

A
LEGACY
OF
HISTORICAL GLEANINGS,

COMPILED AND ARRANGED

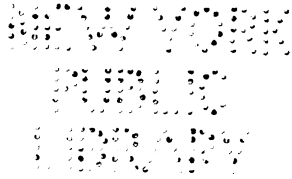
BY

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WITH ILLUSTRATIONS AND AUTOGRAPHS.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOLUME I.



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LEGACY OF HISTORICAL GLEANINGS.

CHAPTER I.

THE LEGACY — WHY BEQUEATHED.

“Come, Aunty, now tell of the years that are past,
 And those ‘soul-stirring times’ in which ‘loved ones’ were cast;
 Of early campaigns when dear Grandfather fought
 For American freedom so valiantly bought!
 When firm hearts were wrung, as the battle raged wild
 Yet, ‘his lungs oozing blood, with complacence he smil’d!’¹
 Give scenes of sweet peace where love’s memories cling,
 As bright visions of joy, or keen sorrow they fling;
 Relate what you saw in the great globe you spann’d,
 In Japan, quaint and mystic, ‘The Flowery Land.’
 And now as from Chaos, bright pictures you trace,
 In my fond heart your record shall deep find a place.”

Hattie said one morning, “Aunt Cuy, you have been now twice around the world, many very interesting scenes of that extensive tour are daguerreotyped, most certainly, on your mind; let the Legacy you bequeath to me, comprise a chronicle of the carefully hoarded incidents in your truly eventful life, interwoven with the traditional antecedents of our most noble Dutch patriarchs, back from the very beginning!”

Humph! Quite a modest request from a pleasing young lady in the budding Spring-time of joyous life, to a serenely quiet Missionary widow, of over half a century, in hoary and chilly Autumn’s sere decadence! I have been thinking over, during weary vigils, her expressed desire, shall I acquiesce?

Rev. Henry Ward Beecher makes this sweeping assertion against inactivity: “Each individual must produce something, must do something toward benefiting the condition of his fellow individual, in order to fulfill in some measure the ends for which he was created.”

Yes, we fully agree with the clerical gentleman, and are convinced that even the “little matters of daily occurrence are of greater importance in social life, than great matters of rare occurrence; and personal behavior in trifles is productive of the greatest amount of social and domestic pleasure and pain.” Now as we are fully posted as to our duty

¹ “I beheld him (Capt. Solomon Van Rensselaer), in a gallant charge at the head of his troop, shot through the body, and with the blood oozing from his lungs, still smiling with complacency.”—*Wilkinson’s Memoirs*.

in the premises, we are also impressed most forcibly with the reminder of these potent "Three suggestions :

" *First.* Go to no place where you cannot ask God to go with you.

" *Second.* Engage in no business which you cannot ask God to bless.

" *Third.* Indulge in no pleasure for which you cannot return thanks to God."

Therefore, as we propose keeping these instructions in view, we will modestly yield to pressing entreaties and strive, as a graphic narrator, to portray "our past" in a *tableau vivant*.

"Autobiographies are not often very popular, but when supplemented by personal recollections may possibly be productive of benefit to others;" and realizing that all *your* sympathies will be enlisted, and harmonized with the incitement which finally determined me to comply with your flattering persuasions, I have cheerfully undertaken the pleasing task. Fearing I may not be specially well qualified for this work of delineation and cosmography, must trust to your partial indulgence to excuse any flagrant imperfections in not wielding skillfully the events portrayed.

"The ancients emulously encouraged one another, by the remembrance of the heroic deeds of their ancestors, to vigilance in peaceful times, and to intrepidity in the hour of danger. Every thing among the Greeks conduced to plant in their hearts the most heroic courage, by the remembrance of their ancestors, whose principles and sentiments were the spur to the noblest actions. The lowest Greeks were exalted to a level with their greatest chiefs by a glorious death; their memory was renewed by the most solemn offering to the latest posterity, and their images were placed next to those of the Gods."

The same clannish pride, produced by the remembrance of the heroism and valor of our ancestors, makes it a precious privilege to a daughter of the Van Rensselaer family to record, the "ways and means" or devious paths, by which its members, (together with the greater part of other illustrious personages, to whom allusion is necessarily made from the intimate linking and intertwining of co-existent events,) have passed to, "That undiscovered country, from whose bourn no traveler returns," where "Immortality is their birthright and inheritance." With increased avidity and some degree of anxiety we shall "await the public verdict upon this work," and although laid open to, we would wish to disarm criticism by frankly confessing we do not expect our first and last essay in "book making" to be faultless, far from it. In 1831. my brother Rensselaer Van Rensselaer, under the signature of *Clio*, arranged some numbers of autographical sketches at the instance of an advertisement in the *Albany Daily Advertiser*, published by a Committee of the Albany Institute appointed for the purpose of collecting materials for a contemplated history of Albany. The communications seem to have been satisfactory from the following notice which soon after appeared: "The Committee of the Albany Institute, who are preparing a history of the city, acknowledge the receipt of some very valuable papers from an unknown correspondent, to whom they tender their thanks, with the hope that the residue of the information therein promised may be forwarded as early as possible.— C. R. WEBSTER, *Ch'n.*"

