

CHAPTER XIII.

DURING the period of intense excitement in the colonies which we have been considering, Mr. Schuyler was an active but conservative politician. He espoused the cause of his countrymen at the beginning of the dispute, with a clear understanding of the merits of the controversy, but his judgment, his love of order, and his social position, made him cautious and conciliating until the time arrived for radical and decisive action.

Business called him frequently to the city of New York, and there he mingled freely with men of every degree. His social qualities, his strict integrity, his enlightened and liberal views upon all subjects which challenged his attention, made him a welcome guest in every family. He was intimate with Sir Henry Moore, the governor, and their families visited each other. Dr. Johnson, of Kings' College, loved him for his sterling virtues, and politicians of every kind considered his friendship a favor and honor.

As the attorney of Colonel Bradstreet, we find Mr. Schuyler in New York in March, 1766, conferring with General Gage, at Fort George, and receiving for his principal between seven and eight thousand dollars, due him for monies advanced to persons who had supplied the Indians with various articles during that officer's expedition to Detroit, in 1764. We also find him, as revealed by his correspondence, an adviser and mediator in family feuds

among his friends ; a guardian and protector of the weak and wayward of his kindred ; and as a valued counselor of those who were involved in serious or delicate troubles. At the time when he was in New York, in communication with General Gage, and a guest of the governor, we find him the confidential adviser of the afterward eminent Peter Van Shaack, who, while a student in college, privately married a daughter of the opulent Henry Cruger. Her angry father refused to sanction the marriage, and kept them apart. In the midst of his sorrow, a letter from Schuyler, then in New York, appears to have affected him most salutarily. "The approbation of good men," said the sufferer, "is a powerful incentive to virtue. You have exactly expressed the sentiments of *my* heart. However happy her presence would make me, without her affections I would not wish to have her person, or to assert my legal right to it on conditions that will ever be but secondary to me." The father soon became reconciled.

Mr. Schuyler appears not to have been an enrolled member of the association of the Sons of Liberty at Albany, yet he affiliated with Jeremiah Van Rensselaer, Abraham Tenbroeck, Jelles Fonda, Myndert Rosenboom, Robert Henry, Volkert P. Douw, Thomas Young, and other active members in his native city and the Mohawk valley, in their opposition to the Stamp Act. He was in New York in the beginning of May, 1766, when the joyful news was brought by Major James (who came passenger in the *Hynde*, from Plymouth,) of the repeal of the Stamp Act, and he feasted with the Sons of Liberty at Howard's, where "twenty-eight loyal and constitutional toasts were drank." Twenty-four of these were personal and the remainder were exceedingly loyal, such as "The King"—

“The Prince of Wales and the royal family”—“Sir Henry Moore and the land we live in”—and “Perpetual union between Great Britain and her colonies.” Before the dinner he went with a large number of the Sons of Liberty, who, on the invitation of the rector, repaired to Trinity Church to hear a congratulatory discourse on the occasion. On the following day a convention of the Episcopal clergy was held at the same place, and Dr. Auchmuty, after sermon, greeted them with a congratulatory speech suitable to the occasion.

Sir Henry Moore was a gay, affable, good-natured, well-bred gentleman, and courteous in the highest degree. He was very popular and fond of company, and he and his family spent much time with the leading inhabitants of New York and its vicinity, and higher up the Hudson, in social enjoyments. The governor made frequent visits to Albany, and was always the guest of Mr. and Mrs. Schuyler. Their spacious and beautiful mansion had been recently erected within the southern suburbs of Albany (yet standing at the head of Schuyler street), and there they had just commenced the dispensing of that generous hospitality which continued for almost forty years. They then had five living children; and Colonel Bradstreet, who was separated from his wife, (the widow of his cousin, Sir Simon Bradstreet, of Dublin,) was an inmate of the family.

