CHAPTER XXVII.

WHILE General Schuyler was engaged, during the closing decade of the last century, in warm political strife, he was busily employed in labors for the promotion of great public works, calculated to develop the resources of his native State, and improve and aggrandize it. For him may be justly claimed, I think, the honor of the paternity of the canal system in the State of New York, which for long years formed an essential element in its prosperity; for, as we have seen, he talked to Charles Carroll upon the subject so early as the spring of 1776, and had entered into a calculation of the actual cost of a canal that should connect the Hudson River with Lake Champlain, as has since been done.*

That honor has been claimed for Elkanah Watson, Christopher Colles and others, but I have nowhere seen any record of a proposition to construct such a work in this country, so early, by several years, as that of General Schuyler, mentioned by Carroll.†

* See page 40, of this volume.

† In 1820, Mr. Watson, in a "Summary History of the Rise, Progress, and Existing State of the Grand [Erie] Canal, with Remarks," alluding to rival claims to the paternity of the canal policy, says:

"It is altogether probable that General Schuyler's enlarged and comprehensive mind may have conceived such a project at an early day, although I have not been able to trace any fact leading to such a disclosure; at least, not until he promulgated the canal-law, in 1792. To his efforts, mainly, the public are indebted for obtaining the law of that year, which established the canal policy in this State, and

While Schuyler was in England, in 1761,* he visited the canal which connected the coal-mines of Worsley with Manchester, then just completed by the Duke of Bridgewater, and saw the aqueduct over the Irwell, which Brindley had lately finished, by which vessels crossed that stream at an elevation of about forty feet. He was deeply impressed with what he saw, gathered much information on the subject, and pondered the matter after his return home. He corresponded with Prof. Brand, of London, on the subject, and read, with deep interest, the reports which reached America, from time to time, of the success of the Duke's canal, which reduced the price of transportation one-half, and the zeal with which similar undertakings were ventured upon in England, until he was satisfied that a canal which should connect Lake Champlain with the tide-water of the Hudson River would be a profitable work. But he found very few people who had faith in the project. The unsettled state of the country was unfavorable to all enterprises of that nature, and when the war that broke out in 1775 was ended, the people and the country were too heavily burdened with debt and taxes to pay much attention to arguments in favor of such an undertaking.

While this bold idea was held in abeyance by circumstances, in the mind of Schuyler, Elkanah Watson, who

which, in my estimation, will confer more glory on his name in the annals of posterity than all the other eminent services which his splendid talents conferred on his country."

It is claimed for Colles, that, so early as 1784, he presented the subject of canal navigation to the Legislature of the State of New York. A careful examination of their records shows that the joint resolution passed at that session, on the subject, and also subsequent resolutions, for eight or ten years, contemplated only the *removal of obstructions* in the Mohawk and Hudson rivers. Not an allusion is made to a canal, direct or indirect.

* See page 180, vol. i.

had travelled on canals in Flanders and Holland, came upon the scene. He had spent two days with Washington, at Mount Vernon, in 1785. The patriot's mind was then deeply engaged in a project for connecting the waters of the Potomac with those of the West, chiefly for the purpose of diverting the fur trade from Detroit to Alexandria, which then was enjoyed by Montreal. Watson was allowed to copy notes from Washington's journals, and estimates on his plans; and his mind was so deeply impressed with the importance to the country of such artificial highways for inland commerce, that he became, as he said, a "canal disciple of Washington."

In the autumn of 1788, Mr. Watson made a journey to Fort Schuyler (now Rome), then the head of batteau-navigation on the Mohawk River. While there, he conceived the idea of producing a water-connection between the Hudson River and Lake Ontario, by means of a canal from the Mohawk to Wood Creek, a tributary of Oneida Lake, and thence down the Onondaga River to Oswego, on Lake Ontario.

