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THE SCHUYLER MANSION
AT ALBANY

RESIDENCE OF
MAJOR-GENERAL PHILIP SCHUYLER
1762-1804

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From the Trumbull portrait enlarged by Lazarus.

MAJOR-GENERAL PHILIP SCHUYLER
1733-1804

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RESIDENCE OF
MAJOR-GENERAL PHILIP SCHUYLER
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BY

The Spirit of '76

Georgia Schuyler

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THE SCHUYLER MANSION
AT ALBANY

*“I care not what others may do; as for me
and my house, we will serve our country.”*

SCHUYLER, 1775.

THE SCHUYLER MANSION AT ALBANY

I

THE PASTURES

BUILT 1761-1762

It was a pleasing sight that met the eye of Philip Schuyler, as he approached Albany in the packet sloop that brought him from New York, upon his return from England, in 1762. A large, new house of yellow brick, substantially built, stood on the slope above the high river bank, about half a mile south of the city. It commanded a fine view of the Hudson, beautiful in those old days with its green shores sloping to the water's edge, its willow fringed islands lying out in the stream. Promontories crowned with noble trees extended into the water; on the pebbly beaches adjoining them the tides plashed and rippled, and in every direction the white sails of the passing boats gave life and animation to the scene.

The house, named "The Pastures," has been described as "a landmark for many years, until the town grew up about it;—a hospitable house, for which travelers looked as they ascended the river, and which still stands in perfect preservation, as a testimony to the architectural taste and good workmanship of the time."¹

Philip Schuyler had passed his early married life in his father's house, in Albany, on North Pearl Street, where he was born, although making frequent visits to his "Aunt Schuyler's"

¹ In the preparation of this pamphlet, the "Life of General Philip Schuyler" (1903), by Bayard Tuckerman, with the very kind permission of the author, has been extensively used.

house at "The Flatts." But now, for the first time, he was to have a home of his own, and one can fancy the emotion and the happiness that filled his heart at the prospect of being welcomed to it by his wife and his little children, after an absence of nearly two years, and a perilous voyage across the Atlantic—the packet in which he sailed having been captured by a French privateer and recaptured by a British frigate.

The house had been built during his absence in England by his wife, assisted and advised by their old friend, General John Bradstreet, Schuyler's commanding officer in the "Old French War," his colleague in extensive land purchases, and, notwithstanding the twenty-one years between them, his warm personal friend. In 1760, Bradstreet, anxious as to unsettled accounts with the English government covering several years, in poor health, and ordered to join Amherst's expedition to the western part of the province, turned to his young friend to help him. "I can't leave my public accounts and papers in a more faithful hand than yours to be settled, should any accident happen to me in this campaign," he writes to Schuyler. To show how this feeling was reciprocated, Schuyler gave Bradstreet a power of attorney to manage and dispose of his property, the paper being executed just before he sailed for England from New York, in February, 1761. The accounts were successfully settled in London, and the young American was complimented by the War Office on their business-like presentation. After seeing many objects of interest in England he returned home—to wife and children and the new house.



Schuyler Mansion at Albany

Residence of Mayor-General Philip Schuyler, 1762-1804

From a pencil sketch. Date unknown

II

THE BUILDING OF THE HOUSE

The building of the house had been contemplated by Schuyler for some time, and work upon it was begun shortly after he had sailed. It was a propitious time for building, as a number of carpenters had been attracted to Albany by the war and, being idle for the time, Colonel Bradstreet advised Mrs. Schuyler to make use of them. Although the names of Colonel Bradstreet and of Nicholas and William Bayard, friends and kinsmen of her husband, appear alone in the business transactions, Mrs. Schuyler undoubtedly assumed that share of the supervision and planning which an efficient woman is apt to give her new home. Born at the "Crailo," or Lower Manor House of her father, John Van Rensselaer, and familiar with other spacious houses of her family connection, she well knew the requirements of large establishments and made her plans accordingly.

The accounts of the mechanics, preserved in General Schuyler's papers, give dates and details. Many of them are endorsed in his handwriting: "The work performed in 1761 whilst I was in England." The bills are made out to Colonel Bradstreet or Nicholas Bayard "for work done at Captain Schuyler's house at Albany." A paper of General Schuyler's, "extracted from my book, August 25, 1788," is headed, "Money paid by Colonel Bradstreet, late General Bradstreet, for building Philip Schuyler's house in 1761 and 1762." It makes a total of £1425, 16s., 0d. Of this there is paid to John Gaborial, master carpenter, £453, 12s., 6d.; to William Waldron, master mason, £412, 13s., 0d.; to John Brown and his workmen, £321, 0s., 0d. Lucas Hooghmerk, master brickmaker, has £206, 18s., 6d.; Gerret Hallenbeck, mason, £11, 12s., 0d.; Barnes and Savage, carpenters, £20, 0s., 0d.¹

John Gaborial, evidently of French extraction, writes a business-like paper in an excellent, clear, round hand. He gives the

¹ These figures represent less than one-half of their value in pounds sterling.

account of his own time, as "running from May 17, 1761, to December 18, 1762." Also "a compte of men's time for the year 1762 employed at Captain Schuyler's house in Albany, from the day of their antrance to the day of their discharge." This last runs only from February 14 to September 18, 1762. Freight of staves posted from Boston to New York is 8 shillings. The "Turner's work and wood, £20, 8s., 6d.," and he concludes, in his handsome handwriting: "Received the sum above mentioned, John Gaborial." Another bill is "Coll. Broadstreet (so the old Albanians pronounced the name) to West Banta, Dr., per order of Mr. Nicholas Bayard, for work done at the house of Capt. Schuyler at Albany." Here we have: "To making 1 large door frame and panel door, 15 sash frames, 7 pair outside shutters and 34 sashes." The men are paid 8s., 6d.-7s., 6d. per day. Credit is given for 60 planks at 2s., 6d., and 33 inch planks at 1s., 6d.

Another bill, from Andrew Gautier, dated 1761, is for "work done at New York for the new house of Capt. Philip Schuyler at Albany by order of Mr. Nicholas Bayard, Esq." This comprises among many other items: "one door frame, fifteen sash frames, and eight pair of outside shutters and thirty sashes, all of the largest size," many days of work by his men, at 8s., 6d. ("my Prentiss" has 6s., 6d.), painting, nails, glue and cartage. Credit is given Cornelius Switt and Captain Schuyler for planks and inch boards. The total amount paid is £53, 14s., 9d.

Houses are slow in their completion, and one is not surprised to find, as late as June, 1767, a correspondence relating to "Marble chimney pieces for Mr. Schuyler," "4 marble chimney pieces with hearths, £42, 14s, 0d," sent by David Chambers by sailing vessel from Philadelphia to Albany.

There are many printed, detailed descriptions of the interior and exterior of the mansion. From one of these, published in 1884,¹ we gather that the house is about sixty feet square. The contour of the roof is of the "double hip pattern" pierced by small dormers and square chimneys. Balustrades are carried about the roof and across the dormers. A row of seven large windows, with panes of glass unusually generous for those days, pierces the front wall.

¹ See article, "Historic Homes," by Frederick G. Mather in "Magazine of American History," July, 1884.

A hexagonal, of later date than the house, forms a vestibule through which one enters the house from the east, as its main entrance. This extends beyond what was doubtless the original front-door of the mansion.

The main hall, entered from the vestibule, is thirty feet long by twenty wide, and twelve feet high. A panelled wainscoting of wood, painted white, conforms with the carved wooden cornices. At the west end of the main hall, directly opposite the entrance, a fine old Colonial door with fan and side-lights makes an attractive feature. It leads to the back hall, and to the historic staircase, with its white balusters and dark railing, where the Tomahawk mark is shown. "The Schuyler staircase, aside from its history, is well worth examining. The balusters are of three different designs, which are repeated in the same order at every step. All are carved by hand in a different rope pattern. This same design may be found in the staircase of the old Lee house at Marblehead, in a house in Salem, Massachusetts, and in one of the great mansions of the South."¹

From the main hall there opens, to the right of the entrance door, a large north-east corner room. Directly opposite, on the other side of the hall, is the drawing-room, where Hamilton and Elizabeth Schuyler were married. It has four deeply-cased windows, with window-seats, looking south and east, and a marble mantel. Opening from this room to the west, a small door leads to General Schuyler's study or office, a bright, attractive south room, where the books may have been kept, with a small bedroom beyond it. Access to this office could be had from the smaller entrance-door at the west of the house. The dining-room, a large north-west corner room, is entered from the back hall. The kitchen was probably in the cellar, which underlies the entire house, and is lighted by small windows.²

The second floor of the house has a hall longer than the one beneath, but the ceiling is not as high. It is said that the young

¹See article in the "Architectural Record" of June 30, 1896, by Marcus T. Reynolds, "The Colonial Buildings of Rensselaerwick." Part of the above description is taken from "Catherine Schuyler," by Mary Gay Humphreys, 1897.

²When, in the middle of the nineteenth century, the family of Judge Tracy, then owners of the house, built a commodious, well-lighted kitchen to the west of the dining-room, the old slave quarters which extended back of that side of the house were destroyed.

people used to dance here. The bedroom on the south-east corner, directly over the drawing-room, is shown as the one where Burgoyne and his officers slept when prisoners of war and guests of the house.¹

The woodwork throughout the house is white, and the first floor has the low wainscot in two simple panels everywhere found in houses of the period. Every room is well-lighted with large windows, deeply recessed and with inviting window-seats. The doors are painted to resemble mahogany, and have solid brass knobs, and locks which turn twice. The heavy, pine floors are good for generations to come.

