

## CHAPTER IV.

PHILIP SCHUYLER was little more than fourteen years of age when the war was closed by treaty, and its attendant alarms had mostly ceased. He had studied the ordinary branches of a plain education under the instructions of his mother, for the schools of Albany were very indifferent. He also had the advantage of listening to the conversation, and perhaps actually receiving instruction from educated French protestants, who, as well as their fathers, had ever been welcome visitors in the mansion of Colonel Schuyler at The Flats. There was also a holier tie than that of mere friendship that linked the Schuylers in sympathy with those people, a brother of the colonel having married a polished and well-educated daughter of one of the Huguenot refugees, who held the first rank in society in the provincial capital.

Under the colonel's hospitable roof young Philip spent much time during his childhood and youth with the good "Aunt Schuyler," the charming matron whose characteristics of mind and heart have been so beautifully portrayed by Mrs. Grant of Laggan, for he appears to have been a special favorite with her and her husband, whom the Mohawks loved so well. It appears evident, from a sentence contained in a letter of his, in after life, that he received some instructions in the science of mathematics from one of those Huguenots, who may have been employed as a private tutor in some wealthy families at Albany. From his

earliest years Philip had exhibited a great fondness for numerals ; and long before he left home for a wider range in intellectual culture, he was complete master of all arithmetical rules laid down in the books then in use or expounded by the tutors in schools.

The subject of education, considered so important by the early Dutch settlers, had, after the conquest of New Netherland by the English, received less and less attention until the period in question, when nearly all schools were neglected, and there was no institution in the province where an academic education might be acquired. Chief Justice Smith, a resident and cotemporary historian, when alluding to the action of the Legislature of New York in 1746, in authorizing the raising of twenty-two hundred and fifty pounds, by lottery, for founding a college, says : “ To the disgrace of our first planters, who beyond comparison surpassed their eastern neighbors in opulence, Mr. De Lancey, a graduate of the University of Cambridge, (England,) and Mr. Smith, were for many years the only academics in this province, except such as were in holy orders ; and so late as the period we are now examining, (1750,) the author did not recollect above thirteen more, the youngest of whom had his bachelor’s degree at the age of seventeen, but two months before the passing of the above law, the first toward erecting a college in this colony, though at a distance of above one hundred and twenty years after its discovery and the settlement of the capital by Dutch progenitors from Amsterdam.”\* “ The persons alluded to,” says Judge Smith, in a note, “ were Peter Van Brugh Livingston, John Livingston, Philip Livingston, William Livingston, William Nicoll, Benjamin Nicoll, Hendrick Hansen, William Peartree Smith, Caleb Smith,

\* History of the Province of New York ; by William Smith.

Benjamin Woolsey, William Smith, jr., John M'Evers, and John Van Horne. These being then in the morning of life, there was no academic but Mr. De Lancey on the bench or in either of the three branches of the Legislature, and Mr. Smith was the only one at the bar." All of these were afterward the cotemporaries of Philip Schuyler in public life—some with him and some against him in the arena of political strife.

At that time commerce engrossed the attention of the principal families in the province, for it was the surest road to wealth and social distinction; and the sons who were generally destined for its avocations, were usually sent from the writing-school to the counting-room, and, in due time, on a voyage to the West India Islands. This practice was introduced by the French refugees, who had settled in the province near the close of the preceding century, they having brought with them money, arts, manners, education, and all the essential elements of thrift and progress, and had become the chief merchants of New York.

Although young Schuyler was not specially designed for mercantile life—for large landed estates awaited his care when he should arrive at his majority—his education appears to have been directed toward that end. At the age of about fifteen years, he was placed in a school at New Rochelle, in Westchester County, then in charge of the Reverend Mr. Stoupe, a native of Switzerland and pastor of the French Protestant church at that place. The settlement was composed almost entirely of the families of those Huguenots who fled from France to avoid persecution between the years 1680 and 1700, the minions of the Pope having persuaded the profligate Louis the Fourteenth to break the great green seal that held the solemn edict of Henry the Fourth, made ninety years before, which pro-