On his return to Albany, Watson appears to have communicated his thoughts to General Schuyler, and when, the next year, the former settled in Albany, he and Schuyler seem to have had much conversation on the subject of both a northern and western canal. Watson made other journeys westward, gathering up facts. He penetrated the country to Seneca Lake, in the autumn of 1791, in company with Jeremiah Van Rensselaer, General Philip Van Cortlandt and Stephen N. Bayard. The facts which he gathered during that journey he digested on his return, in the shape of a pamphlet, which he submitted, in manuscript, to General Schuyler, then an active and powerful

member of the Senate of the State of New York. Schuyler was greatly interested in the subject, and assured Mr. Watson that he would exert his utmost endeavors to obtain a canal law. The subject was brought before the Legislature in January, 1792, and an act was passed by which two companies were chartered. The history of the movement is given in the following letter from General Schuyler to Mr. Watson, dated New York, March 4th, 1792:

"SIR:—A joint committee of both houses—of which committee I was not one—has been formed. This committee reported a bill for incorporating two companies, one for the western, another for the northern navigation. The former was to have been carried *no further than Oneida Lake.* The bill contemplated a commencement of the works from the navigable waters of the Hudson, and to be thence continued to the point I have mentioned; and it obliged the corporation, in a given number of years—which was intended to be ten—to the completion of the whole western navigation.

"When this bill was introduced into the Senate, the plan, generally, appeared to me so exceptionable that I thought it encumbent on me to state my ideas on the subject at large. They were approved of unanimously by the committee of the whole house, and I was requested to draw a new bill. This was done, and it has met with the approbation of the committee of the whole, and will be completed to-morrow by filling up the blanks. By this bill two companies are to be incor porated; one for the western, the other for the northern navigation. It is proposed that each shall consist of one thousand shares; that subscriptions shall be opened by commissioners, at New York and Albany; that the books shall be kept open a month; that if more than one thousand shares are subscribed, the excess deducted from each subscription pro rata, so, nevertheless, as that no subscriber shall have less than one share; that every subscriber shall pay, at the time of subscription, say thirty dollars, and that the directors of the incorporation shall, from time to time, as occasion may require, call on the subscribers for additional monies to prosecute the work to effect, whence the whole sum for each share is left indefinite.

"The western company are to begin their works at Schenectady, and to proceed to Wood Creek. If this part is not completed in——years, say six or eight, then the corporation is to cease; but, having completed this in——years more,—say ten, they are to be allowed further time for extending the works to Seneca Lake and to Lake Ontario; and, if not completed within that term, then the incorporation to cease, so far forth only as relates to the western navigation, from Wood Creek to the

lakes. The State is to make an immediate donation of money, which I proposed at ten thonsand pounds for each company, but which, I fear, will be reduced to five thousand pounds for each company. I thought it best that the operations should begin at Schenectady, lest the very heavy expense of a canal, either directly from Albany to Schenectady, or by the way of the Cohoes or Half-Moon, might have retarded, if not have totally arrested, at least for a long time, the navigation into the western country, and conceiving that if the navigation to the Cohoes was completed, the continuation of it from Schenectady to the Hudson would eventually and certainly take place. A given toll per ton will be permitted for the whole extent from the Hudson to the Lakes, and this toll will be divided by the directors to every part of the canals and navigation, in proportion to the distances which any boat may use the navigation. Provision is made that if the toll does not produce, in a given time, six per cent., the directors may increase it until it does; but the corporation is ultimately confined to a dividend of fifteen per cent. Both corporations are in perpetuity, provided the works are completed in the times above mentioned.

"The size of the boats which the canals are to carry is not yet determined; I believe it will be that they shall draw, when loaded, two-and-a-half feet of water. This is, substantially, the bill, so far as it relates to the western navigation.

"The northern company is to commence its works at Troy, and to deepen the channel at Lansingburgh so as to carry vessels of greater burden to that place than are now capable of going there. The blank for this purpose will be filled up, I think, with two feet; that is, the channel is to be deepened two feet. From Lansingburgh the navigation is to be improved by deepening the river by locks and canals, to Fort Edward, or some point near it, and thence to be carried to Wood Creek, or some of its branches, and extend to Lake Champlain. Tolls, et cetera, are to be on the same principle as on the western navigation. A clause was proposed for preventing any canals to the Susquehanna, bnt it was lost, it being conceived improper to oblige the inhabitants of the western country to make Hudson River, or the commercial towns on it, their only markets.

"In the prosecution of these capital objects, I have to combine the interests of the community at large with those of my more immediate constituents. What the result will be, time must determine. I shall, however, be happy if my ideas on the subject shall meet the approbation of gentlemen more conversant with those matters than I can be supposed to be."

