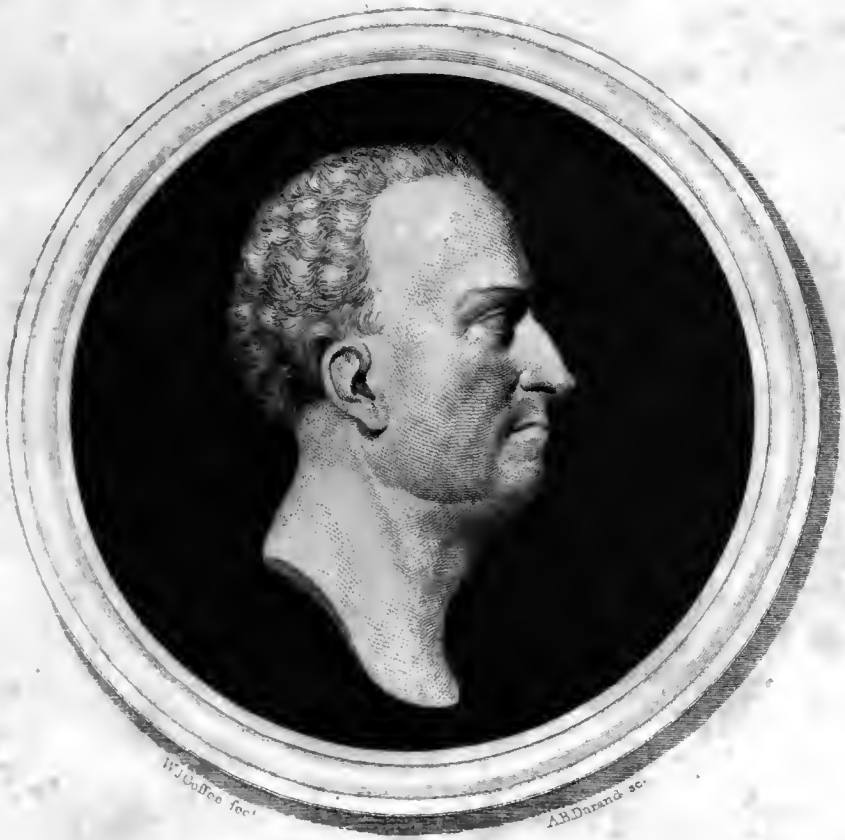
For Francis Lieber Esq
with the respectful
consideration of the author

MEMOIR OF DE WITT CLINTON.



Albany 3 April 1817

***** be here nothing new here. In politics all is calm. I shall be detained here some days by the Canal bill which I think will pass.

Yours sincerely

Dewitt Clinton

Dr Mosch.

Printed by Wm Neale N.Y.

MEMOIR

OF

DE WITT CLINTON:

WITH AN

APPENDIX,

CONTAINING

NUMEROUS DOCUMENTS,

ILLUSTRATIVE OF

THE PRINCIPAL EVENTS OF HIS LIFE.

BY DAVID HOSACK, M.D. F.R.S.

In te unum atque in tuum nomen se tota convertet, civitas;
te Senatus, te omnes boni, te socii, te Latini intuebuntur.
Cic. de Repub. vi. 13.

NEW-YORK:
PRINTED BY J. SEYMOUR, 49 JOHN-STREET.
1829.

PREFACE.

When the author commenced the following work, it occurred to him, that independently of the general character of the illustrious subject of this Memoir, it became his duty to ascertain the nature and extent of the services Mr. Clinton had rendered to the various Literary and Benevolent Institutions of the city and state of New-York; and, more especially, to inquire into the history of the origin, progress, and completion, of the Canals of this state, with which his fame had become identified.

Until the family of the deceased had selected the Hon. John C. Spencer as the biographer of Mr. Clinton, the author acknowledges he had reason to believe he would have had the benefit of access to the private papers of his friend, and from which he had expected to receive much assistance. But while he rejoices in the judicious

selection that has been made of a gentleman, who unites, with great abilities and acquirements, every qualification for the duty he has been requested to perform, the disappointment this circumstance has thereby occasioned to the author, will readily be imagined, and, he trusts, will be received as a satisfactory apology for any omissions, or errors, which may be found in this work.

Indeed, had he supposed the privation possible, which he has experienced, great as has been his attachment to Mr. Clinton, his respect for his memory, or the sense of duty, which a long and uninterrupted friendship had imposed upon him, to perpetuate, to the best of his abilities, the remembrance of those virtues and deeds which had adorned the life of that distinguished statesman, the author, certainly, would have been at once deterred from attempting the performance of the task he has endeavoured to execute.

Being thus deprived of that source of information upon which he had relied, he immediately commenced a correspondence with many of the personal friends of Governor Clinton, and especially with those who had been associated with him in the great and memorable events of his valuable life. From them, in addition to his own personal knowledge of Mr. Clinton, he has derived numerous and highly interesting facts; and it affords him great pleasure to acknowledge his obligations for the information he has thus received. To the Hon. John C. Spencer, Chancellor Kent, Cadwallader D. Colden, Dr. John W. Francis, Nathaniel H. Carter, and others, whose

communications are more particularly detailed in the Appendix, he owes a debt of gratitude for many important facts which they promptly supplied.

Upon the subject of the canals of this state, which, since the year 1810, had been a prominent object of Mr. Clinton's solicitude, it was not the intention of the author to give a full historical account of the events connected with that great achievement. This had already been ably done by the late Charles G. Haines; by John Van Ness Yates, the late Secretary of State; by Cadwallader D. Colden; and, to these may be added, the excellent Summary of the Canal Navigation of the United States, published by Professor Renwick of Columbia College.* The original object of the author was to ascertain the nature and extent of the services rendered by the subject of this memoir. It thence, also, became necessary to inquire, how far other persons had contributed, by their labours, to the accomplishment of the same great end. These inquiries have, necessarily, led to a much more extensive investigation of this subject than was, at first, contemplated. In the course of this examination, to the great surprise of the author, numerous facts have been disclosed, and many valuable documents obtained, which have never hitherto been communicated to the world, and which will be found to illustrate, not only the highly

* See Quarterly Journal of Science, Literature, and Art, Royal Institution of Great Britain.

important services rendered by Mr. Clinton, but those also by others who have not been before known and appreciated among the benefactors of the state, and to whom much praise is due for the benefits which their talents and disinterested labours have conferred.

The number and extent of those documents have unavoidably enlarged the Appendix to a very unexpected length, and have necessarily delayed the publication of the work. These circumstances, and the time occupied in procuring some of the materials, will account for the disproportion which will be found to exist between the original biography and the appended matter. Could these difficulties have been earlier foreseen, measures might have been adopted the better to have secured a more ample Memoir, and to have compressed the Appendix within more moderate limits.

DAVID HOSACK.

New-York, February 1st, 1829.

PREFATORY NOTICES.

Special meeting of the New-York Literary and Philosophical Society.

At a special meeting of the New-York Literary and Philosophical Society, convened at their chamber in the New-York Institution, 16th February, 1828, the following resolutions were unanimously adopted.

On motion, resolved, that this Society are deeply sensible of their loss, as well as that of the state and nation, in the death of their late President, De Witt Clinton.

Resolved, that Dr. David Hosack, the first Vice President of this Society, be requested to pronounce a Discourse commemorative of the worth and services of the deceased.

Resolved, that a committee of five be appointed to carry into effect the above resolutions. Whereupon Professor Renwick, Dr. Van Rensselaer, Philip Hone, William Gracie, and Dr. Pendleton, were appointed.

Resolved, that the above resolutions be published.

By order,

J. VAN RENSSELAER, Secretary.

Meeting of the Citizens of New-York.

At a meeting of the Citizens of the city and county of New-York, on the 21st of February instant, at the large room in the Masonic Hall, Broadway, opposite the Hospital, convened by public notice, for the purpose of expressing their feelings in relation to the death of DE WITT CLINTON, late Governor of the state, Morgan Lewis, Esq. was called to the chair, and Thomas Herttell, appointed secretary.

Philip Hone, Esq. late Mayor, then rose and addressed the chair as follows:

This meeting is convened for the purpose of expressing the sense of the citizens of New-York, generally, on the occasion of the death of Governor Clinton. The various public institutions of which he was a distinguished member, and several of which were planted and watered by his hand, have already paid this tribute to his memory. But we are assembled to express, as far as possible, the sentiments of the citizens of New-York. The benefit of his labours for the public good are felt in every section of the state. But we have participated largely, and we claim the privilege of expressing loudly, and deeply, our grief on this melancholy occasion.

It is not my intention to pronounce a panegyric on the great and good man whose loss we deplore. Abler heads will conceive, more practised hands will indite, and more eloquent lips pronounce, his eulogy; but no heart will be found to feel this bereavement more sensibly than that of the individual who now addresses you.

Engaged as Governor Clinton has been, in party politics, ever since the commencement of his career as a public man, he was, nevertheless, deficient in that quality of a politician, which is unfortunately too often considered as essential. His was not that cold, calculating policy, which, congealing the natural currents of the heart, would check its godlike impulse, and prevent him from loving those who loved him, lest it might interfere with his political plans: he was not of that class of politicians, who fearing to do something wrong, are content to do nothing right. By professional politicians he was condemned for this, but this it was that endeared him to his friends; and few public men have ever possessed in so great a degree the affections of his personal friends.

As a political man, and the leader of a party, he had many adherents and many opponents. Talents like his, could not fail to protrude their possessor into the front rank. On all occasions, and if his inclinations had led him at any time to seek the immunity of neu-

trality, in relation to questions of a public nature, the voice of his fellow-citizens would have forbidden it. But happily for his fame, his claims are more substantial than those merely of the leader of a political sect. In the silence of the tomb, the voice of party is hushed, and our lamented Clinton will be remembered as the proudest ornament of the state. She weeps for him, as the enlightened scholar; the patron and efficient supporter of those liberal institutions, which serve to adorn our country, and to meliorate the condition of its citizens; the patriotic and incorruptible statesman, and the active, zealous, fearless advocate of internal improvements—that cause in which his political and personal reputation was so deeply identified, that its failure would have been his defeat, as its successful accomplishment is his glory. It has succeeded—and his fellow-citizens will not refuse him their gratitude, which alone constituted the ultimate object of his patriotic labours.

The Legislature of the state are at present engaged in such measures as are best calculated to assuage the grief of his bereaved relatives, and to redound to their own honour; and we are assembled this day to encourage them in well-doing by an approval of those measures; and in mingling our tears with those which have been shed in other parts of the state, to express how deeply this afflictive dispensation of Divine Providence is felt by the city of New-York.

Mr. Hone then offered the following resolutions:

Resolved, that we deplore, in common with our fellow-citizens, the dispensation of Providence which has deprived us of our late Chief Magistrate De Witt Clinton, and unite with heartfelt sincerity in the sorrow which has followed him to the tomb.

Resolved, that, while in the death of De Witt Clinton we recognise a nation's loss,—which demands the expression of a nation's grief,—we especially feel the bereavement, as inhabitants of this city, which by his genius, virtues, and untiring exertions, has been rendered the seat of commerce, prosperity, and opulence.

Resolved, that a committee of two persons from each ward be appointed, to consider and recommend such measures as they may deem necessary and proper for rendering honour to the character and public services of the deceased.

Elbert Herring, Esquire, seconded the resolutions, and addressed the meeting as follows:

Mr. Chairman,

It is with much emotion, that I second the resolutions just now offered. The merit of the great man, whose death has assembled us, demands an abler eulogist; and, I trust, that richer praise and worthier tributes of respect may follow my humble offering. It is, however, grateful to my feelings to mingle my own with the general sorrow, and to manifest regard for the memory of him, whom, when living, I never ceased to honour. It is creditable to our nature to weep over departed worth; and it is alike our duty and interest to mourn over, and to deck the graves of the illustrious dead. And could death have struck down a nobler victim? Could the grave have closed upon one more devoted to his country? or more useful to the human family? or more endeared to the wise and the good? Early in life he, whose death we deplore, and whose memory we would honour, was called by his countrymen into public employment; and from that time till our bereavement, his mighty mind was consecrated to the service of his country. For more than thirty years he has passed in review before you, occupying many official stations, shedding lustre upon them all, and impressing upon all the character of his exalted mind. From the commencement to the close of his brilliant career, he was the distinguished patron of science and the arts, and the untiring advocate of charitable and moral institutions. Whatever was great, or good, or useful—whatever we respect, or admire, or applaud—whatever tended to dignify human nature and meliorate the condition of man, to promote the cause of virtue, and exalt the character of his country, was sure to find in him zealous support and efficient aid. To his indefatigable exertions, the school fund, in a great measure, owes its prosperity. His efforts have pre-eminently diffused education through our state; and to thousands has the book of knowledge been opened, who but for him would have been uneducated and unenlightened, blind to its beauties and its blessings: he saw in the diffusion of knowledge and the mental culture of his countrymen, their just appreciation of their own rights, their love of freedom, and the stability and permanency of our civil institutions.

Under his fostering care, agriculture left its unprogressive position, and made rapid strides in improvement. He realized the blessings that follow in her train. He knew that she dispensed wealth, cherished independence, and inculcated morality; and he, therefore, made it the subject of special communication to our Legislature.

He was the constant advocate of charitable and moral institutions. He considered them the handmaids of benevolence and virtue,—ministering to the happiness and

advancing the best interests of society; and he lent them the influence of his talents and of his great name.

And, Sir, his energy and influence and foresight, intermingled the Lakes and the Hudson. The great Western Canal owns him as its efficient patron. His comprehensive mind grasped its stupendous importance. He viewed, in its completion, the prosperity of the state, and the glory of the nation. And on its accomplishment he hazarded his renown. The pledge was nobly given. That work alone will immortalize his name; and the benefits resulting from it will transcend the power of computation.

This, Sir, is a rapid glance at some of his public services. Less could not be said. But his eulogy will be emphatically, and sublimely, and beautifully pronounced by the prosperity and aggrandizement of the state and the nation.

This illustrious man was in one instant passing before us in his career of usefulness, with the brilliancy of a meteor, and in the next the mourners were bearing him to his long home. But he is embalmed in the hearts of his countrymen, because he pursued the best interests, and advanced the true glory, of his country. His fame is the rich inheritance of the nation. The splendid legacy is imperishable. It will last as long as the waters of Lake Erie shall wind around the hills and flow over the valleys of the west in its passage to the ocean. It will last, till the stream of time shall mingle with and be lost in the ocean of eternity. We attest his worth by our sorrow; and we offer our tribute of mournful respect to this friend of science, this patron of the arts, this ornament of our country, this benefactor of mankind.

Resolved, that these proceedings be signed by the Chairman and Secretary, and published.

Resolved, that this meeting adjourn to such time and place as shall be designated by the Chairman by public notice.

MORGAN LEWIS, Chairman.

THOMAS HERTTELL, Secretary.

NEW-YORK, April 2d, 1828.

SIR,

AT a general meeting of the citizens of New-York, a committee was appointed from each ward, to adopt suitable measures to render a tribute of their respect to the memory of De Witt Clinton. By the direction of that committee, we request the favour of you to pronounce an Eulogy on the character and services of that distinguished man.

We are, very respectfully,

Your obedient servants,

JOHN STEARNS,
E. A. BANCKER,
ELBERT HERRING, } COMMITTEE.

DAVID HOSACK, M. D.

To the preceding requests a verbal answer, accepting the invitation, was communicated to the gentlemen composing the committees, with the promise of informing them when the performance of the duty might be expected.

The general committee appointed at a meeting of the citizens in February last, to recommend suitable measures for rendering honour to the memory of De Witt Clinton, met at the City Hall, on the 1st of November instant, when the special committee reported, that Dr. David Hosack had consented to deliver a Discourse commemorative of the character and public services of De Witt Clinton, at such time and place as might be designated for that purpose. The said committee further reported, that the Consistory of the Middle Dutch Church had kindly granted the use of the said church for the contemplated purpose. Whereupon,

Resolved, that the said report be accepted.

Resolved, that Dr. Hosack be requested to deliver his Discourse in the said church, on Saturday, the 8th of November instant, at 12 o'clock at noon.

Resolved, that Dr. John Stearns, Evert A. Bancker, and Elbert Herring, Esqs. be a committee to make the necessary arrangements.

PHILIP HONE, Chairman pro tem.
THOMAS HERTTELL, Secretary.

Agreeably to the appointment of the citizens, and of the Literary and Philosophical Society, Dr. David Hosack will pronounce a Discourse, commemorative of the character and services of the late De Witt Clinton, on Saturday, at 12 o'clock, in the Middle Dutch Church in Cedar-street.

The Honourable the Corporation, the Clergy, Governor, Chancellor, Judges of the Courts, Literary and Benevolent Societies, Gentlemen of the Bar and of the Medical Faculty, and Citizens, are requested to assemble at the City Hall, at half past 11 o'clock, to join the procession from that place to the church.

ORDER OF THE PROCESSION.

The Mayor and Corporation, the General Committee, the Clergy, the Governor, Chancellor, Judges of the Courts, Strangers of distinction, Cincinnati Society, Literary and Benevolent Societies, Professors and Trustees of Colleges, Gentlemen of the Bar and of the Medical Faculty, Citizens.

By order,

JOHN STEARNS,
EVERT A. BANCKER,
ELBERT HERRING,
} Committee of Arrangement.

New-York, November 6th, 1828.

New-York State Society of Cincinnati.

New-York, November 7, 1828.

The President informs the members of the Society, that they have been particularly invited to attend the delivery of a Discourse commemorative of the character and public services of his Excellency De Witt Clinton, deceased, late Governor of this state, and at the time of his death a member of this state society. The discourse is to be delivered by Dr. Hosack, in the Middle Dutch Church, to-morrow at 12 o'clock, but the members are requested to meet at the City Hall, at half past 11 o'clock, for the purpose of joining in a procession to be formed at the latter place.

By order of Col. Richard Varick, President.

CHARLES GRAHAM, Secretary.

Extract from the Minutes of the New-York Literary and Philosophical Society.

At a stated meeting of the New-York Literary and Philosophical Society, held Nov. 13, 1828, the following resolution was unanimously adopted:

Resolved, that the respectful thanks of this society be presented to Dr. David Hosack, for his able, eloquent, and comprehensive tribute to the exalted character of our late President, the lamented Clinton; and that a committee be appointed to request Dr. Hosack to gratify the society by furnishing a copy of his Biographical Discourse for publication.

The following gentlemen were appointed the committee—the Rev. Mr. Schroeder, Gen. Morton, Dr. Van Rensselaer.

This is to certify, that the above is a correct copy from the minutes.

WASHINGTON QUINCY MORTON,
Recording Secretary.

November 15, 1828.

NEW-YORK, Nov. 15th, 1828.

DEAR SIR,

The members of the New-York Literary and Philosophical Society have been peculiarly gratified by your glowing Biography of their revered President; and they esteem it the vigorous and successful execution of an enviable work. You have vividly portrayed the soul of that illustrious man, warm with the best feelings of humanity, enriched by its most valuable treasures, and ennobled by its loftiest and most extended views. You have evinced, that, to our commonwealth, he was an invaluable citizen; to our country, a bright ornament; and to the world at large, a most distinguished benefactor.

While all mingle their just tribute to his imperishable memory, we would unite in the exclamation,

——————— Magnâ supremum voce ciemus;

for it was in him that we recognised the founder of our institution, and our leading officer until his sad farewell. We mourn his absence; yet we rejoice to think, that,

while his works enrich the library of nations, by your complying with the request which it is our pleasing duty to convey to you, your pencil may perpetuate the moral lineaments of our venerated Clinton.

We have the honour to be,

Dear Sir, your obedient servants,

J. F. SCHROEDER,
J. MORTON,
JER. VAN RENSSELAER.

To DAVID HOSACK, M.D. LL.D.

To the Rev. J. F. Schroeder, Gen. Jacob Morton, and Jeremiah Van Rensselaer, M.D. Committee of the New-York Literary and Philosophical Society.

NEW-YORK, November 15th, 1828.

GENTLEMEN,

The same feeling which induced me to undertake the duty with which the Literary and Philosophical Society deemed it proper to honour me, will impel me to comply with the resolution passed at a late meeting of that institution, requesting a copy of my Discourse for publication.

While, therefore, I gratefully acknowledge my sense of the kindness which has dictated the approbation expressed by the resolution of the society, I beg you will also accept my thanks for the courteous terms in which you have communicated their request.

I am, gentlemen,
With great regard and respect,
Your humble servant,
DAVID HOSACK.

At a meeting of the general committee, appointed by the citizens to devise and recommend suitable measures to honour the memory of De Witt Clinton,—

Resolved, that the thanks of this committee be presented to Dr. David Hosack, for his able and interesting discourse, commemorative of the character and public services of De Witt Clinton.

Resolved, that Dr. John Stearns, Evert A. Bancker, Elbert Herring, John L. Graham, and Thomas Herttell, Esquires, be a committee, to request from Dr. Hosack a copy of his Address for publication.

MORGAN LEWIS, Chairman.
THOMAS HERTTELL, Secretary.

SIR,

We have the honour to transmit to you the enclosed resolution, passed at a recent meeting of the general committee, in behalf of the citizens. While we cordially concur in this public acknowledgment, we avail ourselves of this opportunity individually to express our thanks for your prompt acquiescence in the general wish, and for the very able manner in which the trust has been executed. We flatter ourselves, you will add to our gratification by giving publicity to a Discourse, equally creditable to the author and the illustrious deceased.

JOHN STEARNS,
EVERT A. BANCKER,
ELBERT HERRING,
JOHN L. GRAHAM,
THOMAS HERTTELL,
} SPECIAL COMMITTEE.

Dr. DAVID HOSACK.

To John Stearns, M.D., Evert A. Bancker, Elbert Herring, John L. Graham, and Thomas Herttell, Esquires.

NEW-YORK, November, 1828.

GENTLEMEN,

Honoured by the request of the committee of my fellow-citizens, I have endeavoured, to the best of my abilities, to portray the life and services of the late distin-

guished Chief Magistrate of this state. If in the performance of the duty assigned me, I have, in any measure, realized your expectations, I cannot feel myself at liberty to decline a compliance with the request you have kindly preferred to obtain a copy of my Discourse for publication. I, therefore, submit the same to the disposal of the general committee.

I am, gentlemen,
With sentiments of personal esteem and great respect,
Your humble servant,
DAVID HOSACK.

At a special meeting of the Rutgers Medical Faculty of Geneva College, held at the College, on the 15th November, 1828,—

On motion, unanimously resolved, that this Faculty have listened with high satisfaction to the Discourse delivered by their President, Dr. Hosack, commemorative of the life and services of the late Governor Clinton. And further, that this Faculty have ever recognised in the illustrious deceased, the faithful patriot, the enlightened patron of the arts and sciences, and the especial friend and supporter of medical science, and of the members of this Faculty.

By order,

WILLIAM JAMES MACNEVEN, M. D.
President pro tem.
JOHN W. FRANCIS, M. D.
Registrar.

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MEMOIR OF DE WITT CLINTON.

GENTLEMEN, MEMBERS OF THE LITERARY AND PHILOSOPHICAL SOCIETY, AND FELLOW-CITIZENS.

THE feelings which arise in the bosom of him who now addresses you, will readily be anticipated, and cannot fail to find a response in the hearts of all who are assembled upon this solemn occasion.

Ere this, you expected to have heard the well known voice of your CLINTON, pronouncing an eulogy upon the merits, the talents, and the virtues of the orator and patriot, the lamented EMMET: But, alas! such are the dispensations of Providence, such is the precarious tenure of our existence, that voice too, is hushed in death, and the remains of those two illustrious men, whose lives have been spent at the shrine of patriotism, whose worth would have done honour to any age or nation, in ancient or in modern times, are now enclosed in the tomb.—But their memory still lives; and, when their deeds shall be recorded by some future Plutarch, they will afford to their youthful successors, illustrious examples by which they also may acquire the regard and gratitude of their country, and be rendered worthy of the veneration of posterity.

Although I am deeply sensible of the magnitude of the task which has been assigned me, and almost discouraged from the attempt

to perform it, yet when I consider the invitation with which I have been honoured by my fellow-citizens, the relation in which I stand to the Institution of which Mr. Clinton was the presiding officer, and the uninterrupted friendship with which, during a period of more than forty years, "e'en from our boyish days," I have been regarded by the late distinguished man whose loss we now deplore, I do not feel myself at liberty to decline the effort to comply with your wishes, upon the present occasion, however imperfect may be the execution of the task I have ventured to assume.

But I come not here to burn the incense of adulation, or to load his memory with indiscriminate praise, or unmerited panegyric: his native powers of mind, his education, his extensive and varied acquirements, his writings, his public works, his private virtues, his patriotism, his unsullied integrity, his moral feelings, his religious faith, his devotion to the interests of the state, to science, to literature, and those benevolent institutions calculated to promote the happiness of man, will constitute his best eulogy. To exhibit these to your view, will be my present endeavour, and the highest object and gratification of my ambition. These faithfully exhibited, cannot fail to compose a portrait, alike honourable to the age which he adorned, and a model of imitation worthy of succeeding generations.

Introductory to these important themes, permit me to ask your attention, for a few moments, to a brief account of the ancestors of Mr. Clinton; for, in them we shall find the prototype of the great intellectual features and moral character, as well as the personal dignity and deportment, the favourite pursuits and the patriotic feelings that characterized him whose outline it will now become my endeavour to delineate.

Mr. Clinton's earliest ancestors were of English origin. William

Clinton, from whom his descent is traced, was an adherent of the royal cause in the civil wars of England, and an officer in the army of Charles the first.

After the dethronement of that monarch, Mr. Clinton took refuge on the continent, where he remained a long time in exile. Having spent some in France and Spain, he secretly proceeded to Scotland, where he married a lady of the family of Kennedy. With a view to safety, he then passed over to the north of Ireland, where he died, deprived of his patrimony, leaving James, an orphan son, then two years old.

When James arrived at manhood, he went to England, for the purpose of recovering his patrimonial estate; but, being barred by the limitation of an act of Parliament, he returned to Ireland, and finally settled in the county of Longford; having, during his visit to the country of his ancestors, married Miss Elizabeth Smith, the daughter of a Captain in Cromwell's army. By this connexion he was enabled to maintain, at that time, a respectable standing in the country of his adoption.

Charles Clinton, the son of James, and the grandfather of De Witt Clinton, was born in the county of Longford, in Ireland, in 1690. In 1729 he resolved to emigrate to this country, with the intention to settle in Pennsylvania.

In the latter end of May of that year, accompanied by many of his friends who adhered to his fortunes, he embarked with his family, consisting of his wife, two daughters, and one son; but owing to a peculiar and disastrous train of circumstances on the voyage, during which they lost one son and one daughter, they did not arrive until the month of October, when they were landed at Cape Cod. In the vicinity of that place they resided until the spring of 1731, when Mr. Clinton removed with his family, and the

friends who had embarked their fortunes with his, to a part of Ulster, now Orange county, in the state of New-York, where they formed a permanent and flourishing settlement.

The part of the country which he selected, was then wild and uncultivated, covered with forests, but well watered, diversified with hills and vales, and abundant in the products of cultivation. Although only eight miles from the Hudson river, and sixty from the city of New-York, these hardy pioneers were at that period so exposed to the incursions of the Indians, then inhabiting the vicinity of their residence, that it was found necessary to erect a palisade work around his house, for the security of himself and his neighbours. In this retreat Mr. Clinton spent his time in the improvement of his farm, in the cultivation of literature, in the enjoyment of his library, the education of his children,* and occasionally acting as a surveyor of land, for which he was well qualified by his education, and particularly his mathematical knowledge, in which he eminently excelled. Possessed of a well selected library, and endowed with extraordinary talents, he made continual accessions to his store of useful knowledge.

The character he uniformly sustained, was that of pure morals, a strong and cultivated understanding, great respectability, and dignity of deportment, and extensive influence.

Having been well educated, he soon attained to notice and distinction. His first appointment was that of a Justice of the peace; he was afterwards promoted to the station of a Judge of the Common Pleas for the county of Ulster. In 1756 he was

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* Colonel Clinton in educating his children, also availed himself of the services of Daniel Thain, a gentleman who had been educated at the college of Aberdeen, and who afterwards became a highly respected minister of the gospel.

appointed, by the Governor, Sir Charles Hardy, a Lt. Colonel of the militia of the province, and commanded a regiment at the capture of Fort Frontenac, now Kingston, by Colonel Bradstreet.*

He died at his own residence, on the 19th November, 1773, in the eighty-third year of his age; and it may be added, just in time to escape, at that advanced age, the cares and perplexities of the revolution then about to commence, but in the full view of its approach. He expired breathing an ardent spirit of patriotism, and in his last moments, conjuring his sons to stand by the liberties of America.

Besides the daughter born in Ireland, he had four sons in this country. Alexander, educated in the college of Princeton, and afterwards a physician. Charles, also an eminent physician, and a surgeon in the British Army, at the capture of the Havana. James, the father of De Witt Clinton, and George, the youngest, the late Vice President of the United States.

James Clinton was born on the 13th of August, 1736, at the family residence, in what is now Orange County, in the then colony of New-York. Possessing strong natural powers of mind, he acquired, under the instruction of his father, an excellent

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* "George Clinton, the father of the late Sir Henry Clinton, was then Governor of the colony. With this gentleman, Colonel Clinton formed an acquaintance, which might, perhaps, have been produced by ties of distant consanguinity, but which ripened into an intimacy, that only a congeniality of character could have effected. The son of Colonel Clinton, the late venerable Vice President of the United States, was named after the colonial Governor. Several splendid offers, made to him by Governor Clinton, were declined by the colonel, who preferred a life of respectable independence, in the bosom of his family, and in the cultivation of letters, surrounded by his colony of friends and countrymen, to all the allurements of office, and all the pageantry of rank."—*See Life of De Witt Clinton in Delaplaine's Repository*, Vol. I. p 190.

education. He especially excelled in the exact sciences, to which his attention had been particularly directed, and for which he had by nature a great predilection; he, at the same time, inherited the ardent passion for military life, that had distinguished his predecessors, and for which he was peculiarly qualified, by a vigorous frame of body, and the most intrepid courage.

In the war of 1756, he was appointed, by Sir Charles Hardy, the then Governor of the province, an ensign in the militia, for the County of Ulster. Afterwards remaining in the provincial army, under Lieutenant Governor Delancey, and Lieutenant Governor Colden, he was regularly advanced through all the grades of military promotion, and in 1774, he attained to the rank of a Lieutenant Colonel, in the second regiment of the militia of Ulster.

These successive appointments evinced his military merit, and the entire confidence reposed in his skill and bravery. After the termination of the French war, Mr. Clinton married Miss Mary De Witt, a young lady of extraordinary merit, whose ancestors had emigrated from Holland, and whose very name proclaims the high respectability of their connexions.

After this event, Mr. Clinton, for a season, retired from the camp to enjoy the repose of domestic life; but this suspension of public duty was but of short duration. The revolution having commenced, he resumed the character of the soldier, and was appointed by the continental congress, in 1775, colonel of the third regiment of the New-York forces. In the succeeding year, he was created a Brigadier-general in the army of the United States, and at the close of the war, was advanced to the rank of Major-general.

During the war, in the several stations which he filled, he distinguished himself as the gallant and efficient soldier, performing several acts of the greatest heroism, and displaying the most perfect

self-possession in the midst of the greatest dangers. His gallant conduct at the storming of Fort Clinton, as well as that of his brother George at Fort Montgomery, in October 1777, will be ever memorable in the history of our revolution. At the siege of York Town, and at the capture of Cornwallis, General Clinton also displayed his characteristic intrepidity. His last appearance in arms, was upon the evacuation of the city of New-York by the British, when he took leave of the Commander-in-Chief, and retired to his estate in Orange County, with the view of enjoying that tranquillity, which was now called for by a long period of privation and fatigue, and that honour, which was the due reward of the important services he had rendered. After his retirement he was still frequently called upon for the performance of civil duties. At one period officiating as a commissioner, to adjust the boundary line between Pennsylvania and New-York; at another, employed by the Legislature to settle controversies relative to the western territories of the state; and at different periods, performing the duties of a delegate to the Assembly, a member of the convention for the adoption of the federal constitution, and afterwards a senator from the middle district, in the New-York Legislature, to which office he was elected without opposition. All these various trusts he executed with integrity, ability, and the entire approbation of his constituents and the public.

He died at his residence in Orange County, on the 22nd of September, 1812, the same year that terminated the valuable and eventful life of his venerable brother George—"par nobile fratrum." In the concluding language of the inscription upon his monumental stone, "performing in the most exemplary manner all the duties of life, he died as he lived, without fear and without reproach." Such

was the parentage of the man, whose virtues and character we are now assembled to commemorate.*

De Witt Clinton was born on the second day of March, 1769, at Little Britain, his father's residence in Orange County. He received his early education, at a grammar school in his native town, under the direction of a presbyterian clergyman, the Rev. John Moffatt. In 1782, in order to prepare him for college, young Clinton was removed to the academy at Kingston, then under the care of Mr. John Addison, who, by his learning, gave celebrity to that institution. During the revolutionary war, it may be remarked, few good seminaries for education existed in this country; the reputation of this school, necessarily drew to it most of the young men of the state of New-York, who were then engaged in their course of studies. In this academy, Mr. Clinton remained a pupil nearly two years, pursuing the ordinary routine of academical instruction.

In 1784, after passing an examination in the presence of the Board of Trustees of the College, and of the Regents of the University, he was admitted to the junior class, and was the first student who entered that seminary after the conclusion of the war. He was well grounded in the Latin and Greek languages, and in mathematics; for while at college, he enjoyed the advantages of being instructed in the classics, by that highly accomplished and elegant scholar, the Reverend Dr. William Cochrane, now Vice President of the college of Windsor, Nova Scotia, a graduate of Trinity college, Dublin; and in the mathematics, by John Kemp,

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* See Appendix, A.

LL.D. an eminent mathematician, and a graduate of Marischal college, Aberdeen.

These gentlemen were, at that time, professors in Columbia college, in the zenith of their usefulness and reputation, and gave corresponding celebrity to that institution. Mr. Clinton was graduated a Bachelor of Arts in 1786. On that occasion he delivered the Latin salutatory, an exercise always assigned to the best scholar of the class. He was the first graduate of that college after the revolution.

In a recent communication received from his preceptor, the Rev. Dr. Cochran, whose valuable life and services are still continued, he expresses himself with great pride and affection, in relation to his pupil Mr. Clinton. The letter with which I have been favoured, conveying many interesting particulars, bears date the 9th of May last.

"I have seen by the public papers," says he, "that your State has suffered the loss of two eminent men since I visited you last summer; I mean Mr. Emmet and Governor Clinton. The first was my contemporary in Trinity College, Dublin. The other the first pupil I had in Columbia College. The event could not but awaken many interesting recollections in my mind." After a brief and pathetic notice of Mr. Emmet, and of his family, he thus proceeds to speak of Mr. Clinton.

"I think him to have been, both for talents and patriotism, among the very first men of whom the United States could boast in his day. His conceptions were great, and his courage, perseverance, and resources of mind to effect them, were as great."

He continues—"It was, I may say, a mere accident that either that seminary or myself has had any share in educating so great and useful a man. In the summer of 1784, his father brought him

to New-York, on his way to Princeton College, to place him in that seminary. The Legislature had passed an act in the preceding winter, for restoring and new naming King's College; afterwards to be a University by the name of Columbia. But no final arrangement or appointments had been made; only a committee was empowered to provide, in a temporary way, for what might be most needful.

"The late Mr. Duane, then Mayor of New-York, was one of this committee, who hearing that the nephew of the Governor was going out of the state for his education, applied to me, to know if I would undertake the care of him, and such others as might offer, until the appointments for the college could be made. To which I readily agreed, and young Clinton, with half a dozen more, were put under my tuition." He proceeds, "I found Mr. Clinton apt to learn any thing that was required of him. He was clear in mathematics, and correct in classical knowledge. He did every thing well: upon the whole, he seemed likely to me to prove, as he did prove, a highly useful and practical man; what the Romans call 'civilis,' and the Greeks πολιτικος, a useful citizen, and qualified to counsel and direct his fellow-citizens to honour and happiness. And now, in conclusion, I cannot but feel self-gratulation and pride, I hope a virtuous one, when I reflect on the number of eminent persons that have proceeded from the very cradle of Columbia College. Draw at a venture," continues Dr. Cochran, "from the old and illustrious seminaries of England and Ireland, the same number of names as we had on our books, and I will venture to affirm, that they would not be superior to such men as Governor Clinton, Chancellor Jones, the Rev. Dr. John M. Mason, and some others."

In the society, formed by the students for their improvement in composition and declamation, called the Uranian Society, and

among whom were many members now highly distinguished for their abilities and professional eminence, Mr. Clinton held a pre-eminent station, manifesting at that early age, the quickness of perception, the close inductive reasoning, the ample powers of illustration, and talent for composition and extemporaneous debate, that characterised him through life.

He commenced the study of law in 1786, under the late Hon. Samuel Jones, Esq. a celebrated counsellor, the father of the present able Chief Justice of the Superior Court, recently instituted in this city. By that profound jurist, Mr. Clinton was taught to form a becoming estimate of his intended profession, and his studies were so directed and pursued, that the relation of pupil and preceptor resulted in a friendship which was interrupted only by death.

He ever cherished for Mr. Jones the warmest filial affection, and was accustomed upon all occasions, when opportunity presented, to speak of him in terms of the highest respect, considering him as the father and ornament of the New-York bar. During the prosecution of his legal studies, Mr. Clinton, with a view to his improvement, attached himself to a society of gentlemen, then engaged in the study of the Law and Belles-lettres, which was well known for the eloquence and abilities of its numerous members: in this institution also, Mr. Clinton held a prominent place. After the customary period of pupilage, he was admitted to the bar, and commenced the practice of the law in this city, and with a great prospect of success: but owing to the peculiar situation of political affairs in the state of New-York, his talents were soon put in requisition by his uncle George Clinton, then Governor of the state, who made him his private secretary; which station he retained during Governor Clinton's administration, which ended in 1795,

when he declined a re-election. It may be added, that Mr. Clinton during his connexion with his venerable uncle, was also honoured with the offices of secretary to the Board of Regents of the University, and of the Board of Fortifications of New-York. These events may be considered as the introduction of Mr. Clinton to public and political life; for since that period, he has, with few intermissions, been unceasingly devoted to the service of the state.

Mr. Clinton at this time entered into the state of matrimony. He was first married to Miss Maria Franklin, the eldest daughter of Walter Franklin, Esq. an eminent and wealthy merchant of this city, and a member of the society of Friends.

Mr. Clinton, by this marriage, was blessed with a large family of children, consisting of seven sons and three daughters; of these, four sons and two daughters are living.

His second marriage, which took place in 1819, was to Miss Catharine Jones, daughter of the late Dr. Thomas Jones, an eminent physician of this city, and niece of the late Dr. John Jones, of Philadelphia, well known by his writings, as well as his professional services, as the surgeon general during the revolutionary war, and one of the favourite physicians of General Washington.*

I may be permitted, without the violation of delicacy or propriety, to observe, that Mrs. Clinton is a lady of excellent education, accomplished manners, superior talents and acquirements, and no less qualified, in all respects, as the companion of her late distinguished husband, than she is to perform the duties of a mother to his children, to whose education and happiness she devotes the

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* See Life of Dr. Jones by Dr. Mease. Also the American Medical and Philosophical Register, Vol. III. and Dr. Thacher's American Medical Biography.

most tender and affectionate care. May that Almighty Being, who "tempers the wind to the shorn lamb," and who has promised to be the father of the fatherless, and the widow's friend, be their stay and support in this dark hour of their affliction!

Mr. Clinton at an early period of his life, attached himself to the ancient fraternity of Free Masons, and, many years since, was advanced to its highest degrees, and has filled the most important offices of that highly respected order. In 1816, he was unanimously elected to the highest masonic office in the United States, which he retained until his death. His long continued connexion with that institution, which spreads its benign influence throughout the civilized world, which enrols among its members the illustrious names of Washington, Warren, La Fayette, Franklin, Pinckney, Robert R. Livingston, and the venerable Chief Justice Marshall, including many of the most highly respected dignitaries of the church, as well as the clergy of different denominations, is of itself the most unequivocal evidence of the purity of the principles, the correct morals, and the religious tendency of the precepts masonry inculcates. But like other benevolent and pious institutions, it has its unworthy as well as its meritorious members. Christianity has its Pharisees as well as its sincere worshippers. Had the institution of masonry been otherwise than the means of diffusing the blessings of beneficence, and of that charity, that best of virtues, which binds man to man, it never would have received the uniform support of men distinguished for their intelligence, integrity, and piety: on the contrary, could it even tacitly have sanctioned any departure from the strictest rules of rectitude or honour, it long since would have been abandoned by the virtuous and the wise.

In the year 1797, Mr. Clinton was elected a member of the House of Assembly, for the city of New-York; and in the succeed-

ing year was chosen a senator. In both those stations, he exhibited manifestations of those enlarged views for the promotion of literature and the arts, which throughout life he so conspicuously displayed.

Before I enter upon the political career of Mr. Clinton, it may be remarked, that he not only received an excellent elementary and professional education, but he also possessed the stores of an elegant and cultivated mind. He was one of those few active and gifted men, who unite the elevated pursuits of science and letters, with the fullest occupation of his professional and public duties; and it may be added, that genius and application were so well mingled in the very constitution of his mind, that with regard to the departments of science to which he attached himself, he very soon acquired so familiar an acquaintance with them, as to lead to the belief that they had almost been the exclusive pursuit of his life.

In the knowledge of many of the physical sciences, particularly zoology, botany, and mineralogy, Mr. Clinton eminently excelled, especially in the first and the last of these departments of natural history. In icthyology* and ornithology,† his knowledge was minute.

In mineralogy, including geology, few persons possessed superior or more accurate knowledge; but which was only known to his

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* See Transactions of the Literary and Philosophical Society of New-York; and Annals of the New-York Lyceum of Natural History. His description of a new species of fish, the *Salmo Otsego*, the Basse of the Lakes, and his paper on the *Columba Migratoria*, or Passenger Pigeon, may be found in letters addressed to Dr. W. Francis, and published in the New-York Medical and Physical Journal, Vols. I. and II.

† See Review of Wilson's Ornithology, written by Mr. Clinton, in the American Medical and Philosophical Register, conducted by Hosack and Francis.

immediate scientific friends. His collection of minerals, many American specimens of which were obtained from the excavations made in the progress of the canal, though concealed from the public eye, is one of the best and most extensive private cabinets in the United States.

In botany, he was intimately acquainted with the general principles of the Linnæan system, and had an extensive knowledge of those plants which are most useful, and are employed as the objects of agriculture, medicine, and the arts; to the more minute details he was less attentive, than to the great general principles of that science.

I perhaps cannot convey a higher idea of Mr. Clinton's extensive attainments in these departments of knowledge, than by saying, that I knew no man in the United States, so well qualified to discharge the duties appertaining to a professorship of natural history in any of our Universities, as was Mr. Clinton. He was an active member of most of the scientific and benevolent institutions of this city and state. He was the first president, and one of the founders of the Literary and Philosophical Society, the highest station which philosophy could confer upon him in his native State; and upon its incorporation, delivered a Discourse exhibiting a general survey of the progress of literature and science in our country, and comprising a body of illustrative notes, together with many original observations of great interest. This Discourse, with other valuable communications from Mr. Clinton, is contained in the first volume, and in the first part of the second volume of the Society's Transactions. Mr. Clinton was also one of the early presidents of the New-York Historical Society, and of which he was one of the original members. His very able Anniversary Discourse relative to the Five Nations, is contained in one of the

volumes of the Collections of that institution, and is one of the best efforts of his mind and pen. He was also the author of the able and eloquent memorial to the legislature, asking a grant from the state, which was obtained for that society to the amount of 12,000 dollars. An additional grant of $5,000 has also recently been made, which is in part attributable to his exertions and influence, and by which that society has been enabled to preserve to the state and county, its invaluable historical treasures, and, doubtless, ere long will realize the important views of its first formation, and all the expectations of its friends.*

Mr. Clinton was also a member of the Academy of Arts, and evinced his favourable views of that subject, and his ardour in promoting its interests, in an excellent discourse which he delivered to that institution. He was a member of most of the literary and philosophical societies of Philadelphia, Massachusetts, Connecticut, Charleston, and New-York.

He was also many years a Regent of the University, not only holding that station officially as the Governor of the state, but previously elected as a tribute to his talents and learning.

In 1812, Mr. Clinton received from Queens, now Rutgers College, of New-Jersey, the honorary degree of Doctor of Laws: the same honour was conferred upon him in 1824, by the trustees of his alma mater, Columbia College.

But his reputation was not confined to the country he immediately benefited by his services. In the literary circles, and in the scientific institutions of Europe, his name was familiarly known as among the most eminent men of his day. It is an evidence of the

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* See Appendix, B.

high estimation in which he was held, that he was elected an honorary member of many of the learned societies of Great Britain, and of the continent of Europe, and that he held an extensive correspondence with some of the most distinguished men of the age. He was an honorary member of the Linnæan and the Horticultural Societies of London, and of the Wernerian Society of Edinburgh, and was in habits of correspondence with the late Sir James Edward Smith, the learned president of the first, and with Mr. Knight, and Mr. J. Sabine, the able officers of the Horticultural institution.*

The acknowledged reputation which Mr. Clinton attained in his literary character, when we take into view his extensive public services, is to be ascribed, not only to his native taste and ardent love of knowledge, but to the extraordinary industry and order with which he performed his numerous and various duties. At a very early period of his life, he acquired and cultivated habits of great industry: he rose at an early hour at all seasons of the year. He observed the utmost punctuality in all his engagements; this too he was the better enabled to accomplish, by means of the order and regularity with which he divided the several duties of the day; illustrating by example, that well known truth, that he who has the most numerous avocations, is the most attentive and the most punctual in the performance of all: every hour not occupied by his numerous public duties, was devoted to general literature. History, poetry, taste, belles lettres, metaphysics, natural history, theology, all in turn occupied those portions of his time, not devoted to public business, or the duties of the various

* See Appendix, C.

stations he filled: and he studiously noted with his pen, every fact or principle that he deemed important, or that might be rendered subservient to his intellectual improvement, or to the profit of others: by this habit, of collecting in his common-place book what he considered of value, he was enabled to concentrate the ample stores of his knowledge upon the various subjects which occupied his more immediate pursuit: even those smaller portions of the day that are lost by most men, were not unemployed by him: like the goldsmith, who carefully accumulates the smaller particles that drop beneath his hand, and which collected, constitute the ingot; Mr. Clinton, in like manner carefully treasured up the minutest fragments of time, which though inconsiderable in themselves, compose an aggregate of great value. Accordingly, when released from the severer duties which engaged his attention, a volume of the classics, some work of science, or some of the later productions of a Scott, a Campbell, a Southey, or a Byron, whose writings have shed an unusual splendour upon the age that gave them birth, occupied those moments of relaxation: and I may add, that he had a large and well selected library of scarce and valuable works, which continually urged him to augment those sources of knowledge and enjoyment.

The ordinary and more frivolous amusements of fashionable life presented no attractions to his mind; on the contrary, they were by him, I believe through life, most studiously avoided, as not only involving the loss of time, money, and reputation, but utterly incompatible with those pursuits and views that belong to a man who has at heart his dignity of character, the higher interests of science, or his country's welfare.

This leads me to notice the merits of Mr. Clinton as a writer and speaker. Mr. Clinton, as a public speaker, was slow and

deliberate in his manner, manifesting the constant exercise of his understanding while in the act of delivery: he also observed great order in the plan of his discourse, arranging his arguments with precision, and with the view of giving to each its appropriate place and effect, exhibiting thereby much previous and careful consideration of his subject; yet such was the quickness of his perception and power of analysis, that he did not require long preparatory deliberation to embrace a full view of the merits of the question which came before him.

The language in which he was to convey his sentiments, the illustration with which they were to be enforced, and the ornament with which his discourse was to be embellished, cost him little or no exertion in the preparation; for such was his constant habit of reading the best writings of the standard English classics and historians, as well as the most esteemed of the periodical publications upon the different branches of human knowledge, and other valuable writings of the present time, an age teeming with instruction, and unprecedented in beauty and simplicity of style, that those aids to eloquence were ever present to his mind, requiring no effort to summon them to his purpose: the same observation is no less applicable to his written discourses, than to those which were delivered extemporaneously, for such was his facility and rapidity in composition, derived from long practice, the moment he had analysed and elaborated the subject in his mind, it only required the time necessary for the mechanical transcription of it, to prepare his discourse for publication. It is a fact falling within my own personal knowledge, that one of his most elaborate messages to the legislature, and which were among his most finished and the most admired of his compositions, was written in the short space of twenty-four hours.

His daily practice, and which during the greater part of his life he had pursued, of recording important facts and occurrences, which may have had relation to the various subjects which fell within his province as a statesman, a philosopher, or a polite scholar, ever supplied him with the most abundant means of illustrating the immediate subject of his investigation. For like Boyle, Locke, Gibbon, Edwards, Priestley, and Franklin, he always read with his pencil in his hand; accordingly, it will be found that every page which Mr. Clinton has written or published, displays the valuable fruits of the labour which in this way he has undergone.

Upon whatever subject his talents were put in requisition, and no man was more frequently called upon for the performance of public service, owing to this daily use of the common place book, he ever astonished his friends by the sudden and unexpected, as well as the able discharge of any duty he may have had occasion to perform. In like manner, such were the ample stores of his mind, that when an extemporaneous expression of his views or opinions was demanded, whether upon the seat of justice, the floor of the senate, or upon any other public occasion, at the shortest notice he could summon to his purpose all the resources of his highly gifted and cultivated understanding; with these at his command, it may be added, Mr. Clinton was enabled to give full force to the discussion in which he was engaged, and to avail himself of the peculiar advantage it afforded him of directing his attention to, and of observing the effects of his argument upon every individual of the body he addressed. Such too was his perception of the effect produced upon his auditory, that I have often heard him say, that when speaking in the senate, or other deliberative assemblies, he could decide at the moment

the probable result of his address, and at once ascertain, how far it was safe to urge the question immediately to a decision, or to suggest the expediency of deferring such decision to a more distant day, when he could have the opportunity of adding to the friends of the measure he wished to accomplish.

I am aware, that by many persons, Mr. Clinton, in consequence of the calmness and uniformity of his manner, and perhaps a degree of monotony in his enunciation, in both of which his delivery closely resembled that of the late Mr. Pitt, was not considered an eloquent speaker. It is to be observed, that he so exclusively addressed himself to the understanding of his hearers, that he gave less attention to the manner of his communication than is customary with most public speakers. He never indulged in rant or vehemence, either in voice or gesture, yet his clear and logical method and arrangement, the force and perspicuity of style, and dignity of manner, his strong and manly tone of voice, united with his undaunted firmness, gave to his discourse, whether in the judgment seat or in the hall of legislation, an influence and effect, which no other individual, except the lamented Hamilton, Wells, and Emmet, has ever exercised in our state. As far as inductive reasoning, happy illustration, strong and vigorous language, a style always dignified, and oftentimes highly ornamented, can be considered as constituting eloquence, and are calculated to arrest the attention, and to carry conviction to his auditory, Mr. Clinton is entitled to the denomination of an eloquent speaker.

In 1797, as I before remarked, Mr. Clinton was first elected a member of Assembly for the city of New-York: political consideration was, at that early day, his dominant motive of action, and the times were becoming more and more favourable to the developement of his powers as a politician. The germs of the

two great parties, which have since divided the country, and this state in particular, were about this period exhibiting themselves. His uncle, George Clinton, was at that time assailed by the first talents of the state. His nephew, relinquishing all other considerations, immediately embarked in the vindication of the conduct and principles of his revered relative; and from that period, devoted his pen and his faculties to the support of the republican party.

I am aware that the political character of Mr. Clinton, mingling as it does with the excitements of the day, is a delicate topic to be discussed, especially by one who has never departed from his professional duties, to enlist under the banner of any political sect, save that which framed and still sustains our happy constitution of government. But to omit in the outline which is now attempted, what was so prominent in his life, would be to render this portraiture manifestly defective. As he is no longer capable of doing good or evil, of exciting suspicion or envy on the one hand, or adulation on the other, it is hoped that without disturbing those ashes which are yet scarcely cold, we may calmly survey the distinguishing traits, which, amid the alternate revolutions of parties, fixed upon him the admiration, and confirmed the confidence of his fellow-citizens.

"Id cinerem, aut manes credis curare sepultos?"—*Virgil. Æneid.* iv. 34.

Born and nurtured among the whigs of the revolution, imbibing daily from the counsels of a patriot father and uncle the cardinal principles of liberty, and learning from their great examples the practical application of those principles, Mr. Clinton could not be otherwise than an ardent and devoted republican. The occasion does not call for a full recital of those eventful epochs in our

history, in which his devotion was so conspicuously and effectually manifested. His adversaries felt, while his friends gloried in the power of his efforts. But it is our duty to look beyond the mere partisan conflicts of the day, and to observe those great and prominent traits, the memory of which will endure when the angry passions which they excited shall have subsided, and the occasions on which they were exhibited shall be utterly forgotten. In all the public acts and documents which owe their existence to Mr. Clinton's prolific and vigorous pen, there is apparent throughout a deep and confirmed veneration of the principles and forms of our free institutions; a living faith in man's capacity for self-government, and an unconquerable hostility to arbitrary and illegal power in whatever shape it might appear. Upon the most rigid scrutiny of his productions, not a line or word will be found to justify a resort to implied authority from ambiguous phraseology, or to the tyrant's "plea of necessity," for a latitude of construction in ascertaining the extent of limited grants of power. On the contrary, as a Senator, as a Judge, and as a Governor of the state, he constantly repressed the claims of power, steadily resisted the encroachments of the different branches of the government upon the province of each other, and firmly, at much hazard, vindicated the sovereignty of the state, and the individual rights of the citizen. These, it is true, are political principles of conduct recognised by the great body of our fellow-citizens, but are apt to be forgotten by our public men when elevated to office. In this respect Mr. Clinton was at all times consistent. The lessons which he inculcated as a private citizen, he practised when in power. Upon the whole, he exhibited in his conduct the example of a stern and inflexible republican, in the large and catholic sense of the term, worthy of the purest period of Grecian or Roman

History, and to which, at this day, parallels can be found on no spot of the habitable globe, but in our own happy country.

Mr. Clinton's qualifications as a writer and public speaker, in a peculiar manner fitted him for the new walk of life in which he had embarked. At an early period of his political career, about 1800, difficulties occurred between Governor Jay and the council of appointment, since so conspicuous in the political history of the state. These difficulties were settled by a convention that met at Albany in 1801, when a modification of the constitution was effected, in favour of the views which Mr. Clinton had maintained. Although it may be doubtful whether the constitution of the state was improved by this decision, the opinion of the most eminent statesmen of that day, of both political parties, concurred in favour of its correctness, according to the letter of the constitution. The late illustrious Hamilton, in one of his letters in the Federalist, and before the ambiguity had been attended with any practical evils, supports the views of those, who denied to the Governor that exclusive power which was afterwards only granted to him in common with the other members composing the council of appointment.*

That memorable controversy between Governor Jay and the council of appointment, was supported on the part of the latter by Mr. Clinton, then one of the members of that council. Since that period, he was repeatedly re-elected a senator, and in that situation he defended with effect, every proposition that came before the legislature, calculated to subserve the interests of science or benevolence.

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* See The Federalist.

In 1801, Mr. Clinton was chosen a member of the Senate of the United States, in the place of General Armstrong, who had resigned, and continued in that station two sessions.

Among the eminent men of that august body, at that eventful period in our national councils, were General Mason of Virginia, Judge Brackenridge of Kentucky, James Ross of Pennsylvania, and his able and eloquent colleague, Gouverneur Morris of New-York.

The journals and records of the Senate, as will hereafter appear, show him to have been equal to any of his compeers. As a member of the State Legislature, the journals of both houses may be consulted for the proofs of his many eminent public services. Education was cherished and sustained by additional acts for the incorporation of free schools and literary and benevolent societies, besides numerous acts for the improvement of police jurisprudence. He gave his powerful aid to the measures which have gradually led to the abolition among us of negro slavery; and although foreign nations may object, that a people the most boastful of their liberties, could ever tolerate within their own bosom the most indubitable species of slavery, yet the state of New-York at least, may claim exemption from all participation in the guilt attached to this odious commerce. During this period of Mr. Clinton's public life, we find that the militia system, improved quarantine regulations, and laws for the advancement of medical science, were of the number of subjects which occupied his attention. It is believed that the quarantine system of New-York is not only more complete, but executed with more strictness than any other in our country. It has not at all times secured us from foreign pestilence; but the greater exemption of our city from that scourge of the human species, the yellow fever, is

in all probability, fairly to be referred to the wisdom of our laws, and the vigilance of their ministers. Let me add, that Mr. Clinton, yielding his faith to the doctrine of contagion, as taught and sustained by the highest authorities in medical philosophy, was the most strenuous advocate of the most vigorous system of quarantine regulations. The militia system, so justly deemed by the late President John Adams, a vital and characteristic feature of our republican policy, was reviewed by the masterly mind of Mr. Clinton, and underwent many important alterations. It has not yet received the benefits of which I trust it is susceptible; but the suggestions of his experience may enable future legislatures to give to it still further efficiency and power. By the neglect or inadvertence of our inspectors, the various productions of our state, though not inferior to those of any other portion of our country, were depreciated in character and value. One of the earliest measures proposed by Mr. Clinton was, to correct a practice by which much wealth was annually lost to the state. Our commerce, as well as our agriculture have, by his measures, experienced the most beneficial results. The honour of the munificent appropriation made to our various seminaries of learning, must be shared by him with others; but it would be unjust in me, a member of the medical profession, not to acknowledge the debt of obligation which is due to his efficient agency in procuring those various appropriations in behalf of the College of Physicians and Surgeons, by which an institution, humble and unpretending in its commencement, might have been enabled in a few years, to have held honourable competition with the oldest and most powerful medical schools in the country.

By his exertions the New-York Orphan Asylum was recommended to the patronage of the state. That excellent charity

now rescues thousands of human beings from vice and misery, whom Providence has deprived of their natural protectors, and trains them up in the paths of virtue and usefulness. Among the most conspicuous of the associations for the advancement of knowledge, was the act for the incorporation of the New-York Historical Society.

By the violence of party, we find Mr. Clinton a private citizen during a part of the year 1815, in 1816, and in 1817. But he did not remit in his exertions for the public weal: his whole leisure was absorbed in the cultivation of letters, and in measures for the augmentation of the happiness of his fellow-men. The Literary and Philosophical Society of New-York, of which he also was one of the original members, had been incorporated in 1814. By its charter he was appointed the President, and to which station he was annually re-elected until his death: the choice of Mr. Clinton evinced the discernment of its members. His efforts to promote the objects of this excellent association were incessant. His elaborate Inaugural Discourse delivered before its members, has been extensively circulated in Europe, as well as in the United States. Besides this production, he drew up a series of queries, intended to secure statistical information from the various counties of the state, to be embodied in their transactions, and particularly Memoirs on certain phenomena of the great lakes of America, and on the antiquities of the western parts of the state. The New-York City Hospital was also one of the monuments of his philanthropy and public spirit, for the endowment of which he was happily instrumental in obtaining several legislative grants. By his exertions and influence, connected with those of his able associate in deeds of benevolence, the late

Thomas Eddy, several large sums were procured at different times for that highly necessary and useful institution.

The last amount obtained was $10,000 per annum, for forty years, out of which the Governors have been enabled to establish and erect an institution, calculated to alleviate the ills of that unfortunate portion of our species, whom Providence has visited with its greatest calamity, in the bereavement of their intellectual faculties. This asylum for maniacs, in the numerous comforts and accommodations it affords to the objects of its care, may justly be considered as one of the best institutions of this nature, not only in the United States, but perhaps in the world; not excepting those of the Retreat at York, or that of Aversa, near Naples. To Thomas Eddy and De Witt Clinton many of our public establishments, and the New-York Hospital in particular, owe a debt of gratitude that can never be cancelled.*

Mr. Clinton was one of the founders of the fund for public schools in this state, now the largest and most munificent in the union, amounting to a sum exceeding $200,000 per annum, and effecting more important services in promoting education and virtue, than any other institution in our land. This establishment of a fund for the diffusion of education by means of common schools, the example of which was originally commenced in Connecticut by the late Gideon Grainger, Esq. and which in this state has been ably sustained by Mr. Clinton, and by the late Jedediah Peck, a member of the senate, constitutes an era in the history of knowledge, and one of the greatest blessings our country, and this

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* See Appendix, D.

state in particular, have received. Like the more recent institution established, and the publications commenced, under the auspices of Mr. Brougham, and his associates in the cause of science and letters, it is the means of diffusing knowledge throughout every section of the republic, and may be considered among the most important events of the age in which we live. With the view still further of securing the benefits that had been originally contemplated by the establishment of such fund, Mr. Clinton wisely suggested that competent and intelligent young men should be specially educated as teachers in all those several schools, and that appropriations for this purpose be made by the common schools, out of their portion of the general fund.*

Mr. Clinton was also one of the original members and founders of the Free School Societies,† of the Presbyterian Society for promoting the education of youth as preparatory to the ministry;‡ he was also the patron of the institution recently established for supporting Infant Schools.§ Indeed his efforts to extend the benefits of education to the poor and friendless, as they will be enjoyed by the rising generation, will be hailed by future ages as an era in this state, and constitute an unfading title to the renown of Mr. Clinton.

Of that great improvement arising from the monitorial system of instruction introduced by the philanthropic Lancaster, he early perceived the advantages, and determined that by his industry the state should profit.

In 1803, Mr. Clinton was appointed mayor of the city of New-

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* See Appendix, E.

† See Appendix, F.

‡ See Appendix, G.

§ See Appendix, H.

York, which station he held until the spring of 1807, when he was succeeded, for a short time, by Colonel Marinus Willett, the venerable soldier of the revolution, and who, nearly half a century before, had gathered imperishable laurels at Fort Stanwix.

Mr. Clinton was re-appointed mayor in 1808, and with the exception of one year, in consequence of a change in party politics, when he was superseded by Judge Radcliffe, he retained that office, by annual appointment, until 1815.

In the discharge of the duties attached to the mayoralty, whether presiding at the common council board superintending the general interests of the city, as the President of the board of health, or officiating in the character of a Judge on the bench, Mr. Clinton acquired the confidence, the respect, and the gratitude, of all classes of citizens, uninfluenced by the various party feelings that then distracted our community.

As the presiding officer of the common council, the dignity, the ability, and the despatch, with which he performed the duties of that responsible office, were always the theme of eulogy; and to the municipal concerns of the city he paid a devoted and unremitted attention.

In 1808, Mr. Clinton was instrumental in obtaining from the state legislature the appropriation of $100,000 for the fortification of the city of New-York. He was the President of the Board of Commissioners, appointed to superintend the accomplishment of those important works on Staten-Island, and other places in its vicinity, for the defence of this city.

But it was in the period of the late war with Great Britain that the virtues of his character were more especially exhibited. His patriotism, his unshaken firmness in supporting the laws and in preserving the peace of the community, were then most con-

spicuous, and will be recalled to mind by most of this assembly with pleasure and with gratitude.

The state of war in every country produces a set of men who, under the pretext of patriotism and of public good, excite to acts of riot and disorder, which they turn to the gratification of private resentment, or their own private emoluments. Disgraceful scenes of lawless violence and of bloodshed had occurred in a neighbouring city, and gave fearful omen of what might here be expected, unless restrained by the strong arm of the law. Mr. Clinton's intelligent mind foresaw the crisis, and his correct and intrepid spirit was prepared to meet it.

In an address to the grand jury, he alluded to the riotous scenes of Baltimore, and with the view to prevent a repetition of the same in the city of New-York, he digested and prepared a system of police regulations, for the preservation of the peace of the city, which was adopted by the common council. The result is well known; our city remained tranquil and undisturbed by tumult of any sort. The character of Mr. Clinton for energy and decision, was an assurance to the community, that these regulations would not remain a dead letter, but be faithfully and promptly executed. His well known firmness gave tranquillity to our city; the vicious were awed; the virtuous under his auspices felt additional confidence.

Another instance of Mr. Clinton's pure devotion to the interests of his country deserves to be recorded. Upon the declaration of war by the United States against Great Britain, it was well known that this important metropolis would be one of the first objects of attack by the enemy. The immense wealth of this city would awaken attention, and its importance as a military station pointed out its possession as of the greatest moment.

But the declaration of war found us wholly unprepared: the embarrassed situation of the finances of the United States is still remembered. The treasury was empty, and its credit, at that time, impaired. It was soon perceived, that if our city was to be defended, the funds for that purpose must be provided by ourselves. At this crisis, Mr. Clinton suggested to the common council to borrow the necessary funds on the credit of this city, and to loan the same to the United States. The plan was approved. An impressive address, drafted by Mr. Clinton, was made to our citizens, and a million of dollars raised, by subscription, for our defence.

Throughout the progress of the war, Mr. Clinton constantly associated himself with the committee of defence appointed by the corporation, and lent his powerful influence to the various measures which were then proposed.

When it is considered that Mr. Clinton's political advancement was then in opposition to the existing administration, and when it might have been expected that a political rival would have been pleased with this opportunity of rendering them unpopular with the people, it certainly redounds to his honour and patriotism, that he gave his undivided exertions towards carrying on the war to a successful issue.

His patriotism was also evinced in the tender of his services in his military character during the late war. At this moment of danger, having held the station of Major-general in the militia of the state, he considered it his paramount duty to offer to the Commander-in-chief his personal services for active operation in the field. These were preferred in a letter addressed to the late Governor Tompkins, by their mutual friend, Thomas Addis Emmet.

It ought to be remarked, as an evidence of his high sense of duty, and his disregard of personal danger, that during the visitations of the pestilence, of the peculiar character and contagiousness of which Mr. Clinton had the fullest conviction, while officiating as the chief magistrate of the city, he was ever present at the deliberations of the common council, and rendered his daily attendance in the city at the board of health, of which he was the presiding officer.

As a criminal judge, it is admitted even by those who had been his political opponents, that his vigilance, his able and impartial performance of his official duties, especially in those cases involving the life of the offender, furnished a model worthy of imitation by all who occupy that highly important and responsible situation: for in him were happily united a most strict attention to the merits of the case, with the most devoted leaning to the feelings of humanity. Mr. Clinton did not entertain the opinion expressed by some late philanthropists, that capital punishments are unnecessary or unjust. Believing with the most enlightened authorities, Beccaria, Blackstone, and the late Sir Samuel Romilly, that the certainty of punishment was the best security for the prevention of crime, our statute book bears witness to the wisdom of his counsels in mitigating the severity of the English criminal code; and during his performance of the duties of judge, as assigned to him in his office of mayor, the culprit was equally aware of the clemency of the magistrate, and of the certainty of punishment in the case of conviction: but while in his view the destruction of human life could only be expiated by the lex talionis, he was determined that the last punishment of the law should be inflicted on those who were the wanton instruments of its violation.

But even then no man was more willing to listen to, or eager to

discover any circumstance calculated to mitigate the crime that had been committed; to this purport we have the concurrent testimony of all who practised in the court in which the mayor presided, while he filled that honourable and responsible office. By a gentleman who many years held an official station at his side, and of opposite political sentiments, he is represented to have been "cautious, attentive, of kind temper, patient of investigation, and discriminating with great care; and in a word, that upon all occasions he acquitted himself as the pure, impartial, patient, and upright magistrate, one of the safest men that ever presided in a criminal court, and ever uniting mercy with justice."* It was also the remark of a late eminent† counsel, who was frequently engaged in his court as the favourite defender of that unfortunate class found at the bar of the court of criminal jurisprudence, that in any capital trial De Witt Clinton was, in his estimation, superior to any judge he had ever known. His charges to the Court of Sessions, of which, during his time, the mayor was the presiding judge, were marked with a sagacity and judgment that received the unanimous approbation of the bar.

In the cause of the Trinity Church riot, which many of this auditory may remember, his sternness and severity of rebuke towards some, whose rank in life would have awed the authority of a less firm magistrate, confirmed his character in the minds of all peaceable citizens, and had no inconsiderable influence on the conduct of the factious and the unruly. But there are other and more enduring monuments of his legal abilities.

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* See Appendix, I.

† Washington Morton, Esq.

At the same time that he presided over the police of our city, he frequently filled the station of a senator in our state legislature, where he distinguished himself not only by his able patronage of most of our literary and benevolent institutions, requiring legislative support,* but as an active and efficient member of the Court of errors, the ulterior tribunal of our judiciary, and for which his legal attainments and knowledge had peculiarly qualified him. This leads me to make a few remarks upon the character of Mr. Clinton as a jurist. It may appear presumptuous in me, a member of a profession, the pursuits of which are totally irrelevant, to attempt to delineate the legal acquirements and character of one so justly distinguished for the rare union of high attainments, both in jurisprudence and political science; but when my audience is informed, that in speaking of the legal qualifications of Mr. Clinton, I rely more on the information derived from his coadjutors and fellow-members of that learned and respectable profession, than upon my own competency to form a correct opinion, I trust I shall be acquitted of all vanity and unjust pretensions in attempting to delineate this part of his character.

Although Mr. Clinton, as has appeared, was at an early period after his admission to the bar called into political life, some opportunities had been afforded him of displaying his legal talents and acquirements, and which could not fail to have introduced him into a highly respectable scene of practice. Afterwards, when officiating as a member of our State Legislature, but more especially in the capacity of a member of the Court of Errors, and as the chief magistrate of this city, he was oftentimes called

* See Journals of the Legislature.

upon to deliver opinions, in cases demanding a very profound knowledge of the law, and a very nice discrimination in deciding upon the peculiar circumstances of the case under investigation, and in which principles were involved that required all the aid of practice and experience to constitute a correct decision; yet I am enabled to say, that agreeably to the opinion entertained by gentlemen the most distinguished at the bar, whose names reflect lustre upon their profession, Mr. Clinton's decisions and investigations are highly honourable to his talents and legal acquirements, and will ever be appealed to as standard authorities; at the same time that they are written in a style of eloquence, which cannot fail to give them great additional interest.

As a jurist the distinguishing features of Mr. Clinton's intellectual character were fully exhibited. As has been already stated, in presiding over the court of criminal jurisdiction of our city, frequent and most trying occasions were presented, which taxed to the utmost his judicial firmness.

Those occasions have passed, and it is hoped that the recollection of them, and the angry collisions with which they were connected have ceased, save the remembrance of the inflexible nerve of the upright magistrate.

The enlarged and liberal mind of Mr. Clinton led him early to perceive the inconveniences and evils experienced by the too general introduction into the country of systems of English jurisprudence. In the session of 1805, the disabilities to which the Roman Catholics were liable by the English law, and which had been too implicitly copied in this country, were removed chiefly by his exertions; and on a subsequent occasion in 1813, he carried through the legislature a bill, by which the clergy of this class of christians had secured to them that full freedom of opinion,

for which our constitution had until then furnished an imperfect guarantee. With a characteristic and enlightened boldness, from which a Holt or a Mansfield might have shrunk, Mr. Clinton decided as a criminal judge, that the laws of England which compel the disclosure of the sacred secrets of the confessional, were not applicable to this country, whose constitutional charter guarantees the freedom of religious opinion and worship. Mr. Clinton in expressing the opinion of the court, defended the concealment of the sacrament of penance, claimed by the priest as agreeable to the constitution of our government, which secures to its citizens the free exercise and enjoyment of religious profession and worship, without discrimination or preference; and is consecrated by the social compact, by the principles of civil and religious liberty. So conclusive were the arguments, and such the eloquence with which they were enforced upon that occasion, that the decision which was in correspondence with the opinion of the court, gave general satisfaction to every religious denomination, as well calculated to dissipate antiquated prejudices and religious jealousies, at the same time that when compared with the statutes and judgments in Europe upon similar subjects, it illustrates the independence of American jurisprudence. This adjudication which has been ably reported by a learned counsellor,* constitutes an historical document which has not only been favourably received by his fellow-citizens, but will be precious and instructive to the present and future generations. The philosopher, the philanthropist and the statesman, were equally

* See the report of the trial entitled the Catholic question in America, in which is also contained the able and elaborate argument of Counsellor Sampson.

conspicuous in this celebrated decision: it has since received the highest sanction, and it is now the settled law of the state.

By this law a numerous and most respectable religious denomination, is relieved from the oppression of an arbitrary authority, imposed by the decisions of British law, which would deprive them of the exercise of a paramount religious duty, enjoined upon them by the most positive obligations of their faith.

Upon another occasion, when a great principle, upon which the value of the writ of habeas corpus mainly depends, namely, the authority to review the decisions of inferior courts upon the return to the writ, was in the most imminent peril, he vindicated and successfully sustained this bulwark of our liberties, by the delivery of an opinion, which in force of reasoning and successful illustration, is not surpassed in the judicial eloquence of this country.

Details of this nature are not perhaps expected in this place, yet it may not be irrelevant to observe, that his argument in the case of John Van Ness Yates went far to decide, as well in the minds of the proper authorities as in those of the public at large, a question of the greatest importance in the legal history of this state, and which at the time excited no inconsiderable feeling. The decision in accordance with his views, settled the controversy in a manner satisfactory both to the friends of the parties themselves, and to the wishes and opinions of the prudent and judicious at large. This opinion remains among the records of talent and of genius, a cheering light to the friends of liberty, and a warning beacon against judicial encroachment. The merchants of this city, notwithstanding their liberal* acknowledgment of

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* See Appendix, J.

his public services, are probably not aware of the extent of their obligations to the learning, solid judgment, and independence of Mr. Clinton.

By a principle of English law adapted to the peculiar interests of that country, and calculated for the protection of those interests at the expense of the rest of the world, the sentences of foreign courts of admiralty were held conclusive upon all mankind, while the judgment of every other foreign court were open to examinations and contradiction. Under the sanction of this principle, British cruisers seized our vessels upon the slightest pretexts, and the petty admiralty courts of the West India Islands, legalized those seizures by condemnations without scruple and without cause. Insurance afforded no protection, for the sentence and the grounds upon which it assumed to proceed, were not suffered to be denied or explained, however false in fact, or however illegal or iniquitous in effect. Against this system of rapine Mr. Clinton raised his voice, and in an admirable opinion, whose force and authority have been strengthened by time, overthrew the principle and all its consequences. The proceedings of those courts were declared open to investigation, their sentences liable to contradiction by proof, and commerce was thus far freed from its fetters. This memorable decision has been repeatedly sanctioned, and rigidly adhered to by all the courts of this state. Long before those plans of legal reform which now engage public attention, both in England and in this country were commenced, Mr. Clinton had repeatedly urged legislative efforts upon the subject. These suggestions probably led to the adoption of that system which, as far as regards our statute law, has been so auspiciously commenced in this state, and which has uniformly received from him the most encouraging approbation and support. But the attain-

ments of Mr. Clinton as a jurist, are too rich and copious for a full developement in the narrow limits of this outline, while the incidents already presented are sufficient to exhibit the operations of the same great mind which enlightened and adorned so many other pursuits.

In the language of Chancellor Kent,* whose high professional standing, and whose writings reflect lustre upon the legal character, as well as the literature of our country, "the opinions of Mr. Clinton are ably and powerfully written, and do great credit to his vigorous powers of thought and style: some of his opinions, he adds, are models of judiciary and parliamentary eloquence, and they all relate to great questions affecting constitutional rights and personal liberty."

Another distinguished member of the profession, who has ever ranked, and has long been known as the Mansfield† of the New-York bench, and whose opinions have ever been regarded with reverence, in a private communication I had the honour to receive from him, thus expresses himself: "Mr. Clinton certainly evinced great versatility of talent, his legal opinions exhibited high evidence of the powers of reasoning and acute investigation; his method of illustration was felicitous, his language pure and eloquent."

In the language of another friend, an eminent member of the New-York bar,‡ speaking of the legal opinions of Mr. Clinton, he remarks,—"I have no hesitation in saying that they were, in my judgment, the happiest efforts of his pen: there is displayed in them at once an ease and purity of style, and a fine manly

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* See Appendix, K. † The Honourable Ambrose Spencer.

‡ Henry Warner, Esquire.

progress of connected thought, surpassing, as I think, the best of his other writings, at the same time that they afford very favourable evidence of his character as a lawyer."

To no one in this country are we more indebted than to Mr. Clinton, for freeing us from those numerous and superfluous technicalities, which have for ages proved the source of inconvenience and expense in the adjudication of the rights of our citizens and of property, and which it is the boast of our state in some measure to have lessened or removed. His then is the great and permanent merit of having accommodated that system of English law to the genius of our republican institutions, of infusing into a code wise and well settled in its foundations and leading principles, but disfigured by too much technicality and refinement, a greater spirit of liberality and a more benignant feeling of philanthropy.

We do not pretend to trace any communication between the distinguished men of Europe and of this country, who have recently and simultaneously contemplated this great work of reform in jurisprudence as well as in civil government; but passing over the elaborate and able discourse on the subject pronounced before the Historical Society of New-York by Counsellor Sampson, and his correspondence with Governor Wilson of South Carolina, in 1824,* which is before the public, the coincidence between the views entertained and promulgated by the late lamented statesman of New-York, and the celebrated Henry Brougham, in the benign and salutary improvement he is now endeavouring to effect in the most enlightened of modern nations, is certainly

* See Appendix, L.

no less a matter of surprise, than it is an evidence of the importance and necessity of the changes that are contemplated.

It redounds greatly to the honour of Mr. Clinton, that from the care and distractions of public and political life, he snatched a portion of his time and devoted it, like Bacon, the great model of his imitation, and the object of his enthusiastic encomium, to the noblest of all occupations, intellectual cultivation; it may indeed be said of him, that "he is himself the great sublime he draws," that he belonged to that class of men so happily described by the illustrious Burke, in whom an acquaintance with the forms of the law does not impair the enlargement and liberality of their minds, which are happily sharpened and invigorated without injury to higher and loftier qualities.

It is well known that in the Court of Errors, he for many years by his influence and eloquence, nobly released our jurisprudence from many of those trammels by which it too often subverts the purposes of justice and equity, and prepared the public mind for those radical improvements in the statute law, which I trust we are now about to realize. In the language of the able editor of the American Annual Register recently published,—"It is but an act of justice to Mr. Clinton to state, that in official communications to the legislature, for years previously to the act of 1825, he had strenuously urged various important reforms in the laws of the state; and that these recommendations prepared the public mind, and in a great measure led to the important work of revisal now in progress. It constantly received his cordial approbation and vigorous co-operation, so far as his station afforded the means."*

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* Annual Register, 1826–7, p. 464.

Mr. Clinton's strong recommendation to the legislature of a review of our civil code, will be an enduring evidence to after ages of his liberal views and foresight; and if the execution of that great work shall correspond with the genius and spirit in which it was conceived, and of which the talents and learning of those engaged in its accomplishment afford every pledge, posterity will rank him with the Justinians and the Edwards of other nations.

From what has been stated it is manifest that he studied his profession in the spirit of liberality, and that he formed himself rather upon the model of Lord Bacon, than of his professional rival Coke; and it may not be irrelevant here to offer to my auditors his striking contrast between these two illustrious lawyers, as exhibiting in bold and masterly view the studies and character of an accomplished member of the bar. Doubtless but for the exigencies of the times, and the critical situation of our political affairs, he had followed, at no distant interval, the great original which he here so faithfully depicts.

In his Discourse before the Literary and Philosophical Society of New-York, speaking of Bacon and Coke, he observes, "they were both eminent in their profession, and attained the highest honours and most lucrative emoluments. Bacon became Lord High Chancellor of England, and Coke a Chief Justice. The former had ascended the empyreal heights of literature; the latter had plunged into the learning of Norman lawyers, and had become the oracle of the common law. The works of Bacon are referred to as the oracle of truth and knowledge, and as the revelation of genuine philosophy: while the black letter learning of Coke is an eleusynian mystery to all out of the pale of the profession.

The difference between a mere lawyer great in his profession alone, and a great lawyer eminent in literature and science, can never be more forcibly illustrated than in the exhibition of these celebrated men. Bacon enlivened, enriched, and embellished every subject upon which he wrote; even flowers sprang up under his feet in his journey through the thorny paths of legal investigation. But from Coke you must expect nothing but the dry barren weeds of scholastic subtlety and Norman chicanery."

In 1817 that popular leader, the late Daniel D. Tompkins, having been elected to the office of Vice President of the United States, De Witt Clinton was first called upon by the people of the state to preside over them as their chief magistrate. In selecting him for this distinguished honour, there was a remarkable coalition amongst the principal parties which had previously been divided upon every political subject. But upon this occasion they all appeared to unite in the opinion, that his talents and zealous exertions in promoting the interest of the state, had merited the confidence they were now about to repose in him. He was elected with comparatively little opposition, and during the first year of his administration, nothing occurred to disturb the harmony of the state.

His republican opponents, who were then even more powerful as a party than they are at present, permitted to remain in oblivion the recollection that Mr. Clinton some years before had opposed Mr. Madison on his second election to the Presidency; the federalists were equally kind in blotting out the remembrance of some sentiments which had been expressed by Mr. Clinton, and which at the time they were uttered had given them such dire offence.

During the short tranquillity which succeeded his election, all

parties appeared anxious to sustain him in his exertions to advance the prosperity of the state, and those patriots who kept aloof from party conflicts, hailed the event as auspicious of future benefit; but the union of politicians, when based upon the expectations and hopes of personal advantages, is never lasting, and the first disagreement generally dissolves it. When the difficult task of filling up appointments was performed by the Governor, he very soon gave offence, and particularly to certain republican friends who alleged that he had not kept faith with them, but had gone over to their political adversaries; and strange to tell, many of the latter also took offence, and for a time he was openly opposed by some of the most distinguished federal leaders.

From this period a systematic attack was made against his administration: it was declared that they would never rest satisfied until he was displaced from office, as a punishment for what they considered and pronounced to be his "desertion of their standard." All the former acts of his political life were brought forward in array against him; he was abused without measure for his "unchastened ambition:" he was accused of having opposed the late war; he was charged with aiding in the persecution of Daniel D. Tompkins, whose accounts with the State Treasury were then about being settled; and worst of all, the merit of having been the most efficient friend to the grand canal, was unqualifiedly denied to him.

Whatever may have been his political errors connected with party politics, and however he may have offended those who had supported his first election, it cannot be denied that during the whole period of his administration, he never for a moment neglected the cardinal interests of the state; nor did any personal resentment prevent him from constantly urging upon the legislature,

such measures as he thought necessary or expedient to increase the resources and reputation of the state. That he was ambitious, his friends have never denied; but his was an ambition which was founded not on the ruins, but upon the prosperity of his country; he sought for an enduring fame that would live after him, and not the paltry perquisites or the mere honorary titles of office. Such, however, was the power of party, and so well was it organized, that his opponents succeeded in obtaining a majority first in the senate, and afterwards in the assembly. But when they did so, the "canal policy" had been so firmly established, mainly through his unceasing exertions, they did not dare to alter it: thus practically approving of the measures which had emanated from him, and placing themselves in the unenviable light of mere personal opponents.

As the expiration of his term approached in 1820, every possible preparation was made for a dreadful conflict. The utmost exertions were used throughout the state to secure votes, and no act was omitted by the leaders of the party, which could in any way benefit their cause. In order to secure a victory, they persuaded Daniel D. Tompkins, who was still Vice President, to enter the lists once more in his native state, where from his former popularity he was emphatically called "the man of the people:" never was there a greater struggle between splendid talents and party zeal. On the one hand, the good sense and justice of the people were depended upon; on the other, an appeal was made to their party feelings and political connections.

Close and animated was the contest, and for some days the issue extremely doubtful. Upon an enumeration of all the votes, which by the returns amounted to about 180,000, it appeared that Mr. Clinton was re-elected by a majority of less than two thousand.

It was considered by his friends a great triumph, because on his part, there was nothing to urge but his talents and services; his partisans had not been well organised, whilst his opponents were mighty as a party, and had as their champion a man who had been deservedly popular during the war, and whose very misfortunes since that period had endeared him still more to his friends.

Being thus unexpectedly foiled in their formidable attack upon Governor Clinton, the opposition next proceeded to harass his administration in every possible way. Having majorities in both houses, and also the council of appointment, they removed from office his friends, and put in their places his most active enemies.

In the year 1821, whilst party spirit was at its height, they determined to effect a change in the constitution of the state, ostensibly for the purpose of removing its defects, but in reality to gratify their own feelings, by lessening the power of the Governor, extending the right of suffrage, and removing those judges who were known to be his attached and personal friends. In this measure they were but too successful, and since that period have had ample time to regret that party zeal had ever carried them so far, as to inflict more evils than those they pretended to rectify.

After his re-election in 1820, Governor Clinton who had observed the gathering storm, resolved calmly to meet it: he continued to devote his time and his talents to the services of his native state. He had succeeded in his favourite object in relation to the canal navigation; he had aroused the people from their lethargy upon the subject of internal improvements; he had witnessed the progressive increase of common schools under the patronage of his administration; and he felt satisfied that whatever personal mortifications he might have to endure, his policy had so com-

pletely received the approbation of the people, it could never be destroyed by his opponents. He, therefore, after five years service as chief magistrate, during which time the state had greatly increased in wealth, being unwilling again to arouse the angry feelings of party warfare, voluntarily declined being a candidate at the ensuing election in 1822. To the great regret of his friends throughout the state, he now retired to private life; but during that retirement his powerful energies were not dormant.

In October 1823, when the canal celebration took place in Albany, he was the popular divinity, and many then looked forward with hope to his entry once more into public life. Whether it was that the jealousy of his enemies was aroused by the strong indications of public regard that were then shown him, or that they were determined to crush him for ever, cannot now be told: but certain it is, that soon afterwards they gave a further proof of their political hatred and party folly, by removing him from his station as canal commissioner.

It proved to be the most fortunate step for him that could have been taken: such an uncalled for act of persecution and cruelty, operated upon them with a sensible re-action. His friends once more took the field, and many of his former adversaries joined their ranks: the party which had heretofore held such despotic sway became divided within itself, and at a propitious moment, his friends, availing themselves "of the signs of the times," again brought their favourite before the people as a candidate for that office which he had so ably filled. In 1824, he was opposed to Colonel Young, the candidate of his opponents, but was elected by a majority of nearly twenty thousand votes.

It was fortunate for the credit and honour of the state, that the opportunity was thus afforded of redeeming itself from the

charge of ingratitude towards one of its greatest statesmen and brightest ornaments, which would otherwise have remained a lasting stigma upon the patriotism of her citizens.

After this signal expression of public favour, there was no recurrence of that inveterate opposition against Governor Clinton, which had marked the period of his former administration, and he was permitted, without resistance, to renew all his exertions in favour of his patriotic policy. In 1826 he was again opposed, but the weapons were of a more peaceable character, and there was comparatively little of that virulent abuse which, to the disgrace of our country, is too frequently manifested upon occasions of this nature.

He succeeded by a majority of about four thousand votes, which would, doubtless, have been much larger, had his friends generally come forward in his support, but they felt so confident in the success of his re-election, that many of them saved themselves the trouble of attending the polls.

His opponent was Judge Rochester, whose party had been much increased by the supposed connection between him and the administration of the general government. After this election, until the time of his death, Governor Clinton had been so successful in obtaining the approbation and support of both houses of the legislature, as well as of his fellow-citizens throughout the union, and had gained such a complete victory over the party feelings of former times, that next to the two leading candidates for the Presidency, his prospect of eventually attaining to that elevated station, had become greater than that of any other citizen of the United States.

May I be excused for dwelling so long upon these political details; they are a part of the life of Mr. Clinton, and his

biographer would be censurably deficient were he to omit an appropriate notice of them. A more grateful theme is to advert to the leading acts of his great and triumphant administration.

It has already been observed, how intimately Mr. Clinton was connected with the numerous public charities which characterise New-York. His fostering care and active services to these several institutions continued with unabated zeal during his official capacity as Governor. He took an active interest in the unhappy condition of our Indian tribes, and held divers conferences with them, the better to devise the means of ameliorating their condition, and of promoting their civilization.

The degraded condition of the descendants of Africa also awakened his philanthropy, and stimulated his best efforts in their behalf.

Another of the earliest subjects of his solicitude which he recommended to the consideration of the state, was agriculture. In his famous first message as Governor, he thus expresses himself: "As agriculture is the source of our subsistence, the basis of our strength, and the foundation of our prosperity, it is pleasing to observe the public attention awakened to its importance, and associations springing up in several counties to cherish its interest. Having received but a small portion of direct encouragement from government, it has been left to its own energies; and supported by a fertile soil, cherished by a benign climate, cultivated by industry, and protected by liberty, it has diffused its bounties over the country, and has relieved the wants of the old world. Relying hitherto almost exclusively on the fertility of our soil and the extent of our possessions, we have not adopted those improvements which the experience of modern times has indicated. And it has not been sufficiently understood that agriculture is a science

as well as an art; that it demands the labour of the mind as well as of the hands; and that its successful cultivation is intimately allied with the most profound investigations of philosophy, and the most elaborate exertions of the human mind."

He believed it to be the peculiar province of the state government, to superintend and advance the interests of agriculture, and to this end he deemed it adviseable to recommend the institution of a board, composed of the most experienced and best informed agriculturists, whose duty it should be "to correspond with the county societies; to communicate to them beneficial discoveries and improvements; to introduce useful seeds, plants, trees and animals, implements of husbandry, and labor-saving machines; to explore the minerals of the country, and to publish periodically, the most valuable observations and treatises on husbandry, horticulture, and rural economy. The county societies ought," says he, "to be enabled to distribute adequate premiums; and a professorship of agriculture connected with the board or attached to the university, might also be constituted, embracing the kindred sciences of chemistry and geology, mineralogy, botany, and the other departments of natural history. By which means a complete course of agricultural education would be taught, developing the principles of the science, illustrating the practice of the art, and restoring this first and best pursuit of man to that intellectual rank which it ought to occupy in the scale of human estimation."

These enlarged views received the approbation of the people and of the legislature: accordingly, during his administration, an act was passed in 1819 for the formation of agricultural societies. It may be doubted whether all the beneficent designs of the legislature have been fulfilled by the event; but it is certain,

that a salutary impulse has thereby been given to our system of husbandry throughout the state. the profitable effects of which we this day enjoy.* Of the society for internal improvements, and of the society of arts and manufactures. Mr. Clinton was also. during its existence. an early and active member. and always supported the propriety of encouraging all measures by which we might be rendered independent of foreign aid. though he was sceptical of that policy which looked to the government for its interference and protection.

I have merely time here to allude to his recommendations for an increase of the duties upon sales by auction. by which a considerable revenue was raised. and the tax upon unproductive lands avoided. and to his recommendations of the abolition of imprisonment for debt. and his suggestions in favour of a revised militia code. By his interference to prevent the undue increase of banking capital. much expense and litigation were saved to the holders of notes of accommodation. by the provisions of the law which he recommended.

He had ever considered a state revenue by lotteries as injurious and of immoral tendency: much of the corruption in this method of finance then complained of. is now avoided by the substitution of the present system. Benevolent and literary institutions were equally the object of his attention as heretofore. and the condition

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* The Board of Agriculture ceased at the period of its limitation. by the expiration of the law under which it was organized. in April 1828. It published three volumes. entitled Memoirs of the Board of Agriculture of the State of New-York. 8vo. Albany, 1821. 1823. 1826.—a work highly creditable to the enterprising board, and to the enlightened editor G. W. Featherstonhaugh, Esquire.

of the poor and the penitentiary system, at all times participated of his vigilance and received the benefits of his sagacity and care.

I shall have occasion to speak at length of his services in that enduring monument of public enterprise, the grand canal. Splendid as is this evidence of his genius, numerous works of similar character, instigated by his success, are completing in other and far distant portions of our country.

It was ever the conduct of Mr. Clinton, to communicate with freedom and candour his enlightened views whenever he was consulted, and he freely made known every improvement or measure which presented itself to his mind, however it might divert from, or be opposed to the interests of New-York: those local feelings of jealousy found no place in his mind, which was ever governed by a spirit of liberality and benevolence, that extended to the whole family of man. His plans were not circumscribed by geographical limits, or even by national policy. The two most noted examples of his generosity and disinterestedness, are the countenance and influence he afforded to the Ohio and Welland canals.*

His public administration, it is well known, was characterised by incorruptible integrity, inflexible firmness, unshaken personal courage, and a vigilant attention to the great interests of the state. Indeed, it may be said of Mr. Clinton, that in every situation he filled, whether performing the duties of chief magistrate of the state, or of the common council, the judge on the bench, or as the presiding officer of the numerous literary and

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* See Judge Conkling's able Discourse commemorative of the talents, virtues, and services of the late De Witt Clinton.

benevolent institutions with which he was connected, his energy, his decision and perseverance, were ever fearlessly exercised.

I am in course to speak of his various writings; and here I am far from claiming for him the graces of Goldsmith, or the classical purity of Addison. Though intimately conversant with the productions of the most eminent writers of ancient and modern genius, he was too largely immersed in the details of business, to transfer to his own pages the scholastic spirit of the great masters of finished composition; yet he was deeply imbued with their merits, and if he did not always rival them, it was in no small degree owing to the intractable nature of his themes. Instances of carelessness and haste at times appear, yet I should not hesitate to rank him among the most able and powerful of American writers. If he occasionally betrays a want of elegance, he is, nevertheless, always clear and vigorous, and we always understand him, because he always understands himself.

I have heretofore spoken of his various communications as a public magistrate. His addresses to the patriotic and brave heroes during the late war, are too well known to require a particular notice, yet perhaps they are among the most successful efforts of his genius; and while they enhanced the honours which a grateful country bestowed on its defenders, they contributed to diffuse and excite a spirit and feeling among our countrymen, that enabled them to pass successfully through that conflict in which they were engaged.

Among the earliest efforts in eloquence, is his reported speech on the famous resolution of Mr. Ross, delivered in the senate of the United States in 1802, on the right of deposit at New Orleans. It was his first great appearance before the eyes of the American nation, and received the applause both of his political friends and

opponents. He resisted with vigour and effect, the attempt of the most able and powerful opposition to settle by arms what negotiation might accomplish. The course he recommended was that which was pursued, and resulted in a measure which stamps the administration of Jefferson with immortal honour, the acquisition of Louisiana for a sum infinitely less than would have enabled our government to fit out an armament to recover our disputed right to the navigation of the Mississippi.

As Governor of the state of New-York, he was scarcely less conspicuous than the chief magistrate of the nation. The enlarged and enlightened policy then pursued, doubtless, contributed to his fame, but he was its master spirit and invigorating agent. He gave impetus and direction to its efforts, and infused into its counsels that energy which is so necessary in overcoming those obstacles and impediments which a free government furnishes, as well to salutary as to injurious measures, and of which the timid and the selfish are so ready to avail themselves. His Inaugural Speech as Governor, delivered in January 1818, excited a share of attention that had never been bestowed upon any other similar document. In this distinguished paper he referred to almost every subject which demanded legislative care: agriculture, colleges, schools of elementary learning, the arts, the militia system, criminal jurisprudence, the reformation of the poor laws, monied institutions, finances, and his favourite topic of inland communications, all severally were treated of, and their interests lucidly and earnestly enforced.

His succeeding messages are not less comprehensive in their design, or less able in their execution. They will ever be deemed models of their kind, and be referred to by the politician as successful evidences of the powerful mind and legislative wisdom

of their author. Their style is manly and impressive, and they carry conviction by the logical accuracy and force of their details.

That valuable institution of our state, the New-York Historical Society, as already intimated, is largely indebted to Mr. Clinton for his various services. His discourse delivered before this distinguished body, upon his assuming the office of president, has justly been considered the most masterly and finished of all his literary productions. In its able delineation of character and philosophical spirit of research, it scarcely suffers by comparison with the Treatise de Moribus Germanorum of Tacitus.

The illustrious tribe of Indians whose character it portrays, will be handed down to posterity by his pen, and the people of our state in future ages, will delight to trace the grand and commanding characteristics of the Romans of the western world. His Discourse before the Literary and Philosophical Society, furnishes abundant evidence of his multifarious reading and extent of erudition. In it he not only traces the present condition of the sciences, but points out to the studious and ambitious, the means by which future investigations may be rendered productive and successful. By his example and agency a salutary influence has been exerted upon the literature and science of our city, and already begin to dawn upon our horizon the gleams of day, which, we trust, will be followed by an effulgence of light and glory. In 1807 was incorporated the Academy of Arts. From this period there have gradually arisen amongst us both a taste and talent for the fine arts, especially painting and architecture. I need scarcely add that Mr. Clinton gave to this institution his aid and patronage. He succeeded the venerable Chancellor Livingston as the president of this institution, and pronounced a Discourse in its behalf, which may be deemed almost equal, as a matter

of composition, to any of his writings on any subject. In noticing the difficulties of the institution, he points out numerous subjects suited to elicit the talents of the painter, the statuary and the engraver, as calculated to adorn the halls of justice, the edifices of learning, and the temples of religion.

He then points out the benefits to be derived to the arts themselves, as well as in diffusing a taste for their cultivation, by concentrating in one great institution the best models of ancient and modern art, and the most distinguished specimens of all that can occupy the genius, or improve the taste of our country.

His Eulogy on Chancellor Livingston and Robert Fulton, also contained in that excellent Discourse, is brief but spirited, and holds up the active enterprise of those highly-gifted individuals, as worthy of imitation by all future candidates for fame and distinction. I may be permitted to embody in these Memoirs an extract from this address touching the character of these eminent men.

"We have thus seen Mr. L. converting the lessons of his experience and observation into sources of practical and general utility. He was not one of those remote suns, whose light and heat have not yet reached our planetary system. His object, his ambition, his study, was to do the greatest good to the greatest number. There is no doubt but that he felt the extent of his own powers, and the plenitude of his own resources; but he bore his faculties meekly about him, never offending the pride or the delicacy of his associates by arrogance, or by intrusion, by neglect, or by slight, by acting the oracle or dictator. He was an eminent arbiter elegantiarum, or judge of propriety; his conversation was unpremeditated; it abounded with brilliant wit, with apposite illustrations, and with various and extended knowledge, always

as gentle as 'zephyrs blowing below the violet,' and always exhibiting the overflowings of a fertile mind. His great qualities were attended with a due sense of his own imperfections, and of his limited powers. He did not see in himself the tortoise of the Indian, or the atlas of the heathen mythology, sustaining the universe. Nor did he keep himself at an awful distance, wrapped up in gloomy abstraction, or veiled in mysterious or supercilious dignity. He knew that the fraternity of mankind is a vast assemblage of good and evil, of light and darkness, and that the whole chain of human being is connected by the charities of life, by the ties of mutual dependence, and reciprocal benevolence. Such was Robert R. Livingston. He was not one of those factitious characters, who rise up and disappear like the mountains of sand which the wind raises in the deserts; nor did he pretend to possess a mind illuminating all the departments of knowledge, like that great elementary substance which communicates the principle of vitality to all animated nature: but he will be ranked, by the judgment of impartial posterity, among the great men of the revolution; and in the faithful pages of history, he will be classed with George Clinton, John Jay, Pierre Van Cortlandt, Philip Schuyler, William Floyd, Philip Livingston, Gouverneur Morris, James Duane, John Morin Scott, and the other venerable and conscript fathers of the state.

"Fortunately for the interests of mankind, Mr. L. became acquainted with Robert Fulton, a self-created great man, who has risen into distinguished usefulness, and into exalted eminence, by the energies of his own genius, unsupported by extrinsic advantages.

"Mr. F. had directed the whole force of his mind to mathematical learning and to mechanical philosophy. Plans of defence

against maritime invasion and of sub-aquatic navigation had occupied his reflections. During the late war he was the Archimedes of his country.

"The poet was considered under the influence of a disordered imagination when he exclaimed,

> "Soon shall thy arm, unconquer'd steam! afar
> Drag the slow barge or drive the rapid car,
> Or on wide-waving wings expanded bear
> The flying chariot through the fields of air."—*Darwin.*

"The connexion between Livingston and Fulton realized, to a great degree, the vision of the poet. All former experiments had failed, and the genius of Fulton, aided and fostered by the public spirit and discernment of Livingston, created one of the greatest accommodations for the benefit of mankind. These illustrious men will be considered, through all time, as the benefactors of the world—they will be emphatically hailed as the Castor and Pollux of antiquity—lucida sidera—stars of excellent light and of most benign influence.

"Mr. Fulton was personally well known to most who hear me. To those who were favoured with the high communion of his superior mind, I need not expatiate on the wonderful vivacity, activity, comprehension, and clearness of his intellectual faculties: and while he was meditating plans of mighty import for his future fame and his country's good, he was cut down in the prime of his life and in the midst of his usefulness. Like the self-burning tree of Gambia, he was destroyed by the fire of his own genius, and the never-ceasing activity of a vigorous mind. And O! may we not humbly hope that his immortal spirit, disembodied from its material incumbrance, has taken its flight to the world of

pure intellect, 'where the wicked cease from troubling, and where the weary are at rest.'"

Mr. Clinton's Discourse delivered in 1823 at Union College, at the request of the Phi Beta Kappa Society attached to that institution, also affords, in the language of an elegant eulogist, "a splendid evidence of the inexhaustible riches of his mind."* In that exercise he enforces with all the feelings of enthusiasm, the cultivation of liberal studies on the minds of the aspiring youth, whom he addressed on that interesting occasion. "It is an ordinance of Heaven," says he, "that man must be employed or be unhappy. Mental or corporeal labour is the destination of his nature; and when he ceases to be active, he ceases to be useful, and descends to the level of vegetable life: and certainly those pursuits which call into activity his intellectual powers, must contribute most to his felicity, his dignity, and his usefulness. The vigorous direction of an active mind to the accomplishment of good objects, forms its most extatic delights."

The advantages which a free government offers above all others to a laudable ambition are there pointed out, and illustrated by a reference to the classical states of antiquity, and to the brief history of our own nation. This Discourse of Mr. Clinton no less abounds in felicitous aphorisms upon the importance of education, and the resources which it furnishes at every period, and in all the various circumstances of our lives. I cannot withhold his eloquent remarks on this interesting theme.

"Whatever may be our thoughts, our words, our writings, or our actions, let them all be subservient to the promotion of science

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* Judge Conkling.

and the prosperity of our country. Pleasure is a shadow, wealth is vanity, and power a pageant; but knowledge is extatic in enjoyment, perennial in fame, unlimited in space, and infinite in duration. In the performance of its sacred offices it fears no danger, spares no expense, omits no exertion. It scales the mountain, looks into the volcano, dives into the ocean, perforates the earth, wings its flight into the skies, encircles the globe, explores sea and land, contemplates the distant, examines the minute, comprehends the great, and ascends to the sublime: no place too remote for its grasp, no heavens too exalted for its reach."

The papers of Mr. Clinton being exclusively reserved for the use of the gentleman who, from his acknowledged abilities and learning, has been most judiciously selected as his biographer,* I cannot speak of his last public Discourse, that which was delivered in 1826 to the alumni of Columbia College, his alma mater, and which has not yet been committed to the press. One of the last acts of public duty performed by Mr. Clinton in his capacity as Governor, was his letter addressed, a day or two before his death, to the judge of the District Court of this city. That communication related to what was deemed by the Governor an irregular interposition of the court, in arresting the execution of the law on a criminal condemned to death for murder, after the Governor, with whom the power of reprieve or of pardoning is exclusively lodged by the constitution, had declined interference with the execution of the sentence.

In that document, Governor Clinton's sagacity in detecting and

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* The Honourable John C. Spencer.

exposing what he considered the fallacious argument of the judge and of the court, as well as the vigour he evinced in maintaining his official authority, are considered as no less manifest than the clear and lucid style in which his exposition is conveyed. By most of his friends it was deemed one of his ablest productions, and believed to convey the most correct and satisfactory view of the subject to which it relates.*

On the memorable 13th day of March, 1810, by a resolution of the senate of this state, on motion of the Honourable Jonas Platt, then a member of that body, Mr. Clinton was unanimously appointed one of the commissioners for "exploring the route of an inland navigation, from Hudson's river to Lake Ontario and to Lake Erie." On the 15th of March, the same resolution received the concurrence of the assembly and became a law. This event naturally leads me to offer a few preliminary remarks connected with the important subject of canal navigation.

Few objects of internal policy have so much called forth the powers and resources of a country as canals: the comparative cheapness of conveyance, the easy and secure communication which they afford, the advantages they possess in improving and equalizing the value of countries remote from, as well as those in the vicinity of large cities and towns, render canals the greatest of all improvements: accordingly we find the utility of canal communication has been acknowledged by the wisest states of antiquity, no less than by the most enlightened modern nations. The high rank which Egypt assumed and maintained in former ages,

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* See Appendix, M.

was scarcely less due to her numerous canals, than to the fertility of her soil. Determined to avail herself of all the transcendant advantages of the Nile, she added no less than eighty canals, by which its waters might afford facilities to communication through every part of her territory. The Chinese, according to the testimony of the best writers, are still more alive to the value of this artificial species of navigation. Throughout that immense empire there is scarcely a town or a village which has not the advantage either of an arm of the sea, or a canal, as the means of communication: and to these numerous canals may be fairly attributed a great part of the riches of that remarkable nation. By her great canal, by some stated to be upwards of 1200 miles in extent, she is enabled to enforce and perpetuate her exclusive policy of avoiding all connexion with foreign nations, save only so far as they may contribute to her wealth and advantage.

Russia, Sweden, Holland, France, but above all Great Britain, have expended enormous sums with a view to this object, and are still proceeding with ardour and spirit. This latter nation, indeed, has within a few years exceeded all other people in the spirit of industry and zeal with which she has entered on this most important field of enterprise; more than 2400 miles of canal navigation bespeak her opulence and resources.

Nor has our own country been insensible to its value. Virginia, Pennsylvania, Massachusetts, and Maryland, have honourably distinguished themselves in this laudable career. But it was the destiny of our own state to set the first brilliant and effective example to her sister members of the union, and by the vigour, spirit, and munificence of her enterprise, to excite the astonishment, and to receive the acclamations of mankind. A celebrated

British writer thus strongly expresses himself on this interesting theme. "America, blessed with every climate, capable of every production, abounding with the best harbours and rivers on the globe, overspread with a population of more than eleven millions of inhabitants, what may not be expected? the partial hand of nature has laid off America on a much larger scale than any other part of the world: the map of the world cannot exhibit a country uniting so many natural advantages so pleasingly diversified, and that offers such abundant and easy resources to agriculture and commerce. In contemplating future America, the mind is lost in the din of cities, in harbours and rivers clouded with sails, and in the immensity of her population."*

In noticing this great event, this era in the life of Mr. Clinton, and which will ever be identified with his fame, posterity will demand a minute detail of the commencement, the progress, and the completion of an undertaking that ranks among the most important that has been effected in any age or in any country. Posterity will look back to the authors of the blessings and the benefits, which this great event has secured to this state and nation.

The question then here naturally presents itself, who first projected the system of inland navigation from the Lakes to the Hudson and the Atlantic Ocean? and who were the instruments of its accomplishment? In replying to these important inquiries, I am fully aware of the delicacy of the task before me.

The claimants to this honour are numerous and respectable, and the claims of each to a certain extent founded in justice.

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* Tatham's Political Economy of Inland Navigation, 4to. London.

While the minute details upon this subject are passed over as out of place upon the present occasion, I trust it will not be uninteresting to this intelligent assembly, to advert to a brief sketch of the most interesting facts which this examination has enabled me to develope, some of which, it will be found, have hitherto been totally overlooked in the public communications that have appeared upon this subject. In viewing the origin and progress of this great achievement, our attention is drawn to its numerous friends, who have in various capacities contributed to its accomplishment. But in order that each of the numerous benefactors to this work may have his due share of praise, proportioned to the services he has rendered, it is proposed to divide them into various classes, designating the nature, character, and extent of those services. I am fully sensible that fame has given to some a degree of reputation to which they are not entitled to the extent in which it has been bestowed; while to others much is due for the assistance they have rendered in the accomplishment of this important work, and whose contributions are comparatively little known to the world, or have been but imperfectly acknowledged: so far, therefore, as laborious inquiry has enabled me to ascertain the facts now to be related, distributive justice, the "suum cuique tribuito," shall be most strictly and impartially observed.

"Amicus Plato—amicus Socrates—sed magis amica veritas."

The contributors to canal navigation in the state of New-York, may be considered as consisting of four great classes: in the first, may be enumerated those foreseeing and predicting from the general face of the country, the union of the lakes, the creeks and rivers of the west, by measures calculated to remove obstruc-

tions, improve the natural navigation then existing, and ultimately, by different outlets, to connect the same with the ocean. In this class the names of Cadwallader Colden, Sir Henry Moore, George Washington, George Clinton, and Gouverneur Morris, are prominent. In the second class, are to be noticed those who proposed by artificial navigation, or canals, to form a connexion between the waters of the Hudson and Lake Ontario, Lake Erie, or both. Christopher Colles, Jeffrey Smith, Elkanah Watson, Philip Schuyler, Jesse Hawley, and Joshua Foreman, deserve the most honourable mention in this place. Thirdly, those who in the memorable year 1810, have been chiefly instrumental in effecting a direct internal communication between Lake Erie and the Atlantic. In this class Thomas Eddy, Jonas Platt, and De Witt Clinton stand conspicuous. Fourthly, another class of benefactors to this great work, is composed of numerous members of both houses of the legislature, who took a prominent station in devising and sustaining the measures necessary to carry the same into effect; the various canal commissioners, engineers, surveyors, and many private but public-spirited citizens in various parts of the state, who have zealously given their personal attentions and services to this herculean undertaking, and to whom too much praise cannot be ascribed: so great is the number composing this class, that I am compelled at this time to forbear from their enumeration. The commissioners of the canal fund, as distinguished from that of canal commissioners, and composed of the lieutenant governor, the comptroller, the attorney general, the surveyor general, the secretary and treasurer, to whose special care are committed the regulations of the tolls and other circumstances relating to the government of the canal, are entitled to high approbation for their intelligent and faithful discharge of the duties

"For the good which has been done by individuals or communities, in relation to this work, let each have a due share of credit."

Dewitt Clinton.

Engraved from a Drawing by John I. Morton by Stephen H. Gimber.

assigned them. To all these different classes of coadjutors, may be ascribed a high and enviable measure of applause.

The sagacity of some in early perceiving the practicability and utility of the inland communication; the diligence and zeal of others in unremitted exertions to accomplish it; and the devotion and sacrifices of all to its completion, will be remembered by their successors with everlasting gratitude. While other nations attach the greatest value to military glory, boast of their blood-stained fields, and erect their proudest monuments to their heroes on the field of battle, our commonwealth will point to her soil that has been subdued and appropriated by the skill and toil of its inhabitants, to their use and happiness.

No event in our history has received a warmer eulogium from Europe, and no circumstance has tended to bind together more closely our confederacy. Already a generous emulation has extended throughout our union, a spirit and zeal alike honourable and beneficial to the nation; all sectional interests and party feelings, it is hoped, will hereafter yield to schemes of ambition, in which all may unite, and all partake of the triumph. Passing over the early views which the face of the country suggested to the first settlers and traders who successively occupied the northern and western parts of this state, it may be remarked, that Cadwallader Colden, the surveyor general of the province of New-York, afterwards elevated to the office of its Lieutenant Governor, our acknowledgments are due as among the first to foresee and predict the great results that have been realized. He appears, at the very early period of 1724, to have conceived the grand and elevated scheme of internal improvement, in some degree corresponding with that which has been adopted and carried into operation: for even at that time his views embraced

a line of communication from the Hudson by the lakes to the Mississippi and the ocean. In his report on the fur trade, addressed to his excellency William Burnet, Governor of the province, after noticing the commercial establishments at Quebec and Montreal, and their trade with Schenectady and Albany, he points out the superior advantages arising from a more southern and western intercourse between the colony and the Indian traders, by means of the lakes and the other water communications of that country, and describes with minute accuracy the various stages of its progress, designating the passage from Albany to Lake Ontario by the Mohawk, Oneida, and Onondaga rivers, as preferable to the usual line of transportation then pursued by the Hudson, Lake Champlain, Montreal, and the St. Lawrence, adding in his emphatic language, "that by means of the Mississippi and the lakes, there is opened such a scene of inland navigation that cannot be paralleled in any other part of the world."*

His long study of the topography of this state, his minute and extensive knowledge of the country, entitle him to the highest praise, as it shows that his views were founded on practical observation, and were not the mere suggestions of a visionary projector. To him our state is moreover highly indebted as an early and ardent cultivator of letters.