A steep stairway leads to the large attic, a most inviting stow-away place with great beams overhead. One thinks of the master carpenter, John Gaborial, and his good workmanship, as one studies the eighteenth-century builder's art, which framed so large a structure out of hand-wrought timber, made fast with wooden pegs.

Those who saw them fifty years ago remember, behind the mansion, the servants' quarters, small wooden buildings painted white, since then removed. The servants were negro slaves, and the buildings, although not so important, resembled those in the rear of Washington's home at Mount Vernon.

The Schuyler house had ample grounds about it, with gardens and orchards, with grapevines trained upon trellised arbors, flower beds and well-kept lawns. It was approached by an avenue bordered by fine trees from the entrance gate.

The vine-covered porch at the south of the house, given in the picture, was an arbor; there was no entrance to the house on that side.²

¹Another tradition places Burgoyne's room on the main floor, the large north-east-corner room. This would seem probable on account of its size, as it is known that mattresses were placed on the floor to accommodate his officers.

²To-day, the grounds about the house are much curtailed. The city has grown up to "The Pastures," and has surrounded it, leaving about an acre for lawn and trees. The near-by city streets, bearing the Schuyler names of Philip, Catharine and Elizabeth, undoubtedly indicate the original extent of the property. The grading of the streets has made a deep cut through the lawn at the east of the house, necessitating the high flight of wooden steps which leads up to the entrance-door.

Account of Men's Time in the Year 1762
 Employed at Cap^t. Bingham's House in Albany
 From the Day of their entrance on the Day
 of their Discharge

Man's Name	in what month	Day of Month	In what City	No ^o of Days	at what Rate	1.00 per Day	2.00 per Day	3.00 per Day
Comfort Jones	February	14	Albany	100	9	60	10	0
James Bunker	April	22	Albany	128	10	68	10	0
James Bunker	June	6	Albany	15	18	15	10	0
James Bunker	October	6	Albany	9	21	8	12	8
James Bunker	October	6	Albany	11	2	0	0	0

The Amount of Men's Wages 190⁰⁰ 12 6

Account of my time

From the 17th of May 1761
 to the 18th of December 1761
 Brought Days included 10 months 10 and 13
 at 15⁰⁰ 0⁰⁰ 8⁰⁰ Month 255 00 0
 pay for 1/4th of the Month 8 00 0
 Post from Boston to New York
 The former Week 20 00 6
 and 10⁰⁰ 15 00

The Amount of Man's Wages is 190⁰⁰ 12 6
 The total sum 450⁰⁰ 12 6
 Received at Sunday Times 17 00 0
 The Balance Due 283⁰⁰ 12 6

Received the Sum above mentioned of John Galloway

1761

To	Work Done & New work for the House of Capt. Schuyler at Albany By order of Nicholas Bayard Esq ^r				
To	asitt 1 Door frame 15 Sash 2 ^d & pair of out Side Shutters & 20 pair of Sashes all of the Largest size. - -	\$	1	0	
To	4 1/2 Day. My Man Benoit 2 1/2 8/6	18	16	1	
To	2 3/4 Day. John McDaniel 2 5/8	9	17	7	
To	16 3/4 Day. John Curry 2 5/8	7	2	4	
To	6 Day. John Hancock 2 8/8	2	8	-	
To	2 1/2 Day. My Potentia 2 6/6	8	1	-	
To	8 Day. My Self 2 8/6	1	3	6	
To	30 Large Sash Jambs	2	2/4	4	2
To	15 30 head Pieces	2	1/9	1	6
To	2 Door Jambs & 1 head Piece			14	-
To	1 Large Sash Foot Sill			15	-
To	15 Pitch pine Sash Sills	2	4/3	3	3
To	35 Plank of 1/2 white pine	2	2/6	1	7
To	3 5 Inch	2	1/6	-	1
To	2 1/2 of Nails			2	-
To	1 1/2 of Glue			2	-
To	the Painters Bill for painting the joinings	1	6	8	
To	Carriage first & Last			8	-
		\$	64	30	3

Facsimile of Part of Carpenter's Bill

Coll Boardstreet - - - - -
Co West Banta - - - - -

Order of M^r Nicholas Bunker
for Work done at the House of Capt
Schuyler at Albany N^y

To Making & carp roof frame Annals door
15 Sash Frames & Car sides in hall and
34 Sashes

To 40 ¹/₄ Days work @ 8/6 - - £ 7-2-1/2

To 13 Ditto - - @ 8/6 - - - - 18-6-0

To 25 Ditto - @ 7/6 - - - - 9-7-6

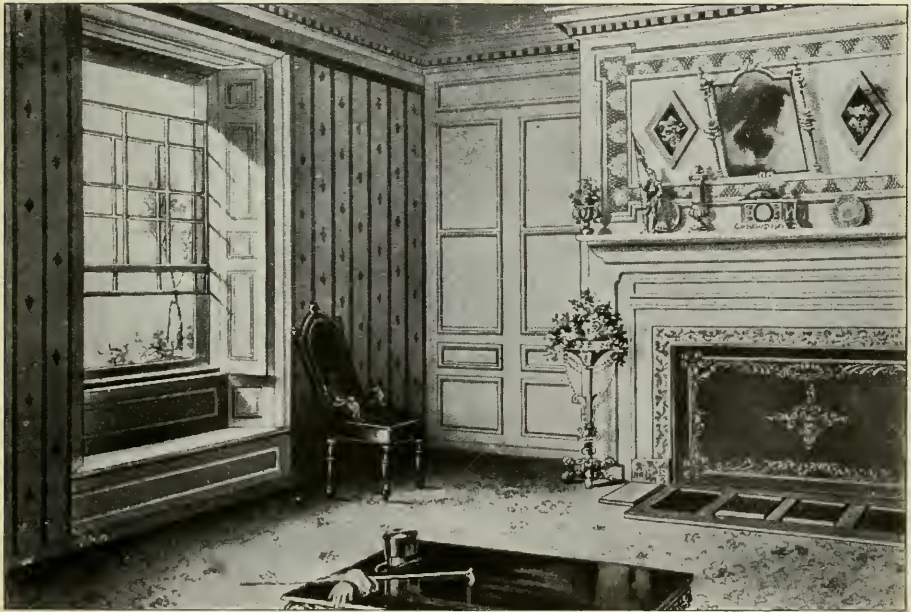
To 28 ³/₄ Ditto - @ 7/6 - - - - 10-15-7 1/2

£ 55-10-4

Faesimile of Part of Carpenter's Bill



Colonial Door of main Hall



Drawing-room in which Hamilton was married to Elizabeth Schuyler (1780)

Decorations and furniture of a subsequent period



The Historic Staircase, with Mark of Tomahawk on Railing

III

THE GUESTS OF THE HOUSE

The mansion completed, Philip Schuyler and his wife resided in it for the remainder of their lives, except the months spent at their country seat at Saratoga where they passed part of every year. In it they died, Mrs. Schuyler in 1803 and the General in 1804, after which the property passed out of the family. Schuyler was noted for his hospitality, and it may be said of this house that, during his lifetime, no stranger of distinction visited Albany without either entering its portal or sleeping under its roof.

In Colonial days, came the Crown Governors from New York—Tryon and his wife, Sir Henry Moore and his wife and daughters, Sir Guy Carleton and Oliver De Lancey; also Schuyler's friends in public life, whether in or out of the Provincial Assembly—Philip Livingston, John Cruger, William Duer, William Smith, Jr., Henry Van Schaick, and many others; while the large family connection, Van Rensselaers, Schuylers from New Jersey, Livingstons, Ten Broecks, Van Cortlandts, Cochrans, Bayards and Cuylers, came and went. Hospitality was sacred in those days, the homestead being always open to relatives to come and sleep under the roof. There were no hotels. Strangers bringing letters of introduction were of course kept by the fireside. Many a family has its eighteenth-century tradition of the guest who came to pass a month, and who stayed seven years! On the other hand, the Manors were often remote and the winter evenings long!

There were also visitors of another kind. In 1767, a band of nine Cherokee warriors, headed by their chief, Attakullakulla, came from the South to the Iroquois country to sue for peace from the Six Nations. Schuyler met the rude embassy as they landed from the sloop and conducted them to his house, after which he accompanied them for a short distance on their journey.

With the Revolution, came Commissioners from Congress

and officers going northward to the armies. The most notable were Benjamin Franklin and Charles Carroll of Carrollton, and with them Father John Carroll, afterwards the first bishop of the Roman Catholic Church in the United States. Then came a succession of eminent persons—Hamilton, Lafayette, St. Clair, Clinton, Steuben, Knox, Wilcox, Duane, Gansevoort, and others. After the peace, Washington himself crowned the house with his presence. Even Gates was made welcome; and, by a tragic coincidence, young Aaron Burr, studying law in Albany, introduced by Alexander MacDougal of New York, often sat in that sunny south room, the General's study, consulting the books kindly placed at his disposal—Burr who was to bring sorrow and mourning into that household, when Hamilton fell in the duel, pierced by the well-aimed bullet of Burr's animosity.