Mr. Watson attended upon the Legislature while this bill was pending, working with zeal in support of the energetic efforts of General Schuyler in the Senate, and of

Mr. Lusk in the Assembly. But many obstacles stood in the way of the organization of a company. Subscriptions were tardily made, and, for a while, the prospect was discouraging. An impetus was soon given by General Schuyler, who showed his confidence in the project by subscribing for one hundred shares, and declaring his belief that it would be "a productive fund for the subscribers." This confidence, displayed by one on whose judgment the public placed implicit reliance, inspired a like feeling in others, and companies were soon organized, under the respective corporate titles of "Western Inland Lock Navigation Company," and "Northern Inland Lock Navigation Company."

General Schuyler was unanimously chosen president of both navigation companies, and Thomas Eddy, a Quaker, was appointed treasurer of the Western company. Schuyler entered upon the duties of his office with the greatest zeal. Accompanied by his associates, Goldsbrow Banyer and Elkanah Watson, and surveyors and engineers, he made a thorough exploration of the whole route from Schenectady to the waters of Lakes Seneca and Ontario, in August and September, 1792. They also explored the route for the northern canal, from the head of Hudson's tide-water to the northern Wood Creek and Lake Champlain. Their explorations were satisfactory, and, in April, 1793, the Western company began work at the Little Falls, in Herkimer county, with about three hundred laborers and a competent number of artificers. The same year, the Northern Company commenced works near Stillwater, intending to extend them to Waterford. Delays followed, chiefly on account of a lack of funds; and yet, so vigorously did Schuyler and his associates, especially Mr. Wat-

son, push on the work when means were at command that boats of sixteen tons burthen passed over the whole route from Schenectady to Lakes Ontario and Seneca, without interruption, in 1796.

But a serious defect in the construction of the locks made the final cost of the works much greater than the estimates. They had been built of wood, and were too perishable. Mr. William Weston, a distinguished English canal engineer, arrived early in 1795, and he was employed to examine the entire line of the works. This he did, in company with General Schuyler, in the summer of that year. The result was an order for Mr. Weston to reconstruct the locks of stone,—an operation which exhausted the funds of the company.

At about the same time, Mark Isambart Brunel, a young French engineer, who, for political reasons, had fled from France to the United States in 1793, undertook the exploration and survey of some lands in northern New York for an association of Frenchmen, known as the Castorland Company. He bore letters of introduction to General Schuyler; was received as a welcome guest at his table, and was employed in 1794 in a survey of the Northern, or Champlain, canal. Almost fifty years afterward, Brunel completed the Thames tunnel, at London, one of the greatest engineering achievements of modern times, and for which the young Queen of England conferred upon him the honors of Knighthood.

Mr. Eddy, who had conceived a plan for uniting the Mohawk and Seneca rivers, by means of a direct canal, made an exploration of the route, with Mr. Weston, under the official sanction of the directors of the Western Company, in 1796. That canal was speedily made. It was

the living germ of the Grand Canal. It led Gouverneur Morris, in 1801, to conceive the greatest of canal projects, the construction of a spacious one through the country, by the nearest and most practicable route, from the Hudson River to Lake Erie, which was accomplished a little more than twenty years later. Henceforth the story of the earlier canals begins to fade from view before the splendors of the history of the greater work. I need only to add the remark that General Schuyler's interest in the inland works already completed, and the canal policy of his State so inaugurated, never flagged to the day of his death. So late as the summer of 1802, when he was almost sixty-nine years of age, he endured the hardships incident to an exploration of the whole line of the Western Canal route, and gave his personal attention to the construction of new locks, repairing old ones, and removing obstructions. His manuscript journal, kept during that exploration, is before me. It is full of vivid pictures of the labors and privations which he then endured. To General Hamilton he wrote, after he came home:

"On Monday evening I returned home to my family. Days of constant activity, and some of fatigue, were succeeded by nights of sound sleep. This, with a good appetite and good food to satisfy it, afforded me as good health as I ever enjoyed, and which I still retain.

