LIFE

OF

COLONEL AARON BURR,

VICE-PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES.

WITH

PORTRAIT, AUTOGRAPH,

AND HITHERTO

UNPUBLISHED LETTERS.

ALSO

SKETCHES OF HIS FATHER, REV. AARON BURR, D.D. (WITH PORTRAIT AND AUTOGRAPH), AND OF HIS DAUGHTER, THEODOSIA, WIFE OF GOVERNOR ALSTON, OF SOUTH CAROLINA.

NEW YORK:
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1879.

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SKETCHES OF REV. AARON BURR, D.D., PRESIDENT OF PRINCETON COLLEGE, AND OF THEODOSIA, DAUGHTER OF COLONEL BURR AND WIFE OF GOVERNOR ALSTON, OF SOUTH CAROLINA.

BY

CHARLES BURR TODD.

REPRINTED FROM THE AUTHOR'S "HISTORY OF THE BURR FAMILY."

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REV. AARON BURR, D. D. [46]

On the 4th of January, 1716, there was born to Daniel Burr Esq., of Upper Meadow, a district in the northern limits of the present town of Fairfield, Ct. a son, on whom the graces that preside at birth, seem to have lavished all those gifts which they so charily bestow on the majority of mankind.

He had a lively, intelligent, profound intellect, a handsome person, equable temper, sufficient wealth, and all the advantages of birth, breeding, and education, and still further to insure his successful rearing, five hearty, healthy boys, and three merry girls shared with him in the care and solicitude of his parents.

"From childhood," says his biographer,* "he had a strong inclination for learning, and early discovered tokens of that extraordinary quickness of intellect which afterward distinguished him." Fortunately his friends had the discernment to perceive this, and early determined to give him a liberal education, with a view to entering him later in some one of the learned professions.

Accordingly, in his eighteenth year, he entered Yale College, then beginning to acquire that prestige as an educator of youth, which had before belonged exclusively to Harvard, and after the usual term of four years graduated with the highest honors of the class. This occurred in 1738. He was particularly proficient in Greek and Latin, and on receiving his first degree, was a candidate for, and received the privileges of a resident graduate on the Berkeley foundation, which were only granted after competition, to the three best scholars in Greek and Latin of the class.

The year after and while pursuing his post-graduate studies, an event occurred which exerted a controlling influence on his subsequent career. In this year he experienced that mysterious change which we call conversion, and which has changed the life current of so many men. A very interesting account of this event is given, in the following extract from his private papers:

"This year God saw fit to open my eyes, and show me what a miserable creature I was. Until then I had spent my life in a

* Stearns' Hist. of First Church, Newark.

dream, and as to the greatdesign of my life had lived in vain. Though before I had been under frequent conviction, and was driven to a form of religion, yet I knew nothing as I ought to know. But then I was brought to the footstool of sovereign grace, saw myself polluted by nature and practice, had affecting views of the Divine wrath I deserved, was made to despair of help in myself, and almost concluded that my day of grace was passed. It pleased God at length to reveal his Son to me as an all sufficient Savior, and I hope, inclined me to receive him on the terms of the Gospel."

His thoughts were now turned towards the Christian ministry, as the worthiest, most sacred and most responsible pursuit of man, and in September, 1736, he was licensed as a candidate for sacred orders. His first parish was Greenfield, Massachusetts, a pretty village in the valley of the Connecticut, a few miles above Springfield.

He remained there but a short time, and then removed to New Jersey, and preached, as the old chronicles inform us, at a place called Hanover ; while here, a wider sphere of action was opened before him.

In 1677, a colony of Connecticut people, principally from New Haven, had settled on the fertile banks of the Passaic, in New Jersey. The church which they then founded had grown with the years, until it had now become a numerous and wealthy society, known as the First Church of Newark ; it was now without a pastor, and having heard of the piety and eloquence of the young preacher from Connecticut, they appointed a committee, in Nov., 1736, to go down to Hanover and treat with him, "on the subject of his becoming a candidate." Next month, Dec. 21st, it was put to vote "whether the town desire Mr. Aaron Burr should have a call for further improvement in the work of the ministry among us, as a candidate for further trial, which was carried in the affirmative, *nemine contradicente.*" They were cautious folk, however, and engaged him at first, for but one year, commencing Jan. 10, 1737. The connection proved mutually satisfactory, and at the expiration of the year he was ordained as their pastor, by the Presbytery of East Jersey, with which the church was then connected. His emotions, on being inducted into this responsible office, are thus referred to in his journal : "Jan. the 25th, I was set apart to the work of the ministry by fasting, prayer, and imposition of hands. God grant that I may ever keep fresh in my

mind the solemn charge that was then given, and never indulge trifling thoughts of what then appeared to me to be of such awful importance."

The early part of his ministry was remarkable for that wonderful religious movement, which, commencing at Northampton and other towns in the Connecticut Valley, spread from town to town and from point to point, until nearly the whole country was embraced in its ever increasing circles.

Great Britain also presented, at the same time, a similar phenomenon. This movement is known in religious annals as the "Great Awakening." Whitefield and the Wesleys were its leaders in England, and Whitefield, Edwards and Burr among its chief promoters in America.*

The personal friendship and connection with Whitefield, begun at this time, forms one of the most charming passages in the life of this good man. The vessel in which the former took passage for this country was bound to Newport, R. I., and as it happened Mr. Burr was in that city when the vessel with its distinguished passenger arrived. It is probable that he accompanied Whitefield on his journey to Boston soon after; at least he was in that city while the latter was preaching there, and his letters of this date contain many pleasant little scraps of information concerning the great preacher and his sermons.

For instance, in one, the first of the series, he remarks, "Today I heard Mr. Whitefield preach in Dr. Coleman's church. I am more and more pleased with the man." Again, "on the 21st I heard him preach on the Common to about 10,000 people. On Monday visited him and had some conversation, to my satisfaction." "On the 23d went to hear him preach in Mr. Webb's church, but the house was crowded before he came. Same day Mr. Whitefield preached at Mr. Gee's church, and in the evening at Dr. Sewall's. On Saturday I went to hear him preach again, on the Common; there were about 8,000 there.

It was during Mr. Burr's stay in Boston at this time that an incident occurred, which is related as showing his remarkable power as a preacher.

One evening a young lady very wealthy and accomplished, but a sceptic in religion, was passing by the church in which he was

* A letter from Newark at this period mentions Mr. Burr as one of the ministers whom the good Lord had stirred up and inspired to water the seed sown by Mr. Whitefield in that region.

to preach, and attracted by the crowd that was pouring in, entered. By and by Mr. Burr entered the desk. There being nothing remarkable in his appearance, she regarded him with contempt, and would have left the church had not a regard for appearances restrained her. But with the first deep, melodious tones of the preacher her interest was awakened; she listened with the most breathless attention to the sermon which followed, and at its close went out weeping and convinced. That evening dated a most decided change in her character and life; she became a humble, earnest Christian, and some years after died, in the triumphs of faith.

After some weeks spent in Boston, Mr. Burr returned to his parochial duties in Newark.

Some time after, in November, 1740, he was visited by Mr. Whitefield, who preached in his church with the most gratifying results. A correspondence was kept up, it is said, between the two until Mr. Burr's death.

Two years after this visit, in June, 1742, the First Church of New Haven honored Mr. Burr with an invitation to become their assistant pastor with Mr. Noyes, and appointed a committee with President Clapp at their head, "to go down to Newark and lay the call before Mr. Burr, and at the same time to treat with the good people of Newark and gain their consent to Mr. Burr's removal." But both Mr. Burr and "the good people of Newark" seem to have been perfectly satisfied with their mutual relations, and the delegation was obliged to return home unsuccessful. Soon after we may suppose that Mr. Burr returned their visit, as he was chiefly occupied during this summer with sending the devoted Brainerd on his long cherished mission to the Indian tribes of the continent, and in the course of the summer made a long journey into New England and urged upon its people the duty and necessity of christianizing the Indians about them, and also recommended Mr. Brainerd as well fitted, both by nature and grace, for the work. Other ministers seconded these efforts and the result was that, in 1744, Brainerd was ordained and sent on a mission to the Indians at the Forks of the Delaware.

A marked peculiarity of President Burr's character was the large development in him of the paternal instinct,—a trait also shared by his famous son.

He loved children, and had an instinctive desire to take every bright active boy he saw, and "make a man of him." As an edu-

cator of youth, he was justly celebrated. Very early in his pastorate at Newark he gathered a class of boys, eight or ten about him, and instructed them in the principles of the English and classical languages. This was but the beginning.

On the 23d Oct., 1746, Jonathan Dickinson, John Pierson, Ebenezer Pemberton, and Aaron Burr, with an equal number of lay associates, received a charter for a new college of New Jersey, and which was organized the first week in May, 1747, at Elizabethtown. Of this institution Jonathan Dickinson was the first President.

In August, 1747, Mr. Dickinson died, and the students, eight in number, were removed to Newark, and placed under the care of Mr. Burr. The following September, Gov. Belcher granted a new charter, under which the college is at present conducted, and on the 9th of November, 1748, Mr. Aaron Burr was unanimously chosen the first President of the new college, "an office," says the College Record, "which he was pleased modestly to accept, and took the oath of office required by the charter." His devotion to the interests of his new charge knew no bounds; indeed, he is to be regarded not only as the first President and true founder of this sturdy giant of our day, but as its fostering parent as well.

"The college," says Dr. Stearns, "was at the time in a feeble condition, and he not only contributed freely of his own means, but by the weight of his own influence and personal efforts, he was able to accomplish much in securing for it the patronage of the liberal, here and in other parts of the world."

For the first three years of its existence, he received no salary whatever as President, and his intense interest in its welfare is shown in a letter of the period, which, after remarking that the college had lately drawn £200 in a lottery, adds, "It hath given the President such pleasure, that his spirits are greatly refreshed which were before very low."* Mr. Burr remained President of the college actively laboring in its behalf until his death in 1757. Indeed, it is highly probable that his unparalleled labors in its behalf were the main cause of his untimely decease.

In the midst of this life of activity, occurred his marriage with Miss Esther Edwards, daughter of the Rev. Jonathan Edwards of

* The autograph which accompanies this sketch, is from a paper in the Connecticut State Archives, praying the General Assembly for authority to hold a lottery in that State for the benefit of the college, which power was denied them by the law of New Jersey. The paper is signed by Aaron Burr, Pres. of the college, as acting for the trustees.

Stockbridge, Mass. This event, and the manner of its accomplishment, created no small amount of gossip in the social circles of the day. Mr. Burr was then thirty-seven, the young lady twenty-one. His courtship, judging from the letters of a young gentleman then a student in Princeton College, to his friends describing the affair, was quite patriarchal.

The young letter-writer thus describes it: "In the latter end of May, the president took a journey into New England, and during his absence he made a visit of but three days, to the Rev. Mr. Edwards' daughter at Stockbridge; in which short time, though he had no acquaintance, nor had ever seen the lady these six years, I suppose he accomplished his whole design, for it was not above a fortnight after his return here, before he sent a young fellow (who came out of college last fall) into New England to conduct her and her mother down here.

"They came to town Saturday evening the 27th ult., and on Monday evening following, the nuptial ceremonies were celebrated between Mr. Burr and the young lady. As I have yet no manner of acquaintance with her, I cannot describe to you her qualifications and properties. However, they say she is a very valuable lady. I think her a person of great beauty, though I must say I think her rather too young (being twenty-one years of age) for the President."

A few weeks later, on becoming acquainted, he wrote again, giving his impressions of the lady:

"I can't omit acquainting you that our president enjoys all the happiness that the married state can afford. I am sure, when he was in the condition of celibacy, the pleasure of his life bore no comparison to that he now possesses.

"From the little acquaintance I have with his lady, I think her a woman of very good sense, of a genteel and virtuous education, amiable in her person, of great affability and agreeableness in conversation, and a very excellent economist."

The marriage was solemnized, June 29, 1752. Two years later, May 3, 1754, the old parsonage in Newark was enlivened by the birth of a daughter, Sarah, and again, Feb. 6, 1756, by the advent of a son, Aaron. They were the only children of President and Esther Burr.

In the autumn of 1756, the college buildings at Princeton were completed, and the president removed thither, severing his connection with the church which he had served to the great sat-

isfaction of all parties, for twenty years. But the career of this busy and pious man was near its close.

In August, 1757, he made one of his swift journeys into New England, penetrating as far as Stockbridge, the residence of his father-in-law. He returned home much exhausted, but was obliged to set off at once to Elizabethtown, to meet Governor Belcher, on pressing business connected with the college.

At Elizabethtown he learned that the wife of the Rev. Caleb Smith was dead, and hastened to condole with his bereaved friend, and on his arrival was prevailed on to preach the funeral sermon of the deceased lady.

On his return to Princeton, he suffered from attacks of intermittent fever, but disregarding it, made a forced journey to Philadelphia, still on college business.

From this journey he returned utterly exhausted, only to meet fresh demands upon his energies, for Governor Belcher, his old friend and ally, the firm friend and patron of the college, had died suddenly, and who but President Burr could fitly pronounce his funeral eulogium. He spent nearly the whole of that night in preparing it, and the next morning, nearly delirious with fever, travelled to Elizabethtown, where the funeral ceremonies were to be held.

During the sermon his friends perceived with regret and alarm, that he was nearly prostrated by his disease ; this was his last sermon. From Elizabethtown he returned to his home at Princeton, where he expired from the effects of the fever, September 24, 1757. His funeral was celebrated in the college chapel, and his remains interred in the college churchyard, where, eighty years after, the body of his famous son was brought for burial.

Few men, probably, have been more sincerely mourned than was President Burr. A large concourse of people, comprising many of the magnates of the land, gathered at his funeral. A glowing eulogium was pronounced upon him by Governor Livingston, of New Jersey,* and the press and the pulpit vied in paying manly tributes to his virtue, talents and beneficence.

Of President Burr's personal appearance and habits we have but few details, and they are chiefly supplied by his biographer, Dr. Stearns, and by Gov. Livingston.

According to Dr. Stearns, he was small in stature, and of a delicate frame but capable of great effort.

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* Afterward published: a copy—and the only one that I have been able to find,—is preserved in the Library of the Mass. Historical Society, Boston.

"He was a small man, and very handsome, with clear dark eyes of a soft luster, a slender, shapely person, and the style and bearing of a prince," said the letter-writers of his day.

"To encounter fatigue," says Gov. Livingston, "he had a heart of steel, and for the despatch of business the most amazing talents. As long as an enterprise appeared not absolutely impossible, he knew no discouragement, but in proportion to its difficulty augmented his diligence, and by an insuperable fortitude, frequently accomplished what his friends and acquaintances deemed utterly impossible. In private intercourse he was modest, easy, courteous and obliging."

A perfect master of the art of pleasing in company, his presence threw a charm over every social circle. Temperate even to abstemiousness, he was a lover of hospitality, and possessing ampler means than most of his brethren, he distinguished himself as a bounteous giver.

"As a pastor," says Dr. Stearns, "Mr. Burr was eminently faithful and assiduous; of winning manners and distinguished skill in finding out and opening the avenues of the heart, he employed his address, learning, and activity for the promotion of the moral improvement and spiritual welfare of the souls committed to him."

Gov. Livingston also touches upon this topic.

"He was none of those downy doctors who soothe their hearers into delusive hopes of Divine acceptance, or substitute external morality in the room of vital godliness. On the contrary, he scorned to proclaim the peace of God, until the rebel had laid down his arms and returned to his allegiance. He was an ambassador that adhered inviolably to his instructions, and never acceded to a treaty that would not be ratified in the court of Heaven. He searched the conscience with the terror of the law, before he assuaged its anguish with the balm of Gilead, or presented the sweet emollients of a bleeding Deity. He acted in short, like one not intrusted with the lives and fortunes, but the everlasting interests of his fellow mortals, and therefore made it his business to advance the divine life, and restore the beautiful image of God displaced by the apostacy of man."

This may seem like extraordinary eulogy, but there is evidence that it was truth.

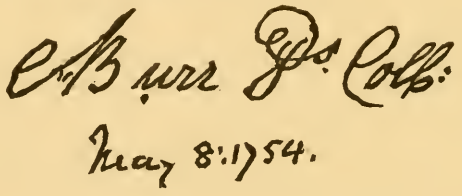
There are several portraits of President Burr in existence, but all I believe copies of an original portrait, which was captured by

the British during the Revolution, and somewhat defaced, but was afterward recovered and restored. The painting in the college library is copied from that portrait.

Mr. Burr was not a voluminous writer. In 1752 he published a Latin Grammar, known as the Newark Grammar, and which was used in the college long after his death. He also published a pamphlet of 60 pages called "The Supreme Deity of our Lord Jesus Christ Maintained;" a fast day sermon, delivered Jan. 1, 1755. "The Watchman's Answer to the Question, What of the Night?" A sermon, 1756, and the funeral sermon on Gov. Belcher, 1757.

A Latin Oration by him on the death of Philip Doddrige, is still preserved in manuscript in the college library.

Fac-simile of Autograph:



His monument in the Princeton churchyard, bears this inscription:

M. S.
Reverendi admodum viri
AARONIS BURR, A.M.
Collegii Neo Caesariensis Præsidiis
Natus apud Fairfield Connecticutensium
IV Januarii A. D. MDCCXVI
S. V.
Honesta in eadem Colonia Familia oriundus
Collegio Yalensi innutritus
Novarcæ Sacris innutritus MDCCXXXVIII
Anno circiter viginti pastorali Munere
Fideliter Fructus
Collegii N. C. Præsidium MDCCXLVIII accepit
In narsoviæ Aulam sub Finem MDCCLVI translatus
Defunctus hoc vico XXIV Septembris
A. D. MDCCLVII S. N.
Ætatis XLII eheu quam brevis
Huic Marmori subjicitur quod mori potuit
Quod immortale vindicarunt cœli
Quæris viator Qualis Quantusque fuit
Perpaucis Accipe

Vir corpore parvo ac tennui
Studiis vigiliis assiduis que laboribus macro
Sagacitate, Perspici cacitate Agilitate
Ac Solertia (si fas dicere)
Plus quam humana pene
Angelica
Anima ferme totus
Omnigena Literatura instructus
Theologia præstantior
Concionator volubilis suavis et suadus
Orator facundus
Moribus facilis candidus et jucundus
Vita egregie liberalis ac beneficus
Supra vero omnia emicuerunt
Pietas ac Benevolentia
Sed ah! quanta et quota Ingenii
Industriæ Prudentiæ Patientiæ
Cæterarumque omnium virtutem
Exemplaria
Marmoris Sepulchralis Augustia Reticebit
Multum desideratus multum dilectus
Humani generis Deliciæ
O! infandum sui Desidarium
Gemit Ecclesia plorat accademia
At Cœlum plaudit dum ille
Ingreditur
In Gaudium Domini Dulce loquentis
Enge bone et fidelis
Serve
Abi viator tuam respice finem.