But the coming, as guests, of General Burgoyne and his staff officers, directly after the burning by the British of Schuyler's country house, barns and mills at Saratoga, makes the Albany house a monument of Schuyler's unselfish and chivalrous kindness. With Burgoyne were Baron Riedesel and other officers. They were preceded by the Baroness Riedesel and her children, and by Major Ackland and his wife, Lady Harriet Ackland.

After the war, during Schuyler's untiring efforts for the adoption of the Federal Constitution, besides Hamilton we have the great lawyers, John Jay, Chancellor Kent, Chancellor Livingston, Gouverneur Morris and others. Later, when Schuyler was promoting the building of canals throughout the State, came Elkanah Watson and three eminent engineers from England, Sweden and France: William Weston and William Seaton, and Brunel who afterwards constructed the tunnel under the Thames.

Schuyler's judgment as to land-purchases, colonization, water power and timber was known throughout the Province, and his advice was constantly sought in regard to these and other important matters. The Wadsworths came to consult him about purchases in the Genesee valley; Governors of adjacent Provinces engaged in settling boundaries; and Commissioners of Indian Affairs,—the Rev. Dr. Kirkland with them, missionary to the Indians.

Under de Rochambeau, in 1780, a bevy of French officers arrived, and, as every Frenchman wished to visit that battle-field

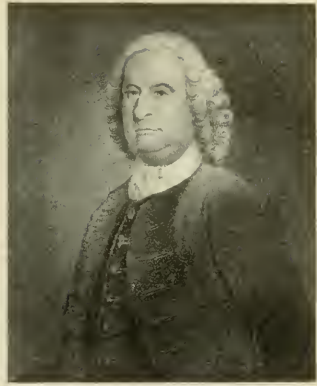
where England had been humiliated, from this time until the General's death the old house saw many gay uniforms, and echoed with the speech of the courteous French gentry of the *ancien régime*, wending their way to Saratoga.

One of the most interesting descriptions of the mansion is found in the pages of the Marquis de Chastellux's "Travels in North America," where, after telling of his "continued journey, through a forest of fir trees," he reached the Hudson opposite Albany. He writes: "A handsome house half-way up the bank, opposite the ferry, seems to attract attention and to invite strangers to stop at General Schuyler's, who is the proprietor. . . . I had recommendations to him from all quarters, but particularly from General Washington and Mrs. Carter (Church). I had besides given the rendezvous to Colonel Hamilton, who had just married another of his daughters, and who was preceded by the Vicomte de Noailles, and the Comte de Damas, who I knew were arrived the night before. The sole difficulty, therefore, consisted in passing the river. Whilst the boat was making its way with difficulty through the flakes of ice, which we were obliged to break as we advanced, Mr. Lynch, who is not indifferent about a good dinner, contemplating General Schuyler's house, mournfully says to me: 'I am sure the Vicomte and Damas are now at table, where they have good cheer and good company, whilst we are here kicking our heels, in hopes of getting this evening to some wretched alehouse.' I partook a little of his anxiety, but diverted myself by assuring him that they saw us from the windows, that I even distinguished the Vicomte de Noailles who was looking at us through a telescope, and that he was going to send somebody to conduct us on our landing to that excellent house, where we should find dinner ready to come on table; I even pretended that a sledge I had seen descending towards the river was designed for us. As chance would have it, never was conjecture more just. The first person we saw on shore was the Chevalier de Mauduit who was waiting for us with the general's sledge, into which we quickly stepped, and were conveyed in an instant into a handsome salon near a good fire, with Mr. Schuyler, his wife and daughters. Whilst we were warming ourselves, dinner was served, to which every one did honour, as well as to the Madeira which was excellent, and made us completely forget the

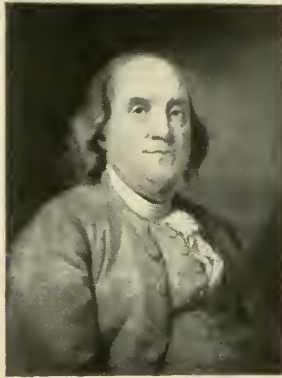
rigour of the season and the fatigue of the journey. General Schuyler's family was composed of Mrs. Hamilton, his second daughter, who has a mild, agreeable countenance; of Miss Peggy Schuyler, whose features are animated and striking; of another charming girl, only eight years old; and of three boys, the eldest of whom is fifteen, and are the handsomest children you can see.'



Charles Carroll of Carrollton



Philip Livingston



Benjamin Franklin



John Jay



Baron Steuben



Mrs. Philip Schuyler



General Burgoyne



Baroness Riedesel



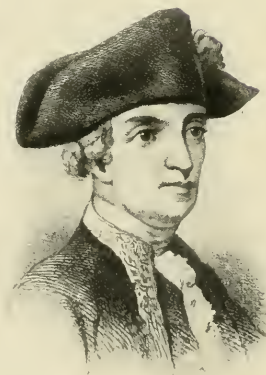
Lady Harriet Aekland



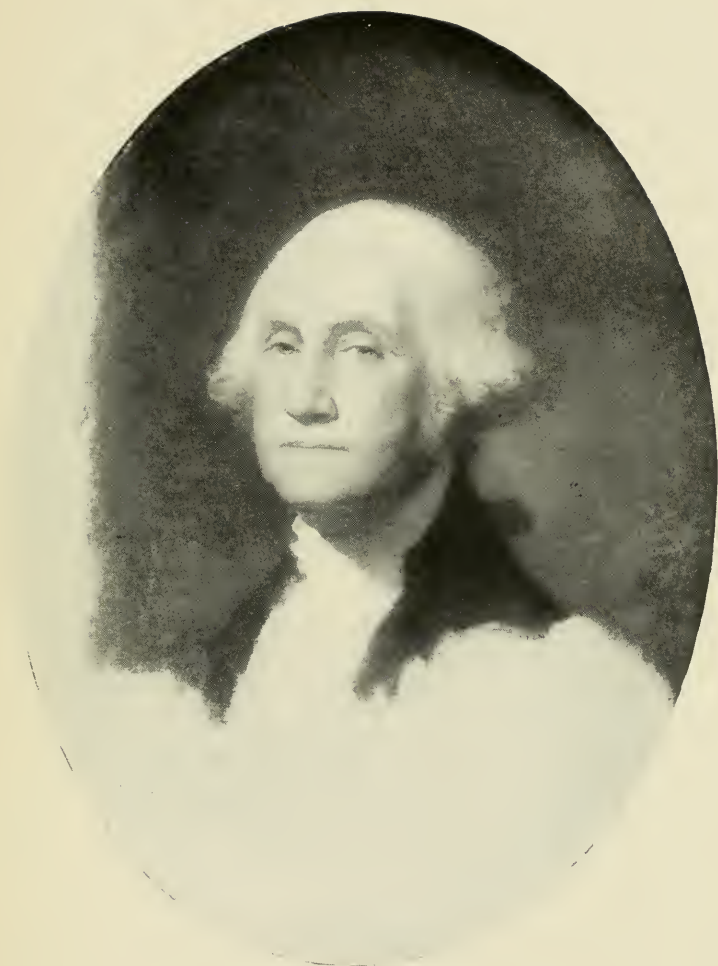
Lafayette



Count de Rochambeau



Marquis de Chastellux



Washington

IV

THE MASTER OF THE HOUSE

1733-1804

At the time of the building of this house, Philip Schuyler had attained his twenty-eighth year. He came of a sturdy, fighting stock—pioneers who felled the forests, fought the savages, bargained with them for furs and got possession of their land, cultivated it, built boats, houses and mills, sold lumber, grain and provisions, and, when the need came, shouldered their fire-arms and headed many a bloody foray against their enemies,—the French Canadians and their Indian allies.

He was fourth in descent from Philip Pieterse Schuyler, who, with a kinsman, probably a brother, David Pieterse Schuyler, emigrated to Albany from Holland before 1650. His great-uncle was the distinguished Peter Schuyler, the “Quider,” beloved and feared by the Indians, whose power in dealing with them was unrivalled in his day. Three times acting Governor of the Province, Chairman of the Board of Indian Commissioners, Mayor of Albany, his influence extended over the whole colony. Partly to impress the Six Nations with the power of England, and partly to excite English interest in the provincial struggles with France, Peter Schuyler took four Mohawk chiefs to London, where they were presented to Queen Anne as “Kings,” by the Earl of Shrewsbury, and were driven through the streets in royal carriages.

Philip Schuyler’s grandfather, Captain Johannes Schuyler, led an expedition to Canada, in retaliation for the terrible massacre at Schenectady by French and Indians in 1690. His uncle Philip was killed defending his house at Saratoga against an attack made by French and Indians in 1745. The early death of his father, Johannes Schuyler, Jr., Mayor of Albany and Indian

Commissioner, left Philip when eight years old, with an older sister and two little brothers, to the guardianship of their mother, Cornelia Van Cortlandt Schuyler, a woman of superior character, much respected in the community. Philip studied at home under a Huguenot tutor, and when about fifteen was sent to a school in New Rochelle, New York, kept by Dr. Stoupe, the pastor of the French Protestant Church. John Jay went to this same school at a later date. Philip remained there about three years. He studied assiduously and his proficiency in mathematics and the knowledge of the French language, which he then acquired, proved important factors in his subsequent career.