"My labors have been crowned with success. One of the locks in Wood Creek is completed; a second greatly advanced, and a third will be completed in the present season, as also two small sluices. These are all the works contemplated the present year; but, to complete the navigation to Oneida Lake, four more locks must be constructed. Preparations are making for two, and directions ought to be given to provide the materials for the other two."*

From this time the clouds of domestic affliction gathered around the household of General Schuyler, and bodily infirmities came on apace. In the year 1801, his

* Autograph Letter, August 19, 1802.

daughter Margaret, wife of Mr. Van Rensselaer, the Patroon, died; and, early in 1803, the wife of his youth—with whom he had lived forty-eight years—was called away by death. This latter bereavement was a severe blow. To Hamilton he wrote:

"Every letter of yours affords a means of consolation; and I am aware that nothing tends so much to the alleviation of distress as the personal intercourse of a sincere friend, and the endearing attentions of children. I shall, therefore, delay no longer than is indispensably necessary, my visit to you. My trial has been severe. I shall attempt to sustain it with fortitude. I have, I hope, succeeded in a degree, but after giving and receiving, for nearly half a century, a series of mutual evidences of an affection and of a friendship which increased as we advanced in life, the shock was great and sensibly felt, to be thus suddenly deprived of a beloved wife, the mother of my children, and the soothing companion of my declining days. But as I kiss the rod with humility, the Being that inflicts the stroke will enable me to sustain the smart, and progressively restore peace to a wounded heart; and will make you, my Eliza, and my other children, the instruments of consolation."*

During this and the succeeding year the health of General Schuyler sensibly failed, and his life-long disease, the gout, made fearful ravages upon the citadel of his strength. Yet he had many intervals of ease, when he enjoyed the society of friends, and especially of his immediate family, with whom he was in constant intercourse, personally or by letters. His epistles to his children during that period (and, indeed, always) were touching evidences of affectionate solicitude. They frequently refer to the exquisite enjoyment which he experienced in the love that his children exhibited in words and deeds, and were often redolent with sentiments of gratitude to his Maker, such as might fill the heart and flow from the lips of a truly humble Christian.

The wounds of General Schuyler's bereavements were

* Autograph Letter, dated Albany, April 16, 1803.

beginning to heal, and the sunshine of repose was gathering over his spirit and his household, when, at midsummer in 1804, a dreadful calamtiy came, which crowned his domestic afflictions. It was the violent death of his son-in-law, General Hamilton, at the hands of his political antagonist, Aaron Burr. It was the result of political strife with a malignant opponent. Words in disparagement of Burr had been spoken by Hamilton in a secret council of friends—as private, almost, as at the domestic fireside—which were overheard by a concealed listener, and reported to Burr. The latter, without the shadow of an excuse, even under the rules of what was miscalled the "code of honor," challenged Hamilton to mortal combat. He tried to avoid the savage issue, by all honorable means. Burr refused to listen, and with an evident desire to destroy the life of one whom he regarded as the chief obstacle to his political preferment, insisted upon fighting. Hamilton, yielding to the influence of the prevailing sentiment at that time, in regard to such matters, accepted the challenge. They met at Weehawken, on the New Jersey shore of the Hudson, opposite New York, on the 11th of July. Hamilton fired his pistol in the air. Burr took deliberate aim, and gave his antagonist a mortal wound. The dying statesman was taken, in a boat, across the river to the house of a friend, where he expired the next day. His wife had been summoned to his side, and in agony unspeakable, she beheld his spirit leave his beloved form. To her it seemed a wild dream of horror; and it left an ineffaceable impression during her widowhood of fifty years duration.

General Hamilton was then in the prime of life, and at the zenith of his fame and usefulness. He was but a little more than forty-seven years of age. The news of

this tragedy caused great excitement throughout the city and country. His murderer fled before the fierce blast of public indignation, and from that hour until his death, more than thirty years afterward, he bore the mark of Cain, and was an outcast from society.

The dreadful tale was conveyed to General Schuyler, by express, in a brief letter sent by his son-in-law, Mr. Church. It reached him about twenty-four hours after Hamilton's death. The blow was most severe, and for several hours his grief was too overwhelming to allow him to be comforted or to comfort others, for he loved Hamilton with unbounded affection, as his letters to his family certify. At about noon his fortitude, which for a time had forsaken him, returned, and he wrote as follows to Mrs. Hamilton:

"FRIDAY MORNING, 13th July, 1804.

"*My Dear, Dearly Beloved and Affectionate Child:*

"This morning Mr. Church's letter has announced to me the severe affliction which it has pleased the Supreme Being to inflict on you, on me, and on all dear to us. If aught, under Heaven, could aggravate the affliction I experience, it is that, incapable of moving or being moved, I cannot fly to you to pour the balm of comfort into your afflicted bosom, to water it with my tears, and to receive yours on mine. In this distressing situation—under the pressure of this most severe calamity, let us seek consolation from that source where it can only be truly found, in humble resignation to the will of Heaven.