COL. AARON BURR. [123]

It would be impossible in a work of this kind to ignore the life and services of such a character as Aaron Burr, even if there was any desire of doing so; it would be equally impossible for the compiler, having after careful study, reached certain conclusions regarding him, to ignore them, and write in the strain of calumny and reproach, which has obtained with most writers in treating of this remarkable man—for remarkable he was beyond cavil—remarkable in his ancestry, his achievements, his unexampled misfortunes, and unexampled fortitude. His was a strong character though a faulty one—a character that commands respect and admiration, while at the same time one cannot avoid noticing and commenting upon many defects. In this work the compiler proposes to treat of him with independence, without undue bias, and certainly without prejudice, stating only what he believes to be the truth in regard to his life and character.

The reader will please remember that his object has been to prepare a careful, accurate sketch of his distinguished subject, for preservation in a family memorial, and that he disclaims any competition in point of literary merit or finish, with the biographers that have preceded him; and further, if any one feels impelled to differ from the views herein advanced, he asks from them fair and honorable treatment, deprecating the harsh invective and coarse abuse that has hitherto assailed all who have dared express a favorable opinion of Aaron Burr.

To gain the end desired, it will be necessary to treat of his earlier career with almost the pitiless brevity of a compendium. He was born in the parsonage of the First Church, Newark, Feb. 6, 1756. Before the second year of his life had passed, it was clouded by the death of his father, mother, and grandparents, and he was left to the hazardous experiment of being reared in an uncle's family, who, however conscientious, was, it is evident, no fit custodian for such a genius.

This uncle was Timothy Edwards, the eldest son of President Edwards; he resided at Elizabethtown, N. J., and at the age of three the little Aaron became an inmate of his family. Left an

A. Burr

ample patrimony, his uncle made free use of it in his education, and provided for him an excellent tutor, Mr. Tappan Reeve, who some years later became his brother-in-law, and later still was widely known as Chief Judge of the Supreme Court of Connecticut, and founder of the Litchfield Law School. So precocious was the boy, that at eleven he was ready for college, and applied to the faculty of Princeton for admission, but was refused solely, as he himself said, "on account of his years and inches." He contrived, however, to triumph over the faculty by entering the sophomore class two years later, in 1769, and graduated with distinction in September, 1772.

The year that followed was spent partly at Princeton, among his books, and partly at Elizabethtown in pursuit of those manly sports which young men of fortune sometimes affect. During this year too, the subject of a profession was much in his thoughts. His friends and the Presbyterian world generally expected him to choose the profession which his father and grandfather had so adorned. Conscience, and the silent influence of the dead impelled him in the same direction. On the other hand, he had no doubt imbibed much of the speculative French philosophy then so rife, and which, while it questioned the truth of revelation, pointed to the attainment of fame, and the indulgence of passion as the chief means of obtaining happiness. In this state of indecision, he became in the fall of 1774, an inmate of Dr. Bellamy's famous school at Bethlehem, Connecticut. This gentleman was the successor in theology of President Edwards, and his reputation for learning and piety attracted to his home so many candidates for the ministry, that it assumed quite the character of a theological seminary.

Here Burr fought the great battle of Armageddon.

We cannot give the details of the conflict, or say how largely the result was due to the absurd and repelling system of theology then in vogue, but we know that the result of his studies was a conviction, to use his own words "that the road to heaven was open to all alike," and that he resolved there to maintain henceforth an imperturbable silence on religious matters. There is however no evidence that he adopted extreme atheistic views.

In the fall of 1774, we find him a law student with Tappan Reeve, now the proud husband of pretty Sallie Burr, and principal of a law school at Litchfield, Conn., which had already become famous. For a few months only Burr pored over his musty law-books, then the guns of Lexington summoned him to arms with thou-

sands of other gallant spirits, and buckling on his sword he set off without delay to join the army at Boston.

It was in July, 1775 that Burr and his friend Ogden,—afterward Colonel,—joined the Continental army, and it was in August of the same year that after five weeks of inaction, he rose from a sick bed to volunteer in Col. Benedict Arnold's expedition then preparing for its famous march through the wilderness of Maine to strike Quebec and Canada. He armed and equipped a company at his own expense, and taking command, with the rank of Captain, marched them to Newburyport, Mass., where the little army was to rendezvous.

On Tuesday the 19th of September, at ten in the morning, the expedition 1,100 strong embarked and stood away for the mouth of the Kennebec, which they reached on the 23d. From that point they were to follow the Kennebec to Dead River, up that stream to its source near Bald Mountain, then over a portage of a few miles to Lake Megantic the source of the Chaudiere, which would lead them to the St. Lawrence and Quebec. This journey was to be performed through an unbroken wilderness 600 miles in extent. On the 4th of October the army took leave of houses and settlements, and plunged into this wilderness; 27 days after, on the 31st of October, they reached the settlements on the Chaudiere River. These were days of the severest privations; thirty times or more the boats were unloaded and borne across portages, miles in length, or hauled by main strength around rapids and falls. Once a sudden flood destroyed half the boats and provisions, and starvation threatened the troops. For days they lived upon dogs and reptiles, they even ate the leather of their shoes and cartridge-boxes, and every thing that could afford nourishment. Many sickened, others deserted, and when at last they approached the settlements it was found that sickness, death and desertion, had reduced their numbers to barely 600 effective men.

Through it all our young soldier displayed the courage and endurance of a veteran. He animated the men with his sprightliness and wit, or he led hunting parties in quest of game; or in the van of his division steered the foremost boat in its descent of the turbulent river; in all positions he proved himself a worthy member of the gallant six hundred who marched with Arnold through the wilderness, and came out strong in life and limb, before Quebec.

As the force approached the latter place a messenger was

needed to communicate with Montgomery, then at Montreal, 120 miles distant. No one volunteered for this perilous enterprise until at last "little Burr" stepped out. Arnold, running his eye over the stripling, demurred to sending such a youth, but Burr persisted, and at length the commission was given him.

Fertile of expedient, he had already devised a plan for executing his mission. Knowing that the religious chiefs of the country were opposed to British rule, he donned the garb of a young priest, and sought an interview with the chief of a religious house near by, and to him, after a few preliminaries, frankly unfolded his plan ; this, the worthy prelate, after his astonishment had passed, heartily seconded, and Burr was passed quickly and safely from one religious house to another, in the disguise of a priest, until he reached Montgomery, who was so delighted with his address and gallantry that he made him his aid-de-camp on the spot, with the rank of captain.

Twenty-four hours after, Montgomery, with his 300 available men, was on the march to join Arnold at Quebec. They arrived there December 1, 1775. The succeeding thirty days history has made immortal.

There was, first, the council of war which decided on the assault, and which gave to Burr the command of a forlorn hope of forty men, whom he was to select and drill in the use of scaling ladders, ropes, grapnels, and all the paraphernalia of the assault. After the council came the long waiting for the midnight storm, which burst upon them at last on the 31st of December. At five in the morning the order to assault was given, the air then being so thick with snow that every thing was hidden : 900 men answered to the roll call. These were divided into four parties, two for the attack and two to distract the enemy's attention by feints at various points.

Arnold led one of the attacking parties and Montgomery the other. Side by side with his general that morning marched Captain Burr; beside them were two other aids, a sergeant and the French guide, these six constituting the group in advance. The column swept swiftly and silently along the St. Lawrence toward the defences under Cape Diamond, and in a few moments struck the first of these—a line of pickets firmly fastened in the ground. These were wrenched away in an instant, and the column rushed on to a second line. Here it was discovered by the British guard, who fired an ineffectual volley and fled in dismay to a block-house

a few yards in the rear. This latter was quite a fortress, built of ponderous logs, loop-holed above for musketry, and pierced below for two twelve-pounders, which, charged with grape and canister, commanded the gorge up which the party was now advancing. The garrison, wild with fear, fled precipitately without firing a shot. Thus the gate to the city was thrown wide open, but the besiegers failed to appear in the breach ; they were some yards below, struggling with the huge blocks of ice which a winter flood in the St. Lawrence had left in their path.

At this critical juncture one of the fugitives ventured back to the block-house ; peeping through one of the port-holes, he saw the attacking column a few yards off and turned to fly again, but as he did so, *touched a match to one of those loaded cannon.* That simple act saved Quebec. Montgomery, the two aids, the sergeant, every man that marched in front of the column, except Burr and the guide, were stricken down by the discharge, and in a moment the fortunes of the day were changed, and the victory which seemed in the grasp of the provincials was turned into defeat. "At this critical moment," says Mr. Parton, "Burr was as cool, as determined, as eager to go forward as at the most exultant moment of the advance."

"When dismay and consternation universally prevailed," testified Capt. Platt, an eye-witness of the scene, "Burr animated the troops and made many efforts to lead them on, and stimulated them to enter the lower town." But the enemy reappeared in force at the block-house and the commanding officer ordered a retreat, by this act giving Capt. Burr an opportunity to perform an action that redeems humanity and proved him the impulsive, generous being that his friends knew him to have been. As the deed itself has been called in question, I give an account of it in the words of the Rev. Samuel Spring, Chaplain in Arnold's expedition, and who was present at the assault. After describing the attack he says : "It was a heavy snow storm, Montgomery had fallen, the British troops were advancing towards the dead body, and *little Burr was hastening from the fire of the enemy, up to his knees in snow, with Montgomery's body on his shoulders.*" Some forty yards he staggered on under his burden, and was then obliged to drop it to avoid capture by the enemy. * See Appendix D.

Thirty years later his friends were fond of detailing this incident in the face of the clamor that arose against Aaron Burr the traitor.

Captain Burr remained with the command until May,—a part of the time performing the duties of brigade major—and then resigned and set out for New York, via. Albany.

He arrived in New York safely and served for a time as Washington's aid, but not liking the clerical duties which the position imposed, he was soon after transferred, at the instance of Governor Hancock, to the staff of Gen. Putnam, then busily engaged in fortifying the city against the British force in the harbor. Putnam gave him work to do, the stirring active work of the soldier, and with him he was perfectly contented.

A few days after, occurred the disastrous battles of Long Island, and the famous retreat of the Americans from Manhattan.

In this retreat Capt. Burr was the hero of an action which won him almost universal applause. He had been scouting in the lower part of the island, and was flying in full gallop before the enemy, when he came upon an American brigade, sheltered in a mud fort, which stood on or about the present line of Grand Street. "What are you doing here?" Burr demanded. Gen. Knox the commander explained that he had been left behind by mistake, and deeming himself surrounded, he had determined to hold the fort. Burr ridiculed the idea, and addressing the men, told them if they remained there they would surely be in the British prison ships before morning. He then led them by blind and circuitous paths to the Hudson, and safely rejoined the main army, with the loss of but a few stragglers. These men ever after regarded him as their deliverer from British prison ships, and the whole army rang with his praises, yet his name was not even mentioned in the dispatches of the commander-in-chief. In 1777, Captain Burr was promoted to the rank of Lieut. Colonel. His superior officer, Col. Malcolm, was a New York merchant of no military ability, and the actual command of the regiment devolved upon Burr. This responsibility he cheerfully assumed, and in a few months brought his men—all raw levies—into the most perfect state of discipline.

Through the fall of this year his regiment was detailed for scouting duty in New Jersey, then the debatable ground between the two armies.

Here he first met Mrs. Prevost, the widow of a British officer, then residing at Paramus, and who afterward became his wife.

In November he joined the main army for the winter cantonment at Valley Forge, and through the winter was in command of a very responsible post called "the Gulf," some ten miles dis-

tant from the main body, and which would be the point first attacked, should the enemy make a descent on the camp. He owed this appointment it is said, to Gen. McDougall, who had been his superior officer at the battle of Long Island. He next saw active service at the famous battle of Monmouth, June 28, and 30, 1778. Here he commanded a brigade in Lord Sterling's division and fully sustained that reputation for address and gallantry which he had before earned. After the battle, almost worn out with fatigue and exposure, he was sent to New York with orders to watch the enemy's movements in that quarter and report, which task he performed with the utmost spirit and success. Returned from this duty, he was ordered to march at once with his regiment to West Point; the regiment, however, went forward without him, he being detailed on the eve of departure, for the delicate service of conducting several influential tories within the British lines. A few weeks later he reported at West Point, but finding himself completely broken in health, he wrote to Washington, asking leave of absence without pay, until the next campaign, and urging as a reason his utter unfitness for military duty. Washington granted him leave of absence but continued his pay. This, however, Burr utterly refused to accept, and the matter was compromised by his being placed in command of West Point, where he remained until his health was in a measure regained. He was now twenty-three years of age.

About the 1st of January, 1779, Col. Burr received his last and most important command, being placed in charge of the Westchester "lines," extending from the Hudson to the Sound, a distance of 14 miles, traversing a section the most lawless and turbulent in the country, and which former commanders had utterly failed to control; here Whigs plundered Tories, and Tories harried Whigs with the utmost impartiality, and both parties combined to plunder the peaceful Quakers, who formed by far the largest portion of the population. To check these marauders, Burr proclaimed martial law, and proceeded to punish all offenders with the utmost rigor. His energy was untiring, and his vigilance argus-eyed.

To protect his posts, he prescribed for himself and his subordinates a course of the extremest vigilance, and visited with the severest penalties any departure from it. Next he prepared a list of the inhabitants of his district, and divided them into their several classes, such as Whigs, Tories, half whigs, spies and others;

and further prepared an accurate map of the country, showing the roads, creeks, swamps, woods and other avenues of escape for parties flying from pursuit. To these safeguards, he added a perfect system of scouts and espionage, and so managed all, that order and quiet was restored to the whole region covered by his force.

If, during this winter he showed himself gallant in war, he also proved himself no laggard in love, for twice during the period, he contrived to visit Mrs. Prevost, at Paramus, thirty miles distant, on both occasions at night, and with such secrecy that his absence from camp was not suspected.

But the labors of this command proved to be too exhaustive a drain on a once splendid, but now enfeebled constitution, and on the 10th of March, 1779, he was forced to send in his commission to Gen. Washington, stating the circumstances of his case, and asking a discharge ; in reply, Washington wrote a letter accepting his resignation, and regretting "not only the loss of a good officer, but the causes which made it necessary."

Thus, after four years of active military life, Col. Burr became again a private citizen.

Eighteen months were spent in recruiting his shattered health, then he resumed the legal studies which four years before he had laid down at the call of his country. His first tutor was Judge Patterson, of New Jersey ; but not satisfied with his progress under him he removed, in the spring of 1781, to Haverstraw, N. Y., and took up his abode with Mr. Thomas Smith, a lawyer of note, formerly of New York, but now thrown out of business by the British occupation of that city. Here Burr pursued his studies with the utmost dispatch, living abstemiously, and poring over his books twenty hours out of the twenty-four.

There were several reasons for this intense application. His splendid patrimony was all gone, spent largely with that inconsiderate generosity which was his bane, to feed, clothe, and arm the destitute soldiers of his command, and his purse needed replenishing. Again the success of the American cause, then well assured, would give to the Whig lawyers all the business and emoluments of the profession. Lastly, he contemplated marriage, and only a lucrative practice stood in the way of home comforts and domestic happiness. After reading law twelve months this man of wonderful gifts thought himself competent to practice, and applied for admission to the bar ; but to his dismay he was confronted with a rule of the court which required candidates to spend at least three years in

the study of the law ; he could boast of but one, nor could he find a lawyer disinterested enough to move a suspension of the rule. He therefore appeared in court and himself offered and argued the motion, reminding the court that but for his services in the field he would long before have completed his studies, and that in his case at least there were grave reasons for the suspension of the rule. The judge, after hearing his plea, decided that the rule might in his case be dispensed with, provided he could show that he possessed the requisite qualifications, and a most rigorous examination having proved his fitness, he was licensed an Attorney on the 19th of January, 1782.

The young lawyer at once took an office in Albany and began the practice of the law, and was so successful that in three months he thought it prudent to marry.

The wedding accordingly took place July 2, 1782, in the Dutch Reformed Church at Paramus, the Rev. David Bogart, pastor of the church, performing the ceremony. This marriage certainly gives no color to the popular belief that Col. Burr was a cold, selfish, unprincipled schemer, with an eye always open to the main chance. He was young, handsome, well born, a rising man in his profession, and might no doubt have formed an alliance with any one of the wealthy and powerful families that lent lustre to the annals of their State. This would have been the course of a politician. But Burr, disdaining these advantages, married a lady without wealth, position, or beauty, and at least ten years his senior, simply because he loved her, and he loved her, it is well to note, because she had the truest heart, the ripest intellect, and the most winning and graceful manners of any woman he had ever met.

It was a favorite remark of his, in later years, that if he was more easy and graceful in manner than other men it was from the unconscious influence of her spirit and graces upon him.

I think it should be mentioned here—because the opposite has been stated—that the marriage was conducive of great happiness to both, and that Col. Burr was to the end the most faithful and devoted of husbands. The young couple at once began housekeeping in a pleasant mansion in the city of Albany, and there they continued to reside, (receiving in the first year of their marriage a lovely daughter, Theodosia, to their home,) until, in the fall of 1784 Burr's increasing law business in New York necessitated his removal to that city. In New York he took a front rank among the leaders of the bar, and his reputation overwhelmed him

with business; by many he was regarded as superior even to Hamilton.