Sir Henry and his family visited Albany in the summer of 1766, and at that time Mr. Schuyler and the governor rode up the Mohawk valley, on horseback, to the baronial residence of Sir William Johnson (now Johnstown) and consummated a joint purchase of lands from the Indians in that wild region. The governor and his family were there again in October, and in December Mr. Schuyler and his family were the guests of the governor at the province

house, in the fort at New York, where they left their daughter for a visit of several weeks. At that time arrangements were made for securing some Mohawk lands for Sir Henry's friend, Lord Holland, (father of Charles James Fox,) and for the purchase of other lands in the neighborhood of Fort Stanwix. These land transactions and social re-unions continued during the whole administration of Sir Henry, which was ended by his death in September, 1769, when only fifty-six years of age.

In 1767 Mr. Schuyler appears to have been connected with the commissary department. In March the governor consults him, by letter, concerning the regiment of Colonel Mann, stationed at the head of Lake George, and also as to the appointment of commanders of other militia regiments, whose officers were about to resign on account of age, in which he says, "Believe me when I assure you that the persons proposed to succeed them could not have a better recommendation than Colonel Bradstreet's and yours." Among those recommended was Philip Skene, afterward made famous by his connection with affairs at Skenesborough, or Whitehall, at the beginning of the Revolution.

A little later, we find Colonel Mann, who was assistant commissary, complaining to Mr. Schuyler of a lack of provisions for the garrison at the head of Lake George, and requesting him to send some up immediately.

In May, William Smith, who had espoused the cause of the colonists, but who, when the final struggle began, drew back and became an active tory, wrote to Schuyler respecting Townshend's tax measures, and said, "When will these confusions end! What a disjointed empire is this! I am afraid it is too complex for so vast an extent. At all events America must rise. The prosperity and ad-

versity of Britain both conduce to our growth. Would to God we had a little more government here !”

At about this time, Mr. Schuyler, pursuant to the directions of the governor, was active in the formation of a militia regiment, of which he was to be the commander. In August following he received his commission, dated the 20th, in which his district is defined as being bounded “on the south by the north line of the manor of Rensselaerwyck ; on the north by Batten Kill or Creek, and the north bounds of Saratoga ; on the east by the county of Cumberland and the townships laid out on the same north and south range or line, and on the west by the east bounds of Schenectada.” This comprised large portions of the present counties of Saratoga, Rensselaer, and Washington. From that time until the kindling of the Revolution he was known as Colonel Schuyler, and held the office to which he was appointed by Sir Henry Moore.

In the autumn of 1767, the commissioners of New York and Massachusetts Bay, appointed to fix the boundary line between the two provinces, pursuant to acts in 1764, met in conference at New Haven, in Connecticut. William Nicoll, Robert R. Livingston, and William Smith were now the commissioners for New York, and Governor Hutchinson, William Brattle, and Edward Sheafe were the commissioners for Massachusetts. Colonel Schuyler, as an early commissioner, had taken great interest in the controversy, as we have seen, and had been very useful to the new board from his own province. He had laid before them all the mathematical plans and calculations which he had made for his private use, and the field-notes he had taken when personally engaged in the matter. Mr. Smith, in particular, was under great obligation to him, and on his return from the conference, toward the middle of October,

he wrote a long letter to Colonel Schuyler, detailing the proceedings in a concise and perspicuous manner. "I brought a sore throat home with me," he said, "and that prevents me from seeing Sir Henry. I wish to know your sentiments soon, as a guide to me in what may be proper to recommend to him."

Colonel Schuyler had now erected a pleasant country mansion on the bank of the Fish Creek, at Saratoga, a short distance from the site of the one burned by the French and Indians in 1745, when his kinsman was murdered; and he had also enlarged and improved his mills there. For some time he had paid much attention to the cultivation of flax and hemp. In a letter to Professor Brand, of London, as early as 1763, he had urged the propriety of encouraging the culture of the latter in the colonies as a matter of national concern. That gentleman, in reply, said, "your observations about hemp are very just, and apply also to iron, which, if the colonies had been encouraged to have supplied us with, and which they could have done, we need not have regarded Russia, upon whom we depended for our naval stores of hemp and iron during the war." Professor Brand adds, "In my next I hope to send you an account of a machine for pulling up trees by the roots, and expeditiously, which has been tried and succeeds. It comes from Switzerland."