He may not indeed inaptly be denominated the pioneer of literature and science in our state, and by means of his extensive correspondence with the distinguished literati of Europe, among whom the names of Linnæus, Gronovius, Collinson, Whyte, Porterfield, and others, may be enumerated, of transferring to

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* See Appendix, N.

our shores a portion of the same spirit by which they were actuated.

In the language of a late writer* on the subject of the great western canal,—"It must be within the memory of those who are natives of the state, and of sufficient age to recollect ancient facts, that the improvement of the inland navigation of the province, while yet a colony of Great Britain, was a favourite subject of conversation with our ancestors; and there are many now living, who can recollect that their fathers spoke with fond anticipations of the intercourse which would take place at a future day with the western country, by means of inland navigation after the manner of the Netherlands: among others, Peter Van Burgh Livingston, and Philip Livingston,† made frequent observations on the subject, after the return of one of the brothers from the Netherlands about the year 1738. Their father, Philip Livingston, Esq. of the manor of Livingston, resided for many years at Albany, and was the most eminent in the Indian trade there."

The same author proceeds to observe, that "the French government of Canada very early attempted to prevent our participation in the Indian trade, by their establishments on Lake Ontario, at Fort Frontinac in the year 1672, and at Fort Niagara

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* See "Facts and Observations in relation to the origin and completion of the Eric Canal," 1825.

† "Peter Van Burgh Livingston was President of the provincial congress of New-York in the year 1775, and died some years after at an advanced age. Philip Livingston was appointed a member of the continental congress for New-York in the year 1774, and continued in that station until his death in 1778, at York Town, Pennsylvania, where congress was then sitting. Among his descendants, Stephen Van Rensselaer, president of the canal commissioners, and Edward P. Livingston, of Clermont, are two of his grandsons."

in the year 1725, and on Lake Champlain, by their Fort St. Frederick, built near Crown Point in the year 1731. Our favourite route, therefore, was by the portages of the Mohawk and Wood Creek, partly to Oswego, but chiefly by the Onondaga and Seneca rivers, to the country of several of the Six Nations, then a populous and powerful confederacy, and uniformly our faithful allies against our hostile neighbours the French. This country of the Six Nations approached by the Onondaga and Seneca rivers, and Mud Creek, embraced the shores of the Genesee river, the Canandaigua, Seneca, Cayuga, and other small lakes, was the seat of a very valuable trade, and was frequently visited by the traders of Albany and Schenectady."

After the treaty of Paris in 1763, the improvement of our inland navigation attracted the attention of the colonial government of New-York, still further than it had done in the days of Governor Burnet.

On the 16th of December, 1768, Sir Henry Moore, then Governor of the province, in a message to the colonial legislature, stated, that "the great inconvenience and delay, together with the expense attending the transport of goods at the carrying places, have considerably diminished the profits of the traders, and called for the aid of the legislature, which if not timely exerted in their behalf, the commerce with the interior parts of the country may be diverted into such channels as to deprive this colony of every advantage which could arise from it." The Governor, therefore, recommended to the house of assembly, "the improvement of our inland navigation as a matter of the greatest importance to the province, and worthy of their serious consideration." And further recommends, that the obstructions in the navigation of the Mohawk river, between Schenectady and Fort Stanwix, be remedied

by sluices on the plan of the canal of Languedoc. The house of assembly immediately referred this message to the consideration of a committee of the whole house, and continued to act on a subject of much importance to them, "of drawing up proper and constitutional resolves, asserting the rights of his majesty's subjects within the colony, which they conceive have been greatly abridged and infringed by several acts passed by the last parliament of Great Britain." These resolves were the subject of long and frequent discussions, and finally, passed the house on the 31st of December. The Governor on the 3d of the ensuing month, required the immediate attendance of the assembly in the council chamber, when by virtue of his prerogative, he dissolved the house, and the proposition of our inland navigation, with other business, was not acted upon. Hence it appears that the improvement of our inland navigation at the carrying places, and the commerce with the interior parts of the country, were subjects which engaged the public attention sometime before the revolutionary war.* The interesting presages, the luminous views of Gouverneur Morris as early as 1777, and still more amply expressed in 1800, relative to the communications which he confidently anticipated between the Hudson and the lakes, also merit our notice.†

The fame of the illustrious Washington receives new laurels from his early attention to the important subject of internal navigation, both anterior and subsequent to the great revolutionary contest. He took a wide and extensive survey of the benefits to

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* See Facts and Observations on the Erie Canal.

† See Appendix, O.

result from an intimate connexion of the eastern and western portions of our country.

In 1784, in a letter addressed to Mr. Harrison,* then Governor of Virginia, he recommends that commissioners be appointed to search the nearest portages between the rivers James and Potomac, and the streams which run into the Ohio, and with the view of directing the trade into those channels, which otherwise he anticipated would at no distant period be attracted to the state of New-York; he was no less urgent on the leading members of the legislature of Maryland, to obtain their co-operation and aid.

I should now proceed to notice the useful labours and enterprise of Christopher Colles in 1784; as well as the early suggestions of Jeffrey Smith, a member of the assembly, from Suffolk County, Long-Island, who on the 17th March, 1786, introduced a bill entitled, "an act for improving the navigation of the Mohawk river, Wood Creek, and the Onondaga river, with a view of opening an inland navigation to Oswego, and for extending the same, if practicable, to Lake Erie." Such was the language of the bill proposed as early as 1786, and which was discussed in committee of the whole four times during that session;† an event most strangely overlooked by all who have written on canal navigation; not excepting those gentleman who were delegated by the legislature to collect all the public acts and documents connected with, and requisite for, a complete official history of the Erie and Champlain canals. I should also at this time notice the early views of George Clinton,‡ communicated in his speech

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* See Appendix, P. † See Appendix, Q. ‡ See Appendix, R.

to the legislature in 1791, his correspondence with General Washington, and the legislative act of the same year, directing the grounds between the Mohawk river and Wood Creek, in Herkimer, now Oneida county, and between Hudson River and Wood Creek, in Washington county, to be explored and surveyed, and an estimate of the expense of making canals between those points." The memorable services of Elkanah Watson and of General Philip Schuyler in 1791, and the passage of the act of 1792, chiefly effected by their instrumentality, incorporating the western and northern inland lock navigation companies, the former to improve the navigation, and to open communications by canals to the Seneca Lake and Lake Ontario; the latter to open a lock navigation between the Hudson and Lake Champlain, should also receive our special attention.* Connected with the same subject is the act of 1798, incorporating the Niagara Company for the purpose of making a canal with locks around the cataract of Niagara, and thence to form a communication between the Hudson, Lake Ontario, and Lake Erie, but which was never carried into execution.

The valuable Essays of Jesse Hawley, published under the signature of Hercules,† in the Ontario Messenger in 1807, recommending a canal from Lake Erie to the Mohawk river; the effective report of Mr. Gallatin, in the same year, on roads and canals which was proposed agreeably to a motion presented by John Quincy Adams, then a member of the senate of the United States, and the important communication of Robert Fulton accompanying the same, present themselves to our respectful attention. The still more memorable and efficient act of the legislature of this state, proposed by Joshua Forman in 1808,‡ with the subsequent and interesting surveys in the same year, directed under that act, and

* See Appendix, S. † See Appendix, T. ‡ See Appendix, U.

effected by James Geddes, under the direction of that able and indefatigable officer Simeon De Witt, the surveyor general, whose highly important and united services will ever be appreciated and gratefully acknowledged, and which first established the practicability of a direct canal to Erie by the interior route; the valuable labours of the Hon. Peter B. Porter,* in his celebrated speech delivered in Congress on the 28th of February, 1810, relative to internal improvements, and the congressional proceedings arising out of the same, also invite our special notice. But upon the present occasion, highly important as they are, I must forbear from occupying the time of this assembly with the details to which they give rise; nor will the time allotted to this Discourse, permit me to submit to you the new, various, and important facts I have been enabled to collect upon this deeply interesting theme. I shall therefore proceed without delay briefly to notice the memorable events of 1810, that led to the great results we now enjoy in the present increasing prosperity of the state of New-York, as well as their effects throughout the union, and which have conferred immortal renown upon those who have contributed to the western and northern canals, and effected their completion.

Notwithstanding the practical skill, intelligence, and enterprise, of that able and experienced observer Philip Schuyler, the president of the western inland lock navigation company, and the abilities and unceasing attention of the late Robert Bowne and Thomas Eddy, active officers in the same institution, the interests and utility of that company declined, its stocks were depreciated, and its resources nearly exhausted. But the impression made was not useless: public attention was partially directed to the importance of inland navigation, which became the subject of repeated

* See Appendix, V.

conversations between Robert Troup, Alexander Hamilton,* Gouverneur Morris, Robert R. Livingston, Stephen Van Rensselaer, Thomas Eddy, and other distinguished citizens, who were in habits of friendship and intimacy with General Schuyler. This depressed and exhausted state of the finances of that institution, induced the directors, and especially the treasurer, Mr. Thomas Eddy, who was the chief agent in conducting the concerns of the company, to direct their attention to the means of its restoration. Mr. Eddy after much reflection upon this subject, was induced to inquire how far an extension of the inland navigation, which for many years he had unsuccessfully urged upon the company, might revive the interests and improve the pecuniary resources of the institution. Agreeably to his written memoranda in my possession, the result of this inquiry led him again to propose to extend this navigation by means of canals as far as the Seneca Lake. It may be remarked, as introductory to the suggestions of Mr. Eddy, that he had been familiarly and intimately acquainted with the geography and topography of this state, and its western section in particular, as early as 1793. In that year he took a journey into that country, in order to be present at a treaty which was held with the Indians by General Schuyler and others, at Fort Stanwix, as commissioners appointed on the part of the state.

Upon another occasion he accompanied Mr. William Weston,

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* General Hamilton was so deeply impressed with the idea, that at no distant period this country would be deeply engaged in the construction of numerous canals, that he resolved to educate one of his sons as a canal engineer, believing that he could not be destined to a more honourable and useful employment. This anecdote I have received from his friend Colonel Troup.

an eminent canal engineer from England, employed by the lock navigation company in exploring the country from Rome to Cayuga Lake in 1796. These circumstances gave Mr. Eddy an accurate and detailed knowledge of the whole face of the country, and induced him to urge upon the company the propriety of extending their canal navigation from Rome to Seneca River.

Mr. Eddy informed me that the views he entertained upon the subject of internal navigation, arose in his mind as early as 1793, and were the subjects of conversation with General Schuyler and himself upon the occasion before mentioned. In connexion with this subject, I well remember when in Scotland in April 1793, on a visit to the late celebrated Dr. Beattie of Marischal College, Aberdeen, to have conversed with him relative to a letter* that had appeared in the Scotch newspapers, addressed to him by his pupil John Kemp, then professor of mathematics and natural philosophy in Columbia College, containing some suggestions which I then presumed Dr. Kemp had derived from his intimate friend General Schuyler, relative to the union of the lakes with the ocean, and the probable beneficial results to be derived from those improvements which have since been effected: the precise course of the water communications then contemplated and detailed in the letter of Dr. Kemp have escaped me. That those suggestions arose out of the intercourse between Dr. Kemp and General Schuyler is not improbable; but with which of these two gentlemen the proposition first arose, I have not yet obtained the evidence: for it is well known by the pupils of Dr. Kemp, that canal navigation was a favourite subject of his attention, and that in his course on natural

* This original letter may perhaps be found among the papers left by Dr. Beattie.

philosophy, he delivered to his class many lectures upon the construction of locks and canals. The papers of General Schuyler, or perhaps those of Dr. Beattie, may throw some further light upon this subject. Mr. Eddy being at Albany in the year 1810, it occurred to him that possibly the legislature might be induced to appoint commissioners to examine and explore the western part of the state, in order to ascertain the practicability of extending the canal navigation, and to estimate the expense and report thereon. As he expressed himself, he was perfectly convinced if such commissioners were appointed, they would make a favourable report. His friend Jonas Platt, who had often expressed particular interest on the subject of internal improvements, and who had also by his residence at that time in the western part of the state, become familiarly acquainted with its geography and topography, was at this time a member of the senate. On the evening of the 12th March, 1810, Thomas Eddy* called on Judge Platt and communicated to him the foregoing plan, on which he had never previously consulted any other person. He proposed to the judge to use his endeavours in the senate to procure the appointment of such commissioners to explore a route for a canal from Oneida Lake to Seneca River, with a view to authorise the western inland lock navigation company to make such canal. After hearing a full exposition of the plan proposed by Mr. Eddy, the judge replied,† that he rejoiced to find him moving in that field of inquiry, that he very highly approved of the proposition, but asked as the map of the state lay open before them, why not make it the duty of the commissioners to explore the country as

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* See Appendix, W.

† See Appendix, X.

far as Lake Erie, in order to ascertain the practicability of making a complete canal from thence to the Hudson? The judge added, that he feared his ideas might be considered by Mr. Eddy as visionary and extravagant, and that he had much to say to him on that subject. He then exhibited the plan which this conversation suggested, of instituting a board of commissioners, without reference to the western inland lock navigation company, to examine and survey the whole route from the Hudson to Lake Ontario and to Lake Erie, with the view of forming a canal independently of the beds of rivers, and using them as feeders merely. Whether the canal should be made directly to Lake Erie, without descending to, and ascending from Lake Ontario, must depend on the result of the surveys and the estimate of the comparative expense and their relative advantages; adding his decided conviction that no private corporation was adequate to, or ought to be entrusted with, the power and control over such an important object; also observing, that as the western inland navigation company had disappointed public expectation, it would be inauspicious to present any project which should be subjected to that corporation.

The mind of Mr. Eddy was startled at the apparent extravagance of this proposal, and he expressed his fears that by suggesting so vast an undertaking, canal navigation being then but little understood in this country, the legislature might condemn the whole as visionary, and deem it altogether unworthy of their consideration: the greater part of the night was consumed in the discussion of this topic, and at the close of this interview it was agreed that Judge Platt should prepare a joint resolution, conformable to the views that had been agreed upon, to be offered to both

branches of the legislature, and that he should present the same to the senate on the succeeding morning.

They then selected the names of the first board of commissioners, endeavouring to unite the influence of the two great political parties which at that time divided the state, and to combine talents, influence, wealth, and public spirit, in constituting such board. The commissioners designated were, Gouverneur Morris, Stephen Van Rensselaer, De Witt Clinton, Simeon De Witt, William North, Thomas Eddy, and Peter B. Porter.* As Mr. Clinton was then a member of the senate, and possessed a powerful influence over the dominant party, it was considered of primary importance to submit to him the resolution that had been prepared, and to request his co-operation in support of the plan proposed. The interview with Mr. Clinton was held, when the whole plan, with all the prominent facts and considerations connected with it, were submitted to him: he listened with intense interest, and although he professed to be in a great measure a stranger to the western interior of the state, and had given but little attention to the subject of canal navigation, he expressed his hearty concurrence in the measures proposed, and promised them his cordial assistance. I need not add with what fidelity that pledge was redeemed throughout the whole course of events that followed.

It was also important to obtain the support of an influential member of the assembly. The Hon. Stephen Van Rensselaer being then a member of that house, Judge Platt submitted to him the proposed resolution, to which he promptly assented,

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* See laws of the state of New-York in relation to the Erie and Champlain Canals, Vol. I.

promising to give it his warmest support when the same might be introduced into the assembly. On the succeeding day, the 12th of March, the resolution was accordingly first proposed in the senate, and was introduced with an appropriate speech by Judge Platt. It was seconded and supported by De Witt Clinton, and passed unanimously. The concurrent resolution was on the same day unanimously adopted in the assembly. From this time, it may be added, that the efforts of Thomas Eddy and of Judge Platt were unremittingly continued throughout the whole progress of the work thus auspiciously begun; and from the same period, Mr. Clinton devoted the best powers of his vigorous and capacious mind to the same subject, as an object of the highest public utility, and worthy of his noblest ambition.

In the eloquent language of the able editor of the American,* who professes himself at no time to have been the admirer of Mr. Clinton's political career, but who had the magnanimity at his decease, to bear the most ample testimony to his merits and services; "in the great work of internal improvement, he persevered through good report and through evil report, with a steadiness of purpose that no obstacle could divert, and when all the elements were in commotion around him, and even his chosen associates were appalled: he alone, like Columbus on the wide waste of waters in his frail bark with a disheartened and unbelieving crew, remained firm, self-poised, and unshaken. Is it extravagant or unjust to say, that, like Columbus, he was recompensed by opening new worlds to our intercourse—vast regions, which the canals of New-York must be the means of subduing, civilising, enriching?"

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* Charles King, Esq.

In the course of that year the commissioners, with corresponding zeal and ability, commenced the labours assigned them, of exploring the surface of the country, with the lakes and rivers connected with the great design; and, in the winter of 1811, submitted to the Legislature an unanimous report, drawn by the masterly pen of Gouverneur Morris, recommending a canal from Lake Erie to Hudson's River, with an estimate of the expense of the same. That eloquent report is before the public.

In the same year General Morgan Lewis was elected to the Senate, who then and ever afterwards gave his warm and decided support to the canal. During the same session the Board of Canal Commissioners received a great accession of talent in the appointment of the late Robert R. Livingston and Robert Fulton, who possessed much information upon subjects of this nature, and who gave all their influence to the support of the contemplated plan.* Indeed, the last named gentleman had already rendered himself conspicuous throughout Europe, by his valuable work on canal navigation.

In April, 1811, Mr. Clinton, then Lieutenant Governor of the state, introduced a bill into the senate, by which the commissioners were empowered to solicit the aid of the general government, in accomplishing the stupendous work then in contemplation. De Witt Clinton and Gouverneur Morris were deputed by the Board for the performance of that duty. They accordingly proceeded to Washington; and after exhibiting their commission to the President, Mr. Madison, they presented a memorial to be laid before Congress, in which every argument was urged in behalf of the object of their

* See Appendix, Y.

application, and to induce the favourable notice and co-operation of the general government. Three weeks were consumed in conferences with the heads of departments and the most influential members of both houses in endeavours to obtain their approbation of the measure proposed, but all to no purpose. Congress peremptorily, and happily for the honour and interests of the state of New-York, refused their aid.*

In March, 1812, the commissioners made their report to the legislature, in which it was zealously urged, "that now, sound policy imperatively demanded that the canal should be made by the state of New-York alone, and for her own account, as soon as circumstances would permit; and that it would be a want of wisdom (and almost of piety) not to employ, for public advantage, those means which Providence had placed so completely in their power;" and with prophetic wisdom predicting, that it will ever remain "a testimony to the genius, the learning, the industry, and intelligence of the present age."

In June, 1812, agreeably to a resolution of the board of commissioners, Judge Platt introduced a bill into the senate authorizing the commissioners to borrow five millions of dollars in Europe, on the credit of the state, as a fund for prosecuting that work. The bill passed into a law; but the war with England, which soon after succeeded, induced the legislature, in 1814, to repeal that law; and with it, all further proceedings relative to the canal were suspended. After the war had terminated, many of the former friends of the canal appeared to be entirely discouraged and to have abandoned all hopes of the legislature being again induced to renew the

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* See Appendix Z.

consideration of that subject. But Mr. Eddy could not thus resign a favourite project; and it appeared to him that one more effort should now be made. His early coadjutor, Judge Platt, being in the city of New-York, holding a court in the autumn of 1815, Mr. Eddy addressed to him a note, requesting a visit from him the succeeding day. The judge, accordingly, accepted the invitation; when Mr. Eddy proposed to him, that although the subject of the canal appeared to be entirely abandoned, yet, if it met his approbation, he would undertake to revive the business, by procuring a public meeting to be held, in order to urge the propriety and policy of offering a memorial to the legislature to prosecute the canal from Lake Erie to the Hudson. Judge Platt readily acceded to the proposal, and consented to open the subject to the meeting, if one could be obtained. De Witt Clinton was also, afterwards, called upon by Thomas Eddy in person, and united in adopting measures to procure such public meeting. A large number of our most respectable citizens met accordingly at the City Hotel. At that memorable meeting the late William Bayard, Esq. acted as chairman, and John Pintard, Esq. as secretary. Judge Platt opened the meeting with an introductory speech, on the immense importance of the contemplated canal both to the city and state. He was followed by De Witt Clinton and others.

Although some opposition to the proposed measures was expressed by individuals of high consideration in the community, a resolution was nevertheless passed by a large majority in favour of the object. Whereupon De Witt Clinton, Thomas Eddy, Cadwallader D. Colden, and John Swartwout, were appointed a committee to prepare and circulate a memorial to be presented to the legislature in favour of the proposed Erie Canal.

A memorial was drawn and published accordingly, and was

extensively diffused throughout every part of the state; and at the ensuing session of the legislature, was presented to that body. It was the production of the pen of De Witt Clinton, and evinced a perfect knowledge of the subject; with a sagacious discernment of its beneficial results, to the state and to the nation. Of that splendid and celebrated production, which doubtless was among the most instrumental means of establishing the canal policy on a firm basis, it is remarked by a competent judge,* "that if Mr. Clinton had left no other evidence, that memorial alone is sufficient to entitle him to the character of an accomplished writer, an enlightened statesman, and a zealous patriot."

The friends of the canal throughout the state rallied under the standard of that memorial; and meetings were soon after held in Albany, Utica, Geneva, Canandaigua, and Buffalo, to support the efforts that had been so successfully commenced in the city of New-York, and thence a vigorous impulse was given to the public mind in favour of the arduous enterprise. Petitions of the same character, from different parts of the state, and signed by many thousand citizens, were presented at the ensuing session of the legislature.

The services rendered by the late Dr. Hugh Williamson, in his various writings under the signature of an †Observer, Mercator, Atticus, &c. relative to this subject; the exertions of the late Gideon Granger,‡ and those of the venerable Robert Troup, who most unceasingly devoted themselves to the interests of the state as

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* Jonas Platt, Esq. † See Appendix, AA.

‡ See speech of Gideon Granger, Esq. delivered before a convention of the people of Ontario county, New-York, January 8th, 1817, on the subject of a canal from Lake Erie to Hudson's River, published at Canandaigua at the request of the members of the convention.

connected with this great undertaking; will also be gratefully remembered by succeeding generations.* The measures which followed are too familiarly known to call for a recital in this place; and which is also rendered unnecessary as they have been amply detailed in the excellent memoir prepared under the direction of the Corporation of this city, by the Hon. Cadwallader D. Colden, and in the valuable writings of the late Charles G. Haines, Esq.

Another class of benefactors to the system of canal navigation may still be added, consisting of those who mainly contributed to its ultimate success, by obviating the difficulties and impediments which were accidentally or intentionally thrown in the way to oppose its progress, or entirely to defeat and frustrate the undertaking; for even after the subject had been well understood by the members of the legislature, and the bill was in its passage through the two houses, obstacles were still presented at every step, which required all the genius and resources of the friends to the project to meet and counteract.

To the Hon. Cadwallader D. Colden, Martin Van Buren, Jacob Rutsen Van Rensselaer, James Lynch, Peter A. Jay, William Ross, and William A. Duer, the state owes a debt of gratitude for their patriotic exertions in behalf of the canal.†

It may be mentioned among the singular coincidences of the times, that Lieutenant Governor Colden, in the early part of the eighteenth century, was the first to express his anticipation of the canal policy of the then colony of New-York; and that in a century afterwards, his no less gifted grandson should be one of its most efficient and able supporters. Of the grandsire I have already

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* See Appendix, BB.

† See Appendix, CC.

spoken, as the most accomplished and most learned of the early settlers of our state; as endued with erudition surpassing the times and age in which he lived; as exhibiting, in his life and character, a devotion to intellectual cultivation most honourable and exclusive; and I cannot doubt that the benign effects of his laudable zeal and example, are felt by our literature and science at the present day. Of his grandson, connected to me by the bonds of friendship and social intercourse, I will attempt to speak in that tone of applause which his own high merits warrant, but which his own modesty would disown.

Long an ardent and successful cultivator of the science of jurisprudence, he has yet, by the versatility of his talent and ardour of application, been enabled to devote no inconsiderable portion of his time to those more liberal studies in which the dignity of our nature as well as its interests are concerned; and we all know the important objects to which those studies have been directed, and the efficiency with which they have been applied. His acquirements, his ability, his honour, and fidelity, are entitled to our unqualified approbation: but while we acknowledge his general merits, it is no less due to the able services he has rendered, as a member of the assembly and of the senate of the state, as the chairman of the committee of finance, and of the committee to whom the Governor's speech was referred, to observe, that in all these several situations, he was the active and able defender of the measures for carrying into operation the plan of canal navigation that has been adopted; at the same time, that, in his valuable memoir addressed to the corporation, he has condensed into an accurate and succinct summary most of the facts which relate to this deeply interesting subject.

In a word, to use the language of the committee of the corpo-

ration of the city of New-York, Mr. Colden as a private citizen, and in the various official stations he has filled, has throughout shown himself the zealous and constant friend of every measure calculated to open to us that vast inland navigation, which his grandfather more than a century ago predicted.

The Hon. Martin Van Buren, and the other gentlemen just mentioned, have been no less distinguished by their support of the legislative measures that have been adopted. Those gentlemen, then members of the legislature, independently of their able, and in most instances their uniform support of the canal policy, signalized themselves by very important services in rescuing the bill from a state of jeopardy, even when it had been to a certain degree abandoned by its friends—by their personal and almost miraculous exertions it was resuscitated, and again restored to the approbation of the two houses of the legislature.

Indeed I may add, such were the machinations of its enemies, that when the bill had actually reached the council of revision, so relentless and persevering were their efforts to defeat it, this great national work as it proves to be, might still have failed if it had not been sustained by the enlightened views and integrity of purpose, that nobly characterised certain members of that body. To our distinguished citizen James Kent in particular, then Chancellor of the state, and ex officio a member of that council, is our country indebted for a casting vote that decided the fate of that highly important act, so deeply connected with the vital interests of this state and nation.

A few cursory remarks will conclude my views on this important subject. When the details of this vast project of uniting the waters of the lakes with those of the Atlantic, were submitted

to the discussions of the legislature, by some the proposition was ridiculed as altogether visionary and quixotic; every epithet which timidity, ignorance, or the bad passions of the human heart, envy, jealousy, malignity, political or personal animosity could suggest, was bestowed upon its authors and the friends of the contemplated plan. But the genius of Clinton was not to be dismayed; with his characteristic firmness, unrestrained by the powers of envy, unappalled by the scoffs of political opponents, obstacles were only interposed to be overthrown. Conscious of his superior strength, and of the practicability of the plan proposed, confiding in the resources of the state, and the patriotism of her citizens to effect its completion, independently of aid from the general government or the neighbouring states, which had been solicited in vain, he met the opposition with calm but steady and persevering firmness, until the whole was in such train that the execution of the work was at hand. But ere the period had arrived which was to crown his efforts with success, and to encircle his brow with a wreath of never-fading laurels, and to elevate him to the proudest niche in the temple of fame, the baleful spirit of party strife reared its hideous front, and for a season he became its victim.

Will posterity believe, that at the very moment when his services were most important, his character should be traduced, his motives misrepresented, and he be thrust from a station, the emoluments of which he neither solicited or received? Yes; the ignoble deed was done!—"Quos Deus vult perdere prius dementat."

On the 12th of April, 1824, the last day of the session of that year, a day which will be rendered ever memorable in the history of this state, De Witt Clinton, by an almost unanimous vote of both

houses of the legislature,* was removed from the office of canal commissioner; the man who had been many years one of the greatest benefactors of this state, and who at the very moment when his labours were suspended, was actively engaged in the completion of this work which distinguishes the age and country in which it has been accomplished: probably for the same reason that the Athenians urged, when by the ostracism they banished their Aristides, that they were wearied with hearing the continued praises bestowed upon the good, the virtuous, the just Aristides, our representatives could also allege, as the best defence to be advanced for their high-handed act of cruelty and folly, that they too were wearied with hearing the unceasing plaudits bestowed upon Clinton, the idol, the Aristides of his country. Such was the indignation created throughout every part of the state by this most extraordinary, this almost maniacal procedure of a deliberative body, that as was to be expected, it produced an almost universal re-action in his favour. Like the chains of Columbus after his discovery of the new world, this unjust and odious act only served to enhance the value of his services, to dishonour his enemies, to rivet more strongly the affections of his friends, and the gratitude of his country, to immortalize and to identify his name with the deeds he had done, and the country he had served. He met the event with his accustomed self-possession; he calmly retired until the storm then raging might be expended, when he again rose superior to his enemies, and to every misfortune with which they had endeavoured to overwhelm him.

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* See Appendix, DD.

Yes, he endured all that poverty and humiliation could inflict, and nobly disdained to receive aught for the services he had rendered in the station from which he had been thus ignominiously displaced. For a time he retired from the public view, but that retirement was still devoted to scientific pursuits, and the interests of his country: notwithstanding the unmerited obloquy he had sustained, his magnanimity never for a moment forsook him; he still extended his guardian protection over the ulterior interests of his native state; he still continued to examine and develope her resources, to arouse her latent energies, and looked forward to the period when she would be awakened to her high destiny. Although withdrawn from public life, he never spent an idle hour, but eagerly availed himself of this temporary release from public employment, to extend his knowledge of mechanical philosophy, of the principles of canalling, and of those collateral branches of science, connected with the great plan of internal improvements. His favourite study of natural philosophy also, as it had ever done, served to fill up an occasional hour of relaxation from severer pursuits.

I am not aware that upon this removal from all public duties, Mr. Clinton did at any time, either in conversation with his private friends or others, communicate the feelings which his wounded spirit must unavoidably have sustained on this occasion; nor have I been able to learn, that in any of his correspondence he in any wise alluded to his exclusion in the language of censure: the only letter in which he adverted to it, that has come to my knowledge, is one written on the third day after the passage of the act by which he was reduced to the station of a private citizen. In this communication, addressed to his friend, Dr. John W. Francis,

he thus expresses himself:—"I am now without any public trust, having been removed from the office of canal commissioner; and if I can do no official good, I certainly am deprived of the means of doing mischief." * * * * *

The time was rapidly approaching when this single-hearted patriotism, this pure devotion, was destined to receive its highest reward. Mr. Clinton having previously exercised the office of Governor of the state, and having signalized himself by the services he had rendered in that situation, the people, ever true to themselves, and to whom is the ultimate appeal when injustice has been done, became sensible of that injustice, and indignant at the conduct of their representatives, resolved to show the world how highly they prized the disinterested services of their benefactor. They accordingly, at the first opportunity which was afforded them to express their sense of the injury and the indignity he had sustained, called him from his retirement, and by an overwhelming majority of the votes of his fellow-citizens, again placed him in the chair of state: happily for the interests and character of the state, he continued to hold the office until his lamented decease.

To Mr. Clinton is also due great credit for devising the means of finance necessary to the contemplated canal navigation, and through the weight of his unceasing exertions and influence, aided by the support of Jonas Platt, George Tibbits, Wheeler Barnes, Myron Holley, Morgan Lewis, and Edward P. Livingston, then members of the legislature, in obtaining the measures of that body to carry the same into effect.*

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* See Appendix, EE.

While, therefore, much praise is due to those whose services have been acknowledged, the existence of the New-York canal will ever be identified with the name and fame of De Witt Clinton, and hereafter ought to be, and doubtless will be known and designated as the Clinton Canal. It ought not to be forgotten that in 1818, during the discussions in the legislature, when the further progress of the canal depended upon the appropriations then required, it was spoken of, by an able and influential member of that body, in terms of derision, as "a big ditch," in which were to be buried the treasures of the state, and to be watered with the tears of posterity. By another member of the senate, when the question of appropriation was first proposed, such were the fears conscientiously entertained by many, it was pronounced to be a project unavoidably involving the ruin and bankruptcy of the state. But notwithstanding all the merited weight of character and experience with which this prediction was urged, it was not sufficient to resist the defence of the plan proposed and sustained by Mr. Clinton and his associates, many of whom were his political opponents, but who had the magnanimity to acknowledge the correctness of his views, and the extensive benefits to be derived to our state and country from their adoption.

Even by the venerable Jefferson, whose views of this subject were solicited, and whose experience and foresight gave weight to his opinions, it was considered a project not to be realized for a century to come; but it is due to the candour of Mr. Jefferson to add, that when the canal was completed, he as frankly acknowledged in a letter addressed to Governor Clinton, that in his prediction he had been a century too late.

By Mr. Madison also it was deemed so expensive an undertaking, as far to exceed the whole resources of the nation. The late Mr.

Rufus King, whose intelligence, patriotism, and correct judgment upon most subjects connected with the general welfare of the country, none can question, when requested to add the weight of his name to the memorial to be presented to the legislature in 1816, declined doing so, alleging that the work contemplated far exceeded the resources of the state, or even of the United States at that time; adding, "I cannot, therefore, sanction with my signature a memorial which would involve, if granted, much useless expenditure." But it is a tribute due to the magnanimity of that eminent statesman to add, from information I have recently received from the gentleman to whom the communication was made, that on the 24th November, 1825, when the American papers were received in London, containing an account of the canal celebration upon the completion of that great work, Mr. King in his remarks on the festival, took occasion to pronounce a high and flattering eulogium upon the talents and services of Mr. Clinton, and expressed much satisfaction that the plans of that illustrious statesman had at length been fully realised, and that the stupendous enterprise with which his reputation was identified, had been crowned with complete success. He rejoiced that Mr. Clinton had outlived the prejudices and passions of his opponents, and was in the full enjoyment of the popularity and public confidence which he had so justly merited.*

By others it was considered altogether visionary, and likely to be destructive not only of the interests of the state, but of the reputation of Mr. Clinton, and all who were associated with him; indeed had it proved unsuccessful, the latter event it will be con-

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* See Appendix, FF.

ceded, must have been inevitable; but thanks to a superintending Providence, he survived to witness its completion, which has been mainly effected by his instrumentality and perseverance. Mr. Clinton's exertions, public, private, and personal, throughout the whole progress of this work, from the commencement to its termination, were the subject of surprise, and the theme of praise throughout the state and country.

Some of Mr. Clinton's more immediate friends whose interests were connected with, and dependent upon his own, perceiving the plan proposed to be unpopular in the western parts of the state, and apprehensive that its failure would prove destructive of his political character and standing, and that they would necessarily suffer from the loss of his influence, appointed a committee to wait upon him, for the purpose of expressing their fears of the result of these contemplated internal improvements, and if possible, of dissuading him from further proceedings upon this subject. His reply, in which he manifested his total disregard of private interest, when it came in collision with the public good, was characteristic of his invincible determination. "Gentlemen," said he, after partially hearing their communications, "my mind is decided upon this measure; it is practicable, it is of immense importance to the interests of the state, it is perfectly within the reach of its resources. I am, therefore determined to hazard all for its accomplishment." His caution in forming his opinions and plans of operation, his inflexible decision and perseverance in carrying into effect what his judgment had approved, were not to be counteracted or controlled by any means that could be presented by friends or foes: his mental courage, as well as his personal and physical firmness, were not to be shaken by the fears of his friends, or the machinations of his opponents.

In 1819 the enemies of the canal finding that the success of Mr. Clinton's measures was inevitable, and further resistance on their part vain and likely to recoil upon themselves, at the same time desirous to lessen the reputation he had acquired, and which was likely to be increased, summoned a meeting in Albany, when they resolved to relinquish the opposition they had hitherto maintained, and to unite in support of the canal, and from that period to give it all the aid in their power; in the meanwhile, industriously diffusing the idea that he had no credit in giving origin to the project, and was only entitled to a small part of the merit attached to the measures that had been recommended and adopted for thus far carrying it into effect.

There are none who will duly consider the important services rendered by Mr. Clinton, in his various capacities of governor, senator, and canal commissioner, who will advert to his public messages, his personal exertions, his extensive correspondence, his anxious and laborious attentions, his unceasing devotion, by night and by day; surrounded by enemies on every side,—sometimes, indeed, counteracted by his friends,—who will believe, that, without his instrumentality, this work would have been accomplished at this time? And it will readily be perceived and acknowledged, had the law not been passed at the propitious moment that it was enacted, such has been the distracted state of party feelings, and such the conflicting local interests of the different parts of the state, that, since that period, it would have been utterly impossible to have again united the sentiments of the legislative body in a work of this magnitude.

The canal, thus completed, uniting the lakes and the ocean, as was anticipated, has rendered the city of New-York the commercial centre of the union—the London of the western hemisphere. At

the same time, that it has immortalized the name of him who has been the efficient instrument of the accomplishment of this gigantic work, which, in the language of the memorable act of 1817, "is destined to promote agriculture, manufactures, and commerce, to mitigate the calamities of war, to enhance the blessings of peace, to consolidate the union, to advance the prosperity and elevate the character of the United States." As is justly observed by the secretary of state, the able compiler of the laws relating to this subject:—"Projects, so bold in their conception, so extensive in their influence, so beneficial in their effects, and so stupendous in their object, will indeed remain to declare the glory of our country, and to pronounce the best eulogium upon the memory of their founders and patrons."*

Contemplating these results as tributary to the firmer union of the American confederacy, permit me to adopt the emphatic language of Mr. Clinton himself:†—"A dissolution of the union may be considered the natural death of our free government. To avert this awful calamity, all local prejudices and geographical distinctions should be discarded, the people should be habituated to frequent intercourse and beneficial inter-communication, and the whole republic ought to be bound together by the golden ties of commerce and the adamantine chains of interest. When the western canal is finished and a communication is formed between Lake Michigan and the Illinois river, or between the Ohio and the waters of Lake Erie, the greater part of the United States will form one vast island, susceptible of circumnavigation to the extent of many thousand miles. The most distant parts of the confederacy

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* John Van Ness Yates.

† See Governor Clinton's speech for 1819.

will then be in a state of approximation, and the distinctions of eastern and western, of southern and northern interests, will be entirely prostrated. To be instrumental in producing so much good, by increasing the stock of human happiness; by establishing the perpetuity of free government, and by extending the empire of knowledge, of refinement, and of religion, is an ambition worthy of a free people. The most exalted reputation is that which arises from the dispensation of happiness to our fellow-creatures, and that conduct is most acceptable to God which is most beneficial to man."

While the completion of the canal is, by common consent, ascribed to the indefatigable and persevering exertions of Mr. Clinton, it is but justice to his memory to observe, that he never pretended to claim the merit of being the projector of the system of canal navigation in this state: on the contrary, he unequivocally disclaimed all pretension to that merit, and freely ascribed it to others, yet not considering it due to any one individual. In his pertinent reply to the committee appointed by the citizens of New-York, to express their sentiments relative to his removal from the honorary station of canal commissioner, he thus diffidently expresses his own agency, and the obligations that are due to others, who had been instrumental in the commencement, the progress, and the accomplishment of this great work: "I have furnished this summary view of the subject, (he remarks,) not in a spirit of egotism, a tone of assumption, or with any pretensions to exclusive merit. I have done all that I could do—and the agency of many meritorious and distinguished men, in preparing the public mind to favour, and inducing the legislature to adopt the project—in exploring and examining the country—in undertaking the responsibilities of superintendence and engineering—in facilitating the financial

arrangements,—and in promoting the general interests of the undertaking, entitles them to the highest praise."* Upon another public occasion he, in like manner, disclaimed any participation in the honour of giving origin to this most useful work.

His compliment to Judge Platt, in his reply to the trustees of the village of Utica,† is an additional evidence of his disinterestedness: "You can enrol in your number a fellow-citizen," he observes, "whose purity of character, elevation of purpose, and solidity of intellect, are entitled to the highest consideration. In the commencement of this work, he was a prominent and efficient friend; and when it had sunk, irretrievably sunk, in the general estimation, he was greatly instrumental in its resuscitation, and, probably, prevented its final overthrow." With the same spirit of liberality towards all who have been his coadjutors, and gentleness of rebuke to those who have been inimical to this undertaking, he further observes: "For the good which has been done by individuals or communities, in relation to this work, let each have a due share of credit: over the evil which has been perpetrated, let a veil of oblivion be drawn—let the unfriendly feelings, which have sprung from those collisions, be merged in a spirit of conciliation and kindness—let the dark shades of the past be extinguished in the brilliant enjoyment of the present and the splendid visions of the future."‡

After this exhibition of the facts relative to the canal navigation and its associate improvements, that have been thus successfully carried into operation, and secured to the state of New-York the acknowledged ascendency she now holds in the union, and the

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* See Appendix, GG. ‡ See Appendix, HHH. † See Appendix, II.

inestimable benefits she has already derived, and will continue to receive, I feel persuaded, that the feelings of all who hear me are in unison with mine, when I observe, that while much praise is due to many of the distinguished men whose services have been briefly referred to, and by whose labours the public mind had been in some degree prepared, more especially by the legislative measures proposed by Joshua Foreman, and the subsequent surveys of Simeon Dewitt, James Geddes, and Benjamin Wright,* that to Thomas Eddy and Jonas Platt are to be attributed the great credit of originating in 1810 the first efficient and successful public measures, and after the termination of the late war, in 1815, of recalling the attention of the citizens, and of the legislature, to this subject; while to De Witt Clinton will be ascribed the imperishable renown of having been the chief instrument of effecting and completing this splendid achievement, which reflects lustre upon an illustrious age.

In the language of his venerable friend and preceptor† already noticed:—"As long as the Erie canal shall enrich and bless the state of New-York, so long that state should venerate the name of De Witt Clinton, and a statue, or other monument to his memory, be erected on its banks."

Yes, illustrious benefactor of this state and nation, while the waters of Erie shall flow, while time shall endure, thy name will be venerated, and an everlasting monument be erected to thy memory in the hearts of thy countrymen.

For such as have not had an opportunity of seeing Mr. Clinton, it may be observed, that his personal manner and appearance were

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* See Appendix, JJ.

† William Cochran, D.D.

dignified and commanding, which well corresponded with the loftiness of his views and the elevation of mind which he uniformly displayed.

His person was tall, exceeding six feet in height, of a fine form, and well proportioned. In his earlier years he was remarkable for his thin and slender make; but in the latter part of his life, his frame became expanded, and in consequence of lameness from an accidental injury, by which he was deprived of his customary exercise, he acquired a fulness of habit, which predisposed him to the diseases that ultimately supervened, and in their consequences led to his dissolution. His carriage was elevated; his movements deliberate and dignified, sometimes manifesting great earnestness, but never precipitancy.

His head was well formed and particularly distinguished for the great height and breadth of his forehead; his hair was brown; his complexion brilliant; his nose finely proportioned and of the Grecian form; his lip thin, and of that peculiar configuration that some critics have deemed indicative of eloquence.

His eyes were of a dark hazle colour, but peculiarly quick and expressive; sometimes indicating all the playfulness of the most vivid imagination; upon other occasions, moistened with a tear, displaying the most tender emotion that can weigh upon the heart; but when a sense of injury or wrong called for redress, the same eye could flash the fire of indignation in expressing the powerful feelings that were then passing through his mind. The muscles of his face, especially when exercised in conversation, or in public speaking, were strongly marked, and exhibited the impulse and energy of the soul that animated them: furnishing ample illustration of the truth, that while the bony configuration of the head may exhibit the original capacity and propensities of the individual, the

eye and the muscles composing the soft features, alone indicate the activity and powers actually exercised by the mind: as the beautiful sculpture of the vase is only displayed in perfection when lighted from within, so do the external moveable features of the human form exhibit the animating principle that gives to them their expression and intelligence; in these alone the character of the man is delineated. The clay and the canvass of the most eminent artists of our country, have frequently been employed to convey the image of his person for the gratification of his numerous friends, and the different public institutions which he has created, and whose interests he has promoted by his public services and his private benefactions.

Mr. Clinton was as amiable in his private as he was dignified in his public life. His great intellectual powers and attainments were adorned with a corresponding moral character, pure and unsullied. Although his life has been dedicated to the interests of his country, and expended in her service, he has left his numerous family in a state of comparative dependence. Yes, the orphan children of him who has been the instrument of elevating the character of the state, and of pouring incalculable wealth into its treasury, with the exception of the inconsiderable legislative grant of ten thousand dollars, are left dependent upon their own exertions, I had almost said, without the means of education and support. The public stations he has filled, afforded him repeated opportunities of improving his pecuniary condition, and that too in a manner which the most fastidious would have approved as perfectly just and honourable; yet he ever declined to avail himself of the numerous occasions that were thus frequently placed within his reach; when too it was customary and deemed perfectly correct, for members of the legislature to subscribe to newly

created stocks, a privilege they possessed in common with their fellow-citizens, Mr. Clinton in no instance, upon no occasion, ever departed from the rule of conduct he had prescribed for himself upon subjects of this nature. Like Hamilton, his illustrious predecessor in the hearts of his countrymen, although placed in situations where he had an opportunity of acquiring great wealth, and that without the least imputation upon his integrity, he preferred to forego those advantages, and to leave as a legacy to his children his unsullied integrity and poverty, in preference to wealth, and the possibility of a suspicion, that he may have acquired it by any act which could bear the construction of a sordid desire to render his office tributary to his private benefit, at the expense of the public good.

I must be permitted too, to relate an occurrence as falling within my own personal knowledge, that upon an occasion when Mr. Clinton was under the greatest embarrassment in his finances, and in a moment of peculiar depression from the temporary discontinuance of public favour and removal from office, the sum of five thousand dollars was placed at his command by a friend who knew his pecuniary distress: with strong and grateful emotions connected with this event, he declined to receive it, thereby manifesting that delicacy of integrity only known to pure and elevated minds. Notwithstanding the limited resources of Mr. Clinton, to the poor he was generous and charitable; in his contributions to the public institutions of our city and state, and in his expenditures in the promotion of science and literature, his liberal feelings far exceeded the means he possessed of indulging his inclinations. As a private citizen, as well as in his public official character, his urbanity and hospitality to the stranger, have oftentimes been the theme of praise, and have reflected credit upon

our country. In the ordinary interchanges of society, he was no less ready in the tender of his advice and friendship to those who sought them, than he was to aid them with his purse. I may add, that in all the changes of a long and eventful life, he was never known to abandon a faithful friend. His gratitude for past services was ever a prominent trait in his character; his fidelity to those from whom he had ever received an act of kindness was proverbial.

However elevated his station, or whatever may have been the changes of condition his friends may have experienced, his attentions to them were uniformly continued. In some instances even at the expense of his discretion, his political influence, his increasing fame and standing in society, he persisted in extending to them his friendly notice long after the world had considered them unworthy of his protection: the motive that prompted to this kindness, cannot but be appreciated, and claim for him the respect and the affections of his fellow-men. Where his friends maintained their integrity and honourable standing, they never failed in the dispensation of his patronage, to receive a full share of his liberality and gratitude.

From a long and intimate acquaintance with Mr. Clinton, I am also fully satisfied that there are other traits of his character, which were misinterpreted and not at all understood by the public. His deportment, which was naturally dignified, was considered by many to proceed from arrogance and a sense of superiority; on the contrary, no man walked more humbly, for no man was more conscious of the real extent of his powers, or sensible of his defects. He had attained to that height in knowledge, that he readily saw the extent of the terra incognita to which his efforts had not reached, or circumstances did not permit him to attain: this necessarily, at the same time that it quickened his ambition,

produced in him great humility, which was frequently made manifest to his intimate friends.

His apparent and alleged haughtiness of manner, in my opinion, arose in part from his natural diffidence, and was partly attributable to long and confirmed habits of abstraction; for when not engaged in the discharge of his public duties, he was generally immured in his library, and his mind intently occupied upon subjects of great interest, leaving little room for intercourse with the world, or indulgence in that light conversation and flippancy, possessed by the man more devoted to fashionable life.

Hence, eminent as he was as the statesman, he knew not, and never descended to the arts of the politician. He exercised none of the blandishments, the thousand nameless arts of winning popular favour by personal address, and for no better reason than that he did not possess them, and disdained the effort to acquire them.

He was indeed, as has been eloquently said, by an eminent counsellor of the New-York bar,* "the Pericles of our commonwealth: for nearly thirty years he exercised without stooping to the little arts of popularity, an intellectual dominion in his native state, scarcely inferior to that of the illustrious Athenian, a dominion as benignant as it was effective."

He was accused of hauteur and indifference towards his friends, and contempt of his enemies: the reverse of this picture too is the truth. In the social circle, in the enjoyments of the fire-side, when all sources of restraint were removed, he was known to be playful in the extreme, both in his manner and in conversation.

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* George Griffin, Esq. See Appendix, KK.

By his enemies he was also pronounced proud and ambitious. He was proud, but his was not the pride that is usually understood as the synonym of vanity; it was the consciousness of the merit and the powers he possessed, the purity of the principles by which he was governed, and of the deeds he had done; vanity knows no such merit, nor is entitled to those claims.

He too was ambitious; but it was that ambition which is ever identified with virtue, and never associated but with virtuous deeds; the object of that ambition was his country's welfare; true, he aspired to the high places and honours in the gift of his fellow-citizens; but it was to extend the horizon of his usefulness, and he never sought them but as the reward of merit and of services rendered.

Mr. Clinton was remarkable for a great degree of sensibility and diffidence, not unfrequently the associates of genius and talent. He scarcely entered a drawing-room where many persons were assembled, or was introduced to a distinguished stranger, without manifesting some emotion and embarrassment: even in the delivery of a public discourse, notwithstanding his long habits of public speaking, like his great predecessor Hamilton, he never rose without excitement, almost as great as that imputed to the Roman orator.

You who have been his auditors, will well remember the trembling hand, the faltering voice, the quivering lip, and the suffused check, that exhibited the strong feelings that agitated his frame, and which were scarcely to be subdued by the consciousness of the importance of the subject, or the merit of the labour in which he was engaged.

In the domestic character, and in all the private relations of life, Mr. Clinton was no less exemplary than he was dis-

tinguished in the several public stations he occupied. In him we find the affectionate husband, the kind and indulgent parent, the humane master, the attentive and unchanging friend.

During all the severity and most violent spirit of party contention, his enemies never said aught to call in question the unsullied purity of his private deportment. In the domestic character of Mr. Clinton, we are called upon to admire his amiable temper, and the tender attachment he manifested to the members of his family, not excepting his domestics, who were uniformly treated by him with feeling and courtesy, and who in return were always devoted to their kind and benevolent protector.

The affectionate intercourse and playful fondness he ever indulged towards his children, and the inordinate sensibilities and sufferings which he experienced from the bereavements he had occasion to sustain, also evince the purity and gentleness of his domestic life.

It may convey to this audience some idea of the extent of that sensibility which filled his parental bosom, when they are told of his acute distress at the loss of a favourite son; and that his feelings were so concentrated upon the object of his affections, that some months after the death of that interesting boy, when passing through the street, and accidentally observing a lad resembling in dress, person, and appearance, his departed son, so instantaneously and ardently were the father's affections kindled into flame, that excluding all other objects of sight, of hearing, or of thought, he eagerly rushed forward in pursuit of his supposed child, calling him to his embrace by the beloved name of his "Walter!—Walter!"—The heart thus constituted must be an abode of the gentlest feelings of our nature;—a citadel where every virtue may be found, and must delight to dwell.

An interesting question here presents itself; what were the religious sentiments of this distinguished man, whose mind was so highly endowed with natural powers of reflection, and enriched by such varied and extensive attainments? An intimate acquaintance with the works of nature, cannot fail to elevate the mind to the most sublime conceptions of the intelligence and power of the Supreme Being, and at the same time dilate the heart with the most grateful emotions and pleasing views of a superintending Providence. These sentiments and feelings, as I have oftentimes personally had an opportunity of witnessing, were enjoyed and expressed by Mr. Clinton in their fullest extent. In his last Discourse to the Bible Society, at its eleventh anniversary, he thus expresses himself on this subject:—"To those who have observed the leading events which have affected the primary interests of the human race, there must appear an obvious connexion or concatenation, demonstrating with irresistible force, the superintending providence of Almighty God."

He was no less a believer in the doctrines of the Christian faith: reflecting upon the doctrines of Christianity, a subject of the deepest interest to mankind, and as he expressed it, involving the most awful responsibilities, he became convinced of their truth, and that the great evidence of their divine origin was manifested in the purity of their ethics, and the superiority they exhibit over every code that has ever been framed or promulgated by man. His Discourses delivered at the anniversaries of the bible and missionary societies; before the society instituted for the education of young men for the ministry; his address relative to the establishment of public schools for the education of the poor; his messages to the legislature; his proclamations as the Chief Magistrate, in setting apart days of public thanksgiving, all

evince his attachment to the great interests of religion, and his devotion to that great and good Being from whose bounty we derive all that we enjoy. In one of his addresses* to the Bible Society, speaking of the objects of the anniversary meetings of that excellent institution, he observes, "they are connected with time and eternity;—with our present and future state of existence. That christianity has elevated the character of man, and blessed him in his domestic connexions, and in his social relations, cannot be denied by the most obdurate scepticism." He adds, "we must indeed shut our ears against the voice of experience, and our eyes against the light of truth, if we do not yield implicit faith to the exalting and meliorating virtues of our divine religion. The star that attracted the wandering curiosity of the wise men of the East, has become a sun of light to the human race, and wherever its radiations have reached, it has been the parent of cultivation, of civilization, of knowledge, and of virtue."

It is also to be remarked, that men whose minds have been enlarged by extensive knowledge and reflection, who have been accustomed to think and reason upon all subjects with a spirit of liberality and generous freedom, are not apt to become bigots to any peculiar sect or modes of faith. Mr. Clinton's liberality of sentiment, and charitable construction of the various doctrines and ordinances that divide the religious world, was no less apparent upon this, than upon every other subject that occupied his serious deliberation. At the same time that he reverenced the sincere worshipper of God, whatever may have been his peculiar tenets, or even his superstition, he knew not that sectarian zeal

* See his Discourse at the ninth anniversary, 1825.

that weakens the strength and chills the warmth of catholic charity; but confiding in the mercy of him who

> "doth prefer
> Before all temples, th' upright heart and pure,"

he knew not "those sectarian fires which put out christian light."* But cherishing the principles and performing the duties enjoined by the essentials of Christianity, in which all those varying sects accord, and rejoicing in the hopes and consolations which religion and reason supply, he looked forward to his dissolution with composure and resignation, prepared to meet the great event, which he manifestly anticipated was not then far distant. In the last conversation which I held with him on the Friday preceding his death, he evinced those feelings with his accustomed equanimity of manner, and characteristic firmness: speaking of his disease, (the sounds of his voice still vibrate on my ears,) he emphatically observed, and in the very language of the father of our country to his physician and friend, "Doctor, I am not afraid to die."

The closing scenes of his illustrious life merit our regard. Having been the fellow-student of Mr. Clinton when at college, having been his physician from the time of his first marriage in 1795, and during that period been honoured by his uninterrupted friendship, which has ever been that of an affectionate brother, I have been enabled to become familiarly acquainted with his constitutional peculiarities and temperament: these, it may be

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* See Plea for Sacramental Communion upon Catholic Principles. By J. M. Mason, D.D.

remarked, were of a nature so vigorous and excellent, that he enjoyed a greater exemption from disease than falls to the lot of most men. As already intimated, an accident some years since occurred, by which to a certain extent he was necessarily deprived of his accustomed exercise; although temperate in the extreme in his habits of living, he soon became plethoric, at the same time that his confinement rendered him sensitive to the changes of the atmosphere. In the autumn of 1827, he was attacked with a catarrhal affection of the throat and chest: as is generally the case with those of a vigorous constitution, and who have long enjoyed uninterrupted health, he was impatient of the restraints which sickness imposes, and to a degree disregarded his disease, and I might say, culpably omitted to employ the active means necessary for his relief. The result was a congestion of the heart and lungs, which ended in an effusion into the cavities of those viscera, attended with a corresponding deposit in the cellular membrane of the lower extremities.

During my last visit at Albany, the week immediately preceding his dissolution, I was very much surprised at the change which had taken place in the state of his health, and confidentially communicated to his eldest son, and to some of his connexions and friends, his imminently alarming situation; even too at this period he was daily taking bodily exercise, performing with his characteristic alacrity and energy his official duties at the capitol, and his mind directed to every object except his health and his own immediate condition, of which he was ever too regardless, and at this time totally unmindful.

Unprepared for these circumstances, and indeed told upon my arrival in Albany that he was recovering his health, which had been impaired, my feelings of surprise and pain when I took

my seat at his side, will readily be imagined; his anxious respiration—his anhelation upon the slightest motion—his livid countenance, his irregular and intermitting pulse—his swelling limbs, all indicated the dropsical and perhaps organic affection of the heart and larger vessels, and at once pointed to the fatal issue I thus confidently predicted.

On the Friday preceding his death, after a long conversation I held with him in his library, I bade him a last farewell, under the fullest conviction, as I confidentially expressed to his more immediate friends, that I should never see Mr. Clinton more.*

On the Monday following, the 11th of February, he performed his ordinary duties at the capitol; rode a few miles into the country with his family; returned to town; met some friends at dinner, and afterwards, as was his habit, retired to his study for the transaction of official business, and his accustomed literary pursuits. While sitting in his library, he was suddenly seized with a sense of oppression and stricture across the chest: he spoke to his son sitting near him, who was then writing, performing some duty that had been directed by his father, described to him the distressful and, as he feared, fatal sensation he experienced. Medical aid was instantly called for. By the direction of his son, some drink was given him. He walked in the hall, but soon returned to his chair in the library:—the hand of death was upon him—his head fell upon his breast. A physician arrived, but too late:—all efforts, though unremittingly continued for some hours, to recall his parting spirit, proved unavailing:—sense—consciousness—intelligence—had fled for ever:—Clinton was no more. The heart-rending event was

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* See Appendix, LL.

communicated to his agonized family; and, with the rapidity of an electric shock, pervaded the city:—the house of mourning was instantly surrounded by his neighbours and numerous friends, who could scarcely credit the reality of his death.—On the succeeding day, excepting the measures of respect for his memory and preparation for his funeral rites, all business was suspended:—the legislative body,—the numerous public institutions—literary—benevolent—commercial—all partake of the general gloom;—their doors are closed;—all unite in the universal lamentation—all, not excepting those who had been his political* opponents, are now emulous to manifest their love and respect for his memory; to unite in expressions of the loss they had sustained, and in demonstrations of gratitude for his invaluable and disinterested services. The funeral obsequies are prepared—his remains are conveyed to the tomb, amid all the solemnities that respond to the deep sorrow with which every heart in the community was afflicted by this dispensation of Providence.

To conclude; if the possession of strong native powers of mind, and those highly cultivated by extensive attainments in the different departments of human knowledge; if an innate spirit of patriotism, quickened and directed by an acquaintance with the various interests of his country, and a life devoted to the unceasing performance of public duty, and expended in the service of his native state, entitle their possessor to respectful notice, Mr. Clinton presents the strongest claims, not only to the affections of his countrymen, but to a distinguished place among the sages, statesmen, and benefactors of the American

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* See Appendix, MM.

republic. It is in the intellectual as in the natural world, although the expanse above is studded with an infinity of bodies, shedding and diffusing their portion of light, a certain number of greater magnitude and brilliancy, command the more exclusive vision of the beholder, and are so many suns communicating their effulgence and influence to other and distant worlds. In like manner, there are some intellectual luminaries much more distinguished than are the ordinary sources of light and knowledge. The Grecian and Roman republics had their constellations of illustrious men. Themistocles and Epaminondas, Cincinnatus, Fabricius, and the Scipios. England has had her Lockes and her Newtons, her Chathams and her Cannings. And young as our own republic yet is, her galaxy is already brightened with illustrious names. It were injustice not to assign a like elevation to the transcendent mind of Mr. Clinton, whose name, associated with those of Washington, Hamilton, Franklin, Adams, Rittenhouse, Jefferson, Fulton, and other American worthies, will ever be identified with the existence of his country, and transmitted with increasing lustre to the latest posterity.

> "Micat inter omnes,
> Julium sidus, velut inter ignes
> Luna minores."

Although withdrawn from our view at comparatively an early period of life, and in the midst of his intellectual vigour and usefulness, the monuments of his glory are imperishable. Youth of our country! although Mr. Clinton has not left to his immediate descendants wealth and independence, to you, as well as to them, he has left a legacy of infinitely greater value.

In his life he has left you a splendid and animating example, which points the way to usefulness and fame; which teaches you how great are the acquirements which well directed industry, even in a short life, is able to achieve, what public estimation and encouragement attend upon them, and what honours and rewards are the happy results—follow then in his footsteps—cultivate those endowments of the mind, and those affections of the heart, that self-command, that dignity, and order of conduct, which distinguished your great exemplar—remember too, to cherish that happy union of virtue and talents, upon which alone you can build your hopes of honour and esteem—follow too his great example in defending the liberties of our country, in supporting our happy constitution of government, in preserving the integrity of our union, in framing and executing good laws, in disseminating useful knowledge, in alleviating human misery, and in promoting the happiness of man.

These principles as your guide, cannot fail to impart to you the greatest enjoyment this world can bestow, that which is derived from a life spent in the performance of the duties you owe to your fellow-men, your country, and your God. Such was the man whose death we this day lament; whose talents, virtues, and public services, while gratitude holds its place in the human breast, can never be forgotten.

Yes, my fellow-citizens, when the present assembly shall sleep with their fathers; when time shall have obliterated the remembrance of this day's feeble effort to present to your view the virtues and the deeds of our departed friend and benefactor, still—still, shall his name be hallowed in the grateful remembrance of the inhabitants of his native land, and generations yet unborn shall

gather round his tomb, and recalling the days that are passed, will utter in the ecstasy of feeling, which love of country and gratitude inspire,

HERE REPOSE THE ASHES OF OUR CLINTON.

Departed shade, farewell—thou art gone—for ever gone—but thy fame survives thee! and thou hast left the influence of thy great example, which will render thy name illustrious so long as science and the arts shall be cherished—so long as patriotism and benevolence shall continue to be virtues, or philanthropy hold its seat in the heart of man.

Benefactor of the human family, farewell! may the remembrance of thine exalted virtues purify our hearts, and thy character be the example of our lives.

"Semper honos, nomenque tuum, laudesque manebunt."

APPENDIX.

NOTE A.—p. 27.

ANCESTORS OF DE WITT CLINTON.

Extracted from the Journal of a relative of the late Dr. Joseph Young, dated April 11th, 1807, in the possession of Judge Herttell of New-York.

"SOMETIME in the year 1727 or 1728, when the whole connexion growing more and more dissatisfied with the government, resolved to emigrate to the then colony of New-York; and as if bound together by the indissoluble ties of consanguinity and friendship, the greatest number of those who had emigrated from the north, with some additional members, engaged a ship at Dublin, commanded by a Captain Rymer, and all paid their passage money there, and had the ship bound to them for the faithful performance of their agreement. They laid in a sufficient stock of provision for an ordinary passage, but instead of a common passage, he kept them at sea twenty-one weeks and three days. During the passage they one morning came in full sight of the coast of Virginia, which the boatswain, who was an old seaman, affirmed he knew perfectly well, as he had frequently been on that coast before; but the captain called him a lying skulking dog, and immediately ordered to put the ship about and put off to sea; in consequence of this unequivocal disclosure of the captain's intention to famish them all to death at sea, William Armstrong, my father's half-brother, would have put him to death, had he not been forcibly restrained. Colonel Charles Clinton, who by his age and superior abilities, appears to have been the head

or chief of the connexion, who had a better knowledge of the laws than the others, told them that unless the other officers belonging to the ship would join them, their rising forcibly against the captain, would upon trial be adjudged piracy. But the spirits of the officers were so completely subdued by the tyrannical conduct of the captain, who had killed a man on board by striking him on the head with a pipe-stave, that they dare not join the passengers against him. In this shocking dilemma the captain extorted from them a very considerable sum of money, as a bribe for landing them on any part of the coast; soon after this agreement he landed them at Cape Cod.

"For several days previous to their landing, their allowance had been an half biscuit, and half a pint of water for twenty-four hours: in consequence of this cruel treatment many of the passengers died, and amongst this number who perished with famine, was Thomas Armstrong: he was a very worthy valuable man; his son William, and his daughter Margery, shared the same fate. It was believed by the passengers, that the captain had been bribed to subject them to vexation and hardship to discourage emigration. And that his motive for landing them at Cape Cod in preference to New-York or Boston was, that at that early period he could not have been so easily prosecuted there for the murder and piracy of which he had been guilty, as at either of the above places. He positively knew that he had forfeited his life, not only by killing the man with the pipe-stave, but also by extorting money from the passengers at sea as a bribe to bring them to land; for he had sworn that they should never see land again, unless they gave him the sum which he demanded: but it appears by their conduct, that although the passengers had suffered so much by the savage cruelty of the captain, that they were not actuated by the spirit of revenge or a thirst for blood; they said he deserves death, but let him fall by other hands. Although Colonel Clinton was not bred a mariner, he was an excellent mathematician, and could have directed the course of the ship; but as he never suspected that he would have been denied the use of the instruments to make observations, he had neglected to provide them, which might have rendered it difficult to discover his course and distance; otherwise, if the other officers belonging to the ship

would have joined him, he would have confined the captain and taken the command of the ship. As the ship had been insured in Dublin, the captain contrived to let her drive from her mooring on a stormy night, in which she was lost. They arrived at Cape Cod in the fall, and remained there until spring, and then sailed for New-Windsor, in Ulster County, where Colonel Charles Clinton, Alexander Deniston, and my father, John Young, bought three farms adjoining to each other, and lived in the greatest friendship and harmony, and called their neighbourhood Little Britain.

"Colonel Charles Clinton, nephew to my great grandmother Margaret, possessed an acute genius, a penetrating solid judgment, an extensive fund of useful as well as ornamental knowledge, with the affability and polished manners of a polite gentleman. He was a tall, straight, graceful person, of a majestic appearance. If he chanced to come into company where a number of young people were cheerfully diverting themselves, their first impressions were those of awe and reverence; but in the course of a few minutes he would enter into the most pleasing, and frequently an instructive conversation, which soon dispelled their panic, and inspired them with pleasing and respectful confidence. He was a Judge of the County Court, and Justice of the Peace until he died; and a Colonel in the Army in the war which commenced in the year 1756. He married Elizabeth Deniston, sister to Alexander, by whom he had one daughter,—Catharine, a sensible, friendly, ingenious, placid being, who was married to Colonel James Mc Claughry, as brave an officer as America could boast of; she died without issue. And also four sons, viz. Alexander, Charles, James, and George. After Alexander had acquired an excellent school education, he remained six years in college at Newark, when Mr. Burr was president; he then studied physic under Dr. Middleton in New-York, which he afterwards practised in Ulster County and parts adjacent, with great success and reputation. He excelled in every thing to which he turned his attention; he was a good classic scholar, a great physician, a considerable poet, an excellent musician, and understood the use of the broad sword in a superior degree; but what finished and gave lustre to a truly great character was, that he was a most placid, agreeable, benevolent, friendly being, beloved and highly respected by every person who knew him;

and I shall ever remember with pleasure and gratitude, the attention and friendship with which he honoured me. He married Miss Maria Kane, but died soon after of the confluent small-pox, greatly and very generally lamented; his memory is dear to many at this day, and to none more than to Joseph Young. Charles, the second son, was a very sprightly lad, and had a good education. He also studied physic under Dr. Middleton, and embarked as a physician in the expedition against the Havana, and was much esteemed by the celebrated Dr. Huck. When he returned he practised medicine with success and reputation in Ulster County and parts adjacent, and died a bachelor, of a lingering consumption. James, like David of old, had been a warrior from his youth up. After he had obtained a good education, he enlisted a company and served with reputation as a captain in the war which commenced in the year 1756. He was a general in the continental army, and signalized himself in endeavouring to defend a redoubt on the west bank of the North River, that was honoured by the name of Fort Montgomery. When it became almost certain that they would finally be obliged to submit to superior numbers, General James tried to persuade his brother George to leave the redoubt, alleging that it would be a greater injury to our cause, to have the Governor of the State taken prisoner, than if he should fall into their hands; they, however, both remained until it grew dark, and were mixed with the enemy: the Governor escaped in a boat to the east side of the river, and James slid down the very steep bank of a creek which ran near the redoubt, and fell into the top of a hemlock tree, and made his escape by going up the bed of the brook, in which there was but little water at that time. When the enemy rushed into the redoubt, Colonel Mc Claughry, and a Mr. James Humphrey, the cock of whose gun had been shot off, turned back to back, and defended themselves desperately; they were assailed on all sides, and would undoubtedly have been killed, but a British senator who witnessed their spirit and bravery, exclaimed that it would be a pity to kill such brave men; they then rushed on and seized them, and when the Colonel was brought to the British General Clinton, he asked where his friend George was? The Colonel replied, thank God, he is safe beyond the reach of your friendship. General James married an amiable sensible woman, of the name

of De Witt, by whom he had four sons; viz. Alexander, De Witt, Charles, and George."

NOTE B.—p. 36.

Conspicuous among those institutions to which Mr. Clinton devoted a large share of his time and energies, was the New-York Historical Society. This useful and active association was first organised in 1804, and was incorporated in 1809; and since that period, through various fluctuations, has risen to be the first association of the kind in the United States. The first volume of its Collections appeared in 1809; the second in 1814; the third in 1821; and in 1826 the fourth volume. The library of this institution, which according to the late report of the directors, amounts to nearly eight thousand volumes, is extremely rich in matters pertaining to this country. Not a few of the MS. papers are such as will throw much light on the colonial and revolutionary history of America. In 1814, a petition was presented by the society, to the Honourable the Legislature of the State, praying for a grant of money to enable them to adopt efficient measures for obtaining from different portions of the United States, books, manuscripts, and documentary information relative to the natural, civil, ecclesiastical, and medical history of the country; but particularly illustrative and commemorative of the origin, settlement, and colonial transactions of this state. Mr. Clinton wrote a powerful memorial to the legislature in the society's behalf. In it he observes,

"The civil history of this state may be divided into four parts:

"1. When occupied by the aborigines.

"2. When under the government of the Dutch, which was about half a century.

"3. Its state under England, which continued about one hundred and twelve years, and which includes the proprietary government of the Duke of York, and its government under the kings of Great Britain, excepting about sixteen months, when it was repossessed by the Dutch.

"4. And, lastly, its political existence as a member of an independent government.

"Before the lapse of many years, the remnant of the Indian nations which now inhabit the state will experience the fate of all sublunary things. The few antiquities of the country; the forts and the tumuli, which may now be easily explored, will be effaced by the extension of cultivation. The natural history of the man of America, disfigured and perverted as he has been by European intercourse, may still be obtained to a considerable extent; his language may be put on record, and his traditions may be perpetuated.

"As before the revolution, the colonies of France and Great Britain were connected by vicinity, by treaty, by trade, and by continual and habitual intercourse with the Five Nations, and other Indians which occupied this state, we can obtain valuable materials to illustrate this important period, from the libraries and public collections of those countries: many learned, elaborate, and interesting works have never been seen in America; some are so scarce that they cannot be procured without the expense of transcribing; and papers of great moment have never been printed.

"The regular minutes of the transactions of the Indian commissioners for this colony, from 1675 to 1751, as kept by a secretary employed for the purpose, were bound up in four large folio volumes. This invaluable collection, and the subsequent colonial records relative to Indian affairs, are not now to be found in this state; and they were probably conveyed away by Sir John Johnson, or his agents, at the commencement of the revolution. The loss of these documents would produce a chasm in our history that could not be supplied; and we hope that they may still be retrieved. Our concerns and negotiations with the Indians, since our existence as a state, have not been preserved in regular and complete order. They are scattered among the bureaus of our chief magistrates, or are buried in the voluminous files of the legislature.

"To obtain materials for the Dutch portion of our history, comprising an interesting period of half a century, we must have recourse to the papers of the Dutch West-India Company, and to the archives of the then government of that nation; to the Dutch records of some of our counties, and in the

office of the secretary of state; to the public offices in the neighbouring colonies with whose governments the Dutch had negotiations; and to several books published in the Dutch and Latin languages, relative to this country, and which are scarcely known to us. The darkness which hangs over this branch, may be perceived in the History of New-York, written by William Smith, a work which skims lightly over this interesting period, leaving it almost entirely unnoticed.

"To supply that part of our history when we were subject to Great Britain, the most valuable materials may be obtained from various sources. From Chalmers' Political Annals it appears, that there are many manuscripts in the Plantation Office, entitled New-York Entries, and New-York Papers. We find in the catalogue of manuscripts preserved in the British Museum, some writings that refer particularly to this state; and in the catalogue of books belonging to that institution, are preserved many works concerning America, in the Dutch, English, French, Spanish, and Latin languages, affording a fund of information important and inestimable. We also know that there are many interesting books and manuscripts relative to this country, in the library of the society for the propagation of the gospel in America; and perhaps much important information may be obtained from the public offices in Canada.

"The history of our country since the commencement of the revolutionary war, is in a better state of preservation: but even here how many interesting events are passing into oblivion; how many important facts are distorted and misrepresented, how many illustrious achievements are forgotten or neglected. Documents that may illuminate the obscure, explain the doubtful, and embalm the memories of the good and the great, may now be drawn from their dark abodes, where in a few years they will be forgotten or lost. Letters of distinguished individuals, fugitive pamphlets, perishable manuscripts, ought now to be obtained and preserved. The time is precious, and not a moment should be lost.

"The only history of this member of the confederacy is that of William Smith, which is brought down to the year 1732. Is it too much to say, that the most important is the worst or least described part of the union?"

This memorial had its proper effect upon the constitutional authorities of the state, and was followed by a liberal grant to be raised by lottery. The society having unfortunately anticipated the avails of this donation, were sometime involved in much embarrassment, from which they were relieved only by an additional grant by the legislature in 1827. For this effective and timely aid, they are indebted to the zealous and well directed efforts of Frederick De Peyster, Jun. Esq. For the purpose of securing the grant, the society unanimously deputed Mr. De Peyster to present to the legislature their claims and necessities. That gentleman found a majority of the members hostile to all appropriations whatever. Committees in both houses had reported upon the low state of the treasury, and the consequent inexpediency of making grants in favour of the various and important objects pending before them. Mr. De Peyster, notwithstanding these discouraging circumstances, persevered in representing the value and importance of preserving the society, the nature and extent of its difficulties, the claims it had upon an enlightened legislature. These representations prevailed in the lower house with only three dissentient voices, and in the senate by an unanimous vote.

In reference to this subject Mr. Clinton observes, in a letter to me, dated April 10th, 1827,—"This institution has now lifted up its head, and will I hope once more flourish. The late state grant is principally owing to the address and indefatigable exertions of Major Depeyster."

The most important service in which the society is at present engaged, is the publication of a new and improved History of the State of New-York, by the late historian William Smith. The materials of this work have been received from the Hon. William Smith, the son of the late historian, and Chief Justice of Canada. Upon my making known to Mr. Smith the object of the society, he with great liberality has presented to the society the MSS. left by his father, what embrace the history down to the year 1762.

The succession of presidents of this society are, in 1804, Egbert Benson, under whom the association was incorporated; 1816, Gouverneur Morris; 1817, De Witt Clinton; 1820, David Hosack; 1827, James Kent.

NOTE C.—p. 37.

The consideration in which Mr. Clinton was held as a diligent and successful cultivator of the natural sciences, was becoming daily more manifest. I have stated that his name was enrolled as a member of several of the most efficient institutions organized for this purpose in the United States, as well as of those abroad. He was lately admitted an honorary member of that enterprising society, the New-York Lyceum of Natural History; and his merits were so highly appreciated in Europe, that his late distinguished friend and correspondent, Sir James Edward Smith, the President of the Linnæan Society of London, was about to recommend him as a fellow of the Royal Society of London. "I shall be proud to sign his certificate for that purpose," says Sir James, in a letter to myself, "and will confer with Sir Joseph Banks on the subject." An honour which the public services and zeal of Mr. Clinton in natural history justly entitled him to.

It has been remarked that Mr. Clinton's collections in natural history were, for their extent, extremely valuable to those who are solicitous of information concerning the natural treasures of our country. The excavations effected during the route of the Grand Canal, supplied him with numerous interesting fossils, and his repeated excursions through the western country, enabled him to observe many productions that might not otherwise have come to his knowledge. It was during one of these excursions, that he observed in the district of Coventry about Rome, a species or variety of wheat which he deemed indigenous. In the letters of Hibernicus, which are usually ascribed to Mr. Clinton, he thus speaks of this plant.

"The novelty of the idea pleased me so much, that I pursued the discovery through all its labyrinths and ramifications. Some years ago it was discovered in wet soil, and in a beaver meadow near Western, and also in a swamp covered with woods near Rome. Its stalk is more compact, and its leaves larger, than that of the common wheat. Its height is also greater, and except having short beards at the apex, it is in other respects bald. It is said to resist the power of frost, and to be proof against winter killing.

"Is this wheat indigenous, or was it imported and accidentally conveyed to the places where it is found? If the latter, why is not wheat found growing wild in more cultivated parts of the country? I am persuaded that it is an indigenous plant; and if so, it may be considered one of the greatest discoveries of the age. It is the vegetable destined by nature for this climate, and it casts light upon the natural history of the most important of the cerealia which has hitherto been enveloped in obscurity.

"Wheat grows in the old world from Egypt to Siberia, upwards of thirty degrees of latitude. Pennant says that wheat will ripen as high as latitude sixty-two north, but so uncertain is the crop throughout Sweden, that it is called the seed of repentance. A species of wheat which is called Siberian, and which has been found growing wild in that country, ripens in a latitude still more north than that laid down by Pennant. Kaimes observes, that—'Writers upon natural history have been solicitous to discover the original climate of wheat, rice, barley, &c. (which must, from the creation, have grown spontaneously) but without much success. The original climate of plants left to nature cannot be a secret, but in countries well peopled, the plants mentioned are not left to nature; the seeds are carefully gathered and stored up for food. As this practice could not fail to make these seeds rare, agriculture was early thought of, which by introducing plants into new soils and new climates, has rendered the original climate obscure. If we can trace that climate it must be in regions destitute of inhabitants, or but thinly peopled. Anson found in the island Juan Fernandez many spots of ground covered with oats. While the French possessed Fort Dauphin, in the island of Madagascar, they raised excellent wheat. That station was deserted many years ago, and wheat to this day grows naturally among the grass in great vigour. In the country about Mount Tabor, in Palestine, barley and oats grow spontaneously. In the kingdom of Siam, there are many spots where rice grows year after year without any culture. Diodorus Siculus is our authority for saying, that in the territory of Leontinum and in other places of Sicily, wheat grew wild without any culture. And it does so at present about Mount Etna.' Diodorus Siculus also says that Isis was the discoverer of wheat and barley, and that Osiris taught the manner of cultiva-

tion. And according to Berosus, Mesopotamia abounded with wild wheat amongst the other indigenous plants.

"Tibullus says of Osiris,

> Primus aratra manu solerti fecit Osiris,
> Et teneram ferro sollicitavi humum.

"And Ovid thus speaks of Ceres:

> Prima Ceres unco terram dimovit aratro,
> Prima dedit leges.

"Why should not wheat grow spontaneously in New-York as well as in Sicily, Egypt, Mesopotamia, or Siberia? And the evidence of the fact is as complete in this particular as the nature of the case will admit. The plant was found in a wild state in places remote from thick settlement, which had never been cultivated, and it possesses peculiar characteristics and distinctive qualities. Besides, rye is found in a wild state, and it was frequently seen growing spontaneously before the settlement of the country. Lieutenant Governor Mercer, of Virginia, thus writes of this plant a long time before the revolutionary war:—'The wild rye which grows every where in the Ohio country, is a species of the rye which is cultivated by the Europeans. It has the same bearded ear, and produces a farinaceous grain. The ear and grain in the wild state of this plant are less, and the beard of the ear is longer, than those of the cultivated rye, which makes this wild plant resemble more the rye grass in its appearance; but it differs in no other respect from the rye, and it shoots its spontaneous vegetation about the middle of November, as the cultivated rye doth.'

"As the indigenous existence of rye in this country is established beyond question, there can be no good reason to doubt the growth of wheat. This curious fact in natural history ought to be fully investigated and illustrated."

Mr. Clinton forwarded to his friends abroad a quantity of this grain, in the hopes of its successful cultivation in the old world. But as Sir James

Edward Smith writes, in a letter dated April 1821, the experiments instituted for its culture failed. "These experiments required time: they consequently proved unfavourable as to the qualities of the wheat ascribed to it by Mr. Clinton." It is much to be regretted that success did not crown these efforts at the cultivation of the wild wheat; still the inquiry is open and ought to be pursued. Dr. Paris tells us in his late work on Diet,—

"There is scarcely a vegetable that we at present employ that can be found growing naturally. Buffon states that our wheat is a factitious production, raised to its present condition by the art of agriculture. Rice, rye, barley, or even oats, are not to be found wild; that is to say, growing naturally in any part of the earth; but have been altered by the industry of mankind, from plants not now resembling them even in such a degree as to enable us to recognise their relatives. The acrid and disagreeable *apium graveolens*, has thus been transformed into delicious celery; and the *colewort*, a plant of scanty leaves, not weighing altogether half an ounce, has been improved into cabbage, the leaves of which weigh many pounds, or into a cauliflower of considerable dimensions, being only the embryo of a few buds, which, in their natural state, would not have weighed many grains. The potatoe again, the introduction of which has added many millions to our population, derives its origin from a small acrid bitter root, which grows wild in Chili and Monte Video."*

The Linnæan Society of Natural History of Paris, having established a branch of their institution in New-York, Mr. Clinton at the anniversary of the Linnæan festival in May 1824, as president of the day, addressed this association in substance as follows:

"It is perhaps proper, and it certainly cannot be deemed exceptionable, to introduce the proceedings of this day by an exposition of the causes of its celebration. This day is the anniversary of the birth-day of Linnæus, one of those illustrious men who have enlightened the world. Natural science,

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* See some interesting observations relative to the native potatoe, in the Horticultural Transactions of London, and in the New-York Farmer and Horticultural Repository.

which comprises a definition and investigation of all the material substances that exist, whether in an organic or inorganic shape, has from the earliest periods engaged the attention, and employed the faculties of philosophers. Some of the most beautiful and sublime images and illustrations in Holy writ, are derived from this source: and Solomon, who is pronounced to have been wiser than all men, spoke of trees from the cedar tree that is in Lebanon, even unto the hyssop that springeth out of the wall. He spake also of beasts, and of fowls, and of creeping things, and of fishes. This enumeration embraces almost all the principal objects of natural history. The most eminent naturalist of Greece was Aristotle, and of Rome, Pliny. The works of the latter particularly are a treasure of useful information, although disfigured by the interpolations of fiction. After a long night of Gothic darkness, the rays of knowledge again gladdened the earth: an inquiring spirit went forth, and vast collections of useful information were made, but they were for a long time in a state of chaos and mingled with fable. The transcendent merits of Linnæus consists not only in enlarging the sphere of natural science, but in devising a system by which an object could be recognised from the description, and in arranging all known substances, whether animate or inanimate, in their appropriate classes, orders, genera, and species. From that period natural history assumed its due rank in the scale of usefulness and estimation; discovery has been heaped upon discovery; and every region of the globe has been explored to augment the riches of science, and to increase the cabinets of naturalists.

"The Systema Naturæ of Linnæus, like all other human works, is not without its imperfections; and he has been followed by different descriptions of scientific men. One class was opposed to the system on the ground that it offered nothing worthy of approbation, and was either intrinsically erroneous, or greatly inferior to the old arrangements. Another class, allured by the glory which surrounded him, and desirous of establishing equal if not superior claims to celebrity, has gone on to multiply theories and systems, to degrade the science by nominal and spurious discoveries, and to darken it by barbarous nomenclatures. A third class has, with a profound reverence for its great master, endeavoured to correct his errors, to supply

his deficiencies, and to push his discoveries and improvements to the utmost verge of practicability. The result of these various enterprises of genius and science has, upon the whole, been very propitious; but such great confusion has notwithstanding occurred, that another Linnæus is required to extricate the student and the inquirer from the perplexities which surround their walks and bewilder their progress.

"Some of the most distinguished savans of France, sensible of these embarrassments and difficulties, and desirous of concentrating their powers in a common focus for the promotion of science, have established a Linnæan Society, of which the illustrious Lacepede is president. The name which they have adopted, evinces their preference for the system of Linnæus. They have already published interesting works, have sent enlightened apostles into different parts of the globe, to communicate and to acquire information, and they have established scientific colonies in both hemispheres. The society now convened, is a branch of the institution of Paris. Several distinguished devotees of natural knowledge now present, are members, and Mr. Jefferson is an honorary associate, and has taken a warm interest in its prosperity. In order that due homage might be rendered to the memory of Linnæus, that the most animated incentives might be applied to the advancement of knowledge, and that the road to the temple of natural science, might be adorned with the offerings of genius, brightened by the smiles of beauty, and cheered by panegyrics, the natal day of the philosopher of Sweden was selected for a grand celebration; which should unite innocent amusement and solid instruction, and produce impressions propitious to the progress of the natural sciences. With this view we have now assembled; and if any of the ceremonies of the day shall not be strictly in unison with the prevailing taste of this country, let it be understood that the ritual is prescribed by the parent institution. And as the object is to please all, without offending any, it is hoped that our proceedings will not in any respect be viewed as a frivolous display, or as ostentatious pageantry.

"The votaries of science in all parts of the civilized world, are now crowning the tomb of Linnæus with the laurels of glory, and offering up

thanks to the Source of all light, for having devoted such a master spirit to the illumination of a benighted world.

"The place which I now occupy, would be more suitably filled by some who are present, who have made greater advances in science, and who have reflected honour on their country, by their acquisitions and investigations. But I have been induced to appear in it, not from any ambitious aspiration after distinction, or any idle devotion to show, but from the suggestions of my associates, that it might be of service to the cause of science; and such an intimation from a quarter so respectable, I can never pass over with neglect. Many of the hours which I could spare from the pursuits of an active life, and from the studies immediately connected with my public avocations, have been devoted to natural science; and the enthusiasm which I cherish on this subject, is justified and enhanced by every contemplative view and every elaborate investigation.

"What a spacious field of inquiry offers in view! What a wide unbounded prospect lies before us! What ever-during honours must the various departments of zoology prepare for the fortunate investigator! The boundless regions of botany will furnish on every exploration chaplets and garlands of glory. Researches into the mineral kingdom will produce treasures of renown more valuable than the gold of Ophir, or the diamonds of Golconda. The genius of philosophy has not yet penetrated the depths of geology, nor proceeded far beyond the alphabet or the horn-book. Theory has followed theory, and speculation has supplanted speculation. The imagination has been consulted more than the judgment, and the airy castles of hypothesis have dazzled the fancy without enlightening the understanding. After a vast accumulation of facts, and perhaps a long afflux of time, some Bacon or Linnæus will rise up and change it from romance into science. Chemistry sprang from the crucible of the alchemist, like Pallas from the head of Jove; and even the erroneous movements of scientific investigation will finally contribute, by a heaven-directed impulse, to the cause of useful knowledge.

"With these animating prospects, with these exalted inducements, let us proceed to the duties of the day, ever bearing in mind that science is

honour, and that knowledge is power; and that all their ways are ways of pleasantness, and all their paths are peace."

In the Discourse I have made reference to Mr. Clinton's papers on natural science, which appeared in the Transactions of the Literary and Philosophical Society of New-York, in those of the Lyceum of Natural History, and in the New-York Medical and Physical Journal. There are other papers of his which embrace inquiries instituted by himself, which have not been published. He laboured with much earnestness to vindicate the character of our aborigines; of this no other proof need be adduced than his Historical Address. He further corrected some prominent errors of Father Le Hontan. On that curious product, the canal cement, he wrote at considerable length: and his geological researches would have formed a most valuable body of information to scientific men on this subject. Mr. Clinton sustained the Wernerian theory, though he considered that philosophy had advanced no farther than the mere elements of geological science.

NOTE D.—p. 48.

Of that noble and extensive charity, the New-York Hospital, Mr. Clinton ever proved a uniform and effectual supporter. It is well known that the foundation of this association was formed by the enterprise and zeal of the late Dr. Samuel Bard, under the colonial administration of Lt. Governor Sir Henry Moore. The provisions for the support of this institution, independently of state grants at divers times, not being deemed adequate for carrying into effect by the governors, the benevolent views which they had early formed for the organization of a State Asylum for those who laboured under mental alienation, the late Thomas Eddy and Governor Clinton, aided by a few active philanthropists, obtained the passage of an act of the legislature, by which was founded the *Bloomingdale Asylum for the Insane.*

Mr. Eddy was for a long time attentive to the subject of insanity: he read almost every thing that appeared concerning it. His correspondence with medical men engaged in the treatment of it, and with those who held a

principal direction in the affairs of Lunatic Asylums, more especially with his old friend Mr. Tuke, of the Retreat at York, his intimate acquaintance with the results of different methods of treatment, adopted in the various establishments in Great Britain, as well as in those of the Bicetre and other hospitals in France, all these matters so wholly engrossed his mind for a considerable period, that we can readily assign a cause for his unwearied application in behalf of the amelioration of this class of our fellow-beings, and the hopes he so ardently cherished, of being able to do good by the appropriation of his talents and labour. In Mr. Clinton he found a kindred spirit and powerful coadjutor.

This institution is deservedly the pride of the state; and it is no disparagement of the services of others to affirm, that without the conjoined efforts of Clinton and Eddy, the magnificent appropriations of 1816 would not have been effected. To distant readers the following notice of this establishment may prove interesting. It was drawn up by Dr. John W. Francis, and published shortly after the Governors had commenced their undertaking.

"Nothing has so greatly contributed to give New-York that elevated standing which she may fairly claim among her sister states, as the splendid patronage which she has uniformly bestowed on public institutions. Under her royal government, she was not indifferent to the value of knowledge; and the provision for the endowment of Columbia College was, we believe, on a scale of magnitude superior to that of any of the other colonial seminaries. In adverting to the records of our legislature since our republican confederacy, we find her solicitude for intellectual improvement manifested in frequent liberal donations. Nor does she appear to be wearied in well doing. Her recent provisions for science and humanity, are no less evidence of her increased wealth and resources, than of the deep conviction which her rulers entertain of the blessings thence to be derived to her people. The wisdom of her councils have been answered by correspondent effects; and the present flourishing condition of her Medical Schools, the New-York Hospital and Penitentiary, are proofs of the salutary results of her legislative acts.

"We have been led to these remarks in consequence of observing the *new*

asylum for the insane, now erecting in the vicinity of this city. Most of the institutions of a similar kind established in Great Britain and on the continent, so far as we are acquainted with them, we are convinced are inferior to the present undertaking, in the magnificence of the design, and the public spirited benevolence of its projectors. It is with American feelings that we anticipate the completion of this great work. In nothing can the power of the state be more nobly exerted than in such ample provision for a portion of its population, who are equally unconscious of the blessings they receive, and of the hand which confers them.

"In the year 1807, the enlightened governors of the New-York Hospital erected an institution for the management of the insane, on a portion of the grounds in this city attached to that excellent charity. The institution then built was calculated to contain between seventy-five and eighty patients, and has answered most happily the purposes intended. But though excellent in its plan, this limited building having been found utterly inadequate to accommodate the increased number of insane patients, the legislature in 1816, determined on the erection of a new building, commensurate with the resources of the state, and equal to the largest demands that may be made from all parts of the union on its benevolence. The site of this truly national edifice was judiciously fixed about seven miles from the city of New-York, near the banks of the Hudson river, and commands one of the most extensive and interesting views in the United States. The plan of the building is the design of Thomas C. Taylor, Esq. The front view is four hundred and fifteen feet by one hundred and eighty, which includes the wings; the whole is three stories high, exclusive of the basement story, and is intended to contain two hundred and fifty rooms. The central part, which is now in a great state of forwardness, is two hundred and eleven feet in front by sixty feet in depth, and is built of brown hewn stone of excellent appearance and of the most durable kind. The foundation-stone was laid by the governors of our City Hospital, on the 9th of May last.

"In considering the nature and extent of this great undertaking, surpassing any thing of a like nature either in this country or in Europe, it would be injustice not to mention with emphatic approbation, the wisdom and benevo-

lence of those who first urged its claims on the public attention, and of the legislature which established it. To that enlightened philanthropist, Thomas Eddy, whose disinterested feelings for the calamities of his species, have been evinced by an active course of exertion in so many ways for more than thirty years, the state of New-York is in an especial manner indebted for this new instance of his benevolence. The liberal views of the board of governors of the New-York Hospital, have been long known and admitted, by those who, either in the capacity of patient or of pupil, have partaken of the benefits of which they are the dispensers; and the same wisdom, which in 1769, founded the institution under the venerable Dr. Bard, and has directed that excellent charity so many years, will, in the continued efforts of Matthew Clarkson, Thomas Franklin, John Murray, jun. Peter A. Jay, G. Aspinwall, Hugh Williamson, and others of that benevolent association, be attended with equally happy results in its new and enlarged sphere of action. It may be confidently hoped that this new retreat will prove a place of refuge, and the means of restoration to a numerous class of our fellow-men: and when it is considered to whom is committed the superintendence of the erection of this asylum, we are satisfied that it will be no less honourable to the talents of Thomas C. Taylor as an architect, than to his benevolence as a man, his services being a free-will offering, and not admitting of pecuniary reward."

NOTE E.—p. 49.

This measure of providing for the rearing up of competent teachers, was among the last suggestions of Mr. Clinton's mind. Few can be ignorant of the fact, that many of our schools have deteriorated in character, and ultimately fallen into disgrace from the paucity of talents and want of ability in those commissioned as instructors. The plan of Mr. Clinton applied the proper corrective to the evil. His services in behalf of the common school fund of New-York, were such as to challenge the approbation equally of his most decided political opponents, as of his uniform friends.

In this important business he never tired. From its foundation in 1812, to the close of his life, he was consulted on every measuse calculated to improve and render more available this liberal and magnificent provision in behalf of useful knowledge. One who well knew his exertions on this head, Gideon Hawley, Esq. thus writes to me:—"Participating in common with you and many others, in veneration for the character and memory of Governor Clinton, I am happy to avail myself of this occasion to bear testimony to the great interest which he always took in the establishment of our system of common schools. While I held the office of superintendant, I had often occasion to consult him on subjects connected with my official duty: he was always ready to assist with his counsel and advice; and it is a matter of personal knowledge with me, that he has rendered the most important services, not only in the first organization of the system, but in all the subsequent stages of its progress."

In his speech to the legislature in 1818, Mr. Clinton states:—The fund appropriated to common schools consist of about one million of dollars, and eighty thousand acres of land. The income for distribution this year is 60,000 dollars. Having participated in the first establishment of the Lancasterian system in this country, having carefully observed its progress, and witnessed its benefits, I can confidently recommend it as an invaluable improvement, which by a wonderful combination of economy in expense, and rapidity of instruction, has created a new era in education; and I am desirous that all our common schools should be supplied with teachers of this description. As this system operates with the same efficacy in education, that labour-saving machinery does in the useful arts, it will be readily perceived that it is peculiarly adapted to this country.

For if by this means one teacher can perform the function of ten, and if a pupil can learn in one week as much as he would in one month in the common way, it is evident that more wealth, more labour, more time, and more industry, can be devoted to the ordinary occupations of life without interfering with the dispensation of knowledge. Wherever it has been attempted, it has succeeded, and several parts of the state have experienced its benefits. Competent teachers can be educated for this express purpose, and in sufficient

number to supply all our common schools, by sending intelligent young men to the Lancasterian seminaries in New-York, where they will be instructed gratuitously, and where in the course of a few months they will acquire sufficient knowledge of the system. Appropriations for this purpose by the several common schools out of their portion of the general fund, under the direction of the superintendant, will defray the small expense attending the attainment of this important object.

In that of 1822, he again adverts to this subject:—"The Lancasterian or monitorial system, or, as it has been emphatically denominated, the system of mutual instruction, is making its way in the community by the force of its transcendent merits. Our common schools have flourished beyond all former example: and our higher institutions, the seats of literature and science, continue to maintain the respectable character which they have so honourably acquired. Having in the course of the last year had an opportunity from personal observation to witness the progress of Columbia College, I cannot omit, on this occasion, to express the high sense which I entertain of the able superintendence of the trustees, of the learning and attention of the president and professors, and of the laudable advances of the students; and my intelligence from the other colleges is also propitious to the progress of knowledge, and honourable to those venerable and distinguished men who watch over their interests.

"I am happy to have it in my power to say that this state has always evinced a liberal spirit in the promotion of education, and I am persuaded that no considerations short of total inability will ever prevent similar demonstrations. The first duty of a state is to render its citizens virtuous by intellectual instruction and moral discipline, by enlightening their minds, purifying their hearts, and teaching them their rights and their obligations. Those solid and enduring honours which arise from the cultivation of science and the acquisition and diffusion of knowledge, will outlive the renown of the statesman, and the glory of the warrior: and if any stimulus were wanting in a case so worthy of all our attention and patronage, we may find it in the example before our eyes, of the author of the declaration of independence,

who has devoted the evening of his illustrious life to the establishment of an university in his native state."

In his speech of 1825, he thus again addresses the two houses, demonstrating, if any thing were still wanting, how intensely the subject was connected with his feelings, and how prominent a place it held among his multifarious occupations.

"The number of children taught in our common schools during the last year exceeds 400,000, and is probably more than one-fourth of our whole population. Ten thousand three hundred and eighty-three have been instructed in the free and charity schools in the city of New-York, a number by no means proportioned to the wants of its population. The students in the incorporated academies amount to about 2,683, and in the colleges to 755.

"The fund for the common schools may be stated at upwards of 1,739,000 dollars, and its annual income at 98,000 dollars; to which may be added the interest on the future sales of lands, and on the disposal of escheated property; the proceeds of which latter item may be added to the capital.

"However imposing this fund may appear, it is sufficiently obvious that it ought to be augmented. This state is capable of supporting fourteen millions of inhabitants. This appropriation will therefore soon be found far behind the progress of population, and the requisitions for instruction. Deeply impressed with the momentous nature of this department of our social policy to the cardinal interests of the state, I cannot withhold one important fact derived from past experience. Of the many thousands who have been instructed in our free schools in the city of New-York, there is not a solitary instance known of any one having been convicted of crimes. In furtherance of this invaluable system, I recommend to your consideration the education of competent teachers on the monitorial plan, its more general introduction, and the distribution of useful books."

From the last annual report of the superintendant of common schools, A. C. Flagg, Esq. made to the legislature of the state of New-York, in January 1828, I have selected the following statements. While it exhibits the magnificence and efficiency of the system of public school instruction, it

must constitute an enduring monument to the benevolent and generous zeal of its principal founder.

"There are 55 organised counties in the state, from the clerks of each of which returns have been received. It will be seen from these abstracts, that of the 742 towns and wards in the state, 741 have made reports according to law, and that only one town is delinquent. This town is Bushwick, in the county of Kings.

"That there are in the towns which have made reports, 8,298 school districts, and consequently the like number of schools organised, and that returns have been received from 7,806 of those districts.

"That 179 new school districts have been formed during the year 1827, and that the number of districts which have made returns, exceeds that of the preceding year by 256.

"That there are in the districts whose trustees have made returns, 419,216 children between the ages of 5 and 15; and that in the common schools of the same districts, 441,856 children have been taught during the year 1827; the general average of instruction having been about eight months.

"The number of children instructed in the common schools, exceeds by 17,804, the whole number between the ages of 5 and 15 years. This estimate does not include the cities of New-York and Albany, where the children between 5 and 15 are not reported.

"The returns show an increase of 7,960, of the children between 5 and 15; and the number of children taught in the common schools, (New-York excepted) has increased 10,255 since the last annual report.

"In 1816, the number of children returned as instructed in the common schools, was 140,106; since which time the number taught has increased 301,750.

"Two hundred and twenty-two thousand, nine hundred and ninety-five dollars, and seventy-seven cents, have been paid to the several school districts during the year 1827: of this sum $100,000 were paid from the state treasury, $110,542.32 were raised by a tax upon the several towns in the state, and $12,453.45 were derived from a local fund which certain towns possess.

It is required by the school law, that a sum shall be assessed upon the taxable inhabitants, equalling that which is apportioned to each town; and by a vote at town meeting, double the amount may be raised. Thus it will be seen, that the towns have raised by tax, $10,542.32 more than were required to entitle them to the public monies.

"The amount distributed among the several district schools, exceeds that of the preceding year by $37,275.31.

"The productive capital of the common school fund has been increased $256,121.50, during the past year, from the following sources, viz.:

1. "'An act to provide permanent funds for the annual appropriation to common schools, to increase the literature fund, and to promote the education of teachers,' passed April 13, 1827, requires the transfer of the balance due on the loan of 1786, to the common school fund; and also $100,000 of the shares owned by the state, in the capital stock of any of the banks, at the par value thereof, to be selected by the comptroller, and appropriated to the same fund. The balance due on the loan of 1786, amounts to $33,616.19. The addition thus made to the capital of the common school fund, amounts to $133,616.19.

2. "By an act of the legislature, passed March 10, 1827, authorising the loan of the credit of the state, and the issuing of certificates of stock to the Hudson and Delaware Canal Company, it was provided that said stock should be sold at public auction, 'and the amount of any premium received on such sales, or on any sales of the said certificates, should be paid into the treasury, to be appropriated to the common school fund.' In pursuance of that act, $100,000 of said certificates were sold on the 6th of November last, at a premium of 11½ per cent., the nett proceeds of which amount to $11,478,25: and on the 11th of December last, another $100,000 at a premium of 11 per cent., the nett proceeds being $10,978.25. On the 31st of December, $100,000 of the same certificates were sold, at a premium of 8¾ per cent., being $8,750. The sum total credited to the capital of the common school fund from this source, is $31,156.50. The comptroller is authorised to issue stock to the amount of $500,000, and should the average sales

of the remaining $200,000 be as favourable as the preceding, the school fund will receive a further augmentation of $20,770.66: making a total addition to the fund from this source, of $51,926.66.

3. "An act passed by the last legislature, authorised the commissioners of the land-office to make such alterations in the plans of the villages of East and West Oswego, as would in their opinion be for the interest of the state, and requiring that the sales of lots in said villages should be at Oswego. Under this authority most of the lands belonging to the state at Oswego, were sold by the surveyor-general on the 18th of July last. These sales amounted to $91,349. Prior to 1824, the lands belonging to the school fund at Oswego, were estimated at $15,000: and in 1827, a few weeks before the sale, these lands were appraised at 44,880 dollars. It will be seen that these lands were sold for more than double the appraised value; and that the increase from the estimate made previous to the commencement of the Oswego canal, has been 76,349 dollars: and a few lots still remain the property of the state.

"The capital of the common school fund is stated in the comptroller's report at $1,611,096. This includes only the premium on the first $100,000 of Hudson and Delaware stock. To this may now be added $19,728.25, the proceeds of the second and third sales, which make the actual productive capital of the school fund, $1,630,825. The revenue of the school fund for the last year has been $81,381.90. It is estimated by the comptroller for the next year, at $95,000.

"In addition to this fund, the constitution provides that 'the proceeds of all lands belonging to this state, which shall be hereafter sold or disposed of,' shall belong to the fund for the support of common schools. The lands embraced in this provision are computed at 880,000 acres, and valued at $411,288: this sum added to the productive capital, will give a total of $2,042,113.05.

"In several of the counties, there is a local fund for the use of schools. This fund is derived from reservations made by the state for the use of schools in granting certain tracts of land. Seventy-eight towns in this state are

reported as having participated in this local fund, the total amount of which is $12,453.45.

On the education of suitable teachers the report says,—"To elevate the standard of education in the common schools, it is indispensable that the qualifications of teachers should be improved. The inhabitants of the school districts ought to be impressed with the great importance of affording such compensation, as will induce men of good talents to fit themselves for the situation of teachers, as a profession for life. The character and usefulness of the schools, are immediately dependent upon the qualifications of the instructors.

"Connected with the subject of training up competent teachers for the common schools, it may not be inappropriate to notice the provisions of an act passed at the last session of the legislature, 'to increase the literature fund, and to promote the education of teachers.' This act appropriates 150,000 dollars, to be added to the literature fund; and requires the distribution of the income of that fund among the incorporated academies and seminaries, 'in proportion to the number of pupils instructed in each, for six months during the preceding year, who shall have pursued classical studies, or the higher branches of English education.' Heretofore, the apportionment has been confined to the number of students pursuing classical studies. The increase of the literature fund, and the extension of its benefits to all such pupils as are pursuing the higher branches of an English education, will tend to multiply the number of those who will be qualified to instruct in the common schools, and to encourage the academies in becoming nurseries of teachers."

In noticing the services of Mr. Clinton in behalf of common schools, one who could well appreciate them thus writes:—"As the patron and zealous supporter of the system of instruction and education in the common schools, he will be entitled to the sincerest respect and gratitude of the present and future generations. To this favourite object he devoted every faculty of his mind and body, exerting himself to the utmost of his powers, and stimulating others by every motive and argument that his ingenuity could urge or

suggest. In almost all his messages to the legislature, this important subject held a prominent place: and there are abundant reasons for believing, that it is in a great measure owing to his constant exertions, and his unwearied perseverance, that the school fund, and the common schools, are at the present time in so flourishing a condition."

While the foregoing pages were in press, I have been favoured with a communication from the Hon. A. C. Flagg, the Secretary of State, bearing date February 4th, 1829, in reference to the school fund during the year 1828; he has obligingly furnished me with the following memorandum, embracing the results contained in his last report as recently presented to the legislature.

"The foundation of the school fund was laid in 1805, on the recommendation of Morgan Lewis, whose message is to be found in the assembly journals of that year. In 1811, Governor Tompkins appointed five commissioners, viz. Jedediah Peck, John Murray, jun. Samuel Russell, Roger Skinner, and Robert Macomb, to devise a system for the common schools. This commission reported in 1812, as you will see by reference to the journals of the assembly in that year.

"The results contained in the annual report for the past year, are as follows: 8609 school districts in the state; 8164 districts have made returns this year; $232,343.21 have been paid to the common schools; 468,205 scholars have been taught in the common schools during the year, the general amount of instruction having been about eight months; there are 449,113 children between 5 and 15, in the school districts which have made returns."

It is due to Governor Lewis to notice his early suggestion of the establishment of common schools; his interesting remarks referred to by secretary Flagg, as contained in Goveror Lewis's speech of 1805, are as follows:—"I cannot conclude, gentlemen, without calling your attention to a subject which my worthy and highly respected predecessor* in office, had much at heart, and frequently I believe presented to your view, the encouragement of literature. In a government resting on public opinion, and deriving its chief

* His Excellency George Clinton.

support from the affections of a people, religion and morality cannot be too sedulously inculcated. To them science is an handmaid; ignorance the worst of enemies. Literary information should then be placed within the reach of every description of citizens, and poverty should not be permitted to obstruct the path to the fane of knowledge. Common schools under the guidance of respectable teachers should be established in every village, and the indigent educated at the public expense. The higher seminaries also should receive every patronage and support within the means of enlightened legislators. Learning would thus flourish, and vice be more effectually restrained than by volumes of penal statutes."*

NOTE F.—p. 49.

Provision had long been made in New-York by various associations, of different religious denominations, for the education of the poor and indigent children belonging to their respective denominations; but it was not until 1805 that a special body was organized in the city of New-York, who made application to the legislature of this state for an act to incorporate them as a "free school for the education of poor children, who do not belong to, or are not provided for by any religious society." Thirteen trustees were elected under this act, on the first Monday of the ensuing May, with powers to conduct the affairs of the corporation. On convening together, they found that they had undertaken a great task, and encountered an important responsibility; without funds, without teachers, without a house in which to instruct, and without a system of instruction; and that their great reliance was on their own industry, on the liberality of the public, and on the bounty of the constituted authorities. From this humble beginning may be dated the origin of the free school system, for the relief of a most extensive class of human

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* See Governors' Speeches, p. 8.

beings. In this society Mr. Clinton was chosen president, and delivered an address to the benefactors and friends of this association, upon the opening of the institution in New-York, in December, 1809. One or two extracts from this address must here suffice. It need scarcely be stated that the plan of instruction suggested by Joseph Lancaster was adopted.

"The trustees of this institution, after due deliberation, did not hesitate to adopt the system of Lancaster, and in carrying it into effect, they derived essential aid from one of their body, who had seen it practised in England, and who had also personal communication with its author. A teacher was also selected who has fully answered every reasonable expectation. He has generally followed the prescribed plan. Wherever he has deviated, he has improved. A more numerous, a better governed school, affording equal facilities to improvement, is not to be found in the United States.

"Provided thus with an excellent system and an able teacher, the school was opened on the sixth of May, 1806, in a small apartment in Bancker-street. This was the first scion of the Lancaster stock engrafted in the United States; and from this humble beginning, in the course of little more than three years, you will observe the rapidity with which we have ascended.

"When I perceive that many boys in our school have been taught to read and write in two months, who did not before know the alphabet, and that even one has accomplished it in three weeks—when I view all the bearings and tendencies of this system—when I contemplate the habits of order which it forms—the spirit of emulation which it excites—the rapid improvement which it produces—the purity of morals which it inculcates—when I behold the extraordinary union of celerity in instruction, and economy of expense—and when I perceive one great assembly of a thousand children, under the eye of a single teacher, marching with unexampled rapidity, and with perfect discipline, to the goal of knowledge; I confess that I recognise in Lancaster the benefactor of the human race—I consider his system as creating a new era in education, as a blessing sent down from heaven to redeem the poor and distressed of this world from the power and dominion of ignorance.

"Although the merits of this apostle of benevolence have been generally acknowledged in his own country, and he has received the countenance and

protection of the first men in Great Britain, yet calumny has lifted up her voice against him, and attempts have been made to rob him of his laurels. Danger to the established church and to government has been apprehended from his endeavours to pour light upon mankind. This insinuation has been abundantly repelled by the tenor of his life—his carefully steering clear in his instructions of any peculiar creed, and his confining himself to the general truths of christianity. 'I have,' says Lancaster, 'been eight years engaged in the benevolent work of superintending the education of the poor—I have had three thousand children, who owe their education to me, some of whom have left school, are apprenticed or in place, and are going on well. I have had great influence with both parents and children, among whom there is, nevertheless, no one instance of a convert to my religious profession.' That knowledge is the parent of sedition and insurrection, and that in proportion as the public mind is illuminated, the principles of anarchy are disseminated, is a proposition that can never admit of debate, at least in this country.

"But Lancaster has also been accused of arrogating to himself surreptitious honours, and attempts have been made to transfer the entire merit of his great discovery to Dr. Bell. Whatever he borrowed from that gentleman he has candidly acknowledged. The use of sand, in teaching, undoubtedly came to him through that channel, but it has been practised for ages by the Brahmins. He may also be indebted to Bell for some other improvements, but the vital leading principles of his system, are emphatically an original discovery.

"The origin and progress of beneficial discoveries cannot be too minutely specified; and when their diffusion can only be exceeded by their excellence, we have peculiar reason to congratulate the friends of humanity. This prompt and general encouragement is honourable to our national character, and shows conclusively, that the habits, manners, and opinions of the American people, are favourable to the reception of truth and the propagation of knowledge. And no earthly consideration could induce the benevolent man, to whom we are indebted for what we see this day, to exchange his feelings, if from the obscure mansions of indigence, in which, in all human probability he now is, instilling comfort into the hearts, and infusing knowledge into the minds of the poor, he could hear the voice of a

great and enlightened people pronouncing his eulogium, and see this parent seminary, and the establishments which have sprung from its bosom, diffusing light, imparting joy, and dispensing virtue. His tree of knowledge is indeed transplanted to a more fertile soil, and a more congenial clime. It has flourished with uncommon vigour and beauty—its luxuriant and wide-spreading branches afford shelter to all who require it—its ambrosial fragrance fills the land, and its head reaches the heavens!"