At eighteen we find him in the wilderness, on the borders of the upper Mohawk, hunting and trading with the Indians, as young Albanians of his day were accustomed to do. He is described at that time as "a tall youth with a florid complexion, a benevolent cast of features, a fine manly deportment, and distinguished for great kindness of manner." He was a favorite with the Indians. For generations his name had stood with them for kindness and fair dealing. When about twenty, he rendered the chiefs of the Oneidas a service they never forgot. They met him at the carrying place between Wood Creek and Oneida Lake and besought him to nullify a sale of their lands to scheming white speculators, made by the dissolute young men of their tribe bribed by money and whiskey. Schuyler was successful. The grateful chiefs paid him the compliment of exchanging names with him, and continued their good will from that time on to Schuyler and his descendants.

At twenty, we have a letter from him from New York written to his friend, Abraham Ten Broeck. He goes to the theatre and sees the play called "Conscious Lovers"—"written, you know," he explains, "by Sir Richard Steele, Addison's help in writing the Spectator." He adds, "Tomorrow I expect to go into New 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 a 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 Jersey men to the field. I wish you and I, Brom, could go with him." He concludes with "Love to Peggy and to sweet Kitty V. R. if you see her."

In the autumn of 1754 Philip came of age. The English law

of primogeniture gave him all the real estate which belonged to his father. Dutch tradition and the generosity of his nature caused him to disregard the law, and to divide the estate equally between his brothers and sisters.

By 1755 the war he expected had come. "The Old French War," it is called. Early in the year Schuyler raised a company and was commissioned Captain by the Governor of the Province, James De Lancey. As Captain he served under Johnson in the disastrous expedition against Crown Point in 1755; under Bradstreet in 1756, when the fort at Oswego was successfully relieved and provisioned; and under Bradstreet again, in 1758, when Fort Frontenac on Lake Ontario was gallantly captured. It was at this time that Schuyler's intimacy with Bradstreet began.

In 1768 Philip Schuyler was elected, with Jacob H. Ten Eyck, to represent the city and county of Albany in the Provincial Assembly, a small body elected for seven years,—the members chosen by freeholders only, and sitting in New York City. Although the Stamp Act of 1765 had been successfully defeated, a conservative reaction had taken place, and he found the Royalist party, headed by the De Lanceys, in control. He ranged himself distinctly on the American side. From 1768 to 1774, the records of the Assembly show him to have been active in all matters pertaining to the industrial and commercial welfare of the colony, taking frequent part in debate, and asserting the rights of the Province. Of the patriotic resolutions introduced into the Assembly, some of the boldest were drafted by him, and it was at his suggestion that Edmund Burke was appointed the agent of New York in England. Every patriotic movement was defeated by the same (Royalist) majority, while in the minority were always recorded the names of Schuyler, Van Cortlandt, Clinton, Ten Broeck, and Livingston.

"Colonel Schuyler and Clinton hold forth in the opposition," wrote Lieutenant-Governor Colden in the spring of 1775 to Tryon, then in England. Later he writes: "I am persuaded that it will give you some concern, Sir, to hear that Colonel Schuyler, Ten Broeck and Livingston made a violent opposition in the House. They openly espoused the cause of the last Congress (held in Philadelphia in 1774) and strove hard to have delegates appointed by the House for that which is to be held in May.

They are now gone home to get that done by the election of the people which they could not effect in the House.”

From this time until his death, in 1804, Schuyler pursued his useful and honorable career. He was member of the Continental Congress in 1775; Major-General of the Northern Department under Washington, 1775-1777; again member of the Continental Congress in 1779; and, with Rufus King, one of the two first United States Senators from the State of New York, 1789. From 1780 to 1790 he was almost continuously a member of the Senate of the State of New York; was appointed one of the Commissioners to settle the Massachusetts and Pennsylvania boundaries question; Chairman of the Board of Indian Commissioners; and Surveyor-General of the State.

In his private capacity, Schuyler was president of two canal companies incorporated in 1792. His visit to England, in 1761, had greatly stimulated his interest in canals as well as in agriculture. He was a member of the “New York Society for Promoting the Arts,” and received a testimonial from it for his experiments in the cultivation of flax and hemp on his Saratoga estate.

No account of Schuyler would be just to him without mention of his constant ill health. At fifty he is spoken of as being an invalid and much broken. The scientific treatment of rheumatism and gout was unknown in Schuyler’s day, and persons subject to those diseases endured a lifetime of unnecessary torture. When a youth of seventeen at the Huguenot school, where John Jay states the boys were insufficiently nourished, the first painful attack of rheumatic gout occurred, and throughout his career, often at the most critical moment, he was obliged to succumb to the disease, a situation mortifying to his pride and detrimental to his success.

V

THE MISTRESS OF THE HOUSE

1734-1803

Mrs. Philip Schuyler, the "sweet Kitty V. R." of her husband's boyish letter to his friend, Brom Ten Broeck, was by all accounts a beautiful woman, a belle and "toast" of her day. She was a daughter of John Van Rensselaer, proprietor of the Lower Manor of Rensselaerwyck, and of Engeltie (Angelica) Livingston. Lossing, who knew and conversed with two of her daughters, Mrs. Hamilton and Mrs. Cochran, describes her as having delicately cut features, dark eyes and hair, and a high color; that she was "below medium height but graceful in movement, with a sweet and winning manner and low, soft voice." Her son Philip inherited his mother's beauty; Mrs. Hamilton, those dark eyes and that low, soft voice; and Mrs. Morton the delicate features. When Mrs. Schuyler was no longer young, her daughter Angelica (Mrs. Church) writes to her mother from London, where she then resided, her husband being a member of Parliament:

"I send you a tea caddy, and a card which will make you laugh. Embrace dear papa a thousand times. I pray to heaven that General Washington would send him ambassador here and that you would come with him. We would all live together, or in two adjoining houses, and you would make everybody love and respect you; besides, I should be so proud of my handsome mother. What pains I would take to do every thing to please you, dear, dear mama,—let it be so, pray do."

Mrs. Schuyler is spoken of as having firmness of will, executive ability, and great kindness. Evidently she was very simple in her manner—"quiet, unobtrusive, kindly," she is called. Well-born, and having an assured position, she had that entire absence of assumption which stamps true dignity and marks the highest

breeding. She probably was a silent person. It is the animation and liveliness of her daughters, not hers, that her guests dwell upon. Yet when Charles Carroll writes of "the ease and affability with which we were treated," and which made the visit a "most pleasing *séjour*," it would seem that Mrs. Schuyler knew well how to put her guests at their ease, and to make them feel at home. Tench Tilghman, an enthusiastic young Marylander, has much to say of this. "There is something in the behavior of the general, his wife and daughters, that makes one acquainted with them instantly. I feel as easy and free from restraint at his seat as I feel at Cliffden, where I am always at a second home."

If she talked but little, she certainly wrote nothing at all. Her clear, strong signature affixed to real-estate documents, and a few little matter-of-fact notes, confined to housekeeping details, are all we have. Her husband was a good talker. "His conversation is easy and agreeable," writes the Marquis de Chastellux. "He knows well what he says, and expresses himself well on everything he knows." He was also a voluminous letter writer. Scores of his letters to his children are preserved, always with some mention of "your mamma." Conversation and correspondence she left to him! Handsome, silent, strong,—she was one of those women who exert an immense influence within the family circle. Her devotion to her husband was absolute, as was his to her. He expresses it in his letters, both before and after her death, in the strongest manner, and writes to his eldest son of the infinite obligation his children are under to their mother.

She had a large family of children, many of whom died in infancy, and her maternal cares alone were enough to preoccupy her time and thought. She lived during two long wars and knew the stern exigencies imposed at such times upon the women of the community. The early days of her married life, when her husband was at the front under Johnson, were spent with her mother-in-law in caring for wounded officers, prisoners of war, consigned by Schuyler himself to their care. One of these officers writes to Schuyler: "One can add nothing to the politeness of Madame your mother and Madame your wife. Every day there come from them to the Baron (Dieskau) fruits, and other rare sweets, which are of great service to him." Again, at the time of

Abercrombie's disastrous defeat, being a visitor at "The Flatts," the old Schuyler homestead that lay in the path of the retreating army, she with the other ladies of the family transformed the great barn into a hospital. The sheets and tablecloths were torn up for bandages, the negro women became cooks for the wounded. Aunt Schuyler and her nieces, "Catharine Schuyler and Gertrude and the two Miss Cuylers" were the nurses.

At a crisis she rises to acts of fortitude and daring. She never fails her husband in time of need. He was subject to sudden and alarming attacks of illness. One of them occurred in 1769 when he was attending the Colonial Assembly in New York as Member from Albany. The old friend, General Bradstreet, who lived with them at the time, writes: "Dear Schuyler: I received Your letter last night which put your wife & Children in such distress that I had it not in my power to write to you by the former who instantly Cross'd the River in a Storme of Rain & danger to set out this morning from her father's to you¹— All I could say was to no purpose, nor that part of your letter that mentions the danger being over, & of your growing Better—which no person wishes more sincerely than myself."

Later, in the war of the Revolution, during the disastrous invasion of Canada, ordered by Congress in 1775, General Schuyler was taken very ill at the Isle au Noix at the northern end of Lake Champlain and was carried back on a litter to Ticonderoga. Upon receiving the news his wife started at once from Albany, making her way over those almost impassable roads and through those water-ways of the wilderness in the rudest craft, hurrying to the sick man's bedside, where she nursed him until he could be brought back to Albany.