claimed toleration to all the Huguenots of his kingdom. In the great Protestant exodus that ensued, the strongest foundations of the French State were sapped. Eight hundred thousand of her best citizens—skillful agriculturists and artisans, and virtuous families—fled from her borders, and carried the secret arts of France into other countries. Fifty thousand cunning workmen took refuge in England, and gave that realm the benefit of their skill, while large numbers crossed the Atlantic, and sought quiet homes in a strange land, where the rights of conscience were held sacred. Those who settled in the province of New York were nearly all from La Rochelle. They soon separated, the artisans remaining in the city, and the tillers of the soil seating themselves in the country, some on the Hudson above the Highlands, and a large number upon a beautiful spot purchased for them by Jacob Leisler on the banks of Long Island Sound. That spot they solemnly dedicated as their future home, and named it New Rochelle, in remembrance of the loved city in their birth-land from which they had fled. They soon built a church edifice and established a school, and there (the only place within the English colonies,) the French language was taught.

Young Schuyler entered upon his studies at New Rochelle with a great deal of zeal. Very soon the hand of disease was laid heavily upon him, and for a whole year he was confined to his room with hereditary gout. It was the first appearance of a malady that tormented him all his life, notwithstanding he was always active and temperate in eating and drinking. The fortitude of the youthful martyr was sufficient to sustain him, and during the whole period of his sufferings he hardly relaxed his studies for an hour. Mathematics and the exact sciences were his favorites.

These he pursued with a devotional spirit, and he acquired a thorough knowledge of the French language, then seldom learned except by the sons of merchants engaged in trade with the West Indies.

How long Philip remained at New Rochelle can not be determined, for there is no record to answer. Probably not more than two years, for as early as the summer of 1751, when he was in his eighteenth year, he was deep in the wilderness on the borders of the Upper Mohawk, doubtless on one of those wild trading and hunting excursions in which all young Albanians engaged. He was then a tall youth, with a florid complexion, a benevolent cast of features, a fine, manly deportment, and distinguished for great kindness of manner. The red men of the forest admired and loved him, and whenever he visited them, in company with Colonel Johnson, or with Albany merchants in their summer tours to Oswego, they always gave him some testimonial of their regard. On one of these occasions, when Philip was about twenty years of age, some of the Oneida chiefs met him at the carrying place between Wook creek and the Oneida lake, while he was on his way to Oswego, and sought and obtained his assistance in nullifying a sale of much of their lands westward of Utica, which had been made to scheming white speculators by the dissolute young men of the nation. The latter had been bribed by a little money and a great deal of rum to make the transaction. Schuyler was successful, and the domain was saved to the nation. The chiefs, to testify their gratitude, exchanged names with him, a custom then common among them, by which they considered both parties honored. Several of them assumed his surname, and the last of the General's children, who survived him more than

half a century,\* remembered that almost sixty years afterward, full-blooded Oneidas, named SCHUYLER, came to Utica to sell their beautifully embroidered moccasins, and partook of the holy communion at the same table with herself in the Episcopal church. From the time of these friendly services to the Indians until his death, no man except Colonel Johnson ever exercised a greater influence over the more easterly tribes of the Iroquois confederacy than Philip Schuyler.

After his eighteenth year Philip usually visited New York each autumn, and spent several weeks with friends and relatives in the metropolis. Society there was quite different in many of its aspects from that in Albany. There was far less of the staid Dutch element in its character, and it displayed in prominent lines the cosmopolitan features of commercial marts. Being the seat of the colonial government, the tone of the best society was marked by courtly gaiety of manner and the appearance of considerable luxury. New York was one of the most social places on the continent. The inhabitants consisted principally of merchants, shopkeepers, and tradesmen; and there was not so great an inequality of wealth and position as in many other places. They were sober, honest, industrious and hospitable, though intent upon gain; and were generally frugal and temperate, except the richer sort, whose tables were furnished with the greatest variety of meat, vegetables and liquors.

Their amusements were simple and rational. The men were not given to extravagant gaming nor the cruel practice of horse racing. They usually collected in weekly evening clubs for conversation, smoking, and the indul-

\* Mrs. Catharine Van Rensselaer Cochrane, his youngest child, who died at Oswego, New York, on the 26th of August, 1857, aged 76 years.

gence of games of chance for amusement ; and the women of all ages were amused in summer by aquatic excursions on the neighboring waters, and in winter by concerts of music and assemblies for dancing, which were held in a large room in the Exchange at the foot of Broad street. On such occasions they assembled and retired early ; and there might always be seen many handsome women, “ scarce any of them distorted shapes,” and all well dressed.