Among other improvements at Saratoga, Colonel Schuyler erected a flax mill in the year 1767, the first of the kind in the American colonies. At a meeting of the *Society for Promoting Arts*, of which he was a prominent member, held in New York near the close of that year, he laid before them a statement concerning his mill, and a calculation of the difference of the work done by it and by the hand. The society, considering his enterprise of great public im-

portance, decreed that a medal should be given to him, and voted him their "thanks for executing so useful a design in the province." At the same meeting a proposition for "setting up the business of silk throwing was read, but judged improper, at least at present, for the colony."

The time was now at hand when the assembly would expire by its septennial limitation. Writs for a new election were issued, and in the newspapers, in caucuses of politicians, in hand-bills, and in public assemblies much was said in opposition to the system of open voting that then prevailed, and the preponderance of lawyers in the Legislature. Much complaint was also made of the practice of self-nomination—"stump candidates," as they are now called in the western States—and their solicitation of votes. Squibs like the following appeared in the newspapers, and indicated a strong feature in public sentiment:

"A CARD.—Jack Bowline and Tom Hatchway send their Services (damn Compliments,) to the Freeholders and Freemen of the city of New York, and beg they would, in order to try how the Land lies, take an Observation, and they will find: *First*, That the good People of this city are supported by *Trade* and the *Merchants*. *Second*, That the *Lawyers* are supported by the *People*.

"SHIP DEFIANCE, February 20, 1768."

Reply.—"A CARD: Mr. Axe and Mr. Hammer, being selected by a number of their brother Freeholders and Freemen of the city of New York to return their hearty thanks to their good friends Mr. Hatchway and Mr. Bowline, have consented, and think proper to do it in this Public Manner, and to assure them that the "*Leather Aprons*" (a very respectable body) are clearly of the Opinion that it is *Trade*, and not *Law*, that supports our Families. And honest Jack Jolt, the Cartman, says he never got Sixpence for riding Law-Books, though he gets many Pounds from the Merchants. So, with many thanks for your sensible, good Card, we say as you say, 'No Lawyers to the Assembly.'

"TRADESMEN'S HALL, February 29, 1768."

At the close of 1767, Colonel Schuyler was requested to represent his native city and county in the colonial

assembly. A seat in that body, says Chancellor Kent, "was very important, and an evidence of character as well as of influence, inasmuch as the members were few and chosen exclusively by freeholders, and held their seats for seven years."

Colonel Schuyler at first hesitated, chiefly because his private affairs demanded his whole attention. But his warmest friends urged him to accept the nomination. They knew the weight that his unexceptionable character, his extensive connections, and his deserved popularity would have in the councils of the state at that critical moment, when the tempest clouds of revolution were hovering in the political sky. "Let me persuade you," wrote William Smith, then a member of the assembly, at the middle of January, 1768, "not to refuse your services to your country—one session, if no more. After seven years we shall both abandon to ease. I will promise to leave you in full possession of your wolves, foxes, snow, (a small sailing vessel), mills, fish, and lands at Saraghtogue, and give no disturbance while the remaining sands run out." Alas! at the end of seven years Colonel Schuyler was in the midst of a most stormy career of political life, and about to enter upon military duties of the most arduous and responsible kind; while his friend, an apologist for the crown and a practical enemy to republicanism in America, was his fierce political antagonist, preparing himself, by acts of opposition to the popular will, for exile in Canada.