To be at the head of a large establishment in the eighteenth century, and to fill the position well, required a woman of more than ordinary ability. Foresight in laying in supplies, care and thought in dispensing them; the supervision of domestic servants (negro slaves in our State until the early part of the nineteenth century), the readiness to receive, accommodate and feed a number of guests, their servants as well, in a day when there were practically no hotels—all this fell upon the mistress of the Schuy-

¹ The "Crailo," the Van Rensselaer house at Greenbush, opposite Albany.

ler home. Not but that her husband assisted her in every way; but his duties often took him away from home, and the responsibilities were hers. The standard of living, as far as food was concerned, was high. The table was covered with dishes and side-dishes, serving *à la Russe* (one dish at a time) being unknown. The enormous sets of china, then in use, have every sort of small dish with which the table was covered. The cooking was elaborate, as is shown by family receipts carefully copied and handed down for generations. They also prove the plenty that existed, of eggs, cream, poultry, fish and game, woodcock, quail and partridges, the many kinds of vegetables, and small fruits. There was an abundance of peaches and plums. The Indians brought haunches of venison to Albany; the Hudson was full of fine fish.

As in Virginia, each family prided itself on its hams, cured by a much prized receipt, while spare-ribs and cheeks, head-cheese and souse, and all the other good things, came forth at "killing time." The rich plum cake, the mince-meat, crullers, and "oley-koecks" came at Christmas, to be followed by New Year's cookies, and the buckwheat-cakes, waffles, and pastry of the winter months. On hot summer days "Bonny Klaber," syllabub, and curds, were in order, and stores of preserves and jellies were put up before the autumn. The lavish use of ingredients for the cooking appals the modern housekeeper! Take a hundred and twenty-five oysters, take twenty-five pigeons, take dozens of eggs, quarts of cream, pounds of butter, say the old cook books! Take fifteen pounds of beef and spice it for three days; throw in a bottle of claret before serving, says the old receipt! The good things are shared with the married daughters when they have households of their own. Indeed, the ladies of that day interchanged gifts from their storerooms much as the gentlemen did from their wine cellars.

Some old and trained servants there were to help Mrs. Schuyler. "How is old Prince?" writes Mrs. Church to her mother from London. "When I don't see the old man's name I think he is dead." Prince was an African, a slave. It was reported soon after he became a member of the household that he refused to eat with the other negroes on the ground that he was their superior in rank in Africa. His meals were then served to him apart from

the others. Soon he was promoted, and he became a trusted and most faithful upper servant. So well was Prince known to the guests of the Schuyler house that John Jay, writing from Spain to Schuyler, says that he has chosen as the key to his cipher dispatches the name of that faithful servant, who for thirty years has never failed to stand at the dinner table behind his mistress's chair.

If the home reflects the standard of daily living of the mistress, then Mrs. Schuyler must be credited with a refinement of taste which showed itself in her surroundings. The various descriptions of her house attest this. "He lives in a very pretty style," writes Charles Carroll of Carrollton, speaking of General Schuyler. The Marquis de Chastellux notes, "a handsome salon, and a good fire." Burgoyne calls it "an elegant house." John Trumbull, the artist, writes, "I was very much impressed by the elegant style of everything I saw." The household effects that are still preserved are handsome and suitable, and in good taste. Mrs. Schuyler's drawing-room furniture is of the Adams period, of light wood, the coverings of blue satin, and comprises large sofas, many chairs, and a charming unique centre table. There are solid mahogany dining-room chairs of the early eighteenth-century type, with ball-and-claw feet and leather-covered seats; also the mahogany dining-table around which so many celebrated people have met. There is a graceful silver epergne with its mirror base, a beautiful, pierced silver cake-basket, plated stands to hold glass dessert dishes, East India china, cut-glass dishes—all good of their kind.

Of Mrs. Schuyler's dress and personal effects, but little is preserved, save a fan with carved ivory sticks, of the period of the French eighteenth-century craze for Chinese art, and a mourning brooch set in small pearls, containing exquisite hair-work, worn in memory of her father. Her youthful portrait, of the same period and style as that of Mrs. Washington, depicts her in the full evening dress of the ladies of her day. Her husband's bills give items of a costly hat with plumes imported from England for Mrs. Schuyler, "a crimson velvet night gown (dressing gown) for Miss Peggy", "a velvet coat for Master Rensselaer."

But a far more important side of her character claims attention—her kindness, of which Franklin wrote to Josiah Quincy.

Franklin, Charles Carroll and Samuel Chase, the Commissioners appointed by Congress, had made their tour of inspection of the northern frontier, and Franklin, worn out by the fatigues of the journey, when he reached the Albany house was far from well. The General was with the army. Mrs. Schuyler nursed him for a week and sent him on his way down the Hudson.

Of this incident Franklin writes to Schuyler: "We arrived here safe yesterday evening in your post-chaise driven by Lewis. I was unwilling to give you so much trouble and would have borrowed your sulky and driven myself, but good Mrs. Schuyler insisted on a full compliance with your pleasure as signified in your letter, and I was obliged to submit, which I was afterward very glad of, part of the road being very stony and much gullied, when I should probably have overset and broken my own bones, all the skill and dexterity of Lewis being no more than sufficient. Through the influence of your kind recommendation to the Inn-keepers on the road, we found a great readiness to supply us with a change of horses."

If there were no hotels in Mrs. Schuyler's day there certainly were no organized charities of any kind. The destitute and out-cast came to the houses of the well-to-do to be fed and given shelter in some out-building or barn. The daughter of James Fenimore Cooper, who knew the traditions, writes that there was a well-trodden footpath from Albany to "The Pastures" along which could be seen, wending their way to the house, a poor negro, or an Indian, to return "with a blessing on their lips in Dutch or in Mohawk."

On the Saratoga estate, where she knew the wants of her neighbors, Mrs. Schuyler would send one of her milch cows to a poor family for their use; indeed, no more grateful tribute can be paid her than the saying of those who knew her intimately, that she was "much loved by the poor."

During the advance of Burgoyne, when panic-stricken fugitives were hurrying to Albany, they met a carriage with a single armed escort, traveling northward. Within sat Mrs. Schuyler. She was on her way to her house at Saratoga to save and bring back her household treasures. To the remonstrances of those she met, for many of them knew her, she answered, smiling, "The General's wife must not be afraid." The tradition is that on her

return she set fire with her own hands to some fields of wheat on the estate, thus carrying out her husband's policy of destroying all possible subsistence for the invaders. Leutze, in an oil painting, engravings of which exist, perpetuates this incident. The waiting carriage, the horses' heads and ears nervous and alert, the driver anxiously looking back, the frightened negro servant, holding a lighted lantern, half kneeling, half clinging to his mistress's skirts, the resolute woman throwing a blazing pine fagot into the yellow grain.

VI

BURGOYNE'S CAMPAIGN

If Lexington, followed by the splendid fighting of the New England men at Bunker Hill, "fired the shot heard round the world," if Washington's masterly generalship in the Jerseys amazed and chagrined the British and held them at bay, the battle of Saratoga in its world-wide significance was the most important episode of the American Revolution.

It opened the eyes of Europe to the magnitude of the struggle, it encouraged the friends of America in the British Parliament, it gave us the alliance with France, and sent a French army and navy to our support.

Burgoyne's surrender was due to many causes. No one man can claim the credit for it. But the recognition of Schuyler's share in bringing it to pass has now been fully accorded him, and he stands in the hearts of his countrymen as the uncrowned victor of Saratoga.

Burgoyne landed at Quebec, in May, 1777, with about 4000 British regulars and 3000 German veterans, to which were added later 1000 Canadians and Indians, making a force of nearly 8000 men. It was a well-equipped army, the officers selected for their ability, and last, but not least, provided with a fine train of brass cannon. The plan of campaign was this: Burgoyne to move south from Canada and capture Albany; General Howe's army, stationed in New York City, to come up the Hudson; a force of Canadians and Indians under Sir John Johnson to approach by way of Oswego on Lake Ontario, harrying the Mohawk Valley—all three commands to meet at Albany. With the Hudson controlled by the British, New England cut off from the Southern Provinces, and the Americans without a navy, the inevitable result must be a speedy subjugation of the rebellion.

Burgoyne's army reached St. John near the head of Lake

Champlain, by June 18, 1777, sailed down the lake and landed at Crown Point, by June 27th, and then commenced to move upon Fort Ticonderoga, which commanded the entrance to Lake George and the road through the forest to Albany, and which he captured eight days later.

The fall of Ticonderoga was a terrible blow to the whole country,—to Washington, to the army, and to Congress. Schuyler, chief in command of the Northern Department, was responsible for it and had to bear the brunt of the disaster. A storm of reproach burst upon him and upon St. Clair, who was in command of the fort. They were most unjustly accused of the basest motives, of treachery, of cowardice; and, before long, Congress relieved Schuyler of his command. Meanwhile Schuyler redoubled his activities and strained every nerve, both to obstruct Burgoyne's further advance and to prevent St. Leger's troops and Sir John Johnson's savages from reaching Albany by the Mohawk Valley. As to Burgoyne, Schuyler knew well the nature of the twenty miles the British general had to traverse before reaching Fort Edward on the east bank of the Hudson, north of Saratoga. The land was covered by heavy forests and intersected by streams and swamps. The roads, though rough, being passable, Schuyler sent a thousand men thither with axes. The trees were cut on either side so that they fell across each other, with trunks and branches intersecting till a tangle was formed which a man could hardly penetrate. Every bridge was destroyed and the streams choked with fallen trees. It took Burgoyne twenty days to make those twenty miles, and those twenty days were of decisive importance. They gave to the American reinforcements time to collect, they brought Burgoyne face-to-face with his fatal difficulty, the want of subsistence for his men. Upon emerging from the forest at Fort Edward, he found Schuyler had burned forage and grain, had driven off or killed cattle, had laid the country waste.

