the Colonists labored in their encounter with British injustice, or grappled them with a more robust spirit of determination and defiance than George Ross. This sense of the situation and his heroic

spirit were accentuated when he said to his son : "We are fighting with halters around our necks, but we will win." When war was imminent he was called upon to assist in the preparation of rules and regulations for the government of the military forces that might be employed. On July 4, 1776, at the very hour the Declaration of Independence was being adopted by the Continental Congress, he was at Lancaster presiding at a meeting of the officers and members of the fifty-three Battalions of Associators of the Colony of Pennsylvania to choose two Brigadier Generals. On July 6th he wrote to Col. Gailbraith enclosing the resolves of Congress on the subject of Independence which he had just received. He was about this time President of the Lancaster Committee of Inspection, Observation and Correspondence. He was Colonel of the First Battalion of Associators of Lancaster. On July 18, 1776, he was elected Vice President of the

Pennsylvania Constitutional Convention
At different times he was a member of the Committee of Safety for Lancaster county, and on July 6, 1775, was appointed one of the inspectors of military stores. In 1777 he was associated with George Washington and Robert Morris on a committee appointed by the Continental Congress to devise a national flag. He was also appointed on a committee to prepare a declaration of rights on behalf of the State ; was chairman of two other committees of importance, due to formulate rules for the government of the Convention which had superseded the Assembly, and the other to draft a law defining treason to the State and fixing a punishment for that crime, Here we note an indication of the esteem in which he was held as a lawyer. He is said to have been among the first of his profession. In the deep and intricate controversies arising in that formative period he took a conspicuous part. On occasions commanding the greatest exertions of the strongest minds he was among the foremost, never failing to acquit himself with distinguished credit.

When he retired from the Continental Congress he received an agreeable demonstration of the approbation of his constituents in the form of a resolution passed at a public meeting in the borough of Lancaster, which showed not only how sensible his constituents were of the value of his public services, but afforded him an opportunity of evincing his sensibility to the obligations which his duty to his country imposed. As this expression of appreciation and gratitude had a touch of novelty and was highly creditable to the citizens of Lancaster I will be excused for reproducing it in this connection:

" *Resolved*, That the sum of one hundred and fifty pounds out of the common

stock be forthwith transmitted to George Ross, one of the members of the Assembly for this county and one of the delegates for this county in the Continental Congress, and that he be requested to accept the same as a testimony from this county of their sense of his attendance on the public business to his great private loss, and of their approbation of his conduct.

"Resolved, If it be more agreeable, Mr. Ross purchase with part of the said money a genteel piece of plate ornamented as he thinks proper, to remain with him as a testimony of the esteem this county **has** for him, by reason of his patriotic conduct in the great struggle for American liberty."

Even in our day, when this mode of requiting the services of public servants is out of fashion, we can easily understand how grateful to the feelings of Mr. Ross was this testimony of affection and gratitude. But he was as sensible of his dignity and duty as were his constituents of his services and their obligation. With a modesty characteristic of real elevation of mind, he disparaged his service to his country and declined this moderate honorarium from his fellow-citizens, protesting that in bestowing his exertions upon the cause of liberty and independence he was impelled solely by a patriotic sense of duty, and that he did no more than every man should do to advance the cause of his country without hope of pecuniary reward. Such elevation of character, lofty patriotism and disinterested devotion to the claims of duty command the homage and admiration of the world, and constitute an example worthy the emulation of mankind.

The remnant of life allowed Mr. Ross after his retirement from Congress was to be still further dignified and exalted by his elevation to the Bench of the Admir-

alty of the State to which he was appointed March 1, 1779. A brief service upon the Bench demonstrated the possession of great ability-, dignity and tireless industry in the discharge of his judicial duties. He died on the 14th of July, 1779. of a sudden illness at his home in Philadelphia, and was buried in Christ Church burial ground. From a letter written by a member of the family at the time it appears that in his last conversation he exhibited great cheerfulness, spoke pleasantly of the long journey he was about to take and hopefully of his prospects in the haven of rest whither he was going and to which his wife had preceded him.

The pedestal and tablet we dedicate today will declare to coming generations what would remain as durably in the remembrance of mankind without the aid of brick or bronze, that George Ross was a signer of the Declaration of Independence; a fact which conferred perhaps greater distinction than any other act of his illustrious career. Next to John Hancock's, the boldest and strongest signature to that immortal instrument is that of George Ross. It has been taken for granted and commonly believed on the warrant of unveracious chroniclers for a hundred years that he was a member of the Congress that *adopted* the Declaration on the Fourth of July, 1776. This is not the fact, and we must not withhold the homage due the truth of history by omitting to record on this occasion absolute historic truth.