Colonel Schuyler accepted the nomination, much to the satisfaction of the people. "Having been yesterday informed of your being unanimously requested to serve as member of the assembly for the city and county, by the principal people of Albany, and of your acquiescence thereto," wrote Sir William Johnson, from "Johnson

Hall," on the 29th of February, "I have only to congratulate you thereupon, and to assure you of my approbation of their choice, and that I am, sir, your well wisher, etc." Little did Sir William think that, a few years later, this budding statesman would be the virtual controller of the lives and fortunes of the baronet's family.

On the 3d of March, 1768, Colonel Schuyler and Jacob H. Teneyck were elected representatives of the city and county of Albany. The certificate of this election, signed by Harmanus Schuyler, high sheriff of the county, and six others, is dated the same day.

Colonel Schuyler, expecting soon to be called to New York to attend to his duties as a legislator, made preparations for the accommodation of himself and family there. A kinswoman, to whom he wrote on the subject of a boarding place for his children, replied that a widow in Hanover Square was "willing to take two of them, at fifty pounds a year, two pounds of tea and one loaf of sugar each, their stockings and clothes mended ; but new work must be paid for making." But he was soon relieved from suspense, by a letter from Sir Henry Moore, at the middle of March, who wrote : "I have already mentioned to the gentlemen of the council that I do not think the assembly should meet on the return of the writs, as I have no particular business to lay before them, and their meeting will be put off by proclamation, so that I hope you will not have your plans broken in upon, and your own private business interrupted."

Toward the close of the previous year, Colonel Schuyler had entertained some strange guests at his mansion. These were the famous Attakullakulla, or the "Little Carpenter," principal chief of the Cherokee nation of Indians, and eight subordinate chiefs and warriors, who arrived in

New York in December, with Captain Schemerhorn and an interpreter. They were on their way to visit Sir William Johnson, to seek his mediation for the conclusion of a peace between the Cherokees and the Six Nations. General Gage took an interest in the embassy, and on the 15th of December sent them in a sloop to Albany, where, at his request, they were received by Colonel Schuyler and forwarded to Sir William. They attempted to ascend the Mohawk in batteaus, but the frost closed it, and they made their way on horseback, suffering much from the inclemency of the weather, so seldom felt in their southern homes. Colonel Schuyler and two or three others accompanied them as far as Fort Johnson, and then dispatched a guide to lead them the remainder of the journey. The embassy was successful, and the ambassadors returned to New York at the close of March.

The new assembly, of which Colonel Schuyler was a member, did not meet until the 27th of October, 1768. Philip Livingston, of New York city, was Speaker, and the Legislature was composed of some of the most noted men of the province.* Colonel Schuyler was then thirty-five years of age. Although he was among the youngest members of that body, and had never had an hour's experience

* The following are the names of the members of the New York assembly when Colonel Schuyler first entered it:

New York City—Philip Livingston, James De Lancey, Jacob Walton, James Jauncey, Isaac Low, John Cruger, John Alsop. *Albany City and County*—Jacob H. Teneyck, Philip Schuyler. *Kings County*—Simon Boerum, John Rapelye. *Queens County*—Zebulon Seaman, Daniel Kissam. *Suffolk County*—William Nicoll, Eleazer Miller. *Richmond County*—Henry Holland, Benjamin Seaman. *Westchester County*—John Thomas, Frederick Philipse. *Borough of West Chester*—John De Lancey. *Dutchess County*—Leonard Van Kleeck, Dirk Brinckerhoff. *Ulster County*—Charles Dewitt, George Clinton. *Orange County*—Henry Wisner, Selah Strong. *Manor of Rensselaerwyck*—Abraham Tenbroeck. *Manor of Livingston*—Peter R. Livingston. *Manor of Cortlandt*—Pierre Van Courtlandt.

in a deliberative assembly, he at once took an honorable, conspicuous, and influential position as a legislator, and particularly as a member of special committees. Prompt in action, extremely methodical, tireless in labor, determined in purpose, candid, fearless, and perfectly reliable, he challenged and received the respect and confidence of the whole House, and the approval of his constituents and of the people at large.

