

war policy of President Madison, and some of them declared it to be but a party proceeding of the President and his minions to keep themselves in power and subsidize their hungry partizans. Only a small majority of Congress approved the declaration of war. A convention of the great State of New York held at Albany, September, 1812, consisting of delegates from the several counties of the State, embodied, in elaborate resolutions, the intelligent American sentiment on the subject of the war. That convention declared: "That, without insisting on the injustice of the present war, taking solely into consideration the time and circumstances of its declaration, the condition of the country, and the state of the public mind, we are constrained to consider and feel it our duty to pronounce it a most rash, unwise and inexpedient measure, the adoption of which ought forever to deprive its authors of the esteem and confidence of an enlightened people; because, as the injuries we have received from France are at least equal in amount to those we have sustained from England, and have been attended with circumstances of still greater insult and aggravation; if war were necessary to vindicate the honour of the country, consistency and impartiality required that both nations should have been included in the declaration; because, if it were deemed expedient to exercise our right of selecting our adversary, prudence and common sense dictated the choice of an enemy, from whose hostility we had nothing to dread. A war with France would equally have satisfied our insulted honour, and, at the same time, instead of annihilating, would have revived and extended our commerce; and even the evils of such a contest would have been mitigated by the sublime consolation, that by our efforts we were contributing to arrest the progress of despotism in Europe, and effectually serving the great interests of freedom and humanity throughout the world." "That we contemplate with abhorrence, even the probability of an alliance with the present Emperor of France, every action of whose life has demonstrated, that the attainment, by any means, of universal empire, and the consequent extinction of every vestige of freedom, are the sole objects of his incessant, unbounded and remorseless ambition." "Whereas the late revocation of the British Orders in Council has removed the great and ostensible cause of the present war, and prepared the way for an immediate accommodation of all existing differences, inasmuch as, by the confession of the present Secretary of State, satisfactory and honourable arrangements might easily be made, by which the abuse resulting from the impressment of our seamen might, in future, be effectually prevented."

Such were the sentiments of the most intelligent and patriotic American citizens in regard to the war of 1812-15; they had no more sympathy with the Madison-Napoleon war than with the recent Fenian invasion of our shores. And when the war was declared, our fathers knew their duty, and knew the worthlessness of the pompous proclamations and promises of President Madison's generals and agents. The blood of our United Empire Loyalist forefathers warmed again in their own bosoms, and pulsed in the hearts of their sons and grandsons, and in the hearts of hundreds of others who had adopted Canada, under the flag of British law and liberty, as their home. Our Legislative Assembly—specially called together by General Brock, on the declaration of war—struck the key-note for Canadian loyalty, sacrifice and action, in a calm, expository and earnest address to the people of Upper Canada, and truly represented the already roused spirit of the country. Some of the words of that noble address are as follows:—

"This war, on the part of the United States, includes an alliance with the French usurper, whose dreadful policy has destroyed all that is great and grand, venerable and holy on the continent of Europe. The government of this bloody tyrant penetrates into everything—it crushes individuals as well as nations, fetters thoughts as well as motives, and delights in destroying forever all that is fair and just in opinion and sentiment. It is evidently this tyrant who now directs the rulers of America, and they show themselves worthy disciples of such a master."

After noting the juncture selected for declaring war, the address proceeds:—"It is certainly not the least wonderful among the occurrences of this astonishing age, that we should find a nation descended from Englishmen, connected still by the same language and laws, by consanguinity and many similar habits, not merely eulogizing the implacable enemy of their parent state, but joining him in the war; while pretending to nourish the purest principles of liberty, bowing the knee before the foe of all just and rational freedom, and supplicating his acceptance of tribute and adulation." After sketching the origin and sustained loyalty of the first inhabitants of the country, the Assembly said:—"Already have we the joy to remark, that the spirit of loyalty has burst forth in all its ancient splendour. The militia in all parts of the Province have volunteered their services with acclamation and displayed a degree of energy worthy of the British