At about this time theatrical performances were introduced into New York for the first time. As usual, they were exceedingly attractive, especially to young people, and the little theatre fitted up in Nassau street, south side, between the present Fulton and John streets, with room enough for only about three hundred persons, was usually crowded on the nights of performance, which occurred tri-weekly. The theatre was opened at about the middle of September, 1753, under the management of Lewis Hallam, who had been with his company performing at Williamsburg, in Virginia, and at Annapolis and other places in Maryland. Young Schuyler, who was always a welcome visitor in the choicest circles of New York, not only on account of his own excellence of character and easy and refined manners, but because of his relationship by inter-marriages with families in the city who held the highest social position next to the governor, appears to have been present at one of the earliest, perhaps the very earliest of these performances. Writing to a friend in Albany on the 21st of September, he says :

“The schooner arrived at Ten Eyck’s wharf on Wednesday, at one o’clock, and the same evening I went to the play with Phil. You know I told you before I left home that if the players should be here I should see them, for a player is a new thing under the sun in our good province. Phil’s sweetheart went with us. She is a handsome brunette from

Barbadoes, has an eye like that of a Mohawk beauty, and appears to possess a good understanding. Phil. and I went to see the grand battery in the afternoon, and to pay my respects to the governor, whose lady spent a week with us last spring, and we bought our play tickets for eight shillings apiece, at Parker and Weyman's printing-office, in Beaver street, on our return. We had tea at five o'clock, and before sundown we were in the theatre, for the players commenced at six.\* The room was quite full already. Among the company was your cousin Tom and Kitty Livingston, and also Jack Watts, Sir Peter Warren's brother-in-law. I would like to tell you all about the play, but I can't now, for Billy must take this to the wharf for Captain Wynkoop in half an hour. He sails this afternoon.

"A large green curtain hung before the players until they were ready to begin, when, on the blast of a whistle, it was raised, and some of them appeared and commenced acting. The play was called *The Conscious Lovers*, written, you know, by Sir Richard Steele, Addison's help in writing the *Spectator*. Hallam, and his wife and sister, all performed, and a sprightly young man named Hulett played the violin and danced merrily. But I said I could not tell you about the play, so I will forbear, only adding that I was no better pleased than I should have been at the club, where, last year, I went with cousin Stephen, and heard many wise sayings which I hope profited me something.

"To-morrow I expect to go into Jersey to visit Colonel Schuyler,† who was at our house four or five years ago, when he returned from Oswego. He is a kinsman and good soldier, and as I believe we shall have war again with the French quite as soon as we could wish, I expect he will lead his Jerseymen to the field. I wish you and I, Brom.,

\* On the 20th of November, [1753,] the following curious note appeared on the play bills:

"N. B. Gentlemen and ladies that intend to favor us with their company are desired to come by six o'clock, being determined to keep to our hour, as it would be a great inconvenience to them to be kept out late, and a means to prevent disappointment."—Dunlap's *History of the American Theatre*, page 14.

† Grandson of the first Schuyler, of Albany, and second son of Arent Schuyler, who settled in New Jersey. When an incursion into Canada was projected in 1746, he was put in command of a New Jersey regiment, and was at Oswego for two years, when he returned to private life. He went with his regiment to the same fort in 1755. He was made a prisoner on parole in 1756, but was ordered to Canada in 1758, where he was soon exchanged and returned home. He was soon in the north again with his regiment, and in September, 1760, he entered Montreal as a victor. He died in 1762, near Newark, New Jersey.



could go with him. But I must say farewell, with love to Peggy, and sweet Kitty V. R. if you see her."\*

This, and another short letter, comprise all of the writings of General Schuyler, in manuscript or published, that I have seen bearing date earlier than that of his commission as captain, in 1755. Indeed very little is known of his career up to that time, for no biographical sketch of him was written during his life, and he left behind no continuous diary or journal containing any notice of his earlier years.