He was the most successful lawyer that ever plead, and it is said never lost a case in which he was alone engaged. Yet the general verdict is that he was not a great lawyer. Perhaps not. He certainly never affected greatness. A soldier by nature and profession, he regarded the end from the beginning and carried his soldierly tactics into the courts; he always used the *means* best calculated to gain his ends. If learning and eloquence were necessary, he could be both learned and eloquent. If appeal, argument, sarcasm, invective promised to be more effective, he used them, or he would win by showing the weak points of his adversary's case rather than the strong points of his own.

He was careful to go into action thoroughly furnished; his weapons were always at command, and his armor without flaw; like most lawyers, he at times skirmished pretty close to the citadel of truth, but it can not be proved that he ever resorted to dishonorable means to gain an end, while it must be said in his praise, that he was keenly alive to the interests of his clients, and was never known to betray a professional trust.

His legal practice covered a period of nearly sixty years—one of the longest on record, and many of his cases and opinions, notably the Medcef Eden case, and the opinion on the contested election in New York, in 1792, attracted national attention.

One thing which I have observed in regard to Col. Burr, is, that as a lawyer he is held by the New York bar in the greatest respect, and his influence for good, both in shaping laws and promoting justice, is freely admitted.

His first appearance in politics was in 1784, when he was elected to a seat in the New York Assembly. He filled the same position in 1785. In 1789, Gov. Clinton appointed him Attorney General of New York. In March, 1790, the legislature named him one of the three commissioners, to decide and classify the claims of individuals who had rendered services, or sustained losses in the Revolutionary War.

The next year he was placed on a commission with the Governor, Secretary, Treasurer and Auditor, to sell the waste and unclaimed lands of the State, the proceeds to be applied to liquidating its war debt and claims. The ability with which he performed the duties of these positions, was the main cause of his subsequent marvelous political advancement.

In January, 1791, two years after his entrance upon public life, he was elected to represent the State of New York in the National Senate, and on the 24th of October—the first day of the session—he took his seat as a member of that body. The day after, he received a very flattering recognition, being appointed chairman of the committee to draft the senate's reply to the President's annual address.

Of Col. Burr's course in the senate, we have only the most meagre details. That body, patterned after the English House of Lords—then sat with closed doors, and little more than the record of votes was given to the public. We know, however, that he served the full term of six years, that he acted generally with the Republican party, that he was the acknowledged leader and champion of that side of the House, that he advocated among other important measures, an open session of the senate, lower rates of postage, substantial aid to the French people in their struggle for liberty, and the gradual abolition of slavery. He also gained a great reputation as an orator, although no utterance of his now exists. A great speech delivered by Col. Burr against the ratification of Jay's treaty with Great Britain, in 1795, is mentioned by the newspapers of that day, but no report of it is given.

As the election, in April, 1792, of a Governor for the State of New York drew near, Col. Burr was frequently mentioned as a candidate, but Hamilton's adverse influence prevented his nomination.

In 1791, Gov. Clinton nominated him to the bench of the Supreme Court of his State, but he declined the honor, preferring his seat in the Senate.

In November, 1792, the young nation was to elect for the second time a President and Vice President.

Washington, it was well known, would fill the first office; as to the incumbent of the second, some uncertainty existed. John Adams was the candidate of the Federal party; in the Republican, the choice lay between George Clinton and Mr. Burr, but Mr. Burr's claims were in the end set aside, and Mr. Clinton was nominated.

In the succeeding presidential election, however, our hero came more prominently before the country, as a candidate for these high offices. In that canvass, John Adams received 71 votes, Thomas Jefferson 68, Thomas Pinckney 59, and Aaron Burr 30. About this time, and while he was in the Senate, he sustained an

irreparable loss in the death of his wife, from cancer, after a long and painful illness.

How much Col. Burr's subsequent misfortunes were due to the loss of this estimable lady, can not be determined, but it is certain that, had she lived, his career would have had a very different ending. She died in the spring of 1794. On the 4th of March, 1797, Col. Burr's term in the Senate expired, and he was succeeded by Gen. Philip Schuyler, the Federal party being then in the ascendant in New York.

Burr returned to his law business in the metropolis, without however losing his hold on national politics. On the contrary he had formed the design of destroying at a blow Federal supremacy in the United States. For two years he worked in silence, then in April, 1800, the time came for him to show his hand.

The fourth presidential election was but six months distant, and the rival parties were already in the field. They were two—the Federal, a party of old renown, strong in the prestige of victory, conservative, arrogant, English in everything but in name, and clinging tenaciously to class privileges and class domination.

Its great rival, the Republican party, was liberal and progressive in the extreme. It was the popular party, *par excellence*, and as much French as the other was English. It advocated an open senate, a free press, free speech, free schools, and free religion. Its leading principle was that so pithily expressed by Mr. Seward, "the emancipation of the masses from the domination of classes."

Of this party Thomas Jefferson was the nominal leader, the historical figure-head, but its real *imperator* was Aaron Burr, the man who, in the conflict which we are now to consider, taught it how to win. In those days the legislature of each State cast the vote of its State for President. It early became apparent that New York would decide the presidential contest. It was also apparent, that if the Republicans could secure the New York legislature, (to be chosen in April, 1800,) the national issue was already decided, and to attain this object Burr had planned and toiled during the two previous years, and now redoubled his exertions.

It was a mistake of Hamilton's that made his great rival's triumph possible. That chieftain strong in Federal supremacy, gathered his friends together a few weeks before the election, and made out a list of his candidates from the city for assemblymen. They were all his personal friends and men of but little weight in the

community. Burr, when the slate was brought to him, perceived at once his adversary's great mistake, and proceeded to profit by it. He immediately sat down and prepared his list of candidates. At its head he placed George Clinton, so long Governor of the State. Then came Gen. Gates, Brockholst Livingston, and other names of national reputation. The next and more difficult step was to persuade these gentlemen to allow their names to be used, but by bringing his matchless powers of persuasion to bear, he succeeded in this also. Then a public meeting was held and the ticket ratified with immense enthusiasm.

Simultaneously Burr began organizing his army for the campaign. The strictest discipline was ordered and enforced. "Every member was obliged to submit to the will of the majority," and "that majority was made to move at the beck of committees, which concentrated the power in the hands of a few individuals." Ward and general meetings were held almost daily. Complete lists of the voters were made out with the political history and affiliations of each; pamphlets and political speeches were disseminated, and no means left untried that might lead to success. The polls opened April 20th, and closed May 2d, at sunset, and before the city had sunk to rest, it was known that the Republican cause had won in the city by a majority of 490 votes. This decided the election throughout the State.

Hamilton seems to have been nearly frantic over his defeat, or he never would have adopted the mean expedient which he did, to wrest from his opponents the fruits of their hard won victory. He at once called a caucus of his party, and with its concurrence, wrote to Governor Jay, urging him to call an extra session of the old legislature, which was still in existence, that it might take the power of choosing presidential electors from the legislature and give it to the people, thus leaving the whole case to be decided again by the ballot. This letter was sent, and the next day a complete *exposé* of the whole plan, with an account of the caucus, and the contents of the letter were published in the Republican journals, to the no small astonishment of the "caucus," which had concocted it. Governor Jay, however, refused to sanction any such proceedings, and the scheme proved futile.

A few days after the New York election, a Republican caucus at Philadelphia nominated Thomas Jefferson for President, and Aaron Burr for Vice President of the United States.

The election which followed in November, resulted in the well

known tie,* Jefferson having 73 votes, Burr 73, Adams 65, Pinckney 64, and made a choice by the House of Representatives necessary. Then ensued a contest such as was never known before in the comparatively peaceful history of parties.

The politicians were painfully active, and the country fairly ablaze with excitement. The main interest centered of course on the rival chiefs, who remained at their posts, Jefferson at Washington, and Burr at Albany, quietly performing his duties as Assemblyman.

"Had Aaron Burr not aroused prejudice by marrying a British wife, he would have been elected President by a large majority," was the remark of a prominent State official, to the writer. Perhaps so: smaller things have ere this changed the popular vote and the gentleman spoke with authority, his father having been the fellow aid de camp, and intimate friend of Col. Burr.

But whether this be true or not, it is certain that at any time between the declaration of the vote and the House's decision thereon. the merest whisper on his part, the lifting of a finger even, would have placed him in the seat of Washington and of Adams. The Federal party was almost a unit in his support. Alike from his antecedents and his political record, they argued that his ascendency would be less detrimental to Federalism and the public good, than that of Jefferson. In a file of the "Connecticut Courant," for 1801, published at Hartford, and the organ of the Federal party in New England, I find a long article on this "crisis," which forcibly and even vehemently urges Burr's claims. "Col. Burr," remarks the writer, "is a man of the first talents, and the most virtuous intentions." "A man who resolves while others deliberate, and who executes while others resolve." In the same article the writer speaks of Jefferson in terms much less complimentary. But Connecticut always was partial to Burr; she had not forgotten the services of his fathers. Cabot of Massachusetts, Carroll of Carrollton, Secretary Wolcot of Connecticut, and many others openly expressed their preference.

He had a strong following too in his own party. Gov. Clinton favored him. His friends in New York, Swartwout, Van Ness, and others repeatedly begged permission to work for his interests. But Burr, in the first moments of the contest, seems to have decided to act according to the dictates of honor and probity.

* At that time the candidate who received the greatest number of votes was declared President.

Dec. 16th, the day after the tie was declared, he wrote to a friend, disclaiming all competition. "As to my friends," said he, "they would dishonor my views, and insult my feelings by a suspicion, that I would submit to be instrumental in counteracting the wishes and expectations of the United States."

That he maintained this position all through the contest is shown by the letters of his cotemporaries, many of them his personal and political enemies. Thus Feb. 12th, Judge Cooper of New York, father of the novelist, wrote from Washington (where the day before the House had convened), "We have postponed voting for the President until to morrow." "All stand firm, Jefferson 8, Burr 6, divided 2. "*Had Burr done anything for himself he would long ere this have been President.*"

Also Bayard of Delaware who gave the casting vote for Jefferson, wrote to Hamilton soon after the event, giving the reasons for his action, and after stating certain considerations which would have induced him to vote for Burr, he proceeds, "but I was enabled soon to perceive that he (Burr) was determined not to shackle himself with Federal principles," and further on in the same letter he says, "The means existed of electing Burr, but this required his coöperation: by deceiving one man, (a great block-head) and tempting two (not incorrupt), he might have secured the majority of the States."

Other testimony might be advanced to disprove the charge often made, that during this contest Col. Burr intrigued for the Presidency. The result disproves it, for had he intrigued at all he might easily have won; as it was, the house, after seven days of balloting and debate, by a majority of one State, declared Thomas Jefferson President. Aaron Burr receiving the next highest number of votes became of course Vice-President.

For the next four years we behold our hero at the summit of his power. As Vice-President, he was presiding officer of the Senate, and never before, it is said, were the duties of that position performed with such grace, dignity, and impartiality; indeed this impartiality, in a strictly partisan contest, in the Senate, laid him open to the censure of his party, and contributed not a little to his ultimate political downfall.

This contest occurred during the session of 1801, over the repeal of a Judiciary bill, which had been rushed through at the close of the last Congress, and by which the Federal judges had been increased by twenty-three. These life judgeships Mr. Au-

ams, in the last hours of his official life, had, with most indecent haste, filled, and by this action so exasperated the Republicans, that they determined to abolish them ; hence this bill.

At one stage of the debate upon it, the Senate was tied, and it became the duty of the President to give the casting vote. His decision was against the Republicans, and elicited no little hostile criticism from the party organs. At a later period he gained the ill will of the Federalists from the same cause. Equally conscientious and honorable was his course in the impeachment trial of the Federal Judge Chase, charged with grossly abusing the authority of the bench in certain political trials, and which occurred toward the close of the session of 1805. Commenting upon his course in this trial, Mr. Parton says, "The dignity, the grace, the fairness, the prompt, intelligent decision with which the Vice President presided over the august court, extorted praise even from his enemies." "He conducted the trial with the dignity and impartiality of an angel, but with the rigor of a devil," said an eye-witness. We shall find further evidence as we proceed, as to the scrupulous impartiality with which he performed the duties of this office.

As Vice-President, Col. Burr, his friends, and the country, expected that he would succeed Jefferson in the Presidency. In this manner Adams had succeeded Washington, and Jefferson, Adams. That he did not was due to the politicians, and not to his own acts, nor because the people had lost confidence in him. The election of 1800 had shown his commanding position in national politics, and served to combine against him three great factions of the Republican party,—the Virginian faction led by Thomas Jefferson, and the Clinton and Livingston families of New York. These united their forces to crush him as an interloper, and at the Republican Convention in 1804 he was quietly shelved ; his name not even being mentioned in connection with public affairs.

Burr attributed this defeat to the politicians, and resolved to appeal to the people. Accordingly in the New York election of that year, he was announced as an independent candidate for Governor. The Republican party nominated Judge Lewis ; the Federal party made no nominations.

Hamilton threw the weight of his great influence in favor of the Republican candidate: so did Jefferson ; but despite these fearful odds, Burr polled a vote of 28,000, against his adversary's

35,000; but he was beaten. This was his last appearance in politics, one more tilt and he quitted the political field forever.

This event was his taking formal leave of the Senate, which occurred March 2, 1804. It is described as one of the most interesting and affecting ever witnessed. The Senate had not then opened its doors to the public, and our only account of the scene is that derived from a report in the *Washington Federalist*, "obtained from the relation of several Senators as well Federal as Republican." The report opens with a summary of the speech, which was, it says, "the most sublime, dignified and impressive ever uttered." Its concluding sentiments only we have room to present:

"But I now challenge your attention to considerations more momentous than any which regard merely your personal honor and character—the preservation of law, of liberty, and the constitution. This House, I need not remind you, is a sanctuary; a citadel of law, of order, and of liberty; and it is here—it is here, in this exalted refuge—here, if anywhere, will resistance be made to the storms of political frenzy, and the silent arts of corruption; and if the constitution be destined ever to perish by the sacrilegious hands of the demagogue, or the usurper, which God avert, its expiring agonies will be witnessed on this floor. I must now bid you farewell. It is probably a final separation, a dissolution, perhaps forever, of those associations, which I hope have been mutually satisfactory. I would console myself, and you, however, with the reflection, that though we be separated, we shall still be engaged in the common cause of disseminating principles of freedom and social order. I shall always regard the proceedings of this body with interest and solicitude. I shall feel for its honor and for the national honor so intimately connected with it, and now take my leave of you with expressions of personal respect, and with prayers and good wishes."

"At the conclusion of this speech," proceeds the report, "the whole Senate were in tears, and so unmanned that it was half an hour before they could recover themselves sufficiently to come to order and choose a Vice President *pro tem.*

"At the President's on Monday, two of the Senators were relating these circumstances to a circle which had collected round them. One said he wished that the tradition might be preserved, as one of the most extraordinary events he had ever witnessed. Another Senator, being asked, on the day following that on which Mr. Burr took his leave, how long he was speaking, after a mo-

ment's pause, said he could form no idea: it might have been an hour and it might have been but a moment; when he came to his senses, he seemed to have awakened as from a kind of trance. As soon as the Senate could compose themselves sufficiently to appoint a President *pro tem.*. they came to the following resolution.

Resolved, unanimously, That the thanks of the Senate be presented to Aaron Burr, in testimony of the impartiality, dignity, and ability with which he has presided over their deliberations, and of their entire approbation of his conduct in the discharge of the arduous and important duties assigned him as President of the Senate.

Thus passed this "well graced actor" from the political scene. He was a free man once more. What will he do next? What new project will his busy brain and hand carve out? were questions which every tongue in the country was now anxiously asking.

But before passing to the later events of his career, we must pause to notice an event which had occurred a few months before, and which exerted a powerful influence on his subsequent fortunes. This event was the duel with Hamilton.

Public opinion, the judgment of *apparent* facts, is sometimes correct, often unjust, but none the less necessary. Whether or not the public opinion which held Burr so strictly accountable for the death of Hamilton was just or unjust, a careful consideration of the facts anterior to, as well as those connected with the duel, in the calm unbiased spirit that time has made possible, will do much to determine.

It would not be strange if we should find, that, in his case, the popular judgment was both harsh and unjust, that he was as averse to the duel as Hamilton himself, that he used every (except dishonorable) means to avoid it, and that he only fought when absolutely forced to it, by the course of his rival and the cruel dictum of society; and we may further agree and conclude, that he was the real victim of that tragedy, and not the brilliant genius who fell beneath his fire.

But for the facts. And first as to the provocation. Without pausing to notice the unsoldierly conduct of Hamilton toward Burr, while both were in the army, we will pass at once to the period when they came prominently into view as candidates for the highest honors of the State.

In the presidential canvass of 1792, Hamilton's almost insane

jealousy led him to write thus of the man against whose fair fame hardly a breath of suspicion had been raised : "*I fear the other gentleman* (Burr) *is unprincipled both as a public and private man. . . . In fact I take it he is for or against anything*, as it suits his interest or ambition. *He is determined, as I conceive, to make his way to the head of the popular party and to climb per fas aut nefas to the highest honors of the State*, and as much higher as circumstances may permit. Embarrassed, as I understand, in his circumstances, with an extravagant family, bold, enterprising and intriguing, I am mistaken if it be not his object *to play the game of conspiracy, and I feel it to be a religious duty to oppose his career.*" Sept. 26, he wrote again to another friend, Rufus King : "Mr. Burr's integrity as an individual, is not unimpeached, and as a public man, he is *one of the worst sort. . . .* in a word, *if we have an embryo Cæsar in the United States, it is Burr.*" These words were not the confidential utterances of one friend to another, they were written *for effect*, for in a few days King writes back, that "Care has been taken to put our friends at the eastward on their guard."

In 1794, Col. Burr was nominated by his party as Minister to France, but Washington refused to ratify the nomination. "It was," he said, "the rule of his public life, to nominate no one for public office of whose integrity he was not insured." But when had Burr's integrity been questioned, except by political rivals ? or when had he ever betrayed a trust, public or private ? The instance cannot be found, and Washington's distrust at this time, may readily be traced to the potent influence of Hamilton, then the confidential man of his administration.