"Oh, my dearly beloved child, let us unanimously entreat the Supreme Being to give you fortitude to support the affliction, to preserve you to me, to your dear children and relations.

"Should it please God so far to restore my strength as to enable me to go to you, I shall embrace the first moment to do it; but, should it be otherwise, I entreat you, my beloved child, to come to me as soon as you possibly can, with my dear grand-children.* Your sisters will accompany you. May Almighty God bless and protect you, and pour

* Four of these grand-children, sons of General Hamilton, yet (December, 1872) survive, namely, Alexander, James A., John C., and Philip.

the balm of consolation into your distressed soul, is, and will always be, the prayer of your affectionate and distressed parent,*

"PH. SCHUYLER.

"Mrs. HAMILTON."

Four days after this letter was written, General Schuyler wrote as follows to Mrs. Church, his eldest daughter, then residing in New York:

"TUESDAY, 17th July, 1804.

"The dreadful calamity, my dearly beloved child, which we have all sustained, affected me so deeply as to threaten serious results; but when I received the account of his Christian resignation, my afflicted soul was much tranquillized. Oh, may Heaven indulgently extend fortitude to my afflicted, my distressed, my beloved Eliza. I trust that the Supreme Being will prolong my life, that I may discharge the duties of a father to my dear child and her dear children. My wounds bear a favorable aspect, and the paroxysms of the gout have not been severe for the last two days. Yesterday I was able to sit up all the day. God grant that my recovery may be accelerated to enable me to go to New York and embrace my distressed children. Should, however, my restoration be retarded, I wish to see you all here. The change of scene, may, perhaps, tend to soothe my beloved Eliza and children. She knows how tenderly I loved my dear Hamilton; how tenderly I love her and her children; that I feel all the duties that are devolved on me. The evening of my days will be passed in the pleasing occupation of administering comfort and relief to a child and grand-children so highly entitled to my best exertions.

"My Kitty† is most deeply affected. Her tears have flowed incessantly. She begins to be more composed; unites with me in love to you, your distressed sister, and all so dear to us. I do not write to-day to my Eliza, lest it should create a fresh paroxysm of grief. Oh, may she become calm. Her piety will, I trust, sustain her, and her life be preserved, that her parent, her children and relations may not sustain an additional calamity.

* * * * * * * *

"Fail not, my beloved, to let me daily know the state of your afflicted sister. My anxiety on her account rends my heart."‡

General Schuyler never recovered strength sufficient to

* Autograph Letter.

† His daughter Catharine, then the young wife of Samuel Malcolm, son of General Malcolm, of the Revolution, and afterward the wife of James Cochran.

‡ Autograph Letter, July 17, 1804.

visit New York again. Mrs. Hamilton and her children spent the latter part of the summer and a greater portion of the autumn with her father, at Albany. Soon after she left him for her home in New York, he wrote to her as follows:

"That your afflictions, my dear, dearly beloved child, have added to mine, was the natural result of a parent's tenderness for so dutiful and affectionate a child, as he invariably experienced from you. My affliction, has, however, been mitigated, by the favor of Divine Providence in preserving your life, and in enabling me to administer every possible consolation; and it will be no small one to you to be informed that since my last letter to you I have had no gout; that, although the ulcers in my feet and above my knee have been extensive, they bear a most favorable aspect for healing; that I have next to no pain from them; that my appetite is restored; that I sleep well; and, although I cannot walk, I have, for some days past, been carried to the dining-room, where I have quietly sat from one to six o'clock. I impute this happy change, under God, to the excessive discharge of gouty matter from my foot. Indeed, I am not without hopes of being able to visit you in the winter, if there should be sledding.

