

If They Mean To Have War

By GROVER CLEVELAND LOUD

Inscribed upon a stone near the border of the Green at Lexington are the words spoken by Captain Nathaniel Parker to his homespun handful of Minutemen as they faced a battalion of redcoat regulars on the morning of April 19, 1775.

"Stand your ground," he said. "Don't fire unless fired upon. But, if they mean to have war, let it begin here."

They were fired upon. And the volley shattered their thin line. But noonday found them reinforced behind the ramparts of the bridge at Concord where they "fired the shot heard round the world."

These were freemen who tilled their own soil. They were fighting for their right to the land they had cleared and made fruitful, for the homes they had built upon it, for their families within the homes, for their way of life—exemplified by the Town Meeting of New England.

Their great-grandsons stood on the ridge at Gettysburg and turned back the tide of chattel slavery upon the land at its high watermark. Nor were they alone. A regiment of New York Irish led by Colonel O'Rourke fought to the last man to hold Little Round Top and a brigade of Germans knew just about enough English to say: "Ve fight mit General Sigel!"

Enmities of that distant day at Lexington and Concord and of that desperate struggle eighty-eight years later on the heights of Gettysburg have long since faded with time and the realization of common inheritance and identical aspiration.

It is the pity of human misunderstanding that both at Lexington and at Gettysburg men of the same breed and heritage were ranged against each other. But they were united when another generation, infused and leavened with the strains of all the children of men, upheld their tradition at Chateau Thierry and in the Argonne.

Even so has the spirit of America grown and spread and deepened. At its roots persist the independence

and the responsibility of the individual consonant with the rights of man, and the consciousness of these rights burns brighter whenever they are infringed or threatened with destruction.

Equality and unity in loyalty to the indigenous ideal of Americans from the beginning to the present are attested by the very names of those who went out from Concord to offer their lives for it in the First World War.

There they are on a memorial shaft not far from the God's Acre of the heroes of the Revolution, the once strange foreign names of the sons of many peoples from beyond the seas alongside the names of the descendants of the Minutemen who were summoned from their homesteads in the night by Paul Revere.

Their monument, however, was to a lost cause, lost after they had won

it in battle, lost by the victor nations that put the protection of privilege above the safeguarding of their own existence. In 1918 obligations to set economic houses in order were not fulfilled. Succeeding years brought a train of consequences that culminated in marauding dictatorships. France and Britain have paid a fearful penalty and the United States must heed the example.

For America is something to be lived for, striven for and, if need be, died for. It has come a long way and has strayed far since farmers fought for the earth they plowed in Lexington. Land monopoly in this century is bad enough as it is, but it will be intolerable under Nazi masters; death is preferable to such abject bondage of body, mind and soul.

Title or no title, the land still belongs to the people. Fighting in defense of it can free it.