Again in 1798, when French insolence had provoked the young republic to warlike measures, and an army had been voted, and new general officers appointed, it was Hamilton again that blighted Burr's honest military ambitions. Sturdy John Adams gives the details in a letter written in 1815, and published in the tenth volume of his works. "I have never known," he writes, "the prejudice in favor of birth, parentage and descent, more conspicuous than in the instance of Col. Burr. That gentleman was connected by blood with many respectable families in New England. . . . He had served in the army, and came out of it with the character of a knight without fear, and an able officer. He had afterward studied and practiced law with application and success. Buoyed up on those religious partialities, and this military and juridical

reputation, it is no wonder that Governor Clinton and Chancellor Livingston should take notice of him. They made him Attorney General, and the legislature sent him to Congress, where, I believe, he served six years. At the next election, he was, however, left out, and being at that time somewhat embarrassed in circumstances, and reluctant to return to the bar, he would have rejoiced in an appointment in the army.

"In this situation I proposed to Washington, and through him to the triumvirate* to nominate Col. Burr for a brigadier-general. Washington's answer to me was, 'By all that I have known and heard, Col. Burr is a brave and able officer; but the question is whether he has not equal talents at intrigue.' How shall I describe to you my sensations and reflections at that moment. He had compelled me to promote over the heads of Lincoln, Clinton, Gates, Knox, and others, and even over Pinckney, one of his own triumvirates (Hamilton) the most restless, impatient, artful, indefatigable, and unprincipled intriguer in the United States, if not in the world, to be second in command under himself, and now dreaded an intriguer in a poor brigadier. He did however propose it, at least to Hamilton. But I was not permitted to nominate Burr. If I had been, what would have been the consequences? Shall I say that Hamilton would have been now alive, and Hamilton and Burr now at the head of our affairs. What then? If I had nominated Burr without the consent of the triumvirate, a negative in the Senate was certain." This letter is interesting as giving Adams' estimate of the two men; it also shows Hamilton's marvelous facility for inoculating every one he met with his own disease of Burrophobia.

In 1800, when there was a possibility of Burr becoming President, Hamilton renewed more openly and bitterly his attacks. Dec. 17, 1800, he wrote a letter to Mr. Wolcott of Connecticut, in which he says, "Let it not be imagined that Mr. Burr can be won to Federal views; it is a vain hope . . . to accomplish his end, he must lean upon unprincipled men, and will continue to adhere to the myrmidons who have hitherto surrounded him. To these he will no doubt add able rogues of the Federal party but he will employ the rogues of all parties to overrule the good men of all parties, and to prosecute projects which wise men of every description will disapprove. These things are to be inferred with moral

* Washington, Hamilton, and Pinckney.

certainty from the character of the man. Every step in his career proves that he has formed himself upon the model of Catiline, and that he is too cold-blooded and too determined a conspirator ever to change his plan. Alas, when will men consult their reason rather than their passion? Whatever they may imagine, the desire of mortifying the adverse party, must be the chief spring of the disposition to prefer Mr. Burr . . . *Adieu to the Federal Troy, if they once introduce this Grecian horse into their citadel.*"

The August before, he had written to Senator Bayard of Delaware: "There seems to be too much probability that Jefferson or Burr will be President. The latter is intriguing with all his might in New Jersey, Rhode Island, and Vermont. He counts positively on the universal support of the anti-Federalists, and that by some adventitious aid from other quarters he will overtop his friend Jefferson. Admitting the first point, the conclusion may be realized, and, if it is so, Burr will certainly attempt to reform the Government *à la Buonaparte.* He is as *unprincipled and dangerous a man as any country can boast—as true a Catiline as ever met in midnight conclave.*"

These letters read like the ravings of a monomaniac; they are but samples of many, sown broadcast over the country for the sole purpose, as we must conclude, of blighting the prospects and reputation of Aaron Burr. With his tongue Hamilton was even more busy and venomous. What its effect was on the community—coming from so eminent a source—may be imagined. All this time the victim was ignorant and even unsuspicious of his rival's conduct; the two men were apparently on terms of friendship; they met in professional consultations, and dined at one another's tables. It was in 1802, I believe, that Col. Burr first heard of Hamilton's manner of conducting political campaigns, and he at once sought a personal interview and demanded an explanation. This Hamilton gave, and admitted that in the heat of a political canvass he had spoken hastily of Col. Burr, and in terms not usual with gentlemen, and promised to be more careful in future. But in the succeeding campaign of 1804, partisan rivalry was most intense, and Hamilton's unguarded expressions more violent and bitter than ever before; so much so that Cheetham, editor of the *American Citizen,* the organ of the Clintonian Republicans, paraded in the columns of his newspaper the query, Is the Vice-President sunk so low as to submit to be insulted by General Hamilton?

while at the same time the thousand gossipy tongues of society were taking up and repeating the same question.

Reports of Hamilton's conduct were brought to Burr at the close of the campaign by certain renegade Federalists driven from the ranks by their chief's arrogance; but he seems to have taken no action in the matter, and awaited further developments. At length his attention was called to a letter,—written by Dr. Charles D. Cooper, of New York, and published in the newspapers during the campaign—which contained, among others, the following sentences:

"Gen. Hamilton and Judge Kent have declared in substance, that they looked upon Mr. Burr to be a dangerous man, and one who ought not to be trusted with the reins of government," and "I could detail to you a still more despicable opinion, which Gen. Hamilton has expressed of Mr. Burr." Col. Burr quietly marked the obnoxious passages, and sent them by the hand of his friend, William P. Van Ness, to Gen. Hamilton, with a note which concluded as follows:

"You must perceive, sir, the necessity of a prompt and unqualified acknowledgment or denial of the use of any expressions which would warrant the assertions of Mr. Cooper." The correspondence which followed is too voluminous for insertion here. In it Burr maintained the position taken in his first letter. Hamilton denied in part, equivocated, hedged, but absolutely refused to make the unqualified acknowledgment and denial asked for by Col. Burr. Such a course would have reinstated his rival in public confidence, and destroyed the work of years. Society too might have considered it an apology from *necessity* rather than *principle*. Burr, on his part, all the lion in him roused by Hamilton's repeated and treacherous attacks, receded not a whit from his original demand. In one of his letters on the subject he most admirably defined his position:

"Political opposition," said he, "can never absolve gentlemen from the necessity of a rigid adherence to the laws of honor, and the rules of decorum. I neither claim such privilege, nor indulge it in others. The common sense of mankind affixes to the epithet adopted by Dr. Cooper the idea of dishonor. It has been publicly applied to me, under the sanction of your name. The question is not whether he has understood the meaning of the word, or has used it according to syntax and with grammatical accuracy, but whether you have authorized this application, either directly, or

by uttering expressions or opinions derogatory to my honor." And again in his last paper drawn up for the guidance of his second he enlarges upon this point.

"Aaron Burr, far from conceiving that rivalship authorizes a latitude not otherwise justifiable, always feels great delicacy in such cases, and would think it meanness to speak of a rival, but in terms of respect; to do justice to his merits, to be silent of his foibles. Such has invariably been his conduct toward Jay, Adams, and Hamilton, the only three who can be supposed to have stood in that relation to him.

"That he has too much reason to believe that in regard to Mr. Hamilton there has been no such reciprocity. For several years his name has been lent to the support of base slanders. He has never had the generosity, the magnanimity, or the candor to contradict or disavow. Burr forbears to particularize, as it could only tend to produce new irritations, but having made great sacrifices for the sake of harmony, having exercised forbearance until it approached humiliation, he has seen no effect produced by such conduct, but a repetition of injury.

"He is obliged to conclude that there is on the part of Mr. Hamilton, a settled and implacable malevolence; that he will never cease in his conduct toward Mr. Burr, to violate those courtesies of life, and that hence he has no alternative but to announce these things to the world, which consistently with Mr. Burr's ideas of propriety, can be done in no way but that which he has adopted. He is incapable of revenge, still less is he capable of imitating the conduct of Mr. Hamilton by committing secret depredation on his fame and character. But these things must have an end."

These are hardly the words of a vindictive, blood-thirsty villain, and indeed they are not, for a more amiable, generous, and genial man than Col. Burr never lived, but he could and would protect himself when wronged beyond endurance. The paper last quoted was Burr's ultimatum, and Hamilton declaring its terms inadmissible, both parties prepared to fight, and never perhaps since the institution of the code was a meeting so inevitable as between these two. Both were soldiers, devotees of honor and men of society. Both had recognized the code by their presence, either as principals or seconds, at several affairs of honor, and both were well aware that their position in politics and society depended on their not showing the white feather at this particular crisis. If either

of the principals were the more culpable, it was Hamilton, for he was the aggressor, and a few words from him might have prevented the meeting. But thoughtful men will find the real culprit in the barbarous blood-thirsty public opinion of the day, that made such Golgothas as that at Weehawken both necessary and honorable. The challenge was given and accepted. With the result of that meeting the world is acquainted. Burr escaped unharmed, the ball from his adversary's weapon, cutting the twigs near his head. Hamilton received a mortal wound, from which he died after thirty-one hours of intense suffering.*

The popular clamor that then arose against Burr, unjust and indecent as it was, made a temporary retirement from New York necessary, and early in July he set out on a southern tour, visiting his daughter, Theodosia, at her home at the "Oaks," and spending several weeks with old political friends in South Carolina and other southern States; from this tour he returned at the sitting of Congress, in the fall of 1804, to resume his duties as President of the Senate, as before related.

In the spring of 1805, Col. Burr set out on a six months' tour through the western and southern States. On his return, he commenced preparations for the execution of one of the most brilliant and stupendous plans of empire ever conceived. What that plan was, we, in the light of later developments, are enabled definitely to determine.

In a few words, he proposed to wrest Mexico—ignorant, oppressed and degraded—from the rule of the hated Spaniard, and to rear there an empire of progress and civilization, with himself at its head. This plan was perfectly feasible. War with Spain seemed inevitable. The bent towards southwestern acquisition in this country was large. The Mexican people were ripe for revolt, and at the first unfurling of his standard on the Mexican frontier, Burr might safely have counted on enrolling a band of gallant adventurers drawn from every quarter of the land. With this army he proposed to invade the country, and after a short and brilliant campaign, Mexico would have been his. Then what?

Pen can scarcely portray the unrivalled future which would have been Mexico's, had Burr been "let alone" to realize his

* The writer, in what has been said, has no desire to belittle the talents or services of Alexander Hamilton, but since, in the effort to make him a demi-god, it was found necessary to paint Aaron Burr in the lurid colors of the pit, both justice and truth demand that the above facts should be stated.

splendid dreams of conquest. A man of rare energy and of great executive force, he would have formed there a strong and stable government, superior to faction, and which might have solved the great problem of how to maintain at once, a strong, and yet popular government—a problem which we have been unable to solve.

Liberal in sentiment, he would have made education universal; the arts and sciences would have been encouraged as never before; religion he would have left untrammelled and uncontrolled; the revenues of the mines would have been spent in the construction of public works and for the glory of the State; canals and railroads, piercing the mountains, would have joined sea to sea, and swift steamers sailing east and west, have poured into her lap the products of all nations. Her unequalled history, too, would have been written; the world's scholars penetrating her secret cloisters, would have unearthed the wealth of manuscript there hidden, and from the temples of Uxmal, Palenque, and the thousand buried cities of plain and forest, we might have gleaned the history of that marvelous race, who, from the ruins of Toltec art, constructed an empire of civilization which was vigorous with age when our oldest political systems were in the weakness of infancy.

These and many other glowing visions were, no doubt, present in the brain of this remarkable man at this stage of his career; how far legitimate were the methods by which he hoped to realize them, let the casuist determine. He has been called a filibuster and an adventurer; but then there was never a ranker set of filibusters than those brought to these shores by the Mayflower, and them we revere, and rightly, too, as most perfect models of correctness; in fact, the whole history of the race is little more than a record of the filibustering of the strong against the weak.

But to return to our subject. His plan was predicated largely on the fact of a war with Spain. Jefferson's prudence averted that war, and Burr turned his energies toward advancing a secondary scheme which he had formed, should the first prove impracticable. This was the establishment of a colony on the Washita River near Texas, to be used as a base of operations in future attempts upon Mexico. General Wilkinson, then Governor of the new territory of Louisiana, Daniel Clark, a wealthy New Orleans merchant, Andrew Jackson, Governor Alston, General Adair of Kentucky, Colonel Dupeister, and hundreds of other prominent persons were cognizant of this scheme, and interested in it. As a preliminary step 50,000 acres of land on the Washita River, known

as the "Bastrop Lands," were bought by Col. Burr's agents, and preparations for colonizing it were urged forward. Provisions were bought, recruits enlisted, and boats wherewith to descend the Mississippi, contracted for. The rendezvous was at Blennerhasset's Island,—an historic spot, and one demanding more than a passing mention.

No locality in the land is better known, and not alone in forensic contests have its velvet lawns and quiet glades, its gardens and fountains, and shrubberies "which Shenstone might have envied," been held up to the gaze of an admiring and pitying public. The owner of this "earthly paradise," too, has received his full share of adulation; fifty years ago no subject was more fascinating to the average writer, male or female, than Heman Blennerhasset and his alleged wrongs, and no tragedy of that day was thought complete which did not present this unfortunate man as the Amiable Victim, and Aaron Burr as the Heavy Villain of its *dramatis personæ*.

In point of fact, the story of Burr's connection with Blennerhasset is a very prosaic one. They first met in 1805, when Burr was on his western tour. He was journeying down the Ohio with a friend, in a row boat, and passing the island, landed from motives of curiosity, having heard that it was the home of an eccentric foreigner. He was kindly received, pressed to stay to tea, remained, spent the evening with his entertainers, and resumed his voyage late at night. The two did not meet again until Col. Burr came west on his scheme for colonizing the Washita Lands.

Such is a plain statement of the *facts* concerning their first meeting; nor did Blennerhasset need any persuasion to enter heartily into Burr's plans of conquest. An idle, shiftless, romantic Irishman, he had spent a moderate fortune in *improving* his island, and now nearly bankrupt, embraced eagerly any plan that promised to repair his shattered fortunes, without much risk of exertion on his part. His "island," the paradise of the historical romancers, was a narrow strip of land in the Ohio River, fourteen miles below Marietta, three or four miles in length and comprising about 270 acres of land.

It was neither picturesque nor romantic, certainly not an Eden. Here it was, that in the summer of 1806, preparations were busily made for colonizing the tract on the Washita. On the 4th of August, these were so far advanced that Col. Burr with his accomplished daughter Theodosia, left the island for the Cumber-

land River, where another detachment was rendezvoused, leaving Blennerhasset to complete the preparations on his island, and then join his chief late in the fall, at the mouth of the Cumberland, where the united force would proceed down the Mississippi on its enterprise. But before these plans could be carried out, Burr was surprised to learn, from the President himself, that his colonization scheme was treasonable.

On the 25th of November, 1806, Jefferson received from Gen. Wilkinson (Burr's ancient friend and ally, and then commanding the department of Louisiana,) a cipher letter, purporting to be from Burr to him (Wilkinson,) proposing that he should use the army under his command to provoke a war with Spain, and also hinting at the erection of a great Southern empire. This letter, grossly exaggerated and altered as it was, was accompanied by such representations from Wilkinson as to raise in the mind of the President the direst visions of treasons and stratagems; his action on receipt of it was that of a man bereft of sober judgment, for nothing could be more absurd than to suppose that so shrewd and politic a man as Aaron Burr, would entertain, for a moment, the project of seducing from its allegiance the great West, then the stronghold of republicanism and devotedly attached to the administration. To the President and his Cabinet, however, it was evident that a heavy conspiracy was already on foot in the West; and on the 27th of November, the former issued a proclamation, declaring that unlawful enterprises were under way in the Western States, and warning all persons to withdraw from the same, under penalty of incurring prosecution "with all the rigors of the law."

We who have been made so familiar with treason that its aspect is no longer frightful, can hardly realize the ominous and hateful sound of the word in 1800, nor the excitement and fear which convulsed the country on the publication of the President's ridiculous proclamation. Latent patriotism effervesced, and spent its force, from lack of other vent, in denunciation of the supposed traitors. The President sent a special message to Congress denouncing Burr as a traitor, and asking for an act to suspend the writ of habeas corpus, which was granted by the Senate, but rejected by the House. Military companies paraded daily, and crowded their offers of assistance upon the General Government; forts and arsenals were put in warlike trim, the navy was strengthened, and the newspapers and the administration vied with each other in circulating the wildest rumors and most palpable untruths;

in short, popular hatred and mistrust was brought to the highest pitch, and there held suspended—a sort of moral avalanche ready to be hurled upon the luckless wight who should be even suspected of the odious crime of treason. Meanwhile Col. Burr, a peaceful citizen of the United States, was pursuing his peaceful and laudable schemes on the banks of the Ohio. The President's proclamation reached Blennerhasset's Island early in December. On the 4th, Blennerhasset learned that a detachment of militia from Wood County, Va., would make a descent on the island the next day, and capture himself, the boats, stores, and all the property of the expedition; and that night, secretly, with four boats and thirty men hastily collected, he left the island, and fled with his utmost speed down the river. At the mouth of the Cumberland, he met his chief, and the combined flotilla proceeded on down the Mississippi.

Had a cunning limner like our Nast been present, he might have found material for a dozen spirited cartoons in this first insurrectionary expedition against the government. There were the flat-boats, thirteen in number, borne by the sluggish current, and guided by sixty red-shirted backwoodsmen. Prominent objects on their decks were the chicken-coops and pig-barracks with their noisy occupants. Sacks of flour, barrels of bacon, and kiln-dried corn, hams, and other munitions of war, with such deadly instruments as ploughs, spades, hoes, pots, skillets and the like, formed the bulk of the cargo. On lines stretched across the deck hung seed-ears and slices of pumpkin drying in the sun; children played unterrified about this grim array; and near at hand, their mothers sewed and gossipped; the linnet and canary sang in their gilded cages, and the antics of a pet monkey joined to the strains of a superannuated banjo, relieved the tedium of the voyage.