It was expressly set forth, in a subsequent address of this society, that they did not intend to interfere with any existing institution; but like gleaners in the wide field of benevolence, they sought such objects only as were left by those who had gone before, or were fellow-labourers with them, in the great work of charity. They considered early instruction, and fixed habits of industry, decency, and order, to be the surest safeguards of virtuous conduct. Nevertheless, some uneasiness existed in the minds of certain of the truly devotional as to how far religious instruction was cherished or overlooked. In the Historical Account of the society, published in 1814, this subject is thus adverted to:

"Every person, who was acquainted with these schools, was ready to express his satisfaction with the literary improvement of the children; but there were some, who thought that sufficient care had not been bestowed in the communication of instruction specifically religious. A concern of such high importance had not, however, been overlooked by the trustees; and they had pursued such measures in regard to it, as they considered to be most expedient. The board was composed of persons of almost every religious denomination; men who were attached to their respective creeds, and who would not fail, on suitable occasions, to recommend an acquaintance with them. But, in these schools, they had studiously avoided the inculcation of the peculiar tenets of any religious society. From the commencement of the institution, they had directed that the holy scriptures should be read daily in the schools; and it was thought that the tender minds of the children could not fail to be impressed with the sublime precepts and the beautiful morality of these excellent volumes. To satisfy the wishes of every well-meaning person, it was however determined, that the schools should be suspended on

the afternoon of every third day of the week (Tuesday), and that this time should be exclusively devoted to the religious instruction of the children. An association of more than fifty ladies, of distinguished consideration in society, and belonging to the different religious denominations in the city, volunteered their services in the work, and they accordingly meet at the schools to examine the children in their respective catechisms on the day appointed for that purpose. The parents and guardians designated the denomination in whose tenets they wished their children to be educated; and it may not be uninteresting to state the number belonging to each, at the time when this measure was adopted. They were found to belong to the various religious societies as follows, and the numbers are not materially different at the present period.

Presbyterians,	279
Episcopalians,	205
Baptists,	142
Methodists,	130
Dutch Church,	33
Roman Catholics,	20
Associate Reformed,	16
Total,	825

"It was also determined, in relation to this subject, that the children should assemble at their respective schools on the morning of every Sunday, or first day of the week, and proceed under the care of a monitor, to the place of public worship to which they respectively belonged.

"The two schools will contain about eight hundred scholars. That number is generally complete; and they are educated at an annual expense of about three dollars each. About four hundred children are admitted, and the same number discharged, every year.

"Nine years have now elapsed since the society commenced its labours, extending the blessings of education to the children of the indigent in this

metropolis. Every succeeding year has afforded them the gratification of announcing to the public the uniform advancement of the interests of the institution, and of its great and rapidly increasing utility; and the trustees have also had the satisfaction of seeing the benefits of the same system extended, either in whole or in part, to several other schools in this city."

As connected with the important subject of education, the following extracts from the Public School Society, embracing six hundred of the most influential and respectable of our citizens, will be read with the liveliest interest. The contrast which it exhibits of the condition of instruction in the city of New-York as compared with the state at large, is lamentable indeed. When we consider the vast efforts that have been made to improve the moral and intellectual culture of the rising generation, the causes of this condition if unravelled will explain much of the difficulty. Let us consider the heterogeneous complexion of our people; and let it be added that New-York probably receives as many emigrants as all the rest of the United States, and of these there is always an over proportion of uneducated persons. The address which the trustees have recently published to their fellow-citizens respecting the extension of the public schools is at once an able and convincing document.

"It is an object of primary importance to ascertain, as nearly as may be, the number of our children within the proper ages for instruction, who are entirely destitute of it. It is impossible with the data we possess, to arrive at a precisely accurate result; but it will be perceived by the following statement, that if we have fallen into an error, it is not that of exaggeration.

"Provision is made by law for ascertaining in all other parts of the state, the number of children between the ages of 5 and 15, and also the whole number annually instructed; and it is much to be regretted that it does not extend to this city. It appears by the Report of the Secretary of State for 1827, that in other parts of the state, the ratio of scholars in the public and other schools to the whole population, was 1 to 5—1 to 4—and 1 to 3; and that these are about the average ratios which prevail throughout the state, with the exception of this city. In this city this ratio is less than 1 to 7, supposing the population to have advanced with the same rapidity since 1825, as in the preceding five years.

"If we adopt for our city the proportion furnished by the above report, and founded upon actual official returns, between the whole population, and the children within the ages above-mentioned, the result will be that we had 45,300 of these children in 1825, when our population was but 166,000. If the increase of our population since 1825 has been in the same ratio as from 1820 to 1825, we must add to this number of children more than 7000, making the whole number 52,300. About 10,000 children are taught at our public and charity schools. It was ascertained by a committee of teachers, about four or five years since, that we had 200 male schools. It is a liberal allowance to suppose the female schools equally numerous. If we add to these numbers 100 schools, and allow 35 scholars to each school, which we are persuaded is an over estimate, we have 17,500 for the private schools.

"We have no means of ascertaining the number of Sunday scholars who go to no other schools. But it is evident that this number cannot be large, because the whole number of scholars in the Sunday schools does not exceed that in the public schools by more than 2000, and because we know that a large portion of Sunday scholars attend private schools.

"From the best inquiries we have been able to make, the number of those scholars who attend no other schools does not exceed one in twenty, or 600 in the whole.

"The result of these estimates is, that we have twenty-four thousand two hundred children, within the ages of 5 and 15, who attend no school whatever.

"A large number of children, principally boys, are taken from school as soon as they arrive at 14, and some even at 12 years of age, to be bound out to service, and others are withdrawn even at ten years of age for other purposes. If we allow one half of the whole number above mentioned to have been withdrawn from school before the age of 15, though perhaps one third would be nearer the truth, the result will be as follows:

"Whole number of children between 5 and 15 years of age,		52,300
Ditto, attending public schools, - - - - -	10,000	
Ditto .. private do. - - - - -	17,500	
Ditto .. Sunday do. not before included, - -	600	
Ditto, withdrawn before the age of 15, - - - -	12,100	40,200
Leaving		12,100

"Twelve thousand children, between five and fifteen years of age, entirely destitute of the means of instruction.

"This computation leaves out all those children of tenderer years, who ought to be introduced into infant schools. The density, magnitude, and character of our population, give to this subject a deeper interest here, than it can have elsewhere. The single fact that 20,000 emigrants arrived within our city the past year, presents the subject in a sufficiently striking point of view.

"It is time to pass from this general view to a more particular consideration of the necessity and nature of the reform which is called for. We conceive that our present establishments are altogether inadequate to the wants of the community.

"The money expended upon public schools in Boston, in the year 1826, amounted to upwards of $54,000, exclusive of all expenses of building. From the best information we can obtain, the expenditures of that city, for the same object, during the past year, amounted to $70,000.

"The whole revenue of the Public School Society of New-York, exclusive of about $4,400 received from pay scholars, for the year ending on the first of May last, was less than $20,000. This sum includes all the public moneys expended upon common schools, except $2,155.50 distributed to the Mechanics', the Orphan Asylum, and the Manumission Societies. It would be a waste of time to attempt to strengthen this statement by any comments we could make. We shall hereafter point out those particulars in which we conceive that our plan of public education needs to be enlarged.

"We have already stated, that our present system does not harmonize with the spirit of our public institutions. It is well known that the schools of the society were formerly exclusively 'free schools.' It was thought that a reluctance naturally arising from a general spirit of independence, to receive even instruction as a charity, would exclude many from the benefits of education.

"The removal of this impediment, by receiving compensation from such as choose to make it, has doubtless been attended with very beneficial consequences. Public instruction has been, to a considerable extent, freed from its

degrading associations with poverty and charity. Still these consequences have not been so extensive as was hoped. About two-thirds only of the whole number admitted into our schools are pay scholars. It is not certain what portion of these would have been excluded if the old system had continued.

"The more the community is enlightened, the more equally will its burdens be borne. It has not, perhaps, been sufficiently considered by political economists, that national wealth chiefly proceeds from the activity of mind; and must therefore be proportioned to the extent and universality of its developement. There is a striking illustration of this truth, in a lecture not long since delivered by Baron Dupin before one of the Institutes of Paris. It appears by his statement that in some parts of France, those who are educated are 1–10th, in others 1–20th, in others only 1–229th part of the whole population; and that the national revenue of these districts is nearly in corresponding ratios. Nay more, that these proportions are not materially varied by the most striking superiority or inferiority of soil and climate.

"It may be said that we have mistaken the effect for the cause. Wealth and education undoubtedly act and re-act upon each other. But it is certain that there would be little or no capital without education, and that capital derives its power of accumulation from education; which points out its uses, and creates a demand for it.

"If it were necessary to add any thing to these considerations, the trustees might claim the support of all the middling and even wealthier classes of society, on the ground of private interest. The amount of their taxes would be repaid to them fourfold, by the greater cheapness of education, even supposing they were to avail themselves only of the higher schools; and it will doubtless be an object of consideration to some individuals of these classes, that the cheaper education is, the more they can afford to purchase.

"It would be impossible, without going too much into detail, to show how great a saving in the expenses of educating our children would result from large establishments, under a proper superintendence. Suffice it to say, that, as far as experiments have been made, the results have been greater and more satisfactory than could have been expected.

"Is it necessary that the trustees should offer any further apology for

proposing that a small portion of the public wealth should be devoted to the great objects of education? We perceive no evidence of a parsimonious spirit in our public councils in regard to the ordinary objects of public revenue. There is no lack of taxation for lighting and guarding our streets—for our alms-house and penitentiaries. These expenditures for these objects, to say nothing of the enormous capital invested in these establishments, amounted in the year 1826 to upwards of $196,000. The expenditures for the same objects during the past year, amounted to $221,000. We might refer to inferior objects for proofs of equal public liberality. In short, whenever revenue is wanted for any purpose deemed important to the comfort or character of the city, it is a matter of course to raise it by tax. We humbly suggest that a similar liberality ought to be shown towards an object inferior to no other."

The salutary influence of this society is now universally felt and admitted; and for these benefits our community admits its obligations mainly to De Witt Clinton, Lindley Murray, jun. John Murray, jun. Thomas Eddy, and William Johnson.

NOTE G.—p. 49.

Before concluding these respective notices of institutions for the cultivation of elementary knowledge, it becomes necessary to give some account of a new organization for a similar object, in which Governor Clinton took a lively interest. This was the *Infant School Society of New-York.*

This society, the first of the kind established in the United States, was founded in the year 1827, upon the plan of similar institutions in Great Britain. "On Wednesday, 23d May, 1827," says the first published and authentic detail of its history, "a number of ladies of different denominations, met in the lecture room of the Brick Church, to take into consideration the necessity of forming a society, whose object should be, the education of the infant poor of this city.

"Mrs. Bethune was called to the chair, and Mrs. Holt was appointed secretary; when the following resolutions were passed unanimously.

"*Resolved*, That we form ourselves into a society for the establishment of schools for the children of the labouring poor, who have not attained the age at which they can be received into other schools, viz. children of both sexes, from eighteen months to two years.

"*Resolved*, That persons subscribing annually a sum not less than one dollar, be considered members of the society.

"Mrs. Divie Bethune, to whom the society is mainly indebted for its origin, was subsequently chosen First Directress.

"The society held their fourth meeting in the lecture room of the church in Canal-street, at which meeting a letter from Governor Clinton was read, approving of the society, and consenting to become its patron; a constitution adopted; additional officers and managers chosen; and arrangements made for carrying into effect the resolves of the society.

"It is evident," say the founders of the society in the preamble to their constitution, "that the deterioration of even the lower feelings of the child proceeds, in a great degree, from the neglect of indigent or uneducated parents; who, partly from poverty, their large families, or the necessity which many of them are under of going out to daily labour, are incapable of giving that personal and moral culture to their children, which the duties of a parent require them to perform."

The following is the tenor of one of the principal articles of the constitution: "Art. V. Committees from the board shall be appointed to different districts of the city, where infant schools are necessary; they shall visit the inhabitants, solicit funds, procure suitable buildings and teachers, encourage the labouring classes to keep their children clean, and send them to the infant school established in their neighbourhood, and render a report to the board at every stated meeting."

Extracts from the report of the proceedings of the board of direction, from the commencement of the society.—"As soon as sufficient funds were collected to warrant the commencement of operations, a school was opened July 16, in the basement story of the Canal-street church, which is known as Infant

School, No. 1. The names of 170 children are registered; the average attendance from 60 to 100; two teachers are employed, and an assistant whose business it is to attend to the smaller children, make the fires, sweep the school rooms, &c.

"During the summer and fall months, many parents availed themselves of the privilege of sending their younger children; but owing to the state of the weather, few under three years have attended during the winter. Of those children from three to six years, who have been pretty regular in their attendance during five or six months, nearly all can read or spell the lessons on the boards, and many the scripture lessons, repeat the tables in arithmetic, add, subtract, and multiply on the numeration frame, and on the lesson boards; are well acquainted with the scripture history, the ten commandments, and many hymns and moral songs; they have some knowledge of the natural history of animals, illustrated by pictures; analyse various moral lessons, and begin to have some knowledge of grammar; all which instruction is illustrated by sensible objects and actions.

"The above is not the only good resulting from infant education. Young as these children are, many were addicted to the vices of stealing, lying, and swearing, and would bite and hurt one another. As no corporeal punishment is permitted in the school, it was found necessary to make an example of the children guilty of these flagrant crimes. A small apartment with a barred window, and styled the Bridewell, has been found to answer the purpose. During the first two months of the school, few days passed that some were not placed there for a few minutes; but for some time, the sight of it is found to be sufficient.

"It is with peculiar satisfaction they report the approbation of the committee of the Public School Society, who have visited their school, and made such honourable mention of their mode of instruction to their society, that a school on the same plan will shortly be opened in Public School, No. 10, and placed under the motherly care of a committee from this society. They have also the pleasure to state, that letters requesting information on the subject of infant education, have been received from various parts, and infant schools are now either contemplated or in actual operation, in Philadelphia, Troy,

Albany, Boston, Norfolk, Va., Niagara, U. C. and in several parts of Connecticut. Many strangers visit the school to gain information, with a view to establish them when they return to their respective homes."

While the managers congratulate the society and the public on the success that has attended this first attempt to introduce Infant Schools into this city and state, the painful recollection presses on the mind, that with these congratulations are mingled the deepest sympathy and regret for the early bereavement of their patron—of him in whom the nation gloried, and whom the nation now mourns.

By the suggestion of De Witt Clinton this society was formed. Under his patronage it has prospered; and of the share it had of his latest attention, he "being dead yet speaketh." "The institution of infant schools is the pedestal to the pyramid. It embraces those children who are generally too young for common schools; it relieves parents from engrossed attention to their offspring, softens the brow of care, and lightens the hand of labour. More efficacious in reaching the heart than the head, in improving the temper than the intellect, it has been eminently useful in laying the foundation of good feelings, good principles, and good habits.* An institution of this kind has been established in the city of New-York by some ladies who, with that characteristic benevolence which forms the brightest jewel in the female character, have devoted themselves and their merited influence to this inestimable object. Whenever such advocates for such institutions appear, they are entitled to the most liberal benefactions from individuals, and the most ample endowments from the public. Benevolence animates their hearts, and charity governs their lives."

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* The Governor's last Message to the Legislature of New-York, January 1828.

NOTE H.—p. 49.

The Presbyterian Society for the promotion of the education of youth, as preparatory to the ministry, has been but recently formed in the city of New-York. Mr. Clinton was from education and feeling a member of this class of Christians; but, as all who were acquainted with him well knew, entirely free from sectarian dogmatism, both in principles and in action. I have been favoured with the following papers under this head, from my friend the Rev. Samuel H. Cox, D.D. pastor of the Laight-street Presbyterian church, New-York.

Address of his late Excellency, De Witt Clinton, on taking the chair of the Presbyterian Education Society as its presiding Vice-President, at its seventh anniversary, May 1824. *He was afterwards, the same evening, unanimously elected President of the Society, and continued in that office till his death.*

In consequence of the resignation of the worthy and respectable president of this institution, I have been honoured with an invitation to act in his place; and in acceding to this request, I have felt all the responsibility attached to the occasion, and all the solicitude connected with the important duties which we are assembled to perform.

It is certainly a work of supererogation to expatiate on the high interests which are blended with the prosperity of this institution. The solemnities of the Jewish ritual have given way to the mild administrations of christianity, and the establishment of the cross has destroyed the sanguinary prescriptions of the heathen mythology. With this change of the character of religion, the offices and functions of its ministers have received a correspondent improvement; and instead of the priest presenting victims at the altar to propitiate the fabulous deities of superstition, the christian divine offers up prayers to the almighty father of the universe—expounds the revelations of

heaven—administers the solemn ordinances of religion, and exerts all the powers of his mind to inculcate the observance of morality.

The experience of mankind evinces that religion is essential to cement society, and to promote good government: and in reference to a future state it determines our destinies for ever. The influence of religion must be co-extensive with the number and the character of its ministers. An able and pious clergy will produce a moral and religious people. And in proportion to a deficiency in the number and a failure in the qualifications of the sacred ministry, in that ratio will the morals of the people be affected, and the interests of the community impaired.

In this state, the functionaries of religion are constitutionally interdicted from office, and in most of the states they are practically proscribed; and it is well known that the emoluments of the sacerdotal office furnish no allurements to cupidity. The sons of the great and the powerful, of the opulent and the ambitious, will seek the road to civil distinction or wealth through other professions; and it thus unfortunately happens that those most able to bestow the blessings of education on their children, are the most unwilling that they should devote themselves to the official duties of religion. This defect must be supplied—this evil must be remedied, by gratuitous education. And with this view, institutions like the present, which cherish merit without any regard to the factitious distinctions of society; which rescue poverty from privation, and elevate humility above depression, and which appreciate talent and virtue in the abstract without any connexion with the endowments of fortune or political distinction, are calculated to enlist in the cause of religion, men of gigantic minds and wonderful energy. In the dark abodes of poverty, and in the sequestered shades of obscurity, genius often exhibits its powers, and the virtues of a saint and a martyr are frequently cherished with holy enthusiasm. Cultivation and patronage must unite in drawing forth these latent and dormant energies, and enlisting them in the service of mankind.

It is in vain to contend that the functions of a christian minister can be performed without education. The apostles of Christ were, at first, men without the benefits of literature; but they were armed with the gift of

tongues, the power of miracles, and the visitations of the Holy Ghost. But, besides these preternatural endowments, all the learning and philosophy of the ancients were united in St. Paul, who was called into the christian church by a miraculous interposition. His writings display the most powerful talent, and he has even condescended to refer to some of the great classical authors of antiquity. His eloquence was of Demosthenian energy; and to his intellectual cultivation must be ascribed, to a certain extent, the vast consequences that resulted from his labours in the cause of christianity.

An able divine ought to understand the original languages in which the inspired writers promulgated our religion. And it would be well if he extended his acquisitions to the other radical languages of the eastern hemisphere. His acquaintance with literature and science ought to be extensive and profound; and he should be deeply read in moral philosophy, metaphysics, and theology. He should also be master of all the points of polemic discussion, and be prepared not only to defend christianity against the assaults of scepticism and infidelity, but to vindicate his particular creed against the objections of opposing sects. In order to attain this intellectual eminence, so becoming an ambassador of heaven and a minister of the Most High God, he must pass through all the seminaries of education, from the rudimental school to the university, and devote year after year to the attainment of pulpit eloquence and the acquisition of theological knowledge.

How are these great blessings to be acquired? By the union of the friends of religion in the education of a christian minister—by inducing our youth to devote themselves to the altars of God—and by dispensing the benefits of gratuitous instruction to the favourites of piety and genius, wherever they are to be found. And let it be understood that the interests of good government as well as of religion, are seriously affected by the want of religious instructors. Thousands of places are now destitute of christian ministers; and the evils are felt not only in religious privations, but in the prevalence of practices incompatible with the public welfare. Wherever a good and an able divine is settled, he will acquire the love, the confidence, and the respect of his congregation. His influence will be felt in all their conduct, and a commerce of benefit and gratitude will be established, which will reach the sources

of the noblest virtues, and exercise the most powerful control over the whole field of human action.

The aspect of the world is replete with wonderful indications: within the memory and observation of many of us, the most extraordinary events, from the American revolution to the present period, have occurred. A new power, unknown to the ancients, has risen up to direct the energies and to superintend the destinies of mankind. Its authority is unlimited, its progress irresistible. It derives its existence from the lights of christianity, the invention of printing, and the diffusion of education. It governs the monarch on the throne as well as the peasant in the cottage. Need I say—the power of public opinion, which influences all the operations and is felt in all the ramifications of society.

This power, in order to be beneficial, ought to be founded on just and proper grounds. It ought to be directed by piety and knowledge. Monitorial education, Sunday schools, and Bible societies, are the great levers which must raise public opinion to its proper elevation: and when reinforced and impelled into activity by the ministrations of a virtuous and enlightened clergy, then the cause of liberty, order, and good government, will be established on a firm basis, and the prospects of blessedness in another and a better world, will brighten the gloom of seclusion, alleviate the burden of affliction, and solace the hour of death.

Such are the objects and such the tendencies of this institution; and recommended as it is by all the considerations which ought to operate on the man, the patriot, and the christian, I feel happy on this occasion to offer my humble mite for its support, and to raise my feeble voice in its favour.

"NEW-YORK, March 20, 1828.

"DEAR SIR,

"It is with great pleasure that I attempt to comply with your request, in reference to our distinguished fellow-citizen and friend, De Witt Clinton. I am happy to communicate any knowledge in my power respecting 'The Presbyterian Education Society,' that is now without a president, and that mourns in the death of Clinton its highest officer departed, and one of its very efficient allies removed, to return no more.

"This society was instituted in 1818. I well recollect the first meeting for its organization, which occurred in this city. Since that event, its success has been animating, and more than equal to the sober anticipations of its founders. Its object is—to assist indigent young candidates, of approved piety and talents, with the means of obtaining a thorough and accomplished education for the sacred ministry. Our first president was the venerable Elias Boudinot, LL.D. who continued his patriarchal interest and oversight in the society, till the hand of death, breaking the slumbers of his age, and waking him to the ineffable joys of heaven, deprived us and the nation of his valued assistance. In May, 1822, the Hon. Jonas Platt, LL.D. one of our vice-presidents, was unanimously elected his successor, and continued until May, 1824, when, in consequence of his removal to Utica, his resignation was tendered and accepted. At this anniversary, Mr. Clinton, who had been from the first one of our vice-presidents, was unanimously elected president of the society. On that occasion he pronounced from the chair an appropriate and excellent address, which has been given to the public, and a copy of which accompanies this letter. His other addresses, I believe, were prudentially withholden from the press, by himself. He continued to sustain the office and discharge the duties of president with distinguished ability, till his late lamented death. The society is now for the third time bereft of its head; and while our loss is realized, our prospect of repairing it is doubtful.*

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* "Since the above was written, I have ascertained that the Hon. Jonas Platt, LL.D. has been unanimously re-elected to that office, at a meeting when I happened to be absent."

"Clinton was the friend of education, and the example of its worth. Rarely has it fallen to the lot of one man to unite such various qualities of greatness in his own person. We have seen the *homo ad unguem factus* in examples comparatively frequent—the man who had received the last effect of education, and who would have been a cipher without it; we have seen also the paragon of native genius, presuming on its untutored resources, and evincing the deplorable want of the application which he scorned, catching at imaginary grandeur or wantoning in impracticable achievements, great even in his eccentricities, and almost redeeming his name from the infamy of uselessness by the vigour and vividness of his exploits; we have seen the sage of learned abstractions, conversant only with books and sepulchred in a library, the associate of the ancients and a stranger to his contemporaries, his name quoted by the scholars of another hemisphere, and unknown in the vicinity of his own dwelling, to whom the numerical population of his country was a secret, and the use of a table of national statistics a thing insolvable—who could recite Homer and Demosthenes, Longinus and Virgil, Horace and Cicero, as his vernacular alphabet, but who could do nothing and think nothing in practical detail; we have seen mental giants, possessing many noble qualities, but with no symmetry or balance between them, and with whom some prominent defect sufficed to ruin or debilitate all the attributes of eminence: but Clinton was, I think, remarkable at once for the combination of great qualities and the happy equilibrium of their adjustment. He certainly possessed an extraordinary self command, an elevated and comprehensive vision, and a singular discretion, as well as a momentum of original thought, that was seen in its effects and acknowledged in its utilities. His eloquence evinced a native vein, while classical accuracy, splendid imagery, and verbal affluence everywhere marked his style. He was, perhaps, not eminently gifted at extemporaneous effort; he generally declined it; yet the fruits of time and care rewarded the patience of cultivation, and commended the soil in which they grew. He was unquestionably a man of genius, a scholar, a jurist, a statesman, an enlightened political economist, a deep and practical projector, and a polished gentleman; in all or in each he had few equals in any age. He was no visionary. His native state and the hearts of his countrymen contain, and

will perpetuate, the monuments of his usefulness. Neither was he superficial, credulous, or precipitate.

Felix qui potuit rerum cognoscere causas.

He was the philosopher of evidence; a disciple of the Baconian school, and utility was the motto of his plans for aggrandizing the community. As an officer of the Education Society, he was universally honoured. Punctual in his attendance; no sinecure occupant of a lofty seat, but an intellectual and pecuniary contributor to the cause. He was not unacquainted with the rational evidence that demonstrates the divinity of the faith of christians; and his testimony is worth volumes. It will be quoted by christian apologists and future Americans, when all the oppugners of revelation shall sleep in ungrudged oblivion.

"That he never professed at the communion-table his faith in the testimonies and his hope in the promises of our Lord Jesus Christ—could he have done this with devout consistency—I can neither cease to regret nor forbear to particularise. Washington was a professor of religion; and amid the happy recollections that embalm the memory of our national patriarch, the fact of his 'professed subjection to the gospel of Christ,' should not be suffered to moulder with his neglected sepulchre.* This chasm in the character of Clinton

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* "I have the following anecdote from unquestionable authority. It has never, I think, been given to the public; but I received it from a venerable clergyman, who had it from the lips of the Rev. Dr. Jones himself. To all christians, and to all Americans, it cannot fail to be acceptable.

"While the American army, under the command of Washington, lay encamped in the environs of Morris Town, New-Jersey, it occurred that the service of the communion (then observed semi-annually only) was to be administered in the Presbyterian church of that village. In a morning of the previous week, the General, after his accustomed inspection of the camp, visited the house of the Rev. Dr. Jones, then pastor of that church, and after the usual preliminaries, thus accosted him. 'Doctor, I understand that the Lord's Supper is to be celebrated with you next Sunday; I would learn if it accords with the canons of your church to admit communicants of another denomination?' The Doctor rejoined—'Most certainly; ours is not the Presbyterian table, General, but the Lord's table; and we hence

was one of which I have reason to think he was not wholly unconscious. He was my personal friend, and I was certainly not ungrateful for his friendship, however unworthy of it. Many valued traces of his esteem are preserved in my memory, and some are filed in the documents of a private correspondence. He received the epistolary expostulations of christian faithfulness 'as the offspring of religion and friendship,' and expressed his gratification with their plain appeal. He was decisively attached to the denomination to which the society appertains, but with no illiberal or contracted predilections; such sordid ingredients of character being rejected in common by the head and the members of the Presbyterian Education Society.

"But he has gone! 'Before the judgment-seat of Christ,' where greatness associates itself with responsibility, or is identified with moral virtues, or retires unseen, his audit has been sped, and we are hastening to the same ordeal of impartiality and truth! 'Glory, honour, immortality,' are legitimate objects of aspiration, and they are definable and attainable too, when sought in the ways of piety towards God. Let us be admonished by the transitoriness of time, by the splendid emptiness of all things without an interest in the Saviour, and especially by the sudden departure of a nation's hope, to live for eternity!

——— winged by heaven
To fly at infinite, and reach it there,
Where seraphs gather immortality,
On life's fair tree, fast by the throne of God.

"With great respect, Dear Sir,

"I remain, yours, &c.

David Hosack, M.D. LL.D. "SAMUEL H. COX."

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give the Lord's invitation to all his followers, of whatever name.' The General replied, 'I am glad of it; that is as it ought to be: but as I was not quite sure of the fact, I thought I would ascertain it from yourself, as I propose to join with you on that occasion. Though a member of the Church of England, I have no exclusive partialities.' The Doctor re-assured him of a cordial welcome, and the General was found seated with the communicants the next Sabbath."

NOTE I.—p. 54.

Mr. Clinton, as the chief magistrate of this city, having been many years associated with the Hon. Richard Riker, the present recorder, I addressed to the latter the following letter, and received in reply the subjoined communication.

NEW-YORK, May 17th, 1828.

DEAR SIR,

Knowing that you have been many years associated with Mr. Clinton in the various official stations you have held, more especially as District Attorney and as Recorder, you must have had a very ample opportunity of intimately knowing his merits as a criminal judge, the duties of which as Mayor, he frequently had occasion to perform. Allow me to ask the favour of you to give me your views of Mr. Clinton's character in that important station. I am aware of the occasional feelings that occurred to mar the friendship which subsisted between you, but I also well know your magnanimity is such that these have long since been obliterated, and that you will not consider this application from me as a departure from propriety or delicacy. It proceeds from my desire to give a faithful portrait of my friend in the performance of the duty that has been assigned me.

Very truly and respectfully yours,

DAVID HOSACK.

The Hon. RICHARD RIKER, *Recorder.*

"NEW-YORK, 19th May, 1828.

"DEAR SIR,

"It affords me great satisfaction to reply to your note of the 17th instant. Whatever differences may have existed between Mr. Clinton and myself, they are buried in oblivion. I remember only the days when we were friends. You have recalled those days to my recollection.

"Mr. Clinton was the chief magistrate of our city for nearly ten years. As such he was the presiding judge in the court of General Sessions. During almost the whole of that period I was the district attorney, and conducted before him the criminal business of the city. You ask me to give his character in the highly important station of judge. My answer is,—that he was, in my opinion, one of the safest judges that ever presided in a court of criminal jurisdiction. He was patient—discriminating—master of all the great principles of criminal law—severe where justice required it, but always inclined to the side of mercy.

"In confirmation of this opinion of mine, it is due to the memory of Mr. Clinton to state the sentiments of a political opponent, and one of the most accomplished advocates, who has at any period adorned our bar. I refer to the late Washington Morton. He has often said to me, that were he to be put upon trial for his life, and could select his judge, he would choose De Witt Clinton. Many of Mr. Clinton's charges to the grand jury have been published, and have uniformly commanded respect, not less for the comprehensive views taken by him of the powers and duties of the grand inquest, than the style in which those addresses were written.

"Very respectfully your obedient servant,

"RICHARD RIKER."

"PROFESSOR HOSACK."

NOTE J.—p. 58.

At a meeting of a number of merchants trading in Pearl-street, assembled on Thursday, December 4th, 1823, for the purpose of expressing to the Honourable De Witt Clinton, their gratitude for the services he has rendered to the state of New-York, in relation to internal improvements. Mr. Peter Crary was called to the chair, and Isaac S. Hone appointed secretary.

Resolved, That the conception of the grand design of the Northern and Western canals, the removal of the prejudices which opposed their adoption,

and the conducting them to an early and successful completion, are the results of the sagacity, zeal, and perseverance, of the Hon. De Witt Clinton.

Resolved, That those eminent services claim for him the proudest title which our country can bestow—that of PUBLIC BENEFACTOR.

Resolved, That a committee be appointed to carry into effect the design of this meeting, and that this committee have full power to procure and present to Mr. Clinton, in the name of the merchants trading in Pearl-street, such pieces of silver plate as they may consider appropriate.

Resolved, That the following persons, together with the chairman and secretary, compose the committee; John Haggerty, James Heard, Nathaniel Richards, Arthur Tappan, Edward M. Greenway, Amos Palmer, Ralph Olmsted, Frederick Sheldon, Najah Taylor.

Peter Crary, *Chairman.*
Isaac S. Hone, *Secretary.*

To Artists.

A premium of $100 is offered for the best design for two vases, to be made in pursuance of the preceding resolutions. It is the wish of the committee, that the vases should be of the same outline, but differing in ornament.

Presentation of the Clinton Vases.

The superb silver vases procured at the expense of the Pearl-street (New-York) merchants, intended as a present for Governor Clinton, were presented to him by a committee of the donors on Saturday, March 19th, 1825, at his house in the city of Albany, in the presence of upwards of a hundred citizens and strangers of distinction. We are told by those who were present on the occasion, that the ceremony was very imposing, and excited feelings of the most deep-toned interest. On presenting the vases, Mr. Hone, on the part of the committee, delivered the following address:

"GOVERNOR CLINTON,

"In behalf of the merchants of Pearl-street, in the city of New-York, who are deeply impressed with a sense of the benefits which you have conferred upon this state, we have the honour to present to you these vases, as a testimony of their gratitude and respect.

"At an early period, your sagacity appreciated the importance of uniting the waters of Lake Erie with those of the Hudson, and your devotion to the public interest induced you to urge it upon the legislature, with all the weight of your influence. What was then theory, has now become a splendid reality, and at every new developement of our resources, and every new display of the power and grandeur of our state, its citizens feel additional inducements to admire and honour your character.

"Among the interesting considerations which your name involves, it is not the least important, that your fellow-citizens have recently recalled you to the office which gives such ample scope to your talents, and that you have preferred the discharge of its duties to the honours of a foreign embassy. We sincerely hope that your administration will be as gratifying to yourself, as it will be beneficial to your constituents.

Committee.

PETER CRARY,
JAMES HEARD,
NAJAH TAYLOR,
NATHANIEL RICHARDS,
JOHN HAGGERTY,
ARTHUR TAPPAN,
EDWARD M. GREENWAY,
AMOS PALMER,
RALPH OLMSTED,
FREDERICK SHELDON,
ISAAC S. HONE.

Governor Clinton's Reply.

GENTLEMEN,

"I receive these splendid fabrics with the highest gratification. In the design and in the execution, they reflect honour on the taste, skill, and ingenuity of our artists, and in that light they are acceptable: but they come to me with superior recommendations, as the offering of regard from the hands of gentlemen whose good opinions I greatly value, and whose friendship I sincerely reciprocate.

"On this occasion, I cannot but felicitate you (as the representatives of a most important section of the most commercial city in the western world,) not only on the flourishing condition of our great emporium, but on the still more exalted destinies that await it. Its unrivalled position near the ocean, and its facilities of interior communication with the most extensive and fertile regions, give it pre-eminent advantages. Making full allowances for the occurrence of those great moral and physical evils, which have scourged the human race, we may confidently predict, that your progress will be accelerated, and that every accession of population and opulence will be the parent of new acquisitions. In one year more houses have been added to New-York, than at present compose the ancient and prosperous city in which I now address you. At this very moment the inhabitants of the counties connected with the Ohio, the Delaware, the Susquehannah, the Connecticut, the St. Lawrence, and the Mississippi rivers, and with our vast inland seas, are seeking with solicitude navigable communications with your city. And without yielding to the dreams of visionary hypothesis, or the chimeras of delusive anticipation, we may expect, before the lapse of many years, the consummation of these designs, and a consequent state of unexampled prosperity. And we may certainly cherish these expectations without the just imputation of arrogance or ostentation. We ought to know our power with a view to its judicious application; and we should form a just estimate of our faculties and capabilities, in order to promote in the most effectual manner, the welfare of our country and the happiness of mankind.

"The favourable views which my fellow-citizens generally, have taken of my agency in developing the resources and advancing the prosperity of the

commonwealth, are the greatest reward, next to the approbation of my own conscience, which I can enjoy in this world. If I have been hitherto an humble instrument in the hands of Providence, of dispensing some benefits to my fellow-citizens, I have every inducement from their kindness, so often, so strikingly, and I may say, so uniformly manifested, for devoting my best and my future exertions in the same career.

"I pray you, gentlemen, to present my grateful and respectful acknowledgments to your constituents for these flattering testimonials of their esteem; and permit me to express to you the high sense which I entertain of the honour you have conferred on me by your personal attendance on this occasion.

"DE WITT CLINTON."

"Albany, March 19th, 1825."

Description of the vases presented to Governor Clinton, by the merchants of Pearl-street, in the city of New-York, in testimony of their gratitude and respect for his public services.*

The form of these vases is copied from the celebrated antique vase, found among the ruins of the Villa of Adrian, and now in the possession of the Earl of Warwick. The handles and some of the ornaments are also similar to those upon that beautiful specimen of ancient art; but all the tablets and figures in *bas relief* are different, and exhibit scenes upon the Grand Canal, or allegorical illustrations of the progress of the arts and sciences.

The vases are twenty-four inches in height, twenty-one inches between the extremities of the handles, and the diameter of the body in the largest part is fourteen inches; the weight of silver in each is about four hundred ounces.

Their form is circular, except that the lower part is slightly elliptical, as are also the covers, each of which is surmounted by an eagle standing upon a section of the globe, upon which is traced part of the outline of the state of New-York; he bears in one talon the arms of the state, and in the other

* Made by Messrs. Fletcher and Gardner, Philadelphia, and designed by the former.

a laurel wreath. The pedestal is square, and supported by four claws; two sides of the pedestal of the first vase are ornamented with foliage and scroll-work, with an oval medallion bearing a river deity leaning on an inverted vase. The third contains the inscription:

TO THE

HONOURABLE DE WITT CLINTON,

WHO HAS

DEVELOPED THE RESOURCES OF THE STATE OF NEW-YORK,

AND

Ennobled her Character,

THE

MERCHANTS OF PEARL-STREET

OFFER THIS

TESTIMONY OF THEIR GRATITUDE AND RESPECT.

The fourth exhibits a number of figures, which, in connexion with those on the corresponding section of the other vase, are intended to represent the progress of the Arts and Sciences, from their rude origin to their present improvement. On the right of the spectator appears a pastoral group listening to the pipe of Mercury; next to these is a husbandman leaning on his spade, and gazing upon a hive, while a female figure points to the labours of the industrious bee; then appears Minerva without her helmet and shield, directing the attention of the spectator to a bust which Sculpture is chiseling. The concave belt around the middle of this vase bears six tablets in *bas relief;* the two centre tablets exhibit views of the Cohoos Falls, and of the Little Falls of the Mohawk, with the stone aqueduct and bridge, and parts of the canal. The figures on each side of the former are Fame and History; on one side of the latter is an Indian contemplating the stump of a tree recently felled, and the axe lying at its root; and on the other, Plenty with her cornucopia; a head of Neptune, with his trident, dolphins, and shells, is placed at each extremity of this belt, under the grape-vine handles.

On the second vase, two sides of the pedestal are ornamented with foliage, &c. as on the first; the third contains the inscription:

TO THE

HONOURABLE DE WITT CLINTON,

WHOSE CLAIMS

TO THE PROUD TITLE OF PUBLIC BENEFACTOR,

IS FOUNDED ON THOSE

Magnificent Works,

THE

NORTHERN AND WESTERN CANALS.

On the fourth side is Architecture leaning upon a column, with a level at its base. Then a youth holding a drawing board with a diagram of one of the first problems in mathematics, and an old man directing his attention to the figures beyond, which denote the sciences still unexplored, and encouraging him to persevere. The next group is composed of two aged persons contemplating a globe held by a female, who points to some lines upon its surface. Next is a figure with a torch in the right hand, and a star on the head, holding in the left hand a tablet with a diagram; by his side is a sundial, and an athletic figure beyond holds a pair of dividers, and gazes attentively upon the female with the globe. This group is intended to indicate the study of the sciences. The concave belt around this vase is also embellished with six tablets. The front view is the grand lock and part of the basin at Albany, where the canal is connected with the Hudson, together with the mansion of Mr. Van Rensselaer and the adjacent scenery, and canal boats passing. The plate on the right of this tablet exhibits Ceres, with the emblems of argriculture; that on the left, Mercury, with the emblems of commerce. The reverse centre tablet contains a view of the aqueduct at Rochester, and a boat passing, drawn by horses; below are seen the falls of the Genesee, and a number of unfinished buildings. This view is supported on the right and left by Minerva and Hercules, indicating wisdom and strength.

The lower compartment of the body of each vase is ornamented with acanthus leaves, intermingled, at proper distances, with small shrubs, among which are seen the wild animals who haunted our western region before the industry and enterprise of our brethren made "the wilderness to rejoice and blossom as the rose."

NOTE K.—p. 60.

Letter from the Hon. James Kent, LL.D.

"NEW-YORK, Oct. 6, 1828.

"DEAR SIR,

"Agreeably to your request, I send you a memorandum of the judicial opinions delivered by Governor Clinton, while he was a member of the Court of Errors. Though I cannot subscribe to all their conclusions, yet you will find them to have been ably written, and they do much credit to his vigorous power of reasoning, and the force and fervour of his style.

In Feb. 1802, he delivered an opinion on the great and much contested question respecting the effect to be given to foreign Admiralty decisions.—See his opinion in 2. Johnson's Cases, 457. and 2. Caine's Cases in Error, 283.

In 1807, he gave an opinion on important points in insurance law, and another on nice and technical questions arising on pleadings.—See 2. Johnson's Rep. 543. 565.

In 1808, he gave an opinion on the Judiciary Act of the United States.—See 3. Johnson's Rep. 560.

In 1808, he also delivered an opinion of much force and eloquence relating to the valuation of the Rose Hill estate, on York Island.—See 7. Johnson's Rep. 617.

In 1809, he discussed at large in one of his opinions the doctrine of Libel.—See 5. Johnson's Rep. 434. 528.

In 1810, he delivered several opinions arising upon the discussions in the highly litigated case of John V. N. Yates, respecting the power of commitment for Contempt, and the construction of the Habeas Corpus Act.

Some of these opinions are models of judicial and parliamentary eloquence, and they all relate to important questions affecting constitutional rights and personal liberty.

You will be able to see the books referred to in every lawyer's library, and I think you will find the opinions I have mentioned to be well worth your

perusal. They partake more of the character of a statesman's discussions, than of that of a dry technical lawyer, and are therefore much more interesting to the general scholar.

"Yours sincerely,
"JAMES KENT."

"DOCTOR HOSACK."

NOTE L.—p. 61.

Letter from Counsellor Sampson.

NEW-YORK, Oct. 14th, 1828.

"DEAR SIR,

"When you do me the honour to require my opinion of Mr. Clinton's legal character, I presume that more is intended than his merits as a mere lawyer, qualified for the ordinary walks of the profession. Long before I could know him, he had given up those pursuits, which probably did not comport with the bent of his genius or his ambition. It would therefore be no disparagement to suppose that he did not possess all the knowledge of technical rules and forms, or of book cases, which require long and exclusive devotion to their attainment, and are hardly retained in memory but by frequent and constant application. But he most undoubtedly was master of the great and leading principles of the laws and constitutions of his country, and of general jurisprudence; and when questions of difficulty came before him, there was none that could better or more promptly seize the true bearings of the case, and place it on its true foundation, and by the force of a discriminating and unsophisticated judgment, clear it from all perplexing embarrassments. The law never suffered by any judgment or opinion delivered by him, but often acquired additional dignity from his manly and liberal expositions. His official messages to successive legislatures were faithful tables of the condition and true interests of our state, and were never fairly and freely acted upon, but with great public benefit; and as a magistrate, a legislator, a jurist, and a

judge, he stood equally distinguished, and never more so than when in the exercise of criminal jurisdiction, where a large discretion is given to the judge in apportioning the punishment in so many cases of misdemeanor, as well by statute as by common law, where broad views of human nature and its frailties, the absence of narrow prejudices, and moral courage to withstand all undue influence, are so essential. In this latter quality Mr. Clinton was characteristically and intrinsically strong.

"In the councils of the nation, in the councils of the state, in the court of last resort of this great and leading member of the union, he has left many monuments of an enlarged and comprehensive mind, that it would be difficult to select, and endless to pursue them in detail. The commercial part of our community, that important portion of our active population, feel and acknowledge his useful services. They know how instrumental he was in freeing their property from usurped authority, and slavish compliance with the decrees of foreign jurisdictions, made in direct opposition to our interests and to international justice and equality. He also recommended the passage of a law to secure our merchants and dealers from the danger of secret liens upon goods, in the hands of factors and other agents appearing as the absolute owners; but he did not live to see that suggestion carried into effect. It would far exceed the limits or objects of this letter to pursue this subject in its extent, or to point out the instances where the masculine energies of his mind had tended to overcome the force of prejudice, and open the way to such improvements as the progress of his age and country called for. It may, however, be but an act of justice to record and call to mind that he was the first chief magistrate of any state in this union, who ventured in the face of long-rooted prejudice, to recommend a complete code or digest of our laws. Of the utility, if not necessity of such a measure, the opinion of such a statesman is of itself some proof; the progress of that sentiment here and in England, where the greatest masters of law and jurisprudence have expounded it both in and out of Parliament, is a further confirmation; and however timidly and doubtingly received, as great plans of improvement often are, it may hereafter be added as a posthumous wreath to crown his well-earned fame.

"I am glad that the eulogy of your distinguished friend is in such good hands; in some points you have been ably anticipated, but the interest is still fresh, and your zeal undiminished. If this letter has any thing worthy your attention, it is at your service; make of it what use you think proper.

"I am, dear sir, your friend and servant,

"WILLIAM SAMPSON."

"To Dr. David Hosack."

Note.—p. 65.

De Witt Clinton and the late War.

The following letter from the late Thomas Addis Emmet, Esq. silences for ever the charge which has been so often reiterated that Mr. Clinton was unfriendly to the prosecution of the late war. It is already known that Mr. Clinton was active and efficient in procuring money for the general government to carry on the war; that the officers of the United States repeatedly and gratefully acknowledged his services; and that no public officer took more pride and pleasure, in bestowing the civic honours which the corporation of New-York awarded to our gallant and naval military heroes, in a manner that reflected equal credit on his head and his heart. The following document will show that it was not his fault that he did not engage in actual service. It is perhaps unnecessary, at this time, to inquire whether Governor Tompkins had any design in thus excluding an active and able officer from the public service. The reason assigned, that it might give offence to older generals, is entirely unfounded; as every man who knows any thing of the late war, knows that generals were selected to command without reference to the dates of their commissions. One thing is certainly extraordinary, that while Mr. Tompkins was so anxious to communicate to the public the patriotic language of the Hon. Rufus King, he should have forgotten the offer of Governor Clinton.

To the Hon. John C. Spencer, Esq. Speaker of the House of Assembly.

"ALBANY, March 21st, 1820.

"DEAR SIR,

"I have this morning been honoured with your letter, requesting from me the information I may possess, respecting Governor Clinton's application during the late war to Governor Tompkins, for an active command, and an opportunity to render his services in carrying on the war.

"Although I am in general unwilling to have my name introduced into public discussions, yet I have always held myself bound to give to Governor Clinton, or the Vice President, or to the friends of either of those gentlemen, as full a statement of what I know of that transaction, as my memory and the lapse of time may permit.

"In the summer of 1814, Mr. Clinton, who was then mayor of the city of New-York, requested me to be the bearer of an application from him to Gov. Tompkins, to be called into active military service, and particularly as apprehensions then began to be entertained for the safety of the city over which he presided. I had previously understood, or was then informed, (and I cannot now say which) that the late General Curtenius, had informally suggested the same thing to Governor Tompkins, but apparently without success. That circumstance, and the manner in which I was applied to, induced me to be very explicit in stating to Governor Tompkins that I came directly from the mayor. At the same time I took the liberty of urging from myself such arguments as appeared to me best calculated to second the application. Governor Tompkins, as far as I now recollect, made but one objection. He said that Mr. Clinton was a very young major-general, and very little known as such, and that calling him into active service would be contrary to etiquette, and would probably offend older militia generals, whom he did not think it right or prudent to employ; some of whom he named to me.

"This application formed the subject of more than one conversation between Governor Tompkins and myself; and I endeavoured to convince him that the situation of Mr. Clinton as mayor, and the confidence placed in him by the citizens of New-York, ought to have much greater weight than any military

etiquette, or at least in the selection of an officer for the protection of that city, which then seemed to be very seriously threatened. Governor Tompkins did not refuse to comply with Mr. Clinton's application; but he seemed to hesitate so long and so much, that I considered it as virtually refused. After some time, however, and when affairs appeared to have grown more gloomy, his excellency, of his own accord, desired me to inform the mayor, that if the enemy landed in the vicinity of New-York, he should be employed as he solicited, and to prepare himself accordingly. This message I immediately communicated to Mr. Clinton, who observed that if his wishes were to be gratified, it certainly would be desirable that he should be appointed some time before the enemy's landing, so as that he might make the necessary previous arrangements; but he nevertheless desired me to inform the Governor, that he should be prepared, and hold himself in readiness at a moment's notice, whenever called on. That message I accordingly delivered to Governor Tompkins, and have never since heard any thing on the subject from either of those gentlemen.

"I have the honour to be, Sir, with much respect,

"Your obedient servant,

"THOMAS ADDIS EMMET."

NOTE.—p. 68.

Upon the termination of Governor Clinton's administration under the old constitution, he resolved to withdraw from the station he had held, and to return once more to the walks of private life. Upon that occasion a public meeting of the citizens of Albany was called to express their sentiments relative to his administration, and to solicit him to permit them again to nominate him as a candidate for the office of Governor. The following are the proceedings of the meeting so called.

At a highly respectable meeting of the members of both branches of the legislature and of the citizens of Albany, held on the 16th inst. at Skinner's Mansion House, William James, Esq. of the city of Albany, was called to the

chair, and Thomas H. Campbell, Esq. of the house of assembly, was appointed secretary.

The meeting was addressed by General Gansevoort, of Albany, who took a rapid and comprehensive view of the administration of Governor Clinton, pointing out its sound republican principles, and its strong claims to public confidence. He dwelt for some time on the prominent features in the system of public policy, which had been pursued by our state government for the last few years, and concluded by moving that a committee be appointed to wait on his excellency De Witt Clinton, to ascertain whether he will accept a nomination for the office which he now holds.

He was followed by C. G. Haines, Esq. of New-York. Mr. Haines recapitulated the grand purposes which had been effected, and the great interests which had been fostered, by the state administration for the last five years. He said that Mr. Clinton's administration had been one, whose general measures had never been assailed amid all the conflicts of party hostility. He had supported it with ardour and zeal, and his confidence in the integrity and abilities of the chief magistrate was undiminished. In saying this, he believed that he uttered the feelings and opinions of those throughout the state with whom he had acted. If Governor Clinton should again consent to receive the suffrages of the people, he would find the friends of his administration ready to gather round its standard with firmness, with resolution, and consistency. He concluded with seconding the motion of General Gansevoort. The remarks of the speakers were received with warm and decided applause.

On motion of General Gansevoort,—*Resolved*, That the chairman and secretary address a letter to his Excellency the Governor, which was as follows:

Sir,

The election of chief magistrate will always be interesting to a free people, and the period is arrived at which they will designate a suitable character for that important office.

Accounts from all parts of the state indicate the increasing desire of the electors for the nomination of the man whose administration, for the last five years, had advanced the prosperity, and exalted the character of the state;

and they will expect certain information on the subject, on the return of the members to their respective counties, which will be in a few days.

Influenced by these considerations, and participating in the wishes and feelings of the people, a number of members of the legislature, and of respectable citizens, are this evening convened for the purpose of making preparatory arrangements for a general meeting. Having organised themselves, and interchanged opinions and information, they have no doubt as to the person whose nomination would accord with the free choice of the electors.

They have therefore directed the chairman to inquire if you will consent to be a candidate for the office of Governor at the ensuing election, and appointed a committee to wait on your Excellency for an answer.

The duty, sir, with which I am honoured on this occasion, affords me the opportunity of conveying to you the sentiments of the meeting respecting yourself, by expressing personally my very great respect for your public and private character.

I am, Sir, most respectfully, yours, &c.

WILLIAM JAMES, *Chairman.*
T. B. CAMPBELL, *Secretary.*

His Excellency De Witt Clinton.

Resolved, That Abraham Hasbrouck, David C. Judson, Philip S. Parker, Robert Shoemaker, and Israel Smith, be a committee to present the same to his Excellency the Governor.

The committee appointed to wait on his Excellency the Governor, reported his answer as follows:

Albany, April 16th, 1822.

Gentlemen:

Having long since determined to retire from the executive chair, on the termination of my present term, I have been anxious to select the most suitable time and mode, of announcing this intention to the public; and I feel greatly obliged to you for this application, which proceeding from so

respectable a source, removes at once, and in the most gratifying manner, all difficulties on this subject.

In forming this determination, I have not been insensible to the claims which every community has upon the services of its members. But, from a full persuasion, that a practical recognition of the doctrine of official rotation in a case so prominent, is of more importance in its propitious influence on the purity of republican government, than any benefits which can possibly arise from my continuance in office, I am happy to realize on this occasion, a correspondence between my private inclinations and my duties to the state.

I shall retire with feelings of good will for all my fellow-citizens—with the consciousness of having, with good intentions and without shrinking from any responsibility, endeavoured to the full extent of my faculties, to promote the best interests of the community—and with fervent prayers to the Supreme Dispenser of all good, that this state may, under abler auspices, and by the judicious improvement of her natural advantages, and the patriotic cultivation of her essential interests, attain fullness of prosperity. And be assured, gentlemen, that I shall never cease to cherish sentiments of gratitude for your friendship and of respect for your virtues.

DE WITT CLINTON.

To the Citizens comprising the meeting of which Wm. James, Esq. is Chairman and T. B. Campbell Esq. Secretary.

Whereupon *Resolved*, That Ephraim Hart, Charles Kellogg, Peter Gansevoort, E. C. Marsh, George W. Stanton, Elijah Miles, Samuel Dill, Joseph T. Rice, James M'Intyre, and Jacob J. Hasbrouck, be a committee to reply to the answer of his excellency the governor.

At an adjourned meeting at the Capitol, on the ensuing day, the committee reported the following reply to the governor.

To his Excellency De Witt Clinton.

Sir,

We receive your letter, declining the suffrages of your fellow-citizens as a candidate for the chief magistracy, with that regret which is inspired by

a conviction that by your retirement, the state of New-York will sustain a great public loss.

Your administration requires no review here. It stands before the world, and its purity will meet the eyes of after ages. Boldness of conception, grandeur of design, and vigour of execution, have marked its policy. It will form a distinct and illustrious era in the history of the state of New-York, on which posterity will delight to dwell.

Parties may change, and the stations of individuals may change with them; but the chief magistrate who calls forth the internal resources and the latent energies of a state—who promotes the interests of agriculture and manufactures—who fosters seminaries of learning, the interests of science and literature, and schools for elementary instruction—who introduces economy into all the departments of government, and diffuses a spirit of enterprise and emulation over the land—who facilitates the adoption of sound and wholesome laws, and diminishes the burdens of the people; and lastly, a chief magistrate, who hazards his rank as a statesman and his hold on public confidence, by bringing forward and sustaining with unerring boldness and confidence the grandest improvement in internal navigation that the world has ever beheld, will ever be remembered with pride and gratitude, by that enlightened and reflecting people, on whom his public labours have conferred the most lasting blessings.

We again repeat, that we consider your retirement from the chief magistracy as a public loss. We cannot but feel the truth of this assertion, when we call to mind your long and ardent zeal for the public good, and the great and salutary purposes which you have effected. But, sir, we cannot but congratulate ourselves that you have guided the destinies of the state until your system of general policy is well established—until you have presented examples which will command imitation—until the blessings of your measures are acknowledged—and, more than all, until the canals which are to connect the northern and western lakes with the Atlantic ocean, are nearly completed. There was a day when your surrender of power and trust would have jeopardized the deepest interests of the commonwealth, and proved a lasting calamity.

Our confidence in your integrity as a politician, our high estimation of your capacity as a statesman, and our deep sense of your private virtues, cannot be impaired or shaken. Twenty-five years of service in the most elevated and responsible stations in the gift of the state, afford a test of worth and talents from which candour and reason will not appeal; and a private life whose rectitude and purity even calumny in her wide and licentious ranges of hostility has never dared to assail, prefers a claim that no unprejudiced man can resist.

We acknowledge the soundness of the principle, that rotation in office is necessary and expedient in a republican government; and although its application may at times deprive the public of those services that tend to exalt the fortunes and promote the prosperity of a people, yet it will correct this evil by calling back again to the paths of public trust the distinguished patriots whom it occasionally excludes from power. Although you leave the first office in the gift of the people, and in a measure assume the relations of a private citizen, we trust that your time and your talents will still be found actively contributing to the interests and glory of your native state, and that in the vigour of life and in the season of usefulness, you will at all times and in every capacity, still remember the obligations of patriotism and the claims of posterity.

EPHRAIM HART,	ELIJAH MILES,
CHARLES KELLOGG,	SAMUEL DILL,
PETER GANSEVOORT,	JOSEPH T. RICE,
E. C. MARSH,	JAMES M'INTYRE,
G. W. STANTON,	JACOB J. HASBROUCK.

ALBANY, April 1822.

Upon Mr. Clinton's retirement from his executive labours, it appears he felt it to be his duty to address the distinguished men composing the Judiciary of this state, and to express to them his deep sense of the important services they had rendered, and his high respect for the learning and talents they had displayed in the performance of their judicial functions. Accordingly on the last day of the year 1822, he addressed a letter to James Kent, the chan-

cellor of the state, to Ambrose Spencer, the chief justice, and to Jonas Platt, the judge of the superior court of the state of New-York. Two of those letters with the subjoined replies, have been communicated to me by a friend, who had been permitted by the kindness of Governor Clinton to take copies of the same. In making me the communication, the writer observes, "as the occasion is as memorable as the persons concerned hold rank in the nation, I present them to you to be placed upon record, that they may never be forgotten, and may be resorted to in times more propitious to the solid glory and true happiness of the people."

"ALBANY, December 31st, 1822.

"SIR,

"Having always appreciated the importance of the judicial department, as a barrier against oppression, and a bulwark of free governments, it has afforded me uncommon satisfaction to witness the distinguished talents, the profound learning, and the inflexible integrity with which justice has been dispensed in our high tribunals.

"Amongst the jurists of this country, who will command the respect of future times, as well as of the present, whose opinions will be quoted, and whose erudition, abilities, and virtues will be revered, when the agitators, and agitations of the day are swept into oblivion, I hesitate not to place you in the first rank. And I flatter myself that this manifestation of respect, and this tribute of justice, rendered with the utmost sincerity on the last day, and among the last acts of my administration, will be received in the same spirit in which they are offered.

"DE WITT CLINTON."

"The Hon. JAMES KENT,
Chancellor of the State of New-York."

"ALBANY, Dec. 14, 1822.

"SIR,

"I do myself the honour to acknowledge the favour of your Excellency's very obliging and indulgent note of this morning.

"To receive the approbation of so competent a judge, and so distinguished a patron of merit, has always been an object of my highest ambition. It is the best and most honourable reward for the fidelity with which I have endeavoured to discharge the trust committed to me by the government of my country.

"The consolation you have afforded me is, however, chastened by the reflection, that you are now to retire from the station which you have filled with dignity and eminent utility; and permit me to assure your excellency that you carry with you into private life, the gratitude and admiration of the wise and impartial among all classes of your fellow-citizens. By the talents, energy, and public spirit which have illustrated and adorned your administration, you have elevated the state to the first rank among the great community of this nation, in credit and character, as well as by the display of its power and resources.

"The personal attentions and disinterested kindness which I have uniformly received from you, during your official life, will always be held by me in grateful remembrance.

"I am, with the highest respect,

"Your Excellency's most obedient servant,

"JAMES KENT."

"His Excellency Gov. CLINTON."

"ALBANY, Dec. 31, 1822.

"SIR,

"I cannot, in justice to my feelings, retire from the office of governor of this state, without bearing witness to the talents and purity that you have uniformly evinced in the important judicial office which you occupy.

"The administration of justice in our higher tribunals has demonstrated so much ability, such indefatigable industry, and such uncommon research, that

their decisions are referred to in our sister states as luminous expositions and as standard authorities.

"With my best wishes for the continuance of your official usefulness, and your private happiness,

"I am, very respectfully,

"Your most obedient servant,

"DE WITT CLINTON."

"Hon. JONAS PLATT,
One of the Justices of the Supreme Court."

"WHITESTOWN, Jan. 3, 1823.

"SIR,

"With unfeigned gratitude and respect I received your kind letter of the 31st December.

"To have obtained the sanction of your approbation for my judicial character and public services, would, at any time, be appreciated by me as a high reward; and I assure you, Sir, that the time and the occasion which you have chosen to express it, have added much to the interest and sensibility with which it has been impressed upon my heart. '*Laudari a laudato viro*,' is the highest object of my ambition.

"Permit me, sir, to congratulate you on your dignified retirement from the office of chief magistrate of this state. Your wise, virtuous, and enlightened administration has exalted the character of the state; and in laying the foundation of the public prosperity, you have erected a monument to your own fame, as imperishable as the continent of America.

"With an anxious hope that our country may continue to enjoy the fruits of your high endowments, and my cordial wishes for your private happiness,

"I am, very respectfully, your obedient servant,

"JONAS PLATT."

"GOVERNOR CLINTON."

NOTE.—p. 73.

The following anecdote, taken from the spirited eulogium of Judge Conkling, and the subjoined letters, afford abundant evidence of the value attached to the views of Mr. Clinton, and the confidence with which the public regarded his opinions, at the same time that they display the zeal, ability, and disinterestedness of his services.

"Under his auspices a new and most important era has arisen in the history of our country; and so inseparably connected has his name become with the introduction into the United States of canals upon a grand scale, that he has for years been habitually regarded, by the whole American people, as the parent and great patron of the system. That such is the light in which he has been viewed, the proofs are too numerous and evident to require enumeration. There is one, however, which I cannot forbear to notice, especially as it will afford me the opportunity to relate an incident, of which I happened myself to be a witness, and which, independently of the striking illustration it affords of the high estimation in which he was held, possesses, if I mistake not, sufficient of moral grandeur to render it of itself not altogether uninteresting. The proof to which I refer is the formal invitation which he received from the state of Ohio, to be present and assist at the imposing ceremonial which was to mark the commencement of her magnificent canal, and the distinguished honours which were paid him during his visit. This tribute, in itself so high and unequivocal, derived additional value from one of the motives by which it was understood to have been dictated. The decision of the commissioners with respect to the northern termination of the canal, had excited a spirit of dissatisfaction, arising from disappointed hopes, which, joined with the original opposition to the measure, threatened seriously to embarrass and impede, if not, for a time at least, to interrupt the progress of the work. Under these circumstances it was hoped, that the presence of Mr. Clinton would serve to inspire a loftier sentiment of patriotism and self-denial, and thus, in some measure, to allay the spirit of discontent. This hope rested, it is presumed, not upon the expectation of any direct efforts from him to

produce reconciliation, but merely upon the supposed moral influence of his high character. That this supposition was founded in no mistaken view of the character and feelings of the people of Ohio, may be inferred from the incident which I will now relate.

"The ceremonies to which I have alluded took place, it will be recollected, upon the anniversary of our independence. The place selected for their performance was a small clearing, in the midst of a gigantic forest. Upon this spot a vast multitude had assembled, among whom were a large proportion of the first citizens of the state. In front of a small stage, destined for the orator of the day, and on which Mr. Clinton, together with the Governor of Ohio, and other distinguished individuals were also seated, rude seats had been constructed sufficiently extensive to accommodate several hundred persons. These were all filled with silent and attentive auditors. At the close of an animated oration (to which I am unwilling, even thus incidentally to allude without bearing testimony to its distinguished merits) Mr. Clinton rose, in compliance with what he understood to be the prevailing wish and expectation, to address the assembled multitude. And when he advanced to the edge of the platform for that purpose, the entire mass of men who occupied the benches which I have described, by one simultaneous movement, which could only have been prompted by one common absorbing emotion of respect, rose from their seats! I may perhaps overrate this tribute—but to me it appears now as it then appeared, a momentary gleam, emanating from "the divinity that stirs within us"—a bright but transient vision, at once beautiful and sublime, of all that is most pure and exalted in man; the silent, unpremeditated, spontaneous homage of the heart to virtue. Of its effects upon Mr. Clinton, it is but just to say, that he was sensibly touched by it. For a few moments he was unable to command his feelings, and his voice faltered as he spoke. But his mind soon recovered its wonted equilibrium, and he proceeded to speak in a manner worthy of himself. In the course of his brief address, adverting to the short period which had elapsed since the admission of Ohio into the confederacy, as an independent state, and her unexampled progress in population, wealth and power, he took occasion, I remember, with great felicity of expression, to compare her to a young eagle,

which, though just escaped from its eyrie, had already soared aloft and fixed its gaze upon the sun. His address was followed by the most enthusiastic acclamations.

" *To George P. M'Culloch, Charles Kinsey of Essex, and Thomas Capner, Esqrs. Commissioners of the state of New-Jersey, in relation to a canal from the Delaware to the Passaic.*

" Gentlemen,—The canal commissioners of the state of New-York having duly considered the request of the legislature of that state, in relation to the contemplated canal between the Delaware and Passaic rivers, determined that it would be most advisable and beneficial, and at the same time correspond with the sense of the legislature, to direct their chief engineer to review the operations of the engineer of New-Jersey, (after his levels were taken and his surveys completed) to explore the route of the canal and the localities of the country, and to furnish the best conclusions of his judgment and all the resources of his experience in aid of the undertaking. Under these impressions, Judge Wright, who has been employed on the Erie canal as a chief engineer, from its first inception to its present state, has lately complied with the direction of the canal board in that respect: and having, as president of that board, had opportunities of becoming acquainted with operations of this nature, I considered it my duty to comply with an invitation to attend to this subject at the same time. The interests of the states are so closely connected, that the improvement of one state has a beneficial influence on the prosperity of all. And I am persuaded, that the internal trade of a country is the great lever of its prosperity, because it supplies the products of agriculture and manufactures with a certain market, and furnishes the elements, and animates the enterprises of external commerce, as well as of the great departments of productive industry; and it is very evident that internal trade cannot flourish without easy and cheap communication. To a considerable portion of Pennsylvania, this canal will furnish a choice of markets, and particularly an advantageous sale of the coal with which it abounds. New-York will be accommodated with this invaluable mineral, and in many other

respects; and New-Jersey must feel the propitious influence of the contemplated measure, in all the sources of public prosperity.

"Under the government of these impressive considerations, and in company with the chief engineer of New-York, and the senior commissioner and engineer of New-Jersey, I have visited and reviewed the whole route of the projected canal; and I shall now communicate to your respectable board my views on this interesting subject, which shall, for the sake of perspicuity, be condensed under four distinct heads.

1. The physical practicability of the canal.
2. The financial practicability.
3. The inducements to the measure.
4. The organ or agent of its accomplishment.

"And 1st. *As to physical practicability.*—Whenever water can be obtained in sufficient quantity on the summit level of a canal, there is no invincible physical impediment to its execution. Give an engineer plenty of water, and he can make any canal. It then becomes a question of expense not of feasibility. In the present case, there is at least three times as much water on the summit level as will be requisite. Hopatkung Lake itself furnishes a superabundance, and if necessary, a lake of considerable dimensions, called Green Pond, can be introduced as an auxiliary. This whole region is uncommonly well watered, and without any interference with hydraulic establishments, supplies can be obtained along the whole course of the canal. The great height of the summit level may be considered an objection against the undertaking, but altitude is like distance, it creates no insurmountable obstacle. It only augments the expense. Through the instrumentality of locks this elevation may be surmounted; but from considerations of economy, and with a view to the rapid passage of boats, it has been proposed to substitute inclined planes to a certain extent; and this measure cannot fail of success. To remove, however, all doubts with respect to its efficacy, preliminary experiments can be instituted.

"On questions of this nature, we must rely on the counsels of experience and science, and the opinions of professional men. Mr. Beach, the engineer of New-Jersey, has been employed as an engineer on the Erie canal, and he

is intelligent, experienced, and deserving of high confidence. Judge Wright is a principal engineer on the Erie canal, and there is no man in this country whose opinion is entitled to more respect. In conducting that great work to its present prosperous condition, his agency has been of primary importance; and I have no hesitation in saying, that in all points relative to the construction of canals, I would place implicit confidence in his judgment. I have read the official reports of these gentlemen, which are decidedly friendly to the object, and which meet my approbation; and when we combine with this aspect of the subject, the corroborating opinions of General Swift, formerly the chief of the corps of engineers of the United States, of General Bernard and Colonel Totten, eminent members of that institution, and of Professor Renwick, of Columbia College, gentlemen distinguished for profound science, for accurate judgment, and for extensive information, there can be no room for doubt. The practicability of the work is as certain as any future event can possibly be, whose accomplishment is not yet realized.

"Secondly, *As to financial practicability.*—Without pretending to a minute acquaintance with the financial resources of New-Jersey, I am fully of opinion that this measure may be carried into effect, without imposing any burdens on the people, and without encountering any serious difficulties.

"The canal will be seventy-five miles long. It is to be in general thirty-two feet wide at the top, sixteen at the bottom, and four feet deep. The whole expense will not much exceed 800,000 dollars, and it can be accomplished with ease in three years.

"The money can be borrowed on the credit of the state, at six per cent. The annual interest on the whole sum will be but 48,000 dollars. For the first year 200,000 dollars will be required, and for each of the two remaining years, 300,000 dollars. There will then be essential,

In order to pay the first year's interest, - - -	$12,000
For the interest of that and the second year, - -	30,000
For the interest on the whole sum borrowed, - -	48,000
Total,	$90,000

" After providing for the payment of this sum, the income of the canal will be fully adequate to defray the interest afterwards accruing, and to extinguish with rapidity the principal.

" On looking with an eye of scrutiny to the revenue which will arise, in time, from this navigable communication, it is not extravagant to state it at 250,000 dollars annually: but making allowance for the repairs which will be from time to time required, and for the expenses of superintendence and collection, I do not scruple to set down the nett annual income at one hundred and fifty thousand dollars. This will not only pay the interest, but in a few years the whole debt.

" I should suppose that it would require no great financial skill to devise the ways and means of paying ninety thousand dollars in three years, without resorting to taxation. The avails of lotteries and banks might constitute important items, and auxiliary expedients may be successfully adopted.

" Thirdly,—*The inducements to the measure.*—On this point there can be no diversity of opinion. There is every motive for adopting the project which ought to operate on an enlightened legislator and a devoted friend of his country.

" 1. It will make New-Jersey the greatest manufacturing country in America. The mountains near the route of the canal are inexhaustible masses of valuable iron ore in all its forms and varieties. There are besides prolific stores of copper, zinc, manganese, copperas, plumbago, serpentine, marble, and lime. All these will be brought into active and abundant operation by this canal.

" The agency of fire is essential to very extensive manufacturing operations, and water-power is a most eligible auxiliary. In the latter respect this part of New-Jersey is unrivalled. But her forests are rapidly wasting away, and many of her iron works are already prostrated for the want of fuel. The anthracite or glance coal of Pennsylvania (which perhaps contains more of the matter of ignition than any other substance,) can be obtained by the canal to any extent, and in the most economical manner. New-Jersey will be thus enabled to manufacture iron in such quantities as to supersede the necessity of

foreign importation, and upwards of three millions of dollars annually will thereby be saved to the United States. In our tour through New-Jersey, we saw foreign iron worked by foreign coal: and as if this sight were not sufficiently humiliating, we could see at the same time mountains replenished with the richest ore, and a day's journey would have brought us to the inexhaustible coal mines of Pennsylvania.

"There are many flourishing institutions at Paterson and other places, where cotton, flax, wool, and hemp, are manufactured into useful fabrics. As these establishments become more extended, the power of steam will be demanded. Coal will therefore be indispensable, and it is now much wanted, as well as iron and steel, for the purpose of making and repairing the machinery of those important establishments.

"2. It will essentially ameliorate the agriculture of the country, by supplying the farmer with lime, gypsum, and other valuable manures, by facilitating and cheapening the transportation of his commodities, by furnishing him at reduced prices with necessaries and accommodations, and by establishing a market at every manufactory, and opening a passage by water to the two great cities of Philadelphia and New-York, and to Paterson, Newark, Elizabeth-town, Amboy, Brunswick, Easton, Trenton, and the villages lower down on the Delaware. The mountain lands which are now exclusively appropriated for providing fuel for the iron manufactories, can then be applied to agricultural purposes, and the population of the state will be greatly augmented.

"3. The population and opulence of the state will not only be greatly increased from these causes, but from the natural and necessary operation of a most extensive and prosperous inland trade, which is the invariable offspring of the flourishing state of productive industry and easy communication. The whole line of the canal will exhibit manufacturing establishments and rising villages, boats crowded with the productions of nature and the fabrics of art, and the enterprising efforts of man improving the bounties of heaven. To adopt the sublime language of holy writ, "the wilderness and the solitary place will become glad, and the desert will rejoice and blossom as the rose."

"4. The revenue arising from the canal will for ever supersede the necessity of taxation, and will form a vast fund applicable to other internal improvements, to the diffusion of the lights of science and to the dispensation of the blessings of education. In Great Britain, it has been remarked that a canal is always lucrative, where there are coal mines in its vicinity. The demands of the city of New-York, and the other cities and villages on the Hudson, the consumption of various parts of New-England, and the manufactories of New-Jersey, for this indispensable article will for ever increase, and for ever secure a great revenue from the canal. Add to this, the fossils and the metals before mentioned, the products of the forest and the field, and the fabrics of art, and there is no question but that this canal will enrich New-Jersey in her finances, as well as in other respects.

"5. Reputation is as important to states and communities as to the individuals who compose them. A measure of this character would encircle the state with honour, and erect a monument of renown as lasting as time. It would excite into activity the energies of her sons, and present to all her population an object of patriotic exultation, and to her sister states a model for patriotic imitation. And when the triumphs of ambition, the pageantry of power, and even the splendour of scientific glory are lost in the abyss of time, the magnanimity and public spirit which effected this great work, will be cherished in the grateful hearts of all future generations.

"Fourthly, *The organ or agent of accomplishment.*—This canal may be made—1st, by an individual; 2d, by an incorporated company; or 3d, by the state. As the first will not be attempted, nor ought it to be permitted, and as the second is very exceptionable, and perhaps not feasible, it follows as an inevitable consequence that the work ought to be achieved by the state exclusively.

"In Europe, with the exception of Great Britain, improvements of this kind have been, I believe, always undertaken and accomplished by the governments. In Great Britain, the superabundance of private capital has enabled companies to effect what in other countries has been the exclusive work of the constituted authorities; but even some cases have occurred in that kingdom when it became necessary for the government to extend its

munificence in order to produce the intended results. The same state of things prevails in this country as in Europe generally, with respect to great surplus capital, which either does not exist, or is already employed, or can, as it is supposed, be more lucratively invested. All the canals that have been attempted in the United States, through the intervention of incorporations, have failed, I believe, and principally for the want of funds, except the Middlesex canal, which, although a meritorious, is comparatively a secondary work; and if New-Jersey does attempt this expedient, either the stock will not be filled up or not paid for, and the consequence will be a failure greatly to be deprecated. But this is not the only objection. The company will consult its own interests, not the prosperity of the state. The route of the canal will be designated, not with a view to the accommodation of the great manufacturing institutions, but with a view to a cheap, facile, and rapid construction: the tolls may be burdensome, and the superintendence may be vexatious. The cardinal interests of the state may be subordinate to the cupidity of a private association. The capital, if it comes at all, will proceed from abroad; and New-Jersey, that has from the war of the Revolution to the present period, evinced a high sense of character and an honourable spirit of independence, will be bound hand and foot by the shackles of a non-resident company.

"I have thus, gentlemen, at your request, with entire respect, and without the least reserve, given you my views of the contemplated canal: and I feel persuaded that this communication will be considered in its true light, not as the obtrusive interference of a stranger, but as the candid opinions of a sincere friend to the best interests of New-Jersey.

"I have the honour to be, with perfect respect,

"Your most obedient servant,

"DE WITT CLINTON."

"NEW-YORK, Oct. 24, 1823."

Letter to De Witt Clinton, President of the Board of Canal Commissioners, of the State of New-York, relative to the Ohio Canal.

NEW-YORK, Nov. 8th, 1823.

SIR,

Fully sensible of the deep interest that you take in internal improvements, I have the honour to solicit your opinion on a subject of primary interest to the western states, and to the United States in general.

It is in contemplation by the state of Ohio to make a canal connecting Lake Erie and Ohio river; and surveys and explorations are now taking place with a view to that important object. As the funds for this purpose can only, as in the case of the New-York canals, be raised by loans, I would wish to obtain information on the following points, viz.

Whether in your opinion funds can, say in two years from this time, be obtained by loans at different periods, as may be required to the amount of $2,500,000, on the credit, and in the behalf of the state of Ohio, at an interest of six per cent. per annum, by giving satisfactory assurances for paying the interest semi-annually, and reimbursing the principal at the expiration of thirty years?

It would also be highly gratifying, and perhaps materially useful to have your judgment on the practicability, physical as well as financial, of the proposed undertaking; as well as your views on the advantages that will be derived from its completion.

You will take into view that the state of Ohio is free from debt; that her soil and her climate are excellent; that her territory is extensive; that her population, next to New-York, will soon be the most numerous in the union; that the canal will, in all probability, be lucrative and productive in proportion to its cost, as that of New-York; and that the revenue derivable from it may be pledged to the holders of the debt until it is extinguished.

Very respectfully,

MICAJAH T. WILLIAMS.

De Witt Clinton's Reply.

NEW-YORK, Nov. 8th, 1823.

SIR,

Your communication of this day covers a wide field of inquiry, and embraces many important considerations. I shall endeavour to give a prompt and explicit, and I hope satisfactory, reply.

The projected canal between Lake Erie and the Ohio river, will, in connexion with the New-York canals, form a navigable communication between the Bay of New-York, the Gulf of Mexico, and the Gulf of St. Lawrence; of course it will embrace within its influence, the greater part of the United States and of the Canadas. The advantages of a canal of this description are so obvious, so striking, so numerous, and so extensive, that it is a work of supererogation to bring them into view. The state of Ohio from the fertility of its soil, the benignity of its climate, and its geographical position, must always contain a dense population, and the products and consumptions of its inhabitants must for ever form a lucrative and extensive inland trade, exciting the powers of productive industry and communicating aliment and energy to external commerce. But when we consider that this canal will open a way to the great rivers that fall into the Mississippi, that it will be felt not only in the immense valley of that river, but as far west as the Rocky Mountains and the borders of Mexico; and that it will communicate with our great inland seas and their tributary rivers, with the ocean in various routes, and with the most productive regions of America,—there can be no question respecting the blessings that it will produce, the riches that it will create, and the energies that it will call into activity.

It must be obvious that there can be no insurmountable physical difficulties to the opening of this canal, if there be a sufficiency of water on the summit level, and the researches which have been made, establish an abundant supply beyond the possibility of doubt. The only questions that can present themselves are those of comparative difficulty, expense, accommodation, and productiveness in the designation of a route; and this must be committed to the decision of able engineers.

I should suppose that the maximum cost of this improvement will not exceed two millions five hundred thousand dollars. In five years, by an annual expenditure of five hundred thousand dollars, this work may be advantageously completed. At a rate of six per cent. there would be wanted 30,000 dollars to pay the first year's interest; the second year 60,000 dollars; the third year 90,000; the fourth year 120,000, and the fifth year 150,000. The only financial difficulty in my opinion will be the procurement of funds for the payment of the interest. If the canal be commenced on the lake side, every step of its progress will open a more extended navigation, and be the means of producing revenue, and at the termination of the five years, the profits of the canal will not only defray the interest, but produce a surplus revenue applicable to other objects.

Supposing this canal to be 200 miles in extent, it could undoubtedly by a vigorous effort, be finished in two years, but it is advisable to extend the period to five years. The banks will, in that case, become consolidated before much use. As the operation proceeds, there will be an augmentation of skill, and an acquisition of experience, which will produce economy and improved workmanship; and as one-fifth of the whole sum will in this case be only required for each year, the pecuniary advances that are essential will not be so onerous as if made within a shorter period, and it ought to be recollected that the Erie canal will be completed next year; that Ohio can then avail herself of the aid of able engineers and skilful contractors, and that an undertaking conducted under such auspices, will propitiate public opinion, and secure the confidence of capitalists who are disposed to embark their funds in the enterprise.

I shall now proceed to answer the following interrogatory:—'Whether in my opinion funds can, say in two years from this time, be obtained by loans at different periods, as may be required, to the amount of two millions five hundred thousand dollars, on the credit and in behalf of the state of Ohio, at an interest of six per cent. per annum, by giving satisfactory assurances for paying the interest semi-annually, and reimbursing the principal at the termination of thirty years.'

I have no hesitation in answering affirmatively. I have no doubt but that funds to the extent specified and on the terms proposed may be procured.

The requisite loan may be obtained either in Europe or in this country.

It will be recollected that there is a vast disposable unemployed capital in Great Britain. The finances of that country are in a state of improvement, and in a period of peace, she now requires no loans. The greatest borrower is consequently out of the market. The moneyed men in Europe have therefore accommodated France, Austria, Russia, and some of the governments in South America, with extensive loans; and certainly none of them affords such ample security for reimbursement as the state of Ohio.

The moral and political institutions of Ohio are all propitious to the observance of good faith; her population is respectable in number, and exceeded by none in elevation of character; her government has been wisely administered; and she cherishes with enthusiasm that spirit of liberty and independence, which is connected with the best interests of man, and the most flourishing condition of states.

Next to New-York, Ohio will be the most populous state in the union. She is susceptible of a population of twelve and a half millions, contains thirty-nine thousand square miles, and has every facility for carrying the pursuits of productive industry to the highest pitch of improvement. She therefore presents all the leading inducements for the confidence of capitalists. She does not owe a cent, and can, it is hoped, so arrange her financial affairs as to meet the interest of the loans. At the termination of one year, New-York will have no further occasion for loans; and in two years, a considerable portion of the funded debt of the United States will be paid off. Capitalists can then find no better place of investment than Ohio.

If two millions and a half are borrowed, every square mile will only be answerable for sixty-four dollars. What an ample security for so small a sum! and it will be recollected that when this canal is perfected it will, by the markets which it opens, increase the value of lands almost immediately fifty per cent. and diffuse the blessings of opulence over the whole country.

In one word, sir, all that is necessary to complete this great enterprise is the

will to direct it. Considering as I always have, that it is only a continuation of the Erie canal—that it will promote correspondent advantages, and that it is identified with the stability of our government and the prosperity of our country, I own that I feel a more than common solicitude on this subject.

I have the honour to be, very respectfully,

Your most obedient servant,

DE WITT CLINTON.

MICAJAH T. WILLIAMS, Esq.
One of the Canal Commissioners of the State of Ohio.

Communication from his Excellency Governor Clinton, relative to the Morris and Delaware Canal.

Governor Clinton has been so good as to visit, with the president of the company and the canal committee, the inclined planes at Rockaway, and to inspect the eastern division of the canal from the summit level to the Hudson, at the city of Jersey.

The inclined plane was put in operation while he was there, and he with the committee and a large number of persons, in all not less than forty, passed on the inclined plane, in a large and heavy scow, loaded with a quantity of stones, from the upper to the lower level, and from thence back into the upper level. The transit from one level to the other, a difference in height of fifty-two feet, was made in eight minutes.

The following is the communication to the president of the company from Governor Clinton, which expresses his opinion of the inclined plane, his views of the progress of the work, and of the practicability and advantages of the canal.

NEW-YORK, May 19th, 1827.

SIR,

On the 23d of April, 1823, the legislature of this state, under the most favourable impressions of the benefits that would result to New-York as well

as to New-Jersey, from a navigable connexion between the rivers Hudson and Delaware, by the contemplated route of the Morris Canal, directed the canal commissioners to cause a survey and estimate to be made by one of our experienced engineers, with a view to facilitate a measure considered so important. The canal board instructed their chief engineer, Mr. Benjamin Wright, to perform this duty, and as president of that board, I accepted an invitation to attend at the same time. After having viewed the whole line, we submitted our opinions on the 24th of October of that year, to the commissioners of New-Jersey. They are of the most favourable character with respect to the practicability and importance of the project, and they are now referred to as comprising our views in extenso.

It appears that this canal has been since undertaken under the auspices of an incorporated association, of which you are the president. And having recently in company with you, visited the eastern section of this work, I can certainly have no hesitation in giving my opinion of its present state and future prospects.

It is ascertained that the summit level is 890 feet above the eastern termination of this canal, and 840 above the western, making an aggregate of ascent and descent to be overcome, of 1730 feet. The great number of locks that would be requisite for this purpose, the expense that would attend their erection, and the delay that would result from the passage, render it necessary that some substitute should be adopted, and inclined planes have been proposed as the most advisable. The only doubt that can possibly be raised in reference to the completion of this canal, is as to the feasibility of this project.

In England and France, inclined planes have been successfully adopted on a limited scale, and there is no reason why they may not be introduced on the Morris Canal, unless it may be, that a load of twenty-five tons may render that impracticable, which has been found easy for vessels of eight or ten tons. There is nothing in the objection that can be considered of a formidable nature: but the best demonstration in this as in all other cases, is actual experiment, and this has been exhibited at Rockaway; an inclined plane of fifty-two feet has been erected, and a vessel of large dimensions has been tried on it, without any inconvenience and with great rapidity. Having participated in a passage

up and down it, I can speak with confidence on the subject. The work may be greatly improved, and in its present state, it affords unequivocal testimony in favour of the utility, the practicability and the economy of the erection, and completely silences all cavils and objections.

I was not a little surprised to observe the progress made in the work in general; and I consider it quite easy to accomplish the whole, and to render it operative in July 1828. The funds have been applied with exemplary economy; what has been done, has been well done. The prospects of abundant remuneration to the stockholders are very encouraging. The most productive sources of revenue will be furnished by this conveyance; viz. coal, iron, lime, copper, zinc, manganese, copperas, plumbago, turpentine, marble, lumber, manures of various kinds, the products of agriculture, and the fabrics of manufactures.

I should regret exceedingly if this important work should be lost to the public, for the want of three or four hundred thousand dollars. It is manifestly the interest of the stockholders to complete it, and co-operators may confidently calculate upon certain and ample returns for their advances. The estimate of the engineer has been verified by the prosperous progress of the works, and there is not a shadow of doubt as to the resulting advantages to individuals, and as to the immense benefits to the community.

DE WITT CLINTON.

Hon. C. D. Colden,
President of the Morris Canal Company.

Governor Clinton's Observations relative to the Hampshire and Hampden Canals.

The following letter, (says the editor of the New-Haven Herald,) from the late Governor Clinton, will be read by all who feel an interest in the extensive internal improvements, in operation or contemplated, in this and the neighbouring states. The opinion and estimates of this scientific and disinterested person, whose experience in canalling operations was not inferior to that of any man now living, and who could not have been biassed by any interested motive whatever, are worthy of the greatest deference and respect.

To Samuel Hinckley, James Hillhouse, and Thomas Sheldon, Esqrs. a committee of the Hampshire and Hampden Canal Company.

GENTLEMEN,

In consequence of an invitation from the canal company, of which you are a committee, I had the pleasure to accompany you, and a number of other respectable gentlemen, interested in the cause of internal improvement, from New Haven in Connecticut to Barnet in Vermont. Our object was to inspect the Farmington and the Hampshire and Hampden canals, which are in a train of rapid completion, and to explore the valley of the Connecticut river, with a view to the further extension of artificial navigation. In the performance of this tour I experienced the most hospitable attentions from you, and the inhabitants of the country through which we passed, and which it affords me no common pleasure to acknowledge. Having no other object in view than the interest of internal improvement, I should greatly regret if my visit was misconstrued into an intrusive intermeddling with the concerns of other states, or an officious interference with existing controversies. In the few observations which I intend to make, I shall not touch upon the comparative advantages of improved river or canal navigation, but shall confine myself exclusively to the practicability, advantages, and expense of constructing a canal, from the termination of the Hampshire and Hampden canal to Barnet in Vermont.

It is admitted on all sides that this measure is practicable. Indeed, any engineer pretending to deny it, would ruin his professional reputation, and would exhibit the extremity of ignorance. The only mode to impeach the proceeding, is to surround it with imaginary difficulties, to magnify the expense, and depreciate the advantages. Whether this course has been pursued I know not; but if it has, it reflects no great credit on the candour and judgment of those who have adopted it.

The route from Northampton to Barnet presents no insurmountable difficulties, and but in a few cases, extraordinary ones. Much greater ones have been overcome in the construction of the Erie canal.

The country on both sides of the Connecticut river is abundantly supplied with rivers and streams which run into that river, and which furnish all the water requisite for canal navigation. The high hills and mountains which adjoin the beautiful and fertile valley of that magnificent river, will be the sources of inexhaustible and perennial supplies; and the great precaution to be observed in constructing a canal, is to carry it above the highest floods of the Connecticut river, which, I believe, do not exceed twenty-five feet. If high bluffs extend into the river, they may in some instances be cut through, and in others the canal may be carried round them, as has been successfully done in the Erie canal, and at all events, and in the worst supposable cases, they may be avoided by aqueducts across Connecticut river. The whole difficulty will finally be resolved into a question of expense, and this is indeed the predominating consideration.

The expense of the Farmington canal extending from New-Haven to the Massachusetts line, and about fifty-six miles in length, has been estimated at 420,000 dollars, and the Hampshire and Hampden canal, from the south line of Massachusetts to Northampton, thirty miles, at 290,000 dollars. And it is believed that the works so far as completed fully establish the correctness of the estimates. This would not exceed 8000 dollars a mile. The distance from Northampton to Brattleborough is about forty-eight miles, and it is a very liberal estimate to put down the aggregate cost of a canal at 505,275 dollars. The distance from Brattleborough to Barnet is one hundred and seventeen miles, which at 9000 dollars a mile, would cost for a canal 1,053,000 dollars. The expense of the whole extent of a canal from New-Haven to Barnet would be upon the result of the finished works, and the estimate of the unfinished operations, less than 10,000 dollars a mile; and all our experience with respect to canals, since the construction of the Erie canal, demonstrates beyond doubt, that the maximum expense of any given canal of any considerable extent, not passing over or under high mountains, will not exceed on an average 10,000 dollars a mile.

The remaining inquiry is, whether the resulting advantages will warrant such a great and expensive undertaking?

A canal, as to its results, may be contemplated in a double view: First,

as to public benefit; and secondly, as to the profits of the stockholders or proprietors. If productive of great public advantages, there is a strong probability that it will be beneficial to the stockholders who have made investments; for the amount of toll will depend on the quantity of articles transported, and from the quantity of commodities conveyed to and from market, must flow the benefits to the community. That a great, cheap, and a safe highway, from a distance of three hundred and fifty miles near the ocean, into a flourishing country, abounding with the productions of the soil, forests, and mines, and the fabrics of manufactures, covered with cities, towns, and villages filled with a dense population, and the residence of an enterprising and industrious people; that such a country should not derive invaluable blessings from such an operation, no one can pretend to deny. Sources of benefit would be opened of which we cannot now form a conjecture. Motives to exertion—excitements to industry would be created, which are now beyond the reach of human foresight. Towns and villages would spring up in every direction, and the wilderness and the solitary place will become glad, and the desert rejoice and blossom as the rose.

This extended canal, besides the business which it would derive from a fertile expanse of country on both sides of the valley of the Connecticut river, would engross all the trade of the great region from Barnet to the north at an immense distance, and far above the line which separates the United States from the British dominions. The transit duties arising from the descending commodities will be equalled by those arising from the ascending merchandize; for the difference in the bulk of the articles would be made up by the difference in the amount of the tolls: and a country will generally receive for the supply of its own wants an equivalent for what it advances for the wants of others.

It is not an unfair standard of comparison—an unjust measure of appreciation, to estimate the avails of the contemplated line of canals by the proceeds of the Champlain canal, which during the last year amounted to 85,000 dollars; and the expense is about one-fourth. At the same rate the proposed canal of two hundred and fifty miles, would produce annually 340,000 dollars

which would be upwards of twelve per cent. on an expenditure of two millions and a half of dollars.

DE WITT CLINTON.

ALBANY, Jan. 18th, 1828.

Governor Clinton's Observations relative to the proposed Delaware and Raritan Canal.

The following letter from Governor Clinton, addressed to a gentleman in New-Jersey, says the writer, "exhibits the same vigour of intellect, the same expanded views and comprehensive sagacity, which so eminently characterized the great and successful executor of the Grand Erie Canal. As the last emanation of that departed and immortal mind, on a subject in which it delighted to employ its energy for the blessings of posterity and the aggrandizement of his native state, it should be regarded with profound interest, and felt with all the weight of an oracle by the legislature of New-Jersey and the citizens of the state."

"ALBANY, Jan. 22, 1828.

SIR,

I was honoured with your interesting letter of the 8th instant, to which I should have paid immediate attention, had I not been under a great pressure of official business; and now my time will only permit a slight view of the subjects which you have presented to my consideration: and I hope this communication will reach you seasonably and operate favourably for the praiseworthy objects which you have in view.

As to the transcendant importance of a navigable connexion between the Bays of New-York and the Delaware, there cannot be a doubt. And when it is considered that this communication will be extended to the Bay of Chesapeake by the Chesapeake and Delaware canal; and that the whole will embrace within its influence, the Hudson, the Delaware, the Sus-

quehannah, and the rivers flowing into them and the Chesapeake Bay, the advantages of the canal which you contemplate, from the Delaware to the Raritan, must be palpable and incalculable. It is well known, that the enterprising spirit, which distinguishes our national character, is limited only by the realities or prospects of profitable adventure. Abroad, it is witnessed in every region, however remote or secluded. At home, nothing escapes its scrutiny or communion. Wherever a market can be found—wherever an interchange of benefits can be had—wherever a facile communication can be obtained,—you will see the products of the soil, of the mines, and of the forests—the fabrics of manufactures, and the importations of external commerce. In July, 1826, I passed through a remote part of this state, bordering on the Susquehannah; and a trader there, availing himself of a rise of water in a small stream, had just returned from conveying a raft of lumber to the city of Washington, with ample profits on the sales, and at a distance of seven hundred miles. A few weeks afterwards I was informed at Oleon, one of the head waters of the Alleghany, that it was not uncommon to convey from that place, pressed hay, in arks, to Natchez, and lumber to New-Orleans. The operation of the same spirit will be most forcibly and liberally experienced, when the great markets of New-York, Philadelphia, and Baltimore, are thrown open to the access of a vast population, covering such immense regions as will be comprehended by these canals, and the natural waters communicating with them. To doubt on this subject would exhibit a skepticism approaching dementation.

I perceive that it is proposed to make the main trunk of the Delaware and Raritan canal fifty miles long, sixty feet wide at the top, six feet deep—that the entire lockage will be about fifty feet on each side of the summit level, and that it is to be supplied by a navigable feeder of twenty-five or thirty miles long, thirty feet wide at the surface, and from four and a half to five feet deep.

This plan is a judicious one. The main canal will be susceptible of sloop navigation, and the increased width and depth beyond those usually adopted, will render the transit of vessels more easy and rapid.

This work can be made without any great physical difficulty. The cost will

not exceed 1,200,000 dollars; and no doubt a loan can be obtained for that purpose by your state, at an interest of five per cent. I am decidedly of opinion, that it ought to be undertaken and owned by the state. The financial inducements to this measure are as obvious as those which affect the other cardinal interests of the community.

This canal, including its feeder, will be about the same extent as the Champlain canal; and it is a very liberal concession in favour of the latter, to say that the income will be about the same: the expense of superintendence and repairs will probably be less, and its increase of revenue will undoubtedly be more rapid. The interest of the loan to effect it, will be sixty thousand dollars; the proceeds of the Champlain canal for the last year were 85,000, and its progressive increase has been more than ten per cent. per annum. The avails of your canal, will, consequently, in a few years extinguish the debt, when, in all probability, the state will derive a clear annual revenue of a quarter of a million of dollars. And when we connect with this consideration, the establishment of towns and villages, the creation of a dense population, and the acquisition of valuable home markets in the vicinity, and along the whole line of the canal, there ought to be no hesitancy about acting promptly and decidedly in favour of a measure so abounding with benefits.

I am, very respectfully, your obedient servant,

DE WITT CLINTON.

NOTE M.—p. 82.

Letter from Governor Clinton to the Rev. John Stanford, relative to the case of Miller under sentence of death for murder.

ALBANY, January 21st, 1828.

REV. SIR,

I have received your representation of the state of William Miller, under sentence of death for murder. Although I have no doubt of the right of government to inflict the punishment of death in certain cases, yet I always feel the utmost anxiety, when the pardoning power is appealed to on such

occasions. To mingle justice with mercy, and to preserve a human being from death, without violating those precautions which are necessary for the welfare of human society, is indeed an important trust. A momentous power which ought to be exercised with caution, with prudence, and with a humble reliance upon divine Providence.

I have considered the case of William Miller over and over again, and with the most profound solicitude: and I can come to no other conclusion, than that which was sanctioned by a jury of the country. His crime, in my opinion, is a clear case of murder, perpetrated under circumstances of barbarity, with intermissions of violence which left ample room for reflection, and without any extenuation but drunkenness, if that can be so considered, and followed by declarations of the most unfeeling character. Under this aspect of the case, I cannot interpose the pardoning power, without a violation of the most sacred and solemn duties.

Accept, worthy and venerable sir, the assurances of my great respect and continued friendship.

DE WITT CLINTON.

Rev. John Standford.

Governor Clinton's Letter to Judge Edwards.

Albany, February 5th, 1828.

Sir,

I received in due season from you, as presiding judge of a court of Oyer and Terminer, held in and for the city and county of New-York, minutes of the trial of William Miller, on the 10th of December last, for the murder of David Ackerman, by which it appears that he was duly convicted of the crime, and sentenced to be executed on the 26th of January last. After an attentive perusal and deliberate consideration of this and the accompanying documents, and of the papers sent up by Mr. E. King, one of the counsel assigned for the prisoner by the court, and several conferences with Mr. R. Emmet, the other counsel, I came to the same conclusion with

the court and jury, that the prisoner was guilty, and that therefore the executive ought not to interfere in his favour. This decision I communicated to Mr. Emmet on the morning of the 19th ultimo, as my definitive determination. Shortly after, on opening some letters on my table, I found a communication from you, and a duplicate relative to this subject, in which you announced a change in your views, and assigned your reasons. I then mentioned to Mr. Emmet that I would look over your communication and reconsider the case, and inform him of the result on Monday—at which time I told him that I could not reconcile it with my sense of duty, and my views of the subject, to interpose, either by a change or remission of the punishment, and that the law must take its course: on the same evening I wrote a letter of a similar import to the Rev. Mr. Stanford, chaplain of the prison, in answer to one received from him, so that the convict might be prepared as far as possible for the awful fate that awaited him. On the evening of the 27th January, I received, to my great surprise, a letter from you informing me that the Court of Oyer and Terminer had considered it their duty to reprieve the convict until the 16th of this month. On taking the subject into consideration, I have no doubt that the court, with pure motives, mistook their powers, and my only object in making this declaration is to prevent the act to which I except from being drawn into precedent. The constitution entrusts the governor with power over reprieves and pardons, and I think that from the very terms it is exclusive.

The power claimed in this case by the court over which you preside, has never before been exercised in this country—it is incompatible with the arrangements of our government—against the constitution, and pregnant with the most mischievous results. It has been claimed in extraordinary cases by the judges in England, but the great commentator who concedes it, qualifies the concession by saying that it is rather by common usage than of strict right. The judges are emanations of the regal power; and even the king himself, in his regal office, and not his person, is always present in the eye of the law in all his courts. Our government is divided into three great departments—legislative, executive, and judicial. Our judiciary, as well as the others, must look for its powers in the grants of the constitution. Now it

must be admitted, that the power that reprieves or pardons, is an executive power expressly delegated—and, however it may be represented in Hale, Hawkins, and Blackstone, they can be of no authority on this occasion. There may be emergent cases in which reprieves or pardons ought to be granted—in cases of pregnancy, insanity, or unexpected discovery of innocence. In these cases, if the executive power cannot operate, in all probability, the sheriff, relying on the justice of his country, might take the risk upon himself, and without any pretence of authority, exercise mercy upon indeed an awful responsibility. But this case is a different one—it is a claim of right —and the pernicious consequences to which it may lead, are obvious. There is a court of Oyer and Terminer in every county, and there are 56 counties. Admit the power over reprieves to be in fifty-six courts—admit that these courts are more or less trustworthy, more or less liable to deception—may they not in many cases prostrate justice, and adopt measures of the most injurious tendency? The power of the executive may be completely overthrown in this respect; for, if a court may respite for a day, they may for a year; and on the exhibition of new testimony, they may try over a criminal, and declare him innocent, whom before they had pronounced guilty, and act as a respiting power: there will be no certainty in punishment—a virtual pardoning power will be established in each county, instead of one express pardoning power for the whole state! And, if the judiciary be exposed to sudden and powerful attempts on its humanity, as is probable in the present case, to suspend the sentence of the law, what must be the effect on the executive when it comes before him backed by judicial authority—a prevalent sentiment against the punishment of death—a reluctance in the firmest minds to accede to it—plausible reasons for a milder course—and conflicting opinions about the right of infliction after an intermeddling with the sentence? Will not the executive, in almost every case, be compelled to change the punishment; and in the present instance, which has been pronounced by the judges and jury the crime of murder, and which I may still believe so, with all due deference to the opinion of the court, I am compelled by the extraordinary circumstances, embarrassments, and perplexities attending it, to interfere with a conditional pardon. And as the course to which I except is obnoxious to

so many objections, and may be productive of so many evils, and is without precedent, so I sincerely hope that it may be without imitation.

I have the honour to be, &c.

DE WITT CLINTON.

The Hon. JUDGE EDWARDS.

NOTE N.—p. 88.

As the following memorial addressed to Governor Burnet in 1724, by Cadwallader Colden, at that time surveyor-general of the province of New-York, afterwards Lieutenant-Governor, relates many interesting facts relative to the fur trade at that period, and as an historical paper, is in other respects valuable, at the same time that it contains the earliest prospective views of the improvement of the internal navigation of this state, I am induced to give it a place among the documents relating to this subject.

A Memorial concerning the Fur Trade of the province of New-York. Presented to his Excellency William Burnet, Esq. Captain-General and Governor, &c. by Cadwallader Colden, Surveyor-General of the said province, the 10th of December, 1724.

It has of late been generally believed, that the inhabitants of the province of New-York are so advantageously situated, with respect to the Indian trade, and enjoy so many advantages as to trade in general, that it is in their power not only to rival the French of Canada, who have almost entirely engrossed the Fur Trade of America, but that it is impossible for the French to carry on that trade in competition with the people of this province. The inquiring into the truth of this proposition, may not only be of some consequence, as to the riches and honour of the British nation, (for it is well known how valuable the fur trade of America is) but likewise as to the safety of all the British colonies in North America. New France, as the French now claim, extends from the mouth of the river Mississippi, to the mouth of the river St. Lawrence, by which the

French plainly show their intention of enclosing the British settlements, and cutting us off from all commerce with the numerous nations of Indians, that are every where settled over the vast continent of North America. The English in America have too good reason to apprehend such a design, when they see the French king's geographer publish a map, by which he has set bounds to the British empire in America, and has taken in many of the English settlements both in South Carolina and New-York, within these boundaries of New France. And the good services they intend us with the Indians, but too plainly appears at this day, by the Indian war now carried on against New-England.

I have therefore for some time past, endeavoured to inform myself from the writings of the French, and from others who have travelled in Canada, or among the Indians, how far the people of this province may carry on the Indian trade with more advantage than the French can; or what disadvantages they labour under more than the French do. As all endeavours for the good of one's country are excusable, I do not doubt but my intention in this will be acceptable to your excellency, though I be not capable of treating the subject as it deserves.

I shall begin with Canada, and consider what advantages they have either by their situation or otherwise. Canada is situated upon the river of St. Lawrence, by which the five great lakes (which may properly be called the five inland seas of North America) empty themselves into the ocean. The mouth of this great river is in the latitude of 50°, over against the body of Newfoundland. It rises from the Cataracui, now Lake Ontario, the eastern-most of the five great lakes, about the latitude of 44°, and runs from thence about north-east to the ocean, and is about nine hundred miles in length, from that lake to the ocean. The five great lakes which communicate with each other, and with this river, extend about one thousand miles westward further into the continent. So far the French have already discovered, and their discoveries make it probable, that an inland passage may be found to the South Sea, by the rivers which run into these lakes, and rivers which run into the South Sea.

The method of carrying goods upon the rivers of North America, into all

the small branches and over land, from the branches of one river to the branches of another, was learned from the Indians, and is the only method practicable through such large forests and deserts as the traders pass through, in carrying from one nation to another—it is this; the Indians make a long narrow boat, made of the bark of the birch tree, the parts of which they join very neatly. One of these canoes that can carry a dozen men, can itself be easily carried upon two men's shoulders; so that when they have gone as far by water as they can, which is further than is easily to be imagined, because their loaded canoes don't sink six inches into the water, they unload their canoes, and carry both goods and canoes upon their shoulders over land, into the nearest branch of the river they intend to follow. Thus the French have an easy communication with all the countries bordering upon the river of St. Lawrence, and its branches, with all the countries bordering upon these inland seas, and the rivers which empty themselves into these seas, and can thereby carry their burdens of merchandise through all these large countries, which could not by any other means than water-carriage be carried through so vast a tract of land.

This, however, but half finishes the view the French have as to their commerce in North America. Many of the branches of the river Mississippi come so near to the branches of several of the rivers which empty themselves into the great lakes, that in several places there is but a short land-carriage from the one to the other. As soon as they have got into the River Mississippi, they open to themselves as large a field for traffic in the southern parts of North America, as was before mentioned with respect to the northern parts. If one considers the length of this river and its numerous branches, he must say, that by means of this river and the lakes, there is opened to his view such a scene of inland navigation as cannot be paralleled in any other part of the world.

The French have, with much industry, settled small colonies, and built stockaded forts at all the considerable passes between the lakes, except between Cataracui Lake, called by the French Ontario, and Lake Erie, one of our Five Nations of Indians, whom we call Senecas, and the French Sonontouans, having hitherto refused them leave to erect any buildings there.

The French have been indefatigable in making discoveries, and carrying on their commerce with nations, of whom the English know nothing but what they see in the French maps and books. The barrenness of the soil, and the coldness of the climate of Canada, obliges the greatest number of the inhabitants to seek their living by travelling among the Indians, or by trading with those who do travel. The Governor, and other officers, have but a scanty allowance from the king, and could not subsist were it not by the perquisites they have from this trade; neither could their priests find any means to satisfy their ambition and luxury without it. So that all heads and hands are employed to advance it, and the men of best parts think it the surest way to advance themselves by travelling among the Indians, and learning their languages; even the bigotry and enthusiasm of some hot heads, has not been a little useful in advancing this commerce; for that government having prudently turned the edge of the zeal of such hot spirits upon converting the Indians, many of them have spent their lives under the greatest hardships, in endeavouring to gain the Indians to their religion, and to love the French nation, while, at the same time, they are no less industrious to represent the English as the enemies of mankind. So that the whole policy of that government, both civil and religious, is admirably turned to the general advancement of this trade. Indeed the art and industry of the French, especially that of their religious missions, has so far prevailed upon all the Indians in North America, that they are every where directed by French councils. Even our own Five Nations, the Iroquois, who formerly were mortal enemies of the French, and have always lived in the strictest amity with the English, have of late, by the practices of the French priests, been so far gained, that several of the Mohawks who live nearest the English, have left their habitations, and are gone to settle near Montreal in Canada; and all the rest discover a dread of the French power. That much of this is truly owing to the priests, appears from many of the Sachems of the Iroquois wearing crucifixes when they come to Albany. And those Mohawk Indians that are gone to Canada, are now commonly known, both to the French and English, by the name of the Praying Indians, it being customary for them to go through the streets of Montreal with their beads, praying and begging alms.

But notwithstanding all these advantages, the French labour under difficulties that no art or industry can remove. The mouth of the river of St. Lawrence, and more especially the bay of St. Lawrence, lies so far north, and is thereby so often subject to tempestuous weather and thick fogs, that the navigation there is very dangerous, and never attempted but during the summer months. The wideness of this bay, together with the many strong currents that run in it, the many shelves and sunken rocks that are every where spread over both the bay and river, and the want of places for anchoring in the bay, all increase the danger of this navigation; so that a voyage to Canada is justly esteemed much more dangerous than to any other part of America. The many shipwrecks that happen in this navigation, are but too evident proofs of the truth of this, particularly the miscarriage of the last expedition against Canada. The channel is so difficult, and the tides so strong, that after their shipping get into the river, they never attempt to sail in the night, though the wind be fair, and the weather good. These difficulties are so considerable, that the French never attempt above one voyage in a year to Europe or the West Indies, though it be really nearer Europe than any of the English colonies, where the shipping that constantly use the trade, always make two voyages in the year.

The navigation between Quebec and Montreal is likewise very dangerous and difficult. The tide rises about eighteen or twenty feet at Quebec, which occasions so strong a stream, that a boat of six oars cannot make way against it; the river in many places very wide, and the channel at the same time narrow and crooked; there are many shelves and sunken rocks, so that the best pilots have been deceived; for which reason vessels that carry goods to Montreal, are always obliged to anchor before night, though both wind and tide be fair. The flood goes no further than Trois Rivieres, half way to Montreal, and about ninety miles from Quebec. After they pass this place they have a strong stream always against them, which requires a fair wind and a strong gale to carry the vessels against the stream. And they are obliged in this part of the river, as well as under the Trois Rivieres, to come to anchor at night though the wind be good. These difficulties make the common passages take up three or four weeks, and sometimes six weeks;

though if they have the chance of a wind to continue so long, they may run it in five or six days.

After they pass Montreal they have a strong stream against them till they come near the Lakes; so that in all that, which is about one hundred and fifty miles in length, they force their canoes forward with setting poles, or drag them with ropes along shore; and at five or six different places in that way the river falls over rocks with such force, that they are obliged to unload their canoes, and carry them upon their shoulders. They never make this voyage from Montreal to Lake Ontario in less than twenty days, and frequently, twice that time is necessary.

Now we are come so far as the lake, my design leads me no further, for at this lake all the far Indians that go to Canada must pass by our traders. And from thence the road to the Indian countries is the same from Albany that it is from Montreal.

Besides these difficulties in the transportation, the French labour under greater in the purchasing of the principal goods proper for the Indian market; for the most considerable and most valuable part of their cargo consists in strouds, duffils, blankets, and other woollens, which are bought at a much cheaper rate in England than in France. The strouds, which the Indians value more than any other clothing, are only made in England, and must be transported into France before they can be carried to Canada. Rum is another considerable branch of the Indian trade which the French have not, by reason they have no commodities in Canada fit for the West India market. This they supply with brandy, at a much dearer rate than rum can be purchased at New-York, though of no more value with the Indians. Generally, all the goods used in the Indian trade, except gunpowder, and a few trinkets, are sold at Montreal for twice their value at Albany. To this likewise must be added, the necessity they are under of laying the whole charge of supporting their government on the Indian trade. I am not particularly informed of their duties or imposts, but I am well assured, that they commonly give six or seven hundred livres for a licence for one canoe, in proportion to her largeness, to go with her loading into the Indian country to trade.

I shall next consider the advantages the inhabitants of New-York have in

carrying on this trade. In the first place, the ships that constantly use the trade to England, perform their voyage to and from London twice every year; and those that go to Bristol, the port from whence the greatest part of the goods for the Indian trade are exported, frequently return in four months. These goods are bought much cheaper in England than in France: they are transported in less time, with less charge, and much less risk, as appears by the premium for insurance between London and New-York, being only two per cent. Goods are easily carried from New-York to Albany up the Hudson River, the distance being only 140 miles, the river very straight all the way, and bold, and very free from sand banks, as well as rocks; so that the vessels always sail as well by night as by day, and have the advantage of the tide upwards as well as downwards, the flood flowing above Albany. It may therefore be safely concluded, that all sorts of goods can be carried to Albany at a cheaper rate than they can be to Quebec, which is also three times further from the Indian country than Albany is. To put the truth of this out of all dispute, I need only observe what is well known both at New-York and Albany, viz. That almost all the strouds carried by the French into the Indian countries, as well as large quantites of other goods, for the use of the French themselves, are carried from Albany to Montreal. There has been an account kept of nine hundred pieces of strouds transported thither in one year, besides other commodities of very considerable value. The distance between Albany and Montreal, is about two hundred miles, all by water, except twelve miles between Hudson River and Wood Creek, where they carry their bark canoes over land, and about sixteen miles between Chambly and La Prairie, over against Montreal. And though the passage be so short and easy, these goods are generally sold at double their value in Albany.