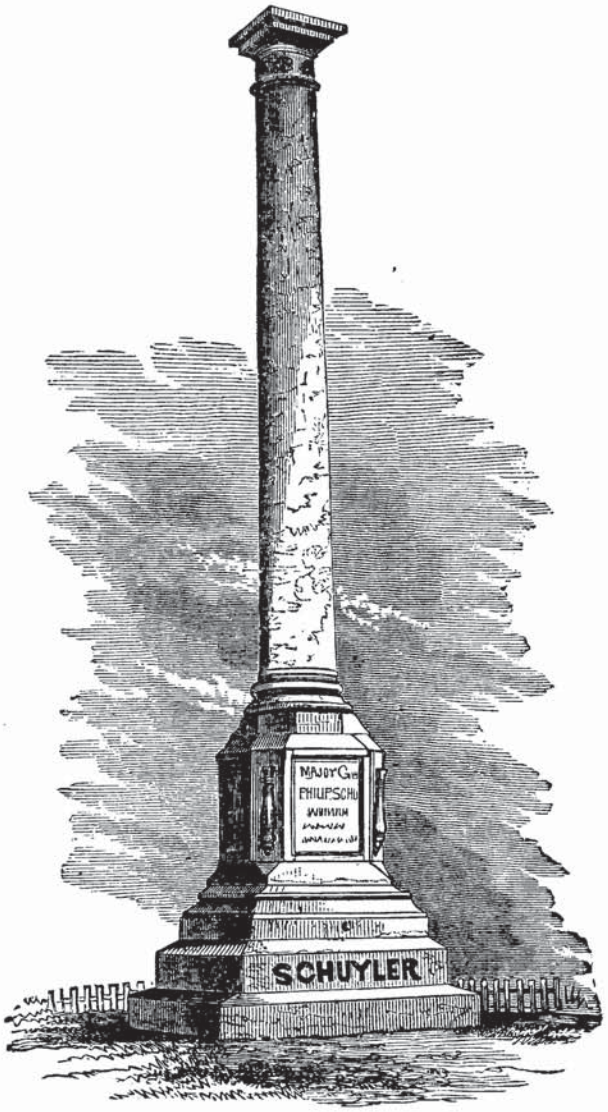
"I am happy that you have obtained a comfortable house. Render yourself and my dear children perfectly comfortable at your table, and call on me, my beloved child, without hesitation, for the means of rendering you so."*

This was one of the last letters written by General Schuyler. He soon afterward suffered a severe attack of gout, which seized a vital part, and, a fortnight after the above hopeful epistle was written—on Sunday, the 18th of November, 1804—his earthly career was ended, when he was almost seventy-one years of age.

The tidings of General Schuyler's death were received with sincere and profound sorrow throughout the country. His funeral, at his residence in Albany, on the 21st of November, was attended by an immense concourse of the citizens of that town and the surrounding country; and his remains were entombed, with military honors, in the fam-

* Autograph Letter, Albany, Nov. 3, 1804.

ily burial-vault of General Abraham Ten Broeck. They were afterward removed to the burial-vault of the Van Rensselaer and Schuyler families. Several years ago, this



SCHUYLER'S MONUMENT.

vault, in the northern suburbs of Albany, was disturbed by the construction of railways, and the remains deposited in them were removed to a temporary resting-place in the Albany Rural Cemetery.

For sixty-six years the remains of General Schuyler reposed without anything to mark the place of their sepulture. Then a loving grand-daughter of the general (Mrs. Mary Regina Miller, the youngest of the two surviving daughters of Cornelia Schuyler and Washington Morton), resolved to erect over his remains, at her own expense, a costly granite monument. That was in the year 1870. When the Trustees of the Albany Rural Cemetery, of which body Thomas W. Olcott is president, were apprised of her intention, they generously gave for the purpose one of the finest plots on the domain, in token of their reverence for the memory of that distinguished citizen. The monument was erected in October, 1871. It is a simple, Doric column, of light Quincy granite, thirty feet in height wrought by Jonathan Williams, architect, of Quincy, Massachusetts. On the pedestal of the shaft are the words:

MAJOR-GENERAL

PHILIP SCHUYLER.

BORN AT ALBANY,

NOV. 22, 1733.

DIED NOV. 18, 1804.

On the base of the monument, in raised letters, is the word SCHUYLER. The only ornaments are cannons, in relief, at each corner of the pedestal, and an inverted torch on the shaft. The design is beautiful, and the workmanship is perfect. It is a noble tribute of filial affection. The citizens of Albany should hasten to honor themselves by placing a bronze statue of General Schuyler in their public park; and the State of New York ought to con-

tribute a full-length likeness of her distinguished son, in purest marble, to the national collection at Washington city.

From General Schuyler's youngest and last surviving child, the late Mrs. Cochran, and from his venerable grandson, James A. Hamilton, who remembered him well, I learned some particulars concerning his personal appearance, habits, et cetera. He was a man of powerful muscular frame, rather slender in form, and about five feet eleven inches in height. In figure he was erect and commanding, and he was quick and energetic in his movements. His eyes were dark and piercing; his hair was dark brown; his voice was clear, and sometimes sharp; and his deportment toward the worthy was cordial, winning and dignified. He was always scrupulously neat in his dress, and fashionably attired. He kept a fine equipage of horses and carriages, but for all ordinary riding he used a "sulky," and of course drove, himself.