Meanwhile, in the Mohawk Valley, Schuyler had roused the inhabitants to defend their territory, and General Herkimer, at Oriskany, fought one of the most bloody hand-to-hand battles of the Revolution; Colonel Peter Gansevoort and Marinus Willett held Fort Schuyler against St. Leger at the head of the Mohawk River, cooperating with Herkimer; while Schuyler sent a strong

force under Arnold from his headquarters at Stillwater into the Mohawk Valley. The enemy was routed; they abandoned everything; their army melted away; and St. Leger and Johnson took boats at Oswego for Canada.

Ten days after Oriskany, occurred the important American victory at Bennington, Vermont, under Stark. A strong force had been sent thither by Burgoyne to secure the provisions and horses collected there by the Americans. Burgoyne lost in this engagement one-seventh of his army, with all their arms and four cannon.

Washington's trust in Schuyler had never faltered through the dark days after the fall of Ticonderoga. Though he could not detach troops from his command, having to watch Lord Howe's army to prevent a move up the Hudson, he rendered all the assistance he could. He sent two important officers to Schuyler—Lincoln, who had influence with the New England militia, Arnold, known as a reckless fighter—both of them popular with the New England troops. These men rendered Schuyler invaluable service.

The New Yorker of to-day asks why such importance is placed upon the New England militia? Why these incessant appeals to Congress for supplies? Where was the New York militia? Where was the New York money? He does not realize that at that day the Province of New York ranked sixth in population with the other colonies and that, with her wealthy seaport, the City of New York, in the hands of the British throughout the entire war, there was little or no money to be had. A fringe of cultivated country bordered the Hudson, the lower Mohawk, the Delaware; there were no towns of any size save Albany, Kingston, Schenectady, and a few others; the rest of the State was a wilderness.

In this connection the devotion and zeal of those citizens of our State who were true to the American cause, for there were many royalists among us, should never be forgotten. The prominent citizens of Albany and elsewhere, the land-holding families of the Hudson River, the patriots of Westchester County, should ever be gratefully remembered. At the time of Burgoyne's advance there came from the Livingston Manors all the provisions that could be gathered up, forwarded to General Schuyler's army. And

subsequently, one of these Livingston houses was fired at from the river by a British man-of-war, and entered and taken possession of, in retaliation for the well-known zeal of its owner for the American cause.

Ticonderoga fell on the 5th of July, 1777. Burgoyne reached Fort Edward, July 27th. Schuyler had fallen back from untenable positions, bringing with him all his stores and ammunition. On July 31st, Schuyler, with the concurrence of Lincoln and Arnold, crossed the Hudson and took up his position at Stillwater and Saratoga, on high ground out of the forest, about thirty miles north of Albany. Here Schuyler reorganized and recruited his small force of 3000 men, now daily growing in strength and confidence. The whole country was roused by the danger of the situation. The stories of outrages by Burgoyne's savages, the murder of Jane McCrae by the Indians, had stirred every heart, "had recruited the ranks and quickened the steps of every militia company in Massachusetts and Connecticut."

Putnam's regiment from Peekskill had come, and Morgan's riflemen were to follow. Lincoln was on his way with two thousand men from the Hampshire Grants. Stark was coming with the victors of Bennington. Arnold was returning from the Mohawk, with a large body of New York militia no longer needed there. Pierre Van Cortlandt's militia regiment, and that of Henry Brockhurst Livingston, were on their way, with Ten Broeck's troops of the line to follow. Schuyler was sure of 10,000 men. At this juncture, on the 9th of August, General Gates arrived from Philadelphia, bearing a commission as Commander-in-Chief of the Northern Department.

Schuyler's character was severely tried when he received the humiliating news that after his untiring and successful labors, when a bright military prospect seemed before him, when the wished-for army was assured and a decisive battle imminent, another man was to take his place. By the way he bore this trial he must be judged as a man and a patriot. Many men have put life and property in jeopardy for their country's sake; but few men, holding high commands, have borne calumny from the people and unjust treatment from the government, as Schuyler did, without being soured, without vindictive feeling, without any

diminution of public spirit. This test of character, so nobly met, touches the highest note of patriotism.

When Gates arrived in camp, Schuyler received him with politeness, gave him all the information he possessed regarding the enemy and his own army, and offered his assistance in any capacity. Gates ignored him completely. Schuyler left the camp and returned to his Albany home. The warm letters he received from his friends at this period show how they esteemed him and the view they took of the situation. "I am chagrined to the soul," wrote Henry B. Livingston, in September, from Saratoga, "when I think that another person is to reap the fruit of your labors."

By September 13th, Burgoyne crossed the Hudson to move upon Albany. On the 19th occurred the first battle at Saratoga, Bemis Heights and Freeman's Farm, when Morgan and Arnold checked the British advance. On October 7th was the second battle at Freeman's Farm, Morgan and Arnold again leading the assaults and bearing everything before them. During the next ten days the American army had increased to 16,000 men. The British were surrounded and assailed from every side; retreat was cut off; provisions and even water were unattainable. On the 17th of October, 1777, followed the inevitable surrender.

The glad news of the capitulation reached Albany. The citizens were wild with delight. By a coincidence, Schuyler's Saratoga estate formed part of the battle-field. During the military operations, the British burned his house, barns, granaries and stables. With the news of the great victory came these tidings of personal disaster. To Colonel Varick, his former aide-de-camp, then at Saratoga, Schuyler wrote: "The event that has taken place makes the heavy loss I have sustained sit quite easy on me. Britain will probably see how fruitless her attempts to enslave us will be. I set out to-day."

Evidently Schuyler wished to be present at the capitulation, to share in the joy of it and to meet Burgoyne. At once he joined the army. He wore plain clothes, although still a major-general in the service. It had been arranged between Gates and Burgoyne, at the request of the British General, that after the British troops had laid down their arms, Burgoyne would come to the American headquarters and be presented to the Commander-in-

Chief. Accordingly, on October 17, 1777, Burgoyne, mounted and in full dress, accompanied by his officers, crossed Fish Creek and rode to the place appointed. A group of American officers, Schuyler among them in civilian dress, stood watching this meeting, Gates by that time playing very well the part of the generous, magnanimous victor.

In the official record of the surrender, it is stated the spot chosen for this ceremony by Major Kingston, one of Gates' officers, was upon the ground "where Mr. Schuyler's house stood."

Here Gates received Burgoyne.

VII

AFTER THE SURRENDER

How differently the campaigns of the eighteenth century were conducted from those of our own day, is shown by the fact that it was not unusual for the families of the officers to accompany them when on active service. Lady Harriet Ackland and other ladies of the British army were in camp, and, by the 19th of August, two months before the battle of Saratoga, Baron Riedesel was joined by his charming wife and children who had come from Germany with recruits for his command. Her letters and journals, kept while in this country, give invaluable pictures of camp life, of American life as well.

The sufferings of these ladies and children before the surrender were piteous. They had passed six days in the cellar of a building to find shelter from the American cannonade. They had but little food and were told the terrible American marksmen picked off any one who approached the stream for water. They expected to find rough and vindictive conquerors. The Baroness writes after the capitulation :

“In the passage through the American camp I observed with great satisfaction that no one cast at us scornful glances. On the contrary they all greeted me, even showing compassion on their countenances at seeing a mother with her children in such a situation.

“I confess that I feared to come into the American camp, as the thing was so entirely new to me. When I approached the tents, a noble-looking man came toward me, took the children out of the wagon, embraced and kissed them, and then, with tears in his eyes, helped me also to alight. ‘You tremble,’ said he to me, ‘fear nothing.’ ‘No,’ replied I, ‘for you have been so kind and have been so tender toward my children that it has inspired me with courage.’ He then led me to the tent of General Gates.

“All the generals remained to dine with General Gates. The man who had received me so kindly came up and said to me, ‘It may be embarrassing to you to dine with all these gentlemen; come now with your children into my tent, where I will give you, it is true, a frugal meal, but one that will be accompanied by the best of wishes.’ ‘You are certainly,’ answered I, ‘a husband and a father, since you show me so much kindness.’ I then learned that he was the American General Schuyler.”

Schuyler remained at Saratoga after the 17th to attend to his private affairs. But his kind heart had evidently been touched by the sufferings of these ladies and their children and by the sad position of Burgoyne and his officers. He sent Colonel Varick to Albany, to Mrs. Schuyler, to announce the speedy coming of guests from the vanquished army. He sent thither the Baroness Riedesel and her children in his own carriage. General Burgoyne, Riedesel, and other officers were escorted on horseback, the latter by General Glover. Mrs. Schuyler received these guests with her accustomed cordiality. The Baroness writes: “They loaded us with kindness, and they behaved in the same manner towards General Burgoyne, though he had ordered their splendid establishment to be burned, and without any necessity it was said; but all their actions proved that, in the sight of the misfortunes of others, they quickly forgot their own.”