But as this path hath been thought extremely prejudicial to the interests of this colony, I shall leave it and go on to another that leads directly from Albany into the Cataracui or Ontario Lake, without going near any of the French settlements.

From Albany the Indian traders commonly carry their goods sixteen miles over land, to the Mohawk River at Schenectady, the charge of which carriage is nine shillings New-York money, or five shillings sterling each waggon-load.

From Schenectady they carry them in canoes up the Mohawk River, to the carrying-place between the Mohawk River and the river which runs into the Oneida Lake; which carrying-place between is only three miles long, except in very dry weather, when they are obliged to carry them two miles further. From thence they go with the current down the Onondaga River to Lake Ontario. The distance between Albany and Lake Ontario this way, is nearly the same with that between Albany and Montreal; and likewise with that between Montreal and Lake Ontario, and the passage much easier than the last, because the stream of the Mohawk River is not near so strong as the river St. Lawrence between the Lake and Montreal, and there is no fall in the river save one short one; whereas there are, as I have said, at least five in the river St. Lawrence, where the canoes must be unloaded. Therefore it plainly follows, that the Indian goods may be carried at as cheap a rate from Albany to Lake Ontario, as from Albany to Montreal. So that the people of Albany plainly save all the charge of carrying goods two hundred miles from Montreal to that part of the Ontario Lake, which the French have to carry before they bring them to the same place from Montreal, besides the advantage which the English have in the price of their goods.

I have said, that when we are in Lake Ontario, we are upon the level with the French, because here we can meet with all the Indians that design to go to Montreal. But besides this passage by the lakes, there is a river which comes from the country of the Senecas, and falls into the Onondaga River, by which we have an easy carriage into that country, without going near Lake Ontario. The head of this river goes near to Lake Erie, and probably may give a very near passage into that Lake, much more advantageous than the way the French are obliged to take by the great fall of Niagara, because narrow rivers are much safer for canoes than the lakes, where they are obliged to go ashore if there be any wind upon the water. But as this passage depends upon a further discovery, I shall say nothing more of it at this time.

Whoever then considers these advantages New-York has of Canada, in the first buying of their goods, and in the safe, speedy, and cheap transportation of them from Britain to the Lakes, free of all manner of duty or imposts, will readily agree with me, that the traders of New-York may sell their goods in

the Indian countries at half the price the people of Canada can, and reap twice the profit they do. This will admit of no dispute with those that know that strouds, the staple Indian commodity, this year are sold for ten pounds a piece at Albany, and at Montreal for twenty-five pounds, notwithstanding the great quantity of strouds said to be brought directly into Quebec from France, and the great quantities that have been clandestinely carried from Albany. It cannot therefore be denied that it is only necessary for the traders of New-York to apply themselves heartily to this trade, in order to bring it wholly into their own hands; for in every thing besides diligence, industry, and enduring fatigues, the English have much the advantage of the French. And all the Indians will certainly buy, where they can at the cheapest rate.

It must naturally be objected, that if these things are true, how is it possible that the traders of New-York should neglect so considerable and beneficial trade for so long time?

In answering this objection, I shall show the difficulties New-York has laboured under, by giving a short history of the country, so far as it relates to this trade. Which method, I think, can be liable to the least objection, and put the whole in the truest light.

When this country, (the province of New-York) came first under the crown of Great Britain, our Five Nations of Indians were mortal enemies of the French at Canada, and were in a continual war with them, and all the nations of Indians round the lakes; so that then it was not safe for the English to travel further than the countries of the Five Nations; nor would our Indians permit the far Indians, with whom they had constant war, to pass through their countries to Albany. Besides, the Five Nations of Indians were at that time so numerous, consisting of ten times the number of fighting men they now do, that the trade with them alone was very considerable for so young and small a colony. In the latter end of king Charles's reign, when the duke of York and popish councils prevailed, the Governor of New-York, who was likewise a papist, had orders to use all his endeavours to make up a peace between our nations (the Iroquois) and the French; and that he should persuade the Five Nations to admit French priests among them, in order to civilize them. The

consequence of which was, that the French thereby obtained a free commerce upon the lakes, and obtained leave to build Cataraqui Fort upon the north side of Lake Ontario, and have two vessels of force upon the same lake. From this time, during all king James's reign, the French, whenever they had any differences with our Five Nations, threatened that the English of New-York would join with them, and destroy the Five Nations; by which, and the practices of the French priests, our Five Nations became very much alienated in their affections from the English, and looked upon them as a people depending upon the French. The consequences of this appeared so dangerous to Colonel Dungan, the Governor of New-York, though, as I have said, a papist, that he again and again complained to his master of the ill offices the French priests did the English among our nations. When the English had thus procured a peace for the French, they thought they might justly reap some advantage from it; and it's hardly to be doubted but that they had promises of that kind. They were therefore encouraged to send forty men, with great quantities of goods, into the lakes, under the command of Major Mc Gregory, to trade with the far nations. At this time Mr. Denonville, Governor of Canada, was gathering together all the force of Canada, and of the Indians, enemies of the Five Nations, in order to surprise the Five Nations and destroy them, at the time they thought themselves secure by the peace so lately made. Major Mc Gregory and his company, were met by a French officer on Lake Erie, coming with a great number of men to the general rendezvous of the French, and he, with all the English, were made prisoners. They were used with such severity as has never been practised between Christian nations in open war, though the two crowns at that time were not only at peace, but under the strictest ties of mutual friendship; for the French used these people as slaves in building Cataraqui fort, and a poor Frenchman that had conducted them, was publicly shot to death, as if he had brought an enemy into their country. Such were their apprehensions then of the English getting any footing among the Indians.

The French Governor surprised a village of the Five Nations, who, on the French faith, lived in great security but seven or eight leagues from the French fort, and sent these miserable people to the galleys in France. He afterwards

fell upon the Senecas, and burnt their villages, but without any advantage to the French, they having lost more men than the Indians did. This renewed the war with greater fury than ever, between the French and our Indians. For some time afterwards our Indians, in a great body, fell upon the island of Montreal, while Mr. Denonville was in the town. They burnt and destroyed all the villages and houses round Montreal, and killed some hundreds of men, women, and children. Afterwards they came into the open fields before Montreal, and there defied the French Governor, who did not think it proper to fight them. And when they had done all the mischief they could, they retired without any loss.

About this time the revolution happened in Great Britain, which was succeeded by a war between Great Britain and France. In February 1689—90, a party of three hundred men, consisting of equal numbers of French and Indians, surprised Schenectady in the night-time, when the poor people were in their beds, in the greatest security, where they barbarously murdered sixty-three men, women, and children, in cold blood, laid the village in ashes, and then retired, without reaping any other advantage besides this cruel revenge on innocent people, for the mischief our Indians had done them. This raised a cruel war between the two colonies, in which there was much mischief done, and blood shed, without any advantage to either side.

In time of this war, the most Christian king's Governor of Canada was so much provoked, that he thought fit to follow the example of our barbarous Indians, and burn his Indian prisoners alive in the most cruel manner, in sight of all the inhabitants of Quebec, and to deliver up the English prisoners to the French Indians, who indeed had more mercy, for they killed none of them.

King William's peace put an end to this war; but the peace lasted so short a while, that the people of this province hardly had time to re-settle their farms on the frontiers, which they had deserted in the time of the war, much less to adventure trading in the Indian countries, so lately the scene of so much cruelty. But both colonies having now an abhorrence of the cruelties of the last war, agreed on a kind of neutrality for the Indians, during Queen Anne's war, in which time we lost much ground with our own Indians. For the

French having learned, by dear experience, that it was not possible for them to conquer our Five Indian Nations, resolved to try all means to gain their affections, and in this art the French are always more successful than in that of war; and the English failing in two ill-concerted expeditions against Canada, the Indians lost much of the opinion they had of the English power and valour.

In time of this last war, the clandestine trade to Montreal began to be carried on by Indians from Albany to Montreal. This gave rise to the Kahnuaga, or Praying Indians, who are entirely made up of deserters from the Mohawks and river Indians, and were either enticed thither by the French priests, or by our merchants, in order to carry goods from Albany to Montreal, or run away for some mischief done here. These Indians now consist of about eighty fighting men, and live about four leagues above Montreal. They neither plant nor hunt, but depend chiefly upon this private trade for their subsistence. These Indians, in time of war, gave the French intelligence of all designs here against them. By them likewise the French engaged our Five Nations in a war with the Indians, friends of Virginia, and from them we might expect the greatest mischief in time of war, seeing every part of the province is as well known to them as to any of the inhabitants. But if this trade was entirely at an end, we have reason to believe, that these Indians would return to their own tribes, for they then could not long subsist where they now are.

As soon as the peace was proclaimed, an open trade with Montreal was carried on with such earnestness, that Montreal was filled with Indian goods, and Albany exhausted; by which means Montreal became the principal, if not the only Indian market, and the Indians depended entirely on the French for what they wanted.

Our merchants were fond of the Canada trade, because they sold large quantities of goods without any trouble, the French taking them from their doors; whereas the trade with the Indians is carried on with a great deal of toil and fatigue; and as to the interest of the country, they either never thought any thing about it, or if they did, had no regard to it.

Now I have brought this account to the time your excellency arrived; what

has happened since, your excellency knows better than I can by any means inform you. From the whole, it seems plain that any difficulties and disadvantages this province has been under, have only proceeded from the wars, which have continued since the first settling of the province, to the beginning of the last general peace. But now, that not only this province, but likewise our Six Nations of Indians are at peace, and in amity both with the French and all the Indian nations with whom we can have any commerce, these difficulties are all removed, and we now enjoy the most favourable time, that at any time can be hoped for, in order to extend the British commerce in North America, while the French not only labour under the difficulties which I have shown to be inseparable from the situation of their colony, but likewise under another disadvantage, not before taken notice of, by the fur trade of Canada being restrained to one company. This company is obliged to pay heavy duties in France upon the importation of beaver or any other fur; for which reason they always fix a price upon beaver and their other furs in Canada; and the Indian traders of Canada being restrained from selling to any but the company's agents there, they cannot raise the price of Indian goods as the price of European rise, or as their profit on the goods they sell to the Indians is lessened.

The merchants of New-York allow our Indian traders double the price for beaver, that the French company allow their Indian traders, the price established by the company for beaver in Canada, being two livres, or eighteen pence sterling the pound weight; and the current price of beaver in New-York being five shillings New-York money, or three shillings sterling the pound weight. Therefore it plainly follows, that our Indian traders could undersell the French traders, though they were to give as great a price for European goods as the French do, and did transport them at as great charge, because of the double price they have for their furs in New-York.

But as our Indian traders not only have a double price for their Indian goods, but likewise buy the goods they sell to the Indians, at half the price the French Indian traders do, the French traders must be ruined by carrying on this trade, in competition with the English of New-York. And the French Indian traders had been ruined before now, if they had not found means to

carry their beaver to Albany, where they got double the price they must have sold for in Canada.

It may be objected against this argument, that the Canada Company as soon as they find that the traders cannot sell at their established price, will allow a greater price. But if we consider the duties the French company is obliged to pay to the king, they cannot allow so great a price as the English can at New-York. And if it should be insisted, that the French company may obtain a remission of those, yet if the clandestine trade with Albany be entirely stopt, the French traders will be ruined before such remission can be obtained, and their trade will be at an end.

My inclination led me to show what advantages not only the Indian trade would reap by extending our frontiers as far as the lakes, but likewise the British trade in some other branches, which the parliament of Great Britain seem to have much at heart, viz. naval stores; for the soil on both sides of the Mohawk River being as rich as it is possible, I believe, for any land to be, will be found the most proper for raising of hemp of any part of America, and the whole country round it being full of the largest pines, the royal navy is as likely to be well provided with masts there, and at as cheap a rate as any where else. But I have already too far presumed on your excellency's patience.

CADWALLADER COLDEN.

NOTE O.—p. 91.

Entering upon the subject of the claims of the late Gouverneur Morris to the honour of projecting the system of canal navigation which has been adopted by the state of New-York, I freely confess that the first impressions upon my mind were the same with those of many who have ascribed to him the credit of having been the first to suggest the interior route, by a direct canal from the Hudson to Lake Erie, as the means of connecting the lakes with the ocean.

That his enlarged and early views of the improvement and extension of the navigation of the western waters of this state, may have *indirectly contributed* to the great achievement which has been effected, is not to be doubted; for few men possessed the same expanded views that Mr. Morris entertained of the great commercial prospects and resources of his native country, or possessed the talents to exhibit them to his fellow-citizens with equal eloquence in speech or in his written communications. Under these impressions, I applied to Mrs. Morris for the purpose, and with the expectation of obtaining access to his papers relative to that subject, with the view of doing justice to his memory by introducing into these pages the testimonials of his merits in originating the canal navigation of this state, and of discharging a debt of gratitude which I owe to that distinguished man, and which I shall ever feel and acknowledge, for the friendship and hospitality with which he honoured me during many years. Having been unsuccessful in my application to Mrs. Morris, who intends herself to publish the documents left by her husband upon that subject, I am compelled to confine myself to the following papers, some of which have already appeared before the public, while others have been obtained from the friends of Mr. Morris, and from the manuscripts left by the late Thomas Eddy. From these documents it will appear questionable how far Mr. Morris, notwithstanding his conversation with Simeon De Witt in 1804, and with Mr. Brodhead of Utica, had prior to 1810, when he was appointed one of the canal commissioners, seriously contemplated any other communication between the Hudson and Lake Erie, than by the circuitous route by Oswego and Lake Ontario, as distinctly expressed by him in his subjoined letter to General Lee, which course had been previously designated by the bill passed by the legislature in 1798, for opening the navigation between Lake Erie and Lake Ontario, but which was never attempted to be carried into execution.

Indeed, it will be seen, that as early as the year 1786, it had been proposed by Jeffrey Smith, of Long Island, to extend the navigation, if practicable, from the Mohawk to Lake Erie (probably intended by the same route as that afterwards stated by Mr. Morris, by way of Oswego and Lake Ontario,) and

indeed had been actively and repeatedly discussed in the legislature during the session of that year.

Being informed in a late interview with Governor Lewis, that he had held conversations with Mr. Morris relative to the internal navigation of this state, as early as the year 1777, and that in a communication to Hermanus Bleecker, Esq. to whom he referred me for the same, he had reduced the substance of those conversations to writing, I addressed to the latter gentleman the following note, for the united purpose of ascertaining the services rendered by Mr. Bleecker himself, when a member of the legislature, during the discussion, on the canal policy, and the extent and validity of the claims of Mr. Morris as the first projector of the Erie Canal.

NEW-YORK, Dec. 13th, 1828.

DEAR SIR,

Knowing that you at a particular period took an active concern in the support of the measures relative to the canal navigation of this state, and being desirous to obtain all the information relative to it from the individuals themselves, for the purpose of supplying in my appendix to the Discourse I am about to publish, in relation to our late governor, a full and authentic history of the origin, progress, and completion of the Erie Canal, I write to request a statement of the particular services you rendered in that memorable work.

I also write to obtain from you the copy of a letter written to you by Gov. Lewis, upon the subject of Gouverneur Morris's claims to the first suggestion of the Erie Canal. Governor Lewis refers me to you for that paper. Your compliance with my wishes will enable me to make an important addition to the life of Mr. Clinton now printing, at the same time that you will oblige your friend

DAVID HOSACK.

HERMANUS BLEECKER, Esq. Albany.

To this letter Mr. Bleecker kindly and promptly replied, enclosing the communications I had solicited, which follow.

ALBANY, Dec. 23, 1828.

DEAR SIR,

I have received, and am much obliged to you for your letter of the 13th instant.—I very soon took an interest in "the measures relative to the canal navigation of this state," and solicitously watched their progress; but as to my "particular services in that memorable work," I can only say, that I rendered "none to speak of."

Of the merit of the late Gouverneur Morris in regard to the canals, I have a deep impression. I witnessed with great interest, his zeal and intelligence—his efforts to inform others—and his elevation above the ignorance and prejudice by which the project was condemned as premature and chimerical.

You know that he and Mr. Clinton were deputed by the canal commissioners to attend at the seat of the general government for the purpose of procuring its aid. In the month of January, 1812, they appeared before a committee of the House of Representatives, consisting of a member from each state, and Mr. Morris made a grand and luminous exposition of his views in relation to the Erie canal, and several other similar projects in various parts of the United States.

It is grateful to me, now, to see how just and enlightened his views were; and to think how much he was in advance of those who doubted, those who were passive, and those who condemned and ridiculed what appeared clear to his discerning mind. What he then prophesied is now history. I believe all the reports made by the commissioners to the legislature during Mr. Morris's life-time, except one, were drawn by him. The lofty spirit of the report made in March 1812, has, of course, excited your attention. You have seen his letter to Mr. Parish in 1800, and the letter of Mr. De Witt to William Darby, written in February 1822. A gentleman, who was at a dinner at Washington in 1800, has informed me of a very interesting conversation, in which Mr. Morris, who was one of the party, spoke of the Erie Canal as a matter of which he had long thought. It seems to me that justice has not been done to his memory.

I send you herewith copies of my letter to Governor Lewis, and his answer.

I am, with great respect, your obedient servant,

H. BLEECKER.

DAVID HOSACK, M.D.

Letter from Hermanus Bleecker, Esq. to Morgan Lewis, Esq.

ALBANY, May 12th, 1828.

DEAR SIR,

I think it is due to the memory of the late Gouverneur Morris, that something should be done to preserve the evidence of the conversation he had with you and General Schuyler, at Saratoga, during the revolutionary war, on the subject of the canal between the lakes and the Hudson. I hope you will excuse my making this suggestion.

If you see no objection to give such an account of that conversation as may be preserved, you will of course adopt such a mode of doing it, as seems most proper to you. If no better way occurs to you, it may be in a letter to me. Having had an opportunity of knowing much of Mr. Morris's zeal and intelligence on the subject of the canal, I have a much stronger sense of his merit and services, in regard to that work, than seems to be now generally entertained. In saying this, I am not conscious of a disposition to detract in the slightest degree from the fair claims and reputation of any other person.

I am, Sir, with great respect,

Your obedient servant,

H. BLEECKER.

MORGAN LEWIS, Esq.

Staatsburgh, May 26th, 1828.

Dear Sir,

On my arrival at this place, from the city of New-York, I found your favour of the 12th inst. requesting information as to the early opinion of the late Gouverneur Morris, on the subject of a canal communication between the waters of Lake Erie, and those of the river Hudson. In compliance with which I present you the following statement.

After the evacuation of Ticonderoga, in 1777, the scattered forces of the army of the north having concentrated at Fort Edward, Mr. Morris arrived at General Schuyler's head-quarters, on a mission from the committee of general safety, of this state, to inquire into and report the actual state of the military force in that quarter. During the time he remained with us, which was several days, he quartered in the same house with the General and myself. Our evenings were usually passed together, and the state of our affairs generally the subject of conversation.

Mr. Morris, whose temperament admitted of no alliance with despondency, even in the most gloomy periods of the war, with which our then situation might justly be classed; never doubting the ultimate triumph of our arms, and the consequent attainment of our independence, frequently amused us by descanting with great energy on what he termed "the rising glories of the western world." One evening in particular, while describing in the most animated and glowing terms, the rapid march of the useful arts through our country, when once freed from a foreign yoke; the spirit with which agriculture and commerce, both internal and external, would advance; the facilities which would be afforded them by the numerous watercourses intersecting our country, and the ease with which they might be made to communicate; he announced in language highly poetic, and to which I cannot do justice, that at no very distant day, the waters of the great western inland seas, would, by the aid of man, break through their barriers and mingle with those of the Hudson.

I recollect asking him how they were to break through these barriers? To which he replied, that numerous streams passed them through natural channels, and that artificial ones might be conducted by the same routes.

This object, it appears, was a favourite with him, and one of which he never lost sight. In 1810, he came to Albany for the express purpose of engaging, if possible, the legislature in his plans for its attainment; and as an inducement, showed that, previous to his departure from Europe, he had secured, conditionally, a loan of five millions to aid in their execution. While in Albany he lodged in the same house with me, reminded me of the circumstances I have related, informed me of the motives of his visit to the seat of government, and at his request I accompanied him to the lodgings of Mr. Clinton, Generals Platt and Hall, who were at that time, with myself, members of the senate. These gentlemen engaged with zeal in the project; and the ardour and perseverance with which the first named of them pursued it to its final accomplishment, will never fail to do him honour, and to place him in the first rank of meritorious citizens. Nor has he, as I believe, on any occasion, done injustice to Mr. Morris, by claiming to have been himself the original projector.

I am, Sir, very respectfully,

Your obedient servant,

MORGAN LEWIS.

H. Bleecker, Esq.

The following letter from Gouverneur Morris, which was addressed to his friend Mr. John Parish, then of Hamburgh, will be read with deep interest, not only as it regards the object for which it is here introduced, but as exhibiting a glowing picture of our country, and as a splendid specimen of the descriptive talents of the author.

The letter which will be found in our columns to-day, (says the editor of the American, in which it was first published,) is from the pen of the late Gouverneur Morris. It is interesting as a picture of parts of our state five and

twenty years ago, and still more, as abounding in glorious anticipations for our common country, which, glowing as they were, reality has already surpassed. But there is one passage in particular in it, which, at this precise moment should be remarked, as entitling his name to no obscure notice, in the ceremonial of celebrating the completion of that channel between the lakes and the ocean, which, standing on the borders of Lake Erie twenty-five years ago, and when all around or between was comparatively a wilderness, he so confidently predicted. "Shall I (he exclaims to his correspondent) lead your astonishment to the verge of incredulity? I will: know then, that one-tenth of the expense borne by Britain in the last campaign, would enable ships to sail from London through Hudson's river into Lake Erie." The ship channel indeed is not there, but the magnificent idea is nevertheless verified, and a water communication exists from London through the Hudson river to Lake Erie.

WASHINGTON, Dec. 20, 1800.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I have before me unanswered, your kind letters of the 3d April, 6th July, and 11th September. I find you have been much a traveller last summer. I too have been one, but through countries from whence I could not write, and in which I received no letters. In July last, I left home to visit some property of my own, and some which was confided to my care by others, in the northern part of the state of New-York. I went by way of Albany, the Lakes George and Champlain to Montreal. After partaking for some days of the festive hospitality of that place, we took boat and went up the St. Lawrence to Lake Ontario, and along the south side of that lake to Niagara; thence by land to Lake Erie, and so back again. This jaunt consumed so much time, that I could not reach my own house until a few days of the period I was bound to come hither, and in those days could scarcely get through the business which lay upon me. Since my arrival at this place, I have been, and still continue incessantly occupied.

If I thought description would convey an accurate idea of what I saw during this excursion, I would attempt to paint objects which must be seen to

be understood. Hudson's river differs from your Elbe in every feature except the breadth; near two miles wide at New-York, it swells by degrees into a lake of six miles before you reach the mountains called the Highlands, which are forty miles from the city. The western shore is for thirty miles a high and perpendicular rock; the eastern consists of lofty hills, variegated with forests, orchards, cottages, corn-fields, and pasture; in short, it displays every thing which can render a country at once grand and beautiful. The river, generally straight, is in its passage through the mountains, forced to serpentine by jutting promontories. These are high, steep, and abrupt, where pendent rocks frown upon the passenger. Like your Grampians, they are huge masses of granite, and in some parts, like them, their breasts lie bare to the blast; but in general they are clothed with luxuriant foliage. After a progress of twenty miles through this range of mountains, you open on a wide sheet of water, extending nearly as far as the eye can reach, with a breadth of about two miles; and you see at a distance on your left, the head of the Alleghany. On your right is a continuation of the mountains you have passed, which stretching, under various names, through Vermont and along the bounds of Lower Canada, terminate at the Gulf of St. Lawrence. As you ascend towards Albany, you pass two other ridges, beginning each at the distance of 10 or 12 miles from the west bank of the river. The valleys between these ridges extend southward to the Bay of Mexico. They are varied by hills and watered by many streams, no one of which, except the Hudson, is navigable (except by flat-bottomed boats) up to much less beyond the first or south-easternmost range.

About thirty miles to the southward of Albany, you have already turned the third range, which is the head of the Alleghany, called at that place the Blue Mountains, and the Katskill hill; for the English have rendered by the word *hill*, the Dutch word *bergh;* and the stream or kill which runs from them, was anciently infested by panthers and the large wild cat. As you approach Albany, the features of the scene begin to soften; the shores are neither so high nor so steep, and at length, sailing among rich meadows and islands, you reach that city, which is 160 miles from New-York. Something more than sixty miles further north is the south end of Lake George. In riding up-

wards from Albany, along the Hudson, you pass over some fine land, well cultivated, and in crossing by a bridge, the mouth of the Mohawk river, you see, at less than half a mile, the great Cahoos Falls, of above seventy feet perpendicular height, over which tumbles a river as large as the Elbe at Wirtemberg. At a place called Fort Edward, you see the Hudson, a stream still more copious, precipitate itself over a cataract nearly as high; and about five miles farther on, you have the view of another cataract in the river, called Glen's Falls, whose features are still more rough and bold. After leaving Hudson's river at this place, and passing over a plain of a few miles, you ascend some hills of moderate height, and from the top of the last behold Lake George, which, at about ten or twelve miles from its southern extremity, is divided into two parts—the one called the northwest bay, bends off to the westward; and the other, which is the main lake, stretches along in a northern direction. At the upper, or southern end, this lake is from six to eight miles wide, but, after a dozen miles it becomes narrower, and is sprinkled with islands of rocks, covered with trees, for ten or twelve miles, and opens again to a sheet of water of three or four miles; after which, turning short between the points of two mountains of solid rock, it seeks its issue over cataracts into Lake Champlain. The shores of Lake George are bold, chiefly mountainous, frequently steep, sometimes perpendicular; and although these mountains are not so high as the Alps, the lake is, on the whole, a finer object than that of Geneva, because it combines better the sublime with the beautiful, and far exceeds in the variety and richness of natural scenery. Its whole length is above thirty miles; the water is deep, pellucid, of a bright green; but on the sandy beach, a liquid crystal. It is difficult which most to admire, the abundance or excellence of the fish. Among these, the trout and perch, called by the Dutch name of *barsch* or bass, are most eminent. In crossing the lake, I took with a trolling line, above fifty, of various sizes, from half a pound to one pound, and one of five pounds weight. A walk of two miles from the landing place, at the lower end of Lake George, brings you to the landing place below, and you go thence, by a short river, two or three miles, to Ticonderoga or Lake Champlain. Here the scenery is totally different; the water is turbid; the shores of moderate heights rise gently, and are cultivated. At a distance on

each side there are high and waving mountains ; after passing Crown Point there is some mountain on the western shore before we reach the split rock : until that point the lake varies in width from one to three miles, but swells there to nine or ten. The shores are fine, the land rich, and in rapid improvement ; there are good houses, handsome villages, and many vessels sailing to and fro. This point of the lake is sometimes rough, but when we reach Cumberland Head, it is confined by large fertile islands within less extensive and more pleasing limits. The water also having had time to subside, becomes more pure. The mountains retire to the right and left, and before we reach the outlet of the lake, which is about one hundred miles from Ticonderoga, we are already on the great northern plain, which, beginning at Quebec, extends above one thousand miles southwest, west, and northwest, with scarcely any thing on it that deserves the name of a hill. Towards the outlet of the lake, near St. Johns, the shores are low and marshy.

The usual route from St. Johns is sixteen miles to the ferry at La Prairie, a village where every thing is as much French as within a league of Paris. There the Saint Lawrence is crossed obliquely to Montreal, shooting a fall in the way : from Montreal we go by land a few miles to La Chine, to avoid some difficult and shoal rapids, and then embark in a batteau managed by five men. From this place to Lake Ontario is one hundred and seventy-five miles : some part of the distance the current is almost imperceptible, but in general it is swift, and frequently so rapid, that its waves are like those of the sea ; so indeed are its waters, which are of a bright sea green, and of wonderful transparency. In a calm on Lake Ontario, I let down a stone not so large as my fist, and saw it from the side of a batteau, above thirty feet below the surface. The source of the St. Lawrence is one vast congeries of lakes. Ontario, the smallest of them, is unfathomable, and has a length of one hundred and fifty miles with a breadth of fifty. The river flows out of this lake, and has therefore the advantage of being always full and of never overflowing its banks. Let me add here, that there is a brilliancy in our atmosphere, you can have no idea of except by going to Italy, or else by viewing one of Claude Lorraine's best landscapes, and persuading yourself that the light there exhibited, is a just though faint picture of nature. The borders of Lake Saint

Francis, so called because the river expands itself there to a breadth of five or six miles, and has but a gentle current, are chiefly low; all the rest are of an agreeable height. The width of the river is various. Seventy miles from Lake Ontario it is about two miles wide, and deep enough for the largest ship, which may sail from thence to Niagara. In approaching the lake it is wider, but does not appear so, being filled with islands, of which there are, it is said, one thousand. There are also islands, and some of them considerable, in the hundred miles which extend from the first rapid down to Montreal. I believe there is much more water in this river than in the Danube at Vienna. Of the rapids I can say nothing; each differs from the other, and all from every thing of the kind I ever beheld. Still less can I pretend to convey to you the sentiments excited by a view of the lake. It is to all purposes of human vision an ocean, the same majestic motion in its billows. More delightful situations for country seats there are not in the world, than those which lie on the Saint Lawrence and a bay called ——, at the mouth of the lake, where too are such fish as can be met with no where else. A man who has not been on these waters, cannot be said ever to have tasted an eel. They have also three species of pike; one like that of Europe goes by the same name; another of brighter scales and broader, called by the English pickerel and by the French poisson doré, is much better; but the best of all, called by the Indian tribes Maskinonge, is of a shorter make, particularly about the head, and of enormous size, viz. from twelve to thirty pounds. Salmon is also abundant, and so is the large lake trout. The game is of various kinds and excellent. In coasting along the smooth sides of Lake Ontario, the scene always vast, has too much sameness; but I must not omit to mention, that we dipt up water from the surface, and found it cool even in our midsummer. This circumstance combines with many others, to show that the large lakes are all fed by springs; and men of credit assure me that in ascending them, their waters become more limpid; so that a man would think that of Ontario warm and foul when compared with the coldness and purity of Lake Superior, whose circumference is more than 1500 miles. After one day's repose at Niagara, we went to view the Falls. To form a faint idea of the cataract, imagine to yourself the Frith of Forth rush wrathfully down a deep descent, leap foaming,

over a perpendicular rock one hundred and seventy-five feet high, then flow away in the semblance of milk from a vast basin of emerald.—Proceeding from the Falls towards Lake Erie, along the bank of Niagara river, the contrast is complete. A quiet, gentle stream laves the shores of a country level and fertile. Along the banks of this stream, which by reason of islands in it, appears to be of moderate size, we proceed to Fort Erie. Here again the boundless waste of waters fills the mind with renewed astonishment; and here, as in turning a point of wood, the lake broke on my view, I saw riding at anchor nine vessels, the least of them 100 tons. Can you bring your imagination to realize this scene? Does it not seem like magic? Yet this magic is but the early effort of victorious industry. Hundreds of large ships will in no distant period bound on the billows of those inland seas. At this point commences a navigation of more than a thousand miles. Shall I lead your astonishment to the verge of incredulity? I will: know then, that one-tenth of the expense borne by Britain in the last campaign, would enable ships to sail from London through Hudson's River into Lake Erie. As yet, my friend, we only crawl along the outer shell of our country. The interior excels the part we inhabit in soil, in climate, in every thing. The proudest empire in Europe is but a bauble compared to what America *will* be, *must* be, in the course of two centuries, perhaps of one. If with a calm retrospect to the progress made within forty years, we stand on the firm ground of calculations warranted by experience, and look forward to the end of a similar period, imagination shrinks from the magnitude of rational deduction.

Forty years ago all America could not, without bills of credit, raise 100,000 dollars, to defend themselves against an enemy at their doors. Now, in profound peace, the taxes bring into the treasury, without a strain or effort, above 10,000,000 dollars. In the year 1760, there was not perhaps 10,000 dollars of specie in this country: at present, the banks of Philadelphia alone have above ten millions to dispose of beyond the demand. I heard it remarked many years ago as wonderful, that in the year 1760, there were in privateers, sailing from America, as many seamen as there had been on board the royal navy of Elizabeth. Is it less wonderful that our present tonnage should be equal to that of the whole British dominions at the accession of George the second?

If pausing thus at particular periods to collect the facts, we are already surprised, how shall we control our amazement, when those facts are applied in the course of just reasoning? This country advances not in direct, but in compound ratio; which is more than duplicate, and accumulating without adverting to the principles of this accelerating progression: ascertain facts, and for that purpose divide the last forty years into four periods, then supposing the ratio were duplicate, a revenue of 10,000,000 in 1800 will give for 1790, 5,000,000 dollars, for 1780, two millions and a half, for 1770 one million and a quarter, and for 1760, five-eighths of a million. But in speculations of this sort, it is more proper to take periods of twenty years, so as to obviate fluctuations from accidental causes. If then half a million be assumed as the utmost which could have been raised in 1760, that sum multiplied by four gives two millions for 1780, which multiplied by five gives ten millions for 1800. On going backward and dividing first by 3, we have 160,000 dollars for 1740, and then by 2, we have 80,000 dollars for the year 1720,—the era of the South Sea bubble. Now then, if we go forward, not with sextuple, but merely with quadruple ratio, for more periods of 20 years, beginning with 2,000,000 pounds sterling, we have for 1820, 8,000,000 pounds; and for 1840, more than thirty millions sterling of revenue, raised from a population which may then amount to near 30,000,000 of souls. This indeed seems impossible; but did it not seem equally impossible, at the close of the seven years' war, that the nett revenue of British America should exceed 2,000,000 pounds sterling by the end of the century? Had this been asserted on the exchange of London in the year 1760, would it not have been laughed at in 1780? But whither am I going? I meant, in the time I steal, merely to answer your letters now lying before me.

Many thanks for what you tell me about your family, and about our friends; remember me affectionately to them, and present my respects to Lord ———, when you see him. If you were on this side the water, I should greatly rejoice; and (whatever you might do) your grand-children would have great reason to rejoice. But you won't come—you will shiver along through German and Scotch summers, consoling yourself for the tediousness of June, by the long, snug, comfortable evenings of January. You tell me, my friend,

that I must join you, and particularly must take up my residence in London. But have you reflected that there is more of real society in one week at Niensteden, than in a London year? Recollect that a tedious morning, a great dinner, a boozy afternoon, and a dull evening, make the sum total of English life. It is admirable for young men who shoot, hunt, drink, and —; but for us! how are we to dispose of ourselves? Now were I to give you a rendezvous in Europe, it should be on the continent. I respect, as you know, the English nation highly, and love many individuals among them, but I do not love their manners. They are perhaps too pure, but they certainly are too cold for my taste. The Scotch are more agreeable to me; but were the manners of those countries as pleasant as the people are respectable, I should never be reconciled to their summers. Compare the uninterrupted warmth and splendour of America, from the first of May to the last of September, and her autumn truly celestial, with your shivering June, July, and August, sometimes warm, but often wet; your uncertain September, your gloomy October, and your damnable November. Compare these things, and then say, how a man who prizes the charms of nature, can think of making the exchange. If you were to pass one autumn with us, you would not give it for the best six months to be found in any other country, unless indeed you should get tired of fine weather.

You are at this time tired of my letter, so at length I bid you adieu.—God bless you.

GOUVERNEUR MORRIS.

In the pamphlet referred to, entitled *Facts and Observations in relation to the origin and completion of the Erie Canal*, in which the author claims for Mr. Morris the credit of giving origin to the western canal, the writer makes the following remarks:

"In the year 1799, Mr. Gouverneur Morris returned from Europe, where he had been employed as minister plenipotentiary from the United States to France, and in other important and confidential situations. In the year 1800 he made a visit to the falls of Niagara and Lake Erie, and first conceived the

gigantic plan of bringing the waters of Lake Erie into the Hudson, which when completed in the manner he contemplated, will be justly considered one of the greatest undertakings ever performed by the exertions of a free people, uninfluenced by the commands of despotic authority.

"Mr. G. Morris, returning from the above mentioned visit to the falls of Niagara and Lake Erie, communicated his plan to several persons, from whom he expected he might obtain information on the subject; among others to Mr. Charles C. Brodhead, then an intelligent land-surveyor at Utica, who has since been employed as one of the engineers of the Erie Canal. Mr. Morris inquired of him if he could estimate the probable height of the summit level of the country between Lake Erie and the Hudson: on Mr. Brodhead's answering in the negative, and inquiring the reason of the question, Mr. G. Morris stated that he was desirous of information, in relation to a plan he had of an immense inland navigation, by bringing the waters of Lake Erie into the Hudson. On Mr. Brodhead's expressing his surprise at the magnitude of the project, doubting its feasibility and practicability, and treating it as visionary, Mr. G. Morris assured him that he would live to see the day, when this communication would be effected. Mr. Brodhead is now living at Utica.

"Simeon De Witt, Esq. surveyor general of the state, a gentleman of universally acknowledged merit, who has held that office uninterruptedly through all the various changes of parties, for above forty years, states 'that the merit of first starting the idea of a direct communication by water between Lake Erie and Hudson River, unquestionably belongs to Mr. Gouverneur Morris.'"

The following are Mr. De Witt's observations on this subject.*

Soon after the revolutionary war, the attention of our legislature was drawn to the improvement of the internal navigation of the state, and two companies were incorporated for the purpose, viz. the Northern, and Western Inland Lock Navigation Companies. With respect to the latter, the views of its patrons evidently did not extend further than to the improvement of natural

* See New-York Canals, vol. i. p. 38.

streams, and the making of short canals and locks to pass difficult or unnavigable places, such as the Little Falls on the Mohawk River, the communication between that river and the Wood Creek at Rome, and some extraordinary rifts or rapids, in order to facilitate the passage of boats from Albany, or Schenectady, to Oswego and the Cayuga lake. Beyond these nothing was then contemplated. To lock round the Niagara falls was a subsequent project, which was never attempted to be put into execution. The merit of first starting the idea of a direct communication by water, between Lake Erie and the Hudson River, unquestionably belongs to Mr. Gouverneur Morris. The first suggestion I had of it was from him. In 1803, I accidentally met with him at Schenectady. We put up for the night at the same inn, and passed the evening together. Among the numerous topics of conversation, to which his prolific mind, and excursive imagination gave birth, was that of improving the means of intercourse with the interior of our state. He then mentioned the project of tapping Lake Erie, as he expressed himself, and leading its waters in an artificial river, directly across the country to the Hudson River. To this I very naturally opposed the intermediate hills and valleys, as insuperable obstacles. His answer was, in substance, *labor improbus omnia vincit*, and that the object would justify the labour and expense, whatever that might be. Considering this as a romantic thing, and characteristic of the man, I related it on several occasions. Mr. Geddes now reminds me that I mentioned it to him in 1804, when he was here as a member of the legislature, and adds, that afterwards, when in company with Mr. Jesse Hawley, it became a subject of conversation, which probably led to inquiries, that induced Mr. Hawley to write the essays which afterwards appeared in newspapers, on the subject of carrying a canal from Lake Erie to Albany, through the interior of the country, without going by the way of Lake Ontario.

The author of the pamphlet continues:—"Mr. James Geddes, one of the principal engineers of the Erie Canal, has on a former occasion thus expressed himself: 'canals between the Hudson and northern Wood Creek, and between the Mohawk and western Wood Creek, must have been contemplated by the first navigators of these waters, things so obvious must have early struck every one, but the idea of the Erie Canal is of very modern origin. In the winter

of 1804, I learnt for the first time, from the surveyor general, that Mr. Gouverneur Morris in a conversation between them in the preceding autumn, mentioned the scheme of a canal from Lake Erie across the country to the Hudson River. The idea of saving so much lockage by not descending into Lake Ontario, made a lively impression on my mind, by which I was prompted on every occasion to inquire into the practicability of the project, and entered with enthusiasm on the task assigned by the surveyor general in 1808, of expending the small sum of six hundred dollars, then granted by our legislature for making levels, &c.'

"The improved intercourse with Lake Erie had been always contemplated to be effected by removing obstructions in the streams, and in some places constructing canals and locks, on the route of the then actual intercourse by the Mohawk River, western Wood Creek, Oneida Lake, Onondago and Oswego Rivers, Lake Ontario, and Niagara River. But when Mr. G. Morris's project of constructing a canal across the country the whole distance from Lake Erie to the Hudson, was made known and discussed in the interior, the scheme was adopted there, and spread with inconceivable rapidity. Mr. Jesse Hawley of Ontario, engaged in giving publicity to the proposed route with great zeal, and in 1807, published a number of essays in the newspapers, which had an excellent effect in making the inhabitants of the western district familiar with the subject, and engaging their steady co-operation in promoting a plan which was to them of such vast importance."

The following observations by the author of the Supplement to Col. Troup's letter addressed to Broekholst Livingston, Esq. on the lake canal policy of the state of New-York, are also introduced as connected with this subject.

"In 1796, Mr. Thomas Eddy, one of the most efficient members of the Western Navigation Company, accompanied by Mr. Weston, a distinguished engineer, explored the country from the Mohawk, to the Seneca River, under the direction of General Schuyler, the president of the association, for the purpose of laying out the track of a direct canal to connect those rivers, as

well to avoid the intricate navigation of Wood Creek, as the dangerous passage for loaded boats across the Oneida lake. They reported in favour of the plan, but no attempt was made to carry it into effect. In this incipient measure, we distinctly perceive an additional stride towards the Great Erie Canal.

"Recent inquiries have also enabled me to state, that Gen. Philip Schuyler, whose name is already identified with the system of inland navigation, proposed by the act of 1792, conceived, as early as the year 1797 or 1798, the design of extending that system to Lake Erie. The intelligence and patriotism of that great man have received from Colonel Troup an animated but merited encomium; and I am happy to furnish new evidence of both, by announcing him as probably the first individual who conceived the splendid project of uniting by a direct canal, the waters of Lake Erie with those of the Mohawk and Hudson.

"The evidence upon which this opinion is founded, and which has never been laid before the public, will be found in the appendix.* The name of

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* The evidence, referred to above, is contained in the following paragraph, from a letter of Major James Cochran, addressed to Moses I. Cantine, dated Utica, Feb. 10, 1822.

"In the year 1797, I was frequently at the Little Falls, where I saw General Philip Schuyler, and Mr. Weston the engineer. I staid at the same house with them at that place for six or seven days together, and heard almost every day conversations between them on the subject of internal navigation. Their views went far beyond the projects then authorised by law: they frequently talked of water communications, by means of canals, as far as Lake Erie, keeping the interior, so as to avoid the Niagara Falls, provided the face of the country would admit of a different route. Good policy, as it respected our contiguity to the Canadas, as well as the principles of canalling, so well understood, and the benefits arising from it, forbade the route by the way of Lake Ontario. But they considered the period remote, when this great system of canalling was to be adopted. At the time I speak of, it was supposed that neither the infant state of the country, nor public opinion, would allow of any other steps towards internal improvements, than those already sanctioned by law. Their whole views were therefore bent on perfecting the navigation from the Hudson to the Seneca Lake, and the harbour of Oswego, in conformity to the law of 1792."

Schuyler is dear to the people of this state, and I doubt not they will cheerfully award to his memory the honour it deserves.

"Gouverneur Morris has also been supposed to have alluded to this project, in a letter to a friend in Europe, written in the year 1800, but published since his death, in which he says—'That one-tenth of the expense borne by Britain in the last campaign, would enable ships to sail from London through the Hudson River into Lake Erie.'

"If Mr. Morris contemplated in this passage, a canal from Lake Erie on the present system, it is highly probable, from the intimacy which existed between him and General Schuyler, that the idea was communicated to him by the latter.

"It is supposed by others, that he intended a communication between Lake Erie and the Hudson, by what is usually called the 'Ontario route,' to be effected by a canal and locks around the falls of Niagara, by navigating Lake Ontario to Oswego harbour, and from thence, pursuing the plan of Mr. Watson, as adopted by the legislature in March 1792. Perhaps such may have been his meaning, for in the year 1798, a law had been passed authorising the construction of a canal around the falls of Niagara, for the express purpose of connecting the vast chain of upper lakes, with Ontario and the Hudson, via Oswego and the improved navigation."

With the hope, if possible, of settling the question with regard to Mr. Morris's views on this subject, I addressed a letter to Mr. James Geddes now residing in the county of Onondago, to Mr. Charles C. Brodhead of Utica, and to Mr. Benjamin Wright, who have all been actively and extensively employed in their professional capacity, as surveyors and engineers. The following extracts are from the communications I have received from those respectable sources of information.

Extract of a letter from James Geddes, dated January 17, 1829.

Dear Sir,

I must say, that I never had the idea cross my mind of passing a canal over the country to Lake Erie, regardless of the ready made navigation of Lake Ontario, until I received it from the surveyor general in 1804, as communicated to him by Gouverneur Morris. The impression made on my mind was vivid ; the saving of so much lockage struck me as a grand desideratum. I had then been ten years in this country, a wilderness at that time, but partially penetrated, had a knowledge of the chain of swamps, which stretch across the country from Montezuma to the Mohawk River, and readily entertained some idea of the practicability of the project. Four years afterwards, I found the continuance westward of the above singular formation through the long swamp between the Seneca River waters and those of the Irondequot, and had in 1808 all doubts removed as to the practicability of the plan suggested. Yes, sir, more than twenty years ago, I became acquainted with nearly all the prominent features of the internal direct course to Erie.

In my report made to the surveyor general, January 20th, 1809, you will find, Vol. I. p. 32d of the Official History, &c. anticipations as follows :—As to farther particulars respecting the interior route, it would be important to know, whether there is not some place in the ridge which bounds the Tonawanta valley on the north, as low as the level of Lake Erie, where a canal might be led across. A place so low has not been found, but it has been made so.

I consider it, sir, amongst the fortunate occurrences of my life, that after having received the idea of such a project, I was enabled fully to test its practicability. It was a piece of good fortune, for which I feel grateful to him, that I was employed by the surveyor general to make the surveys. And I have been alike fortunate in enjoying the confidence of the several legislatures, who have passed important laws relative to the Erie Canal, during the eleven years in which I was the only engineer, who had ever seen or given any account of the western section. In February 1820, the report of Canvass White, Esq. is mentioned as his first entrance on the western section.

Between the years 1804 and 1808, when my neighbour, Judge Forman, brought forward his resolutions in the legislature, I had often conversed on the subject of the canal to Lake Erie, with him and other gentlemen who had a relish for such speculative inquiries, and have not the least doubt, that the ideas of every one on the internal route, are traceable to the conversations in 1803, between Messrs. De Witt and Morris. In Mr. De Witt's letter to Mr. Darby, he says, "I related it on several occasions."

I have the most perfect recollection of circumstances, time and place, when I informed Mr. Jesse Hawley of the project. It was at Geneva, the winter before he wrote his essays. I had a few days before seen a map of the country west of the Genesee River, from which I had received some new ideas as to the probable track of such a canal, and finding in him a taste for such disquisitions, I conversed at length with him on the subject, and have no doubt but that I then informed him that the idea came from Mr. Morris.

I had great opportunities of being acquainted with Mr. Morris's canal notions; and he seemed to have caught much of that spirit of the celebrated Brindley, who would make tunnels, high embankments, almost any thing to avoid lockage. This great desire to lessen lockage, probably suggested the idea of passing across the country south of Lake Ontario, and thus avoiding all the locks required to descend to Lake Ontario, and rise again to the Utica level; for such was his ignorance of the country to be passed, and his pertinacity was such, that it was almost impossible to call his attention to the impracticability of such a thing.

Forty-five feet that Seneca River lies below the Utica level, makes ninety feet of lockage that could not be avoided; but the thirty-four feet of lockage made by the alteration of 1818, from the first map that had been made, was not necessary.

Very respectfully, I am, Sir,

Your most obedient servant,

JAMES GEDDES.

To Dr. David Hosack.

Letter from Mr. Charles C. Brodhead.

UTICA, February 1st, 1829.

DEAR SIR,

I have this moment received yours of the 26th ult. relative to the Erie Canal; and in reply, can only say, that I do not recollect that I ever saw my name in any pamphlet published, though I had seen a publication in the American, stating Gouverneur Morris's views of a project of a canal, as said to have been related by me, and which I was afterwards informed, by some one, had been taken from a pamphlet published in New-Jersey. If this is what you allude to, I have no hesitation in saying, that the account given of the conversation with Mr. Morris, as stated in that paper, is in many important particulars, incorrect, and does not convey my views in relation to the subject. It is some time since I have seen this publication, and cannot now lay my hands on it, so as to refresh my memory, but I well recollect the impression it made on my mind at the time. And will therefore give you as brief a statement as possible, of what I consider to be the facts, in relation to Mr. Morris's views, as conveyed to me at the time.

In the year 1802 or 3, I met Mr. Morris at Rome, and had a conversation with him on the subject of canals. He had just then ascended the Mohawk, in a boat on a tour to the St. Lawrence, by the way of Oswego, and inquired very particularly of me as to the situation and soil of the land, along the Oneida Lake and the banks of the Oneida and Oswego Rivers, and the country lying between the Oneida and Ontario Lakes. And if I mistake not, he spoke of the waters of the Salmon River, and Bruce's Creek, so called; the former empties into Lake Ontario, and the latter into Oneida Lake. I do not recollect that Lake Erie was mentioned in this conversation, and it is my impression that it was not, though it might have been and forgotten by me. After answering Mr. Morris's inquiries, as far as I was able, he declared he would give five hundred dollars to be a member of the legislature that year, that he might get a law passed for a canal from the Hudson River, and I think I cannot be mistaken, when I say, to Lake Ontario. Much might be said, and

many anecdotes told, were it necessary to show Mr. Morris's zeal and views on this subject; but more is not thought necessary. Whatever Mr. Morris's views might have been subsequent to this period, I cannot say, nor do I know who is entitled to the credit, of first suggesting the project of carrying the canal direct to Lake Erie, nor would I hazard an opinion at this time.

I am, respectfully, your obedient servant,

CHARLES C. BRODHEAD.

To Dr. David Hosack.

P. S. I remember to have had a conversation with Mr. R. at Utica, on the subject of the canal, when we spoke of Mr. Morris, and the splendid schemes proposed by him. But I never intended to convey any other idea to him, or any one else, of Mr. Morris's views to me, than those above alluded to, and which I have in substance stated.—C. C. B.

Letter from Judge Wright.

New-York, Jan. 3, 1829.

Dear Sir,

Your favour of yesterday is before me. In this you request me to give you all the information I have as to the early views and suggestions of the late Gouverneur Morris, relative to the improvement of the interior of this state by water communication.

I can only give you what were the rumours of the time, and reported as the remarks of Mr. Morris. These conversations or observations were made by Mr. Morris about the year 1800, and soon after that period, and they all tend to show that Mr. Morris looked only to canalling along the valleys of the natural water-courses to Lake Ontario, and then connecting Lake Ontario and Lake Erie by improvements around Niagara Falls, as contemplated by the act of 1798.

I cannot say that Mr. Morris did not concur in the project of a canal through the interior without touching Lake Ontario, but I feel very confident

he had no local knowledge of the formation of the country at that day.—Neither do I believe he gained any knowledge of the peculiar formation of that part of the state, until after the surveys made by direction of the state in 1808—9.

A friend of mine, now no more, told me he heard Mr. M. observe at an early day, (say about 1800,) that a sloop navigation ought to be made from the Hudson to the lakes; and when asked where the labour to execute such a work could be had, he replied, that we ought to bring over thousands of German Redemptioners for that purpose.

Taking this remark of a sloop navigation, and then looking at the map of the state, where we see that Oswego on Lake Ontario is almost equi-distant between Niagara and Albany, and then bear in mind that Lake Ontario is good sloop or ship navigation, and that all intelligent men at an early day looked that way as the natural route for improvement, as is evident by Mr. Gallatin's Report to Congress in 1807, the inference is strong that these were Mr. Morris's views until he visited the country as canal commissioner, in 1810: he then took a different view of the whole subject.

I could relate other remarks made by Mr. Morris, which would corroborate these impressions, but do not think them important at this time.

The late Mr. Morris, with his gigantic mind and extensive views of things, had no doubt many vast, but crude and indefinite ideas of great future improvements in this country. Yet with all his great mind, his projects were of little benefit to the world without being submitted to the test and scrutiny of sound practical minds, to decide upon what was capable of being performed with reasonable feasibility, as to means and future usefulness and profit. The time I hope is rapidly approaching, when sound practical knowledge and judgment, in comparing utility and advantages with expense of execution in great plans, will be better understood and appreciated, and more in fashion than heretofore.

With great respect and esteem, I am, dear sir,

Your obedient servant,

BENJAMIN WRIGHT.

To David Hosack, M.D.

The views thus expressed by Mr. Brodhead and Judge Wright, appear to be corroborated by Mr. Morris himself, in the following correspondence with General Lee.

Extract of a Letter from General Lee to Gouverneur Morris, Esq.

"January 16, 1801.

"DEAR SIR,

"In our late conversation respecting the western country, I could not but be impressed with your observations on the policy of strengthening the ties which hold us together, by opening a convenient access to the Atlantic from the lakes and the Ohio, through the Hudson and Potomac rivers; will you do me the favour to commit to paper your ideas in full, that we may, if practicable, bring the nation to adopt and cherish a scheme, pregnant with a long train of consequences, benign and useful."

Extract of a Letter in reply to the above by Gouverneur Morris. Esq. to General Lee.

"WASHINGTON CITY, Jan. 22, 1801.

"DEAR SIR,

"In compliance with the wish you did me the honour to express in your letter of the 16th, I will sketch out a general idea of what has occurred to my observation and reflection, respecting the commerce of our interior country, the political consequences which may result from it, and the means we possess of rendering that commerce, and those means, favourable to our government and propitious to our future prosperity."

"The rivers of the United States falling south-eastward into the Atlantic, furnish a means of transportation less interrupted by the frost than the St. Lawrence, and more commodious than the Mississippi."

"As far as I can judge from observation and information, the communication *between Lake Ontario and the Hudson* is not only practicable, but easy, though expensive."

Upon this last letter of Mr. Morris, Mr. Thomas Eddy makes the following remarks.

"Previous to this, say in 1797, a canal from Wood Creek to the Mohawk was completed by the Western Canal Company, under the direction of Mr. Weston, so that Mr. M. supposes a communication *might* be made, which, in fact, *was* done *four years* previous. But it should be well observed, Mr. M. only contemplates the practicability of a communication from Lake Ontario to the Hudson—not a word of one continued canal from Lake Erie to the Hudson."

"The character of Mr. M. is well known. His talents were of the most brilliant kind: he had seen much of the world, and it is seldom we meet with a man of more universal knowledge of mankind. He was, during the trying period of the Revolution, warmly attached to the great cause his country was then engaged in. When speaking of Mr. M. we therefore do not wish to depreciate his general character; with all the greatness of mind he possessed, he was in many of his opinions at times visionary—he was not a practical man. Although no one of the commissioners were more ardent in promoting the object of connecting the waters of Lake Erie and the Hudson, yet it is a fact that Mr. M. in some respects injured the undertaking—or, in other words, was the means of preventing the legislature engaging in the project so soon as they otherwise would have done. The first Report was drawn (as Mr. M.'s friends state,) by him. The subject being new, and the commissioners diffident of their own judgment, vested much confidence in the opinions of Mr. Morris, and signed that Report unadvisedly, and without proper care and deliberation, believing that he knew much more than he really did, and distrusting, perhaps too scrupulously, their own judgment, they signed, and thereby sanctioned that Report. In it Mr. M. gave scope to his fancy, and proposed the project of a canal on an *inclined plane* from Erie to the Hudson. When this Report was printed, and read by sensible men throughout the Union, they were disappointed, and condemned it on account of the proposed plan of an inclined plane canal. The rare project of a canal on so extensive a scale, connected with the idea proposed of the inclined plane, caused much opposition

to the whole undertaking.—The second Report was also from the pen of Mr. M. but in this, as the other commissioners had gained some more experience on the subject generally, more care was taken, and the errors contained in the first Report avoided. After the second Report was presented, the legislature passed an act, giving authority to the commissioners to borrow, on the credit of the state, five millions of dollars. Mr. M. proposed to borrow this money in Europe, and after considerable deliberation, this was agreed to by the other commissioners. Mr. M. drafted letters to a person in Paris, whom he proposed should be appointed agent to obtain the loan. In these letters Mr. M. directed the agent to receive the money, and proposed that the commissioners would draw on him for the whole amount. This scheme was objected to by the other commissioners, and Mr. Clinton called on Chancellor Livingston, Mr. De Witt, and Mr. Eddy, and stated to them that it would be proper for them to state to Mr. M. explicitly, that they would not on any account consent that the agent should pledge the state, until the money should first be paid the commissioners in New-York. Mr. M. was exceedingly offended that his proposal should be rejected, and at length was obliged to comply with the mode proposed by the other commissioners, viz. that the money should first be paid in New-York, before the state should be pledged to redeem the loan.—Mr. M. was much chagrined. If, as he proposed, the agent should have received the money in Paris, and he, the agent have died, or any other accident happened, the state might have lost the whole of this money. This anecdote serves to show the ardent character of Mr. M.—When the third Report was to be drafted, Mr. M. was chairman of the committee, and undertook the drafting of it. Mr. M. addressed a letter to the commissioners then in New-York, Messrs. Van Rensselaer, North, and Eddy, informing them that it was ready, and wished them to come out to Morrisania. The roads were so extremely bad that they were prevented from going out; they sent a messenger and requested the Report might be sent to them, and stated if it met their approbation, they would send it to Mr. Clinton then at Albany, to be presented by him to the legislature. The draft as drawn by Mr. Morris was sent to them, but on examining it, they could not unite with Mr. M. in some parts of it, and returned it with respectful observations proposing amendments, &c. Mr. M. on this wrote the

note dated March 9, 1816, which is inserted in the American of April 7, 1819; on this the commissioners in New-York (Van Rensselaer, North, and Eddy,) drafted a Report and sent it to Mr. Clinton and Mr. De Witt at Albany, which with some alterations by the latter gentleman was presented, but Mr. M. did not sign it.—On the whole, Mr. M. certainly, (as has been shown,) prevented the legislature adopting the plan prior to 1816. On December 3d, that year, a large meeting of citizens was convened at the City Hotel, and addressed by Judge Platt, Mr. Clinton, and others. A committee (Messrs. Clinton, Swarthout and Eddy,) were appointed to draft an Address to the legislature. This Address was written by Mr. Clinton, and signed by a very large portion of citizens. The address contained by far the most clear view of the subject relating to the practicability of making the canal, its advantages, &c. &c. of any of the reports made by the commissioners. It contains so much useful matter, that it is presumed it will at this day be an acceptable document to lay before the public."—*Thomas Eddy's Manuscripts.*

Such are the statements I have been enabled to obtain relative to the claims of Mr. Morris. I should have been gratified, by having had access to his private papers, to have found them containing less equivocal evidences of the originality of his suggestion of the course to Erie by the interior route, than those which are adduced.

NOTE P.—p. 92.

Views of General Washington relative to the inland navigation of the United States.

Chief Justice Marshall, noticing the views of General Washington relative to the inland navigation of this country, thus observes:*

Life of General Washington, Vol. V. p. 9.

"The multiplicity of private avocations could not entirely withdraw the mind of Washington from objects tending to promote and secure the public happiness. Though his resolution never again to appear in the busy scenes of political life was believed by himself, and by his bosom friends to be unalterable, it was impossible that he should become regardless of those measures which must inevitably produce consequences infinitely interesting to his country.

"To a person looking beyond the present moment, and taking the future into view, it was only necessary to glance over the map of the United States, to be impressed with the incalculable importance of connecting the western with the eastern territory, by facilitating the means of intercourse between them. To this subject, the attention of General Washington had been in some measure directed in the early part of his life. While the American states were yet British colonies, he had obtained the passage of a bill empowering those individuals who would engage in the work, to open the Potomac so as to render it navigable from tide water to Wills Creek, a distance of about one hundred and fifty miles. The river James had also been comprehended in this plan; and he had triumphed so far over the opposition produced by local interests and prejudices, that the business was in a train which promised success, when the revolutionary war diverted the attention of its patrons, and of all America, from internal improvements to the great objects of liberty and independence. As that war approached its termination, subjects which for a time had yielded their pretensions to consideration, reclaimed that place to which their real magnitude entitled them; and the internal navigation again attracted the attention of the wise and thinking part of society. Accustomed to contemplate America as his country, and to consider with solicitude the interests of the whole, Washington now took a more enlarged view of the advantages to be derived from opening both the eastern and western waters; and for this, as well as for other purposes, after peace had been proclaimed, he traversed the western parts of New-England and New-York. 'I have lately,' said he, in a letter to the marquis of Chastellux, a foreigner, who was in pursuit of literary as well as of military fame, 'made a tour through the Lakes George and Champlain, as far as Crown Point; then re-

turning to Schenectady, I proceeded up the Mohawk River to Fort Schuyler, crossed over to Wood Creek which empties into the Oneida Lake, and affords the water communication with Ontario. I then traversed the country to the head of the eastern branch of the Susquehanna, and viewed Lake Oswego, and the portage between that lake and the Mohawk River at Canajoharie. Prompted by these actual observations, I could not help taking a more contemplative and extensive view of the vast inland navigation of these United States, and could not but be struck with the immense diffusion and importance of it; and with the goodness of that Providence which has dealt his favours to us with so profuse a hand. Would to God we may have wisdom enough to improve them. I shall not rest contented until I have explored the western country, and traversed those lines (or great part of them) which have given bounds to a new empire.'

"Scarcely had he answered those spontaneous offerings of the heart, which, on retiring from the head of the army, flowed in upon him from every part of a grateful nation, when his views were once more seriously turned to this truly interesting subject. Its magnitude was also impressed on others; and the value of obtaining the aid which his influence and active interference would afford to any exertions for giving this direction to the public mind, and for securing the happy execution of the plan which might be devised, was perceived by all those who attached to the great work a sufficient degree of importance, and who were anxious for its success. In a letter from a gentleman, (Mr. Jefferson) who had taken an expanded view of the subject, who felt an ardent wish for its accomplishment, and who relied on funds to be advanced by the public for its execution, a detailed statement of his ideas was thus concluded.

"'But a most powerful objection always arises to propositions of this kind. It is, that public undertakings are carelessly managed, and much money spent to little purpose. To obviate this objection is the purpose of my giving you the trouble of this discussion. You have retired from public life. You have weighed this determination, and it would be impertinence in me to touch it. But would the superintendence of this work break in too much on the sweets of retirement and repose? If they would, I stop here. Your future time

and wishes are sacred in my eye. If it would be only a dignified amusement to you, what a monument of your retirement would it be! It is one which would follow that of your public life, and bespeak it the work of the same great hand. I am confident that would you either alone, or jointly with any persons you think proper, be willing to direct this business, it would remove the only objection, the weight of which I apprehend.'

"In the beginning of the autumn of 1784, General Washington made a tour as far west as Pittsburgh; after returning from which, his first moments of leisure were devoted to the task of engaging his countrymen in a work which appeared to him to merit still more attention from its political, than from its commercial influence on the union. In a long and interesting letter to Mr. Harrison, then Governor of Virginia, he detailed the advantages which might be derived from opening the great rivers, the Potomac and the James, as high as should be practicable. After stating with his accustomed exactness the distances, and the difficulties to be surmounted in bringing the trade of the west to different points on the Atlantic, he expressed unequivocally the opinion, that the rivers of Virginia afforded a more convenient, and a more direct course than could be found elsewhere, for that rich and increasing commerce. This was strongly urged as a motive for immediately commencing the work. But the rivers of the Atlantic constituted only a part of the great plan he contemplated. He suggested the appointment of commissioners of integrity and abilities, exempt from the suspicion of prejudice, whose duty it should be, after an accurate examination of the James and the Potomac, to search out the nearest and best portages between those waters and the streams capable of improvement, which run into the Ohio. Those streams were to be accurately surveyed, the impediments to their navigation ascertained, and their relative advantages examined. The navigable waters west of the Ohio, towards the great lakes, were also to be traced to their sources, and those which empty into the lakes to be followed to their mouths. 'These things being done, and an accurate map of the whole presented to the public, he was persuaded that reason would dictate what was right and proper.' For the execution of this latter part of his plan he had also much reliance on congress; and in addition to the general advantages to be drawn from the

measure, he laboured, in his letters to the members of that body, to establish the opinion, that the surveys he recommended would add to the revenue, by enhancing the value of the lands offered for sale. 'Nature,' he said, 'had made such an ample display of her bounties in those regions, that the more the country was explored, the more it would rise in estimation.'

"The assent and co-operation of Maryland being indispensable to the improvement of the Potomac, he was equally earnest in his endeavours to impress a conviction of its superior advantages on influential individuals in that state. In doing so, he detailed the measures which would unquestionably be adopted by New-York and Pennsylvania, for acquiring the monopoly of the western commerce, and the difficulty which would be found in diverting it from the channel it had once taken. 'I am not,' he added, 'for discouraging the exertions of any state to draw the commerce of the western country to its sea ports. The more communications we open to it, the closer we bind that rising world, for indeed it may be so called, to our interests, and the greater strength shall we acquire by it. Those to whom nature affords the best communication, will, if they are wise, enjoy the greatest share of the trade. All I would be understood to mean, therefore, is, that the gifts of Providence may not be neglected.'

"But the light in which this subject would be viewed with most interest, and which gave to it most importance, was its political influence on the union. 'I need not remark to you, sir,' said he in his letter to the Governor of Virginia, 'that the flanks and rear of the United States are possessed by other powers, and formidable ones too: nor need I press the necessity of applying the cement of interest to bind all parts of the union together by indissoluble bonds, especially of binding that part of it which lies immediately west of us, to the middle states. For what ties, let me ask, should we have upon those people, how entirely unconnected with them shall we be, and what troubles may we not apprehend, if the Spaniards on their right, and Great Britain on their left, instead of throwing impediments in their way as they now do, should hold out lures for their trade and alliance? when they get strength, which will be sooner than most people conceive, what will be the consequence of

their having formed close commercial connexions with both, or either of those powers? it needs not, in my opinion, the gift of prophecy to foretell.

"'The western settlers, I speak now from my own observations, stand as it were, upon a pivot. The touch of a feather would turn them any way. Until the Spaniards, very unwisely as I think, threw difficulties in their way, they looked down the Mississippi; and they looked that way for no other reason than because they could glide gently down the stream; without considering, perhaps, the fatigues of the voyage back again, and the time necessary for its performance; and because they have no other means of coming to us but by a long land transportation through unimproved roads.' Letters of the same import were also addressed to the Governor of Maryland, and to other gentlemen in that state. To a member of the national legislature, he observed, 'there is a matter which, though it does not come before congress wholly, is in my opinion of great political importance, and ought to be attended to in time. It is to prevent the trade of the western territory from settling in the hands either of the Spaniards or British. If either of these happen, there is a line of separation drawn between the eastern and western country at once, the consequences of which may be fatal. To tell any man of information how fast the latter is settling, how much more rapidly it will settle by means of foreign emigrants who can have no particular predilection for us, of the vast fertility of the soil, of the population to which the country is competent, would be unnecessary; and equally unnecessary would it be to observe, that it is by the cement of interest alone we can be held together. If then the trade of that country should flow through the Mississippi or the St. Lawrence; if the inhabitants thereof should form commercial connexions, which we know lead to intercourses of other kinds, they would in a few years be as unconnected with us, as are those of South America.

"'It may be asked how are we to prevent this? Happily for us the way is plain. Our immediate interests, as well as remote political advantages, point to it; whilst a combination of circumstances render the present time more favourable than any other to accomplish it. Extend the inland navigation of the eastern waters; communicate them as near as possible with those which

run westward; open these to the Ohio; open also such as extend from the Ohio towards Lake Erie; and we shall not only draw the produce of the western settlers, but the peltry and fur trade of the lakes also, to our ports: thus adding an immense increase to our exports, and binding those people to us by a chain which never can be broken.'

"The letter to the Governor was communicated to the assembly of Virginia, and the internal improvements it recommended were zealously advocated by the wisest and most influential members of that body. While the subject remained undecided, Gen. Washington, accompanied by the Marquis de La Fayette, who had crossed the Atlantic, and had devoted a part of his time to the delights of an enthusiastic friendship, paid a visit to the capital of the state. Never was reception more cordial, or more demonstrative of respect and affection, than was given to these beloved personages. But amidst the display of addresses and of entertainments which were produced by the occasion, the great business of promoting the internal improvements then in contemplation, was not forgotten; and the ardor of the moment was seized to conquer those objections to the plan, which yet lingered in the bosoms of those who could perceive in it no future advantages to compensate for the present expense.

"An exact conformity between the acts of Virginia and of Maryland, being indispensable to the improvement of the Potomac, the friends of the measure deemed it advisable to avail themselves of the same influence with the latter state, which had been successfully employed with the former; and a resolution was passed, soon after the return of General Washington to Mount Vernon, requesting him to attend the legislature of Maryland, in order to agree on a bill which might receive the sanction of both states. This agreement being happily completed, the bills were enacted under which, works, capable of being rendered the most extensively beneficial of any thing yet attempted in the United States, have been nearly accomplished.

"'Not content then, continues General Washington, with the bare consciousness of my having in all this navigation business, acted upon the clearest conviction of the political importance of the measure, I would wish that every individual who may hear that it was a favourite plan of mine, may know also, that I had no other motive for promoting it, than the advantage

of which I conceived it would be productive to the union at large, and to this state in particular, by cementing the eastern and western territory together, at the same time that it will give vigour and increase to our commerce and be a convenience to our citizens.' "

NOTE Q.—p. 92.

The services of Christopher Colles and of Jeffrey Smith.

The following observations, taken from a publication entitled "The Canal Policy of the State of New-York," by Tacitus, generally believed to have been published under the superintendence of Governor Clinton, contains a succinct view of the plans of improvement proposed by Mr. Colles, and of the spirit and enterprise with which they were urged as early as the year 1784.

"The utility of canals to supersede the portages on the Mohawk and Oswego rivers, and to unite the Mohawk River and Wood Creek, must have been obvious to every traveller. During what was called the French war, this route was of course the thoroughfare to the military posts on Lake Ontario—and Oswego and Niagara were the great seats of the fur trade, in times of peace as well as of war. Carver,* who travelled through the western country in the summer of 1766, says, 'the Oneida Lake, situated near the head of the river Oswego, receives the waters of Wood Creek, which takes its rise not far from the Mohawk River. These two lie so adjacent to each other, that a junction is effected by sluices at Fort Stanwix.' Thus we see at that early period, that an artificial water-communication was made between those streams at Rome, and in times of high flood, there is no doubt but that boats frequently passed from the one to the other.

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* See Carver's Travels, page 79.

"Mr. Christopher Colles, a native of Ireland, who settled in New-York, and who had, before the revolutionary war, proposed a plan for supplying that city with good water, was the first person who suggested to the government of the state, the canals and improvements on the Ontario route. Colles was a man of good character, an ingenious mechanician, and well skilled in the mathematics. Unfortunately for him, and perhaps for the public, he was generally considered a visionary projector, and his plans were sometimes treated with ridicule, and frequently viewed with distrust.

"In the session of the legislature of 1784,* he presented a memorial, and on the 6th of November in that year, Mr. Adgate, from the committee to whom was referred the memorial of Christopher Colles, proposing some interesting improvements in inland navigation, reported—'That it is the opinion of the committee, that the laudable proposals of Mr. Colles for removing the obstructions in the Mohawk River, so that boats of burthen may pass the same, merit the encouragement of the public; but that it would be inexpedient for the legislature to cause that business to be undertaken at the public expense. That as the performing such a work will be very expensive, it is therefore the opinion of the committee, that if Mr. Colles, with a number of adventurers, (as by him proposed,) should undertake it, they ought to be encouraged by a law, giving and securing unto them, their heirs and assigns for ever, the profits that may arise from transportation, under such restrictions and regulations, as shall appear to the legislature necessary for that purpose; and authorising them to execute that work through any lands or improvements, on payment of the damages to the proprietors, as the same shall be assessed by a jury;' and it appears that this report was sanctioned by the house.

"At the next meeting of the legislature, Mr. Colles again presented a memorial, and on the fifth of April, 1785, a favourable report was made by the committee to whom it was referred; and one hundred and twenty-five dollars was appropriated in the supply bill 'for the purpose of enabling him to make

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* See Memorials of Assembly for that year.

an essay towards removing certain obstructions in the Mohawk River, and to exhibit a plan thereof to the legislature at their next meeting.

"In pursuance of this arrangement, Mr. Colles visited the country to be affected by the intended improvements, and took an actual survey of the principal obstructions upon the Mohawk River as far as Wood Creek. The results of this journey of observation and survey, were published by him in a pamphlet, entitled 'Proposals for the speedy settlement of the waste and unappropriated lands on the western frontier of the state of New-York, and for the improvement of the inland navigation between Albany and Oswego. Printed at New-York, by Samuel Loudon, 1785.'

In this pamphlet Mr. Colles enters into certain calculations illustrative of his proposed design. He observes—

"'From the foregoing views, the importance of the proposed design will appear sufficiently evident. By this, the internal trade will be increased —by this also the foreign trade will be promoted—by this, the country will be settled—by this, the frontiers will be secured—by this, a variety of articles, as masts, yards, and ship timber may be brought to New-York, which will not bear the expense of land carriage, and which, notwithstanding, will be a considerable remittance to Europe. By this, in time of war, provisions and military stores may be moved with facility in sufficient quantity to answer any emergency; and by this, in time of peace, all the necessaries, conveniences, and if we please, the luxuries of life may be distributed to the remotest parts of the great lakes which so beautifully diversify the face of this extensive continent, and to the smallest branches of the numerous rivers which shoot from these lakes upon every point of the compass.

"'Providence, indeed, appears to favour this design; for the Alleghany mountains, which pass through all the states, seem to die away as they approach the Mohawk River; and the ground, between the upper part of this river and Wood Creek, is perfectly level, as if designedly to permit us to pass through this channel into this extensive inland country.

"'The amazing extent of the five great lakes, to which the proposed navigation will communicate, will be found to have five times as much coast as

all England; and the country watered by the numerous rivers which fall into these lakes, full seven or eight times as great as that valuable island. If the fertility of the soil be the object of our attention, we will find it at an average equal to Britain. Of late years, the policy of that island has been to promote inland navigation; and the advantages, gained both by the public and individuals, have been attended with such happy consequences, that it is intersected in all manner of directions, by these valuable water-ways, by which the inhabitants receive reciprocally the comforts of the respective productions, whether flowing from the bounty of Providence, or the effects of industry; and by an exchange of commodities, render partial and particular improvements the source of universal abundance.'

"At the next session Mr. Colles renewed his application, and on the 8th of March, 1786, a committee reported favourably on a memorial of Christopher Colles and his associates, and leave was given to bring in a bill to compensate them for the purposes specified in that memorial.

"It does not appear that any further steps were taken on the part of Mr. Colles. His operations probably failed for the want of subscribers to the contemplated association. It is not a little remarkable, that this project commenced so soon after the termination of the revolutionary war, and that contemporaneous efforts were made in some of the southern states."

Notwithstanding what has been said in the preceding pages of the suggestions made by General Schuyler in 1797, and by Gouverneur Morris in 1800, relative to the extension of the navigation to Lake Erie, the ensuing extracts from the journals of the legislature, as early as 1786, show that Mr. Jeffrey Smith, and probably Christopher Colles, must have preceded them in this view of the measure.

*Extracts from the Journals of the Assembly of the State of New-York.**

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY, *Friday, March* 17, 1786.

Mr. Jeffrey Smith moved for leave to bring in a bill, entitled, "An act for improving the navigation of the Mohawk River, Wood Creek, and the Onondaga river, with a view of opening an inland navigation to Oswego, and for *extending the same, if practicable, to Lake Erie.*"

Ordered,—That leave be given accordingly.

Mr. Jeffrey Smith accordingly brought in the said bill, which was read the first time, and ordered a second reading.

Saturday, March 25, 1786.—Mr. N. Smith, from the committee of the whole house, on the bill, entitled, "An act for improving the navigation of the Mohawk River, Wood Creek, and the Onondaga River, with a view of opening an inland navigation to Oswego, and for extending the same, if practicable, to Lake Erie," reported, that the committee have made some progress therein, and have directed him to move for leave to sit again.

Ordered,—That the said committee have leave to sit again.

Wednesday, March 29, 1786.—Mr. Brinckerhoff, on behalf of Mr. N. Smith, from the committee of the whole house, on the bill entitled, "An act for improving the navigation of the Mohawk River, Wood Creek, and the Onondaga River, with a view of opening an inland navigation to Oswego, and for extending the same, if practicable, to Lake Erie," reported that the committee

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* To Colonel Troup, who was a member of the Assembly in that year, viz. 1786, I am indebted for reference to this source of information. In a letter from Colonel Troup he also observes—"That on reviewing the journals of the Assembly, he finds that on the 1st February, 1786, 'A petition from Christopher Colles, with a report of the practicability of rendering the Mohawk River navigable, was referred to Jeffrey Smith and others,' and adds, "that it is therefore very possible that Mr. Colles may have furnished Mr. Smith with the idea of extending the navigation to Lake Erie."

had made some progress therein, and had directed him to move for leave to sit again.

Ordered,—That the said committee have leave to sit again.

Tuesday, April 4, 1786.—Mr. Malcolm, as a farther amendment to a motion for referring some other subjects to a committee of the whole, made a motion that the house should resolve itself into a committee of the whole, on the bill, entitled, "An Act for improving the navigation of the Mohawk River, Wood Creek, and the Onondaga River, with a view of opening an inland navigation to Oswego, and for extending the same, if practicable, to Lake Erie."

The question having been put on the last mentioned motion, it passed in the negative.

Wednesday, April 5, 1786.—Mr. N. Smith, from the committee of the whole, on the bill, entitled, "An act for improving the navigation of the Mohawk River, Wood Creek, and the Onondaga River, with a view of opening an inland navigation to Oswego, and for extending the same, if practicable to Lake Erie," reported, that the committee had made further progress therein, and had directed him to move for leave to sit again.

Ordered,—That the said committee have leave to sit again; but the session was closed without the further re-consideration of that subject.

NOTE R.—p. 92.

Gov. George Clinton, in the war of 1756, having been a subaltern officer in the enterprise against Fort Frontinac (now Kingston) and Niagara, where Col. Prideaux was killed by the bursting of a cohorn during the siege of that fort, must necessarily have led him to a familiar acquaintance with the water-courses of that country, and to the anticipations he has expressed in the communications referred to: he accordingly, very early after the revolution, urged

upon the legislature the importance of improving the means of communication with the western parts of this state.

In his speech delivered in January, 1791, among other subjects of interest he observes—

"As our frontier settlements, freed from apprehensions of danger, are rapidly increasing, and must soon yield extensive resources for profitable commerce, this consideration forcibly recommends the policy of continuing to facilitate the means of communication with them, as well to strengthen the bands of society, as to prevent the produce of those fertile districts passing to other markets." On this part of the speech a joint committee of both houses was appointed "to examine what obstructions in the Hudson and Mohawk rivers will be proper to be removed; and to report thereon, with their opinion of the most eligible mode of effecting and defraying the expense thereof."—Shortly afterwards the committee reported it as their opinion, "That the commissioners of the land office should be authorized to make and offer proposals to such persons, or association of persons, as will contract to open a water communication between the Mohawk River and Wood Creek; with power to grant such person or persons an exclusive right to the profits of a reasonable toll on the canal, when so opened, for a limited term of years."* Pursuant to the report, a bill entitled "An act for opening communications between Wood Creek and the Mohawk River, and between Lake Champlain and Hudson's River, and for removing obstructions in the Hudson and Mohawk rivers, was brought into the House of Assembly; and it became a law in March 1791, under the title of "An act concerning roads and inland navigation, and for other purposes." By the third section of this law the commissioners of the land office were authorised "to cause to be explored, and the necessary survey made, between the Mohawk River, at or near Fort Stanwix, and the Wood Creek, in the county of Herkimer; and also, between the Hudson River, and the Wood Creek in the county of Washington; and to cause an estimate to be made of the probable expense that would attend the mak-

* See Journals of the Legislature.

ing of canals sufficient for loaded boats to pass, and to report the same to the legislature at their next meeting:" and the section likewise authorized the treasurer to pay the commissioners a sum not exceeding two hundred and fifty dollars, for defraying the expense of the service.

The commissioners of the land office, in the exercise of their authority, engaged Mr. Abraham Hardenbergh, a skilful and experienced surveyor, to explore and survey the ground between the Mohawk River and Wood Creek, in the county of Herkimer. That surveyor, with the assistance of Mr. Benj. Wright, performed, in September or October 1791, the service confided to him; and, in due season thereafter, he made out and delivered to the commissioners, an exact return of his survey, together with a corresponding map to explain it.

By this faithful narrative of legislative proceedings, it is demonstrated that the policy of the state, which aimed to improve internal navigation in the western district prior to 1792, was limited to the removal of obstructions in the Mohawk River, and to the junction of that river with Wood Creek.—Strange as it may appear, it is nevertheless true, that the eye of the legislature is not perceived* to have cast a glance at the interesting country between the head of Wood Creek and the western lakes; nor its mind to have bestowed a thought on the practicability of intersecting that country by a canal, which would mix the waters of the lakes and Hudson's River in a common stream, destined to waft to our proud emporium the vast productions of a large portion of our western world!

The commissioners of the land office, after receiving Mr. Hardenbergh's return of survey, reported that they had caused "to be explored, and the necessary surveys made of the grounds situate between the Mohawk River, at or near Fort Stanwix, and the Wood Creek in the county of Herkimer, and also between Hudson's River and the Wood Creek in the county of Washington; and estimates to be made of the probable expense that will attend

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* With the exception of the measures already noticed in 1784, 1785 and 1786, upon the motion of Christopher Colles, and the subsequent bill brought in by Jeffrey Smith.—D. H.

the making of canals sufficient for loaded boats to pass." And the commissioners added, that they were "happy to find that these objects are not only practicable, but attainable at a very moderate expense, when put in competition with their advantages and importance to the state."

A copy of this report was ordered by the commissioners, the 3d January 1792, to be "delivered to the Governor for the purpose of being transmitted by him to the legislature."

Governor Clinton, in his speech made two days afterwards, submitted the report to the deliberations of the legislature, in terms of earnest recommendation. The speech stated that "the legislature, at their last meeting, impressed with the importance, not only to the agriculture and commerce of the state, but even to the influence of the laws, of improving the means of communication, directed the commissioners of the land office to cause the ground between the Mohawk River and the Wood Creek in the county of Herkimer, and also between the Hudson River and the Wood Creek in the county of Washington, to be explored and surveyed, and estimates to be formed of the expense of joining those waters by canals. I now submit to you their report, which ascertains the practicability of effecting this object at a very moderate expense; and I trust that a measure, so interesting to the community, will continue to command the attention due to its importance."*

The report of the commissioners, with other papers accompanying the Governor's speech, was referred on the 7th January, by the House of Assembly, to a committee that was discharged from service without being allowed time to deliberate; and on the 9th January, the report was again referred by a resolution, originating in the house, and concurred in by the senate, to a joint committee of both houses.

General Williams of the senate, and also of the joint committee, on the 7th February, moved the senate in behalf of the committee, for leave to bring in a bill entitled, "An act for constructing and opening a canal and lock navigation, in the northern and western parts of this state." Leave was granted, and the General accordingly brought in the bill.†

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* See Journals of the Legislature. † Ibid.

The bill brought in by General Williams, after labouring its progress for several weeks in the senate, was forced to yield to a new bill, entitled, "An act for establishing and opening lock navigations within this state;" the declared intent of which was to open "a lock navigation from the navigable part of Hudson's River, to be extended *to the Seneca Lake, and to Lake Ontario.*"—To this bill various amendments were made by the house: some of which were accepted, and others disagreed to by the senate. From the amendments disagreed to, the house promptly receded; and the bill finally passed both houses on the 24th, and the council of revision on the 30th March, 1792, in the form appearing in our statute book.*

NOTE S.—p. 93.

Services of Elkanah Watson and General Schuyler.

The early views of Elkanah Watson relative to the internal navigation of the State of New-York, and his services in exploring the western parts of the state prior to the act of 1792, introduced and supported by General Philip Schuyler, establishing the Inland Lock Navigation Companies, and the influence of those measures as introductory to the improvements that have subsequently taken place, are fully set forth in the following communication from Col. Troup. This was prepared at my solicitation in answer to certain queries addressed by me to that gentleman. Further remarks upon the merits of Mr. Watson and of General Schuyler become unnecessary.†

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* See Journals of the Legislature.

† See Discourse delivered before the New-York Historical Society by Chancellor Kent, in which the memorable services of General Schuyler during the war of the revolution, in the counsels of the state, and in the promotion of internal improvements, are ably and fully exhibited.

"In 1792," says Chancellor Kent, "he was very active in digesting and bringing to maturity that early and great measure of state policy, the establishment of companies for inland lock navigation. The whole suggestion was the product of his fertile and calculating

Letter from Colonel Robert Troup.

NEW-YORK, 22d January, 1829.

DEAR SIR,

I have learnt from you with much satisfaction, that you are engaged in the meritorious work of rendering justice to those who projected our canal policy, and also to those who assisted in giving it practical effect.

You have, likewise, informed me of your solicitude to have the work distinguished for its strict regard to truth and its inflexible impartiality; and towards obtaining these desirable ends, you have applied to me for the facts I may possess relative to the claims of my estimable friend, Mr. Elkanah Watson, to a portion of public gratitude for his labours in the canal vineyard.

Having been unexpectedly placed, some years ago, in a situation that required my careful examination of Mr. Watson's claims, I rejoice that I can support them by a series of plain facts, which, I think, will justify the most favourable opinion of his usefulness.

That my information may the more exactly correspond with your wishes, I proceed to furnish it in the shape of precise answers to the following questions, which you have been pleased to submit to my consideration.

1. In what years did Mr. Watson first direct his attention to the western part of the state? And how far did he proceed in exploring it?

2. What was the import of his suggestions to General Schuyler respecting the improvement of the navigation between Hudson River and the western

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mind, ever busy in schemes for the public welfare. He was placed at the head of the direction of both of the navigation companies, and his mind was ardently directed, for years, towards the execution of those liberal plans of internal improvement. In 1796, he urged in his place in the senate, and afterwards published, in a pamphlet form, his plan for the improvement of the revenue of this state, and in 1797, his plan was almost literally adopted, and to that we owe the institution of the office of comptroller. In 1797, he was unanimously elected, by the two houses of our legislature, a senator in congress; and he took leave of the senate of this state in a liberal and affecting address, which was inserted at large upon their journals."

lakes? And did the suggestions aim at the improvement of the natural navigation, then existing, of the lakes, rivers, and creeks, of our western country, and as a medium of connexion between them? or, did they aim at the construction of a continued canal? And, if the latter, what was to be its course and extent?

3. What share had Mr. Watson in procuring the passage of the canal act of March 1792?

In answer to the first question I observe, that Mr. Watson's mind naturally inclines him to speculate in improvements of a public nature. This inclination has derived additional strength from Mr. Watson's travelling,* while he was young, in Flanders, in Holland, and in England, and attentively examining the canals he met with; and also from visiting General Washington, at Mount Vernon, and conversing freely with him on his favourite project of uniting the western waters with the Potomac. Thus prompted by natural inclination, and, at the same time, urged by patriotic motives, Mr. Watson, in September 1788, made a journey from Albany to Fort Stanwix, now called Rome, where state commissioners were holding a treaty with the Indians for the purchase of their western lands. What Mr. Watson, in this journey, saw of the face of the country and of the courses of its waters, and especially the situation of Rome, inflamed his imagination with the lofty conception that, by removing obstructions in the rivers and creeks, and cutting canals to connect them, the state might open a navigable communication between the waters of the Hudson and those of the great lakes; a measure which Mr. Watson supposed would necessarily tend "to divert the trade of the lakes from Quebec and Alexandria to Albany and New-York."†

After reflecting for several years on this important measure, and becoming by his reflections more partial to it, Mr. Watson, in company with a few friends, in the autumn of 1791, travelled, partly by land but chiefly by water, from Schenectady to Geneva in Ontario county. Mr. Watson kept a particular journal‡ of these travels; and from his journal it appears, that he carefully

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* See Mr. Watson's History of the Western Canals, p. 8. † Ib. p. 30. ‡ Ib. p. 25.

explored the ground, lakes, rivers, and creeks, lying in his route, and was sanguine in his opinion of the feasibility of opening a navigable communication between the Hudson and the western lakes. And dwelling, almost with rapture, on the vast benefits such a communication would be likely to produce, Mr. Watson pressed it in emphatical terms on the "policy of the state." Anticipating this policy, he "promised to notice every obstacle, and, according to" his "best judgment, to devise plans and make estimates." And he further promised, "by every effort in his power, to excite the public attention to the grand object;" insisting, that "its cost would bear no comparison with the immense advantages the state would be sure to derive from it."

In answer to the second question I observe, that in January 1792, Mr. Watson delivered his journal to General Schuyler, who was then a leading member of our senate. With his journal, Mr. Watson also delivered to the General a report,* framed from the remarks and estimates which the journal contained. The report minutely traced the route of the proposed navigation—described the obstacles to be removed—suggested the mode of removal—calculated the probable expense of some of the operations—and concluded with a declaration, that "it would require a folio volume to point out the advantages that would result to the union, to the state, and to individuals, by laying the navigation entirely open."

Mr. Watson did not extend his travels to Oswego, because the fort, at that place, was still possessed by British troops, owing to the non-execution of the treaty of peace. But, in his journal, Mr. Watson said it would be necessary to improve the navigation to Oswego, in order to "complete the chain of water communications from Ontario to the Hudson."

From Mr. Watson's report, it is obvious that the route, designated by him, was from Schenectady to the Seneca and Ontario Lakes; and that he contemplated the improvement of the natural navigation by the intermediate lakes, rivers, and creeks, as a medium of connexion between them, without intending a continued canal. Indeed, Mr. Watson himself, speaking of his

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* See appendix to Colonel Troup's letter to B. Livingston, Esq. p. 8.

own views and those of his fellow-labourers, frankly disclaims all idea of having suggested a continued canal, or attempted more than to improve the natural navigation to the Seneca and Ontario lakes, when he says, that " the utmost stretch of our views was, to follow the track of nature's canal, and to remove natural or artificial obstructions; but we never entertained the most distant conception of a canal from Lake Erie to the Hudson. We should not have considered it much more extravagant to have suggested the possibility of a canal to the Moon."*

Such having been Mr. Watson's views, a regard to distributive justice obliges me to remark, that, whatever be the degree of praise which public gratitude may award to him for his sagacious suggestions and generous labours, to improve the natural navigation to the Seneca and Ontario lakes, it should not be forgotten that equal praise, at least, will be rightly due to the enlightened and patriotic men who conceived, and to those who prosecuted, the sublime plan of extending the navigation to Lake Erie by a continued canal, independent of the natural navigation by the lakes, rivers, and creeks, which intersect the country. And I know Mr. Watson too well to suspect that this sentiment will not receive his hearty approbation.

In answer to the third question I observe, that, during the years 1791 and 1792, Mr. Watson and General Schuyler both lived in Albany, and were in habits of intimacy. Mr. Watson, besides delivering his journal and report to General Schuyler, had frequent conversations with him on the matters they contained. In these conversations it was agreed, that General Schuyler should use his exertions and influence in the legislature to procure the passage of an act to incorporate a company for opening the navigation from the Hudson to the Seneca and Ontario lakes. The legislature was to sit in New-York, in the beginning of January, 1792; and Mr. Watson's zeal for the passage of the act carried him to New-York early in the session, to unite his exertions and influence with those of General Schuyler. Mr. Watson accordingly remained

* See Mr. Watson's History of the Western Canals, p. 100.

several weeks in New-York, and, while there, he afforded every aid in his power to promote General Schuyler's success: and, after Mr. Watson's return to Albany, he made General Schuyler the tender of another visit to New-York, on the like errand, if the General should think it expedient.

Mr. Watson's zeal, however, did not suffer him to stop here. So far from it, when in New-York, he addressed to the legislature, through the medium of a city paper, a piece under the signature of "a Citizen,"* in which he represented the state, from its geographical position, as enjoying advantages for internal intercourse much above those of her neighbours—communicated substantially the information contained in his journal and in his report—extolled the advantages that would probably flow from a navigable intercourse with "the great chain of lakes forming our north-western boundary"—and recommended, with enthusiastic ardour, the improvement of the navigation to the Seneca Lake; keeping always in sight, its further improvement as soon as "the British should be dispossessed of the outlet of Oswego river." And Mr. Watson's zeal for improving the navigation continuing unabated, he once more pressed the subject on the notice of the legislature, with fresh and cogent reasons, in a piece under the signature of "an Inland Navigator,"† which he forwarded from Albany, and had also published in a New-York paper.

It unfortunately happened that a bill was brought into the senate, without the concurrence of General Schuyler, the objects of which were the removal of obstructions in the Mohawk River, and the junction of that river with Wood Creek; thus appearing to relinquish the improvement of the navigation to the Seneca and Ontario lakes. Whilst this bill was labouring its progress through the Senate, Mr. Watson, then being at Albany, wrote a letter‡ to General Schuyler, in which he observed, that he had not been "inattentive to the progress of the great objects of the western canals since the commencement of the session of the legislature"—expressed "much regret that no one of that body, except" the General, "appeared to soar beyond Fort Stanwix"

* See appendix to Col. Troup's letter to B. Livingston, Esq. p. 14. † Ib. 22. ‡ Ib. 13.

—complained " that stopping at Fort Stanwix would be half doing the business"—and he declared that " although the whole plan might not be accomplished for years to come, yet as the improvements on Wood Creek were indispensable to making the contemplated canal at Fort Stanwix of any value, the charter should stretch to Seneca Lake, and the harbour of Oswego, as pointed out in his journal, and in conformity to (his) conversations with the General, so as to admit the commerce of the great lakes into Hudson's River, and vice versa."

Mr. Watson, in the same letter, treated the " enterprise" as a " proper state object," and he expressed a firm belief that the " enterprise would succeed if the charter be so shaped as to embrace the objects contemplated by" him and the General, and " a term of twenty years be granted for the completion of the plan ;" and, in reply to the objection that undertaking the enterprise would be premature, Mr. Watson, in the same letter, avowed his settled conviction that " the enterprise could not be undertaken too soon," and consequently he " determined" to do his " utmost to co-operate with" the General's " enlarged views of the very important subject."

The ardent desire of Mr. Watson for a charter on a scale embracing the navigation of the Seneca and Ontario lakes, was finally gratified by the passing of the canal act of March, 1792 ; which was the golden fruit of General Schuyler's eminent talents and controlling influence.

General Schuyler, ever disdaining to receive honors not fairly his due, often acknowledged* to that excellent man and public spirited citizen, the late Thomas Eddy, that " the observations made by Mr. Watson, in his tour to the western part of the state in 1791, first turned his attention to that important object, and induced him to offer to the senate the act incorporating the western and northern inland lock navigation companies."

The facts which I have thus detailed, will be found in Mr. Watson's " History of the Western Canals," published in 1820 ; and also in a Letter from me " On the Lake Canal Policy," addressed to the late Brockholst Livingston,

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* See appendix to Col. Troup's letter to B. Livingston, Esq. p. 31.

Esq. one of the associate justices of the Supreme Court of the United States, and published in 1822.

The consideration of these facts, will naturally lead to the conclusion, that they form the ground, on which Mr. Watson rests his claims to a portion of public gratitude for his labours to improve the inland navigation of the state.

I am much deceived if the facts do not irresistibly show that Mr. Watson's labours have been useful. Their usefulness consists in his travelling to explore our western country, its lakes, rivers, and creeks—in his observations on the practicability of a navigable communication between the Hudson and the western lakes—in his communications to Gen. Schuyler—in his concerting with the General a plan of navigation embracing the western lakes, to be submitted to the Legislature—and, lastly, in his unwearied pains to assist Gen. Schuyler to obtain a preference for the concerted plan, by the passing of the canal act of March, 1792.

There can be no reasonable objection against admitting that this act was the commencement of our state canal policy. Before the existence of the act, nothing appeared, in the community, on the subject of canalling, except the different commercial speculations of individuals respecting it. To dignify their speculations with the title of state policy, would be preposterous. That the policy pursued by a state, can only be known from the schemes adopted by its constituted authorities, and from the measures taken to carry such schemes into effect, is a position too evident to require any illustration. It was the act, therefore, that first gave body and life to the floating ideas about canalling, by the incorporation of a company to undertake the expensive and arduous enterprise of opening a canal navigation to unite the waters of the Hudson with those of the western lakes, and by endowing the company with rights to authorise, and privileges to facilitate its successful prosecution.

To maintain that the act was unimportant in its consequences, would be to incur the censure of violating the dictates of sound sense, and disregarding the plain language of experience. Although the funds of the company incorporated were wholly inadequate to the construction of canals calculated to promote the highest interests of the state; yet the operations of the com-

pany, proceeding from the employment of their scanty funds, considerably reduced the rates of transportation, and thereby proved not a little beneficial to trade. But the most important consequence of the act was, that even the limited benefits it produced to trade, served to keep the public eye fixed on the highly interesting objects of canal policy, and eventually to induce our wise and patriotic rulers to adopt a system of canalling which, from the grandeur of its design, and the magnanimity of its execution, has become the pride of the state, and the admiration of the Union.

Allow me, dear sir, to conclude this letter with the assurance of my unfeigned gratification that it has fallen to your lot to perform the meritorious work in which you are engaged; for your able, elegant, and impartial eulogium on the illustrious De Witt Clinton, persuades me to believe the work will be performed in a manner justly entitling it to the praise of every unprejudiced and intelligent reader, as well of the present age as of posterity.

With the most perfect esteem I remain, dear sir,

Your humble servant,

ROBERT TROUP.

To David Hosack, M. D.

Connected with this part of the subject, it gives me pleasure to give place to the following interesting letters from the late President of the United States, John Adams, addressed to Mr. Watson, in the years 1822 and 1823.

Letter from President Adams to Elkanah Watson.

Quincey, 23d December, 1822.

Dear Sir,

I have received and heard read Colonel Troup's letter to Judge Livingston of the 23d January last.

You need not wish a more ingenuous, a more able, or a more spirited vindication of your claims to the first suggestion of the canal policy in New-York;

and of General Schuyler's sagacious patriotism in adopting and supporting your ideas in the legislature. You have both great merit, but still I think Mr. Clinton has also great merit in supporting your plan. It is right to preserve the memory of the first discoverers and inventors of useful improvements for the amelioration of the condition of mankind.

The gentlemen who were my cotemporaries at Philadelphia used to say, that the first discovery of the efficacy of lightning-rods was Ebenezer Kennesly, a young gentleman of an ardent thirst for science, who drew lightning from the clouds by his iron-pointed kites, before Dr. Franklin had attempted any thing on the subject.

Why, indeed, may we not say, that this discovery was made in the time of the Roman Emperor Tiberius, for, in his reign, the astronomical and astrological poet Manilius wrote these lines, "eripuit jovi fulmen viresque tonandi?" Yet, all this diminishes in no degree the great merit of Dr. Franklin in maturing, digesting, and propagating to the world, his system of lightning-rods. It would be well to ascertain, if it were possible, the first discoverer of the invaluable power of steam. While we should do honour to his memory, we should not withhold our admiration and gratitude from the great Fulton, whose steam navigation will be of greater benefit to mankind than Franklin's philosophy, though that is very great. While I wish to do honour to these great men, I ought to bear my testimony to the merit of your long exertions, which I think have been very useful to our country. With much pleasure I repeat the assurance of the long and continued esteem and affection of your friend and humble servant,

JOHN ADAMS.

Letter from John Adams to Elkanah Watson.

QUINCEY, 28th February, 1823.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I thank you for your letter of the 12th instant, and for the communication of Judge Troup's letter.

I am very much obliged to him for his civility to me, as well as for his testimonies in honour of your meritorious exertions for the public good.

Your active life has been employed, as far as I have known the history of it, in promoting useful knowledge and useful arts; for which I hope you have received, or will receive, a due reward. Shafts are wanton sports; and secret and public malice are common to you, and all men who distinguish themselves,

> "Envy does merit, as its shade pursue,
> And like the shadow proves its substance true."

This, or something more sublime, must be the consolation of us all.

Your friend, by proxy,

JOHN ADAMS.

ELKANAH WATSON, Esq. Albany.

NOTE T.—p. 93.

Claims of Jesse Hawley.

It has already been alleged by Mr. C. Brodhead, Mr. Geddes, Mr. Simeon De Witt, and others, that the views entertained by Mr. Hawley, relative to the Erie Canal, were not original, but had been derived from conversation with those gentlemen. In order to ascertain how far this is correct, I applied through the medium of our mutual friend James Rees, Esq. of Geneva, to Mr. Hawley, for information on this head—his communications are added. But whatever may have been the sources of his information, it is certain that his Essays, published in the Genesee Messenger, materially contributed to enlighten the public mind with regard to the projected canal to Erie by the interior or overland route, and in the course in which it has been prosecuted. The first board of commissioners too, in exploring the country, it is well ascertained, took a copy of those Essays with them on their journey, and have expressed their approbation of them, and their sense of the valuable information they contain. Another fact illustrative of their value, is, that Mr. Hawley's calculations at

that early day, of the cost of the canal, corresponds very nearly with the amount of the expenditure actually incurred. The author of Tacitus, in relation to the merits of Mr. Hawley, makes the following observations.

"To an intelligent and observing mind, the physiognomy of the country, west of Rome to Lake Erie, must present great facilities for artificial navigation. The abundant supply of water from the intermediate lakes, rivers, springs, and creeks—the general and gradual ascent to the west—the great extent of champaign country—and the wide valleys through which canals might pass, are too obvious not to strike the observation of any traveller.

"At what time this channel of communication was first orally suggested, and by whom, it is impossible now to ascertain. The letters published in the New-York Evening Post, to show that Mr. Gouverneur Morris entertained this project as far back as 1800 and 1801, prove directly the reverse; for in his communication to General Lee, he says: "As far as I can judge from observation and information, the communication between Lake Ontario and the Hudson is not only practicable, but easy, though expensive;" and on the call of Lee for a full developement of his views, he is wholly silent as to the Erie communication.

"The first hint on this subject which I have seen in print, was suggested by Jesse Hawley, Esq. of Ontario county—a gentleman of an ingenious and reflecting mind. On the 27th of October, 1807, he commenced a series of essays on internal navigation, under the signature of Hercules, in the Ontario Messenger, printed at Canandaigua, which extended to fourteen numbers—At the close of the first number he says—"In my next number I intend to point out that improvement which I conceive to be of the greatest importance of any which can be undertaken in the United States, and for the promotion of which these numbers were principally written—*a canal from the foot of Lake Erie into the Mohawk River.*" In the second number he says, that his chief object is to induce a belief of the propriety of an actual survey: and in the fifth number he *estimates the expense at six millions of dollars.*

Letter from Jesse Hawley, to David Hosack, M.D.

ROCHESTER, 24th July, 1828.

DEAR SIR,

I received a letter a few days since from James Rees, Esq. of Geneva, who informs me, that he lately saw you and understood that you were collecting materials for a Discourse on the death of Governor Clinton, and that he had made mention of me to you as probably being able to furnish some facts relating to the Erie Canal, &c.; and requested me to write you of what I did know, &c. Perhaps I know of but very few of the facts relating to Mr. Clinton and the canal, but what are already publicly known, and they are merely incidental and mostly relate to myself. Such as they are, since Mr. Rees has had the goodness to refer to me, I will narrate, and leave you to judge whether they will be of any service to you.

In April 1805, then a merchant at Geneva and concerned in forwarding flour from Mynderse's mills, owing to the very imperfect navigation of the old Mohawk canal, and various methods being proposed for improving it, I suggested the idea of an overland canal from the foot of Lake Erie, at Buffalo, (as containing a head and great reservoir of water to feed it,) to Utica, and thence down the Mohawk to Hudson River. These impediments to navigation would often call forth the expression of our wishes, that an arm of the North River had been extended into the Genesee country by the Author of nature, for our facilities of transport;—but no one yet had suggested the idea of effecting this object *by a canal!* I occasionally mentioned my suggestion to my friends, and was generally laughed at for my whim!

A reverse in my business landed me on the gaol limits of Ontario, in Canandaigua, in August 1807. Fully persuaded of the practicability of such canal; and having, thus far, lived to but little purpose, I thought I might render myself useful to society by giving publicity to the suggestion, and, in October 1807, commenced writing on the subject in the Genesee Messenger, a newspaper then published at Canandaigua, which I continued to fourteen numbers, in April 1808. My plan was a canal of 100 feet wide and 10 feet deep, laid on

an inclined plane, from Buffalo to Utica, and thence down the channel of the Mohawk, with improvements in it, to Schenectady, and thence over the portage to Albany, for a time—to be constructed by the national government, rather than by an incorporated company of individuals—not conceiving, then, the state treasury, or finances, adequate to the undertaking. These essays were treated with much ridicule, and, by some, were considered as "the effusions of a maniac." The writer was unknown for some time.

In 1809, Gen. Micah Brooks, a member from Ontario, borrowed and took them with him to Albany; but nothing was done by the legislature of that session, and he left them with Simeon De Witt, Esq. the surveyor general, to investigate the subject.

In 1810, the legislature appointed the first board of commissioners to explore and report, of which the surveyor general and Mr. Clinton were members. The former took my essays with him on the route. After their return, he sent them back to me with the compliments of the commissioners for their use.

In their report, of 1811, they embraced several leading points which I had advanced in my essays, viz. of its being a national work and proposing to construct it on an inclined plane. The former they applied to congress for, but failed to obtain. The latter, as from Buffalo to Albany, was found impracticable, owing to the great elevation of the hills at the Little Falls on the Mohawk River. I never heard, that, under these circumstances, Mr. Morris made any claim to the original idea of the *overland route*. I believe Mr. Morris, if alive, would say for himself, that his first idea was the *lake route*, and the locking up of the Niagara Falls into Lake Erie. Such was decidedly the idea of Messrs. Gallatin, Porter, and Woodward, who wrote on the subject after I had written; and in which Judge Woodward was very tenacious, terming the *overland route*, then under discussion, *a short-sighted and selfish policy* in New-York.

In 1812, Mr. Clinton borrowed my essays, through my brother, with whom he had become acquainted as a member of the masonic fraternity and special business together, and not then acquainted with me—and returned them, through Mr. Granger, in 1820. These are the chief incidents that occurred between us.

I have given more detail than the subject abstractedly required, wishing to rebut an error that some person has fallen into, contained in Mr. De Witt's letter, printed in vol. I. page 39, of Mr. Secretary Yates's Canal History, in which Judge Geddes is made to say, that "his communication to me of Mr. Morris's *idea of tapping Lake Erie* was the origin of the subject in my mind, and from which I was induced to write my essays." I saw Judge Geddes at Utica, in April 1804, for the first time—he returning from the legislature, and I going to New-York. I saw him again at Geneva, in the winter of 1806, visiting his relations, with whom I boarded; this was about ten months after I had suggested the idea: and again at his house in Onondaga, in September 1811—he had then surveyed a part of the route, under the direction of the first board of commissioners, when we conversed on the subject, I believe, for the first time—for I do not recollect that any mention was made of it when we met at Geneva; if there was, I presume that I first spoke of it; nor of hearing that Mr. Morris had written on it until several years after I had written and the work was commenced; and I think Mr. Morris does not use the term, *tapping Lake Erie.* There was no writer on the *idea of tapping Lake Erie*, or the *overland route for the canal*, publicly known in Ontario at the time I wrote my essays. This the ridicule of the day, on the subject, sufficiently proves; for, had any been known, they would have been brought forward against my claims to originality of the measure. I was too disadvantageously situated in life to obtain a better access to the private correspondence of those gentlemen, who had written on the subject, than the generality of the public. Mine was a public correspondence, without obscurity; and I can say with great sincerity of heart, that I knew of no competitor with me for the reputation of both the conception and publication of the idea of the *overland route*, until after the work was commenced and became a popular theme;—*then* it was, the epistolary writings of Messrs. Watson, Morris, and others, were drawn from their private archives and made to claim rank of their primitive dates.

The great merit of Mr. Clinton, in relation to the canal, consists in his having put his powerful mind to the investigation of the subject, and, probably with great labour, comprehending the magnitude of its utility and the splendour

of its enterprise; and failing to render it a national work, he conceived the idea of rendering it a state undertaking and property—an idea which had escaped all others, from the supposed inadequacy of the state resources to accomplish it—resolutely shouldering the responsibility of the measure, at the hazard of his popularity and reputation—while others were confronting him with assertions that it would require the revenue of all the kingdoms of the earth, and the population of China, to accomplish it.

Although others claim it for him, yet Mr. Clinton never claimed for himself the original idea of the canal. In his essays to Colonel Troup, written in 1820, he assigned that to me. Also, in his letter to me of 4th March, 1822, he says—"I have no hesitation in stating, that the first suggestion of a canal from Lake Erie to the Hudson River, which came to my knowledge, was communicated in essays under the signature of 'Hercules,' on internal navigation, published in the Ontario Messenger at Canandaigua. The first number appeared on the 27th October, 1807, and the series of numbers amounted, I believe, to fourteen."—"The board of canal commissioners, which made the first tour of observation and survey in 1810, were possessed of the writings of 'Hercules,' which were duly appreciated as the work of a sagacious, inventive, and elevated mind; and you were, at that time and since, considered the author."

Being called on by an old acquaintance to write you, to have omitted would have been disrespectful to him as well as yourself.

While writing, I ask your liberty to add a few remarks more in relation to myself. I claim the original and the first publication of the overland route of the Erie Canal from Buffalo to the Hudson—that, in it, I have been a benefactor to the public in general, and to the state of New-York in particular—and I bless the author of my existence, that I have lived to see it finished, which was almost beyond the hope of my expectations when I was writing my essays—and, as chairman of the Rochester visiting committee, to deliver the first address at the opening of its celebration at Buffalo. But this is all the notice that I have ever received from the state, or people, of New-York, for

it in any wise: nor would I complain of that, having in the mean time, by laborious industry, attained from bankruptcy to a comfortable moderate competency, and pleasantly located within a mile of this village and the canal.

I am, respectfully, yours, &c.

J. HAWLEY.

Shortly after the receipt of this letter, I was favoured with another communication from Mr. Hawley, bearing date the 24th September, forwarding, at the same time, a copy of the Essays, with the following remarks:—"At your request, I loan you my essays on the canal, having taken them out of their bindings for the purpose; being the only set, I know of, in preservation, and intending to deposite them, eventually, in the archives of the secretary's office of New-York, in order to preserve the evidences of my claim to the first writings on the subject, I am choice of them. But they are antique—written before the science of canalling was known in American literature, when a treatise was no where to be found among us, and maps the only references that could be obtained—by a native mind, taught only in a country school of Connecticut, common at the period of his childhood; they will require many of those charitable allowances to be made on their perusal at the present day."

As the following Essays of Mr. Hawley, published in 1807 under the signature of 'Hercules,' appear to have been the first publication of the plan of a direct overland communication from Lake Erie to the Hudson, and have been found highly useful by the first board of commissioners, as they have publicly acknowledged, when they were exploring the route which Mr. Hawley designated, and which has been adopted as the course of the canal, I am induced to give them a place in this work. Although fourteen of those essays appeared in the Genesee Messenger, a paper then extensively circulated in the western parts of this state, no other entire copy, but that from which they are now reprinted, is, at this day, to be obtained. They, therefore, cannot fail to be acceptable, not only as containing much interesting matter, but in connexion

with the preceding communications, as illustrative of the well established claims of the author to the originality of the views they develope.

While these papers show in the writer superior sagacity and knowledge, I feel that I perform a duty to the community in attempting to preserve them from oblivion. From these it will also appear, that the merits of Mr. Hawley, by some singular combination of circumstances, have not hitherto been duly estimated. When it is considered, that in these numbers Mr. Hawley points out the track of a canal from the foot of Lake Erie to the Mohawk River nearly corresponding with the route of the present canal, urges the propriety of an immediate survey, and estimates the expense with wonderful accuracy, as has since been ascertained, at six millions of dollars! it is certainly surprising, amidst the numerous publications on this subject, that Mr. Watson and Mr. Colden* are the only persons who have rendered that justice to Mr. Hawley which his merits and services claim from this state.†

Introductory Essay by Jesse Hawley.‡

In consequence of the difference and conflict of political sentiments which pervade the United States, respecting the administration of the government, and the appropriation of their resources, it is probable that it will be left to the future politician to duly appreciate and justly admire the ingenuity and patriotism of Mr. Jefferson, which devised and promul-

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* See Watson's History, and Colden's Memoir.

