

MANCHESTER THEN AND NOW

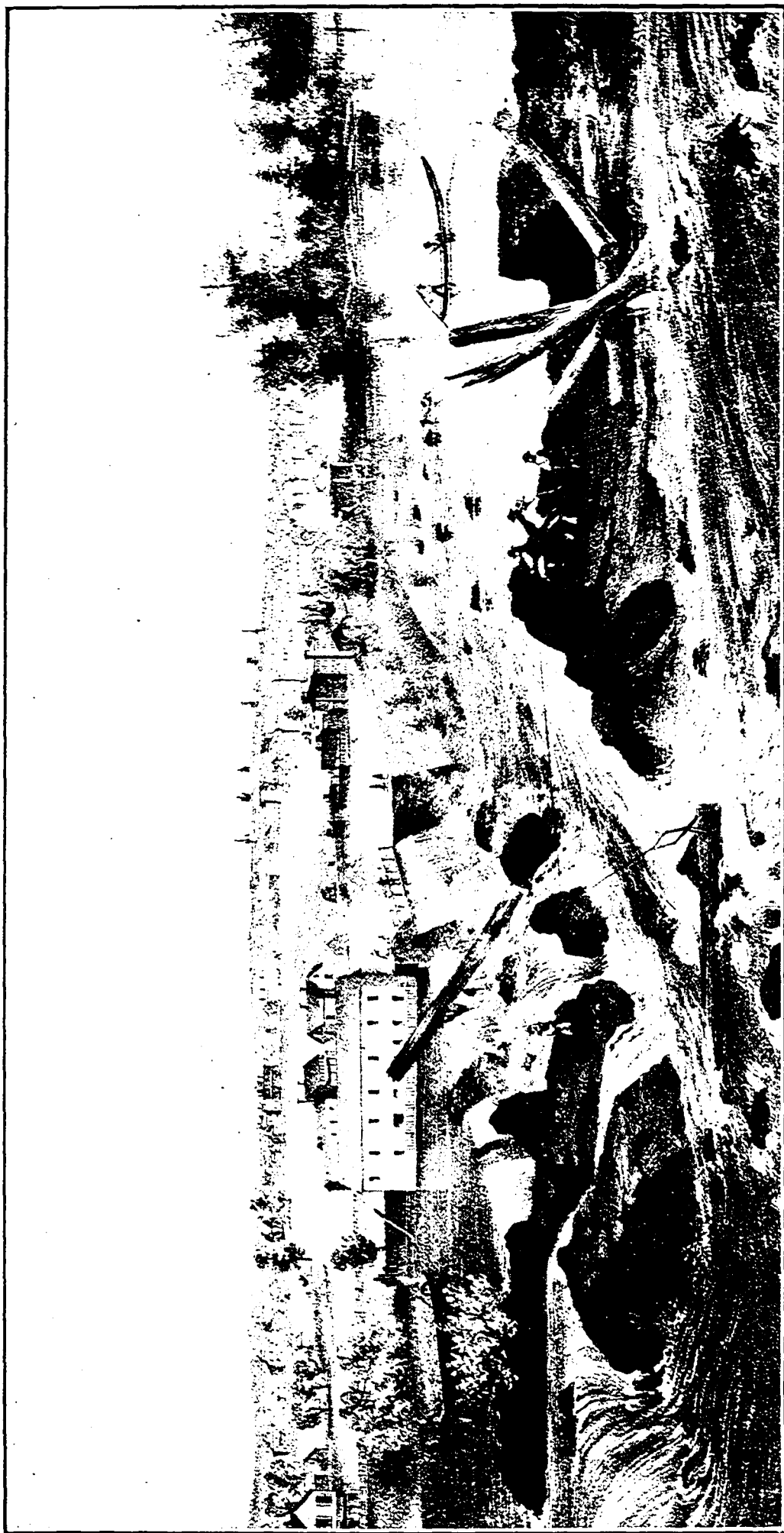
AN ADDRESS BY
HON. EDWIN F. JONES

DELIVERED AT THE
CENTENNIAL CELEBRATION
OF MANCHESTER, N. H.
ON JUNE 13, 1910



MANCHESTER, N. H.
MANCHESTER HISTORIC ASSOCIATION

1910



From a Rare Painting by Col. JOHN B. BACHELDER

AMOSKEAG FALLS IN 1855

MANCHESTER--THEN AND NOW

We meet here to-night to celebrate the one hundredth anniversary of the naming of the municipality of Manchester. The simple change of the name Derryfield to Manchester may seem a small thing to celebrate, but it marks an epoch in the life of our community and furnishes an appropriate occasion for our people to pause a bit in the daily routine of existence; to turn from the thoughts and labors of our work-a-day lives and spend a little while in contemplating the past; to consider what manner of men and women they were who have gone before us, what they did when they occupied the place where we now make our homes, and how we compare with them in purpose and achievement.

To the man who sees only the practical side of things, and to whom money getting seems the chief aim in life, such a celebration may appear trivial. But we must remember that human nature has an æsthetic side which needs developing, that there is another view of existence beside the utilitarian one. Knowledge is a good thing of itself, without regard to its practical application, and whatever adds to a man's knowledge adds to his power to carry on properly the activities of life. To increase that power is the main purpose of education, and no part of the curriculum of the schools is more important than the study of history, and the history of no part of the world is more interesting and instructive than that of the community in which one lives, and so far as such occasions as this tend to foster an interest in the growth of the home community and to increase the knowledge of the local events and people of bygone days, they justify the time and labor involved in promoting them.

I shall recur no further into the past than the single century which closes tonight. The story of Indian life at this seat of tribal government, of the bold and hardy conduct of the first settlers in the wilderness, of the deeds of