Schools in New York, at this time, were of a low order. "The instructors want instruction," said a cotemporary, "and through a long, shameful neglect of all the arts and sciences, our common speech is extremely corrupt, and the evidences of a bad taste, both as to thought and language, are visible in all our proceedings, public and private."† There was nothing more generally neglected than reading among all classes, imitating, in this respect, society in England at that time, when education was regarded as pedantry, and a student outside of the liberal professions was a great rarity. Philip Schuyler, who had acquired much useful knowledge and a great variety of information from books, as well as observation, was therefore looked upon almost as a prodigy in New York, and men of culture delighted to have him visit them. Among these he best loved the society of Mr. Barclay, rector of Trinity Church, Mr. Johnson, his assistant, and Mr. Smith, the historian. With the latter he became very intimate, and they were constant correspondents for years before the Revolution, and even after Mr. Smith had taken an opposing position

\* Autograph Letter of Philip Schuyler to Abraham Ten Broeck. † Smith.

in politics and espoused the cause of the king in the quarrel.

Only two newspapers were published in New York at this period, and they were very indifferent ones. They contained very little reading except advertisements and a meagre record of current events, but were much improved a few years later, when Hugh Gaine's *Mercury* became a vehicle through which some of the ablest essayists of the province were enabled to reach the public ear.

In libraries the people were very deficient. In the City Hall, a strong brick edifice, two stories in height, which stood upon the site of the present custom-house, were a thousand volumes, which had been bequeathed to the *Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts*, by Dr. Millington, Rector of Newington. That library was sent to New York in 1730, and, as evidence of the scarcity of books in America at that time, it may be mentioned that the secretary of the society, in his letter to Governor Montgomerie, stated that they were sent "for the use of the clergy and gentlemen of New York, and the neighboring governments of Connecticut, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania, upon giving security to return them." The greater part of these were theological works, and at the time we are considering many of them were missing. With the movement for the establishment of a college in New York a desire for a public library appears to have arisen, and in 1754 a considerable sum was subscribed for that purpose, and seven hundred volumes of new and well selected books were purchased. This was the origin of the New York Society Library, one of the most flourishing of the literary institutions of that city at the present time.\*

\* The largest private library known in the province previous to the Revolution was that of Governor Montgomerie, which contained 1,341 volumes

Religion, morals and metaphysics received due attention, but in different degrees. Theology had always been a favorite topic for meditation, and at about the middle of the last century it became almost as popular as politics as a theme for public discussion in the province, because of recent ecclesiastical movements in England that deeply concerned the American colonists. Every Protestant sect was legally tolerated in the province, while the Episcopalians, dwelling under the shadow of the established church in England, and claiming precedence, looked with very little favor upon the dissenters. The dislike was mutual, and no love was wasted.

Nationality, likewise, had a separating influence, and the old hatred that existed between the English and Dutch had not disappeared, but was greatly modified. The bulk of the inhabitants of New York city consisted of the descendants from the original Dutch planters and traders, and there were two churches in the city wherein the gospel was preached in the language of their fathers, by Ritzema and De Ronde, who were both strict Calvinists. These two churches were associated under one incorporation styled the Reformed Protestant Dutch Church of the city of New York.

There were also two Episcopal church edifices in the city. Trinity Church, first erected in 1697 and rebuilt in 1737, contained seats for two thousand hearers, but strangers and proselytes had so augmented the congregation

of a standard character. The first law library of which we have any account was that of Broughton, the attorney-general in 1704, which contained only thirty-six volumes. The library of Judge Smith, the historian, and that of his father, the eminent jurist, who died in 1769, contained about a thousand volumes of law and miscellaneous books and pamphlets. Of the latter they had a large collection, dating back to the civil wars in Charles the First's time.

that in 1752 St. George's chapel was erected on Beekman street, in what was then considered "a new, crowded, and ill-built part of the town." In the face of much opposition from the Church of England party, a Presbyterian church was founded in 1719, under the pastoral charge of Mr. Anderson, a Scotch minister, but they did not erect a church edifice until 1748. At this time the French church had become torn by dissensions, and its membership reduced to a handfull. There were also in the city two German Lutheran churches, and a Quaker and an Anabaptist meeting-house, a Jewish synagogue, and a Moravian congregation. The latter was a new sect in America, just planted by Count Zinzendorf and others, and the congregation in New York then consisted principally of female converts from other religious societies.