† Were it necessary, I could still adduce many other collateral proofs in my possession, lately received from Mr. Hawley; but these, upon the publication of this volume, with the other original documents from which I have composed this work, will be deposited, for preservation, in the archives of the New-York Historical Society.

‡ This first essay, as Mr. Hawley informs me, was printed at Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, in the paper called the Commonwealth, on the 14th January, 1807, under the signature of "Hercules." Having failed," he says, "in my mercantile business at Geneva, I fled to Pittsburgh in the autumn of 1806, and there met with Mr. Jefferson's second inaugural message. Not knowing whither I was going, or when I should return, I sketched that essay, in order, as I then thought, to preserve it from oblivion, saying, 'this project is probably not more than twelve months old in human conception.'"

gated the idea of appropriating the surplus revenue of the United States, after the payment of the national debt, to the improvement of canals, roads, &c. which he threw out in his second inaugural speech.

It appears by the president's last message, that there is a greater surplus of revenue than was anticipated at the time the terms for the discharge of the national debt were stipulated; so as to leave a sum of money in the treasury without any appropriation; for the use of which he has suggested its application to the improvement of some great national object, the undertaking of which is to be immediately commenced.

I will presume to assert, that the president himself will agree that, if not even before, at least, next to the utility of a National Institute, is the improvement of the navigation of our fresh waters.

This admitted, the next inquiry is—where and what waters can be improved, to afford the most extensive and immediate benefit to the agricultural and commercial interests of the United States?

With due deference to the president of the United States, and the committees appointed by the national legislature, who now have the subject under consideration, I will presume to suggest to them, that improvement which would afford the most immediate, and consequently the most extensive advantages which any other in the United States can possibly do. It is the connecting the waters of *Lake Erie* and those of the *Mohawk* and *Hudson* rivers by means of a canal.

As this project is probably not more than twelve months old in human conception, but imperfect data can be furnished on the subject at present—such as I am possessed of, I will add.

It ought to commence at the foot of Lake Erie, as soon as a suitable place can be found to afford a draft on its waters—to gain and preserve a moderate descent of ground it will have to pursue a north-eastern course for some miles, it then may pursue an east course and cross the Genesee River, somewhere above its Falls, thence near to, and probably in the channel of, Mud Creek, an outlet of Canandaigua Lake, and follow them into Seneca River; but leaving that, up stream to Jack's Rifts, for the purpose of preserving the head of water —thence meandering along between the high and low grounds of Onondaga and Oneida counties, going south of their lakes, and let it fall into the Mohawk and mingle with its waters somewhere above Utica.

The distance from Buffalo village, at the foot of Lake Erie, to Canandaigua, is ninety miles according to the present road—from thence, on the Seneca turnpike to Utica, is one hundred and twelve miles—making two hundred and two miles from Lake Erie to Utica. It is possible that the angles of the roads are equal to the necessary meanderings of the canal through so extensive and level a country. By Ellicot's map of the Holland company's tract, the level of the waters of Lake Erie are four hundred and fifty feet above that of Onta-

rio. The level of the Mohawk above that of Ontario is not correctly known, but we can approximate the fact from the following comparative statement. From the canal at Rome or Fort Stanwix, down Wood Creek to Oneida Lake, is twenty miles through a tract of very level land, say ten feet fall. Oneida Lake thirty miles in length, say three feet fall—from thence to Three River Point, eighteen miles, say twelve feet fall—thence to Oswego Falls, twelve miles, say ten feet fall. The Falls a quarter of a mile, say fifteen feet fall—thence to Lake Ontario twenty-four miles, say fifteen feet fall, makes the elevation of Rome sixty-five feet above the waters of Ontario. From Rome to Utica sixteen miles by land, and twenty-eight by water with good current, say twenty-five feet fall, which deduct from sixty-five leaves forty feet, the elevation of the Mohawk at Utica above the Ontario. As the whole of this calculation is conjectured without ever seeing any part of the ground except the villages of Utica and Rome, it cannot be pretended that it is correct; yet it is presumed to be sufficiently large. Deduct the difference between Utica and Ontario (forty feet) from the difference between Erie and Ontario, (four hundred and fifty feet) and it leaves four hundred and ten feet fall, between the waters of Erie and the Mohawk at Utica, which will average two feet a mile on the whole distance.

The result of this crude calculation is sufficient, and merely intended to demonstrate the possibility, and even practicability, of the undertaking. When we consider the Herculean task performed on sundry canals in Europe, the crossing Genesee river and other streams which intersect the course of the route, cannot be admitted as insuperable obstacles to the undertaking.

Pretending to no knowledge in the science of canalling, consequently no calculation on the probable expenses will be hazarded—but the level country through which it would take its course, is such, that more than half the distance would require no further digging than to sink the ditch sufficient for the depth of water and its necessary banks; and it is obvious that it would require but few stone. The western part of the Genesee county and Onondaga county afford a sufficient supply. Other tracts no doubt would furnish at least partial supplies by occasional beds and quarries. The principal use of stone contemplated here is to wall the banks of the ditch. Where stone was scarce, timber could be substituted in the first essay, and stone could be boated to supply its place when decayed.

The magnitude of this improvement is far beyond the reach of individual capital in America, for the present age, and probably for a century to come. The present governor of the state of New-York has indeed suggested the idea of calling into its aid *British capitalists;* but as their object, by vesting their capital in foreign stock, would be the double consideration of having that stock permanent, and to receive from it a rate of interest above that which they can obtain for their capital in their own market; consequently both the immense agricultural and commercial interests of America, flowing through this channel, must for ever, by an inexhaustible load of taxes, be tributary to foreign capitalists.

America already suffers by foreign capitalists drawing from her resources large sums, in premiums, from her stocks and new lands; from which she can have no possible reciprocity of interest, except merely in the contemplation of redressing at some future day, the wrongs of foreign nations, in spoliations on her commerce, by a sequestration of this foreign capital. And unless the government holds the idea of sequestration *in reserve*, as the dernier resort for the redress of foreign aggressions, there can scarcely be a palliative argument offered by them for their toleration to foreigners, of foreign residence, by their superior wealth drawing a private revenue from our best resources. We, therefore, can alone, with confidence, turn our attention and our best hopes to a patriotic government, whose treasury must in a few years, be amply competent to the undertaking; which, when finished, may be given to us for an insignificant tax.

When completed, this would afford a course of navigation from New-York, by sloop navigation to Albany, 160 miles—from Albany to Buffalo, by boat navigation, 300 miles—from Buffalo to Chicago by sloop navigation, 1200 miles; making a distance of 1660 miles of inland navigation up stream, where the cargo has to be shifted but three times.

The probable charges of freight would be—from New-York to Albany (the present price on small packages of merchandise up freight is about) five dollars per ton, from thence to Buffalo (full large enough, including no charge for lockage) fifty dollars per ton, from thence to Chicago, say large fifty dollars per ton—is equal to 105 dollars per ton, or five cents per pound nearly. From Chicago harbour it might be continued up its river, by portage, into and down the Illinois, and up the Mississippi; and into, as yet, almost unknown regions.

The navigation of the four largest lakes in the known world, together with all their tributary streams—the agricultural products and the commerce of all the surrounding country, would pass through this canal—and even the fifth (Ontario) would become its tributary.—The additional duty on the Canadian trade alone would defray the annual repairs of the canal.

The vast extension of and facility to commerce, together with the additional spur to industry which this canal would give, would in twenty years redeem the principal and interest of their expenditure, at the rate of their present imposts, by its additional increase.

Its invitation to the culture of the fertile soil surrounding these extensive navigable waters, would be such, that in a few generations the exhibition of their improvements and the display of their wealth, would even scarcely be equalled by the old world.

HERCULES.

[*For the Genesee Messenger.*]

OBSERVATIONS ON CANALS.

No. I.

"I entertain vast ideas of the destinies of these United States. A giant in its infancy, to what point may we not aspire in our maturity," said a writer under the signature of HISTORICUS, in a late New-York paper.

When we survey our vast extent of territory, nearly equalling that of Europe; nearly equal to it in its difference of latitude; fully equal to it in the variety of its climate and the exuberance of its soil; equal in perfection, and importantly exceeding it in the variety of its vegetable productions; nor inferior to it in the animal and mineral kingdoms. That two-thirds of this territory remains yet a forest, holding out the prospects of wealth, and affording an easy and certain competency to all—when we view our natural resources unsurpassed by that of any other nation; our citizens possessing an equal share of acquirements in the more useful branches of literature and the arts and sciences; and when we behold our inestimable improvements in the science of politics, having refined it down to its elementary principles, well may we exclaim with the writer, that we entertain vast ideas of the destinies of these United States.

But to what are we destined?—Servilely to copy the splendid folly of all ancestry, or to borrow wisdom at their expense?—Nations have often mistaken the true path to wealth and greatness, by pursuing the mere phantoms of glory. In early ages they were infatuated with the idea of erecting monuments of national grandeur. The impious project of a Babel; the renowned Pyramids; the magnificent Hanging Gardens; the stupendous Colossus;—ALL were but as so much splendid folly and prodigality.

The stupendous monument of England, is her navy. This reads something more than folly and prodigality. To its oppression on human sweat and toil, it adds blood and carnage.

Mr. Pinkerton, after noticing twenty or thirty canals in England, adds the following instructive apothegm. "When we reflect that all these laudable efforts of improvement and civilization have been executed within these forty years, there is room for a well-grounded hope that in the course of centuries the kingdom [of England] may be intersected, like another China, to the inconceivable advancement of agriculture, commerce and the national industry and prosperity. The sum already expended in these noble works has been computed at five millions five hundred thousand pounds sterling; but how much more usefully employed than in fruitless wars, which consume fifty millions in one year!" What a satire on wars, navies, and standing armies!

So far as nations before us have made the experiment, internal improvements have proved

the certain and more speedy road to national greatness. China affords us the most instructive lessons on the subject. She extensively abounds in them. Her walls and her canals are alike useful. The one, to preserve her tranquillity; the other, to promote her wealth. She prides not herself in armies nor navies.

What would have been the present state of internal improvements in Europe, with her numerous and some of the largest streams in the eastern hemisphere, had she borrowed the example of China? The toil, blood, and treasure which have been expended in futile wars for princely domination, would have canalled and gardened the whole of its territory!

Can the philosopher inform us why Europe is more sanguinary than Asia? Is it owing to its government or its climate? The common purpose of government is protection. But can it not be made to do more? Make it to act like an incorporate body in cultivating its resources, and thus to diffuse competency, comfort, and even wealth to its individual members.

To the cultivation of the arts of peace, we have to ask our government to adopt another principle: that of a nation's wealth best consists in the amount of the individual property of its subjects. This is best promoted by applying the surplus revenue of the state to internal improvements, roads, canals, &c.

Navigation offers the most cheap, familiar, and extensive intercourse with distant places. This, therefore, first deserves attention. The science of hydraulics is invaluable to the United States. Our territory, from one extremity to the other, is either intersected or interlocked with current waters or inland seas. Here is a vast field opened to American enterprise. To encounter the huge length and stern current of the Mississippi and its numerous branches—the torrent waters of the St. Lawrence—or the precipiced bed and impetuous stream of the Susquehannah—to improve the old beds, or give new channels to the smaller streams, and to convert our lakes into reservoirs for canals.

The late improvements in the steam-boat has surmounted the first of these difficulties.—The others require much ingenuity and capital bestowed upon them for their completion. When effected, they will serve as labour-saving machines in facilitating the transport of produce to market. By lessening the expenses of transport, its value would be enhanced. By substituting water for land carriage, much of manual and animal labour would be reserved for the improvement of our forests and the culture of our fields.

In my next number I intend to point out that improvement which I conceive to be of the greatest importance of any which can be undertaken in the United States; and for the proposition of which these numbers were principally written—A CANAL FROM THE FOOT OF LAKE ERIE INTO THE MOHAWK.

HERCULES.

No. II.

Every man of observation, who has travelled the western counties of this state, has doubtless, noticed the quality of soil gradually improving from Albany westward, and which appears evident at every fifty miles nearly sufficient to pay the additional charges of transport on the surplus produce of that part of the country. This increase in the quality of the soil continues to this village (a distance of more than 200 miles) if not to Batavia. In beholding these equalising gifts of nature, we are led to admiration and gratitude to its provident and bounteous author. But when this sentiment escapes our mind, and we turn our reflections to the fatigue and toil of so much land transport, we are apt to exclaim,—Why was not the parent of nature so thoughtful—why was he not so kind, as to give this country a river navigation from the Atlantic to the lakes, like that to Albany?

Why these murmurs? The Creator has done what we can reasonably ask of him. By the Falls of Niagara he has given a head to the waters of Lake Erie sufficient to flow into the Atlantic by the channels of the Mohawk and the Hudson, as well as by that of the St. Lawrence. He has only left the finishing stroke to be applied by the hand of art, and it is complete! Who can reasonably complain?

The canal had best commence so near to the foot of Lake Erie as the current of Niagara River will admit by affording a draft on its waters, and run nearly parallel to that river a sufficient distance (perhaps some miles) to obtain a fall which will preserve it a current; thence winding easterly and crossing the Tontawanta, perhaps a few miles from its mouth, by an aqueduct bridge; thence nearly due east, preserving the height of the Limestone ridge, and crossing Genesee River, also by an aqueduct bridge, and most probably above the upper falls; thence continuing its course and running near to, and probably into, the west branch of Mud Creek; pursuing its channel with improvements into, and thence down the Seneca River, to somewhere about the head of Jack's Rifts; thence leaving that river to the north and run along the foot of the hills and high grounds of Onondaga and Oneida counties, going south of their lakes, and discharge it into and mingle its waters with the Mohawk somewhere about Utica.

As it is probable that no additional head could be gained, nor even wanted, by continuing it beyond Utica, the more probable place of junction is at or above that place.

Mr. Ellicott, in noticing (on his map of the Holland purchase) the ridge of Limestone which runs through the country from Canada, across the Strait of Niagara, through the purchase eastward, states the "elevation of the surface of Lake Erie to be 450 feet above that of Ontario—that the ridge is nearly perpendicular—the lands from its base northward to Lake Ontario, and from its summit southward and along the eastern shore of Lake Erie is nearly level."

The project of this canal is founded on the presumptive correctness of these data; and considering the attention which was paid to accuracy in the survey of that tract, we may venture to place dependence upon it. While I hope I am sufficiently correct in my remarks for the main purpose of the subject, yet I will here observe, that having never seen any part of the route spoken of, but the villages at the two extremes, and the account which I have given being obtained from general, rather than particular information, probably I may be minutely incorrect in some particulars. My chief object is, to point out a sufficient probability to induce a belief of the propriety of an actual survey.

The level of the Mohawk at Utica, above the surface of Lake Ontario, is not correctly known; but after subtracting the difference of the elevation of the Mohawk, between Rome and Utica, from that between Rome and Lake Ontario, we shall find the level of Utica, about, or perhaps below, that of Three-Rivers-Point. We may, therefore, safely conjecture that the elevation of the Mohawk at Utica is not 50 feet above that of Lake Ontario. Presume it at 50 feet, and subtract it from 450, will give 400 feet for the elevation of Lake Erie above the Mohawk at Utica.

The distance from the village of Buffalo, at the foot of Lake Erie, to Utica, by the present road, is about 200 miles.

It is not improbable that the angles of the roads are nearly equal to the necessary meanderings of the canal. On this presumption, it would average about two feet fall per mile in the canal.

The ridge of Limestone declines from Niagara to the eastward. This will appear evident on comparing the height of the Falls of the Genesee and Oswego Rivers, with the Falls of Niagara. From such information as I am able to collect, the lower falls of the Genesee is 90—the second 48—and the third 12 feet, making in the whole 150 feet; the distance from the upper falls to Lake Ontario is about 10 miles. Add the fall for the current of the river to the height of the falls, and we may presume the upper falls to be about 170 or 180 feet above the surface of Ontario. I am not informed of the height of Oswego Falls, but I presume they will be found still less on a comparison.

Ten or twelve miles to the east of Genesee River the ridge begins to spread, and this decline is still more evident by the waters running eastward. In the north-eastern part of this county, the ridge becomes more extended, and is scarcely perceptible; yet it preserves a height sufficient to direct the waters to flow into Seneca River.

In this proposed canal, I think it may be fairly presumed that we have the grand desideratum of nature, viz. an inexhaustible fountain of water, with an absolute head and fall, which may be pitched and guaged to any dimensions required. Also an improvement of the navigation of the Mohawk by the addition of its waste waters.

Nor do I conceive the idea to be vain, or even incorrect, in saying, that it appears as if the Author of nature, in forming Lake Erie with its large head of waters into a reservoir, and his

having formed this Limestone ridge into an inclined plane, had in prospect a large and valuable canal, connecting the Atlantic and the continental seas, to be completed at some period in the history of man, by his ingenuity and industry!

In my next, I shall offer some suggestions on its size, and hazard conjectures on the probable expense of the canal.

HERCULES.

No. III.

Before I proceed to the intended subject for this number, I have to correct an error in my statement of the Genesee falls. Although this error, when corrected, will be in favour of the proposed canal, yet propriety would impose on me the obligation to rectify any error, even at the expense of the project. The information of both the other and the present statements, are derived from persons residing near the banks of that river; yet the latter comes in the more positive terms, which give it the greater authenticity.

The lower falls are 96, the second 14, the third 80, the fourth (by some called a rapid) 10 feet—making 200 feet height above the level of Ontario, and seven miles distant from it. The first two miles up the stream from the upper falls are rapids, the falls of which are estimated at 100 feet in that distance. The elevation of that river at the ferry or late bridge, on the main road, is estimated to be nearly equal to that of Lake Erie. The ferry is 28 miles distant from Lake Ontario. This statement, indeed, makes the third falls but 20 feet higher than the other; but with other falls above it so circumstanced as that, probably, every advantage can be taken of them, in case it be practicable to cross higher up than the third falls, and the canal probably might be guaged to that accurate decline as to require but one lock from Buffalo to this river; and that to be fixed near to the inlet for the purpose of countervailing, at a future day, the asserted or apprehended sinking of the waters in Lake Erie. If it can command this advantage of the Genesee falls, I think it not improbable that the canal may be thrown as far south as Cayuga Lake, or near its outlet. From this to Utica, it will then have about the same fall which the Seneca River has from this to Three-Rivers-Point.

ITS PROBABLE SIZE.

My hints on this subject will chiefly consist in the mention of the size of others. As I shall have occasion for other references to the quoted canals, I take the liberty of making my extracts in full, at once.

Mr. Pinkerton gives the following account of Languedoc. "This celebrated canal was commenced and completed in the reign of Louis XIV. by Riquet, the engineer, under the auspices of that able minister, Colbert, in fifteen years—from 1666 to 1681. The mechanical ignorance of the period was surprised at a tunnel near Bezeirs of only 720 feet [in

length] lined with free-stone.* This noble canal begins in the bay of Languedoc; and at St. Ferrol [which I take to be the highest point of land] is a reservoir of 595 acres of water. It enters the Garonne River one-fourth mile below the city of Toulouse. The breadth, including towing paths, is 144 feet—depth 6 feet—length 64 French leagues, or about 180 English miles. The expense of it was more than half a million sterling—[nearly 2,500,000 dollars.]"

The American Encyclopedia gives the following additional information to his. "It begins with a large reservoir, 4000 paces in circumference and 24 feet deep, which receives many springs from the mountain Noire.

"The canal is supplied by a number of rivulets, and is furnished with 104 locks of about 8 feet rise each. In some places, it passes over [aqueduct] bridges of vast height—and in others, it cuts through solid rock for 1000 paces [nearly 182 rods.]" Phil. ed. vol. 4, p. 79.

On the canal of Clyde, in Scotland, Mr. Pinkerton gives the following information.

"It connects the friths of Forth and Clyde together. Its breadth, at the surface, is 56 feet—its depth 7 feet—the locks 75 feet long, their gates 20 wide. It is raised from the Carron by 20 locks, in a tract of 10 miles, to the amazing height of 155 feet above the medium of full sea mark. At the 20th lock begins the canal of partition on the summit between the east and west seas, which continues 18 miles on a level, near Glasgow. In some places the canal is carried through mossy ground, and in others through solid rock. In the fourth mile of the canal there are ten locks, and a fine aqueduct bridge which crosses the great road leading from Edinburgh to Glasgow. The expenses of this mile amounted to 18,000 pounds sterling, [equal to 80,000 dollars.]

"At Kirkintullock, the canal is carried over the water of Logie, on an aqueduct bridge, the arch of which is 90 feet broad, and was built at three different operations of 30 feet each, having only one centre of 30 feet broad, which was shifted on small rollers from one stretch to another. Although this was a new thing and never attempted before with an arch of this size, yet the joinings are as fairly equal as any other part of the arch. The whole is thought to be a capital piece of masonry. There are, in the whole, 18 drawbridges and 15 aqueduct bridges of considerable size, besides small ones and tunnels.

"The supplying the canal with water was, of itself, a great work. One reservoir is above 24 feet deep, and covers a surface of 50 acres. Another consists of 70 acres, and is banked up by a sluice 22 feet. The length of the canal is precisely 35 miles, and no work of the kind can be more ably finished. It was completed in 1790."

The American Encyclopedia, beside the above, has the following particulars. "It rises and falls 160 feet by means of 39 locks; 20 on the east and 19 on the west side (as the tide does not ebb so low in the Clyde by 9 feet as it does in the Forth.) Vessels drawing 8 feet of

* A tunnel is the piercing or boring a passage through a hill to preserve the proper level.

water, and not exceeding 19 feet beam and 73 feet in length, pass with ease. [This is the exterior dimensions of the boat—it is probable her interior measurement would give about 100 tons burthen.] The canal is about 8 feet deep. It passes through moss, quicksand, gravel, and rocks; up precipices and over valleys. It runs 18 miles on a level: in this course, for a considerable way, the ground is banked about 20 feet high, and the water is 16 feet deep, and two miles of it is made through a deep moss. The aqueduct bridge over the Kilven is supposed to be the greatest of the kind in the world; it consists of four arches and is 420 feet in length, exhibiting a very singular effort of human ingenuity and labour. The canal, when finished, will cost 200,000 pounds, [nearly 900,000 dollars.]

"It is the greatest of the kind in Britain, and, without doubt, will be of great national utility; though it is to be regretted that it had not been executed on a still larger scale, the locks being too short for transporting large masts."

Mr. Pinkerton, in speaking of the canal of Kiel in Denmark, observes, "This canal is intended to unite the Baltic Sea with the river Eydar, which flows into the German Sea. It is about 20 English miles. The breadth 100 feet at the top and 54 at bottom. Its least depth about 10 feet, so as to admit vessels of about 120 tons burthen. It was begun in 1777 and finished in 1785."

It is to be regretted, that Mr. Pinkerton did not inform us of the number of locks, &c. and the cost of them.

HERCULES.

No. IV.

ITS PROBABLE SIZE CONTINUED.

Mr. Pinkerton says, "The English canals are generally from 3 to 5 feet deep, and from 20 to 40 wide, and the lock-gates from 10 to 12. But they answer the purpose of land-carriage, their only design."

Again—"The Duke of Bridgewater is justly venerated as the founder of inland navigation [in England.] He was seconded by Brindley, than whom a greater natural genius in mechanics never existed.

"Their first canal extends from Worsley's mills, by a circuitous route, 9 miles, to Manchester. This beautiful canal is thrown over the river Irwell by an arch of 39 feet in height, under which barges pass without lowering their masts. Yet the expense of this noble canal, in the then comparatively cheap state of labour and provisions, was only computed at 1000 guineas per mile [equal to 4750 dollars.] The various machines and inventions of Brindley, for its construction and preservation, deservedly excite wonder; but a detail cannot be given here.

"The grand design of Brindley was to join the four great ports of England, viz. Bristol,

London, Liverpool, and Hull, by inland navigation. The two latter are joined by a canal from the river Trent, and proceeding north to the Mersey. This is styled the Grand Trunk. It was begun in 1766 and finished in 1777. Its length is 99 miles. It was attended with great difficulties, particularly in passing the river Dove in Derbyshire, where there is an aqueduct of 23 arches. The tunnel through the hill of Hare-castle in Staffordshire, is in length 2880 yards [524 rods] and is more than 70 yards [210 feet] below the surface of the ground, and was executed with great labour and expense."

The same author, in noticing the canal from Dublin to the river Shannon, and that it failed through want of able engineers, closes his remarks with the following. "But in the first place, the avaricious and jobbing spirit of the persons employed—and latterly, the distracted state of the country, have hitherto impeded these noble intentions."

Also, in speaking of the canal of Arragon in Spain, he says, "One of these branches is conducted over the valley of Riojalon by an aqueduct bridge of 710 fathoms [258 rods] in length, and but only 17 feet thick at the base."

The American Encyclopedia informs, that "In the Dutch, Austrian, and French Netherlands, there is a very great number of canals; that from Bruges to Ostend carries vessels of 200 tons."

The Chinese have also a great number of canals; that which runs from Canton to Pekin extends about 825 miles in length, and was executed about 300 years ago."

I have enlarged my extracts with an intention of their serving as articles of information, without the expectation of having reference to many of them hereafter.

Having finished them, I find more remarks to offer under this head than I at first contemplated. I shall offer the importance of the subject, in apology to the reader, for my prolixity, digressions, and defect of language, which he may feel disposed to censure.

As American articles of commerce are principally its agricultural products, their bulk and weight impose large charges on their transportation to market. These charges are augmented by the scarcity of hands and the high price of manual and animal labour in this country.

In England many of her rivers (which compared with ours, are but farm-brooks and mill-streams) have been canalled and with advantage, because the price of manual labour is lower than that of beasts of draft and burden, when compared in their proportions with those of this country. Our streams are more than proportionably larger to our excess of bulk and wages. Our produce, forming the larger freight, can, in its course to market, mostly glide with the current, while the up-freight, consisting of manufactured articles, is proportionably lighter.

The important object of canals is to substitute animal labour in the transport of produce with water machines, and to bestow the saved labour in transport on the cultivation of the soil, where these machines cannot be made to apply. For us to derive the greatest advan-

tage from them, it is necessary they should be calculated on a large scale, sufficient to enter immediately into a competition, and shortly lead to an entire exclusion of land transport within their range. In a word, it should answer the same purpose the Hudson River does its adjacent territory, where no produce is carried to New-York market by land north of Kingsbridge.

The experiments on canals, hitherto made in the United States, are on the small scale. They are but little more than auxiliaries to our land carriage. The navigation of the Mohawk and Seneca rivers, is strictly so. They merely serve the purpose of facilitating the surplus produce of the country to market, which, for the want of a sufficient number of draft-teams, would be materially retarded. The charges on land or water transport are about the same. The size of boats in use on these rivers are mostly five or ten tons. Owing to the small size of the Herkimer Canal, and the locks at Little Falls, the latter size is the largest which can be admitted: and in consequence of the light streams of Wood Creek and the upper part of the Mohawk, with the numerous rifts and false channels around the islands in the lower part of the latter, the smaller sized boats are navigated with difficulty during the two or three months of summer drought.

It certainly must be acknowledged that the inhabitants within the vicinity of the western part of this navigation, have exercised a degree of patience toward the Western Inland Lock Navigation Company, in their neglect of clearing the channel of the Mohawk from its minor obstructions, by which, it is problematical, they have exposed their charter to a forfeiture. I am not alone in the opinion, that for little more than 1000 dollars material improvements might be made in that river, by a well-constructed float, with a windlass and grappling irons, by which many of the large stones in the rifts might be removed, and the false channels dammed two or three feet high, so as to turn all their waters, when low, into the main channel.

In the account of the canal of Clyde we have its particular dimensions with that of the boat. In that of Kiel, its dimensions with the burthen of the boat. In that of Languedoc, its dimensions only, those of the boat being left to our inference. That of the Clyde has about the same draft of water which the Hudson River has on the bars a few miles below Albany. These canals are of those sizes adapted to the purposes of great utility.

The dimensions which I conceive best to adopt for the Genesee Canal is the commodious width of the Languedoc, about 100 feet, and 10 feet in depth. I cannot perceive any obstacle to these dimensions, but that of accommodating the Mohawk to its depth; and I am far from conceiving that impracticable. To clear its channel from sunken timber—its rifts of their rocks—sinking the bed of the river at the small rifts, and in some cases to throw their falls into the larger ones—at a few of the larger rifts erect shallow locks—erect dams in an oblique direction across the false channels—erect wing dams at the head of the broad and shallow parts of the river—rebuild the locks and canals on a larger scale. To these and

such other improvements as science and experience shall advise, add the waters of the Genesee Canal, and I presume it would not fall far short of 10 feet draft of water.

A material argument for giving the canal a good width, is its furnishing the Mohawk with the complementary waters of its own draft.

How far steam-boats can be adapted to practice in canals, so as to supersede the use of towing-paths and their draft cattle, time and experiment have yet to determine.

In my next I shall speak of the expense of the proposed canal, with some remarks on its utility.

HERCULES.

No. V.

PROBABLE COST.

The expenses of the canal of Languedoc, averaged on its whole distance, were 13,889 dollars per mile; those of Clyde, 25,714 dollars, nearly double. The locks of the former are more than one to every two miles: those of the latter, more than one to every mile; nearer double than the sum of their expenses. The surface of the reservoirs to the latter is over the proportion of distance to the former; so are the aqueduct bridges and bankings also. But the width of the canal of Clyde is only fifty-six feet, probably only half the width of that of Languedoc, but it is one-third deeper. It is probable the same labour in the former cost three to two of the latter. The latter was completed more than a century before the former. As the price of labour gradually rises with the multiplication of property, this will account for the difference. The price of labour in the United States is still more disproportioned.

We have the expense of the fourth mile of the canal of Clyde, which includes ten locks, and a fine aqueduct bridge, given separate, 80,000 dollars. From these data we may presume the thirty-nine locks with four miles of the canal, cost about one-third the whole sum. These, with the reservoirs and the bankings through mossy ground, &c. probably one half. This would leave its cost, when made through good and level ground, at about 14,500 dollars per mile. This calculation makes locks enormously expensive; probably three locks would cost more than one half of canal in good ground.

Of the canal of Languedoc—it would be but a rude conjecture, in me, to say what distance of the canal, in good ground, the labour which was bestowed on its reservoir of 595 acres would make. However, to favour my calculation, I will presume on the probability that the extra labour which that canal required, in its reservoirs, tunnels, &c. more than it is probable the proposed one will, is equal to twenty miles, which added to one hundred and eighty, makes it equal to two hundred miles or the supposed length of the latter. This will leave their difference only in their respective number of locks. Through my ignorance in

the art of canalling (that which has involved me in so many probabilities) I am wholly unable to make a calculation on the number of locks which the Genesee Canal may require; but to further the argument I will presume 26.* This gives a difference of four to one, or 78 locks for their whole difference.

If we can presume on the excess of expense in locks, reservoirs, and bankings in the canal of Clyde, over the one proposed, together with American ingenuity in the invention and use of labour-saving machines, for making an equivalent to the excess in the price of labour in the United States, we may venture to lay its price at the same rate—or, which is nearly the same, to double the price of that of Languedoc, and allow its distance at 200 miles, we shall find it to cost something more than five millons; to put it in round numbers, say 6,000,000 dollars. This will average 30,000 dollars per mile; or 93 dollars 75 cents per rod.

Were the executive of our government to instruct its foreign ministers and agents to collect every information from authors, engineers, and plans of foreign canals, which the old world affords, we could doubtless profit largely at their expense in our infant undertakings.

COMMERCIAL UTILITY.

Its advantages are too obvious to admit of a question. Of these, I shall only particularise two or three articles and glance at a few others.

In its tendency to improve and foster our natural resources, the effect which it would have on the article of pot-ash alone, would, in time, be sufficient to pay more than the expenses of the canal. I presume the following calculation will demonstrate the proposition.

At present, pot-ash is made as far inland as Batavia. The heavy charges on land transport would prevent it from ever extending as much further as to Niagara, consequently the waste timber of all our forests to the west of that, must be lost to the commerce of the United States. The effects of the canal in encouraging the manufactory of pot-ash, may be calculated to commence at the foot of Lake Erie. The American shores of that lake are about 300 miles; the shore of the straits of Detroit through Lake St. Clair to Lake Huron probably 80 miles; Lake Huron's shore, say 320 miles; the whole circumference of Lake Michigan, about 600; total, thirteen hundred miles, without taking Lake Superior into account.

Allow this range fifty miles width for the greatest distance of land carriage to the several landings on these shores. This gives 65,000 square miles, or 41,600,000 acres in this tract.

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* This estimate is predicated on the plan of an inclined plane.

One acre well timbered with hard wood will afford fifty bushels of ashes—from six to seven hundred bushels field ashes, make a ton of pot-ash, or fourteen acres—but allowing reserves for woodland, waste and neglect in collecting and saving ashes, &c. say that only one ton to every fifty acres shall be brought to market, this would give 832,000 tons.

Pot-ash can be manufactured, taken from the works to the country merchants, twenty or thirty miles, and afforded at 100 dollars per ton. The charges of transport from this village to New-York are about thirty-five dollars. To aid my calculation, I will presume on this for the average price of freight from the lakes through the canal. Its present price in New-York is 220 dollars per ton. Its average price in that market for ten years past is full 150 dollars. This will give the manufacturer and country merchant fifteen dollars profit.—Allow the shipping merchant for his profits ten dollars, making twenty-five dollars per ton for the sum of nett profits to American citizens. I consider this calculation to be within fact averaged on the whole quantity of pot-ash for the term past. We may at least rely on it for the future, when we consider the improvements yet to be made in the manufactory of that article, of which it is susceptible, and for which we already have a certainty in Alex. M'Nitt's patent therefor. So far as his patent has been essayed, it has rendered pot-ash standard first sort. With the improvement of its quality we may calculate on the enhancement of its price. Taking for granted the twenty-five dollars on 832,000 tons, gives 20,800,000 dollars for the amount of nett profits, a sum which perhaps cannot otherwise be realized by the citizens of the United States. To this sum add the advance value on this article along the shores of the canal, and it will make an amount equal to four times the conjectured cost of it.

Another consideration offers to view—to the New-York price of 150 dollars, add American freightage to Europe, and call the price 200 dollars per ton. The gross amount of 832,000 tons would be 166,400,000 dollars in exports answering our merchants for their remittances equal to cash.

These calculations also serve to give us some ideas of the resources of capital we have in our forests.

It is singular that this valuable article of commerce is not made in any considerable quantity to the south of this state. From the Philadelphia price current, I presume their merchants give it no encouragement. It might be attended with advantage in the other middle states, and particularly in the western. It could be transported from Pittsburgh to New-Orleans for twenty dollars per ton. By its serving as ballast freight to cotton, it could be exported from thence for nearly the same charges as from the Atlantic ports.

HERCULES.

No. VI.

Another article in which the canal would eventually nett its expenses to the inhabitants of the western country, is by facilitating the transport of salt. At present, all the country to the west of Onondaga, through the whole route of the lakes, the western part of Pennsylvania down to Pittsburgh, and one hundred miles below, on the Ohio River, mostly depend upon the salt springs on the Seneca River for their supply: also the country eastward to and beyond Utica.

A few minor springs have been found in this and the Genesee counties, and doubtless others will be discovered in different places sufficient to supply their adjacent settlements; but the probability is, that the westward country will ever have chiefly to depend on the Onondaga springs, and their fountain is competent to it.

The present route of transport from Onondaga is down Oswego River, along Lake Ontario, and up Niagara River to Black Rock or Buffalo. In this route it has to encounter the portages of Oswego and Niagara Falls, beside the sometimes tardy and dangerous navigation of the lake.

I am not informed what the present charges of freight and portage from Onondaga to Buffalo are, but it is probable that the charges by the canal would not exceed two-thirds of the present. Another valuable saving in its expense could be made in its package casks—by the canal it could be transported from the works to the most distant landings on the lakes, in bulk; whereas, owing to the different changes which it has to undergo in its land and water vehicles, it has necessarily to be put up in barrels which cost 50 *a* 60 cents each.

Salt can be purchased at the works for twenty cents per bushel—allow half cent the pound freight, from thence to Albany, it could be afforded in that market at 43 cents per bushel—under the late duties this would be able to enter into a competition with imported salt, on the banks of our tide waters.

I am informed, and with pleasure announce, that the Galen works manufacture a quality as fine for table use as the best of Liverpool basket salt.

Another advantage which the canal would dispense to the country, is that of rendering the cluster of lakes which would lie to the south of it, in the Genesee and Military tracts, navigable, by canalling their outlets into itself—also the Genesee River—and a connexion with Lake Ontario by tapping the canal opposite and into Oneida Lake; thence down Oswego River. The effects which these combined would have on enhancing the value of many millions of acres of land adjacent to their navigation, would ultimately be in amount perhaps in a decimal proportion to their first cost. With very few exceptions the soil of the surrounding country is even of a superior quality, and when put under good cultivation, would be able to make prompt remittances for its imported merchandise.

It would command the trade of Upper Canada.—If the late publication of the unratified

British treaty be correct, we have sufficient testimony of the estimation which its government would hold it in. The publication states the purport of the first of the two additional notes was to "keep open for future discussion a claim of Britain not to pay more on goods sent from Canada or New-Brunswick into the territories of the United States than is paid on the importation of such goods in American ships." England appears desirous to give its Canadian subjects a liberal trade through our territories. The revenue of this trade would pay much of the annual repairs of the canal.

Mail and passage boats would be devised for expedition. The spring and autumnal travellers on our turnpike would gladly improve the opportunity.

It would greatly facilitate emigration to the western new lands.

Its not being affected by summer droughts—only by frosts—nor that scarcely beyond the period usual at Albany, would give it the term of eight or nine months of the best seasons in the year, with the longest days for doing business.

Its bankings would afford excellent and permanent mill-seats, whose value would be enhanced by the scarcity of natural ones in the country. Those we have are mostly temporary, except on the outlet of our small lakes. Their rents would afford a revenue towards its repairs and attendance on its locks.

The trade of almost all the lakes in North America, the most of which flowing through the canal, would centre at New-York for their common mart. This port, already of the first commercial consequence in the United States, would shortly after, be left without a competition in trade, except by that of New-Orleans. In a century its island would be covered with the buildings and population of its city.

Albany would be necessitated to cut down her hills and fill her valleys in order to give spread to her population.

The harbour of Buffalo would exchange her forest trees for a thicket of marine spars.

Utica, if the point of junction, would become a distinguished inland town.

Schenectady, by her portage, would have the drudge of business. I have made no calculation for extending the navigation of the Mohawk beyond this place. Her citizens will endeavour to retain the portage to an extremity. When the western trade becomes extensive, and the price of freight down the Mohawk, through the necessary locks into the Hudson at Troy and Albany, can be produced below the possible price of portage, the necessary improvements will then be effected.

Such is the interest which the inhabitants of those places would have in the canal, that they cannot long slumber over the project. To sum up the whole in a sentence, if the project be but a feasible one, no situation on the globe offers such extensive and numerous advantages to inland navigation by a canal, as this!

In my next, I shall inquire into the resources of capital for the undertaking.

HERCULES.

No. VII.

RESOURCES OF CAPITAL.

The probable sources are, the individual capital of our citizens,—that of foreigners,—and our national treasury.

There are objections which lie against the two first. To the former of these, the magnitude of the undertaking is beyond the reach of their individual capital. This yet remains inadequate to the full improvement of our natural resources; consequently wholly incompetent to any capital undertakings of internal improvements, and probably will remain so for a century to come. Such an attempt at the canal would, for the want of effective capital, like many of those which have been undertaken in this country, have either to labour under a tardy execution, or obtain relief from the disgraceful aid of lotteries.

The calling foreign capitalists in to our aid is still more exceptionable. The object of investing their capital in our stock would be the double consideration of its permanency, and its premium at a per centage above what they could obtain for it in their own market; and, consequently, the immense trade of the canal would for ever be rendered tributary to foreign capitalists by an unextinguishable toll. America has already a large amount of foreign capital vested in, and drawing a revenue from, her stock and her new lands, for which she has not an adequate reciprocity of interest; and, unless our government holds in reserve the idea of the sequestration of foreign property, deposited in our country as the dernier resort, for the redress of foreign spoliations on our commerce, there can scarce be a palliative argument offered for its liberal toleration to foreigners, expressly foreign residents, who by their superior wealth are drawing large sums of profits from our best resources.

Beside the toll, there is another objection common to both these sources of capital: it is that prejudicial propensity to which incorporate bodies are subject, in their divergings from the common interest, and their tendency to monopolies.

Our government is constituted by a certain sum of power granted by each of its members in exchange for a certain sum of equal rights.

Incorporations and charter-parties are constituted by granting a fractional sum of these equal rights and endowing a few select members—generally the most wealthy, consequently the most influential—as their exclusive rights.

This sum of delegated power subtracts so much from that of the social compact; and these exclusive rights diminish, to their amount, the sum of equal rights.

The government which grants charter-parties, cedes so much of its own jurisdiction—creates and erects so many little demi-sovereigns within itself. This it does at its own expense; for the sum of power in governments is like the sum of money at the gambler's table, where nothing is added or multiplied. The gains of one are but the losses of another. The joint interests of incorporate bodies, like partnership, produce a concert of measures. Being

derived from government by an emanation of political power, they are very subject to re-act on the parent of its existence. Its effects are often pernicious. Fifty men associated for a common purpose, can out machinate five hundred unassociated; and one bank association *may* buy or bribe two-thirds of the representation of the whole state. They must, indeed, pay for it, but others must pay them in turn; and like the special immunities, the whole must come out of the people.

Let the government be liberal with its grants of incorporations, and it would eventually transfer its vital powers to, and its energies become absorbed in, these principalities. Thence our government would gently slide into an aristocracy. The one is the foster-parent to the other.

But another evil, more serious if possible, may be apprehended. Presume that our country abounded with a large amount of charter stock; although it was originally granted to native citizens, yet it was made transferrable.

Should British agents and capitalists purchase up the major part of it, our government would become completely manacled with foreign control. This is the most vulnerable point of our government to British influence—their gold.

I have said more on the subject of incorporations than I at first contemplated; but I conceived the aptitude of the subject to the times rendered it somewhat pertinent to the main subject. I will here remark, in justification of our republican governments, that they commenced with extensive natural resources and advantages—with few hands, and a scanty capital. Incorporations become a necessary evil to aid the improvements of our infant country. Although their injurious, as well as beneficial, effects are obvious, yet, for the want of a sufficient amount of their stock, we may, for the present, allay our apprehensions of those direful evils. However, it would be but judicious and prudent in our government to limit the duration of their grants of charters, and privilege none but citizens to vote for, and to hold offices under, them.

HERCULES.

No. VIII.

RESOURCES OF CAPITAL CONTINUED.

In stating the objections to the first two resources of capital,—its tax of tollage,—I have necessarily been led to consider their collateral consequences also—the biassed and perhaps baneful influence which incorporate companies may and often have on government.

With these weighty objections to the resources of individual capital, we therefore can alone, with confidence, turn our attention and our best hopes to a patriotic government, with a productive revenue, as the source of capital competent to the completion of our numerous

internal improvements. The ample funds of its treasury would prevent the failure of the design—mutilated plans being substituted for grand projects, or even a tardy pursuit and prosecution of the work.

This would leave the private capital of our citizens to pursue and follow up the improvements of our natural resources in the wide field of business which they would open. By the extension of improvements and trade, the government would derive a premium on its expenditures, through its custom-house revenue, without, and which would far exceed, tolls and lockage. In this respect, the government would possess an advantage which could not be attached to capital derived from any other source; nor could it be deprived of it, were they executed by any other capital.

The government, thus acting as a national incorporation, would supersede the use and necessity of separate and selfish associations for these purposes; and furnish them to the country free of tollage. This alleviation of the tax on its capital to our citizens, would operate with mutual reciprocity between them and the government.

But there are political considerations, the consequences of which cannot be estimated by the rule of pence. Our considerate government is so ably devised and constituted as to embrace, with equal facility and effect, ten times the number of states that now belong to it.

The maxims of politicians are, that rivers unite, mountains divide, governments. In our essay on a republican government, we have undertaken to encounter the latter dogma, by embracing the celebrated Alleghany mountains, and their western country, within our territory.

The political advantages of opening water communications around and across the intervening mountains, between the great eastern and western sections of the American empire, are, by expediting and familiarising the intercourse, and by establishing commercial and social connexions between their respective inhabitants, to cultivate genial harmony, and to assimilate their manners in the infancy of our country, which, growing with our maturity, would bind them in their affections to the common government, and secure it from a dismemberment.

The convention which formed our constitution, not anticipating the subject, omitted to provide it with an article for the purpose of applying the surplus revenue to internal improvements. However, its utility is too obvious for the proposition of an amendment for the purpose to meet with an obstacle; and the interest which this state has in the event, is of sufficient inducement for its legislature to be the first to propound it. The amendment ought to endow the national government with the uncontrollable right to enter, range through, and leave the territory of any individual state at discretion. This would avoid the impediments of local prejudices and selfish jealousies—leaving old places to flourish or decline, and new ones to arise, as natural advantages decided.

In the appropriations, it is probable the suspicions of partiality might arise on the part of

some states against the proper requisitions of others. These altercations could readily be adjusted by the fair and equitable principle of a dividend of the surplus money in the treasury, in proportion to the sums its custom-house produces to it, until their most important improvements were effected.

The payment of the nineteen millions of three per cent. stock could be deferred with advantage to the country, for the earlier commencement of these improvements. For this purpose I have a sincere wish that the government may not effect the proposed negociations with the holders of the deferred stock.

Having finished my remarks on the Genesee Canal, I shall, in my next, suggest some projects for other improvements of the kind in different parts of the United States.

HERCULES.

No. IX.

OTHER IMPROVEMENTS PROPOSED.

In the course of my remarks on this subject, I shall suggest sundry improvements of the present beds and channels of rivers. These will have in view, in general terms, the clearing them of rocks and bars, damming up false channels and sinking shoal places to produce channels of an even bottom and uniform depth of water—sinking small rifts, and locking the large ones and falls—and straightening the course of rivers by cutting points across their bends.

As the propositions have in view the following of the established course of waters, their feasibility, I presume, will readily obtain the assent of the reader.

I also contemplate to suggest some projects for tapping rivers, and taking part of their waters from their natural beds, and giving a new direction to their channels. In doing this, I am sensible I shall assume a critical position; but, "in America, nature seems to have carried on her operations upon a large scale, and with a bolder hand, and to have distinguished the features of this country by a peculiar magnificence;" and nature invites Americans to project their plans of internal improvements on her magnificent scale.

The experience of this country on canals, as yet, is but trifling; and that which it possesses, is obtained from essays made on a small scale. By striking out a "bolder" line, I shall pursue nature's guide in an untrodden route. Being but a limited traveller, and our geographies and gazetteers affording me but little information on the subject, of course I am left to draw my inferences of probabilities chiefly from maps; consequently, these suggestions must be subjected to many exceptions; particularly those of natural impediments which remain unascertained, even by observation, much less by actual survey. It is by surveys, only,

that they can be tested; and it is the interest of men, only, which will invite them to it. Until then, they will remain but as the crude suggestions of projects.

I am not without apprehensions that, from the novelty of the projects, they may be treated as chimeras; or, at least, as "works that will never be undertaken in your day or mine."

Although I have an ardent wish to live and see many of them effected, yet, by accident, I may be writing for a subsequent age: And I have that reliance on the American character, already established for its inventive genius and enterprise, which gives me even grateful expectations that, when possessed of adequate capital and invited by interest, my countrymen are capable of encountering many difficulties and apparent impossibilities, by which many improvements, or collaterals to the proposed ones, will be undertaken and completed at a future day.

Having thus premised the subject, with diffidence I shall pursue it, connected with the idea which I suggested of a dividend of the surplus money of the United States' treasury among the individual states, and purpose to notice the probable improvements which they severally offer.

Owing to the unevenness of ground in the New-England states, they offer but uncertain prospects of success in tapping their principal rivers and traversing the country with canals.

The District of Maine has the Penobscot, Kennebec, and Amoriscogin, of considerable size, which will admit of improvements in their channels and locking their falls, and rendered serviceable in rafting lumber from the interior.

New-Hampshire has no considerable streams but the Merrimack and her half share of Connecticut River. The unevenness of the country will probably forbid the idea of tapping Connecticut River and throwing it across to the Merrimack; and that, again, across its bend and into or near its estuary. Its chief use of inland navigation is for the conveyance of its lumber. Its surplus productions are mostly provisions which can be transported alive on their feet.

Massachusetts invites to a more capacious and finished improvement of navigation of Connecticut River above and through her territory. If the ground would admit of taking a draft of water from Connecticut River, above Greenfield falls, and running it in a circular route across the country (perhaps through Montague, between Sunderland and Petersham, near Rutland and Worcester, to the head waters of the Concord and to Charles River) into Boston, it would be a valuable acquisition to the trade of that town. It would require a distance of 120 or 130 miles. The Middlesex canal could be materially improved by sinking its bed to the level of the Merrimack, and by giving it a greater width also—or by sinking it in part and accommodating the remainder of its present elevation, by tapping the Merrimack up stream a sufficient distance to command the draft of its current. From Dr. Morse's information of the canal, I presume an improvement of the kind is very plausible. The Dr.

speaks of cutting a canal across the isthmus between the heads of Barnstable and Buzzards Bay, a distance of six or eight miles, which, if it could be accomplished, (he says that Dr. Dwight gave it as his opinion,) it " would be more advantageous to Massachusetts and the continent than any other."

If the learned gentlemen had merely boat-navigation in view, I shall beg the liberty to entertain the reverse opinion. Their fancies must have taken the lead of their judgments; for I know of no place where the connexion of two equal bodies of tide-waters would be of less utility. However, could a ship-channel of 15 or 20 feet depth be cut through and admit of the ebb and flood of the tides, it would be valuable for abridging the length and risk of the passage of the sound coasters to and from Boston. This consideration, alone, can possibly render its capital of more value than two or three per cent.

Rhode-Island has a greater proportion of navigable waters than territory. Its only prospect for capital improvements in inland navigation is the tapping Connecticut River about Greenfield falls—or rather, tapping the one from that to Boston, near and throwing it into the head-waters of the Pawtucket—thence follow its channel, with improvements, to Providence. The advantageous navigation, the interior and safe situation, and the capital in trade at Providence, gives it a valuable consideration.

Connecticut has but two considerable rivers—that of its name and Stratford. The improvement of the first would be valuable—that of the second, with the branches of the Thames, would doubtless be worth the expense.

Vermont is wholly an inland state, and for ever destined to remain so, with its productions tributary to the commerce of her neighbour states, unless Chamblee River can be sufficiently improved to admit vessels from the St. Lawrence into Lake Champlain. While she would have no dividend from custom-house revenue, she offers the interest of her trade to New-Hampshire, Massachusetts, Rhode-Island, and Connecticut, for the improvement of Connecticut River, on the east—and to New-York, the improvement of Lake Champlain (by a connexion with the Hudson) and several considerable rivers which fall into it, on the west.

HERCULES.

No. X.

OTHER IMPROVEMENTS PROPOSED.

New-York is destined to be the brightest star in the American galaxy. This state commands the means of vast improvements and extension of inland navigation. To the natural advantages for navigation which (the most beautiful river that geography records,) the Hudson affords, may be added further improvements to those already made at the head of its tide waters for the benefit of Albany, Troy, Lansinburgh, and Waterford; and these

extended up the river to Fort Edward. If clearing out the rocks and stones in the bed of the river—sinking the channel on the small rifts—damming and locking the falls at Fort Miller, Saratoga, and the rift at Waterford would not effect the necessary improvements, a capacious canal could be thrown from Fort Edward to Waterford, and continued almost the whole distance on the west bank of the river; a distance of forty miles. This communication could be continued to Lake Champlain, by cutting a canal from Fort Edward to Skeensborough, or the head of South Bay. I have no information of the balance of waters between the two points, except what is drawn by inference from the maps, and by presumption. From the latter, I conceive the head of water which gives current to Lake Champlain and Chamblee River, into the St. Lawrence, is greater than from Fort Edward to tide waters in the Hudson. If this be fact, a draft could be obtained from the lake for the supply of the canal—but when looking at the head and course of Wood Creek, there is a probability that the Hudson, at Fort Edward, is the highest. Admit it, then the supply of the canal must be gained from the Hudson by taking it out at the head of Glen's Falls, or by tapping (and if the surrounding hills require it, to tunnel also) the head of Lake George, which could conveniently be thrown on the highest ground between the two points. The distance would be about fifteen or twenty miles. These would open an important communication between Lake Champlain and the tide waters of the Hudson.

The several branches of the Susquehannah and the Tioga which take their rise in, and traverse a part of the state, would merit a consideration also.

In turning our attention to the westward, an immense field opens to view. To the Genesee canal and its appendages already spoken of—there could be a continuation of water communication to the north-western extremity of our territory, with several valuable divergent branches. From Buffalo (the contemplated head of the Genesee Canal) the navigation to the straits of St. Marie is already complete. These straits might be improved by sinking its rapids, or by damming and locking them, which would complete the navigation into Lake Superior.

The improvement of the Fox and Ouiseonsing rivers, with a canal to connect them at or about their portage, supplied by the most elevated stream, would open a communication between Lake Michigan and the Mississippi 1150 miles from its mouth.

Another important improvement could be effected by tapping Lake Michigan and throwing a canal into the Plein river, the west branch of the Illinois, thence down that river into the Mississippi 1180 miles from its mouth. The evenness of the land between the Plein and Michigan, gives a certainty to its feasibility, and a probability of its being completed by a canal of ten—at furthest twenty miles. With the necessary improvements in the river below the canal, the navigation of this branch could be made of equal dimensions with the Genesee Canal.

To render the route of transportation from Buffalo to the Mississippi, by the Illinois, of

its greatest value, another improvement would become essential—a cut across the promontory between Lakes Erie and Michigan at their heads. Here, indeed, the course of waters (the rivers taking their rise near Lake Erie, and falling into Lake Michigan) appears to preclude the idea—but Michigan disemboguing its waters through Huron and the straits, into Erie, establishes the fact that the former lies something higher than the latter, and the project is forbidden only by the unevenness of the intermediate ground, of which I have not been able to acquire particular information.

As the importance of this improvement may not immediately strike the perception of the reader, I will make a brief statement of it. It would require the distance of 180 or 190 miles. From the head of it, across the lake to Chicago, about 50 miles, making 240 miles from the head of Lake Erie. This would make the distance from Buffalo to Chicago 540 miles, which by the present route through Lake Huron, &c. is 1200, with a difference of 300 miles of north latitude.

The distance from New-York by this route, to the Mississippi, would be—to Albany, 165—to Buffalo, 300—to Chicago, 540—to the mouth of the Illinois, about 425—to the mouth of the Missouri, 20 miles, making 1450 miles; of which 165 would be tide waters—350 dead waters—445 down, and but 490 up stream of current waters; and the most of that regulated by canals. Whereas, from the mouth of the Mississippi to the mouth of the Missouri is 1160 miles, with its whole distance up the stream of current waters. This would evidently give the port of New-York a share of the trade in supplying the Missouri with foreign merchandise, and with a participation in its fur trade, which, however, would return with the current of the Mississippi—while the other improvements would secure to that port the entire command of both over all our North-western territory.

Unless this improvement be found practicable and become effected, it is doubtful whether the port of New-York will be able to enter into competition with that of New-Orleans for the Missouri trade—for the increased distance of the route through Lake Huron, &c. and the sometimes dangerous navigation of that lake, with the more lengthy interruptions by frost, would materially enhance the charges of transport—nor could it well be substituted by a connection between and improvement of the rivers Miamee of the lakes and Saint Joseph, for their courses are indirect and their branches too small for any other purpose of improvement but the benefit of their own shores.

Valuable improvements could be made by canalling the portages between, and improving the beds of several rivers between Lake Erie and Ohio River—between the Miamee of the lakes and the Wabash; also between the former and the great Miamee—between Sandusky and the latter; and the Scioto—and between the Cuyahoga and the Muskingum. The route between the Sandusky and the Scioto is the best of these in the natural state.

Another important acquisition to the commerce of the port of New-York presents itself to view—if the necessary improvements can but be found practicable—but it yet remains to

be ascertained, whether a draft can be had on the waters of Lake Erie, and thrown into any one of the branches of the Ohio. The portage of Chatauque Lake, and the Presque Isle, are the only places which offer a prospect at present. Of these, the latter is the most promising. The tapping at Presque Isle would of course be thrown into the French Creek, which is already one of the best navigable streams, for its size, in the United States.

The land is level along the portage to La Boeuf, and should the French Creek be something higher at this place than the lake at Presque Isle, the canal could be continued down its stream until it gained a draft. Should this be found impracticable, the only alternative is the Chatauque Lake, with a less probability of success. But were they to fail, we have an inferior substitute left us, by damming the mouth of the Chatauque and raising it several feet, for the purpose of opening it occasionally to facilitate the navigation of its outlet during the summer droughts.

This would give a route of transport from New-York to Buffalo, 465—to Presque Isle, 90—to Pittsburgh (by land 125, add for the bends of the river 40,) is 165, making 720 miles, and about the half of it up stream, and is 80 miles more than twice the distance from Philadelphia to Pittsburgh over land, with a very mountainous road.

Could the capital improvement of commanding a draft on the waters of Lake Erie be effected, it is obvious that it would give to the port of New-York, the supply trade for all the shores of the Ohio, and its northern branches, until it was met by arrivals from New-Orleans.

This fertile country would make able remittances for its importations.

HERCULES.

No. XI.

OTHER IMPROVEMENTS PROPOSED.

New-Jersey is circumstanced mostly for domestic trade, and to be tributary to the two first commercial ports in the United States, situated on her right and left.

It is bounded by water on all sides but her northern line, yet offers no certainty of capital improvements in inland navigation.

With no part of her territory more than fifty miles from navigable waters, she has turned her attention to the improvement of roads. The turnpike mania rages among her citizens, and her legislature have granted charters by the dozen for several years past. It will be fortunate for her citizens if turnpike stock-jobbing should not happen to get the preponderance over her state councils.

It will be a desideratum to the United States to have a water passage opened between the Delaware and the Hudson through that state, for the purpose of continuing the chain of inland navigation coastwise from South Carolina to Long Island Sound, which would be of

essential service to the internal continental commerce during maritime wars. But the prospect is not as flattering as our wishes. Probably a small canal could be opened between Trenton Creek and Millstone River—perhaps the latter could be straightened by a cut across its bend, in a direct line from Princeton to Amboy.

Whether there could be found a gap in the Blue Mountains suitable to admit of tapping the Delaware near the north-west corner of the state and throwing it into some of the head branches of the Passaic; or whether the Delaware would admit of being tapped at the southern termination of these mountains, somewhere about Easton, and thrown into the south branch of the Raritan—and this aided, or perhaps even effected, by the use of the Mosconecunk, are but mere speculations on the map of the state. Could a tapping of the Delaware be effected at the latter place, it would greatly aid the grand intersection of the state, besides contributing to its own trade.

Pennsylvania is possessed of a large territory, mostly a fertile soil, and rich in its mineral productions. Like New-York, it is almost an interior state, and has but one principal seaport; but each commands the trade of more than their state territories.

Its large streams open a field for valuable improvements in their channels and canals.—As Philadelphia can monopolize the trade of the Delaware, it is her interest to bestow upon it the most effectual improvements. It could be rendered navigable about two hundred and fifty miles above that place, and made to furnish that market with lumber, produce, and pot-ash.

Of the Susquehannah—nature has done much, but never applied the finishing chissel.—It requires, and probably will admit of important improvements being made in its bed and channel. Maryland is largely interested in the improvements of this river. Could the contending interests of the two states be reconciled into mutual co-operation for the purpose, it might be converted into one of the most extensive and valuable channels of trade, of any other river to the east of the Alleghany mountains. As it is, its navigation requires an annual sacrifice of a few lives and much property. To blast and remove the obstructing rocks might be sufficient for descending the river in freshets. To ascend the river, its bed would require to be sunk at the small rifts, and the large rapids dammed, with canals and locks cut in its margin; and rendered navigable through the season. [Since writing this number, I have been informed by a gentleman, that there are sundry improvements made and making—among them the Conewaga Falls are canalled and locked as here proposed. These improvements afford excellent mill-seats.]

Doctor Morse says the Susquehannah, with all its tributary streams, "water at least 15,000,000 acres." Besides its agricultural products, the east branch affords large supplies of pine timber, from which excellent naval spars can be obtained. The west branch, and the Tioga, abounds in excellent grain lands. The improvement of its navigation would

cultivate these resources of trade, and command the southern section of the Genesee country.

It is worthy of remark, that the adventures made, a few years since, at Newtown, on the Tioga branch, by the merchants of Geneva, cost them nearly 10,000 dollars. This was a large sum to tax an infant settlement with experiments.

The effect was the turning of that trade into the channel of Albany again.

To follow the natural bed of this river with its improvements, would be throwing its whole trade into the Chesapeake. Philadelphia, straitened to the preservation of its commercial consequence, has been necessitated to devise means for diverting its extensive trade from its natural channel. Under the enterprising spirit which the Philadelphians have displayed in prosecuting their plans, I cannot but presume that the idea of tapping the Susquehannah, and throwing it into the Delaware, must have occurred to them; however, the idea of its immense expense must have deterred them from attempting it; for instead of adopting the only adequate means of securing to themselves their share of its trade, they have resorted to the inefficacious substitute of turnpikes and mill-stream canals.

It is certain that the Susquehannah is above that of the Delaware, and affords the probability of being tapped somewhere.

It is doubtful whether the unevenness of the ground will admit of the east branch being tapped about Wilkesbarre, and thrown into the Lehigh, or the main branch at Sunbury, and thrown into the west branch of the Schuylkill. Could they be effected, it would save the otherwise, necessarily, complete improvement of the bed of the river below their respective places; and the latter, rather more probable of the two, might be thrown into the canal which connects the Tulpehocken and the Swatara, and would serve also as a reservoir to enlarge and maintain that communication between the Susquehannah and the Delaware through the summer droughts. But much the more probable prospect of tapping it with success, is either about Harrisburgh, or at the head of the Conewaga Falls, and running it circular—nearly collateral with the river, until it could raise the height of land, and thence over to the Delaware near Philadelphia—or, about or above the Conestoga and over to Philadelphia or Newcastle—*or both*. Either of these would embrace the trade of the Juniata, with the east and west branches of the main river, and avoid the part which is the most difficult of navigation, between Columbia and tide waters.

Philadelphia must effect some tapping of the kind, or forfeit nearly the whole trade of the Susquehannah. She is the conflict of trade with the more excellent harbour of New-York, and the more commodious situation of Baltimore to the back and great western country, with the command, naturally, over the best river in her state. Nothing but a spirited effort and success in improvements, can preserve her from a decline in trade; but with well effected improvements, and her merchants possessing a more independent capital, with which they

are enabled to give more liberal credits to country merchants, she could retain an able competition with them.

The important purpose of supplying Philadelphia and the manufacturing towns in the lower part of the state, with fuel from the coal mines, up stream of all these rivers, would alone be equivalent to the interest on the sum of their expenses in improvements—also the reduction in the transport charges of iron to market, from the inexhaustible ore beds about their banks; while the small sized canals, fed by perishable streams, would scarcely make an able competition with land carriage; nor would be of any consequence for the transport of coal.

The head branches of the Susquehannah and the Juniata would merit their necessary improvements.

With respect to a connexion between the waters on the east and west side of the Alleghanies—between the Juniata and the Conemaugh—the west branch of the Susquehannah and the east branch of the Alleghany—the Tioga, and the head of that river—they are too near their respective sources to be durable or sizeable, and must be subject to numerous locks or portages in lieu thereof. However enterprise, and the established connexions in trade, may effect secondary improvements.

HERCULES.

No. XII.

OTHER IMPROVEMENTS PROPOSED.

Delaware has more navigable waters than territory. Like New-Jersey, it is calculated only for domestic trade, and to be intersected by the continuity of the inland navigation running collateral with our Atlantic shores. It is this alone which will give to that state its chief importance in this point of view. It will have to be effected by connecting Christiana and Elk creeks, unless its level ground will somewhere admit of cutting a canal which can be supplied by tide waters.

Maryland, whose indented shores of tide waters, perhaps exceed any other state in the Union, commands an important rank in a commercial point of view, by the invaluable intersection of the Chesapeake Bay, and the concentration of its capital near the head of it at Baltimore. It already classes the third in the United States, and it ever will maintain its position.

Its chief improvements in inland navigation are, the bed and channel of the Susquehannah in concert with Pennsylvania; with Virginia for the improvement of the Potomac, and, if possible, to straighten it in its upper bends—to tap it, perhaps about the elbow, near the

Monocasy, and throw it into the Patapsco, near Baltimore, a distance of about fifty miles; and a joint intersection with Delaware by the Atlantic parallel canal.

If the head of tide waters in the Chesapeake afford a good harbour, it will furnish a mart that will enter into competition with Baltimore, at least for the Susquehannah trade. The tapping would establish Baltimore in the preference for the Ohio trade, in which she already rivals Philadelphia by overland transport; and unless New-York can come into the competition by an outlet of Lake Erie into the Ohio, Baltimore will eventually become the mistress of this trade.

It is singular how the celebrated Doctor Morse came to give this trade, with that of all the lakes west of Ontario, to the borough of Alexandria. Surely it could not have been the Doctor's political partiality for the southern states which led him to bestow it there at the expense of New-York. But I presume he had not correctly informed himself of nature's calculation on the subject. He has been led into a very considerable error respecting the distances between the places. He lays down the distances from the mouth of the Cuyahoga to Alexandria 425—and to New-York 825—making a difference of 400 miles.

The result of my labours to ascertain the distances, is as follows—From Alexandria up the Potomac to George's Creek 230 miles (see Morse's Geography, p. 622) to Savage River, say 6—portage from this to Cheat River 37—to its mouth 50 (see Gazeteer, under Cheat River)—down the Monongahela to Red Stone, by water, 40—to its junction with the Yohogany 50—to Pittsburgh 12 (see Gaz.)—down to Big Beaver 30—up that, across the portage, and down the Cuyahoga to Lake Erie, by their meandering 180—making 635 miles. The other route, from Cuyahoga to Buffalo 190—to mouth of Niagara River 36—to Oswego 160—to Oneida Lake 43—across it 27—to Rome 26—to Utica 25—to Schenectady 82—its portage to Albany 16—to New-York 165—total 768 miles. But the Doctor has very partially added the distance from Albany to New-York; whereas Albany is as properly the head of tide waters on this route as Alexandria is on the other, the distance of which is 603 from Cuyahoga, or 32 miles less than Alexandria, instead of 400 miles further.

Let Albany get the Genesee Canal completed, and Baltimore the one above proposed from the Potomac, and they become the two principal points. Albany will then be about 500 from Cuyahoga, and Baltimore about the same as Alexandria, about 130 miles further, nor will it be to her purpose to go to the expense of shortening those fluctuating streams.—From this consideration, Baltimore will only take into view the Ohio trade. If a draft can be obtained on Lake Erie into the Ohio, as was mentioned in the tenth number, with its distance from New-York 720 miles to Pittsburgh—or 550 from Albany—that from Baltimore being about 425,* leaves a difference between them of 125 miles. (The Doctor in his Geo-

* The above estimated distance from Alexandria to Pittsburg I have taken entirely from the Doctor's own works; but in his Geography, Vol. 1. p. 188, the Doctor gives this for the distance from Al-

graphy, page 188, makes this difference 580 miles, and the Doctor is more apprehensive of interruptions from a Canadian or Indian war than our frontier settlements are.) This will produce an able competition between the two places. Albany, through the aid of New-York, will be able to afford European goods about the same as Baltimore; but the latter will undersell the former in West India produce. Albany will have a capacious and permanent inland navigation for eight or nine months in the year. Baltimore cannot depend on hers for more than four or five months.

Our surprise at the Doctor's partiality for the southern route still increases on reading his information of the Potomac—"At Fort Cumberland, in a dry season, it is but a small stream," and yet he proposes to navigate it about thirty miles further up—and of the Monongahela, in his note to page 538, he says, "the Monongahela which commonly is barely sufficient to turn two grist-mills, after great rains, sometimes suddenly rises nearly 40 feet."

The Doctor, when "strolling into the uncertain field of conjecture," over the map of our country, wherever he could catch a brace of brooks in the neighbourhood of each other, and running in different directions, he projected a canal between them, and cut up the continent "into a cluster of large and fertile islands."

The aborigines of our country, through their want of science and resources, and from their strong propensity to indolence, have pursued the natural bed of streams, and towed their boats to the head springs and backed them over the portages, as a make-shift; but it would be a burlesque on civilization and the useful arts, for the inventive and enterprising genius of European Americans, with their large bodies and streams of fresh water for inland navigation, to be contented with navigating farm brooks in bark canoes.

HERCULES.

No. XIII.

OTHER IMPROVEMENTS PROPOSED.

In proceeding to notice the states to the south of Maryland, I premise, that owing to the Apalachian mountains precluding any principal connexion between their eastern and western waters, to their being more agricultural than either commercial or manufactural, I have pre-

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exandria to Cuyahoga. I have been positive there was an error in the Doctor's statement for some time past, but had never informed myself how great, until I made the above calculation; nor where it lay, until I had gone through with it, and proceeded thus far in the number.

sumed their views to be more confined to territorial and local pursuits; and the want of particular information, not inattention to their respective interests, will lead me necessarily to be brief in my remarks on them.

Virginia "affords almost every planter a river at his door." It has a common interest with Maryland in improving the Potomac and the Shenandoah, on which essays are already made; if possible, the former would merit the straightening of its bends above the junction of the latter. Also, with North Carolina, in continuing the Atlantic parallel, by a canal through the great Dismal Swamp, which is already undertaken, but probably on too small a scale.

It has the Rappahannock, York, James, Appamatox, Staunton, and the great Kanhawa. Of these, James River, from its size, merits particular attention.

The light streams of Jacksons and Green Briar rivers, the approximating branches of James and Kanhawa; the impeding mountains on their portage; and perhaps the indisposition of its inhabitants to commercial enterprise, are causes which reduce the importance of this western communication to locality.

North Carolina has its proportion of rivers and inland navigation. It has too much about its coast, with its sounds, their impeding shoals, and inlets. Its quota of the canal through the great Dismal Swamp continued into Albemarle sound. Its rivers are, Roanoke, Pamlico, Nuse, Cape Fear, and their branches; the Dan, Yadkin, and Catawba, which, although more or less navigable, are no doubt susceptible of valuable improvements.

South Carolina appears on the map to be admirably well watered by rivulets. The principal rivers, which it offers for improvement, are the great Pedee, the Santee and its valuable branches, and the Savannah in conjunction with Georgia. Probably the Santee might be tapped about Nelson's ferry and thrown into Coopers River and to Charleston—also at Murry's ferry and overland to Georgetown.

Georgia has a major interest in the improvement of the Savannah and its branches—the Ogeechee, the Alatamaha and its branches.

The western states, from their interior situation, would have no custom-house dividend to defray the expense of their improvements; the public lands in their territories, however, could be appropriated to the purpose in payment to the workmen. Two or three years labour would purchase and stock a farm for those who had no capital to procure it; nor would the government feel so sensibly the high price of labour; and this would have the mutual effect of improving and populating the interior of our country.

Ohio has the Cuyahoga and the Sandusky, on the north—and the Muskingum, Hockhocking, the Scioto, and the Miamees, on the south, most of which were spoken of under New-York.

Indiana has the Wabash, Illinois, and the Kaskiaskis.

Kentucky has, in conjunction with Ohio and others, the canalling of the rapids of the

Ohio river. It ought to be cut 20 or 30 feet deep to encourage the large sized ship-building up stream. The village of Marietta, at the mouth of the Muskingum, has already suffered by their experiments in the business, a sum perhaps equal to half the expense of it.

The culture of hemp, establishments in the manufactory of iron, cordage, and duck, added to ship-building, will afford a valuable resource to that country. The Sandy, Licking, Kentucky, and Green rivers, may admit of improvements for the internal trade of that country.

Tennesee has the two valuable rivers of Tennesee and Cumberland. Their head branches would require the chief improvements, except the Muscle Shoals in the former.

The Mississippi Territory has the Tombigbee, Coosee, Tallapoosee, Chatahoosee, and Flint rivers. Tennesee will have a joint interest in endeavouring to canal the portages between the Tennesee and the head branches of the Coosee and Tombigbee. The Tennesee might be tapped below the junction of Clench River and thrown into the former; and tapped again above the Muscle Shoals, and thrown on to the crown land between the latter and Bear Creek, which falls into the Tennesee. The latter would give a new route for the importation of merchandise into the states of Tennesee and Kentucky. With 100 miles tide-waters in the Mobile; 250 miles up stream in the Tombigbee, 50 miles canal; and 230 miles down Bear Creek and the Tennesee to its mouth, making 630 miles from Mobile Bay to the Ohio River 45 miles above the Mississippi, and but 300 miles of the distance against current waters; which is 1057 miles by the Mississippi, and the whole distance of it up stream.

To possess the jurisdiction of the mouths of the rivers which traverse this territory, and the custom-houses necessarily established on them, is an argument for our government to purchase the Floridas. Unfortunately, the harbours of these rivers are shallow and will be of less value unless they can be improved.

What will be the utility, or even policy, of cutting across the bends and straightening the Mississippi? Whether the increased rapidity of its current will not over-balance the shortened distance, is a subject on which I will not venture to speculate, except to remark, that, with a straightened channel to that river, there would probably be less drowned lands on its margin.

A marine canal, the most noble work of the kind on this "ball of earth," would be a cut across the Isthmus of Darien. Were the Mexican empire under an independent government—or even under an enterprising one—this would be done in less than half a century, and those provinces opened to a liberal trade, under which their abundant resources would make them immensely wealthy. Nature never has, nor will, endure the jealousy and selfish dogmas of man with impunity. From the huckster's shop to the chartered company's shipping warehouse, the principle continues the same. Wherever the avarice and vanity of

man has imposed his restrictions—whether in religion, politics, or commerce,—she has entered her caveat to them.

I shall conclude the subject with some general observations.

HERCULES.

No. XIV.

The following is extracted from the Boston Palladium, and has led me to give this as an extraneous number.

"Messrs. Editors, I was extremely happy, a few days since, when in the lobby of the senate chamber to hear the report read of the committee appointed by the legislature to explore and survey the ground for a water-communication from the harbour of Boston, through the towns of Weymouth, Braintree, Abington, Bridgewater, Raynham, by Taunton, to Narraganset Bay and Rhode-Island. The idea of a canal to connect the southern and northern waters, (which will prevent the necessity of going round the capes in perilous seasons of the year,) and save a distance of several hundred miles, is a subject which has long since been contemplated, and which I rejoice to hear is likely to go into effect. From the above report we are told, that the whole distance, from tide-waters in Weymouth to Taunton, is only 26 miles, on the route proposed by the canal; that the grounds are very favourable, and that there are a great number of large ponds which will afford a sufficiency of water for the canal, and which are of a sufficient height above the ground where the canal is proposed to be built. These circumstances, which I suppose may be relied on, (as the committee have taken an accurate spirit level,) reduced it to a certainty that the project is practicable, and that nothing is wanting, but a portion of that spirit of enterprise, which has ever characterized the citizens of this country, to carry it into effect. I sincerely hope, that the report will be published, and that some suitable and enterprising men will undertake the business, and I have no doubt, when the advantages which will result from it are made known, that the different states in the union will not hesitate a moment to furnish the means and carry it into operation, as it is a subject which is of the utmost importance to all the states that border on the southern ocean."

In my IXth number, under the head of Massachusetts, and remarking on the canal proposed by Dr. Morse, in his geography, across the isthmus of Cape Cod, to form a junction between Barnstable and Buzzards Bays—after having objected to the idea of its being made for a boat navigation only, I observed, "however, could a ship-channel of 15 or 20 feet depth be cut through, and admit of the ebb and flood of the tides, it would be a valuable abridgment of the length and risk of the passage of the Sound coasters to and from Boston." At

the time of writing this, I did not know that there was any design of prosecuting a project of the kind immediately.

The execution of it would be an extension of the Atlantic parallel, by passing through Long-Island Sound, by Newport, through Narraganset Bay and the canal, to Boston. In this view, only, can it be advantageous to "the different states in the union,"—unless its bed can be sunk sufficient to admit of being supplied by tide-waters; for, except it was made passable, and easy for the southward and Sound coasters, they would have to harbour at Newport, and shift their cargoes into canal boats for Boston. This interrupted continuity of the voyage would enhance the price of freight equal to the difference in the premium of insurance on the cargo in navigating it around the capes, and its utility would be confined to the ports of Boston, Newport, and Providence, in time of peace.

Presuming on the doubtful prospect of throwing the tide into the canal, I am decidedly in favour of opening a communication between the two bays. If I have a correct idea of it, the ground between is level and well adapted to the undertaking; and, when opened, would admit of an excellent draft of the tide. The floods of the tides in the Atlantic flow to the west, and the ebbs to the east; of course, the current of flood, in the canal, would flow from Barnstable into Buzzards Bay, and the ebb vice versa. Barnstable Bay being situated further east and more open to receive the flood than Buzzards Bay, the tides would be nearly an hour earlier in the former than in the latter; and the tide, by being pent up in the former, would give a head that would set a strong current through the canal into the latter.

The ebbs in the former, being earlier than in the latter, would set the current of ebb from the latter into the former. This would give the certainty of a passage through the canal twice in 24 hours, either way.

I presume the same expense which would open a good boat canal for 26 miles would open a good ship canal for 6 miles, which would equally accommodate the West India merchantmen and the coasters. Martha's Vineyard has become a great resort-harbour for vessels coming in from the southern latitudes. Were the canal to be opened, the most of this resort might be transferred to Buzzards Bay, which would probably afford equally as safe and commodious harbour; and the canal could have basins cut in it, which would afford more safe harbours than nature ever furnished.

The greatest natural impediment which I conceive may be found an obstacle to this improvement, is perhaps the want of sufficient bold shores at the head of these bays.

HERCULES.

After the perusal of these able essays of Mr. Hawley, it cannot be doubted that they must have had a great influence upon the public mind, as prepara-

[illegible] in the legislative measures which succeeded. He will, therefore, be considered as entitled to a conspicuous place among the projectors of the Erie Canal.

The writer of the article in "the New-York Gazette" in the North American Review, [illegible] does justice the assertion above repeated.

"Mention is made of former essays which proved in 1807, and are attributed to Jesse Elwer, Esq. of Rochester. The account given makes it appear that we have better data than we see them. The force of the detail is all in favor of the distinct proposal and the express estimate is approached less strongly with the history. Our readers will recollect that this was before the legislative proceeding on the subject and is therefore more worthy of notice on account of the fullness of the details, the goodness of the conception, and the courage of suggesting what would have [illegible] a wide and expensive enterprise."

NOTE.—p. 33.

Claims of Joshua Forman.

In the session of 1808, Mr. J. Forman, being then a member of the assembly from Onondaga county, after an eloquent address relating to President Jefferson's message of the preceding year, in which he had suggested the propriety of devoting an annual portion of the national revenue to the improvement and repairs of roads and canals, proposed a concurrent resolution, to grant a sum to be made of the most eligible and direct route of a canal, to connect a navigation and deriven the waters of the Hudson River and Lake Erie. If we except the act introduced into the assembly by Jeffry Smith, in 1808, which has been already noticed, this is the first legislative measure that has reference to a direct canal from the Hudson to Lake Erie of which there is any record. The following letter from Mr. Forman, in answer to the inquiries made by the committee, contains information relative to his services, that has appeared in the public journals, contains so much interesting history of the debates, the circumstances

which moved them, and the important results which flowed from them, that further comment on my part is rendered unnecessary.

Letter from Julius Forman.

[illegible], N. Y., Dec. [illegible], 1889.

DEAR SIR,

In answering your kind letter, requesting such information as I can communicate of the early history of the canal, with a view to do justice to the memory of all who took an interest in that great work, I am encouraged to make such facts and circumstances as occurred therein, as might be of importance to be known, with the reflection that the subject matter, according to the soundness of your judgment, and the justness of your intentions, to give such importance to them as they deserve.

Our family my sent as a member of assembly for the county of Onondaga, in the session of 1817-8, my predecessor moved the several numbers of Lake Cayuga, in which I was a subscriber. I had early been acquainted with the projected works of the Erie and Lake Navigation. Journeying from the Hudson River to Lake Ontario, I had seen in the spring time, as far as to incorporate a company to cut in the Niagara River from Lake Erie to Lake Erie. In reading, in my history, of the attempt "Dark," as particular of the numerous canals and improvements in navigation in England, I soon discovered the relative importance of the former over the latter. According this to my mention, I determined to view more the country which is described by a canal, and by the works contemplated, and observing the number of problem canals intersecting a country of such small extent from sea to sea, as the northern part of England, I concluded in the mind of a canal was ever much to open a communication from the Hudson to the western lakes. I would be worth more than a [illegible] directly through the country to Lake Erie. Guided by this, I took the [illegible] route, I endeavored to me from the knowledge I had of the country to be traversed. Spring in the time, in the room with Judge Wright and Colonel McNeil of Oneida, my countrymen, I immediately introduced the subject to them. At first, Judge Wright observed that it would be a folly to make a canal 150 miles instead of a good

sloop navigation in Lake Ontario. To this I replied, that the rich country through which it must pass would, of itself, support a canal; and the benefit of a continued navigation, safe from the dangers of the sea at all times and from the enemy in time of war, and building up a line of towns in the interior which must grow up on the Lake shore, if that was to be the route of transportation, would abundantly compensate the extra expense of a direct canal, over that of a canal and lockage from the point of departure down to Lake Ontario and up by Niagara to Lake Erie. The subject was freely discussed. Judge Wright gave in to the plan, and it was agreed by all, that the project was of immense importance, and measures ought to be taken to ascertain its practicability. I drew up the resolution, as now printed,* which Judge Wright agreed to second, that it might lie on the table until, by the rules of the house,

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* "In Assembly, *February* 4, 1808.

"Mr. Forman called up for consideration the following resolution, heretofore submitted and ordered to lie on the table; which, being read, was agreed to, in the words following, to wit:—

"Whereas, the President of the United States, by his message to Congress, delivered at their meeting in October last, did recommend, that the surplus moneys in the treasury, over and above such sums as could be applied to the extinguishment of the national debt, be appropriated to the great national objects of opening canals and making turnpike roads. And whereas, the state of New-York, holding the first commercial rank in the United States, possesses within herself the best route of communication between the Atlantic and western waters, by means of a canal between the tide-waters of the Hudson River and Lake Erie, through which the wealth and trade of that large portion of the union, bordering on the upper lakes, would for ever flow to our great commercial emporium. And whereas, the legislatures of several of our sister states have made great exertions to secure to their own states, the trade of that widely extended country, west of the Alleghany, under natural advantages vastly inferior to those of this state. And whereas, it is highly important that those advantages should, as speedily as possible, be improved, both to preserve and increase the commercial and national importance of this state:—Therefore,

Resolved, (if the honourable the Senate concur herein,) that a joint committee be appointed to take into consideration the propriety of exploring and causing an accurate survey to be made of the most eligible and direct route for a canal, to open a communication between the tide-waters of the Hudson River and Lake Erie, to the end that Congress may

it might be called up. Without much confidence that the general government would construct such a canal, I framed the resolution to take advantage of Mr. Jefferson's proposition, to expend the surplus revenues of the nation in making roads and canals, to induce our legislature to explore the route of a canal, which, if proposed as a work of the state, would not have been listened to at all; and although I had stated the proposition in a favourable light in the preamble, when it was read in the house it produced such expressions of surprise and ridicule as are due to a very wild foolish project.

Fired with the novelty and importance of my project, and somewhat piqued at the manner of its reception in the house, I took pains to prepare myself on the subject, conversed with several of the members at their rooms, and when it was called up, addressed the house in support of the resolution. I stated in evidence of its being practicable, that after following the valley of the Mohawk to Rome, it would have the valley of the Oneida and Seneca Rivers to the head of Mud Creek, an uncommonly flat country; and from the west, (if no better route was found,) from the Niagara up the Tonnewanta and down Allen's Creek to the Genesee River, the intermediate country, although nothing particularly favourable was known, yet as there was no high mountains or large rivers intervening, it would most likely be found practicable without any of those expensive tunnels or aqueducts common to canals in Europe. I presented a probable estimate of its cost, calculated from that of the Languedoc Canal, at 4,500,000 dollars; this doubled, for the advanced price of labour, which I considered a large allowance, and adding a million for inexperience, gave 10,000,000 dollars, in my opinion an ample estimate for the work, which must appear a bagatelle to the value of such a navigation, whether considered in relation to the state, in improving the western district, and enriching the city of New-York by the trade of the rich and growing country bordering on the western lakes; or as respected the United States,

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be enabled to appropriate such sums as may be necessary to the accomplishment of that great national object; and in case of such concurrence, that Mr. Gold, Mr. Gilbert, Mr. Forman, Mr. German, and Mr. Hogeboom, be a committee on the part of this house." *Canal Documents*, Vol. I. page 7.

whose forty or fifty millions of acres of land, bordering on the lakes, would be enhanced in value beyond the whole expense by causing their rapid settlement, form a dense frontier barrier towards Canada, and by forming an outlet for their trade through our own territory, instead of its flowing down the St. Lawrence, it would be an indissoluble bond of union between the Western and Atlantic states—and I recollect distinctly observing, that it would chain them to our destinies in any national convulsion.

The resolution was adopted on the ground, as expressed by several, "that it *could do no harm*, and *might* do some good." The senate concurred, and when the joint committee met, so strong was the prepossession in favour of the Oswego route, that instead of directing the survey of a canal direct to Lake Erie, as the original resolution proposed, they reported a joint resolution directing the surveyor-general to cause a survey to be made of the rivers, streams, and waters in the *usual route* between the Hudson River and Lake Erie, and *such other route as he may deem proper*,* thus shifting from themselves the responsibility of countenancing so wild a project, they only left a chance of its being examined at the discretion of the surveyor-general.—The trifling appropriation of six hundred dollars was all that could be obtained for the purpose; and so intent was the surveyor-general upon going through Lake Ontario, that he expended most of the money exploring routes in that direction. I conversed frequently during the season with Judge Geddes, who was appointed to make the surveys, and explained to him my views on the subject of the interior route, who entered zealously into the project, and on his return from the west in December, informed me of the important discoveries he had made, particularly in that part deemed most difficult between Mud Creek and Genesee River, and read me parts of his report, proving most conclusively the practicability of the proposed canal. Shortly after, being at New-York on business, and much elated with the result of the examination, I made a trip to Washington, almost entirely to converse with Mr. Jefferson on the subject. Sometime in January, 1809, I called on him in company with Wm. Kirkpatrick, Esq. of

* Canal Documents, Vol. I. p. 8—9.

Salina, then Member of Congress, who introduced me, and informed him, that in view of his proposal to expend the surplus revenues of the nation in making roads and canals, the state of New-York had explored the route of a canal from the Hudson River to Lake Erie, and had found it practicable beyond their most sanguine expectations; after recapitulating in as laconic a manner as I could, some of the most important advantages it offered to the nation as inducements to undertake it—enhancing the value of their lands—settling the frontier—opening a channel of commerce for the western country to our own sea-ports—a military way in time of war, and a bond of union to the states. He replied, it was a very fine project, and might be executed a century hence. "Why sir," said he, "here is a canal of a few miles, projected by General Washington, which, if completed, would render this a fine commercial city, which has languished for many years because the small sum of 200,000 dollars necessary to complete it, cannot be obtained from the general government, the state government, or from individuals—and you talk of making a canal of 350 miles through the wilderness—it is little short of madness to think of it at this day." I replied, that having conceived the idea, ascertained its practicability, and in some measure appreciated its importance, I thought the state of New-York would never rest until it was accomplished. Having frequently mentioned this anecdote, it came to the ears of Governor Clinton, who, when the canal was nearly accomplished, wrote to Mr. Jefferson, as I have understood from him, inquiring if he recollected the conversation, to which he replied, that he did not recollect the name of the person who first informed him of the project, but recollected that on first hearing of it, he had remarked that it was a century too soon, but was then convinced he was a century be-

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* *Letter from Mr. Jefferson to Governor Clinton.*

MONTICELLO, Dec. 12, 1822.

I thank you, dear sir, for the little volume [Letters of Hibernicus] sent me on the natural history and resources of New-York. It is an instructive, interesting, and agreeably written account of the riches of a country to which your great canal gives value and issue, and of the wealth which it creates, from what without it would have had no value. Although I

hind a just estimate of the march of improvement in this country.* The story has found its way into the newspapers without mention of my name; but as the whole proceeding had been without any newspaper remarks, and the discoveries of Judge Geddes so recent, there cannot remain a doubt that the communication made by me was the first he had heard on the subject, and I think he was not a little surprised so soon to have such a claim made on his proposed fund for internal improvement. Although I have not conversed with Mr. Kirkpatrick on the subject, I have no doubt of his recollecting the conversation, and I confidently appeal to him for the correctness of the statement.

The report of Judge Geddes in Canal Documents, Vol. 1. p. 13 to 38, proving beyond a doubt the practicability of a canal on the interior route, and putting at rest all further question of the one through Lake Ontario, came in during the session of 1808—9, and rendered the project of such a canal as a feasible one, familiar to a great body of the men of intelligence in the state. The board of commissioners, appointed under General Platt's resolution of the ensuing session, took this report from the office of the surveyor-general, and with it in their hands explored the route there designated, and satisfied with his examination, never caused any surveys with a view to the Ontario route—and the surveys and plans at the Boyle summit and Gerundegut em-

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do not recollect the conversation with Judge Forman, referred to in page 131, I have no doubt it is correct, for that I know was my opinion; and many, I dare say, still think with me that New-York has anticipated, by a full century, the ordinary progress of improvement. This great work suggests a question, both curious and difficult, as to the comparative capability of nations to execute great enterprises. It is not from greater surplus of produce, after supplying their own wants, for in this New-York is not beyond some other states; is it from other sources of industry additional to her produce? This may be;—or is it a moral superiority? a sounder calculating mind, as to the most profitable employment of surplus, by improvement of capital, instead of useless consumption? I should lean to this latter hypothesis, were I disposed to puzzle myself with such investigations; but at the age of 80, it would be an idle labour, which I leave to the generation which is to see and feel its effects, and add therefore only, the assurance of my great esteem and respect.

THOMAS JEFFERSON.

bankment, comparing exactly with the canal as now executed, establish incontestably its identity as the first stage of that splendid work which reflects so much credit upon the state and nation. Judge then my surprise, (when after the middle section was completed, all opposition having ceased, both parties were competing which should gain popularity by forwarding the canal policy, and a scramble had commenced for the credit of originating the measure,) to see it stated by Ferris Pell, in his Review, page 177, that a resolution introduced by me in 1808, "was adopted and resulted in nothing." He then dates the origin of the canal from Judge Platt's resolution, and divides the honour between him, Governor Clinton, and Thomas Eddy, as the suggestor of the measure.

Some time after, Colonel Haines professing to write the history of the canal, gives nearly the same account of the matter, denying that any thing was done under the resolution of 1808. Although I had not been so ambitious of fame as to enter the lists in the general scramble with Elkanah Watson and others, I was not satisfied to see the thing falsely stated, and called on Col. Haines for an explanation. He told me he had been so informed by the surveyor-general and by Thomas Eddy, who had furnished him the article published in his work. On my way home, I asked the surveyor-general how he could tell Colonel Haines that nothing had been done under my resolution, when he must remember Geddes' survey. He denied telling him so, but said he could find nothing in his office relating to it, and had told Colonel Haines so, and that he did not know what had become of Geddes' Report. I then informed him that the commissioners under the resolution of 1810, to whom he had loaned it, had left it on their travels, where it would have been irrecoverably lost, had not the person who found it, seeing the name of Judge Geddes in it, sent it to him, where it had remained safe for several years, while such a disposition had been manifested to cover up and deny the whole affair. The report was soon after procured, and deposited in the secretary's office, where the original resolution required it to be placed, and in the end is published in its proper place among the Canal Documents.

I should have been satisfied, so far as I am concerned, to rest the decision of the question to posterity on the face of the Documents, had not the sur-

veyor-general, in a letter to William Darby, published in Canal Doc. Vol. I. p. 38, (I know not with what propriety,) given a new turn to the investigation. He states a question that had arisen in relation to the Erie Canal—"Who is most entitled to the honour of it;" and although he admits most conclusively, p. 41, that the investigations of 1808 settled the question—"that a canal from Lake Erie to Hudson's River was not only practicable, but practicable with uncommon facility," yet as he awards to Gouverneur Morris the credit of first starting the idea of a direct communication by water, between Lake Erie and Hudson River, to him in a conversation in 1803, which he considered "a romantic thing, characteristic of the man," and related it as such to Judge Geddes in 1804. He (Judge Geddes) told it to Jesse Hawley, and he published some essays in the newspapers, and then states that I brought in a resolution to survey the rivers, streams, and waters in the usual route of communication between the Hudson and Lake Erie—giving an impression that my resolution had grown out of that suggestion of Gouverneur Morris, and by suppressing the terms of my resolution for a direct canal, and substituting the words of the joint committee, deprives it of its importance, and causes it to be inferred that his and Judge Geddes' preconceived notions led them to look for the interior route. Now I do most solemnly declare, that the idea of a direct canal was original with *me*, whoever else had thought of it before—that I had never heard of Gouverneur Morris' suggestions, nor of Mr. Hawley's essays—that when it was broached to Judge Wright, he then, and has always since said, it was entirely new to him—that when it came into the house, it was treated as at once new and visionary—for several years I was called a visionary projector, and have been asked hundreds of times if ever I expected to see *my* canal completed; to which I uniformly answered, that I did as surely as I lived to the ordinary age of man—that it might take ten years to get the public mind prepared for the undertaking, and as many more to accomplish it. No man suggested to me that I was building upon another's foundation, until the spring of 1810, when I saw it suggested in a newspaper, that the idea was derived from Hawley's essays in the Geneva paper, which I did not take, and not having attracted sufficient notice to be republished, had never come to my knowledge. I have since seen them very cursorily in a file of that paper in

the hands of General Granger, when he was a senator, and think Mr. Hawley entitled to much credit for his efforts to call public attention to an inland navigation through the country; but whether his views actually amount to a direct canal, or a combination of canal and improved river navigation, I cannot recollect. I never claimed that I first thought of such a plan, nor is that the question in issue; but I do claim to have been the first man who, having conceived the idea, appreciated its importance, and set about carrying it into effect, and by the happy expedient of turning the eyes of the legislature to the general government for its accomplishment, induced them to take the first steps in a project too gigantic for them to have looked at for a moment as an object to be accomplished by the means of the state. Gouverneur Morris had travelled, and seen canals in other countries, and no doubt had bright visions of the future improvements of this country, and occasionally astonished his friends by detailing them in conversation; but it was nowise probable that he viewed them as works to be accomplished in his day, or as a patriot, he would have proposed the subject to the legislature. The surveyor-general thought of those suggestions only to relate them for their extravagance, and Judge Geddes, a member of the legislature, at the time he heard them, was not so impressed by them as to offer any proposition to the legislature on the subject. His suggestions, therefore, had produced no action—they had literally sunk into the earth, and in reality had no more effect in producing the canal than the ancient poet's song of the Fortunate Islands beyond the Atlantic Ocean had in producing the discovery of America; and no man can now point out the person who, had I not done it, would have at once conceived the idea, appreciated its importance, and had the moral courage to meet the ridicule of proposing so wild a measure in earnest. It might have lain for years, and at length a canal been made to Lake Ontario, towards which public attention was then directed, had not the ice been broken by that resolution, and an impetus given to a direct canal by the discoveries made under it.

I have ever felt that justice has not been done to the importance of that measure by those who have written on the subject, which I can only account for by supposing each claimant of honour thought his own share would be the greater by depreciating that of others, and have sat still in the confidence that

some impartial historian would discriminate between the importance of thinking of a thing and doing it—between taking the first step and any other in the same course. An incident evincive of this spirit occurred at the canal celebration. The Rochester committee sent me an invitation to attend the celebration, with assurances of their "high consideration" as "the first legislative projector of the greatest improvement of the age."* I attended the celebration at Rochester, and heard from the orator, in the presence of thousands, a highly honourable notice of the measure introduced by me, and the important results growing out of it. You may appreciate my feelings when, afterwards reading the printed oration, I found that paragraph suppressed. I have never inquired by whom or for what purpose it was done.

I returned, with the committees, in the Rochester boat as far as Weed's Basin, and from thence pushed on, by land, to Syracuse, to aid in having all things in readiness for their reception. There I found the Syracuse committee had depended upon me as president of the village to address the governor and committees on their arrival. It occurred to me, that, as the over-zealous advocates of Governor Clinton had been in the habit of attributing to him the originating as well as the execution of the canal project, it was a fair occasion,

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* ROCHESTER, October 19, 1819.

Dear Sir,

It having been mentioned to our committee of arrangements for celebrating the completion of the Erie Canal, that the first legislative proceedings ever had, in relation to this great work, were upon a resolution offered by yourself in 1808, as a member of assembly from the county of Onondaga, it was instantly and unanimously resolved to invite you to participate in the approaching celebration, as a guest of the citizens of Rochester.

In transmitting the invitation of our committee, we beg leave to add assurances of our high consideration and esteem for the first legislative projector of the greatest improvement of the age.

Very respectfully yours,

VINCENT MATHEWS, CHAIRMAN.
THURLOW WEED, SECRETARY.

JOSHUA FORMAN, Esq.

P. S. Our celebration is on the 27th inst. The favour of an answer is respectfully requested.

by giving him credit for what was his just due (and great indeed it was), to furnish him an opportunity of disclaiming such meretricious honour. There were but two or three hours to spare, in which I drew up the address subjoined, as copied from the Syracuse Gazette, Nov. 2d, 1825.* Gov. Clinton,

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* Gentlemen,

The roar of cannon rolling from Lake Erie to the ocean, and reverberated from the ocean to the lake, has announced the completion of the Erie Canal; and you are this day witnesses, bearing the waters of the lakes on the unbroken bosom of the canal to be mingled with the ocean, that the splendid hopes of our state are realized. The continued fete which has attended your boats, evinces how dear it was to the hearts of our citizens. It is truly a proud day for the state of New-York. No one is present, who has the interest of the state at heart, who does not exult at the completion of a work fraught with such important benefits; and no man, with an American heart, that does not swell with pride that he is a citizen of the country which has accomplished the greatest work of the age, and which has filled Europe with admiration of the American character. On the 4th of July, 1817, it was begun and is now accomplished—not by the labour of abject slaves and vassals, but by the energies of freeman, and in a period unprecedently short—by the *voluntary* efforts of its freemen, governed by the wisdom of its statesmen. This, however, is one of the many benefits derived from our free institutions, and which marks a new era in the history of man, the example of a nation whose whole physical power and intelligence are employed to advance the improvement, comfort, and happiness of the people. To what extent this course of improvement may be carried, it is impossible for any mere man to conjecture; but no reasonable man can doubt, that it will continue its progress, until our wide and fertile territory shall be filled with a more dense, intelligent, and happy people, than the sun shines upon in the wide circuit of the globe. It has long been a subject of fearful apprehension to the patriot of the Atlantic states, that the remote interior situation of our western territory (for want of proper stimuli to industry and free intercourse with the rest of the world) would be filled with a semi-barbarous population, uncongenial with their Atlantic neighbours; but the introduction of steamboats on our lakes, and running rivers and canals to connect waters which nature has disjoined, (in both which this state has taken the lead, and its example has now become general,) have broken down the old barriers of nature, and promise the wide spread regions of the west all the blessings of a seaboard district. But while we contemplate the advantages of this work, as a source of revenue to the state and of wealth and comfort to our citizens, let us never forget the means by which it has been accomplished; and after rendering thanks to the All-wise Disposer of events, who has, by his own means

in his reply, which was short, adverted to the important views presented in the address, and with great candour observed, they "were such as he had expected from an individual who had introduced the first legislative measure relative to the canal, and who had devoted much thought and reflection to the subject." And walking from the boat to the hotel, Gen. Tallmadge being on my left and Gov. Clinton on my right, he remarked, that I had been very happy

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and for his own purposes, brought about this great work, we would render our thanks to all citizens and statesmen who have, in and out of the legislature, sustained the measure from its first conception to its present final consummation. To the commissioners who superintended the work, the board of engineers (a native treasure unknown till called for by the occasion), and especially to his excellency the governor, whose early and decided support of the measure, and fearlessly throwing his character and influence into the scale, turned the poising beam, and produced the first canal appropriation,—keeping the public opinion steady to the point. Without his efforts in that crisis, the canal project might still have been a splendid vision,—gazed on by the benevolent patriot,—but left, by cold calculators, to be realized by some future generation. At that time all admitted, that there was a high responsibility resting on you; and, had it failed, you must have largely borne the blame. It has succeeded! and we will not withhold from you your due meed of praise.

Gentlemen, in behalf of the citizens of Syracuse and of the county of Onondaga here assembled, I congratulate you on this occasion. Our village is the offspring of the canal, and, with the county, must partake largely of its blessings. We were most ungrateful, if we did not most cordially join in this great state celebration.

Judge Forman having concluded his address, Governor Clinton replied in a very happy and appropriate manner. In the course of which he adverted to the important views presented in the address, and observed, that they were such as he had expected from an individual who introduced the first legislative measures, relative to the canals, and had devoted much thought and reflection to the subject. His excellency also adverted to the prosperous condition of Syracuse and of the county, and concluded by expressing his congratulations on the final accomplishment of this great work.

N. B. The above address was printed in my absence from the hasty draft, and has many errors and omissions, which the reader will readily supply. In one instance, before the words "keeping the public opinion," &c. a whole line is omitted,—"by his talents and exertions" keeping the public opinion steadily to the point.—J. F.

in the address, and that he was gratified with the discrimination I had made; which expressions were distinctly recollected by the general, in a late conversation with him on the subject.

As one of a committee from Syracuse, I attended the fete to the mingling of the waters of Lake Erie with the ocean off Sandy Hook; and from that day to the receipt of your letter, have been attending to my own concerns, satisfied with having, in any degree, contributed to so great a public benefit—and trusting that an impartial posterity would render to each person concerned his just meed of praise. Nor should I have deemed it at all important to have detailed these facts, occurring since the contest for fame began, had not the singular circumstance occurred, that the origin of a great public work, but just completed, should so soon be involved in obscurity, and the facts, relating to its incipient stages, confidently denied, so that thousands who are experiencing the benefits of the canal, are in doubt to whom they are indebted for the boon, instead of possessing such a clear statement of the case as would enable them justly to appreciate the share each person took in it, from its conception to its final consummation.

I submit these facts and remarks, hastily thrown together, to your discretion, to make such use of them as you shall think proper.

I remain, with respect,

Your most obedient servant,

JOSHUA FORMAN.

To David Hosack, M. D.

It has been incorrectly stated by Mr. Haines,* that nothing had been done as the result of the foregoing resolution introduced by Mr. Forman. On the contrary, it appears that, in conformity to the resolutions referred to of the senate and assembly,† that the surveyor general immediately employed Mr.

* See Introduction to his Public Documents, xlix.

† Canal Documents, Vol. I. p. 9 and 10.

James Geddes, of Onondaga county, to make the necessary surveys, and opened a correspondence with Mr. Joseph Ellicott, of Batavia, an agent of the Holland Land Company. By information derived from those gentlemen, both "practical surveyors, of experienced skill, of investigating minds, of sagacious observation, and perfectly well acquainted with the country," the fact was satisfactorily established, that, in the language of the surveyor general, "a canal from Lake Erie to Hudson River was not only practicable, but practicable with uncommon facility."*

In January, 1809, Mr. Geddes made his luminous report in favour of the practicability of a route directly from Lake Erie, addressed to the surveyor general, by whom it was communicated to the legislature.†

Mr. Ellicott's communication, says Tacitus, also contained a perspicuous description of the country, and was accompanied by an explanatory map. All which papers, it is added, with the writings of Mr. Hawley, were in the possession of the canal commissioners, appointed in 1810; and, unquestionably, the idea adopted by that board, of the Erie canal, originated from these investigations, fortified by the observations under their direction.

Tacitus proceeds to remark,—"No further view, however, was taken on this subject until the session of 1810; when, in consequence of representations from the Western Inland Lock Navigation Company, and from a great number of citizens of Albany, Schenectady, Utica, and other places, interested in the internal trade of this state, commissioners were appointed, to explore the country between the great lakes and the navigable waters of the Hudson, and to report upon the most eligible route for a water communication. It was suggested by those representations, as a point deserving of particular attention, that the commerce of the country was directed, in a great degree, to Canada. The report of Mr. Gallatin in favour of canals and roads had awakened the public attention to that important object; and the proceedings referred to‡ took place in the legislature, on the motion of the Hon. Jonas Platt, then a senator, now a judge of the supreme court—a gentleman equally distinguished for strength of understanding and purity of heart."

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* Canal Documents, Vol. I. p. 44. † Ibid. p. 13. ‡ Ibid.

But it ought to be added, that about the same period of time, (probably in consequence of the suggestions referred to in the message of Mr. Jefferson,) besides the labours of Mr. Hawley and of Mr. Forman in this state, a general spirit was awakened, and diffused throughout our country, relative to internal improvements, and the means of opening an advantageous intercourse by roads and canals, between the most distant parts of the United States; not only for the purpose of strengthening the Union, but of promoting our independence of foreign nations, by calling forth the native riches and resources of our country. To this spirit, doubtless, is to be ascribed the valuable report of Mr. Gallatin; the bill introduced into the Senate of the United States by Mr. Pope, a member from Kentucky; and the resolution afterwards moved in the House of Representatives by Mr. P. B. Porter, then a member of congress from this state; and the writings of the late Dr. Hugh Williamson, all which attracted the attention of the legislature of New-York, and prepared the public mind for the measures which subsequently ensued.

The report of Mr. Gallatin, which was presented to Congress in April, 1808, with its appendix, containing the communications of Messrs. Latrobe and Fulton relative to canal navigation, (although that part of it which concerns the state of New-York, recommended the route to the west by canals and locks to Lake Ontario, and around the falls of Niagara,) was eminently serviceable.

It is due to Mr. Pope, to observe, that early in 1810, some weeks prior to the celebrated speech delivered by Mr. Porter in the House of Representatives, he introduced a bill into the Senate, for the improvement of our nation, by facilitating intercourse between its different parts. That bill contemplated the union of the waters of Boston harbour with those of Newport, in Rhode Island—of the Raritan in New-Jersey with the Delaware—of the Hudson with the Lakes Erie and Ontario—of the Delaware with the Chesapeake—a canal to pass the cataract of Niagara—the union of the Hudson with Lake Champlain—the Ohio with Lake Erie—a canal to pass the falls of the Ohio, and from the Roanoke to the Appamatox, and from the Tennesee to the Tombigbee—a road from the highest navigable waters of the western states—and a turnpike road for the general mail from Maine to and through Georgia.

For the above purpose a tract of land in the peninsula of Michigan was contemplated to be appropriated, containing perhaps ten millions of acres.

Mr. Pope's bill in the Senate not having been acted upon by that body, Mr. Porter, on the 8th of February, 1810, presented to the House of Representatives the following resolution.

"Resolved—That a committee be appointed to examine into the expediency of appropriating a part of the public lands, or the proceeds thereof, to the purposes of opening and constructing such roads and canals, as may be most conducive to the general interest of the Union, and that they have leave to report thereon by bill or otherwise."

Mr. Porter introduced this resolution with an able and elaborate speech, in which he took a comprehensive view of the subject, and went into details, showing the feasibility of the plan, the benefits which would result from it to the country, and the readiness with which funds might be raised to carry it into effect. Mr. Porter displayed an intimate knowledge of the geographical relations, local habits, and natural interests of the interior. In this speech, says the writer of the Supplement to Colonel Troup's letter to Brockholst Livingston, he took an expanded view of the great subject to which his resolution referred, pointed out the benefits which would result from the construction of roads and canals under the direction of the general government, and particularly enlarged upon the advantage and necessity of a navigable communication from the Hudson to Lake Erie. The resolution was adopted, and a committee of twenty appointed, of which General Porter was the chairman. The committee, on the 23d February, 1810, reported a bill "for the improvement of the United States by roads and canals," which provided among other improvements, for "opening canals from the Hudson to Lake Ontario, and around the Falls of Niagara."

Doubts being entertained by some of the members as to the powers of congress to authorise the construction of roads and canals, and differences of opinion existing among others respecting the details of the bill, the enterprising and patriotic efforts of General Porter proved unsuccessful. They nevertheless made a strong impression upon the people of this state, and had

no small share in exciting the attention of the New-York legislature, then in session, to this subject.

Although the speech of Mr. Porter attracted much notice at the time it was delivered, and was published in the journals of the day, as it contains much valuable matter still applicable to the general interests of the Union, it merits a place in these documents, and is accordingly subjoined.

Speech of the Hon. P. B. Porter on Internal Improvements, delivered in the House of Representatives on the 8th February, 1810.

I have risen, sir, for the purpose of asking the attention of the house to a subject, than which, I may confidently say, there is no one that regards our domestic policy, more important, or which more loudly calls for the interposition of the national legislature.

The subject to which I allude, is the internal improvement of the United States by roads and canals; and I intend, before I sit down, to offer a resolution, the object of which will be to ascertain the sense of the house in relation to the expediency of appropriating a part of the public lands to such improvements.

I am not in the habit of trespassing upon the patience of the house, and I am sure no apology will be required for the time I may occupy in presenting such general views of this subject as the importance of it seems, in my opinion, to demand. I know that the time of the house is precious. I am aware that there are many matters connected with our foreign relations that have strong claims to its attention; but they surely ought not to exclude every other subject of legislation. I have the honour to represent a portion of the country which is perhaps as little affected by our exterior commercial relations as any part of the United States; and yet I listen, with great attention and interest, to the various plans and propositions which are daily submitted and discussed in this house, and with which, indeed, its time is almost exclusively occupied, for the protection and security of commerce; and I trust that I shall show by my vote, on every proper occasion, that I consider my constituents as bound to support with their persons and their property, and to the last extremity, the just rights of the merchants of this country. On the other hand, I have a right to expect that the gentlemen who represent the mercantile interest will not only hear with patience the proposition I am about to submit, but that they will thank me for the fair opportunity I intend to afford them of proving the sincerity of those professions which we hear so often and so loudly made on this floor, in favour of the agricultural interest. The gentlemen tell us that commerce is only the handmaid of agriculture; and that their zeal to protect commerce

arises merely from a desire to promote, through its instrumentality, the great interests of agriculture. I shall not question the sincerity of these declarations, nor the correctness of the principle they assert; but it is to be presumed that the gentlemen will be as willing to give a direct encouragement to agriculture, as to do it indirectly through the medium of commerce.

It will be recollected that a bill was some days ago laid on your table, from the senate, embracing the subject of roads and canals. What course this bill has already taken, or what may be its ultimate fate in that house, were it possible for me to conjecture, it would be improper for me to state in this place, especially in the present state of my feelings on that subject. I mention this bill only because I had some little share in producing it in the form in which it appears on your tables, and in which it originally appeared in the senate; and because it therefore shows my ideas of a practical mode of carrying the objects of the resolution into effect. And I must beg the house to bear in mind the provisions of that bill in weighing the observations which I am about to offer, should these observations be so fortunate as to gain the ear of the house.

It is possible that some of the views which I am about to take of this subject, may be considered as too extravagant and remote, and that they may at first even wear the appearance of affectation. I hope, however, it will be recollected that the subject is in itself of vast magnitude and extent; and that in order to speak of it with any degree of justice, it will be necessary to consider it in reference to the great and correspondent effects which it is calculated to produce. And permit me, in the first place, to say, sir, that some great system of internal navigation, such as is contemplated in the bill introduced into the Senate, is not only an object of the first consequence to the future prosperity of this country, considered as a measure of political economy, but as a measure of state policy, it is indispensable to the preservation of the integrity of this government.