It will be seen from what I have already said that George Ross did not sit in the Continental Congress from November 3, 1775, to July 20, 1776, in which interval the vote of adoption took place. It is worthy of note that some members, not alone from Pennsylvania but from other Colonies as well, who occupied seats on

the Fourth of July and voted for the adoption of the Declaration, ceased to be members before the 2nd of August when the signing took place ; and on the other hand some who were not members on the Fourth of July became such before the day of signing, and while they had no agency in the adoption enjoyed the distinction of signing the Declaration. The Pennsylvania delegation underwent a radical change in that interval. Five members, viz., John Dickinson, Charles Humphries, Edward Biddle, Thomas Willing and Andrew Allen, were succeeded by George Ross, George ulymer, Benjamin Rush, James Smith and George Taylor, who took their seats on the 20th of July, and all signed the Declaration, though they had no part in its adoption.

The only signatures placed upon the instrument on the day of its adoption were those of John Hancock, President, and Charles Thompson, Secretary. The order made on the Fourth, as shown by the Journal, was "that the Declaration *be* authenticated and printed." On the 19th of July, however, the following resolution was passed :

Resolved, That the Declaration passed on the 4th inst. be fairly engrossed on parchment with the title and style of 'The Unanimous Declaration of the Thirteen United States of America' and that the same when engrossed be signed by every member of Congress." On the 2nd of August the Journal says : "The Declaration of Independence being engrossed and compared at the table was signed by the members." The signers were thus of necessity the members at the time the instrument was submitted for signatures, all of whom with three exceptions signed at that time. Two signed later in the fall and Thomas McKean not until January, 1777.

Another circumstance invites our attention in this connection, not one that would either make or mar so great a fame as that of our Lancaster signer, but which requires an explanation to be recorded on this occasion ; for the attentive student of our Colonial and Revolutionary history and the studies it has afforded for artistic representation still wonders why the face of George Ross does not appear in the celebrated painting of the "Signers" in the rotunda of the Capitol at Washington. John Trumbull was employed by the Government to execute this work. He was a painter of eminence and was employed at the same time on a number of historical studies illustrating our Revolution history, under a contract with the Government. He travelled extensively in Europe and traversed the States in search of portraits for the purpose of his paintings. His idea, as stated in his autobiography, was to secure the likenesses of the men who were the authors and signers of that memorable Declaration ; and the rule he laid down for his guidance in the composition of the painting was to admit no ideal representation. He was determined in his purpose, tireless in his exertions to procure the face of every man required for the completion of his canvas. An incident given me by Mr. J. Hammond Trumbull, of Hartford, Connecticut, derived from the artist himself, illustrates the length he went to carry out his intentions. No portrait of Benjamin Harrison could be found ; none was in existence. One day when the painting was nearly completed a stranger entered his studio and after looking at the picture for some time remarked: "I don't see Governor Ben. Harrison there. He signed the Declaration." " Did you know General Harrison ?" asked the artist impatiently.

" Well, I ought to," was the reply. " He was my father." " Is there any likeness of him?" asked Mr. Trumbull. "No," said Mr. Harrison, "there is no picture, but my mother and the family have always told me that I was the image of my father at the same age except for the difference in color of eyes and hair." "Please stand just where you are," was the peremptory command of the painter, who caught up his palette and brush and began to make a sketch of his visitor, making the requisite changes in eyes and hair. When the sketch was completed he showed it to Mr. Harrison, who, after studying it for a while, said : " Well, I don't believe there is a man in Virginia who ever saw Governor Harrison who would not recognize that as his likeness." And that face caught thus on the wing went on the famous canvas.

The artist found it difficult to determine who by rights should be represented. Should he admit those only who were present and voted for adoption and exclude those who voted against it, or should he recognize the title only of those who signed the instrument ? On these questions he consulted Adams and Jefferson, who concurred in the advice that the signatures should be the general guide. Mr. Ross was within this rule and his face would certainly have adorned the canvas if a portrait of him had been available. Mr. Trumbull, however, in the end adopted a *very* liberal test and admitted to the privilege of his canvas some who adopted but did not sign, some who signed but did not adopt, and some who did both and two who did neither, viz., John Dickinson, who was an eloquent opposer of the measure, and Thomas Willing, who voted against it and being retired before the 2nd of August had no opportunity to *sign*. But the mystery of the omission deepens

when we remember that there **was** extant a portrait of George Ross, painted by Benjamin West, of whose existence Mr. Trumbull may fairly be presumed to have had knowledge, for he was a friend of West's and a frequent visitor at his house in London during the years that the "great picture" and the persons who were to compose it were on his mind and frequently on his lips.

I find an interesting incident recorded in the life and studies of Benjamin West by John Galt, which leaves no doubt of the fact that West painted a portrait of George Ross. Young West was visiting a friend by the name of Flower, a Justice of the Peace in Chester county, who had a legal friend in Lancaster by the name of Ross. "Lancaster," says the biographer, "**was** remarkable for its wealth and had the reputation of possessing the best and most intelligent society to be found in America," a reputation which it is her felicity to have maintained through the intervening century and a half. Mr. Flower brought his young friend to the Ross mansion on a visit. "The wife of Mr. Ross," says the chronicler, "was greatly admired for her beauty, and her children were so remarkable in this respect as to be objects of general notice." Mr. Flower at dinner advised his friend Ross to have the portraits of his family taken, and suggested that they would be excellent subjects for young West. Application was afterwards made to West's father for permission for the young artist to go to Lancaster for the purpose of making one or more portraits of the **Rosses**. How many pictures were executed at that time has eluded my search ; but it is certain that Mr. and Mrs. Ross' were, and it is said by members of the family that portraits of two children were also made.