Clio requested, if it would not be infringing upon any of their established regulations, after the publication, to have his original effusions returned entire to him. This was accordingly done, and those sketches are now in my possession and interwoven in this record of historical

gleanings. "All books are properly the record of the history of past men." What thoughts past men had in them; what actions past men did; the summary of all books, whatsoever, lies there. "The past history of one's own native country is a broad beaten highway for every traveler."

As it is not pleasant to be charged with plagiarism I would frankly state, in this complement of materials, I have had access to my father's letters and papers, with the benefit of Clio's journal as an auxiliary. And following in the footsteps of assiduous reapers in the historical field have also gleaned from General Wilkinson's Memoirs; Lossing's Field Book of the Revolution; Lossing's War of 1812; Stone's Life of Joseph Brant; Simms's Border Wars of New York; Thacher's Military Journal; Writings of S. Wells Williams, LL.D.; and gathered a cluster of extracts with selections from such other sources, which have been grouped together as best suited the gleaner's fancy. Leaving each admiring reader at liberty to consider any appropriations of their writings, to illustrate more fully what we wish to detail, as a compliment to their productions, for "Our wishes are presentments of our capabilities."

The greatest difficulty which the fox hunter experiences when engaged in his favorite pastime of reaping game, is to find the *trail*. That discovered, he follows "the true nosed pack" in its unerring course and eventually overtakes the object of his eager pursuit. Not so in the historian's sphere. His chief difficulty in finding the trail of circumstances best calculated to make his work yield solid, nutritive food, to be authentic, most useful, entertaining, complete and of course widely popular, is equally as great and onerous; he may glean diligently but he must depend in very many cases upon his own perseverance and ingenuity to trail out and to worry down his game. In ranging those vast and unfrequented hunting grounds of Memory, it is not extraordinary that many traditions and *viva-voce* narrations, with a "bit of personal history" which used to delight my youthful fancy "in auld lang syne," should have been daggerreotyped on my mind and still adhere to my recollections in unconnected fragments. Accordingly, as these "yesterday's telegrams" of our exploratory researches are received from the great storehouse, we will endeavor to put in a detailed account of persons and things. Thus from a mass of biographical matter we also will select the whole, or parts of letters penned by notable persons and others who are naturally grouped with them, interspersed with a few extracts of home letters, which portray the workings of the inner man; giving also a desultory survey of the political field at that period. As all our needed Prefatory is contained in this opening chapter, and being a first cousin of the ancient and veritable Diedrich Knickerbocker, will start as so authoritatively requested "back from the beginning" in historic gleanings. Our great progenitors, the Ish and Isha, were created perfect in the image of God, though most unfortunately after a time the Isha become a "Woman's Rights" convert and transmitted to posterity the seeds of disobedience. Their descendants, the great family of mankind, consisted of the "five races: the Caucasian, or white race; the Mongolian, or yellow race; the African, or black race; the Malay, or brown race; and the American, or red race;" the lineage of these is worthy of the parent stock.

If we put on our "seven league boots," after many long strides, we shall find, verified from the most authentic sources, that the clever inhabitants of Holland, our "Fadder leindt;" Mother England and our sponsor France (who chivalrously stood up for us in feeble infancy, forming

• *Robert Sanders to Sir William Johnson.*

“Hon^{ble} Sir :

“Albany Novem^{br} : 15, 1764.

“I have Just Now Rec^d your favour of the 8 Cur^t Noted you would take up the Bond w^{ch} you Executed Jointly & severally with Mr. Wells to me on the 7 June 1762 for £700 : — : — Two Years & 4 months Interest thereon due the 8 June @6½ P^r C^t 106 : 3 : 4 — Amounts in the whole to the 7 Instant to £806 : 3 : 4 which sum you or they Can pay & Discharge when you please But as I have at present no Occasion at New York for it I would Chuse to Receive it here In New York Money — Jersey Money I find Good Deal of Trouble into pass it here Among our farmers As you Doubtless will with me Daily Experience. I have Labored above Two years under a Malady which Rendered me Spring and Summer past Incapable to write much or hardly at all But It seems I mend something Dayly at Least I think so & thank the Great Ruler & Disposer of Heaven & Earth for it and am In Great hopes of Recovering my Former State of health again. I Cant At this time Enlarge Shall only Add that I am with Greatest Regards Dear Sir —

“Your hum, & most Obd^t friend & well wisher

“Sir William Johnson, Bart.”