In this manner, day after day the grim armament floated down the river, carrying terror and dismay wherever it penetrated. At Bayou Pierre, thirty miles above Natchez, a crisis occurred. The Natchez militia, 275 strong, hearing of Burr's arrival, marched out to meet him. Drawing near his encampment, they were reinforced by a battalion of cavalry, and halting, sent a peremptory summons to Burr to surrender. The latter talked freely with the messengers, declared his innocence of any treasonable designs, and protested against such high-handed and arbitrary proceedings. But the officers persisted in their demand, and at last Burr agreed to meet Gov. Mead next day, and surrender his entire force, with the stipulation, however, that he should not be handed over for trial

to the military authorities. He was then conveyed to the neighboring town of Washington, a grand jury was hastily impaneled, and he was brought before them for trial—but on what charges? The grand jury struggled with this question for days, but were unable to answer it; and a higher tribunal a few weeks later fared no better; but at length, after numberless motions and discussions in which Burr completely captivated the populace with his displays of learning and eloquence, the grand jury returned that "on a due investigation of the evidence brought before them, Aaron Burr has not been guilty of any crime or misdemeanor against the laws of the United States." They also went further and presented as a grievance, "the late military expedition, unnecessarily, as they conceive, fitted out against the person and property of Aaron Burr." They also presented as a grievance, destructive of personal liberty, the late military arrests made without warrant, and as they conceive, without other lawful authority. Thus ended the first attempt to indict Col. Burr for the crime of treason.

He was a free man again, but not secure, for orders had already been issued by the President, "*to take the body of Aaron Burr alive or dead, and to confiscate his property.*" Finding himself in the power of a military despotism, he determined to escape, and crossing the Mississippi, made the best of his way southward, toward the port of Pensacola where lay a British man-of-war, on which he hoped to find refuge.

Some days after these events, two travellers might have been seen descending a hill near the residence of Col. Hinson, in the town of Wakefield, Alabama; these persons were Col. Burr and his guide. At the foot of the hill they were intercepted by a file of dragoons led by Capt. Gaines, commanding Fort Stoddard, near by. Capt. Gaines rode forward. "I presume, sir," said he, "that I have the honor of addressing Col. Burr." "I am a traveller in the country," replied the person addressed, "and do not recognize your right to ask such a question." "I arrest you at the instance of the Federal Government," was Gaines' rejoinder. "By what authority do you arrest travellers on the highway, bound on their own private business," asked the stranger. "I am an officer of the army; I hold in my hands the proclamation of the President and Governor directing your arrest," was the reply. "You are a young man, and may not be aware of the responsibilities which result from arresting travellers," said the person addressed. "I am aware of the responsibility, but I know my duty," said Gaines.

It was all in vain that Col. Burr protested his innocence, declared that all this arose from the malevolence of his enemies, and pointed out the liabilities the captain would incur by arresting him. "My mind is made up," said Gaines, and the former Vice President was arrested and duly lodged within the walls of a military fortress.

For two weeks Col. Burr remained at Fort Stoddard: then in charge of a file of soldiers under command of one Perkins, he was sent overland to the city of Richmond, where the Government had decided his trial should take place. One incident only of this difficult and perilous journey shall be narrated. After the party had passed the wilderness, and had come to the outposts of civilization, the utmost care was taken to prevent the prisoner from communicating his situation to his friends, and through them appealing to the civil authorities for relief. Perkins had carefully avoided the large towns in his way, and while passing through Chester, in South Carolina, they chanced to ride near a small tavern, in front of which quite a group of citizens had collected. This was Burr's opportunity and he embraced it.

Suddenly throwing himself from his horse, he exclaimed with a loud voice, "I am Aaron Burr, under military arrest, and claim the protection of the civil authorities." In a moment Perkins sprang to the ground and, presenting his pistols to Burr's head, sternly ordered him to remount. "I will not," Burr shouted defiantly, whereupon Perkins, a perfect specimen of a backwoodsman, seized him around the waist, and threw him forcibly into his saddle, a soldier then seized his bridle, and the whole cavalcade swept off into the forest before the astonished people had time to comprehend the situation.

It is said that Burr, thus a second time kidnapped, was almost wild with excitement: "The indifference of the people," says Mr. Parton, "the indignity he had suffered, the thought of his innocence of any violation of the law, the triumph his enemies were about to have over him, all rushed into his mind, and for the moment unmanned him. For the first and only time, amid all his unexampled misfortunes, his iron fortitude forsook him, and he burst into tears."

This, however, lasted but a moment, then the prisoner's usual imperturbability of manner returned, and the journey was finished as it had been conducted, without a murmur or word of complaint from him. The party arrived in Richmond on Thursday, the 26th

of March, 1807. On Monday the prisoner was brought before Chief Justice Marshall for examination previous to commitment, and after three days of argument was committed for misdemeanor only, the Judge leaving the charge of treason to be considered by the Grand Jury.

He was arraigned before the Grand Jury May 22, 1807. Never before or since, perhaps, has the country witnessed a trial of such magnitude, conducted by such an array of talent, and the progress of which was followed with such intense interest by the whole country. All the magnates of Virginia, Gen. Jackson, John Randolph, Senator Giles, distinguished public men, fair ladies without number, crowded the court-room. The sympathies of the people of Richmond, and of the ladies especially, were with the prisoner, and many expressions of sympathy and regard were tendered him during his forced stay in the city. Two judges conducted the trial, John Marshall, Chief Justice of the United States, and Cyrus Griffin, Judge of the District Court of Virginia. Burr was fortunate in his chief judge. "The soul of dignity and honor," says a contemporary, "prudent, courageous, alive to censure, but immovably resolute to do right, John Marshall was the Washington of the bench, an honest man and just judge." It was to his firmness and judicial impartiality no doubt that Burr owed his life, or at least, liberty. The lawyers employed were worthy of the occasion. Engaged in the prosecution, were George Hay, Monroe's son-in-law, William Wirt the renowned orator, and Alexander McRae, Lieut. Governor of Virginia.

For the defence appeared Aaron Burr, the Launcelot of this legal tournament, Edmund Randolph, Washington's Attorney General and Secretary of State, Wickham, called the ablest lawyer at the Richmond bar, Luther Martin of Maryland, Jefferson's "Federal bull-dog," and Benjamin Botts of Virginia.

At the opening of the trial it was found that an impartial jury could not be obtained. Of the whole panel summoned, all admitted that they had formed an opinion adverse to the prisoner. "I pray the court to notice," remarked Burr, while the jurors were being challenged, "from the scene before us, how many attempts have been made to prejudice my cause."

At length, late in the afternoon, a jury was obtained, not one of whom but had admitted his conviction of the prisoner's guilt. Of the trial, or rather trials that followed, it is impossible for us to speak in detail. A report of it was published in two large octavo

volumes, and may be found in any well-stocked law library. Mr. Davis and Mr. Parton also give able summaries. The trial was divided into two parts, one before the grand jury on a motion for a commitment of the prisoner on a charge of treason, the other was the trial for treason itself after a true bill had been found. Between the two was an interval of some six weeks.

The trial was opened by Col. Burr, who addressed the court, as to the admissibility of certain evidence which he supposed would be offered. Hay replied, "hoping the court would grant no special indulgence to Col. Burr, who stood on the same footing as any other man who had committed a crime."

"Would to God," was the retort of Burr, "that I did stand on the same footing with any other man. This is the first time I have been permitted to enjoy the rights of a citizen. How have I been brought hither?"

In the speech that followed, he made many other strong points, and eminently Burrian; but the strongest, and that which most thoroughly demoralized the prosecution, was the stand taken in the very first stages of the trial, that before any evidence as to the prisoner's guilt could be admitted, the *act* of treason must first be proved, just as it would be manifestly absurd to indict a man for murder until the fact of the *killing* was first established.

In the course of the argument on this point, Mr. Botts defined in a masterly manner, the *act* of treason. "First," said he, "it must be proved that there was an actual war; a war of acts and not of intentions. Secondly, the prisoner must be proved to have committed an overt act in that war. Thirdly, the overt act must be proved to have been committed in the district where the trial takes place. Fourthly, the overt act must be proved by two witnesses," and this view of the crime of treason was sustained by the court.

The prosecution could not conceal the dismay and confusion which this decision caused in their ranks. To prove the prisoner's guilt, they had relied chiefly on *ex parte* evidence, suspicious facts, the prisoner's acts, and his own unguarded words. Now they were forced to go back of all this, and before a syllable of evidence in regard to the prisoner or his acts could be admitted, must prove the fact that actual war had been levied against the United States. However, gallantly recovering from this *contre temps*, they at once set to work to establish the overt act. Wilkinson was sent for from New Orleans, Gen. Eaton brought from

New Jersey, and the Morgans from Kentucky. Hardly a person that had written or spoken to Col. Burr during the past two years but was brought to the witness stand, in the effort to prove that war had actually been levied against the United States. Even post offices were broken open and rifled of his papers ; it was all in vain, however, no war was to be found, or as Col. Burr pithily expressed it in a speech to the court on the third day of the trial :

"Our President is a lawyer and a great one, too. He certainly ought to know what it is that constitutes a war. Six months ago he proclaimed that there was a civil war, and yet for six months have they been hunting for it, and still cannot find one spot where it existed. There was, to be sure, a most terrible war in the newspapers, but no where else. When I appeared before the grand jury in Kentucky, they had no charge to bring against me. When I appeared for a second time before a grand jury in the Mississippi territory, there was nothing to appear against me, and the Judge even told the United States Attorney, that if he did not send up the bill before the grand jury, he himself would proceed to name as many of the witnesses as he could, and bring it before the court. Still there was no proof of war. At length, however, the Spaniards invaded our territory, and yet there was no war. But, sir, if there was a war, certainly no man can pretend to say that the Government is able to find it out. The scene to which they have now hunted it, is only three hundred miles distant, and still there is no evidence to prove this war."

At length, after thirty-three days of argument, the grand jury brought in an indictment against Aaron Burr for treason, and also an indictment for misdemeanor. Blennerhasset was also indicted for the same offences.

The trial for treason began on the 3d of August ; the same judges and counsel were in attendance. Here the same difficulty was experienced in securing an impartial jury. Fourteen days were spent in the effort. Of the first *venire* of 48, but four were found unprejudiced, of a second *venire* of 48 summoned, *all* admitted that they had formed opinions unfavorable to the prisoner. The defence even moved to quash the trial on the ground that an impartial jury could not be obtained. The matter was at length compromised by allowing the defence to choose eight from the *venire* last summoned, which, added to the four chosen from the first, made up the required number.

The second trial was in many respects a repetition of the first. The witnesses chiefly relied on to prove the overt act, were Gen. Eaton, an old army officer, the Morgans, and Gen. Wilkinson.

Eaton and the Morgans gave an exaggerated account of Burr's wild talk of severing the union—words that he certainly would never have uttered had he really entertained such designs. Wilkinson produced the famous cipher letter, which had raised the tempest, but which proved nothing, except that the two men had had a prior agreement as to certain objects to be attained. It should be remarked here that Wilkinson by his own confession was a perjurer as well as traitor. At the trial he swore that the letter produced was *the one* received from Burr and *unaltered*, afterward he admitted that he had made some slight *alterations* in it. Burr declared after the trial, that thirty of the fifty witnesses examined, had perjured themselves. On the 29th of August, the debate was concluded by Mr. Randolph. On the 30th, the judge delivered his opinion. On the 31st, the jury brought in their verdict—the most irregular and cowardly ever returned by an American jury. "We of the jury," so the verdict ran, "say that Aaron Burr is not proved to be guilty under the indictment *by any evidence submitted to us.* We therefore find him not guilty." It was the Scotch verdict of *not proven*, and was designed to fasten still more firmly in the minds of the people, their conviction of the prisoner's guilt.

Scarcely was the reading of the verdict concluded, when Col. Burr was on his feet, and vehemently protested against such a verdict, and it was only after an animated debate, that he succeeded in having it entered as simply "not guilty."

There yet remained the trial for misdemeanor, and on this charge he was also acquitted. Col. Burr was now legally free; but his position in the land for which he had done and suffered so much had become unendurable. The Government still breathed out threatenings against him and the belief of his guilt was firmly fixed in the minds of the people. It has been demonstrated that nothing but time and Almighty power can remove a popular prejudice. Burr was too wise to attempt it; he did better, he left it behind him. Early in June 1808, threatened with a second arrest by the Government, he sailed in disguise under the name of Edwards, in the British mail-packet Clarissa bound from New York to Liverpool. The Clarissa left port on the 9th of June, and on the 14th of July she arrived at Liverpool.

Of Col. Burr's four years' wandering in the old world, we cannot speak with any degree of particularity. He remained in England nearly a year, or until April, 1809; then, induced by the representations of the American Minister, Lord Liverpool addressed him a polite note, which stated that the presence of Col. Burr in Great Britain was embarrassing to his majesty's government, and that it was the wish and expectation of the government that he should remove. Burr, who had been dined and fêted by most of the literary and society magnates of London, had visited the tomb of Shakespeare and travelled about the kingdom as far as to Edinburgh, was quite ready to make his majesty's mind easy by leaving the inhospitable isle; and accordingly on the 24th of April, 1809, sailed for Gottenburg in Sweden, not deeming it safe at that time to visit France. He remained in Sweden five months, enjoying Swedish hospitality to the full, and received as a distinguished guest even by royalty itself. Late in October he set out with two companions, Americans, for Paris. The party proceeded by easy stages to Elsinore, from Elsinore to Copenhagen, and from thence to Hamburg, on the confines of French territory. Here they waited for passports to the French capital.

While detained at Hamburg he made a short excursion into Germany, visiting Hanover, Gottingen, Weimar, Frankfort, and other places. At Weimar he met Goethe, Wieland, the Baroness De Stein, and other eminent persons. Returning to Mayence, where the passports were to be sent, he waited a few weeks until they arrived, and then proceeded without further incident to Paris. In Paris Col. Burr lived fifteen months; the last ten months spent in trying to get away, for Jefferson had now become a private citizen and the thought would obtrude itself that he might return in safety to his native land.

But the representations of the American Minister had made him an object of suspicion to the French Government, and he was refused permission to leave the country. At length, however, in July, 1811, the government was induced to remove its surveillance, and wringing a reluctantly given passport from the American "chargé des affaires," through an accidental acquaintance with some of that gentleman's doubtful transactions, he betook himself to Amsterdam, where lay the "Vigilant," Capt. Combes, and about to sail for America. The captain, a gallant, generous son of the sea, gladly gave the ex-Vice President passage, and on the 1st of October, 1811, Aaron Burr bade adieu forever, and we may ima-

gine without regret, to the continent of Europe. But outside the harbor a crushing misfortune awaited him, for the Vigilant was set upon by a British cruiser and carried into the English harbor of Yarmouth, and held as a prize, subject to the decision of the admiralty. Burr at once proceeded to London and there remained six months awaiting an opportunity to return to America. Few vessels were then returning, and the captains of those that were, were easily persuaded by the American consul to refuse him a passage. At length, however, he found a Captain Potter, of the ship Aurora, who agreed to land him in Boston for the sum of thirty pounds.

Burr again paid his passage money, received his passports from the British Government, now all friendliness, and five weeks thereafter was safe in Boston Harbor. A month later, in May, 1812, the second war with Great Britain was declared, and the Atlantic became a dangerous highway for American vessels.

With the return of Col. Burr to his native country ends our brief resume of his public career. The story of the remaining twenty-five years of his life is a pitiful one,—a mere record of slights and scorns—a continued kicking of a man who was down, by the immaculate society of the day.

Immediately on his return he opened a law-office in New York, and much of his former business returned to him, but he never regained his social or political status; and he never sought to regain it. Conscious of the injustice done him, and retaining his pride of character to the last, he disdained to make explanations, and repaid scorn for scorn, and contempt with indifference. But to the few friends who remained faithful, he was the same brilliant, genial, fascinating man as of old, and these he was wont to entertain for hours, when off duty, with vivid descriptions of the men and things of a former generation, interspersed with brilliant ancedotes, and profound observations on pending issues in politics and statesmanship. Nothing, it is said, could be more valuable and interesting than these recollections, and it is to the incalculable loss of American literature that they were not preserved in print. Burr did entertain such a project at one time, and would probably have carried it out, but for the loss of his most valuable papers in the same shipwreck that bereft him of his daughter, and rendered him dead to ambition or any worldly interest.

Before passing to narrate the closing scenes of his life, a few notes as to the appearance, character, and habits of our distin-

guished subject will be thought necessary and interesting. A writer in the New York *Leader* thus describes him as he appeared in the later years of life :

"I knew him personally, from my boyhood, and saw him often in the quiet scenes of domestic life, in the house of a gentleman who was always his friend. His personal appearance was peculiar. Under the medium height, his figure was well proportioned, sinewy and elastic, appearing in every movement to be governed more by the mental than mere physical attributes. His head was not large, but as phrenologists say, well proportioned. His forehead was high, protruding, but narrow directly over the eyes, and widening immediately back. The head was well, even classically, poised upon the shoulders; his feet and hands were peculiarly small; the nose rather large, with open, expanding nostrils; and the ears so small as almost to be a deformity. But the feature which gave character and tone to all, and which made his presence felt, was the eye. Perfectly round, not large, deep hazel in color, it had an expression which no one who had seen it could ever forget. No man could stand in presence of Col. Burr, with his eyes fixed on him, and not feel that they pierced his innermost thoughts. There was a power in his look—a magnetism, if I may be allowed the expression,—which few persons could resist.

"The expression of his face when I knew him, it was first in 1823, bore in repose a sad and melancholy air, yet the features were mobile, and when addressing ladies, uttering some pleasantry or witticism, the smile around his mouth was literally beautiful, and his eyes would lose their piercing look, and become tender and gentle. His voice was not powerful, but round, full, and crisp, and though never loud, was tender or impressive as the case required. His elocution in conversation was perfect, always precisely suited to the occasion and the style of thought to which he was giving expression. His language was terse, almost epigrammatical, and he rarely indulged in illustration or metaphor; his words were always the most apt that could be used, and he had command of a vocabulary which would make Roguet of the Tesaurus envious. His manners were polished, his motions graceful and easy, yet he never for a moment lost his noble and dignified bearing. In mere physical beauty, in elegance of face or figure, in brilliancy of the eye, I have seen many men superior to Col. Burr, but in a bearing and presence which you felt to be something beyond other men, with character in every motion and expression, in a life of over forty

years, and after seeing all the great men of the country during that period, I have never seen his peer. He wore his hair—which till quite late in life, was long and thick, excepting on the front of the head.—massed up on the top held by a small shell comb, the whole head profusely powdered. . . His usual dress was a single blue-breasted coat, with standing collar, a buff vest, and dark pants; in winter he wore a fur cap and buckskin mittens."