the Rangers which lend a romantic flavor to the tales of the Indian wars, of the heroic struggles of the Revolution when Derryfield sent so large a proportion of its able-bodied men to fight in the cause of liberty and popular government,—these things have no place in my remarks. My task is to try to picture the town which, one hundred years ago to-day, was re-baptized, and to draw the contrast which the present condition of the same territory affords. "Then and Now" is my theme.

On the bank of the river now known as the Irwell, in that part of England called Lancashire, the ancient Roman had a camp or "castrum" named "Mancunium." The Saxon records show that about the year 923, King Edward sent a number of his Mercian troops to repair and garrison the fortress at "Manig-ceaster." The place was mentioned in the Domesday Book as one of four in Western Lancashire. It is known that woolen manufacturing was carried on there in the 13th century, and in the reign of Henry VI, in the year 1552, laws were passed by parliament, regulating the length of "Manchester cotton," which, notwithstanding their name, were probably woolen goods. In 1850, the cloth manufacturers of Manchester ranked among the first in England in extent and importance and its people were described as "the most industrious in the northern part of the kingdom." The inadequate supply of cotton goods, along the middle of the 18th century, stimulated efforts for increasing the means of production; and the machines successively invented by Arkwright, Hargreaves and others, furnished the means, and the efficiency of these machines was greatly heightened by the perfection of Watts' steam engine. In 1783, Manchester, with Salford on the other side of the river, which bears the same relation to old Manchester, as West Manchester now bears to this side of the Merrimack river, although it has always had a separate borough government, had a population of 39,000, mainly given over to the manufacture of cloth. This was the Manchester which Samuel

Blodget prophesied would be equalled by Old Derryfield when the power of the Amoskeag Falls was properly harnessed to the uses of the spindle and loom. In a certain sense, the prophecy has been literally fulfilled. Our Manchester is "the Manchester of America," and it is, to-day, larger and more prosperous than was the original Manchester when Judge Blodget returned from England in 1787. Our municipality has progressed farther in the last hundred years than did the English Manchester in thirteen centuries of known history.