The United States have for twenty years past been favoured in their external commerce, in a manner unequalled perhaps in the history of the world. Our citizens have not only grown rich, but they have gone almost mad in pursuit of this commerce. Such have been its temptations, as to engage in it almost the whole of the floating capital of the country, and a great part of its enterprise; and every other occupation has been considered as secondary and subordinate. This extraordinary success of commerce has been owing partly to our local situation, partly to the native enterprise of our citizens, but primarily to the unparalleled succession of events in Europe. The course of these events, before so propitious to our interests, has of late very materially changed, and with it has changed the tide of our commercial prosperity. I am far, however, from believing that this sudden reverse may not eventually prove fortunate for the true interests of the United States. The embarrassments which the belligerents have thrown in the way of our external commerce, have turned

the attention of thepeople of this country to their own internal resources. And in viewing these resources, we perceive with pride, that there is no country on earth, which in the fertility of its soil, the extent and variety of its climate and productions, affords the means of national wealth and greatness in the measure they are enjoyed by the people of the United States. If these means are properly fostered and encouraged by a liberal and enlightened policy, we shall soon be able not only to defend our independence at home, (which, however, I confidently trust, we have now both the ability and the disposition to do, notwithstanding the fears that are attempted to be excited on this subject,) but we shall be able to protect our foreign commerce against the united power of the world. One great object of the system I am about to propose, is to unlock these internal resources, to enable the citizen of one part of the United States to exchange his products for those of another, and to open a great internal commerce, which is acknowledged by all who profess any skill in the science of political economy, to be much more profitable and advantageous than the most favoured external commerce which we could enjoy. The system, however, has another object in view not less important.

The people of the United States are divided by a geographical line into two great and distinct sections—the people who live along the Atlantic on the east side of the Alleghany mountains, and who compose the three great classes of merchants, manufacturers, and agriculturists; and those who occupy the west side of these mountains, who are exclusively agriculturists. This diversity and supposed contrariety of interest and pursuit between the people of these two great divisions of country, and the difference of character to which these occupations give rise, it has been confidently asserted, and is still believed by many, will lead to the separation of the United States at no very distant day. In my humble opinion, sir, this very diversity of interest will, if skilfully managed, be the means of producing a closer and more intimate union of the states. It will be obviously for the interests of the interior states, to exchange the great surplus products of their lands, and the raw materials of manufactures, for the merchandize and manufactured articles of the eastern states; and on the other hand, the interests of the merchants and manufacturers of the Atlantic will be equally promoted by this internal commerce; and it is by promoting this commerce, by encouraging and facilitating this intercourse—it is by producing a mutual dependence of interests between these two great sections, and by these means only, that the United States can ever be kept together.

The great evil, and it is a serious one indeed, sir, under which the inhabitants of the western country labour, arises from the want of a market. There is no place where the great staple articles for the use of civilized life can be produced in greater abundance or with greater ease; and yet as respects most of the luxuries and many of the conveniences of life, the people are poor. They have no vent for their produce at home; because, being all agriculturists, they produce alike the same articles with the same

facility; and such is the present difficulty and expense of transporting their produce to an Atlantic port, that little benefits are realized from that quarter. The single circumstance, of the want of a market, is already beginning to produce the most disastrous effects, not only on the industry, but upon the morals of the inhabitants. Such is the fertility of their lands, that one half of their time spent in labour, is sufficient to produce every article which their farms are capable of yielding, in sufficient quantities for their own consumption, and there is nothing to incite them to produce more. They are, therefore, naturally led to spend the other part of their time in idleness and dissipation. Their increase in numbers, and the ease with which children are brought up and fed, far from encouraging them to become manufacturers for themselves, puts at a great distance the time, when, quitting the freedom and independence of masters of the soil, they will submit to the labour and confinement of manufacturers. This, sir, is the true situation of the western agriculturist. It becomes then an object of national importance, far outweighing almost every other that can occupy the attention of this house, to inquire whether the evils incident to this state of things, may not be removed by opening a great navigable canal from the Atlantic to the western states; and thus promoting the natural connexion and intercourse between the farmer and the merchant, so highly conducive to the interests of both. This brings me more immediately to the object of the resolution which I shall have the honour to submit. And I must beg the indulgence of the house while I attempt to show, by a geographical detail, not only the importance but the practicability of such a navigation.

The great ranges of mountains continued from the circular mountain in Georgia on the south, to the Mohawk River in the state of New-York, on the north, intercept and destroy the navigation of all the rivers which discharge into the Atlantic and approach the western country. But when you have passed these mountains from the Atlantic, that country opens a scene of natural internal navigation unequalled in the world. The face of the country is so uniformly level, as to make almost every small stream, by which it is intersected, navigable for boats of considerable size. The chain of western lakes, extending from the north-eastern extremity of Lake Ontario to the south-western termination of Lake Michigan, affords now an excellent navigation for vessels drawing ten feet of water, of fourteen hundred miles in extent; uninterrupted, except by the falls and rapids of Niagara, a distance of only eight miles. To the south and west of these lakes, the waters of the Ohio and Mississippi approach within short distances of, and are interlocked by the waters of the lakes. The lands along these dividing waters are generally level; and the rivers are navigable and might be connected by short canals at little expense. I will mention some of the principal points at which these connexions might be formed.

On the south western part of Lake Erie, in the state of New-York, there is a portage of eight miles from that lake to a small lake called the Chatauqua. The Chatauqua is the reservoir or source of one of the branches of the Alleghany River, and this stream is navigable

from the lake to Pittsburgh, on the Ohio, for boats of thirty tons burthen. The waters of the Chatauqua are higher than those of Lake Erie, to which there is a gradual and regular descent of land; and a canal might be opened between them at a very moderate expense.

On the south side of Lake Erie, in the state of Pennsylvania, there is another portage of fifteen miles over an artificial road, from Presque Isle to French Creek, another branch of the Alleghany, and which is also navigable for boats carrying 200 barrels, to Pittsburgh. Over these two portages were sent, during the last summer, more than 100,000 bushels of salt, manufactured in the interior of the state of New-York, and transported through Lakes Ontario and Erie, across these portages and down to Pittsburgh, for the use of the inhabitants of the Ohio and its tributary streams. This salt trade was commenced about seven years ago, and has been increasing ever since at the rate of twenty-five per cent. a year. And if the great line of navigation, to which I shall presently call the attention of the house, were opened, the people of the Ohio, and its various waters, would be supplied with that great and necessary article of life, fifty per cent. cheaper than it now costs them.

About one hundred miles to the west of Presque Isle, in the state of Ohio, the river Cuyahoga opens a good boat navigation from Lake Erie to within six or eight miles of the navigable waters of the Muskingum; and I understand that a communication is about to be opened between them, either by means of a canal, or an artificial road, under the patronage of the legislature of that state.

About one hundred and fifty miles still further to the west, in the territories of Michigan and Indiana, other communications may be formed between the waters of the Miami of Lake Erie, and the Wabash and Miami of the Ohio.

At the south-western extremity of Lake Michigan, the most inconsiderable expense would open a canal between the waters of that lake and the Illinois River, one of the principal branches of the Mississippi. Nature has already made this connexion nearly complete; and it is not uncommon for boats in the spring of the year, to pass from the lake into the Illinois, and from thence by the waters of the Illinois and Mississippi to New Orleans, without being taken out of the water.

Farther to the north, a connexion might be formed with nearly the same facility between the waters of the Fox River which discharges into Green Bay, and the Ouisconsing, another branch of the Mississippi; and the lands adjacent to these rivers, are said to be uncommonly rich and fertile.

From this view of the western country and the great extent of its natural and internal navigation, we perceive the advantages to be derived by opening it to the Atlantic by a great canal; and we discover also, at the same time, that it is not very important to the inhabitants, by what line this canal approaches them, as their interests would be almost equally promoted by any route that might be adopted. I presume, however, there can be no doubt on this point.

The Alleghany mountains have a uniform elevation of about three thousand feet above the level of the tide. Their bases, together with those of their parallel ridges, occupy a distance, transversely, of about one hundred miles. They present a barrier to the opening of any continued navigation from the middle states to the western country, which, if not beyond the reach of art, is certainly far beyond that of our present national resources to surmount. An inspection of the map will at once point out this leading fact. To unite the highest navigable waters on each side of the mountains, by good roads, is all that can for some years, and perhaps for some centuries, be attempted; and very valuable communications may be opened in this way.

To the south and west of these mountains, the River Mississippi affords an invaluable descending navigation to the inhabitants of the vast countries which it traverses. But such is the great extent of that river, and the uniform rapidity of its current, that great doubts are entertained whether it can ever be made a valuable ascending navigation. It certainly cannot, in the present state of the science of navigation, even with the improvements of the steam-boat. To the north, still more important difficulties present themselves in the navigation of the St. Lawrence. One of these is found in the great rapids of the river, and another in the severity of the climate, which is such as to shut up the mouth of that river with ice, for six or seven months in the year. The only practicable route for an ascending navigation to the lakes, is by way of the Hudson and Mohawk, in the state of New-York; the Hudson being the only river whose tide waters flow above the Blue Ridge, or eastern chain of mountains. The Mohawk rises in the level lands of the western country, in the vicinity of Lake Ontario, from whence it takes an easterly direction for about a hundred and forty miles near to Albany, the seat of government of the state of New-York, where it passes around the northern extremity of the western chain of Alleghany mountains, and falls into the Hudson. From thence the two rivers united, take a southerly course, and breaking through the east chain of mountains, commonly called the Blue Ridge, at West Point, fall into the Atlantic at New-York. The Hudson is navigable from New-York to the mouth of the Mohawk, a distance of a hundred and seventy miles, for sloops drawing from eight to ten feet of water. The Mohawk is a river of respectable size, and for most of its distance deep and navigable; but its navigation is occasionally interrupted by falls. A canal of any extent may be made along the margin of this river, and supplied with its waters, as high as Rome, which is one hundred and twenty miles from its mouth. From Rome, a canal of one mile and a half in length, over lands which do not rise more than nine feet above the bed of the river, will connect it with the waters of Lake Ontario, down which the canal may be continued, about sixty miles, to the lake. The highest elevation of this canal at Rome, would be less than four hundred feet above the tide water of the Hudson, and less than two hundred above the surface of Lake Ontario. The whole expense of this canal from the Hudson to the lake, is estimated by the secretary of the treasury, in his very able report to the senate,

of April, 1808, on the subject of roads and canals, at 2,200,000 dollars; and I will take the liberty to recommend to the members of this house the perusal of that report, as containing a fund of the most useful geographical and other information, which, on every subject of political economy, that gentleman is so eminently qualified to impart.

From the place where this canal would connect with Lake Ontario, there is a ship navigation of two hundred miles to the falls of Niagara. A canal with locks sufficiently large for the vessels that navigate the lakes, might be opened around these falls, at an expense, estimated by the secretary of the treasury at one million of dollars. From the Niagara River there is again a ship navigation to every part of Lake Erie. It is presumed that a canal might be opened from Lake Erie to the Ohio, for the sum of five hundred thousand dollars, and another canal cut around the falls of the Ohio, for the like sum of five hundred thousand dollars. And from the falls of the Ohio, there is a good navigation of near two thousand miles to the Gulf of Mexico. And thus, sir, for the sum of 4,200,000 dollars, a great circumnavigation might be formed, embracing the principal part of the United States and their territories, and connecting in its course, by navigable waters, the whole of the western and Atlantic countries. This canal would open to the navigation of the Atlantic on the lakes alone, inclusive of Lake Superior, the navigation to which is now obstructed by a short rapid in the River St. Mary's, which connects it with Lake Huron; but which obstruction might be removed by an expense of thirty or forty thousand dollars. I say, sir, it would open to the navigation of the Atlantic, on the lakes alone, a coast of between five and six thousand miles, of as fine and fertile country as any in the world. And it would open on the Mississippi, and its various waters, a country not less fertile and still more extensive. How many hundred millions of dollars such an operation would add to the solid wealth of the western country, I will not venture to conjecture. But, sir, I may well say, that there is no work in the power of man, which would give such life, such vigour, such enterprise, and such riches to the citizens of that country, as the execution of this canal. The inhabitants near the lakes would have a direct communication to and from New-York, by means of the canal, and the effect of it would be to double the price of their produce, and to add three or four hundred per cent. to the value of their lands. The people of the Ohio and the Mississippi would descend with their produce to New-Orleans, and to any port on the Atlantic, from whence they might return with the articles received in exchange by way of the Hudson and the lakes, to their own homes. The idea of benefitting the people of the Ohio and Mississippi to any great extent by this northern navigation, may perhaps, at first, appear visionary; but I can state it as a fact, that even at this time, under all the disadvantages of that route, goods may be transported from the city of New-York, by the way of the Hudson and the lakes, to any part of the Ohio, and to all those parts of the Mississippi above its confluence with the Ohio, at as cheap a rate as they can be transported from any port on the Atlantic, by any other route. The effect of opening this navigation, would then be

to reduce the price of transportation to those parts of the country, at least fifty, and probably seventy-five per cent. Another important advantage, independent of the general commerce of the lakes, would be felt in the reduction of at least fifty per cent. in the price of salt. The salt springs in the state of New-York, are within a few miles of the proposed line of circumnavigation, and are connected with it by a navigable river. This article may be manufactured at those springs in sufficient quantities for the whole of the population of the United States, and it is now sold there for twenty-five and thirty cents a bushel; but such is the present expense of transportation, that it sells in the Pittsburg market for two dollars a bushel. If the effect of opening a canal navigation were only to reduce the price at Pittsburg to one dollar, it would make a saving on the quantity now sent to that market, of one hundred thousand dollars a year. But, sir, aside from all the pecuniary benefits I have mentioned, the great political effect of this work would be, by opening extensive communications, encouraging intercourse, and promoting connexions between the various ports of the Atlantic and western states, to subdue local jealousies, and to bind the union together by the indissoluble ties of interest and friendship.

There may be some, sir, whose fears to do any thing which shall diminish the national resources, may incline them to reject this system of internal improvement at the first view, on account of the magnitude of its expense. Let me ask these gentlemen to give themselves the trouble to trace the consequences of this system on the public wealth, and they will soon be satisfied that there are no possible means by which the aggregate value of the landed property of the United States could be so certainly increased, as by the application of part of these lands to the purposes of opening the great inland navigation which I have before described. The immediate and necessary effect of which would be, to enhance the value of the remaining part to an almost inconceivable extent.

I have been somewhat conversant with the interests of the great private landholders of the western country. They are a class of people whose sagacity in discovering and industry in pursuing the means of accumulating wealth, are not to be questioned. When they undertake the sale and settlement of wild lands, there is no policy so well understood, or so generally adopted, as that of opening easy and extensive communications, through the different parts of their lands, and of facilitating the approaches to them by means of good roads. And for every dollar they expend in these roads, or indeed, in almost any other public improvement, they are sure to be remunerated three or four hundred per cent. in the increased value which is thereby given to these lands.

The United States are the owners of about 250,000,000 acres of land in the western country, independent of Louisiana. More than 100,000,000 acres lie in the vicinity of the lakes. The public lands occupy a coast on the lakes of more than 2,600 miles in extent, inclusive of the navigable straits by which they are connected; but exclusive of the numerous and extensive islands abounding, more or less, in all of them. Taking thirty miles

in breadth along this coast, will give about 50,000,000 of acres of public land, the most remote of which is within thirty miles of the navigable waters of the lakes. A canal might be effected from the Atlantic to the lakes, by an appropriation of 1,000,000 of acres to that object. And this not by an actual sinking or sacrifice of the price of the land, but by a conversion of it into canal stock; which stock would, in all probability, be more productive and more valuable than the land itself. And the effect of opening this navigation would be to enhance the value of the remaining 49,000,000 some hundreds per cent. The value of land must depend upon the value of its produce, or, to speak with more precision, upon the profits which this produce will yield to the agriculturist. To show the effect of opening this navigation on these profits, I will instance the article of wheat, which is one of the great staple articles of the lake country, and is produced there with great certainty and in greater perfection than in any other part of the United States. The average price of a bushel of wheat on the lakes is fifty cents. This depression of price is owing solely to the present expense of conveying it to market. It costs from 75 to 100 cents to transport a bushel of wheat from the lakes to New-York, which is its nearest American market. If a canal were cut from the Hudson to the lakes, there can be no doubt but it would reduce the expense of transportation from 75 and 100 as low, at least, as 25 cents; and the effect would be to add the saving in transportation to the price of the article, and wheat would then be worth on the lakes, one dollar instead of fifty cents a bushel. But it costs the farmer from 30 to 40 cents to produce a bushel of wheat. When, therefore, he sells for fifty cents, his profits are only from ten to twenty cents. Whereas, if he could sell for one dollar, his profits would be from sixty to seventy cents. The effect then of opening this navigation would be to increase the profits of the farmer from four to six hundred per cent. and the value of land ought to rise in the same proportion. But suppose it should only double the value of lands (and this is an effect cannot be doubted) what would be the result as respects the property of the United States? Why, sir, the 50,000,000 of acres on the lakes, which are now worth 50,000,000 of dollars, would immediately become worth one hundred millions. And thus, besides performing a great and imperious duty, which, as a government, we owe to the people of the western country, we should by this operation, as mere proprietors of the soil, and in a matter of pecuniary speculation, advance the public property fifty millions of dollars.

But, sir, there are some gentlemen who are friendly to this system of internal improvement, but who think the present time inauspicious to such an undertaking, on account of the reduced state of the treasury.

To this objection I would answer, first, that the means by which it is proposed to carry on these improvements, are such as are not calculated to make any sensible impression on the revenue; and, secondly, that the bare increase of the sales of land, which would be effected in consequence of undertaking these works, would more than supply the drains on the trea-

sury in constructing them. I do not know that I can demonstrate the truth of this last position to the satisfaction of the house; but there is not the shade of a doubt on my mind, but the mere undertaking of a great canal from the Atlantic to the lakes, under the auspices of the general government, would, in a very short time, cause the sale of more land than would be sufficient to accomplish the whole of the improvements contemplated in the bill before the senate.

The expense of executing the whole of the works enumerated in that bill, is estimated at sixteen millions of dollars. This is not a mere random estimate of my own. It has been formed from the best information which the secretary of the treasury has been able to collect on this subject, by a gentleman (Mr. Latrobe) who as an experienced and scientific engineer, is confessedly superior to any other in this country. The estimate was intended to be a liberal one, and to show the maximum price which the works could cost. If the United States were to be interested one-half in these works, their subscription would amount to eight millions of dollars. The proposed plan, however, does not contemplate the payment of the principal sum out of, nor to make it chargeable upon, our ordinary revenue; but it provides that when monies shall be wanted to carry on these internal improvements, certificates shall be issued from the treasury, bearing an interest of six per centum, redeemable eventually out of the proceeds of a particular tract of land set apart to be sold for that purpose.—These certificates may be sold in market, or they may be immediately applied to the purposes for which they shall be issued.

Suppose, then, that the whole of these works were to be undertaken immediately, and completed within ten years; and suppose, too, that no monies should be received from the sales of the hypothecated lands. The calls on the treasury would then be,

For the first year,	$48,000
2d,	98,000
3d,	144,000
5th,	240,000
10th,	480,000

which sum of 480,000 dollars is the interest of the whole principal sum of eight millions.—And this, sir, would not be a very large sum compared to the magnitude of the object, and the extent of our revenue; especially when it is considered that, after one year from this time, and before the effect of such an appropriation could be felt, our revenue will be relieved from the payment of two millions of dollars, and after two years, from the payment of four millions of dollars annually, in consequence of the reductions which will then have taken place in the principal of the national debt.

But it is to be presumed that not more than one-third of these works would be undertaken immediately, and that these will be completed before any others are begun. The works, as fast as they shall be completed, will be drawing a toll equal at least, it is presumed, to the

interest of the money they cost; and in this way the treasury will be relieved from the payment of that interest. Upon this calculation, the United States would never have to pay, in any one year, a greater sum than the interest of one-third of the principal sum of eight millions of dollars; and in this case, the calls on the treasury would be (supposing again that no aids were derived from the sale of lands) as follow:

For the first year, - - - - -	$16,000
2d, - - - - - -	32,000
3d, - - - - - -	48,000
5th, - - - - - -	80,000
10th, - - - - - -	160,000

the highest sum called for in any one year.

Let us now see what will be the probable amount of the sales of land, within a given period, to forward the execution of these improvements.

The present population of the United Sates is estimated at seven and a half millions.—It is well ascertained that our population doubles once in twenty-three years; and it certainly is increasing, at this time, in as high a ratio as any former period. According to a calculation of Mr. Blodget (in his statistical tables) something more than one-third of the increasing population of the United States is constantly migrating to the western country.—One-third of the increased population, (or that portion which will migrate) for the next twenty-three years, will amount to two and a half millions. But suppose that only two millions should emigrate, and that only one million of these should settle on the public lands. This population would require fifty millions of acres, or fifty acres to each person, which is about the average quantity taken by new settlers; and it would bring into the treasury, in the space of twenty-three years, the enormous sum of one hundred millions of dollars, upon the supposition that the whole of the land should be purchased at the minimum price of two dollars an acre. It is probable, however, that it will sell much higher; and, if so, the aggregate amount of the sum will be increased in proportion to the increase of the price.

Such a demand for new lands may appear extravagant to those who have not attended to the progressive population and settlement of the United States for the last twenty years. A moment's recurrence to a few well known facts on this subject, will show that such a demand is not only probable, but that, unless some great national calamity befalls us, it is certain. The population of the state of New-York has considerably more than doubled within the last twenty years. Upwards of fifteen millions of acres in the western part of that state, which twenty years ago formed a dreary and uninhabited wilderness, are now covered by settlements, and compose one of the most flourishing parts of the United States. Population and settlement have progressed nearly or quite to the same extent in the northern and western parts of the state of Pennsylvania. That tract of country which now forms the state

of Ohio, did not contain, twenty years ago, one thousand inhabitants; and now it has a population of more than 200,000. The great states of Kentucky and Tennesee have been almost wholly peopled within the same period; and it is not extravagant to say, that more than one hundred millions of acres have been actually purchased and occupied within the last twenty years in the western country.

It is true, sir, that the rate at which the public lands are now, and have been for some time past selling, is not such as to warrant the calculation I have made as to future sales; but the causes of these sales being so contracted are obvious. One principal cause, which, however, will immediately cease to operate, because it is ceasing to be a fact, has been that the public lands were remote from the inhabited parts of the country. Settlements will always be regular and progressive. People accustomed to the pleasures and advantages of society, do not choose to remove far into the wilderness, when they can purchase lands in the vicinity of old settlements. Several of the individual states have held large tracts of wild land, which, being more contiguous to settlements, came of course first into market. But the lands of the individual states, especially to the northward, are now nearly all occupied. The state of New-York, for instance, has but few new lands. Settlement in that state has advanced to its western extremity. The same is the case with Pennsylvania—and the whole of the immense emigration from the northern and middle states, will be immediately pressing upon the public lands. Another reason for the paucity of sales is, that we have no lands in market calculated for this northern emigration. The lands on the lakes are shut up. We have no lands for sale further north than the south part of the state of Ohio, and that is too low a latitude for most of the northern population.

Another impediment to the sales of public lands arises from the circumstance that you will receive nothing but specie in payment for them. The people who migrate to new countries are, with few exceptions, of the poorer class. They rarely have more than property sufficient to transport their families to their new places of residence, to construct a few temporary accommodations, and to subsist themselves and families until their farms become productive. They then calculate to pay for their farms by the produce of them. But the products of the public lands in their present occluded situation, will not command money, and settlers are therefore deterred from purchasing. If, instead of confining the payments to money, you were to undertake this system of internal improvement, and issue paper to enable you to execute it, and make this paper receivable at the land offices, the additional facilities which this would afford to payments would not only bring back this paper into the treasury, but large sums of money with it. To show the effect of such a policy, I need only refer to a comparative view of the sales of public lands during the time when the evidences of the public debt were receivable in payment for lands, and the sales which have taken place since that period.

The sales in the year 1803,	amounted to	199,080	acres.
1804,	do.	373,611	do.
1805,	do.	619,236	do.

During the whole of this time the public paper was receivable in payment. The amount of sales was increasing near one hundred per cent. yearly, and would probably have continued to increase in the same ratio to this time, had the same quantity of public debt been kept afloat, and had it continued to be received at the land offices. But, sir, in April 1806, a law was passed prohibiting the further receipt of the public debt in payment for land: And the consequence was, that the sales diminished,

In 1806	to	473,217 acres.
1807	to	284,180
1808	to	195,579
1809	to	143,409

The sales thus retrograding in amount, in about the same ratio in which they had before advanced, and this for no other assignable cause than what that law furnishes.

But, sir, the grand, and all-important operation by which only you can make extensive and effectual sales of the public lands, is to open the produce of them to market, and in this way to make them pay for themselves. Do this, and not only settlers, but monied men will become purchasers. There are now thousands, and I may venture to say millions of dollars in the northern states, ready to be invested in the lands on the lakes, the moment a value shall be stamped on them, by the certainty that they will be speedily opened to the navigation of the Atlantic. Let the United States and the state of New-York undertake a canal from the Hudson to the lakes; and so far from draining your treasury by the operation, it will give you in five years, I pledge my reputation on it, an overflowing treasury. There can be no mistake about this business, sir, it is a matter of plain calculation.

The government of the state of New-York have long seen the advantages of such a navigation; and they have been for several years desirous of undertaking this canal. They wait only in the expectation that the general government will aid them in this great work; and this is certainly a just and reasonable expectation, inasmuch as the work would benefit the property of the United States to a much greater extent than that of the state of New-York.

The present time, far, in my opinion, from being unpropitious to the undertaking of this measure of internal improvement, is peculiarly fortunate. The great commercial capitals which have been thrown out of employment by the stagnation of foreign commerce, are now idle, and might be engaged in these improvements by a little attention on the part of government; and if they could be so engaged, they would continue to give support to a vast number of our sailors and other labourers who have hitherto been employed in the subordinate

occupations of commerce, but who have also been thrown out of employment by the stagnation of that commerce.

If I had not already drawn too largely upon the time of the house, I could point out other advantages resulting from this system of improvement, not less important than those I have mentioned. I could show that it would bring into the treasury, perhaps some millions of dollars yearly, by the increase of duties on imports. The great additional quantities of produce which would be thrown into market through these roads and canals, would be exchanged for foreign merchandise, which is subject to heavy duties; and from which most of our present revenues are derived. I could show also the great advantages which, in a military point of view, would result from these improvements. If the United States were to be engaged in a war, we are equally vulnerable and equally liable to be assailed, at half a dozen different points, some hundreds and even thousands of miles distant from each other; and it would be impossible to carry on any vigorous military operations, without the aid of good roads and canals to transport over such distances the immense quantities of arms, ammunition, and provisions necessary to the supply of a great army. It is sufficient, however, that I suggest these arguments, and they will be properly appreciated by the house.

But, Mr. Speaker, there is one other point of view, in which, although an unpleasant one, I feel it my duty to present this subject to the house: and this regards not only the means of improving that great source of national wealth, the public lands, to the best advantage; but it involves the practicability of enjoying it at all. The people who have purchased and settled on your new lands, are already your debtors to the amount of some millions of dollars; and in as far as they are your debtors, they are (to use a phrase perhaps somewhat too harsh) a species of enemy—and we have already seen to what a formidable extent their powers and numbers are increasing. It is far from my intention, sir, to cast any injurious imputations on the character of these settlers. On the contrary, I know that they are not to be distinguished from the great mass of the yeomanry of this country; among whom is to be found most of the real patriotism, as well as the real strength of the nation. It is on them that we are to depend for the security and permanence of our republican institutions. It is to them that this government must resort for protection and support, in every great and dangerous crisis. I say, sir, that I am not about to impeach either the honesty or the patriotism of these settlers; it is their interest and their wish to pay their debts, and to discharge all their duties to government as good and faithful citizens. But let me ask you, sir, let me ask any man of common observation, who has attended in the least, to the situation of the western country, how it is possible for these settlers to pay you fifty or an hundred millions of dollars in specie, when they have no other resources than in their agriculture, and when the produce of this agriculture will not bring them money enough to buy

their whiskey. It is impossible, sir, and if you intend to hold those lands, much more if you intend to make them a source of public revenue, you must furnish the means of making them productive, by opening them to market. Every motive of interest and policy unites in urging the government to undertake this system of internal improvement. It is a subject too vast to be accomplished by individual enterprise. The means of the citizens of the western country are peculiarly inadequate to such an undertaking. They cannot construct canals for the very obvious reason that they are already deeply in debt for their lands, and they must continue so until this great work is executed for them. They will then not only be able to pay you for their lands, but they will remunerate you for the expense of opening canals by the tolls which they will be able to pay. In the advantages which these outlets for their produce will give them, and on which their prosperity must so essentially depend, you will have a pledge for their future attachment and fidelity to your government, and which they will never forfeit. But, sir, if you neglect to avail yourselves of the opportunity which this system affords, of securing the affections of the western people—if you refuse to extend to them those benefits which their situation so imperiously demands, and which your resources enable you, and your duty enjoins it on you, to extend to them—if, while you are expending millions yearly for the encouragement of commerce, you affect constitutional doubts as to your right to expend any thing for the advancement of agriculture—if you can constitutionally create banks for the accommodation of the merchant, but cannot construct canals for the benefit of the farmer,—if this be the crooked, partial policy which is to be pursued, there is great reason to fear that our western brethren may soon accost us in a tone higher than that of the constitution itself. They may remind us (as the people of this country once did another power, equally regardless of their interests) of the rights with which the God of nature has invested them, by placing them in the possession of a country which they have the physical power to defend; and which it is to be feared, they would defend against all the tax-gatherers we could send among them, supported by all the force of the Atlantic states.

It is unpleasant, sir, to be obliged to press considerations of this sort on the attention of the house. Disagreeable, however, as they are, they are not on that account the less important, and ought not to be disregarded. If you would attach the affections of the western people to your government, you must attach them by their interests. You must appear among them, not in the light of their creditors merely, but as their guardians, their protectors, as the promoters of their welfare. If you avoid all communication with them, except what arises out of your relations as creditors, and go among them only to collect their money, be assured that this is an intercourse which they will soon break off. You have seen how effectual an opposition a few settlers in the north part of Pennsylvania have been able to make to the authority of that great state; and you have seen in a more recent instance, the difficulties which a handful of squatters have opposed to the power of another

great state, the state of Massachusetts—and from these examples you may well calculate the effect of an opposition from the host of settlers who are covering your new lands. But I have said enough on this subject.

I am under great obligation to the house, for the attention which I have received during this long discussion, and I will not trespass any further. In the various aspects in which I have presented this system of internal improvement, I have considered it principally in reference to the effects which it is calculated to produce on the western country; because, in that point of view I consider it not only most important, but least understood. I have not gone into a particular examination of the benefits to be derived from the proposed canals and roads along the Atlantic, not because I do not think them important, but because this part of the subject is as well and perhaps better understood by the members generally than by myself. For the same reason I have not gone into any minute calculations to show the superior cheapness and safety of canal transportation, over transportation by land. That point is fully illustrated in the report of the secretary of the treasury to which I have before alluded. I believe, however, I have said enough, and more than enough, to satisfy the house of the importance of the subject, and of the propriety of referring it to a committee. This great system, so necessary, in my opinion, to the welfare of this country, is not a measure of speculative or doubtful utility. Its advantages are great and palpable; and the accomplishment of it perfectly within the reach of the resources of the nation. I have not been induced to bring forward this resolution by any personal considerations, but I have done it in obedience to a great duty which I owe my constituents. So far from being a project confined to myself, or even to a few individuals, the proposition, which I now submit, carries with it the anxious wishes, and the best hopes of a large and respectable portion of the population of this country—and permit me to hope, sir, that their expectations may not be disappointed.

Note W.—p. 97.

Services of the late Thomas Eddy.

About two years since, conversing with Mr. Eddy in relation to the important services he had rendered to the state, particularly in fostering our schools, our benevolent institutions, and especially in promoting the late improvements in canal navigation; at the same time observing his health to be rapidly declining, I urged upon him the importance of committing to paper, some details of the services he had contributed. After his lamented death, which took place on

the 13th September, 1827, a number of memoranda were found, which probably had been prepared in consequence of the suggestion before mentioned. Upon the subject of the canals of this state, the following are the remarks he has committed to paper, which his family have kindly placed in my hands. Upon another occasion, his observations upon other interesting topics may also be communicated to the public.

Canals.

"I was one of the first directors of the Western Inland Lock Navigation Company, and continued as a director, and treasurer, until the company disposed of their property to the state in 1820. I applied myself with much zeal in forwarding the views of the company, in improving the internal navigation of the state. Our funds were not sufficient to extend any improvement further than a few miles west of Rome. The company had in their service William Weston, an eminent engineer from England, and in company with him and General Schuyler, the president, I made several journies to the westward, in order to explore and examine the country as far as Seneca Lake, with the view to ascertain the practicability of making improvements in the navigation as far as that place. Being well satisfied from my own observation, of the practicability of making extensive improvements by means of canals, &c. through the western parts of the state, and considering the incalculable advantages that would result from the completion of such a magnificent work, my mind was devoted to its accomplishment. As I was active in the prosecution of the improvements made by the Western Inland Lock Navigation Company, the geography and topography of the western parts of this state were very familiar to my mind; and having been exceedingly intimate with William Weston, when he was in this country employed by the company as canal engineer, and having accompanied him in exploring the country from Rome to Cayuga Lake, in 1796, and being repeatedly with him, whilst he was employed on the canals on the Mohawk River, my knowledge of the whole face of the country fixed in my mind an ardent desire to extend a complete canal navigation from Rome to Seneca River. Occasionally for many years, I urged the Western Canal Company to extend their improvements

further west. A vast sum of money had been expended by them in improving the navigation of the Mohawk, which for many years absorbed the tolls, and prevented a dividend being made among the stockholders. Under these circumstances, no importunities of mine could prevail on the company to make advances for further improvements. In March 1810, I was at Albany, and it occurred to me that possibly the legislature might be induced to appoint commissioners to examine and explore the western parts of this state, for the purpose of ascertaining the practicability of extending canal navigation, and to estimate the expense and report thereon. I was perfectly convinced that if commissioners should be appointed, they would make a very favourable report. My friend Jonas Platt, now one of the judges of the supreme court, was then a member of the senate, and on the evening of the 12th of March, I called upon him, and suggested to him a plan, on which I had never consulted any person, of proposing to the legislature to appoint commissioners as before mentioned, and I proposed to him that he should use his endeavours in the senate to further the plan. He replied he very highly approved of my proposition, and asked, why not make it the duty of these commissioners to explore the country as far as Lake Erie, with the view to ascertain the practicability of making a complete canal from thence to the Hudson? We then agreed to its being made in this way, and he immediately drafted a joint resolution to be offered to both branches of the legislature, which it was agreed he should present to the senate next morning. We also thought it would be proper for us then to fix on suitable names to offer to the senate as commissioners, and we agreed as to the necessity of selecting persons equally from the two great political parties which then divided the state. This we did, according to the best judgment we could form, and the following gentlemen were nominated, viz. Gouverneur Morris, De Witt Clinton, Stephen Van Rensselaer, Simeon De Witt, William North, Thomas Eddy, and Peter B. Porter. It was concluded that I should meet Judge Platt at the senate chamber next morning, when I accordingly attended, and we called out De Witt Clinton, and showed him the resolution. He expressed his hearty concurrence with our plan, and as soon as the senate was formed, Judge Platt presented the resolution which we had prepared the previous

evening. It was seconded by Mr. Clinton, and passed without a dissenting voice. It was immediately sent to the assembly, and passed that house in the same manner, within an hour after. In the summer of 1810, I accompanied the other commissioners, in exploring the country as far as Lake Erie. In 1811, we made our first report to the legislature.

" Several laws were enacted favourable to the prosecution of the project, notwithstanding which, the measure met with a serious and warm opposition.—The war with England seemed to put a stop to all further proceedings, and many persons entertained serious doubts of the practicability of the undertaking, and if practicable, whether the resources of the state were competent to secure its completion. Besides these difficulties, the measure was opposed with great warmth on party grounds. Thus circumstanced, after the war the friends of the project appeared to be entirely discouraged, and to have given up all hopes of the legislature being induced again to take up the subject, or to adopt any measure to prosecute the scheme. However I could not thus resign a favourite project, and it appeared to me that one more effort should be made; and Judge Platt being then (in the autumn of 1815) in the city, holding a court, I wrote him a note inviting him to breakfast with me the succeeding morning. He came, when I proposed to him, that if it met his approbation, I would undertake to get up a public meeting, to be held at the City Hotel, in order to urge the propriety and policy of offering a memorial to the legislature, pressing them to prosecute the canal from Erie to the Hudson. Judge Platt readily agreed to my proposition, and consented to open the business to the meeting if one could be obtained. I then called on De Witt Clinton, who united with me in adopting measures to procure a public meeting. Accordingly a large and respectable meeting was held at the City Hotel. William Bayard was chairman. Judge Platt made an introductory speech, and was followed by De Witt Clinton, John Swarthout, and others.—Cadwallader D. Colden, De Witt Clinton, John Swarthout, and myself were appointed a committee to draft a memorial to the legislature. This memorial was drawn up by De Witt Clinton; and from the masterly manner in which it was written, it was evident he had a complete knowledge of the subject, and

evinced the uncommon talents of the author. It was signed by many thousands in this city, and throughout the state. With the legislature it had the desired effect, and was the means of establishing the canal policy on a firm basis, and producing the law of 15th of April, 1817, directing the work to be commenced, which was accordingly done on the 4th of July following.

"From the period of presenting the first report of the commissioners to the legislature, in 1812, to the passing of the act of 1817, (excepting two years during the war with England,) I attended the several sessions of the legislature for the purpose of interesting the members in favour of the great project of the proposed canal from Lake Erie to the Hudson River. De Witt Clinton and myself were uniformly engaged in using every means in our power, by distributing pamphlets, and endeavouring to explain to the members the great value and importance of such a canal, and showing them the immense advantages the state would derive, as to its agricultural and commercial improvements, and the great increase of revenue arising from tolls. We were encouraged to pursue further exertions by procuring an act, in 1813, which authorised the commissioners to obtain a loan of five millions of dollars, to enable the state to prosecute the grand undertaking. This act was afterwards repealed, and nothing further was done during the war, and from the period of its termination, until the meeting held at the City Hotel, in the latter part of the year 1815. The friends of the plan were much discouraged, in consequence of the violent opposition it met with from men not capable of forming a correct judgment as to the practicability of the work.

"From the year 1810, I devoted most of my time in endeavouring, in connexion with De Witt Clinton and Robert Fulton, to enlighten the public mind respecting it, by publishing pamphlets, essays in newspapers, &c. &c."

NOTE X.—p. 97.

Jonas Platt.

The following narrative, drawn up at my request, and with which I have been favoured by Judge Platt, will afford high gratification to all who feel an interest in this subject, as containing not only an accurate outline of the public measures which have successively taken place in the internal navigation of this state, but as exhibiting a plain and unaffected statement of all the circumstances which led the Judge, when a member of the senate, to introduce the memorable resolution of the 13th March, 1810.

The following tribute, from his friend Governor Clinton, inviting him to participate in celebrating the completion of the Erie canal, bespeaks the extent and importance of the services Judge Platt has rendered, and the high sense entertained of them by his fellow-citizens.

Letter from De Witt Clinton to Jonas Platt, Esq. at Utica.

ALBANY, Sept. 29, 1823.

MY DEAR SIR,

On the 8th of October the first canal boat will pass into the Hudson at this place, and a celebration will take place under the direction of the citizens and corporation of Albany, correspondent with this auspicious event. Your signal services in initiating, and promoting, our great system of internal navigation will be remembered to your honour when we are no more.

Your presence at the celebration will be highly gratifying to your numerous friends, and to none more than to

Yours sincerely and respectfully,
DE WITT CLINTON.

JONAS PLATT, Esq.

Letter from Jonas Platt, Esq. to David Hosack, M. D.

NEW-YORK, May 3, 1828.

DEAR SIR,

It affords me great pleasure to comply with your request, in furnishing some particular facts, within my own knowledge and personal observation, relating to the origin and progress of the Erie Canal.

The operations during the war of 1756, and particularly the transportation of the army and military stores in two expeditions, the first under Colonel Bradstreet, and the other under General Prideaux, on the route of the Mohawk and Wood Creek, Oneida Lake and its outlet, to Lake Ontario, demonstrated the practicability and importance of inland navigation from Schenectady to Oswego. The same channel of conveyance was in constant use by the fur-traders, from the peace of 1763, till the revolutionary war of 1775.—It was then also well known, that with slight impediments, there was an easy communication for batteaux, from the outlet of Oneida Lake to the Cayuga and Seneca Lakes. That any person, since that period, should arrogate the merit of discovering or projecting that channel of inland navigation, is absurd and ridiculous.

The efforts of Christopher Colles, immediately after the peace of 1783, to improve that navigation by means of dams and locks, were highly commendable. And the subsequent operations of the Western Inland Lock Navigation Company, in following up that plan of improvement, by canalling around the Little Falls, and in connecting the Mohawk and Wood Creek, by a short canal link of one mile and a half, were evidence of patriotic zeal for public improvements. But it is a truth which ought not to be disguised, that the gross errors which were committed by the advocates of that scheme, in their estimates of the expense, and of the profits and advantages of those improvements, resulted in a complete failure of the benefits promised by its projectors. The whole operations of the Northern Inland Lock Navigation Company, were condemned and abandoned as utterly useless. Certain I am, that instead of facilitating, and encouraging subsequent canal operations, the history and experience of the Northern and Western Inland Lock Navigation

Companies, were powerful impediments to the enterprise of the Erie Canal. I shall never forget my embarrassment, in answering the appalling argument of the venerable John Tayler in the senate. "General Schuyler and Mr. Weston," said he, "were as wise and skilful as any of the new projectors. We know, and the fact is upon record, that all their calculations of expense and of tolls were not only erroneous, but they erred more than 200 per cent. in their estimates. What confidence, therefore, can we place in the opinions and estimates of the new projectors, who recommend a canal over mountains and valleys of 360 miles in extent?"

On the 4th February, 1808, on motion of Joshua Forman, a joint resolution passed the legislature, directing the surveyor-general to cause a survey "of the most eligible and direct route for a canal to open a communication between the tide waters of the Hudson River and Lake Erie; to the end that congress may be enabled to appropriate such sums as may be necessary to the accomplishment of that great national object." And the surveys were directed to be transmitted to the President of the United States: and there, as might have been expected, the matter ended. That effort evinced much patriotic zeal, but the state of New-York has reason to rejoice that the effort proved abortive. Next to the surrender of state sovereignty, it would have proved the greatest sacrifice which the state could have made.

As to the merit of the first design of a canal directly from Lake Erie to the Hudson, it belongs, in my opinion, exclusively, to no person. It was gradually developed to the minds of many who were early acquainted with the geography and topography of the western region of this state. I knew, in common with thousands, at an early period, that there was a remarkable gap in the continental ridge of high lands, at the summit of the Mohawk at Rome. I knew, from the estimates of Charlevoix and others, that Lake Erie was elevated about three hundred feet above Lake Ontario; and from Mr. Weston's levels and estimates from Albany to Oswego, I knew that Rome was about 140 feet lower than Lake Erie. And these grand outlines led the inquiring mind to the conclusion, that a canal directly from Lake Erie to the Hudson was practicable, if a sufficiency of water could be obtained upon every intervening summit. My knowledge of that region rendered it *probable*, that

the remarkable succession of small lakes, throughout the western district, known to be at a great elevation above Lake Ontario, and discharging into it, might be used to feed a canal from Lake Erie; and the general surface and conformation of the country seemed favourable to such an operation. I saw the general capabilities of the natural features of the country; and if practicable, my mind and heart were expanded with a glow of sublime enthusiasm, in contemplating the magnitude and importance of the work, as a channel of commerce, and as a ligament of union between the eastern and western states.

In this state of mind and opinions, I was elected to the senate of this state, in 1809; and early in the session of the ensuing winter, my friend Thomas Eddy, called on me at Albany, to solicit my aid in the passage of a law, to employ commissioners to explore a route for a canal, from Oneida Lake to Seneca River, with a view to authorize the Western Inland Lock Navigation Company to make such a canal. After hearing a full exposition of his plan, I told him, I rejoiced to find him moving in that field of inquiry; that I feared he would consider my ideas visionary and extravagant, but that I had much to say to him on that subject. I then unfolded to him the plan of instituting a board of commissioners (without reference to the Western Inland Lock Navigation Company,) to examine and survey the whole route from the Hudson to Lake Ontario, and to Lake Erie also; with a view to forming a canal, independent of the beds of rivers, and using them as feeders merely. Whether the canal should be made directly to Lake Erie, without descending to and ascending from Lake Ontario, must depend on the result of the surveys, and the estimate of the comparative expense and advantages. I also expressed to him my decided conviction, that no private corporation was adequate to, or ought to be entrusted with, the power and control over such an important object. I also told him, that the Western Inland Lock Navigation Company had disappointed public expectation; and that it would be inauspicious to present any projèt which should be subject to that corporation.

The mind of that prudent and excellent man seemed startled at the extravagance of my proposal. His first impression was, that it would be thought so visionary and gigantic, that the legislature would not even deem it worthy of consideration or inquiry. We spent nearly the whole night in discussing the

subject, and at the close of our interview, it was agreed, that I should prepare a resolution conformable to my views; and that he should call on me again early next morning, and consider of it. He did so; and his mind then fully embraced the subject. He expressed his cordial approbation of the plan, and assured me of his support.

Mr. Eddy and myself then designated for commissioners, Gouverneur Morris, De Witt Clinton, Stephen Van Rensselaer, Simeon De Witt, Benjamin Walker, Peter B. Porter, and Thomas Eddy. Our object was to balance the opposing political parties as nearly as possible, and to combine talents, influence, and wealth in constituting this board; and as De Witt Clinton was then a member of the senate, possessing a powerful influence over the dominant party in the state, it was considered by Mr. Eddy and myself, of primary importance to obtain his co-operation. We accordingly requested an interview with Mr. Clinton, and unfolded to him our plan, and the prominent facts and considerations in support of it: and I distinctly remember, that in showing him the names of the persons we had proposed as commissioners, I stated to Mr. Clinton, that we had selected men of wealth and public spirit, with an expectation, that they would bestow their time and services without compensation; so that we might then only ask an appropriation for the expenses of the engineers and surveyors, who were to be employed by the commissioners.

Mr. Clinton listened to us with intense interest, and deep agitation of mind. He then said, that he was in a great measure a stranger to the western interior of our state; that he had given but little attention to the subject of canal navigation, but that the exposition of our plan struck his mind with great force; that he was then prepared to say, that it was an object worthy of thorough examination; and that if I would move the resolution in blank, (without the names of the commissioners,) he would second and support it.

Stephen Van Rensselaer and Abraham Van Vechten were then members of the House of Assembly. I immediately called on them, and showed them the proposed resolution, and the names intended to be inserted in it as commissioners. They heartily assented to it, and promised to aid its passage in the Assembly: but Mr. Van Rensselaer requested that his friend William North might be added as a commissioner, or substituted for one of the others. I

then went to the senate chamber, and moved the resolution of the 12th March 1810, (as the journal will show) with an introductory speech. Mr. Clinton seconded and supported it; and the resolution (in blank) was unanimously agreed to. Next morning, I moved to insert the names of Gouverneur Morris, De Witt Clinton, Stephen Van Rensselaer, Simeon De Witt, William North, Peter B. Porter, and Thomas Eddy, who were unanimously agreed to in the senate, and the concurrent resolution was on the same day, unanimously adopted in the Assembly.

Mr. Colden in his Memoir, (page 34,) has omitted the names of De Witt Clinton and Simeon De Witt; and he says that the resolution moved by me was brought forward "on the suggestion of Thomas Eddy." If he had conferred with Mr. Eddy, he would not have fallen into that error. An interesting Memoir of the Canal, left by Mr. Eddy, never published, but now in the possession of his family, substantially accords with the statement I have here given. Mr. Eddy's suggestion to me was, to appoint commissioners to examine and report a plan for extending the navigation from Oneida Lake to Seneca River, with a view to enlarge the powers of the Western Inland Lock Navigation Company for that object. My answer was, that the survey and inquiry should be extended from the Hudson to Lake Ontario and Lake Erie, with a view to a canal independent of the beds of rivers; and that the enterprise if practicable, should be undertaken by the government, for the benefit and at the expense of the state. Mr. Eddy abandoned his project and adopted *my suggestion.*

From that period Mr. Clinton devoted the best powers of his vigorous and capacious mind to this subject; and he appeared to grasp and realize it, as an object of the highest public utility, and worthy of his noblest ambition.

The commissioners all entered with zeal, upon the duties assigned to them; and during the summer of 1810, they explored, with scrutinizing observation, the surface of the country, with the lakes and rivers connected with the design; and in the winter of 1811, they made a unanimous report in favour of a canal from Lake Erie to Hudson's River, with an estimate of the expense. That splendid report was from the pen of Gouverneur Morris, and is before the public.

General Morgan Lewis came into the senate in 1811, and then, and ever afterwards, gave his warm and decided support to the canal; and during the session of 1811, Robert R. Livingston and Robert Fulton were added to the board of canal commissioners, which brought a powerful reinforcement of talent and influence in aid of the contemplated work.

During the summer of 1811, the commissioners prosecuted their labours of surveys and levels; and in the course of a written correspondence between Mr. Morris, as president of the board, and myself, during the years 1811 and 1812, it was agreed that I should introduce a bill into the senate at the next session, authorising the canal commissioners to borrow five millions of dollars in Europe, on the credit of this state, as a fund for prosecuting the work. In the extra session of June, 1812, such a bill was accordingly introduced by me, and was carried into a law, by a small majority, in each house. But in consequence of the war between the United States and Great Britain, of which the duration and consequences could not be foreseen, the bold measure of borrowing five millions for the canal, was deemed inexpedient; and by a nearly unanimous consent of both houses, the law for that purpose was repealed in April 1814; and during the war, the projèt of the canal was utterly abandoned.

Soon after the war ended, a consultation was held between Mr. Clinton, Thomas Eddy, and myself, in the city of New-York, for the purpose of reviving the enterprise of the canal, and for organizing and animating its friends throughout the state. It was agreed that cards of invitation should be addressed to about one hundred gentlemen of that city, to meet at the City Hotel to consult on measures for that object. A meeting was held accordingly, at the City Hotel, in the autumn of 1815, of which William Bayard was chairman, and John Pintard was secretary. According to previous arrangement, an address was made to the meeting by myself, in which I endeavoured to show that the object was identified with the best interests of the state; and that the city of New-York was peculiarly interested in its accomplishment. In that address, I also pointed at the stupendous project of a canal, on an uninterrupted inclined plane, which had been unfortunately proposed in the first report of the commissioners, and I urged the expediency of a formal and public abandonment of that plan, for the simple mode (afterwards

adopted) of following the general surface of the country in its undulations. After discussion, a resolution was then passed, approving the object, and appointing a committee, consisting of De Witt Clinton, Thomas Eddy, Cadwallader D. Colden, and John Swartwout, to prepare and circulate a memorial to the legislature in favour of the Erie Canal. A memorial was drawn and published accordingly. It was from the pen of Mr. Clinton, and evinced a perfect knowledge of the subject, with a sagacious discernment of its beneficial results to the state and to the nation. If Mr. Clinton had left no other evidence, that memorial alone is sufficient to entitle him to the character of an accomplished writer, an enlightened statesman, and a zealous patriot.

The friends of the canal throughout the state, rallied under the standard of that memorial, and meetings were soon after held in Albany, Utica, Geneva, Canandaigua, and Buffalo, to second and support the efforts of the meeting in New-York; and a vigorous impulse was given to the public mind in favour of the arduous enterprise.

Powerful and appalling obstacles, however, were presented, in the honest doubts and fears of many sensible and prudent men; in the rival and hostile local interests of various sections of the state; and in the political cabals, and personal hostility to Mr. Clinton, who had boldly identified himself with the canal, and staked his public character on the issue of the experiment. The leading advocates of the canal, were objects of ridicule throughout the United States: hallucination was the mildest epithet applied to them.

The year 1816 was employed in the examination of physical obstacles, and the modes of obviating or surmounting them; in conciliating public opinion in favour of the object, and in devising a system of finance, to meet the vast expenditures which it involved. The full force of Mr. Clinton's mind was devotedly applied to these objects.

In April 1817, the first decisive act of the legislature was passed for commencing the work. By this act, the commissioners were directed to make the middle section of the canal, from Seneca River to the Mohawk, and a suitable appropriation of funds was made for the purpose.

The bill passed each house by a very small majority. But after its passage through the senate and assembly, it was subjected to another severe ordeal in

the council of revision. Lieutenant-Governor Tayler, as acting Governor, was then president of the council, and had ever been distinguished as one of the ablest and most formidable opponents of the canal. The other attending members of the board were, Chancellor Kent, Chief Justice Thompson, Judge Yates, and myself. After reading the bill, the president called on the chancellor for his opinion. Chancellor Kent said he had given very little attention to the subject; that it appeared to him like a gigantic project, which would require the wealth of the United States to accomplish it; that it had passed the legislature by small majorities, after a desperate struggle; and he thought it inexpedient to commit the state, in such a vast undertaking, until public opinion could be better united in its favour.

Chief Justice Thompson was next called on for his opinion. He said he cherished no hostility to the canal, and he would not inquire whether the bill had passed by large or small majorities, and as the legislature had agreed to the measure, he would be inclined to leave the responsibility with them; but, he said, the bill gave arbitrary powers to the commissioners over private rights, without those provisions and guards, which, in his opinion, the spirit of the constitution, and the public safety required; and he was therefore opposed to the bill.

Judge Yates was a decided friend of the canal, and voted for the bill. My heart and voice were ardently engaged in support of the measure, which now seemed at a fatal crisis.

The president of the council panted with honest zeal to strangle the infant Hercules at its birth, by his casting vote in the negative. A warm and animated discussion arose; and afterwards a more temperate and deliberate examination of the bill and its provisions, obviated in some measure, the objections of the Chancellor and the Chief Justice. Near the close of the debate, Vice-president Tompkins came into the council chamber, and took his seat familiarly among us. He joined in the argument, which was informal and desultory. He expressed a decided opinion against the bill; and among other reasons, he stated, that the late peace with Great Britain was a mere truce; that we should undoubtedly soon have a renewed war with that country; and that instead of wasting the credit and resources of the state, in this chimerical project, we ought immediately to employ all the revenue and credit of the

state, in providing arsenals, arming the militia, erecting fortifications, and preparing for war. "Do you think so, sir?" said Chancellor Kent. "Yes, sir," was the reply; "England will never forgive us, for our victories on the land, and on the ocean and the lakes; and my word for it, we shall have another war with her, within two years." The Chancellor then rising from his seat, with great animation declared, "if we must have war, or have a canal, I am in favour of the canal, and I vote for this bill." His voice gave us the majority; and so the bill became a law.

If that bill had been rejected by the council, it could not have been carried by two-thirds of the senate and assembly; and from the personal hostility to Mr. Clinton, the great champion of the canal, combined with other causes of opposition, it is probable, that this magnificent enterprise could never since have obtained the sanction of the legislature. At no future period could the work have been accomplished at so small an expense of land, of water, and hydraulic privileges. Rival routes, and local interests, were daily increasing and combining against the projèt: and in my estimation, it was one of the chief grounds of merit in the advocates of the Erie Canal, that they seized on the very moment most proper and auspicious for that immortal work.

As to the subsequent measures and operations, till the successful completion of the Erie and Champlain Canals, with the firm, bold, and efficient support, uniformly given by Governor Clinton, they are matters of history and of public record.

Whether the early projectors adopted and pursued the means best calculated to promote and effectuate the object, the public must judge. My humble efforts have been rewarded, by seeing the great work accomplished with complete success: and I have also the proud satisfaction of reflecting, that my name has never appeared among the clamorous competitors for fame or public gratitude.

I have only to beg you, to excuse the egotism of this memoir. My apology is, that a compliance with your request, seemed to render it indispensable.

With great respect,

Your friend and obedient servant,

JONAS PLATT.

Dr. David Hosack.

NOTE.—p. 97.

Knowing that our learned countryman, Dr. Samuel L. Mitchill, had not only been the intimate and personal friend of the subject of this Memoir, as appears from his interesting eulogium, pronounced at the request of the Lyceum of Natural History, but had also been a member of the house of assembly of this state in the year 1810, during the memorable proceedings relative to canal navigation, I addressed a note to the Doctor, soliciting such information as he might possess upon that subject. In reply to this request, I have been favoured with the following communication, which contains some interesting particulars, and reflects no inconsiderable light upon the events to which it relates.

"*Notices of certain events connected with the History of the Canal in the State of New-York, uniting the Hudson with Lake Erie. In a letter from Samuel L. Mitchill, late a member of the New-York Legislature, to David Hosack, author of a Discourse on De Witt Clinton.*"

NEW-YORK, November 15th, 1828.

DEAR SIR,

I remember to have made you an acknowledgment of the gratification I received from hearing your Discourse concerning the late Governor Clinton, on the 8th inst. After the circumstantial display you gave of the events relative to the great western canal, it was scarcely to be supposed that any additional research would have been expected. But, on receiving your verbal communication, and written request of the 10th, certain proceedings and doings were brought to my recollection, which I have now the pleasure of submitting to you. In my own opinion, they are calculated to throw strong light upon the subject.

After a service of eight years in congress, three in the house of representatives and five in the senate, including the time to the end of Mr. Jefferson's administration. I returned home to the city of New-York in March 1809.

My term in the national legislature having thus expired, my fellow-citizens insisted on nominating me once more to the assembly of the state. At that time the annual election was held near the end of April. I was chosen, and of course was obliged to prepare myself for taking my seat at Albany the ensuing winter.

In order to qualify myself the better for the performance of my duties, I concluded to make a tour of observation and instruction through some of the internal counties during the summer of 1809. In order to witness the progress and actual state of society since my last preceding visit, I went at a leisurely and moderate rate, stopping to inspect as many objects as I conveniently could. In this manner I proceeded from Albany to Buffalo, and crossing from Black to Bertie, in Upper Canada, took a temporary residence on the banks of the Chippewa River, and made excursions to the cataract of Niagara, and other places in the vicinity.

On returning I varied my route in different directions, that I might see as much as possible. I came back exceedingly well pleased with my performance. I flattered myself I had obtained a valuable portion of knowledge, relative to the interesting region I had traversed. I had on a former occasion travelled to Oswego, by the way of Oneida Lake and Onondaga River.

Thus prepared, I found myself ready during the legislative session of 1810, to discuss with the representatives of the western counties, a number of local questions, like a man who had inquired for himself, in places where genuine intelligence could be got.

You will find a mighty impulse given to the future grand work of the canal, while not as yet matured in the mind of any man, during this important session. A sketch of the initiatory operations will probably be sufficient for your purpose, as you are so fully informed on the subsequent transactions.

On the 21st of February, 1810, a memorial, under the name of a report, was presented to the senate in behalf of the Western Inland Lock Navigation Company. It was subscribed by Robert Bowne, as president of the board, and may be found at length in the journals of that day. It states among other matters, the improvements made in the navigation of the Mohawk River, and that the canals and locks at the Little Falls, German Flats, Rome, and Wood Creek, had already produced incalculable advantages to the agricultural

interests of the state. The directors in prosecuting the work, had expended before that time, all the monies due from the stockholders, the whole amount received for tolls, and were, besides, ten thousand dollars in debt. They had not received any profit on the capital for eighteen years. And they solicited the legislature to relinquish for a number of years, all the dividends that might be due on the shares held by the state, and further, to grant such other relief as might seem just and reasonable. They urged in favour of the object prayed for, the increase of exports through Lake Ontario to Canada, to the serious and increasing loss of the New-York market.

On the 23d February, the petition of Stephen N. Bayard was read, praying that he and his associates might be incorporated for the purpose of canalling the outlet of the Seneca Lake, and asking funds.

The same day the petition of Noah Preston, and others, was offered, begging a sum of money for deepening the outlet of the Oneida Lake.

There were some other applications of a similar tendency all which had been referred to a select committee. At length, after such an accumulation of papers, on the 1st day of March, Jonas Platt, the chairman, moved that the committee be discharged from the further consideration thereof. This being ordered by the senate, he moved a joint resolve in these words:

"*Resolved*,—(if the honourable the assembly concur herein) that a joint committee of the senate and assembly be appointed, to consider and report upon the several petitions of the president and directors of the Western Inland Lock Navigation Company; of the inhabitants of the counties of Oneida, Madison, and Onondaga; of the inhabitants of Albany; of the inhabitants of Schnectady; and of Stephen N. Bayard, and others, relative to certain extensions and improvements of the inland navigation of the state; and that in case of such concurrence, Mr. Platt, Mr. Clinton, and Mr. Rea, be the committee on the part of the senate, as may be seen in the journal of that body, for the thirty-third session, on pages 72 and 73. This was adopted by the assembly on the same day, and Mr. Mitchill, Mr. Van Vechten, Mr. Brooks, Mr. Skinner, and Mr. Chapin, were appointed the committee on the part of the house. The deliberations of this joint committee gave rise to the ensuing memorable proceeding of the senate, on the 13th March, 1810.

On motion of Mr. Platt, the following resolution, with the recitals, was read and passed, viz.

" Whereas the agricultural and commercial interests of the state, require that the inland navigation from the Hudson River to Lake Ontario and Lake Erie, be improved and completed on a scale commensurate with the great advantages to be derived from the accomplishment of that important object; and whereas, it is doubtful whether the resources of the Western Inland Lock Navigation Company are adequate to such an improvement, therefore,

" *Resolved*,—(if the honourable the assembly concur herein) that Gouverneur Morris, Stephen Van Rensselaer, De Witt Clinton, Simeon De Witt, William North, Thomas Eddy, and Peter B. Porter, be and they hereby are appointed commissioners for exploring the whole route, examining the present condition of the said navigation, and considering what further improvements ought to be made therein; and that they be authorised to direct and procure such surveys, as to them shall appear necessary and proper in relation to these objects; and that they report thereon to the legislature at their next session, presenting a full view of the subjects referred to them, with their estimates and opinion thereon." This was concurred in by the assembly in a way that I thought very remarkable, for there was no attempt to amend, nor was there a single word of debate. The day was the 13th of March. A place in this commission was offered me, but I declined it.

Among the causes predisposing to those important events, there was one that deserves to be particularly stated. It relates to transportation up and down the Mohawk River. This stream is noted for its great swell during rainy seasons, and its depression during the prevalence of drought. Owing to the proclivity of its bed, the floods descend with suddenness and impetuosity, carrying all before them, and rendering it difficult or even impossible for boats to make head against it. Sometimes it overflows the adjoining fields, and then again it shrinks to scanty and in many places a shallow current.—These difficulties became more and more serious, in proportion to the increase of population, and to the corresponding conveyance of produce and merchandize. The inhabitants turned their attention to the improvement of roads

and the construction of bridges; and by many the carriage by land, on account chiefly of its greater certainty, was preferred to that by water. This change wrought a disastrous effect upon the company's stock. The desertion of the river by so many persons and so much property, rendered it necessary to lower the rate of toll. Thus the receipts, impoverishingly small before, were rendered more diminutive. But the inconvenience of the river, for the purpose of carrying on an active business, would not have been removed had the toll been remitted altogether. The uncertainty of the arrivals and departures of boats, would have remained with all the incidental embarrassments. In this state of things I arrived at Utica, on my return from the before mentioned expedition. For the sake of diversifying my route, and of enjoying the picturesque scenery of the Mohawk from its channel, I wished a passage to Schenectady by water, as I had on my westward course proceeded by land. I went to the rendezvous of the river boats, with the intention of hiring one for the accommodation of myself, my wife, and company. There were only three batteaux at the station. Surprised at their inconsiderable number, I inquired what was the meaning of it, and was told that there was very little employment for them on the Mohawk River, and that the greater portion of them had gone to Lake Ontario, where there was plenty of business. Indeed I could not get a boat without more delay than was expedient, and so pursued my journey by land. This occurrence led me to make further inquiries of the dealers and traders in the village. The sum of the intelligence was this: The unavoidable irregularity of carrying on business, and occasional risk and loss, terminated in performing the transportation to and from Albany, chiefly in wagons. In the actual condition of the roads and bridges, the owner of a team could calculate almost to an hour when the load would reach its destination; and relying on the punctuality of his agent, and the fidelity of his driver, he could predict with equal certainty when the vehicle, with its charge, might be expected back. By this means, despatch and punctuality were introduced—the phenomenon exhibited of land carriage being more economical than water carriage.

Yet, though the company failed to accomplish their original object, their efforts established two most important practical facts.

1. That as the distinguished engineer Brindley is reported to have said, rivers are to be considered as the feeders of canals, and not as canals themselves.

2. That it was incorrect to import engineers from Europe, when they might be found or formed among our native citizens with superior qualifications for service.

Another impulse was given to this investigation, by the conviction that all the productions of our industry intended for exportation, that found their way into Lake Ontario, would be lost to Albany and New-York city, and would be conveyed to foreign markets by the river St. Lawrence, the capacious natural outlet. It was, therefore, an impolitic measure to increase the facilities for enabling our citizens to carry articles to Ontario Lake; and, consequently, the projects for making locks at Niagara and Oswego Falls ought to be abandoned by the legislature; more especially as the fur trade, formerly deemed very important, had, along the lower waters, dwindled almost to nothing.

I urged these matters to the gentlemen with whom I was associated, under a conviction that some other plan was needful, and indeed loudly called for.

Thus have I attempted to comply with your wish. I hope the effort will add a few links to the chain of history. I rejoice that you prompted me to a search which has been more successful than I anticipated. I shall be happy to learn that it has not disappointed your expectations.

Yours, with the sentiment of much good feeling,

SAMUEL L. MITCHILL.

To David Hosack, M. D.

Note Y.—p. 101.

The following letter, with which I have been favoured, from the Honourable Edward P. Livingston, who was uniformly the friend and active supporter of the canal policy of the state, contains some interesting particulars relative to the late Chancellor Livingston, which entitle it to a place in these records.

Letter from the Hon. Edward P. Livingston to David Hosack, M. D.

NEW-YORK, April 14, 1828.

DEAR SIR,

I promised to communicate to you my recollections of the proceedings relative to the Erie Canal, whilst I was a member of the senate between July 1808 and July 1812, and to mention those gentlemen who were then most actively engaged in supporting the plans for its accomplishment. The public documents will inform you of the dates when the various relations and laws were passed; I will now briefly state some facts which they cannot furnish.

The report of Mr. Geddes in 1809 led the public mind more generally to think on this subject, and in 1810, Mr. Platt introduced his resolutions into the senate. Conflicting opinions and interests divided the legislature, and no doubt most of those who opposed any further proceedings were actuated by the purest and most patriotic motives, believing the whole project to be entirely visionary. My reflections, and some little knowledge acquired by a visit to Europe, induced me to think it wise to make the necessary surveys and examinations, and I had the honour of supporting with my best endeavours the resolutions above mentioned. The remarks I made drew from a venerable member the observation, that "the young men in that body would ruin the state, by involving it in a debt which we could never liquidate." The senate was then divided into three parties or sections, one called Clintonian, one Federal, and one consisting of those republican friends of Mr. Madison, with whom I acted. The support given to the resolutions by Mr. Platt, Mr. Clinton, and myself, and other gentlemen avowing different political connexions, shows that the measures proposed to be adopted were not to be decided by any spirit of party; and it was probably owing to this circumstance that those resolutions passed, and which I ever considered as a most important step towards ensuring the success of the undertaking. Whether General Lewis was a member of that session I do not recollect, and have not the journals

to refer to;* he was, however, friendly to the canal, and particularly engaged in 1811, in forwarding the object.

A bill was brought in by Mr. Clinton in 1811, to which I was favourably disposed, but believe I was not present at its passage, having been called home by the death of an infant son, and was there detained by the illness and subsequent decease of my eldest.

To the commissioners who were first appointed, were added Chancellor Livingston and Mr. Fulton. With these gentlemen I frequently conversed on the subject of our internal navigation; and although they were much occupied with their steam-boats, and harassed by a powerful opposition and its consequences, yet they were not inattentive to the great enterprise. Chancellor Livingston was desirous that steps should be taken early to procure funds, and at his suggestion authority was given to make inquiries relative to a loan; and I well recollect his stating, that a large one could be obtained in Europe, at an interest not exceeding five per cent. and that we ought to secure it as all important to our success. He mentioned the name of the late William Bayard as affording the information, or able to effect the negotiations for obtaining the funds; and when the situation of affairs after that period rendered doubtful the progress of the work, I recollect Mr. Livingston saying, that if we did not want it, that the United States would gladly take it from us, particularly in case of a war, then very probable. At this period almost all Mr. Livingston's landed estates, and much of that belonging to General Lewis, were situated in the middle district, which went no further north than Greene and Columbia counties; still they hesitated not to support an undertaking promising great public good, though certainly detrimental to themselves. The difference to Chancellor Livingston I consider not less than one hundred thousand dollars.

Among the number of those with whom I frequently conversed on this subject, and with whom I was on very friendly terms of acquaintance, I may mention Gouverneur Morris, Thomas Eddy, and J. R. Van Rensselaer, in addition to those I have already named.

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* General Lewis took his seat in the Senate in 1811.—D. H.

After the war and when a successor to Gov. Tompkins was to be chosen, the general voice of the west declared, that the question of being friendly to the canal or not, would be the most important one; and afterwards the union of that enterprising region with the north, and the support of its friends elsewhere, caused the great work to be completed.

When last a member of the senate, I voted for appropriations to complete it, and had the satisfaction of witnessing the entrance of the first boat into the waters of the Hudson, from the deck of one of our steam-boats, and within a short distance of the spot where, in 1807, I had landed in company with Mr. Livingston and Mr. Fulton.

I have said nothing of Mr. Clinton, as you are well acquainted with his proceedings relative to the canal. Allow me, however, to observe to you, that it afforded me pleasure when I could co-operate with him in public measures, and regret when a sense of duty called on me to oppose him. From his uncle, who was well acquainted with my father and grandfather, I had received the appointment of an aid-de-camp, with the rank of lieutenant-colonel, in 1801; and his being my senior by several years, and acting under more favourable circumstances, excluded the probability of collision. Yet among his political friends and admirers, have been my warmest opponents, who manifested their hostility even before I was in the senate. I do not know that any thing above stated will be new to you. I am happy, however, to have had an opportunity of mentioning the interest taken in the advancement of our internal improvements by one whom I am proud to acknowledge as my best friend and second parent; and as it was among the last acts of a useful life, I am convinced it will add to his other claims of a public benefactor.

With much regard, I am your obedient servant,

EDWARD P. LIVINGSTON.

To Dr. David Hosack.

When noticing the services of the late Chancellor Livingston, we naturally advert to those of his associate and friend, the late Robert Fulton, who, independently of his well known treatise on canal navigation, published in Lon-

don as early as 1796, has also by his genius and enterprise applied to the canals of this state, largely contributed to direct the public mind to the measures which have been adopted, and which, to use his own language, are "to secure wealth, ease, and happiness to millions." In the preceding pages his correspondence with Mr. Gouverneur Morris, and with Mr. Gallatin, relative to the superior advantages of canals over roads, and the great revenue to be derived from them, has been already mentioned. Referring, therefore, to the admirable biography of Mr. Fulton by his friend Cadwallader D. Colden, the interesting tribute to his talents by Governor Clinton,* and the splendid eulogy pronounced upon his merits in the application of steam to the purposes of navigation by Mr. Morris,† we may, in the language of a spirited writer in the North American Review,‡ observe of Robert Fulton, that "among the enlightened friends of the canal policy of the state, he is a man whose name is identified with that of his country, whose inventions, valuable as they are, were only the earnest of what he contemplated, whose benefactions to his country will be celebrated by every American, as long as the Mississippi shall bear her floating palaces upon her bosom, or roll her rich tribute to the ocean."

NOTE Z.—p. 102.

The circumstances which relate to the unsuccessful application made to the general government on the part of the state of New-York, for that assistance in the construction of the contemplated canals which the message of Mr. Jefferson, and the report of Mr. Gallatin, had led them to believe would be readily accorded, are well known. In the Memoir of Mr. Colden, in the Documents published by Mr. Haines, and in the Canal Documents published under the direction of the state, they are so fully detailed, that no further notice of them is called for in this place. But the attempt on the part of

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* Discourse before the Academy of Arts.

† Inaugural Discourse before the New-York Historical Society.

‡ Vol. IV. p. 236.

the general government, to impose a tax upon the trade of the canal, and to compel those who conducted it to take custom-house licenses for that purpose, ought not to be forgotten.

In the language of Mr. Colden,* "we have yet one humble petition to make to congress. That having made our canals without their interference, they will be pleased to leave us to enjoy them; and that they will not sanction any such pretension, as was of late made by some of their revenue officers, that our canal-boats, traversing our hills and valleys, in an artificial channel made by ourselves, entirely within our own territory, hundreds of miles from the sea, and six or seven hundred feet above its level, were engaged in the coasting trade of the United States; that they must therefore take custom-house licences, and pay a tax to the general government. An act of congress has been passed, exempting boats employed wholly on the canals, from the necessity of paying this tax, yet the claim of a right to impose it seems to be reserved. But so long as any respect for state sovereignties remains, so long as the confederacy is considered of any value, and so long as there is any regard for the peace of the Union, it is hoped there will be no attempt to enforce this, or any similar claim."

The observations of Governor Clinton on this subject, contained in his message of 1825, and the remarks of General Tallmadge in his able and eloquent speech, delivered in the House of Assembly on the 8th of November, 1824, expose, in the most ample manner, the injustice of the measure proposed by congress.

The following are the remarks of Governor Clinton on this subject.

I cannot pass over, in silence, the attempt which has been recently made to bring the boats navigating our canals, within the operation of the statutes for regulating the coasting trade of the United States, by requiring from such boats enrolment and license, and the payment of tonnage duties. The canals are the property of the state, are within the jurisdiction of the state, have been constructed by the state, and can be destroyed by the state. They have been made at its expense, after the general government had refused all participation and assistance. It cannot well be perceived how the regulation of commerce

* See his Memoirs, page 38.

"with foreign nations, and among the several states, or with the Indian tribes," can authorise an interference with vessels prosecuting an inland trade, through artificial channels. The coasting trade is entirely distinct from a trade through our canals, which no state in the union, nor the general government itself, has a right to enjoy, without our consent. The consequences of such assumptions would be, if carried into effect, to annihilate our revenue arising from tolls, to produce the most oppressive measures, to destroy the whole system of internal improvements, and to prostrate the authority of the state governments.

A just exposition of the laws of the United States, cannot authorise their application to such cases. But if a different interpretation should prevail, then it becomes a very serious question indeed, whether the state can enforce its laws imposing tolls. The supreme court of the United States has solemnly adjudged, that a coasting license from a collector is a grant of the right of navigation. If so, and that right being derived from a law of congress, it will be contended that it cannot be prohibited nor controlled by any state law; the right to be complete, must be enjoyed without restraint. The state cannot demand a toll, as the price of the enjoyment of such a right, if it has not the power to prohibit such enjoyment altogether.

It may be further remarked, that the power to regulate commerce, among the states, under which the act regulating the coasting trade was passed, is held by that high tribunal, to be exclusively in congress—If so, and if that act, or any other act, which congress may pass, under that power, can be applied to the canals, it would follow, as a consequence, that our laws imposing tolls, are void from the beginning. The state has no power to adopt them; and in this view of the subject, it would seem to be immaterial whether any license be taken out under the act of congress.

The supreme court has also declared, that the power to regulate commerce includes a power to regulate navigation, as one means of carrying on commerce. The same remark may be made with equal force, concerning any kind of transportation, whether by land or water, the power to regulate commerce applying to the one as well as to the other. If congress can declare, that a boat passing between different parts of the same district, within the same state, shall take a license, why can it not direct that a waggon shall take one, under similar circumstances? When we shall have arrived at this point, we shall begin to have some adequate notion of the extent to which this claim may be carried.

I shall say no more on this subject at this time. I will not entertain a doubt but that the national government will command the abandonment of a claim so unfounded and pernicious; and I am persuaded that it has been preferred without due reflection, and without instructions from superior authority. But if this course shall not be pursued, it will then be your duty to take that stand which the rights and safety of the people imperiously demand.

Speech of General James Tallmadge.

IN ASSEMBLY, November 8, 1824.

Mr. Tallmadge called for the reading of the letter of Joseph Anderson, comptroller of the United States treasury, and the notice from the United States collector at Rochester, as published in the Albany Daily Advertiser of November 3.

Mr. Tallmadge then offered the following preamble and resolution:

Whereas, this legislature has had under consideration a letter dated April 6th, 1824, from Joseph Anderson, comptroller of the treasury of the United States, in relation to the exaction of tonnage duties upon boats navigating the canals of this state, and requiring such boats to be enrolled and licensed under the United States. And whereas, it appears that the subject was submitted in April last, to the house of representatives, with a view to have canal boats exempted from such claim or exaction, and that "Mr. Newton, from the committee, made a report against amending the law so as to admit vessels to navigate canals without enrolment or license, or payment of tonnage duties, and in which report the house concurred." And whereas, it appears to this legislature, after due consideration, that the claim on the part of the United States to require boats which navigate our canals, to be enrolled or licensed, and to pay tonnage duties, is a claim not founded on any legal right, and in regard to the circumstances under which it is made, such claim is so evidently unjust and oppressive, that the interference of this state is called for the defence of its citizens. Therefore,

Resolved, (if the senate concur,) That the senators of this state, in the senate of the United States, be directed, and the representatives of this state, in the house of representatives of the United States, be requested to use their utmost endeavours to prevent any such unjust and oppressive exaction for tonnage duties on boats navigating the canals, from being carried into effect.

Resolved, That his excellency the Governor, be requested to transmit a copy of the foregoing recital and resolution to the senators and representatives from this state—and also to the president of the United States, and to the speaker of the house of representatives of the United States.

In support of his resolution, Mr. Tallmadge made the following remarks.

Mr. Tallmadge said it was some time since he heard that a claim had been set up on the part of the United States for tonnage duties on our canal boats. He had not regarded the rumours, because he considered them wholly unfounded, and without any credit. He had classed those rumours among the many unfounded reports which had been so lately and so widely circulated, perhaps for political objects. He had continued under the entire disbelief

until Saturday, when the letter of Joseph Anderson, comptroller of the treasury, appeared in the public newspapers, and had come under his observation. The subject commanded his immediate attention, and he availed himself of the earliest opportunity to call the attention of this legislature to the subject, and to submit the matter to its consideration. In his opinion, it was a subject of such deep importance to the character of this state, and to the interests of its citizens, that it could admit of no delay, nor yield to any compromise. The claim for payment of tonnage duties on our own canals, was a claim so evidently wrong and unjust, it must not be submitted to for a single day. It called for the marked and decided disapprobation of this house. The legislature of this state were bound not only to speak to the congress of the United States in defence of her own and her citizens' rights, but it was bound to speak in language not to be misunderstood. Let the claim be declared to be unsupported in point of law, and unfounded in a spirit of equal justice, and wholly inadmissible.

The proposition which I maintain is, that whatever may be the language, or however extensive the terms and expressions of the act of 1793, yet, that it cannot be construed to extend to, or include within its operations the canals of this state, and cannot justify the exaction of a tonnage duty upon boats within those canals.

Congress have power by the constitution of the United States, to regulate commerce with foreign nations, among the several states, and with the Indian tribes. From this clause is derived their power and jurisdiction over the subject. It points out the nature of their authority—it limits it to foreign nations or among the states. It excludes all idea of any power over the internal concerns of a state. In the theory and practice of our intermingled general and state governments, this was intentionally reserved to the states. Any interference on the part of the general government in our local and internal concerns, with our towns, turnpikes, and private incorporations, would not be endured for a moment. Our canals are internal, and come within the same principles, and cannot submit to the interference of the general government. It is our duty and our business to maintain our state rights. Our bays, inlets, harbours, and navigable streams, are betowed upon us as the bounties of Providence, and as the natural product from the hand of God. The United States have the just jurisdiction over all those waters for the necessary regulation of commerce with foreign nations, and among the several states. But our canals are of a different class; they are not natural, but artificial; they are the product of our own labour, and created at our individual expense. They are mere vehicles, like our waggons, upon which the product of agriculture and manufactures are carried to market, and made ready for commerce with foreign nations, or among the several states. Our private fortunes are invested in our turnpikes—the wealth and the credit of the state are invested in our canals. We look to them as the property of the state, to produce an income which may relieve us from the heavy burthens under which we rest.

We can never suffer the United States to take away the income, under the name of ton-

nage duties, while we are borne down and left under the heavy debts incurred in making those canals. It is to extort from us our private property. Whatever are the words and terms of the act of 1793, regulating the navigation and coasting trade of the United States. it is a perversion of its meaning, and a misapplication of its object, to extend its construction so as to include boats upon our canals. When that act was passed, our canals were not in existence, nor even in contemplation. Canals were at that time unknown in this country, It never could have been the object of the act to have reached canal navigation. The act was avowedly passed with reference to the natural waters of the United States, and intended to include the bays, inlets, and deep streams formed by nature, and necessarily used in commerce with foreign nations, and among the several states. The term navigation, used in the act, had reference to the natural waters then open to general commerce, and could not have intended to embrace artificial streams, long since created by the hand of man, and now preserved at his individual expense. If these distinctions are correct, the conclusion is, that while the cases cited in the opinion of the comptroller, are correct, as applied to natural bays and inlets, that act cannot be extended to boats on the canals, although above five tons burthen, and otherwise within the words of the act. This construction and restriction of the words of the act of 1793, derives great force from the recollection, that so far from the words of the act being intended to apply to canal navigation, our canals have been made long since the date of the act, and under the scoff and hiss of that general government, which laughed at the folly of our undertaking; but which now comes to search into our internal concerns, and demand of us tribute for our successful enterprise. Massachusetts has her Middlesex Canal, but we have not heard of a tonnage duty there. Virginia has long had her James River Canal, and yet the letter of the comptroller, nor the report of Mr. Newton, do not tell us that tonnage duty has been for years past collected there. Carolina has a canal through the Dismal Swamp, yet it does not appear any requisition has been made upon it for tonnage duty,—while New-York has not even yet completed her great work, the justice and policy of a tonnage duty is already discovered, and the act of 1793 is found to be intended for our canals to be made in 1824, and under the power to regulate commerce with foreign nations and among the several states, collectors are now in the interior chasing after boats for forfeiture and confiscation. Under such a state of facts, the report of Mr. Newton is made and adopted by congress.

It is not my province to censure our thirty-four representatives in congress for having so tamely submitted to the adoption of such a report; but it is our duty, as the legislature of this state, without an hour's delay, to enter our protest, and to announce to all whom it may concern, that such a determination cannot and must not be tolerated.

I insist that no judicial tribunal would ever sanction the opinion of the comptroller of the treasury, and construe the act of '93 to include canal navigation. If this case was before a court of justice, it would regard the well known rules for the construction of statutes,

and arrive at the conclusion, "that where some collateral matter arises out of the several words, and happens to be unreasonable, the judges are in decency to conclude that the consequence was not foreseen by the legislature, and therefore they are at liberty to expound the statute according to its intent, and so far disregard its general words." The example adduced under this rule is thus—if an act of parliament gives a man power to try all causes that arise in a certain district, yet if a cause should arise in which he himself is a party, the act is construed not to extend to that, because it is unreasonable that any man should determine his own quarrel. It is also a rule that the words of the act shall be understood according to their usual and most known signification, and as having regard to the subject matter. Thus the act of '93 was passed to regulate the coasting trade and foreign commerce, and under a power limited to regulate commerce among the states: canals were then unknown in this country, and the term navigation, in its most usual and known acceptation, had reference to the natural waters, the ocean and the bays, inlets and harbours of the country. Another rule in the construction of statutes, directs us to regard the reason and spirit of the law, or the cause which moved the legislature to enact it. We are also commanded to consider the effects and consequence, and that when words bear either none or a very absurd signification, if literally understood, we must even deviate from the received sense of them. Thus we are told of a law which enacted, that whoever drew blood in the streets, should be punished with the utmost severity, was held, after a long debate, not to extend to the surgeon who opened a vein of a person that fell down in the streets with a fit.

The conclusion of the act of '93 cannot be extended to include canals not then in existence, and long since enacted, is too evident to admit of further argument. I therefore insist that we do not require from congress any further legislation to exempt our canal boats from tonnage duties; and that our remedy is to be found in a firm and proper and legal resistance to the extended and improper application of the act of '93.

But if we are wrong in all these premises, and incorrect in all these conclusions, it then remains for us to consider the spirit of justice in which this claim for tonnage duties is made, and the circumstances under which it is pressed upon us—whose mind is not instantly filled with recollections of the past? We are not only one of the states, but an elder sister of this happy union. To consummate that union, we bore our full share in all the toils and perils of the era which gave it birth. To supply it with resources, we surrendered our right to collect "imposts" in our own harbour; we gave up our custom-house and our duties, and transferred over to this union, resources which even at this day produce from our own state, more than one-fifth part of the whole revenue of the United States. When the circumstances of the age and the spirit of this people, produced and adopted our system of internal improvement, who does not remember, that fearing the extent of our own resources,

compared with the required amount of expenditure, we asked of this union co-operation and assistance. But we asked in vain!

We sent special agents to solicit from the general government a grant of new lands, or even a loan of money. The favour was withheld, because the very boldness of our project, examined by the narrow visions which could not comprehend its gigantic magnitude, was condemned as the wildness of delusion, and served but to impeach our credit. While that constitution, with its elastic properties, which can expand to the granting of millions for a Cumberland road, or thousands for clearing out the Ohio and the Mississippi, contracts itself into a blunt refusal when a pittance is asked for internal improvements in the state of New-York. But the pang of the unkind refusal had scarcely ceased to vibrate on our hearts, when the collectors of revenue are hovering about the locks built with our labour, and at expenses sustained by our rejected credit, and under the name of tonnage duties, provided by the law of '93, are exacting their sixpences from the boats navigating in our artificial streams, whose payment of tolls are under the sanction and protection of our state.

The late case of Gibbons v. Ogden, before the Supreme Court of the United States, commonly known as the steam-boat cause, has determined that the power given by the constitution to regulate commerce, includes navigation, and that the enrolment and license of vessels, and payment of tonnage duties under the act of '93, not only established the character and nationality of the vessel, but confers upon it the right to navigate our waters. It is upon this principle the court decided, perhaps correctly, that steam-boats enrolled and licensed under the United States, had a right to navigate the waters of this state, and declared the laws of this state, giving exclusive privileges to the Fulton company, to be ineffectual and void.

If you for one moment submit to the principle of this claim for enrolment and license, and the payment of tonnage duties upon boats in our canals; if you yield to any other construction of the act of '93 than is now given; if you sanction the term navigation, in its commercial meaning, to be applied to any other than the natural waters, the bays, inlets, harbours and deep streams of your country—then the vessels enrolled and licensed under the United States, have established not only their national character, but their right to navigate. If such vessel shall present herself before your locks and demand to pass, I ask, with what right, and upon what reason, your state can refuse them admission into your canals?

I ask, under what pretence you can maintain your right to demand tolls? The collectors of tonnage duties for the United States, will then take place of your toll gatherers, and your citizens must turn "hewers of wood and drawers of water," to pay the interest on your canal debt. It is painful to have conflicts arise between the state and general government. But this claim upon our canals is so evidently illegal, and under the circumstances so unreasonable, it can not be submitted to. It is another Boston tea tax, upon which it has

become the duty of this state to take its stand—even though in its consequences the cradle of liberty should again be rocked.

After this speech, it may be added, the resolution was passed unanimously.

NOTE.—Page 104.

The Memorial of Mr. Clinton referred to, has been published in various forms, and has been very extensively diffused throughout the state. But inasmuch as it was among the most influential means of inducing the legislature, and the people of this state, to adopt the system of internal navigation which it recommends, and as it contains those general views that are in many respects applicable to other parts of our country, and is among the ablest of Mr. Clinton's productions, I have considered it due to the author's fame to republish it at length among the documents relating to the canals of this state.

Memorial of the Citizens of New-York, in favour of a Canal Navigation between the Great Western Lakes and the tide-waters of the Hudson.

TO THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF NEW-YORK,

The memorial of the subscribers, in favour of a canal navigation between the great western lakes and the tide-waters of the Hudson, most respectfully represents:

That they approach the legislature with a solicitude proportioned to the importance of this great undertaking, and with a confidence founded on the enlightened public spirit of the constituted authorities. If, in presenting the various considerations which have induced them to make this appeal, they should occupy more time than is usual on common occasions, they must stand justified by the importance of the object. Connected as it is with the essential interests of our country, and calculated in its commencement to reflect honour on the state, and in its completion, to exalt it to an elevation of unparalleled prosperity; your memorialists are fully persuaded, that centuries may pass away before a subject is again presented so worthy of all your attention, and so deserving of all your patronage and support.

The improvement of the means of intercourse between different parts of the same country, has always been considered the first duty and the noblest employment of govern-

ment. If it be important that the inhabitants of the same country should be bound together by a community of interests, and a reciprocation of benefits; that agriculture should find a sale for its productions; manufacturers a vent for their fabrics; and commerce a market for its commodities: it is your incumbent duty, to open, facilitate, and improve internal navigation. The pre-eminent advantages of canals have been established by the unerring test of experience. They unite cheapness, celerity, certainty, and safety, in the transportation of commodities. It is calculated that the expense of transporting on a canal, amounts to one cent a ton per mile, or one dollar a ton for one hundred miles; while the usual cost by land conveyance, is one dollar and sixty cents per hundred weight, or 32 dollars a ton for the same distance. The celerity and certainty of this mode of transportation are evident. A loaded boat can be towed by one or two horses at the rate of 30 miles a day. Hence, the seller or buyer can calculate with sufficient precision on his sales or purchases, the period of their arrival, the amount of their avails, and the extent of their value. A vessel on a canal is independent of winds, tides, and currents, and is not exposed to the delays attending conveyances by land; and with regard to safety, there can be no competition. The injuries to which commodities are exposed when transported by land, and the dangers to which they are liable when conveyed by natural waters, are rarely experienced on canals. In the latter way, comparatively speaking, no waste is incurred, no risk is encountered, and no insurance is required. Hence, it follows, that canals operate upon the general interests of society, in the same way that machines for saving labour do in manufactures; they enable the farmer, the mechanic, and the merchant to convey their commodities to market, and to receive a return, at least thirty times cheaper than by roads. As to all the purposes of beneficial communication, they diminish the distance between places, and therefore encourage the cultivation of the most extensive and remote parts of the country. They create new sources of internal trade, and augment the old channels, for the more cheap the transportation, the more expanded will be its operation, and the greater the mass of the products of the country for sale, the greater will be the commercial exchange of returning merchandize, and the greater the encouragement to manufacturers, by the increased economy and comfort of living, together with the cheapness and abundance of raw materials; and canals are consequently advantageous to towns and villages, by destroying the monopoly of the adjacent country, and advantageous to the whole country; for though some rival commodities may be introduced into the old markets, yet many new markets will be opened by increasing population, enlarging old and erecting new towns, augmenting individual and aggregate wealth, and extending foreign commerce.

The prosperity of ancient Egypt, and China, may in a great degree be attributed to their inland navigation. With little foreign commerce, the former of those countries, by these means attained, and the latter possesses a population and opulence in proportion to their extent, unequalled in any other. And England and Holland, the most commercial

nations of modern times, deprived of their canals, would lose the most prolific source of their prosperity and greatness. Inland navigation is in fact to the same community what exterior navigation is to the great family of mankind. As the ocean connects the nations of the earth by the ties of commerce and the benefits of communication, so do lakes, rivers, and canals operate upon the inhabitants of the same country; and it has been well observed, that "were we to make the supposition of two states, the one having all its cities, towns, and villages upon navigable rivers and canals, and having an easy communication with each other; the other possessing the common conveyance of land carriage, and supposing both states to be equal as to soil, climate, and industry: commodities and manufactures in the former state might be furnished 30 per cent. cheaper than in the latter; or, in other words, the first state would be a third richer and more affluent than the other."

The general arguments in favour of inland navigation, apply with peculiar force to the United States, and most emphatically to this state. A geographical view of the country will at once demonstrate the unexampled prosperity that will arise from our cultivating the advantages which nature has dispensed with so liberal a hand. A great chain of mountains passes through the United States, and divides them into eastern and western America. In various places, rivers break through these mountains, and are finally discharged into the ocean. To the west there is a collection of inland lakes, exceeding in its aggregate extent some of the most celebrated seas of the old world. Atlantic America, on account of the priority of its settlement, its vicinity to the ocean, and its favourable position for commerce, has many advantages. The western country, however, has a decided superiority in the fertility of its soil, the benignity of its climate, and the extent of its territory. To connect these great sections by inland navigation, to unite our Mediterranean seas with the ocean, is evidently an object of the first importance to the general prosperity. Nature has effected this in some measure; the St. Lawrence emanates from the lakes, and discharges itself into the ocean in a foreign territory. Some of the streams which flow into the Mississippi, originate near the great lakes, and pass round the chain of mountains. Some of the waters of this state which pass into Lake Ontario, approach the Mohawk; but our Hudson has decided advantages. It affords a tide navigation for vessels of eighty tons to Albany and Troy, 160 miles above New-York, and this peculiarity distinguishes it from all the other bays and rivers in the United States, &c.

The tide in no other ascends higher than the Granite Ridge, or within thirty miles of the Blue Ridge, or eastern chain of mountains. In the Hudson it breaks through the Blue Ridge, and ascends above the eastern termination of the Catskill, or great western chain; and there are no interposing mountains to prevent a communication between it and the great western lakes.

The importance of the Hudson River to the old settled parts of the state, may be observed in the immense wealth which is daily borne on its waters, in the flourishing villages and cities

on its banks, and in the opulence and prosperity of all the country connected with it, either remotely or immediately. It may also be readily conceived, if we only suppose that by some awful physical calamity, some overwhelming convulsion of nature, this great river was exhausted of its waters; where then would be the abundance of our markets, the prosperity of our farmers, the wealth of our merchants? Our villages would become deserted, our flourishing cities would be converted into masses of mouldering ruins, and this state would be precipitated into poverty and insignificance. If a river or natural canal, navigable about 170 miles, has been productive of such signal benefits, what blessings might not be expected if it were extended 300 miles through the most fertile country in the universe, and united with the great seas of the west! The contemplated canal would be this extension; and viewed in reference only to the productions and consumptions of the state, would perhaps convey more riches on its waters than any other canal in the world. Connected with the Hudson, it might be considered as a navigable stream that extends 450 miles through a fruitful country, embracing a great population, and abounding with all the productions of industry; if we were to suppose all the rivers and canals in England and Wales, combined into one, and discharging into the ocean at a great city, after passing through the heart of that country, then we can form a distinct idea of the importance of the projected canal; but it indeed comprehends within its influence a greater extent of territory, which will in time embrace a greater population. If this work be so important when we confine our views to this state alone, how unspeakably beneficial must it appear, when we extend our contemplations to the great lakes, and the country affiliated with them? Waters extending 2000 miles from the beginning of the canal, and a country containing more territory than all Great Britain and Ireland, and at least as much as France.

While we do not pretend that all the trade of our western world will centre in any given place, nor would it be desirable if it were practicable, because we sincerely wish the prosperity of all the states; yet we contend that our natural advantages are so transcendant, that it is in our power to obtain the greater part, and put successful competition at defiance. As all the other communications are impeded by mountains, the only formidable rivals of New-York, for this great prize, are New-Orleans and Montreal, the former relying on the Mississippi, and the latter on the St. Lawrence.

In considering this subject, we will suppose the commencement of the canal somewhere near the outlet of Lake Erie.

The inducements for preferring one market to another, involve a variety of considerations: the principal are the cheapness and facility of transportation, and the goodness of the market. If a cultivator or manufacturer can convey his commodities with the same ease and expedition to New-York, and obtain a higher price for them than at Montreal or New-Orleans, and at the same time supply himself at a cheaper rate with such articles as he may want in return, he will undoubtedly prefer New-York. It ought also to be distinctly under-

stood, that a difference in price may be equalized by a difference in the expense of conveyance, and that the vicinity of the market is at all times a consideration of great importance.

From Buffalo, at or near the supposed commencement of the canal, it is 450 miles to the city of New-York, and from that city to the ocean twenty miles. From Buffalo to Montreal 350 miles; from Montreal to the chops of the St. Lawrence, 450. From Buffalo to New-Orleans by the great lakes, and the Illinois River, 2,250 miles; from New-Orleans to the Gulf of Mexico 100. Hence, the distance from Buffalo to the ocean, by the way of New-York, is 470 miles; by Montreal 800; and by New-Orleans 2,350.

As the upper lakes have no important outlet but into Lake Erie, we are warranted in saying, that all their trade must be auxiliary to its trade, and that a favourable communication by water from Buffalo, will render New-York the great depot and warehouse of the western world.

In order, however, to obviate all objections that may be raised against the place of comparison, let us take three other positions: Chicago, near the southwest end of Lake Michigan, and of a creek of that name, which sometimes communicates with the Illinois, the nearest river from the lakes to the Mississippi; Detroit, on the river of that name, between Lake St. Clair and Erie; and Pittsburgh, at the confluence of the Alleghany and Monongahela Rivers, forming the head of the Ohio, and communicating with Le Bœuf by water, which is distant fifteen miles from Lake Erie.

The distance from Chicago to the Ocean by New-York, is about 1,200 miles. To the mouth of the Mississippi, by New-Orleans, near 1,600 miles, and to the mouth of the St. Lawrence, by Montreal, near 1,600 miles.

The distance from Detroit to the ocean by New-York, is near 700 miles. From Detroit to the ocean, by Montreal, is 1050 miles. From Detroit to the ocean, pursuing the nearest route by Cleveland, down the Muskingum, 2,400 miles. The distance from Pittsburgh to the ocean, by Le Bœuf, Lake Erie, Buffalo, and New-York, is 700 miles. The same to the ocean by the Ohio and Mississippi, 2,150 miles.

These different comparative views show that New-York has, in every instance, a decided advantage over her great rivals. In other essential respects, the scale preponderates equally in her favour. Supposing a perfect equality of advantages as to the navigation of the lakes, yet from Buffalo, as the point of departure, there is no comparison of benefits. From that place, the voyager to Montreal has to encounter the inconveniences of a portage at the cataract of Niagara, to load and unload at least three times, to brave the tempests of Lake Ontario, and the rapids of the St. Lawrence.

In like manner the voyager to New-Orleans, has a portage between the Chicago and Illinois, an inconvenient navigation on the latter stream, besides the well-known obstacles and hazards of the Mississippi. And until the invention of steam-boats, an ascending navigation was considered almost impracticable. This inconvenience is, however, still forcibly

experienced on that river, as well as on the St. Lawrence, between Montreal and Lake Ontario.

The navigation from Lake Erie to Albany, can be completed in ten days with perfect safety on the canal; and from Albany to New-York, there is the best sloop navigation in the world.

From Buffalo to Albany, a ton of commodities could be conveyed on the intended canal, for three dollars, and from Albany to New-York, according to the present prices of sloop transportation, for $\$2\frac{80}{100}$, and the return cargoes would be the same.

We have not sufficient data upon which to predicate very accurate estimates with regard to Montreal and New-Orleans; but we have no hesitation in saying, that the descending conveyance to the former, would be four times the expense, and to the latter, at least ten times, and that the cost of the ascending transportation would be greatly enhanced.

It has been stated by several of the most respectable citizens of Ohio, that the present expense of transportation by water from the city of New-York to Sandusky, including the carrying places, is $\$4\frac{50}{100}$ per hundred, and allowing it to cost two dollars per hundred, for transportation to Clinton, the geographical centre of the state, the whole expense would be $\$6\frac{50}{100}$, which is only fifty cents more than the transportation from Philadelphia to Pittsburgh, and at least $\$2\frac{50}{100}$ less than the transportation by land and water from these places, and that, in their opinion, New-York is the natural emporium of that trade, and that the whole commercial intercourse of the western country north of the Ohio, will be secured to her by the contemplated canal.

In addition to this, it may be stated, that the St. Lawrence is generally locked up by ice seven months in the year, during which time produce lies a dead weight on the hands of the owner; that the navigation from New-York to the ocean, is at all times easy, and seldom obstructed by ice, and that the passage from the Balize to New-Orleans is tedious; that perhaps one out of five of the western boatmen who descend the Mississippi, become victims to disease; and that many important articles of western production are injured or destroyed by the climate. New-York is, therefore, placed in a happy medium between the insalubrious heat of the Mississippi, and the severe cold of the St. Lawrence. She has also pre-eminent advantages, as to the goodness and extensiveness of her market. All the productions of the soil, and the fabrics of art, can command an adequate price, and foreign commodities can generally be procured at a lower rate. The trade of the Mississippi is already in the hands of her merchants, and although accidental and transient causes may have concurred to give Montreal an ascendency in some points, yet the superiority of New-York is founded in nature, and if improved by the wisdom of government, must always soar above competition.

Granting, however, that the rivals of New-York will command a considerable portion of the western trade, yet it must be obvious, from these united considerations, that she will

engross more than sufficient to render her the greatest commercial city in the world. The whole line of canal will exhibit boats loaded with flour, pork, beef, pot and pearl ashes, flax-seed, wheat, barley, corn, hemp, wool, flax, iron, lead, copper, salt, gypsum, coal, tar, fur, peltry, ginseng, beeswax, cheese, butter, lard, staves, lumber, and the other valuable productions of our country; and also, with merchandise from all parts of the world. Great manufacturing establishments will spring up; agriculture will establish its granaries, and commerce its warehouses in all directions. Villages, towns, and cities, will line the banks of the canal, and the shores of the Hudson from Erie to New-York. "The wilderness and the solitary place will become glad, and the desert will rejoice and blossom as the rose."

While it is universally admitted that there ought to be a water communication between the great lakes and the tide-waters of the Hudson, a contrariety of opinion, greatly to be deplored, as tending to injure the whole undertaken, has risen with respect to the route that ought to be adopted. It is contended on the one side, that the canal should commence in the vicinity of the outlet of Lake Erie, and be carried in the most eligible direction across the country to the head-waters of the Mohawk River at Rome: from whence it should be continued along the valley of the Mohawk to the Hudson. It is, on the other side, insisted that it should be cut round the cataract of Niagara; that Lake Ontario should be navigated to the mouth of the Oswego River; that the navigation of that river, and Wood Creek, should be improved and pursued until the junction of the latter with the Mohawk at Rome. As to the expediency of a canal from Rome to the Hudson, there is no discrepance of opinion; the route from Rome to the great lakes constitutes the subject of controversy.

If both plans were presented to the legislature, as worthy of patronage, and if the advocates of the route by Lake Ontario did not insist that their schemes should be exclusive, and of course, that its adoption should prove fatal to the other project, this question would not exhibit so serious an aspect. If two roads are made, that which is most accommodating will be preferred; but if only one is established, whether convenient or inconvenient to individuals, beneficial or detrimental to the public, it must necessarily be used. We are so fully persuaded of the superiority of the Erie Canal, that although we should greatly regret so useless an expenditure of public money as making a canal round the cataract of Niagara, yet we should not apprehend any danger from the competition of Montreal, if the former were established.

An invincible argument in favour of the Erie Canal, is, that it would diffuse the blessings of internal navigation over the most fertile and populous parts of the state, and supply the whole community with salt, gypsum, and in all probability coal. Whereas, the Ontario route would accommodate but an inconsiderable part of our territory, and instead of being a great highway, leading directly to the object, it would be a circuitous by-road, inconvenient in all essential respects.

The most serious objection against the Ontario route, is, that it will inevitably enrich the

territory of a foreign power, at the expense of the United States. If a canal is cut round the falls of Niagara, and no countervailing nor counteracting system is adopted in relation to Lake Erie, the commerce of the west is lost to us for ever. When a vessel once descends into Ontario, she will pursue the course ordained by nature. The British government are fully aware of this, and are now taking the most active measures to facilitate the passage down the St. Lawrence.

It is not to be concealed, that a great portion of the productions of our western country are now transported to Montreal, even with all the inconveniences attending the navigation down the Seneca and Oswego Rivers; but if this route is improved in the way proposed, and the other not opened, the consequences will be most prejudicial. A barrel of flour is now transported from Cayuga Lake to Montreal for $1\frac{50}{100}$, and it cannot be conveyed to Albany for less than $2\frac{50}{100}$. This simple fact speaks a volume of admonitory instruction.

But taking it for granted, that the Ontario route will bring the commerce of the west to New-York, yet the other ought to be preferred, on account of the superior facilities it affords.

In the first place, it is nearer. The distance from Buffalo to Rome, is less than 200 miles in the course of the intended canal; by Lake Ontario and Oswego, it is 232.

2. A loaded boat could pass from Buffalo to Rome by the Erie route, in less than seven days, and with entire safety. By the Ontario route, it will be perfectly uncertain, and not a little hazardous. After leaving the Niagara River, it would have to pass an inland sea to the extent of 127 miles, as boisterous and as dangerous as the Atlantic. And besides a navigation of at least twenty miles over another lake, it would have to ascend two difficult streams for 55 miles; no calculation could then be made, either on the certainty or safety of this complicated and inconvenient navigation.

3. When a lake vessel would arrive at Buffalo, she would have to unload her cargo, and when this cargo arrived at Albany by the Erie Canal, it would be shifted on board of a river sloop, in order to be transported to New-York. From the time of the first loading on the great lakes, to the last unloading at the storehouses in New-York, there would be three loadings and three unloadings on this route.

But when a lake vessel arrived with a view of passing the canal of Niagara, she would be obliged to shift her loading to that purpose, for it would be almost impracticable to use lake vessels on the Niagara River, on account of the difficulty of the ascending navigation. At Lewiston, or some other place on the Niagara, another change of the cargo on board of a lake vessel for Ontario would be necessary: at Oswego another, and at Albany another; so that on this route, there would be five loadings and five unloadings, before the commodities were stored in New-York.

This difference is an object of great consequence, and presents the most powerful objections against the Ontario route; for to the delay we must add the accumulated expense of these changes of the cargo, the storage, the waste, and damage, especially by theft, where

the chances of depredation are increased by the merchandise passing through a multitude of hands, and the additional lake vessels, boats, and men that will be required, thereby increasing in this respect alone, the cost two-thirds above that attending the other course. And in general it may be observed, that the difference between a single and double freight, forms an immense saving. Goods are brought from Europe for twenty cents per cubic foot; whereas, the price from Philadelphia to Baltimore, is equal to ten cents. This shows how far articles once embarked, are conveyed with a very small addition of freight; and if such is the difference between a single and a double freight, how much greater must it be in the case under consideration?

If the fall from Lake Erie to Lake Ontario be 450 feet, as stated in Mr. Secretary Gallatin's report on canals, it will require at least 45 locks for a navigation round the cataract. Whether it would be practicable to accommodate all the vessels which the population and opulence of future times will create in those waters, with a passage through so many locks accumulated within a short distance, is a question well worthy of serious consideration. At all events, the demurrage must be frequent, vexatious, and expensive.

When we consider the immense expense which would attend the canal proposed on the Niagara River, a canal requiring so many locks, and passing through such difficult ground; when we view the Oswego River from its outlet at Oswego, to its origin in Oneida Lake, encumbered with dangerous rapids and falls, and flowing through a country almost impervious to canal operations; and when we contemplate the numerous embarrassments which are combined with the improvement of Wood Creek, we are prepared to believe that the expense of this route will not greatly fall short of the other.

It is, however, alleged, that it is not practicable to make this canal; and that if practicable, the expense will be enormous, and will far transcend the faculties of the state.

Lake Erie is elevated 541 feet above tide waters at Troy. The only higher ground between it and the Hudson is but a few miles from the lake; and this difficulty can be easily surmounted by deep cutting; of course no tunnel will be required. The rivers which cross the line of the canal, can be easily passed by aqueducts; on every summit level, plenty of water can be obtained; whenever there is a great rise or descent, locks can be erected, and the whole line will not require more than sixty-two; perhaps there is not an equal extent of country in the world, which presents fewer obstacles to the establishment of a canal. The liberality of nature has created the great ducts and arteries, and the ingenuity of art can easily provide the connecting veins. The general physiognomy of the country is champaign, and exhibits abundance of water; a gentle rising from the Hudson to the lake; a soil well adapted for such operations; no impassable hills, and no insurmountable waters. As to distance, it is not to be considered in relation to practicability. If a canal can be made for fifty miles, it can be made for three hundred, provided there is no essential variance in the

face of the country; the only difference will be, that in the latter case, it will take more time, and consume more money.

But this opinion does not rest for its support upon mere speculation. Canals have been successfully cut through more embarrassing ground, in various parts of the United States; and even in part of the intended route from Schenectady to Rome, locks have been erected at the Little Falls, and at other places; and short canals have been made, and all these operations have taken place in the most difficult parts of the whole course of the contemplated Erie navigation. Mr. William Weston, one of the most celebrated civil engineers in Europe, who has superintended canals in this state and Pennsylvania, and who is perfectly well acquainted with the country, has thus expressed his opinion on this subject: "Should your noble but stupendous plan of uniting Lake Erie with the Hudson, be carried into effect, you have to fear no rivalry. The commerce of the immense extent of country, bordering on the upper lakes, is yours for ever, and to such an incalculable amount as would baffle all conjecture to conceive. Its execution would confer immortal honour on the projectors and supporters, and would in its eventual consequences, render New-York the greatest commercial emporium in the world, with perhaps the exception at some distant day of New-Orleans, or some other depot at the mouth of the majestic Mississippi. From your perspicuous topographical description, and neat plan and profile of the route of the contemplated canal, I entertain little doubt of the practicability of the measure."

With regard to the expense of this work, different estimates will be formed. The commissioners appointed for that purpose, were of opinion that it would not cost more than five millions of dollars. On this subject we must be guided by the light which experience affords in analogous cases.

The canal of Languedoc, or canal of the two seas in France, connects the Mediterranean and Atlantic, and is 180 miles in length: it has 114 locks and sluices, and a tunnel 720 feet long. The breadth of the canal is 144 feet, and its depth six feet; it was begun in 1666, and finished in 1681, and cost £540,000 sterling, or £3000 sterling a mile.

The Holstein canal, begun in 1777, and finished in 1785, extends about fifty miles: is 100 feet wide at the top, and 54 at the bottom, and not less than ten feet deep in any part. Ships drawing nine feet four inches in water, pass through it from the German ocean, in the vicinity of Tonningen, into the Baltic. From two to three thousand ships have passed in one year. The expense of the whole work was a little more than a million and a half of dollars, which would be at the rate of 30,000 dollars a mile for this ship navigation.

The extreme length of the canal from the Forth to the Clyde in Scotland, is 35 miles. It rises and falls 160 feet by means of 39 locks. Vessels pass drawing eight feet water, having 19 feet beam, and 73 feet length. The cost is calculated at £200,000 sterling, which is at the rate of about 23,000 dollars a mile. But this was a canal for ships drawing eight feet

of water, with an extraordinary rise for its length, and having more than one lock for every mile.

The following will give an idea of the money expended on such works in England:

	Cost.	*Miles.*
The Rochdale Canal,	£291,900	31½
Ellesmere,	400,000	57
Kennet and Avon,	420,000	78
Grand Junction,	500,000	90
Leeds and Liverpool,	800,000	129

The miles of canal are 385½, and the cost is £2,411,900 sterling, or about 28,000 dollars per mile.

But in the estimation of the cost of these canals, unquestionably the price of the land over which they pass is included, and this is enormous. The land alone for one canal of 16 miles, is said to have cost £90,000 sterling. With us this would be but small.

If we look at the history of the English canals, we shall see how many objects of great expense are connected with them, with which we should have nothing to do, and that most of them have encountered and surmounted obstacles which we should not meet with. For instance, the Grand Junction Canal passes more than once the great ridge which divides the waters of England; ours will pass over a country which is in comparison champaign.