In regard to the *character* of Col. Burr, the verdict of the honest and intelligent student of his career will be much more favorable than is the popular judgment. Of him it may be said more truly than of any other, that circumstances made him bad, wherein he was bad, and that party rancor and sectarian bigotry painted the portrait which has come down to posterity; in proof of the truth of these assertions I will present a paper which was read by Judge John Greenwood, of Brooklyn, before the Long Island Historical Society, begging the reader to observe that the author's intimate acquaintance with Col. Burr, his thorough integrity, and judicial training, render his judgment unassailable, whereas the idle and vicious tales from which the adverse judgment has been formed, are without parentage and cannot be substantiated by any proof that would be received in a court of law. The italics in the paper are our own. They mark the passages which treat—very delicately and yet very satisfactorily—of Col. Burr's relations with women, and make farther remark on the subject unnecessary, except to say that all with whom the writer has conversed, and who were from their position best calculated to judge, take substantially the same view of the case as that expressed by Judge Greenwood. The paper is given nearly entire:

"As to Col. Burr I enjoyed peculiar advantages of knowledge, having been, for a period of about six years, namely, from about 1814 to 1820, a clerk and student in his office, and in constant intercourse with him, and this at a period of my life when the strongest impressions were likely to be made upon me. The dark side of Col. Burr's character has been very often presented, and it is unnecessary that I should make another exhibition of it. It gives me pleasure to be able to bring into the light, features upon which it is more agreeable to dwell, and some of which, indeed, may be contemplated with advantage. Let me speak first of his temperance in eating and drinking. It would be natural to suppose that a man somewhat unrestricted, as it must be admitted he was, in one respect which may be regarded as in some degree cor-

relative, would not be very much restrained in the indulgences of the table. But the fact is otherwise. His diet was very light: a cup of coffee and a roll, with but seldom the addition of an egg, and never of meat or fish, constituted his breakfast. His dinner, in a majority of cases, consisted of roasted potatoes, seasoned with a little salt and butter, or perhaps of some thickened milk (called sometimes '*bonny clabber*') sweetened with sugar. A cup of black tea with a slice of bread and butter, was the last meal; and these constituted as a general thing, his whole sustenance for twenty-four hours. The exception was when some friend was invited by him to dinner. He was very fond, when seated at table, of having his favorite cat near him, and it was a pleasant thing to see puss sit on the arm of his chair and keep him company. As to spirituous liquors, I have no hesitation in saying from personal knowledge, that he never used them. His usual beverage was claret and water, sweetened with loaf sugar. His wine he bought by the cask, and had bottled at his residence. The result of his abstemious course of living was, that he enjoyed uniform good health, which was seldom, if ever, interrupted.

"His industry was of the most remarkable character. Indeed it may with truth be said that he never was idle. He was always employed in some way, and what is more, required every one under him to be so. Sometimes in coming through the office, and observing that I was not at work, as I might not have been for the moment, he would say, 'Master John, can't you find something to do?' although it is safe to say that no clerk in an office was ever more constantly worked than I was.

"He would rise at an early hour in the morning, devote himself to the business of the day—for he had a large general practice—and usually retired to rest not sooner than twelve, or half-past twelve at night. In this way he would accomplish a vast amount of work. His perseverance and indefatigability, too, were strikingly characteristic. No plan or purpose once formed was abandoned, and no amount of labor could discourage him or cause him to desist. To begin a work was, with him, to finish it. How widely, in this respect, he differed from some professional men of his own and the present day, I need hardly say. I could recur to some, greatly his juniors in years, who were and are his very opposites in this respect. He was for having a thing done, too, as soon as it could be, and not, as some have supposed, for seeing how long it could be put off before it was begun.

"But I must say a word of his manner in court. He seemed in the street and everywhere in public, to be strongly conscious that he was a mark of observation, not indeed in the sense in which Hamlet is spoken of, as 'the observed of all observers,' but as an object, to some of curiosity, to others of hostile or suspicious regard. Carrying this feeling into the court-room his manner was somewhat reserved, though never submissive, and he used no unnecessary words. He would present at once the main points of his case, and as his preparation was thorough, would usually be successful. But he was not eloquent. If he thought his dignity assailed in any manner, even inferentially, his rebuke was withering in the cutting sarcasm of its few words, and the lightning glance of his terrible eyes, which few could withstand. I may say in this connection, that his self-possession, under the most trying circumstances, was wonderful, and that he probably never knew what it was to fear a human being.

"If there was anything which Burr's proud spirit supremely despised, it was a mean, prying curiosity. He early inculcated on me the lesson, never to read even an opened letter addressed to another, which might be lying in my way, and never to look over another who was writing a letter. It was one of my duties to copy his letters, and I shall never forget the withering and indignant look which, on one occasion, he gave to a person in the office who endeavored to see what I was copying. Neither would he tolerate any impertinent gazing or staring at him, as if to spy out his secret thoughts and reflections.

"You will be glad to hear me say something of his very fascinating powers in conversation. It may seem strange, if not incredible, that a man who had passed through such vicissitudes as he had, and who must have had such a crowd of early and pressing memories on his mind, should be able to preserve a uniform serenity and even cheerfulness, but such is the fact.

"His manners were easy and his carriage graceful, and he had a winning smile in moments of pleasant intercourse, that seemed almost to charm you. He would laugh, too, sometimes, as if his heart was bubbling with joy, and its effect was irresistible. Nobody could tell a story or an anecdote better than he could, and nobody enjoyed it better than he did himself. His maxim was *suaviter in modo fortiter in re.* Yet, where spirits and a determined manner were required, probably no man ever showed them more effectively. Although comparatively small in person, and

light in frame, I have seen him rebuke, and put to silence, men of position in society greatly his superiors in physical strength, who were wanting in respect in their language toward him.

"Col. Burr was a social man, that is, he liked the company of a friend and would spend a half hour in conversation with him very agreeably. Occasionally one with whom he had been on intimate terms, and who had shared his adventures, like Samuel Swartwout, or William Hosack, would call and have a pleasant time. Dr. W. J. McNevin was also intimate with him. He was very fond of young company. Children were delighted with him. He not only took an interest in their sports, but conciliated them, and attached them to him by presents. The latter, I may observe, was also one of his modes of pleasing the more mature of the gentler sex.

"He was very fond of alluding to events in his military life. Indeed I think he chiefly prided himself upon his military character. His counsel was much sought by foreigners engaged in revolutionary enterprises, who happened to be in New York; and during the period of the revolution in Caracas, Generals Carrera and Ribas, who took part in it, and during its existence visited New York, were on very intimate terms with him. The former was a gentleman of great talent but of modest and retired bearing.

"There are some who suppose that Col. Burr had no virtues. This is a mistake. He was true in his friendships, and would go any length to serve a friend, and he had also the strongest affections.

"I shall never forget the incidents concerning the loss of his daughter Theodosia, then wife of Gov. Alston of South Carolina. Soon after Col. Burr's return from Europe to New York, he arranged for her to come on and visit him, and she set out, as is known, from Georgetown in a small schooner, called the Patriot. Timothy Green, a retired lawyer in New York, a most worthy man, and an old friend of Col. Burr, went on by land to accompany her. The fact of the departure of the vessel, with his daughter and Mr. Green on board, was communicated by letter from Gov. Alston to Col. Burr, and he looked forward with anticipations of joy to the meeting which, after so many years of separation, was to take place between himself and his dear child. A full time for the arrival of the vessel at New York elapsed, but she did not come.

"As day after day passed and still nothing was seen or heard of

the vessel or of his daughter, that face which had before shown no gloom or sadness, began to exhibit the signs of deep and deeper concern. Every means was resorted to to obtain information, but no tidings were ever heard of the vessel, or of her upon whom all the affection of his nature had been bestowed. 'Hope deferred,' did indeed in this case, make sick and nearly crush the heart.

"His symbol, which he loved occasionally to stamp upon the seal of a letter, was a rock in the tempest-torn ocean, which neither wind nor wave could move. But his firm and manly nature, which no danger or reverse, nor any of the previous circumstances of life had been able to shake, was near giving way. It was interesting though painful, to witness his struggle; but he did rise superior to his grief and the light once more shone upon his countenance. But it was ever after a subdued light.

"Something will be expected to be said by me, with regard to his duel with Gen. Hamilton. So much has been written on this subject already, that I can add nothing to the history of the transaction. Every one will form an opinion for himself as to who was to blame in that unfortunate affair. I will say, however, that it was a matter to which Col. Burr, from delicacy, never referred. He was no boaster, and no calumniator, and certainly he would have no word of censure for his dead antagonist. I will relate, however, an anecdote told me by him, indicating the degree of hostility felt towards him by some after that transaction, and at the same time his own intrepidity, although to the latter he seemed not to attach the slightest importance.

"He was travelling in the interior of the State, and had reached a country tavern where he was to stay for the night. He was seated by a table in his room engaged in writing, when the landlord came up and announced that two young men were below and wished to see him, and added that their manner seemed rather singular. He had heard that two very enthusiastic young gentlemen were on his track, and he was not therefore surprised at the announcement. Taking out his pistols, and laying them before him, he told the landlord to show them up. They came up, and as one was about to advance into his room Burr told them not to approach a foot nearer. Then addressing him he said, 'What is your business?' The foremost said, 'Are you Col. Burr?' 'Yes,' said the Colonel. 'Well,' says the young man, 'we have come to take your life, and mean to have it before we go away. Upon this, Burr, laying his hand upon one of his pistols, replied.

'You are brave fellows, are you not, to come here two of you against one man? Now if either of you has any courage, come out with me, and choose your own distance, and I'll give you a chance to make fame. But if you don't accept this proposal,' bringing the severest glance of his terrible eyes to bear upon them, 'I'll take the life of the first one of you that raises his arm.' They were both cowed, and walked off like puppies.

"It may not be out of place here to relate another incident, illustrating Col. Burr's remarkable presence of mind, which occurred while he was in Paris. He had received a remittance of a considerable sum of money, and his valet formed a plan to rob him of it by coming upon him, unawares, with a loaded pistol. Burr was engaged in reading or writing in his room at a late hour at night, when the fellow entered with pistol in hand. Burr recognized him in a moment, and turning suddenly around, said to him sternly, 'How dare you come into the room with your hat on?' The valet struck with sudden awe and the consciousness of having violated that decorum, which had from habit virtually become a part of his nature, raised his arm to take off his hat, when Burr rushed upon him, tripped him down, wrested the pistol from him, and calling for aid, had him secured and carried off.

"Col. Burr, as is well known, was what is termed a *good shot* with a pistol. To illustrate his skill in this respect, I will relate a circumstance told me by an old colored man named 'Harry,' who was in the habit, while I was with Col. Burr, of coming to his house, to clean his boots, and do little jobs. 'Harry' had lived many years with the Colonel while the latter's residence was at Richmond Hill in the upper part of New York. The Colonel often had dinner parties, and after dinner the gentlemen would go out upon the back piazza, to enjoy the air, and would amuse themselves by firing with a pistol at apples which Harry would throw up for them. Said Harry, laughing in the way peculiar to an old African, 'De Colonel would hit em' almos ev'ry time, while de oder gentlement couldn't hit 'em at all.'

"The charge against Col. Burr of *treason* has formed a prominent part of his history. All the facts developed on the trial have been long since published, and it will not of course be expected that I should refer to them. I will say, however, that this was a subject upon which he was always disposed, whenever proper, to converse with those who were intimate with him. I myself have conversed with him upon it. He said he had been entirely mis-

represented and misunderstood as to the object which he had in view. He had never, he stated, any design hostile to the United States or any part of it. His object was, as he said, to make himself master of Mexico, and place himself at the head of it, and if they had let him alone he would have done it. He seemed to entertain a great contempt for Gen. Wilkinson, who was in command at the South at the time, considering him a very weak man.

"Colonel Burr, like other great men, had some remarkable eccentricities of character. He was very fond of all sorts of inventions, and always trying experiments. He puzzled his brain for a long time to get some motive power which would avoid the necessity of using fire or steam, of which Livingston and Fulton then held the monopoly. He had models made, and I also got my ambition excited about it.

"But his efforts, and my own philosophical powers and chemical knowledge fell short, after a hard trial, of accomplishing the object. One great end which he desired to attain in housekeeping was to *save fuel*, not money; and I have known him to go to an expense, I should judge, of forty or fifty dollars in contrivances to save five dollars in the value of wood consumed.

"He was very liberal and even reckless in spending money for certain purposes, while in others, such as bills of mechanics, he was very particular and scrutinizing. He liked to have a bill looked over very carefully, and reduced to as low an amount as the case would admit of, but, so far as I know, never practiced any dishonesty or refused to pay any just debt which he had incurred.

"I have forborne thus far to refer to a matter connected with the character of Col. Burr, and identified almost with his name, and although not within the plan with which I started in this notice, I ought not perhaps to omit it. I allude of course to his *gallantries.* This is a topic upon which it would be impossible to speak with any particularity without transcending that limit of propriety within which all public discussions should be confined. I shall therefore speak of it in the most general terms. *I do not believe that Col. Burr was any worse in this respect, than many men of his own and of the present day, who pass for better men.*

"The difference between them is, that he was much less disguised and that he did not pretend to be what he was not. *I think he was quite as much sought after by the other sex as he was a seeker.* There seemed indeed to be a charm and fascination about him which

continued to a late period of his life, and which was too powerful for the frail, and sometimes even for the strong, to resist. I know that he has been charged with much wrong in this respect, and it may be with truth. I feel no disposition to justify him in his course, or even to palliate what must be regarded in its best aspect as a vice. But I have heard him say, and if it be true it is certainly much in his favor, *that he never deceived or made a false promise to a woman in his life.* This is much more than many can say, who have a much better name than he has.

"His married life with Mrs. Prevost (who had died before I went into his office) was of the most affectionate character, and his fidelity never questioned. There is another thing, too, which I will add to his credit. He was always a gentleman in his language and deportment. Nothing of a low, ribald, indecent or even indelicate character ever escaped his lips. He had no disposition to corrupt others. One other thing I will add in this connection: Col. Burr, in everything relating to business, and indeed in all his epistolary correspondence with men, had a special regard for the maxim that 'things written remain,' and was very careful as to what he wrote. But with regard to the other sex, such was his confidence in them, that he wrote to them with very little restraint.

. . I must point you to one admirable and strong characteristic in him. He sought with young men, in whom he felt an interest, to graft them as it were, with his own indomitable will, energy and perseverance. I can truly say that, although I was often overtasked beyond my powers, and even to the injury, no doubt, of my health, so that his course seemed to me to be over-exacting and oppressive, yet that he constantly incited me to progress in all the various modes and departments of mental culture, even in music, the influence of which he deemed of great importance, although he had but little taste for, and no knowledge of it himself; and that my success in life, as far as I have succeeded, has been owing to the habits of industry and perseverance which were formed under his training.

"As to the *character* of his mind, it would be probably presumptuous in me to attempt to analyze it. If I should express an opinion, it would be that it was not large, comprehensive, and philosophical, but rather quick, penetrating and discerning. He was a shrewd planner, and indefatigable and persevering in carrying out his plans, although he did not always succeed in accomplishing them. He was a good scholar, acquainted with polite

literature, and spoke the French and Spanish—the former fluently. I think his heart was not in the profession of the law, and that he followed it principally for its gains. He was, however, a good lawyer, was versed in the common, civil, and international law; acquainted generally with the reports of adjudicated cases, and, in preparing important cases, usually traced up the law to its ancient sources. But political and military life seemed to interest him more than anything else, although he never neglected his business. He prided himself probably more upon his military qualities than upon any other, and if he could have gratified his ambition by becoming Emperor of Mexico he would no doubt have been in his glory."

Concerning Burr's habits in regard to money, the following pleasant anecdote is related by Mr. Parton in his life of the Colonel. "An anecdote," says he, "related to me by the wife of one of Burr's partners, will serve to illustrate his infirmity with regard to the use of money. He may have been seventy years old when the circumstances took place. The lady chanced to be sitting in the office one morning, when Burr received a large amount of money in bills, and, as his habits with regard to money had often been the subject of remark in the house, she watched his proceedings with curiosity. She saw him first take a law-book from an upper shelf, put a fifty dollar note between its leaves, and replace the book on the shelf. The rest of the money he deposited in the middle of his table as usual. He had, on that morning, an extraordinary concourse of begging visitors, of whom no one seemed to go empty away, and by three o'clock in the afternoon, the well was exhausted. An hour later, Col. Burr looked at his watch, sprang from his chair, and began hastily to pack his portmanteau with law papers, in preparation for a journey to Albany, where he had business in the courts. When he was ready, he looked into his receptacle for money and *discovered* that it was empty. An examination of his pockets disclosed only a few coins. 'Bless me!' he exclaimed, 'I have to go to Albany in half an hour and have no money.' Could madame lend him ten dollars? Madame could not. Would madame oblige him by stepping over and asking her good mother to lend him the amount? Madame was of opinion that her good mother would not lend Col. Burr any *more* money. He was at his wit's end; at length she said, 'But, Colonel, what are you going to do with the fifty dollar bill in that

book yonder?' 'O! I forgot,' he said; 'I put it there this morning on purpose. What a treasure you are to remind me of it.'"

The following reminiscence from a New York newspaper will be found interesting. "Just round the corner (from Broadway) in Reade Street—we believe on ground now occupied by Stewart's—was the office, for many of the later years of his life, tenanted by Aaron Burr. We, when a boy, remember seeing him there often. It was a dark, smoky, obscure sort of a double-room, typical of his fortunes. Burr had entirely lost caste for thirty years before he died, and whatever may be said of his character and conduct, we think nothing can excuse the craven meanness of the many, who, having fawned around him in the days of his elevation, deserted and reviled him in the aftertime of misfortune. Burr had much of the bad man in him (faith, we'd like to see the human mould that has not), but he was dauntless, intellectual, and possessed the warm temperament of an artist. Yes, we remember well that dry, bent, brown-faced little old man, polite as Chesterfield himself, that used to sit by an ancient baize table, in the half-light of the dust-covered room, there—not often with work to do—indeed he generally seemed meditating.