Colonel Schuyler entered upon life as a legislator at a most remarkable and important period in the history of his country. The people in all the provinces were intensely excited by current political events. They stood firm upon the rock of truth—the great principles of justice between man and man—and with a full consciousness of integrity, and firm reliance upon the Divine Protector, they had uttered the voice of remonstrance so vehemently, and raised the arm of resistance so defiantly, that the ire of the home government had become hot and implacable. Massachusetts had sent forth, in the name of the Speaker of the assembly, a Circular Letter to all its sister provinces, embodying in it the sentiments expressed in a petition previously addressed to the King, in which the state of the colony was considered in bold words, and the cooperation of all other colonies was solicited. It was a cry for union against an oppressor, and nobly was that cry responded to.

The court and the ministry were alarmed and incensed at the rebellious acts of Massachusetts, and at once determined to send fleets and armies to bring them into submission if necessary. They considered the Circular Letter an incentive to rebellion, and acted promptly on this opinion. Lord Hillsborough immediately sent a copy of it, with a letter, to all of the colonial governors, directing them to

exert their utmost influence upon their respective assemblies "to take no notice of it, which," he said, "will be treating it with the contempt it deserves. If they give any countenance to this seditious paper," he continued, "it will be your duty to prevent any proceedings upon it by an immediate prorogation or dissolution." To Governor Bernard, of Massachusetts, he said, "You will, therefore, require of the House of Representatives, in his Majesty's name, to rescind the resolution which gave birth to the Circular Letter from the Speaker, and to declare their disapprobation of that rash and hasty proceeding."

The Massachusetts assembly, consisting of one hundred and nine members—the largest legislature in America—were not easily frightened by ministerial frowns. They had counted the cost of opposition to unrighteous demands, and were prepared to assert their rights. Instead of complying with the governor's requisition, they made that very demand a fresh cause of complaint. Samuel Adams, that staunch old Puritan, whom no gold could bribe nor place propitiate, made, on that occasion, as the creatures of the crown said, "the most violent, insolent, abusive, and treasonable declarations that perhaps ever were delivered." The fiery Otis, full of the spirit that animated him more than six years before, also denounced the measure with bitterest scorn. "When Lord Hillsborough knows," he said, "that we will not rescind *our* acts, he should apply to Parliament to rescind theirs. Let Britons rescind these measures or they are lost forever." In this strain he harangued the house for an hour, until even the most zealous Sons of Liberty trembled with the fear that he would tread upon the domains of treason.

The assembly refused to rescind by an overwhelming majority—ninety-two to seventeen. They sent a letter to

the governor, informing him of their action, in which they said, "If the votes of this House are to be controlled by the directions of a minister, we have left us but a vain semblance of liberty." The governor, greatly irritated, proceeded to dissolve them, but before that act was consummated they had prepared a list of accusations against him, and a petition to the King for his recall.

Thus Great Britain, through her representative, struck the first blow against free discussion in America. The Secretary of State, speaking for the King, offered to Massachusetts the alternative of submitting to his mandate or forfeiting its representative government. In that ordeal she acted bravely, and she was sustained by the warm sympathy of her sister colonies, for whom like treatment, on slight provocation, was doubtless in reserve.

New York stood up manfully in defense of the right of free discussion, and when, on the 14th of November, 1768, Governor Moore transmitted Lord Hillsborough's instructions against holding seditious correspondence with other colonies, and called upon the Legislature to yield obedience, they boldly remonstrated against ministerial interference with their inalienable privileges. The House refused obedience. The governor threatened to dissolve them. The foremost leaders of the people sustained their representatives, and in newspapers and in hand-bills they expressed their sentiments freely. "Let these truths," they said, "be indelibly impressed upon our minds, that we can not be *free* without being *secure in our property*; that we can not be *secure in our property*, if, without our consent, others may, as *by right*, take it away; that taxes imposed by Parliament do thus *take it away*; that *duties*, laid for the sole purpose of raising money, are *taxes*; that

attempts to lay such should be instantly and firmly opposed."*

In the movements in the assembly concerning the Massachusetts Circular Colonel Schuyler was conspicuous. The New York city members, at their own request, were instructed by their constituents to have the Circular read in the assembly. Possessed with these instructions, says a writer of the day, the city members used them for selfish purposes. They felt sure that the assembly would be dissolved if the Circular should be read, and from time to time, before the business of the session was concluded, they would threaten to make a motion to read.