In 1810, the Town of Derryfield consisted of that part of our present city which lies east of the Merrimack river. Amoskeag was then a part of Goffstown, and what we call West Manchester, then the little village of Piscataquog, was a part of Bedford. And it was not until 1853 that the territory west of the river was annexed to Manchester. This town of Derryfield was inhabited by a population of 615, according to the census of 1810, farmers, lumbermen, boatmen and their families. A very few persons resident here may have been working in a small mill on the Goffstown side of the river, near the falls. By the Blodget canal, it was possible to pass a boat around the falls. In this community life was prosaic and uneventful. Neither great riches nor dire poverty existed here. The people were vigorous and independent; they had to work hard to extract a living from the unwilling soil. They gave some little attention to education, maintaining schools in five school districts, but there, probably, was not a college educated man in the town; there was no doctor, lawyer or settled minister. The people were more orthodox in their belief than in their conduct. Amusements were scarce. A barn raising or husking bee brought the young folks together. Wrestling was a favorite sport and at times the friendly bouts developed into free fights. Rum, West Indian or New England, was the prime accessory at all gatherings, whether at dance or wedding or funeral. It was a democratic community where every man was as good

as his neighbor, and oftentimes, in his own opinion, a little better. It was a typical frontier settlement, in that state which follows the complete expulsion of the native savages and sees the beginnings of a real civilized existence.

The men of Derryfield were a homogeneous lot. They were the first or second generation following the hardy settlers who made New Hampshire, who, with wives and children, pushed out into the wilderness, climbed the lofty hills and dotted their slopes with happy homes, and, by their industry planted the fair valleys of the Merrimack and Connecticut, and builded here a commonwealth where freedom dwelt; where they could worship God after the dictates of their own consciences and were asked to call no man master. The fathers of the men of Derryfield—and some of them as well,—had assisted prominently in overthrowing kingly rule in America, to the end that the rule of the people might have full sway. In the town meeting, all local matters were argued and decided, and Derryfield had an equal opportunity with Litchfield to be represented every other year in the legislature of the state.

It would appear that there were but two facts which made our old town at all notable. One was Amoskeag Falls, with their fisheries and possibilities; the other was that General John Stark still lived and had his home here. The old hero, after his eminent services in the Revolution, refused public office except in his town, devoted his time to farming and to his lumbering interests, accumulated a comfortable property, and, surrounded by his children and grandchildren, was enjoying a happy and serene old age.

At the Derryfield town meeting, held March 13, 1810, the following vote was passed: "Voted Thomas Stickney, John G. Moore & Amos Weston be a Committee to petition the General Court to have the name of the Town of Derryfield altered to that of Manchester." Thomas Stickney was the grandson of Judge Samuel Blodget, who in his lifetime had been the most active inhabitant of the territory now known as Manchester, in the developing of its

resources and establishing industries. Judge Blodget lived both in Amoskeag and on this side of the river. He spent his fortune, which for the time was quite considerable, on his project for a boat canal around Amoskeag Falls and had died a few years before, still full of hope for the future of his enterprise and seeing with accurate eye the opportunities for a larger community where then existed a few sandy farms, a goodly lot of pine forests and a most excellent fishing place. He was the pioneer in the industrial and business life of Manchester, and greater recognition should be accorded his achievements and influence than they have yet received from the people of the city whose godfather he was. Amos Weston was, I believe, the grandfather of the late Governor James A. Weston, and John G. Moor was a leading member of a family which was very prominent in the early days, with numerous descendants still living here.

The petition of the town was duly presented to the legislature, and on June 13, 1810, John Langdon, as governor, affixed his signature to an engrossed bill, reading as follows:

STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE

In the Year of Our Lord One Thousand Eight Hundred and Ten

An Act to Alter the Name of the Town of Derryfield in the County of Hillsborough, in said State to the Name of Manchester.

WHEREAS the inhabitants of the town of Derryfield in the County of Hillsborough, have petitioned this legislature to have the name of said town altered to that of Manchester; therefore,

Be it Enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Court convened:

That said town of Derryfield shall forever hereafter be called and known by the name of Manchester, any law, usage or custom to the contrary notwithstanding.