"We can *now* understand it all, though he seemed a strange personage then. What thoughts must have burned and whirled through that old man's brain—*he*, who came within a vote or two of seating himself as a successor of Washington. Even to our boyish judgment then, he was invested with the dignity of a historic theme. He had all the air of a gentleman of the old school, was respectful, self-possessed and bland, but never familiar. He had seen a hundred men morally as unscrupulous as himself, more lucky, for some reason or other, than himself. He was *down;* he was old. He awaited his fate with Spartan calmness—knowing that not a tear would fall when he should be put under the sod."

At my request, Mr. Parton kindly transmitted to me the Burr papers which had collected since his work was published, with full permission to use them as I thought best. Among them I find this interesting extract, from a religious journal, concerning Col. Burr's early education:

"The oldest son of President Edwards congratulating a friend on having a family of sons, said to him with much earnestness, 'Remember there is but one mode of family government. I have brought up and educated fourteen boys, two of whom I brought, or rather suffered to grow up without the rod. One of those was

my youngest brother,* and the other Aaron Burr, my sister's only son, both of whom had lost their parents in childhood, and from my observation and experience, I tell you, sir, a maple-sugar government will never answer. Beware how you let the first act of disobedience in your little boys go unnoticed, and unless evidence of repentance be manifest, unpunished.'" †

No doubt, the stern puritan was but an indifferent master for so headstrong a youth, still it was evident that Col. Burr's many serious faults were not *all* the result of a defective education. Some of them were perhaps inherited. Thoroughly furnished as he was, mentally and physically, there was yet something lacking in his moral make-up, otherwise he would have been perfect. It would be curious too, if we should be able to find the *cause* of this.

The genealogist will remember that the Edwards blood was not without taint, that the grandmother of Jonathan Edwards was insane, and that several of her family were victims of the same distressing malady. Whether this had any effect upon the temperament of her remote descendant, Col. Burr, we neither maintain nor deny. The fact is mentioned as affording food for thought to the curious.

Among the papers above referred to I also found a letter from Col. Burr to a legal friend in New York, which, as showing the sprightliness and vivacity of his spirit, that even age could not tame, I feel moved to produce here. It is dated at Albany, March 15th, 1814.

"I pray you never again to be silent, in hopes, etc. That apology has been worn out more than 1000 years ago; from you something original is expected. Letters which require and deserve to be answered at all, should be answered immediately. Your pleadings, though not very technical, are in substance good as to the point charged, but not altogether satisfactory as to the subsequent period. Keep a better lookout. Yes, send copies of my letters to Graves and Mad. F. by the Cartel about to sail for Gottenburg. To the letter of Mad. F. add

'P. S. 17eme Mars, 1814,

'Le sauvage est actuellment à cent lieues dans l'intérieure

* Pierrepont Edwards.

† This is not in character with what Col. Burr used to relate as to his uncle's mode of government, for we have Burr's own testimony, that on one occasion, at least, his uncle "licked him like a sack."

sur une affaire très intéressante pour lui et pour A. H. C ; on aura le resultat au bout d'un mois.' *

"Still, my dear John, I am a sceptic about your health. You have not been pleased to name your Hippocrate. I can at this distance give no instruction, other than that you observe a very temperate diet. About three weeks ago I enclosed you twenty dollars, *i. e.*, ten for Nancy, and ten for contingencies, the receipt has not been acknowledged. I no longer hear anything of the employment of your time. It is feared that things do not go well. † A. B."

From "Personal Recollections of Aaron Burr," published in a late issue of the *Cincinnati Commercial*, I extract the following: "I once heard Hon. Edward Everett relate an incident that occurred in Albany in his presence, that forcibly displayed his power over minds the most strongly biased against him. It was immediately after his secret and sad return from Europe. A case of great pecuniary importance, if I remember right, of the Van Rensselaers against the city, in which the plaintiffs had apparently made no preparations for an advocate, only employing a young lawyer to prepare and present the case. Surprise at this fact became indignation, when it was whispered about that Aaron Burr had returned from Europe and was employed in the case. Such was the indignation that court and bar conspired to put him down with coughs, hisses and jeers,—that they would not hear him,—as an advocate lynch him. The trial proceeded, and at the proper time a side door opened, and a little figure walked silently in, and addressed the court. Not a cough, hiss, stamp, scratch of a pen, or even breath, or apparently a wink, disturbed that calm musical voice during a long speech, and the case was won."

A few years before his death Col. Burr married Madame Jumel, a wealthy lady of New York, and many years his junior. The marriage resulted unhappily, and after a few months was annulled.

In December, 1833, while Col. Burr was walking in Broadway with a friend, he was stricken with a paralysis, which confined him for some weeks to his room. He recovered from this attack, however, almost wholly, and was seen about the streets as usual.

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* This "postscript" might be freely translated, "The savage is actually away a hundred miles in the interior, on an affair very interesting to himself and to A. H. C.; one may expect to hear the result by the end of the month."

Perhaps some one who remembers the men and things of that period, can tell us who the "savage" and A. H. C. were.

† For other letters of Col. Burr, see Appendix C.

This was followed in a few months by a second stroke, which deprived him forever of all use of his lower limbs; two years of inaction then followed, during which, although his mind was as active and strong as ever, his physical powers were gradually failing. During these years he was the honored guest of a lady, whose father had been his intimate friend, and who had herself known him from childhood. This lady proved to be a true Samaritan, one of those rare souls who embody the truths of Christianity in their lives. Unmindful of the construction put upon her acts by society, she cared for the old man with tender assiduity, as long as life lasted, and after his death used both tongue and pen in defending his memory.

In the spring of 1836, he grew rapidly weaker, and it became evident to all that he had not many months to live. It chanced that the house occupied by his kind benefactress was to be pulled down that summer, and the Colonel was removed for the season to Port Richmond, on Staten Island. Here he died on Wednesday, the 14th of September, 1836, aged nearly eighty-one years.

The Rev. Dr. Vanpelt of the Dutch Reformed Church frequently visited him during his last days and administered spiritual consolation; and Col. Burr always received his visits with courtesy and thankfulness. On one of these occasions, in answer to the Doctor's queries as to his view of the Holy Scriptures, he responded, "they are the most perfect system of truth the world has ever seen." At his last visit the clergyman inquired as to his faith in God and his hope of salvation through the merits of Christ, to which he responded with evident emotion, "that on that subject he was coy," meaning as the Doctor thought, that on a subject so momentous, he felt cautious about expressing an opinion.

A small party of friends accompanied the body to Princeton, where, in the college chapel, the funeral ceremonies were performed. The funeral sermon was preached by Dr. Carnahan, then President of the college. It was charitable in tone, and was delivered before a large audience, composed of the townspeople and the college students.

His remains were followed to the grave by the faculty and Cliosophic Society of the college, a large body of citizens and by a detachment of the *Mercer Guards* of Princeton, who fired over his grave the customary volleys.

His grave is near those of his honored father and grandfather,

and is marked by a simple and unpretentious monument of marble, which bears this inscription :

AARON BURR.

Born February 6th, 1756.

Died September 14th, 1836.

A Colonel in the Army of the Revolution.

Vice President of the United States from 1801 to 1805.

THEODOSIA BURR ALSTON. [256]

Born at Albany, 1783, lost at sea in January, 1813—between the two dates fill in such joy, brilliant promise, beauty, accomplishments, intense sorrow, and tragic fate, as never woman knew before, and one has the history of this remarkable lady in epitome.

No daughter ever received a heartier welcome to the home and hearts of her parents, and none ever awakened greater parental care and solicitude than did she. Her father was so constituted, that while he would have been proud of, and honored a son, a daughter called out all the strength and affection of his nature, and he devoted himself to her care and education with a zeal and assiduity that knew no cessation. With the earliest glimmering of reason, her education began. She was taught to sleep alone in the rooms of the great mansion at Richmond Hill, to be prompt, diligent, and self-reliant, polite and mannerly to all, kind and considerate to her inferiors, and was grounded in all the elements of a solid and ornamental education. At the age of ten, "she was precocious, like all her race, and was accounted a prodigy; and she really was a child of precocious endowments." She is also spoken of at this time as having the family diminutiveness, and as being a plump, pretty, and blooming girl. Her father had the utmost horror of her growing into the mere fashionable woman of society, and, while a senator at Philadelphia, thus wrote to his wife on the subject—"Cursed effects of fashionable education, of which both sexes are the advocates, and yours the victims; if I could foresee that Theo. would become a mere fashionable woman with all the attendant frivolity, and vacuity of mind, adorned with whatever grace or allurement, I would earnestly pray God to take her forthwith hence." There was not much danger of her becoming so, for at the time that letter was written, she was reading Horace and Terence in the original, mastering the Greek grammar, studying Gibbon, speaking French, practicing on the piano, and taking lessons in dancing and skating.

At the age of fourteen, she became the mistress of her father's

mansion at Richmond Hill, and entertained his numerous guests, —senators, judges, grave divines, foreign notabilities—with the most charming grace and dignity. At that early age she was her father's friend and counsellor. She wrote letters that displayed a masculine force and directness. She translated grave political treatises from English to French, was familiar with the philosophical and economical writers of her day, and proficient in the Greek, Latin, and German tongues, and was, what she is freely admitted to have been, the most charming and accomplished woman of her day. In her eighteenth year she was married to Joseph Alston of South Carolina, then twenty-two years of age, a gentleman of large wealth and assured position, and a lawyer by profession, though he had never entered into practice.

It was the gossip of the day, and still believed by some, that she was forced into this marriage by her father, from political and prudential reasons chiefly, while she was really in love with a young writer of the town, one Washington Irving, whose articles in the newspapers of the day were then attracting much attention. But the story lacks confirmation. Irving and the lovely Theodosia were acquaintances, it is true, and frequently met in society, but there is no proof of any intimacy between them.

Immediately after her marriage, the bride accompanied her husband to South Carolina, and the happy pair took up their residence at the Oaks, the patrimonial estate of Mr. Alston, and one of the most charming of South Carolina homes. Soon after his marriage, the young husband, spurred by Col. Burr's vigorous mind, entered public life, and in a few years, by the aid of his talents and position, was elected Chief Magistrate of the State. To add to the young wife's happiness, a beautiful boy was born in the first year of her marriage, which was christened Aaron Burr Alston, around whom the liveliest hopes of the parents and of the far-off grandfather as well, clustered. This event we may suppose completed the sum of her happiness; indeed her life, for the first five years of her marriage, was all brightness and sunshine. An honored wife and proud mother, beautiful, accomplished, and fascinating, a Vice President's daughter, and a Governor's wife, leading the society of two States, petted and adored by all—who could at this time have foreseen her coming misfortunes and tragic fate.

In the summer of 1806, she spent some weeks with her father at Blennerhasset's Island, and on the Cumberland. In the fall

they parted ; he to plant his colony on the Washita, and if events favored, to seat himself on the throne of the Montezumas ; she to return to South Carolina, and wait. The winter passed. In May she was horrified to learn that her father was in jail at Richmond, and about to be tried for his life on a charge of treason, but letters from her father which swiftly followed the news, allayed in some measure, her apprehensions. They assured her of his innocence, that his arrest was the work of his political enemies, and that they would be foiled, and himself completely exonerated from all charges.

But the devoted daughter felt that she must be with her father in this hour of adversity, and at once set out for Richmond ; she arrived a few days before the trial began, and remained until it was concluded by the acquittal of her father, spending most of the time in the prison with him, and proudly sharing the odium that was gathering about his name.

What she thought, and how she felt in regard to her father's alleged crime, and the labors of his enemies, is very frankly stated in the following letter written to a friend at the conclusion of the trial :

"I have this moment received a message from court, announcing to me that the jury has brought in a verdict of acquittal, and I hasten to inform you of it, my dear, to allay the anxiety which, with even more than your usual sweetness, you have expressed in your letter of the 22d of July. It afflicts me, indeed, to think that you should have suffered so much from sympathy with the imagined state of my feelings ; for the knowledge of my father's innocence, my ineffable contempt for his enemies, and the elevation of his mind, have kept me above any sensations bordering on depression. Indeed, my father, so far from accepting of sympathy, has continually animated all around him ; it was common to see his desponding friends filled with alarm at some new occurrence, terrified with some new appearance of danger, fly to him in search of encouragement and support, and laughed out of their fears by the subject of them. This I have witnessed every-day, and it almost persuaded me that he possessed the secret of repelling danger as well as apprehension. Since my residence here, of which some days and a night were passed in the penitentiary, our little family circle has been a scene of uninterrupted gayety. Thus you see, my lovely sister, this visit has been a real party of pleasure. From many of the first inhabitants, I have received the most un-

remitting and delicate attentions, sympathy indeed, of any I ever experienced."

Nor did her devotion falter during subsequent years, when her father was an exile, and in his own country everywhere spoken against. She gladly shared his reproach, as she had his honor, and for those who, without a particle of evidence, and in the face of his triumphant vindication by the courts, could condemn and ostracize the innocent, she expressed only the most unmitigated contempt. Meantime she wrote letters of womanly tenderness and cheer to the exile, and eagerly watched the political horizon for signs of an abatement of the popular resentment. She also addressed letters to eminent public men, pleading her father's cause, and asking their opinion as to his safety should he venture to return to his native land. Some idea of the style and force of these epistles may be gathered from the following, addressed to Mrs. James Madison, wife of the President, on this subject, and with whom she had been quite intimate in brighter days :

ROCKY RIVER SPRINGS, June 24th, 1809.

MADAM :—You may perhaps be surprised at receiving a letter from one with whom you have had so little intercourse for the last few years. But your surprise will cease when you recollect that my father, once your friend, is now in exile ; and that the President only can restore him to me, and to his country. Ever since the choice of the people was first declared in favor of Mr. Madison, my heart, amid the universal joy, has beat with the hope that I too should soon have reason to rejoice. Convinced that Mr. Madison would neither feel, nor judge, from the feelings or judgment of others, I had no doubt of his hastening to relieve a man. whose character he had been enabled to appreciate during a confidential intercourse of long continuance, and whom he must know incapable of the designs attributed to him. My anxiety on this subject has, however, become too painful to be alleviated by anticipations which no events have yet tended to justify, and in this state of intolerable suspense, I have determined to address myself to you, and request that you will, in my name, apply to the President for a removal of the prosecution now existing against Aaron Burr. I still expect it from him, as a man of feeling and candor, as one acting for the world and for posterity.

Statesmen, I am aware, deem it necessary that sentiments of

liberality, and even justice, should yield to considerations of policy, but what policy can require the absence of my father at present? Even had he contemplated the project for which he stands arraigned, evidently to pursue it any further would now be impossible. There is not left one pretext of alarm, even to calumny. For bereft of fortune, of popular favor, and almost of friends, what could he accomplish; and whatever may be the apprehensions, or clamors of the ignorant and the interested, surely the timid, illiberal system which would sacrifice a man to a remote and unreasonable possibility that he might infringe some law founded on an unjust, unwarrantable suspicion that he would desire it, cannot be approved by Mr. Madison, and must be unnecessary to a President so loved, so honored. Why then, is my father banished from a country for which he has encountered wounds, and dangers, and fatigue, for years? Why is he driven from his friends, from an only child, to pass an unlimited time in exile, and that, too, at an age when others are reaping the harvest of past toils, or ought at least to be providing seriously for the comfort of ensuing years? I do not seek to soften you by this recapitulation. I wish only to remind you of all the injuries which are inflicted on one of the first characters the United States ever produced. Perhaps it may be well to assure you, there is no truth in a report lately circulated, that my father intends returning immediately.

He never will return to conceal himself in a country on which he has conferred distinction. To whatever fate Mr. Madison may doom this application, I trust it will be treated with delicacy. Of this I am the more desirous, as Mr. Alston is ignorant of the step I have taken in writing to you, which, perhaps nothing could excuse but the warmth of filial affection. If it be an error, attribute it to the indiscreet zeal of a daughter whose soul sinks at the gloomy prospect of a long and indefinite separation from a father almost adored, and who can leave nothing unattempted, which offers the slightest hope of procuring him redress. What indeed would I not risk once more to see him, to hang upon him, to place my child upon his knee, and again spend my days in the happy occupation of endeavoring to anticipate his wishes. Let me entreat, my dear madam, that you will have the consideration and goodness to answer me as speedily as possible; my heart is sore with doubt and patient waiting for something definite. No apologies are made for giving you this trouble, which I am sure you will not deem it irksome to take for a daughter, an affec-

tionate daughter thus situated. Inclose your letter for me to A. J. Frederic Prevost, Esq., near New Rochelle, New York.

That every happiness may attend you is the sincere wish of

THEO. BURR ALSTON.

To *Mrs. James Madison*, Washington, D. C.

It was from assurances received in answer to this letter, that Col. Burr, in 1810, began to think once more of his native land. In the spring of 1812 her father arrived in Boston, but hardly had the news of his arrival reached her, when she was called upon to suffer a bereavement, beside which those that had preceded it seemed trifles light as air. Her boy, her only child, a handsome promising lad of eleven years, the "little Gamp" so frequently mentioned in Burr's letters, sickened and died. This blow shattered in an instant the hopes of years, and plunged both parents and grandfather in the deepest depths of affliction.

"But a few miserable days past," wrote the poor bereaved mother to her father, announcing her loss, "and your late letters would have gladdened my soul, and even now I rejoice at their contents, as much as it is possible for me to rejoice at anything; but there is no more joy for me. The world is a blank. I have lost my boy. My child is gone forever. He expired on the 30th of June. My head is not sufficiently collected to say anything further. May heaven by other things make you some amends for the noble grandson you have lost. He was eleven years old." The mother never recovered from the effects of this shock.

For years her health had been delicate, owing in some measure, no doubt, to the unfavorable influence of the climate, and as early as 1805, she had been forced to admit the probability of an early death, and at that time prepared a letter to be given to her husband after her death, and which was found among her effects after her decease in 1812. This letter, so natural, and so characteristic, conveys a better idea of the life and character of this remarkable woman, than could pages of studied description and eulogy. It was intended for one eye alone, but as it has been before published, and as it exhibits its author in a most favorable light, there can be no impropriety in reproducing it here.