General Schuyler's house was noted for its generous hospitality. It was open to his friends at all times; and for long years, distinguished ladies and gentlemen who visited Albany were entertained at his mansion in the southern suburbs of the city, or at the Manor-house of his son-in-law, the Patroon Van Rensselaer. His household servants (black slaves) were numerous and well-trained. His table was abundantly supplied with a great variety of food and choice liquors. Whist was his favorite amusement, and one of which he was passionately fond. Often, after suffering all day acutely with the gout, on being relieved at evening, he would sit up half the night, at his own house or at the Club, playing whist.

General Schuyler was a very skillful mathematician,

which science gave him methodical habits. His business was arranged with the most perfect order and system, and he possessed a full knowledge of all the minute details in the management of his large estate. He was fond of agricultural pursuits, and spent the most of eight months of the year, when not engaged in public business, at his country-seat at Saratoga. His town and country houses are yet standing, the former fronting on Schuyler street, in Albany, and the latter (the one which he built on the ruins of the older mansion, in 1777) on the southern bank of the Fish Creek, at Schuylerville.

Mrs. Schuyler, who was a wife worthy of such a man, was short in stature, and, in her later years, quite fleshy. She had soft, sweet manners, that won all hearts, and a gentle spirit, while energy and firmness were conspicuous features in her character. Her charities to the deserving poor flowed like refreshing springs into barren wastes, and she was dearly loved by all who knew her.

I will close this memoir of one of the foremost men of his time with the following just analytical sketch of his character, written immediately after his death by Joseph Dennie, editor of the "Port-Folio," and published in that periodical, in February, 1810, with a portrait engraved by Leney:

"In the decease of General Schuyler both America and the State which had the honor of giving him birth have sustained a great and irreparable loss. So high and so broad a place has he filled in community, so blended with all the great concerns and interests of the nation have been his life and his distinguished name; such an impression of his agency and character has been left on our affairs, and so extensively has the social system, for a long course of years, felt the influence of his genius and his labors, it may not be too much to say that in his removal that system has experienced a profound sensation of vacuity never to be supplied.

"Although in the gradual decay which marked the last period in

the general's life, bodily infirmity, disease and pain restrained activity and repressed exertion; although the state of parties, for a time, was calculated to render useless the suggestions of his fertile mind and his rich experience; yet a quick retrospect of past times and past events cannot fail to awaken all our regrets, heighten the impression of our loss, and communicate a shock to every patriotic bosom.

"The history of our country, of its institutions, its policy, its jurisprudence, is full of monuments of this great man's usefulness and fame. They are extant or latent in the whole of our system; and excursive memory, from the rich and varied field of civil, political and military affairs, returns loaded with these memorials. Of the rare public spirit, indefatigable activity, persevering resolution, profound penetration and commanding talents of this eminent citizen, the last half century has been a steady witness. Few are the transactions, events and places, in the several departments of public life and public business, for the last forty years, in which he has not borne some part, or contributed some aid or influence.

"In his early military career, his activity, zeal and skill gave facility to every operation. In the more important and interesting scenes of our revolution, in times which required great resources and great energies, he was among the first in the confidence of his country; the man on whose spirit and abilities the most serious reliance was placed for providing those resources, and for repelling public dangers. And while others shared with him the toil of war, he, whether in or out of active and immediate service, was justly considered as a mainspring of every patriotic movement, and the soul of the Northern Department.

"During that short period which followed the termination of the war, and which, though our independence was conquered and secured, might properly be termed the gloomy night of the Confederation, General Schuyler found less occasion for the exercise of talents, but enough for the exercise of a vigilance and firmness then so necessary. Not discouraged by the existing state of things, and looking forward with assurance to the glorious morning of the Constitution, when public spirit and public virtue were to awake from their slumbers, he continued to devote himself to the public service in the State Legislature, the only theatre where he could act effectively. With views always liberal and extensive, he contemplated, with a steady aim, the consolidation of our Union as the first of political blessings, and labored in the very front of the enlightened men of that day in appeasing local jealousies and State pride, then the greatest obstacles to political reform.