On this bill are the following endorsements, showing the rapid progress of the bill:

In the House of Representatives, June 13th, 1810.

The foregoing bill having had three several readings passed to be enacted.

Sent up for concurrence.

(Signed) CHARLES CUTTS, Speaker.

In the Senate June 12th, 1810.

This bill having been read a third time was enacted.

(Signed) WILLIAM PLUMMER, President.

Goodly signatures were those on this name certificate of Manchester. Charles Cutts, a Harvard graduate, lawyer, twice United States senator to fill vacancies, and serving eleven years as secretary of the federal senate. William Plummer, liberally educated, lawyer, speaker of the state house of representatives, governor four times, United States senator, and the one presidential elector in 1820 who refused to cast his vote for James Monroe, on the ground that no man but Washington ought to be honored by receiving the unanimous vote of the electoral college as president.

And John Langdon, merchant, patriot, member of the Continental Congress, member of the convention that framed the National Constitution, president of the state under the first constitution and governor several times under the amended one, United States senator and first president *pro tem* of the senate, offered the post of secretary of the navy in 1811 and the nomination for vice-president on the ticket with Madison in 1812, but declining both these honors.

But those official sponsors, could they gaze on our city at the close of one hundred years since they signed that act, might well say that the name then given was truly prophetic and that no ironical criticism of the choice of names can justly be made.

Let us look a little at this newly christened town of Manchester. There were 113 resident and 17 non-resident tax payers carried on the tax list of 1810. The largest tax paid was by Isaac Huse, and his tax was \$16.30. Besides

the farms, horses, cattle, timber land and one or two small grist and saw mills, \$1,350 money at interest were mentioned in the inventory, of which \$700 belonged to General Stark, the rest being divided among three other men, who, with the general, I suppose, were the local representatives of the wealthy bond holding class of the day.

Five chaises were owned in town, three valued at \$100 apiece, one at \$80, while General Stark was charged with one at \$50. The appropriation to pay all town charges was \$75. The same sum was appropriated to pay for preaching. There was a meeting house but no church or regular preacher, and at town meeting there was an article in the warrant to see if the town would pay Enos Webster for boarding Mr. Pickles when the latter was preaching in town, but the article was dismissed. Seventy-five dollars a year without refreshments seems to be the value placed on preaching. There was about one liquor license for each one hundred of population, and each poll tax payer was assessed \$1.50 to pay for the repair of highways, of which there were enough to call for the election, if not the services, of eight highway surveyors. The town clerk was voted \$5 for one year's service, and the three outgoing selectmen were paid respectively \$13.75, \$12.25 and \$10.25 for their time and services the last year.

Fishwards seem to have been important officers, seven being chosen. Three corders of wood, six surveyors of lumber, a culler of stones were chosen. A sealer of weights and measures was elected, and the town was so extravagant as to vote that "a chest be purchased at the expense of the town to put the weights and measures in." The selectmen were voted fence viewers and overseers of the poor. A town clerk, a treasurer and one constable were elected, and the collection of taxes was "vendued to the lowest bidder." This seems a frugal and economical municipal government. The warrant contained an article "to see if the Town will provide any support for" a certain man. "he being old and unable to care for himself," but the

meeting voted to dismiss the article. Judged by this vote, it might not be unfair to call the town something "nearer" the truth than economical, but loyalty to the old community bids us to be careful in our choice of adjectives.

In examining old records and studying the history of former times, one is forcibly struck by the proofs that human nature is a good deal the same from one generation to another, and that men's motives and actions are very similar in similar circumstances, though in widely different times and places. We hear a good deal nowadays about ring rule, boss control, one-man power and such like in political affairs, and we are told that the country ought to return to the practices of the early days of the republic when the people were under no dictation, but, as it were, spontaneously acted without suggestion or direction. But I am fearful that the town meeting held in Derryfield in 1810 would not bring much comfort to those who would seek an example of disinterested leadership and altruistic political management. The records show an example of political cohesiveness and co-operation on the part of the leaders of the town that, to-day, would call forth the loudest denunciations from those who did not happen to be of the elect.