The following is the letter:

Aug. 6, 1805.

"Whether it is the effect of extreme debility and disordered nerves, or whether it is really presentiment, the existence of which

I nave often been told of and always doubted, I can not tell; but something whispers me that my end approaches. In vain I reason with myself; in vain I occupy my mind and seek to fix my attention on other subjects; there is about me that dreadful heaviness and sinking of the heart, that awful foreboding of which it is impossible to divest myself.

"Perhaps I am now standing on the brink of eternity, and ere I plunge in the fearful abyss, I have some few requests to make. I wish your sisters (one of them, it is immaterial which) would select from my clothes certain things which, they will easily perceive, belong to my mother. These, with whatever lace they find in a large trunk in a garret-room of the Oaks House, added to a little satin-wood box, (the largest, and having a lock and key) and a black satin embroidered box with a pin-cushion; all these things I wish they would put together in one trunk, and send them to Frederic Prevost, with the enclosed letter."

Then follow several bequests, after which the letter continues:

"To you, my beloved, I leave my child, the child of my bosom, who was once a part of myself, and from whom I shall shortly be separated by the cold grave. You love him now, henceforth love him for me also. And oh, my husband, attend to this last prayer of a doting mother. Never, never, listen to what any other person tells you of him. Be yourself his judge on all occasions. He has faults; see them and correct them yourself. Desist not an instant from your endeavors to secure his confidence. It is a work which requires as much uniformity of conduct as warmth of affection toward him.

"I know, my beloved, that you can perceive what is right on this subject, as on every other. But recollect, these are the last words I can ever utter. It will tranquillize my last moments to have disburdened myself of them. I fear you will scarcely be able to read this scrawl, but I feel hurried and agitated. Death is not welcome to me; I confess it is ever dreaded. You have made me too fond of life. Adieu then, thou kind, thou tender husband. Adieu, friend of my heart. May heaven prosper you, and may we meet hereafter. Adieu, perhaps we may never see each other again in this world. You are away; I wished to hold you fast, and prevent you from going this morning.

"But He who is wisdom itself ordains events; we must submit to them. Least of all should I murmur. I on whom so many blessings have been showered, whose days have been numbered by

bounties, who have had such a husband, such a child, and such a father. Oh, pardon me, my God, if I regret leaving these. I resign myself. Adieu once more and for the last time, my beloved. Speak of me often to our son. Let him love the memory of his mother, and let him know how he was loved by her.

Your wife, your fond wife,

THEO."

This letter was written in the summer of 1805. In this summer of 1812, her malady had greatly increased. She sank into a listless apathetic state, pitiful to see and from which it was difficult to rouse her. Her boy was dead, henceforth life was a blank, and existence a burden.

In the fall, her father, alarmed, insisted that she should come North ; he even sent an old friend to her home to accompany her on the journey. It was manifestly impossible for her in her enfeebled state to make the journey by land, and the party, comprising Theodosia, her maid, her physician and Mr. Green, proceeded to Charleston, and embarked on a small schooner called the Patriot. The vessel sailed on the 30th of December, 1812, and was never again heard of.

It was the commonly received opinion that she foundered off Hatteras, in a heavy storm that visited the coast a few days after she left port ; but forty years after, a paragraph appeared in a Texan newspaper and went the rounds of the press, giving a different version of her fate.

This paragraph purported to be the confession of a sailor who had recently died in Texas, and who declared on his death bed that he was one of the crew of the Patriot in December 1812, and that during the voyage the sailors mutinied and murdered all the officers and passengers, Mrs. Alston being the last to walk the plank.

To this statement the *Pennsylvania Enquirer* added corroborative evidence as follows :

"An item of news just now going the rounds relates that a sailor, who died in Texas, confessed on his death bed that he was one of the crew of mutineers who, some forty years ago, took possession of a brig on its passage from Charleston to New York, and caused all the officers and passengers to walk the plank. For forty years the wretched man has carried about the dreadful secret, and died at last in an agony of despair.

"What gives this story additional interest is the fact that the vessel referred to is the one in which Mrs. Theodosia Alston, the beloved daughter of Aaron Burr, took passage for New York, for the purpose of meeting her parent in the darkest days of his existence, and which, never having been heard of, was supposed to have been foundered at sea.

"The dying sailor professed to remember her well, said she was the last who perished, and that he never forgot her look of despair as she took the last step from the fatal plank. On reading this account, I regarded it as a fiction; but on conversing with an officer of the navy he assures me of the probable truth, and states that on one of his passages home some years ago, his vessel brought two pirates in irons, who were subsequently executed at Norfolk for recent offences, and who, before their execution, confessed that they had been members of the same crew and participated in the murder of Mrs. Alston and her companions.

"Whatever opinion may be entertained of the father, the memory of the daughter must be revered as one of the loveliest and most excellent of American women, and the revelation of her untimely fate can only serve to invest that memory with a more tender and melancholy interest."

And this is all that can be certainly known in regard to her death. The reader will draw his own conclusions; but in either case what a tragic fate was hers!

To her father this was the "event that separated him from the human race." To her husband thus doubly bereaved, it proved a blow from the effects of which he never fully recovered. He survived his wife and child but a few years, dying at Charleston, Sept. 10th, 1816, at the early age of thirty-eight years.

APPENDIX C.

Letters from Col. Aaron Burr to his sister Mrs. Reeve, found in the garret of the old Reeve mansion at Litchfield, Ct., and never before published; also two letters from Mrs. Prevost, afterward wife of Col. Burr.

LETTER I.

CAMBRIDGE, August 26th.

DEAR SISTER,

This is the fourth Letter I have wrote you—and two I have sent to Mr. Reeve since I have been here—and yet Mr. Phillips tells me you complain grievously that I never write—I hope then you will allow me to freeze a little, for I have not recd a single Line from either of you since I have been at this Place—I am told indeed there are Letters in Town for me brought by the Litchfield Post, but no mortal knows where he has laid them—pray direct him to leave my Letters for the future at Pomeroy's opposite the College—there I lodge—

You sha'n't have one word of Politicks in this Letter for several Reasons—one is I am just out of Bed rouz'd by Mr. Phillips—and have not yet my Eyes open—much less my Senses—and furthermore—Mr. Phil- goes off in ten Minutes to Roxbury and is doubtful whether he will return to this Place again—if he does, I shall have another Letter to give him; if not this must suffice.

Yesterday I recd a Letter from T. Edwards, very urgent for me to go to Stockbridge and from thence with him to attend an Indian Congress to be holden at Albany—but I think I shall take no notice of his Invitation—his Letter was dated August 22d all well—but I fear Mr. Ph's Patience is exhausted—remember me with Abundance of Love to my Brother.

I am dear Sister
your Affte Brother &c.
A. B.———

You shall receive a Letter by every Post if you will direct him to me.

LETTER II.

CAMP BEFORE QUEBEC, 2nd Feb. 7 1/76.

I have just time my dear Sister once more to assure you that I am your Brother, tho' in Canada—I have been anticipating half a

Dozen Letters from you by the next Post—they will be to me like—like what shall I compare them to ? like a Rind of Pork in the Wilderness—I had thoughts of giving you a little sketch of my manner of Life—but perhaps you will have it from Mr. Ogden, and at any Rate I see no very good end to be answered by it—be it enough for you, that I am dirty, ragged, moneyless and friendless and no Prospect of bettering myself very speedily—

Litchfield seems to me like some ideal Region in the Moon, some place I have visited in Vision and tasted a thousand Raptures—do write of the old Raschals and the new, who are up and who down—I think I could with no small pleasure—but I'll say no more for fear you'll think I've some female in my eye—*apropos* of females—I think this a good opening to finish the Affair of Gallantry I began in my last—I began as I informed you I should —made regular Approaches—I flash'd out so inimitably that the Torrent was too mighty ; it bore her off—I had next Day the Pleasure of hearing (second handed) that I was an exceeding genteel young Fellow—now hear the Improvement—I am resolved never again to expose myself to be entangled in a similar scrape, or in other words that I will at no Time or on any Occasion whatever utter a syllable in the Presence of a French Lady that can understand me—for I am confident that no Art, no Hypocrisy can surmount my natural Bluntness—and one rash Word might forfeit more than a whole Fortnight's Penance can retrieve—but I'm running on as wildly as if I had Ages for nothing but to write in & had I—I could not employ them better than in telling you how sincerely I am your Affecte. Brother &c. AARON BURR.

Remember me suitably to all my Acquaintance, but be cautious to whom you give my Love.

LETTER III.

PEEKSKILL, 8th June, 1777.

MY DEAR SISTER :

I am at length within a single Days Journey of you, a single Day surely can't separate us long—I was left at Princeton unwell, but have joined the Army again in perfect Health. Mr. Bradley was with me a few Days past and acquainted me that you were much recovered.

Edward Bujue, the faithful Fellow who has attended me for near a year past, will wait on you with this and some of my winter

cloathes. If I have with you any Handkerchiefs, Linnen, Cotton or Silk Stockings, pray send them me by Ned's Return, which will be in about three Weeks.

I am starved for Letters, not a single snip can I get from any Friend in any Quarter—my faithful Correspondent, my best, my, almost, only Friend, is, alas, no more—J. Bellamy's Death gave me Feelings, which few Deaths can ever renew.

But why this to a Sister who feels more for a Brother than herself—my Pen and Heart you know were ever nearly allied. I left our worthy Aunt at Eliz'eth Town last Monday—her increasing Troubles have almost worn her out. She still enjoys a tolerable Share of Health—Mr. Pollock grows weaker in Mind but may live these 7 years.

Our Army increases fast, are in good health and Spirits. The Prospect of public Affairs brightens to *my* View, but we may yet expect Clouds.—We are yet in Doubt whether Philada is the object of the Enemy,—a very short Time will probably determine.

I want much to see you and some Litchfield Friends—I know not when to promise myself that Happiness—but I think this Month.

With much Love to my Brother
I am Dear Sister
Affectionately Yours,
A BURR.

Desire Mr. Reave to let me know how much Money he received for me, and whether he has disposed of it.

My Aunt Pollock presents you with ½ lb. of Bohea Tea—An English officer made a Present of 1 lb. of Green Tea when I was lately with a Flagg—what is left of it I now send you—make much of it—3 pr. Waiscoats, 2 pr. Breeches, 4 pr. Stockings.

LETTER IV.

DEAR SALLY

I am just returned from Philada and To-morrow pursue my Route Eastward—(not yet to Litchfield) that happiness must be a few Days more suspended—not on military Business—for I have no intention to rejoin the Army or any Branch of it—

I spent the last evening with Doctor Jones of N. York, eminent for his good sense, his Politeness, but particularly for his Skill and Experience as a Physician. He has politely offered his advice and

endeavours in your Behalf—If you had the opinion which I have of his Abilities you would not fail to improve it; he will be at Goshen (in this State) these two Months. It was our Sister P's Representation unknown to me that drew his attention and interested him in your Welfare. When I have an Interview with you, I can urge many Reasons, (some of which I know you will feel) why I am the more anxious you should not delay to consult Doctor Jones—my conclusions are the Result of Reason, not Whim or Sanguine Fancy.

I am on my way to Boston—the Brother of our Sister P. is there a Prisoner—how happy if I am his Deliverer! I return thro' Litchfield—for several Reasons I cannot take it in my Way there—I expect to bring our Brother with me—then to take you to Goshen or remain at Litchfield while Mr. Reeves eschorts you—or attend you both—I am so bent on the experiment that nothing can divert me—nothing I will not encounter or do to effect it—the Ride will be of service at any Rate.

I wrote you the Beginning of this Month from White Plains. Old Tetard will certainly live with me this Summer—if he comes in my Absence take good care of him and keep him alive till I come.

I shall use many Arguments to induce Mr. Reeve to go immediately to Jersey—think of it seriously—

With the warmest Affection of a Brother I am Dear Sister

Your A. B.

Mrs. Reeve.

Peekskill 25th April 1780.

LETTER V.

24th July; —80

Honest Hull is tired of this Dutch Wilderness & on his Journey home will deliver you this—The little mare and Saddle goes with him—She does not at present do justice to Fredericks attendance & care of her, he has been really a faithful nurse.

This is my third letter all of which I suppose you have recd—& and from a consciousness of guilt, I fancy the Light of my hand must be terrible to you, as it renews the conviction of your own negligence—I am not yet at the springs, but shall be this week—I was deterred by accounts of Robbers, Horse thieves, &c—at present I have a Security from those Apprehensions by a good honest boy who is to be my Companion & who is as much afraid of

Rebels as I am of Refugees—Thea is at my elbow & is this moment pinching my Ear, because I will not say any thing about her to you—

Not one word from you directly or indirectly since I left you—The Litchfield air gives me not a few anxious reflections—I am still distrustful of it—& I am not the only one that feels interested for you—I am still a skeleton & excepting less flesh—am neither better or worse than when with you—I have settled my plans with Troup—he is now at Pattersons & I shall join him there when my health will allow—

Gen. Wayne on the 21st Inst. with 1800 foot, a Regt. of Horse, and some Artillery, attacked a Block house in the English Neighbour, Defended by some refugee Negroes & tories—We were repulsed with the Loss of abt. fifty killed—If my trunk has come from Middletown I wish you would send me when you have an oppty the four Vols of Gil Blas which you will find in the trunk—If you can send them either to this place or Bartolfs at Ramapough by a safe oppty I shall get them—

My love to Patty.

T. Reeve Esqr.

LETTER VI.

[no date.]

Dear Brother,

I have written you many letters within a few months, principally on the subjects of Beer and money—The Beer is in *Statu quo* to wit, in my Cellar—and will be forwarded you as soon as possible—Thea has almost broke her heart about it Since the certainty of peace, of which we are this evening informed—Money becomes more than ever necessary—I must go as soon as possible to N. York & must for that purpose have cash—Pray endeavor to negociate the Treasurers Note which I took in Mothers behalf at Hartford and also the small tax Note—Perhaps Stirlings Master (whose name I forget) will discharge his Note—If not you must sell it at the best price.

Judge Hobart will set off from Sharon for Albany, I suppose on the 14th of April—If you should be able to procure me any cash by that time, you must forward it by him—if you are obliged to send to Sharon on purpose—If you can on any terms procure a sum of money on loan (beside the notes &c I have just mentioned, I beg you will *do it*—150£ in this way would be very convenient—indeed I must at all events have a sum of money from you—

Phil behaves so ill that she is for sale—you know her qualities as a seamstress &c—I wish you would inquire for a purchaser—her price is 60£ your money, cash—I shall send you Castor as soon as possible.—Children are all well—talk forever of little Burr.

Love to Sally.

Yrs, &c. A.B.

LETTER VII.

[no date.]

It is my real opinion that if I did not write to you in a twelve month, the thought of writing to me would never enter your head—but I hear from you frequently even in spight of yourself—I am told the brat begins to pick up—I wish he may be a much cleverer fellow than his father.

The winter has I think been favorable to Sally—pray tell me what prospect there is of her recovery—I think often of the remove to Carolina, though I should lament the necessity—I heard she was threatened with a swelling on the foot—how is this—my health is nearly established, and will be quite so when I hear of yours & hers—any news of my trunks or sleigh yet, or of Bradley's money—if you have an opportunity any time this spring, write him a civil letter on that subject—

Mrs. D. V. has begged me to make inquiry after her affairs—If you can get a letter into the post office it will meet me—direct it to the care of the post master at Morristown.

1st March. Ys. A. B.

LETTER VIII.

I inclose a copy of a Bond which I request you immediately to prosecute in such way as will most speedily produce the money, you see by the memorandum that the sum in the Bond is secured by a mortgage of Lands in Sharon. It is very interesting to me that you should bring this Business to a speedy conclusion—pray do not fail to acknowledge the receipt of this by first post—

We are all well, are surprised we have not heard from you, or seen Burr—

We have lost our youngest child, our Sally—a beautiful lovely Baby. Your affec.

A. B.

12th October, 1786.

LETTER IX.

From Mrs. Theodosia Prevost to Mrs. Sarah Reeve, Litchfield. The writer was probably engaged to Col. Burr at the time.

DEAR MADAM

As you are no stranger to the partial friendship your amiable Brother honors me with, nor to my want of skill in the art of writing, I will not apologize for my present attempt—Although I can with propriety accuse him of a breach in confidence for having exposed the ignorance of his friend to a lady of your superior sense.

Your ill health my Dear Madam has given me the utmost concern, and anxiety. Though I have not the happiness of a personal acquaintance, As the sister of my inestimable friend you are justly entitled to my highest regard and attention. Give me leave to assure you, I feel sincerely interested for your recovery—as your physician recomends exercise with change of air, I flattered myself with the hope of seeing you with Mr. Reeve at the Hermitage, The Variety may perhaps produce a happy effect—You will find a sympathizing friend who would feel a singular pleasure to be in the smallest degree conducive to your recovery—who would treat you with the familiarity of a sister that wishes to cultivate your friendship. Believe me my Dear Mrs. Reeve, your acceptance of my wellmeant invitation will be esteemed a particular favor confered on Your sincere friend and very

Humble Servant
THEODOSIA PREVOST.

HERMITAGE, June 5th, 1770.

My Best respects wait on Mr. Reeve.

LETTER X.

From Mrs. Prevost to Mrs. Reeve.

DEAR SALLY,

I have waited impatiently ever since the departure of Mr. Reeve to hear of your health, and whether he suffered no injury from the rain—I was in hopes the violence of the storm would have retained him my prisoner that day—but he disappointed my expectations even at the risque of his health—His desire to return evinced the sacrifice he had made to friendship in quitting his

Sally; & redoubled my gratitude to both, for their kind attention—

Our dear Reeve flattered me with the prospect of a visit from my lovely sister—The family employ themselves numbering the days, and rejoicing every evening to be nearer that wished for period—I am desirous it should arrive before the boy returns from nurse—as I am apprehensive you will not then, have resolution to quit home—

My boys have our brothers leave to request from among his books, Martins Grammar & Virgil— they & their sisters join in every assurance of affection to you & yours—Adieu my dear Sally, Hygiæa & peace attend Thee—

THEOD PREVOST.

SHARON, August 3d. —81

Dr. S. has become a very good neighbor.