name. When men are called upon to defend everything they hold precious, their wives and children, their friends and possessions, they ought to be inspired with the noblest resolutions, and they will not be easily frightened by menaces, or conquered by force. And beholding, as we do, the flame of patriotism burning from end to end of the Canadas, we cannot but entertain the most pleasing anticipations. Our enemies have indeed said, that they can subdue this country by a proclamation; but it is our part to prove that they are sadly mistaken." "If the real foundations of true liberty, and consequently of solid happiness, consist in being amenable only to such laws as we or our representatives ordain, then are we in possession of that liberty and that happiness, for this principle was fully recognized in our excellent constitution." "It is not necessary for us to examine the causes alleged by our enemies for this unjust and unnatural war, because an address from the House of Representatives of Massachusetts, the most respectable in the Union, proves in the most satisfactory manner, that it is wanton and unprovoked, and is the climax of the various outrages previously committed against Great Britain. In this statement they have been joined by the minority in Congress, whose expositions of the secret reasons of the war, and the falsehood of those alleged by the President and his friends is unanswerable, and must hand down the promoters of this diabolical measure to the execration of posterity." "Your representatives finished their labours with placing in the hands of His Honour, the President (Sir Isaac Brock,) all the public money they could collect, in order to contribute as much as possible to the extraordinary expenses which the war renders necessary, and they have the fullest confidence that it will be most faithfully applied. Having thus endeavoured, to the best of their abilities, to provide for the welfare and safety of the Province, your representatives take the liberty of reminding you that the best laws are useless without the zealous co-operation of the people. Unless you are prepared to endure the greatest privations and to make the severest sacrifices, all that your representatives have done will be of no avail. Be ready, then, at all times to rally round the Royal Standard, and let those who are not called into the service assist the families of those who are called into the field." "Remember, when you go forth to the combat, that you fight not for yourselves alone, but for the whole world. You are defeating the most formidable conspiracy against the civilization of man that ever was contrived; a conspiracy threatening a greater barbarism and misery than followed the downfall of the Roman Empire—that now you have an opportunity of proving your attachment to the parent State which contends for the relief of the oppressed nations—the last pillar of true liberty, and the last refuge of oppressed humanity."

Such were the views and spirit with which the seventy thousand people of Upper Canada, and their score of parliamentary representatives, engaged in the unequal struggle against myriads of invaders—relying simply upon their principles, their duty, and their God; and, in three months after the declaration of war, they had, with the aid of a few hundred regular soldiers and noble officers, driven back three invading armies, capturing Hull and the territory of Michigan, driving the invaders commanded by General Van Rensselaer down Queenston Heights, taking hundreds of prisoners, driving "proclamation" General Smyth, with his eight thousand from the Canadian side of the Niagara River, near Fort Erie, so that he had to run away and retire from the army to escape popular indignation and disgrace. It is not for me to dwell upon the incidents and progress of the war; raids were made into our country, many battles were fought, and much property destroyed, and much suffering inflicted; but those raids were severely retaliated, and at the end of three years not a foot of Canadian territory was in possession of the invader, while the key of the Northwest, Fort Mackinaw, was in the hands of the British.

Of all the battles fought during the war, the most sanguinary and obstinate was that of Lundy's Lane—the battle, the anniversary of which we are this day assembled to commemorate—the battle fought the last few months of the war, the 25th of July, 1814. It was the most formidable and final effort of the American General Brown to get permanent footing in Canada. The smallest number of American soldiers engaged in the battle, according to General Brown's report, was upwards of five thousand; and the largest number of British soldiers and Canadian militia engaged, according to the British General Drummond's report, was twenty-eight hundred, although the greater part of battle was fought with a force not exceeding sixteen hundred. I shall not attempt to describe the order, or narrate the incidents of the battle; I will only say, that the high ground, near the east end of Lundy's Lane, was the centre of interest, and the position contended for by both parties in deadly strife for several hours. In no battle during the war did the Americans fight with such heroism and obstinacy; and in no battle was the courage, steadiness and perseverance of the British