The Marquis de Chastellux relates the following incident:

“The British Commander,” he says, “was well received by Mrs. Schuyler and lodged in the best apartment in the house. An excellent supper was served him in the evening, the honors of which were done with so much grace that he was affected even to tears, and said with a deep sigh, ‘Indeed, this is doing too much for a man who has ravaged their lands and burned their dwellings.’ The next morning he was reminded of his misfortune by an incident that would have amused any one else. His bed was prepared in a large room; but as he had a numerous suite, or family, several mattresses were spread on the floor for some officers to sleep near him. Schuyler’s second son, Philip, a little fellow about seven years old, very arch and forward, but very amiable, was running all the morning about the house. Opening the door of the room, he burst out laughing on seeing all the English collected, and shut it after him exclaiming, ‘You are all

my prisoners!' This innocent cruelty rendered them more melancholy than before."

Later Major Ackland, severely wounded, with his wife, Lady Harriet, passed through Albany and were guests at the Schuyler house.

After the surrender, Schuyler was introduced to Burgoyne, who subsequently described the meeting in a speech before the House of Commons: "I expressed to General Schuyler my regret at the event which had happened, and the reasons which had occasioned it. He desired me to think no more of it, saying that the reason justified it, according to the rules of war. . . .

"He did more: he sent his aide-de-camp to conduct me to Albany, in order, as he expressed it, to procure me better quarters than a stranger might be able to find. This gentleman conducted me to a very elegant house and, to my great surprise, presented me to Mrs. Schuyler and her family; and in General Schuyler's house I remained during my whole stay at Albany, with a table of more than twenty covers for me and my friends, and every other possible demonstration of hospitality."

Burgoyne remained until October 26th under Schuyler's roof.

VIII

THE HISTORIC STAIRCASE¹

The years 1780-1781, the war being then waged at the South, saw great unrest on the northern frontier, with incursions from Canada; while in the Mohawk Valley, Johnson, Butler, and Brandt were destroying settlements. The Tories were active, the Americans dispirited and tired of the long war. As Lossing justly observes, there were two sorts of Tories: the one royalists, men of high character who suffered for their opinions and were respected by the community; the other ruffianly marauders ready to kill and pillage on either side.

“For some time the Tories in the neighborhood of Albany had been employed in capturing prominent citizens and carrying them off to Canada, for the purpose of ransom. Such an attempt was made upon Colonel Gansevoort; Clinton, then at Peekskill, had been repeatedly warned; and now a bold project was conceived to carry off General Schuyler. John Walter Meyer, a bold partisan and colleague of the notorious Joe Bettys, was employed for the purpose. Accompanied by a gang of Tories, Canadians, and Indians, he repaired to the neighborhood of Albany, but, uncertain how well General Schuyler might be guarded, he lurked among the pine shrubbery in the vicinity eight or ten days. He seized a Dutch laborer, and learned from him the exact position of affairs at Schuyler’s house, after which he extorted an oath of secrecy from the man and let him go. The Dutchman seems to have made a mental reservation, for he immediately gave information of the fact to General Schuyler. A loyalist, who was the general’s personal friend and cognizant of Meyer’s design, also warned him. In consequence of the recent abductions, the general kept a guard of six men constantly on duty, three by day and three by night, and after these warnings they and his family were on the alert.”

¹ Lossing’s “Pictorial Field Book of the Revolution” and “Life and Times of Philip Schuyler.”

Lossing gives the following account of the attempt made upon Schuyler in his Albany house, as it was told him by Catharine, Schuyler's youngest child (Mrs. Cochran, of Oswego, New York). She was not seventy years old when she related it, and her memory and faculties were unimpaired.

At the close of a sultry day (in August, 1781) the general and his family were sitting in the front hall. The servants were dispersed about the premises. The three guards, relieved from night duty, were asleep in a basement room, and the three on duty, oppressed by the heat, were lying upon the cool grass in the garden. A servant announced to the general that a stranger desired to speak to him at the back gate. The stranger's errand was at once comprehended. The doors of the house were immediately shut and close barred. The family were hastily collected in an upper room and the general ran to his bed-chamber for his arms. From the window he saw the house surrounded by armed men. For the purpose of arousing the sentinels upon the grass, and perchance to alarm the town, he fired a pistol from the window. The assailants burst open the doors; and at that moment Mrs. Schuyler perceived that in the confusion and alarm of the retreat from the hall her infant child, a few months old, had been left in the cradle on the floor below. She was flying to the rescue of her child, when the general interposed and prevented her. But her third daughter, Margaret,¹ instantly rushed down the stairs, snatched the still sleeping infant from the cradle, and bore it off safely. One of the savages hurled a sharp tomahawk at her, but it effected no other harm than a slight injury to her dress, as it passed within a few inches of the infant's head and stuck in the stair railing. As she ascended the stairs she met Meyer, who supposing her to be a servant, exclaimed, "Wench, wench, where is your master?" With great presence of mind she replied, "Gone to alarm the town."

"The Tory's followers were then in the dining room plundering it of the plate and other valuables, and he called them together for consultation. At that moment the general threw up a window, and, as if speaking to numbers, called out in a loud voice, 'Come on, my brave fellows, surround the house and secure the villains, who are plundering.' The assailants made a precipitate

¹ Afterwards the wife of Stephen Van Rensselaer, the Patroon, of Albany.

retreat, carrying with them the three guards that were in the house and a large quantity of silver plate. They made their way to Balston by daybreak, where they took General Gordon a prisoner from his bed, and with their booty returned to Canada. The bursting open of the doors of General Schuyler's house had aroused the sleeping guards in the cellar, who rushed up to the back hall where they had left their arms, but they were gone. Mrs. Church, another daughter of General Schuyler, who was there at the time, without the slightest suspicion that they might be wanted, had caused the arms to be removed a short time before the attack, on account of apprehended injury to her little son whom she had found playing with them. The guards had no other weapon but their brawny fists, and these they used manfully until overpowered. They were taken to Canada, and, when exchanged, the General gave them each a farm in Saratoga County. Their names were John Tubbs, John Corlies, and John Ward.

“Mrs. Cochran was the infant rescued by her intrepid sister.”¹

¹ There is a tradition in the Church family that it was the Church boy, not the Schuyler infant, who was rescued, and it is so stated in some of the published accounts.

IX

HAMILTON

In October of 1777, shortly after the surrender of Burgoyne, Hamilton first crossed the threshold of the Schuyler house. Gates, having supplanted Schuyler, was now scheming to supersede Washington. It was extremely difficult to induce Gates to detach regiments from his command and send them to Washington's army. Hamilton had been entrusted with this delicate and diplomatic commission, and stopped on his way north to pay his respects to General Schuyler. That he then first saw Betsey Schuyler, is one of the traditions. They certainly met at Morristown in the winter of 1779-80, and after a short and ardent courtship, and with her father's hearty approval, she accepted his offer of marriage. The wedding took place in the drawing-room of the Schuyler house at Albany, in December, 1780. This wedding has appealed to the imagination of many writers both of history and of fiction, and it surely is admissible to quote the following:

“Never had Betsey Schuyler's dark eyes shone so gloriously, or her cheeks flushed more bewitchingly, than when she stood beside her brilliant young husband receiving the good wishes of her friends.” . . . “The sweep of the staircase with its fine spindled balustrade, seemed made for the descent of so distinguished a groom and so charming a bride. There was a glance of pride and protection in Hamilton's fine face as he appeared on the half-way landing beside Elizabeth Schuyler.”¹

Early in 1781, when he ceased to be a member of Washington's staff, Hamilton came to his father-in-law's house and remained some ten months there studying law and, as he writes, “rocking the cradle of his little boy.” Again, after his resignation as Secretary of the Treasury, in 1795, he returned with his family to

¹ From “The Parsonage between Two Manors,” by Elizabeth L. Gebhard, 1910.

live with General Schuyler for months, until he settled himself in New York City. From that time until his death, he was constantly at the house. Schuyler not only loved him, but had recognized from the first his genius and exceptional ability. The two men were at one in their views upon national policies, especially as to the adoption of the Federal Constitution. After a visit at the Albany home, Hamilton, while sailing down the river in the packet sloop, wrote one of the numbers of the Federalist. At the Poughkeepsie Convention, his father-in-law assisted as a zealous partisan and, when the Constitution was finally adopted by the State of New York, the Albany house was illuminated, and a parade was formed, with Schuyler, the Van Rensselaers, Gansevoort, Wendell, Lansing, Cuyler, and other prominent citizens in the procession. So high did party feeling run, that a mob of Albany anti-federalists assaulted the procession before it disbanded, and were charged by Gansevoort's company of Light Horse.

During the ravages of yellow fever in Philadelphia and New York, Schuyler writes repeatedly to his daughter begging her to come with her children and to persuade Hamilton to come. He has a father's solicitude for Hamilton, he reproaches him for not caring for his health. In 1793 they do come, having both had yellow fever in Philadelphia. They drive all the way, their little son James with them, then five years old, keeping to the west of the Hudson, because not allowed, owing to the quarantine, to cross the river to New York City. On approaching Albany they were required to halt and obtain permission of the authorities to go to the Schuyler house, "which was in the fields south of the city."