But the Episcopalians took the lead in influence, the aristocracy being chiefly members of that church. They enjoyed the advantages of special privileges granted by their church charter and laws connected with it, the violent, weak, and dissolute Governor Fletcher, who became the tool of the aristocracy and was hated by the people, having procured the passage of an act by the Assembly which virtually made the doctrines and rituals of that church the established religion of the province. With profane and perhaps drunken lips, he piously declared to the Assembly that "neither heresy, sedition, schism or rebellion should be preached among them, nor vice and profanity encouraged." His views were seconded by the successor of the Earl of Bellomont, Edward Hyde, (Lord Cornbury,) the licentious robber of the public treasury, who persecuted all denominations of Christians except those of the Church of England. From his time until the kindling of the old war for independence, in whose blaze the rubbish of des-

otic systems of every kind in the colonies was consumed, the sum of five hundred dollars of the annual salary of the rector of Trinity Church was unrighteously levied upon all the other clergy and laity in the city.

At about the time in question, a sharp controversy commenced between the episcopal and dissenting writers of the province, and continued for several years, continually increasing in acrimony. The chief cause of the controversy was the alarm felt in the colonies concerning a scheme proposed in 1748 by Dr. Secker, Archbishop of Canterbury, for establishing episcopacy and curtailing the Puritan or dissenting influence in the political and religious affairs of the American colonies. The throne and the hierarchy were in a measure mutually dependent, and Dr. Secker's proposition was warmly approved by the British cabinet.

The colonists, viewing episcopacy in its worst light, as exhibited in the early days of the American settlements, had been taught to fear such power, if it should happen to be wielded by the hand of a crafty politician, more than the arm of civil government, and they regarded the archbishop's scheme as a weapon of contemplated tyranny. The eminent Whitefield had been for years crossing and re-crossing the Atlantic on errands of mercy, and arousing the colonists to a right sense of their duties and privileges. He had taught lessons concerning religious freedom with power to thousands whose minds had never been agitated by reflections and speculations upon such subjects ; and all over the land there was a general awakening to truths of vast importance, secular and spiritual, hitherto undiscovered or unrecognized. These truths imparted strength to the recipients, and with the recent vindication of the liberty of the press in the acquittal of Zenger, they made many bold in their enunciation of maxims concerning the freedom

of conscience, and the right of every man to the exercise of private judgment in matters relating solely to himself and his God.

The public mind was prepared to act when the notes of alarm were sounded, and Whitefield was among the first to send them over the land. He had learned the secret of Archbishop Secker's scheme, and the fact that the integrity of Puritanism in New England had been approached with the bribe of a bishop's mitre for several dissenting divines, and he exclaimed to Dr. Langdon, of Harvard college, "I can not leave this town without acquainting you with a secret. My heart bleeds for America. O, poor New England ! There is a deep laid plot against both your civil and religious liberties, and they will be lost. Your golden days are at an end. You have nothing but trouble before you. Your liberties will be lost if you are not vigilant and brave !"

From other points alarums were sounded, and the pens of ready writers caught up the strain and put forth valiant words and hard arguments in opposition. Among the most powerful and industrious of these writers in the province of New York was William Livingston, (afterward governor of New Jersey,) a native of Albany, then about thirty years of age, and already eminent as a lawyer in the provincial capital. He commenced his task behind the curtain of anonymity, and dealt heavy blows in favor of Presbyterianism and against episcopacy, in a weekly periodical called the *Independent Reflector*, first published late in 1752.

For some time the *Reflector* was devoted to the exposure and censure of local social and political abuses, and the suggestion of ideas practically beneficial to the people. The talent displayed, the truths put forth, and the interests disturbed by this serial attracted general attention imme-

diately, and provoked the strongest opposition. The editor spared no party, social, political, or religious; and he was denounced in private circles as an infidel and libertine, and in the pulpit as the Gog and Magog of the Apocalypse. The mayor, who had felt his lash, recommended the grand jury to present the *Reflector* as a libel, and the author was publicly charged with profanity, irreligion, and sedition.

