

P R E F A C E.

OF all the prominent men in public life in America during the last half of the eighteenth century, not one so really distinguished for important services as General Schuyler has received so little attention from the essayist, the historian, or the biographer, as he. His name is familiar to all who possess even a superficial knowledge of his country's annals, and yet, to all, the details of his career in civil and military life are unknown. His figure, as drawn by the historian's pen, is seen in bold relief, in detached pictures illustrative of his country's history from the dawn of the birth-day of the Republic until the firm establishment of government under the federal constitution; but the really more important phases of his useful life are hidden or but imperfectly apprehended.

General Schuyler's career was not brilliant but eminently useful. He was one of those men who often work noiselessly but efficiently; whose labors form the bases of great performances; who lay the foundations and modestly assist in building the structures of law, government, morals, and philosophy, which give true glory to a state, and who rest contented, when the labor is over, with the reward of conscious merit as benefactors of mankind, indifferent to

that popular applause which follows the enunciation of startling opinions, or the performance of brilliant services.

No man was ever more keenly alive to the influence of just censure or praise than General Schuyler ; and yet no man ever felt less concern than he about the verdict of the popular feeling of the hour. Conscious of unswerving rectitude and fidelity, he was ever perfectly willing to submit his character and motives to the analysis of dispassionate posterity.

General Schuyler did not leave behind him any autobiography, in the form of a diary or a narrative of his career. Of his early life we have very little knowledge, except such as is preserved in family traditions and passages in the public records. Hitherto no biography of him has been written. Many years ago the late Chancellor Kent wrote a brief memoir of him, which occupies a few pages in the American Portrait Gallery. It is general and necessarily meager. More recently the late Mr. Irving, and also the author of this work, in their respective elaborate biographies of Washington, have given many new and interesting details of General Schuyler's military life ; and his grandson, John C. Hamilton, Esq., in his work entitled "History of the Republic of the United States of America, as traced in the Writings of Alexander Hamilton and his Contemporaries," has given much more information concerning Schuyler's civil life than had ever before been published. With these exceptions, very little has hitherto been written concerning the subject of these volumes.

This biography of General Schuyler has been constructed with much labor and care, from family traditions

and records, the public documents and records of the country, printed and in manuscript, authentic histories of his times, and his own correspondence. The latter, evidently somewhat imperfect, but still voluminous, commences with the period when the old War for Independence was kindling, and extends to the day of his death, in 1804. It is in the form of manuscript letter books on his part, and autograph letters on the part of his correspondents. The former are contained in several large volumes; the latter comprise several thousand loose sheets of paper, all carefully filed and endorsed by Schuyler. These, for many years after his death, were neglected, and became somewhat scattered. Many letters have been lost, and some have been given away as autographs.

To Mr. and Mrs. George L. Schuyler, of Dobbs' Ferry, New York (the former a grandson of General Schuyler), the world is indebted for the collection and preservation of all that are left of the papers of General Schuyler. Having, a few years ago, expressed to them a desire to prepare a biography of their illustrious ancestor, they readily offered me the free use of the materials in their possession. I have examined every paper carefully, and have endeavored to make judicious use of the matter placed in my hands, in the preparation of a history of the "Life and Times of Philip Schuyler," in two moderate sized volumes, adapted to popular use.

With these few prefatory remarks, the work is submitted to the public.

B. J. L.