At that meeting, Thomas Stickney was chosen selectman and a member of the committee to petition the legislature for a change of the name of the town. John G. Moor was elected town treasurer of highways, surveyor of lumber, fish ward, and a member of the legislative committee. Isaac Huse was elected selectman, highway surveyor, sealer of weights and measures, and hogreeve when there was something for that official to do. Samuel Moor, Jr., was chosen selectman, town clerk and surveyor of lumber, and Messrs. Stickney, Huse and Samuel Moor, Jr., were *ex-officio* fence viewers and overseers of the poor. For years before and after 1810, the records show a similar centering of official control in a block of a few men.

The historian calls these men leading citizens, and

proves it by the records. Is it possible that what was leadership then would be ring rule or bossism now? Or is it true that "bossism" is simply one way of describing long and successful leadership in political matters, and a "ring" merely another term for a number of leaders acting together for a common purpose? As we study the past, we are apt to grow more lenient in our estimate of the men and measures of the present and to be more charitable in our opinions and criticisms, for this reason, if no other, the study of history ought to be encouraged.

In 1810, the Democratic-Republican candidate for governor received 41 votes to 37 for his Federalist opponent, with one scattering.

For nearly thirty years after it received its new name, no great changes took place in the town. In 1820, the census showed a population of 761; and in 1830, 887; and in 1840, 3,325, and most of the last increase was made in the two years immediately preceding the last-named census taking. The War of 1812 made but little impression on the town except to cast it into the slough of hard times, which prevailed all through New England. It was not a popular war hereabout, and few enlistments were made except enough to fill the quota of the town under the president's call for troops. The number and personnel of those who did serve is not accurately known, but in 1816 it was "voted to make up ten dollars per month" to the drafted soldiers.

In 1815, the legislature granted the town the privilege of choosing a representative without the assistance of Litchfield and, in 1816, Isaac Huse, who was still selectman and highway surveyor, was elected the first representative of Manchester in the general court. In 1814, the navigation of the Merrimack River was fully opened, and the first boat came through. The river became a considerable water highway, whose traffic, though it was impaired by the opening of the Concord Railroad in 1842, continued in bulky articles nearly a score of years thereafter. For many years the care of the pound called for

considerable attention, and the boarding of the town paupers was auctioned off to the lowest bidder.

After 1810, religious matters received but little attention from the town meeting. At the annual meeting in 1814, it was voted not to raise any money for the support of preaching, and nothing more was done till 1827, when additional emphasis was given to the refusal to spend public money for religious exercises, when it was decided not to allow certain money coming from the sale of "ministerial land," to go towards the support of a minister. This was recognized by those who desired a town supported church as their Waterloo. In 1828, a Presbyterian Church Society was organized at Manchester Center, which afterwards united with the Congregational Society of Amoskeag, and in 1839 the two became the First Congregational Church of Manchester. No church edifice was built by these church societies until 1840, when the first church on Hanover street was constructed, standing where the Opera House block now is. A Methodist Episcopal church was formed and a building was erected, in 1829, at the Centre, a few rods south of the old meeting house, and this seems to have been the first building in Manchester erected exclusively for religious purposes. Universalist and Baptist societies held services in Amoskeag some years before 1840, but they met in a hall, and not till after that date were church buildings erected.

From 1821 to 1826, a controversy long drawn out and bitterly contested by Manchester's people existed over the building of the Mammoth road as the more direct stage route from Concord to Lowell. Only one man in Manchester favored it, and he is said to have kept a tavern or been in the position to keep one on the line of the road. Finally the court ordered it built, and Manchester reluctantly, but obediently, constructed the part within the town limits. But it was not built soon enough to make it worth while. If built when it was originally planned, it might have paid for itself in its use, but coming so late, it

had but few years of coaching before the newly constructed railroad changed all lines and methods of travel.