It was not until the spring of 1753 that the Episcopalians and their interests were assailed in the *Reflector*. The occasion was the effort (which proved successful) to place the College about to be established under the control of the Episcopalians. Mr. Livingston was one of the small minority of the trustees who were not of that denomination, and had opposed the measure because the Episcopalians were greatly in the minority in the province, and the money having been raised by a general tax. Accordingly, in March he opened his batteries with great force against the measure. His language was bold and defiant, but dignified and unexceptionable. He caught up the alarm notes of Whitefield, and in several numbers he most ably discussed the subject of Christianity and its mission, and its relations to society and the civil power, drawing illustrations for his arguments from the past history of the Church of England and events around him. Violent opposition immediately appeared, and Barclay, Johnson, Auchmuty, and other churchmen answered the strictures of the *Reflector* in the columns of Gaine's *Mercury*. The subject was considered of sufficient importance to compose almost the entire theme of a letter written at the close of June, 1753, by the Reverend Samuel Johnson to Dr. Secker, the Archbishop of Canterbury. "Among other pernicious books," he said, "the *Independent Whig* grows much in vogue, and a notable set of young gentle-

men of figure in New York have of late set up for writers in that way in a weekly paper called the *Independent Reflector*.\* Several worthy gentlemen of the Church in that province have of late been embarked in the design of erecting a college as a seminary of the Church, though with a free and generous toleration for other denominations, upon which these Reflectors have been indefatigable in their paper, and by all possible means, both public and private, endeavoring to spirit up the people against us, and to wrest it out of the Church's hands and make it a sort of a free-thinking, latitudinarian seminary.† We have several of us been writing in the Church's defense against them, and endeavoring, not without some success, to defeat their pernicious schemes."

Finally, through the influence of the civil authority, the clergy, and the aristocracy, the printers of the *Independent Reflector* (Parker and Weyman,) were induced to refuse to print it any longer, and it was closed with the fifty second number, on the 22d of November, 1753. But the controversy continued for more than ten years, in various

\* It was known that Livingston was the sole conductor of this work, and his articles were signed with different initials. But there were some able contributors besides himself, over different signatures, and as John Morin Scott, William Peartree Smith, and William Smith, the historian, coincided with him in sentiment, these have been named as his coadjutors. In the letter here quoted, Mr. Johnson speaks of Mr. Smith (the young man who bore it,) as one who had written against the *Reflectors*.

† In the spring of 1754, the trustees of the college, stimulated by an offer of a tract of land whereon to build an edifice, made by Trinity Church, on condition that the head of the college should always be a member of the Church of England, and the prayers of the church always to be used in it, petitioned Lieutenant Governor De Lancey for a charter containing such provisions. Livingston alone entered a protest against the prayers of the petitioners, believing that this college scheme was a part of the great plan arranged for uniting Church and State in the colonies. But the act of incorporation, with these sectarian provisions, was passed, and the Reverend Samuel Johnson, the writer of this letter, was appointed to the presidency.



ways, and through various vehicles. The synod of Connecticut voted thanks to Livingston for his championship; while in Gaine's paper he was lampooned in a poem of almost two hundred lines. Livingston wrote anonymously, and the poet thus referred to the author:

"Some think him a *Tindall*, some think him a *Chubb*,  
Some think him a *Ranter*, that spouts from his *tub*;  
Some think him a *Newton*, some think him a *Locke*,  
Some think him a *Stone*, some think him a *Stock*—  
But a *Stock* he at least may thank Nature for giving,  
And if he's a *Stone*, I pronounce it a *Living*."

Young Schuyler was in New York when the forty-sixth number of the *Reflector* appeared, which contained the editor's "creed" in thirty-nine articles. In a letter to a friend, whose name does not appear in the manuscript, he said: "I send you the forty-sixth number of the *Independent Reflector*, which is making a notable stir here. The clergy, and all churchmen, are in arms against it, and our friend, Will. Livingston, who is the principal writer, is thought by some to be one of the most promising men in the province. I esteem the Church and its liturgy, but I believe he is right in opposing the ridiculous pretensions of the clergy, who would make it as infallible as the Popish Church claims to be. I wish liberty of conscience in all things, and I believe our friend is right when he says, '*Our faith, like our stomachs, may be overcharged, especially if we are prohibited to chew what we are commanded to swallow.*'"

The foregoing glance at the social and religious aspect of New York, at the period we are considering, will be found essential as we proceed in our researches concerning the development of events that led to the old war for independence, in which Philip Schuyler bore a conspicuous

and noble part, because in these elements we may perceive the philosophy of the history of those times.