But it is said that the price of labour in our country is so much above what it is in England, that we must add greatly to the cost of her canals in estimating the expense of ours.

But that is certainly a false conclusion, for not only must the price of the land and the adventitious objects which have been before referred to, be deducted from the cost of the foreign canals, but we must consider that there will be almost as great a difference in our favour in the cost of materials and brute labour, as there is in favour of England as to human labour, and it is well known that so much human labour is not now required on canals as formerly. Machines for facilitating excavation have been invented and used with great success.

Mr. Gallatin's report on canals contains several estimates of the cost of contemplated ones. From Weymouth to Taunton, in Massachusetts, the expense of a canal of 26 miles with a lockage of 260 feet, is set down at 1,250,000 dollars. From Brunswick to Trenton, 28 miles, with a lockage of 100 feet, 800,000 dollars. From Christiana to Elk, 22 miles, with a lockage of 148 feet, 750,000 dollars. From Elizabeth River to Pasquotanck, 22 miles, with a lockage of 40 feet, 250,000 dollars. These estimates thus vary from 48,000 to less than 12,000 dollars a mile, and furnish the medium of about 31,000 dollars a mile.—But it must be observed, that they are for small distances, are calculated to surmount particular obstacles, and contemplate an extraordinary number of locks, and that they do not therefore furnish proper data from which to form correct conclusions with respect to the

probable cost of an extensive canal, sometimes running over a great number of miles upon a level without any expense for lockage, or any other expense than the mere earth work.

Mr. Weston, before mentioned, estimated the expense of a canal from the tide-waters at Troy to Lake Ontario, a distance of 160 miles, (exclusive of Lake Oneida,) going round the Cahoos, and embracing 55 locks of 8 feet lift each, at 2,200,000 dollars, a little more than 13,000 dollars a mile.

Fortunately, however, we have more accurate information than mere estimates.

In the appendix to Mr. Gallatin's report, it is stated by Mr. Joshua Gilpin, that "by actual measurement, and the sums paid on the feeder, it was found that one mile on the Delaware and Chesapeake canal, the most difficult of all others, from its being nearly altogether formed through hard rocky ground, cost 13,000 dollars, and one other mile, perfectly level, and without particular impediment, cost 2,300 dollars; from hence, the general average would be reduced to 7,650 dollars per mile."

The Middlesex Canal in Massachusetts, runs over twenty-eight miles of ground, presenting obstacles much greater than can be expected on the route we purpose. This canal cost 478,000 dollars, which is about 17,000 dollars a mile. It contains twenty-two locks of solid masonry, and excellent workmanship, and to accomplish this work it was necessary to dig in some places to the depth of twenty feet, to cut through ledges of rocks, to fill some valleys and morasses, and to throw several aqueducts across the intervening rivers. One of these across the river Shawshine is 280 feet long, and 22 feet above the river.

From the Tonnewanta Creek to the Seneca River, is a fall of	195 feet.
From thence to the Rome summit, is a rise of	50
From thence to the Hudson River, is a fall of	380
The whole rise and fall,	625 feet

This will require sixty-two locks of ten feet lift each. The expense of such locks, as experimentally proved in several instances in this state, would be about six hundred and twenty thousand dollars.

We have seen that on the Middlesex Canal, there are 22 locks for 28 miles, which is a lock for somewhat more than every mile, whereas 62 locks for 300 miles, is but about one lock for every five miles; and the lockage of the Middlesex Canal would alone cost two hundred and twenty thousand dollars. It would, therefore, appear to be an allowance perhaps too liberal to consider the cost of it as a fair criterion of the expense of canals in general in this country, and of this in particular. Reservoirs and tunnels are the most expensive part of the operation, and none will be necessary in our whole route. The expense of the whole earth work of excavating a mile of canal on level ground, fifty feet wide and five feet deep, at eighteen cents per cubic yard, and allowing for the cost of forming and trimming the

banks, puddling, &c. will not exceed 4,000 dollars per mile, and the only considerable aqueduct on the whole line will be over the Genesee River.

From a deliberate consideration of these different estimates and actual expenditures, we are fully persuaded that this great work will not cost more than 20,000 dollars a mile, or six millions of dollars in the whole; but willing to make every possible allowance, and even conceding that it will cost double that sum, yet still we contend that there is nothing which ought to retard its execution. This canal cannot be made in a short time. It will be the work perhaps of ten or fifteen years.

The money will not be wanted at once. The expenditure, in order to be beneficial, ought not to exceed 500,000 dollars a year, and the work may be accomplished in two ways; either by companies incorporated for particular sections of the route, or by the state. If the first is resorted to, pecuniary sacrifices will still be necessary on the part of the public, and great care ought to be taken to guard against high tolls, which will certainly injure, if not ruin the whole enterprise.

If the state shall see fit to achieve this great work, there can be no difficulty in providing funds. Stock can be created and sold at an advanced price. The ways and means of paying the interest will be only required. After the first year, supposing an annual expenditure of 500,000 dollars, 30,000 dollars must be raised to pay an interest of six per cent; after the second year, 60,000, and so on. At this rate the interest will regularly increase with beneficial appropriation, and will be so little in amount that it may be raised in many shapes without being burdensome to the community. In all human probability, the augmented revenue proceeding from the public salt works, and the increased price of the state lands in consequence of this undertaking, will more than extinguish the interest of the debt contracted for that purpose. We should also take into view, the land already subscribed by individuals for this work, amounting to 106,632 acres. These donations, together with those which may be confidently anticipated, will exceed in value a million of dollars, and it will be at all times in the power of the state to raise a revenue from the imposition of transit duties, which may be so light as scarcely to be felt, and yet the income may be so great as in a short time to extinguish the debt, and this might take effect on the completion of every important section of the work.

If the legislature shall consider this important project in the same point of view, and shall unite with us in opinion, that the general prosperity is intimately and essentially involved in its prosecution, we are fully persuaded that now is the proper time for its commencement.—Delays are the refuge of weak minds, and to procrastinate on this occasion is to show a culpable inattention to the bounties of nature; a total insensibility to the blessings of Providence, and an inexcusable neglect of the interests of society. If it were intended to advance the views of individuals, or to foment the divisions of party; if it promoted the interests of a few, at the expense of the prosperity of the many; if its benefits were limited as

to place, or fugitive as to duration, then indeed it might be received with cold indifference, or treated with stern neglect; but the overflowing blessings from this great fountain of public good and national abundance, will be as extensive as our country, and as durable as time.

The considerations which now demand an immediate, and an undivided attention to this great object, are so obvious, so various, and so weighty, that we shall only attempt to glance at some of the most prominent.

In the first place, it must be evident that no period could be adopted in which the work can be prosecuted with less expense. Every day augments the value of the land through which the canal will pass; and when we consider the surplus hands which have been recently dismissed from the army into the walks of private industry, and the facility with which an addition can be procured to the mass of our active labour, in consequence of the convulsions of Europe, it must be obvious that this is now the time to make those indispensable acquisitions.

2. The longer this work is delayed, the greater will be the difficulty in surmounting the interests that will rise up in opposition to it. Expedients on a contracted scale have already been adopted for the facilitation of intercourse. Turnpikes, locks, and short canals have been resorted to, and in consequence of those establishments, villages have been laid out and towns have been contemplated. To prevent injurious speculation, to avert violent opposition, and to exhibit dignified impartiality and paternal affection to your fellow-citizens, it is proper that they should be notified at once of your intentions.

3. The experience of the late war has impressed every thinking man in the community, with the importance of this communication. The expenses of transportation frequently exceeded the original value of the article, and at all times operated with injurious pressure upon the finances of the nation. The money thus lost for the want of this communication, would perhaps have defrayed more than one half of its expense.

4. Events which are daily occurring on our frontiers, demonstrate the necessity of this work. Is it of importance that our honourable merchants should not be robbed of their legitimate profits; that the public revenues should not be seriously impaired by dishonest smuggling, and that the commerce of our cities should not be supplanted by the mercantile establishments of foreign countries? Then it is essential that this sovereign remedy for maladies so destructive and ruinous should be applied. It is with inconceivable regret we record the well known fact, that merchandize from Montreal, has been sold to an alarming extent on our borders for 15 per cent. below the New-York prices.

5. A measure of this kind will have a benign tendency in raising the value of the national domains, in expediting the sale, and enabling the payment. Our national debt may thus, in a short time be extinguished. Our taxes of course will be diminished, and a considerable portion of revenue may then be expended in great public improvements; in encouraging the

arts and sciences; in patronising the operations of industry; in fostering the inventions of genius, and in diffusing the blessings of knowledge.

6. However serious the fears which have been entertained of a dismemberment of the Union by collisions between the north and the south, it is to be apprehended that the most imminent danger lies in another direction, and that a line of separation may be eventually drawn between the Atlantic and the western states, unless they are cemented by a common, an ever-acting, and a powerful interest. The commerce of the ocean, and the trade of the lakes, passing through one channel, supplying the wants, increasing the wealth, and reciprocating the benefits of each great section of the empire, will form an imperishable cement of connexion, and an indissoluble bond of union. New-York is both Atlantic and western; and the only state in which this union of interests can be formed and perpetuated, and in which this great centripetal power can be energetically applied. Standing on this exalted eminence, with power to prevent a train of the most extensive and afflicting calamities that ever visited the world, (for such a train will inevitably follow a dissolution of the Union,) she will justly be considered an enemy to the human race, if she does not exert for this purpose the high faculties which the Almighty has put into her hands.

Lastly. It may be confidently asserted, that this canal, as to the extent of its route, as to the countries which it connects, and as to the consequences which it will produce, is without a parallel in the history of mankind. The union of the Baltic and the Euxine; of the Red Sea and the Mediterranean; of the Euxine and the Caspian; and of the Mediterranean and the Atlantic, has been projected or executed by the chiefs of powerful monarchies, and the splendour of the design has always attracted the admiration of the world. It remains for a free state to create a new era in history, and to erect a work more stupendous, more magnificent, and more beneficial than has hitherto been achieved by the human race. Character is as important to nations as to individuals, and the glory of a republic, founded on the promotion of the general good, is the common property of all its citizens.

We have thus discharged with frankness and plainness, and with every sentiment of respect, a great duty to ourselves, to our fellow-citizens, and to posterity, in presenting this subject to the fathers of the commonwealth. And may that Almighty Being in whose hands are the destinies of states and nations, enlighten your councils and invigorate your exertions in favour of the best interests of our beloved country.

This memorial, it may be added, was signed by a great portion of the respectable citizens of New-York, and was seconded by the corporation of that city, and by meetings held in Albany, Geneva, Buffalo, Watervliet, Hartland, Ridgeway, Seneca, Lyons, Troy, Onondaga, Avon, Paris, Bloomfield, Read-

ing, Junius, Caledonia, Canandaigua, Russia, Schuyler, Newport, German Flatts, and various other towns in Genesee, Cayuga, Oneida, and other western counties.

NOTE AA.—p. 104.

Services of the late Dr. Hugh Williamson.

Doctor Williamson, during his tour in Europe, and from subsequent observation by travel in this country, had early become apprised of the great facilities and advantages which the state of New-York so eminently possesses for an inland communication between its interior waters and the Atlantic Ocean.

At what particular period his attention was first given to investigations of this nature, is not so certain. As early, however, as June, 1807, he published in a paper, entitled "The Weekly Inspector," some hints on the improvement of the western country, for the purpose of securing to the State of New-York advantages which otherwise would be enjoyed by the cities of Philadelphia and Baltimore. As these remarks appear to be the first of Doctor Williamson's productions on this subject, and were made at an early day with his characteristic foresight, I have thought proper to give them a place in these pages.

"The votes given at the late election by freeholders in this state for government, taken from the official returns, are as follow:

In the Southern District,	- - - -	9,688
In the Middle do.	- - - -	13,670
In the Eastern do.	- - - -	16,482
In the Western do.	- - - -	26,223

"This statement shows in a concise view the number of freeholders in each district in the state, by which it will be observed, that the western district contains a greater number of freeholders than both the southern and eastern districts; and these districts include the cities of New-York, Albany, and Schenectady, with a number of populous villages; yet that district, generally denominated the "western country," is by many in this city considered a mere wilderness. It must, however, be admitted, that nine-tenths of its population

is of no longer date than eighteen years at most; and that, before that time this western district was an almost endless wilderness to the lakes on which it borders. Hence these questions will arise—What will be the population of this western district in the next eighteen years? What the commerce of this city with this western country, if it can be retained by timely improvements? Will not that western country, in the course of the next eighteen years, give as many votes for governor as the whole state gave at the last election? There is sufficient land yet unsettled in that district to maintain upwards of one hundred thousand freeholders. But will not so rapid a population as this district is capable of producing, be compelled to force its trade with a more southerly channel, if the natural one, which leads to this city, remains neglected and unimproved?

"Will it not be easy for a great part of this western country to open its inland trade, and carry it on with Baltimore, as it is in its present unimproved state, to continue it with New-York, Albany, or Schenectady? This western country may be compared to a handsome girl, who has too rival lovers—the one, Baltimore, flattering her fancy—the other, New-York, too sure of conquest, and therefore neglectful of his courtesy. But beware of the consequences of this neglect; view with a jealous eye the assiduities and devices of your rival. If you wish New-York to remain, as now, the emporium of America, suffer not the trade with the interior of your state to be carried off triumphantly by the spirited and enterprising citizens of Philadelphia and Baltimore."

Dr. Williamson having been a constant visiter in my family, more especially in 1808—9 and 10, he had frequent discussions with Governor Clinton and the late Thomas Eddy, and a mutual interchange of thought and views must have taken place, by which he became enthusiastically devoted to this great project of internal navigation, which at that time began to attract public attention. In the summer of 1810 Dr. Williamson favoured the editors of the American Medical and Philosophical Register of New-York with a paper, entitled "Observations on Navigable Canals," which appeared in that Journal in October of the same year.

This essay is equally remarkable for the enlarged suggestions and prophetic views of the author, and the confidence with which he contemplated the practicability of the canal communication from the Hudson to Lake Erie by the interior route, without entering into Lake Ontario, and among the other documents which have served to enlighten the public mind upon the subject of the canal navigation of this state, is particularly worthy of reference. Several other papers have been written by Dr. Williamson upon this subject, under

various signatures, which may be found in the same journal,* and to these may be added a separate pamphlet, which he published under the signature of Atticus, which has been several times reprinted, and of which many thousand copies have been circulated.

NOTE BB.—p. 105.

Services of Robert Troup.

Among the number of those entitled to the meed of public gratitude, although he did not hold an official station connected with the public measures relative to this subject, is Colonel Robert Troup. That gentleman was an original subscriber to the Western Inland Lock Navigation Company, and in connexion with the late Thomas Eddy, Robert Bowne, of New-York, and Barent Bleecker, of Albany, was also an active and useful member of the board of directors of that association. Colonel Troup has also, as an agent for the Pultency estate, resided many years in the western country. Under those circumstances he enjoyed peculiar opportunities of becoming familiarly conversant with every part of the interior of the state, as regards its soil, its waters, its native productions, and the commercial advantages that must arise from the improvement of its natural navigation, or by the system of canals which were at that time contemplated.

Busily employed, as Colonel Troup has been for many years, in performing the duties of an extensive agency, which has necessarily called him to mix a good deal with his fellow-citizens in the western parts of the state, and with the members of the legislature, he has never failed to improve to the utmost of his power, every proper opportunity towards removing prejudices against the canal policy, and substituting, in their places, impressions favourable to its adoption.

It is also to be observed, that shortly after the period of the meeting of the

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* See Hosack and Francis' American Medical and Philosophical Register.

citizens in New-York, which agreed to Mr. Clinton's celebrated Memorial to the legislature, urging that body to undertake the construction of the canal as a work of the state, Colonel Troup was also concerned with the late Gideon Granger, John Greig, Esq. John Nicholas, Esq. the Hon. Nathaniel W. Howell, and several other leading gentlemen of Ontario County, in convening a large meeting at Canandaigua, in that county, for the purpose of exciting general attention to the contemplated improvements, of giving a right direction to public opinion, and of pressing the construction of the canals as the work of the state. The meeting took place; and few meetings, it is stated, have been more respectable for numbers, character, talent, and property. Such indeed had been the active exertions of Colonel Troup, and such his weight of character and influence, that he was appointed chairman of the meeting. Mr. Nathaniel Rochester, another gentleman of great influence, and who has since that period filled several important public stations, was appointed secretary. The meeting being organized, and the objects of it announced by Col. Troup, Gideon Granger, Esq. the late post master general, rose and addressed it in a very eloquent and able speech, on the momentous object for which that meeting had been convened. Mr. Granger's speech being finished, a number of important resolutions, drawn up by Myron Holley,* afterwards one of the canal commissioners, and distinguished for his valuable services throughout the whole progress of the great work which has been achieved, were offered by John Greig, Esq. another active friend and liberal contributor to the canal, and were unanimously passed. Those resolutions exhibited with great force, the incalculable advantages that would necessarily flow from a canal navigation between Lake Erie and the Hudson. Of these resolutions a

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* In a letter addressed to Colonel Troup, by John Greig, Esq. dated Canandaigua, 31st May, 1828, he observes: "To Mr. Holley, more than to any one else, are we indebted for that meeting, and for the popularity which the canal policy immediately afterwards acquired in the western part of the state. Indeed I have always been satisfied that his intelligence and zeal, and unwearied exertions both of mind and body on the subject, from the moment of his appointment as a canal commissioner, essentially contributed to bring the Erie Canal to a successful completion."

correspondent observes, "that both in matter and style, they may justly be denominated *a near relation* of Mr. Clinton's celebrated Memorial." The valuable document containing those resolutions is subjoined. The proceedings of this meeting, as may readily be supposed, made a deep impression on the public mind, and powerfully contributed to the enlightened policy which the legislature subsequently embraced. After this meeting, a memorial to the legislature from the inhabitants of Geneva, in order still further to sustain the efforts making in other parts of the state, in recommendation of the canal policy, was drawn by Colonel Troup, who greatly exerted himself to have it supported by numerous signatures. These, with other important services rendered by an extensive correspondence with Mr. Clinton, Thomas Eddy, and the other canal commissioners, as well as other gentlemen interested in the canal navigation of the state, entitle Colonel Troup to the gratitude of his fellow-citizens.

Resolutions passed at the Ontario County Meeting.

At a numerous and very respectable meeting of gentlemen from most of the towns in Ontario County, held at the court-house in Canandaigua, on Wednesday the 8th January inst. pursuant to public notice, for the purpose of taking into consideration the project of a canal, between Lake Erie and the Hudson.

The objects for which the meeting had been called, were concisely explained by the chairman, who seeing that one of the canal commissioners was present, intimated an expectation that he would communicate such facts as had come to his knowledge during the examinations and inquiries of the last season, applicable to those objects. Whereupon Mr. Holley gave some account of the proceedings of the present board of commissioners, pointed out a route for the canal, and stated, more especially in reference to the western parts of that route, the principal difficulties to be met with, and the manner in which they might be overcome. He also mentioned several facts tending to a conviction that the expense of this enterprise would not exceed the estimate of former commissioners. A respectable member, then observing Mr. Granger in the assembly, remarked, that, from the former official situation of that gentleman, his extensive local and general information, and the interest he had always manifested in internal improvements, the subject before the meeting must be familiar to his mind, and he hoped we should be favoured with his opinions upon it. The chairman ex-

pressing the same hope, Mr. Granger rose, and in a luminous, learned, argumentative, and eloquent speech, occupied the attention of the meeting for about two hours, exhibiting the most irresistible motives of justice, policy, and prudence, as demanding an immediate and effectual effort for the construction of this canal on the part of our rulers. No sketch of this speech is here attempted, because it will probably be published.* The following resolutions, proposed to the meeting and read by Mr. Greig, were then considered, and unanimously adopted, viz.

Resolved, That this meeting, from the personal knowledge of many of its members, the published reports of former canal commissioners, and the more particular information communicated to them, by persons engaged during the last season in exploring the country, have the most entire conviction of its being practicable, without an exorbitant expenditure, to open a navigable canal, from Lake Erie to the Hudson River; and that the strongest reasons, of profit and policy unite in requiring that Lake Ontario should not constitute any part of the direct route of such canal.

Resolved, That in the opinion of this meeting, the interests of the United States would be greatly promoted by the construction of this canal;

Inasmuch as it would immediately enhance the value of land beyond the Ohio, enlarge the spirit of forming new settlements there, and afford to that extensive section of our country all the advantages of a safer and more economical road to market than it can otherwise enjoy;

Inasmuch as it would secure to our own citizens the entire benefits of an inland commerce, of which that portion enjoyed by our northern neighbours during the last ten years, has given to the provinces of Upper and Lower Canada, more wealth than all other causes combined, and of which the future extent will almost exceed calculation;

Inasmuch as by laying the sure foundation of an unrivalled interior navigation interest; by spreading suddenly, to the utmost western limits of the waters of the great lakes, a hardy, enterprising, flourishing and numerous population; and by offering the greatest possible facility for transporting, wherever they might be wanted, in that direction, all the munitions of war, it would be the most efficient instrument imaginable, of giving to the whole line of our north and north-western frontier, that security, which, in every well governed community, is the first object of good policy; and

Inasmuch as it would diffuse, multiply and strengthen, incalculably, all the ties of interest and sympathy, by which every good American hopes that the union and prosperity of his country will be perpetuated.

Moreover, having seen appropriated from the public funds, which we have been taxed, in

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* His speech has been published and extensively circulated.—D. H.

common with others, to provide large sums, to secure to our south-western fellow-citizens, the right of a free passage to the ocean, and to cherish, protect, and extend the commercial interests of our Atlantic brethren,

Resolved, That it appears to us necessary to the substantial existence of that equity, which regards with equal favour every portion of the same people, that the United States should aid in the construction of this canal by a liberal appropriation.

But, as it is apparent that there is no district of our country in which projects of improvement, by roads and canals, are not entertained, the completion of which, in many instances, we have no doubt would be of great public utility,

Resolved, That, in our opinion, it would well become the wisdom of the national legislature to form, at once, and prosecute with vigour, a system of internal improvement, adapted to the whole extent of our territory, and calculated, as much as possible, to make general all those blessings which nature has lavished upon particular regions; and that we would cheerfully bear our proportion of all the burthens connected with the establishment of such a system.

Resolved, That as friends to the great interests of the state of New-York, we anticipate a long train of the most gratifying effects, as inevitably resulting from the construction of this canal—effects that would speedily advance the public good, and permanently identify themselves with it in every possible shape. This canal would promote the interests of the western district,

By reducing the expense of transportation so much as to confer, upon many of our heavy and bulky articles now entirely excluded from every market, a value, in the aggregate, of great amount;

By giving to all other articles produced in the country a large additional value;

By lessening the price of all imported articles;

By raising the price of our lands, and conducing most efficaciously to their settlement and cultivation;

By indirectly, though surely, effecting the utmost possible improvement in the navigation of the St. Lawrence;

By enlarging vastly the market for our plaster and salt, of which last article, the quantity manufactured, and the expense of it to the consumer, must always depend upon the facility of supplying, at the salt-works, the necessary fuel; and therefore,

By opening to an almost interminable extent, the most economical road possible to wood and coal.

It would promote the interests of the middle and eastern districts,

By supplying them with the necessary articles, salt and plaster, cheaper than they could otherwise obtain them, and

By diminishing the amount of their proportion of the public taxes.

It would promote the interests of the southern district,

By locating there chiefly the warehouses and the agents of that extensive commerce, which must necessarily grow out of the increasing wants and means, not merely of the western parts of this state, but of all that wide and fertile country which lies between the Ohio, the Mississippi, and the lakes. In addition to these local benefits, of which the list might be almost indefinitely lengthened, and which it is easy to perceive, would abundantly swell the tide of general prosperity, the state at large would derive advantage from the construction of this canal,

By its increasing the value of her unsold lands;

By its drawing through her whole extent, from many different nations, an incalculable mass of valuable commodities, which could not fail, in various ways, to scatter wealth and animate industry throughout their course;

By its giving, universally, a new activity and expansion to her commerce, agriculture, and manufactures; and finally,

By its becoming the right arm of her power, the inexhaustible mine of her wealth, and the prevalent asserter of her rights.

Resolved, That in the opinion of this meeting, the whole expense of this enterprise might be soon repaid, in a manner eminently calculated to encourage important interior interests, without discouraging those that are exterior, by imposing a rate of lockage, very low upon all exported articles, and much higher upon all articles imported.

Resolved, That while we are deeply impressed with the prospective blessings of the canal between Lake Erie and the Hudson, we are not insensible to the benefits that would accrue to this state and the union, from a navigable connexion between the said river and Lake Champlain, and also, from the project, by which it is proposed to connect the waters of the Seneca Lake with those of the Susquehannah; and that we are disposed to aid, wherever we have influence, in the accomplishment of these valuable improvements.

Resolved, That Robert Troup, John Nicholas, Gideon Granger, Nathaniel, W. Howell, and Nathaniel Rochester, be a committee for the purpose of laying before the congress of the United States and the legislature of this state, the views and wishes of the people of this county, upon this important subject; and also for publishing these resolutions, and transmitting copies of them to such other counties in the state, as in their opinion, will feel an interest in promoting the great objects of this meeting.

ROBERT TROUP, *Chairman.*
NATHANIEL ROCHESTER, *Secretary.*

The effect produced by these resolutions, in connexion with the able speech delivered by Mr. Granger, as will readily be supposed, operated very power-

fully in sustaining the measures then before the legislature; the following commendation of the labours and services of Mr. Holley, from the pen of Tacitus, is justly due to that gentleman.

"Mr. Holley," says Tacitus, "was a member of the legislature when the initiatory canal law was passed, which he advocated with the whole force of his talents. This gentleman is a member of a numerous family distinguished for genius. His mind is improved by reading, reflection, and conversation, and is distinguished for extensive research, and acute discrimination. He has devoted his whole time and attention, mind and body, to the canal; and some of the most luminous reports and communications have proceeded from his pen. Whatever he touches, he adorns, and whenever he speaks or writes, he instructs. His mild and conciliatory manners, his elevated character, his spotless integrity, and his indefatigable business talents, have rendered his services as an acting canal commissioner, invaluable."

NOTE CC.—p. 105.

In reply to the following request, preferred to Colonel W. L. Stone, the editor of the Commercial Advertiser, that gentleman has kindly favoured me with the subjoined valuable communication, containing very interesting details upon each subject to which his attention was requested, and which cannot fail to receive the notice and approbation of all who feel an interest in the great event to which they relate.

NEW-YORK, February, 12th, 1829.

DEAR SIR,

I am fully aware of the important legislative services that were rendered in the years 1816 and 1817, by the gentlemen referred to in my Discourse, and by some others whom I omitted to notice upon that occasion, and whose services are no less entitled to grateful consideration, viz. the Hon. Abraham Van Vechten, Elisha Williams, Esq. and my friend the late Judge Pendleton.

As you were in Albany during those memorable sessions of the legislature,

and reported the proceedings of the two houses, and the most important speeches that were delivered in the course of the debates which took place in the years referred to, I will esteem it a favour if you will communicate to me a summary of your reports of the proceedings of the legislature in 1816 and 1817, relative to the Erie and Champlain Canals, which I may be permitted to introduce among the documents collected upon this subject.

I am, dear sir, your friend,

DAVID HOSACK.

WILLIAM L. STONE, Esq.
Editor of the Commercial Advertiser.

NEW-YORK, Feb. 20, 1829.

DEAR SIR,

You have honoured me with a request that I would furnish you a sketch of the legislative history of the great projects for the Erie and Champlain Canals, in the years 1816 and 1817, together with notices of the leading members of the legislature during those years, who were friendly to the enterprise, and whose labours were exerted most efficiently in the cause which has been crowned with such splendid success. Although my opportunities for acquiring a competent knowledge of the history of our canal system, have not been limited, yet it is with unaffected sincerity that I apprise you of my fears that I shall not be able to execute the task imposed by your request, in a manner that will at once do justice to the subject, and the gentlemen concerned, and at the same time reflect no discredit upon the volume which I understand you have in preparation for the public eye. I fear, moreover, that it will be impossible to compress the history of the canal measures of 1816—17, and trace the progress of the acts of those years through both houses of the legislature, preserving, moreover, the sketches of the debates of the latter session, included in your request, and which were written down by me at the time, within the reasonable bounds which you may suppose. Still, however, in the hope, perhaps a vain one, that I shall be able to contribute something towards the materials for a future history of the internal improvements of my native state,

and also to furnish a modicum of matter not altogether deficient in interest to the reader of the present day, I cheerfully attempt a compliance with your wishes.

Knowing full well that your own personal knowledge, added to your patient researches, have rendered you familiar with the incipient measures from time to time adopted by the state, with a view to the stupendous public works of which I am to speak, I shall come at once to the very letter of your request, and begin with the legislature of 1816.

The legislature commenced its session on the 2d of February. There had for six years been a board of commissioners to make the necessary examinations and surveys, with a view to the projected canals. The gentlemen in commission at this time, were, Gouverneur Morris, Stephen Van Rensselaer, De Witt Clinton, Simeon De Witt, William North, Thomas Eddy, Peter B. Porter, and Charles D. Cooper. In his opening speech to the legislature, Governor Tompkins adverted to the subject of internal improvement by means of roads and canals, and spoke particularly of the latter as follows:

"It will rest with the legislature whether the prospect of connecting the waters of the Hudson with those of the western lakes and of Lake Champlain, is not sufficiently important to demand the appropriation of some part of the revenues of the state to its accomplishment, without imposing too great a burthen upon our constituents. The first route being an object common with the states of the west, we may rely on their zealous co-operation in any judicious plan that can perfect the water communication in that direction. As it relates to the connecting the waters of the Hudson with those of Champlain, we may with equal confidence count on the spirited exertions of the patriotic and enterprising state of Vermont."

This portion of the speech of his excellency was referred by a concurrent resolution, to a joint committee of both houses, consisting of Messrs. Ross, Tibbitts, Swift, and Peter R. Livingston, on the part of the senate; and Messrs. Oakley, W. Thompson, Lynch, Mooers, Holley, Ford, and Warner, on the part of the assembly. The resolution having originated in the senate, Mr. Ross would of course have been the chairman of the joint committee; but from a pressure of business in the Court of Errors, he yielded the situation, and Mr. Oakley was selected as the head of the committee in his place. It

is due to Mr. Ross, however, to state, that although Orange, his own county, was at that time, perhaps, more strongly than any other, opposed to the canal project, yet he had the independence to act uniformly with its friends, during the whole period of his service in the senate.

On the 21st of February, the memorial of Cadwallader D. Colden and others, of the city of New-York, in favour of the great work, was presented and referred to the committee. This memorial was a masterly document, and deserves a proud rank among the splendid remains of the capacious intellect of its author—De Witt Clinton. On the 1st of March, a memorial to the same effect was presented from the mayor, aldermen and commonalty of New-York; and numerous others came pouring in from most of the principal towns and villages in the interior.

There was at that time an opposition, which was strong and general, to the canal project, among the representatives and the people of the river counties of the Hudson, and upon Long Island; and this opposition was strengthened by an apprehension, that, even if this work was practicable, the opening a cheap, direct, and easy water communication to the rich garden of the west, would injure the market for their own produce, by an excess of supply. They had no conception of the rapid growth of New-York, nor could they be persuaded that its increase would be proportionably accelerated by every new source of production opened to its market. There were others, sound and intelligent men, and accomplished legislators, who paused and hesitated, if they did not oppose, a project of such vast magnitude, and which, of course, must be undertaken as an experiment. Others, again, though by no means hostile to the project, feared the expense during the years of pecuniary and commercial pressure which succeeded the first flush of business at the close of the war. They were not inimical to the cause of internal improvement, but believed it was yet too soon for the state, single handed, to commence works of such extent. Of this class were Mr. Oakley, Mr. Duer, and others, during the present session, and Judges Pendleton and Emmott, and some others, during the session of the ensuing year. It was from this cause, probably, that on the 27th of February, Mr. Oakley, at his own request, was discharged from the canal committee, of which he was chairman, and Colonel (now General)

Jacob Rutsen Van Rensselaer appointed in his place. Colonel Van Rensselaer was one of the most early, ardent, and, as it proved, efficient friends of the project in the state; and it is a rule of parliamentary courtesy, that the chairman, and a majority of the committee, shall be selected from the friends of the subjects referred.

On the 8th of March, the canal commissioners before mentioned, made their annual report to the legislature. During the war it had been impossible for them to prosecute the objects of their appointment; but fully convinced of the practicability and importance of the work, and the necessity of taking measures to divert the trade of the west from passing down the St. Lawrence, they recommended the adoption "of such preliminary measures as might be necessary for the accomplishment of this important object." This report was signed by all the commissioners excepting Gouverneur Morris, who, it has been said, was displeased with sundry alterations in the draft which he prepared, and consequently withheld his name.

On the 21st, Colonel Van Rensselaer, from the joint committee having the subject in charge, presented an able report in favour of the immediate commencement of both canals, and introduced a bill for that purpose. From this excellent report I have transcribed the following passage which has already proved prophetical.

"The beneficial results to arise from the completion of this navigation, can scarcely be calculated by the most sanguine of its advocates. A country, capable of sustaining as dense a population as any section of the globe, embracing many millions of acres, will pour its productions and its wealth into the heart of our commercial emporium, diffusing blessings of every description to every part of this great and important state; connecting the interests of this, and the states in the north-western section of the union, so intimately as to promise permanence and stability to the system of government established by us, and on which all must rely for the political prosperity and happiness of these United States."

An unsuccessful effort was made by the chairman of the committee, to have the bill taken up on the 29th of March. On the 3d of April, however, the house resolved itself into a committee of the whole upon the bill, as the first business in the morning—a very unusual circumstance—Mr. Duer in the chair.

others, Colonel Van Rensselaer had a host to encounter, in the persons of Messrs. Oakley and Duer, of Dutchess; though, as I have before intimated, neither of these gentlemen were so inimical to the measure, as they were to the premature period at which, as they believed, it was proposed to commence it. In the origin of almost every great public measure, men of even the best judgment and soundest heads, will entertain honest differences of opinion, concerning time, place, expediency, &c. Such had long been the fact in this state, in regard to the canal project. Of those who stood in this posture on the present occasion, the gentlemen last mentioned were at the head. Both occupied a proud rank as men of talents, possessing fine parliamentary address. In the legislature then, as often afterwards, Mr. Oakley was distinguished by the same cool and dispassionate manner, the same clearness of argument and acuteness of perception, which have uniformly distinguished him at the bar, and which now render him the ornament of the bench. His manner was always frank, easy, and unostentatious, and by his patience and untiring vigilance, he had deservedly acquired vast influence in the house. So also with his colleague, Mr. Duer, (now judge of the third circuit.) Uniting with superior talents, a graceful and imposing parliamentary manner; always disclosing his views with perfect candour and sincerity; scorning all the minor artifices of legislation, and bringing to the work a thorough knowledge of whatever subject he undertook to discuss; he also had deservedly acquired a large share of the confidence of the legislature;—and under the influence of such commanding powers, and such address, it is not surprising that the members were induced still again to pause and reflect before they authorised the "passage of the Rubicon," if this figure may be allowed.

The select committee, to whom the bill had been referred, after having been so essentially changed in its features, and taken from the committee of the whole, as before stated, reported, on the 12th, Mr. Duer's substitute, with sundry amendments. The selection of the committee on this occasion, was peculiarly fortunate, since, being a member of the committee, and an ardent friend of the project, it brought Mr. Jay out more actively in the cause, than he would otherwise, perhaps, have deemed it his duty to engage. The commanding talents, and high personal character of Mr. Jay, the wisdom of his

remarks, and the affability and courtesy of his demeanour, were circumstances eminently calculated to favour the cause which he now vigorously espoused. And the force of his powers was soon felt. The consideration of the bill, in its amended form, was resumed in committee of the whole, on the 13th, in the morning; when, after an animated debate, the first section was adopted. It was again taken up in the evening session of the same day.

It was during this sitting that a proposition for a local tax upon the lands, twenty-five miles in breadth, along the line of the middle section, was offered by Mr. Oakley, and adopted. This proposition tended very much to soften and abate the fears and opposition of many members, who represented those counties, which it was supposed would be less particularly benefitted by the canals. From this moment things once more assumed a brighter aspect. A great variety of amendments were made to the bill, by which the canal was to be commenced, but the operations of the commissioners were confined to the middle section, extending from Rome to the Seneca River; the expenditures were limited to 250,000 dollars per annum; the commissioners were appointed for eight years; and the whole amount of money appropriated to the object, was 2,000,000 dollars. The commissioners named in the bill were, De Witt Clinton, Stephen Van Rensselaer, Townsend M'Coun, Melancthon Wheeler, Henry Seymour, Joseph Ellicott, Jacob Rutsen Van Rensselaer, Philip I. Schuyler, Samuel Young, John Nicholas, William Bayard, George Huntington, and Nathan Smith. In this shape, substantially, it passed the assembly, by a vote of 83 to 16, and was sent to the senate for concurrence.

The bill was taken up in committee of the whole of the senate, on the 16th, on motion of Mr. Van Vechten. On motion of Mr. Van Buren, it was amended by striking out all those parts which went to authorise the commencement of the work, and making it altogether preparatory, by directing the procurement of more accurate surveys and estimates. The reasons for this course were stated by Mr. Van Buren at considerable length. It being evident, he said, to his mind, that the legislature did not possess sufficient information to justify the passage of a law authorising the commencement of the work, and apprehending that the measure might be prejudiced in the public mind by inconsiderate legislation, he believed this to be the safer course. His

amendment was adopted by a vote of 20 to 9. The consideration of the bill was resumed in the senate on the 11th, and after an unsuccessful motion by Major Cochran to reject the whole, the commissioners, on motion of Mr. Ross, were reduced to five in number, and it was thus adopted. The names of the five commissioners retained were, Stephen Van Rensselaer, De Witt Clinton, Samuel Young, Joseph Ellicott, and Myron Holley.

By these amendments, the bill was reduced substantially to the original proposition of Mr. Duer in the other house; and in this shape it went back for concurrence. The assembly at first refused to concur, and the bill was sent back to the senate. But the senate in turn refused to recede. It was the last day of the session—time pressed—and lest the whole project should be swept by the board and lost, by the talents and address of Mr. Lynch and Mr. Jay the house was finally persuaded to recede from its vote of non-concurrence; and thus passed the act of 1816.

The duties enjoined upon the commissioners by this act were,—

"1st. To examine and explore the country, for the purpose of determining the most eligible routes for the contemplated canals; to cause surveys and levels to be taken, and maps, field-books, and draughts to be made, and to adopt and recommend proper plans for the construction and formation of the said canals, and of the locks, dams, embankments, tunnels, and aqueducts; and to cause all necessary plans, models, and draughts thereof to be executed.

"2d. To calculate and estimate the expense of the above operations.

"3d. To ascertain whether to any, and to what amount, and upon what terms, loans of money can be procured on the credit of the state for the above purposes; and,

"4th. To apply for donations of land and money, in aid of those undertakings, to the United States, to states interested, to corporate bodies, and to individuals."

The commissioners met in New-York in May, and the board was organised by the appointment of De Witt Clinton, president, Colonel Young, secretary, and Myron Holley, treasurer; and the season was occupied in a diligent and laborious discharge of their preparatory duties.

At the meeting of the legislature of the following year, Governor Tompkins in his speech, directed their attention to the subject only in the following negative paragraph:—

"It is respectfully submitted to your wisdom to make provision at the present session, for employing a part at least of the state prisoners, either in building the new prison at Auburn, erecting fortifications, opening and repairing great roads, *constructing canals*, and in making other improvements."

Governor Tompkins had never been suspected of any very strong friendship for the canal project; and this chilling paragraph, at a time when the public attention was alive upon the subject, was at once construed into a settled hostility, which subsequent events proved too true. "So much of his excellency's speech as related to canals," was not referred to any committee. This speech was delivered at an extra session, held in November 1816, for appointing presidential electors. No communication was made by the Governor at the opening of the adjourned session, which commenced on the 14th of January, 1817; and no direct movement upon the subject of the canals was attempted for more than a month afterwards. Mr. Clinton, Colonel Young, and Mr. Holley, however, were in attendance at Albany, and were not idle in regard to their high trust.

At length, on the 17th of February the commissioners presented their report respecting the Erie Canal, and the report on the Champlain Canal project was presented on the 19th of March following. These reports were replete with valuable information connected with the subject. To quote their own language in the first of these reports, "their investigations had shown the physical facility of this great internal communication, and a little attention to the resources of the state, would demonstrate its financial practicability." The former of these reports was referred to a joint committee consisting of Messrs. Livingston, Tibbitts, and Swift, on the part of the senate; and Messrs. William D. Ford, Pendleton, Child, Eckford, and Wilcoxson, on the part of the assembly. Mr. Ford was chairman of the committee. He was a plain, sensible man, of solid understanding, and though little of a rhetorician, acquired a good share of influence in the house from the confidence reposed in his judgment, and his manifest and unquestioned integrity. He then represented the county of Herkimer; but has since been in congress from the county of Jefferson, where he now resides.

On the 19th of March, a plan of finance, prepared by the commissioners at

amendment was adopted by a vote of 20 to 9. The consideration of the bill was resumed in the senate on the 11th, and after an unsuccessful motion by Major Cochran to reject the whole, the commissioners, on motion of Mr. Ross, were reduced to five in number, and it was thus adopted. The names of the five commissioners retained were, Stephen Van Rensselaer, De Witt Clinton, Samuel Young, Joseph Ellicott, and Myron Holley.

By these amendments, the bill was reduced substantially to the original proposition of Mr. Duer in the other house; and in this shape it went back for concurrence. The assembly at first refused to concur, and the bill was sent back to the senate. But the senate in turn refused to recede. It was the last day of the session—time pressed—and lest the whole project should be swept by the board and lost, by the talents and address of Mr. Lynch and Mr. Jay the house was finally persuaded to recede from its vote of non-concurrence; and thus passed the act of 1816.

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the request of the joint committee, was presented to the legislature. This *projet* is understood to have been chiefly, if not altogether, the work of Mr. Clinton. But in forming the plan subsequently adopted, which was devised with great skill and ability, it is understood that George Tibbitts, Esq. of Rensselaer, then in the senate, was the master spirit. It was to his talents and exertions, probably, more than to those of any other man, that the state is indebted for the substitution, in lieu of sundry financial expedients, of an efficient and durable plan of canal revenue. Mr. Tibbitts' plan, "was to establish a fund to be managed by commissioners, the income of which would raise money sufficient to complete the canals in twelve or fourteen years, with seven millions of dollars, and leave a sinking fund sufficient to redeem the debt to be created, at a period not far distant from their completion." Mr. Tibbitts is a gentleman of sound judgment, and of much practical knowledge upon many subjects. I have known him before, and since, in both branches of the legislature, and have seldom seen a more useful man in either.

During the session of congress corresponding with the period of which I am now writing, which was the last session of Mr. Madison's administration, a bill was introduced into that body, for a just apportionment among the several states, of the dividends arising from the stock owned by the United States in the National Bank, to be applied by the states respectively to the prosecution of works of internal improvement. The amount to be derived by the state of New-York from this source, was estimated at about 90,000 dollars per annum, —no mean item of revenue. And it is probable that the committee were induced to delay their report until that question should be decided. The bill passed both houses of congress, greatly to the satisfaction of the friends of internal improvement at Albany. But most unexpectedly, as one of the last acts of his public life, Mr. Madison put his veto upon it. The indignation felt at Albany on the receipt of this intelligence, was equal to the disappointment. But probably this act of Mr. Madison's, was ultimately productive of good, in respect to the projects then in contemplation. The feelings of the people and of the legislature were aroused, and there was a very general determination that the state of New-York should put forth her own energies, and commence the proposed works, though of national magnitude, on her own

account. Accordingly, on the 19th of March, the joint committee presented an able and elaborate report, recommending the immediate construction of the Erie Canal, from the Mohawk to the Seneca River, and the entire Champlain Canal. Colonel Van Rensselaer was not a member of this legislature, but the object lay so near his heart, that he was much of the time at Albany; and so certain was he of the practicability of the work, and of the vast profits and advantages to result from it, that he sent in a proposition which accompanied the report of the committee, for undertaking the whole Erie Canal himself.

The subject was this year first taken up in committee of the whole of the House of Assembly, on Tuesday the 1st of April, Mr. Duer in the chair. In opening the debate, Mr. Ford, as chairman of the committee, avowed himself in favour of the first bill which the committee had reported; but some of his associates preferred a different mode of raising the revenue, or at least a portion of it, by imposing an annual tax upon the real and personal estates, in the several cities, villages, towns, and counties immediately to be benefitted by the canals. Under the direction of the committee, therefore, he now proposed a new bill, embracing such a provision.

The late Judge Pendleton, of Dutchess county, spoke in favour of the substitute, which was received in committee of the whole by a large majority.—From the general scope and tenor of the judge's remarks, I drew the inference that he was in fact hostile to the entire project, and would oppose the bill throughout. My acquaintance with this gentleman was limited, having been altogether confined to the last half of the session of which I am speaking. I saw enough of him, however, to admire his sterling character, and high and honourable principles. He was a perfect gentleman of the old school, and in the days of chivalry would have been a cavalier of lofty and noble mien. An officer in the war of the revolution, he was attached to the military family of General Greene, in his southern campaigns. In debate he was not eloquent, but he never spoke unless he thought it necessary, and from a sense of duty; and what he communicated was to the purpose; being ever the result of a sound and discriminating judgment. I shall presently have occasion to speak of this gentleman again.

The debate next turned upon a proposition for purchasing the rights secured by their act of incorporation, to the old Western Inland Lock Navigation Company, in which several members were engaged; but before the question was taken, the committee rose and reported progress.

The consideration of the bill was renewed in committee of the whole, on the following day. Mr. Duer opened the debate this morning; and as his remarks not only indicated his present views, but explained very lucidly the course he took, and the motives by which he had been actuated, during the former session, it may not be amiss to preserve in this place a sketch of those remarks made by me at the time.

Mr. Duer said—" That when the important subject now presented for the consideration of the committee was agitated in the house at the last session, he had been decidedly opposed to the bill then reported by a select committee, for engaging the state at once in the execution of the whole work, before we were in possession of a complete survey of the route, or of any previous estimate of the expense; and without providing the means, and creating the funds by which it should eventually be defrayed. Although he had been opposed to that bill, he was by no means unfriendly to the project of the canal; and he had therefore felt it his duty to propose a substitute, which was ultimately adopted by both branches of the legislature, and is the law under which the commissioners are acting. He was against all precipitate and inconsiderate measures, lest they should defeat the final accomplishment of the great object which we had in view. But even at that period, he had been willing to authorise the commissioners, from information then before the house, and from the funds then proposed to be provided, to commence the construction of the northern canal, and of the western canal, between Rome and Seneca River; confining their operations to those sections in the first instance; and he had accordingly voted for the amendments to that effect, which passed the house, but which were afterwards rejected by the senate. From the information since collected by the commissioners, he thought we were fully warranted in proceeding; his impression was, that the section between the Mohawk and the Hudson ought first to be completed; but upon this section the report of the commissioners is defective—their opinion is against it. If this committee, therefore, should agree in that opinion, he should now, as on the former occasion, be willing to submit his wishes to the judgment of the majority, and vote for the commencement of the Lake Champlain Canal, and for the commencement of a canal from Rome westward; provided adequate funds could be devoted and pledged for that purpose, upon fair and equitable principles.

" The bill under consideration was materially defective. It did not contain the necessary

provisions to enable the commissioners to take possession of the lands through which the canals must pass, nor does the bill upon the table empower the commissioners to enter upon other lands adjacent, to procure timber and other materials necessary for constructing the canals. Sir, (said Mr. D.) in order to prosecute the undertaking, it is necessary that the commissioners should have extensive powers. They must have ample power to take possession of any and every description of property necessary for the construction of the contemplated canals. It is nugatory to invest the commissioners with power to contract either with the Western Inland Lock Navigation Company, or with individuals; for you cannot compel them to consent to an agreement, nor even to listen to proposals. The interests of the incorporation, as well as those of other persons, should be subservient to the paramount interests of the state; and a fair compensation, to be ascertained by a person appointed, should be allowed to them for any damages or sacrifices which the public good requires of them. He therefore suggested the propriety of recommitting the bill to a select committee, to be amended upon these principles."

Mr. Barnes, of Oneida, informed his friend from Dutchess, that he was prepared to offer amendments in conformity with the views of that gentleman, when they arrived at the proper stage of the bill.

Wheeler Barnes, Esq. the gentleman whose name is now introduced, had succeeded Mr. Lynch in the legislature, from Oneida. I am thus particular, because the services of Mr. B. were of great importance during the discussions upon this subject. His talents were highly respectable, his industry great, his knowledge of the subject precise, and his personal character in every way estimable. In discussing the details of the bill, he was frequently called to the floor, and on all occasions acquitted himself in a manner that entitled him to the gratitude of his constituents and the friends of the great cause. His exertions in the house, in the committees, and out of the house, were indefatigable; and I have yet in my possession the notes of a very excellent speech—clear, forcible, and argumentative—which he delivered during the day of which I am now speaking, in reply to Mr. Sharpe of New-York—for since the session of the preceding year, one of those political revolutions which sometimes sweep suddenly over our city, had again occurred, and the new delegation was as strongly opposed to the canal project, as their predecessors had been in its favour.

On this day also, Mr. Emott, (now Judge Emott,) who had succeeded Mr. Oakley, from Dutchess, came out very decidedly, not only against the present bill, but in hostility to any project for embarking in the enterprise at that period, or for a long time to come. The high character and attainments of Mr. Emott, united with talents of the first order, and industry the most untiring, rendered him a formidable antagonist. But the chairman of the committee bore himself manfully, and was ably sustained, as I have already said, by Mr. Barnes, and also by a very eloquent and beautiful speech from John I. Ostrander, Esq.—then a representative of the city of Albany.

The debate was resumed on the 7th ;—the question on which the discussion turned, being a motion to strike out the section imposing the local tax upon real and personal estates in the chief towns, villages, cities, counties, &c. as before mentioned. William B. Rochester, Esq., then a young member from the west, first took the floor in opposition to the motion, but in favour of the bill upon its merits in the broad sense of the term. The late Dr. Sargeant, of Washington county, who had long been an influential member of the house with a certain class of politicians, replied to Mr. Rochester, to whom the latter rejoined. These were the virgin parliamentary efforts of Mr. R. ; they were able and eloquent, and afforded promise of talents, which, as they ripened into greater maturity, have successively pointed him out for a seat in congress ; for the bench of the circuit court ; and subsequently to fill two diplomatic situations.

After Mr. Rochester had concluded, Mr. Emott again took the floor in a more formidable and determined manner than during the former debate. He came armed with appalling tables of figures and estimates, and all perceived that before he had concluded he had made an impression unfavourable to the project. Not that he avowed himself decidedly the enemy of the measure ; on the contrary, he now declared that he was in favour of the canal, but utterly opposed to all visionary projects, and most especially to the bill under discussion.

The prospect began now for a moment to darken ; and serious doubts were again entertained as to the fate of this bill, or any other upon the subject, during that session. On the following day, however, which was the 8th, after

having examined the surveys and calculations of Benjamin Wright, Esq. the principal engineer, Judge Pendleton came out decidedly in favour of the canal system, and delivered a speech of which I reported the following sketch at the time:

" Mr. Pendleton said—The gentleman from Albany, (Mr. Ostrander) had done injustice to his honourable colleague from Dutchess (Mr. Emott) on a former day, in supposing that gentleman had introduced the clause now proposed to be stricken out, and who, he said, had thrown it as an apple of discord among the friends of the Great Canal. Whatever there was of merit or demerit in the measure, Mr. E. had nothing to do with its introduction. Mr. P. said, he had himself proposed in the committee which reported the bill, the propriety of raising a part of the funds necessary for that work, by a tax on the lands and property of the cities, towns, and counties which would derive by the canals, if they could be accomplished, great, and almost incalculable advantages. He then stated, and insisted it was fair in its principle, and perfectly just. With such a tax he was willing to begin the work, but if the whole funds were to be raised by the state, he should feel it to be his duty to vote against the whole bill. Gentlemen, he said, had treated this measure of a local tax as one intended, by those who maintained it, to defeat all the plans that might be proposed for making the canals; yet it was a little extraordinary that a gentleman who is warmly in favour of the bill, and who made the motion to reject this clause, (Mr. Sargeant,) coincided with those who were understood to be avowedly hostile to it, under any modification, and who had seconded that gentleman's motion. Mr. P. said, it was a principle of equity, that those who were to receive the benefits of the measure, should bear some additional part of the expenses. The committee reported that the counties west of the Oneida, inclusive, had paid annually one million of dollars for the transportation of merchandise and supplies of all kinds from Albany for their clothes, farms, manufactures, &c. and that the average freight to Buffalo, the most distant point, was one hundred dollars per ton—that the price of freight from Montreal to the same point, was about sixty dollars. Suppose sixty dollars to be the average price, it followed that they required upwards of 66,000 tons to supply their wants. If a safe and easy navigation can be effected by means of canals and locks, which he believed to be practicable, at a comparatively small expense, the price of freights at three cents per ton per mile, which was the lowest sum spoken of, would, on an average, enable them to obtain those supplies at ten dollars and a half per ton on the whole route, making a gain of forty-nine dollars and a half, a saving of more than 700,000 dollars per annum on this single charge upon their industry. In relation to the transportation of their produce to market, it was stated that it might be carried to Montreal at thirty dollars. The quantity of tonnage, however, was much greater, as the articles were more bulky, and this item would make the saving in transportation alone one million of

dollars per annum in those countries. It would also open a market for their extensive beds of plaster of Paris, as a manure, which would be turning their very stones into gold.

"Villages and towns would spring up along the canal in an almost continued succession, and it was universally admitted that for a considerable distance on each side of the canal, the value of lands would be increased at least two hundred per cent. and that it would produce a great and general rise in the value of lands through that whole country. Another advantage, by no means inconsiderable, was, that the 500,000 dollars per annum, which it was contemplated to expend in the work, would be expended among those who were to pay this tax—it would increase the value of their flour, pork, vegetables, &c. It would afford them also employment. It was fair to say, the increased price of their market for these articles, which would be paid for in cash, would be sufficient to pay the whole tax. Would it be fair and just to tax the other parts of the state to make these canals, which were no otherwise benefitted by them, if they should ever be made, than by the effect they might have on the general wealth and prosperity of the country? He contended it would be the height of injustice; and he was surprised gentlemen showed so little magnanimity as to be urgent for this great work, and at the same time insist on being exempted from the expense. The midland counties on the North River had a convenient navigation, but they had paid for it. Our farms cost us sixty dollars an acre, because they lie near that great natural canal. Am I to be taxed, and my money expended in an enterprise, which will be of no value to me, to raise the value of your lands, that cost you perhaps five or ten dollars an acre, to fifty or sixty? Can this be just? Will any just man desire it?

"Mr. Pendleton proceeded. He said the contemplated canals, if they succeeded to the utmost that their friends expected, would be of no direct benefit to a great part of the state. And the taxes for them would fall principally on those who were in that situation. We, said he, in Dutchess county, pay sixty dollars per acre for our lands, so that two hundred acres would be estimated at 12,000 dollars. Whereas the inhabitants on those canals would pay for two hundred acres not more than 3,000 dollars, so that we should pay four times as much as they. The result would raise the value of their farms up perhaps to 9,000 dollars, giving a clear profit to them on the expenditure of our money of three hundred per cent. It had been said that we should be supplied with plaster of Paris, a valuable manure much used by us. Mr. P. doubted whether it could be delivered at Albany on the canals, if completed, cheaper than at New-York from Nova Scotia. He said he understood that the quantity of plaster imported into New-York, was perhaps 75,000 tons per annum, for which was paid about 350,000 dollars; this would be a saving of so much to the country, if it could be supplied from the west; but the midland and southern counties would derive no benefit from it locally. They would have to pay probably the same price for it on their farms in both instances. He had stated the immense local advantages to be derived from these canals if completed. He reminded the gentlemen that he had as-

sumed that they could be made and completed, as they themselves insisted, and if so, the result was inevitable. They could not oppose this without at the same time opposing the whole scheme as an impracticable, visionary project. Then what was the tax? Seventy-five cents on one thousand dollars value. It would probably be on 2,000,000 acres, and would not be more than two and a half cents per acre per annum. The amount for New-York would be 41,000 dollars. This was not a large sum; and from what we have heard from well informed men of that city, a large portion of the people of property were in favour of it, and thought that contribution a moderate one. If those canals were made, it would have an almost incalculable effect on the commerce of that city. What, he asked, had caused its unexampled increase of wealth and population? It was owing to its central position—its great rivers—its open port. This made it the depot of supplies, and for the shipment of the produce of three or four states. Suppose these canals completed, and it would be the emporium not only of our own products, but for the northern part of the western states and territories, and this would increase with the increase of their population, which had been rapid beyond conception. It appeared by documents on the table, that the money paid at Fort Pitt for transportation for goods delivered there from Philadelphia, and carried by wagons, was more than one hundred thousand dollars per month, perhaps eight months in the year. It was ascertained that goods could be delivered there, if the western canal was complete, for one-third the cost of that land carriage. Gentlemen had strongly urged that the enterprise was a national one, and ought to be made solely at the expense of the state. He had already shown the injustice of that principle in its operation on those parts of the state by which no benefit could be derived; but gentlemen had exclaimed against a local tax, as though the whole funds were raised in that mode. The whole amount proposed to be expended annually was 534,000 dollars. The whole amount of the local taxes was proposed to be 96,000 dollars per annum only. If the gentlemen were so desirous of having the canal for their benefit, either they doubted the practicability, and wished the experiment to be made at the expense of the state, or they were so palpably unjust as to wish to improve their estates at the people's expense. Mr. P. said the proposition was so partial, so selfish, so grossly inequitable, that he was surprised any honourable man would support it. He was glad to see many gentlemen from the western country had acted otherwise, thinking it just that they should bear some part of the expense. Another national advantage had been alluded to, arising from the commercial competition between Montreal and Albany, for the trade of the western country. At present, Montreal must be the depot, and the St. Lawrence the channel through which the exports of their and our territories near the lakes must find a foreign market; but it was clear if the canal could be made complete, so as to afford an easy and certain passage for boats of from thirty to fifty tons, eight months in the year, paying three cents per ton per mile, the consequences would be directly the reverse. We should get not only all our own productions from the great lakes and their streams to a

foreign market, through Albany and New-York, but theirs also. As it now is, our merchants go to Montreal and form their connexions in trade. This creates a kind of dependence on that country, which might be very injurious in the event of war. Mr. P. concluded by saying he would have no objection to devote some part of the funds of the state to this enterprise, which he believed might be accomplished for seven or eight millions of dollars at most, but he would not think it just or proper to do so wholly at the expense of the state. To obviate, however, some of the objections, he would propose that all moneys advanced for this enterprise by the state, and by individuals, should be repaid out of the profits of the canals after they were completed; and he read two clauses as part of his speech, which he said he should propose, if the principle of local taxation prevailed. If it did not, he should vote against the bill.

Mr. Sargeant replied to Judge Pendleton, as also did Mr. Romaine, of New-York, in a forcible and impressive speech. After which, and a brief rejoinder from Judge Pendleton, the question was taken on the motion to strike out the clause for local assessments, and the same was carried in the affirmative by the close vote of 52 to 51.

In discussing and adjusting various details of the bill during the remainder of the day, Mr. Duer was often upon the floor; and his opinions tended greatly to produce an unobjectionable arrangement of its provisions, and a favourable vote subsequently on the final question. Before the rising of the committee, however, Mr. Duer moved to add, in lieu of the objectionable scheme for local and partial taxation, which had been stricken out, a section equivalent to that of the former session proposed by Mr. Oakley, imposing a tax on lands within twenty-five miles on each side of the canals.

This was the important question to be met at the threshold, on the opening of the debate the following day, (the 9th). It was very evident from the late vote upon the question, involving essentially the same principle, but in a somewhat different shape, that there would be a very strong opposition to any system of local taxation whatever. And it was equally evident, that without some such provision, the bill must fail. The debate was recommenced by Mr. Duer on the morning of the 9th in his ablest manner. His language was at once persuasive and powerful. His close observation, and his deep thought upon the proud results evidently to grow out of this momentous ques-

tion, revealed to his enlightened understanding the immense utility of the work in contemplation, and the honourable fame to be awarded, by unborn ages, to those who might now or hereafter step forth as its honest, fearless, and successful advocates. He did not hesitate. He avowed his determined purpose in the course of the debates, to sustain the cause and persevere to the end. His reasons for the proposed amendment were plainly and perspicuously assigned, and they were not without their effect upon his hearers.

At this critical point of the struggle, Elisha Williams, of Columbia, who had not hitherto manifested any particular friendship for the project, having been rather reserved, stepped forward in its favour; and events soon proved "the might that slumbered in his arm." The extraordinary powers of this gentleman, as well before a court and jury, as in our legislative halls, is proverbial. No matter what subject comes up, he is always ready to grapple with and master it. Nor is he more remarkable for the readiness and strength of his powers, than for their versatility. For deep and thrilling pathos when required; for sublimity of thought and richness of language, when demanded by his theme; and for logical and grave debate, he is equally as distinguished as for the lighter sallies of his playful and sparkling fancy, the quickness of his wit, and the pungency and severity of his satire. And woe to the hapless wight who, incurring his displeasure by unprovoked attack, subjects himself to the arrows which fly from his ample quiver, or draws forth that scorching torrent of invective, which sometimes flows like a stream of burning lava from his lips! His appearance in debate is commanding; his presence at all times easy and dignified; his countenance almost invariably cheerful, and beaming with good nature; and his mild blue eye, when lighted up with unwonted lustre in pleading a momentous cause, or debating an important question, beams and sparkles with intellectual fire. Altogether he is one of the most eloquent, popular, and commanding public speakers in our country; and although his language has not always the classical polish of Canning, yet those who have had the opportunity of comparing the manner of both, decidedly award the palm to Williams. He would at any time have shone pre-eminently in the federal legislative halls, had he complied with the wishes of those who were anxious to be represented by him in the national councils. His fame, if more limited

on account of being confined to a narrower sphere of action, is, however, within that sphere more enviable and exalted.

In the course of the debate in which he now engaged, Mr. W. had occasion for all his powers, and he wielded them with a giant's might; contesting the ground inch by inch, and defending the bill section by section. But it was in one grand speech, that in the most masterly manner he sustained the motion of Mr. Duer, and argued the question of the canal policy, upon the broad ground of its merits. From this time until the battle was fought, and the victory won, he was at his post, and often upon the floor; now gravely answering the objections of the leading opponents of the measure; now nerving the arms, even of the strong, and now dispelling the apprehensions of the timid, and confirming the vacillating and doubtful; now tearing the mask from those pretended friends of the project, who were secretly aiming at the destruction of the bill, and now extinguishing in a breath, by some happy stroke of raillery, the petty objections thickly interspersed by those legislators, who have neither the mind to conceive, nor the judgment to appreciate, any extensive projects of public improvement. He laboured hard to harmonise and soften jealousies and conflicting interests. He, as well as several gentlemen who opposed the bill, represented a county bordering on the Hudson River—a county that might possibly be opposed for the present to so great an undertaking. But he relied on the patriotism and the magnanimity of his constituents; and he was not mistaken. He appealed to the members from New-York, who were almost to a man hostile to the project. He conjured them in the most animated and persuasive manner, not to forget that this was in fact an attempt of the people of the state to supply their favourite city, at the cheapest rate, with every production of the soil in abundance. The glowing picture which he drew of the future greatness and splendour of New-York, when the great channels of inland navigation then under consideration should be completed, is yet floating in my mind, like the fragments of a bright and glorious vision. "If," said he, turning to a leading member of the New-York delegation, "if the canal is to be a shower of gold, it will fall upon New-York; if a river of gold, it will flow into her lap." How true have we already found this prediction! But, strong as was his belief, and sanguine as was his tem-

perament, his anticipations, though then considered extravagant, have fallen far short of the reality, both on the score of revenue derived from these canals, and as regards the incalculable benefits they have conferred upon the state and country at large.

Mr. Duer's motion to amend was adopted soon after Mr. Williams sat down, by a vote 61 to 45. Mr. Sergeant then moved to reject the whole bill, which motion, after a brief discussion, was lost, 70 to 30. The battle was now won; and the residue of the time occupied upon the bill in the house of assembly, was in a running debate upon its minor details. The question on its final passage, in committee of the whole, was taken on the 10th of April. The votes stood, ayes 64, noes 36. On the next day it was read the third time, passed, and sent to the senate for concurrence, where, on motion of Mr. Tibbitts, it was made the special order for the following day.

Accordingly, on the 12th of April, the subject was taken up in the senate; but after a long debate, the committee rose and reported progress before any question was taken. On Monday the 14th, the discussion was resumed, when Mr. Elmendorf, of Ulster, and Mr. Peter R. Livingston, of Dutchess, successively spoke at length in opposition. Mr. Tibbitts made a very sound and judicious speech in reply, and was followed by Mr. Van Buren, late Governor of New-York, and now Secretary of State, also in favour of the bill. This was Mr. Van Buren's great speech of the session, and it was indeed a masterly effort. I took notes of the whole debate at the time, but being then young in the business of reporting, and this being the first time I had ever attempted to follow Mr. Van Buren, whose utterance is too rapid for an unpractised pen, and whose manner was on that occasion too interesting to allow a reporter to keep his eyes upon his paper, my effort was little more than a failure. At your request, however, a transcript of the loose notes which were preserved, is here inserted.

"Mr. Van Buren said he must trespass upon the committee, while he stated the general considerations which induced him to give his vote for the bill. It was a subject which had been so fully discussed, and upon which so much had been said, that he should deem it arrogance to enlarge. The calculations which had been made with respect to the probable expense of the canal, and the ways and means for raising funds, were fit subjects for consi-

deration. But to do this he deemed himself incompetent. He must place great confidence upon the reports of the commissioners upon these points. Mr. V. B. here took a brief review of the measures adopted at the last session of the legislature, in relation to the canal, when a bill similar to the one now before the senate, was under consideration, and stated the reasons why he voted against the bill at that time. We then had no calculations made by the commissioners so minute as at present. Under these considerations, he conceived it his duty at the last session, to move the rejection of the whole bill relating to the commencement of the canal. It was done, and he had the satisfaction to find that most gentlemen have since united with him in his opinion. Now the scene is entirely changed. We at that time passed a law appointing new commissioners, and applying 20,000 dollars to enable them to obtain all the information possible. We now have the information, and we have arrived at the point, when, if this bill do not pass, the project must for many years be abandoned. His convictions were, that it is for the honour and interest of the state to commence the work at once; we are pledged by former measures to do it. Mr. Van Buren here viewed the proceedings of former legislatures upon the subject, during the years 1810, 11, 12, and 14, when, in consequence of the war, the law appropriating five millions for the canal, was repealed. He proceeded:—Since that period, new commissioners have been appointed, and new authority given, to examine the route for the canal, and report at the present session of the legislature. A law authorising the commencement of the work has passed the popular branch of the legislature, and unless we have the clearest convictions that the project is impracticable, or the resources of our state insufficient, you must not recede from the measures already taken. Are we satisfied upon these two points? We have had able, competent commissioners to report, and they have laid a full statement before us; we are bound to receive these reports as correct evidence upon this subject. In no part of the business have we looked to individual states, or to the United States for assistance, other than accidental or auxiliary. Mr. Van Buren here made some calculations relative to the funds. Lay out of view, said he, all the accidental resources, and the revenue from the canal, and in completing the work you will only entail upon the state a debt, the interest of which will amount to but about 300,000 dollars. He then stated the amount of real estate within the state now, and what it probably would be, if the canal were completed. The tax would not amount to more than one mill on the dollar, unless the report of commissioners is a tissue of fraud or misrepresentation, this tax will be sufficient, and more than sufficient, to complete the canal. We are now to say that all our former proceedings have been insincere, or we must go on with the work. The people in the districts where we are first to make the canal, are willing and able to be subjected to the expense of those sections. Mr. Van Buren contended that the duties upon salt, and the auction duties, were a certain source of revenue, and that these two sources of revenue would be abundant, and more than abundant, for ever to discharge the interest of the debt to be created. Ought we, under such circum-

stances, to reject this bill? No, sir; for one I am willing to go to the length contemplated by the bill. The canal is to promote the interest and character of the state in a thousand ways. But we are told that the people cannot bear the burden. Sir, I assume it as a fact, that the people have already consented to it. For six years we have been engaged upon this business. During this time our tables have groaned with the petitions of the people from every section of our country in favour of it. And not a solitary voice has been raised against it. Mr. V. B. said he had seen with regret the divisions that have heretofore existed upon this subject, apparently arising from hostility to the commissioners. Last year the same bill, in effect, passed the assembly, the immediate representatives of the people; and this year it has passed again. This was conclusive evidence that the people have assented to it. Little can be done by the commissioners, other than to make a loan, before another session. The money cannot be lost—there can be no loss at six per cent. We have now all the information we can wish—we must make up our minds either to be expending large sums in legislation year after year, or we must go on with the project. After so much has been done and said upon this subject, it would be discreditable to the state to abandon it.

"He considered it the most important vote he ever gave in his life—but the project, if executed, would raise the state to the highest possible pitch of fame and grandeur. He repeated that we were bound to consider that the people have given their assent. Twelve thousand men of wealth and respectability in the city of New-York, last year petitioned for the canal; and at all events, before the operations would be commenced, the people, if opposed to the measure, would have ample time to express their will upon the subject."

When Mr. Van Buren resumed his seat, Mr. Clinton, who had been an attentive listener in the senate chamber, breaking through that reserve which political collisions had created, approached him and expressed his thanks for his exertions in the most flattering terms.

Mr. Van Buren is a very eloquent speaker; but the character of his eloquence is *sui generis*. We know of none of the mighty masters of the persuasive art, whom he has adopted for his model; and yet his manner is graceful, and animated when occasion requires, or impassioned when engaged upon an inspiring theme. He has a happy command of language, but his utterance is too rapid. His figure is small, and there is nothing peculiar in his person, excepting the fine formation of his head, which would afford an admirable subject for a craniologist. With manners affable and insinuating, he inspires his friends with the strongest attachment known to political ties; and though self-educated, his professional knowledge is such as to have placed him in the

front rank at the bar, while his successful career in politics bears ample testimony to talents of an elevated order, and a tact in the management of men, and in the control of parties, without a living parallel.

Messrs. Livingston, Elmendorf, and Ogden, of Delaware, severally spoke in reply; but when the main question on the enacting clause was taken, it was carried in the affirmative, 21 to 8. In the course of this day's sitting, a very important motion was made by Mr. Van Buren, with success. The bill, as it passed the assembly, authorised the loans to be made on the canal fund only; and that was the best form in which it could in the first instance, be passed in that body. The vital importance of extending the security, was at that time fully appreciated by the friends of the canal, and has been amply confirmed by experience. This amendment was adopted by a vote of 16 to 11. Several other amendments were made to the bill by the senate, but there was none of sufficient importance to require a specification here. Some of these amendments were concurred in by the assembly, among which was the important one mentioned above; and from others the senate receded. The result was, that the bill was successfully carried through both houses in the course of the evening session of the same day, and sent to the Council of Revision. It became a law on the following day, viz. the 15th of April. Under this act, the first meeting of the commissioners to receive proposals, and make contracts preparatory to the actual commencement of the work, was held at Utica, on the 3d of June, 1817.

Colonel Young and Mr. Holley, remained to take charge of the commencement of the work upon the middle section, which it was wisely resolved should be first completed. There was foresight in this determination; for it was a period of increasing political excitement, and a portion of the public press had already become the bitter assailants of the president of the board, and were endeavouring to render the work itself unpopular, by attributing sinister views to the great man who it was obvious would share in large measure the glory of success, or, on the other hand, be inevitably crushed by the odium attendant upon defeat. Hence, therefore, it was very possible that the great work might even yet be arrested by the madness of party. But by constructing the middle section first, the whole country upon the eastern and western sections,

anxious to enjoy the like advantages, would compel the legislature to make such liberal appropriations as would be adequate to a vigorous prosecution of the work upon both these extensive sections at the same time, and thus secure a more speedy completion of the whole enterprise.

It was determined to break ground in the vicinity of Rome; and an arrangement was made by the people of that village, with Colonel Young and Mr. Holley, to unite with our joyous national festival, the ceremonies of commencing the excavation of the Great Canal. Accordingly, on the 4th of July, at sunrise, a large number of citizens, accompanied by the acting commissioners and the engineers, proceeded to the place appointed. The Hon. Joshua Hathaway, one of the pioneers of the west, made a few pertinent observations on behalf of the citizens, and at the conclusion delivered the spade into the hands of the commissioners, by whom it was presented to Judge Richardson, the first contractor engaged in the work. The following neat and pertinent address was delivered by Colonel Young on this occasion:

"Fellow-citizens:—We have assembled to commence the excavation of the Erie Canal. The work when accomplished will connect our western inland seas with the Atlantic ocean. It will diffuse the benefits of internal navigation over a surface of vast extent, blessed with a salubrious climate and luxuriant soil, embracing a tract of country capable of sustaining more human beings than were ever accommodated by any work of the kind.

"By this great highway, unborn millions will easily transport their surplus productions to the shores of the Atlantic, procure their supplies, and hold a useful and profitable intercourse with all the maritime nations of the earth.

"The expense and labour of this great undertaking, bears no proportion to its utility. Nature has kindly afforded every facility; we have all the moral and physical means within our reach and control. Let us then proceed to the work, animated by the prospect of its speedy accomplishment, and cheered with the anticipated benedictions of a grateful posterity."

Judge Richardson then thrust the first spade into the earth, and the example was followed by the assembled citizens, and his own labourers, each emulous of the other, and all ambitious of the honour of participating in the labours of this interesting and joyful occasion. "Thus, accompanied by the acclamations of the citizens, and the discharge of cannon, was struck the first stroke

towards the construction of a work, which in its completion has united Erie with the Hudson; the west with the Atlantic; which has scattered plenty along its borders; carried refinement and civilization to the regions of the wilderness; and which will ever remain a proud and useful monument of the enlightened views of its projectors, and of the wisdom and magnanimity of the state of New-York."

The next important period in the legislative history of the canals, was the session of 1819. The work on the middle section had been prosecuted with such vigour and success, that the canal commissioners felt justified in recommending the necessary appropriations for completing the whole. A bill for this purpose passed the assembly. But it met with much opposition in the senate, and several attempts were made to defeat it, by motions to strike out, first, that part which authorised the construction of the western section; and, secondly, that which in like manner authorised the construction of the eastern section, from Utica to the Hudson River. I believe it may be truly said of Mr. Van Buren and Colonel Young, that it was to their unwearied exertions, mainly, that the attempts made at this time to cripple the bill, were defeated. At this session of the legislature, Henry Seymour, Esq., was appointed to the board of commissioners, in the place of Mr. Ellicott, resigned. [Subsequently, in 1821, William C. Bouck, Esq. was added to the board.]

The next grand landmark in the bright career of New-York in the work of internal improvement, was the celebration of the completion of the middle section, which event was commemorated on the 4th of July, 1820; exactly three years from the day of its commencement. This section extended from Utica to Montezuma, on the Seneca River, a distance, I believe, of ninety-six miles. In conformity with previous arrangements, the people from Ontario, Genesee, Cayuga, Onondaga, Madison, and Oneida counties, assembled on the morning of that day, in the basin formed by the junction of the Salina, with the line of the Great Canal at Syracuse. The people, many of them, came in boats from either direction, on the canal. Seventy-three boats, of different sizes, filled with people bearing different standards, and many of them gaily and tastefully ornamented, were present. On board of one of

these, the "Oneida Chief," were, his excellency Governor Clinton, Thomas J. Oakley, Esq. then attorney general, John C. Spencer, Esq. then speaker of the house of assembly, Myron Holley, Esq. one of the commissioners, together with the late Col. Charles G. Haines, and Pierre C. Van Wyck, Esq. of this city, with other distinguished gentlemen from New-York, Albany, Utica, and elsewhere. An appropriate address was delivered to an audience of many thousands, by Samuel Miles Hopkins, Esq., then of Genesee county, now of Albany. His speech was every way a national one, embracing the great topics connected with the perpetuity of our republican government, and beautifully proportioned civil institutions, and the prosperity of the American empire. Every heart beat warm with national enthusiasm, and the rising glory of the state of New-York, filled and elevated every mind capable of reflecting on the tendency of the scene, or the new and splendid era opening upon her destinies. After the address, the boats moved in procession down the lateral canal to the basin at Salina, where the day was concluded by the usual festivities incident to great and joyous public occasions. Such a spectacle, in point of novelty and grandeur, had at that time never been witnessed in the interior; and there was a corresponding degree of interest manifested by the people to behold it.

The next period which stands prominently forth in our canal history, and which the scope of your request renders it proper for me to notice, is the completion of the Champlain Canal, and of the eastern section of the Great Erie Canal, together with the ceremonies which marked the descent of the first boat into the Hudson. This important event was celebrated at Albany on Wednesday the 8th of October, 1823. Extensive preparations were made by the corporation and citizens of Albany, together with the military, and the several literary, benevolent, and other societies of the capital, to honour the day with suitable demonstrations of satisfaction and joy. Invitations having been extended to New-York to participate in the proposed festivities, a public meeting was held at the old Tontine Coffee-house, and a large committee of our citizens deputed to represent the great commercial mart of the state at the political capital. The deputation from this city amounting to about fifty gentlemen, took passage, a part in the Chancellor Livingston steam-boat, and

a part in the Richmond, both of which were handsomely decorated with flags and streamers for the occasion. At West Point they were joined by Major Worth, with several officers, and the elegant military band at that post. The day was ushered in at Albany by the ringing of bells and firing of cannon, and at an early hour the people, in countless hundreds, were in motion. The commissioners were descending the canal, after the completion of these portions of their labours; and at sunrise a superb packet-boat, called the "De Witt Clinton," proceeded with a committee, to meet them at the junction of the canals, near the Cahoos, and escort them to the city. At the proper hour, an immense military and civic procession was formed, which marched to the canal near the lock through which it takes its last leap into the bosom of the Hudson. The concourse of people was very great. The windows, and tops of the houses, were filled; the fields covered; and the banks of the canal lined with people for a distance of several miles. At 12 o'clock the aquatic procession, consisting of a long line of boats, handsomely decorated for the occasion, preceded by the "De Witt Clinton," having on board, the great man whose name she bore, together with the commissioners and committee, arrived, and gracefully entered the last lock, beneath a triumphal arch. The ceremony of laying the cope-stone was performed by Ezra Ames, Esq. High Priest of the Grand Royal Arch Chapter. The boat was then allowed to descend into the Hudson amidst deafening peals of applause by the multitude, and the still louder roar of artillery. But as you were among the invited guests on that occasion, and standing at the side of your friend, the lamented Clinton, at the proud moment when the vessel met the embrace of the river, I think it not unlikely that the picture yet in your memory will render my sketch comparatively dry and uninteresting. A short address, calculated for this part of the celebration, was here delivered by Dr. Mitchill. After sweeping gaily down the river for some distance, the boats returned to the dock, and the commissioners, joining with the procession, repaired to the capitol, in front of which a spacious pavilion had been erected for the reception of the several committees and distinguished guests. The ceremonies and proceedings were here opened by the late Rev. Dr. Chester, of whom it may most truly be said, "none knew him but to love—none named him but to praise," who addressed

the throne of grace in a fervent prayer, characterized by the enthusiasm of gratitude, piety, and patriotism. A congratulatory address was then delivered to the canal commissioners in behalf of the corporation, by Charles E. Dudley, Esq. then mayor of that city, now in the Senate of the United States.—The late William Bayard, Esq. chairman of the New-York committee, thereupon rose and tendered the congratulations of the citizens of New-York to those of Albany, through their committee. His address was brief, but neat and pertinent; and was replied to in an excellent speech by William James, Esq. of the Albanian committee. I wish you had room to preserve all these addresses; but I fear it would swell your volume to an unreasonable size, should you incorporate therein all the documents of this kind which are really worthy of preservation. The exercises at the pavilion were closed by a benediction; a *feu de joie* was fired by the troops on duty; and the day was concluded by a sumptuous banquet, and a display of fire-works in the evening.

Thus closed the second proud festival of New-York connected with the march of internal improvement. But a greater, prouder, happier scene was then at hand—a day of which it may fearlessly be said, there is none like it in our history, nor can there probably be another. I need not stop to inform you that I now allude to the day on which was commemorated the completion of the same grand design, then so near its consummation. The work was finished on the 26th of October, 1825—eight years and four months from the time of its commencement. Extensive preparations were made for the celebration of this auspicious event, not only in New-York and Albany, but along the whole line of the canal from the Hudson to Lake Erie. It had been arranged that a procession of boats should start from Lake Erie for New-York, immediately as the last blow should be struck. On board of one of these boats Governor Clinton and Lieutenant-Governor Tallmadge, with the canal commissioners, and other distinguished gentlemen took passage; and the other boats were occupied by committees of gentlemen from the different villages along the route, participating in the festivities which everywhere marked the progress of the novel flotilla. To guard against mistake, or disappointment in Albany and this city, in case the work should not be completed within the time

designated, pieces of ordnance were planted at suitable points along the whole intermediate distance, so that a signal gun could be fired at the moment the boats should move from the lake into the canal; which signal being repeated from gun to gun, was to serve the double purpose of a grand salute, and a medium of intelligence. The plan was accurately and effectively executed. In one hour and thirty minutes from the firing of the first gun, at Buffalo, its echo was heard in this city; and in about the same period of time, by the same process, the people of Buffalo were apprised of the fact of our having received the grateful intelligence—a distance, both ways, of nearly eleven hundred miles. Throughout the whole extent, from Erie to the ocean, it was a voyage of triumph. Every village had prepared its festival, each vieing with the others to excel; and for the whole week, the commissioners only left one scene of rejoicing to mingle in another.

The procession reached Albany on the morning of Wednesday the 2d of November, and arrived at this city on the morning of the 7th. I have elsewhere had the honour of writing a detailed account of the festivities observed during this memorable celebration, from the commencement at Buffalo to that scene of enchantment with which they were concluded in this city; to which I beg leave to refer those who are are desirous of further particulars.*

Suffice it, therefore, to say, in conclusion, that the celebration at Albany was upon a far larger and more brilliant scale than had ever been witnessed in that venerable capital before. The descent of the Hudson presented a glorious spectacle along the whole river—the canal-boats being accompanied by a fleet of steam-boats, all gorgeously decorated with flags and streamers of every variety. The banks were lined with people, whose loud huzzas, mingling with the roar of artillery at every village, proclaimed the joy with which all were animated by the event, and by the beautiful and cheering pageant passing before their eyes like a delightful vision. Of the celebration in this city, I need only say, that we shall "never look upon its like again." It was

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* Vide the quarto volume published soon afterwards by the Corporation, containing Colden's Memoir, and many other documents connected with this celebration.—Appendix, pp. 288—331 inclusive.

a tranquil, beautiful day, and a thousand circumstances, both upon land and water, conspired to increase the interest and magnificence of the scene.—Never before was there presented to the eye of man so rich and splendid an exhibition, upon the water, as was displayed on that day in the harbour of New-York. And never, in this country, was there so brilliant a procession upon land, or such universal demonstrations of proud and heartfelt joy among the people. And the prominent figure in this scene of public exultation, was a man whose name will be preserved from the stroke of time, by the benedictions of remotest posterity;—one of those men whom one age is insufficient to appreciate;—whose thoughts and purposes run through many ages;—and whose minds are never fairly developed till their conceptions have been embodied in plans and measures, which continue blessing a nation from generation to generation. That man—need I add his name?—was De Witt Clinton.

I have the honour to remain, sir,
Your most obedient servant,
WILLIAM L. STONE.

Dr. David Hosack.

As the following letter, written at my request, by Mr. Lynch, contains many details connected with the subject of the preceding communication, it is entitled to a place in this work.

Letter from the Hon. James Lynch to David Hosack, M.D.

New-York, October 1, 1828.

Dear Sir,

It affords me pleasure to have it in my power to comply with your request that I should furnish you a statement of the proceedings in the legislature of this state, of which I was a member in the session of 1816, on the bill relating to the Erie and Champlain canals.

The numerous petitions from the whole extent of country through which the canals pass, as well as from the cities of New-York and Troy, praying that efficient measures might be adopted for the commencement of that great work, were referred to a joint committee of both houses, which was convened without delay. The first step taken was to invite a conference with the canal commissioners appointed by the act of 1811, and to request them to lay before the committee the surveys which had been made under their direction, with such information as they were in possession of on the subject; one only of those commissioners attended, and made some verbal communications of little importance, and presented some maps of a survey on the north side of the Mohawk River. He stated that the principal maps and papers necessary for a satisfactory examination of the subject were not in his hands, but were probably in the possession of another of the commissioners at New-York, and that he would procure them for the committee. After a delay of three weeks, that gentleman informed the committee that these maps and papers could not be found. A reference was then made to the engineers who had made those surveys and estimates, who very promptly furnished the same to the committee, which satisfied them not only of the practicability of the undertaking, but that the resources of the state were adequate to the purpose. On the 21st of March the committee presented a report recommending the immediate commencement of the work, accompanied by a bill containing provisions to that effect.

A determined spirit of opposition, headed by a gentleman of distinguished talents, was soon evinced by the members from those parts of the state which considered that they were not directly to be benefited by the measure; and under pretence of making the bill more acceptable, ingenious attempts were made to alter the bill, so as to dissatisfy some of its friends, and detach them from its support; this plan for one day succeeded, and the friends of the bill had almost determined to abandon it for the session. I had been absent for a few days, and on my return found the bill in this critical situation. I immediately called on Mr. Jay, and a few other members, and urged them to join me in a vigorous effort to rally the friends of the bill, and pass it as it was reported without any material alteration. In this we succeeded, except that we sub-

mitted to the addition of a clause, taxing lands adjacent to the canal, if it should be found necessary, and the bill was passed in the Assembly by a very large majority.

The most confident expectation was then entertained that the bill would pass, as it was known that there was a decided majority of the Senate whose sentiments had been expressed in its favour.

When the bill was under consideration in the Senate, an amendment, similar to one which had been proposed in the house by an opponent of the bill, was moved, which had for its object to defer the commencement of the work, and was most unexpectedly carried, many members who had uniformly and openly advocated the canal cause, voting for the amendment; and among them, if I mistake not, one senator who was in the committee, and agreed to the bill as reported. These gentlemen gave a silent vote on the occasion, but it was well understood that they were induced to this course by political considerations, not dictated by any regard to the interests of the public; it is, however, entirely unnecessary and unconnected with the object of this communication to enter into any examination of that matter, nor would I have referred to it now, were it not to show, that a few individuals by consulting their private views instead of the public good, put in jeopardy one of the most useful public works which has ever been accomplished; and, but for a concurrence of fortuitous circumstances, the commencement of the work might have been delayed for many years in consequence of their votes on that occasion.

On the return of the bill to the Assembly, there was a difference of opinion among its friends as to the policy of concurring in the amendments of the Senate, some being of opinion that it would be better to do nothing, than to pass a bill which merely provided for a further examination of the country, and appropriated funds only for that object, thus throwing the responsibility on the Senate: others, with whom I concurred, thought it would be better by adopting the amendment, to appoint active commissioners, who would cause the proper surveys and estimates to be prepared and laid before the public; being well convinced, that the more the subject was investigated, the more certain would be its success: I then moved to concur with the Senate in their

amendment, and, after a spirited opposition, succeeded in the last hour of the session.

The effect was such as we anticipated. The new commissioners entered upon the duties assigned them with energy, and presented at the next session of the legislature, a report founded on minute and accurate surveys and estimates, which refuted every objection that had been urged, and produced so strong a conviction on the public mind of the practicability of the scheme, and of the ability to execute it, that the law of 1817 was passed, providing for the commencement of an improvement which has exceeded in utility and importance any thing before attempted in the United States; and, by its example, induced our sister states to develope their resources, and improve the immense advantages afforded by nature to this free and happy country.

I am, respectfully,

Your friend and obedient servant,

JAMES LYNCH.

NOTE DD.—p. 109.

Removal of Mr. Clinton as Canal Commissioner.

The following proceedings and resolutions, which took place at the public meetings called in Albany and in the city of New-York, immediately after the removal of Mr. Clinton, and which were echoed throughout the state and country, abundantly show the sensations of surprise and indignation which that event created, while the replies of Mr. Clinton to the addresses which were delivered and accompanied the resolutions presented to him, exhibit the magnanimity and elevated tone of feeling which characterised the subject of those proceedings, in such a manner as to render the succeeding documents peculiarly interesting and deserving of public record.

[From the ALBANY DAILY ADVERTISER.]

At the meeting at the Capitol, on Friday evening, the chairman, the Hon. John Tayler, on taking his seat, addressed the meeting in a style which went to the heart and affections of every hearer. The age, experience, public services, and venerable appearance, of the speaker, excited the undivided attention of the assembled multitude. It was emphatically the voice of the patriarch to his countrymen. He addressed the meeting substantially as follows:

FELLOW-CITIZENS,—This meeting has been convened for the purpose of taking into consideration the services of De Witt Clinton as canal commissioner, and from which he has recently been removed by the legislature. Notwithstanding my advanced age and declining health, I have made an effort to mingle with you, to render praise to a man whose exalted virtue and talents not only adorn his own country, but have claimed the attention and admiration of foreign nations.

There have been various and conflicting opinions as to the original projector of the Erie Canal: speculative opinions on this subject were probably indulged at a very early period; but this is not our present inquiry.

The knowledge I possess, in relation to the agency Mr. Clinton has taken in bringing this stupendous work into successful operation, induces me to state a few facts, which, indeed, must be within the recollection of many gentlemen of this numerous meeting.

Mr. Clinton was appointed, at a very early period, one of the commissioners to explore the route of the Erie Canal, with instructions to report to the legislature the practicability and expense of accomplishing this magnificent work; and I believe it will not be doubted that this incipient step was accomplished by his influence and unremitting industry, and his continued perseverance at length procured the passage of the law, (notwithstanding the doubts of his friends and the revilings of his enemies,) making appropriations and appointing commissioners to commence and complete a work that has not been surpassed in any age or country.

Mr. Clinton was one of those commissioners, and as he was considered one of the principal instigators, as was alleged, of this visionary project, he was subjected to the most bitter reproaches that his infuriated and vindictive enemies could heap upon him; every means was resorted to, that envy and the malignant passions of man could invent, to hurl him from that exalted eminence he had so justly obtained. His project was assailed by sophistical arguments, and groundless calculations; he has himself been basely traduced as ambitious and dangerous to the liberties of his country; but he has surmounted all these difficulties, and lived to see the "big ditch," as it has been sarcastically called, nearly finished.

After all his toil, incessant anxiety and labour, it has been left for the present legislature to complete the climax of injustice. They, on the last day of their session, outraged all the rules of justice and propriety by passing a resolution to remove him from his office of canal commissioner, which, in my humble opinion, is not only a disgrace to themselves, but disre-

putable to the state. I shall, gentlemen, trespass no further on your time, but I presume the subject will be more ably elucidated by those that will follow me.

After the venerable chairman had concluded his remarks, Col. James M'Kown addressed the meeting in an energetic and forcible manner, and with great eloquence, exhibited the claims of Mr. Clinton to the gratitude of his countrymen, and pointed out the injustice which had been manifested in his wanton and unprovoked removal from office. The generous and patriotic sentiments of the speaker were warmly seconded by the enthusiasm of the audience, which burst forth in repeated and protracted cheers. The following is an imperfect sketch of his remarks.

Mr. M'Kown said, in introducing the resolutions which he intended to offer, that he congratulated himself in being able unexpectedly to be present at a meeting of his fellow-citizens on a subject in which not only this state, but the nation at large, were so deeply interested. It was peculiarly proper that the inhabitants of Albany should express their opinion of the public services of their esteemed fellow-citizen, the Honourable De Witt Clinton, in relation to the great measure of the canal policy. But a few months since we, as citizens, assembled together to celebrate the important event of the junction of the inland seas of the west with the waters of the Hudson, to admire the successful efforts of science in mingling the waves of Erie with the tide of the Atlantic—to lay the cap-stone in this magnificent structure, which is to aggrandize our state and common country, and add to the national character by the wonderful improvements in our yet infant republic.

What heart was there on that occasion that did not fill with gratitude to the men who were instrumental in this mighty work? What hand was there that did not point to DE WITT CLINTON; and with one common impulse assist to inscribe beneath *that name*, on the scroll of history, PUBLIC BENEFACTOR!

Who would *then* have believed, that in so short a period we would have been called together on an occasion like the present, to express our sentiments of gratitude towards that benefactor, and our feelings towards those who would vainly attempt to tear away the wreath of honour?

He has been displaced from his official station by a majority of the legislature. That legislature must first erase the power of memory from the people of this country, if they would hope to make them forget the gratitude that is due to him. It is with amazement the people ask of their delegates, why is Mr. Clinton removed from the honorary station of president of the board of canal commissioners? Not to save the public expense, for his services have been *gratuitous*—not because he engaged the state in a visionary and expensive scheme, for he, with those who were willing to hazard their public reputation with his, have brought it to a most successful termination.

It was to have been hoped and believed, for the honour and dignity of our state, that this littleness of malice, this virulence of party, would not at least have been manifested towards

this distinguished individual, by any of the present generation, who ought so well to know his worth and public services, in the station from which he has just been displaced. Displaced by the very men too, who, while the ultimate success of the canal policy was to be tested, claimed it as a merit to oppose, and to charge him as being the very father of this stupendous undertaking.

Our venerable chairman, who has so long acted with him, has alluded to the agency and perseverance of Mr. Clinton, in originating, advancing, and after surmounting every obstacle, finally completing this stupendous work. Need more than allusion be made to those facts, to those who, living at the seat of our state government, have personally witnessed these efforts? Every man of intelligence not only in this state, but in this republic, has known and felt them. His cotemporaries have acknowledged them; posterity will appreciate them.

Within these walls most, if not all of us, have heard it alleged with apparent malicious triumph, that Mr. Clinton must stand or fall in public estimation, by the result of this measure alone. He has stood. He now stands splendidly on a towering monument of imperishable fame, which neither envy can corrode, nor malice with her darkened wings, overshadow or conceal.

Mr. chairman, said Mr. M'Kown, the voice of this state, the sentiments of the whole of this confederated republic, as well as of those European governments, which have looked to us with an intense interest on this subject, will be heard to condemn, if not felt to despise us for this wanton injustice.

When we are reproached abroad that republics are ungrateful, and have not the magnanimity to remember, or reward their meritorious citizens, and pointed to this lamentable instance of its early truth; let us who are assembled this evening, by one united and spontaneous expression, by the resolutions we adopt, be able each, to reply to the charge with heartfelt sincerity, and say, "Thou canst not say I did it."

On Saturday, the committee appointed by the meeting of citizens of this city, waited personally upon Mr. Clinton, when Mr. James, the chairman, presented the following address:

To the Hon. De Witt Clinton.

Albany, April 17, 1824.

Sir,—The late resolution of the legislature, which has terminated your honourable labours as president of the board of canal commissioners, and deprived our state of your invaluable services hereafter, has awakened, among all honourable men, feelings of the liveliest indignation. It could not have been expected in this enlightened age, so fruitful in improvements which tend to advance the comforts and add dignity to the character of man, that the legislature of an intelligent republic would have rewarded fourteen years of successful and

disinterested efforts in promoting the prosperity and glory of the state, by this act of most base ingratitude.

Deeply sensible of the stain which this unworthy measure has affixed on the character of this state, and animated with the warmest sentiments of gratitude towards you as a distinguished public benefactor, the citizens of Albany have directed us, as their committee, to express to you their feelings on this occasion.

To you personally, the termination of your official duties can be of little moment, for injustice and ingratitude will in vain assail that reputation, whose noble and elevated structure rests on the broad foundation of a nation's prosperity. You have laboured long enough for your own glory, but far too short a time for your country.

If any circumstance could alleviate our regrets, in the loss of services so important to the honour and welfare of the state, we should derive it from the hope, that the inspiration of your genius may continue to animate your fellow-citizens to a full completion of the magnificent works which you have planned.

In behalf of the numerous meetings of our fellow-citizens, which we have the honour to represent, we tender to you our warmest thanks and liveliest sentiments of gratitude; for those invaluable services have justly acquired for you, the appellation of the "disinterested benefactor of the state of New-York."

Accept from us, individually, assurances of our great personal respect and esteem.

Signed, William James, J. H. Wendell, Isaiah Townsend, John Taylor, Elisha Jenkins, Gideon Hawley, Joseph Alexander, Israel Smith, E. Baldwin, Chandler Starr, Samuel M. Hopkins, Philip S. Parker, John Cassidy, Jabez D. Hammond, A. Conkling, James M'Kown J. Waterman, Teunis Van Vechten.

To the address presented by the committee, the following reply was made by Governor Clinton:—

To the committee of a meeting of the citizens of Albany, of which John Tayler, Esq. was chairman, and John H. Wendell, Esq. Secretary.

Gentlemen—As the good opinion of virtuous and enlightened men has always been an object of peculiar solicitude to me, I cannot sufficiently express the gratification which I derive from your communication. From the inhabitants of this city I have ever experienced the most friendly treatment, and in the course of my residence among them, they have seen me in public and private life, and have witnessed my efforts in favour of the navigable communications between our inland seas and the Atlantic Ocean. At a meeting unprecedented for its number and respectability, they have unanimously honoured me with an expression of their approbation; and what has greatly increased my satisfaction on this occasion, is, the leading participation of two of the surviving patriots of the revolution—of that illustrious band of statesmen and soldiers which conducted our country to glory, to liberty and to

independence. The eyes of these worthy and honourable men are now emphatically fixed on eternity, and their opinions on the concerns of this world must be as impressive as they are disinterested.

With respect to the character of the transaction of which you speak, I shall be silent. I shall willingly leave it to the decision of our country, and to the judgment of posterity. I can certainly entertain no resentments against the agents. If this event shall transmit their names to future times, they must pass the ordeal of the same high and impartial tribunals, and their conduct must receive its proper estimation. But I owe it to myself and to you, to my family, to my friends, and to my country, to declare that I invite the most rigid scrutiny into my official conduct. The same legislature will again assemble, and I shall then be as willing to encounter the full exercise of their inquisitorial authority, as I now am to sustain the whole weight of their implacable hostility.

I tender to you, gentlemen, and to my fellow-citizens whom you represent, my sincere thanks. The most powerful incentive to good actions, is the favourable notice of those who perform them. And I shall spare no exertions to merit the continuance of that good will and good opinion which you have this day manifested, and which I rank among the most felicitous events of my life.

DE WITT CLINTON.

Albany, April 17th, 1824.

[From the Evening Post, April 20th, 1824.]

Great Meeting in the Park.

Yesterday, at 5 o'clock in the afternoon, in conformity to a previous general notice, the citizens of our metropolis, to the number of many thousands, embracing all classes and all political parties, assembled in the park, in front of the City Hall. The object of the meeting was to stigmatise the resolution of the senate and assembly, which removed De Witt Clinton, as canal commissioner, and caused his consequent removal as president of the board; and, also, to return him thanks for his long, able, and gratuitous services in the prosecution of the New-York canals. Such a meeting, take it all in all, has never taken place in this metropolis. From all we can learn, the number who assembled must have been from eight to ten thousand.

General Bogardus nominated the late venerable William Few to the chair. As the hoary-headed patriot took his seat on the table or platform, the assemblage gave three cheers. John Rathbone, jun. Esq, was then called on to act as secretary by a unanimous vote. The meeting being organised, a call was made from all quarters for Thomas Addis Emmet, who had agreed to address the meeting. It having been ascertained that he was detained in court unexpectedly—he being in the middle of an important trial, Charles G. Haines, Esq. arose

and opened the meeting. He said that it was called independent of all party or political grounds. It was called to do an act of justice to a great and an injured man. It was called to enter its solemn protest against a legislative act that would be condemned by the state of New-York, and reprehended by the nation; for it was an ungenerous, unnecessary, and abortive attempt to separate De Witt Clinton from a great national work.

Mr. Haines said that he did not rise to prove De Witt Clinton the father of the New-York canals. They were magnificent public works which the state had made, and which belonged to the state. Mr. Clinton had toiled with other faithful and distinguished men, and the extent of his agency in their origin, advancement, and near completion, was a matter well settled in public opinion, and it was in vain to make efforts to change that opinion. His fame would be the subject of rigid and impartial history, and to history he was willing to leave it. The benefactors of states and empires could not be hidden from the world. The spirit of the age and the light of truth were with them. Combinations might arise to obscure the lustre of their acts, and diminish the magnitude and utility of their efforts; but the calm conviction of after times would do them justice.

The New-York canals, he said, were nearly completed. The Hudson and Lake Champlain were united; and in a few months the waters of the Atlantic Ocean would mingle with those of our inland seas. In grandeur and usefulness, these were the first works of the present age, whether we look to this or to the other side of the ocean. Already we begin to feel their vast influence, as it strengthens the union of the east and the west, reaches the relations of interest, trade and exchange—animating industry and enterprise, and facilitating the rapid circulation of capital—as it gives new life and vigour to agriculture and manufactures, unfolds the resources of the state in ten thousand ways; bringing to her waters the trade of the western world, and rendering her commercial capital, the city of New-York, the grand emporium of the western continent. No wonder all Europe was astonished at the boldness of the state which undertakes, and is rapidly finishing, such works.

But there was a day of unbelief in the land; a day, when not only the uncandid and the selfish, but when many of the purest and most enlightened among us, doubted as to these works. Public opinion was undecided. Some master-spirit was wanted to draw this opinion from beaten paths, and conduct it to new and bold conclusions. Some pioneer was required to inspire the ardent, to lead on the timid, and to persuade the wavering. Who was the man? Who stood forth as the triumphant advocate of the Great Western Canal? Who stood foremost in convincing this community of the extent of her own resources? Who devoted toilsome days and sleepless nights to demonstrate, by every data and every argument, the practicability and advantages of the Great Western Canal? Who placed in jeopardy his bold or public confidence and respect? Who aided in exploring the route of this grand channel of trade and intercourse? Who, after he became the chief magistrate of this state, identified his administration with this work, and risked its duration on the success of the

project? Who aided in obtaining loans for its advancement? Who had traversed the state for years to watch over its progress? Who for nearly ten years had presided over the board of canal commissioners? Who had waded through streams and torrents of ridicule, calumny and insult, in the prosecution of this canal? Who, throughout the American union, and who, on the other side of the ocean, was connected as a leading and efficient personage in this splendid work? Need any man stand here and pause like Brutus among the Romans, for a reply? *De Witt Clinton is the man!* Every tongue utters his name; every heart bears testimony to his services.

And what was Mr. Clinton's reward? Had his long, unwearied, and persevering efforts covered him with the titles and honours of public office? Had he put his hand into the public treasury and amassed wealth and fortune? Was he the proprietor of palaces, and had he bought over men to his purposes? Had he purchased power and popularity with the public funds? Had he advanced his family to posts of honour and profit? No; for fourteen years, De Witt Clinton had devoted his time, his thoughts, and his labour, to the New-York Canals, without receiving a single farthing in the shape of salary, or a solitary cent of pecuniary profit. And sincerely did he wish that this were the only return. But, Mr. H. said he must go further: without the semblance of reason; without an attempt to render an excuse; without an effort to apologise to the people of this state, and without the faintest colour of necessity, a party in the legislature had passed a vote that has removed De Witt Clinton from the merely honorary office of canal commissioner, and president of the board of canal commissioners; offices to him destitute of salary and recompense. To reward a most able, faithful, and distinguished statesman for past labours, sacrifices, and anxiety, it had been resolved by a political party, that the state of New-York could no longer afford to be benefited by his experience, his talents, his information, and his integrity, though conferred without reward and without public honours. In a moment of hurry and confusion, before the mind could have time to reflect on the lasting disgrace of the act; at a moment when calm and temperate discussion was precluded, and the close of the session was at hand, a sudden and pre-concerted appeal is made to party feeling and party discipline, and without the assignment of a single reason, a long tried, faithful and most able public servant, eminent for his abilities and integrity, and wrapped up in the pride and glory of this state, and labouring with unabating and unceasing zeal for her lasting prosperity and happiness, is hurled from office, as though he was some great state culprit who had disgraced the ermine, or received bribes in the senate room, or betrayed the armies of the republic, dipped his hands in treason, or sold his country for gold! For the last ten years, our state had been convulsed by party violence of the blackest type.

He spoke of no particular party or body of men: all had more or less participated in the temperament of the times. Great men had been hunted down, and talents been driven to the shades of domestic life. Even our social relations had been invaded and disturbed, and ancient friends been torn asunder, and ancient enemies united. Mr. Burke's description of a

party-coloured administration, when men of different politics were huddled into a room without knowing each other, to fight under the same standard, had been realized. A legislative majority had been opposed to Mr. Clinton. While he was Governor, he was for two years with a legislative minority. As president of the board of canal commissioners, he had been in a minority, politically speaking, for years past. The tide of party had overwhelmed him for a time, and all the zeal, and all the efforts had appeared against him, incident to violent political contests.

But whoever thought of proscribing De Witt Clinton as a canal commissioner, or as president of the canal board? Who had had the hardihood to suggest it? A sense of public decorum seems to have repressed the very idea of such a step. No! it had been left to a time when he was in no way before the public; when he was not a candidate for any office or trust; when he had retired from the political field, and was bending all the energies of his powerful and comprehensive mind to consummate the Union of Lake Erie with the ocean; when he was looked up to by all the states in the union where internal improvements were prosecuted, and when he was diffusing the light of his experience, and communicating the tone of his enterprise to every section of the country; it was at such a moment that a body of politicians in the Capitol at Albany, against the wishes of a million and a half of people, whom they pretended to represent, had combined to sweep him from an honorary post, without daring to tell why; without daring to attempt a palliation.

For the honour of our state, and for the honour of our common country, he was proud to say, that it was an act without a parallel; and he had the satisfaction to believe, that it would remain a solitary instance of ingratitude in the long annals of this country, and draw after it to the end of time, the deep abhorrence of every generous, every liberal, and every virtuous mind. Could George Clinton and Alexander Hamilton this moment stand among us, and see facts as they are; could they be carried back to the day when those stupendous plans of improvement that adorned the age, were denounced as the offspring of folly and ambition; could their minds be carried forward to the day when these works will go far to revolutionise the internal relations of a great portion of this country, and pour a broad and perpetual stream of wealth into the state of New-York; and then, could their eyes be directed to the resolution of the 12th of April, 1824, by which De Witt Clinton was removed from the office of canal commissioner, and president of the board of commissioners, after fourteen years of faithful and gratuitous service, and that too without a solitary complaint or a solitary reason, how would their great souls swell with manly indignation, and how would they mourn over the hour when the voice of justice was unheeded, and state pride forgotten!

Mr. Haines said that it was to condemn such an act that the present meeting was called. And if there had ever been a day when he gloried in the institutions of the country, and felt the force of principle that they contained in themselves a self-preserving spirit, it was at that moment. The character of the state of New-York had been degraded, and a stain brought

upon her reputation. He beheld the people rising in their constitutional strength, and in language temperate, firm, and dignified, putting forth a declaration to the world, indicative of that intelligence, that love of truth and justice, that sense of right and wrong, and that pride and independence of character, that proved the safeguard of all republican governments. While the people cherished such feelings and such sentiments, republican principles could never perish.

Well might the people ask—What are we to have next? Was any thing to excite astonishment? Was any transaction in our state politics to create surprise? Would it be strange if there was a proposition to abandon the Great Western Canal as an expensive and impracticable undertaking? This might indeed be called the day of party presumption; for it was the fashion to talk about the people, and insult the people to their faces. Did men expect that the press would slumber? Did they expect to banish light and motion? Did they expect to avoid a day of retribution? That day was at hand. The proceedings of that meeting would be echoed from the shores of the St. Lawrence, and the lakes to the north of the Hudson. They would reach, and they would rouse, every city, every town, and every village in the state. In one week, a million of people would reciprocate every sentiment which they breathed. They would traverse the Union, and serve to convince the Union, that although a great man may become the victim of a petty act of party vengeance, yet that the state disavows that act, and that his talents, his brilliant services, his vast and comprehensive views, and his undaunted perseverance, united to integrity, and blended with a course of private life that was destitute of a stain or a blemish, have gathered round him the confidence, the admiration, and the sympathies of a grateful people, without party names or distinctions!

One word more, said Mr. Haines, and he had done. An attempt had been made to deprive De Witt Clinton of that praise and renown which candour and justice allow him for his agency in the origin and prosecution of the New-York Canals. Mr. Haines appealed to the remembrance of the meeting. Suppose the Great Western Canal had been abandoned six years ago, as a visionary scheme of idle ambition—an impracticable and ruinous undertaking—all the laws had been repealed, and universal odium covered the project. Who then would have been swept from the face of the political world? Who would then have been driven to the dreary refuge of an ignominious private life, with the execrations of an enraged people pressing on his retreating steps? Whose name would have been synonymous with disgrace, scorn, and derision? De Witt Clinton would have been the man! But his stupendous views had been realised. The blaze of noon-day splendour encircled his plans, and it was not now to be extinguished by opening the fountains of public ingratitude.

In conclusion, he submitted the propriety of adopting such resolutions as would condemn in strong and dignified language the removal of De Witt Clinton as canal commissioner, and his subsequent removal as president of the board of canal commissioners, and such as would

express a deep sense of gratitude for fourteen years of distinguished and successful public services for the interest and prosperity of the state of New-York, without reward or remuneration.

This speech was received with feelings highly honourable to the city, accompanied with loud and general applause.

Isaac S. Hone, Esq. then arose, and after a few prefatory remarks, which were peculiarly pertinent to the subject, and which were received with universal approbation, he submitted the following resolutions for the adoption of the meeting. They were read, and adopted by acclamation. Thousands of voices proclaimed the unanimity which was felt, and when the noes were called, a dead silence—a deep pause ensued.

RESOLUTIONS.

Resolved—That we consider the removal of De Witt Clinton as Canal Commissioner, and his subsequent removal as President of the Board of Canal Commissioners, by the late joint resolution of the Senate and Assembly of the state of New-York, as an act degrading to the character of the state, a violation of justice, and an outrage on public opinion.

Resolved—That considering the exalted talents, the enlightened views, and the great experience of De Witt Clinton, we consider his removal from office as a serious injury to the highest interests of the state—since in the completion of the Grand Western Canal, his knowledge, his counsel, and his personal superintendence would have proved eminently useful.

Resolved—That in the origin, advancement, and near completion of the New-York Canals, De Witt Clinton has displayed uncommon talents, great forecast, and undeviating integrity, and that his labours and sacrifices have contributed to the lasting glory and prosperity of the state.

Resolved—That we consider De Witt Clinton pre-eminently useful to the age in which he lives, and that for fourteen years public service in the prosecution of the Grand Western and Northern Canals, without salary or reward, he is richly entitled to the gratitude of the people of the state of New-York—to the gratitude of the nation at large, since they are national works—and to the gratitude of posterity, since they benefit all future generations.

Resolved—That the resolution by which De Witt Clinton has been removed from the office of Canal Commissioner, and President of the Board of Canal Commissioners, has in no way diminished our confidence in his capacity and integrity, nor lessened our respect for his public and private life.

Resolved—That we consider the removal of De Witt Clinton, a subject of general interest and regret, and that we hope to see the feelings and sentiments expressed by this meeting, reciprocated by every city, town, and village in the state.

Resolved—That James Benedict, John Morss, and David Seaman, three members of the

New-York delegation, and the several members of the Senate and Assembly, who had the firmness and independence to discharge their duty in voting against the removal of De Witt Clinton, deserve the thanks of this meeting and the thanks of this whole community.

Resolved—That a committee of thirty be appointed to communicate the proceedings of this meeting to De Witt Clinton, and to give them publicity throughout the state of New-York, after they are signed by the chairman and secretary.

The following are the names of the committee.

Committee.