“ROBERT SANDERS.”

Robert Sanders to Messrs Champion & Hayley.

“Gentlemen,

“Albany April 13, 1765.

“The Enclosed Memorandum I Confirm to be Copy of my Last to you This Serves purely to hand you the 2^d Bill thereof to Serve in Case of need and to Assure you I am very Respectfully, Gent, Your Most

“Hum^{ble} S^{vt}

ROBERT SANDERS.”

The following month, May 24, 1765, Robert Sanders the veteran champion of his country's rights, passed away from the stirring scenes of life at the age of 60 years, for the lamp of life ceased to burn.

Among the family effects is a singular Patent for CHRISTAIN STADLE, engraven on parchment, having attached to it the great Seal, stamped on one side with the “Lion and the Unicorn.”

“*New York Secretary's Office* 30th July 1765 — The within Letters patent are recorded in Lib. patents to reduced Officers, &c., page 123.

“G^o BANYAR, D. Secr'y.”

“*New York Auditor Generals Office* 30 July 1765 — The within Letters patent are Docquetted in this Office.

“G^o BANYAR, Dep. Aud.”

“GEORGE The Third, by the Grace of God, of *Great Britain, France, and Ireland*; King, Defender of the faith, and so forth: To all whom these Presents shall come *Greeting*: KNOW YE, That of Our especial Grace, certain Knowledge, and meer Motion, *We*, have Given, Granted, Ratified, and Confirmed; and Do by these Presents, for Us, our Heirs, and Successors, Give, Grant, Ratify, and Confirm unto Our loving Subject CHRISTAIN STADLE being a disbanded non Commission Officer having served in North America during the late War and last belonging to our Fifty-fifth Regiment of Foot: All that certain Tract or parcel of Land situate lying and being in the County of Albany on the East-side of

Hudsons River within our Province of New York : Beginning at the Southwest Corner of a Tract of Land Surveyed for John McDonald and runs thence East Sixty Chains and sixteen Links ; Then South Thirty-five Chains ; Then West Sixty Chains and Sixteen Links and then North thirty-five Chains to the place where this Tract first began Containing Two hundred acres of Land and the usual Allowance for Highways.”

This curious Patent is too lengthy to be further copied but it is closed by “ IN TESTIMONY whereof, We have caused these Our Letters to be made Patent, and the Great Seal of our said Province to be here unto affixed. *Witness* our Trusty and Well beloved CADWALLADER COLDEN Esquire our Lieutenant Governor, &c., &c. * * *

“ CLARK.”

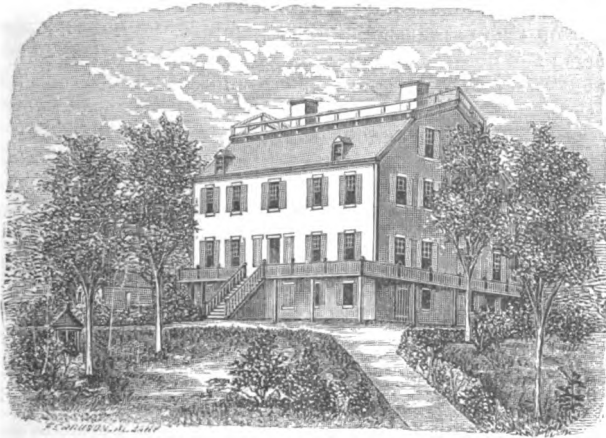
PHILIP was the second son of Col. Kiliaen Van Rensselaer and Ariaantie Schuyler. In the old family Record I find in my maternal grandfather's own writing these notices :

“ 1747 May 19th New Style was I, Philip Van Rensselaer born in Albany.”

“ 1749 October 15th N. Style was Maria Sanders born in Albany.”

“ 1768 February 24th, Philip Van Rensselaer *getrout met* Maria Sanders and Elizabeth Schuyler, by Dominie Eilardus Westerlo at the house of her grandfather Peter Schuyler, at the Flatts.”

Col. Philip Van Rensselaer was appointed in July, 1776, commissary of military stores of the Northern Department by General Schuyler, and



CHERRY HILL.

Built by Phillip Van Rensselaer, in 1768.

confirmed by congress. We see from his private papers, the hard times they had to contend with in raising money and getting supplies for the army. He was an upright and successful merchant and well deserved the high consideration in which he was held. When on a visit to New Orleans, he was prostrated with yellow fever ; though able eventually to return to his home at Cherry Hill, a beautiful site overlooking the Hudson