"The design of this finesse," says the writer alluded to, "was to feel the pulse of the House, in order if a majority appeared against the measure, they would then make the motion, and monopolize the credit of it to themselves with their constituents and the continent; at the same time their seats would be secure, as there would be no dissolution. This being done repeatedly, many of the members saw through the artifice, which greatly incensed them, upon which Colonel Schuyler, a gentleman of great independency of spirit, and a true Son of Liberty, being unable any longer to bear the duplicity of those political hypocrites, got up and observed to the House that he was as determined to read the Circular Letter, and make resolutions asserting the rights of the people of the colony, as any gentleman in the House, but that he conceived it most eligible to go through the business of the session, that the colony might not suffer for the want of the necessary and annual laws, before they came into the resolutions, which would as well serve the cause of liberty as if they were made at the expense of the loss of those laws. But if it was the opinion of the House that the resolutions with which they had been so often threatened by those gentlemen should be made before the business of the session was gone through, as in that case they would immediately be dissolved, he thought, in justice to themselves and their constituents, to save the time of the former and the money of the latter, they should come into them immediately," and therefore made a motion for that purpose.

"Our corrupt politicians found themselves counteracted, and the arguments of the Colonel would work against them with the judicious if

* Leake's *Life and Times of General John Lamb*, p. 43.

they should persist in their former threats, and the other members of the House being fully in opinion with him for deferring the resolutions until the business was finished, prevailed on him to withdraw his motion, which he accordingly did; so the matter was put off for that time. To prevent any member getting the credit of it, the House some time afterward made an order to take it up and go into it."*

Troops, at this time, had been gathered in Boston, to overawe the people and enforce obedience. General Gage had been requested by Governor Bernard to act upon his secret instructions from Lord Hillsborough, and order some soldiers from Halifax. He did so. Meanwhile the governor had refused to order the election of a new assembly, and the people of Massachusetts took the matter into their own hands and called a provincial convention. In that convention every town and district in the province but one was represented. Cushing, late Speaker of the assembly, was chosen chairman. The governor denounced the movement as treasonable. The convention disclaimed all pretensions to political authority, but professed to have met "in this dark and distressing time to consult and advise as to the best manner of preserving peace and good order." The governor warned them to desist, and admonished them to separate without delay. They were firm but respectful. They adopted a petition to the King, and a defense of the province, in the form of a letter to the agent of the colony in England. This was the first of those popular assemblies, which soon assumed all political power, as derived from the people. The movement was approved in the other colonies. New York spoke warm words of encouragement; and from Virginia, where some of the boldest and most patriotic measures of the day had been adopted during the three years preceding, and also from South Carolina, came the injunction, Stand fast!

* *The Watchman*, No. V., April, 1770.

On the day after the closing of the provincial convention a British fleet arrived at Boston, bearing two regiments from Halifax, and took a hostile attitude while the troops were landing. It was on Sunday morning. Seven hundred troops, with bayonets fixed, colors flying, and drums beating, marched into the doomed town with all the insolence of victors into a conquered city. A part of them encamped on the Common and a part in Faneuil Hall. Every strong feeling of the New Englanders was outraged by this desecration, and a thrill of indignation ran throughout the colonies. The engine of non-importation agreements, which had operated so powerfully against the Stamp Act, was now speedily put in motion again, and organized associations, under the sanction of the assemblies, worked with increased energy. An agreement of the kind, presented by Washington in the Virginia House of Burgesses, was signed by every member present; and the patriotism of the people was every where displayed by acts of self denial.