When, in 1801, Hamilton built "The Grange," then in the country just north of New York City, Schuyler furnished the timber from his Saratoga estate. The two men consult and plan together as to the building. Later, in 1802, Schuyler writes of some cedar posts he has ordered, half for himself, half for Hamilton, doubtless for fences; and he says: "I have been much engaged of late in [making] a new and I think a commodious and perhaps not an inelegant avenue, from the public road to my house." Again, in 1802, he writes to Hamilton: "I very much wish to see your improvements at Grange. Your task and my

dear Eliza's exertions, I am persuaded, will make it a desirable residence. Be assured I shall make it mine when I leave this for a visit to my children."

A note to his daughter Eliza, from Albany, of April 23, 1803, says: "Dear Child: This morning General Ten Broeck informs me that your horses, which went from hence, were drowned, and that you had lost paint, oil, etc. to a considerable amount. Supposing this account to have been truly stated to the General, I send you, by Toney, my wagon-horses of which I make you a present. If you cannot recover the paint, purchase no more, as I will have the house painted. When an opportunity offers, send my saddle and bridle, which Toney will leave."

To the end of his days, the old General averred that the only one of his daughters who had married with his consent was Mrs. Hamilton! In support of this declaration, in our own day, come pilgrims from different parts of the country to the old Albany house to determine from actual observation through *which window* his or her respective ancestress leaped, to run off and marry the man of her choice. This epidemic of elopements was not at all confined to the Schuyler girls. Sheridan's comedy of "The Rivals," produced in London in 1775, pictures the dismay of the romantic heroine at being married in church, with all the formalities.

"There had I projected one of the most sentimental elopements," cries Lydia Languish, "so amiable a ladder of ropes, conscious moon, four horses, Scotch parson—Oh! I shall die of disappointment." . . . "To go simpering up to the altar," she continues, "and perhaps be cried three times in a country church, and have an unmannerly fat clerk ask every butcher in the parish to join John Absolute to Lydia Languish, Spinster! Oh! that I should live to hear myself called Spinster!"

The play gives an insight, as well, into the arbitrary part parental authority played in eighteenth-century marriages. General Schuyler and his wife possibly indulged their children when little, to find that when they became men and women, the young people had wills and preferences of their own. Mrs. Church, Mrs. Van Rensselaer, Mrs. Washington Morton, despite the wealth or exceptional social position of the men they wished to marry, were culprits in the paternal eyes! But Schuyler's

was a generous heart, and in due time all the culprits returned to him and their mother, and shared the parental affection for the rest of their lives.

As the June sunshine plays upon the old house, and the horsechestnuts blossom, in the mind's eye of the patriotic pilgrim how many scenes are evoked, how many stately figures move through those halls!

It is summer, and eager young faces look from the east windows toward the river, watching for the packet sloop bringing cousins and friends. Or is it one of the General's own sloops, the "Mohawk" or the "Saratoga" they descry in the distance, slowly beating up the river, deeply laden with supplies from New York?

Youths and maidens stroll across the lawn or sit on the bank under the trees. Next comes a sound of voices and laughter, when a young party starts in post-chaise and phaetons and go clattering down the avenue bound for their picnic at Cohoes Falls.¹

In the large hall on the second story, through which the soft wind blows so refreshingly, sit Hamilton and his Betsey. He is always writing, but his foot rocks the cradle of his little boy, and when the child awakes, smiling and refreshed, he dances him on his knee. Little Kitty Schuyler, her hand in that of old Prince, has gone toward the orchard with a promise of one of those golden plums, while Masters Philip and Rensselaer profit by Prince's absence to play their pranks in the pantry.

Or it is winter, and the snow-covered ground lies sparkling under the blue sky and sunshine of a typical Albany winter's day. Wood fires blaze in all the rooms—the jingle of sleigh-bells is heard—the French officers have come! In the drawing-room Mrs. Hamilton, who addresses the foreign guests in their own language, receives them with her mother. They dine at that long table with its graceful epergne, and its silver and glass, its branches of wax candles, its good cheer and good wine. In the evening de Chastellux and de Noailles are in the General's study, going over maps and campaigns, while the young ladies and the young aides amuse themselves in the blue drawing-room with its

¹ Among them, on one occasion, were Mrs. Huger and Miss Lynch, of South Carolina.

handsome furniture, and with Mamma in her stately evening dress sitting by.

Or it is a quiet family evening, with no outsiders save Baron Steuben, their dear old Baron, with his gallantry and his fun. He stands with his back to the fire, round which they are gathered, exchanging repartees with Hamilton, while the General, who loves a joke, puts in a word, and laughs heartily. The young Cornelia sits in one of the deeply recessed windows absorbed in a romance, but Peggy, alongside of her Mamma, looks up from her embroidery and keeps an ear open to the talk of the elders, and of her dear tease of a brother-in-law.

What an excitement spread through all the house, shared by Prince and Dinah and Sambo, the night when candles burned at every window, to celebrate the good news from Poughkeepsie,—the ratification of the Constitution by the State! What an eager, admiring throng filled hall and parlors, and crowded the staircase, to see Washington when, at the reception that summer evening after the Peace, he stood by his host and hostess and received those heartfelt and respectful salutations!



Alexander Hamilton



Mrs. Alexander Hamilton
(Elizabeth Schuyler)

X

WASHINGTON

The friendly, social relations existing between General Washington and Schuyler are emphasized by a naïve remark of Mrs. Hamilton's in the account she gave Lossing of her first impressions of Mrs. Washington.

“He [young Ford, afterwards Judge Ford] brought to mama and me, from Mrs. Washington, an invitation to headquarters soon after our arrival at Morristown, in 1780. ‘Had you ever seen Mrs. Washington before?’ I inquired. ‘Never,’ she said, ‘never, she received us so kindly, kissing us both, for the General and papa were very warm friends.’ ”

In 1783, after the Peace, Washington and Clinton made a tour of the northern and western parts of the State of New York. On their way north they stopped at Albany (August 4, 1783), were presented with the freedom of the city and given a banquet at Hugh Denniston's tavern, and afterwards attended a brilliant reception at General Schuyler's house. On a second visit, the year following, Washington slept at the house.

During Washington's residence in New York, as President, General and Mrs. Schuyler were members of the intimate circle he had about him, outside of the Cabinet officers and their wives and other officials. They dine with him and Mrs. Washington, and afterwards go to the Play. Again they dine, and subsequently Washington notes in his journal, “called upon General Schuyler,” at a day when the Chief Executive permitted himself but few personal visits to friends.

In 1798, cordial letters are interchanged respecting a visit to Mount Vernon, which General and Mrs. Schuyler were unable to make owing to Schuyler's ill health. Referring to this disappointment, Washington writes to Schuyler of the pleasure it would have given him and his wife to have them come; he praises

Schuyler's grandson, young Philip Church, who had been at Mount Vernon, and concludes, "let me pray you to be assured of my sincere esteem, regard and wishes of the most affectionate kind."

Both were growing old—and there had been years of mutual regard and affection between them. From the time of Schuyler's first meeting with Washington, in Philadelphia, in 1775, when they served together on a Military Committee, from the June morning when they rode out of Philadelphia, journeying northward, to be met on the road by the messenger coming to Congress with the news of the battle of Bunker Hill, from that time until his death, Schuyler's love and admiration for Washington never faltered. In return, Washington's friendship for Schuyler, his confidence in him, his understanding, his sympathy, are matters of history. In 1776, when both were sorely tried by the insubordination in their respective commands, the two men interchange letters. Washington writes from Cambridge: "It would be far beyond the compass of a letter for me to describe the situation of things here on my arrival. Perhaps you will only be able to judge of it from my assuring you that mine must be a portraiture at full length of what you have had in miniature. Confusion and discord reigned in every department. . . . However, we mend everyday, and I flatter myself that in a little time we shall work up this raw material into a good manufacture. . . . I must recommend to you what I endeavor to practice myself, patience and perseverance."

Schuyler answers: "I can conceive that my difficulties are only a faint semblance of yours. Yes, my General, I will strive to copy your bright example."

At the Newburg headquarters, in 1783, when Washington indignantly crushed the seditious attempt to make him a military dictator and to involve his army in such a treasonable scheme, Schuyler writes to his son-in-law, Stephen Van Rensselaer: "Never through all the war did his Excellency achieve a greater victory than on this occasion, a victory over jealousy, just discontent, and great opportunities. The whole Assembly was in tears at the conclusion of his address. I rode with General Knox to his headquarters in absolute silence, because of the solemn impression on our minds."

Through the dark days of Washington's second administration, when calumny and abuse were heaped upon him, Schuyler, whether in or out of the Senate, was his staunch, warm-hearted supporter. "Miscreants" was the term he applied to the detractors of his beloved chief.

The two men had much in common. Both were prominent in their respective provinces, inheriting position and wealth, and with these the conscientious sense of obligation to the community. Both were land-owners, deeply interested in the development of their estates, the one on the Potomac, the other on a tributary of the Hudson. Both had fought for the King in the Old French War, had associated with Royal Governors, noblemen and army officers, and yet, as members of their respective Provincial Assemblies, both had stood firm for American rights, and finally, when the crisis came, both men gave themselves to the American cause, risking all they possessed for Constitutional Liberty.

In the history of our country, Washington and Lincoln tower above their contemporaries like mountain peaks, and stand forever touched with the sunset glow of the nation's reverence, with the morning light of its aspiration. Yet, inscribed on the Nation's Roll of Honor are the names of lesser men, not as great, not as gifted, but who keep their hold upon the affection and regard of posterity, in that, despite shortcomings and mistakes, amidst trials and difficulties, through good and evil report, they stood firm and did indeed *serve their country*.

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