A brief delineation of some of the most prominent material characteristics of the city of New York, the metropolis of the province, is equally necessary for the same reasons, because the quarrel was based upon interests involving principles of a moral and material character.

New York city, at that time, contained about thirteen thousand inhabitants, of whom about two thousand were negroes, who were mostly held in easy servitude as bond slaves. There were about twenty-five hundred buildings in the city, many of them of brick, covered with tiles, and most of them presenting an aspect of comfort and thrift. Fine country residences, surrounded by gardens and pastures, embellished the suburbs, and some of the town residences were comparatively palatial. The city was almost a mile in length, and about half a mile in its greatest breadth. Some of the streets were paved with huge pebbles, as in rural cities and villages at the present, but nearly all of them were irregular in their linear relations and course. Its markets were well supplied with fish, flesh, and vegetables of every kind, the latter being chiefly raised by Dutch farmers on Harlem Plains, near the northern end of the island. "No part of America," says a cotemporary writer,\* "is better supplied with markets abounding with greater plenty and variety. \* \* \* Our oysters are a considerable article in support of the poor. Their beds are within view of the town; a fleet of two hundred small craft are often seen there, at a time, when the weather is mild in winter; and this single article is computed to be worth, annually, £10,000 or £12,000."

The merchants of New York were justly compared to

\* William Smith.

a hive of bees gathering honey for others, for the largest portion of the profits of their trade centered in Great Britain. They were not allowed to traffic except with Great Britain or its colonies; and acts of Parliament forbade various domestic manufactures, so that many necessary articles which the colonists might have made for themselves were imported from England.

They exported to the British West Indies bread, peas, rye, meal, Indian corn, apples, onions, boards, staves, horses, sheep, butter, cheese, pickled oysters, beef and pork. Of flour alone they shipped about eighty thousand barrels a year. Their returns consisted chiefly of rum, sugar, and molasses from the islands, and cash from Curaçoa, and the balance in this trade was always in favor of the New York merchants. They imported cotton, from St. Thomas and Surinam, lime-juice and Nicaragua wood from Curaçoa, and logwood from the Bay of Honduras. They exported flax seed to Ireland and logwood and furs to England, but the balance was always largely against the colonists. The importation of dry goods alone from Great Britain was so great that they often found it very difficult to make remittances. They were consequently drained of gold and silver by the British merchants. The annual importation of goods from Great Britain by the colony of New York, at that time (1753 to 1760), was estimated at not less than one hundred thousand pounds sterling.

The city of New York, incorporated more than sixty years before, was divided into seven wards, under the government of a mayor, recorder, aldermen and assistant aldermen, who formed a common council. The mayor, sheriff and coroner, were annually appointed by the governor, and the recorder, holding a patent from the same officer, was dependent upon his pleasure for the term of his

official career. The annual revenue of the corporation was nearly two thousand pounds a year, and the standing militia of the island consisted of twenty-three hundred men. The city had also, in reserve, one thousand stand of arms for seamen, the poor, and others, in case of an invasion.

A strong fortification was upon the lower end of the island, on the site of the old Fort Amsterdam, called Fort George, in which was the governor's house, three stories in height and pleasantly fronting the bay ; also brick barracks, originally built for the accommodation of the independent companies. A large battery had just been erected eastward of the fort, built of stone, cedar joists and earth, on which ninety-two cannon were mounted ; and in front was Nutten (now Governor's) Island, which was made a demesne for the governors by an act of the colonial assembly, on which the erection of a strong castle was then under discussion, it being an eligible point for an enemy to plant batteries to bombard the town. A greater portion of the palisades and block-houses erected during the alarm caused by the enemy's inroads on the northern frontier in 1745, extending from the East river to the Hudson, nearly on a line with the present Chambers street, were yet remaining, "a monument to our folly," says Judge Smith, "which cost £8,000."

Such was New York at the opening of the French and Indian war, a little more than a hundred years ago, during which the province became the theatre of the most stirring scenes of that contest.