In 1822, General Stark, the most noted man then resident in New Hampshire, was gathered to his fathers. He sleeps in the little burying ground in the attractive park bearing his name, which, by the gift of his descendants, has become the property of the city. The plain granite shaft, marking the spot, is visible from the passing trains, but very few of the travelers realize that this is the monument of one who, in the darkest hours of the patriots' struggle, led his New Hampshire regiment to Vermont, and at Bennington broke the power of Burgoyne's army and contributed so largely to the final triumph of America's cause. This hero of the Indian War, the survivor of Bunker Hill and Trenton, deserves better treatment. Let us hope that sometime the Nation will provide above his grave a more fitting memorial, and if the Nation will not then the State ought to do so.

In 1824, the town showed its lack of appreciation of its own political importance when it voted, 90 to 0, to make Amherst the county seat of Hillsborough county, and it displayed its customary frugality, in 1836, by voting, 67 against 15, against the establishment of a state asylum for the insane. In 1836, the old meeting house at the Centre was repaired at the expense of \$500 and was divided into two stories, the upper story for a school-room and the lower one for a town hall.

So much for a general view of thirty years from 1810 to 1840. If nothing more than I have narrated had happened, Manchester, to-day, might be like Bedford or Litchfield or Merrimack. But Manchester had a resource not vouchsafed to any other town. Amoskeag Falls were her one big asset, and the development of their power is the reason for the city.

The project of manufacturing cloth near Amoskeag Falls was started in 1809, by Benjamin Prichard and Ephraim, David and Robert Stevens, and in 1810 they

formed a company under the name "Amoskeag Cotton & Wool Factory." They had a small mill on the west bank of the river in Amoskeag. They had little capital or machinery and their output was diminutive.

After September, 1815, little was done in the manufacturing line until 1822, when there was a sale to other parties, who were unsuccessful, and finally, in 1825, Dr. Oliver Dean and his associates got control of the property. They constructed and operated mills on the west bank and on the island in the river and made sheetings, shirtings and tickings, and the last became quite famous under the name "A C A Ticking," still a valuable trademark.

In 1831, the present Amoskeag Manufacturing Company, of which Dr. Dean was the first president and agent, was chartered with a capital of \$1,000,000, a large sum for those days—for the purpose of taking over the old company, developing water power, acquiring and selling land, selling sites and power to other manufacturing concerns, building and operating mills of its own, and so bringing about the growth of a flourishing manufacturing town worthy the name it had been given. By 1835, the company had acquired the power rights at Amoskeag Falls, at Hooksett and Garvin's Falls, most of the land on the east bank and quite a large tract on the west bank.

It built a dam and canals; built and sold a mill and boarding houses to the Stark Mills, newly organized; built two mills and other buildings of its own, and in 1838 and 1839 had its first two land sales, following the plan it had prepared, in accordance with which so much of our city has been built up. From this time on, the future was assured. Mill followed mill in the Amoskeag and Stark yards; then the Manchester Mills; the Langdon and Amory came in due course. Where a few farms and pine lands had lain almost in solitude, a town grew up as by miracle. In six years, following 1840, seven thousand people flocked here to find work and homes. The management of town affairs was taken over by the men of the

“New Village,” in 1840, after a bitter fight in town meeting with the old inhabitants. A town hall was built, in 1841, on the site of the present city hall, and town meeting was held there in 1842. The building was burned in 1844, and in 1845 another town hall, the historic structure in which we are holding these exercises, was erected at a cost of \$35,000.

In 1846, the town became a city, and its history since then is too well known to need extended comment now. Fourteen years ago, a whole week was given over to the celebration of the fiftieth anniversary of the granting of the city charter. Eloquent words in prose and poetry, uttered by men who, by their own experience or from tradition or record, were qualified to describe the events of the half century, made known to all the story of the city's life, and they have been published and bound in lasting form. During those fifty years, the city grew and prospered. Its manufactures increased and became more diversified, churches and schoolhouses were numerously constructed, the city became a county seat, the river was spanned by bridges, parks and commons were beautified a bountiful water supply was acquired, police and fire protection were amply provided, and it was fitting that our people should celebrate as they did their civil, industrial and social advancement. And they had the right to be proud, as we are all proud, of the record made in the days when rebellion was trying to destroy the republic and Manchester sent more than one in every ten of its people to battle for freedom and for Union. There were tears in Manchester following every battle during those awful days. Almost every great battlefield was reddened with the blood of Manchester men. The spirit of Stark animated the boys of '61, and a grateful city erected to the memory of those who gave their services on land and sea the beautiful monument which we hope will teach to future generations the full meaning of the loyalty and victory of the heroic dead.