"The commencement of our new era opened wide the field for the exercise of those abilities which long experience and much study had brought to full maturity. A better system of State politics, which fol-

lowed the reformation of the national system, presented fair objects and full scope for the exercise of useful plans. To legislation, in all its views, to public improvement in all its various branches, he brought those stores of useful and practical science, those original powers and chastened judgment produced or perfected by the research and labor of forty years. From that period to the resignation of his employments, his public life was one uninterrupted series of interesting engagement and active pursuit. A prime agent in all important affairs, a natural leader in public business, he never disdained or declined the task of personal labor or minute detail in arranging or executing the plans originating in his own conceptions. The journals and the history of public bodies in which he so sedulously and conspicuously acted, afford a mere outline of the service he performed, and the character he sustained. They remain, faint memorials of his inventive genius, his intense labors and his matchless facility. His parts and his powers were equally vigorous and versatile. Accustomed to military scenes, he was equally familiar with the civil code, with the policy of States, with the financial and economical systems, and with the useful arts. Without the benefits of an early education, strictly claimed, he was yet as extensively acquainted with books as with men, and without professional habits or practice, a legislator; without the study of the law, our statute book in every part bears the impression of his hand.

"To draw a full and complete portrait of this eminent man would be an arduous task, and far above the feeble pen now employed in sketching a few of its lineaments. Considered in various points of view, his image assumes various forms, each equally interesting and striking. Connected with all, he stood distinct from all. Original as was his character, and nervous as were his individual faculties, both are best to be seen, read and appreciated in their effects and their diffusible influence. History can alone, with truth, portray the entire man; since history collects from remote sources, descends with the details of things, and combines, out of the scattered materials of particular acts and exploits, those general, and, withal, those luminous views, which, alone, are adapted to the portraiture of eminent characters. Even in history, something will be lost or defective, because genius often acts by foreign instruments, moves by an imperceptible line, pervades a system unseen, gives to a train its first spark, and communicates an influence which cannot be traced.

"General Schuyler united in himself a rare assemblage of striking qualities. In him, to great quickness and strength of intellect was added an uncommon, perhaps an unequalled spirit of industry and command of detail. It was his general habit to narrow the interval between the conception and performance of things, by descending from the highest mental research to the most patient actual labor.

By this he attained exactness, and secured fidelity of execution. Though so much accustomed and so well qualified to manage affairs of state and of civil polity, he never abstracted himself from the concerns of agriculture and the useful arts. Familiar with the science of cultivation, and deep in the knowledge of nature, he was the projector, promoter and patron of improvements, both general and local, in every branch of rural and domestic economy. But in improvements projected on a larger scale and for general accommodation, his views and efforts were more particularly keen and conspicuous. Here his zeal arose to a patriotic fervor and public spirit, that spirit which is now, alas! almost extinct, which presided over his plans, animated his steps, and gave to his most comprehensive and systematic views the warmth and energy of a single exertion. He was attentive to the most remote interests, while the vitals of our system felt his reforming influences; and, while with one hand he healed the disorders of the treasury, with the other he opened the field, and conducted the progress of internal commerce.

"In contemplating the character of this veteran and worthy, the mind is forcibly struck with that happy union of intuitive powers combined with the most sedate and correct judgment. To a careless observer, indeed, viewing him in opposite lights, a fervid imagination, at one time, seems to preside over his character. At another, common sense appears to hold sway. In the texture of this character, however, as in that of the changeable silk, the colors which cast so various a shade were intimately blended. The general was a practical man in his whole life; and, though he pursued the execution of well-digested plans with the enthusiasm of a projector, he never suffered soaring fancy to disturb the balance of sober reason. A similar remark may be applied to his private life. His temper was ardent; but his general estimate of merit was just and liberal; and, if ever urged too far by the heat of the moment, his kindness was sure to return, and, with it, generosity resumed its habitual sway. To fraud and imposture of every species, public or private, he never relaxed his frown; and even impertinence, absurdity and folly sometimes moved his impatience. Thus, in the movement of his passions, was exhibited the standard of his principles and taste. In his opinions, attached to one energetic administration, a friend to strict political discipline as the best preservative of liberty, too proudly honest to be indiscriminately popular, and holding in utter abhorrence the intrigues of democracy and the spirit of mob government, he found many among the interested, the envious, the ambitious and factious, who ventured to question his patriotism; but a long life, devoted to the welfare of the people, and public services without number, refuted the charge and repelled the aspersion."