Another incident narrated by the same author confirms the fact of West's visit to Lancaster. Mr. Galt **says**: "At the time of West's visit to the Ross family he met a gunsmith by the name of William Henry, who, having something of a classical turn, proposed to the young artist to paint the death of Socrates. West had never heard of Socrates, but the gunsmith booked him up and he made a sketch which was very clever. He, however, was in doubt how to represent the slave and he said to his friend: "I have hitherto painted faces and people clothed ; what am I to do with the slave who presents the poison ? He ought, I think, to be naked." Henry went out to his work-shop and brought in one of his workmen, a handsome man, stripped to the waist, saying, "There is your model," and accordingly the muscular toiler went on the canvas.

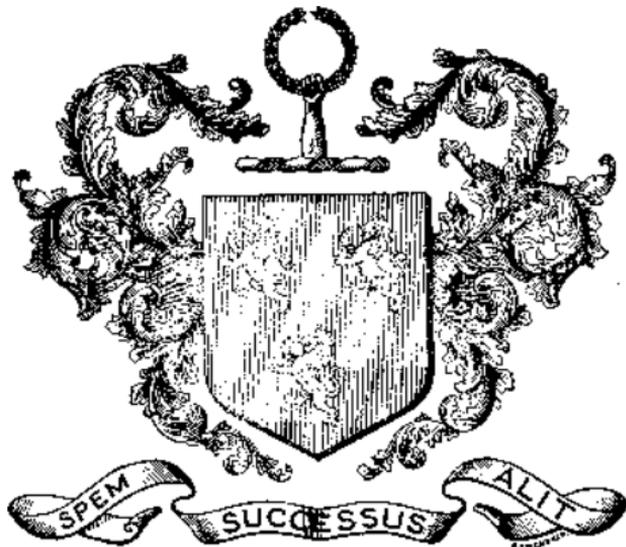
A careful review of the chronology of events which cluster about the portrait of George Ross leads to the conclusion that it was executed between 1755 and 1760, when he was twenty-five or thirty years of age ; and an inspection of the picture confirms this view. A copy, made about 1875, by Philip Wharton, I am advised, now hangs in Independence Hall. It is not a little singular that anyone in possession of a portrait of so eminent a person at a time when a group of figures to whose companionship he had so just a title was being painted by order of the Government, did not produce it even without request. The only admissible explanation is that from 1810 to 1824, when Mr. Trumbull was in quest of portraits for his historical studies, the Ross picture was stored away in somebody's closet, out of sight and therefore out of mind, and the artist's search failed to reach its hiding-place. It thus happened that the

celebrated painting of the "Signers" which cost the Government \$5,000 received the artist's benediction without the face of Lancaster's illustrious signer.

But the fame; of George Ross is not conditioned by the accident of an effigy or the circumstance of an artist's unavailing search. Immortal wreaths in this world of ours will ever crown immortal deeds. A Roman orator, to stimulate the heroism of his countrymen, placed before them the vision of a heaven of never-ending repose and happiness for those who defended their country. So is there a heaven of never-ending repose for the honest fame of the good and great in the remembrance of mankind. The memory of this eminent citizen, upright judge, and sterling patriot, as well as that of his illustrious contemporaries who led the Colonies through the Red Sea of Revolution to the Canaan of Independence, can never lose its perennial green ; for their fame is indissolubly linked with and imperishably enshrined in the history of that memorable and heroic struggle to secure the inalienable rights of man, place government on the moveless base of liberty and justice, and establish in the New World the supremacy of principles as inextinguishable as the stars and a civilization as shining as the sun.

My fellow citizens, our task ends. As we have spoken, the hour and the occasion have passed. Sad indeed would it be were we to miss the lesson they teach. To secure the fruit of the achievements of the past we must emulate its high examples. They point the way to patriotism, courage, faith, fortitude and rectitude. Veneration for the examples of the heroic dead found a tongue in the young Greek who exclaimed: "The trophies of Miltiades will not let *me* sleep." So a *high sense* of the achievements of the masters who

laid our keel and wrought our ribs of steel may lift us to the high level of their excellence, until like Hector's son we catch heroic fire from the memory of illustrious sires and by our exertions make our country as immortal as the memory of its founders.



ROSS
COAT-OF-ARMS

The Ross Arms blazoned above are taken from a silver tankard in possession of G. Ross Eshleman, Esq., of this city. The tankard belonged to George Ross, the Signer, and came to him from his father. According to "Burke's Peerage," pages 1181-82, the arms were created February 28, 1672, and are blazoned as follows : "gules ; three lions rampant ; argent. Crest, *a* hand holding a garland of laurel, proper." In a copy of an early blazonry of the arms there appear "Supporters—two savages, wreathed about the head and middle with laurel and holding clubs in their exterior hands, all proper." The motto is : "*Spem, Successus, Alit.*"

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Brosius, Marriott, 1843-1901.

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