Since 1896, little of startling note has transpired. The growth of the city has continued its even way. On the west bank of the river has grown up a population nearly twice that of the whole city in 1846. More and better mills have been built. The figures showing the output of cloth by the Amoskeag Company are overwhelming. Over 100,000 miles of cotton and woolen cloth, besides nearly 2,000,000 bags. The shoe manufacturing industry has become so established that Manchester stands among the leading cities of the country in that line of business. No pestilence or great calamity has been experienced. Though the annals of the last fourteen years have been uneventful, they have been years of progress and prosperity. When in 1898, in the cause of an outraged humanity, the United States went to war with Spain, the quota of Manchester in the troops called for in New Hampshire was filled and the Sheridan Guards marched away, ready to do and dare all that might confront them. Happily, the war was short; no great sacrifice was demanded. But the spirit of 1898 was the same as that of other days. It proved that martial valor and patriotic fervor still exist among the American people and that we may rest assured that, whenever duty shall call in the name of a periled country, the sublimest effort and most daring sacrifice will be forthcoming.

Thus much of the "Then." What of the "Now"?

We may safely hazard the guess that our present population is not far below 70,000, a cosmopolitan population, and, speaking generally, industrious, law abiding and decent. Large crime is and always has been rare in Manchester. Murder and riot have been so exceptional that the Parker murder and the Firemen's Muster riot stand out with unique significance. There is abundant church room for all, and no child goes untaught for lack of proper school facilities. A varied library of nearly 60,000 volumes is extensively patronized by our people. Many miles of streets are bordered with homes, owned by the occupants.

The relations between employer and employee, in our manufacturing establishments, are generally good. Wages are as high as in any similar manufacturing center. Strikes and other labor troubles have been scarce in our city. Taxation is not excessively high, and few cities anywhere can point to a better financial condition than that of Manchester. The water works alone are worth the whole city debt, and those who have been in charge of our municipal affairs should receive the credit due them for keeping the debt within such reasonable limits. The death rate here is low, and the birth rate in some streets is high enough to gladden the heart of a Roosevelt. All in all, Manchester is a good place to live in, a good place in which to have one's home, and for him who has finished his work and left his earthly home, the Valley cemetery or the Pine Grove affords a beautiful place for the last long sleep.

The former citizens of Manchester did their work well. The present generation can find enough to do to satisfy the present needs of the city. We need better and cleaner streets and smoother sidewalks. We need a decent theatre. We need several assembly halls on the ground floors, with ample means of exit. We badly need a new, large and better library building.

We need to realize the fact that our industrial situation is a peculiar one. We have few employers but many employees, and the welfare of the whole community is dependent on the success of a very few great business enterprises. Whatever is advantageous for those enterprises is advantageous for the whole city. If they are successful, the city is prosperous. They bear a large part of the expenses of the city and, naturally, desire an efficient and economical administration of municipal affairs and are entitled to a proper influence therein. We need to cultivate and maintain the most friendly relations between those enterprises and the city, for they cannot be hurt or crippled without injury to us all. They should bear their just share of the public burden, and they and the citizens

at large should harmoniously and cordially work together for the common good.

We need, also, a keener sense of civic pride—a pride that will promote a high toned and intelligent public opinion and induce each citizen, honestly and to the best of his ability to discharge his duty to the city. With such a public opinion and such citizenship, the second century of Manchester life will be brighter than the first, and the work of the sons will outrival the accomplishments of the fathers.