Matthew Clarkson,	Joseph G. Swift,
William Bayard,	Philip Hone,
Thomas Addis Emmet,	Robert H. Bowne,
Nicholas Fish,	John Rathbone, jun.
Charles Wright,	Abraham Ogden,
Thomas Hazard, jun.	Lockwood De Forrest,
Thomas Eddy,	James Oakley,
Cadwallader D. Colden,	Mansel Bradhurst,
James Lovett,	Benjamin Stagg,
Robert Bogardus,	Thomas Gibbons,
Preserved Fish,	Eli Hart,
Thomas Freeborn,	Noah Brown,
Peter Crary,	Stephen Whitney,
Lynde Catlin,	Thomas Herttell,

Campbell P. White.

W. FEW, *Chairman.*

John Rathbone, *Secretary.*

The proceedings being finished, the venerable chairman stood up in the midst of his fellow-citizens, and adjourned the meeting. The assemblage gave nine cheers, and peaceably returned to their homes. In a few moments, out of eight or ten thousand people, scarcely a man was to be seen.

Thus was sent forth to the state and to the nation, one of the most solemn, temperate, and dignified expressions of public sentiment ever recorded in this country. New-York has nobly done her duty. The commercial metropolis of our state has raised her voice, and it will be heard over the Union. She has discarded party feelings, and paid a becoming tribute of respect to De Witt Clinton for his extensive agency in the grandest public works of the age—works which will pour wealth into our city, and lay open the resources and contribute to the lasting glory and happiness of the state.

Address of the Committee to Mr. Clinton, and his Answer.

To the Hon. De Witt Clinton.

Sir,—We, the undersigned, are a committee appointed to transmit to you the enclosed resolutions, which were unanimously passed by one of the most numerous and respectable assemblages of citizens, ever convened in the city of New-York. We hope the sentiments expressed in these resolutions, will convince you, that the late act of the Senate and Assembly, to which they refer, is considered as an unjust, illiberal, wanton, and ungrateful measure: and that a few violent party politicians, cannot by any abuse of power, take from you that respect, esteem, and gratitude, which are due to your character and public services.

This will be presented to you by Messrs. C. D. Colden, Thomas Hazard, jun. Philip Hone, Lockwood De Forest, and Thomas Herttell, who have been deputed by us for that purpose.

We have the honour to be, Sir, with the highest respect,

Your obedient servants,

William Bayard,	Lynde Catlin,
Peter Crary,	James Oakley,
Thomas Herttell,	Lockwood De Forest,
Stephen Whitney,	Robert H. Bowne,
Joseph G. Swift,	Eli Hart,
Cadwallader D. Colden,	Abraham Ogden,
Thomas Addis Emmet,	Nicholas Fish,
Philip Hone,	Thomas Freeborn,
Robert Bogardus,	Preserved Fish,
Charles Wright,	J. M. Bradhurst,
Thomas Eddy,	Thomas Hazard, jr.
Thomas Gibbons,	Noah Brown,

James Lovett.

To the committee of a meeting of the citizens of New-York, of which William Few, Esq. was chairman, and John Rathbone, Esq. secretary.

Gentlemen—I know of no event that has a more powerful demand on my gratitude than the proceedings of the citizens of New-York, respecting my agency in the navigable communications between our Mediterranean seas and the Atlantic Ocean. The approbation of a meeting so numerous and respectable, conveyed through a channel so virtuous and enlightened, is a reward that ought to satisfy the most aspiring ambition.

At the commencement of the year 1816, a few individuals held a consultation in the city of New-York, for the purpose of calling the public attention to the contemplated western and northern canals. The difficulties to be surmounted were of the most formidable

aspect. The state, in consequence of her patriotic exertions during the war, was considerably embarrassed in her finances; a current of hostility had set in against the project; and the preliminary measures, however well intended, ably devised, or faithfully executed, had unfortunately increased, instead of allaying prejudice; and such was the weight of these, and other considerations, that the plan was generally viewed as abandoned. Experience evinces that it is much easier to originate a measure successfully, than it is to revive one which has been already unfavourably received. Notwithstanding these appalling obstacles, which were duly considered, a public meeting was called of which William Bayard was chairman, and John Pintard secretary; a memorial in favour of the canal policy was read and approved, and a correspondent spirit was excited through the community, which induced the legislature to pass a law authorising surveys and examinations. And let me, on this occasion, discharge a debt of gratitude and of justice to the late Robert Bowne. He is now elevated above human panegyric, and reposes, I humbly and fervently believe, in the bosom of his God. He had at an early period, devoted his attention to this subject, and was master of all its important bearings. To his wise counsels, intelligent views, and patriotic exertions, we were under incalculable obligations. I never left the society of this excellent and venerable man without feeling the most powerful inducements for the most animated efforts.

The proceedings under the act of 1816, presented such conclusive testimonials in favour of the proposed canals, that a law was enacted authorising their commencement, but not without the most decided opposition. I am aware that some of the most pure and intelligent men in the community were unfriendly to the prosecution of a measure which appeared to them either impracticable in attainment, or overwhelming in expense; but it must certainly be considered an extraordinary feature in our history, that the representatives of your city, the place most benefited by the canals, should take the lead in hostility. This fact is not mentioned in the way of reproach, but to show the difficulties which environed the measure in every step of its progress.

After my election to the chair of state, I found that the opposition to the canal was mingled with the agitations of the times, and that its destinies were to a certain extent identified with my official position. At this crisis, I was induced to continue in my station as a canal commissioner, from a persuasion that my retirement might be considered an abandonment; and from a conviction that I could render more essential benefit to the undertaking by remaining at my post, and encountering all the obloquy, resentments, and misrepresentations, which at that period were so strongly indicated: And I had finally the satisfaction to see that the successful progress of the work had dispelled the doubts of its well-meaning opponents, and silenced the clamours of its enemies of a different description.

From the extinguishment of open hostility, to the present period, I have not been without serious apprehensions, that events might occur to prevent the consummation of this

work; and I have rejoiced at the termination of each year of its progress, and watched over it with indescribable anxiety. Although I have no reason to suspect the fidelity of the agents entrusted with the disbursements of the public monies, yet I was sensible that any loss by accident, or any misapplication by design, might prove fatal. And I was at all times aware, that the intervention of a foreign war might prevent the necessary loans, and that the national government, without any hostile design, might, by repealing and imposing certain duties, inflict an irreparable injury on our financial arrangements.

On the 4th of July, 1817, the work was commenced. The Champlain and the greater part of the Erie Canal are now in a navigable state, and in less than a year the whole, comprising an extent of about four hundred and twenty-five miles, will be finished. Every year's experience will enhance the results in the public estimation, and benefits will be unfolded which we can now hardly venture to anticipate. As a bond of union between the Atlantic and the western states, it may prevent the dismemberment of the American empire. As an organ of communication between the Hudson, the Mississippi, the St. Lawrence, the great lakes of the north and west, and their tributary rivers, it will create the greatest inland trade ever witnessed. The most fertile and extensive regions of America will avail themselves of its facilities for a market. All their surplus productions, whether of the soil, the forest, the mines, or the waters, their fabrics of art and their supplies of foreign commodities, will concentrate in the city of New-York, for transportation abroad or consumption at home. Agriculture, manufactures, commerce, trade, navigation, and the arts will receive a correspondent encouragement. That city will in the course of time become the granary of the world, the emporium of commerce, the seat of manufactures, the focus of great monied operations, and the concentrating point of vast, disposable, and accumulating capitals, which will stimulate, enliven, extend, and reward the exertions of human labour and ingenuity, in all their processes and exhibitions; and, before the revolution of a century, the whole island of Manhattan, covered with habitations and replenished with a dense population, will constitute one vast city.

I have furnished this summary view of the subject, not in a spirit of egotism, a tone of assumption, or with any pretensions to exclusive merit. I have done all that I could do.—And the agency of many meritorious and distinguished men, in preparing the public mind to favour, and inducing the legislature to adopt the project—in exploring and examining the country—in undertaking the responsibilities of superintendence and engineering—in facilitating the financial arrangements, and in promoting the general interests of the undertaking, entitles them to the highest praise. Notwithstanding the errors committed, the disasters experienced, and the obstacles encountered, the work is now so near to its consummation, that nothing can prevent it, except some very extraordinary visitation of calamity. If this undertaking were now presented to the community as an original proposition, would not its fate be questionable, and would not the difficulties which have attended its commencement

and progress, be greatly augmented, from the increased rivalries of villages, the conflicting interests of individuals, and the accumulated influence of other causes?

Any view of the subject, and this view particularly, must elicit our humble and devout thanks to Almighty God, for disposing the minds of the people of this state, at the most propitious period, in favour of this work, and for enabling them to persevere amidst all surrounding impediments. A free state has thus set an illustrious example to the world; has evinced the energies of republican government, and demonstrated that the people of this country have had the heads to conceive, the hearts to undertake, and the hands to execute, the most useful and stupendous work of the age.

But although your city will derive the greatest benefit from the canals, yet it will by no means be exclusive. Like the Nile, they will enrich the whole country through which they pass, and all the adjacent regions will feel their benignant and animating influence. Great market towns will be established in every direction, and the banks of the majestic Hudson will exhibit a line of villages and cities, that will grow with the growth, and flourish with the enlivening and reacting prosperity of our commercial metropolis. The revenue will not only extinguish the debt and defray the expenses of the government, but it will in time realise a vast fund, applicable to all the objects of human improvement. Upon intellectual and moral cultivation we must rely for the conservation of our republican government, and for the protection of the last hopes of freedom and the best destinies of man. When every child in the state shall become the child of the commonwealth, and shall receive the blessings of education at the public expense, then we may be assured that neither fraud nor violence, neither intrigue nor corruption, can destroy the sacred temple of liberty.

Under any aspect of the occurrence which has produced this manifestation of your friendship and confidence, I have no reason to entertain any resentment, or to express any regret, whether we estimate it by the ordinary standard that graduates the character of human actions, or contemplate it in connexion with other events still more extraordinary. Indeed I view it as a subject of high felicitation, since it has honoured me with the approbation of the most respectable and the most respected among my fellow-citizens. The venerable chairman of your meeting was one of the illustrious band of sages that formed our national constitution; and on the committee I recognise the names of some of the men of the revolution, whose deeds of patriotism will transmit an inestimable legacy of fame, and a glorious example of heroic virtue, to their posterity. The intellectual and moral worth, and high character of the committee, and of the chairman and secretary of the meeting, and its number and respectability, afford conclusive evidence of the favourable opinion of the citizens of New-Yok, and I shall certainly rank their expression of it among the highest honours and most auspicious events of my life.

I cannot conclude, without offering my particular acknowledgments to those gentlemen who have presented me in person with the proceedings, for their condescending kindness:

and I most respectfully tender my sincere and heartfelt thanks to my fellow-citizens who composed the meeting, and the committee who represent it, for their favourable notice of my efforts to promote the prosperity of our country.

DE WITT CLINTON.

ALBANY, April 26, 1824.

In the course of conversation with a gentleman of high political standing, expressing my surprise at the legislative act referred to, the following remarks were made on his part, as in some degree calculated to palliate the injustice that had been done by this high-handed act of violence and ingratitude. He observed that, "misunderstandings had taken place between members, particularly of the board of commissioners and Mr. Clinton, relative to certain measures that had been proposed in the location and direction of some parts of the canal, which afforded an opportunity to the opponents of such measures, and to his personal and political enemies, to create the belief in a portion of the legislature, that his removal from the place of honorary commissioner, was necessary for the harmonious prosecution of the remaining parts of the work." He indeed assured me, that many of the members of both houses, including some of Mr. Clinton's personal friends, under the influence of such consideration alone, without inquiring into the details of the personal disagreements that had occurred in the board, were induced to yield their sanction to a measure, which, under other circumstances, was deemed by them so highly improper and unjustifiable.

But there are, doubtless, other reasons than those just alleged, which must have operated in producing this most extraordinary legislative proceeding. In order, if possible, to disclose the source from whence it originated, I applied to Colonel Stone, the editor of the Commercial Advertiser, who was present, and had ample opportunities of knowing the various interests that at that time influenced the great political parties into which the state was then divided. His reply to my request, I have his permission to introduce in this place.

New-York, March, 25th, 1829.

Dear Sir,

At a late hour last evening, I was favoured with your note of yesterday, requesting a copy of the speech of the late Henry Cunningham, Esq. of Montgomery county, delivered in the house of assembly, on the resolution, in 1824, for the removal of De Witt Clinton from the board of canal commissioners. To this request you have done me the honour to append the following intimation: "You may, perhaps, give me some clue to the circumstances which led to that extraordinary transaction, besides those alleged by the enemies of Mr. Clinton." The speech of Mr. Cunningham is herewith enclosed; and as justice requires that the event to which it refers, connected as it is with the legislative history of our canals, and the political history of Governor Clinton, should not be passed over in silence, I readily undertake a compliance with the whole of your request, though it were better perhaps that another pen should make the record. I shall endeavour, however, to speak with the utmost candour and impartiality, using as few names as possible.

You have very justly denominated this an "extraordinary transaction." It was effected by a joint resolution of the two branches of the legislature, on the 12th of April, 1824. No satisfactory excuse for this harsh and intolerant measure ever has been, or ever can be made. The most that can be said in extenuation is, that it was done at a moment of high political excitement. "There never was a perfect man," says a late number of the Edinburgh Review; "it would, therefore, be the height of absurdity to expect a perfect party; or a perfect assembly; for large bodies are far more likely to err than individuals. The passions are inflamed; the fear of punishment, and the sense of shame, are diminished by partition. Every day we see men do for their faction, what they would rather die than do for themselves." It is upon this principle, and upon no other, that we can account for this unnecessary, and uncalled for act of political proscription. As I have remarked before, it was a moment of high and peculiar political excitement. The then approaching presidential election, had called into action many angry passions, and fierce conflicting opinions, touching a great measure involving the supposed

rights of the people, to a direct participation in the election of president. It was well known that a large majority of the people of this state were in favour of Mr. Adams, at that time, and it was believed that a small majority of the legislature preferred the election of Mr. Crawford. Hence the friends of the former were desirous of taking from the legislature the power of appointing the electors, and of referring the choice immediately to the people. And the friends of the latter candidate were equally anxious to retain the power in their own hands. The political revolutions of 1821—22, which had swept away the old constitution, and changed, in some respects, the aspect of our political and civil institutions, had likewise left Mr. Clinton in temporary retirement from the chair of state. And although nearly balanced upon the presidential question, a large majority of both branches of the legislature were in decided political hostility to him. The consequence of this peculiar state of things was, that the friends of Mr. Crawford, and the opponents of the electoral law, devised the resolution for the removal of Mr. Clinton, simply as a political *ruse de guerre*. Availing themselves of the supposed unpopularity of Mr. Clinton at that moment, they hoped at once to extinguish all clamour upon the subject of the electoral law, and ruin the cause of Mr. Adams, by identifying the friends of this measure and this candidate, with what they were pleased to consider the broken fortunes of the illustrious individual then suffering the pains of political banishment. The project was devised, and the whole scheme matured, as I have the written authority of a highly respectable member of the senate who was present, for saying, in a select and rather informal caucus, on the evening before the act was perpetrated. No one, it is believed, would have denied the high-handed and daring injustice of the measure. But it was a large stake for which they were playing; and in the heat of an embittered party contest, politicians are too often in the habit of practising upon the maxim, that the "end justifies the means." It was believed by the leaders in the project, that on a resolution for the removal of Mr. Clinton, the opponents of Mr. Crawford, and, as they pretended, of Mr. Clinton also, would almost to a man vote in the negative. And from that moment they were to have been denounced as Clintonians. The device was considered the *ne plus ultra* of political cunning. But unfortunately for its projectors, though most fortunate, as it proved, for

the great object against whom it was aimed as the last fatal stab, the effect was directly the reverse of what had been anticipated. The resolution was moved in the senate by Mr. B.,* of Rochester, and instantly adopted.—It was then sent down to the assembly for concurrence, where it was received just as the house was on the point of adjourning *sine die*. It was received with unmingled astonishment by every member who had not been intrusted with the secret. A sort of panic seemed to prevail, and men looked at each other with fixed and unutterable amazement. As I have just remarked, the house was on the very point of its final adjournment, and many of the members were packing the papers upon their desks, as they were leaving their seats, when the resolution was announced. Mr. Cunningham, who was a fine, noble-hearted man, and in reality what Mark Antony pretended to be—"a plain blunt man, who spoke right on," was in the act of putting on his over-coat. But though others stood hesitating and abashed, it was not the case with him. With but a moment for reflection, flinging his coat over his arm, he turned to the speaker, and with a countenance glowing with generous indignation, gave utterance to his feelings in the following bold and manly sentiments, in language warm and proceeding spontaneously from the heart.

"Mr. Cunningham said he arose with no ordinary feelings of surprise and astonishment at the resolution just read as coming from the senate. Sir, said Mr. C. it is calculated to arouse the feelings of every honourable gentleman on this floor; its very approach is marked with black ingratitude and base design. I do not wish, said Mr. C. to speak disrespectfully of a co-ordinate branch of the legislature, nor to impute their acts to improper motives, but I hope I may be permitted to inquire, for what good and honourable purpose has this resolution been sent here for concurrence, at the very last moment of the session.

"Is it to create discord amongst us, and destroy that harmony and good feeling which ought to prevail at our separation? We have, said Mr. C. spent rising of three months in legislation, and not one word has been dropped intimating a desire or intention to expel that honourable gentleman from the board of canal commissioners. Sir, he was called to that

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* It is said, and I believe the story is not apochryphal, that Mr. B. was the only member of the senate, who would consent to rise in his place and offer it. And there was a division of labour in the operation as it was; General E—— R—— having written it; Mr. J—— S—— copied it; and Mr. B. presented it.

place by the united voice and common consent of the people of this state, on account of his peculiar and transcendant fitness to preside at that board, and by his counsel stimulate and forward the great undertaking; his labour for years has been arduous and unceasing for the public good; he endured slander and persecution from every direction like a christian martyr; but steadfast in his purpose, he pursued his course with a firm and steady step, until all was crowned with success, and the most flagrant of his opposers sat in sullen silence.

"For what let me inquire, did Mr. Clinton endure all this? was it for the sake of salary? No, sir; it was for the honour and welfare of his state; it was from noble and patriotic motives, and for which he asked nothing; received nothing; nor did he expect any thing but the gratitude of his countrymen.

"Now, sir, said Mr. C. I put the question to this honourable house to decide upon the oath which they have taken, and upon their sense of propriety and honour, whether they are ready by their votes to commit the sin of ingratitude.

"I hope, said Mr. C. there is yet a redeeming spirit in this house; that we shall not be guilty of so great an outrage. If we concur in this resolution, we shall take upon ourselves an awful responsibility, and one for which our constituents will call us to strict account. What, let me ask, shall we answer in excuse for ourselves, when we return to an inquisitive and watchful people? What can we charge to Mr. Clinton; what can we say that he has been guilty of, that he should now be singled out as an object of state persecution? Will some friend of this resolution be kind enough to inform me? Sir, I challenge inquiry. I demand from the supporters of this high-handed measure, that they lay their hands upon their hearts, and answer me truly, for what cause is the man to be removed?

"I dare assert in my place, said Mr. C. that his doings as a canal commissioner are unimpeached and unimpeachable, and such as have even elicited the plaudits and admiration of his political enemies. This, sir, is the official character of the man whom we now seek to destroy. I hope, said Mr. C. this house will pardon me when I freely declare my opinion, that this resolution was engendered in the most unhallowed feelings of malice, to effect some nefarious and secret purpose at the expense of the honour and integrity of this legislature; however harsh it may seem, it is the irresistible impulse of my mind.

"Some may call me federalist, or Clintonian, and hence my zeal manifested on this occasion; not so, sir; no party name or feeling shall be suffered to influence my conduct or my vote, when considerations of justice, of gratitude, and of principle, make their demand upon me.

"However much I esteem Mr. Clinton as a profound statesman and scholar, I am not embarked with his political fortunes, but speak free and untrammelled, without fear, favour, or affection.

"I am well aware, said Mr. C. that some honourable gentlemen may think if they vote against this resolution, they will be suspected in their politics; such considerations ought

not to influence us on this subject. Mr. Clinton is not in the political market; he reposes in the shades of honourable retirement; he asks for no office and possesses none, but the one of which he is about to be stripped.

"The senate, it appears, have been actuated by some cruel and malignant passion, unaccounted for, and have made a rush upon this house, and taken us on surprise. The resolution may pass; but if it does, my word for it, we are disgraced in the judgment and good sense of an injured but intelligent community. Whatever the fate of this resolution may be, let it be remembered, that Mr. Clinton has acquired a reputation not to be destroyed by the pitiful malice of a few leading partisans of the day.

"When the contemptible party strifes of the present day shall have passed by, and the political bargainers and jugglers who now hang round this capitol for subsistence, shall be overwhelmed and forgotten in their own insignificance; when the gentle breeze shall pass over the tomb of that great man, carrying with it the just tribute of honour and praise which is now withheld; the pen of the future historian, in better days and in better times, will do him justice, and erect to his memory a proud monument of fame, as imperishable as the splendid works which owe their origin to his genius and perseverance.

"Sir, I have done; and I have only to beseech every honourable gentleman on this floor, to weigh and consider well the consequences of the vote which he is about to give on this important question: it is probably the last that will be given this session; and I pray God it may be such as will not disgrace us in the eyes of our constituents."

The appeal, however, of this generous and patriotic man, who has since been summoned to an early grave, was vain. Many of the ablest and best men, though pricked to the heart with the injustice of the deed, were yet fearful of snares and pitfalls, and in the doubt and perturbation of the moment, voted for the fatal resolution.* There was a want of moral courage in this matter, which cannot be excused. The question should have been met upon its merits, whatever might have been the consequences. Still, however, there is much in the attending circumstances, to mitigate the sharpness of our censure; and the result was all that the friends of civil liberty, and foes to proscription and intolerance, could have desired. This act aroused the spirit of

* In the senate, the vote stood as follows:—Ayes 21; noes 3!—The votes of the assembly were, ayes 64; noes 31.

the people to the highest pitch of excitement. The post from which Mr. Clinton was then ejected, had become merely honorary. The great public works in which the state was then engaged, and which had been thus far prosecuted with such distinguished success, under the general superintendence of his presiding genius, were almost completed, and the plans had all been matured and determined.

For fourteen years De Witt Clinton had held the office of a commissioner on the subject of canals, during which period he had bent all the energies of his soul, and all the resources of his capacious mind, to the accomplishment of these mighty works. For years he had to struggle against an opposition, which it might be supposed would have appalled the most daring, and overwhelmed the stoutest heart. But he breasted himself to the torrent like a giant, and not only turned its current back, but by his resistless powers, compelled his foes to do homage to the triumphs of his genius. And the whole of this period of fourteen years had been devoted to this branch of the public service, without salary or compensation. The intelligence spread with the rapidity of lightning, and the fire of indignation followed in its train. Public meetings were called, and attended by overwhelming numbers, in every part of the state. From Sag-Harbour to Niagara, there was a spontaneous demand from the people to bring back the persecuted patriot and statesman from his retirement. The sequel is known. Mr. Crawford was not chosen president, and Mr. Clinton was again called to the chief magistracy of the state, by a majority then unparalleled in the annals of our contested elections.

I have dwelt longer, and with greater particularity upon this transaction than I otherwise should have done, not only because it was a very important event in the life of Mr. Clinton, as connected with the political history of this state, but because I do not believe the subject has been generally or clearly understood. Amid the din of party strife, a candid and impartial statement of the case was hardly to be expected from the partisan presses of either side; each being anxious to place the conduct of its political friends in the fairest possible light. But the excitement and feelings of that day have already passed

away. And the bitterness of political hate, which rankled in the bosoms of Mr. Clinton's foes, was buried with his ashes. The distinguished rivals for the presidential chair at that period, have both passed from the political stage, so that the truth can now be spoken without obstacle or restraint. I have endeavoured to give the history of the event with truth and impartiality; and believe I have succeeded in disclosing the secret springs of action which led to a measure so unjust in itself, so well concerted, and yet so suicidal to its authors. *Fiat justitia, ruat cœlum.*

I am sir, with respect,

Very truly yours,

WILLIAM L. STONE.

Dr. David Hosack.

Note EE.—p. 111.

While the author was engaged in collecting materials for this work, he requested a friend to address a letter to George Tibbits, Esq. of Troy, who was an active member of the legislature, at the moment the most important canal laws were enacted, for such facts as might be in his power to furnish, particularly upon the subject of the measures of finance, in which Mr. Tibbits, it is well known, took an active part. In reply to that request, Mr. Tibbits wrote an interesting communication, which was subsequently placed in the author's hands for his private information. Although it was manifestly written without the remotest idea of its publication, it seems too valuable to be lost; the author has therefore determined to preserve a large extract from this communication, in the present collection of historical documents. He trusts the highly respectable writer of the letter will excuse the liberty taken therewith, inasmuch as, after this explanation, not the slightest imputation of egotism or vanity can rest upon him.

Extract of a letter from the Hon. George Tibbits, to Benjamin Tibbits, Esq.

TROY, June 13th, 1828.

I feel myself very much indebted to Dr. Hosack, for his friendly inquiries in regard to the part which it fell to my lot to perform towards advancing the construction of our canals, and for his suggesting to you, that a correspondence with him on this subject would be acceptable.

Navigable communications between the Hudson and the great lakes, were subjects of great solicitude from a very early day. And for their advancement our firm, your father and myself, became stockholders to the extent of our means, in the old Champlain Joint Stock Company, which proved a total loss. The magnitude of these undertakings discouraged all individual efforts. Nothing short of the power of the state, or the United States, seemed equal to the task; and these impressions were generally entertained long before the incipient steps of 1808, 10, 11, 12, and 16 were taken. But the mode and manner in which the strength of government should be applied, became a subject of equally great interest and solicitude. In common with all the other advocates of the proposed canals, they became with me the subjects of frequent discussions in private and public circles, and in the public prints, always advocating the general principle to be carried into effect by almost any means, though it would be uncandid in me not to admit my decided opposition to the mode of finance adopted in the act of 19th June, 1812; viz. that of authorising the commissioners to borrow five millions on the general credit of the state; and this sum to be vested in some sort of stock at their discretion, to be from time to time sold and applied to the construction of the canals. The mass of the community soon became divided into two sections, those advocating, and those opposing the construction of the canals by the state, and the line of division mainly that of private or local interest. Those opposing were the southern and middle counties, including Delaware and the eastern parts of Rensselaer and Washington counties, with parts of Saratoga, Montgomery, and Schoharie. The general allegations of those opposed were, that they were not to be benefited, but probably injured by the canals if the state should succeed in making them. That if completed, they would let in the products of the illimitable regions of the west, and reduce the price of their agricultural commodities. That in fixing on places of residence, some had gone west, and become the proprietors of townships at the same price which others had paid for farms near the Hudson. That it was unjust to tax the latter to make canals for raising the price of the former. That if the west and north wanted better roads and canals, it was for them to be at the expense of their construction, and not for those who did not want them, but were to be injured by them, and protested stoutly against any additional taxes on the increase of the state debt, thereby mortgaging their farms near the Hudson, to make canals which could not be of any benefit to them, and none other but the

west and north. The law of 1812, as soon as generally known, became the subject of altercation, and was soon repealed.

If I am entitled to any credit more than other zealous advocates for the canals, it is for efforts which proved successful in allaying these difficulties. Having had the honour of serving on the two joint committees on canals for the years 1816 and 1817, I took the liberty of submitting my views to the committee of 1816. Before the session of 1817, I prepared and digested a project of finance. It was that of constituting a fund of money income, to be denominated the Canal Fund, and applied exclusively to that purpose. It was presumed that the city of New-York (notwithstanding her representation opposed the canals,) must be more than compensated by them for the loss of the share of the auction duties which she had so long enjoyed, and which for one I should not have voted to take from her for any other purpose. That the west, who were the exclusive consumers of the salt made there, would consent to a heavy tax upon it rather than not have the canals. That some of the towns and counties who were conceded to be benefited, would consent to a small addition to their ordinary taxes; that the state could, without feeling or hardly knowing it, devote a section of its wild lands to this purpose; that a steam-boat passenger tax might, right or wrong, be imposed. These were estimated to produce annually about two hundred thousand dollars, exclusive of tolls on the canals, which, without borrowing any money on the general credit of the state, or this fund, would allow of the canals progressing slowly. But by allowing the commissioners to borrow annually upon the credit of this fund, a sum which, together with the nett income left after paying interest, should amount to 534,000 dollars, would allow them to progress rapidly, and leave a reasonable presumption that they would be completed in twelve years, estimating their cost at seven millions. The estimates when they came to be reported were less by the amount of about two millions, still it was thought best not to deduct any thing from the project, as they might cost much more. This project of finance with very long statements in figures, showing what would be its annual operation, with estimates of the probable annual additions to it from tolls and charges of interest payable from it, were submitted by me to Governor Clinton at a very early day of the session of 1817, with notes of the general principles of a bill, and with a request that he would give to them the most deliberate investigation and consideration, and that he would draw a bill to be reported by the committee conformable to them. The Governor heard me and took my budget, saying that he would examine it as soon as he had leisure: it was unavoidably voluminous. It appeared to me that he gave the preference to the project of 19th June, 1812, as he spoke favourably of that project, but at the same time admitted the repugnance of public opinion to a large loan at first. Thought a loan for a less sum at first worth consideration; that New-York would resist any attempt to take away the auction duties; that the western counties would resist so large a tax as twelve and a half cents on salt—suggested six cents. I waited on him once afterwards to

see if he had made any progress in drawing a bill; said he had not, but would devote some time to it soon.

Soon after my first interview with the Governor at the session of 1817, I submitted the project to the joint committee, and informed them of what I had done in regard to the Governor; they approved of the plan, but at the same time wished it to have the sanction of the Governor. At a succeeding meeting we met to consider a bill expected from the Governor, but got none; when we came to the understanding that Mr. Ford, chairman of the committee from the Assembly, should take my papers, and the next day draw a bill conformable to the principles suggested. The committee were to meet the next evening to consider it, but did not do so, but obtained from the Governor a bill which he reported to the Assembly without consulting the committee from the Senate. It was thought most strange that Mr. Ford should report a bill without submitting it to the committee on the part of the Senate. But the gentlemen of the committee, all I believe except myself, fearing lest any interference of theirs might prevent the passage of some bill, remained silent. I did no more than to give Mr. Ford, and the gentlemen of our committee, notice that I should not vote for the bill; that if his bill ever came to the Senate, which I thought it would not, I should offer a substitute. The Governor's bill was printed, and the Assembly went into committee upon it several times, when Wheeler Barnes, Esq. of the Assembly, from Oneida, with whom I had had frequent conversations on the subject, and to whom I had shown the papers, and as much of the bill as I had drawn, came to me and said the Assembly would never pass the Governor's bill, and asked me for the papers. With his assistance a bill was written out, which the next day he offered to the Assembly as a substitute for the bill then before the house: it was accepted, printed, and by large majorities passed both houses promptly. On motion I think of Mr. Duer, in the Assembly, the tax on towns and counties along the line of the canal, was changed for a tax on all lands lying within twenty-five miles of the canal; and in the Senate, on motion of Mr. Van Buren, the faith of the state was pledged for the redemption of the debt. For as the bill was drawn, and as it passed the Assembly, the faith of the state was only pledged for continuing the sources of income, and of the application of this income to the canals, and to the redemption of any loans which might be made on the credit of that income.

Reference may be had to many of the then members of the legislature for the general correctness of this statement. I name the Hon. Peter R. Livingston, to whom I have said nothing about it since, but who, I have no doubt, will recollect some of the several conversations which we had, and of my showing and explaining to him the papers containing this projet of finance, in the hope of doing away his objections against this great work being undertaken by the state. Also Samuel Young, Esq. one of the canal commissioners. I name especially, Wheeler Barnes, Esq. of Oneida, who lodged at Crittenden's with me, and to a letter from him, which you will find in the appendix to the pamphlet which is herewith

sent. I cannot now put my hand on any of the fugitive remarks of mine in the newspapers in regard to the canals previous their commencement, as I kept no copies or files of the papers. The twelve or thirteen numbers in the Troy Post, over the signature of Cato, were written long after, and after the middle sections from the Seneca River to the Mohawk had been completed. They were written to show the impolitic proceedings of the canal commissioners in pushing forward the construction of the one hundred and sixty odd miles of the Erie Canal west of the Seneca, before the eastern section and Champlain should be completed and brought together upon the Hudson, upon which very little was then doing, though upon their being so finished before the western section should be undertaken, and upon tolls expected from them, depended in a great degree the success of the fund, and its proving sufficient to complete the canals. The remarks of Cato being long after the commencement of the canals, are probably not within the purview intended to be taken of this subject by Dr. Hosack, and are therefore not sent.

Although I did not fall in with Governor Clinton's project of making the canals a common charge upon the state treasury, and of partial appropriations from time to time, nor in that of finishing the western section simultaneously with the eastern, still I consider Governor Clinton's efforts in preparing public opinion for this great work, and keeping up public feeling and opinion, worthy of all praise, and I have no doubt but that Dr. Hosack will do him the most ample justice.

In reading over the foregoing, I find that I have not pointed out the particular differences between the bill from Gov. Clinton reported by Mr. Ford, and the substitute for it offered by Mr. Barnes. But you will find several of them stated in the letter of Mr. Barnes, in the appendix of the pamphlet now sent.

Respectfully, &c.

GEORGE TIBBITS.

The following is the letter referred to by Mr. Tibbits. It is introduced not only as useful to a full elucidation of the subject to which it relates, but as a valuable statement of facts from a gentleman who had no inconsiderable share in maturing the scheme of finance adopted by the legislature.

Letter from the Hon. Wheeler Barnes to Elkanah Watson, Esq.

ROME, April 12, 1820.

RESPECTED SIR,

I understand that in your contemplated history of the rise and progress of canals in this state, you are desirous of assigning to the different contributors and advocates of the

various projects, their due proportion of merit, and that for this purpose you wish communications. As the Hon. George Tibbits, then of the Senate, boarded at the same house with me, and as we spent many of our leisure hours together during the session of 1817, upon the subject of the canals, a friend of his has suggested the propriety of giving you some account of the part he took in contributing to the act of that year.

In the assembly journals it appears, that on the 17th of February, the report of the canal commissioners was referred to a joint committee, of which Mr. T. was a member; that thirty days after, the committee reported, on the 17th of March; that on the 28th, the house went into a committee of the whole; and also on the 2d, 4th, 7th, 8th, 9th and 10th of April, being seven times in all; and on the 11th, passed the bill, and sent it to the Senate. The bill accompanying the report presented by the chairman, Mr. Ford, is not on the journals, though it was printed with the report in a pamphlet form of twenty-four pages, by Websters and Skinners, in 1817. This bill you will perceive is essentially different from the one acted upon and finally adopted, and still no notice is taken in the journals of the exchange of the one for the other. By comparing them together, it cannot have escaped you, that the difference is very important, both in their details and main features. One point of difference consists in substituting for a loan of one and a half millions, an efficient and durable plan of finance, by which the commissioners could continue without further legislative aid. To Mr. Tibbits I am satisfied that the state is much indebted for this important feature.

In a government like ours, the subject of finance for such and so great an undertaking, was viewed as difficult. On it very much depended the success of the undertaking, both as to passing a law, and completing the work. Immediately after his appointment, Mr. Tibbits applied himself with industry to devise and prepare a plan, which would complete the canals without impoverishing the treasury, exhausting the funds of the state, burthening the people with taxes, or placing the canals subject to the influence of party views, or local prejudices; and the report of the committee (as to ways and means) contains the views of Mr. T. as exhibited by him to me, in his own hand writing, before the report was made. But when the bill was presented, Mr. Tibbits appeared disappointed that it did not embrace the plan of finance contained in the report. Mr. T. thereupon spent considerable time with me in preparing another bill as a substitute, which I presented to the house with the approbation of the chairman, and it was ordered to be printed. This order does not appear upon the journals; and when the house went into committee of the whole, the substitute was taken up, and was the only bill acted upon. The alterations it underwent in the house were, leaving out the section respecting the acknowledgment and recording of deeds, and the tax upon the valuations of real and personal property in those places thought to be more essentially benefited, and substituting in lieu thereof, (an motion of Mr. Duer) a tax upon the land twenty-five miles on each side of the canals. The plan of Mr. Tibbits was to establish a fund to be

managed by commissioners, the income of which would raise money sufficient to complete the canals in twelve or fourteen years with seven millions of dollars, and leave a sinking fund sufficient to redeem the debt to be created, at a period not far distant from their completion. I have copies of his projects and calculations taken at the time. The bill substituted for the first, was drawn upon the principal of seven millions in twelve years, that is, to raise and expend the net sum of 584,000 dollars.

After the bill had passed the house, the alterations made by the senate, and concurred in by the house, were, striking out that sum, and inserting 400,000 dollars, and striking out the appropriation of land of the value of 600,000 dollars, or which might produce 50,000 dollars yearly for twelve years, and adding the Lieutenant-Governor as one of the commissioners of the canal fund, and borrowing money on the credit of the state, instead of the credit of the canal fund. Had the bill been adopted by the Senate, as sent them by the Assembly, without alteration, the canals might have been completed without further legislative appropriation. The first bill, instead of adopting a plan of finance, directs the commissioners to digest and present one to the ensuing legislature. There are other important provisions in the bill adopted, which I omit to notice, as the only object of this hasty sketch is, that merit may receive its due, as it regards the individual mentioned, without detracting from that of others, and to show that he is not only in profession, but in deed, a friend to this magnificent undertaking.

I am, Sir, with great respect,

Your obedient servant,

WHEELER BARNES.

ELKANAH WATSON, Esq.

NOTE.—p. 111.

When we take a review of the facts which have been noticed in the preceding pages of this work, relative to the canal policy of this state, we are prepared to appreciate and to express our unqualified approbation of the judicious, pertinent, and correct observations presented to the state in the messages of his late Excellency Governor Yates, in 1823 and 1824. All party feelings having subsided, his remarks relative to that subject will now be perused with the interest which is due to them.

Extracts from Governor Yates' Messages, delivered in 1823 *and* 1824.

"It gives me much pleasure to state, that the canal system, so wisely adopted and successfully pursued in the state, promises to realize the expectations of the community. The convenience already afforded to the inhabitants, by the facility with which the products of the country may be brought to market, has exceeded the most sanguine hopes of its warmest supporters."

"During the last year, the Champlain Canal has been rendered navigable to the Hudson River, at the city of Albany, and the completion of the Erie Canal, the ensuing season or the summer following, is rendered morally certain, so that the period is not distant when we shall fully experience the benefits and important advantages secured to our citizens by this unexampled improvement. A more propitious era, connected with the growth and prosperity of our country, cannot well be imagined; and in taking a retrospective view of the enterprise and patriotism of our predecessors, it is difficult to suppress the most endearing emotions of respect and gratitude, for the memory of those with whom this vastly important and useful project of connecting the western and northern lakes with the waters of the Hudson, first originated. On examining our statute book, we find as early as 1792, within nine years after our revolutionary struggle, and whilst the western and northern parts of the state were a perfect wilderness, a legislature composed almost exclusively of those who had contributed towards achieving our independence, and whose zeal and devotion for their country's good, it seems, did not cease with that memorable event, passing a law incorporating two inland navigation companies, one for the western and another for the northern part of the state, both of which commenced their operations and expended large sums of money. The northern company soon desisted, but the western continued their exertions, although comparatively circumscribed, on account of the situation of the country, and the source from whence their funds were derived. But those incipient measures introduced further inquiry and investigation, and after a great portion of the western and northern parts of the state became inhabited, the subject claimed and received the attention of many of its enterprising citizens, who caused examinations and surveys to be made, which resulted in a conviction that the undertaking was too extensive, and probably not within the reach of private capital, and that this great work could only be accomplished by the state itself. This opinion continued to gain ground, until it became manifest that a large and respectable portion of the citizens were its advocates; and the proper period to forward the views and intentions of its friends and supporters, soon arrived. Measures were accordingly adopted, to proceed the most effectually in the prosecution of the work, and after extinguishing the existing rights of the western inland navigation company, those measures were persevered in, by the people of this state, with ardour and uncommon unanimity; abundantly evinced by the united and uniform support of their representatives, in voting annual appropriations

of sums of money, unusual in amount to be granted within so short a period for the like purpose, by the government of other countries, possessed of much greater and more extensive resources.

"The Champlain Canal having been finished, and the Erie Canal being in operation for upwards of two hundred miles, it is submitted to you, whether independent of providing the necessary means to enable the commissioners to finish the western section, legislative interposition has not become necessary, in conducting the extensive concerns connected with the operation of the system, as far as it has progressed; and to expedite the adjustment of existing claims for damages of meritorious citizens, who have patiently submitted to privations arising out of the necessity of the measure for public good; but from whom a just and equitable remuneration ought no longer to be withheld.

The navigation of the Hudson since the introduction of the canals, has assumed an importance highly interesting to the citizens of this state. The same subject has heretofore been presented to the legislature, and commissioners have been appointed by a law passed for the purpose, to report a plan for improving the navigation of the river. Their report has been received, and appears on the journals. By it, two plans, with estimates of their respective expenses, are given, one for deepening the channel of the river, and the other for a lateral canal for ship navigation; but canalling is recommended as the most efficient plan, if it should be judged that the benefit to be derived from it, is of sufficient magnitude to make its adoption advisable. The report further states, that no extraordinary obstacles are presented to its execution—that the track indicates facilities which were not anticipated before it was minutely explored. The accuracy of estimates, emanating from so respectable a source, cannot be questioned; and the amount of the expenses stated, ought not to be put in competition with the positive advantages to be secured by it to the country. The vast amount of property produced by the soil and by the industry of the western and northern citizens of this state, to be benefited by sales at a market for direct exportation, can readily be anticipated. If congress, therefore, would authorise a small tonnage duty on vessels passing through the contemplated canal, to be exacted by this state until the debt created to complete it, shall be paid off, and suffer such duty to be continued in aid of the funds set apart for the payment of the canal debt, until the final extinguishment of that debt, it would be an object mutually beneficial to the state and to the general government; as no reasonable doubt can be entertained but that the arrangement would in a short time eventuate in a removal of the duties on salt, and in such a diminution of toll as would require a sum, sufficient only to defray the repairs and other expenses, incident to the use of the canal; while congress at the same time would obtain an additional port of entry of considerable importance, and an extensively useful national improvement, without immediately resorting to the public funds for its accomplishment. If it should be deemed expedient to adopt the plan of a lateral ship canal, for the improvement of the navigation as suggested

in the report alluded to, a law might be passed, authorising the prosecution of the work, upon condition that the assent of congress to the collection of such tonnage duties as are specified in the act, should first be obtained by the commissioners named in it, to conduct the construction of the canal.

NOTE FF.—p. 113.

Letter from Nathaniel H. Carter, Esq. to David Hosack, M. D. containing the observations of the Hon. Rufus King, relative to the talents and public services of Governor Clinton.

NEW-YORK, October 28th, 1828.

DEAR SIR,

I take great pleasure in complying with your request, to state the substance of a conversation which I had with the Hon. Rufus King, at his residence in London, on the 24th November, 1825, respecting the late Governor Clinton. American papers had just reached England, containing an account of the Grand Canal celebration on the completion of that great work, and the mingling of the waters of Lake Erie with the ocean. Mr. King appeared to feel as lively an interest as myself in the proceedings; and in his remarks on the festival, he took occasion to pronounce a high and flattering eulogium upon the talents and public services of Mr. Clinton. He expressed much satisfaction, that the plans of that illustrious statesman had at length been fully realised, and that the stupendous enterprise with which his reputation was identified, had been crowned with complete success. He rejoiced that Mr. Clinton had outlived the prejudices and passions of his opponents, and was in the full enjoyment of that popularity and public confidence which he had so justly merited. In a word, Mr. King spoke of the late Governor in terms of the most liberal and unqualified praise. This conversation made a deep impression on my mind, not only as manifesting the opinions and feelings of one distinguished individual towards another, but because I was aware they had never been political friends.

I am, dear Sir, very respectfully, and truly yours,

N. H. CARTER.

DR. DAVID HOSACK.

NOTE GG. HH. and II.—p. 118.

The enemies of Governor Clinton have frequently adduced the charge against him, that his ambition had induced him to claim the whole merit of having originated the canal policy of this state. His answer to the following address from the citizens of Utica, as well as his reply to the address from the citizens of New-York upon his removal as canal commissioner, abundantly vindicate him from that charge.

Congratulatory Address to Governor Clinton, delivered by George Bacon, in behalf of the citizens of Utica, on the 31st October, 1825.

In behalf of the citizens of the village of Utica, we are deputed to tender to your excellency and your honour, to the honourable the board of canal commissioners, and to the various respectable delegations from our citizens elsewhere, who have honoured us with their presence on this auspicious occasion, our heartfelt gratulations on the happy consummation of a great work, which is destined as we trust to form a memorable epoch in the annals of our state, and to diffuse countless blessings to our posterity through remote generations.

The satisfaction which is derived on beholding the triumph of a vast enterprise of public utility, which for a long time struggled for its existence against the heavy tide of prejudice and of error, is at once the richest source of gratification, and the highest reward to a liberal and enlightened mind.

It must afford the most consolatory reflections to your excellency and your honour, to be able to realize that the entire completion of our great chain of inland navigation, will form an era cotemporaneous with your executive administrations of the concerns of this rising state; and that when the conflicting passions of the present day have subsided, and the transient interests of the passing moment shall have lost all their consequence, the great and permanent interests connected with this event, will be identified with those of every citizen of the state; and its authors and projectors enrolled amongst the eminent benefactors of their country.

To the honourable the board of canal commissioners, and to all those distinguished individuals, (many of whom with a Schuyler, a Morris, and a Fulton, now rest from their labours) whose genius has contributed to the projection, or whose counsels or labours have aided in the erection of this splendid trophy of the enterprise and energy of a free people, we tender the deep homage of a people's gratitude, in view of that fortunate and glorious result, which we are this day brought to witness. For fortunate indeed must that citizen be considered,

whose talents and whose services have in any degree contributed to accomplish that which gives him a lasting title to the gratitude of his fellow-citizens, and whose name shall be associated in all future time, with a work surpassing in its usefulness to mankind, the most imposing structures of antiquity; compared with which, in every moral and essential view, the boasted pyramids of Egypt, and the mouldering walls of the Colosseum, can be regarded but as splendid playthings, to minister to the pride and ambition of vain-glorious power.

Inhabitants as most of those around us are, of a district of country which less than half a century since, had hardly felt the permanent impress of a civilized footstep, and to whose occupants the rude barque of the savage then furnished the only idea of navigation; we reciprocate our mutual congratulations that we have lived to witness even at our doors, an extent of navigable communication stretching from our remotest frontier, to the great commercial emporium of our state, equal or superior for all practical purposes, to the first navigable rivers of the globe, or even to those mighty oceans which break upon either shore of our magnificent continent.

As fellow-citizens of this most populous member of our national confederacy, we congratulate you all, that this high enterprise has been commenced, prosecuted and accomplished by the courage, perseverance, and resources of our state alone, unaided by the capital and uncountenanced by the encouragement of any other power, either foreign or domestic.

And by a yet higher and more enlarged title, as Americans, and as citizens of a free representative government, we congratulate you upon the decisive evidence which this imperishable monument will furnish to a doubting world of the sagacity, wisdom, and energy of a free people, in accomplishing, without a burthen, a greater national work, than within the same period, has ever been effected with all the concentrated force of the most unlimited despotism.

Neither the time nor the occasion justify us in adding further to these brief outlines of a picture, which no American patriot can contemplate, without an emotion of honest pride; and no friend of civil freedom without an increased confidence in the entire sufficiency of our free institutions of government, to secure the individual welfare of its citizens, and to exalt and sustain the lasting glory of our country.

——————"Ever may the All-just
Give to the cause of freedom such success."

E. BACON,
J. C. DEVEREUX, } *Committee.*

To which Governor Clinton made the following reply.

Citizens of Utica:—In this flourishing village, which is indebted for much of its prosperity, to the great work that has been the subject of your eloquent eulogium, and animated

congratulation, are now assembled before you, representatives from our great city, and from the rising towns of the west, to mingle their felicitations with yours, and to proceed to our commercial emporium, rejoicing in the great consummation, and tendering the hand of congratulation in their transit of upwards of five hundred miles, from the lakes to the Atlantic ocean, in the first vessels that have attempted this important voyage.

On such an occasion, so worthy the spirit of patriotism, so animating to the friends of republican government, cold and insensible must be that heart that does not feel the force; futile and feeble must be that understanding which does not recognise the weight of your remarks. Indeed, such was the career to be expected from the members of this enlightened and public spirited community. In all the vicissitudes which have marked the destinies of this work, whether in evil or good report, whether in prosperous or adverse fortunes, the citizens of Utica have stood firmly and fearlessly at their posts, its decided and energetic supporters, neither turning to the right nor to the left, nor changing with the tides and currents of public opinion; but vindicating, fearlessly and independently, the great interests of internal improvement. And you can enroll in your numbers, a fellow-citizen, whose purity of character, elevation of purpose, and solidity of intellect, are entitled to the highest consideration. In the commencement of this work, he was a prominent and efficient friend, and when it had sunk, irretrievably sunk, in the general estimation, he was greatly instrumental in its resuscitation, and probably prevented its final overthrow.*

For the good which has been done by individuals or communities, in relation to this work, let each have a due share of credit: over the evil which has been perpetrated, let a veil of oblivion be drawn. Let the unfriendly feelings which have sprung from those collisions, be merged in a spirit of conciliation and kindness. Let the dark shades of the past be extinguished in the brilliant enjoyment of the present, and the splendid visions of the future.

Accept our sincere thanks for the manifestations of kindness, always gratifying from meritorious sources, and particularly so on the present occasion; and we humbly supplicate the Creator and Father of the Universe, to expand your prosperity, with the prosperity of our beloved country, and to render both as lasting as the great waters that are now connected by the most important communication, and most stupendous work in the world.

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* This happy and appropriate allusion relates to Judge Platt, who was an early and active friend of the great system of internal improvement, and who in the hour of its adversity, came forth boldly and fearlessly in its support, and contributed very essentially to its final adoption and triumph.

NOTE JJ.—p. 119.

Mr. Clinton, in his reply to the committee appointed by the citizens of New-York, to express their sentiments relative to his removal as a canal commissioner, notices the important services that had been rendered by the surveyors and engineers in exploring and examining the country, and in the performance of the duties that devolved upon them in their several capacities. While the labours of the Surveyor-General, James Geddes, and Joseph Ellicott, are rewarded and gratefully acknowledged by the people of this state, those of Judge Wright and of Canvas White, which are perhaps less extensively known, will more fully appear in the following communication, with which I have been favoured, in reply to my request to obtain the information it conveys.

Letter from Judge Wright to David Hosack, M. D.

NEW-YORK, Dec. 31, 1828.

DEAR SIR,

In answer to your favour requesting general information as to all the incidents and several transactions in which I took a part, in the canal policy of the state of New-York, and also as to all matters relative to the improvements of the interior navigation of the state, which had taken place previous to the state commencing operations on their own account, I with great pleasure give you all within my knowledge.

In the year 1791, Major Hardenburgh came to Fort Stanwix (now Rome) to make a survey for a cut or canal, (under the direction of the Surveyor-General) from Mohawk River to Wood Creek; and as I resided in the neighbourhood, and was then a country surveyor of new lands, he sent for me to assist in running certain lines, to ascertain distances between certain points, in order to get a correct topography of the country, while he carried on his level over the proposed route.

This duty was performed by order of a legislative act or resolution of the previous session.

The report of Major Hardenburgh, upon his whole plan and estimate of expense, can be found, no doubt, in the public offices at Albany.

Being at that day very young and inexperienced as a civil engineer, I knew nothing at that time of the merits of his plan. I can now, however, perfectly recollect the outlines,

and can say with great assurance, that the project was only one of those temporary expedients in improvements which are only to answer for a short period, and to be superseded by more durable, permanent, and useful works.

Nothing more was done until after the charter granted to the Western Inland Lock Navigation Company in 1792—93, who commenced their operation at the Little Falls, on the Mohawk River. After completing their works at that place, they commenced operations at Fort Stanwix, in 1796. Mr. William Weston, a gentleman from England, was then the engineer employed by that company.

Being at this time engaged in surveying large tracts of new lands in the counties of Oneida, Oswego, Jefferson, and Lewis, I took no part in any of the operations going on under the direction of Mr. Weston.

After Mr. Weston had completed the improvements at Rome, or Fort Stanwix, and a short cut and two locks at German Flatts, in Herkimer county, which was completed about the year 1798—99, he soon after returned to England, his native country.

In 1802, the Western Inland Lock Navigation Company determined upon improving the navigation of Wood Creek from near Fort Stanwix to a small tributary stream six miles westerly, called Little Canada Creek. In this distance there was a descent of nearly twenty-four feet, and the navigation very indifferent and troublesome. The plan decided upon was by means of dams and locks, of which they constructed four in the distance above mentioned. George Huntington, Esq. of Rome, was their agent, and I was their engineer.

After locating and determining all that was necessary for these works, the gentlemen composing the board of directors, of which General Schuyler was president, and Robert Bowne and Thomas Eddy two very prominent and active members, were so well satisfied with my manner of executing the duties of civil engineer, that they directed me to make a traverse and regular survey, ground plan, and profile of the Wood Creek, from the point at Little Canada Creek, before mentioned (where the improvements of 1802 ended) down to the Oneida Lake, where Wood Creek empties its waters. This I performed in the spring of 1803.

Immediately on completing my work on Wood Creek, and returning the maps, plans, reports, &c. I received further directions from the president and directors to commence a survey of the Mohawk River from Fort Stanwix to Schenectady—" taking a regular traverse of the river, so as to show all its windings, its breadth, the descent in each rapid, and the descent between rapids, the depth of water in the channel at each rapid, and the depth in each pool between rapids at its lowest summer drought, the height of alluvial banks and all other remarks and observations which I might think useful."—" And as a final duty, to strike out my own plan of improving the river in as cheap and economical a manner as possible, and one adapted to the situation and circumstances of the company."

This duty I performed in 1803, by recommending a compound of dams, locks, and short canals, so as to make a slack water navigation upon the cheapest possible and useful plan. Unfortunately the pecuniary affairs of the company never permitted them to carry any part of the proposed plan into effect.

Things remained in their then state until the resolution of Judge Forman, in February, 1808, in the Assembly, he being at that time a member from Onondaga county, and myself a member from Oneida. We roomed together in company with General McNiel, a colleague of mine.

Judge Forman and myself were subscribers to Rees' Cyclopedia, and we received that winter, in an early part of the session, the sixth volume of that work, containing the article "Canal." We also read a long and able report published in a newspaper, made by a committee of the legislature of Pennsylvania, wherein it was recommended in strong terms, that that state should make a first-rate road from some proper point towards Philadelphia, where it could be connected with an existing good road, and carry it to some proper point near the north line of the state, where it would lead to what was then called the "Genesee country" of the state of New-York, and urging as a reason, that Philadelphia was so much nearer to that part of the state of New-York than any large commercial town in New-York state, that therefore the trade might be directed, and would, with little exertion, centre in Philadelphia, from all that part of New-York. Tioga Point was considered as the place where this road was to approach the New-York line.

Upon reading this, Judge Forman observed that something ought to be done to prevent the people of Pennsylvania from drawing away the trade of our state, and suggested that as Mr. Jefferson, the then President of the United States, had recommended the surplus monies in the treasury to be expended on roads and canals, he was for making a canal to Lake Erie. I told him I could give him much light upon the matter, as far as Oneida Lake, as I had surveyed and levelled over all between Schenectady and Oneida Lake, and knew well the country between the Oneida Lake and Lake Ontario at Oswego. Judge Forman observed, that he was for going directly to Lake Erie without touching Lake Ontario; and after conversing a while, he proposed a resolution which he would introduce, and I agreed to second it. He accordingly introduced it, and being a joint resolution, it laid upon the table one day, according to rule.

I well recollect the surprise and astonishment of many members, and by whose look and manner it was easily seen that they considered it a wild, visionary project, but after conversing with many of them, they rather wished the information which the resolution, if acted upon, would elicit; but when a clause was introduced into the supply bill making an appropriation for the expense, it was filled with one thousand dollars in the assembly, and when it went into the senate, they reduced it to six hundred dollars, which was all that could be obtained. This was to be expended under the direction of the Surveyor-General. He

employed Judge Geddes, who resided at Onondaga, and had a better local knowledge of the part of the country then to be examined, than perhaps any other person, as he had been a surveyor of lands for many years.

Judge Geddes spent the season of 1808, and part of 1809, in obtaining information; and the local knowledge he obtained for the above sum, together with seventy dollars in addition, led to a final plan of what could be done as to a canal from Lake Erie through the country, without going into Ontario.

Things remained without further acts or examination, until the formation of a board of commissioners of seven, in the session of the legislature of 1810, when Governeur Morris, De Witt Clinton, Thomas Eddy, Simeon De Witt, Stephen Van Rensselaer, William North, and Peter B. Porter, were appointed, and made their excursion and examination through the western part of the state. This year, 1810, I took no part in the examination, as my engagements on the St. Lawrence confined me to that part of the country nearly the whole season.

This examination of the commissioners, resulted in their famous report of an inclined plane from Lake Erie to near Albany. This plan of the inclined plane was not approved of by public opinion, and further examination took place in 1811. In this year I was directed to make an examination on the north side of the Mohawk River, from Rome to Waterford, on the Hudson. My instructions and report, are in Appendix to Canal Documents, Vol. I. p. 531.

In 1812, I received instructions to examine the country from Seneca Lake to Rome, and from thence on the south side of the Mohawk River to Albany. My instructions directed me to pursue a level from Rome, ten feet below the level of the old canal at that place, and carry that level to Seneca River near Montezuma. This I did; but it was found to be too crooked and serpentine, and the distance increased so much more than the present plan, as it is now executed, that it was abandoned.

My instructions from Rome eastward, along the valley of the Mohawk and thence to Albany, were to strike out such plan for a canal as I thought best. In this examination it became very important for me to find out how a canal could be carried over the Pine Plains between Schenectady and Albany, and I searched and examined every part of this plain, and levelled over it in different directions, between Troy and Schenectady, between Albany and up the Patroon Creek, through the Shaker settlement at Niskayuna. Also between the valley of the Mohawk near Schenectady, and Norman's Kill, which falls into the Hudson two miles below Albany. In this examination I found every part of this plain elevated from 130 to 200 feet above the Mohawk at Schenectady.

My report, accompanied by maps and profiles for the year 1812, was very full. They are, I believe, lost, as I have never been able to find them since. The war having commenced, nothing more was done until 1816, when the act passed forming a new board of commissioners, and appropriating 20,000 dollars to make surveys and estimates. That part of the

line between Rome and Seneca River was assigned to me; and the report of the canal commissioners of 1817, gives a copy of my report and estimate of expense of that part of the canal. In the session of 1817, the work was authorised to commence; and the middle section, as it was called, was put under my charge, extending from Utica to Seneca River at Montezuma.

I was at the head of the engineers while this work was going on and until completed; and then the work from Seneca River westerly, to Genesee River, was under my direction; and when this was laid out and in progress, the eastern division from Utica to Albany was commenced, and I had the charge of that part also until completed in 1823.

Here it is proper that I should render a just tribute of merit to a gentleman who now stands high in his profession, and whose skill and sound judgment as a civil engineer is not surpassed, if equalled, by any other in the United States. The gentleman to whom I refer, is Canvass White, Esq. Mr. White commenced as my pupil in 1816, by carrying the target; he took an active part through that year, and through 1817. In the fall of the latter year, he made a voyage to England on his own account, and purchased for the state several levelling instruments, of which we stood much in need. He returned in the spring, and brought back much valuable information which he has usefully diffused, and greatly to the benefit of the state of New-York. To this gentleman I could always apply for counsel and advice in any great and difficult case: and to his sound judgment in locating the line of canal in much of the difficult part of the route, the people of this state are under obligations greater than is generally known or appreciated.

These, my dear sir, are the outlines of all the incidents relating to the improvements by canal or river navigation in New-York, in which I took part, excepting a map and general plan of the country from Albany to Oswego, on Lake Ontario, showing the topography and connection of the waters, and remarks and observations thereon, which I made by request of George Huntington, Esq. to whom Mr. Gallatin applied in 1807 for information; this was forwarded by Mr. Huntington.

There are many little things which have taken place, by correspondence with various persons touching these subjects, which are not material to your views.

With great respect and esteem,

I am, dear sir, truly your obedient servant,

BENJAMIN WRIGHT.

Dr. David Hosack.

NOTE KK.—p. 124.

Meeting of the Bar in New-York.

Immediately after the death of Mr. Clinton, public meetings of the learned professions, and of almost every class of citizens, were called to express their sense of the loss sustained by his demise, and their respect for his memory. The members of the profession of the law in the cities of Albany, New-York, and other parts of the state, were severally convened to bear their testimony to the merits of the deceased.

Court of Common Pleas.

The court commenced its usual sittings to-day, and was opened at 11 o'clock by His Hon. Judge Irving, who addressed the gentlemen of the bar who were present, as follows:

As the bar of this city will assemble in this court room to-day, at twelve o'clock, to express their sense of the loss which this state has sustained in the decease of its late Governor, who has so suddenly been called from a life of great worth, and public usefulness; the court duly appreciating such services, and such loss, is adjourned until eleven o'clock to-morrow morning.

At a numerous meeting of the members of the New-York Bar, assembled in the Supreme Court-room of the City-Hall, on motion of Josiah Ogden Hoffman, Esq. Chancellor Kent was appointed chairman of the meeting, and Silvanus Miller, Esq. was appointed secretary.

Mr. Hoffman then moved the following preamble and resolutions.

The members of the bar of the city of New-York, assembled to express their sense of the public calamity occasioned by the death of DE WITT CLINTON, resolved unanimously:—

That they deeply unite in the voice of sorrow this afflicting dispensation has called forth, not only from the hearts of his family and friends, but from public bodies, scientific, religious and charitable institutions, the tribunals of justice, and the legislative councils of the state, who each felt a portion of its character and usefulness identified with his name, and each of which mourns the loss as peculiarly its own.

That the death of such a man in the fulness of his acquirements, the strength of his intellect, and when his country anticipated still further exertions for its welfare and happiness, of which the present and enduring monuments of his genius and constancy had afforded full assurance, is a bereavement greatly deplored by the state he exalted, and the age he adorned.

Resolved, That the bar of this city, as a tribute of respect to the memory of the deceased, and in testimony of their heartfelt regret, will wear mourning during the present session of the legislature.

Resolved, That the proceedings of this meeting be signed by the chairman and secretary, and published in the different newspapers.

Mr. Griffin seconded the resolutions, and in the following brief but eloquent address, adverted to the public and private virtues of his Excellency the Governor.

Mr. Chairman:—It is no ordinary death that has called us together. When such an individual as a Canning or a Clinton dies, we mourn, not as members of a particular profession, or a particular community, but as members of the great family of man. It is a bereaved world that feels the loss.

Our lamented Clinton was a character whom the worthies of antiquity would cheerfully have named as a brother. Possessed of a peculiarly commanding person, and a more commanding mind—a mind richly stored with the treasures of ancient and modern learning, and animated by an ambition lofty and inflexible, it is true, yet identified with the glory of his country,—wise in deliberation, unbending in purpose, determined in action,—nature and education formed him to be one of the master-spirits of the age in which he lived. The Pericles of our commonwealth, for near thirty years he exercised, without stooping to the little arts of popularity, an intellectual dominion in his native state scarcely inferior to that of the illustrious Athenian—a dominion as benignant as it was effective. He was the supporter of every charitable and religious institution—the encourager of every science and every art. Not confining his literary patronage to the artist and the scholar, he also devoted the powers of his mighty mind to the less brilliant, but not less useful, subject of common education. Feeling the truth of the great political axiom, that virtue and information, widely diffused, are the only sure pillars of a republican government, he zealously promoted every object calculated to meliorate the moral condition of the state, and laboured, with untiring assiduity, to irradiate the general mind with the light of knowledge.

About eighteen years ago, the then unformed project of our great canal, was whispered by some supposed enthusiast. The intimation reached the ear of our departed statesman. It was a subject worthy of his mind: his perception intuitive, bold, and comprehensive, saw it in all its bearings. If the enterprise should fail, it must, as he well knew, bring bankruptcy on the state, and ruin on its patron. Timidity bade him desist;—cold and calculating policy cautioned him to stand aloof until the success of the experiment was tried. But he was not a timid, nor a cold calculating politician. He foresaw that the enterprise, if successful, would crown the commonwealth with unparalleled prosperity and imperishable glory. Knowing that nothing could give it a chance of success but the influence of his own great name, he cheerfully and cordially perilled his earthly hopes on the issue of the dubious undertak-

ing. He became its avowed patron; and regardless of the despondency of the timid, and the cavils of the prejudiced, with an inflexibility of purpose, and a disinterestedness of motive, worthy of the proudest page of Roman story, he continued for fifteen years its indefatigable and efficient, though unremunerated, guardian and protector. But, thanks to the great Disposer of events, he lived to witness its complete success;—to see, under his own auspices, in spite of the obstacles interposed by nature and the greater obstacles interposed by man, the inland oceans of the west, conducted in proud triumph to the bosom of the deep, and the prosperity of his country rendered as enduring as its rivers and its lakes.

Such is the man whom our state may well bewail. Such is the man who has sunk in the midst of his renown. But his fame survives; it belongs to posterity. The American historian will transmit it to succeeding generations, brightening as it descends, and encompassed with a blaze of glory, perhaps only inferior to that of the Father of his country.

The resolutions were then put by the chairman, and unanimously adopted.

JAMES KENT, *Chairman.*
SILVANUS MILLER, *Secretary.*

NOTE.—p. 125.

Upon no occasion were the sensibility and agitation of Mr. Clinton, in the delivery of his public discourses here referred to, more manifested than in his oration pronounced at the request of the Alumni of Columbia College in 1827. Having obtained an analysis of that Discourse, from the editors of the Commercial Advertiser, to whom, on the day of its delivery, Mr. Clinton loaned the manuscript, I have it in my power to present to the public the following outline of that production, and the remarks which accompanied it.

Analysis of Governor Clinton's Discourse delivered before the Alumni of Columbia College.

The third anniversary of the associated Alumni of Columbia College, was celebrated yesterday, (May 3.) The hour for the delivery of the address was twelve o'clock, and the chapel of the College, including the galleries, was punctually filled by a fashionable assemblage of ladies and gentlemen, including the faculty of the College, the trustees, students, residents, graduates, &c. The exercises were commenced with an appropriate prayer by the Reverend Professor M'Vickar.

His Excellency Governor Clinton then rose and pronounced a discourse which occupied nearly an hour, and was listened to with deep interest and uninterrupted attention. The subject of his address, was a rapid history of the rise, progress, and present condition of his Alma Mater, interspersed with notices of its officers and professors, and some of the more prominent men whose names adorn its catalogue of graduates, and concluding with some happy thoughts upon the state of education in our country, and suggestions for its extension and improvement.

In his preliminary remarks, the distinguished orator first adverted to the pleasures and advantages of intellectual communities, in the republic of letters; more especially of those votaries of the arts and sciences, disciples of the same great seminary, who have derived their mental aliment from a common parent, and who have received their education from the same source. Speaking of the present occasion, he said he knew of no assemblage better calculated so to awaken the enthusiasm of their youthful days, and to brighten the rays of their setting sun, than a convention of the members of three generations under the protecting roof of their Alma Mater, at the altars of science and literature—to recall to their recollections the transporting scenes of their youthful collegiate lives, and to realise and renew those friendships which were formed in youth, and will last as long as the pulsations of the heart, and the operations of memory.

In commencing the principal subject of the discourse, the orator quoted the continuation of Smith's History of New-York, which has lately been given to the world by the historical Society of this city. The germ of the college was a Free School, established in 1732, for teaching the Latin and Greek tongues, and the practical branches of mathematics, under the care of Mr. Alexander Malcolm, of Aberdeen. The enterprise was patronised by the Morris family, Mr. Alexander, and Mr. Smith, who petitioned the assembly upon the subject. Such was the negligence of the day, that the teacher could not find bread from the voluntary contributions of the inhabitants, although examples had been set in New-England, where colleges had been endowed early in the last century. The bill for founding this school was brought in by Mr. Delancey, and had this singular preamble:—"Whereas, the youth of this colony are found by manifold experience to be not inferior in their natural geniuses to those of any other country in the world, Therefore be it enacted," &c. From this the orator remarked that even at that early period it was thought necessary to vindicate our country against the degenerating and debasing qualities which have since been so liberally imputed to it by Buffon, Robertson, and others. In touching upon these puny efforts of flimsy philosophers, however, the orator wished permission to say that he could not reconcile the sensibility which we have manifested under such vituperations, with the respect which we owe to our country; charges so unfounded being beneath the dignity of refutation. The country which has been called the land of swamps, of yellow fever, and universal

suffrage, requires no advocate but truth, and no friend but justice, to place it at the highest elevation of triumphant vindication.

The school was the harbinger of more enlarged views, and more elevated establishments; and at length, in 1754, the charter of King's College was obtained. In four years afterwards it was sufficiently matured to confer degrees. The city then contained but 10,000 inhabitants, and the whole colony but half the population of the city of New-York at the present day. The faculty was composed of very able men; but after a brief career of eighteen years, during which about one hundred degrees were conferred, the college was broken up by the American Revolution. On a rapid inspection of the catalogue of this period, the orator said he was persuaded that the truth of the legislative preamble was clearly established, and that in no period of time, nor in any country, had an institution existed, so fertile of enlightened and able men, within so short a time, and among so small a population.

The orator next proceeded to notice some of the most prominent of these men, among whom were Samuel Provost, Samuel Seabury, Benjamin Moore, Isaac Wilkins, and others. The three first of these attained the honours of the mitre; and Wilkins was a distinguished writer at the commencement of the revolution. Among the enlightened jurists who sprung from this institution within the period before spoken of, the names of John Jay, Robert R. Livingston, Gouverneur Morris, Richard Harison, Peter Van Schaick, and Robert Troup, were mentioned "with pride and pleasure." The three first were distinguished in the public councils at the commencement of the revolution; Livingston was one of the committee which drafted the Declaration of Independence; Jay took a leading part in the celebrated state papers which emanated from the old congress, which drew forth the celebrated panegyric from the great Chatham, and which Johnson, the colossus of British literature, undertook to answer. After paying a high tribute to the talents, learning, character and services of the great men above named respectively, the name of "that great man," Hamilton, was introduced, who was a student of this college before the revolution, but before he could obtain his academic honours it was broken up. In speaking of this distinguished patriot, the orator related an anecdote, at once illustrative of his amiable disposition, his firmness, and his independence. He was greatly attached to his preceptor, President Cooper, who favoured the royal cause. The peace of the city was troubled by the conflicts of contending parties. A mob collected before the college door, and had marked Dr. Cooper out as an object of aggression. Hamilton threw himself between the people and his preceptor, addressed the former from the vestibule of the building, and delayed their progress until his friend had time to escape from their fury.

Of learning, said the orator, it may be remarked as of law:—"*Inter arma leges silet.*"—In the revolutionary conflict, the interests of education were almost entirely neglected. The

college was broken up, the building converted into an hospital, and the only classical school, to which young men could repair in the pursuit of knowledge, was the Academy at Kingston.

Having thus taken a distant view of this institution, the orator proceeded to sketch its late history—a task gratifying at once to the pride and filial affection of the alumni. The war of independence over, the attention of our statesmen and patriots was directed to the revival of letters, and the establishment of the temple of freedom upon the foundation of knowledge. In 1784, the board of "Regents of the University" was established, clothed with a superintending power over Columbia College, and all future colleges and academies. This board was composed of the principal officers of the government, and of distinguished citizens. On the 17th of May of that year, the first student was admitted into the college under the new order of things. The board of regents personally attended at the examination of the candidates for admission; and, the speaker said, he might, perhaps, without the imputation of vanity, be permitted to remark, that he was the first student, so examined, and among the first graduates. Instructors were appointed, and apartments for the accommodation of the college were furnished in the old City Hall, until the college building was refitted for use. No president was appointed for some years afterwards, and it was deemed expedient to resort to Europe for teachers. William Cochran, a native of Ireland, and an alumnus of Trinity College, Dublin, was appointed Professor of the Latin and Greek languages; and John Kemp, graduate of Marischal College, Aberdeen, Professor of Mathematics, and afterwards of Natural Philosophy.—The Rev. Dr. Moore, afterwards Bishop, was appointed Professor of Rhetoric and Logic; Dr. J. D. Gros, a German by birth and education, Professor of the German Language and Geography, and afterwards of Moral Philosophy. Dr. Samuel Bard, who had been professor of the theory and practice of medicine under the royal charter, undertook to fill, temporarily, the office of Natural Philosophy and Astronomy. The speaker took a rapid sketch of the character and attainments of each of the professors, and his notices of Dr. Gros and Dr. Bard were highly interesting. The former had emigrated to this country before the war, and resided upon the frontier, where in those times of peril and alarm, he stood forth with the bible in one hand and the sword in the other, in the united character of patriot and christian, vindicating the liberties of mankind. An exalted tribute of praise was bestowed upon the memory of Dr. Bard, of whom it was said—"as long as literature has a friend, and science an advocate, the name of Samuel Bard will be identified with some of the best and wisest measures to spread the benefits of the healing art, to diffuse the lights of knowledge, and subserve the essential interests of our country." Glancing along in reference to the new and prosperous career of the college, the names of Peter Wilson, and Dr. Henry Moyes, were introduced: the former, eminent for his learning, was appointed Professor of Latin and Greek, and the latter of Natural History and Chemistry. Dr. Moyes was blind, yet his lectures were popular, and he had the merit of sowing the first seeds of this science in our country, redeemed from the follies of Alchemy, the visions of elixirs and transmutations, and founded on the experimental science of Bacon.

In 1787, the regents were divested of the immediate government of the colleges and academies, and the same was intrusted to boards of trustees. In 1786, the first commencement was held, and the first degrees conferred. The population of the city was then 24,000 —it is now 130,000. The population of the whole state has multiplied in the same ratio, which, by a singular coincidence, is the fact with regard to the cities of London and Philadelphia.

After reviewing the career of the college, and speaking of its increasing numbers and extending usefulness, notwithstanding the many difficulties it has had to encounter from pre-established colleges, on each side (Yale and Nassau Hall)—from rival institutions, and from sectarian jealousy—the speaker remarked that it is since the college has been under professors of native growth, that it has experienced its present fulness of prosperity. And although he expressed his perfect contempt of unworthy prejudices against foreigners, yet he gave his strong and decided preference for native teachers: not from any defects of their character, or education, but because they do not understand the American character—nay, reside here for years, and yet remain as ignorant of it as when they first landed on our shores. The sturdy spirit of liberty which distinguishes our youth, will not tolerate the stern infliction of exotic discipline. The president, and all the professors of the college, are now indigenous plants, and their talents and powers of instruction, are felt in the flourishing state of the institution. Never did it stand on higher ground, and never were its prospects more brilliant. And he argued that from the numerous advantages of its location; the facilities of access to the city from every direction; its rapid growth, and the prospect that it will within a century, extend over the whole island and the adjacent shores, the institution must continue to grow and flourish—unless some extraordinary calamity should derange the natural course of events, and blight its fairest prospects—until Columbia College shall stand upon an equal footing with the most celebrated universities of the old world.

The speaker next adverted to the means of education now in successful operation in this state. We have four colleges, containing 437 students; thirty-three incorporated academies, containing 2,440 students; 3144 common schools, in which 431,601 persons are receiving instruction: and the pupils in private institutions it is computed will swell this number to at least 460,000. From the apex to the base of this glorious pyramid of intellectual improvement, we perceive an intimacy of connexion, an identity of interest, a unanimity of action and re-action, a system of reciprocated benefits, that cannot but fill us with joy, and make us proud of our country. The National School Society of Great Britain, educates but 300,000 children annually; and while it is cause of exultation that there is no state or country that can vie with our common school establishment, the orator expressed his regret that as much could not be said of the merits of its teachers. Upon this part of his subject, the Governor made a number of valuable suggestions in regard to our want of a corps of educated instructors, of gratuitous instruction in our colleges and academies, &c. Some

of the considerations here presented, have repeatedly been pressed upon the attention of the Legislature, but unfortunately with very little effect. The conclusion of this part of the theme was so happy, that we will quote the passage entire :—" The *dii minorum* of learning, ought to be elevated in the scale of public estimation and intellectual endowment; for from their hands the rude materials of the mind must receive their first polish of usefulness and improvement; and their depots of instruction, like the speaking bird of Asiatic fiction, which gathers around it all the singing birds of the land, ought to contain all the youth of our country who are fit for improvement. Like the indicator of ornithology, that leads the way to the collected honey of the forest, they must and will conduct us to the highest enjoyment of knowledge. They will act to us as pioneers to delights, which nothing but intellectual pursuits can communicate."

From this branch of his theme, the orator returned to his Alma Mater, and spoke with approbation of its course of studies; the exact sciences, and political economy being sedulously attended to, as well as classical literature. Dwelling for a moment upon the value of college acquisitions in after life, though net called into immediate or frequent uso in the every-day pursuits of man, and illustrating his premises by striking instances in point, he proceeded to pronounce a severe and merited sentence of condemnation upon that class of society, which explodes all kinds of knowledge not founded on personal experience—who believe that the less one reads, the more he thinks; and that the less he understands, the better he can act; that education beyond the precincts of common schools is aristocratical, and incompatible with our principles of equality, &c.; and that, above all things, the true statesman ought to be like the genuine empiric, and rely exclusively upon his own experience and observation for his chart and compass. Our readers will probably read this with amazement; not dreaming that we have any in the land who entertain such views. But they are mistaken. More than once have we heard these doctrines advanced in our legislative halls, when attempts were making to endow a college or an academy, and generally such arguments were successful. For the honour of our country, however, as the orator truly remarked, their numbers are diminishing, and as our country advances in her career of light, they will be extinguished in the lustre of her radiated and reflected glory. The benefits of education have been gradually rising in human estimation, from those dark days when kings could not write their own names, and when those who could write their names were exempted from the punishment of death, until the present time. Those vampires of the mind, who derived their aliment from human ignorance, are now viewed in their true colours; and as a refulgent light maintains the same splendour when it illumines a wider space, so does intellectual improvement, the fountain of national greatness, enlarge and extend itself without being displaced; and contrary to the general laws of nature, the wider it spreads the stronger it grows.

The peroration of this admirable discourse, of which we are conscious we have given but

a very imperfect outline, was appropriate and happy; and when it is published, it will be found to reflect equal credit upon the head and heart of the distinguished writer. It was listened to with unmingled satisfaction; and those who heard it will hardly credit the assertion, that it was commenced on Monday, and written during the odds and ends of time at the Governor's disposal, between the forenoon of that day and Wednesday. The general subject, however, was one upon which the author delights to dwell, and every word came warm from the heart.

Proceedings of the Alumni of Columbia College upon the death of Governor Clinton.

The association of the Alumni of Columbia College, having heard with deep sorrow, of the death of their illustrious associate De Witt Clinton, late Governor of the state, deem it proper for them to make a public declaration of their sentiments and feelings on this mournful event. Therefore,

Resolved unanimously, at a general meeting held at the College Hall on Tuesday, February 19th, That the Alumni of Columbia College, while they mingle their sorrow with that of their fellow-citizens for the loss of their Chief Magistrate, whose elevated policy has eminently contributed to raise the glory, and promote the prosperity of the state, do yet feel themselves especially called upon to deplore his loss, as the enlightened and liberal patron of education and science; as the zealous and steady friend of the college, and its earliest alumnus after the termination of the war of independence.

Resolved, That in testimony of Mr. Clinton's eminent talents and virtues, and of their sincere sorrow for his death, the alumni will wear crape on the left arm for thirty days.

Resolved, That a copy of Mr. Clinton's last year's address to the alumni be procured for publication, and that the same be forthwith put to press.

Resolved, That the standing committee be empowered to carry the above resolution into effect, and also to adopt such further measures as may best express the sentiments of respect entertained by the alumni for the memory of their highly distinguished associate.

Resolved, That the chairman transmit to the family of Mr. Clinton a copy of the proceedings of this meeting, together with the expression of the sincere condolence of the alumni, for the severe bereavement which the family have suffered. By order of the meeting,

ROBERT TROUP, *Chairman.*

JAMES T. WATSON, *Secretary.*

NOTE LL.—p. 131.

Believing that the reader will feel an interest in knowing all the circumstances attending the last moments of Governor Clinton, the author is induced to give a place to the following communications, which were addressed to him immediately after the decease of his friend. While those letters convey many particulars connected with his death, they serve to show the deep and acute feeling which pervaded every member of the community, and that all political differences were merged in the great respect, universally entertained, for the value of the life and services of the deceased.

Letter from John James, M. D. the family physician of Governor Clinton.

ALBANY, Feb. 11, 1828.—Monday Evening, 12 o'clock.

DEAR SIR,

Your apprehensions have been too soon realized. The Governor expired at half past six o'clock this evening. During the morning he rode several miles in a carriage, and had been apparently as well as usual until a few moments before he expired. While the Governor was engaged in his study, Mr. Charles Clinton observed him to lean backward in his chair, as if distressed for breath, and before he could cross the room to his assistance, he expired without a struggle.

Very respectfully yours, &c.

JOHN JAMES.

Dr. DAVID HOSACK.

Letter from Rensselaer Gansevoort, M. D.

ALBANY, Feb. 11, 1828.—Monday Evening, 8 o'clock.

DEAR SIR,

The pride and ornament of our country is no more! Your early friend and associate, Governor Clinton, died this evening about 7 o'clock. Being present a very few minutes after his dissolution, I will briefly state the facts that fell under my own observation, and such as I have learned from the family. At 11 o'clock, he rode out with Mrs. Clinton and others of the family; returned at one, dined at his usual hour, and retired to his study: took tea at a quarter past six, again retired to his room, and, a few minutes after, while sitting in his chair and conversing with his sons, he complained of an oppression about the

region of the heart. A glass of water was handed him, which he drank. After this five minutes may have elapsed, when his son observed his head gradually incline upon his chest. Independent of this, no change of posture, or the least alteration of feature, ensued. Life had deserted its citadel! Upon the most careful and repeated examination, no pulse was discovered at the arm, or the least action at the heart. The means adopted towards resuscitation proved abortive.

That his death was the result of a chronic disease of the heart, is evident. Touching the nature of that disease, I am not prepared to hazard an opinion.

Some of the Governor's family, and a few of his friends, express the belief that he evinced symptoms of slight indisposition for a number of days previous to his death—still he was daily engaged in his domestic and official duties.

In haste, I am, Sir, very respectfully, yours,

RENSSELAER GANSEVOORT.

DAVID HOSACK, M. D.

Letter from the Honourable Luther Bradish, Member of the Legislature.

ALBANY, Feb. 11, 1828.—Monday Evening, half-past 7, A. M.

MY DEAR SIR,

After the very explicit opinion you confidently expressed to me, while here, of the situation of Governor Clinton, you will not be surprised when I announce to you his death, which took place about half an hour since. He had taken an unusually long ride in the morning: dined with his family and a few friends, and when they had withdrawn, retired to his library, where he expired, almost immediately, sitting in his chair. Thus has passed from among us one, whom, when the little short-lived feelings and views of party shall have passed away, history will record among the great and distinguished of our country. Three of the faculty were called in on the occasion, Doctors Beck, Bay, and James; one of whom I understand, has declared the immediate cause of his death to have been the rupture of a blood vessel about the heart. Recollecting the opinion confidently expressed by you while here, and believing that opinion to be correct, I hope a surgical examination of the body will take place; should this be the case, I will communicate to you the result. We regret exceedingly your absence at this moment.

I am, dear Sir, with great truth, yours, &c.

LUTHER BRADISH.

DR. DAVID HOSACK.

Letter from the Honourable Francis Granger, a Member of the Legislature.

ALBANY, Feb. 11, 1828.—Monday Evening, 8 o'clock.

DEAR SIR,

The city is in consternation. Governor Clinton died this evening at seven o'clock, while in his chair, in his study. How soon your fearful forebodings have been realized!

Your friend,

FRANCIS GRANGER.

DAVID HOSACK, M. D.

Letter from the Honourable Robert Bogardus, a Member of the Legislature.

ALBANY, Feb. 13, 1828. Wednesday Evening, 8 o'clock.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I send you the arrangement of the funeral of our late great friend, for whose death you prepared me.

Your last words, "that you never should see him again, and that his death would be instantaneous, and sooner than I appeared to expect," had not lost their impression, before a hasty messenger came to me, exclaiming—Clinton is dead!

Many may regret they were not, but who can regret they were, his friends?

Yours,

ROBERT BOGARDUS.

DAVID HOSACK, M. D.

NOTE MM.—p. 132.

The numerous public testimonials of respect paid to the memory of Governor Clinton, throughout the state and nation, would of themselves compose a volume of inordinate size. The author, therefore, from a regard to the limits which are usually prescribed to works of this nature, and indeed which he fears he has already exceeded, is compelled to omit many of those details which relate to the decease, the funeral obsequies, and the expressions of

respect, for the memory of Mr. Clinton, and to confine himself to a brief sketch of the proceedings of the legislature, those of the common council of the cities of Albany and New-York, a reference to the tributes of regard, not heretofore noticed in this work, which have been presented by some of the public institutions with which Governor Clinton had been connected.

Proceedings of the Legislature of New-York.

On the morning of the 12th February, agreeably to the adjournment of the preceding day, the senate and assembly were convened in their respective chambers, and the session opened with an appropriate prayer by the chaplain, referring to the dispensation of divine providence in the removal of the governor of the state.

IN ASSEMBLY.

After prayer by the Rev. Mr. Young, Mr. Butler* rose, and thus addressed the speaker of the house.

Mr. Speaker:—It seems to devolve upon me, as the representative of this city, to call the attention of the house to that awful event, which, since our last sitting, has shrouded this metropolis in mourning. Death has been among us! and he has aimed at no common mark. By one of those signal displays of his power which illustrate the supremacy of the Almighty, and the nothingness of man, he has cut down one not only pre-eminent in station, but most conspicuous for talents and public services. How inscrutable are the ways of Providence! It seems but as yesterday, since we were called to lament the death of an adopted son, whose eloquence created an era in our history, and whose virtues and talents rendered him an ornament alike to the old world and the new; and now, when the tears shed for Emmet are scarcely dried, another—his appointed eulogist—has like him been stricken down, in the fulness of his fame and on the very field of his renown—and that, too, ere he had performed the sad but honourable duty to which he had been called.

In the resolutions which I shall have the honour to submit, I have endeavoured to express the common feelings of this house and of the community. Before they are read, I shall attempt the further duty of saying something of the character and services of the illustrious dead. I do not intend to speak his eulogy—for I have neither sufficient control over my

* The magnanimous conduct of Mr. Butler, who, during the life of Mr. Clinton had ever been among the opponents of his politics and administration, reflects upon this gentleman the highest honour, and has received the universal approbation of the community.

feelings to perform the task, nor would the suddenness of the occasion permit me to do justice to the subject. Other reasons would also restrain me—overwhelmed with that deep sense of the vanity of human greatness, which this event is so well calculated to inspire, I dare not flatter him.

But I may say without offence, and in the spirit of history, that this state, since the formation of its government, nay more, since the settlement of the country, has never produced an individual, who has exerted so great an influence upon the interests of the state, or whose name is more likely to be perpetuated in its history.

It was the fortune of De Witt Clinton, for nearly thirty years, to be the head of a great party: and the mark at which were hurled the shafts of a powerful opposition. Of those who supported or those who opposed him, this is not the occasion to speak. It is known to every member of this house, that ever since my acquaintance with political affairs, I have acted with the latter; but it affords me at this moment unspeakable delight to reflect, that for many years there has been mingled with that opposition nothing personal; save respect for his character and admiration of his talents. That respect and admiration were justly due him; for to his honour be it said, that while he pursued with avidity political distinction, he had the wisdom to seek for enduring fame, not from the possession of power, or the triumphs of the day, but by identifying himself with the great interests of the community. It was his ambition to be distinguished as the friend of learning and of morals, and as the advocate and patron of every measure, calculated to promote the welfare, or increase the glory of the state.

Let the statesmen of the present day, those who are now engaged in the career of ambition, learn wisdom from his example. The grave of Clinton will soon cover the recollections of his political honours, and in it will be buried the triumphs and reverses of the hour. But his fame as the patron of schools and seminaries of learning, as the friend of morals and benevolence, and as the ardent champion of every great public improvement, will flourish while time shall last. Need I remind you of his efforts to call out and to foster the latent genius of our people? Need I speak of his labours in aid of that great work which has conferred so much glory on his native state, and so largely contributed to the happiness of its inhabitants? By connecting his fortunes with the success of that stupendous project, and by devoting to it the best energies of his mind, what an unfading wreath did he secure! So long as the waters of the great lakes shall flow through this new channel to the Atlantic, so long shall history record his name.

I rejoice, sir, that he was not taken from us until he had witnessed the triumphant consummation of that great work. I rejoice still more, that he was permitted to outlive, to a great degree, the collisions, the prejudices, and the asperities of party; and that there is now nothing to prevent the representatives of the people, from awarding to his memory the honours he deserves. I feel, therefore, that I may safely call on the members of this house —on the votaries of science—the friends of humanity and morals—the philanthropist and the patriot—to unite with me in strewing flowers on his bier; and in compliance with usages

rendered holy by the best feelings of our nature, to join in a solemn expression of respect for his memory and sorrow for his loss.

The following are the resolutions offered by Mr. Butler.

It having pleased the Almighty, suddenly to remove by death the chief magistrate of this state, and the legislature being desirous to manifest its deep sense of the great public loss sustained by the state and the American nation, it is therefore

Resolved, unanimously, by the senate and assembly of the state of New-York, that in testimony of the profound grief felt by this legislature on the sudden death of De Witt Clinton, Governor of this state, the members of the senate and assembly will wear the usual badges of mourning during the present session.

Resolved, unanimously, that the funeral obsequies of the late governor be conducted under the direction of a joint committee of the two houses, to consist of four members of the senate, and four members of the assembly.

Resolved, unanimously, that the members of the two houses of the legislature will, in their public character, attend the funeral solemnities of the late governor.

Resolved, unanimously, that these resolutions be transmitted to the family of the deceased Governor Clinton, as an evidence of the high estimation entertained by this legislature of his great talents and eminent public services; of the deep regret caused by his sudden and awful removal from the scene of his fame and of his usefulness; and of its sincere condolence with those who have been so deeply afflicted by this dispensation of Providence.

The above resolutions were adopted, and Messrs. Butler of Albany, Porter of Erie, Granger of Ontario, and Brasher of New-York, were appointed the committee on the part of the house. The house adjourned till the 10th, to receive the report of the committee.

IN SENATE.

The resolutions of the assembly relative to the death of Governor Clinton and his funeral obsequies being announced to the senate,

Mr. Spencer (evidently much affected,) said he rose to move a concurrence in the resolutions. He felt wholly unable to express the emotions which he presumed were experienced by every member of that body. The bereavement was so sudden, so unexpected, that he could scarcely realise the fact that he who yesterday stood before them in the freshness of life and the fullness of his fame, had been summoned to appear in the presence of his Maker. He felt oppressed by the magnitude of the event. Of the character of the deceased, it was needless here to speak. It would evince an ignorance of the history of the state and of the country, not to know how largely it was identified with it. With the literature, the science, and the improvement of the age, his name would go down to posterity full of honour. He could only add, that the resolutions were such as were due to the occasion, and he hoped they would be adopted. These resolutions were seconded by Mr. Crary, who also, with much feeling, pronounced a panegyric upon the late Governor, and were unanimously con-

curred in by the senate; whereupon the following committee was appointed, viz.—Messrs. Spencer, of Ontario; Carroll, of Livingston; Allen, of Genesee; and McCarty, of Albany.

Further Proceedings of the two Branches of the Legislature.

The two branches of the legislature met yesterday, at ten o'clock, and after adopting the following report, adjourned till one o'clock this afternoon, when they will assemble at their chambers, and thence proceed to the late dwelling of Governor Clinton.

The joint committee of the senate and assembly, appointed to conduct the funeral obsequies of the late Governor Clinton, reported;

That they have made the arrangements which appeared necessary to conduct the funeral of Governor Clinton, in such a manner as to carry into effect the intentions of the legislature. It is believed they are such as will evince the sentiments of grief expressed by the two houses in their resolutions, and comport with the character of the state. The details of their arrangements, so far as they are necessary to be reported, will appear by the order adopted by the committee, a copy of which is annexed.

In cases somewhat similar, it has been the practice to direct the chairs of the president of the senate, and of the speaker of the assembly, to be shrouded with black. Unwilling to omit the least mark of respect to the memory of the illustrious dead, the committee have followed these precedents. They respectfully recommend that the two houses meet in their respective chambers, to-morrow, at one o'clock P. M. in order to make the necessary preparations to unite in the funeral solemnities.

Order of Arrangements for the Funeral of De Witt Clinton, late Governor of the state of New-York, on Thursday, the 14th day of February, 1828.

The senate and assembly will meet in their respective chambers, at half-past one P. M. and will proceed to the house of the deceased, escorted by the military who may be assembled for that purpose.

The reverend clergy of the city of Albany, are requested to join in the funeral solemnities, and for that purpose to attend at the same time, at the house of the deceased.

The chancellor, justices of the supreme court, circuit judges who may be in the city, and the state officers, are also requested to attend at the house of the deceased, at the same time, for the same purpose.

The mayor and common council of the city of Albany are invited to attend, and to assemble previous to two o'clock P. M. at some house in the vicinity.

The citizens of the state of New-York, who may be desirous to pay the last tribute of respect to the memory of Governor Clinton, are invited to attend, and assemble at such of the houses in the vicinity as will be open for their reception.

Places will be assigned to any benevolent, religious, literary or other society, and to the members of any particular profession, who may wish to appear as a body in the procession, if notice of their intention be given to the chairman of the committee on the part of the senate, or to the chairman of the committee of the assembly. They will respectively assemble at such place in the vicinity as they may think proper, and will give notice of the place of their meeting to the committee.

In order to avoid an undue collection of citizens at the house of the deceased, it is earnestly desired that those who are not specially invited to assemble there, would meet at some of the adjacent houses.

The procession will begin to move as soon after two o'clock, P. M. as circumstances will permit. The signal of its moving shall be, the firing of minute guns. The bells of the city will then commence tolling, and will continue so long as the minute guns are fired.

The following will be the order of the procession:

The Military Escort.

The Clergy of the city, and the attending Physicians of the deceased.

The hearse and pall bearers.

The relatives of the deceased in carriages.

The military family of the late Commander-in-Chief.

The Joint Committee of Arrangements.

The Lieutenant-Governor of the state.

The Senate, preceded by its officers.

The Assembly, preceded by its officers.

The Chancellor, Justices of the Supreme Court, and Circuit Judges.

The State Officers.

The Common Council of the city of Albany, with their officers.

Judicial and Executive Officers of the County of Albany.

The Members of the Bar.

Citizens, either in societies, or otherwise, as they may choose to appear.

The procession will be formed of six persons abreast, and will move through North Pearl, to Columbia, North Market, State and Washington streets, to the place of sepulture. On arriving there, military honours will be paid to the deceased, and the procession will be dismissed.

JOINT COMMITTEE OF ARRANGEMENTS.

Of the Senate.

J. C. SPENCER, C. H. CARROLL,
E. B. ALLEN, J. MCCARTY.

Of the Assembly.

B. F. BUTLER, P. B. PORTER,
F. GRANGER, P. BRASHER.

The report was accepted, and the senate then adjourned until one o'clock to-morrow afternoon.

The house met at 10 o'clock pursuant to adjournment. After prayer by the Rev. Mr. Young, Mr. Butler, from the joint committee of the senate and assembly, reported the order of arrangements for the funeral of the late governor, (as above) which was read, approved and adopted, when on motion of Mr. Granger, the house adjourned until one o'clock P. M. to-morrow.

Proceedings of the Corporation of the City of Albany.

A special meeting of the board was held yesterday afternoon at 5 o'clock. The mayor addressed the meeting as follows:

GENTLEMEN—The melancholy event that has induced me to call this special meeting, is already known to you all. The death of Governor Clinton, which occurred last evening, is a public calamity.

I presume I have merely anticipated your wishes in affording an opportunity publicly to express our grief on this solemn occasion, and to sympathize with his family, his friends, and our fellow-citizens in their great affliction.

The recorder then offered the following resolutions, which were unanimously adopted:

The death of Governor Clinton having deprived the nation of one of its most eminent citizens, our state of a public benefactor, and this city of a benevolent inhabitant, who was endeared to us as well by a sense of his public usefulness, as by the knowledge of his private virtues, and the ties of social intercourse—

The Common Council of the city of Albany, under the dispensation of Providence, deeply deploring the death of Governor Clinton as a public calamity, and sympathizing with the afflicted family and relations of the deceased,

Resolve—

That this board will conform to such arrangements as may be made by the committees of the two branches of the legislature, and will attend the funeral on Thursday next, at two o'clock P. M. with its officers, wearing the usual badge of mourning, and continue to wear the same for thirty days.

That the several religious, literary and charitable societies in the city, be requested to unite with the municipal and state authorities, in paying the last tribute of respect to the deceased.

That the bells of the churches in the city be tolled during the moving of the procession.

That it be recommended to the citizens generally to close their usual places of business during the time of the funeral solemnities.

Meeting of the citizens of Albany.

At a meeting of the citizens of Albany, at the Capitol, on the evening of the 12th of Feb. 1828. Isaiah Townsend, Esq. was called to the chair, and Thomas W. Olcott, Esq. was chosen secretary.

The following preamble and resolutions were unanimously adopted:

The citizens of Albany, having learned with unfeigned sorrow, the sudden and lamented death of his excellency De Witt Clinton, and assembling together to testify the respect they owe to the memory of his exalted talents and eminent services, do resolve as follows:

That they sincerely deplore the severe and afflictive loss, sustained not only by the state, but the nation. This distinguished statesman and accomplished scholar, after devoting more than thirty years to the public good, as the firm and decided patron of the arts, the warm and zealous friend of science, and the powerful advocate and supporter of internal improvements, of education, and of virtue, is now no more. His public and private worth are identified with the history of his country, and will endure, as long as patriotism and freedom preserve their influence over this happy land.

That they condole with his family, relatives, and connexions, in this painful and mysterious dispensation of Divine Providence, by which they have lost an affectionate relative, and an illustrious benefactor.

That they will abstain from their usual avocations during the day on which his funeral obsequies shall be solemnized, and that they will close their stores and shops.

That they will wear the usual badge of mourning on the left arm, on that day.

That a committee, consisting of three persons from each ward, be appointed to confer with such other committees, as are, or shall be appointed by the legislature, the corporation, the bar, the military, or other public bodies, to make arrangements for attending the funeral of the deceased, and to adopt such other measures as shall be suitable to the occasion.

Funeral of Governor Clinton.

Pursuant to the arrangements previously made under the direction of the legislature, the funeral of the late Governor Clinton took place on Thursday, the 14th February.

The day was ushered in at sunrise by the discharge of cannon, which was repeated every half hour until sunset.

The two houses of the legislature, convened at 1 o'clock, P. M. and after a short sitting, proceeded in a body to the mansion of the deceased. The state officers, the clergy of the city, the pall bearers, the relatives of the deceased, his present and late military family, and several other gentlemen were also assembled at the same place. The dwellings of Mrs. Van Schaick, Messrs. Brown, Dudley, Wheaton, Davis, Elmendorf, James, and Westerlo, were also most obligingly opened, for the accommodation of the corporation of the city, the members of the bar, and other societies.

The citizens of Albany were assembled in great numbers at the consistory room of the North Dutch Church, whilst the side-walks and street, from the residence of Governor Clinton to State-street, were filled by the inhabitants of this county and the adjoining counties.

Immediately after 2 o'clock, a solemn and most appropriate address to the throne of grace, was made by the Rev. Dr. Ludlow, who was invited, in the absence, from ill health, of Dr. Chester, to whose congregation the Governor was attached, to perform that duty. The coffin was then placed in the hearse, and the solemn knell which announced the forming of the procession, resounded from all quarters of the city.

The procession moved in the following order under the firing of minute guns, which continued until the close of the solemnities.

The military escort, consisting of—

The ninth regiment of riflemen, under Colonel Taylor.

A battalion of light infantry, under Lieut. Col. Shankland. Commandants of companies, Captains Fry and Groesbeeck. To this battalion were attached three companies of light infantry from Gibbonsville and Troy.

A battalion of artillery, under command of Major Gibbons. Commandants of companies, Captains Thomas and Preston.

A squadron of horse artillery, under Lieut. Col. Van Schaick. Commandants of companies, Captains Green and Fuller.

A squadron of the third brigade of horse artillery, under the command of Col. Consaul. Commandants of companies, Major Winne and Captain Brandon.

The whole under the command of Brigadier-general Cooper, accompanied by his staff.

The Clergy of the city, and the attending Physicians, with scarfs.

The hearse, covered by a superb canopy, surmounted with black plumes, drawn by four white horses; their heads also decorated with black plumes, and their harness trimmed with crape. The horses were led by grooms properly habited.

The following gentlemen, with scarfs, as pall bearers:

General Bogardus, Mr. Crary, Mr. Ellsworth, and Mr. Wilkeson, of the Senate.—Mr. Bucklin, Mr. Scudder, General Montross, Mr. Williams, Mr. Breese, and General Brinckerhoff, of the Assembly.—Chief Justice Savage, Judge Sutherland, the Secretary of State Mr. Flagg, the Comptroller Mr. Marcy, and Messrs. J. D. P. Douw, and Mr. William James.

The Military Association, as an escort to the pall bearers.

The relatives of the deceased and of his family, in carriages. Among them were the venerable John Tayler, late Lieutenant-governor, Chief Justice Spencer, Chancellor Jones, Judge Woodworth, Judge Duer, and other gentlemen of distinction.

The present and late military family of the Commander-in-Chief, also as mourners.

The joint committee of arrangements; in scarfs.

The Senate, preceded by its officers, the president with a scarf.

The Assembly, preceded by its officers, the speaker with a scarf.

The Attorney General and Treasurer of the State, the Canal Commissioners, and other state officers.

Governor Van Ness, of Vermont, and other strangers specially invited.

The Common Council of the city of Albany, and their officers.

The Judicial and Executive officers of the county of Albany.

The members of the bar, with their distinguished senior, Abraham Van Vechten at their head.

Knights Templars, with their banner.

Master Masons.

Royal Arch Masons, with their officers in full dress.

Present and past grand officers of the Grand Chapter of the state of New-York, in full dress.

Members of the fraternity, to the number of five hundred, with the insignia of the order.

The faculty of Union College, preceded by their president, Dr. Nott, robed in a scarf, and the Phi Beta Kappa Society of that College.

The St. Andrew's Society, with their badges.

The officers and members of the Albany County Sunday School Union Society.

The Fire Departments, consisting of several companies, with their banners; the whole under the direction of Allen Brown, as marshal.

The masters of vessels and steam-boats.

The students at law.

The citizens of Albany, preceded by the several ward committees.

Citizens of the adjoining counties.

The procession moved through North Pearl, Columbia, North Market, State, and Washington streets, to the place of sepulture, the family vault of the late Dr. Stringer, in Sand-street; where the military escort opened to the right and left, through which the hearse, followed by the relatives and other mourners, and by such of the procession as circumstances would permit, proceeded to the vault. The mortal remains of De Witt Clinton were then deposited in the "narrow house." Military honours were paid to them, and the procession dismissed at half past four.

Thus terminated the funeral honours decreed by the representatives of the people of New-York to her distinguished son.

It was alike honourable to our citizens, and indicative of the great interest felt on the occasion, to observe the entire suspension of business, and the stillness and solemnity which every where prevailed.

Many interesting circumstances could be mentioned to illustrate the general feeling, were it not feared that this account was already sufficiently extended. A few particulars only will be adverted to.

Great interest was manifested by the public to see the body, ere it was for ever withdrawn from human observation. From an early hour in the morning until one o'clock, the room in which the coffin was deposited, was thronged by respectable visitants who attended for that purpose, and many of whom had come from a considerable distance.

The side-walks of every street through which the procession moved, and the windows of houses, and the roofs of several of them, were thronged by spectators of both sexes, and of every age. Many of them wore badges, bearing a miniature likeness of Clinton. More than one of the groups thus decorated, were composed of children, whose parents had adopted this mode of manifesting their own sympathy with the general feeling.

The colours of the several vessels at the wharves of the city, were displayed at half mast.

Upon the whole, every thing was done that duty or sympathy required; and so done, as to confer honour upon the legislature and the state. The solemnities, without being ostentatious, were appropriate and imposing; they were calculated to call out the finer feelings of the heart; to remind those who witnessed them, of the solemn rites consecrated, in ancient days, to the memory of heroes and mighty men; and to furnish at the same time, a noble incentive and a bright reward to public virtue.

Proceedings of the Common Council of the City of New-York.

Mr. Seaman presented the following resolutions, which were unanimously adopted:

The Common Council of the city of New-York having been informed of the death of De Witt Clinton, late Governor of the state of New-York, and being deeply impressed with this dispensation of Divine Providence, and feeling in common with their fellow-citizens, the loss which the state of New-York, and the nation at large, have sustained in his sudden removal from the scene of his usefulness, and being desirous of rendering to his memory a sincere and heartfelt tribute of respect, Therefore

Resolved unanimously, That the president's chair be dressed in mourning, and that the members of the Common Council wear crape on the left arm for the space of thirty days.

Resolved, That it be recommended to the ship-masters of the several American vessels now in port, to hoist their colours half mast on Sunday next.

Resolved, That the Reverend the clergy of the city be respectfully requested, in the name of the Common Council, to notice in an appropriate and solemn manner in their respective churches, to-morrow, the deep bereavement sustained by our common country by the death of our chief magistrate and fellow-citizen De Witt Clinton.

Resolved unanimously, That copies of these resolutions be transmitted by his honour the mayor to the family of the late Governor Clinton, with a sincere condolence of the Corporation of the city of New-York, with those who are so deeply and more immediately afflicted by this dispensation.

The following was presented by Alderman Lamb and adopted:

Resolved, That a committee be appointed with authority to make arrangements and to carry them into effect, for such further demonstrations of the respect of this Common Council, for the memory of the deceased, and of their high sense of the eminent services he has rendered the city and state, as they may judge proper.

In conformity with the resolution of the Common Council, requesting the clergy of the city to notice the deep bereavement sustained by our country in the death of Gov. Clinton, many of the clergy of different denominations, as had been spontaneously done at the demise of General Washington, availed themselves of this mournful occasion to hold up to the community the bright example of talents, patriotism, virtue, and religion, as displayed by Governor Clinton; and to impress upon their several charges, the salutary lessons to which such visitations of Providence naturally give rise. The Discourses of the Rev. Dr. Milnor, Dr. Wainwright, and others of this city, as well as in different

parts of the state, some of which have been published, were well calculated to excite those to whom they were addressed, to a noble emulation of the bright example they so successfully portrayed.

Proceedings of the New-York Delegation at the City of Washington.

At a meeting of the senators and representatives in Congress, from the state of New-York, held in the Capitol at Washington, February 19th, 1828, in consequence of the information of the death of his excellency De Witt Clinton, Governor of the state of New-York. Gen. Stephen Van Rensselaer, of Albany, was called to the chair. Gulian C. Verplank, of the city of New-York, was appointed secretary.

The Hon. Martin Van Buren, of the senate, addressed the meeting nearly in the following words:

Mr. Chairman—We have met to pay a tribute of respect to the memory of our late Governor and distinguished fellow-citizen, De Witt Clinton. Some of our brethren have been so kind as to ask me to prepare a suitable expression of our feelings; and I have, in pursuance of their wishes, drawn up what has occurred to me as proper to be said on the occasion. Before I submit it to the consideration of the meeting, I beg to be indulged in a few brief remarks. I can say nothing of the deceased, that is not familiar to you all. To all, he was personally known, and to many of us, intimately and familiarly, from our earliest infancy. The high order of his talents, the untiring zeal and great success with which those talents have through a series of years been devoted to the prosecution of plans of great public utility, are also known to you all, and by all, I am satisfied, duly appreciated. The subject can derive no additional interest or importance from any eulogy of mine. All other considerations out of view, the single fact that the greatest public improvement of the age in which we live, was commenced under the guidance of his councils, and splendidly accomplished under his immediate auspices, is of itself sufficient to fill the ambition of any man, and to give glory to any name. But, as has been justly said, his life, and character, and conduct, have become the property of the historian; and there is no reason to doubt that history will do him justice. The triumph of his talents and patriotism, cannot fail to become monuments of high and enduring fame. We cannot, indeed, but remember, that in our public career, collisions of opinion and action, at once extensive, earnest, and enduring, have arisen between the deceased and many of us. For myself, sir, it gives me a deep-felt, though melancholy satisfaction, to know, and more so, to be conscious, that the deceased also felt and acknowledged, that our political differences have been wholly free from that most venomous and corroding of all poisons, personal hatred.

But in other respects it is now immaterial what was the character of those collisions.—They have been turned to nothing, and less than nothing, by the event we deplore, and I

doubt not that we will, with one voice and one heart, yield to his memory the well deserved tribute of our respect for his name, and our warmest gratitude for his great and signal services. For myself, sir, so strong, so sincere, and so engrossing is that feeling, that I, who whilst living, never, no never, envied him any thing, now that he has fallen, am greatly tempted to envy him his grave with its honours.

Of this, the most afflicting of all bereavements, that has fallen on his wretched and desponding family, what shall I say?—Nothing.—Their grief is too sacred for description; justice can alone be done to it by those deep and silent, but agonizing feelings, which on their account pervade every bosom.

Mr. Van Buren then submitted the following resolutions:

The delegation from the state of New-York, to the Senate and House of Representatives of the Congress of the United States, having been informed of the sudden death of De Witt Clinton, late governor of that state, feel it due to the occasion, as well as to their own feelings, to unite with the people they represent, in expressing their deep and sincere sorrow for a dispensation of Providence, which has, in the midst of active usefulness, cut off from the service of that state, whose proudest ornament he was—a great man, who has won, and richly deserves, the reputation of a distinguished public benefactor.

Sensibly impressed with respect for the memory of the illustrious dead, they will wear the usual badge of mourning for thirty days; and they request that a copy of these, their proceedings, be communicated to the family of the deceased, with an assurance of their condolence at the greatest bereavement that could have befallen them on this side of the grave.

On motion of Mr. De Graff, of Schenectady, the above was unanimously adopted, and the chairman and secretary empowered to communicate them to the widow and family of the deceased.

The author might now proceed to record the various other expressions of public and private feeling to which the lamented decease of Mr. Clinton gave rise; for these he refers the reader to a small volume, entitled "Tribute to the Memory of De Witt Clinton," &c. in which they are collected and judiciously arranged, by a citizen of Albany. Suffice it to remark, that most of the numerous public institutions, literary and benevolent, of our city and country, with scarcely an exception, gave a public expression of their sorrow at the death of the late chief magistrate of our state. While, too, it would have afforded the author high gratification to have introduced into these pages many of the testimonials referred to, and some of the more splendid effusions contained in the several eulogies that have been pronounced in various parts

of the United States, he is denied this melancholy duty by the very unexpected length to which this Appendix has already extended.

Recurring to the following warm tribute of affection and respect (not less honourable to the writer than to the deceased friend whose loss he deplores,) he is compelled to deviate from his original purpose.

Letter of Condolence from General Lafayette addressed to Charles A. Clinton, Esq. of this City.

PARIS, March 30, 1828.

MY DEAR SIR,

Your particular and friendly attentions to me, make you the natural organ of the melancholy and affectionate feelings, which I wish to be conveyed to the family of your lamented father. I regret the mournful and unexpected event, as an immense loss to the public, and a great personal cause of grief to me. Bound, as I was, to the memory of my two beloved revolutionary companions, your grandfather and granduncle, I had found a peculiar gratification in the eminent talents and services of their son and nephew, and in his kind and liberal correspondence, until personal and grateful acquaintance had impressed me with all the feelings of a more intimate friendship. I beg you to be to your afflicted family the interpreter of my deep sympathies, and to believe me, for ever,

Your most sincere friend,

LAFAYETTE.

COL. CLINTON.

P. S. My son and Le Vasseur beg to be mournfully remembered.

THE END.